

# Musics of the Soviet Union



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1. **Lithuanian lullaby** 1:10
2. **Lithuanian lullaby** 2:45
3. **Estonian bagpipe music** 1:07
4. **South Russian solo song from Belgorod province** 1:50
5. **South Russian wedding dance song from Belgorod province** 1:28
6. **North Russian wedding greeting song from Arkhangelsk province** 4:59
7. **North Russian wedding lament** 1:11
8. **North Russian lyric song** 6:00
9. **Tuvan folk melody** 1:27
10. **Song from Khomeizhi** 2:30
11. **Azerbaijani classical mugam** 7:05
12. **Georgian song** 2:54
13. **Georgian song** 2:41
14. **Georgian wedding song** 2:40

**Front cover:**

Members of "Podserednee," a southern Russian choral ensemble at the 1988 Festival of American Folklife. Photo by Dane Penland.



The music on this album gives an idea of the beauty and variety of musical traditions performed today in the Soviet Union. The artists here are fine representatives of regional traditions that have developed over centuries.

The examples on this album were selected to represent the styles of the Soviet musicians who came to Washington, D.C., in the summer of 1988, for the 22nd annual Smithsonian Institution Festival of American Folklife. The recordings were furnished by the Soviet national record company, Melodia, which is issuing a companion recording of American folk music from U.S. recordings.

Notes and additional photographs are included inside.



Smithsonian/Folkways Records  
Office of Folklife Programs  
955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 2600  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington DC 20560

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### Smithsonian Folkways Records

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**Front cover:**  
Members of  
"Podserednee," a  
southern Russian  
choral ensemble  
at the 1988  
Festival of  
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Dane Penland.



**Back cover:**  
*(clockwise from  
top left)*

Mugam trio from  
Azerbaijan at the  
1988 Festival of  
American Folklife. Photo by Richard Strauss.

Tuvan throat singer Gennadii Chash at the  
1988 Festival of American Folklife.

Members of "Elesa" Choir from Georgia at



the 1988 Festival of American Folklife.  
Photo by Richard Strauss.

Johannes Taul from Estonia at the 1988  
Festival of American Folklife. Photo by  
Richard Strauss.

The performers depicted above were participants in the 1988 Festival of American Folklife and exemplify their musical and expressive traditions; they are not, however, the performers heard on the album.



# Musics of the Soviet Union

The music on this album gives an idea of the beauty and variety of musical traditions performed today in the Soviet Union. The artists here are fine representatives of regional traditions that have developed over centuries.

The Soviet Union is a huge country, covering one sixth of the earth's land surface and stretching across eleven time zones. Its population of over 275 million includes over one hundred distinct ethnic and linguistic groups, each with its own traditions and unique character. Traveling from the European Baltic republics to the Muslim villages of Central Asia and on to the Arctic in northeastern Siberia, a traveler encounters many different musical traditions and ways of life. Throughout the Soviet Union music plays an important role in creating and reinforcing ethnic identity. Whether in the songs accompanying lengthy Russian wedding rituals, in Azerbaijani mugam compositions, or in Georgian harvest festivals, musical traditions are passed orally from generation to generation and embody a group's culture.

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Future Smithsonian Folkways releases of music from the Soviet Union will focus on specific traditions and include extensive commentary by specialists in the field.

**Lithuanian Lullaby** to make children laugh.  
Veronika Povilioniene (Melodia C30-25710).

**Lithuanian Lullaby.**  
Veronika Povilioniene (C30-25710).

These songs for young children are performed by the renowned singer Veronika Povilioniene. The performer learned her repertoire from her father and older villagers in the Dzukia region of southwestern Lithuania, where ancient seasonal and family rituals, customs, and songs continued until recently. She is heard singing to one of her grandchildren.

**Estonian bagpipe music.**  
(M30-46729).

The bagpipe was an important instrument in Estonian musical tradition for centuries until, in the 19th century, the

growing popularity of polkas and waltzes from Western Europe made the fiddle a more popular instrument. Growing interest in the traditional music of Estonia has sparked a renaissance of bagpipe performances. This is an older recording, included because of the high quality of the performance, and the sound is affected by the deterioration of the original recording medium.

**South Russian solo song from Belgorod province.**  
Lead singer M.K. Maltseva (C20-24374).

**South Russian wedding dance song from Belgorod province.**  
Lead singer M.K. Maltseva (C20-24374).

Russia is the largest republic of the Soviet Union. The rural and urban musical traditions of Russia remain distinct despite their mutual interaction. Rural Russian songs are performed in a great variety of regional styles, two of which are represented on this tape, one from southern Russia, the other from northern Russia.

Traditional southern Russian songs are still performed for life cycle, seasonal and celebratory events. Choral singing here makes use of developed polyphonic texture and harsh harmonic complexes. These songs, performed by a vocal ensemble from the village of Podserednee in Belgorod province, demonstrate the rich sonority and strident Russian vocal styles.

**North Russian wedding greeting song from Arkhangelsk province.**  
Kamenka village ensemble (M20-44641).

**North Russian wedding lament.**  
Evdoxia Alexandrovna Oreshkina (M20-44641).

**North Russian lyric song.**  
Singers from the village of Shostova Gora in Arkhangelsk province (C20-26311-12).

A vocal ensemble from the Kamenka village in the Mezen' River basin in northern Russia performs a song to greet the groom's party coming for a wedding (6) and a lament sung as the bride bids farewell to her girlhood (7). Another popular musical form in the region is the lyric song (8), performed by an ensemble from Shostova Gora, in the Pinega River basin. Characteristic of the Pinega tradition is the spacious musical texture where the distance between low and high voices is two octaves. Local singers call this "to sing with a thin voice."

**Tuvan folk melody ("throat singing").**  
S.B. Manchakai (D039773-4).

**Song from Khomeizhi** ("throat singing").  
M.C. Daknai (D030773-4).

One of the most striking traditions in Tuvan music is "throat singing," in which one singer simultaneously creates a fundamental (low) tone and an overtone. The fundamental tone acts as a bass pedal while the melody is carried by overtones in a high register. In some styles of "throat singing" the performer adds tone coloration to the fundamental tones, thus creating a three-voice effect.

**Azerbaijani classical mugam.**  
Bayat-i Kurd (C30-26965-66).

The mugam tradition of Azerbaijan is an intricate musical form related to venerable traditions of Islamic science, philosophy, and music theory whose origins are in the Middle Ages. Soviet musicologists use the term "professional oral-tradition music" to designate orally transmitted musical repertoires whose musical complexity, rigorous demands on students, and social status correspond to "classical" music in the European tradition.

**Georgian song.**  
"Lile" song and dance ensemble of the Lintekskii House of Culture (C-30-12187-88).

**Georgian Song.**  
Gugava Dzhokia (C30-12187-88).

**Georgian wedding song.**  
"Lile" song and dance ensemble (C30-12187-88).

Songs from the Svanetia region in Western Georgia performed by the vocal ensemble "Lile" (Lintekskii District), represent one of the remarkable polyphonic styles of Georgian music, performed by men. Each singer improvises his melodic part, regulated by strict and complex norms of local tradition which require a dissonant chord structure, complex rhythms and melody. Most Svanetian songs are sung in three parts. The examples include a wedding song, and a song sung during the famous Georgian table rituals.

## Selected Reading:

The following will provide a more detailed introduction to musics of the Soviet Union:

The entry on "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" in volume 19 of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, edited by Stanley Sadie. London, Washington, D.C. and Hong Kong: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1980.

Belyayev, V.M. *Central Asian Music*. Edited and translated by M. and G. Slobin. Middletown, Connecticut:

Wesleyan University Press, 1975.

Brown, Malcolm H. (editor), with Introduction and Appendices by Margarita Mazo. *A Collection of Russian Folksongs* by Nikolai Lvov and Ivan Prach. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987.

Propp, Vladimir. "The Historical Basis of Some Agrarian Festivals." Introduction to *Soviet Ethnography*. Edited by Stephen and Ethel Dunn.

Melodia Records, the national record company of the Soviet Union, has published several important record series including *The Anthology of Musical Art of the Peoples of the USSR, From the Pushkin House Archives, and Folk Performers Sing*.

Notes by Margarita Mazo, Theodore Levin, and Stuart Detmer. Sound Engineering by V.M. Parfenova. Produced in cooperation with the USSR Ministry of Culture. All recordings were previously released on Melodia records, as indicated. We gratefully acknowledge Melodia Records, Moscow, USSR, and especially its Deputy Director, Alexander Chechetkin, for providing the master tapes used to produce this recording.

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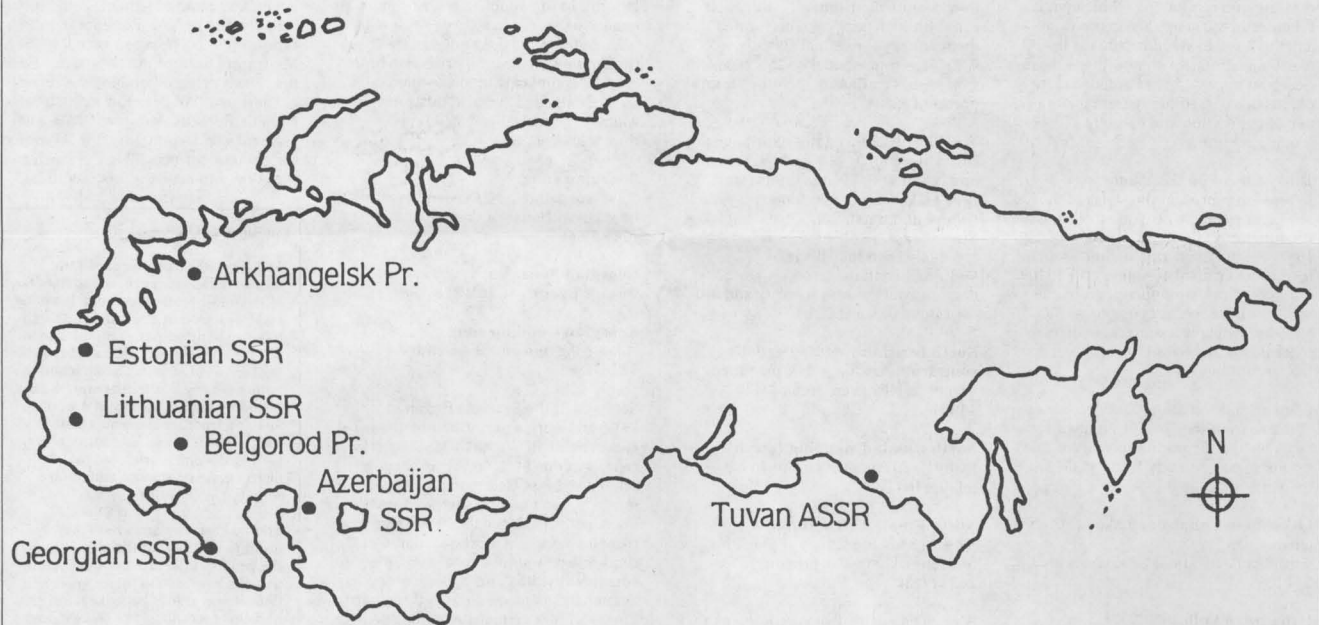
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This insert accompanies  
Smithsonian/Folkways SF 40002

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Map of the Soviet Union indicating  
location of musical examples.



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