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Blackbirds in the Archive: Genealogy and Media in a Century of Georgian Folk Song

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Abstract. This article examines early recordings of Georgian folk music and their use by present-day singers through the dual lens of ethnography and media archaeology. One song in particular, recorded in 1907 and re-created in concert in 2009, demonstrates a complex negotiation between changing ideals of vocal timbre and the desire to be faithful to all aspects of the original recording, even mistakes or idiosyncrasies. Throughout, Anzor Erkomaishvili looms large as a dominant figure: founder of the most famous ensemble in Georgia, archivist in search of old records, and elegiac narrator of a family saga at the heart of Georgian music history.

რეზიუმე. წინამდებარე სტატია განიხილავს ქართული ხალხური მუსიკის ადრეულ ჩანაწერებს და მათზე აღბეჭდილი სიმღერების შესრულებას თანამედროვე მომღერლების მიერ. საკითხი განხილურია, როგორც ეთნოგრაფიულ, ისე მედია არქეოლოგიურ ჭრილში. ნაშრომში ყურადღება გამახვილებულია 1907 წლის ჩანაწერში აღბეჭდილ სიმღერაზე, რომლის სცენაზე კვლავწარმოების მომსწრე, 2009 წელს გავხდით. აღნიშნული შესრულება, იმ რთულ პროცესს წარმოაჩენს, რომელიც ხმის ტემბრთან დაკავშირებული იდეალების ცვლილებას და პირველწყაროში არსებული ყველა ასპექტის მიმართ ერთგულებას გულისხმობს. შემსრულებლები, პირველწყაროში არსებულ შეცდომებს, ჩანაწერის ხარვეზებსა და სხვა თავისებულებებსაც ითვალისწინებენ. ანზორ ერქომაიშვილის მოღვაწეობა, საკითხის განხილვისას – ერთგვარ გამადიდებულ შუშას წარმოადგენს. მან დააარსა ყველაზე ცნობილი ანსამბლი საქართველოში; ის გახლავთ ძველი ჩანაწერების მაძიებელი, არქივისტი და ქართული მუსიკის გულში აღმოცენებული ოჯახური საგას ელეგიური მთხრობელი.

On 19 February 2009 Anzor Erkomaishvili stood onstage in the Grand Hall of the Tbilisi State Conservatoire to introduce a performance by the Georgian folk ensemble Basiani. His brief remarks offered some context for the piece about to be sung: "Our work songs [*naduri*] have a very long and extensive history. We

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could call them a unique phenomenon in the world." He then announced that Basiani "will now perform for us the exact same variant [of this naduri] that Gigo Erkomaishvili's group recorded in 1907."[1] Though not explicitly stated here, Anzor Erkomaishvili's relationship to Gigo Erkomaishvili would have been well known to those in the audience: Anzor is the great-grandson of Gigo, a master singer and choir leader from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[2] Anzor's own credentials would also have been well known to the audience. As founder and director of the Rustavi Ensemble, Anzor has arguably done more than any other individual to popularize traditional Georgian music at home and abroad. He also successfully lobbied for Georgian polyphonic singing's recognition as a UNESCO-proclaimed masterpiece of intangible cultural heritage (Tsitsishvili 2009).

Anzor is famous in Georgia as a performer and public intellectual, yet his appearance in the Grand Hall with Basiani pointed to another of his roles: keeper of the archive of Georgian music, presenting and restoring forgotten treasures from over a century of audio recording. The concert, in fact, was held to celebrate the recent publication of a book and CD of archival recordings (Erkomaishvili and Rodonaia 2006). The performance by Basiani that immediately followed his speech quoted above—a virtuosic re-creation of the "Sajavakhura naduri" recorded by Gigo Erkomaishvili's group in 1907—is emblematic of his multifaceted legacy. The group's professional concert presentation owes much to the model of Anzor's Rustavi Ensemble, which has captivated audiences around the world since the 1960s, although aspects of Basiani's repertoire and performance style—their vocal timbre especially—represent a break with Rustavi's so-called academic style.

"Sajavakhura naduri," the piece performed onstage, is an agricultural work song from western Georgia that is named for the village of Sajavakho. It is sung antiphonally by an all-male, unaccompanied vocal ensemble. Basiani's performance begins with a solo call, quickly answered by another singer with a twisting, descending line. Typical of songs from western Georgia, the text of this piece largely consists of "nonsense" syllables like *wo* and *de la da*, resonant vocables lacking lexical significance but harboring expressive power (see Ninoshvili 2010; Tuite 2015). The song takes time to build up, with two groups trading long phrases back and forth while the lower voices sustain single-pitch drones. Gradually, the tempo picks up and the rhythm becomes sharper as solo voices in each group execute dense passages of three-part counterpoint. Now new sonic elements emerge: vocal techniques like *gamqivani*, named for a rooster's crowing (*qivili*), and *k'rimanch'uli*, a high-pitched yodeling ostinato. As the antiphonal exchanges become shorter and shorter, Basiani's yodelers maintain their stamina and brilliance. One could imagine two teams of farmhands who begin several miles apart and ruthlessly scythe the fields between them until only a few yards remain. In a kind of stretto, the groups trade phrases of eight beats, then four, then two, until the tension cannot be sustained any longer, and all the voices resolve in a ringing unison.[3] These work songs are among the longest, most challenging pieces in any ensemble's repertoire. Even more remarkable, then, is Basiani's achievement in matching, note for note, a performance recorded a hundred years before.

In this article, I present a media archaeology of three moments in Georgian traditional music history. Two of them occupy the bulk of my analysis, operating in intimate dialogue a century apart: the 2009 performance by Basiani and the 1907 gramophone recording by Gigo Erkomaishvili on which it is based. As an epilogue, I recount a third instance of significant media practice chronologically halfway between the other two: the 1966 tape recordings of Artem Erkomaishvili, the last master chanter in the Georgian Orthodox Church tradition. These moments are most obviously linked by the presence of three generations of the same family—Gigo (1840–1947), Gigo's son Artem (1887–1967), and Artem's grandson Anzor (b. 1940)—yet they do more than tell a family story (see figure 1). Here, family genealogy becomes media history, and decades of performance

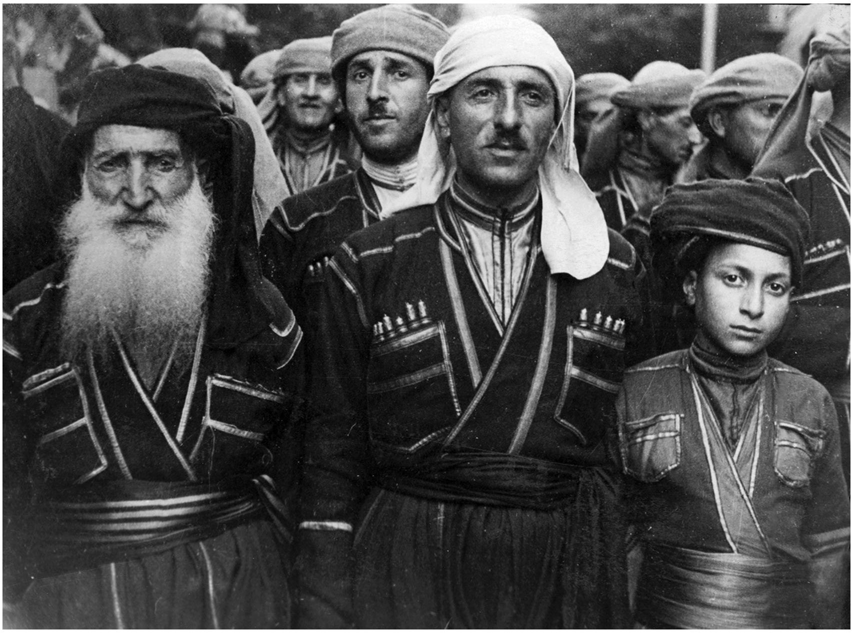


Figure 1. *Front row, from left*: Gigo, Artem, and Davit Erkomaishvili (Anzor's father) in 1934. Photo courtesy of Anzor Erkomaishvili.

practice hinge on the archival efforts of one man seeking to hear the voices of his forebears.

By identifying my method as "media archaeology," I engage with a heterogeneous set of practices cutting across disciplines from comparative literature to science and technology studies. What unites these practices is a commitment to writing histories of culture and technology that are antiteleological and resist master narratives of progress and innovation. General introductions to media archaeology (Parikka 2012; Huhtamo and Parikka 2011) identify such precursors as Walter Benjamin, Aby Warburg, and Marshall McLuhan while emphasizing the influence of Michel Foucault, especially *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). An oft-cited figure is the literary theorist Friedrich Kittler (1990), who never identified his work as media archaeology yet who argued that literary history must take account of the "discourse networks" (*Aufschreibesysteme*) that encode and store cultural data in material form, be it writing, sound recording, or digital media.

Although cinema and visual culture have tended to dominate in histories of media, technologies of sound recording and reproduction have been rich resources for media archaeology (Kittler 1999; Gitelman 1999, 2008; Sterne 2003; Thompson 2004; Mills 2012). Within musicology, Gavin Williams (2011), Andrea Bohlman (2016), and Roger Moseley (2016) make explicit use of the term "media archaeology" and its attendant methodologies (cf. Rehding 2017), as does a special issue of *Twentieth-Century Music* (Bohlman and McMurray 2017) dedicated to sound on tape. While ethnomusicologists have long been attentive to technologies of sound recording and the social structures they entail (Manuel 1993; Meintjes 2003; Greene and Porcello 2005), applications of media archaeology discourse to ethnomusicology are still rare. Notably, Peter McMurray's (2019) media-archaeological work on the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature—and the afterlife of its media artifacts—shares with this article an ethnographic attention to the family genealogies that become bound up in an archive and entangled with the politics of repatriation and redistribution. Above all, what I draw from media archaeology is a way of writing history that recognizes the enduring significance of different periods and artifacts of media practice, offering insights into the lives of users liberated and constrained by those technologies.

The media archaeologist "sees media cultures as sedimented and layered, a fold of time and materiality where the past might be suddenly discovered anew" (Parikka 2012). The archival recordings of Georgian folk and sacred music that I examine here enact such a fold. They have influenced performing groups from the 1980s onward and provoked renewed interest in the pre-Soviet soundscape of Georgian culture. In the process, accidents and idiosyncrasies—even, as I argue below, *mistakes* on these source recordings—became canonic, repeated features of live performance. While my attention to such "noisy" elements is firmly in line with leading currents of media archaeology, especially the work of Wolfgang Ernst (2013), I also address a gap in much media theory by incorporating ethnography based on my ongoing fieldwork in Georgia, which entails a greater awareness of live performance contexts and embodied vocal practices. In this way, my method here resonates with more recent trends in German media theory, particularly the "cultural techniques" (*Kulturtechnik*) approach, which attempts to assimilate bodily techniques into general theories of technology, restoring agency to human actors while acknowledging the constraints imposed by media systems (Siegert 2008; Geoghegan 2013).

My focus in this article on Anzor Erkomaishvili further underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to media and memory, since Anzor has shaped the performance of Georgian music not only as a highly respected singer, teacher, and transmitter of an oral tradition but also as a master operator within networks of media creation and dissemination. Accordingly, I draw on Jacques Derrida's (1996) theorization of the archive to render legible Anzor's outsize influence, cultivated over a half-century career. Attention to dominant figures like Anzor, I suggest, is crucial in any history of traditional music in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, offering an alternative to impersonal or reductive theories of autonomous stylistic change or the one-way influence of Western paradigms of modernity.

Readers may recognize counterparts from other traditions. Taking, for example, the case of Irish music in the twentieth century, one could point to Seán Ó Riada as the most important person in establishing and policing the canonical practices of Irish traditional music (Williams and Ó Laoire 2011:30–35). At the same time, media artifacts played a vital role in this same revival, notably the records made in the 1920s and 1930s by the fiddler Michael Coleman, which helped establish fiddle playing from the Sligo region as the dominant national style. What sets Anzor apart, I argue, is his unique position as both an arbiter of cultural practice on a national scale, like Ó Riada, and a direct claimant, through family connection, to the authority of the earliest sound documents. In keeping this history focused on the individual, I also recognize that, for Anzor, the quest to restore to life the voices of the past is always colored by a mournful sense of familial and cultural loss.

Tracing the arc of Anzor's career will help elucidate the path to Basiani's 2009 performance, with its note-for-note imitation of the 1907 recording. This path primarily involves changes in performance practice by Georgian ensembles beginning in the 1960s. I argue that a clear dichotomy between "academic" and "neotraditional" styles, a commonplace among scholars and practitioners (Graham 2015:477), obscures a more complex interplay of varying and complementary claims on authenticity. Historical recordings—and the different uses to which they are put by different singers—cast these claims in high relief. In the case of Basiani's performance of "Sajavakhura naduri," I identify four different conceptions of authenticity at work: the *testimonial* authority of the 1907 recording itself; the *genealogical* legitimacy of the archivist, Anzor, whose great-grandfather sings on that record; an *iconic* authenticity in Basiani's painstaking imitation of the original recording's sounds and vocal timbres; and, finally, a kind of *existential* authenticity, expressed in the notion of "singing with your own voice" that Anzor described to me in an interview.

Given that the very notion of authenticity, a foundational concern in folklore and ethnomusicology, is justly open for deconstruction (Bendix 1997), it is not my purpose to evaluate or weigh these claims against each other. Even so, ideas of authenticity may constitute "the very core around which people build meaningful lives" (17). This is especially true for professional folk singers, for whom being seen as authentic or not has serious economic consequences (see Witulski 2018 on "negotiated authenticity"). In order, then, to see how this discourse of authenticity developed, we must turn first to the earliest sound documents and the cultural technology involved in their production.

The Gramophone in Prerevolutionary Georgia

In the early years of the twentieth century, the Russian Empire was a growing market for new record companies. Among the first to set up in Russia was the Gramophone Company, a London-based multinational corporation that had licensed the patent for Emile Berliner's disc-playing gramophone in 1898 (Jones 1985:80). An alliance between the Gramophone Company and the US-based Victor Talking Machine Company divided the world into noncompeting hemispheres, with the Gramophone Company operating in Europe, the British Empire (including India and much of Africa), the Russian Empire, and Japan. Between 1898 and 1921, the Gramophone Company produced two hundred thousand different recordings (Gronow and Saunio 1998:12). Two brothers, Frederick and William Gaisberg, were the most renowned of the company's pioneering record producers, making the voice of Enrico Caruso familiar throughout the world. While opera and Western classical music would remain the centerpiece of record catalogs for decades, these producers quickly recognized the value of capturing local genres on disc, especially as they pursued new markets outside the capital cities. "When the musical centers of Europe had been exhausted, the Gaisbergs were sent to more exotic places" (11).

In Fred Gaisberg's own words (1942:26), Russia was "that El Dorado of traders," and for the Gramophone Company, the economic promise of the Russian market was no myth. By the outbreak of the First World War, 22 percent of the company's business came from Russia (Jones 1985:89). The branch office in

Tbilisi, then known as Tiflis and capital of Russia's Caucasus Viceroyalty, was responsible for recording a wide range of ethnic and linguistic groups in the North and South Caucasus. Music from Central Asia and Iran was also handled by the Tiflis office (Gronow 1981:256). From 1901 to 1914, approximately 170 Gramophone Company records featured Georgian folk music in the polyphonic vocal tradition (Erkomaishvili and Rodonaia 2006), including forty-nine by Gigo Erkomaishvili's choir, who made the trip in spring 1907 to the studio on Golovinsky Prospect (today Rustaveli Avenue). No recordings were made in Georgia between 1903 and 1907, perhaps owing to political instability related to the 1905 Russian Revolution, in which Gigo's home region of Guria played a significant role (Villari 1906; Jones 2005).

Exact sales numbers are hard to come by, though anecdotes attest to the ubiquity of gramophones on the outskirts of Russia. As one early engineer put it in an article for the *Talking Machine World*: "In the Caucasus mountains the talker can be heard in every one of the multitudinous villages; the records are played unceasingly and are therefore soon worn out, causing a result which is not particularly pleasing to [anyone] other than the Cossacks themselves who will never buy another record of the same title until one is actually broken. Even then they retain the pieces and in some cases decorate their huts with them"[4] (Noble 1913:65). This engineer's account—which elsewhere narrates a robbery at the hands of brigands and a daring mountain escape—must be approached cautiously, as it clearly partakes in exoticizing stereotypes and tropes of adventure writing. Even so, this description inadvertently hits on two notable features of listening in these preradio, pre-mass-media days—namely, the wide availability of recordings and playback machines and the "intensive" listening practices (Gitelman 2008:63) that transform a record through overplaying into shiny, decorative material.

In similar terms, Anzor Erkomaishvili, who was born in 1940, explained to me that in the days before radio came to Makvaneti, the village in Guria where he grew up, "every single family in town" owned some records (interview, 30 August 2016). If they did not have a record player themselves, they would go to listen at the home of someone who did. Although the 1907 recordings of Gigo Erkomaishvili predate Anzor's memory by some four decades, we may still situate them within a social context rapidly coming to terms with mediated sound. In later years, these early sound documents would gain status as authentic testimonials to a pre-Soviet musical practice as yet unsullied by commercial or political interference. Rather than view Gigo and his fellow singers, however, as naive premoderns, captured on disc by happy chance, I suggest we recognize their agency in the media processes that preserve their voices. Why, then, did Gigo want his choir recorded? In Anzor's telling, it was a friend who encouraged

Gigo and bankrolled the recording session (interview, 30 August 2016). Beyond that, we must look to broader cultural trends for contextual clues.

"Russian record manufacturers," Anna Fishzon writes in her study of early twentieth-century opera recordings, "sold the notion that consumers acquired sophistication and status through the purchase of native 'greatness'—the experience of beautiful voices and exemplary personalities in their own language" (2011:807). While opera stars from France or Italy might sing and record Tchaikovsky in translation, by 1902 Russian singers like Fyodor Chaliapin had filled the market with arias and art songs in Russian. In Georgia, on the fringes of the empire, the desire for an audible "native greatness" embraced not only Georgian opera singers like Ia Kargareteli and Vano Sarajishvili but also folk choirs like Gigo Erkomaishvili's. Here the market principles of supply and demand dovetailed with political currents, for, beginning in the late nineteenth century, choirs dedicated to Georgia's indigenous music traditions had helped to amplify the Georgian nationalist movement, encouraged by writers like Ilia Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli (Suny 1994:133). Gigo, in other words, was part of a broader social movement, and through a mechanism parallel to the one Fishzon describes for opera singers, his choir's sound recordings offered a visceral experience of authenticity.

The 1907 gramophone recordings were made at an inflection point in the history of Georgian national identity, in the immediate aftermath of revolts connected to the 1905 Russian Revolution and a decade before the short-lived Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918–21) seemed to offer a culmination of the Georgian independence movement.[5] Likewise, the rediscovery and restoration of these recordings, which I discuss in the next section, took place in the waning years of the Soviet Union and the first decades of Georgia's post-Soviet sovereignty. Whatever significance the recordings possessed for their original audiences would be transformed and enhanced in the folk revival that began to take hold in the 1970s.

The Records Recirculate

Anzor Erkomaishvili has told the story of his rediscovery of these Gramophone Company recordings many times, whether in published accounts or in interviews for television. The most detailed narrative of his search for old records was written in 1980 and published as a chapter of his first memoir, later translated into English as "Tracing Old Phonorecords" (Erkomaishvili 1988, 2007a). In the essay, Anzor narrates an odyssey that, beginning in the early 1970s, took him through a bewildering maze of Soviet bureaucracy, with stops at archives in Leningrad, Kiev, Riga, and Krasnogorsk. He struck gold, so to speak, at the

Central State Archive of Sound Recordings in Moscow, where he found copper or brass matrices of many of the Gramophone Company recordings from which new nickel discs could be pressed and played back. By cross-checking with published catalogs—or, in some cases, by recognizing the song on an unlabeled matrix as one he had a copy of at home—Anzor was able to identify the repertoire and performers on a majority of the discs. As founder and director of the internationally renowned Rustavi Ensemble, Anzor had access to these archives and could leverage his relationship with Melodiya, the Soviet state–controlled record company, to fund the restoration of the matrices, the pressing of new discs, and their conversion to tape. In the late 1980s, Melodiya began releasing these recordings on LP, with several discs dedicated to specific singers (including recordings from the 1930s and later), as well as a five-LP set specifically devoted to the Gramophone Company records (Ziegler 1989; see the discography).

Anzor made further discoveries in 1991 at the British Institute of Recorded Sound, but these records would have to wait nearly a decade to be heard by the public. The 1990s were a period of intense political and economic instability in Georgia, with the breakup of the Soviet Union, constitutional crises, and separatist conflicts all taking their toll. Plans to release the Gramophone Company recordings on CD were abandoned during this time, and besides, Melodiya, which had released all of Anzor's music, had functionally ceased to exist.[6] According to Carl Linich, a longtime student and friend of Anzor, the records had been transferred to DAT tapes yet were simply "sitting in a box on a shelf in [ethnomusicologist Ted Levin's] office" (interview, 17 October 2015). As a teacher and performer, Carl Linich has been a major figure in the spread of Georgian folk singing to North America (Bithell 2014), and his archival work has been equally significant. At Levin's prompting, Linich took on the task of "doing something" with the recordings. Making a selection of twenty-five songs, Linich produced *Drinking Horns & Gramophones*, a CD released by Traditional Crossroads in 2001.

The success of *Drinking Horns & Gramophones* was followed by a four-CD release of all extant Gramophone Company recordings in the form of a deluxe, coffee-table-style book with extensive notes in English and Georgian titled *Georgian Folk Song: The First Sound Recordings, 1901–1914* (Erkomaishvili and Rodonaia 2006). This project rode the wave of international recognition following the 2001 UNESCO proclamation of Georgian polyphonic singing as a "masterpiece of the oral and intangible cultural heritage of humanity."[7] New publications and recordings appeared—funded by various governmental and international entities—and new folk music ensembles were established within Georgia (Bithell 2014:581). Anzor's historical-recordings project thus played directly into a global preservationist narrative with elements of repatriation and transnational collaboration. The book and CDs were funded in part by the United States Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation, and it was at a celebration for the book's publication that Anzor delivered the speech quoted at the beginning of this article.

Keeper of the Archive

Despite this inspiring narrative of rediscovery and restoration, for Anzor the recordings were never really lost. In several cases, the best-preserved copy of a Gramophone Company disc came not from a state or corporate archive but rather from his personal collection (Erkomaishvili 2007a:31). The Erkomaishvili family, it seems, were early adopters of recording technology. In an essay about Gigo, Anzor recalls meeting his great-grandfather sometime in the mid-1940s, when Anzor was a young boy and Gigo over a hundred years old. On this occasion, Gigo's son Artem brought his father some records as a gift, and the old man took out his gramophone to have a listen. The young Anzor was fascinated by the brown box and assumed there must be a small, sound-making demon inside (Erkomaishvili 2006:12).[8] This same gramophone remains in the family in working condition, and when I visited Anzor in 2016, he readily offered to play one of the original Gramophone Company discs for me. The upper floor of Anzor's apartment in Tbilisi is wholly dedicated to photographs, musical instruments, and other treasures from his years as a performer and scholar of Georgian music, an archive at once deeply personal and broad in scope.[9]

The question of the archive, according to Jacques Derrida, is one of outside and inside, specifically, "Where does the outside commence?" (1996:8). For Anzor, the master archivist, this question pertains to the boundary between family genealogy and the history of Georgian music more generally. Gigo Erkomaishvili's date of birth is generally given as 1839 or 1840, and Gigo himself traced his singing lineage back several generations. Thus two centuries of singing expertise lead up to Anzor. The Erkomaishvili family hails from Guria, a region of western Georgia bordering the Black Sea. Although the administrative unit called Guria today is the smallest in Georgia (apart from the capital district around Tbilisi), its musical traditions dominate the archive. Of the ninety-nine surviving Gramophone Company recordings, forty-four of them feature Gurian singers and repertoire. The other significant corpus of early Georgian recordings, those made in German and Austrian prisoner-of-war camps during World War I, likewise features the voices of many Gurians, one of whom served as a chief informant for the comparative musicologist Robert Lach (1928:7).

Guria's prominence in Georgian music history is further augmented by the importance of the Shemokmedi monastery. At Shemokmedi, near the Gurian capital of Ozurgeti, an oral tradition of church chanting was maintained into the twentieth century, longer than any other center of chant. When scholars and composers in the late nineteenth century began to study and transcribe Georgian church chant—which, like the secular repertoire, is also unaccompanied vocal polyphony in three parts—they gave Shemokmedi special attention (Graham 2015). As I discuss in this article's epilogue, Artem Erkomaishvili, Gigo's son and Anzor's grandfather, was the last representative of the "Shemokmedi school" and made important recordings in 1966, when Anzor was still a young man.

Taking all of this into account, it is safe to say that Erkomaishvili would have been an important name in Georgian music history, even without the international fame of Anzor's Rustavi Ensemble. Nevertheless, Anzor, throughout his celebrated career, has used multiple strategies of inscription to shape public understandings of Georgian traditional music and its history. In this way, he embodies what Derrida (1996:22) terms the "archontic dimension" of the archive, an idea linked to the duality at the heart of the word's Greek etymology. *Arkhē* can mean both "origin" and "rule": thus Derrida's pithy formulation, "the *commencement* and the *commandment*" (1). The *arkheion*, in ancient Greece, was both the house of the rulers and a repository for the documents that historicized and legitimized their rule. There is always a person or group that maintains a privileged relation to the messages contained in an archive's documents and can therefore control their circulation. Anzor's privileged position may originate with his name and his early training in Gurian folk singing, yet it finds constant reinforcement in the different ways he writes himself and his family into the canonical history of Georgian music.

The concepts of "canon" and "archive," central to this story, may be seen as two modalities of cultural memory. Thus the literary theorist Aleida Assmann (2010) distinguishes between active and passive remembering (canon and archive, respectively), drawing an analogy to an individual's "working memory" or "reference memory." In her terms, cultural messages and traces in a society's canon are readily available to all members of that society, while similar items in a society's archive require special effort to access. Assmann's framework, which also describes active and passive *forgetting* (when knowledge is either lost by a society or deliberately erased), is most helpful in tracking the movement of objects, materials, processes, or technologies from canonical circulation to archival stasis and back again. "The two realms of cultural memory," Assmann writes, "are not sealed against each other." Rather, elements of the canon can "recede into the archive, while elements of the archive may be recovered and reclaimed for the canon" (104).

The process of canon formation has long been of interest to musicologists and ethnomusicologists (Bergeron and Bohlman 1992), particularly the way that canonized repertoires and practices exert a kind of coercive force on musicians. Sound recordings play a complex role here, sometimes elevated to canonical status themselves (this is especially common in jazz), sometimes relegated to an archive, their secrets and idiosyncrasies waiting to be discovered and perhaps incorporated into future canons.

For decades, the canon of Georgian folk song was more or less synonymous with the recorded output of the Rustavi Ensemble. Founded in 1968 by graduates of the state conservatory of music in Tbilisi and led from its inception by Anzor Erkomaishvili, Rustavi appeared on no fewer than thirty LPs put out by Melodiya. Two of these albums, in their comprehensive scope, represent quintessential moves of canon formation: *Sixty Georgian Folk Songs*, released in 1981, and *One Hundred Georgian Folk Songs*, a massive eight-disc set released in 1989 (see the discography). No other ensemble attempted so complete a recording project, dedicated to representing Georgia's different regional repertoires. In the grooves of these records, Anzor and his collaborators inscribed a vision of Georgian folk music as a monumental cultural achievement on par with traditions of art music throughout the world.

Anzor's practices of inscription, however, entail both erasure and preservation. The selection of material that he and Carl Linich included in their Gramophone Company releases paints a picture of Georgian music making in the early twentieth century that is only a narrow slice of the archival record. *Before the Revolution* (2002), a CD compiled by Will Prentice, a sound preservationist at the British Library, also consists of pre-1917 Gramophone Company recordings and clearly demonstrates the mingling of languages and ethnicities in the regions that would become independent Georgia. The city of Tbilisi, in particular, harbored a number of urban musical styles showing Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Persian influence, and several artists recorded in multiple languages and musical styles (Ziegler 1997). As Prentice (2002) observes, such "ambiguities of cultural identity" would seem "awkward" today in the post-Soviet Caucasus.[10] Anzor's focus on Georgian vocal music "in the polyphonic tradition" ends up excluding solo songs, instrumental music, and "city songs" featuring guitar or piano accompaniment, not to mention musical traditions of the other linguistic and ethnic groups that have lived in Tbilisi for centuries.[11] This is a kind of "epistemology of purification" (Ochoa Gautier 2006) that reinforces the brand of ethnonationalist narratives advanced by Georgian politicians since 1991.

More space would be needed for a full account of Anzor Erkomaishvili's dominant role in Georgian musical life, which extends to radio, film, and publishing.[12] His organization, the International Centre for Georgian Folk Song, has published many books and musical scores, including a biographical volume dedicated to the Erkomaishvili family (Chokhonelidze and Rodonaia 2004), as well as a book of scores based on Artem's song and chant repertoire (Erkomaishvili 2005). Taken together, Anzor's efforts in a wide range of media to identify, classify, unify, and disseminate Georgia's rich musical traditions represent what Derrida calls the power of "consignation," or the "gathering together [of] signs"

(1996:3). In this framework, a keeper of the archive like Anzor Erkomaishvili "aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration" (3).

Voices of Revival

The "ideal configuration" of the Georgian folk tradition, of course, involves more than texts and objects in a physical archive. It is a dynamic entity continually reenacted by living singers and dependent on embodied practices of the voice. What is perhaps most remarkable about the performance by Basiani that sparked this research is not how much their voices sound like the 1907 gramophone recording but rather how *little* they sound like the Rustavi Ensemble, a much more recent performance model. The recirculation of archival recordings must be counted as a major force in the transformation of vocal production and timbre by Georgian groups from the 1960s to today. As a result of these changes, the blended, balanced vocal style perfected by Rustavi is no longer the dominant practice, at least among professional folk groups in Tbilisi. Thus I argue that one effect of Anzor Erkomaishvili's archival efforts is a kind of genealogical slippage: thanks to technological mediation, singers in the post-Soviet generation, rather than following in Anzor's footsteps, can choose instead to be pupils of his great-grandfather Gigo.

Understanding the Georgian folk music revival demands a brief history of Georgian choral performance practice (Bithell 2014), beginning with the 1885 founding of the Kartuli Khoro. This was the first professional choir dedicated to Georgian folk music, and it was formed as part of the nineteenth-century nationalist revival movement. As a result of this choir's popular concert tours, "singing groups sprouted like mushrooms throughout Georgia" (Shilakadze 1961:10). Gigo Erkomaishvili's choir was one such group. Although Gigo's ensemble did not do this, many choirs of the time, imitating the Kartuli Khoro, added additional singers to the upper two voice parts, traditionally sung solo, and tuned their singing to equal-tempered thirds, abandoning indigenous Georgian tuning (Arakishvili 1925:45, cited in Shilakadze 1961:9). After 1917, large choirs became the norm throughout the Soviet Union, whether in the form of professional folklore groups or amateur "people's choirs" assembled for regional festivals called Olympiads (LaPasha 2004). It was on the Russian model of the Piatnitskii Choir and the Moiseyev Dance Ensemble that the Georgian State Ensemble of Song and Dance was formed in 1936 (Bithell 2014:579; cf. Smith 2002; Shay 2016).[13]

Members of the Rustavi Ensemble, like Anzor Erkomaishvili, were students during the post-Stalin cultural thaw of the late 1950s and 1960s, and in some ways, the group they formed in 1968 may be seen as a rejection of the stale, overblown spectacle of the state ensembles. (See Levin [1996b:45] on the "frozen music" of Soviet ensembles in Central Asia.) Dialing down the size of their choir, Rustavi focused on precision and blending in their singing, using their Western classical training to craft performances of haunting power and dynamic contrast. Their recordings for the Melodiya label, which helped spread the Rustavi sound, were skillfully engineered by Mikheil Kilosanidze and made great use of reverberant space and balance between soloists and chorus. In his liner notes to *Georgian Voices* (1989b), a compilation CD for Nonesuch Records, Theodore Levin sums up the approach: "The Rustavi's performance style synthesizes the powerful, rough-hewn sound characteristic of the traditional regional folk choirs with a newer, cleaner, more finely-honed aesthetic whose orientation is towards concert presentation—nowadays on an increasingly international scale."

Rustavi's techniques became known as the "academic" style, likely a reference to their conservatory training, and by the time of Levin's writing, it was already being challenged by a new generation of singers. In the early 1980s, a young scholar and singer named Edisher Garakanidze founded two ensembles, Mtiebi (a mixed-voice group) and Mzetamze (an all-female group). He and his colleagues were devoted to field research in villages and motivated by a desire to rediscover the original functions of folk songs, an approach that resembled the work of Dmitri Pokrovsky's influential Russian ensemble (Levin 1996a). Also part of this new revival movement was the Anchiskhati Church Choir, which made its name through careful research on the earliest sources of Georgian Orthodox chant and revived liturgical chanting as a daily practice in the oldest church in Tbilisi.

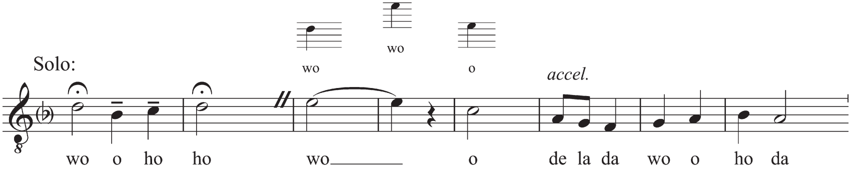
For these groups, the archival recordings beginning to be released by Anzor Erkomaishvili in the mid-1980s were incredibly valuable. In the waning years of the Soviet Union, the Gramophone Company discs especially held the key to restoring a pre-Soviet musical past. Among the salient features of the archival recordings were repertoire (songs lost or forgotten in the intervening years), tuning (evidence of an indigenous Georgian scale prior to western European influence), and, perhaps most importantly, vocal timbre.[14] Groups like Anchiskhati developed a mode of vocal production that was bright, edgy, and individualized, the very "rough-hewn sound" (Levin 1989) smoothed over by the blended choral textures of Rustavi.[15] In terms of vocal timbre, then, Basiani's performance of "Sajavakhura naduri" in 2009 most closely resembles this post-Rustavi wave of practice.

This historical sketch should not, however, imply a simplistic narrative in which the academic style was completely replaced by a neotraditional or "village" style. Indeed, as John Graham (2015:477) observes, when Georgian chant appears today on television—in historical documentaries or fund-raising appeals by the Orthodox Patriarchate—it is still the hushed tones of Rustavi-style chorality that invariably greet the ear. Rather, I propose that recognizing the coexistence of these varying vocal practices provides crucial grounding for a media-archaeological analysis of the Gramophone Company recordings and their recirculation. Furthermore, close attention to embodied practices of the voice, especially elusive aspects like timbre, can disrupt the seemingly total authority of a dominant cultural figure like Anzor. Expanding on Roland Barthes's (1977) famous essay, Steven Feld and his coauthors assert, "The physical grain of the voice has a fundamentally social life" (2004:341). Although popular performers like Anzor and the Rustavi Ensemble have the power to inscribe certain practices directly on the voice, the marks they leave are ephemeral, subject to the near-infinite pliability of the voice in its social aspect.

Mistakes and Mimesis

The authority of an old phonogram record can be seen as a kind of "frozen media knowledge" that is "waiting to be unfrozen, liquefied" (Ernst 2013:60). In the case of the Gramophone Company recordings, the process of liquefying includes the efforts by folklore groups to re-create and perform songs directly based on recordings. This is another feature of the archive's archontic principle: because something is attested in the archive, it is viewed as legitimate. Its archival presence allows it to be referenced and brought back into living practice, with a powerful claim to authenticity. At times, however, the testimony of the recording is, perhaps, untrustworthy.

Thus we return to the concert with which we began, in which Anzor promised a performance of the "exact same variant" of "Sajavakhura naduri" as Gigo recorded in 1907. Carl Linich drew my attention to Basiani's performance because of something curious that happens in the first moments of singing. At the beginning of the 1907 recording, a solo voice, having just sung a circular, three-note motive, is joined for a brief moment by one or more other voices. After barely a second of overlap, the upper voices cut out, and the solo voice continues to the end of the phrase (musical example 1).[16] Linich was convinced



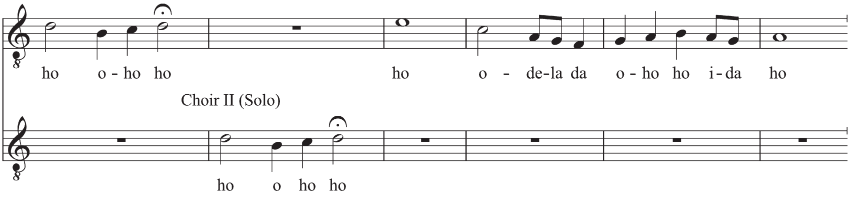
Music Example 1. Opening moments of "Sajavakhura naduri," recorded by Gigo Erkomaishvili's group in 1907.

that this had been a mistake, that the brief clash of voices occurred because one or more singers jumped in too early. In Basiani's 2009 performance, however, they reproduced the 1907 "mistake" precisely.

Linich's claim that the 1907 singers made a mistake has evidence to support it. Most tellingly, Anzor's group, Rustavi, performs the opening differently, with the first phrase immediately repeated by the second soloist before the first soloist continues (see musical example 2).[17] In this, they are likely following the score published by Anzor himself (Erkomaishvili 2005:120), which is based, like all the scores in this collection, on transcriptions made by Anzor of the songs taught to him orally by his grandfather Artem. Artem, in turn, was a member of his father Gigo's choir. All of this suggests a conception of "Sajavakhura naduri"—indeed, an authoritative conception, based on the genealogical authenticity of transmission through the Erkomaishvili family—in which the clash of voices does not occur.

But is "mistake" the right word? For Anzor and the members of Basiani, the answer is no. Zurab Tskrialashvili, a founding member and now director of Basiani, thought "misunderstanding" might be better. His tentative suggestion was that in 1907 Gigo's group had decided to do a shorter opening of the song than usual—perhaps aware of the limited time available on the record—but that in the moment of recording, one of the singers began singing his usual part, forgetting the plan to shorten the opening (Zurab Tskrialashvili, Facebook messages, 8 July 2018). Not for a moment, however, did the members of Basiani consider "correcting" the opening or singing it any differently—they were committed to precise sonic fidelity to the original.[18] Furthermore, Tskrialashvili explained to me, "even mistakes by them are not mistakes at all."

The singers of Gigo's generation are held in such high esteem that the few recordings of them that exist are treated almost like relics, revered as carriers of a sonic code and as material witnesses to the lives of these singers. Audio recordings, Wolfgang Ernst writes, "contain—and thus memorize—a world of signals that operate beyond and below the cultural symbolism intended by the



Music Example 2. Opening of "Sajavakhura naduri" as performed by the Rustavi Ensemble. Based on Anzor Erkomaishvili's transcription (2005:120).

humans involved" (2013:59). What Ernst terms the "subconscious qualities of technical media" allow the gramophone recording to preserve more than just "the song" (i.e., the item of repertoire); instead, every interval, every inspired improvisation, every cracked note or hoarse voice is preserved as well. In a folk revival movement, these subconscious qualities may become conscious choices, as the tone and timbre—and "misunderstandings"—captured on old records become part of living practice.

Anzor, too, demurred when asked about the "mistake" on Gigo's recording, but his reasoning was a bit different. Describing the members of his great-grandfather's choir as "real peasants" (*namdvili glekhebi*), he explained that these men would not have been comfortable on the concert stage and thus should not be judged on the same terms as a professional choir. When I asked him about groups like Basiani performing exact imitations of the old records, Anzor expressed measured approval, tempered with concern for a different kind of authenticity:

> When young people sing today, they're generally imitating an old recording, but I don't think that's entirely right. . . . Of course, you need to sing [a given variant of] a song precisely, and it's great if you sing a nice variant and do it correctly, but you shouldn't make your voice—whatever voice you have—sound like an elder's. (interview, 30 August 2016)[19]

"You should sing with your own voice," Anzor added, an appeal for existential authenticity, for being true to oneself, that seems to override the kind of sonic mimesis practiced by some of these younger singers. In concrete terms, Anzor explained, a young singer shouldn't try to sound like "a hundred-year-old man," referencing the advanced age of Gigo and other men on these early recordings. On top of this, many of them were farmers or laborers, not full-time musicians, and had hoarse voices from years of strain and exposure. Yet in the same breath with which he cited flaws in the old singers' voices as a reason not to imitate them, Anzor celebrated those very voices as unattainable, saying that no singers today can properly reach the high notes they sang a century ago.

Anzor, in short, has an ambivalent relationship with claims to authenticity based on sonic mimesis, despite his role in bringing the old recordings to the public ear. As his writings and public statements make clear, the straightest path to authentic folk performance is genealogical, the oral transmission of music through a family dynasty like his own, the Erkomaishvilis. Personal authority is paramount: "Not many people might know better than me how a folk song should be sung," he once remarked in an interview (2007b:30). For Anzor, old recordings are immensely valuable and perhaps even necessary in a society that suffered the cultural ruptures of Soviet domination, but they are no substitute for oral transmission.

The opening of "Sajavakhura naduri," then, may not have been a mistake for Anzor, yet there was something else in the 1907 recording that needed fixing. Since "Sajavakhura naduri" was such a long piece, it had to be recorded on two discs, necessitating a break in the performance. The two sides, in fact, may have been recorded on separate days. Since the singers in 1907 would not have used a fixed pitch as a reference, the second side of the record, as it turns out, is roughly a whole step lower than the first.[20] Anzor discovered this when he set about combining the two sides into a single track for his LP release. Rather than leave this imperfection—the acoustically "real" record of the event—Anzor discreetly adjusted the second half of the song to match the first by speeding up the recording. This editing maneuver was not kept secret—Anzor offered the information during our interview and has mentioned it in print (2007a:32)—yet it highlights the different negotiations and compromises made in the name of fidelity to an original source. For Anzor, it seems, presenting a full, continuous performance of the song—something impossible in 1907, given the time limits on disc technology—is the way to stay true to the original, even if it means sacrificing or transforming elements of the original performance, such as pitch and tempo. To borrow terms from performance theorist Diana Taylor (2003), Anzor's studio trick perhaps reveals a preference for repertoire (i.e., live performance) over archive. A full, seamless rendition of a song is more likely to inspire other singers, offering them a model for their own performances, while an unedited presentation of the two mismatched record sides, though required of a scrupulous archivist, introduces obstacles for the would-be emulator, stalling the song's reentry into the lived canon. Ultimately, this labor of stitching together a complete performance using fragments from a lost age echoes events to which I turn now as epilogue: a recording experiment in 1966 that undoubtedly shaped Anzor's view of the potential for technology to help reimagine and reconstruct the past.

Epilogue: *Babua*'s Voice

It took nearly eighty years for the recordings of Gigo Erkomaishvili to reappear on disc, yet in the interim, another event of sonic mediation stands out: the recording of chants by Artem Erkomaishvili at the Tbilisi conservatory in 1966. Artem was a major figure in his grandson Anzor's life, especially after his father Davit's death. Both of Anzor's published memoirs (1988, 2006) include a chapter titled "Babua" (Grandfather) devoted to Artem, and selections from these volumes were recently translated into English (Erkomaishvili 2018). In his writing, Anzor often likens his grandfather to a blackbird (*shavi shashvi*), for whom song is as natural as breathing.

Artem was born in 1887, studied chant with Melkisedek Nakashidze at the Shemokmedi monastery, and was known as a *sruli mgalobeli*, someone who had mastered the tradition in all three voice parts (Graham 2015:281). The Bolshevik seizure of religious property closed these monastery schools, and by the 1960s, Artem was the only chanter still living who knew the corpus of chant melodies and their traditional harmonizations. Artem, according to Anzor, did not share his knowledge, even with his family: "Grandfather Artem would conceal even from me the invaluable treasury he owned" (Erkomaishvili 2007b:29). In the post-Stalin years, there was increased interest in the Georgian Orthodox chant tradition, and Artem, who led a folk ensemble in Ozurgeti, often came to Tbilisi to teach chants to members of the Gordela ensemble, including his grandson Anzor. In 1966 Artem's advanced age and failing health led the musicologists Grigol Chkhikvadze and Kakhi Rosebashvili to undertake an ambitious, urgent project: preserving in sound some portion of Artem's knowledge.

The technology they used is significant. Recording via electromagnetic tape, which came to the Soviet Union after World War II, permitted instantaneous playback and greater flexibility for multiple takes than had been possible using wax-cylinder phonographs or gramophone discs (McMurray 2017). Chkhikvadze and Rosebashvili set up a reel-to-reel tape recorder at the Tbilisi conservatory, and Artem sang all three voice parts in succession, beginning with the upper voice, which contains the main melody of the chant. Then, while the recording of the first voice was played back, Artem sang the middle part into the microphone, harmonizing with himself on a separate track. The process was repeated for the third, lowest voice part. The recording engineers, however, apparently did not have Artem wear headphones, so the previously recorded parts were played back into the room and can be heard in the background of each subsequent part. This accounts in part for the considerable distortion on the recordings. In all, over a hundred chants were recorded, including some different variants of the same chant. Beyond the extraordinary focus and stamina, not to mention memory, that this project required of Artem, it marked a decisive shift in the methods available for the preservation of Georgian traditional music.[21]

Without proposing a deep ontological divide between the mechanical engraving of the 1907 Gramophone Company discs and the electromagnetic capture of these 1966 chants, there are uniquely spectral elements involved in these tape recordings. In particular, there are several orders of displacement occurring, primarily vocal and temporal. The vocal displacement allows Artem's voice to exist independently of his body and, with the innovation of playback techniques, creates the possibility for dialogue with his own voice, essentially a rewriting of one recording through the addition of other voices.[22] The temporal displacement allows musical processes typically enacted simultaneously to become sequential instead. This has implications for understanding the cognitive processes involved in Artem's chanting. As John Graham (2013:169–72) argues persuasively, the upper voice in Shemokmedi-style chant may take unexpected turns away from the expected chant melody (e.g., descending below its typical range), forcing the lower two voices to adjust spontaneously. When adding a second- or third-voice part to his initial recording of the first voice, Artem had the advantage of already knowing what the first-voice singer (he himself) was going to do. This likely lessened the cognitive burden of improvisation. A final displacement—almost a haunting—may be recognized in the fact that since Artem was the last of the recognized master chanters, his voice(s) stand in place of the dead, in place of singers worthy of forming a trio with him, who are all absent. In this way, Artem's recordings are the incarnation of an imagined or remembered community.

Like the Gramophone Company records, Artem's "conservatory chant" recordings have a prominent afterlife in the post-Soviet revival of folk singing and church chant. David Shugliashvili (2014) has published transcriptions in staff notation, and a CD was released in 2013 by the Georgian Chant Foundation titled *Pearls of Georgian Chant*. Here the three voices, which Artem had recorded sequentially, are combined in a simultaneous three-voice mix, with Adobe Audition software used to clean and edit the recordings (Ilia Jgarkava, email, 12 March 2017). I have uploaded to YouTube an audio sequence of the opening two phrases of the chant "Angelozi ghaghadebs" (The angel cried), first with each of the three separate voices in succession, as recorded in 1966, followed by those same three parts edited together for the 2013 release.[23]

The original raw recordings have also served as fodder for scholarship, whether as a model for reconstructing an indigenous Georgian scale (Tsereteli and Veshapidze 2015) or as a case study in methods for determining the fundamental frequency trajectories of singing within "complex sound mixtures" (Müller et al. 2017). The authors of the latter study in particular demonstrate the potential for computer-aided analysis to address questions of long standing in ethnomusicology, including how to make precise measurements of pitch and notate sound without recourse to the Western five-line staff. There are more secrets to be uncovered, it seems, in Artem's recordings.

Listening to these recordings now, aware of the poignancy and drama of the moment—the last chanter, doing the work of three men at once in order to save his cultural treasure—I must acknowledge a strong temptation to try to divine or intuit Artem's inner thoughts and motivations. As the media historian Jonathan Sterne (2003:15) reminds us, however, the idea of a "pure interiority" in the hearing, speaking, or singing subject is more theological than empirical. With recordings, we are dealing fundamentally with a form of exteriority. To invoke Derrida again, where does the outside commence? "Like the body embalmed," Sterne writes, "recorded sound continues to be able to have a social presence or significance precisely because its interior composition is transformed in the very process of recording" (332–33). This association of sound recording with death—the body embalmed, or the resonant tomb—points to a general feature of the archive and its mediation between the living and the dead.

The way Anzor Erkomaishvili retells his archival search brings this point home. In one of his memoirs, Anzor is twice on the verge of discovering a lost photograph or recording, only to have the archivist who knew its whereabouts die suddenly (Erkomaishvili 2006:7–9). One page later, the narrative moves from these archive deaths to the great loss that shaped Anzor's early life: the death of his father, Davit, in a car accident at age thirty-two. Even here, music heightens the drama: before leaving the house on the day of the accident, Davit promised his son Anzor that he would teach him a certain good song (not identified) when he got home. The promise, of course, could not be kept. Personal grief melts into the affective melancholy aspect of the archive.

"Shavi shashvi" (The blackbird) is a beloved Gurian song whose opening line gave Anzor the title of his first memoir (1988). With the second line added, its lyrics neatly schematize the dynamic between the singer of the past and the listener of the present: "Shavi shashvi chioda / net'av rasa chioda" (The blackbird sang / I wonder what it said?). The history of sound recording in Georgia seems filled with blackbirds and thrushes, roosters and swallows: isolated voices captured in moments of exuberant display. Their internal meanings and motivations may be lost, yet their exterior manifestations endure, engraved not only in recording substrates of wax, shellac, or tape but in the tenuous materiality of voices reaching for an imagined yet tangible past.

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Notes

1. Transcription from performance video (https://youtu.be/0O89ChVAk4s): ჩვენს ნადურს ძალიან გრძელი, ვრცელი ისტორია აქვს და იგი შეიძლება ჩავთვალოთ მსოფლიოში უნიკალური მოვლენად. ეხლა „ბასიანი" შეგვისრულებს სწორედ იმ ვარიანტს, რომელიც გიგო ერქომაიშვილის გუნდმა ჩაწერა 1907 წელს.

2. Because many of the figures I discuss have the same surname, I use given names to refer to members of the Erkomaishvili family.

3. A short film from 1958 by Otar Chiaureli based on the work of musicologist Vladimer Akhobadze featured a staged naduri in a cornfield with superimposed images of musical notation (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlhHlV2murM).

4. Noble's reference to these people as "Cossacks" is likely a generic term for villagers of the Caucasus, who elsewhere are identified more specifically as Ingush or Chechen, if not explicitly Georgian.

5. A more robust understanding of early twentieth-century Georgian aurality would necessarily build on the work of Lauren Ninoshvili (2011), which juxtaposes early folkloric investigations into Georgian vocal music with contemporaneous sonic experimentation by literary modernists.

6. The demise of Melodiya is a source of frustration to Anzor still. He does not retain the rights to any of his Soviet-era records—whether Rustavi albums or his archival releases—and bristles when he hears about reissues by unknown companies or high-priced resales on sites like Ebay.

7. https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/georgian-polyphonic-singing-00008.

8. Erkki Huhtamo identifies the conceit that "little people" (or fairies or demons) are responsible for the sound of a gramophone as one of media archaeology's foundational *topoi*, stereotypical formulas or clichés that "accompany and influence the development of media culture" and "mold the meaning(s) of cultural objects" (2011:27–28).

9. Michael Heller's *Loft Jazz* (2017:145–78) features an illuminating ethnography of percussionist Juma Sultan's private archive, highlighting the role such archives can play in processes of self-definition, especially for marginalized genres and performers.

10. Prentice and Erkomaishvili's differing archival projects should not be seen as antagonistic, however: Prentice himself has declared his admiration for Anzor's work, and Anzor's writings discuss many discs that do not appear on his reissue CDs (Erkomaishvili 2007a).

11. The *duduki* ensembles in Tbilisi represent such a tradition, which is generally excluded from Georgian folkloric categories owing to its connection to Armenian and Near Eastern musical styles. An ethnographic film by Hugo Zemp and Nino Tsitsishvili (2012) and ongoing scholarship by Tsitsishvili (2007; Helbig et al. 2008) may be seen as restorative moves in this regard.

12. See Fairley (2017) for further discussion of Anzor's work as a publisher, impresario, and anonymous folk-music composer.

13. Insightful ethnographies have been written on analogous state ensembles in Bulgaria (Rice 1994; Buchanan 1995, 2006), work to which I am deeply indebted.

14. Determining the precise intervallic structure of an "original" Georgian scale is one of the abiding questions in Georgian ethnomusicology, and it is pursued by scholars from Georgia (Erkvanidze 2003; Tsereteli and Veshapidze 2015) and elsewhere (Gelzer 2003; Scherbaum 2016; Müller et al. 2017). All of them, to greater or lesser degrees, rely on archival audio recordings as evidence for their theories.

15. To hear the difference in vocal production, compare renditions of the Georgian hymn "Shen khar venakhi" (Thou art a vineyard) by Rustavi (https://youtu.be/RH9zNz9L_VA) and Anchiskhati (https://youtu.be/JTJFX3bdMA0).

16. https://youtu.be/vS8T103n9-Y. Levan Veshapidze (2006:65) transcribes this opening moment somewhat differently, suggesting an intentional overlap.

17. Rustavi may be seen performing "Sajavakhura naduri" on YouTube (https://youtu.be/Y4csjUVesdw).

18. Basiani continues to sing the opening of "Sajavakhura naduri" this way, as on their CD for Ocora Radio France, *Géorgie: Polyphonies vocales profanes et sacrée* (2012).

19. ამიტომ, დღეს, როცა მღერიან ახალგაზრდები, უფრო ბაძავენ ძველ ჩანაწერს, თუმცა მე არ მიმაჩნია, რომ მთლად ისე სწორი არ არის . . . ვარიანტი ზუსტად უნდა იმღერო, რა საკვირველია, რაც კაი ვარიანტს იმღერებ და სწორად იმღერებ კარგია, მარა შენი ხმა—რაც შენ ხმა გაქვს—ბებერს არ უნდა მიამსგავსო. შენი ხმით უნდა იმღერო.

20. The split between the two sides happens at 2:04 in the restored recording of "Sajavakhura naduri" (Erkomaishvili and Rodonaia 2006:disc 1).

21. There is, in fact, a rather long-standing tradition of trying to capture Georgian polyphonic music by means of multiple microphones or recording devices. The earliest may have been in a prisoner-of-war camp in Austria during World War I, when two Gurian trio songs were recorded first by a group and then with each singer performing his part by himself (Lach 1928:92). The first known attempt to record multiple parts simultaneously was done in 1935 by the Russian scholar Evgeny Gippius in Leningrad (Ziegler 1993:30). Gippius employed three phonographs—one for each singer—and recorded at least twenty-four songs in this manner, over seventy wax cylinders in total (Erkomaishvili 2007a:236–41). Many of these are included on the *Echoes from the Past* series (see the discography). The use of separate audio tracks for each voice part as a pedagogical device continues in Georgian music circles to this day (Shugliashvili and Erkvanidze 2004).

22. The 1963 album by jazz pianist Bill Evans, *Conversations with Myself*, which makes use of three overdubbed piano tracks, offers a nearly contemporary parallel.

23. https://youtube/C0F_np7irPk.

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