

## Ana Sikhashvili Interview 2018

(Piano music)

Brittany: Hello MSAB, welcome to today's podcast. In this podcast today we have our exchange student, Ana, who is from the Republic of Georgia. And before meeting her I never even knew that Georgia was actually considered a country! So, Hello there Ana.

Ana: Hello!

Brittany: And how are you on this lovely day? How are you?

Ana: Good, how are you?

Brittany: I'm doing ok, thank you. So, tell us about yourself and your country.

Ana: So, like you said, I'm Ana and I'm 15 years old. Ah, I'm from the Republic of Georgia. So, Georgia is by Russia and it's a really small country so sometimes I think that my country is ah, smaller than Minnesota. (laugh) So yeah, but ah, when foreign people come to my country, they really like that, and also, especially they, they love our food. So yeah.

Brittany: Oh, so what kind of food do you have over there exactly?

Ana: For example, um one of my favorite is cheese in the bread, it's really good.

Brittany: Can you explain that in more detail?

Ana: Like, there's like cheese um, in the bread, like you can bake that.

Brittany: Ooh

Ana: So, I don't know how to explain more. (Laugh)

Brittany: It's kind of like fried bread that we have over here, but instead of baking it you fry it.

Ana: Yeah, and also you can put like there potatoes and milk to it together.

Brittany: Ooh

Ana: So Yeah

Brittany: Interesting

Ana: Yeah, it's real interesting

(Piano music)

Brittany: Can you tell us about your exchange program?

Ana: So, my exchange program is called FLEX, and it means like, um, my exchange program is about like leadership. So if I'm here I'm like a future leader. So, I'm really glad that I'm here because I was waiting for this year for five years. Ah, because when I was 10 years old ah, one of my um, one of my, ah, friend came in the United States ah, through this program so after that it was my dream that oh I have to go there and I was waiting for 15 when I would be like 15 years old. And when I just got 14 years old I just said that I'm going now! (laugh) And I just took um, this test like FLEX test and um, I took just one for one time. And I know some students and they tried two times and 3 times and they couldn't come here, so I'm glad.

Brittany: So, is that considered an entrance requirement to get into the United States then, for like um, the exchange program that you go through? The test you were talking about?

Ana: So yeah, you should um, so you like ah, should write some essays, and um, it's like really, they don't really, they are truly interested about your English, maybe you don't have ah, very good English but they ah, they are interested ah, your ideas, your ah goals, what are you going to do for your country and ah, what is your leaderships skills. You know, if you have leadership skills, and if you are especially ah they really, ah pay attention for like if you are (French), ah friendly.

Brittany: Ah

Ana: Yeah

Brittany: Interesting

Ana: Yeah

Brittany: So how does it feel to be an exchange student?

Ana: It is like you're a representative of your country. Like when you're from, for example when I'm from the Republic of Georgia you know what kind of people live in my country. So, I have to represent my country and it's, it's not really easy for me because I always try to don't get into trouble. (Laugh) Because I want you guys to know that, they're not bad people.

Brittany: Yeah

Ana: So Yeah

(Piano music)

Brittany: I found out that you have an interest in music, can you kind of explain more about that?

Ana: Yeah, I love music, I really love music, so I ah, I've played ah piano for 8 years and I sing um, for 8 years. Also, I was um, in the choir for 7 years. I don't know I really love that years. I have some friends, they were playing too and they just hate it, ah but no I just love it. I so, I had lessons (piano lessons) I had um, every day and sometimes I had a really good teacher and sometimes we were working ah, for 3 hours in a day or something because ah I had, I have had a lot of concerts together. Sometimes 3 of them in a week or something like that. But I was really enjoyed, I don't know. And I, now when I like play the piano it's like when, when I'm sad I'm just going and play the piano and everything like is ok. So, I love it.

Brittany: yeah So um, so how do you learn to play the piano?

Ana: Um, honestly um, braille music is not very, like we don't really use braille music in my country because I don't know maybe we don't have books for that and people are not real interested. So, I had two teachers ah and they were working very hard especially one of them was working very hard, so she like was, for example she played something one phrase for example ah, and after I was trying to repeat that piece. So, yeah it was, it was not easy really, but I have I can say that I, I have very good music memory, like I can really remember very easily music so.

Brittany: Ok, so kind a like your, you're playing by ear basically?

Ana: Yeah

Brittany: Ok interesting. So, what is your favorite kind of music in general then?

Ana: My favorite music...I love classical music, and also, I love French music. I can say that I love French pop, because it's kind of different so, I don't know I like it, and also I love some Italian music too, but I can not say that I don't love my Georgia like music. It's, I just love it ah, because it's really old and it means a lot of things for me.

(Piano Music)

Brittany: Um, what is your favorite piece that you like to play, like anywhere, any where you get a chance to?

Ana: Yeah, I always like, I always want to play um, Georgian songs. Like this song is really, I guess it's really rich for me, ah this song is about ah, the capital of Georgia, hum, and I always play this and sometimes if I want I sing this, I don't know... it's really good. I just, I just enjoy when I play this.

(Piano music: "Song of Tbilisi" ...Ana plays entire song)

Ana: I had, I had ah, lessons everyday but sometimes if I need it I, I've had like 3 hours in a day.

Brittany: Oh, I --

Ana: So, yeah

Brittany: I don't know if I'd want to go through that process.

Ana: (laugh) No, it was really intense for me.

Brittany: Yeah

Ana: It was really, yeah, I was not, yeah ya know I was tired and when I like ah, came it home I was like, oh no, I don't, I don't really want to do my homework but no I have to do it because it's my responsibility and tomorrow I have to, I cannot tell my teacher that oh ya know what, I, I could not do my homework so I was always trying to do my best.

Brittany: So, are you glad you came to the United States for a year?

Ana: Yes I'm glad because um, I have, I already have a very good experiences here so, I've been her for, um, 3 months already and for this started, so yeah and especially I am glad, like I love, I already love my friends and I don't know how to leave you guys so it's really hard for me.

Brittany: Ahh, well we're glad we have you here in our country and hopefully within the next few years or so you might be able to come back.

Ana: I really want to come back here for college and maybe, maybe I'll find out something maybe I'll still, ahh, I'll still get some scholarship. I can not give up. I real, I really love to get some scholarships so (laugh) because here um, I really learned so many things about blind people and for the blind people so when I'll be back in my country I'm going to help and I'm going to tell them that there is some things for the blind people and we can do this here too, so I'm talking about my country we can, I can like help them to ah, get new things for, for the blind people. And ya know I, that's why I want to still come back here, and I'll like study here and also like come back in my country and I'll help them. It's my call and I can say that it's just leadership and I want to be a leader.

Brittany: Thank you so much Ana.

Ana: Thank you!

Brittany: Yeah, your welcome. So, there you have it MSAB. Ana is an amazing 15-year-old, musically talented, young lady who has her whole life ahead of her, and hopefully we will hope to see her back in...who know 5, 10 years from now. So, thank you for tuning in!

(Piano music, played by Ana.)