

THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL OPERA THEATER

THE ZACHARIA PALIASHVILI — TBILISI OPERA AND BALLET STATE THEATER

REBECCA SCHAHPAR
LINZ AT

The main opera house of Georgia, founded in 1851 on Rustaveli Gamsiri in Tbilisi, is one of the oldest of such institutions in western Asia and eastern Europe. Opera houses were often financed by wealthy individuals, rulers and nobels in order to use the patronage of the arts to underpin their political agenda and social standing. This opera was also built as a form of bribery, in the hope of attracting unsettled Georgians to Moscow.

ORIGINS

The establishment of the Tbilisi Opera was linked to the Russian annexation of Georgia in 1801.

In the first half of the 19th century, Georgia was poorly integrated into the empire. In 1832, Georgian aristocrats planned a plot against the Russian authorities, but it was uncovered and met with imprisonment and repression of the population. To calm the tensions, the new viceroy of the Caucasus, Mikhail Semyonovich Vorontsov, founded a number of cultural institutions, including the city's opera house. The intention of the new edifice was to contribute to the public benefit. But an important political objective was to integrate the Georgian aristocracy into the social life of the Empire, to prevent any non-Russian resentments. To accommodate the Georgians, Vorontsov also supported theater performances in Georgian language. The efforts of Vorontsov, however, were also viewed critically, for many Russians were not keen on the non-Russian contributions to the cultural development of the city. At Vorontsov's suggestion, the original theater was built on the boulevard Rustaveli Gamsiri. The land was donated by the Tbilisi governorate, so it would be the property of the city. After four years of construction work, under the supervision of the Italian architect Giovanni Scudieri, the building was completed in 1851. Outside of Moscow, Tbilisi grew to be one of the most prominent venues for opera and ballet, during communist rule.



RECONSTRUCTION

After a fire broke out on 11. Oktober 1874, the opera house needed to be rebuilt. The city held an architectural contest, which Viktor Johann Gottlieb Schröter won.

After the completion of the construction the opera became a cultural center and as of 1937 it was named after the Georgian national composer Zacharia Paliashvili.

ARCHITECTURE

As of 1896 the theatre has its residence in an exotic neo-Moorish building with an oriental style and decorations. The floor plan is based on the design of a typical European opera house, with its stage, orchestra pit, audience seating and backstage facilities for costumes and building sets.

It is part of the European Route of Historic Theatres and it is a member of Opera Europa.

The project is supported by the Culture Programme of the European Union.

Many internationally acclaimed singers like José Carreras and Montserrat Caballé came to perform on this stage.

National festivities and the presidential inaugurations are held here as well.



Tbilisi Opera Theater
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Auditorium
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Red Hall
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Passage
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