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Voices of our Grandmothers - PART 1 (Part 2 starts p11)

Except for the live music and South African song all music in this episode is from the CD accompanying the Songbook [Georgia by Tamar Buadze and Imke McMurtrie](#)

Live Music: Ase Chonguri Tamar Buadze

Musical underscore : Gelino from the CD accompanying the Songbook [Georgia by Tamar Buadze and Imke McMurtrie](#)

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Welcome to Voices of the Ancestors, where we explore Georgian polyphonic songs and the women who sing them.

Susan Thompson The voices today are me, Susan Thompson

Holly Taylor-Zuntz And me, Holly Taylor-Zuntz. And the voice you heard at the top of the episode was Tamar Buadze, singing Ase Chonguri with her grandmother's voice and tonality.

Susan Thompson Welcome to series 2 of Voices Of The Ancestors. We've missed you! This episode has been a long time in the pipeline, nearly a year I think...

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Uh uh Yeah we first visited Tamar er last summer wasn't it? When it was, she was holding a workshop in the park.

Susan Thompson Oh that's right oh that was a first wasn't it. It was the first time she'd done an open workshop. And she put this call out to people, you know, come and sing in the park - young, old doesn't matter if you've sung before or not.

And then ah she's so busy she managed to fit in a meeting with us - it was the first time we'd met her, um and then she went straight to a TV interview and then she went straight to leading this unique workshop.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Yeah so we were pretty lucky to get to meet her and then go back a few months later with our recording equipment and have a wonderful interview with her which I think she was fitting around her teaching or something.

Susan Thompson Yeah, yeah - it takes a lot to put together an episode for you guys out there you know. We have to... I mean this time we were coordinating with an interpreter, so we had Zoé Perret with us Er because we learnt the first time we met Tamar that she doesn't have very much English, and we don't have very much Georgian. And we didn't have enough German between us to communicate.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz No my brain can't handle German and Georgian and English at the same conversation. So yeah Zoé was amazing um she actually came twice because I went back a second time um to interview Tamar and to get more recordings of her singing with her grandmother's voice. So the second time, that was when, Susan you weren't in Georgia but I was and you said 'Holly go just grab the moment and go back to Rustavi'. So me and Zoé we got on the marshrutka to Rustavi er to the music school um actually yeah the main road is right outside the music school, so that's exactly where the marshrutka stops. Um - It's not some big grand Conservatoire it's um it's just an old building and the cars are kinda rattling past and you can hear them from inside - and there's all sorts of people bustling around coming in and looking for Tamar and going out again.

And actually the second time I went I got to meet Tutachela. 'cause I went to their rehearsal - And that was amazing hearing the women sing being led by Tamar. They were singing all sorts of songs, some of them were from Lazeti, (**Susan Thompson** oh yeah) Yeah that's the type of music that Tamar um is probably most well known for um. arranging and we'll talk about that more in the episode.

Susan Thompson Yeah I mean think that's really what drew us into er I think one of our listeners had suggested - Oh it'd be really great if you could interview Tamar and then I knew that she'd, um was behind a lot of the songs that I'd learnt well you know fifteen/twenty years ago but at that stage I had no idea that she'd kinda worked on them or arranged them - so for me it was a dream come true to actually meet her and understand sort of, how that all came about. (**Holly Taylor-Zuntz** absolutely).

Music: Gelino from the CD accompanying the Songbook [Georgia by Tamar Buadze and Imke McMurtrie](#)

Holly Taylor-Zuntz So you're hearing this episode now, because we reached our financial goal - thanks to our amazing Patrons and Ko-fi supporters who've supported the project regularly with donations. So thanks to them buying us a cup of coffee once a month er we've been able to just do this work that we absolutely love - so like we said it is a lot of work to put an episode together but we absolutely love it and we love really getting deep underneath the folklore er and the stories, and the songs and just er basically we've been able to develop this episode in the way it deserves um thanks to our supporters so - Thank you to our supporters from the US, Australia, Austria, um UK. Thank you Angela; Bernard; Boris; and David;

Susan Thompson And thank you Innessa; Jen; Joan; and Jonny;

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Thank you Karin; Rosemarie; Shawn; and Spike;

You've all helped to create this episode.

Susan Thompson That's so true and this is an episode when it really is gonna be worth checking out the website and the show notes because there's gonna be lot's of added detail. You can go to the website www.voicesoftheancestors.co.uk and if you go to the Donate page you'll find all the information about how to make a donation so that we can make more of these episodes for you. And then there's a page where there's a transcript that you can download, because this interview with Tamar - she's done so many things she works and teaches in many of the German speaking countries and there's a book that she has co-authored with Imke McMurtrie and that has a teaching CD with it where there are 3 voices on it. Um the third voice is Nana Mzhavanadze who appears in one of our other episodes so yeah they'll be - you'll find out all about how to get hold of the book on the website Resources page..

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Yes so here we go enjoy our interview with Tamar Buadze and Zoé Perret translating.

Music: Gelino

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Tamar welcome to our podcast. Thank you for being our guest.

Tamar Buadze: Madloba. Chvents didi madloba

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze Thank you, thank you for having me and thank you for... that you considered that I was er – how to say – Thank you for considering that I was a useful person to interview. (Laughter)

Holly Taylor-Zuntz And welcome Zoé, thank you for being our translator. (Laughter)

Zoé Perret: It's always a pleasure to be with you.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Let's start with where are we, what's this space and what do you do in this space?

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze So we are now in the music school of Rustavi. In the number 2 Music School and I am the director of this school since 2006. In this school we have about 400 students and unfortunately the condition of this building is not good and we have been waiting for so long for renovation or for another building. But despite the bad condition there are still 400 students. (Laughter)

Susan Thompson And is it just a 'Folk' music school or What Music?

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze So until 2006 this used to be a piano school. But it was almost about to collapse. And at that time Folk Music started to be a little bit more 'fashionable' let's say and um the Mayor of the city – Rustavi – came to me and asked me if I could take care of this school and he said, OK let's change the name and let's call it 'Folk Music School'. And actually that's the reason why today probably, this music was saved, um this school was saved and even tho' it was called 'Folk Music School' now any orientation of music is taught here. So it's just a usual Music School.

There is another... The reason this could happen from 2004 [Tutarchela](#) the choir, the folk music choir started to have their rehearsals here. And very soon, um, Tutarchela reached quite big success so that is also why this school could survive.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Mmm so Tutarchela that's your ensemble – can you tell us more about it?

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze So it was in 2004. I was just sitting home, and it was at the time quite a difficult period economically. Um and I thought OK we should – I was talking with some of my friends, some of my musician friends and said OK we need to do something um, not to get bored let's start a choir – and this is how Tutarchela started. So at that time, at the same time, I met a lady, a Laz lady whose name is Nazy Memishishi.

So Nazy er, is my neighbour 'till today. And she told me – look I know so many Laz songs, er I think it will be interesting for you to listen to them, and why not you could may be sing them and work on them and let's say, make them Georgian so that people can sing them. Actually Nazy is a very patriot woman and so she really wanted us to sing these songs.

Susan Thompson This happened in Rustavi? So Rustavi is about – well almost as far away as you can get from the Black Sea and Lazeti.

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze Exactly, Lazeti yeah and um – Yes er this happens in Rustavi which is very far from Lazeti but this woman is from [Sarpi](#) originally, just now she has er her family here.

So I started to um to go to her house and listen to her songs and unfortunately I didn't have a recorder at that time. But, er I would listen carefully to what she was singing. And I was trying to

write down or the notation of this – like transcribe on scores all these songs because she was every time of course she was singing a different variant, version, of this song.

At that time I also attended a concert or, that was organised by the Georgian Church in Tbilisi and or it was a song by a Turkish man, a Turkish singer, or very famous and I then realised that this. Um so this music that was Laz music. It meant that it was interesting for these people as well.

So I contacted the Georgian Church and they said yes actually we are very interested in the Laz folklore. And there is even radio, a channel that has been created for Laz people and or we want Laz people to listen to or Georgian music or Mingrelian songs etc.

Because the Laz people from today, they live in Turkey, most of them, and they think they have no connection to Georgia and they think they are not Georgians at all. So it was a kind of mission from the Georgian Church to make them listen to Georgian music and to um, 'feel' the connection through this music.

Music: [Heyamoli](#)

So parallelly I also started to work on these songs and to make um as three part songs and to teach them to my choir Tutarchela. For them it was a little bit difficult because it's a completely different language. For me it was not that difficult because my mother is Mingrelian, so Mingrelian being quite close to Laz it was not so hard. Mingrelian & Laz languages are very similar it's almost the same language..

Susan Thompson So does her mother sing Mingrelian songs or did she grow up listening to Mingrelian songs.

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze I actually learned Mingrelian songs from my grandmother, she was a very good singer and she used to sing so much to me and I loved it, but at some point I was telling her because I was studying music and it was not um you know fitting into the um like the um tempered scale so I thought she was singing 'not right' you know, not the right notes. (laughter) So I kept telling her – no this is wrong – then I realised how huge was the treasure that she actually left me by teaching me these songs and the way she was or interpreting them. (laughter)

So or it happened that or for me these Laz songs – I felt very close to these Laz songs for some reason and I really put a lot of energy into this ... for this.

So for me it was kind of experiments and um or when I finished that I decided that let's go and show these experiments to the people in the Conservatory. And this has caused a lot of or 'how to say' dispute.

Susan Thompson We are talking about an academic Conservatory aren't we, in Tbilisi.

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze Er yes to the ethnomusicologists

Susan Thompson Uh Huh

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze But yes, so she said I remember that er the musicologists were er not fighting, but having a discussion, arguments, between each other about my experiments.

So I felt so embarrassed because um, it was these people they were like you know discussing it to each other and um basically the only person that um probably felt pity for me and that was on my side and that was Tamaz Gabisonia. And also Guguri Chokonalidze was really happy with my experiments and he said – this is very nice and please we should – please come again to us and we should collaborate together.

Susan Thompson: What are the names of the songs that Tamar was experimenting with?

Tamar in Georgian – Es aris [Ele Mele Kismeti](#), [Heyamoli](#), Heyasie, dzalian bevri simghera Lazuri Khorumi, aris simgherebi

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze So for example Ele Mele Kismeti, Lushi pirapa, Heyasie, Khorumi, Heyamoli very many songs. About 15-16 songs were arranged by her.

Music: Ele mele kismet

We also worked, me and Nazy on the text. Because we wanted the text to be without Turkish 'barbarism' so we wanted them to sound real 'Laz' so we also did some er evidential work on that.

Some of the songs like Heyamoli, I learned them from the Conservatoire archives. And then on top of that I also made some arrangements. Almost all these songs are only one part – voice. There's only a few songs that are recorded with two parts, but most of them, they are one voice and so er that's why I started to er try to make them into polyphony, into three parts singing.

Music: Ele mele kismet

Susan Thompson I'd like to know from Tamar – we often talk about the journey of Georgian songs because we are from England and we first heard and learnt songs in England and if we jump forward from that moment when you were creating these three part harmonies for Laz songs. Have you any idea where those songs have travelled to now?

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze I know that especially three songs, Ele Mele Kismet, Heyamoli and Khorumi – these three songs have been spread worldwide and they are sung in Europe, in America and even I think in Australia.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz And in London.

Susan Thompson On Friday.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz We sing this Ele Mele Kismeti in our choir in London and tomorrow (Susan: at the [Wigmore Hall](#)) they will perform this on stage.

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze I am really happy about it. So I am really happy because actually not so many Georgians now in Georgia sing these songs. The way I made the arrangements, I made them for my choir and I made up basically a new way of interpreting them.

So I knew when arranging these songs how it could fit into my choir's style and how my singers could sing them so I crafted ...

So these songs were coming out of our choir's soul – let's say, our interior universe.

And this was actually thanks to these Laz songs that people in Europe started to get to know Tutarchela.

The period at that time was very hard economically and you sometimes we didn't even have money to come to the rehearsal but despite all of that we put so much effort, not only me but the other people in the choir, that I think today that I have um, put more energy and effort into these choirs and um this school than in my own family. (*Laughter*) Not only me, but actually every woman in this choir, Tutarchela.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Hard working women. (*Laughter*)

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze But unfortunately then it happened that – let's say –today we are not considered any more as a 'Folk choir' and we felt a little bit er, like excluded. So it's er it's a little bit hard when you feel like you are not part of the community. Always listening to this remark that OK 'you are not a folk ensemble'. It was never actually our ambition anyway, we never wanted to um to perform exactly the way people performed in the recordings in the archive recordings.

First of all I always considered that this so that we are people and we want to enjoy what we are doing and we want to enjoy the process of singing.

There was also one thing that caused a lot of (how to say) agitation from the men – it was the fact that we started to sing men's repertoire as women. Some of the men were not happy at all about that. (*laughter*) At the beginning I really didn't understand, I didn't get the point why they are, they were so upset that we perform this songs. I just love this songs like Naduri for example. Why shouldn't ...I think anyway these songs are not performed any more in their original function right? So as long as it's already on the stage – performed, I think the gender here does not have so much importance any more.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Mmm and who said that Naduri is a men's song anyway? Because the women are, I think, also working. (*Laughter*)

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze Yes of course.

Music: Helesa

You know until today I remember the voice of my grandmother and I remember how she was performing and it was very authentic, it was really, like It was her style it was her. So I, I, learnt a lot from this, but I never consider that I was to copy and repeat it as exactly her style of performance. Because I was another person and I had my other, my own style, my own universe – so I was not to copy her exactly.

Susan Thompson I am interested because I know Tamar has taught many other people in other parts of the world and I wonder if she thinks there is an idea of a 'Georgian Womans' sound? Is there a Georgian voice for women?

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze Aah – for me the most important I think is to um, to be able to transmit the soul of this song. Um and not er, the most important is not the er genre, genre of the song should it be like lullaby or whatever but what it brings to us, what is the emotion of this song. So I think that anybody actually can sing these songs.

There is one thing that I noticed er, I think is important. That our ancestors, the people who were singing, used to sing these songs um they were much more connected to their body and this connection is lost I think today. In performances that I hear.

So I always tell my students that when they sing, try to erm feel that you are standing on the grass that you are singing on the earth because if you feel that then er necessarily you will feel that the whole body is engaged.

Actually these people – our ancestors they were not thinking about the position of their voice or should they do this or that, actually they were just singing with their body and um in the er how to say – in their everyday life and they didn't have these thoughts probably, they just were naturally singing with the body.

If you take only the scores, if you transcribe these songs um into three parts – you look at the scores and you're like – oh that's quite easy actually, that's nothing very special and er it happened like when I was doing these workshops like in a few minutes because I gave them the scores they would be able to perform the song um like by the notes but um then when I started to explain um more in detail the soul of this. This is where the people then understand er where is the unique, unicity. (Holly: Mmmm)

How to say? Of these songs, what make them unique? (Susan: Yes) What make them special?

Music: Heyamo

I never look at the music from the ethnomusicological point of view – ah – I er look at music as music. For me it's much more important to see the musicality I guess from the performance of someone er because someone might be singing something that has nothing to do with the folklore but still I might be much more touched by his or her singing than some kind of er

performance from er an ethnomusicologist – that’s not maybe interesting for me – it doesn’t touch my soul.

I always like er more, the performances that I feel like are simple, are um true, so they are sincere, let’s say. So I like to listen to performances by non professionals and by people from whom I feel that they are really sincere and true about what they are singing. And that’s why I like to work with non-professional singers.

Susan Thompson: This would be a great time to ask Tamar about her experiment in Rustavi Park this Summer.

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze: So, um, because of the pandemic of course many people felt a little bit down. There was not so much going on – but from my side, actually, I still had some energy and I thought OK maybe we should do something for these people, she had come up with an idea.

And so that’s why I decided to start these workshops. Yeah and I was happy, even tho it was not exactly what I expected. Still I was really happy that something like this happened.

Susan Thompson: What did you expect?

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze So, I think that from some of the participants there was a lack of discipline. They were not really focussed on what we were doing – so I would have wished a little bit more – you know – like they would be more ‘into it’. But it’s OK I guess this also needs some experience – from my side as well.

Susan Thompson ‘Cause I think – I came to some of the early ones and remember that people were saying to me that this hasn’t been done before in Georgia. This is the first time.

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze Yeah it’s true and actually I had the er I really wanted to have these kinds of workshops in other cities as well.

Susan Thompson So I have a question which is um - Our most recent episode somebody who has worked with you - [Briget Boyle](#) said this great phrase – it was like – I think Tamar Buadze she comes at music from a revolutionary place. So I’m wondering what energy Tamar has for the future? What her current projects are?

laughter

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze I never look at music from er the er frame or the er laws or rules – I just look at it as music and as a musician.

I don’t have limits, I don’t put myself into a frame.

Same thing for Laz songs for example, um, maybe I did not transmit exactly the way it was before but most importantly I transmitted the soul of these songs and that’s everything for me.

It's my approach to any music not only folk music but even classical music to be free from frames.

Susan Thompson So then if we ask the question – What does Voices of the Ancestors mean to you? I wonder what the answer will be.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Tamar - What does Voices of the Ancestors mean to you?

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze Um, so as I said earlier when I was a kid um, I would, when I was listening to my grandmother, I was like I don't want to sing like her because I am myself etc. As more that – as time passes, I now realise that actually the voice of my grandmother today is for me the biggest er link and the biggest inspiration. So it's the foundation for me. I think I am standing on this, this voice.

So when I have holidays, I always feel the call from my grandmother's house. I always want to go there, there's always a voice telling me come here and somehow I manage to go.

So I am driven by this voice, actually. And actually this is the voice that I have been following. My grandmothers voice.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz What was her name, your grandmother?

Tamar Zhenia, Yevgenia

Live Music: Ase Chonguri, by Tamar Buadze

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze So she lost er, her grandchild, small girl, when she was just a few months. But she couldn't cry actually she always had to sing somehow. She was transmitting these emotions through singing.

Now I'm really laughing at myself when I remember, I'm reminded of these moments when I was a kid and telling my grandmother not to do this and not to sing like this. No you should not sing like this and you should sing like this – even tho' I was saying that, at the same time I was of course taking on me all this er energy and er the the style of her singing and everything and so today I consider that this – this is what er stayed in my soul.

It's the most important that she had.

Susan Thompson I just want to check my understanding – I think you are saying that your grandmother sang everything through those emotions of loss, not just say 'zari' or..

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze She would express everything with the singing.

Susan Thompson Because Holly and I have had the experience of being in [Samegrelo](#) when someone had died and hearing someone wail – I would call it wailing.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz I thought it was the wind, but it was a real person - it was a grandmother, yeah and I don't think I'd really heard a human make such a – it was a song but it was a wail yeah.

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze Yeah my grandmother as well was Megrelian.

Music: Gelino

Holly Taylor-Zuntz *voice over* Hi everyone, Holly here from the editing suite. Wow, how cool is Tamar?! That was just our first chat with her, but like we said, I went back a few months later to hear her sing in her grandmother's voice. So keep listening for part 2 coming up next - and there's also a surprise guest who turns up and tells us about Tutarchela youth choir!

I've loved working on this episode for you! And If you're enjoying listening to it, consider sharing it with a friend or on social media, rating and reviewing it. We rely on you, our community of listeners, to help us grow - you are our marketing team! You also help us with the production costs by becoming patrons. As we said at the top of this episode, it's only with your support that we've been able to give this episode the detail and attention it deserved. So if you want to be part of creating more episodes like this, visit voicesoftheancestors.co.uk and click donate. We have sooo many exciting ideas for the rest of the series, and I just hope we can keep bringing stories and songs to you. Thanks a lot and see you in part 2.

END OF part 1

Voices of our Grandmothers

PART 2

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Welcome back to Voices of the Ancestors, with me Holly Taylor-Zuntz.

Susan Thompson But not me, Susan Thompson. For in Part 2 with our guest Tutarchela founder and conductor -Tamar Buadze - Holly and translator Zoé Perret were on their own. It was agonising waiting to hear how the second part of the interview went. I got to experience what it's like for all of you, when you are waiting for a new episode. And Holly didn't help - I was back in England. I got this very excited voice note telling me all about it. How it was full of surprises and so much singing and how I would have loved it - well thanks of course I would, and so I'm sure would all of you - so thanks for waiting and enjoy the episode....

Music: Gelino

Holly Taylor-Zuntz So Tamar, how did your grandmother's voice sound?

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze My grandmother lost one of her grandchildren and she was telling me that one of the ways she could get emotionally out of the situation was .. that she kept singing. So she was actually always singing - she would sing constantly and when I was with her during Summer I would always listen to her voice.

At that time I was already studying music at school. So while listening to her in the beginning I would tell her like come on grandma you don't sing right. So I would always tell her, come on - your sound should be more stable - now the pitch is going down and this is not right etc. This is because, this is the way I was taught at school, this is how. But of course my grandma didn't listen to what I was saying - she was still singing and then when I started to study at the Conservatory and when I went to the chair of ethnomusicology with Edisher Garkanidze they were talking about, they were telling us about how rich it is, the sound, the natural sound that people can have, and what it is to sound naturally - and at that point I actually understood that my grandma was a typical example of this and she, she actually left to me a real treasure.

So I understood very well what meant authentic singing it's kinda of, I feel that this is inside me but at the same time I didn't want to, with my choir I didn't want to just copy the singing style of other people, should it be grandmothers, or maybe old recordings, so I wanted to take the possibilities of my choir like the voices of my choir, and to work on that with the voices that we naturally had without copying someone.

Music: Nani - Laz

So I actually received a few comments, remarks, about my singing style from ethnomusicologists that would say OK Tamar actually you are a choir director and you don't have an authentic and folk singing style or your singing style is more academic, so you should not sing folk songs. So, um, one day I get a little bit upset about that and I said OK about what you call authentic singing, so let me sing how my grandma would sing, so I started to sing the way my grandma would sing - and they would be like - Oh so you see actually you can do it and this is exactly what we would like to hear from you and we definitely need to make other people listen to this voice that you actually have. So of course I could always sing that way and this kind of singing is very beautiful especially for mingrelian songs, because my grandma was mingrelian, but let's say - it was not me!

I would also like to mention my grandfather, who used to fight during the second world war. And I remember, when I was a child, how he would always make me listen to different types of music, of world music - it would be folk music from different countries of the world, So I was wondering actually why am I so interested and why I love so much listening to folk music from different countries should it be Balkan or African, Scandinavian or even Asian. So actually a short time ago, I just realised because my - during a conversation with my mother, she was like - do you remember how your grandfather was making you listen to these songs from around the world - so ... then I realised that this maybe is why actually I love these songs and music and this is because of my grandfather, So this world folk music for me it's so important to me that I started to teach it with the Tutachela young choir. When we started 10 years ago and now I think

that these people, who are now adults, they like, the same way, it's already inside them and I am sure they will always be interested in discovering different world folk songs.

Music: South African song - Amayee

Because apart from that in Georgia it is very rare that you can listen to this kind of music, apart maybe from African music that everyone loves because it is so energetic and stuff, but in general it is very rare to hear this folk music from other countries

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Um. Is it possible to hear an example of the same song, sung as Tamar and sung as Tamar's grandmother?

Live Music Ase Chonguri: Tamar sings Ase Chonguri like her grandmother.

Ase Chonguri

Zoe Perret: Nice!

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze: Now, er if I have to sing this song I would actually sing more or less like that but then I should have a top voice with me that is actually able to follow me on this type of intonation, which is very rare. Actually my son, is one of them.

Live Music Ase Chonguri: Tamar sings as herself. *Oh nana didavoi, nana didavoi, nana didavoi, nana ni na.*

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze: Basically she would change (as you can see) the scale very much. But in the end she would always go back to that note of reference to that first degree - even tho' it was completely different in terms of scale from the last song.

When I taught my choir the song Varado I actually used this style of singing in this song.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Can we sing Varado together?

Door opens. *Greetings in Georgian and English.*

Holly V/o: So the door creaks open and in walks our friend Ninutsa, she's been singing with Tamar since she was a little girl in Tutarchela.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz Could you just introduce yourself, like say your name and how you were, how you know Tamar?

Ninutsa So I'm Ninutsa. Er Tamar took me in Tutachela when I was 6. I didn't like singing so much that time! I was in another choir and I hated coming to musical school. But when I met Tamar *laughter* - it was whole different story. The first rehearsal was er dancing in a circle singing Jirvelo - it's like oh this looks interesting - fun

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze: Actually I remember the first time when Ninutsa came to my choir erm she came and she was so shy like compared to the children that I had at that time - very energetic and completely free and kinda wild and this child was like so girly or for herself and she, she, she was singing at that time in a manner that sounded so classical, lyrical because before they would make her sing in a very high pitch so I was like Oh My God I have to um make this child alive like er she has to er probably she will learn something in this choir and actually I, I just er it only took like a couple of er rehearsals and then I realised wow this child is actually even worse than the others - she's so energetic and she's completely She was very cute!

Tamar speaks in Georgian to Ninutsa

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze: And then soon we had this - I think it was Christmas er Show or something so I decided to give her a role and that was a wonderful beginning when you could see light really inside - so I could literally see her open up and when I could see that it was for me really a big source of motivation - all this gave me actually the power and the will to continue in the sense that, we should all work on the huge potential that er is children

Ninutsa was actually part of the first er generation of the young choir Tutachela and um when we would do some show shows they um the roles that they had actually it er the energy was coming out of each individual that would play this role. Now with the new choirs that I have - it's a completely different generation and sometimes I'm thinking maybe we could repeat what we did before but this would be completely different because I would actually choose the repertoire on, depending on this er specific individuals that I had it.

Ninutsa Actually yes and all the appreciation, like taste of music erm anything connected to music for me comes from Tamar. Really because er like not only about music, but er - she really raised us up basically because er we spent more time here in music school than in our schools. And er every. every rehearsal was something new and something really interesting and really like exploration and she was always exploring everything um personally um individually with us. Like she would give us solos and work, show us the ways that we could express not only like musically, musically express ourselves but like very very deep what we could offer, she could show this. she really um, saw something in each of us that we ourselves maybe couldn't see but she, she really helped us explore these things er and it was like one of the precious things that happened in my life I think and each of Tutachela member of Tutachela I think. Because we would sit in her class room for like 20hrs - she would show us like arrangements of the songs and er we never were tired never.

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze: At that time I think that financially and materially the situation was even more difficult than today um but actually it was such a huge love and er I remember these children and er we were actually rehearsing in a quite small room and until today I don't understand how we could be um 25 people how we could fit in this room somehow. And this is because there is such a huge motivation and um will to explore and um big love to everyone. Imagine that actually every week we had four rehearsals and um each rehearsal lasted 3 hours. (Holly: Wow)

I remember Ninutsa's words actually saying um, please teacher can we, would it be possible to live together just 5 days a week and we just go on the weekend for just 2 days. It really felt like a family, like a home here.

Ninutsa: When we had to go back home and we walked in a group and it was er - we could never after rehearsal we had so much energy like we didn't know where to put it so er I think people hated - I mean they didn't hate us but we were very very noisy in the streets like at night they knew that Tutachela's rehearsal was over. Singing going home, shouting.

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze: Now we are actually waiting for a school in Rutavi to be built er and it will be like a new music school er free music school id say and it would be a dream for me that the young people um who are already, have gone already through this, these steps during their childhood that they would come and study and why not also teach other people because - I don't think that you er necessarily need to be like a so called professional with such and such diplomas to be able to um teach and to conduct nice workshops and to er share this energy and knowledge with er other people it would be really great that we creat this space for expression in Rustavi.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz: Wow - it's so great to hear about future dreams, thank you.

Can we sing varado together?

Live Music Varado: Tamar, Zoe, Ninutsa, Holly sing Varado

Holly Taylor-Zuntz: Wow so the call was like, very different.

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze: In general choirs sing it very differently. But I think it should have, because it's quite dramatic, and it should have this other type of soul.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz: A bit more raw maybe, less polished.

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze: Yes like that.

Live Music Varado: Tamar sings Varado

Zoé Perret translating Tamar Buadze: It's basically crying, it's quite strong, the lyrics of this song.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz: Would you be able to tell the story of this song?

Ninutsa: Um I don't remember exactly but I will try. Um - So there were two brothers who went out hunting, and one of them, erm like slipped on foot and he fell down on a cliff and he was hanging on the cliff with a hand and er other brother couldn't reach him with a hand, he could just cheer him up for him to find the strength to pull himself up but he couldn't do it. He tried to - come on brother come on, but to like support him. But at the end he said OK if he'll die now - I will go back to your house, take your wife, make her my wife and er your children my children

and like when other brother heard this he pulled himself up and killed the brother who tried to save him. So he was just telling these things to save this man. Er And when he realised what he did, he started crying out this song Varado. And I think it means - what does Varado mean?

Holly Taylor-Zuntz: So is it coming from the brother or from the mother of these boys, this song, do you think?

Ninutsa: As I know it was coming from the brother himself.

Tamar speaks in Georgian to Ninutsa

Ninutsa: So another story is that the mother when he kills the brother, he goes home and his mother makes sense of this. She tells him OK - he tried to save you and then. But it's still him who starts singing cries for his brother.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz: thank you.

Dzalian didi madloba Tamar da madloba Nutsa da madloba Zoe. Thank you everyone. Can I take one picture of you together.

Music: Gelino

Tamar Buadze: Thank you for listening to Voices of the Ancestors.

Holly Taylor-Zuntz: And thank you Tamar Buadze for being our guest, with Zoe Perret interpreting and surprise guest Ninutsa Kakhiani. Your hosts were Holly Taylor-Zuntz and Susan Thompson. Music was by Tamar Buadze and Tutarchela. To see a transcript of this and all our episodes visit voiceoftheancestors.co.uk. While there you can support the podcast by clicking donate. So if you enjoyed this episode, you can help us make more by becoming a Patron on Patreon or buying us a coffee once a month on ko-fi. If that's not possible, consider sharing it with a friend or on social media, rating and reviewing it. You help us grow - you are our marketing team! Thanks to our community of listeners for keeping this podcast sustainable. See you next time for more stories and songs. Bye for now!

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