

A close-up photograph of a wooden instrument, possibly a traditional Latvian folk instrument. The central focus is a circular, carved wooden piece with a starburst or floral pattern. The pattern consists of eight pointed, leaf-like shapes radiating from a central point, with a small circular hole at the center. The wood is light-colored with visible grain. Several dark, round pegs are visible around the perimeter of the carved piece. Thin, dark strings are stretched across the instrument, some passing through the central hole and others through the outer holes. The background is a blurred green, suggesting foliage.

TRADITIONAL, FOLK, WORLD-MUSIC LATVIA

NATIVE MUSIC 18



Welcome to Native Music 18!

We are happy to announce that in this compilation, you will hear only one song from each artist instead of the usual two. The explanation is that for a long time, the Latvian traditional/folk/world music scene has not been as vibrant and interesting as it has been this year – 2023 – the year when Latvians from all over the world gathered to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Song festival tradition and the “Native Music” compilation celebrates its coming of age.

Latvian Music Information Centre

TRACKLIST

1. ZeMe — **Vēvers**, 2:15, M: Laima Jansone, Uldis Cīrulis, singls (2023)
2. Banga — **Kvašnovas Talka**, 2:07 MT: trad., from CD "Talka" (Lauska, 2023)
3. Raxtu Raxti — **Saule pina vainadziņu**, 5:18 M: trad., Kristīne Kalniņa T: trad. From CD "Vīdū saule" (Raxti Music Management, 2022)
4. Otaņķu Etnogrāfiskais Ansamblis — **Ai, nama māmīna, dar' duretīnas**, 1:43, MT: trad. From CD "Ciemā iēcu ķekatās" (Lauska, 2022)
5. Auļi — **Man Bij' Kaltis Kumeliņis**, 3:17 M: Mārtiņš Miļevskis T: trad., from CD "Ķekatās" (Lauska, 2022)
6. Laimas Muzykanti — **Bandenieka rudzi**, 3:11 M: trad., Armands Varšlavāns, Arturs Uškāns, Ilze Fārte, Inga Zeile, Matīss Uškāns, Sintija Šteinkopfa, Tatjana Gruničeva T: trad., from CD "Turu burul" (Laimas Muzykanti, 2023)
7. Māsas Dimantas Sisters — **Celies Jāņa diena**, 3:56 M: trad., Laima Dimanta T: trad. From CD "Celies Jāņa diena" (Dimanta Management, 2023)
8. Ilģi — **Ceļatiesi, bāleliņi**, M: trad., Māris Muktupāvels T: trad., from CD "Mēs deviņi bāleliņi" (Ilģi/Melodia MA, 2021)
9. Very Cool People feat. Paula Saija — **Rikšiem**, 3:52 MT: Elvijs Grafčovs, Jānis Kalve, Laura Rozenberga, Māris Jēkabsons, Paula Saija, trad., Single (Very Cool People, 2023)
10. Tautumeitas — **Rise Up!**, 4:11 M: trad., Asnate Rancāne T: trad. from CD "Skrejlejš" (Tautumeitas, 2022)
11. Svīres — **Sūr rinda**, 3:55, M: trad., Zane Jurēvica T: trad., from CD "Pūrs" (Svīres, 2020)
12. Māris Briēžkalns Quintet un Biruta Ozoliņa — **Rudiņš bolšs**, 3:37 M: trad., Māris Briēžkalns, Biruta Ozoliņa, Raimonds Macats, Pēteris Liepiņš, Viktors Ritovs T: trad., from CD "Latgalian evergreens" (Mūsdienu mūzikas centrs, 2023)
13. Umala Tevi — **Migla**, 3:36 M: trad., Lauma Bērza T: trad., from upcoming CD "Birch bark letters" (CPL-Music/Native Vibes, 2023)
14. Jauno Jāņu Orķestris — **Visapkārt gaisma ausa**, 3:29 M: Juris Kaukulis T: trad., from CD "Balts" (LNKC, 2023)
15. TKP / tā kā pērn — **Meža meita**, 3:17 M: Ēriks Zeps T: trad., from CD "Balts" (LNKC, 2023)
16. Laiksne — **Ai, jūs puīši**, 3:54 M: Latviešu tautasdziesma, Gatis Gaujēnieks, Baiba Indrēvica, Lauma Garkalne, Vīneta Romāne, Kaspars Indrēvics, Imanta Nīgale, Dina Liepa T: trad., from CD "Sviests 10" (Lauska, 2023)
17. Krāce — **Līvānu polka**, 2:23 M: trad., grupa Krāce, from CD "Sviests 10" (Lauska, 2023)
18. Saucējas — **Tumba**, 2:04 M: trad., Janta Meža, Elīna Ellere, Vīneta Romāne, Signe Pujāte, Katrīna Liepa, Kristīne Jansone, Zane Reitere T: trad., from CD "Sviests 10" (Lauska, 2023)
19. Rahu the Fool — **Nāve**, 3:42 M: trad., Pēteris Narubins T: trad., single (CPL-Music/Rahu the Fool, 2023)
20. JUUK — **Balāde par pulkvedi**, 4:26 MT: Oskars Jansons from CD "Indulgenču tirgotāji" (Biedriba HJ, 2019)

**ZEME****1. VĒVERS**

"ZeMe" (land) is a duo composed of Laima Jansone, the most prominent soloist of the Latvian ethnographic kokle, and DJ Monsta (Uldis Cirulis), an experienced electronic music artist. Laima's improvisation skills are well-honed, allowing her to interpret traditional melodies in her own unique style, and also create original compositions through the discovery of new possibilities with this traditional instrument. DJ Monsta broadened his horizons through many years of collaboration with jazz and classical musicians, and therefore has a wide range of musical techniques at his disposal.

The duo ZeMe create instrumental music, which always has an interesting story and background as its basis, possibly an adventure. In 2023 you will hear the composition "Vēvers". As you can guess from the title of the piece, it is a story about weaving. This time the adventurous spirit has taken ZeMe to the weavers' workshop, where the tuned weaving loom and spinning wheel both now participate in a piece of music that could be good for dancing.

**BANGA****2. KVAŠNOVAS TALKA**

"Banga" (Surge) is a group of youths whose activities go far beyond merely musical expression. In Latvia such collective is called a folklore group - the core of their activity is the desire to understand ancient traditions. This includes archaeological costumes as well as mask-making skills, celebrating annual festivals together, and playing a wide range of instruments: the kokle, stabule (flute), bagpipes, ģīga (a two-stringed bowed zither), drums, mouth harp and mandolin. This enterprising group of young people are the important link to create a dialogue with those from their generation and traditional culture. They have a deep interest in the relevance of this culture today and have the energy and knowledge to regularly promote it.

"Banga" excels in traditional singing. In 2022, the group released its debut album "Talkā" (At the working bee). It features polyphonic songs to be sung outdoors and instrumental melodies associated with working in the fields and partying afterwards. The long list of 25 songs represents all the cultural and historical regions of Latvia. The performance combines strong vocals, a historically informed interpretation of songs and joyful enthusiasm. The song "Kvašnovas talka" represents the traditional bourdon polyphony of Northern Latgale.



RAXTU RAXTI

3. SAULE PINA VAINADZIŅU

Raxtu Raxti is another example of Latvians enjoying being involved in large musical groups. The core of the group is a union of musicians from a clan of venturesome folk musicians and professional pop musicians. When the group started out, the repertoire consisted mainly of folk songs by the legendary composer Imants Kalniņš adding a folksy mood, which were interpreted for the first time by this ensemble using instruments such as bagpipes and kokles. Later, the repertoire was expanded with other compositions and arrangements of Latvian folk songs.

The song "Saule pina vainadziņu" is from the band's sixth studio album "Vidū saule", released last year. The music can be described as a folk fantasy accessible to a wide range of listeners, while the harmonious and musically polished orchestra of folk instruments and vocals also increasingly highlight various nuances of traditional techniques, which testifies to the band's desire to delve into elements of traditional music. The song "Saule pina vainadziņu" is accompanied by a tetrachordal melody of the stabule, one of the few documented (written down) melodies performed on the traditional flute. The song features the polyphony of bourdon singing.



OTAŅĶU ETNOGRĀFISKAIS ANSAMBLIS

4. AI, NAMA MĀMĪNA, DAR' DURETĪNAS

We can thank several generations of singers from Nica, Barta and Otaņķi for the fact that nowadays we can still listen to homophonic and bourdon polyphony – so characteristic of Southern Kurzeme – performed by the inhabitants of local villages. The ensembles express themselves through traditional culture, typical for this region – by celebrating family events, seasonal festivals, wearing traditional clothing, highlighting their culinary heritage, yet with a special focus on singing. The villages of Southern Kurzeme, one of which is Otaņķi – comprise the few islands of traditional polyphony in Latvia. If Southern Kurzeme was reknowned in the 20th century for being a resounding island with rich historical material and unique singing styles performed by an older generation of singers, then at the end of the first quarter of the 21st century, the ensemble is a unique example of how close ties between all generations and a love and thirst for knowledge can permeate authentic traditional music making. The singers range in age from pre-school to retirement.

The song "Ai, nama māmina, dar' duretīnas" is sung as the characters of the masked procession try to break into a house. This ancient melody, with its ever-changing lyrics but with the same theme and performed by the same people, can also be heard on the album 'Ķekatās' by the bagpipe and drum group Auļi, which focuses on songs of the snowy season.


AUĻI
5. MAN BIJ' KALTIS KUMELIŅIS

"Auļi" have also chosen mask parades as the theme of their new album. In addition to the Otaņķu Ethnographic Ensemble, a number of other singers are members of this group - this Auļi album features instrumental pieces with bagpipes and drums accompanied by vocals. While previous albums titled "Gadalokos" (2016) and "Visapkārt" (2020) featured compositions written for an instrumental ensemble, which thematically explored traditional cultural themes, their albums "Līgo, jānīti" (2022) and "Kekatās" (2022) feature various Latvian folk songs which come to visit the sonic world of Auļi. These songs highlight the text and bring the composition another dimension. For almost 20 years now the group still continues to delight audiences in Latvia and also at the world's best festivals with their energetic performances, filled with ancient strength. The fact that Auļi is dynamic not only in its music, but also in the band's activities is evidenced by the addition of male vocals who have joined Auļi at concerts as members of the core line-up, making the sound even more colourful and suggestive. These vocals can also be heard in the song "Man Bij' Kaltis Kumelīņis" from their latest album "Kekatās".



LAIMAS MUZYKANTI

6. BANDENIEKA RUDZI

"Laimas Muzykanti" started by playing traditional dances and continues to play songs and dances for energetic people inspired by folk music. Over the years, the musicians have experimented with different sounds, instruments and unusual combinations of music, for example, combining the sounds of folklore, rock and opera, electronic music and an ethnographic ensemble, but primarily the ensemble sticks to a classic rock band line-up, complemented by folk instruments. The line-up, which features an electric guitar and a vibrant bass, as well as vocal harmonies, all appear to signify the group members' love of 70s/80s rock, prog rock and funk. The leader of the band - the lead male vocalist and accordionist Arturs Uškāns is a versatile personality who at one stage even united the local vowels of the village of Vabole in an ethnographic ensemble. His experience and knowledge of folklore allows "Laimas Muzykanti" to balance between all the varied styles that are combined in their music. Because of their strong sound, "Laimas Muzykanti" are one of the most sought-after representatives of Latvian ethnic music on the big stage.

This year, a new album was released after a fairly long break. It is called "Turu buru!" (I'm keeping the sail up!), which can probably be translated in the context of a vigorous resumption of activity after a moment of silence.



MĀSAS DIMANTAS SISTERS

7. CELIES JĀŅA DIENA

The Dimantas sisters Katrīna and Laima come from a large family of nine. Growing up during the Latvian folk revival of the 1990s, the sisters began traveling internationally and performing at a young age. They are musicians who bring about the joy of Latvian togetherness in the most literal sense of the word, entertaining large masses of people with their resonant and sunny vocals.

Katrīna is more boisterous and loud, her slightly older sister Laima is more composed and her timbrally rich and well-developed voice has a more subdued energy. Both sisters have versatile personalities and can play several instruments. Their live performances feature Katrīna playing the violin and ukulele, occasionally the cello, and Laima playing the kokle, violin, and recorder.

The piece "Celies jāņa diena" (Rise, John's Day) features a summer solstice song with the characteristic refrain "Ligo, ligo!" The tone of the music is uplifting, thematically following the content of the text - the fertility deity Jānis is glorified, lifted aloft in a gentle voice and shouted out in rapturous praise.



ILĢI

8. CEĻĀTIESI BĀLELIŅI

The group "Ilģi" has been playing since the early 1980s and for many years has been the most recognisable ethnic music band in Latvia. From the outset, their sense of mission to promote folklore has been intertwined with a desire to make music creatively.

The classic rock line-up is complemented by Māris Muktupāvels' bagpipe and kokle playing, as well as Ilga Reizniece's iconic 'vijolēšana', or violining (which, like postfolklore, is a playful name she gave to fiddling, referring to specific musical expressions of herself and her members) and kokle-playing.

But in fact it all started from the other end – starting with the kokle, bagpipes, violin and after some time the guitar, drums and bass guitar were added, forming the line-up we have known as Ilģi for several decades now.

The band's live performances are in great demand, especially the social folk dance nights led by Ilģi. The band has toured all over the world. Ilģi has been awarded the Latvian Music Award for Best Contemporary Folk Music Album of the Year six times. The song "Ceļātiesi, bāleliņi" comes from the band's latest album – a 65-verse folk song "Mēs devīni bāleliņi" recorded on the subsequent 9 tracks. Ilga Reizniece's voice invites the brothers to chase and rescue their little sister, who has already been taken away by (to be married to) strangers.



VERY COOL PEOPLE FEAT. PAULA SAIJA

9. RIKŠIEM

Very Cool People is a band whose instrumentation and performers claim that jazz-fusion and energy in concerts screams – funk and free. The band has been actively touring since 2007, playing a lot of high quality, interesting and danceable instrumental music, and have also created popular concert programmes with the best Latvian singers, released several albums which have been awarded with Latvian Music Record of the Year awards in jazz music and other categories.

In recent years the group has also become increasingly fond of ethnic music, including Balkan and klezmer elements, with a number of compositions including Latvian folk song arrangements.

The new single "Rikšiem" fuses elements of 1990s electronic music, jazz, and folk songs - the singing parts are performed by the young and talented singer Paula Saija, and the rapping performed by VCP's trombonist Laura who has now become known in the group as MC teicēja. Both girls are the main characters on the song's eclectic video.



TAUTUMEITAS

10. RISE UP! (TRIBUTE TO MARIJA GOLUBOVA)

"Tautumeitas" is a group that consists of six girls, Asnate, Aurēlija, Laura L., Ilona, Laura V. and Gabriēla. The girls make use of Latvian folk melodies and lyrics, create strong harmonies and, with the help of skilled musicians, fuse them with modern beats. The girls are also creative in their visuals - their costumes and crowns reflect how close the "traditional" and the "futuristic" really are. Their look is cosmic, yet also authentic, strong and feminine.

In spring 2022, the band released their latest album, "Skrejceļš" (Runway). "Tautumeitas" have collaborated with the popular Latvian music producer Reinis Sējāns and Swedish composer and music producer Povel Olsson, and changed several members and the band's team in the process, marking a new phase in the band's activities and quality. The song "Rise up!" features audio material sung by Marija Golubova, owner of a powerful voice and fountain of knowledge about the folksongs of Latgale. This song is very special for the group "Tautumeitas", just as important as the Latgalian language and culture.



11. SŪR RĪNDA

"Svires" (Swifts) is a trio of young and energetic flautists, who started making music in 2015. Their arrangements of folk music showcase the speed and technical dexterity of the swifts, performing contemporary flute techniques, including the combining of the flute with vocals. In addition to the classical flute, for many years the group members have also been playing traditional flutes and, to add variety to their sound, various accompanying instruments such as the mandolin, kokle and percussion instruments. The musicians are inspired by the repertoire that attracts them to folk music - sometimes these are folk dances, at other times traditional polyphony, also original music.

The piece "Sūr rinda", from their debut album "Pūrs", is a playful arrangement of the folk song of one of Latvia's indigenous people, the Finno-Ugric Livs. It is one of the most recognisable Liv songs, once popularised by the pioneers of the folk revival and representatives of Liv culture, the Stalti family and the ensemble Skandinieki. In recent years especially, we have been trying to pay extra attention and show respect to the Liv cultural space, because unfortunately the native speakers of the language itself can be counted on the fingers of one hand.



MĀRIS BRIEŽKALNS QUINTET UN BIRUTA OZOLIŅA

12. RUDIŅS BOLSS

Biruta Ozoliņa is a Latvian musician and pedagogue from Rēzekne. Her name has been inscribed in Latvian ethnic music since the mid-1980s, when the talented Latgalian girl, while studying piano at the Academy of Music, became interested in traditional music and sought out those who were already elderly at that time, yet were experts in local music-making traditions that were still poorly documented. Taking part in expeditions brought Biruta together with great female singers who provided great insight and inspiration.

"Latgalian evergreens" is the latest album of the quintet of the great percussionist and organiser of Latvian jazz music, Māris Briēžkalns. Biruta performs 3 songs on it, Rudiņš bolss is the opening track featuring the voice of Biruta Ozoliņa. Rudiņš bolss is one of the most beautiful and complex songs sung by the unique singer and storyteller Domicella Līpeņa (1901). She also features in two other songs. The rest of the album is instrumental jazz, with the best Latvian jazz musicians playing around with well-known Latgalian folk melodies and other pieces dedicated to Latgale.

**UMALA TEVI****13. MIGLA**

Umala Tevi [yumala tevi:] is the creative spirit or solo project of ethnomusicologist and musician Lauma Bērza. Since childhood, the musician has had a very close relationship with her native Latvian language and nature. She grew up in a post-Soviet small town, forming her first indie/grunge band at the age of 12. Lauma has a special interest in ancient songs and their interpretation, the four-line lyrics of which are rich and multi-layered in content, and tend to be surprisingly topical. In addition to songs with a narrow melodic range, where the text is at the forefront of the performance, Lauma has a particular professional interest in the wide and sonorous songs of jubilation: a particular style of herding calls appear to have once existed in her home region of Vidzeme. They are distantly related to Alpine yodelling and Swedish kulning.

The song "Migla" (Mist) is the first single from the debut album "Vēstules uz bērza tāss" (Birch Bark Letters). It was originally sung by Domicella Lipēņa, who is known for her melismatic and rhythmically interesting style of singing. The melody and its flow are reproduced from the original, but Lauma performs the text the way her "mammamma" (grandmother) used to speak, because it just sounds more genuine. Using looping, she plays all the instruments and effects herself.



JAUNO JĀŅU ORĶESTRIS

14. VISAPKĀRT GAISMA AUSA

Jauno Jāņu Orķestris (JJO) was formed, using rock band Dzelzs vilks as its basis. This band, which started playing heavy metal in the early nineties, had developed their own signature sound. Both "Dzelzs vilks" and JJO share the expressive vocals by Juris Kaululis, an untamed sound, and Latvianness - all of the songs are performed in Latvian and the band names are only used in the Latvian language. Perhaps it is the cultivation of their own style - Latvian and creative rock music - that makes folksongs fit so freely into their music. JJO's creative work is characterised by human inner experience and sweet irony. It also features songs about the most ambiguous episodes of Latvian folklore. Alongside the creative vocalist, who has also composed music for films and theatre productions, and the keyboardist Kaspars Tobis, who is an experienced electronic music artist, is Ieva Strode, who developed her personal style of violin playing and singing by playing Latvian dances. JJO's well-developed style always makes their music easily recognisable. The love of their audience is proven by the fact that this group was one of the groups who wrote the music for the performance "Balts" at the XXVII Latvian Song and XVII Dance Festival.



TKP / TĀ KĀ PĒRN

15. MEŽA MEITA

As the members of TKP themselves have explained, the group comprises "average Latvians", mixing Liv calmness with Latgalian fervour, and also Latgalian sentiment with Liv immortality. The core of TKP - initially a duo - was formed by Julģi Stalte (violin, vocals), a member of the legendary folklorist family and leader of the group "Skandinieki" which promotes Liv culture, and the musically energetic Eriks Zeps (accordion, vocals), but gradually the ensemble expanded to include another violin, bass, guitar and mandolin.

The original duo was formed by playing together - teaching and promoting Latvian traditions. The group has programmes devoted to the seasons, as well as those devoted to each cultural and historical region. TKP is also one of the groups whose heartfelt and high quality interpretations of folk music have led to them being one of the musicians whose music accompanied the dance steps of thousands of folk dancers in the 150th anniversary performance "Balts" at the Latvian Song Festival.

**LAIKSNE****16. AI JŪS PUIŠĪ**

The folklore group "Laiksne" (which means "ūdenroze" in the East Latvian dialect) performs carefully arranged Latvian traditional music. The members of the group share a love of folk songs. These songs were once sung by peasants in their everyday lives, so it is surprising how amazingly imaginative folk songs can be, combining the mundane and the supernatural. The musicians' knowledge of folklore and their repertoire is very broad, and this year the group Laiksne celebrates its 30th anniversary.

Over the years, the group has released several albums, staying true to their acoustic sound by combining the interplay of the iconic instrument – the ethnographic kokle – and resonant vocals. The new single "Ai, jūs, puiši" is a summer solstice song with the characteristic refrain "Ligo, ligo", which, in poetic parallels between nature and human life, tells the story of the relationship between young men and women. The light and sonorous singing and kokle playing radiate a refreshing feeling of Latvian freedom and joy.


KRĀCE
17. LĪVĀNU POLKA

For a long time, historians have not been certain about whether and at what times to distinguish a separate Selonian cultural area, either by grouping the Selonians with the Latgallians or by forgetting to mention them completely. In recent years, when the cultural and historical regions that make up Latvia have been highlighted, the study and promotion of the heritage of Sēlija has been given special importance.

The Selonian traditional music group "Krāce" researches, practices and promotes the traditional music of the Selonians. It was founded by Iveta Tāle, a researcher, practitioner and lecturer at the Academy of Culture, when she returned to the area of her birth a few years ago. Her interest in folklore and traditional music began in the early 1980s when she met the leaders of the rapidly growing folklore movement at that time: Helmi and Dainis Stalts, Artis Kumsārs, Ilga Reizniece, Valdis Muktupāvels and others. In 2003 she founded and until 2021 was the leader of the Latvian Academy of Culture traditional singing group "Saucējas", developing and staging several unique concert programmes dedicated to Latvian singing traditions.

Līvāni is a well known town in Latgale near Daugava river which separates both regions. "Līvānu polka" is a joyful dance tune played by small vocal instrumental group. Singing in Selonian dialects "Krāce" tells a playful story about visiting Līvāni.



SAUCĒJAS

18. TUMBA

"Saucējas" always learn the dialects that correspond with the location of a song, search for information about the way it should sound and pay attention to other conditions to bring out the natural beauty of the folk song. The members of the group share a common goal - to learn and promote traditional Latvian singing styles and techniques. "Saucējas" specialize in traditional polyphony - their repertoire includes various types of traditional Latvian polyphony - both the ancient polyphony of burdon and songs of later origin. The repertoire of "Saucējas" is created by working with audio recordings, sheet music which has recorded traditional songs.

The last major work of "Saucējas" - the double album "Dabā" (In nature), was notable for its thorough research and elements of reconstruction, which included not only historically informed performances of the singing styles, but also the appropriate time of year and the time of day was chosen for the songs. Due to its impressive size (2 CDs and a book), the work provides a unique and broad-ranging insight into Latvian traditional vocal music. The life space for this music until the first half of the 20th century was primarily the environment of the natural landscape, the conditions of which significantly influenced the content, form and performance of the songs.

The song "Tumba", on the other hand, is a step by "Saucējas" in the direction of a creative use of vocals - the broad and sonorous vocals also form an instrumental-style accompaniment.



RAHU THE FOOL

19. NĀVE

An ensemble of five musicians who perform Latvian and world folk songs, American folk music and blues in a jug band style - with washboard, guitar, mandolin, violin, double bass, soprano saxophone and vocals. 2019 saw the release of their debut double album, and now the first single from their forthcoming second album is out, featuring both original songs and folk music covers in the style they have developed over the years, with a special place for dances - balfolk or its local variant, baltfolk.

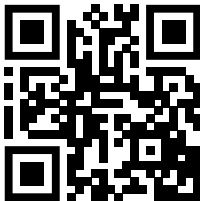
If anything, death unites all the world's inhabitants. The piece "Nāve" (Death) combines the Latvian dancing game "Nāve, nāve, nāc jau drīz" (Death, death, come soon) and the Appalachian "Oh death" refrain. In recent years, the world has become more real and direct and at the same time like a horror story about the past or possibly an uncomfortable dystopia. The song's video, filmed two years before the song itself, during the second winter of the pandemic, shows the characters killing each other on a Latvian farm.


JUUK
20. BALĀDE PAR PULKVEDI

Juuk is a group of professional musicians from the Latvian alternative, rock, folk and jazz scene. The core members are Sniedze Praulīna, Edgars Šubrovskis and Oskars Jansons. Together with the rhythm section, they create original music influenced by folk-rock, dreampop, American folk and sacred music, with an emphasis on lyrics that give the songs a philosophical side. The songs and arrangements are created by playing both rock and acoustic instruments (drums and percussion, bass guitar and banjo, guitars, violin and flute), thus combining an academic, intelligent tone with the directness and simplicity of rock and folk, and at the same time preserving the melody of a ballad and occasionally also Latvian melancholy, so characteristic of Latvians.

The band has released 4 albums, including an album of alternative music for children and their most recent effort "Muļķa stabule", which features original music composed for ballads by Baltic poets. This time we present our Native music listeners "Balāde par pulkvedi" (Ballad of the Colonel) from the band's debut album. Each verse of the song contains a different impression of the onboard and land adventures of a military ship captain. As in all Juuk's songs, the music is arranged so that the text and the instruments harmonise and the music dramatically emphasises the narrative of the text.

Concept & Text: *Lauma Bērza*
Translation: *Daina Grosa*
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