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**Zemp, Hugo & Nino Tsitsishvili**  
**2012 Duduki of Tbilisi: Eldar Shoshitashvili and His Students. Watertown, MA: [Documentary Educational Resources](#).**

Notes: DVD, 22 minutes

**Reviewed 16 Jan 2015 by:**  
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**Medium:** *Film/Video*

**Subject** *Ethnomusicology – Eastern Europe*

**Keywords:** *Georgia*

*Tbilisi- Musical Instrument*

*Reed/Woodwind*

*Duduki*

**ABSTRACT:** Ethnomusicologist Hugo Zemp is a prolific documentary filmmaker. We are fortunate in that they have been re-released by Documentary Educational Resources and several of them have been previously reviewed on ARD. In this film Zemp collaborates with the researcher Nino Tsitsishvili to present the *duduki* (a double reed instrument of the oboe family) music of the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi.

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**E**ldar Shoshitashvili is the focus of the movie. He is a professional music teacher of the *duduki*. The city of Tbilisi is located in the eastern portion of the country and has been subject to cosmopolitan, multi-lingual, cultural cross-fertilization for many centuries. The film places the local musical traditions in geographic and historical context.

The musical tradition to which Shoshitashvili belongs is a polyphony performance where one or more *duduki* provide a drone while a soloist provides a melody. A drummer accompanies these reed instruments, and it falls on the drummer to sing (optionally with an ad hoc choir). Occasionally there will be the addition of an accordion to the mix. This form is only mentioned, but it tends to follow the tonalities of Western music.

There is the performance of a song that was written as an anthem to honor the city of Tbilisi. Another exciting moment of the film is what could fairly be described as a show off routine by a young drummer. He spins the drum around in a show of agility and dexterity while tapping and striking different parts of the drum rhythmically with his hand. It forms a visually exciting performance and a compliment to the younger generation of musicians.

The film lacks narration. There is some subtitled dialog, most of it instructions from Shoshitashvili to his students and song lyrics. Some titles describe more technical details, such as the way that the *duduk* players providing the drone use circular breathing, puffing their cheeks out like young Dizzy Gillespies in order to hold a reserve of air pressure as they breathe in new air through their noses. This allows them to perform uninterrupted drones for several minutes.

This short film ends with the performance of an Arabic *maqam*, an improvisational sequence that has much in common with the Western musical concept of a mode. A *maqam* is a set of rules about how the improvised melody is to be constructed. This closing performance is a moving piece of music.

The setting for this ethnomusicological film is a bit different than that of Zemp's other films. Usually he chooses to film performances in specifically cultural settings, in the natural conditions of performance. By focusing on a music teacher and his students he presents a more pedagogical image of *duduk* practice. This is probably the influence of Tsitsishvili, who has a background in music education. By focusing on musical education in a formal setting in an ethnomusicological subject Zemp is able to show how the cultural reproduction of musical traditions can be bounded by formal instruction and still have a genuine cultural importance.

Due to the length of the film and concision of editing it is an ideal selection for musical appreciation courses where an interesting example of Eastern European musical traditions, their cultural admixtures, and the formalization of their musics into a taught, learned, and celebrated national heritage. I think it would also be a recommended choice for secondary school music classes to provide cross-cultural inspiration to show a music education setting outside of the dominant marching band performance functions of public education.

