

# Cellists' Corner

## Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

*prepared by David Johnstone from public information*

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## FEATURE ON COMPOSER/CELLIST SULKHAN TSINTSADZE

Birth: 23rd August 1925

Death: 15th September 1991

Sulkhan Tsintsadze was born in Gori, Georgia, in 1925. When he was seven years old, the family moved to Tbilisi (his father Fyodor Tsintsadze was a chief inspector of sheep breeding; however, in 1937 he was arrested as part of the Great Purge).

Once installed in the capital city, Sulkan began taking cello lessons with teacher E. N. Kapelnitsky. Showing great talent, he was soon transferred to the Tbilisi State Conservatory's new department for gifted children to continue his studies with Kapelnitsky.

In 1942, Tsintsadze began formal studies in the orchestra department of the Tbilisi State Conservatory with cellist Konstantin Minyar-Beloruchev, who died in January 1944. While enrolled at the conservatory, Tsintsadze also played in the GSSR State Symphony Orchestra. These experiences surely gave him many ideas as to orchestral colours and orchestrations. He was also the founding cellist of the original State String Quartet of Georgia, of which he was a member from 1944 to 1946. Ever keen to advance, he attended the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory between 1945 and 1953, where he studied cello with Semyon Matveyevich Kozolupov until 1950 and composition with Semyon Bogatyryov until 1953. This appears to be his crucial cross-over period – from cellist to composer.

The still young Tsintsadze was spotted by fellow Georgian composer Nikolai Narimanidze, who saw him as a bright future of Georgian national music. He was helped in that at this time the Soviet Union emphasized the more important contributions of national minority composers. In 1949, Tsintsadze presented to the Union of Russian composers his String Quartet No.2, two

viola pieces (including one based upon the khorumi, a southwestern Georgian war dance), and romance settings of poetry by Aleksandr Pushkin. The committee's preference were for the quartet and viola pieces, as they incorporated elements of Georgian folk music. The reception particularly of his second-string quartet, was hugely positive as he was able to maintain adherence to the Soviet ideals of socialist realism whilst using a bright writing and a distinctly folk-influenced style. Therefore, Tsintsadze enjoyed a very positive reputation among Soviet-affiliated elites.

In his later works - and especially the string quartets - Tsintsadze experimented with more advanced polyphony and dissonance, within the essentials of Georgian folk music, and also with musical form. Tsintsadze's other compositional influences included Vissarion Shebalin and Dmitri Shostakovich.

Tsintsadze also composed a number of film scores during the 1950s and 1960s, including those for *The Dragonfly* (1954), *Bashi-Achuki* (1956), *A Woman's Burden* (1958), *Maia Tskneteli* (1959), and *A Soldier's Father* (1964). After his death, his music also featured in the television series 'Oqros oboba'.

Tsintsadze's most famous solo piano work is his 24 Preludes for Piano, written in 1971 for the Georgian pianist Roman Gorelashvili, who edited the set and recorded it in 1972. He wrote an important separate set of 24 preludes for cello and piano in 1980.

Tsintsadze was awarded the People's Artist of Georgia (1961) and People's Artist of the USSR (1988) titles, the USSR Stalin Prize (1950) for his Quartet No. 2 and his 3 Miniatures, and the Zakharia Paliashvili Prize (1974) and Shota Rustaveli Prize (1981) from the Georgian government.

Tsintsadze died in Tbilisi on 15th September, 1991, just having completed his 12th string quartet. He is buried in the Didube Pantheon in Tbilisi. Interestingly, Tsintsadze's son Irakli, born in 1964, is also a composer in his own right

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Compositions with a special importance for the cello, in chronological order:

Cello Concerto No. 1 (1947)

Five Pieces on Folk Themes for cello and piano (1950)

*1.Villain's Song on a Carriage / 2.Tchonguri (Chonguri) / 3.Sachidao / 4.Nana / 5.Dance Tune*

Cello Concerto No. 2 (1964)

Georgian Melodies for cello and piano (1967)

Cello Concerto No. 3 (1973)

Sonata for Unaccompanied Solo Cello (1975)

Toccatà for Unaccompanied Solo Cello (1976)

Concertino for cello and orchestra (1976)

Fantasy for string quartet and orchestra (1977)

Twenty-Four Preludes for cello and piano (1980)



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