



Georgian Polyphony

On the way of its centuries-long development, Georgia has created highly artistic examples of secular and ecclesiastic music. Georgian Polyphony is one of national identity elements among language, unique script, original architecture etc. preserved from immemorial time withstood all the challenges. Some of these songs are linked to the cult of the grapevine and many date back to the eighth century. To give a general survey Georgian (and Caucasian) traditions of vocal polyphony shows promising parallels with the most European polyphonic traditions: from the mountainous Balkan traditions, to the swampy Polesie, Mordvinian and Baltic traditions, to the mountainous regions and the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. Georgian folk music is predominantly vocal and is widely known for its rich traditions of vocal polyphony and it predates the introduction of Christianity in Georgia (beginning of the 4th century AD). Almost every family sings Georgian polyphonic songs. This is the culture related to church hymns, field work, handicrafts, martial arts, worry and traditional Georgian table, which is organically combined in the life style of Georgian people. The Chakrulo song, used at ceremonies and festivals was selected to accompany the *Voyager* spacecraft in 1977. Byzantine liturgical hymns also incorporated the Georgian polyphonic tradition to such an extent that they became a significant expression of it. From UNESCO site: *“Popular singing has a highly valued place in Georgian culture. Polyphonic singing, in the Georgian language, is a secular tradition in a country whose language and culture have often been oppressed by invaders”*.

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