

Lost Angels

Paliashvili music school for highly talented children in Tbilisi 2010 – 2012
by Peter Dammann



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After the 2010 Proms performances of the Georgian violinist Lisa Batiashvili and of the Georgian pianist Khatia Buniatishvili the "Guardian" asked: What do Georgian mothers put in their children's tea, to ensure that such brilliant musicians emerge? The answer lies not in the tea but in a music school that has existed in Tbilisi for over 70 years, which prepares children for the conservatory and a professional career in music.

Today the music school is in a dire state. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the whole country sank into chaos. Civil war, gang warfare and kidnapping in broad daylight, a life of pitch black nights (there is only one hour of electricity supply each day) and a corrupt police force turned life into a living hell in Tbilisi. And as if that were not enough, in April 2002 an earthquake destroyed many houses including the music school.

For some years now the chaos on the streets has got better but the teachers of the Paliashvili School teach in a temporary building in abject conditions (old clapped-out pianos from the Soviet and East German era, which each winter for the past fifteen years have frozen and the most appalling physical conditions). The music students need support so that they can have access to good instruments and sheet music. They need grants to cover their living costs and money to enable them to participate in international workshops and competitions. In return, the world gets particularly good musicians, who can mature only in this country with its history and culture.

Peter Dammann

The school building is in a dire state and has no stage, but the school has a beautiful view over the city of Tbilisi. April 2011







The last new piano was bought 40
years ago.
October 2010



New children, they will take
the entrance examination.
October 2010



Six and seven year old children
at their entrance examination.
October 2010



Damaged classrooms and
pianos are everywhere in this
school.
October 2010

A grandmother, a teacher and
a pupil - most of the pupils are
supported in their musical
education by mothers, grand-
mothers or aunts.
October 2010







Elene Jimshitashvili (14)
and her Professor Mikhail
Xoshtaria.
October 2011



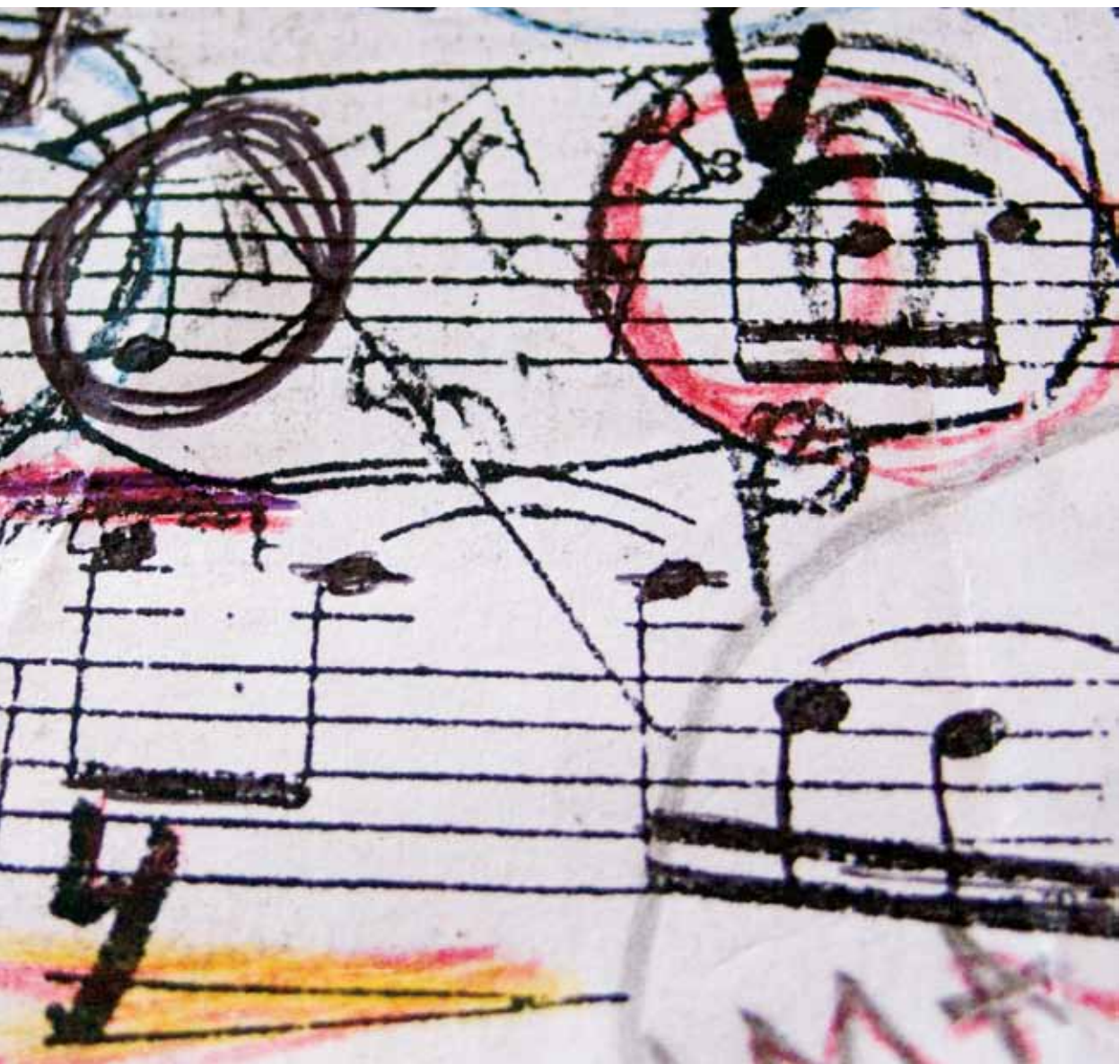


Georgi Vartanava (9) and
Prof. Victoria Vaskanova.
October 2010



Next pages: Georgis music.
October 2010







Sandro Mamulashvili (13) in his
oboe lesson at school.
May 2012





Prof. Lali Sanikidze and
Sandro Nebieridze.
October 2010



Prof. Ernst Avakelov and Natia
Chilashvili (18).
October 2010

Ana Gogava (17) has worked
for 10 years with Prof.
Darejan Tsintsadze.
April 2011







The school library and a
classroom.
October 2010





Prof. Nino Mamradze and her
student Ketevan Sharumashvili.
October 2010





Sendi Vatanova (13) with her mother before a „closed concert“ at school.
October 2010 and April 2011





17 year old pupils listen to a
music history lesson.
October 2010





Bassoon lessons in a cellar.
April 2011





Georgi Vartanowa (10) before
playing in a competition.
October 2010







Sandro Sidamonidze (14) at home practising in the living room with Prof. Peter Bagration-Davitashvili and concert master Inga Lobjanidze. October 2011



Sandro Sidamonidze (14) on his way to school.
October 2011





Sandro Sidamonidze (13) and
Prof. Tamara Gabarashvili.
Sandro will play in a
competition.
October 2010

Sandro Sidamonidze (15) and
Anni Gigauri (17) playing in a
concert in the grand hall of the
conservatory.
May 2012





Lisa Ramishvili (13),
Prof. Tamara Gabarashvili and
concert master Tinatin Alavidze
in the music school.
October 2010





Nino Kupreisvili (17) is practicing at home - and explaining her dream.
October 2010







Alexander Julakidze (17) at home with his mother and sister. His music education has been supported by his mother. October 2010



Prof. Neli Imedashvili
works from home, she
has been teaching for
more than 50 years.
October 2010



Sergo Markosian (12) has been working for seven years with Prof. Neli Imedashvili.
October 2011

Prof. Neli Imedashvili and
a new pupil.
May 2012







Prof. Tamaz Batiashvili
conducting at the school
orchestra rehearsals.
October 2011 and
May 2012

Lizi Tseteradze (8)
supported by her
older sister before her
examination.
May 2012





Director Tamuna Shengelia and
her son are visiting the school
orchestra rehearsal.
May 2012



View over the city of Tbilisi
October 2010

Kids from the first class.
October 2011







The concert master is
working with the singers.
May 2012

Prof. Tamar Gurgenzidze
and her student Salome
Paghava (21).
May 2012





Prof. Tamar Gurenidze and
her students.
May 2012





Prof. Tamaz Batiashvili
teaches a string quartett
in the music school.
October 2011



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The man who tunes the old
pianos.
October 2010

Ivane Davreshidze (14) is
practising at school.
May 2012





During Sendi is practising
(Mendelson, concert e-moll,
part I), her brother Georgi
explaining a game on his
mobile.
May 2012







Etato Ruxadze (16) is practising
at school.
May 2012



Natalia Dorevli (11) has been playing the flute for one year, her teacher is Prof. Anna Lomtadze.
May 2012

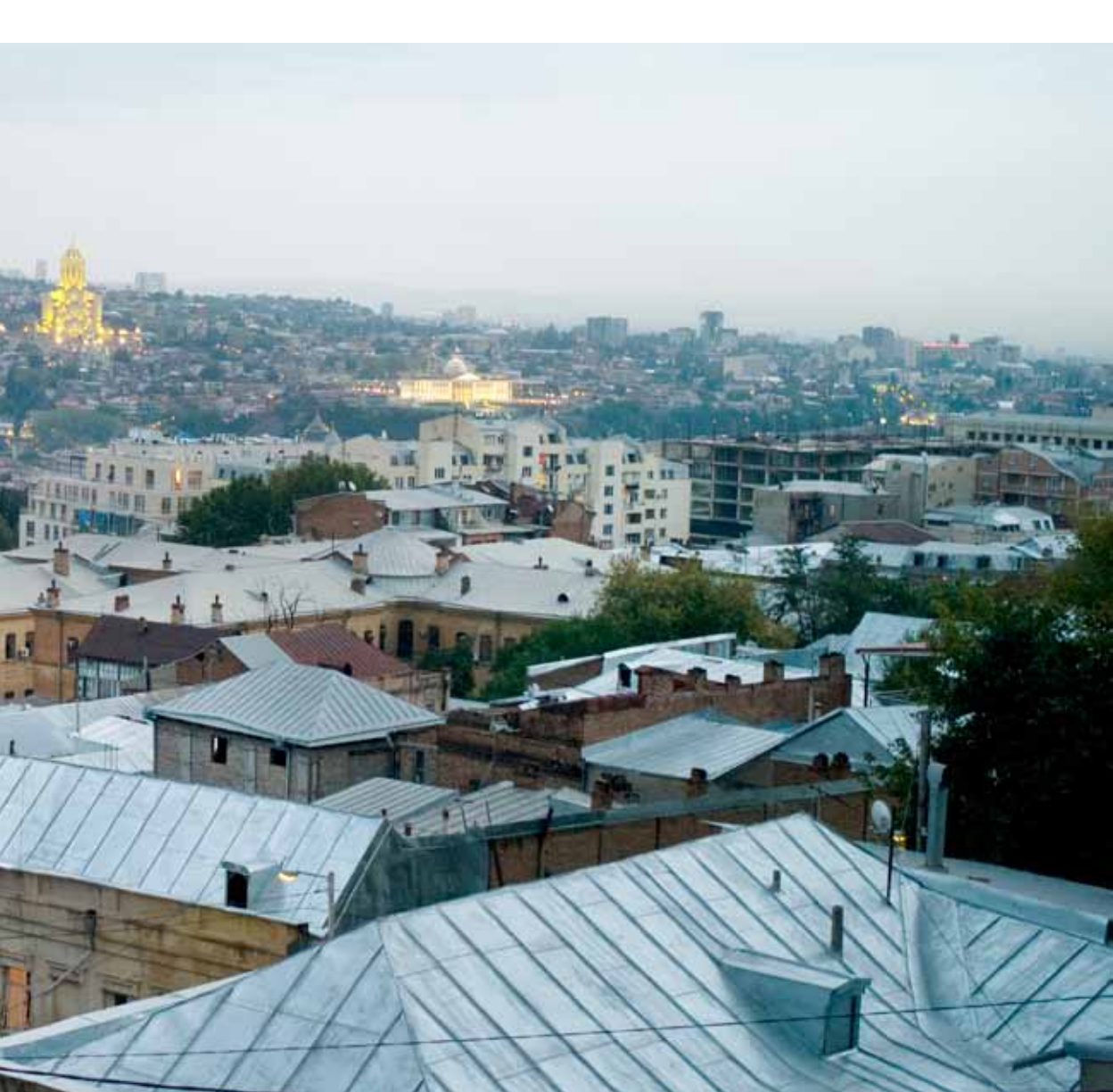
School orchestra rehearsal.
May 2012







A view of Tbilisi from the
school.
October 2010









Prof. Meri Zhania and her
pupil Tamo Modebadze (15).
May 2012



Nino Ochigava (15) practising at school.
October 2011



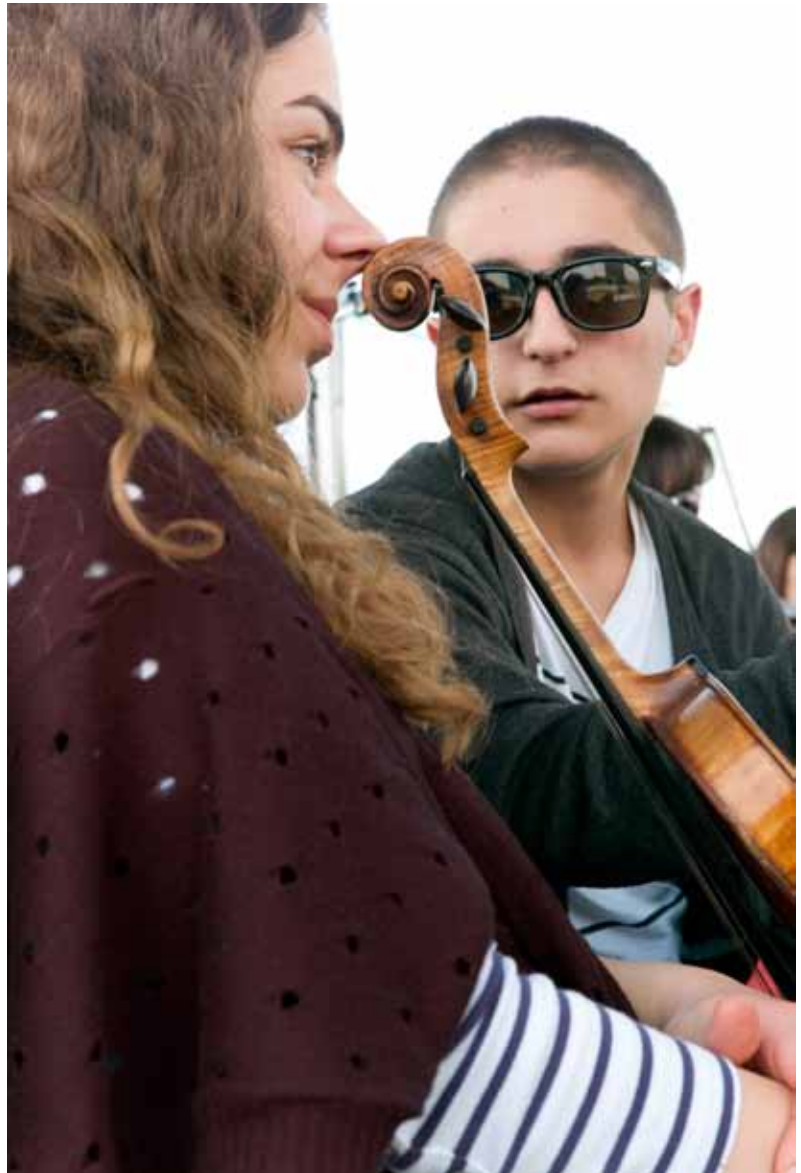
Prof. Tamar Zhvania (29) and
her pupil Sopo Sargradze
(14). They have been working
together for two years.
May 2012





The school orchestra is
travelling by bus to play
a concert in Kutaisi.
May 2012





Mariam Chapasvili (17) before
the concert in Kutaisi.
May 2012



Khatia Buniatishvili and pupils
of the music school after an
open air concert.
May 2012



Sergo Markosian and Davit Khrikuli played the piano with an orchestra - close to the border to Abkhazia.
May 2012









In the background the new Georgian Parliament Building in Kutaisi - and the stage, where the school orchestra will play. May 2012

Famous Khatia Buniatishvili
and pupils of the school
orchestra on stage before a
concert in Kutaisi.
May 2012





Famous Khatia Buniatishvili
and a pupil of the school
orchestra before a concert in
Kutaisi.
May 2012

The school orchestra is travelling by bus to play a concert in Kutaisi - mothers are accompanying their children. Davit Khrikuli and his mother. May 2012





Nino Sichinava (16) and her
mother on tour with the
school orchestra.
May 2012



Ninutsa Nadiradze playing with her string quartett engaged for a event by the Norwegian Ambassador.
May 2012



A string quartett with pupils of the music school and students of the conservatory engaged for an event of the Norwegian Ambassador.
May 2012



Ketevan Sepashvili, a former pupil of the music school, before her concert in the small hall of the conservatory. She is supporting the music school. October 2010







Mariam Papashvili (14) in a
school orchestra break at the
piano
May 2012



Georgi Lortkipanidze (11) plays the flute, but here he is playing out the double bass.
May 2012



Pupils of Prof. Neli Imedashvili.
October 2010





Pupils at home by Prof. Neli
Imedashvili.
October 2010





Tako Midelashvili (17) practising at the conservatory.
April 2011



Tamka Babunashvili (12)
practising at the conservatory.
October 2011



Waiting for their
performance in a „closed
concert“ at school.
April 2011



Nino Ochigava (16) and
Prof. Nugzar Kiknadze.
Next page:
Lisa Ramishvili (14) and her
school colleagues.
April 2011







Lisa Ramishvili (14) and Prof. Tamara Gabarashvili. In the background concert master Tinatin Alavidze and Lisas's mother.
April 2011

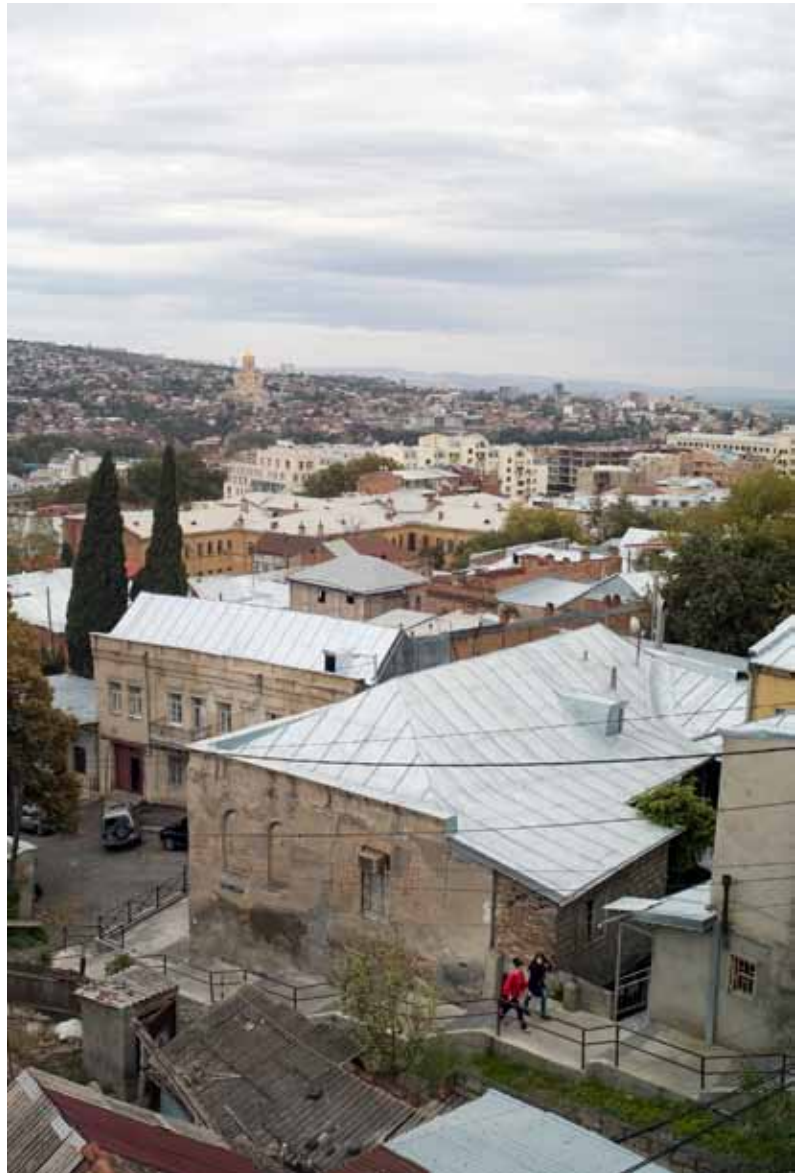


Ana Gogava (17) at home with her new Petrof piano, which was funded by the Martha Pulvermacher Foundation.
April 2011



Davit Khrikuli (10) a pupil of
Prof. Darejan Tsintsadze.
October 2011





A view of Tbilisi from the
school.
October 2010



Prof. Victoria Vaskanova
October 2011

Sendi Vartanova (14)
cleaning her violin before
playing.
October 2011









Georgi Vartanova (11)
practising at school.
May 2012



Georgi Vartanova (10), his
sister Sendi and his mother are
going home from school.
October 2011







Georgi Vartanova (11) and his
mother are going home from
school.
May 2012





Georgi Vartanova (9) has to practise outside, because he is living with his mother and sister in a one-room-flat
October 2010



Mariam Pukashvili (7) in a lesson with Prof. Victoria Vaskanova - and before her first concert.
April 2011





Tamka Babunashvili (11) is playing in the living room of her violin teacher Prof. Manana Kantaria. Tamkas's mother is sitting behind her.
October 2010



Tamka Babunashvili (12) and
Prof. Manana Kantaria before
a concert in the small hall of
the conservatory.
October 2011



Prof. Darejan Tsintsadze and
her piano pupils before a con-
cert in the small hall of the
conservatory.
October 2011





Sergo Markosian and his mother
before a concert at the
small hall of the conservatory.
April 2011



Sandro Nebieridze with gloves on
before the concert.
October 2011







Sandro Nebieridze before a
school concert in the small hall
of the conservatory.
April 2011





Waiting backstage for their
grand entrance.
May 2012







Waiting backstage.
April 2011



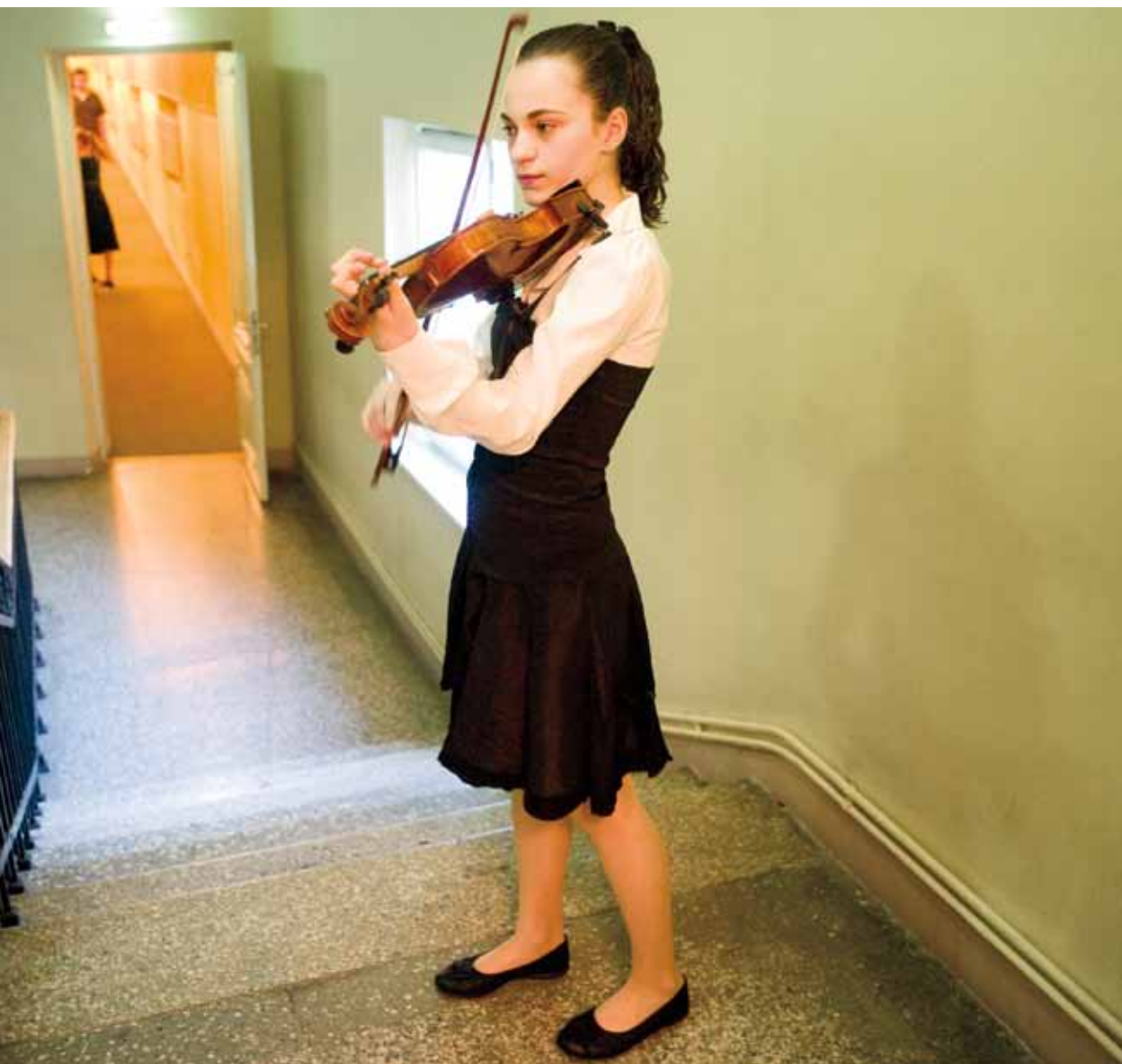
Lizi Tseteradze (8) before her
piano examination.
May 2012



Sendi Vartanava (13) will play in
a competition.
October 2010

Sendi Vartanava (14) will play
a concert
May 2012







Anna Gogava is waiting, she will play in the last round of a national competition.
April 2011



Anna Gogava after playing in the last round of the national competition, she has won second prize.
April 2011





Anna Gogava on stage
before playing.
April 2011

Next page:
Ani Gigauri (17) before a
concert.
May 2012









Backstage, flowers after her
first concert.
April 2011

I wish to thank:

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Ketevan Sepashvili
Tamuna Shengelia

Peter Dammann

is based in Bern and Hamburg. He is represented by Focus in Hamburg. His social studies and working experience as a socialworker are decisive for his photographic approach. The photographic reports about the street and railway station children in Eastern Europe and in Asia, about the highly talented young musicians and ballerinas as well as about child navy cadets in St. Petersburg and also about young boxers in Kiev are part of a comprehensive body of work on adolescence. Peter Dammann's photographs often form an integral part of NGOs projects. From 2002 to 2004 he has photographed in psychiatric clinics in Romania, Russia and Switzerland. 2004 to 2008 he has photographed the creation of a Palestinian youth orchestra. In 2008 and 2009 he followed El Sistema in Venezuela, the greatest classical orchestra movement in history.

Peter Dammann has published several books (pdf-files are on his website), his photos has been widely exhibited and he has received many prizes, among others the Lead Award and the World Press Photo Award.

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