TRADITIONAL Folk World-Music Latvia

2020



Welcome to the 2020 edition of Native Music!

For already fifteen years, this compilation has presented the newest trends in Latvian ethnic music. Here you will find a wide range of music, from authentic multipart singing to danceable original compositions performed on kokles and bagpipes with the addition of electronics.

Enjoy!

TRACKLIST

- ZeMe Miglas vāli / Clouds of fog (3:13) M: L. Jansone, U. Cīrulis From the album "Visuma Vizošā Tumso" ("The Glimmering Darkness of the Universe"), Lauska / CPL-Music, 2019
- ZeMe Urbānās dzīres / Urban feast (2:17) M: L. Jansone, U. Cīrulis From the album "Visuma Vizošā Tumsa" ("The Glimmering Darkness of the Universe"), Lauska / CPL-Music, 2019
- Tautumeitas Panama (2:40) MA: A. Rancāne, M. Miļevskis, S. Judins T: trad. From the upcoming album
- Tautumeitas Pavasars Pavasara bolss / Spring (springtime bolss) (1:30) MT: trad. From the CD "Dziesmas no Aulejas" ("Songs from Auleja"), self-published / CPL-Music, 2020
- 5. Laiksne Dzīžu, dzīžu vīna pate / I sing all by myself (3:17) MA: B. Indrēvica, D. Liepa, G. Gaujenieks, K. Indrēvics T: trad. From the upcoming album, Lauska
- Auļi Alšvangas dūdu meldiņš / Bagpipe melody from Alšvanga (feat. Suitu dūdenieki, Dūdinieki un bundzinieki) (2:07) MA: K. Bārbals
- Auļi Ozoliņi / Dear oak tree (with Suitu sievas, Suitu vīri, Suitu dūdenieki, Ilža, Otto Trapāns, Tarkšķi, Vilkači) (4:37) MA: E. Kārklis, K. Bārbals, M. Miļevskis T: trad.
- Iļģi Kunigundes un Dabreļa kāzu deja /Wedding dance of Kunigunde and Dabrelis (3:31) MA: M. Muktupāvels — From the album "Sviests 8" ("Butter 8"), Lauska, 2019
- Ansis Jansons Kokļu mežs / Forest of kokles (3:04) MA: A. Jansons From the album "Sviests θ" ("Butter θ"), Lauska, 2019
- 10. Dārdi Divi dienas mežā gāju / I wandered in the forest for two days (4:11) MA: A. Valtera, A. Jansons, I. Zvaigznekalne, J. A. Vītols, K. Vītols, P. Narubins, R. Valters, T. Valmiers. T: trad. From the album "Stipri vārdi" ("Powerful Words"), Lauska, 2019

- 11. Dārdi Austošās saules dziesma / Song of the rising sun (5:08) MA: A. Valtera, A. Jansons, I. Zvaigznekalne, J. A. Vītols, K. Vītols, P. Narubins, R. Valters, T. Valmiers. T: A. Valtera From the album "Stipri vārdi" ("Powerful Words"), Lauska, 2019
- 12. Jauno Jāņu orķestris Saule brauca debesīs / The sun rode in the sky (3:25) M: J. Kaukulis T: trad. — From the album "Saule brauca debesīs: mūzika Rozes Stiebras animācijas filmai" ("The Sun Rode in the Sky: Music for the Animated Film by Roze Stiebra"), Studija Lokomotīve, 2018
- Jauno Jāņu orķestris Selēna / Selena (2:19) M: J. Kaukulis T: trad. From the album "Saule brauca debesīs: mūzika Rozes Stiebras animācijas filmai", Studija Lokomotīve, 2018
- 14. Saucējas Aiz upītes ūzulini / Oaks beyond the river (2:11) MT: trad. From the upcoming album "Dabā" ("In Nature"), Lauska
- 15. Saucējas Pļaunit, bruoļi, pūrva pļovas / Mow the meadows, brothers (2:08) MT: trad. From the upcoming album "Dabā" ("In Nature"), Lauska
- Sventava and Māris Muktupāvels Gotovs beja kara puiseits / The ready young soldier (3:18) MA: M. Muktupāvels T: trad. — From the album "Sibīrijas dziesmas" ("Siberian Songs"), Māris Muktupāvels, 2020
- 17. Sventava and Māris Muktupāvels Viens bēdīgs puika staigāja / A sad young man was wandering (4:14) MA: M. Muktupāvels T: trad. From the album "Sibīrijas dziesmas" ("Siberian Songs"), Māris Muktupāvels, 2020
- Rikši Rudiņs / Autumn (3:46) MA: Ē. Zeps T: trad. From the album "trīp!" ("smear!"), Lauska, 2020
- 19. Rikši Vylks ar kozu / The wolf and the goat (3:01) MA: I. Utāns T: trad. From the album "trīp!" ("smeor!"), Lauska, 2020
- 20. Kārlis Rudra Jirgens Sunrise (4:11) M: K. R. Jirgens From the album *"Till Now"*, self-published, 2020



2. Urbānās dzīres / Urban feast

Photo credit: Edmunds Goldmans

ZeMe

ZeMe (meaning "land") is a duo consisting of kokle player Laima Jansone and DJ Monsta. Both musicians are experienced in a variety of genres and have collaborated with many different musicians. Therefore, as they began working on this project, they decided to do everything the way they wanted to do it. Improvisation is their strong point, and this permeates the ethno-groove sound of their album *Visuma vizošā tumsa* (*The Glimmering Darkness of the Universe*).

"This album tells about the link between two different worlds – between the contemporary and the traditional, between peace and rowdiness, between fragility and the imperturbable, between seriousness and playfulness – which is a poetic and also philosophical way of looking at life," says Jansone.



Publicity photo

Tautumeitas

For already five years Tautumeitas have given audiences a peek into a young woman's thoughts and dreams. With the album *Songs from Auleja* released earlier this year, they introduced the world to sixteen songs from the village of Auleja in Latvia. These songs, based on recordings found in archives, were also unfamiliar to most Latvians. In fact, it is this repertoire of songs that brought Tautumeitas together in the first place. The traditional form of a cappella multipart singing on this album, known as bolsi, is linked with specific times of the year or special celebrations. The texts tell about various natural phenomena as well as events and activities in people's lives.

The springtime bolss is about nature waking up after a cold winter. It is a time of great potential and aspiration. These multipart songs were traditionally sung outdoors, the singers actively interacting with the environment. "Panama" is from Tautumeitas' upcoming album, which, like the group's self-titled debut album, features vocal-instrumental music. According to this song, a young woman's most beautiful and powerful gift is her voice.



Publicity photo

Laiksne

Laiksne's repertoire consists of thoughtful arrangements of traditional Latvian music. Founded in 1993, the folklore group performs not only in concert but also plays dances and takes part in seasonal festivals and family celebrations. Thanks to their empathic understanding and interpretation of the poetic messages contained in folk songs, the group members, most of whom are women, successfully highlight the special atmosphere of each song with simple, unpretentious musical expression. Their knowledge of folklore is very thorough, their repertoire is extensive, and their album themes cover everything from seasonal festivities to daily life and the female experience.

Laiksne's upcoming album is devoted to wedding songs. "I sing all by myself" is about a young woman saying farewell to her sisters and childhood home as she is about to be married.



Photo credit: Gatis Indrēvics

Auļi

The drum and bagpipe music group Auli is known for its powerful, loud and original sound created by six bagpipers, three drummers and a bass player. Listeners both at home and abroad appreciate the group's drive, which seems to literally carry them forward. Auli is an instrumental group, and therefore it is natural that they enjoy collaborating with singers. Last year they created the *Voices of the Ancestors* album and concert programme, collaborating with powerful male singers representing a variety of musical traditions, including Sami joik singer Kai Somby, Mongolian throat singer Batzorig Vaanchig and Austrian yodeller Albin Paulus.

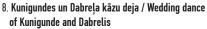
Likewise, during this year's lockdown, Auli developed nontraditional solutions to singing and playing together with others. For example, they invited all of the bagpipe players in Latvia to join together in a song online. This vivid bagpipe melody from Alšvanga is one the oldest known examples of traditional Latvian instrumental music. "Ozoliņi", for its part, presents an original way of being together and inspiring each other at Midsummer. Unable to gather in large groups to celebrate Latvia's favourite seasonal festival this year, Auli invited folklore groups from across the country to record a song together.

* Sviests 8 * (

Every other year, Lauska, Latvia's largest producer and publisher of ethnic culture, releases a compilation titled *Sviests (Butter)*. It contains music by a large variety of musicians representing different styles and experiences, from beginners to professionals, with the goal of giving listeners an insight into the current ethnic music scene in Latvia in all of its colour and energy.



Photo credit: Latvian Television, Lauris Vīksne



lļģi

Iļģi will soon celebrate their 40th anniversary. Beginning as a folklore group based at a cultural centre in Riga in the early 1980s, the group members have devoted their time and energy to Latvian folk music. Their "post-folklore" style is full of love and energy and has no doubt inspired all of the other musicians whose music appears on this album. But Iļģi still have things to say, and audiences are still listening. In recent years, Iļģi have created music for a number of large-scale performances, including the Latvian Song and Dance Festival, where a whole football field full of dancers has performed choreographed patterns to their music. "Wedding dance of Kunigunde and Dabrelis" is an instrumental piece in which the imagined characters of Kunigunde and Dabrelis celebrate.



Photo credit: Andrejs Komarovs

Ansis Jansons

Five years ago, kokle player Ansis Jansons decided to cease performing live and founded Forest of Kokles, a school dedicated to teaching the kokle. He believes anyone can play the traditional Latvian instrument. "My real mission is to help people feel and experience music for themselves," says Jansons. He has developed a teaching method that requires no previous experience with music, and students can already play a piece after their first lesson. Jansons also offers online instruction and lends instruments to those who do not have their own kokle. He finds inspiration in a statement by Latgalian kokle maker and player Donāts Vucins: "Where there is a kokle player, there you'll find a free spirit."



Publicity photo

Dārdi

Eight young people founded Dārdi in 2011. Several of them were born during the Third Awakening of the late 1980s and early 1990s, into families that were active in the folklore movement. The members of Dārdi continue this interest in folk music, adding their own personal touch to arrangements, which are often influenced by the blues. They also pay close attention to the song texts and the symbolism included therein, which is why they named their debut album *Stipri vārdi (Powerful Words)*. They are inspired by the many different layers of meaning they discover, as adults, in the songs they learned as young children.

"I wandered in the forest for two days" has a mythological text. The singer wanders in the forest for two days but sees nothing. On the third day he sees a golden oak tree and a silver river, on the banks of which God's sons prepare a sauna for the Sun, who bathes in it with her maids. "Song of the rising sun" is the only original composition on the album, but like folk songs, it draws inspiration and strength from nature: "Earth my body and water my blood / Air my breath and fire my spirit."



13. Selēna / Selena

Photo credit: Jānis Deinats

Jauno Jāņu orķestris

Jauno Jāņu Orķestris (JJO) grew out of the legendary Latvian rock group Dzelzs Vilks. Now and then the group included a folk song in its set list...until it established a separate group focused on this type of music. In one of its most recent projects, JJO created the music for celebrated Latvian director Roze Stiebra's animated film "The sun rode in the sky". The plot is an original story revolving around the mythical characters Sun, Moon, Death, Wolf and Goat. The Sun and Moon have a daughter, who is kidnapped. Nabašnieks arrives along with Sister and Brother, and they wish to find and bring back the little girl. But there is little time – if she is not rescued within three days, the Sun's daughter will turn into just an ordinary girl. The soundtrack by JJO consists of folk song texts set to original compositions and has been released as a separate album.

"The sun rode in the sky" is the title song from Stiebra's film and tells about the evil wizard who kidnapped the Sun's daughter.



14. Aiz upītes ūzulini / Oaks beyond the river 15. Pļaunit, bruoļi, pūrva pļovas / Mow the meadows, brothers

Photo credit: Jānis Romanovskis

Saucējas

Saucējas, the traditional singing ensemble of the Latvian Academy of Culture, has been studying, singing and popularising traditional Latvian singing styles and techniques for 17 years, with particular attention to local traditions involving multipart singing. The group has most recently been developing a project about traditional singing outdoors in the acoustic environment of nature. The recordings for this project have been made as live takes, with no additional mixing or editing. Unexpected and unique sounds from the surrounding nature are an integral part of each song's acoustic environment.

"Oaks beyond the river", a song from Medneva administrative parish, provides a lightly humorous view of the relationship between a young couple. It was recorded on a springtime evening by a bog at the foot of an ancient hill fort. On "Mow the meadows, brothers", two groups of singers sing different melody variants of a communal work song from Šķilbēni administrative parish. It was recorded on a springtime evening on the banks of a swiftly flowing river.



17. Viens bēdīgs puika staigāja / A sad young man was wandering

Publicity photo

Sventava and Māris Muktupāvels

When serfdom was abolished in Latgale in 1861, the peasants were left with no land of their own, and yet the Russian Empire did everything it could to hinder the buying of land. Peasants were thus forced to move to distant Siberia, where land was cheaper. Ever since the Third Awakening, Latvians have travelled to Siberia to become acquainted with the Latvians still living there and their culture. Their songs, many of which are no longer known in Latvia, have preserved many features from the mid-19th century. The *Sibīrijas dziesmas* (*Siberian Songs*) album is the most recent project by Māris Muktupāvels and the Sventava musical association. By arranging and recording songs documented during folklore fieldwork expeditions, they hope that at least some of these songs will become beloved again in their original homeland.



Photo credit: Jurģis Rikveilis

Rikši

The group Rikši was established in 2011 and represents Latgale, Latvia's easternmost region, which has a different historical and cultural heritage from the rest of the country. The old folk songs were also sung here the longest, until fairly recent times. Latgale is synonymous with hospitality and the joy of spending time together, and this is also the main message of Rikši's music.

The group's third album, *trīp!* (meaning "to smear"), is dedicated to seasonal songs from the Rēzekne area. The songs are very personal and express this young group's joy of making music together. The songs "Autumn" and "The wolf and the goat" are associated with the time of year when Latvia experiences more darkness than light. "Let's let those thoughts go and try to see what we can find beyond all of the illusions we've built up around ourselves over time," say Rikši.



20. Sunrise

Photo credit: Eliora Photography

Kārlis Rudra Jirgens

Kārlis Rudra Jirgens is a Latvian busker who has spent much of his life travelling. He plays many different folk instruments and has developed his own style by experimenting with their sounds. He often performs solo, and therefore his music directly reflects his worldview. Jirgens' album *Till Now* predominantly features the kokle, which he plays in an intriguing and virtuosic manner. He accompanies this traditional Latvian instrument with Indian bansuri flutes, bagpipes, percussion and other instruments.

"Sunrise" is an aural painting. "After the darkness comes light, and after the night comes day, with an optimistic, life-affirming calmness. Everything awakens, the birds greet the sun, and the bagpipes ceremoniously begin to play," Jirgens describes the composition.

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FESTIVALS

Nationwide Latvian Song and Dance Celebration

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International Folklore Festival BALTICA

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International Folk Dance Festival SUDMALINAS

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International Music Festival RIGAS RITMI

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World Music Festival PORTA

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International DRONE FESTIVAL

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Art, music and culture festival KOMĒTA

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International music festival LABA DABA

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Folk / pagan / metal festival ZOBENS UN LEMESS

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Ethno-Festival SVIESTS

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Festival of music, art and local harvest ZEMLIKA

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