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Yale Russian Chorus Joins Singers Around the World

The chorus joined with alumni and the Kartuli Ensemble for an online symposium performance.

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Shen Khar Venakhi performed by Yale Russian Chorus, Alumni and Kartuli Ensemble **YouTube**

Like virtually every other international symposium, congress or conference this year, the 10th Anniversary Symposium of Traditional Polyphony that was to be held in Tibilisi, Georgia, could not welcome singers in person. So the Yale Russian Chorus gave up their travel plans but joined with their Alumni Association and the Kartuli Ensemble to sing for their fellow polyphonous choirs online.

The song they presented is called Shen Khar Venakhi (You Are a Vineyard), composed in the 11th century. It was the first Georgian song the Yale Russian Chorus learned in 1968, and for many audiences over the decades has been their introduction to traditional Georgian polyphony.

The Yale Russian Chorus was founded in 1953 by a student a Yale Music School, Denis Mickiewicz, and the president of the Yale Russian Club, George Litton, to sing religious and secular music from the Soviet republics and neighboring states. During the first decades at the height of the Cold War, the chorus performed around the world, including in the Soviet Union, before government leaders and public audiences.

The Yale Russian Chorus Alumni group continues to perform and record as well as fundraise and support the university singers. The Kartuli Ensemble is an association of men's choirs that perform Georgian music.

Click on any of the links above for more information about the organizations and to hear and watch performances.

Shen Khar Venakhi, below, was performed for the symposium by singers located across the world, from Hawaii to Israel, and conducted by Carl Linich of the Kartuli Ensemble.

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