

**Ensemble Kereoni:**

The name of the ensemble **Kereoni** refers to a traditional candle used in the Orthodox Church. This candle symbolizes the harmonization of the Trinity; the singers selected this name because of their mission to link Georgian culture to other cultures.

**Kereoni** has performed professionally around Europe, and especially in The Netherlands where the STICHTING KEREONI, a foundation created on the island of Texel, provides support by arranging promotional concert tours and sale of CDs. Coming from a poor country as they do, where life especially for artists is very difficult, this support is vital.

*The artists:*

**Jemal Museridze** (2<sup>nd</sup> bass) was born in 1942 in the mountain province of *Radja*, in the high Caucasian Mountains of northern Georgia. Jemal sings a very deep bass (*basso profundo*). In Georgia he has been famous for over forty years. For many years he was a soloist of the State Choir and also a soloist of State Television of the former Soviet Union. In 1990 he co-founded Kereoni together with other soloists of this State Choir.

**Levan Samkurashvili** (2<sup>nd</sup> tenor) was born in 1949 in the province of Imeretie. His special vocal talent was discovered in the choir of the factory where he worked as a chemical engineer. In 1970 he decided to move to the capital Tbilisi to take singing lessons at the conservatoire. For many years he was a soloist of the State Choir of Georgia, singing for State Television and he sang for many years in the choir of the main church of Tbilisi. He also plays the *doli* (drum) and *bass-panduri* (lute). Apart from his musical activities he also writes poetry.

**Joseb Zurabauli** (1<sup>st</sup> tenor) was born in 1957 in Sagaretsjo in the province of Kachetie, East Georgia. He studied at the Technical University of Tbilisi and during this study sang in the choir of the university. After graduating he became a soloist in many well-known ensembles and frequently sang with different groups on television programmes. He also plays *guitar*, *chonguri* and *panduri*. He has been a member of Kereoni since 1995.

**Levan Golidze** (baritone) was born in 1960 in the province of Guria, in the south-west of Georgia. Levan also plays *chonguri* and *panduri* (lutes). Like Jemal Museridze and Levan Samkurashvili, he was a soloist of the State Choir of the former Soviet Union.

**Merab Samkurashvili** (bass). Born in 1979 in Tbilisi, he is the youngest member of the ensemble and the son of Levan Samkurashvili. Merab studied at the conservatoire of Tbilisi. He has been a member of Kereoni for nine years. In the ensemble he also plays *salamuri* (flute), *piano*, *guitar* and *panduri*, sometimes playing two *salamuri* at the same time.

**1. Phirosmani** (*Singer: Levan Samkurashvili*)

An ode to the most famous Georgian painter Phirosmani who lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**2. Tsitsinathela**

Romantic song about a firefly. "My firefly, why do you fly so far, but still your light warms me. I want you to come to me, but you fly away. My heart belongs to you always."

**3. Tskarostan** (*Singer: Levan Goliadze*)

Tskarostan means "near the source". "Near the spring there is a beautiful garden, and in that garden lives a girl so beautiful, she looks like an angel."

**4. Guls rad miklav** (*Singer: Levan Samkurashvili*)

Romantic song, "Why do you kill my heart?"

"I have not given up on my life yet, I am looking with my heart, my heart is my eyes."

5. **Mindor mindor** (*Singer: Soso Zurabauli*)

“I want to bring you to the meadow and pick all the flowers for you and I will protect you for ever.”

6. **Alilo** (*Singer: Levan Samkurashvili*)

Religious song about 25<sup>th</sup> December, the birth of Jesus.

7. **Guruli Nana** (*Singer: Levan Samkurashvili*)

Lullaby from the province of Guria. In ancient times it was a song about the sun-god Nana; after conversion to Christianity it became a lullaby.

8. **Khvavilebis Khvekhana** (*Singer: Jemal Museridze*)

“Flower Country”. “You did promise to come, why you are not coming? I have so many garlands of flowers for you, which I want to hang around you. I beg you on my knees, come to me.”

9. **Gogov, gogov shavthvala** (*Singer: Levan Samkurashvili*)

A love song about a beautiful girl with wonderful black eyes. “I love you, why don’t you answer me? I am tired of waiting for you.”

10. **Simgera Sakharveloze**

Romantic song about wonderful Georgia, with all the seasons in one day, in one country; sun, rain, snow, mountains, sea ...

11. **Orthav thvalis sinathlev** (*Singer: Levan Samkurashvili*)

Love song, “You are the light in my eyes.” “I am waiting for the opening of your rose.”

12. **Mthiuluri satrphialo** (*Singer: Soso Zurabauli*)

“You are like a deer in the mountains and a nightingale in the valley. My sorrow will not leave me ere you become mine.” This is a special melody from the mountains, accompanied on *panduri* (lute) and *salamuri* (flute).

13. **Sabodisho**

This healing song is many centuries old. It was sung for sick people before there were medicines.

14. **Orovela** (*Singer: Levan Samkurashvili*)

Orovela is the god of agriculture. People sang this song while ploughing the fields with the help of bullocks.

15. **Dila**

Dila means “morning”. This is a song about the beauty of nature when she awakes, and about the joy that after each night there is always a new morning.

16. **Macharia** (*Singer: Levan Samkurashvili*)

Love song from the province of Samegrelo about a great love. This province has its own language, Megrelian, which is only spoken, and for which no script exists.

17. **Tsjagara** (*Singer: Levan Samkurashvili*)

“Times go fast, my summer passed. But I still want to sing as if I were young. Now that I am old and grey I only sing for you. It will be my last song before I die like a swan”.

18. **Gaphrindi shavo mertschalo** (*Singer: Levan Samkurashvili*)

“Black swallow flies away”. This is a song about the grief of the relatives of those who died in the war.

**19. Sisona**

Sisona is a man who lived in the forest for many years and who fought against injustice.

**20. Chongurs**

The *chonguro* (a Georgian lute) is the symbol of Georgia. If one string is missing (see a string as a province) then the harmony of the country is disrupted.

**21. Megruli Nana**

Lullaby from the province of Samegrelo.

**22. Shinmousvlelo** (*Singer: Levan Samkurashvili*)

This is a song in memory of a soldier who did not return from the war.

**23. Mthiuluri modzachili** (*Singer: Soso Zurabauli*)

A song out of the mountains, about the border guards of the country.

**24. Nanina**

A drinking song from the province of Guria.

**Panduri:** A three-stringed fretted lute of Georgia. Body, neck and head are carved from one piece of wood, usually mulberry, lime, pine or fir. The resonator is hollowed-out and can be spade-, boat- or pear-shaped. The body gradually slopes into a short neck. The flat fir sound board has small sound holes arranged in a circle or a star. The overall length of the instrument is between 70 and 90 cm (27.5 - 35.5 in).

The strings are made of sinew and are tuned to a major 2<sup>nd</sup> (2 semitones) and a major or minor 3<sup>rd</sup> (3 or 4 semitones). Sometimes the two lower strings are tuned in unison and the third string to a 4<sup>th</sup> above. The strings are strummed together. The panduri is used to accompany women's solo or choral songs and occasionally dance.

**Doli:** A double-headed cylindrical drum, played exclusively by men. The skins are made from bladder or sheepskin. The doli has a diameter of 21 - 35 cm (about 8 - 13.5 in) and is between 8.5 and 30 cm wide (3.5 - 11.8 in). Small drums are held under the arm and rested on the knee, and played with fingers and palms of both hands or with sticks. Large drums are supported on the shoulder with straps and beaten with two thick sticks. The *doli* is related to the Azerbaijani *nagara* and the Armenian *dhol*.

**Chonguri:** A four-stringed, fretted lute. It has a deep pear-shaped body (truncated at the end), a long neck with a bent-back pegbox. The frets are tied on the neck. The resonator is made of wooden staves of mulberry, pine, lime or cherry wood. Small sound holes are cut in the flat soundboard and the sides or the body. The strings are made of twisted silk, but nowadays occasionally of nylon. The three main strings are wound onto the pegs in the box and the fourth string is attached to a peg on the side of the neck at the octave, to provide a drone. It is not always used. The tuning varies and largely depends on the type of piece to be played. The *chonguri* is played mainly by women to accompany solo or choral song.

**Salamuri:** A duct flute and is one of the oldest Georgian instruments. It is made from wood or cane and is 24 - 39 cm long (about 9.5 - 15.5 in). It has six or seven finger holes and one thumb hole, producing a diatonic scale. It is one of the most popular pastoral instruments and is played in classical as well as folk music.

**Ensemble Kereoni**

**Soso Zurabauli** - *1<sup>st</sup> tenor, chonguri (lute), guitar*

**Levan Samkurashvili** - *2<sup>nd</sup> tenor, dolly (drum)*

**Levan Goliadze** - *1<sup>st</sup> bass, chonguri, panduri (lute)*

**Jemal Museridze** - *2<sup>nd</sup> bass*

**Merab Samkurashvili** - *salamuri (flute), piano*

Licensed in 2005 from **Stichting Kereoni**, Texel, The Netherlands

**Thanks** to Mattie Poels, producer for VPRO Radio, Hilversum, Netherlands, for bringing us together with the Ensemble Kereoni.

*Premaster:* **Diz Heller**

*Photos:* courtesy of **Kereoni**

*Cover design:* **Alex Stokes**

*Photos in the booklet:* provided by **Kereoni**

*Typesetting / layout:* **Barbara Papadopoulos**