President Zurabishvili Delivers First Report in Parliament

By Thea Morison

President of Georgia Salome Zurabishvili delivered her first report before the Members of Parliament on March 6.

The first female president of the country started her report by summarizing her visits abroad in the rank of president, stating that her meetings with the EU and NATO officials, and follow-on meetings with her French and German counterparts, had brought Georgia closer to its foreign partners and states.

Zurabishvili spoke about her visits to Afghanistan and Azerbaijan, highlighting she was warmly welcomed by the officials there. She said she raised the issue of Russian occupation during every meeting and underlined that Georgia will not put up with the injustice of it.

"Georgia will not reconcile with the occupation, abductions and creeping lines that are parts of [Russia’s] violent policy. The formats of negotiations are at a technical level at present. I talked to our partners about the necessity to restore high political formats. Our partners must tell Russia that games ending in zero points are not in the interests of anyone and that leading an aggressive policy is the way backward," she added.

The Georgian President named the diaspora and cultural relations as priorities of her activities and as such, she met with students and emigrants during her foreign visits.

She underlined that having the status of a Georgian citizen was very important for emigrants to keep close links with the motherland. Zurabishvili said that work was ongoing with the Justice Ministry to facilitate procedures for the restoration and preservation of citizenship.

"It is our duty to create favorable conditions for immigrants' return to the country and to provide them with information about the demand for specialists in employment that allows them to fit their professional plans with the local market," she said.

Zurabishvili also claimed that neither the democratic system nor state stability would be preserved in the country without protected and objective information.

Continued on page 2
Tech4Equality Supports Women’s Empowerment in Tbilisi

BY LISA MAIER

On March 5, International Women’s Day was marked with the Tech4Equality talk in Tbilisi, aiming to discuss new ways of empowering women and girls by supporting their involvement in the field of technology and science and echoing this year’s theme for International Women’s Day, “Think equal, build smart, innovate for change.” The event was organized by the United Nations in Georgia in cooperation with the Administration of the President of Georgia, Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia, the governments of Sweden and Norway, and the Georgian civil society organization “Innovation Support Fund.”

Georgia is still facing a gender imbalance in the work environment, with the field of science and technology the most affected area of gender inequality. Women are more represented in social works and the wholesale sector than in technical activities, science, politics and the manufacturing sector. Equality among genders is still not a matter of course, as the statistics show (geostat.ge), and although the sphere of technology and science is a permanently increasing work environment, creating ongoing future and sustainable jobs, women are still highly underrepresented.

Louisa Vinton, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Georgia, opened the Talk4Equality event and the stage for a row of inspiring speakers. She pointed to the importance of celebrating Women’s Day and to use this day to shine the spotlight on both sides of gender equality. “To celebrate the positive while also seeking solutions for the negative.”

Women in Georgia are well-educated and are still underrepresented in the working environment and particularly in high positions, as well as in the science and technology field. Vinton stated this fact as “shocking” and referred to the need for innovation to equalize this imbalance. “The main challenge is to think equal, end stereotypes and point to role models for young girls,” she said.

The talk hosted a line-up of inspiring speakers from a wide range of fields who presented stories and experiences in the tech and science world and what kind of difficulties they had had to face in a “male-dominated” world. The speakers counted UN and governmental representatives discussing structural perspectives and official efforts already made, as well as leading women in science and technology offering their rather personal stories and experiences. Among the speakers were Nana Dikhaminjia, Professor of Electronic and Computer Engineering at Ilia State University; Natia Tsitsishvili, microbiologist, veterinarian and founder of QuickCash AI; and Ani Gumberidze, an activist who advocates for equal-tech entrepreneur, technologist and bi-artist.

Ulrik Tidestrøm, Ambassador of Sweden to Georgia and Armenia, created a start-up, distributing food products from the regions on the internet in order to ease farmers’ lives from the burden of worrying about sales-building a bridge between rural and urban areas in Georgia. “Promoting equal rights in the technological field will bring a whole new and innovative set of ideas to the field,” she said. “There are so many strong women who stand out in Georgia, but when you look at the average wage gap and the lack of representation, particularly in political leadership, I think women need to take courage and demand their rights. But we also need to work together with men to ensure and spread the idea that gender equality is a good thing for women as well as men, and at the end for society overall,” Louisa Vinton told GEORGIA TODAY.

All speakers exemplified how they had found new approaches and creative solutions on global problems. Natia Ninikashvili, Founder of www.soplidan.ge, said she and her team had to face “a male-dominated world.” The talk was well-attended, with more than 100 participants.

President Zurabishvili Delivers First Report in Parliament

Continued from page 1

“…We cannot close our eyes to the threats which intimidate people and society in the form of slander and false information…” she stressed.

The President underlined that polarization was raging in the country and that a violent environment intimidated the lives of all. “The public expects boiling water to become calmer, it needs peace and reconciliation. This requires the processes developed in information and social networks to be brought within civilized frameworks.

We should stop fresh floods of misinformation, slander, the language of hatred and secret recordings exposing private lives,” she added.

In addition, the President mentioned a number of other challenges that the country is facing, like unemployment, healthcare and social issues, poor conditions for disabled people and increased cancer cases.

Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze, members of the government and Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze attended the delivery of the annual speech by President Salome Zurabishvili.

SUBSCRIBE!

wherege

1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION - 60 GEL
(6 ISSUES)

Money Back Guarantee!

send wherege, 1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION to anywhere.ge

Tel: (995 32) 2 45 08 08
E-mail: info@peoplescafe.ge

10 Galaktion Street
Pardoning Commission to Move to Justice Ministry

BY THEA MORRISON

The Pardoning Commission of Georgia, the body under the President which decides as cases sent by inmates or their families and makes the initial decision to which prisoners are deemed to deserve pardoning, will now function at the ministry of Justice.

The statement was made by the President of Georgia, Salome Zurabishvili, while delivering her first report before parliamentarians on March 6. Currently, the President’s Pardoning Commission is composed of 10 people. Members are mostly lawyers from the civil sector and public figures, alongside the Public Defender and the Georgian Patriarchate.

The Commission chooses from the inmates’ applications the ones who deserve pardon and makes the initial decision which figures, alongside politicians, teachers and other competent figures, alongside politicians, teachers and other competent figures, alongside politicians, teachers and other competent figures.

During her speech, the first female president of Georgia noted that during the term of the previous president, the practice of pardoning resembled acts of amnesty rather than a concept based on the discrete right of the President. “The discrete right of pardoning means the selection of individual prisoner cases by the President where the priority goes to human principles. This [change] will reduce risks to the public,” Zurabishvili said.

According to the President, having a state Pardoning Commission at the Justice Ministry will ensure the involvement of representatives of different administrative bodies in the commission work.

“The commission will discuss application questions which meet new criteria, and prepare recommendations. The final decision will remain the President’s prerogative. Private, social, religious or political factors will not influence the decision-making,” she said, adding that the number of commission members will be increased.

Former Head of the Pardoning Commission, Zviad Koridze, says the President’s decision to transfer the body to the Justice Ministry will definitely result in less effective outcomes as it is the President’s function to pardon inmates. “In this situation, we will get a very inefficient, inactive and dead pardoning mechanism. The pardoning function was imposed by society on the President, not on the executive government,” Koridze noted.

He said even in 2014-2015, the authorities tried to take the pardoning function from then-President Margvelashvili, who is often criticized by the governmental officials for having pardoned “too many inmates.”

“The government did not win back then but today we see that Zurabishvili herself transferred this power to the authorities. It means the body which manages the penitentiary system will also have the right to pardon prisoners,” Koridze stressed.

Justice Minister Tania Tsulukiani says they will work with the president on the Pardoning Commission formation and further procedures.

“It is necessary to have a commission which consists of professionals. Now writers and artists will be included in the mechanism but social workers, psychologists, teachers and other competent people,” the Minister said.

ECRI encourages the Georgian authorities to continue on this path. It considers that this recommendation has been partially implemented,” the commission stated.

The second issue concerns ECRI’s recommendation that the Georgian authorities scale up their support for the Council of Religions, which operates under the authority of the Public Defender’s Tolerance Center.

“The authorities should in particular task the newly created State Agency for Religious Issues to cooperate with the Council of Religions and utilize the Council’s expertise and recommendations in order to tackle the problem of religious intolerance,” ECRI said.

The Council said they were informed by the Georgian authorities that they consider the State Agency for Religious Issues to be the main interlocutor between religious communities and the government and capable of acting as an impartial, trusted and successful mediator in cases of problems related to religious issues or inter-religious tensions. However, “any significant improvement provided by the authorities of co-operation consists of the State Agency’s recommendation that this recommendation has not been implemented,” the report reads.

“The State Agency, however, rejected the request. ECRI regrets that on this occasion yet another opportunity for co-operation and for the utilization of the experience of the Public Defender’s Tolerance Center with regard to promoting religious tolerance was missed,” the report stated.

ECRI added they have not received any other information that could be interpreted as an expression of interest from the side of the State Agency for meaningful co-operation with the Council of Religions.

ECRI concluded that the situation that followed the previously given recommendation due to this priority recommendation persists and that the State Agency for Religious Issues has not taken any serious steps to cooperate with the Public Defender, as recommended by ECRI.

The organization therefore considers that this recommendation has not been implemented.
Saving the Georgian Dream or Ivanishvili’s Dream?

BY AMY JONES

Former Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili will return to politics following a three-year political hiatus. Bidzina Ivanishvili announced the sudden decision on March 5 at a meeting of the political council of the ruling Georgian Dream party. However, does his surprise return to politics underline Ivanishvili’s undeniable grip on Georgian politics?

Garibashvili was Prime Minister of Georgia from November 2013 until his resignation in December 2015. Since stepping down from politics, Garibashvili remained mostly out of the public eye. It later emerged that Ivanishvili had advised him to resign from the position of Prime Minister.

Ivanishvili and Garibashvili have a close relationship. Garibashvili worked as a business executive in several of Ivanishvili’s companies for eight years before they both turned to politics. He will now replace Gia Volsky in the position of Political Secretary in Georgian Dream.

Many media outlets claim Garibashvili’s return is an attempt to hold Georgian Dream accountable for its failure. They both turned to politics. He will now replace Gia Volsky in the position of Political Secretary in Georgian Dream.

Moreover, Garibashvili’s return is an attempt to hold Georgian Dream accountable for its failure. They both turned to politics. He will now replace Gia Volsky in the position of Political Secretary in Georgian Dream.

Mia Gogia is a journalist and analyst who has worked extensively on the Georgian political landscape. She explained that since Garibashvili’s return, there has been a surge in the number of open political discussions.

The strong ties between Ivanishvili and Garibashvili are undeniable. With Garibashvili’s return to Georgian politics, Ivanishvili has once again shown his influence within his party. With his influence and power, it is likely that Georgian Dream will recover from its loss of party members. However, questions remain as to whether Ivanishvili’s hold is damaging to Georgian democracy.

The Abkhaz View on Crossing the ABL

BY GABRIELLE COCHEN

Andrea Peinhopf is doing her PhD at the University College London and gave a presentation at the CRRC office on the theme: “Why cross the conflict divide? The success and failure of Abkhazian de facto statehood.”

She explained that she spent six months in Abkhazia to conduct fieldwork and interview people there, and that her work is still in progress. Her main challenge is to understand why Abkhazians choose to cross over the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) that separates the territory from Georgia proper, and what this implies for conflict resolution. Peinhopf often faced challenges gaining people’s confidence enough to interview them and noted she felt that she was addressing very sensitive subjects and had to be careful not to assume the opinion people had of Russia, Georgia, and of the conflict in general.

People from Gali are free to cross the ABL, whereas other Abkhazians encounter difficulties doing so. Taking that into account, Andrea first described the reasons that push Abkhazians not to cross it. First, Georgia is still widely described as the “enemy state” by Abkhazians, and many people feel embarrassed to go there. Another reason is the trauma that persists from the 90s war. The memory of the violence is still strongly present in people’s minds and the idea of crossing the ABL sometimes appears traumatizing. Finally, Abkhazians are very attached to their land and home, she says, and share the idea that they should not leave their own territory.

On the other side, Peinhopf was also interested in understanding why Abkhazians choose to go to Georgia proper. It seems that having relatives living on the other side of the ABL is one of the main reasons that push people to go there. There are a lot of mixed families living in Abkhazia, in which the mother is Megrelian and the father Abkhaz, who want to visit their relatives in Georgia proper. Another reason that presses people to cross is the oppressing atmosphere in Abkhazia. She described that the people living there are very close-knit due to the need to develop a strong sense of solidarity when the war occurred. However, this closeness also implies the existence of a lot of gossip between people, a strong societal control and many internal conflicts. It is hard for people living there to step back from the situation. Therefore, they often choose to leave the territory for short periods of time. The difficult economic situation and the lack of employment also force people to look for work outside of the region. Finally, she says, they enjoy better medical treatment in Georgia proper than on the territory of the Abkhazia region. Indeed, the Abkhaz health system provides expensive and inefficient treatment, contrary to Georgia proper, which gives free and good quality treatments.

While conducting her research, Peinhopf gathered very diverse and often contradictory narratives from Abkhazians. Some people were pro-Russian, while others were very sympathetic towards Georgia. She understood that, generally, people feel frustrated by the Abkhaz State and the lack of services there but would not for all that necessarily turn their back on Abkhazia.

For people living there, the Abkhaz “state” has become normalized and they often take it for granted since they travel with Abkhaz passports. Their preoccupation is not so much about legitimizing the existence of this state, but that they are tired of the conflict and aspire to move on and breathe the “breather air.” Peinhopf argued that some Abkhazians have no preoccupation in re-integrating with the Georgian territory but have a strong interest in engaging with Georgia and Europe and are curious of what is happening on the other side of the ABL. Some of them feel that it is a shame that passing from one side to the other is so complicated. They are also often quite critical about Russia, she said.

In sum, this very interesting study focuses on quite a delicate and complex question. It is impossible to make a generalization of what Abkhazians think and want, Peinhopf noted, and emphasized that her remarks of are merely an interpretation of what she observed during her time there.
Western media outlets recently announced China has built military facilities on the Tajik side of the Tajik-Chinese border. The move is significant as it is first confirmation (built upon earlier unconfirmed reports) of the Chinese military/semi military presence in the Central Asia region.

The section where the Chinese facilities are located is strategically important as it overlooks one of the crucial entry points from China into Central Asia and is close to the vital corridor through which the country has a connection with Afghanistan’s heartland. The corridor is particularly important to China due to its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Put into a wider context, the opening of the new base might be problematic as Central Asia is perceived by the Russians as a sphere of their own influence. As I argued in previous pieces for GEORGIA TODAY, for Moscow, Central Asia nowadays is especially important as it is the only region where the Kremlin can still extend its existing influence through military and economic means. Quite naturally, Chinese military/security measures go against Russian pillars of power in this region.

It is fashionable among world analysts to argue that Russia and China would rather cooperate in Central Asia than fight each other. However, the point here is that this cooperation might be in force in the coming years and perhaps for decades, but in the end the Russians will have to be worried (if they are not already) as China grows economically, a process concomitant with simultaneous military expansion beyond its borders.

Many believe the Chinese do not plan military expansion across Eurasia and, as yet, no statements from Chinese officials have revealed a military agenda for the continent. There is also a purely logical point in the Chinese thinking that it would be more prudent to fulfill geopolitical aims through economic and public diplomacy measures. However, the point many scholars miss is that China, being a rising power which relies on global trade routes for internal stability and further enhancement of its world role, will eventually have to be more active in military and security affairs beyond its borders, whether it wants to or not. The new semi-military base in Tajikistan is a good indicator of this evolving Chinese approach to world security.

In other words, the Chinese see the need to be present in those territories which are strategically important. As said, the base in Tajikistan is at the crossroads of Central Asia, China and Afghanistan. To prove further the likelihood of China’s more active stance on the Eurasian arena is that the base in Tajikistan actually is not the first one built by China. Beijing already opened a surveillance/security/semi military base in Djibouti, which controls the commercial traffic in the Red Sea.

Many may compare China to Germany of the early 20th century, when a rising power wanted a larger role for itself in world affairs, but there are many problems with this attitude. True, China, like Germany a century ago, also aspires to build a larger navy and increase its economic potential abroad. However, rather than comparing China to Germany, which was defeated in both world wars, China today is as cautious as the United States was a century ago. Beijing acts prudently on the world stage, as any open moves in security or military affairs could inspire a strong antagonistic coalition of powers in Eurasia.

China Opens a New Military Base in Tajikistan
Surprises, No Surprises

OP-ED BY ZAZA JGARKAVA

L ast week, Official Tbilisi received messages of threat and warning from the Defense and the Deputy Interior ministers. Whether the threat from Sergey Shoigu and warning from Grigory Karasin are interconnected is presently unknown, but if we take into consideration their respective work profiles, we can clearly imagine the possible reason behind it and just what “surprises” might await us.

At the collegium session of the Ministry, Shoigu blamed NATO for threatening global security. He was especially unhappy with the fact that NATO has doubled its military trainings, with both Ukrainian and Georgians participating. “In such circumstances, we are forced to provide an adequate response, carrying out strategic containment events with plans of stepping up combat capabilities of military formations and units,” he stressed. His promise was fulfilled as he quickly generated large-scale military trainings, with both Ukrainian and Georgians participating. The Ministry, Shoygu started the negotiations with a threat, nor when he disclosed a secret message, he implied that the invisible hand of the Kremlin came as far as Sololaki. Meanwhile, Karasin brought his messages to Abashidze and Abashidze consults before meeting with journalists in Prague. By tradition, Abashidze received messages of threat from Grigory Karasin and his Georgian colleague after the meeting. But never say never: Zurab Abashidze had met earlier with the informal leader of Georgia, Bidzina Ivanishvili. Nobody knew the details of their private session until we all found out from Karasin that he not only knew what they talked about but was also aware of the tone with which Ivanishvili addressed Abashidze. Why the Russian diplomat decided to stress the tone of voice is ambiguous, but we can guess that he implied that the invisible hand of the Kremlin came as far as Sololaki. Meaning that Moscow is well-aware of what is being discussed in Ivanishvili’s glass palace and what messages his emissaries carry to the meetings with Russian diplomats.

Political analysts believe that Moscow might be pressuring Ivanishvili, who could be facing a serious dilemma: “There is pressure on Ivanishvili because of this. Practically defending the real sovereignty of Georgia is causing the exacerbation of relations with Russia, which is a serious threat,” claims Ghia Nodia, Chairman of the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy, and Development. He does not rule out that if facing a choice, Ivanishvili could give up the sovereignty of Georgia in favor of Russia. And the latter could be directly connected with the Anaklia Port project, which could be terminated as a result.

Founder of the Georgian Strategic Analysis Center, Nodar Kharshiladze, stated in TV program ‘Accents’ that Ivanishvili received direct instructions about Anaklia from the Kremlin, and that the psychological pressure could result in him adopting rougher methods of game within the country.

Why the port of Anaklia is in the role of “black cat” in Georgian-Russian relations will be analyzed as we witness the developments of Georgian politics in the near future. Before that, what Georgians are trying to find out is whose personal representative is participating in the Georgian-Russian negotiations, that of PM Mamuka Bakhtadze or of Chairman of Georgian Dream, Bidzina Ivanishvili. For now, the only thing which is clear is that it is Ivanishvili with whom Abashidze consults before meeting Karasin and bringing his messages to Prague, not PM Bakhtadze.
Spanish Platform Dyntra Ranks Tbilisi at Just 19% Transparency

BY SAMANTHA GUTHRIE

TODAY
MARCH 8 - 11, 2019

OPED BY NUGZAR B. RUHADZE

What gives, my friends? What are we so worried about? Why are we so worried, if there is nothing happening to us that is so different from what the rest of the world is experiencing in our tense and agitated time? Probably nothing, except that our national nervous system is not historically used to much neuroticism, so characteristic of our current life. Take, for instance, our parliament. Why should folks be on edge and solid as the legislators almost everywhere in the world can be so apprehensive and unfailingly stable in Georgia? Their crusty sinneraces are cast-iron stable because of their elective nature; their comfty seats are warmer than anybody else’s in the country; their chauffeur-driven vehicles are fueled with free gas, and their daytime snacks are cheaper than the lunches of all of us working beyond the parliament premises.

Yet, notwithstanding all those fringes, our dearest lawmakers still feel over stressed and look overthrown by the harshest possible vocabulary when addressing each other; their verbal skirmishes periodically garnered with fist fights and their miles pushed around for the graphic expression of indignation about any issue raised on the floor. No, they are not simply worried about successfully handling the agenda on their parliamentary desks: they are vexed for some reason, and maybe for no reason, feeling panic and uncomfortable when the media pester them for some newsmaking comment or fact.

Parliament appears as a spacious arena, populated by overeager (itelly political) animals; some of them well-qualified for the job and some still in the middle of on-job training. I have seen frazzled and distraught American senators and congressmen in action, but they look and sound totally different from ours. As far as the country’s administration is concerned, the cabinet meetings are less on display to the public eye, but whenever they happen to be, the upright poker-faced government members reveal their edgy and uneasy disposition anyway, especially in expectation of a certain prickly question from our means of mass communication, which may turn those bundles of nerves into irritable and distressed figures, involved in a frantic political process which is not very easy to cope with.

OK, let’s leave the parliamentary grounds and the governmental chambers for a while and take to our streets, where angry, impatient and fuzzy driving is a norm, and where aggressiveness is an ever-present reality. Traffic is a mirror of the overall nervous tension that this nation is suffering with on an everyday basis. Drivers here behave like madly fuming badmouthed gladiators in their internal combustion four-wheel chariots ready to eliminate each other to ensure their own survival.

When in traffic, I myself become one of those overenthusiastic types, berping, swerving, passing and middle-finger my fellow drivers, and if compelled, purposely discharging the obscene verbal exhaust that so badly contaminates our cultural environment. Like the traffic, like the nation!

Let us now, for a change, pep into a regular primary school within which breaks make the most entertaining part of the academic process. Here, when the long-expected interval bell rings, the noisy kids rush to their freedom like crazy to let the restrained physical energy out in uncontrolled soul destroying. That are the school buildings. Those restless little devils jump over each other’s heads, trip over the fallen bodies and run around without purpose. The upset teachers and security guards look disgruntled, but their annoyed groups continually results in merely a displeased and short-tempered calling for better behavior - all ineffective. This is likely the root of the irrationally touchy style that has to be taken as the precursor of our grownup behavior when we find ourselves in parliaments, governments, and in other walks of life.

Let us now add to those recurring episodes one more experience of our life and the picture will become almost complete - the television, where the stories are often garbled and values confused. If we imagine the entire TV network of Georgia as one big restively talking screen, perpetually reflecting the faces of our peninsularity interviewees, and the disconnected expressions of our harassed interviewees, we will instantly understand the natural connection between our nervous life and the nervous system. What is it after all that makes us so hung up and unreasonable, so much ill-at-ease and irate. Could it be, nonsensicalism, irrationalism, or just generics and the way we are all brought up? Could be all of these together?

When we examine the overall nervous life and the nervous system.
**Irakli Kervalishvili: We'll Have a Deep-Water Marina In Poti by Year-End 2020**

**BY MARIAM MERAISHVILI**

PACE, a US-based Private Investment Corporation, invested into PACE Group’s new port and terminal for $50 million. GEORGIA TODAY spoke with Irakli Kervalishvili about the project.

**OPIC IS SPENDING $50 MLN ON CONSTRUCTION OF THE MARINE TERMINAL. HOW DID PACE GROUP MANAGE TO ATTRACT SUCH A LARGE INVESTMENT?**

The OPEC’s trust in PACE Group and Georgia is so high that this unprecedented loan has been allocated. OPEC has been active in the Caucasian region for 20 years, however, this is its first investment in transport infrastructure, distinguished by a volume that clearly demonstrates this project is real. OPIC expressed interest in the project in 2014 and studied PACE Group activities during this period. A lot of time was spent on engineering expertise, marine-nautical navigation, environmental protection of high standards, as well as labor safety conditions, and, on the convincing results, they agreed to offer a $50 million low-interest loan, which we have 15 years to pay back.

**THE PROJECT COST AMOUNTS TO $120 MILLION. WHAT WORKS ARE PLANNED WITHIN THE FIRST PHASE?**

In order to maintain and enhance Georgia’s importance as a transport corridor, it is essential to develop infrastructure, and develop of transport infrastructure should start with marine infrastructure. The country needs a deep-water sea port, hence PACE Group’s developing 25 hectares of port infrastructure. Over 700 meters of berth construction is planned. The project will be implemented in two phases. Within the first phase, 260 meters will be built already, and the terminal is busy enough to necessitate a deep-water port. We have an open warehouse of about 30 hectares and a 30-thousand-ton capacity in closed ones. We add 50 thousand tons of closed warehouses due to the demand and these are already full. We have Carbamide, mineral fertilizers to arrange and need additional infrastructure. These warehouses and infrastructure will carry about 1.5 million tons of cargo. Depending on the size of cargo, we need to be able to receive big ships, otherwise we will lose cargo. PACE Group employs over a thousand people and this number will increase by 50%.

Tell us about the second stage of the project.

We have already prepared tender documentation. In two-three months we will start the tender. We will choose the company that will perform the second-phase construction works. Presumably, Georgian companies will not be able to participate in the tender because OPIC’s requirements are quite high, so most likely we will see Norwegians, Dutch and Turks expressing interest. Obvi- ously, the selected company will need subcontractors and we will make recommendations of those Georgian companies with whom we have successfully cooperated before. We have a strict schedule: the works should end 18 months after it begins, and at the end of 2020 we will have a deep-water terminal. In the second stage of the project, not only OPIC, but other financial institutions have expressed their willingness to cooperate. We plan to develop a warehouse infrastructure, including liquid cargo (we now focus on bulk cargoes). The PACE terminal has a 27-year history and I can name a number of examples where we were able to attract new cargoes by our own efforts. Aluminum oxide, which is a raw aluminum production, was carried from Russia by a Tajik factory. We managed to convince them to move 35 thousand tons through the Poti Port, and then it upped it to 150 thousand tons annually. Poti Port became a hub for that Tajik factory and aluminum realization was made from here thanks to the proximity to the European market. The PACE terminal was the first in Georgia to craft cargoes that could not be obtained by any other port of our country. Among them is Turkmenistan Mineral Fertilizer - Carbamide, which was transferred to Poti in 2010. Prior to that, transportation went through Russia and Iran. Also, PACE Group was the first to implement a modern reverse-type wheat terminal, which is the only one in the country. Last year we dealt with 300 thousand tons of Russian-Kazakh wheat. The terminal also processes mineral fertilizers produced in Central Asian countries. By means of our terminal, we transported BP pipelines within the Shah Deniz 2 project, which is so important for our region, in 2015-2017. The relevant infrastructure was not in the country, we allowed these pipes to be transported and stored here.

**SUM UP LAST YEAR AND GIVE US AN INSIGHT INTO WHAT TO EXPECT FORWARD TO FROM PACE GROUP IN FUTURE.**

2018 was financially hard for the company. Our annual cargo turnover amounts to about 3 million tons, but last year it decreased to 2.6 million tons. In 2018, we signed a number of important agreements and we are expecting to increase the cargo by 700 thousand tons this year. Russian coal, Turkmen sulfur, and wheat flows will increase. During the past year, PACE Group has taken an important step, as many companies have promised to cooperate with us.
The g.Vino City Wine Hotel

Hidden among the multiplicity of streets and old houses of the Chachapori district of Tbilisi, g.Vino City Wine Hotel is a marvelous boutique hotel, launched by Lida Vardania and Mamuka Maisuradze and based on an absolutely wonderful concept. But before exploring the hotel, it would be interesting to take a moment and find out more about its story. g.Vino City Wine Hotel represents a continuation of the wine bar of the same name, opened by Hotel represents a continuation of the wine bar of the same name, opened by Hotel. That is why wine, translated into Georgian (gvino) became the cornerstone of the project. g.Vino creates an ideal space for informal gatherings and gives a chance for guests to spend time with loved ones in a cozy atmosphere. The hotel's restaurant has a grand terrace that is nothing short of spectacular and offers guests an incredible variety of natural Georgian wines, as well as an assortment of European wines. The young chef of the g.Vino restaurant, Tamta Kikaleishvili has explored Georgian gastronomy; flavors, scents, ancestral cooking techniques, and puts a lot of effort into creating traditional Georgian dishes with modern European twists that perfectly suit a guest's chosen wine, to create a bouquet of marvelous tastes. Kikaleishvili uses only sustainably-grown ingredients for the specialties. At the restaurant of the hotel, the visitors can taste dishes like beef tartare with green adjika, slow cooked beef cheeks, kubdari wellington with demi-glace sauce tastes that mingle, blend, delight, meet and merge. The modern interior, where the works of contemporary painters embellish the walls, creates a perfect melange with the authentic charm of the old building. g.Vino City Wine Hotel offers a wine tour to visitors and gives them an opportunity to have a drink at the most wonderful wine bars or the cellars of the capital.

10.1-inch HUAWEI MediaPad T5: The Best Choice for Your Children’s Safety

When delivering each new product of HUAWEI, the customer aims to take advantage of the more advanced technological capabilities compared to predecessors, and the company is exactly oriented towards these expectations. By launching each new model, HUAWEI once again shows that it is an advanced and innovative oriented brand.

HUAWEI has introduced an updated 10.1-inch HUAWEI MediaPad T5 to Georgian customers. This is the latest and most innovative MediaPad, with an 8-core, powerful processor and 10.1-inch and 1920*1200 full HD screen. At first glance, it has a simple and plain design, but thanks to the updated technological capabilities, you can use multiple apps simultaneously, and with the microSD card, and increase your mediaPad memory up to 256 GB and watch your favorite movies anytime and anywhere. In addition, MediaPad is equipped with a smart management system that regulates the operating time and speed of applications. HUAWEI MediaPad T5 can connect HUAWEI’s smartphones and computer platforms.

The strength of the device is provided by an 8-core processor and the wide and sharp depiction through a high-resolution screen. If you want to get professional stereo sound, this is not a problem for this model as you’ll find a double speaker in the lower part of the tablet.

The 600 gram MediaPad also has rounded edges for maximum comfort for use in your hands. It also has the special functionality embedded into the HUAWEI MediaPad T5, you can set limits to your child’s usage and customize the content available. Besides the parental control feature, HUAWEI MediaPad T5 offers enhanced eye-comfort modes for your kids’ eyesight health: Posture Guidance (provides reminder for your child if you don’t read the tablet when lying down), Blue Ray Filter and Usage Time Control.

HUAWEI products and services are available in more than 170 countries and are used by a third of the world’s population. There are 36 research and development centers operating worldwide in the USA, Germany, Sweden, Russia, India and China. HUAWEI Consumer BG is one of HUAWEI’s three business units, mainly focusing on Smartphones, personal computers, tablets and cloud services. HUAWEI Global Network is based on 20 years’ experience in the telecommunications business and serves to provide innovative technologies to customers around the world.
F ew people have heard about the Georgian eco-village being built by the Sunsurfers community in the Chkhemuri area of Kakheti. GEORGIA TODAY decided to find out more.

The Sunsurfers community is a group of travelers who share the same values and want to make positive changes for the planet. They are committed to a healthy lifestyle that rejects alcohol and the use of drugs and aims for self-develop- oment in different spheres. The community gathers people from different backgrounds, countries and religions thanks to retreats and gatherings. One of their main projects is the develop- oment of the new Georgian eco-village. The information we acquired comes from an interview with Sasha Wickenden, the co-founder of the Sunsurfers community, given to Sasha Postovar, with the support of Marat Chasnov.

**Image source: European Commission**

The Materials Construction of the Village

After the acquisition of 51 hectares of land in November 2017, the volunteers began the construction of the village in July 2018. The main goal of such a project is “to cultivate self-awareness and unleash the potential of each person.” For this purpose, yoga retreats, community gatherings, universities of free-spirited nomads, and workshops on eco-building and permaculture will be held at this eco-settlement,” explains Wickenden.

Even though the construction of the village is still in progress, some people are already living there. They already have a water supply, solar power station and 3G internet. According to Sasha, about 100 volunteers from 20 countries of the world have already invested their energy, time and skills to set up the first foundations of the eco-village. “They are currently working to build the first warm house, bath and cellar to enable the residents to live comfortably in winter. There will be separate houses made of natural materials for permanent resi- dents, and guest houses for visitors.”

**The Philosophy of the Eco-Village**

Sasha explains that people living in eco-villages experience a complex interconnec- tion system since they face many different challenges such as “common values, rules, settlement economics, common expenses, self-reliance, resolving issues, resolving disagreements, personal space, interaction with neighbors and with the state [or] the education of children,” for example. Various reasons push people to live in eco-villages: they can be attracted to life in nature, live outside the “system,” the absence of basic objections, which means that everyone agrees with the decisions. Of course, this system will have to be tested and adapted.

As for economic survival, they have already reflected on different sources of income: they will rent or sell parts of the land and houses to inhabitants of the village and the money received “will be spent on (...) roads, electricity, water, a yoga dosite, school, garden, forest fruits, planting and goats.” Sasha explains that “the second source of income is educational activities: yoga retreats, Sun-Universities, permaculture and eco-construction courses, and school.” The third source is the eco-production of honey, herbs, and organic fruits and vegetables.

To ensure a minimum harmful impact on the environment and animals, the vil- lage will be entirely vegetarian. They will have the minimum number of animals that give dairy and wool and they will concentrate on growing organic fruit and vegetables according to the season and to permaculture methods. However, Sasha says that “there is no goal to achieve 100% self-sufficiency in terms of food. Buying some products from local farm- ers will help establish good neighborly relations, support the local economy, share experiences and help us to not be isolated from the outside world.”

In terms of education of children, no specific plan has yet been made but Sasha is thinking about a system in which the eco-village school will welcome children from inside and outside the village so that they can learn from each other.

Even though people have already begun to live there, the eco-village is currently under construction and many things are likely to change since new people will come with new ideas.

One thing on which Sasha insists is that they “do not seek to run away from the world. We do not plan to build fences, to hide from our neighbors, nor close ourselves off in our own bubble. On the contrary, we plan to invite as many people as possible to show how the day-to-day business of the Union, has it been. But by the way we live it.”

Those interested in the project can support it by making direct donations. It is also possible to go there and volun- teer for a minimum of one week.

More information can be found here: www.sunsurfers.ru/en/
Japan to Host ‘Georgia – Homeland of Wine’ Exhibition

GEORGE is preparing to pre-

sent its wines to a wide

audience within the scope

of the project ‘Georgia –

Homeland of Wine’, which

will be implemented from March 10 to

May 7 at the exhibition center “Terrada

Warehouse” in Tokyo, Japan.

Even though, with 8000 years of wine-

making history, Georgia has already

gained recognition worldwide and has

been named as the ‘cradle’ of wine, such

initiatives will contribute to the promo-

tion of the Georgian wines to particular

nations, Japanese in this case.

Wine enthusiasts and other guests at

the exhibition will have an opportunity
to discover the history of Georgian vin-

iculture and ancient wine-making meth-

ods. “This exhibition presents the history

and the culture of the world’s oldest

Georgian wine, sometimes referred to

as the ‘Tears of Cleopatra’,” – reads the

preview of the organizers.

A special website georgia-homeland-
ofwine.com has been launched especially

for the event, which will serve as a par-

ticular guide to the potential visitors of

the exhibition and provide all useful

information regarding Georgian wine-

making history and the details of the

event. The website is bilingual: Japanese

and English.

Aside obtaining prominence, the given

project will is to have fruitful outcomes

in respect of boosting the Georgian wine

enterprises and helping them augment

their sales, locally, as well as abroad. ‘Georgia-Homeland of Wine’ may also

help the development of tourism in

Georgia by raising the interest of for-

eigners in Georgia.

Georgian Wine Wins Diamond at Japan Int’l Contest

A

Georgian wine has been

awarded the Diamond Tro-

phy in a prestigious inter-

national wine competition

judged exclusively by Jap-

anese female wine specialists.

Sakura 2019 in February awarded Vazi-

ani Winery the Double Gold award in

February, after which the wine was pre-

sented at the International Food and

Drink Exhibition “Foodex Japan 2019”

where it received the highest award –

Diamond Trophy.

Natia Metreveli, the Director of Vazi-

ani, received the award on behalf of the

company.

“Victory in such prestigious competi-

tions will promote the promotion of

Georgia and Georgian wine in general

on the important export market in Japan,

where the National Wine Agency has

been implementing marketing activities

since 2014,” noted the National Wine

Agency.

The Sakura Japan Women’s Wine

Awards took place for the 6th year this

year and saw over 4000 different wines

from 33 countries presented. The com-
petition jury is staffed by women repre-
sentatives of the wine industry (som-

meliers, wine writers and journalists).

For the purpose of promoting Georgian

wine and popularity in Japan, from March

10 to May 7, the project “Georgia – Wine

Homeland” will be implemented in Japan.

BY KATIE RUTH DAVIES

BY KETEVAN KVARATSCHELIYA
Ceramic Revival: Mtskheta

BY TONY HAMNER

A side from having a name difficult for Westerners to pronounce, Mtskheta is known for being the capital of Georgia as it was from roughly 300 BC to 500 AD. This, then, would be the city where Christianity was adopted as the national religion early in the 4th century.

Given Georgia’s truly ancient status as a place of dwelling, however, it should not come as much of a surprise that things much older than 2500 years old might be found here. One of these would be pottery, one of the world’s earliest arts.

I recently caught up with my new Russian friend, who had just left our Svaneti guest house after two weeks of children’s clubs and pottery teaching, described in my last three GT articles. They, too, can now be found in Mtskheta. They have bought a house near the Shioamvime Monastery just outside the city and are renting another place while they have this riverside one renovated.

The wife introduced me to a local potter whom she met. Eldar Mamaladze has had his current studio since 1994. He digs and refines his own clay from near Mtskheta, and has a wheel and two electric kilns, one small and one more than a cubic meter in volume, to fire in. He also has a son, Giorgi, who in his mid-20s has been following dad’s footsteps in learning the art; a daughter in her mid-20s has been following dad’s footsteps in learning the art; a daughter

Father and son have a good collection of plaster molds for pressing or pouring multiple pieces which they then color with clay slips or glazes. They also throw vessels on the wheel, often incising or texturing them (this latter is a process secret to them) and then again adding color to the usually reddish earthenware. It fetches high prices, and should because it is beautiful and refined. We were given wine to drink on the spot, after our tour of the facility, and then given the bowls we had used as a precious gift to treasure.

PM on Investments in Education System

BY KETEVAN KVARATSHVELIYA

The occupation line and economic hardship hinder our possibility for full development, which is intolerable, stated the Prime Minister of Georgia Mamuka Bakhtadze at the presentation of the new initiative “Education – A Road to Freedom”, at the National Library on Thursday morning. Bakhtadze said the two problems serve as major motivators for he and his colleagues to stay and work in the sphere of politics in Georgia, and strongly stressed his desire to overcome the given challenges. “It is the main goal of our life to overcome these problems,” he said.

The Head of the Government also spoke about the significance of education and presented the new project.

“Today, the political team of the Georgian Dream is announcing the launch of the boldest and largest-scale idea: the national concept of education, within the scope of which the government will take an unprecedented commitment to annually spend 6% of our national wealth, which makes a quarter of the current budget of the country, on the full transformation of the Georgian education system into one of the most outstanding,” said Bakhtadze.

Controversial Road Project to be Abandoned

BY GABRIELLE COLCHEN

Even though the final decision has yet to be made, the road project connecting Georgia’s northern Khevi region with the northeastern Tusheti region through Khevurnauri is likely to be abandoned, Georgian authorities have announced. They explained that the initial road project would enhance local tourism and help people have better movement, people were divided over the construction plan. The rejection of the project should make local residents of Tusheti happy since many denounced its negative impact on the Caucasus ecology and ecosystem.

However, the government still wants to build the Juta-Blashika section of the road so that tourists coming through the Stepanminda-Verkhny Lars border with Russia can cross directly into Khevurnauri, Irakli Kanadzha (Head of the Roads Department) said. Activists expressed their disappointment and said they would continue to oppose these projects.

My Russian friend really wants to see pottery restored as an art in Mtskheta, and the art scene revitalized in general, especially among children, our future. She and her husband have found a building which locals claimed was for a long time the center of this industry, although nothing now remains to testify of it at all except the structure itself. We walked around it and wondered how we might find out the true history and current ownership; is there anything there worth restoring, or should one start elsewhere in Mtskheta?

As I walked around this ancient city which I have not been in much for about a decade, seeing the changes and improvements made to it, during this interval, I began to have hope that much of its infrastructure and culture could continue to receive new life here. It’s all so close to Tbilisi that a daily commute would not be hard at all, especially if one lived on the closer side of the current capital. Mtskheta offers the quieter, simpler advantages of small-city living while being close to the big action as well, if one wants this. So, I hail my friends’ desires to see the improvements continue and grow and look forward to what another decade of growth will bring.

Tony Hanmer has lived in Georgia since 1995, in Svaneti since 2007, and been a weekly writer for GT since early 2011. He runs the “Svaneti Renaissance” Facebook group, now with nearly 2000 members, at www.facebook.com/groups/SvanetiRenaissance/. He and his wife also run their own guesthouse in Etseri: www.facebook.com/hanmer.house.svaneti
Illusions Museum Opens This Weekend!

MARCH 8 - 11, 2019
GEORGIA

BY MARIA MERABISHVILI

Mark the date—March 9 to check out a space where you can laugh, scream, take pictures and do many other things that are usually forbidden in museums.

In the historical and tourist part of Tbilisi, the Illusions Museum will be officially opened at 10 Bethlehem Street on March 9 and will offer many interesting visual and intellectual experiences. The Museum combines perspectives, optical and other types of illusion, and a “playroom” where visitors can try out a number of didactic games and really get stuck into the new experiences to be had here.

A media tour was held at the Illusions Museum on March 5, giving media rep.

resenatives the opportunity to be the first guests in the world of illusions.

“The first Illusions Museum opened in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, in 2005. This was soon followed by openings in the Zadar Museum, Ljubljana, Vienna, Munich, Belgrade, Kuala Lumpur, New York, Tokyo, Berlin, Athens, Dubai, Hamburg, Kansais, and now Tbilisi. This is a completely different place where people can laugh, scream, take pictures and do many other things that are usually forbidden in museums,” says Rocco Zhirovich, the author of the idea.

The idea of opening the Georgian Museum belongs to the Sarke Group. As a result of their initiative, museum visitors have the opportunity to learn about human vision, perception and science through static and interactive installations and find out why their eyes see what they cannot perceive. The concept of the Illusion Museum is radically different from the classical understanding of the word “museum” and it offers a unique new space that is designed for entertaining cognition. The Illusion Museum is a place where all the optical, physiological and cognitive illusions are presented together. The Illusion Museum’s illusion collection should simultaneously encourage an observer, surprise and make them think about their own feelings.

Visitors have an opportunity to find out about human vision, perception and science through interactive and entertaining installations. “The museum also has a gaming room and a souvenir shop where visitors of all ages can play, compete, learn something new and buy original gifts such as fun wooden didactic toys and puzzles that develop and stimulate creativity,” notes Natalia Ana-niashvili, Head of Marketing of Illusions Museum.

The museum collection consists of more than 70 exhibits based on knowledge of science, mathematics, biology and psychology. You can find information and explanations next to the exhibits. The narrative language will be Georgian, English and Russian. The technical support for the museum in Tbilisi, as in other countries, comes from their Croatian counterparts.

As Ananishvili notes, the museum is intended for all generations. In addition, the museum will have the facilities to host birthday parties for 3-5-year-olds, as well as corporate events, meetings and presentations will also be possible.

“The Tbilisi Illusions Museum is part of a global project on the Georgian market. The concept of the museum itself is unchanged from country to country, the only difference is the format size. In relatively small museums, there is naturally not enough space for every exhibit. The Tbilisi format is 150-400 m2, however, and so offers visitors the complete collection of Illusion Museum exhibits.”

Why is this type of museum opening so popular in Tbilisi? The authors of the idea say that it was the lack of such places in modern Georgian reality where people can laugh, scream, and do many other different and wonderful things.

Corporate events, meetings and presentations will also be possible.

“The Tbilisi Illusions Museum is part of a global project on the Georgian market. The concept of the museum itself is unchanged from country to country, the only difference is the format size. In relatively small museums, there is naturally not enough space for every exhibit. The Tbilisi format is 150-400 m2, however, and so offers visitors the complete collection of Illusion Museum exhibits.”

Why is this type of museum opening so popular in Tbilisi? The authors of the idea say that it was the lack of such places in modern Georgian reality where people can laugh, scream, and do many other different and wonderful things.

Corporate events, meetings and presentations will also be possible.

“The Tbilisi Illusions Museum is part of a global project on the Georgian market. The concept of the museum itself is unchanged from country to country, the only difference is the format size. In relatively small museums, there is naturally not enough space for every exhibit. The Tbilisi format is 150-400 m2, however, and so offers visitors the complete collection of Illusion Museum exhibits.”

Why is this type of museum opening so popular in Tbilisi? The authors of the idea say that it was the lack of such places in modern Georgian reality where people can laugh, scream, and do many other different and wonderful things.

Corporate events, meetings and presentations will also be possible.

“The Tbilisi Illusions Museum is part of a global project on the Georgian market. The concept of the museum itself is unchanged from country to country, the only difference is the format size. In relatively small museums, there is naturally not enough space for every exhibit. The Tbilisi format is 150-400 m2, however, and so offers visitors the complete collection of Illusion Museum exhibits.”

Why is this type of museum opening so popular in Tbilisi? The authors of the idea say that it was the lack of such places in modern Georgian reality where people can laugh, scream, and do many other different and wonderful things.

Corporate events, meetings and presentations will also be possible.

“The Tbilisi Illusions Museum is part of a global project on the Georgian market. The concept of the museum itself is unchanged from country to country, the only difference is the format size. In relatively small museums, there is naturally not enough space for every exhibit. The Tbilisi format is 150-400 m2, however, and so offers visitors the complete collection of Illusion Museum exhibits.”

Why is this type of museum opening so popular in Tbilisi? The authors of the idea say that it was the lack of such places in modern Georgian reality where people can laugh, scream, and do many other different and wonderful things.

Corporate events, meetings and presentations will also be possible.

“The Tbilisi Illusions Museum is part of a global project on the Georgian market. The concept of the museum itself is unchanged from country to country, the only difference is the format size. In relatively small museums, there is naturally not enough space for every exhibit. The Tbilisi format is 150-400 m2, however, and so offers visitors the complete collection of Illusion Museum exhibits.”

Why is this type of museum opening so popular in Tbilisi? The authors of the idea say that it was the lack of such places in modern Georgian reality where people can laugh, scream, and do many other different and wonderful things.

Corporate events, meetings and presentations will also be possible.
WHAT’S ON IN TBILISI

THEATER

TBILISI ZAKARIA PALASISVILI OPERA AND BALLET THEATER
25 Rustaveli Ave.
TEL. (+995 32) 2 99 04 56

March 9, 10
BALLET GALA
Raymond Song
Symphony in C
Ballet divertissement
Start time: 19:00
Ticket: 40-150 GEL

MUSIC

GBARIADZE THEATER
14 Shavteli Str.

March 8
THE AUTUMN OF MY SPRINGTIME
Rezv Gabriadze
Directed by Rezv Gabriadze
English Subtitles
Start time: 20:00
Ticket: 20, 30 GEL

STALINGRAD
March 10
Ticket: 20, 30 GEL
Start time: 20:00
English Subtitles
Directed by Revaz Gabriadze

SPRINGTIME
March 8
14 Shavteli Str.
Ticket: 10-150 GEL
Start time: 19:00
Composer: Sandro Nikoladze
Directed by Ioseb Bakuradze

CHAKADASHI
March 11
Ticket: 15-18 GEL
Start time: 19:00
Directed by Kakabadze

FOOTBALL SPECTACLE
March 12
11 Rustaveli Ave.
Ticket: 10-15 GEL
Start time: 20:00
Directed by Kikodze, Ketevan Magalashvili

THE NATIONAL GALLERY
GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM SIMON JANASHIA MUSEUM
3 Rustaveli Ave.
TEL. (+995 32) 299 80 22, 293 48 21

March 8
THE STORY OF A MURDERER
March 10
AMIRANI CINEMA
36 Kostava St.
TEL. (+995 32) 2 99 95 35
www.kinoa.ge
Every Wednesday ticket: 5 GEL
GREEN BOOK
Directed by Peter Farrelly
Cast: Viggo Mortensen, Mahershala Ali, Linda Cardellini
Genre: Biography, Comedy, Drama
Language: Russian
Start time: 22:15
Ticket: 13-14 GEL
CAPTAIN MARVEL
Directed by Anna Boden, Ryan Fleck
Cast: Brie Larson, Samuel L. Jackson, McEnery Grace
Genre: Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi
Language: English
Start time: 23:45
Ticket: 13-15 GEL

GREEN BOOK
March 9
Start time: 20:00
Directed by Anna Boden, Ryan Fleck
Cast: Brie Larson, Samuel L. Jackson, McEnery Grace
Genre: Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi
Language: English
Start time: 23:45
Ticket: 13-15 GEL

MUSEUM

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY
March 9
Directed by Bryan Singer
Cast: Rami Malek, Joseph Mazzello, Mike Myers
Genre: Biography, Drama, Music Language: English
Start time: 18:45
Ticket: 11-15 GEL

J. K. HAKHIDZE TBILISI CENTER FOR MUSIC & CULTURE
125/37 Aqmaezheba Ave.

March 10
VARINTANG KAKHIDZE JUBILEE CONCERT
Click here to enjoy more than 60 artworks by the author from the Georgian National Museum and private collections.

THE WINDOW
March 9
Tutu Kiladze’s Exhibition
8 Sioni St.
TEL. (+995 32) 298 22 81

CAST: Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Steve Carell
Genre: Biography, Comedy, Drama
Language: English
Start time: 17:35
Ticket: 14-19 GEL

CHARITY CONCERT
TKHILIS GULI’S ORGANIZATION

March 9
March 10
CAST: Viggo Mortensen, Mahershala Ali, Linda Cardellini
Genre: Biography, Comedy, Drama
Language: English
Start time: 17:35
Ticket: 14-19 GEL

FELIX VARLAMSHVILI (VARLA) - SOLO EXHIBITION
For the first time, enjoy more than 60 artworks by the author from the Georgian National Museum and private collections.

MUSIC

GREEN BOOK
March 8
March 10
March 12
March 14
March 15
March 16
March 17
March 18
March 19
March 20
March 21
March 22
March 23
March 24
March 25
March 26
March 27
March 28
March 29
March 30
March 31

9 G. Kikodze Str.
Ticket: 10 GEL
Start time: 18:00
F minor “Appassionata”
L. van Beethoven–Sonata, op. 57 in F minor “Appassionata”
L. van Beethoven – Sonata op. 110 in F minor “Appassionata”
Concerto in F minor No. 5,
J.S. Bach- Largo from Klavier
suite from the ballet “Amazons”
Liebestod S. 447
F. Liszt- Liebestraume No. 3 S. 541/3
L. van Beethoven - Sonata op. 110 in F minor “Appassionata”
Concerto in F minor No. 5,
J.S. Bach- Largo from Klavier
suite from the ballet “Amazons”
Liebestod S. 447
F. Liszt- Liebestraume No. 3 S. 541/3
L. van Beethoven - Sonata op. 110 in F minor “Appassionata”
Concerto in F minor No. 5,
J.S. Bach- Largo from Klavier
suite from the ballet “Amazons”
Liebestod S. 447
F. Liszt- Liebestraume No. 3 S. 541/3
L. van Beethoven - Sonata op. 110 in F minor “Appassionata”
Concerto in F minor No. 5,
J.S. Bach- Largo from Klavier
suite from the ballet “Amazons”
Liebestod S. 447
F. Liszt- Liebestraume No. 3 S. 541/3
L. van Beethoven - Sonata op. 110 in F minor “Appassionata”
Concerto in F minor No. 5,
J.S. Bach- Largo from Klavier
suite from the ballet “Amazons”
Liebestod S. 447
F. Liszt- Liebestraume No. 3 S. 541/3
L. van Beethoven - Sonata op. 110 in F minor “Appassionata”
Concerto in F minor No. 5,
Russian Freethinker Deals with Stalinism: “Stalin Is Not Yet Completely Dead”

BY TATJANA MONTIK

At the age of 43, Artur Solomonov, a Russian writer, theater critic and playwright, was named “a new Dostoevsky” by the German newspaper Tagezeitung. In his first novel, “Theatrical Story” (2013), the theater stays para pro toto for society and the readers are confronted with the author’s sharp non-conformist attitudes, social critique and a fine psychological analysis. The novel has already had three editions with rare reviews from respected Russian cultural personalities. To stage the novel in a theater was not easy, the author recalls, as it deals critically with the intervention of the Russian Orthodox Church in social affairs. Yet, since the very first performance in Moscow in 2015, Solomonov’s “Theater Story” has been ready to a full house.

I met the celebrated artist this winter in a downtown Tbilisi café. Solomonov was also here two years ago to write his new play depicting Russia’s Stalinist past and its continuing consequences. He received permission to carry out research in the Communist Party Archives in Tbilisi.

“When I was examining the archives, I became terrified at how little value human life had back then, and how in today’s Russia this is repeating itself,” he said. “I cannot understand people who say Stalin is their hero—people who use completely unacceptable calculations on one hand millions of innocent victims were tortured, enslaved and subjected to violence and humiliation; they lost their dignity, health and lives. On the other hand, there was colossal construction, the war was won and the state became powerful. This logic is diabolical—and we know its author.”

His new play “How We Buried Stalin,” already, and a brilliant piece that makes us both laugh and tremble with horror. The action takes place in a present-day theater in Moscow during a rehearsal for a new play about Stalin’s death. The creative process is interrupted by a “man from the Ministry” who brings a message from the Russian President asking them to change the play: Stalin shall not die, and there must be no amusing scenes in the play. A dramatic expression as the author, the Director, who also plays Stalin, and the playwright gradually become “Stalinized” and slowly morph into the characters in the drama: violence takes place on stage as espionage and conspiracies emerge and a fake prison cell is established. After the play is altered, the author can’t recognize it, and “the man from the Ministry” arrives again to announce that the President will soon stage the play himself.

Solomonov says he intentionally wrote a tragic farce and the main idea was “the criminal plasticity of the human psyche, and how people, in certain conditions, are ready to reproduce the most treacherous practices of the Soviet past. It becomes obvious that the past has not disappeared and that it takes possession of the present and even stretches out into the future. This play is about how easily a person becomes a tyrant, and how conveniently the environment allows him to.”

The author admitted he is afraid it won’t be possible to perform his new play in Russia. In recent years, although his homeland has changed lot and there is no direct censorship except for the official media, you still cannot criticize the government or say anything bad about Stalin. On State television, for example, Stalin and other official rulers cannot be shown as funny, weak or dying. “And, of course, the irrational plays an immense role. There is a superstitious unwillingness by the authorities to be reminded of their mortality, or even of the mortality of their ‘distinguished predecessor’. In fact, Stalin is still not completely dead.”

I asked Solomonov why he is not afraid to deal with such a sensitive topic and he responded: “I worry about topics that now fall into taboo category: the relationship between individuals and the State; the problems of religious worship, the relationship between the artist and the government; and an endless, almost theatrical hypocrisy in all spheres of life.”

“In every country, a person trying to engage in creative work is in conflict with generally accepted values; however, only in a few countries of the civilized world do you get punished for what you express. This is a very important moment for all contemporary artists in Russia; our words are gaining momentum again and they can have an effect that is impossible in an uncensored state.”

He added, “Today, every artist decides for himself what consequences he or she is ready for. At the same time, there is no total persecution of dissidents in Russia. The situation is tricky: artists must decide for themselves where the red flags are, where the real danger begins.”

Despite all the difficulties Russian artists have been facing due to official censorship, there are still some highlights and breakthroughs in Russia’s cultural life. Faisal Mukhambetov, a young theater director from the city of Buinsk, Tatarstan, has dared to perform one of Solomonov’s plays called “God’s Grace.” It won second prize in the 8th Biennale for Dramatic Art in London as the best political and social play, and was performed on March 7 in the Buinsk Drama Theater. The play depicts a kind of “Soviet Union of the future”. Although the characters live in a world of fear, mistrust and denunciation, they long for love, but no relationships come about because no one trusts anyone.

Taking into account all recent tendencies in the current Russian political and social situation, Arthur Solomonov says he sees a huge threat to Russia’s future development: “If the number of taboo topics increases and criticism, satire, or even irony are perceived as an ‘enemy’s invasion,’ then we will again find our selves in the situation Soviet art went through. In the dramatic arts, this was called “the struggle between the good and the best” because nothing could be wrong in a beautiful country. How it all ended for this “beautiful, infallible country,” we all know. So, overall, my goal is to not to leave problems unnamed or unrevealed; otherwise they will develop destructively, even pathologically.”

Tbilisi Jazz Festival Features Pat Metheny

THE Tbilisi Jazz Festival was completed with the joint concert of Pat Metheny and the Tbilisi Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Vakhtang Kakhidze at the Tbilisi Concert Hall. The world-renowned guitarist performed within the scope of the project Missouri Skies and More. The audience was given an opportunity to listen to the diverse and unorthodox presentation of the famous compositions.

“I am grateful to the organizers of the Festival for giving me an opportunity to work with such a legendary figure as Pat Metheny,” Kakhidze said after the concert.

Tbilisi Jazz Festival is organized by Eastern Promotions and TBC Status and supported by the Ministry of Tbilisi City Hall and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia. At the press conference, the Director of Eastern Promotions, Giorgi Kereselidze, focused on the importance of inviting such prominent guests to Georgia for promoting the country and contributing to the popularization of high-quality jazz music for the Georgian audience. He also noted that in order for everyone to be able to attend the concert, the entrance fee would be “moderate” to attract many and encourage all generations to develop a love of jazz.
Hotel type apartments with sea view for sale
from 32 m²
18-months 0% installment
Contact us:
+995 555 097 097 / +995 555 098 098
Adress: Leh and Maria Kachinsky street N8
www.batumiview.com