

Latvian[®] Voices

OKTOBER 2025

Hello, friends!

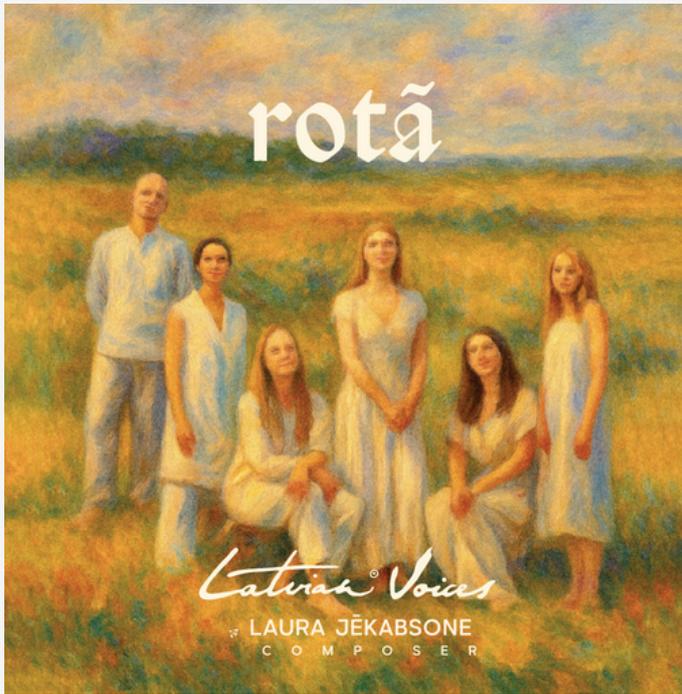
We are back from our first autumn trip — our creative batteries are recharged and we are ready for new ideas! October has been particularly productive for us, with many projects outside of Latvian Voices. While the rehearsal room is a little quieter, we are spending our autumn in schools, theaters, and concert halls in various cities in Latvia and beyond our country's borders.

In this newsletter, we will look back on our September trip, take a look at the visual image of our new CD, share the latest news for October, and remember an older trip from the past.



Here we are, Latvian Voices, on stage at the Elba Philharmonic Hall, right after the sound check.

Extremely happy, excited, proud, and pleasantly nervous! The hall is truly phenomenal - beautiful, acoustically superb, and, despite seating more than 2,000 listeners, it creates a surprisingly intimate atmosphere. We hope to return there soon with a solo concert



CD "ROTĀ" - ALREADY VERY SOON

We are delighted to announce that the production of our new CD has been completed. As we have already mentioned, this will be a special release, as all of the songs are compositions by Laura, rooted in folk songs and Baltic music.

The album "ROTĀ" will be available to listeners around the world from November 7. We will "release it into the world" in a month when the feeling of belonging and patriotism resonates particularly strongly in all our hearts. .

The album recordings were completed in the summer, but behind the scenes, the work continued for a long time. This has been a collaboration with a great team, and we would like to express our sincere thanks to:

- sound engineers Andris Ūzems and Krišs Vesimanis,
- sound mixer Pauls Dāvis Megi,
- and Sigita Prola, who created the album's visual identity.

The album's visual image was inspired by nature and Jānis Cimze's "Dziesmu rotas" (1872) edition — one of the most significant monuments of Latvian cultural heritage.

Last year, at the Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum, after filming the video for the song "ROTĀ," our trusted photographer Kaspars Teilāns captured moments when we were all together.

When Laura decided that this would also be the name of the album, these pictures took on a special meaning, and we realized that this shot, taken outside the photo studio, was exactly what the new CD needed.



1. Vakarā kalnā kāpu
2. Es bij' liela dziedātāja
3. Muote dieleņu auklieja
4. Zvīdzi, zvīdzi sērmais zirdzeņ
5. Jo dziedāju, jo skanēja
6. Titivity, Tatatoj
7. Ilus Hääl
8. Ik vakara es dziedāju
9. Rotā
10. Mana dziesma neizdziedāta

New CD release Coming soon

/ November 7th /

We have made sure that listeners have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the lyrics of each folk song. Laura has also dedicated her own commentary to each song - a special story or moment of inspiration.

Here is a small glimpse of what it will look like:

1
Vakarā kalnā kāpu
Music by Laura Jēkabsons,
lyrics from Latvian folk songs

Vakarā kalnā kāpu uz akmeņa gaviļēt,
Lai skan mežu virsotnēs, lai dzird mani bālelīņi.

Kalnā kāpu padziedāt, uz akmeņa gaviļēt,
Lai skan visi priežu meži līdz manai mājīpai.

Uz cietņņa dziedāt kāpu, uz akmeņa gaviļēt,
Lai vējņiņš balsu nesa manam līnu arājam.

*** A song that I never tire of singing. Perhaps the reason for this is that a large part of the song consists of improvisations, which each singer sings according to their own interpretation, and thus the same song sounds different every time it is performed live. Another important reason for my love of singing is definitely the mutual understanding between the singers of Latvian Voices, which has been systematically developed over many years spent singing in the same group. ***

2
Es bij' liela dziedātāja
Music and lyrics by Laura Jēkabsons
Percussion: Bodhrán - Laura Jēkabsons, Udu - Jānis Strazdiņš

Es zināju to vietīņu,
Kura mani negaidīja,
Auksta krāsns aldzišusi,
Favarda turētāj' aizgājusi.

Es zināju to vietīņu,
Kurā atpakaļ neatnākšu,
Mēlms galdīņiņš, pelnu dārna,
Aizsast šķā ūdenīņis.

Es bij' liela dziedātāja,
Man ilgu aizskamējis,
Aiznesa man' balstiņis'
Pār kalniņu kalniņiem.

Es zināju to vietīņu,
Kura laba nedarīja
Rīti, rīti, vakar rīti
Asariņu kamolī.

*** This piece is dedicated to all little girls who dare to dream big dreams. No matter where in the world they may be, no matter what their environment, opportunities, or abilities. Dreams are hope, and hope lifts us up. Only in the last few years have I begun to understand that the voice is a great responsibility to those who listen to it. I hope that both this song and the other compositions that Latvian Voices have immortalized on this album will speak to someone who especially needs it. ***

3
Muote dieleņu aukleja
Latgalian folk song, arranged by Laura Jēkabsons
Percussion: Bodhrán - Laura Jēkabsons.

Muote dieleņu aukleja Viglas diņas dūmuodama	Bruojs izvedē kumelēnu nu stalleiša rauduodams.
Nasagaīda viglas diņas Izaudzēja karaveiru, Izaudzēja karaveiru,	Juoj bruojēiti, narauduojī, pa treis godi atpakaļ.
Muote vyika bruņu kraklu, Tavs apmauce zuobacēpus,	Napaguoja treis gadēņi, atāk bārais kumelēņš.
Muosa sieja zeidā jūstu, augumeņu mieraīdama.	Pavaicuojū kumeljam, Kur palika juojieņējs?

Ti palyka juojieņējis,
Kur guj veiri kai ūzāli.

*** Latvian Voices has two singers from Latvia, Beate and myself, and it is very important to us to include music from our region in our programs. I had been thinking about arranging this particular folk song for several years, but I managed to write it down when Beate gave birth to her son, and it seemed like the most appropriate moment! This melody can be found in various folk song lyrics, including in Latvian, but the Latvian version is the one that resonates with me the strongest. ***

4
Žvīdži, žvīdži, sērmais žirdzen'
Latgalian folk song, arranged by Laura Jēkabsons
Percussion: Udu - Jānis Strazdiņš

Zvīdži, žvīdži, sērmais žirdzen, Vīdēņi stalleišā stīvdamstīlī.	Nūsyūtēju brōļam ziņu, Lai pōrdeve sauru zyrģu, Lai izpērka man nu kara, Brōjs(i) zyrģu napōrdeve, Maņ nu kara naizpērka.
Raudi, raudi, jaunais pūsiēti, Uz kareņa aizīdamstīlī.	Nūsyūtēja mōsai ziņu, Lai pōrdeve sovu pūru, Lai izpērka maņ nu kara, Mōsa pyuru napōrdeve, Maņ nu kara naizpērka.
Nūsyūtēju tāvam ziņu, Lai pōrdeve sovu zemī,	Nūsyūtēja mōsai ziņu, Lai pōrdeve sovu pūru, Lai izpērka maņ nu kara, Mōsa pyuru napōrdeve, Maņ nu kara naizpērka.
Tāvstīlī zemī nepōrdeve, Maņ nu kara naizpērka.	Nūsyūtēja mōtei ziņu, Lai pōrdeve sovu gūvi, Lai izpērka maņ nu kara, Mōte gūvi nepōrdeve, Maņ nu kara naizpērka.
Nūsyūtēju mōtei ziņu, Lai pōrdeve sovu gūvi, Lai izpērka maņ nu kara, Mōte gūvi nepōrdeve, Maņ nu kara naizpērka.	Nūsyūtēju bryutei ziņu, Lai pōrdeve sovu krūni, Lai izpērka maņ no kara, Bryute krūni pōrdavuse, Maņ nu kara izpērkuše.

*** I wrote "Žvīdži, žvīdži, sērmais žirdzen'" at a time when war seemed to be a topic confined to the pages of history books and moments of remembrance. Unfortunately, today's reality is quite different. This song has now found a different place in our concert program with a different message than before. On the one hand, it is a story about a boy who does not want to go to war, but in my mind it has always been a story about a girl who is ready to do anything and everything for love. ***

AUTUMN DEBUT IN PHOTOS

Were you waiting for photos from our trip? Here are a few photos from our September trip to Germany and the Czech Republic.

Our trip was truly wonderful. It was our first time in the Czech Republic, and we must admit that we were greeted by an unexpectedly warm audience. We gave a concert as part of a festival, performed at a special concert for local schoolchildren, and led a master class for a cappella enthusiasts. We managed to accomplish an extraordinary amount in three days!

We spent a very sunny and hot day in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. Before the concert, Zane, Paula, Jānis, and Laura went on a proper city tour.

In the evening, we were honored by the presence of the Latvian ambassador to the Czech Republic, Vilmārs Heniņš, at the concert..

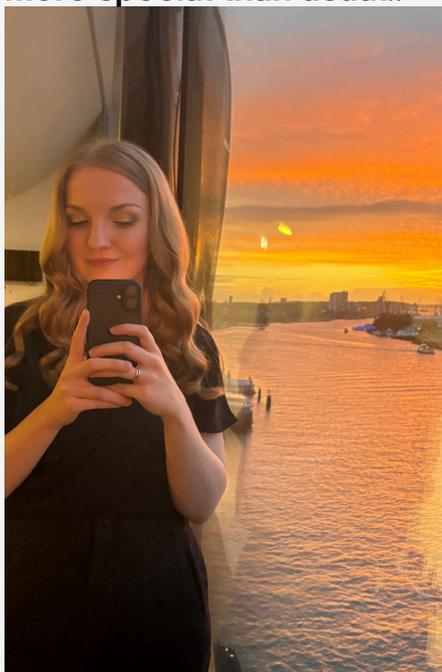


In Hradec Králové, we were welcomed by the professional male octet Gentlemen Singers. One evening, we went to listen to their concert in the old town.



Jānis, who was also the official driver for the trip, was happy to finally get some delicious coffee.

¶The icing on the cake of this trip was the opportunity to perform at the Elbphilharmonie. Although Hamburg is our top flight destination, this time it was even more special than usual.



The view from our backstage window/wall was outstanding – we didn't miss the opportunity to capture beautiful shots during the golden sunset. We also spent most of the day in this backstage area.



Since we are in Hamburg, a visit to St. Michael's Church is an essential part of the trip. Finally, Jānis also saw the legendary birthplace of the band. Now he knows where he "lets us go" on a ladies' solo trip every December.

The Elbe is a river in Germany, after which the philharmonic hall is named. It flows through Hamburg, and one of its canals was located almost at our feet. During our stay in Hamburg, we lived in a very nice hotel that seemed to float on water. .



OCTOBER AGENDA

October has arrived with a wonderfully celebrated Teachers' Day in Jūrmala, and it will continue with diligent study throughout the month in preparation for exams and National Day concerts.

Since we are not planning any Latvian Voices concerts this month, I invite vocal music fans to attend the Hannover Girls' Choir concerts, which will be held in Ikšķīle and Riga on October 14 and 15!

ZANE:



UNA:



The start of the school year has been difficult this year. Not only does the Dailes course still not have stable premises, but the RDKS has also moved. My days consist of room logistics and a pile of unnecessary bureaucratic battles – not very inspiring in the musical department's 10th anniversary year. However, Latvian Voices brought a lot of joy in September with a wonderful tour!

October is my birthday month, which I started this year with a trip to London to get a little taste of the world and sing away the creativity that has been stifled by Latvia's bureaucratic dry air.

However, something creative has already happened this season, something I have been working on for more than half a year with Maksims Busels. We met on the show "Pārdziedi mani" and our interests coincided - I wanted to compose and he wanted to perform pop songs. We have written a bunch of original songs, and in October, three of them will reach listeners.

My October this year promises to be colorful. A concert in the Riga Dome Chapter Hall with the ensemble "Džezbaroks," which will feature music from both the Baroque era in Riga and 20th-century Latvian composers with references to earlier times. There will also be a piece written especially for this concert and this group of musicians by band member Jānis Rubiks. Then there will be a concert in Jūrmala at the Dzintari Concert Hall with Jānis Lūsēns and Zigfrīds Muktupāvels, where we will perform songs inspired by Čaks' poetry. Another new addition to my calendar this fall is a new job, I have become a vocal teacher for the Latvian Academy of Culture's mixed choir Sōla, and at the end of October we will travel to Tolosa in the Basque Country, Spain, to compete for the European Grand Prix.

BEĀTE:



JĀNIS:



While the other members of the group are busy with various other musical projects, my plan for this month is to learn the Latvian Voices program "Love is," which was created this year. During my absence in the first half of the year, my colleagues have created a substantial amount of new material, in which there is also a place for me. This is quite challenging, because usually it is easiest to "sing" the material into your mind and muscles together with everyone else during rehearsals, but this time I have to do my homework properly.

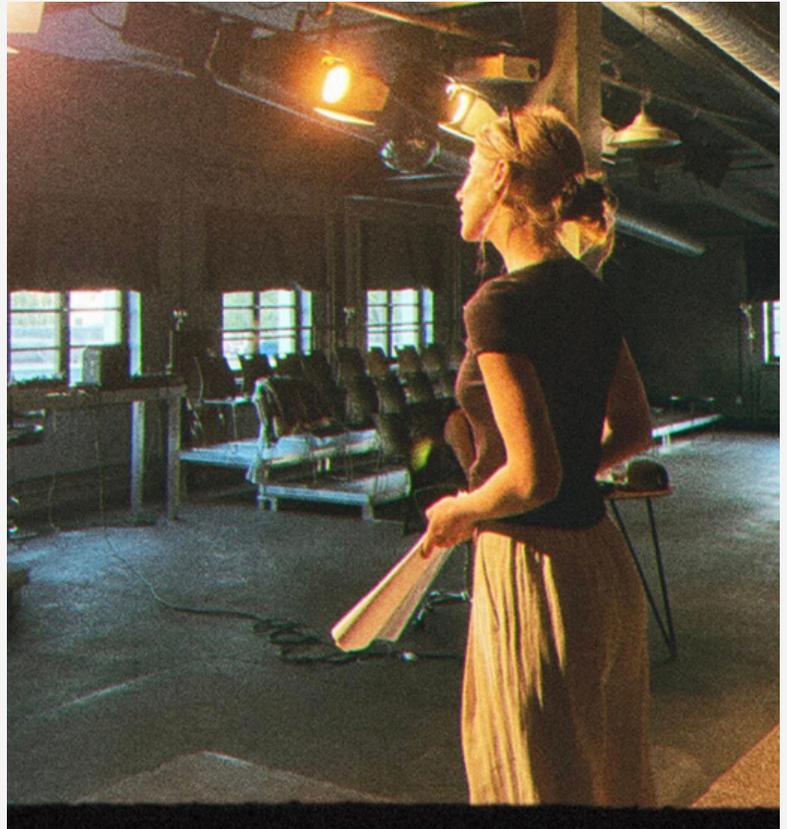
"Love is" will be performed in November at the Riga A Cappella Festival and in Italy. We will tell you more about these events in our next newsletter.

October promises to be a month full of many exciting events!

Imants Kalniņš' song story performance "Viņi dejoja vienu vasaru" (They Danced One Summer) is about to begin, and I have been given the opportunity to participate and play a role! I never thought that I would have the opportunity to play a role in my life, but here I am, eagerly awaiting the premiere!

In parallel with the performances in Latvia, I have started ERASMUS studies in Graz, Austria, where I will continue to study conducting, as well as simply gain new and fresh knowledge, vision, and experience!

PAULA:



LAURA:



MThis October is a very special and different month for me. It is the longest period in the group's 15-year history that I have been away from Latvian Voices and focused on my activities as a composer. I started the month in Buffalo, USA, where the choir Vox Lusciniae rehearsed my original program. At the same time, I visited local universities and schools to give master classes to choirs that sing my compositions. I really hope that next time I will be able to go there with Latvian Voices, because our music is very popular in Buffalo.

When I return home, I will go to the Ilūkste region, where I will be happy to share my experience in a cappella arrangement and composition with local music enthusiasts. I really hope that this will bring a new repertoire to both ensembles and choirs.

In mid-October, my travels will take me to sunny Barcelona, where the Canta Al Mar 2025 choir competition will take place. I have been entrusted with the honor of being one of the jury experts. This month will conclude with a visit to Finland to work with the choirs Kamari Kuoro Värinä and Grex Musicus, where we will rehearse compositions by myself and other Baltic composers. It will be a productive month in my life as a composer, enriching my experience and inspiring me to write new pieces for both Latvian Voices and other ensembles.

LATVIJAS LEPNUMS 2025

One of the special events in October will be our participation in the Latvijas Lepnums awards ceremony. We will congratulate this year's winners with a performance of the song "Jādzied"

The awards ceremony will take place for the 22nd time and will be broadcast on TV3 on November 18, the day of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia.



Every year, Latvijas Lepnums awards ceremony honors individuals who, through their work and self-sacrifice, make Latvia a better place by promoting positive change, fostering empathy and inclusion, and improving interpersonal relationships and public opinion. The ceremony has become a tradition that invites us to appreciate the people who are with us every day, introducing us to stories about outstanding, sincere, good people who are right here among us. The awards are presented to the winners by well-known personalities in Latvia, as well as by people who are important to the award recipients and whose paths have crossed in life.

PWe have participated in the award ceremony several times before – you can watch our 2021 performance of the song “Buramdziesmiņa” [here](#).



BLAST FROM THE PAST: OCTOBER 2019

The last time we traveled outside this continent as a group was more than five years ago, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

In America, the Latvian Association, with the support of the Ministry of Culture, organized an interactive concert program called "The Power of Song in Latvia," dedicated to the centenary of the Latvian state. The program, created by Associate Professor Dr. Guntis Šmidchens and us, combined concerts, lectures, and master classes, introducing Latvian song traditions and the history and significance of the Song and Dance Festival.

17 days: 6 singers, 6 concerts, 6 time zones, 7 states, 7 flights, 7 hotels



October 7, 2019, California.

Latvian Voices and our friend Andrew Kesler. At the time, we had no idea that Andrew would be the one responsible for the sound of so many of our recordings.



We performed at the California Institute of the Arts. Of course, many local Latvians attended, including the world-renowned Latvian composer Lolita Ritmane.

We enjoyed Chicago in the classic tourist spirit. We didn't stay there, but we did visit the cities around Lake Chicago—Milwaukee and Kalamazoo—for concerts.





While we were there, we had the honor of going on a tour of the Latvian Center Garezers. It is a center for Latvian culture, education, and community life located in Three Rivers, Michigan, USA. This organization was founded in 1965 with the purchase of a former Girl Scout camp and has since served as an important center for the Latvian community in North America.

The place is especially known for its Latvian environment, including streets named after regions of Latvia and more than 100 buildings, including a library and museums.

On October 15, we performed at the Millennium Stage concert hall at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. It was our second time performing at this prestigious venue. A recording of the performance is still available on YouTube..



We ended our trip in Seattle, at the Benaroya Concert Hall.

We're keeping our fingers crossed that we'll get to travel at least that far with the mixed group as well.

Which country do you think Latvian Voices should perform in?