

AN INVITATION

TO ATTEND



## THE EIGHTH WEST COAST LATVIAN SONG FESTIVAL

SAN FRANCISCO

July 4 through 8

1979

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

Mill Valley, CA 94941  
303 Vista Linda Drive  
Tel. (415) 383-4530

## CALENDAR OF MAIN EVENTS

Wednesday — July 4, 1979

**Opening Ceremonies** 12:45 P.M. Admission Free  
St. Francis Hotel  
Union Square  
San Francisco

**Church Service** 3:00 P.M. Admission Free  
St. Paulus Luth. Church  
Eddy & Gough Streets  
San Francisco

**Sacral Music Recital** 4:30 P.M. Admission \$4.00  
St. Paulus Luth. Church  
Eddy & Gough Streets  
San Francisco

Organist Anita Rundans from Toronto, Canada. Vocal ensemble "Solaris" from Los Angeles, under the direction of Daira Cilnis.

**"Kolibri" Concert** 8:00 P.M. Admission \$7.00 & \$6.00  
Masonic Auditorium  
California & Taylor  
San Francisco

Ten young musicians from Boston, under the direction of Peteris Aldins, singing and playing a variety of modern and ancient instruments in a program of folk song arrangements.

Thursday — July 5, 1979

**Popular Music Concert** 2:00 P.M. Admission \$6.00  
St. Francis Hotel  
Union Square  
San Francisco

Popular and folk music arrangements performed by two youthful vocal groups: "Staburadze" from Seattle and "Līča vēji" from San Francisco.

**Theatre Performance** 7:00 P.M. Admission \$8.00, \$7.00 & \$6.00  
Herbst Theatre  
Veterans Building  
Van Ness & McAllister  
San Francisco

A play in Latvian — "Omartija kundze" (Madame Omartijs) by Anslavs Eglitis, directed by Laimonis Silins.

Friday — July 6, 1979

**Folk Dancing Performance** 1:00 P.M. Admission \$8.50, \$7.50 & \$6.00  
Masonic Auditorium  
California & Taylor  
San Francisco

Over 150 dancers in national costume performing a variety of Latvian folk dances, some in the ancient tradition, some incorporating modern-day choreography, accompanied by folk singer groups, soloists and musicians of the San Francisco Symphony.

**Prose and Poetry Reading** 4:30 P.M. Admission \$5.00  
St. Francis Hotel  
Union Square  
San Francisco

Latvian poets and prose writers reading their most recent works — in Latvian.

**Classical Music Recital** 7:30 P.M. Admission \$8.00 & \$7.00  
Masonic Auditorium  
California & Taylor  
San Francisco

A rendition of Latvian classical music, performed by: Arturs Ozolins — internationally known pianist from Toronto • Ileana Petersons — mezzosoprano, soloist with the Stockholm Royal Opera • Milda Grimma-Strauss — soprano from San Francisco • Hugo Strauss — pianist and professor of music from San Francisco.

Saturday — July 7, 1979

**Festival Concert** 2:00 P.M. Admission \$8.50, \$7.50 & \$6.00  
Masonic Auditorium  
California & Taylor  
San Francisco

A choir of 250 singers, under the direction of six conductors, accompanied in part by the organ and an ensemble playing the ancient string instrument *Kokle*, will perform 18 Latvian songs and cantatas.

**Festival Ball** 9:00 P.M. Admission \$9.00  
St. Francis Hotel  
Union Square  
San Francisco

Ballroom dancing in the Grand Ballroom • Dick Crest Orchestra.

*Bus Transportation* from the St. Francis Hotel to events taking place in the Masonic Auditorium, Veterans Building and St. Paulus Lutheran Church will be available. One-way ticket: \$1.00.





The four days of the festival will feature a variety of concerts, folk dancing and theater performances, a prose and poetry recital and other activities, offering a rare opportunity to become acquainted with Latvian culture and heritage.

At the St. Francis Hotel, the Festival headquarters, exhibits of Latvian art, jewelry, pottery and other crafts will be open to the public daily, and each day's activities will be concluded with a dance. The Masonic Auditorium will be the site of the main concerts. Tickets for all performances will be available at the Festival headquarters, or at the box office preceding the performance.

Of special interest will be the Concerts, Folk Dances, the Art Exhibit, and displays of ethnic Arts and Crafts. Internationally known musicians and accomplished ensembles will perform classical, sacral, ethnic and popular music. The central and most impressive event will be the Festival Concert in which a choir of over 250 voices from all over the United States and Canada will sing Latvian songs and cantatas, accompanied in part by an ensemble playing the ancient Latvian string instrument, the *Kokle*. Equally impressive and interesting will be the Folk Dancing performance, featuring over 150 dancers in national costume and accompanied by musicians, including members of the San Francisco Symphony.

Singing has been an integral part of the everyday life of Latvians since their earliest history. A collection of over 100,000 folk songs (*dainas*) and some 15,000 melodies gives testimony to the Latvian love of song. The First Song Festival took place in the Latvian capital, Riga, in 1873, but the Ninth Song Festival in 1938, during the days of the free and independent Latvia, was attended by over 100,000 people who listened to a choir of 16,000 voices. Thus, since their inception, the Song Festivals have symbolized Latvian dedication to song and served as an expression of national character.

The tradition has been continued by Latvians under Soviet occupation, as well as in the Free World. In the last 30 years Song Festivals have taken place in Germany, Great Britain, Australia, Canada and many cities in the United States.

The First West Coast Song Festival, in 1962 in Seattle, was followed by Festivals in Portland, Vancouver, Los Angeles, and now in 1979, for the second time in San Francisco. The Festival program has expanded beyond the Festival Concert, and now includes many different cultural and social activities over a period of several days.

Located in a geographically strategic area, Latvia has suffered through many wars and been under frequent foreign occupation. A land of free people until the 13th century, with origins dating back to 2000 B.C., it was brought under the rule of the Teutonic Order and ceded to Russia by Sweden in 1721. Latvians finally regained their freedom in 1918, when, after a successful war of independence against Soviet Russia as well as German forces, they founded a modern European nation.

The beginning of World War II once again turned Latvia into a battlefield. In 1940, as a result of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, it was occupied by the Red Army and forceably incorporated into the Soviet Union. A year later Nazi Germany overran the country. The achievements of the years of independence were destroyed, and in 1944, in the wake of returning Soviet troops, about 150,000 Latvians (nearly 10% of the population) fled to the West. An equal number of Latvians were lost to a Soviet reign of terror, which included forced deportation of large segments of the population to Siberia.

Now, for almost 40 years, the Soviets have continued to rule Latvia. The United States and other major nations of the Free World have refused to recognize the illegal incorporation of the three Baltic countries — Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania — into the Soviet Union.

Russification and the suppression of human rights in Soviet occupied Latvia is very intense and threatens to destroy Latvian national identity. Soviet Russia has imposed on Latvians not only its Communist institutions, but also its language and culture. Under the guise of industrialization, Latvia has been subjected to a constant influx of imported manpower from Russia, which may soon make Latvians a minority in their own country.

At the end of World War II thousands of Latvians spent several years in displaced person camps in Germany, until they found new homes in countries of the Free World. The United States opened its doors to some 70,000 Latvians. They settled primarily in the industrial cities of the North and West, where they organized their churches, schools and cultural centers. They resumed publication of books and magazines in Latvian and worked hard to pass their heritage on to the younger generation. As a result of these efforts, in the 30 years since their emmigration to the United States, the scope of Latvian ethnic activity has intensified, as is exemplified by the Song Festival.

The driving force behind this group of Latvians is a relentless love for their native country and pride of their heritage.

The Latvians in the Free World, as well as those living under Soviet rule in Latvia, will never reconcile themselves to the injustices done to their people and their country.

Freedom for Latvia, and all nations of the world, will remain their highest ideal and ultimate goal.



The Latvians have lived in their present homeland, on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea, for over 4000 years.

The Latvian language, related only to Lithuanian, is one of the oldest Indo-European languages spoken today.

Latvia is comparable in size to Ireland, and has a population of 2½ million.