

LATVIAN
Song Festival



CLEVELAND
O H I O

AUG. 30, 1963 — SEPT. 2, 1963

The Festival Calendar of Events

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 7:00 P.M.

Public Auditorium — Club Room A, B, C.

THE OPENING OF PAINTING, FINE ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION.

Open daily from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Saturday from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31, 11:00 A.M.

Estabrook Recreation Center, 4125 Fulton Rd.

SPORTS GAMES, with all star basketball and volleyball teams from Canada and U.S.A.

THEATRE PERFORMANCE "RUDA" by M. Ziverts, at 1:30 P.M., Bohemian National Home, 4939 Broadway Ave.

A CONCERT COMMEMORATING PROF. JAZEPS VITOLS, an outstanding Latvian composer, at 5:00 P.M. at Severance Hall.

PERFORMANCE OF LATVIAN FOLK DANCES. Participating are 14 various groups with 250 dancers in Latvian national costumes. 8:00 P.M. at the Arena, 3717 Euclid Ave.

AN EVENING OF GETTING ACQUAINTED AND DANCING, from 10:30 P.M. to 2:00 A.M. at the Sheraton-Cleveland Hotel Grand Ballroom, Public Square.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 10:00 A.M.

Sheraton-Cleveland Hotel, Gold Room
Latvian Youth Seminar

Religious Services for Cleveland Latvian Baptists Presbyterian Church, Superior Ave. and East 40th St., at 11:00 A.M. and for the Evangelical-Lutheran Churches at the Old Stone Church, Public Square, 12:30 P.M.

PROCESSION OF THE CHOIRS TO THE PUBLIC AUDITORIUM, at 2:00 P.M.

THE GRAND CONCERT OF THE FESTIVAL,

which is the main part of the Song Festival, with the participation of 40 choirs and the combined strength of 1000 singers in Latvian national costumes, members of the Cleveland Orchestra, and the presentation of the most beloved Latvian songs for choirs, makes this an outstanding event.

3:00 P.M. at the Public Auditorium.

THE FESTIVAL BALL

8:00 P.M. to 1:00 P.M.

At the Sheraton-Cleveland Hotel Grand Ballroom

Monday, September 2, 10:00 A.M.

LATVIAN WRITERS' SESSION

At the Sheraton-Cleveland Hotel Gold Room

At 2:00 P.M. **LATVIAN ANCIENT WEDDING TRADITIONS**, a musical portrayal at Sheraton-Cleveland Hotel, concluding the Latvian Song Festival in Cleveland.

What is a Song Festival?

The origin of Latvian Song Festivals dates back to nearly a century when Latvians were subjugated by a foreign power and only dared to dream about becoming free. With the First Song Festival the conscientious awakening and burning desire to have national independence took place and the following Festivals were the guiding beacons toward that goal. Throughout the following years, the Song Festival, in conjunction with painting, fine arts and crafts exhibitions, colorful performances of folk dances, has become an integral part of Latvian national life, as well as revered tradition.

Music possesses the unique quality of being able to touch and shape a nation's cultural destiny, with its hidden soul of harmony penetrating into the hearts of men leaving an impact of gentle vibration and strength. The folk music extends like a colorful rainbow, from generation to generation, giving joy in happier days — solace and courage in days of peril. In general, the Song Festival represents to Latvians an idea and its expression reaching the heights of national and emotional expression. Therefore, the Festivals and the resounding of songs are remembered long after this event.

Although Latvians have been under foreign domination for more than 700 years, they have preserved the Latvian way-of-life; the national elements; their language, folk dances and music, the colorful costumes, art and the folklore which includes some 240,000 folk songs and 6000 tales.

At this time Latvia is under the Communist yoke. The Festival in Cleveland will be a significant manifestation of the firm determination to preserve the values of national and ethical heritage. It will be in the spirit of hope and prayer for the renaissance of freedom and the preservation of a priceless heritage that the songs will be ascending toward the heavens here in Cleveland.

Latvia and Latvians

Latvia, in size and population, comparable to the State of West Virginia, is situated between the other two Baltic States; Estonia and Lithuania, on the Eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. On the East, Latvia is bounded by the U.S.S.R. History reveals, that this agriculturally fertile land has been a constant battle field, where the East and the West have attempted to settle their political differences. Due to Latvia's geographically and strategically advantageous location its sovereignty has been endangered on numerous occasions. Many a fierce battle between the German and the Red Armies during the 2nd World War was fought on Latvian territory, inflicting injuries and loss of human life on the population beyond description. Through the agreements at Yalta, the fate of Latvia was left at the mercy of the Soviet Union and since 1941 Latvia has been occupied by the U.S.S.R.

From at least 1500 B.C., in the Bronze Age, Latvians have inhabited the North-Eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. Latvians are neither of Teutonic or Slavic origin. They speak their own distinctive language which derives directly from Sanskrit.

Throughout the recorded history a relentless battle has been carried on to obtain liberty and national independence. When this was achieved, a period of tranquility and prosperity — with all the blessings of a free nation — graced Latvia's existence among the nations of the World. This was a small nation's Golden Age.

Then, during the first year of Soviet occupation, 33,000 Latvians out of the 2 million population, were forcibly deported to Siberia as "not trustworthy" and "undesirable" to the Soviet Government. An estimated 150,000 Latvians fled their homeland in 1944 as the Soviets, once again, were occupying the country.

Following the post-war years, spent at the D.P. camps in Germany and Austria, the majority of Latvians emigrated to many countries in the Free World. Many came to the United States and Canada. Approximately 3,000 Latvians found their new homes in the Cleveland area. Because of their willingness to work hard and diligently they were soon accepted socially and now in every segment of business and industry one will find a Latvian scientist, a draftsman, a chemist or a worker present. There are over 20 Latvian doctors practicing in Cleveland and vicinity. Many young Latvians are enrolled at the local Universities and Technological Institutes. Many have been and are now serving in the U.S. Armed Forces becoming officers of the highest caliber. The Cleveland Latvians have their own churches, schools and organizations. These then are the Latvians — a group enriching this community in their own way with the characteristics of their national origin, and yet, an integral part of this nation, one in purpose and dedication for the preservation of freedom.



LATVIA'S geographical relation
to other European countries.

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