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'RUSSIAN PIAF' TO PERFORM CLASSIC JEWISH FAVOURITES IN TORONTO

By **Ruth Schweitzer** - June 2, 2016



Tamara Gverdtsiteli, one of the world's most popular Georgian singers, will perform Jewish favourites and new arrangements of Yiddish songs at a concert at Roy Thomson Hall

Tamara Gverdtsiteli, one of the world's most popular Georgian singers, will perform Jewish favourites and new arrangements of Yiddish songs, to be played by an orchestra for the first time since the 1950s and '60s, at a concert at Roy Thomson Hall.

The songs are included on Gverdtsiteli's soon-to-be-released album, *Mamele*, dedicated to her mother.

"You can't perform such songs without sadness and tragic feeling, without mourning about those who died, without thinking about a disaster, which happened to the Jewish People,"

she said in an email interview translated from Russian by Eugenia Protsko.

"While performing, you have to remember how they felt, how we feel and how our parents and grandparents felt. I think that it is passed from generation to generation at the genetic level. If you want to sing such songs, you have to take part of your soul and bring it to the altar."

Gverdtsiteli is a crossover artist whose repertoire also includes popular songs and the classics. She sang Carmen in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, in a production that had a three-year run.

Hailed as the 'Russian Edith Piaf', she brings her expressiveness to her renditions of popular songs. "These are songs you can't perform without putting your soul into them," she said.

She loves jazz and says it's influenced every singer in the 20th century, "because jazz music is brilliant, a phenomenon that touched everybody."

Gverdtsiteli, who was born in Tbilisi, Georgia, and has lived in Paris and New York, moved to Moscow 18 years ago, where her career took off and her recordings produced some hits.

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"I am lucky that I have some composers who create the songs for me, and these songs truly become mine," she said. "They create them, taking into consideration my voice, my manner of singing, my emotional side, everything."

Gverdtsiteli described her life as a musician as pretty intense. She performs frequently, tours Russia and Europe, and has played the Kremlin Palace in Moscow, Carnegie Hall in New York City, and the Olympia Hall in Paris. She's usually working on a new album and constantly experimenting with different musical genres.

At her Toronto debut, Gverdtsiteli will devote half of her concert to Jewish music. "The first part of the concert is indeed devoted to the famous songs, but nobody interpreted them and performed them like this before. The interpretation always depends on the performer, and the performer's point of view reflects the conceptual approach to the subject. These songs can't be understood without their history, without context," she said.

During the second half of the concert, she'll focus on international hits in Georgian, Russian, French and Italian, as well her own hit songs. Gverdtsiteli will be backed by the soloists of the Moscow Male Jewish Cappella and a full symphony orchestra, conducted by Alexander

Tsaliuk.

The Moscow Male Jewish Cappella, led by Tsaliuk, is considered one of the best Jewish musical groups in the world. The choir's repertoire includes Jewish liturgical music, songs in Yiddish and Hebrew and Russian folk songs. The group has collaborated with such renowned symphony orchestra conductors as Zubin Mehta, Arnold Katz, Mark Gorenshteyn and Yuri Bashmet. The choir has also performed with such acclaimed Jewish soloists as Mikhail Alexandrovich, Nehama Lifshits and Joseph Malovany.

Tamara Gverdtsiteli and the soloists of the Moscow Male Jewish Cappella perform at Roy Thomson Hall at 8 p.m. on June 3. For tickets, [click here](#), or call 416-872-4255.

For more information on Gverdtsiteli, [click here](#).



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