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## LUKADVALISHVILI

### CHALLENGES OF THE GEORGIAN THEATRE IN 1870-1880S IN *ILIA CHKONIA'S PUBLICISM*

Ilia Chkonia is among Georgian patriots of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who felt the role and importance of theatre in the awakening and unifying Georgians as well as contributing to the cultural development of the country.

The patriot writer took great care and concern of newly-established Tbilisi and Kutaisi theatrical companies. In his reviews he praises and stimulates them, and appeals to the Georgian public to participate actively in the life of theatre. The writer himself made every effort to enrich the limited repertoire of the Georgian theatre by translating interesting dramatic pieces of literature from foreign languages, writing plays though he never published them.

I. Chkonia's reviews provide remarkable theoretical thoughts and practical suggestions. According to him, the Georgian theatregoers are not yet esthetically mature for "serious plays" and some of them doze off during the performance, at the beginning it is necessary to provide the society with simple *vaudevilles*, comedies and melodramas, "thus, step by step, preparing them for the national theatre.