A HERITAGE OF BALTIC SONG CELEBRATION SONGS

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Abstract

This attempt to inventory all 1,964 songs performed at the seventy Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian National Song Celebrations (1869 to 2014) identified twelve songs which are most representative of Song Celebrations tradition as a whole. These are songs which were remembered and repeated across different epochs of Celebration history (Tsarist, Independence, Soviet, and Renewed Independence). Song Celebrations heritage is measurable, in retrospect. At any Song Celebration, the number of songs from previous Celebrations can be counted to assess if the concert is more or less heritage-oriented.

Keywords: *repertoire, songs, Song Celebration history, tradition.*

In heritage traditions, people select things from the past and adapt them for the present, intending to pass them onward to future people. Among these "things" are texts [Wilgus 1971] like the ones counted in this essay. This is an attempt to inventory the Song Celebration traditions that were inscribed in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003 [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization n.d.]. Unlike many ICH inventories, which concentrate on living heritage [Velure 2007: 1–2], I attempt to document how active tradition bearers have constructed and preserved their heritages over the past century and a half, identifying "pre-existing structures of valuing cultural pasts and traditions" [Bendix et al. 2012: 15]. A starting point is a corpus of 1,964 songs in the programs of the seventy Baltic national song celebrations that were held from 1869 to 2014 (885 songs at 26 Estonian Celebrations, 643 at 25 Latvian Celebrations, and 434 at 19 Lithuanian Celebrations).[1] On the one

[1] Song titles compiled from books [Bērzkalns 1965; Mikutavičius et al. 2014; Ojaveski 2002], Celebration organizer websites, and printed Celebration programs.

hand, every song in the programs was and is potential heritage, available for future generations to remember. But it is also clear that most songs did not become heritage in practice, because the people of their future, as we now can document, did not repeat them – in Lithuania, for example, 83% were sung at only one Celebration, then relegated to the library shelves. The proportion of songs that were not later repeated, and therefore have not yet been recognized as heritage, is similar in Estonia (82%) and Latvia (73%). The total number of songs that were sung at two or more Celebrations was 171 in Latvia, 155 in Estonia, and 72 in Lithuania. The significance of such repeated songs is sometimes highlighted in printed programs, where a song title may be followed by a list of previous years when it appeared at the Song Celebration.

These 398 songs, each of them sung at two or more Celebrations, are here all called "heritage", because, even if they were not always highlighted as such, somebody nevertheless selected them from the past and the choir sang them again (see table 1). There are different degrees of heritage in the context of four distinct historical epochs as outlined by Brüggeman and Kasekamp [2014]: the Tsarist epoch (Celebrations from 1869 to 1910), Independence (1923–1938), Soviet (1946–1985) and Renewed Independence (1990–2014).

Table 1.

Baltic Song Celebrations songs repeated within and across epochs, 1869–2014
(A. Tsarist; B. Independence; C. Soviet; D. Renewed Independence)

Estonia	**A**	**AB**	**ABC**	**ABCD**	**ABD**	**AC**	**ACD**	**AD**	**B**	**BC**	**BCD**	**BD**	**C**	**CD**	**D**
Epoch	**7**	**6**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**6**	**1**	**16**	**13**	**11**	**44**	**32**	**9**
A. 1869–1910															
B. 1923–1938															
C. 1947–1985															
D. 1990–2014															

Latvia	**A**	**AB**	**ABC**	**ABCD**	**ABD**	**AC**	**ACD**	**AD**	**B**	**BC**	**BCD**	**BD**	**C**	**CD**	**D**
Epoch	**11**	**15**	**2**	**6**	**3**	**4**	**0**	**4**	**3**	**5**	**14**	**12**	**40**	**31**	**21**
A. 1873–1910															
B. 1926–1938															
C. 1948–1985															
D. 1990–2013															

Lithuania									**B**	**BC**	**BCD**	**BD**	**C**	**CD**	**D**
Epoch									**1**	**5**	**4**	**5**	**19**	**11**	**27**
B. 1924–1930									■	■	■	■			
C. 1946–1985										■	■	■	■	■	
D. 1990–2014											■	■		■	■

More than one third of these 398 heritage songs were short-lived hits, repeated as heritage only in the epoch where they premiered (see table 2). So, for example, during the Tsarist period Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God" and Bortniansky's "Holy" were each performed at three Latvian Celebrations, but they were subsequently never repeated again. Numerous Soviet loyalty songs were regularly included in Celebrations from 1946 to 1985, but disappeared into the dustbin of history after the three countries renewed their independence in 1990. Sometimes a hit song entered longer-term heritage; so, for example, Melngailis's *Jāņuvakars* ("Midsummer Eve") premiered in 1931, to be repeated at both of the next Independence-epoch Celebrations (1933 and 1938), and then at 13 of 16 Celebrations spanning the Soviet and Renewed Independence epochs. A multi-epoch heritage song did not necessarily have to be wildly popular hit in its own time; however: In Estonia, for example, "Dawn" premiered in 1923 but was not repeated again until 1960, when it became an anthem to be sung at every Celebration.

Table 2.

Degrees of heritage: "Hit" songs (created and repeated in an epoch), and number remembered and repeated at least once in a later epoch

	Tsarist epoch hits		**Independence epoch hits**		**Soviet epoch hits**		**Renewed Independence**
	"Hits"	**repeated later**	**"Hits"**	**repeated later**	**"Hits"**	**repeated later**	**"Hits"**
Estonia	13	6 (46%)	6	5 (83%)	54	10 (19%)	9
Latvia	19	8 (42%)	10	7 (70%)	56	16 (29%)	21
Lithuania	–	–	7	6 (86%)	24	5 (21%)	27

"Hit" songs may characterize an epoch. But they do not necessarily reveal the spirit of the Song Celebrations over a longer stretch of time. I have argued elsewhere [2016] that only twelve songs are truly representative of the Baltic Song

Celebration tradition as a whole. These are the songs that were repeated in the officially confirmed programs of all four epochs. It is possible that their meanings changed over time, but the basic text and melody have remained unchanged.

The twelve songs which may represent Song Celebrations over their entire history are:

Estonia:

- Aleksander Kunileid, *Sind surmani* (You, until Death), sung in 1869, 1880, 1910 / 1933 / 1969 / 1994, 2009, 2014
- Aleksander Läte, *Laul rõõmule* (Song to Joy): 1891 / 1928, 1938 / 1947, 1950, 1955, 1965, 1969 / 2004

Latvia:

- Jānis Cimze, *Rīga dimd* (Rīga Rings): 1873, 1880, 1888 / 1933 / 1948, 1965, 1973 / 1990, 2008
- Emīls Dārziņš, *Mēness starus stīgo* (Moonbeams): 1910 / 1931, 1938 / 1948, 1965, 1973, 1985 / 2003
- Andrejs Jurjāns, *Pūt, vējiņi* (Oh, Wind): 1910 / 1926, 1933 / 1948, 1950, 1955, 1960, 1973 / 1990, 2003
- Ernests Vīgners, *Strauja upe* (Swift River): 1888 / 1931, 1933 / 1950, 1965, 1973 / 1990
- Jāzeps Vītols, *Beverīnas dziedonis* (Bard of Beverīna): 1895, 1910 / 1926, 1933, 1938 / 1960 / 1990
- Jāzeps Vītols, *Gaismas pils* (Fortress of Light): 1910 / 1926, 1931, 1933, 1938 / 1948, 1950, 1955, 1970, 1973, 1980 / 1990, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013

Lithuania (only three epochs, because Celebrations began in 1924):

- Mikalojus Čiurlionis, *Šėriau žirgelį* (I Saddled My Steed): 1924 / 1950 / 2003
- Vincas Kudirka, *Tautiška giesmė* (National Anthem): 1924, 1928, 1930 / 1946 / 1990, 1994, 1998, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2014
- Česlovas Sasnauskas, *Kur bėga* Šešupė (Where the Šešupė River Flows): 1928, 1930 / 1970 / 1990, 1994, 1998, 2007, 2009
- Juozas Tallat-Kelpša, *Tris dienas, tris naktis* (Three Days, Three Nights): 1924, 1928 / 1946, 1950 / 2009, 2014

What is perhaps unexpected is that in each country, these most representative (or perhaps most viable) songs were almost never all sung together at the same Celebration. So, for example, the two Estonian songs appeared together only once, in 1969. In Lithuania, only three of the four were sung together in 1924, and a different threesome appeared together in 1928 and 2009. And in Latvia, a maximum of five out of the six songs converged in different groupings in 1933,

1973, and 1990. These songs may represent a heritage of songs repeated in all historical epochs, but they were most definitely not a canon to be repeated at each Celebration.

Some thematic patterns appearing in the twelve representative songs listed above recur elsewhere in the three national Song Celebration traditions, perhaps with different emphases in each of the three countries. So, for example, one of the two Estonian songs, "You, until Death" is an explicitly patriotic declaration of loyalty to Estonia, while the other, an Estonian adaptation of the German poet Schiller's "Ode to Joy," simply expresses a human emotion and does not mention Estonia. This pattern of local/national identity in one song, and global/musical identity in another, is recurrent: When one asks Estonian singers today to name the two most important songs, they will typically answer *Mu isamaa on minu arm* ("My Fatherland is My Beloved"), an explicit song of patriotism, and *Koit* ("Dawn"), a song about singing and hope that, although it mentions that the singing fatherland is blossoming, it does not explicitly speak to Estonia. And two exceptionally poignant moments happened at the 2014 Celebration, when the audience energetically called for encores of two songs – Peep Sarapik's patriotic fatherland song, *Ta lendab mesipuu poole* ("Flying to the Honeytree"), and Pärt Uusberg's *Muusika* ("Music"), a song about music that does not mention Estonia [Šmidchens 2016: 29–30].

In the Lithuanian list, two of four songs explicitly refer to Lithuania: The national anthem by Kudirka (which was briefly also the official anthem of the Lithuanian SSR), and "Where Šešupė Flows," a patriotic landscape song from the early 20th century. The other two texts carry no explicit ideology – one of them describes courtship, and the other a cuckoo-bird's song. Much of their meaning lies not in the words but in the fact that their source is folk tradition, as will be discussed below. The two song categories, "patriotic" and "folksong", re-emerge in comparable proportions in the 2014 Lithuanian Song Celebration repertoire, where slightly under half of the songs were explicit expressions of love for Lithuania and its landscape, and another half (16/35) were folk song arrangements.

In Latvia, patriotism is more subdued in the six representative songs. Two songs do not refer to the nation at all ("Moonbeams" and "Swift River"). Two others include the region of Kurzeme, and one mentions Rīga, place names that have been covert metaphors or euphemisms for the country. Only one explicitly names Latvia ("Bard of Beverīna"). The words of four of the representative songs thus connect to the national territory, but none of them is a pledge of allegiance comparable to the Estonian or Lithuanian patriotic texts listed above. A tradition of subtle patriotism continued at the Celebration of 2013, where only nine of forty songs included the word Latvia; seven more songs contained metaphorical

references to the nation (Latvian place names, "my people"), but the rest (24 of 40 songs, 60%) did not contain explicit political ideology.

In Latvia as in Lithuania, a salient symbolic meaning emerges through genre, not words: three of the six representative songs come from folk tradition. Here, too, similar patterns emerge in the broader tradition, from the 19th century to the 21st century. The very first Latvian Celebration of 1873 featured two concert programs, one of sacred music, and the other mostly of Latvian folksongs. And at the 2013 Celebration, half (20/40) of the repertoire were folksongs. Two additional songs in the Latvian representative list are of literary origin, but the words written by the poet Auseklis are in folksong meter ("Bard of Beverīna" and "Fortress of Light"). This tradition also continued at the most recent Celebration, where the words to *"Saule, Pērkons, Daugava"* and *"Dod Dieviņi"* were written by Jānis Rainis and Nora Ikstena in trochaic tetrameter, evoking the sound of folksongs.

Song Celebration heritage in Latvia as well as Lithuania thus rests firmly on the foundation of an earlier heritage of folksongs (see table 3). Estonian Celebrations have fewer connections to that tradition, as can be shown by counting folksongs in the entire repertoire, or in the list of heritage songs, or in the 2014 program. Elsewhere, too, Estonian folksongs play a smaller, though not insignificant role, for example, in representative music compilations such as the CD, *125 Years of Estonian Song Festivals* (1994) with three of 24 songs, or the four-CD collection *Review of Estonian Music* (2011), where 14 of 95 songs are from folk tradition.

Table 3.

Native folk songs in the National Song Celebration repertoire

	Representative songs (sung in all epochs)	Song Celebrations entire repertoire	Song Celebrations Heritage Songs	2013 or 2014 Song Celebration
Estonia	0/2 (0%)	127/885 (14%)	29/155 (19%)	7/55 (13%)
Latvia	3/6 (50%)	195/643 (30%)	70/171 (41%)	20/40 (50%)
Lithuania	2/4 (50%)	152/434 (35%)	26/72 (40%)	16/35 (46%)

Folk song arrangements or adaptations belong to a particular kind of heritage within the heritage of Song Celebrations songs, a subset that is explicitly marked in programs with the Latvian word *tautasdziesma*, Lithuanian *liaudies daina*, and Estonian *rahvaluule* (folk poetry) or *rahvaviis* (folk melody). The genre designation signifies that their words or melodies originated in the preindustrial oral tradition, long before choirs and Song Celebrations existed. Since the discovery of *Volkslieder* by the German folklorist Johann Gottfied Herder, folksongs have projected modern meanings beyond surface texts: Romantic nationalists have

interpreted them as pure expressions of the nation's soul, as ancestral heritage, and as a nation's unique contribution to humankind. Baltic composers, singers and audiences all know this: folksongs, selected and adapted for choral performance on stage, are received as symbols of current cultural wealth that was inherited from past generations.

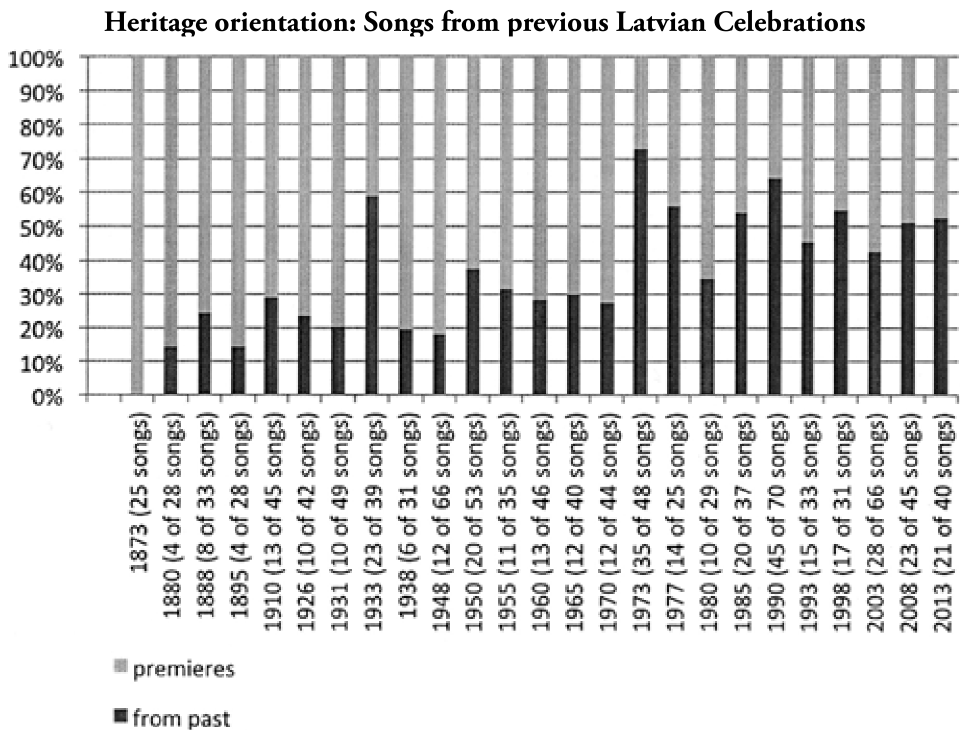
During the Soviet epoch, folksongs were framed as culture of the lower classes in the feudal stage of social evolution. A process of "folklorism" aimed to modernize them for current life, and so the composers who arranged new, progressive versions of old folksongs earned honoraria from the Soviet government. But the meanings of these songs also extended outside the reach of Soviet government policy into the earlier epochs when Romantic revivalists saw unique national treasures in them. This may be a reason why folksong arrangements were a relatively insignificant part of song production as a whole during the Soviet epoch, despite Soviet government lip service to their importance. All ten Soviet-epoch Latvian Song Celebrations, for example, premiered only 41 folk song arrangements, in contrast to 50 folksong premieres at four Celebrations of the first independence epoch, and 67 folksongs at six Celebrations of the Renewed Independence. A third, relatively recent meaning attached to folksongs is that of children's culture; the supposedly simple melodies of some folksongs have been perceived to be most suitable for young beginners, and their childish words add a sentimental cuteness factor to Song Celebration concerts.

On the other hand, it is a mistake to interpret folksongs as a genre segregated from their words, and to see in them chiefly expressions of nationalism, Soviet ideology, or children's culture. In the songs of living oral tradition, semantic weight lies heavily on words; melodies are vehicles that give singers license to speak and, perhaps, say things that would not or could not be expressed otherwise. Folksongs have explicit meanings, particularly when they are sung by adults. Latvian folksongs about the sun celebrate her motherly warmth and the beauty of sunsets; we note that the sunsets which embrace the outdoor Song Celebration stage during evening concerts *are* truly majestic, warm and nurturing. Latvian Midsummer songs evoke the real-world customs which most Latvians held a week or two before the Song Celebration; and Midsummer night in Latvia *is* a truly magical moment in time, its feelings captured by folksongs with the refrain, *Līgo*. Lithuanian courtship songs conjure up conversations between young men and young women who are in love; and young, singing Lithuanian men *are truly* handsome, brave and witty, and Lithuanian women *are* beautiful and smart, just like their alter-egos conversing in the songs they sing on the great stage. And when Estonians announce the grand arrival of guests with a song that was once chanted to guests at traditional weddings, they *are* truly welcoming a hundred thousand people onto

the Song Celebration grounds. Folksongs thus continue to function in the modern world of technology in ways comparable to earlier preindustrial life.

Heritage processes are measurable, in retrospect. We can count songs in a given year's Song Celebration repertoire to calculate the relative importance of heritage at the time (see table 4). When more songs are repeated from past Celebrations, we can conclude that the concert is more heritage-oriented, and when the proportion of new premieres rises, heritage-orientation recedes. Although heritage-orientation has ebbed and flowed over the past century, there appears to have been some proportional increase in heritage-oriented content since the 1970s.

Table 4.



Songs that premiered in different epochs may also be counted to assess the weight of these epochs as part of contemporary heritage. For example, of the forty songs performed at the Latvian Celebration of 2013, nineteen were premieres, and twenty one were repeated from earlier celebrations. Of these, five originated in the Tsarist period, seven in the Independence period, four in the Soviet epoch, and eight in previous celebrations during the renewed independence. One might thus mathematically calculate that, for example, heritage of the Soviet epoch is gradually fading, decreasing from 32% in 1990 to 10% in 2013 (see table 5).

Table 5.

Heritages of past epochs in Latvian Song Celebrations

Year	1990	1993	1998	2003	2008	2013
Total songs in concert repertoire	70	33	31	66	45	40
Songs premiered in epoch A, 1873–1910	10 (14%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)	5 (8%)	4 (9%)	2 (5%)
Songs premiered in epoch B, 1926–1938	12 (17%)	6 (18%)	5 (16%)	7 (11%)	3 (7%)	7 (18%)
Songs premiered in epoch C, 1947–85	23 (32%)	4 (12%)	7 (22%)	9 (14%)	9 (20%)	4 (10%)
Songs premiered earlier in epoch D, 1990–	–	2 (6%)	4 (13%)	7 (11%)	7 (16%)	8 (20%)
Songs premiered at this celebration	25 (36%)	18 (55%)	14 (45%)	38 (58%)	22 (49%)	19 (48%)

Moreover, the Soviet-epoch premieres that continued after renewed independence are not expressions of "Soviet nostalgia" or "retro" [Platt 2013: 449–450] memories that attempt to revive the past. Many of the Soviet-epoch premieres that did continue after renewed independence are folksong arrangements (16 out of 31 in Latvia, 7 of 11 in Lithuania, and 5 of 32 in Estonia). Folksongs are remembered, not as songs that premiered in the Soviet epoch, but rather, as songs that came from the preindustrial (thus pre-Soviet) oral tradition. Songs that Balts explicitly connect to the Soviet epoch recall informal resistance and persistence in spite of, not thanks to the Soviet rule. One Latvian example is *Lauztās priedes* ("Broken Pines"), which was written in 1901, but premiered as a Song Celebration song at the Stalin-era festival of 1948, ostensibly to celebrate the socialist revolution; but it also declared that "you broke us, oh enemy, but the battle is not over yet," in the present tense. Another example is *Manai dzimtenei* ("For My Homeland") composed by Raimonds Pauls in 1973 and under Soviet censorship not allowed into the centennial Song Celebration that year; when it was performed later, audiences stood silently, treating it as an unofficial anthem. Feelings of national unity and common purpose, quietly but powerfully present at Soviet-epoch Song Celebrations despite loudly explicit Soviet culture, were the heritage celebrated when Pauls's song appeared in the concert programs of 1977, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1998 and 2008. In Lithuania as well, two songs that premiered at Soviet-epoch Celebrations became unofficial anthems partly due to their pre-Soviet origins, and

partly because they mentioned forbidden topics such as God, explicitly named in *Lietuva brangi* ("Dear Lithuania") or proud patriots in the forest, reminiscent of the anti-Soviet military resistance in *Kur giria žaliuoja* ("Where the Green Forest Grows"). In Estonia, "My Fatherland is My Beloved" premiered under Soviet rule in 1947, but it was banned from the Song Celebrations in 1950 and 1955; it returned to the stage in 1960 as a result of defiant nonviolent political action. It is these meanings that are revived when the songs of the Soviet epoch are sung today.

Song Celebrations are not past-oriented. Some Baltic Song Celebrations did feature retrospective programs. Heritage was particularly important, for example, at the centennials of the Celebrations in Estonia in 1969 (38 of 58 songs, or 66% were repeated from past celebrations) and Latvia in 1973 (35 of 48 songs, 73%), and at the Celebration marking the thousand-year anniversary of Lithuania in 2009 (21 of 28 songs, 75%) Songs of the past also were in high proportion at the first Celebrations of renewed independence in 1990, where many Soviet-banned songs were revived. But most Celebrations highlighted a tradition of creating and singing new songs. Of the 47 songs at the Estonian Celebration of 1928, for example, only one had ever been sung at an earlier Celebration, and the rest (98%) were premieres. At the 1960 Lithuanian celebration, 34 of 37 songs (92%) were premieres. The Latvian Celebrations of 1931 and 1938 featured 80% new songs (39 of 49 songs, and 25 of 31 songs, respectively).

This creative, innovative tradition depends on the heritage other than repeated song texts. It depends on the heritage of singing, reaching back through many generations of skilled singers along with teachers, conductors and composers, who all together embody a self-tuning national musical instrument. Here, the Baltic singing heritage echoes folk and Protestant church singing customs of the pre-tsarist epoch, and continues secular choral traditions that began in the Tsarist epoch, most dramatically taught at the pedagogical seminar by Jānis Cimze (1814–1881). He started traditions of secular classroom singing to educate many singers, composers and conductors of the first Estonian and Latvian Song Celebrations. Performances today also hearken back to the first wave of creative energy which blossomed and flourished during the first Independence epoch: public musical skills moved to a new level after 1918, when universal public education was established and national singing curricula were cultivated by teachers, composers and performers who themselves were educated at the newly-founded National Conservatories. The Soviet epoch expanded on these earlier foundations, adding music-focused primary- and secondary schools where thousands of children acquired specialized musical literacy and performance skills. Two and a half decades into the epoch of renewed independence, there is little reason to elevate one of these epochs above the others. The truest heritage of the Song Celebrations is not

institutionally based, but rather, it is a heritage of charismatic singers, teachers and creators of songs who have inspired younger generations to continue singing an ever changing and expanding repertoire of songs in all epochs.

This essay began with tables that mathematically calculated past heritage by counting songs repeated from Celebration to Celebration from 1869 to 2014. There is no method for assessing future heritage, of course. "It's tough to make predictions," said Yogi Berra, "especially about the future." Future Song Celebration songs are discussed about two years before a celebration when songs are selected for the program. Debates may emerge over whether a song woud be appropriate: in early 2014, for example, Estonians debated, removed, and then reinstated a premiere by Erkki-Sven Tüür, *Taandujad* ("Retreaters") only a few months before the Celebration [Randlo 2014]. But repertoire plans never extend more than a few years into the future.

Exceptions to this rule may be emerging today. An intensive sociological survey of Estonian singers and public confirmed that they believe two of the Celebration's "most important" songs are "Dawn" and "My Fatherland Is My Beloved" [Lauristin 2014: 42–43]. Once such a question has been asked, answered, and their answers printed in an authoritative scholarly publication, it becomes highly likely that these songs will be sung again at the 2019 Celebration and beyond. In Lithuania as well, a 1980 survey documented that two Lithuanian songs were favored above others: *Lietuva brangi* ("Dear Lithuania") and *Kur giria žaliuoja* ("Where the Green Forest Grows") [Gudelis 2001: 260–261, 291–293]. Both have since been sung at every Celebration, and it therefore seems likely that they will continue indefinitely. I modestly venture to predict that the three Baltic National Anthems, though usually not discussed in analyses of Song Celebrations songs, will also be repeated at all Celebrations for the foreseeable future.

Latvians recently placed three songs into a list of 99 "most important cultural achievements of all time," entitled the Latvian Cultural Canon: "Fortress of Light," "Oh, Wind," and "Midsummer Eve." The Canon also includes three broader categories falling under the umbrella of the Song Celebration repertoire: the *dainas* – folksong poetry; the traditional bourdon (drone) folk singing style, often adapted in folksong arrangements; and songs created by one composer, Raimonds Pauls. Along with the entire Canon, these songs and song categories "should form the basis of cultural experience of every Latvian resident, fostering his or her sense of belonging." It is thus conceivable that they will become a "canonic" refrain to be repeated at every Latvian Song Celebration – or at least intensely discussed if omitted from a future Celebration program. So, for example, nine months before the 2013 Celebration, Latvians heatedly debated whether the Raimonds Pauls song "For my homeland" should be in the program [Veidemane 2012]; it was

excluded, but nevertheless sung informally after the concert. It is notable that in all of the lengthy internet commentaries related to this song, not a single one mentioned the Cultural Canon as an authoritative reason for keeping the most famous song by Pauls in the program. The Canon is a descriptive enterprise, not prescriptive. Culture, and the active bearers of culture act independently of such institutions, beyond the reach of "heritage regimes" [Bendix et al. 2012]. Māra Lāce, leader of the Canon project, cautions us to remember that "The Cultural Canon should not be perceived as a petrified, unchangeable dogma." Its purpose is to incite an exchange of opinions, and it should be "developed creatively." So also with heritage and heritage songs.

Standing on stage in the baritone section at the conclusion of the 2013 Latvian Song Celebration, I noticed one such nearly imperceptible change of recent years. As has been the custom, the choir was informally singing a song that appears in the representative heritage list of this article, a melody whose importance is firmly established in the Latvian Cultural Canon. "Oh wind, blow wind," the folksong arranged by Andrejs Jurjāns in 1884 and premiered at the 1910 Celebration, wafted gently across the Song Celebration grounds. And yet, it was a different song. Where Jurjāns's last stanza once ended, the choir continued to sing another stanza about marriage, as commonly sung in oral tradition; but whereas the oral variant recently had the words, "*tēvam, mātei nezinot,*" the singers around me were now singing "*tēvs, māmiņa nezināj*" (both variant lines may be translated as "father and mother didn't know"). A tiny detail, perhaps. And yet, it is significant, because these are the words of a different song with a similar melody, arranged by Imants Ramiņš and premiered in 2008. Earlier that day I had asked my baritone section neighbor which of all songs was his favorite – and he answered with little hesitation that it was the new "Oh, Wind" arranged by Ramiņš. Is this item in the Latvian Cultural Canon transforming? In the future, which song will "form the basis of cultural experience of every Latvian resident"? The answer, my friends, will be sung by future singers, when they recreate and create their heritage of Song Celebration songs.

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