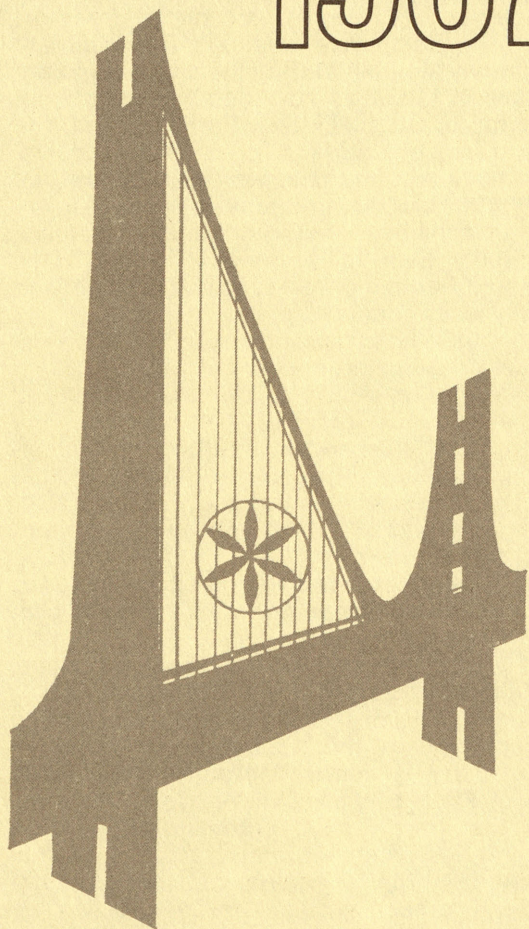


Jun 30-July 4

1967



LATVIAN SONG FESTIVAL
SAN FRANCISCO
CALIFORNIA

Let these few words introduce you to Latvian

history

Latvia is situated on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. The Latvians and their neighbors, the Lithuanians, belong to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European family of nations. The Latvian language is considered one of the oldest.

Once the Baltic peoples occupied a great territory. The Baltic rule extended from Oder to present day Moscow. During the middle ages the Kingdom of Lithuania governed territories from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Part of Latvia, the grand duchy of Courland, possessed a considerable navy and had colonies in Africa and the New World. However, Germanic, Slavic and Scandinavian expansion reduced Baltic territories, and finally their lands were incorporated in Slavic and Germanic states. By 1795 all Latvian territory was conquered by the Russians.

There have been many uprisings against Russian rule during the nineteenth century culminating in the revolution of 1905. On November 18, 1918, Latvia regained her freedom. The country was independent until World War II when it was invaded by both the German and the Russian armies and at the end forcibly incorporated into the U.S.S.R. despite objections from the Western powers.

The territory of Latvia compares in size to the combined New England states. Its present population exceeds 2 million people. About 1/2 million Latvians are scattered all over the globe, 100,000 of which are living in America.

Today Latvia is still the most advanced and developed part of the U.S.S.R. colonial empire. The industry is centered around three major ports of **Riga**, **Liepaja**, and **Ventspils**. Main exports are: bacon, dairy products, sugar, fish, lumber, glass, cement, fertilizers, drugs, machinery, electronics equipment, textiles, plastics, and rubber goods. Latvia's greatest resources of energy are three large hydroelectric power stations on the river **Daugava** capable of producing over 1.5 billion kwhr annually. There is also a nuclear power station.



Enthralled in epic melodies of

songs

The Latvian folksongs or **dainas** constitute the richest cultural treasure of the Latvian nation. In a seemingly simple manner, yet poetic and richly colored, the dainas reflect Latvia through the ages. The dainas are the literary and musical expression of the Latvian concept of life and deity, mores and events. They have not only literary and musical, but also philosophical and historical value.

The dainas represent a unique folk epic and their subject matter is the totality of human life. The main emphasis is on: high ethical standards, religious beliefs, joy of work and nature, a profound love of the native land, and the hatred of oppression. Women have been the principal creators of the dainas — hence their abundance of human sympathy and strikingly feminine character.

The dainas originated mainly between the 13th and 16th centuries, yet the subject matter and the form of some indicate a prehistoric origin. Some dainas have been recorded as early as 1208. However, the most significant collections of the dainas were made by Krisjanis Barons (1835-1923) and Dr. Karlis Straubergs. They have also been collected by such great personalities as the German philosopher Johann Gothfried Herder, the British novelist Sir Walter Scott, and the American dainologist Uriah Katzenellenbogen.

Up to 1940 as many as 957,000 variant texts were collected, including 60,080 original verses. About 12,000 original melodies and 8,000 variations of tunes were also recorded, and their number continues to grow.

The dainas have been a source of inspiration for the entire nation, especially for our composers. Consequently, periodic song festivals have been held in Latvia since 1873 and have turned into a great cultural manifestation. Today these festivals are being held all over the world. Now for the first time one is being offered to you for your enjoyment in San Francisco.



Enlivened through ages in ethnic

dances

Folk dances, reflecting the rather serene Northern character of the Latvian Nation, form an important part of its cultural fabric. Many of these dances originated in the period from the 13th to the 16th centuries, but some of them are considerably older.

Some dances, portraying important events in life or the seasons of nature, are ritualistic. Many of them imitate the rhythmical movements of the sun, the symbol of life, across the arc of the universe. Others, noted for their rapid movements or high jumps, and performed around trees, burning logs or round objects, were a part of magic ritual, associated with certain festivities. Dances performed during Halloween season and in January were supposed to bring fertility to the fields and herds.

Other dances were associated with baptisms, weddings and funerals. The ones performed at the weddings introduced the young brides to all phases of housekeeping and to the entire cycle of life. Those performed on the second day after the funeral tried to relieve sadness and express belief in an afterlife.

Still other Latvian dances playfully stress simple joy in pure movement itself without any symbolism. Many of these are circle dances for as many as sixteen couples. Often, the numbers of men and women are not equal, or the dances are for men or women only. The dominant formation is the square, made up of four or eight couples. All these dances require great precision since many of the figures are extremely complex.

The musical accompaniment for the dances was usually provided by simple wood winds, horns, timpani, bells, bagpipes, or a string instrument called the **kokle**, which resembles the ancient zither. Although, nowadays the piano or the accordion is often used instead of these ancient instruments. Sometimes verses related to the movements of the dance are sung to enhance the performance.



Portrayed in lasting beauty through

art, craft

Latvians have lived in their present territory for 4000 years, and the culture they have developed through the ages is reflected in folksongs, legends and folk art. The ancient Latvian religion recognized several deities, but only one God. Each deity was depicted by a basic design demonstrated in arts and crafts.

Original Latvian art forms and designs, some of which are over 3000 years old, have been reconstructed from findings in archaeological excavations or handed down from generation to generation. The unique, yet modern, Latvian arts and crafts find ornamental and practical application in everyday life.

Latvian craftsmen decorated clothing, tools, weapons, pottery, furniture, dwellings and boats with ornaments, mostly geometric in design, with good sense of proportion and beautiful color combinations. Each composition is unique and duplications are rare.

Latvians attending folk festivals still wear costumes which are reproductions of attire used 1000 years ago. Each garment and design has some specific significance. For example, young girls wear crowns or bands while married women wear scarfs.

Latvian jewelry, too, reflects ancient customs. Hellenic Greece and Rome knew the Baltic area as the land of mysterious amber or "electron", considered more valuable than gold. This same amber is still extensively used by Latvian craftsmen in designing their characteristic jewelry. Although the patterns and figures are standard and very old, the design elaborations made from them depend on the artist and vary with each piece of work.

Modern Latvian ceramics, leathercraft, metalwork, textiles and woodwork are essentially based on ancient designs. Textiles are used extensively for interior decorations, such as tapestries, tablecloths, etc. Often several techniques are combined in order to produce a more decorative creation of applied art.



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LATVIAN FOLK DANCES

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O F E V E N T S

CIVIC AUDITORIUM

Sunday, July 2, 2:00 p.m.

Approximately 400 singers from Western States
in national costumes accompanied by
Symphony Orchestra

Tickets at \$5.00, \$4.00, \$3.00

CIVIC AUDITORIUM

Monday, July 3, 8:00 p.m.

Presenting over 100 folkdancers in colorful
national costumes

Tickets at \$3.50, \$3.00, \$2.50

JACK TAR HOTEL

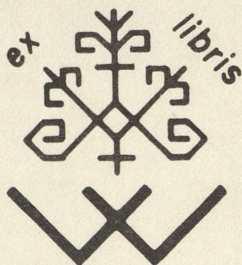
July 1-3, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Original paintings, sculpture and artworks
created by Latvian artists, some items will be on
sale. Also there will be a philatelic exhibit.

One time admission to the Art Exhibition: .75c

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>> MARGERS ŠĒFERS <<



LATVIA

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