

Lincoln Center's
white light festival

T E N T H A N N I V E R S A R Y

October 19–November 24, 2019

Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 7:30 pm

Unifying Voices

Ensemble Basiani

ALL-TRADITIONAL PROGRAM

Megruli Alilo
Mravalzhamier
Orira
Tsintsqaro
Raiudo
Aghdgomisa Dghe Ars
Shobaman Shenman
Odoia
Chven Mshvidoba
Namgluri
Khasanbegura
Tsmidao Ghmerto
Sashot Mtiebisa
Voisa and Gandagana
Vagioroko Ma
Chakrulo
Chochkhatura (Naduri)

This program is approximately 70 minutes long and will be performed without intermission.

Please join us for a White Light Lounge following the performance.

Please make certain all your electronic devices are switched off.

This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.

Church of St. Mary the Virgin

White Light Festival

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UPCOMING WHITE LIGHT FESTIVAL EVENTS:

Thursday, November 14 at 7:30 pm in the David Rubenstein Atrium

Attacca Quartet

Caroline Shaw, voice

ALL-CAROLINE SHAW PROGRAM

Entr'acte; Valencia; Plan and Elevation

Songs for Strings and Voice

Sunday, November 17 at 3:00 pm in David Geffen Hall

Tristan and Isolde, Act II

National Symphony Orchestra

Gianandrea Noseda, conductor

Christine Goerke, Isolde

Stephen Gould, Tristan

WAGNER: Tristan und Isolde, Act II (concert performance)

Pre-concert lecture by Cori Ellison at 1:45 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse

Thursday, November 21 at 7:30 pm in Alice Tully Hall

Orchestra and Choir of the Age of Enlightenment

Jonathan Cohen, conductor and harpsichord

Katherine Watson, soprano; **Rowan Pierce**, soprano

Iestyn Davies, countertenor

PERGOLESI: Stabat Mater

VIVALDI: Gloria in D major

Pre-concert lecture by Benjamin D. Sosland at 6:15 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit WhiteLightFestival.org. Call the Lincoln Center Info Request Line at (212) 875-5766 to learn about program cancellations or to request a White Light Festival brochure.

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We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.

In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.

Ensemble Basiani and Georgian Song

By Carl Linich

Ensemble Basiani, the choir of the Georgian patriarchate, comes from Tbilisi, Georgia. Formed in 2000, the choir has been active in researching and reviving traditional songs and sacred hymns from both archival recordings and transcriptions and from its own fieldwork with singers throughout Georgia. The choir has performed internationally to great acclaim, and made its U.S. debut at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival in 2010.

Georgian polyphonic song is one of the world's musical treasures, admired by such visionaries as Igor Stravinsky, Alan Lomax, and Werner Herzog. It is unlike any other traditional music in the world, with unique scales and voice structures, and progressions that seem unexpected, almost impossible. And while it may sound modern to our Western ears, Georgian music also has a primal appeal, speaking to our hearts and souls just as it delights and perplexes our minds. Where did this remarkable music come from? And who are the Georgians?

Our story begins...well, in the beginning. According to legend, when God created all of the Earth's peoples, he instructed them to come to him at a designated hour to receive a place to live on the Earth. The hour arrived, and true to his word, God carefully divided up all of the land on the Earth and gave it to those who came. The following day, the Georgians arrived. "We're here for our land, O great and generous God!" The Lord shook his head and said, "I'm very sorry, but I've given all of the land away. I told you to come yesterday—why have you arrived so late?" The Georgians replied, "We are so sorry! We were having a banquet in your honor, and we got caught up in our toasts to you and your generosity in giving us land on the Earth. We toasted you till dawn and lost track of the time! Please forgive us! Isn't there some small corner somewhere that we might still have to live on...?" God realized that he could not leave the Georgians without a place of their own, and so he gave them the one place on the Earth that he had been saving for himself. And thus, the Georgians came to live in the most beautiful place in the world, nestled in the Caucasus Mountains.

Legend aside, it's true that the earliest historical accounts of the Georgians places them right there, in what is still Georgia. They speak a language that is unrelated to any other, and foreigners who choose to explore their culture will find it a Pandora's box. Georgia is the fabled land where Jason and the Argonauts traveled in search of the Golden Fleece, and home of the sorceress Medea. Many archaeologists agree that Georgia is probably the birthplace of wine, with the earliest evidence of winemaking dating to around 6000 BCE. Any visitor to Georgia will be sure to taste Georgian wine at a ritual banquet, or *supra*, where hours are

spent in fellowship, merriment, and reflection on “this fleeting world.” It’s a time for everyone to stop, look around, and acknowledge the things that are important in life: family, country, love, beauty—but it’s not a free-for-all; there is always one person who leads the toasts, according to protocol. The supra remains one of Georgia’s richest living traditions, and it is closely linked to song.

Historically, Georgians have had songs for all occasions, many of which are represented on our program this evening. Although few of these survive in their original context (work songs are no longer sung in the fields, for example), they are still sung, and new generations of Georgians will pass them on to their children. Polyphonic singing is a source of national pride in Georgia, and it has enjoyed renewed interest since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Paralleling this renaissance has been the revival of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Georgia adopted Christianity as its state religion circa 327 CE. Significantly, the Bible was translated into Georgian soon thereafter, and a liturgy was created in common Georgian language that all churchgoers would understand. Georgia reached its pinnacle as an empire in the 12th century under Queen Tamar, when monasteries nurtured the composition of hymns for the liturgy. However, this golden age did not last. After centuries of struggle with other invaders, Georgia was annexed by Russia at the dawn of the 19th century, and the Russian Orthodox Church restricted the use of Georgian liturgy. In the Soviet period, during the height of Communist atheism, the church went underground. Today Georgians enjoy freedom of religion, and Georgian liturgies are heard throughout the country, both in restored and in newly built churches. As Ensemble Basiani is directly associated with the Georgian patriarchate, the choir also devotes careful study to the practice of Georgian sacred chant, several examples of which we will enjoy this evening.

Since gaining independence in 1991, Georgia has been struggling to rise from the ashes of its Soviet and post-Soviet past. Things are certainly far from perfect, but Georgia’s hope lies in its rich and unique culture, its wonderful artistic heritage, and its breathtaking natural beauty. Visitors to Georgia are guaranteed an unforgettable experience, and many return again and again, overwhelmed by the famous Georgian hospitality and spellbound by the land that God almost kept from us all.

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Notes on the Songs

By Carl Linich

Megruli Alilo: Our program begins with a ritual Christmas carol from Georgia's western province of Samegrelo. Georgians are perfectly happy singing seasonal carols and songs like this at any time of the year.

Shobis makharobelni vart!
Krist'eshobas mogilotsavt!

We are the heralds of Christmas!
We congratulate you on the birth
of Christ!

Otsdakhutsa dek'embersa
Krist'e ishva betlemsao.

On the 25th of December,
Christ was born in Bethlehem.

Angelozni ugaloben
Dideba maghalta shina.
Es rom mts'qemsebma gaiges

The angels were singing
Glory in the highest.
When the shepherds heard the
news

Mividnen da taqvani stses.

they went to worship him.

Mravalzhamier: The word means "long life" or "many years." There are many *mravalzhamier* songs from all parts of Georgia, traditionally sung at holidays, weddings, birthdays, and other festive occasions.

Nurtsa ikharos mt'erma
chvenzeda, arts ara gaukharnia!
Ts'utisopeli asea—dghes ghame
utenebia;
Rats mt'robas daungrevia,
siqvaruls ushenebia!

May no enemy defeat us—and
they haven't yet!
The fleeting world is like this—day
follows the night;
that which enmity has destroyed,
love has rebuilt.

Orira: A traveling song from Georgia's western province of Guria. This features *krimanchuli*, a unique form of Georgian yodeling. The song has no fixed text.

Tsintsqaro: A lyric song about unrequited love. A young lady from the village catches a young man's eye, but his feelings are not reciprocated. This is one of the most well-known and beloved Georgian folk songs.

Ts'int's'qaro chamoviare, ts'int's'qaro.	At Tsintsqaro I passed by, at Tsintsqaro.
Bich'o da ts'int's'qaro chamoviare.	At Tsintsqaro, I passed by.
Ts'in shemkhvda kali lamazi, ts'in shemkhvda.	There I met a beautiful woman— there I met her.
Bich'o da k'ok'a rom edga mkharzeda.	With a jug on her shoulder.
Sit'qva utkhar da its'qina, sit'qva utkhari.	I said a word to her and she was offended—I said a word.
Bich'o da ganriskhda gadga ganzeda.	And she went away.

Raiudo: Circle dance songs are among the oldest surviving forms of Georgian musical folklore in traditional performance characteristics and form. They are accompanied by dances that have become inseparable from the songs. This particular circle dance song comes from the mountainous northwestern province of Svaneti. The song has no fixed text; even the name of the song has no known literal meaning.

Aghdgomisa Dghe Ars: "The Day of Resurrection"; Paschal hirmos, Gelati monastery traditional Orthodox liturgy. Gelati Monastery in Georgia's Imereti province was a great center of learning in the Middle Ages, and among other things, boasted a school of hymn composition, from which this hymn comes to us.

Aghdgomisa dghe ars!	The Day of Resurrection has come!
Gavbrts'qindebodet ats' erno!	Let us be illuminated, O ye people!
P'aska uplisa, p'aska, romlita	The Passover, the Passover of the
krist'eman ghmertman	Lord, by which Christ our God
Sik'vdilisagan mikhsna da kveqanit tsad	from death unto life, and from earth unto heaven
Aghmiqvana supevad dzlevisa, mgalobelni dghes.	hath brought us, singing a hymn of victory.

Shobaman Shenman: “Thy Nativity, O Christ, our God”; troparion for the Feast of the Nativity, from the Shemokmedi Monastery school of hymn composition in Georgia’s western province of Guria. Despite its very modern sounding chord progressions and tonality, this hymn is typical of the liturgy that flourished in the Middle Ages in western Georgia.

Shobaman shenman, krist’e ghmerto, Aghmoubrts’qinva sopelsa nateli metsnierebisa, Rametu romelni varsk’vlavsa msakhureben, Varsk’vavisagan ists’avles taqvanistsema sheni, Mzeo simartlisao! Romeli aghmobrts’qindi Maghlit aghmosavaltad. Upalo, dideba shenda!	Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath shined upon the world as the light of wisdom, for by it, those who worshipped the stars were, by a Star, taught to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Light from the East. O Lord, glory to Thee!
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Odoia: A work song from the province of Samegrelo, on the Black Sea coast, this is the first of two *naduri* songs on the program. Traditionally, when a family had a particularly large farming task to undertake, they would arrange a *nadi*, or work party. Neighbors, friends, relatives—anyone who was free would come help, and the task would be completed easily. Song was an important part of the *nadi*, and was called *naduri*. In its original context, a *naduri* song like “Odoia” might have lasted for an hour or more, with each musical section corresponding to a different motion in time with the work. After the task was finished, the host family would invite everyone to a banquet. Today, such work parties have been replaced by tractors, but their mesmerizing songs survive in abridged concertized arrangements. “Odoia” has no fixed text, though it is believed to invoke the name of Odo, an ancient Georgian god of agriculture.

Chven Mshvidoba: From Georgia’s western province of Guria, this banquet song is a masterpiece of complex polyphony that lends itself to rich improvisation both melodically and rhythmically by each of the three voices in the trio, creating a remarkably complex polyphonic mosaic.

Chven mshvidoba da gamarjveba! Peace to us and victory!

Namgluri: This work song from Georgia’s eastern Kakheti province is similar in function to the other work songs in the program, but is quite different in musical style, featuring ornamented solo interjections in contrast to the choral responses.

Glesav da glesav namgalo,
 Namgalo chemo rk’inao.
 Gaglesav da migaqoleb,
 Namgalo chemo rk’inao.

I’m sharpening you, my sickle,
 my sickle, my iron.
 I’ll sharpen you and take you with me,
 my sickle, my iron.

Khasanbegura: A historical ballad from Georgia’s western province of Guria. In the second half of the 19th century, the provinces of Guria and Achara were caught in a political conflict between Russia and Turkey. Some nobles decided to use the conflict for their own advantage. One such figure is Khosro Tavdgiridze, who had a dispute with Georgia’s Prince Gurieli and emigrated to Turkey. There he was promoted, receiving the title of Khasan-beg (*bey*), and was appointed commander of a military unit, ultimately betraying his homeland during the Crimean War. Khasan-beg is eventually beheaded, and the story has survived as a deterrent to betrayal. This song again features the Georgian yodel called *krimanchuli*. Some researchers believe that the music of *Khasanbegura* was created earlier, and this historical text was adopted later. Romain Rolland and Igor Stravinsky were fascinated by *Khasanbegura* and its remarkable polyphony. The text relates the viewpoint of Khasan-beg’s brother.

Khasan-begi tavdgiridze, gariskhuli
 ghvtisgan erti,
 Tatris pashoba ishova, sul mtlad
 daavits’qda ghmerti.
 Shekvetilshi shemovida, idzakhoda:
 “olan geti”;
 Lanchkhutamide mas vatsalot, mere
 chven gviquros, erti.

Khasan-beg Tavdgiridze, who rejected
 God
 sought the Turkish title of pasha,
 completely forgetting God.
 He entered Shekvetili, crying in
 Turkish, “I have come.”
 We’ll allow him to pass as far as
 Lanchkhuti, then let him see what
 we do.

Chven gakhlavart gurulebi, brdzola
 gvkonda shukhut-perdshi,
 Mt’eri ise davamartskhet, mtkhroblad
 ar goushvit erti.
 Chemi dzmai khasan-pasha
 tavmoch’rili devinakhe,
 Radgan chemi dzmai iqo, vai metki,
 devidzakhe.
 Ts’ina ghamit man gadagvts’va, mit
 deigo tsudi makhe,
 Radgan chemi dzmai iqo, bolos
 maints me davmarkhe.

We are Gurians. We had a battle near
 Shukhut-Perdi.
 We defeated the enemy leaving no
 one to tell the tale.
 I saw my brother, Khasan-Pasha,
 beheaded.
 As he was my brother, I cried out,
 “Woe is me!”
 The previous night he had fought us,
 snaring himself in the process.
 Because he was my brother, I buried
 him.

Tsmidao Ghmerto: “O Holy God”; the Trisagion (“Thrice Holy”) hymn, from the Georgian Orthodox Divine Liturgy.

Ts'midao ghmerto, ts'midao dzliero,
ts'midao uk'vdavo, shegvits'qalen
chven.'

Holy God, Holy Almighty, Holy
Immortal, have mercy on us.

Sashot Mtiebisa: “Out of the Womb”; Introit to the Feast of Nativity, traditional Orthodox hymn from the Shemokmedi Monastery school of hymn composition in Georgia's western province of Guria.

Sashot mtiebisa ts'ina gshev shen,
Putsa upalman da ara sheinanos.
Shen khar mghvdel uk'unisamde
ts'essa mas melkisedek'issa.

Out of the Womb, before the morning
star have I begotten Thee.
The Lord hath sworn and will not repent.
Thou art a priest forever after the
order of Melchizedek.

Voisa and Gandagana: A medley of dance songs, the second is one of the most popular comic dance songs from the western province of Achara. Accompanied by traditional instruments the *chiboni* (bagpipes) and *chonguri* (fretless lute).

Supra chemi simgheraa tsek'va
mosalkhenia!
Gandagani davits'qot ts'qurvils
mouts'qenia!
Gogov gogov k'isk'isa ak chamodi
ts'qlis p'irsa.
Ts'qali masvi k'ok'ita gamagzhevi
k'otsnita.
Ts'ukhelis sizmarshi gnakhe ts'arbi
maghla ageqara,
Panjarastan momdgariqav nats'navi
gadmogeqara.
Gaghma katami gavdene gamoghma
gamok'ak'anebs.
Lamazeb's rom devinakhav zghvasavit
gamak'ank'alebs.
Satamasho vashli mkonda shensk'en
gadmomivardao.
Me tu gzdulvar skhvai giqvars pesvits
amogivardao.

The banquet is my song! Dance is
festive!
Let's begin with Gandagana!
The thirsty are bored!
Girl, girl, playful one, come here to the
riverbank.
Give me water to drink from your jug
and sate me with kisses.
Last night I saw you in my dream,
your eyebrow was raised,
you were by the window, your braid
was hanging down.
Across the river I chased a hen.
It cackled all around.
When I see such beautiful people I
tremble like the sea.
I had a toy apple. I dropped it and it
rolled toward you.
If you hate me and love another, may
you be uprooted!

Vagiorko Ma: “Don’t you love me?” A lyric love song from Samegrelo province, this is a polyphonic arrangement of what was once a single-voice melody, accompanied by *chonguri* (traditional fretless lute). With its simple, melodic expression and soft, velvety harmony, it stands out not only among Megrelian, but among all forms of Georgian folk song, combining several forms of traditional performance.

Vagiorko ma? Vamorts'onko ma?	Don't you love me? Don't you like me?
Ishen ku gorluapuda skani ch'irima.	I still cherish you, my darling.
Uskanet ma vadmarine ma	I cannot bear to be without you.
Goluapiro makharია, skani ch'irima.	You are my delight, my darling.
Uskanet ma te kiana ma	Without you this world
Mapu sruli jojokheti, skani ch'irima.	is a true hell for me, my darling.
Vagiorko ma? Vamorts'onko ma?	Don't you love me? Don't you like me?
Goluapiro gurishi vardi, skani ch'irima.	You are my heart's rose, my darling.

Chakrulo: A banquet song from the eastern province of Kakheti. *Chakrulo* is the crown of Georgian polyphony. Like *Mravalzhamier*, it belongs to the family of long Kakhetian banquet songs. Various explanations exist as to the origin of the song's name. The literal meaning of the word in Georgian is “intertwined.” One theory cites everyday farming activities as the possible source: “As *Chak'ulo* needs a strong resounding voice, in the same way, a load placed on an oxcart needs to be tightly bound.” Hence, it is concluded that *chak'ulo* means a strong, reliable, loud, charming song, which requires a singer with a high voice—all certainly true of *Chakrulo*. In 1977, a recording of this song was launched into space on the Voyager spacecraft as one of humankind's greatest musical achievements. Indeed, this is the finest example of a Georgian table song, and one of the most popular and widely recognized folk songs in Georgia. The text recalls an uprising against an oppressive landlord—something which no doubt appeals to the spirit of the centuries-oppressed Georgian people.

Khidistavs shevk'rat p'iroba, chven gavkhdet ghvidzli dzmania.	At Khidistavi we'll swear an oath
Chavukht'et mukhran bat'onsa, tavs davangriot bania.	to bring down Lord Mukhran's house.
Mukhran bat'onis qmobita, pkvili ver davidgi godrita,	As his servant, I've had no flour.
Dek'euli ver gavzarde, k'alo ver vlets'e mozvrita.	I couldn't raise a bullock, couldn't thresh the wheat in my field.
Khmalo khevsurets nach'edo, telavshi tushma gagpera,	O sword of Khevsurian forge, in Telavi a Tushetian bloodied you.
Mepe erek'lem gak'urtkha, saomrad jvari dagtsera.	King Erekle blessed you for battle.

Mt'ero damchagre ar vt'iri t'irili diatst ts'esia	Enemy, you have oppressed me, but I do not cry.
Bevrjer vqopilvar am dgheshi magram ar damik'vnesia	I have been in such straits many times.
Matsale erti avleso, khmal-chakhmakh tsetskhlis k'vesia,	Just wait. I will sharpen my sword, ready my rifle
Sults'mindad mogamk'evino, rats chemtvis dagitesia.	and thoroughly destroy you, and you will reap that which you have sown with me.

Chochkhatura: From the western province of Guria, this is also a *naduri*—a special kind of work song traditionally sung by a large group of villagers who gathered to help one family perform a particularly large or challenging farming task. This gathering was called a *nadi*. If a family hoed its field without a *nadi*, it would be seen as bad luck and deemed inhospitable. If the village had no singers for the *naduri* song, they were specially invited from other villages. The people gladly worked together with the singers, as the work then became more cheerful. Field *naduri* songs are the longest and most sophisticated antiphonal (two-choir) work songs, and they number in the dozens. Most antiphonal songs of this kind that come from this region are in four voice parts—an unusual phenomenon in world musical folklore—and their texts often have nothing to do with working.

Carl Linich has been a scholar of traditional Georgian polyphonic singing since 1990. He has received awards from the Georgian government for his efforts to popularize Georgian culture.

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Ensemble Basiani

Ensemble Basiani was created in 2000 and became the Folk Ensemble of Georgian Patriarchate. In 2013, Basiani was given the status of State Ensemble of Georgian Folk Singing. The ensemble is composed of singers from different parts of Georgia; most members come from families that perform traditional singing and many members have sung folk songs in different ensembles since childhood.

Since its inception, Basiani has actively revived and popularized the examples of Georgian traditional polyphony, and has also released many albums, participated in internationally acclaimed festivals, and performed at prestigious venues around the world, including Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Gulbenkian Great Hall in Lisbon, Grand Hall of St. Petersburg Academic Philharmonic, Aldeburgh Music Festival in England, Kilkenny Arts Festival, and many more. The ensemble has visited the U.S. several times since 2010, performing at Lincoln Center, Stanford Live's Bing Concert Hall, Cal Performances, Town Hall, and Krannert Center for Performing Arts, among others.

Basiani is the name of a region in southwest Georgia (in what is now modern-day Turkey, northwest of the town of Erzurum). In 1203, Georgian royal troops won a victory there that consolidated Georgia's position in Asia Minor. In Georgia, the battle of Basiani is associated with love of homeland, devotion, and unity, and inspires the ensemble's desire to serve its beloved music with similar devotion.

White Light Festival

I could compare my music to white light, which contains all colors. Only a prism can divide the colors and make them appear; this prism could be the spirit of the listener.—Arvo Pärt. Celebrating its tenth anniversary, the White Light Festival is Lincoln Center's annual exploration of music and art's power to reveal the many dimensions of our interior lives. International in scope, the multidisciplinary festival offers a broad spectrum of the world's leading instrumentalists, vocalists, ensembles, choreographers, dance companies, and directors complemented by conversations with artists and scholars and post-performance White Light Lounges.

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