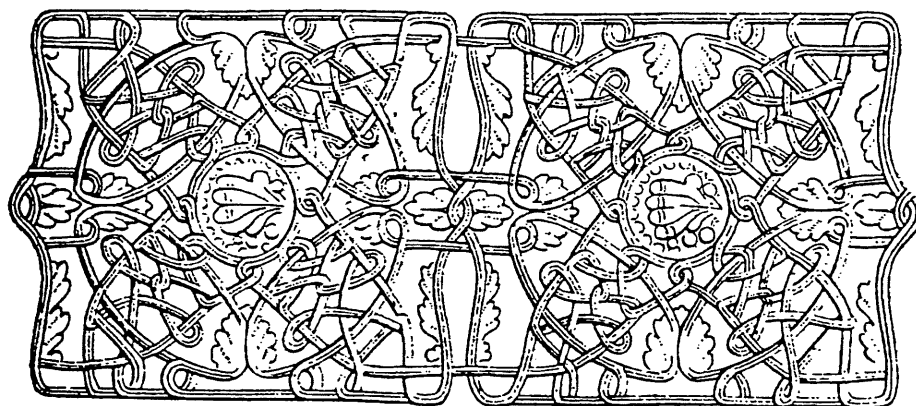


# SHEN KHAR VENAKHI

My Vineyard

## Georgian Wedding Song

TTBB



*earthsongs*

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# Shen khar venakhi

*Shen khar venakhi*, a 13th century wedding song from the Georgian Republic, appears in a collection entitled *Gruzinskie narodnye pesni*, ("Georgian folksongs") compiled by O. Chidzhavadze and V. Tsarareishvili (Moscow Music, 1964). Conceived as an introduction to the rich history of Georgian vocal music, the collection reveals a highly diverse picture of the musical, poetic, linguistic, and stylistic characteristics of Georgian folk literature. The collection is organized into various genres: work songs, calendar songs, lullabies, wedding songs, humorous songs, dance songs, lyric songs, epic and historic songs. *Shen khar venakhi* appears among the wedding songs as No.15 of the 60 songs, all but two of which are set for male chorus.

The texts of the folk songs appear in Georgian cyrillic and in singable Russian translations by V.L. Chmaladze. The editor has chosen the latter for this edition. We are most grateful to Eva Shraiman for her translation of the Russian introduction to the collection and the transliteration and translation of the text of this song. The AAB form of *Shen khar venakhi* consists of two verses and a refrain which draw parallels between nature and love, blending images of the beauty of a vineyard and the beauty of the beloved:

"My vineyard is luxuriantly in blossom;  
Thou art my own, my paradise;  
Thou art the most beautiful fruit of my garden."

Zakhary Paliashvili (1871-1933), a Georgian composer, teacher, and ethnomusicologist, has harmonized most of the Georgian folk songs in this collection "according to the principles of 13th century Georgian improvisatory style." The original melody appears in the second tenor part, supported strongly by the "burdon" or bass ("which should be the strong point of all songs"), while the first tenor improvises with slow notes or parallel "harmonizing" notes above the melody.

Paliashvili also offers several performance suggestions. He suggests the general mood of this particular wedding song ( *Нежно* -"tender"), provides dynamic markings and *crescendi/diminuendi*, and indicates a *Замедляя* ("*ritard.*") at the very end of the piece. These indications mirror the intrinsic gestures of the melodic lines, harmonies, textures and the large AAB form of the piece. The fermatas enclosed by brackets and the small ornamental variants are the suggestions of the editor.

The second tenor melody should always be clearly audible; however, the shifts between three and four parts and the piece as a whole will ring more true if each line is in balance as the texture slowly changes. Special attention should be given to tuning the slow-moving vertical chords and the expressive dissonances at the ends of the first two verses. Each of the vocal lines should also be given significant vocal energy to enhance the sense of direction in each of the three large phrases of the AAB form.

The inherent quality of the folk melody and its Georgian style harmonization suggest a quasi-processional style: slow, dignified, meditative, and serene, with a very expressive *ritard.* at the conclusion of the refrain. At a compellingly slow tempo (quarter note = c.48), the effect of this very simple and charming folk song is both beautiful and haunting.

*Jameson Marvin*

საქართველო სიმღერები

СВАДЕБНЫЕ

Wedding Song

15. შენ ხარ ვენახი

Виноградник мой  
My Vineyard

13th century Georgian Wedding Song

harmonized by Zakhary Paliashvili

edited by Jameson Marvin

Нежно (tender)

1. Shen khar ve - na khi  
2. Nor chi ke - ti li

a khlad akh va ve bu li  
e - dems shi - na ner gu li

3. Da - ta - vi - tvi - sit

*mf* Mze khar ga bur tskhin ve - bu - li  
*pp*

N.B. this piece may also be sung effectively by treble voices an octave higher.



The CENTENARIAN CHOIR, formed by the oldest members of the Abkhazian Folk Art Club in the Soviet Republic of Georgia, dresses in Georgian national costume and gives concerts regularly. Out of Georgia's total population of four million, well over 1,000 people are known to have reached the age of ninety or more.

