

Music in Religion Culture of the Georgian Pentecostals

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Abstract : The study of religious minorities and their musical culture has attracted scant academic attention in Georgia. Within wider Georgian society, it would seem that the focus of discourse to date has been on the traditional orthodox religion and its musical expression, with other forms of religious expression regarded as intrinsically less valuable. The goal of this article is to study Georgia's different religious and musical picture which, this time, is presented on the example of the Pentecostals. The first signs of the Pentecostal movement originated at the end of the 19th Century in the USA, and first appeared in Georgia as early as 1914. An ethnomusicological perspective allows the use of anthropological and sociological approaches. The basic methodology is an ethnographic method. This involved attending religious services, observation, in-depth interviews and musical material analysis. This analysis, based on a combined use of various theoretical and methodological approaches, reveals that Georgian Pentecostals, apart from polyphonic singing, are characterised by "bi-musicality." This phenomenon together with Georgian three part polyphony combines vocalisation within "social polyphony." The concept of back stage and front stage is highlighted. Chanters also try to express national identity. In some cases however it has been observed that they abandon or conceal certain musical forms of expression which are considered central to Georgian identity. The famous hymn "Thou art a Vineyard" is a case in point. The reason given for this omission within the Georgian Pentecostal church is that within Pentecostal doctrine, God alone is the object of worship. Therefore there is no veneration of Saints as representatives of the Divine. In some cases informants denied the existence of this hymn, and others explain that the meaning conveyed to the Vineyard is that of Jesus Christ and not the Virgin Mary. Others stated that they loved Virgin Mary and were therefore free to sing this song outside church circles. The results of this study illustrates that one of the religious minorities in Georgia, the Pentecostals, are characterised by a deviation in musical thinking from Homo Polyphonicus. They actively change their form of musical worship to secondary ethno hearing - bi-musicality. This outcome is determined by both new religious thinking and the process of globalization. A significant principle behind this form of worship is the use of forms during worship which are acceptable and accessible to all. This naturally leads to the development of modern forms. Obtained material does not demonstrate a connection between traditional religious music in general. Rather, it constitutes an independent domain.

Keywords : Georgia, globalization, music, pentecostal

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