

Thames Valley Early Music Forum

Georgian Sacred Song

an exploration of Georgian singing through the ages led by
Malkhaz Erkvandze

Ickenham United Reformed Church
Saturday 15th February 2014 10am for 10.30 until 5pm

This workshop, a first for TVEMF, will explore the rich and stunning sacred *a cappella* singing tradition of the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Dating back to pre-Christian times, the tradition has undergone many changes over the years and established a great variety of forms and regional variations within the country in the various centres of the Georgian Orthodox Church that developed.

The songs are in three- rather than four-part harmony (originally representing the Trinity). When sung by mixed choirs the top part is normally sung by sopranos and upper altos, the middle part by lower altos and upper tenors, and the bass by lower tenors and basses. However this will not be fixed and it will be possible to change parts during the workshop if you wish. Also, unlike Russian sacred music, there are no deep bass or high soprano notes, and the voices are all within a close range. While now adapted to modern notation and scales, the harmonic system is based on the old natural tuning system and on the 5th rather than the octave, and this gives rise to some (for us) unusual and seemingly dissonant harmonies, and sometimes different key signatures between the upper and lower voices. More of this will be explained on the day. Meanwhile please visit www.tvemf.org where you will find links to recorded examples. The sung language is Georgian, which contains some unusual sounds and consonantal clusters, but these can be simplified as necessary.

MALKHAZ ERKVANIDZE of Tbilisi, Georgia has been at the forefront of the revival of Georgian folk and medieval sacred music for the past quarter century, with many important recordings and publications to his credit. Born in the central mountainous region of Imereti, Malkhaz grew up singing folk music in his family and with the legendary master-singer Benia Mikadze. On graduation from the Tbilisi State Conservatory in 1988, Malkhaz formed a revolutionary folk ensemble *Anchiskhati* dedicated to promoting nearly-forgotten polyphonic folk and chant traditions of pre-Communist Georgia. Malkhaz is currently director of the *Sakhioba Ensemble*.

Ickenham URC is in Swakeleys Road, on the corner of Eleanor Grove (postcode UB10 8BE), half a mile from Ickenham station (Metropolitan and Piccadilly lines) and about three quarters of a mile from West Ruislip (Chiltern and Central). Drivers can park in the streets by the church. There are pubs and cafes serving lunches close by, or bring your own packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided. During the lunch break Michael Bloom will give a short slide show of Georgian landscapes, churches, monasteries etc. If anybody can bring a laptop and matching digital projector for him to use on the day please mention this on your booking form.

The fee will be £12 for members of an early Music Forum and £14 for others. Please try to book as early as possible to ensure a place, and certainly before 8th February. If you would like to take part please send the attached form to: Nick Pollock, 22 Oaklands Grove, London W12 0JA, tel: 020 8740 9646, email: npollock33@gmail.com. You can assume you have been accepted unless you hear to the contrary, but if you would like confirmation please provide an email address or enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. If you cancel too late to allow someone from the waiting list to attend you will forfeit the event fee.

Registered charity no 900284

Please fill in using BLOCK CAPITALS

I would like to come to Georgian Sacred Song and enclose a cheque for £ (payable to TVEMF)

Name:

Telephone:

Address:

Email address:

Voice (please specify Top, Middle or Bottom based on the information above):