

# Colorful costumes and dances tell story of Georgian culture

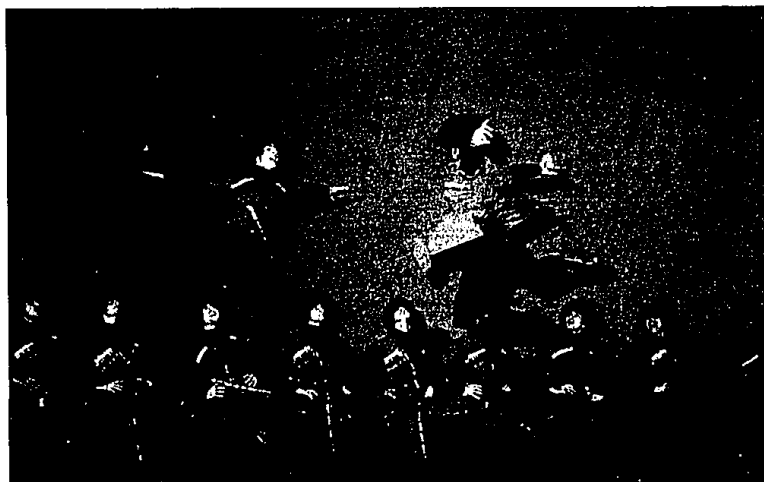
BY LINDA CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER

## GEORGIAN STATE DANCE COMPANY

**What:** Perform dances that reflect life in the Republic of Georgia on the Black Sea  
**When:** 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26  
**Where:** Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway  
**Tickets:** Call (313) 237-SING

A life without dance? Nino Sukhishvili doesn't want to think about the possibility even though she's not physically on stage with the Georgian State Dance Company anymore. Sukhishvili grew up around grandparents Nina and Ilko Ramishvili's folk dance troupe and needs the energy and excitement of the traditionally inspired choreography in her life - and the dancers need her. The 37-year-old company manager designs the dazzling costumes that capture the culture of various regions in the Republic of Georgia. When the 70-member company takes the stage of the Detroit Opera House Saturday, Oct. 26, Sukhishvili will be watching from the wings but her spirit dances to the live orchestra of wooden flute, bass, mandolin and accordion-like folk instruments, and drum. "Everybody in my family dance," said Sukhishvili. "It's family tradition. My brother and I grew up dancing. We were behind the stages all our lives watching performances. In 1945 it was a difficult period under Stalinism. My grandparents had the idea to create dance company and collected different dances from different regions and transformed them to make them more spectacular, added modern movement, built new choreography on folk base. The dance is very special Georgian folk dances, very traditional. They reflect the history, culture

of our country. It's a historical experience of our country." Years later the men dressed in red coats whirl around the stage and leap in the air under the direction of her father Tengiz Sukhishvili. It's not an easy life. The rigorous routines call for the men to dance on their knees and toes. "It's hard on male dancers," said Sukhishvili. "They're not blocked shoes (like ballet point shoes) they're wearing when they're dancing on their toe. They exercise a lot during the day to dance on their toes and knees. It's traditional Georgian movement." Embellishing their dancing are Sukhishvili's costumes recalling life in her country. "The types of dances represent different aspect of Georgian life - wedding, cavalry, hunters," Sukhishvili. "The costumes are very colorful traditional folk styles, different styles depending on the district. The mountains are different from the seashore. Mountain dresses are shorter because people need to walk narrow paths and in the snow.



Nino Sukhishvili's dynamic red and black costumes add to the excitement of The Georgian State Dance Company.

The valley is more colorful dresses, longer. The second part is new. I keep the style of dress, change the color and headdress. I use a lot of hats." Sukhishvili draws on years of study at the Academy of Art for her designs. At one time, she considered becoming a ceramist and began exhibiting in shows like the 1982 Navy Pier in Chicago, but returned to carry on the family tradi-

tion. It's a decision she's never regretted even though she and the company continue on tour through December before celebrating Christmas at home. Shortly after the holidays it's on to Australia and New Zealand. "Dance is an art. It's so common for me I can't imagine myself without dance."

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## Win tickets for an 'Evening with Andrea Bocelli'

Come on, admit it...you really do love opera, especially when it's sung by the world's most romantic Italian tenor, Andrea Bocelli.

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers is offering you a chance to win two tickets to attend the Sunday, Dec. 1, concert of Andrea Bocelli at The Palace in Auburn Hills. And we're not talking just any back row, balcony seats. We want you to hear every thrilling note, so you'll be sitting with the V.I.P.s. All you have to do is to tell us in 50 words or less why you'd love to attend Bocelli's concert. No operative scores to write, no recordings of you singing Italian love songs in the show-

er...just 50 words e-mailed, faxed or sent snail mail. Bocelli, who has achieved unprecedented success in both the classical and pop venues, will be accompanied by the World Festival Symphony conducted by Steven Mercurio with special guest soprano Maria Luigia Borsi and solo violinist Lidia Baich.

The concert begins at 8 p.m. Send your entry to Cathy Young, Promotion Manager, Observer & Eccentric, 36351 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150; phone: (734) 953-2155; fax: (734) 953-2332; e-mail: cyoung@oe.homecomm.net. All entries must be received by 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 15.

## See the bears, and win a family pack of zoo tickets

Get to the Detroit Zoo by Sunday, Nov. 3 to see the Polar Palooza bears, and you could win a family pack of tickets to the zoo - two adult, two children tickets and free parking. Simply take a picture of your family by your favorite bear, and tell us why the bear was your favorite. Three winners

will be chosen. Deadline for entry is Thursday, Nov. 7, winners will be notified by phone. Send, fax or e-mail your entries to: Keely Kaleski, Assistant Managing Editor Features, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009, e-mail

kkaleski@oe.homecomm.net or fax (248) 644-1314. Polar Palooza is a fund-raiser for the Detroit Zoo. Artists in the area were asked to paint the bears in a variety of themes. A race car driver, pirate and tourist bear are among the colorful works ringing the entrance of the Detroit Zoo. On Nov. 18 all

of the bears will be auctioned off to raise funds for the zoo. The event takes place from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Sangria in Royal Oak. For more information, call (248) 998-0900 or visit www.detroitzoo.org. The Detroit Zoo is at the intersection of Ten Mile and Woodward Avenue, just off I-696 in Royal Oak.

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