

Zaza Burchuladze

title

**Mineral Jazz**

Novel. Bakur Sulakauri Publishing. Tiflis 2003. 176 pages  
Tsinandali Literary Award for Best Novel 2003

The title of the novel says it all! Instead of following a central theme in a tidy and well-behaved manner, the reader is faced with a meandering text full of red-herrings, wild goose chases, circuitous detours and evocations – just like jazz! It is as if the novel has been fed from a fountain of Caucasian spring water, bubbling over with traditional, classical Georgian fables full of oriental magic.

At the very beginning the story appears to be a combination of thriller and family saga or to be more precise, a parody of both. In the dressing room of the circus building in Tiflis, where the Russian state circus is making a guest appearance, the old magician Count Orlov dies just before his act is about to begin. At the same time the Russian circus bear is having a skirmish with a circus-hand, mauls him, escapes and runs off.

The local investigator desperately tries to solve the case, which may simply have been caused by tragic circumstances. The search for the culprits becomes a crazy roller-coaster ride like the capitalism that had been recently introduced to Georgia. The course of the investigation is complicated not only by the colourful but evasive collection of acrobats, jugglers and conjurers from Russia, but also by the apparent involvement of the Ochigava family. And in the end the investigator even ends up on the devil's official website.

The author seems to show little interest in solving the case, but devotes himself more to involving the reader at every unexpected twist and turn of the novel in a cheeky, teasing discussion. In this way the author and reader end up in a parallel discussion about both the possibility and the unlikelihood of straightforward investigations and narrations. The novel is like a tangled web whose kaleidoscopic fragmentation is only completely reassembled in the mind of the reader.

press reviews

"The novel grabs you and does not release you from its knotty entanglement of thoughts until the final page. Neither the subject matter nor the characters appear to be important; as the story progresses the author acts as a demi-god transforming the heroes, or alternatively, rethinking who are to be appointed as protagonists. Nevertheless, every literary element, every word, every sound is of the highest significance in the complex conglomeration of the novel." – KNIGI

"A must-read for anyone who loves semi-fantastic but very down to earth and unbelievably realistic characters." – EVGENI GRISHOVETS

biography

Zaza Burchuladze, born 1973 in Tiflis, started writing after graduating from the Tiflis National Academy of Arts and has since published ten books and screenplays. He translates Russian authors, including Dostoevsky, Sorokin and Bitov, into Georgian. Burchuladze is considered one of the most important writers of post-Soviet Georgian literature. As an underground writer he initially provoked outrage within Georgian society with his scandal topics and language experiments and was long ignored by critics. Since the appearance of his novels he has become a leading intellectual and one of the most promising authors. Zaza Burchuladze lives in Tiflis.

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**awards**

Best Georgian Novel 2011  
Ilia State University Award 2011  
Bakur Sulakauri Award 2008  
Tsinandali Literary Award for Best Novel 2003

**other works**

Adibas  
Instant Kafka  
The Inflatable Angel

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