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LATVIAN SONG FESTIVAL

Sponsored by the United Latvian Associations of Chicago

Main Concert at Chicago Arena, 630 N. McClurg St.

ON SUNDAY, MAY 31ST, AT 2:00 P.M.

Already since the Middle Ages foreign travellers and clergymen, who have happened to visit the Latvian people, at the East shore of the Baltic Sea, and to observe peasant life there, had to acknowledge that the Latvians were a nation of singers. And the nation itself verifies this with its songs:

I was born singing I grew up singing,
I spent my lifetime singing,
And, singing, my soul passes
Into the Garden of the Sons of God

Songs accompany Latvian people from the cradle to the grave. There was neither work nor feast neither a family gathering nor any event which did not find an echo by direct or indirect means in folk-songs.

The Latvians have more folk-songs than any other nation in Europe. The folklore archive stores about 900,000 folk-songs.

In the Nineteenth Century some of the more prominent and well established choirs and their leaders voiced the idea of a national song festival. Though the nation was then under Russian rule and the committee selected in 1864 had to work against great odds the First Latvian General Song Festival was held in Riga, Capital of Latvia, in 1873. Fifty-five choirs were present in which 1,000 voices participated. This rather timid event, however, gave the whole nation an uplift in those difficult days and created great enthusiasm towards a larger song festival soon to follow.

Thus, in 1880, a Second Song Festival was held. Thereafter, General Song Festivals were held in 1888, 1895, 1910, 1926, 1931, 1933 and 1938. The Ninth General Song Festival in 1938, at which time about 400 choirs with 17,000 singers participated. The audience was about 120,000. It was a first class cultural event in Northwestern Europe.

Now, when the Latvian nation suppressed under the occupation of Russian Communists, several thousand Latvians were fortunate enough to escape from the Soviet terror and enslavement. With the aid of the United States, they are now in the environment of a hospitable and friendly country.

Therefore, at Chicago will be presented the First Latvian Song Festival in America, to thank God and the American Nation for the call of liberty and freedom with heartfelt songs of praise and thanksgiving.

This festival will be the first of its kind in the history of Latvian immigrants in the United States and ideologically will embrace all Latvian speaking citizens in America. It will not only be a demonstration of highly artistic achievement

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in choir singing, but at the same time also will affirm our loyalty to the United States and our belief in its peace policy, thus turning this festival into a magnificent and unique cultural and national event. Twenty-five choirs with 80 members in national costumes from all parts of the United State and Canada will participate and an attendance of 5,000 is anticipated.

MAIN CONCERT PROGRAM

Opening Ceremony and Greetings

. . . by . . .

MR. KARLIS DZIRKALIS

President of the United Latvian Associations of Chicago

MR. FULIJS FELDMANS

Latvian Minister

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER.....Francis Scott Key

THE ANTHEM OF LATVIA.....Karlis Baumanis

WILLIAM G. STRATTON

Governor of Illinois

PROF. PETERS LEJINS

President of American Latvian Association

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MIXED CHOIRS

1. THE LORD'S PRAYER.....Andrejs Jurjans
2. THE CASTLE LIGHT.....J. Vitols
(The Castle Light—light signifying all good and liberty—once proudly on a mountain top, has disappeared. Death and destruction came to the country. Only by someone guessing the long forgotten name of the castle will it rise. Our brave sons guessed it and the castle rose once more in all its beauty.)
3. OLD TIMESE. Melngailis
(Describes the peaceful life of old times, girls singing and dancing amidst the beauty of nature, and then also the hard fate of the orphans, working for cruel masters. However, don't despair, a sharp sword is awaiting those masters, and the sun will rise in its splendor again.)
4. THE BROKEN PINES.....E. Darzins
(The wind broke the highest pines, defenceless on the seashore. Though broken and crushed they will not be subdued. The fight is still on, they will raise again and reach the faraway place, where the sun rises.)

I N T E R M I S S I O N

LATVIJAS NACIONĀLĀ
BIBLIOTĒKA

II

TWO SONGS BY ESTONIAN CHOIR

WHERE THE FOREST GROW GREEN.....Jonas Kudavicius

IN THE NICE SPRING DAY.....Mikas Petrauskas

Lithuanian Ensemble "Dainava"

Conducted by Mrs. Stepas Sodeika

MEN CHOIRS

5. **BALLAD OF THE WITCH MOUNTAIN**.....Br. Skulte
(The sun has hidden in the witch mountain. Bad days have come over the country. The black crow has forecast disaster. Our brothers are riding to war.)

6. **FOREST LAKE**J. Vitols
(The forest lake lies quiet as a slumbering child, kissed by the sun, radiating peace.)

7. **THE BLUE HILLS OF LATVIA**.....E. Darzins
(Describing the beauty and the mystery of the Blue Hills of Latvia.)

8. **AT THE BALTIC SEA**.....J. Straume
(Where the winds roar and the waves crush against the cliffs — there is our home. As rigorous as the nature, as fearless as the cliffs are our sons.)

MIXED CHOIRS

9. **AT THE DAUGAVA** (largest river in Latvia).....Arn. Kalnajs
(Springs awakens at the banks of the Daugava, encouraging good thoughts and deeds.)

10. **IN LATVIA**P. Barisons
(I know you, Latvia, you ancient land, with your green meadows and forests, the mid-summer nights. In memory of all this beauty my soul is young once again.)

11. **THE ROAD HOME**.....J. Zalitis
(A dream of home, visited me saying: Get up, strengthen yourself, see where the road leads home . . .)

12. **THE EAGLE AND THE CRANES**.....V. Ozolins
(The cranes fly to the south, fleeing the cold of winter. The eagle, however, remains at his cliff, which he loves above all, as it is his home.)

I N T E R M I S S I O N

III

MIXED CHOIRS

OH SUN, WAIT FOR ME, LEAVE ME NOT IN THE SHADOW..D. Cimze
(An orphan telling her sorrows to the sun.)

14. **OH, SUN SET DOWN AND GIVE ME REST!**.....A. Jerums
(A slave worker appealing to the sun, telling of long hours of hard work)
15. **I WAS BORN SINGING**.....A. Kalnins
(I was born singing, went through life singing and died singing.)
16. **WHICH BIRD SINGS AS NICE**.....J. Kalnins
(Which bird sings as nice as the Nightingale; which brother loves his sister as much as my beau loves me.)
17. **THE CAT TOOK THE MOLE FOR A DANCE**.....A. Abele
18. **AT THE FENCE**.....J. Norvilis
(Leaning over the fence, kissing my beau, I fell to the ground. If he is strong and lifts me up, I will marry him, but not, if he is weak and tumbles down.)
19. **MIDSUMMER NIGHT**E. Melngailis
(The midsummer night (June 24) is one one of the most celebrated festivals of the Latvians, already since ancient times. This song describes the jovial doings and customs of that night.)
20. **FATHERLAND — Cantata**.....A. Jurjans
(A patriotic song, asking God's guidance and blessing for the welfare and freedom of country and people.)

Soloist: Mrs. Herta Luse; at organ: Mr. Arnolds Kalnajs

HONORARY MAIN CONDUCTOR: PROF. ADOLFS ABELE

Main Conductors:

Arnolds Kalnajs, Voldemars Ozolins, Eduards Ramats and Bruno Skulte

During the Song Festival the following interesting events will also occur:

May 30th to June 7th at Abbott Hall, 710 N. Lake Shore Drive

LATVIAN ART EXHIBITION

Open from 10:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

LATVIJAS NACIONĀLĀ BIBLIOTĒKA



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May 31st, at 8:00 P.M. in the Chicago Arena

LATVIAN NATIONAL CELEBRATION

With Folk Dancing Program — Large Number of Performers
(about 100 dancers in costume)

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