



Traditional music

From Estonia



History of music of Estonia

- The history of music from Estonia dates back as far as 12th century. The earliest mentioning of singing and dancing Estonians stretches far back to Saxo Grammaticus Gesta Danorum ((c. 1179).
- Saxo speaks of Estonian warriors who sang at night while waiting for an epic battle.
- Runic singing was widespread among Estonians until the 18th century,, when it started to be replaced by rhythmic folksongs.
- The older folksongs are in the poetic metre “regivärss” the tradition shared by all Baltic Finns.
- These were gradually replaced by rhythmic folksongs in the 18th century
- Professional Estonian musicians emerged in the late 19th century at the time of Estonian national awakening.

Folk music

- Estonian runo-songs (Estonian: regilaul) can come in many forms, including work songs, ballads and epic legends.
- Traditional wind instruments derived from those used by shepherds were once widespread, but are now more rarely played.
- By the 20th century, though, runo-song had largely disappeared from Estonia, with vibrant traditions existing only in Setumaa and Kihnu.



Examples of Estonian runo-songs

Internet connection is required



[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=lebVYcfBBzM&t
=148s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lebVYcfBBzM&t=148s)

National awakening

- After the Estonian national awakening the first professional Estonian musicians emerged
- In the 1960s, the Soviet government began encouraging folk art from its constituent republics.
- After the 1950s and 60s saw the publication of Herbert Tampere's "Eesti rahvalaule viisidega" (Estonian folk songs with melodies), and the first LP of traditional music, "Eesti Rahvalaule ja pillilugusid" (Estonian folk songs and instrumental pieces), in the 1980s, a series of festivals took place that helped stimulate increasing agitation for freedom of expression; these included the 1985 conference of CIOFF, the 1986 Viru Säru and 1989's Baltica.
- The most significant was Rudolf Tobias (1888-1918) and Artur Kapp (1878-1952).

The Estonian Song Festival (in Estonian: laulupidu).

- Is one of the largest amateur choral events in the world.
- It is held every five years in July on the Tallinn Song Festival Grounds simultaneously with the Estonian Dance Festival.
- The joint choir has comprised more than 30,000 singers performing to an audience of 80,000.



The Estonian Song Festival (in Estonian: laulupidu).

- The tradition of the song festival was born along with Estonian national awakening.
- The first national song festival was held in Tartu in the summer of 1869.
- One of the organizers of the first song festival was Johann Voldemar Jannsen.
- Starting from 1947, the Soviet authorities forced foreign songs into the repertoire. Every event was to include the State Anthem of the Estonian SSR, The Internationale, and the National Anthem of the Soviet Union.
- The Estonian Song Festival still takes place!

“Ta lendab mesipuu poole” performed at the Estonian Song Festival in 2014

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IKqnO18ZVc>

An example of a traditional song sung by children “Kus on minu kodule”.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VmMPFDjkD0>

An example of a traditional song sung by children “Kus on minu kodule”.

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KUS ON MINU KODUKE? Rahvalik laul

Rahulikult



KUS ON MI - NU KO - DU - KE, KO - DU - KE NII ARM - SA - KE?

SEAL, KUS I - SA, E - MA - KE, SÕ - SAR, VÄI - KE VEL - LE - KE.

2. KUS ON ISA, EMAKE,
SÕSAR, VÄIKE VELLEKE?
SEAL, KUS TAMMEST TAREKE,
TARE ÜMBER AIAKE.

3. KUS ON TAMMEST TAREKE,
TARE ÜMBER AIAKE?
SEAL, KUS METSAD SINAVAD,
PIKAD PÖLLUD LÕPEVAD.

4. KUS NEED METSAD SINAVAD,
PIKAD PÖLLUD LÕPEVAD?
SEAL, KUS MINU KODUKE,
KODUKE NII ARMSAKE.



“Kivikasukas” (A stony fur coat).

- A song often performed by Uhtna school's pupils.
- There is a story behind the song. There was a workman who was beaten by a foreman in a manor house. The workman was beaten hard but he did not do any noise. It was because he had a sheepskin under his shirt! The story was told to the other workmen who were so happy that the workman had been so clever, and all the workmen started dancing and playing bagpipes.
- The song starts with the lyrics: "A stony fur coat (kivikasukas), a stony fur coat - hard (kõva), hard.
- In view of the foreman, the workman was hunched and pretended that the spanking was very painful but when the foreman could not see him anymore, he straightened his back and went happily home That's a story!

“Kivikasukas” (A stony fur coat) performed by Uhtna school’s 3rd and 4th grade students.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J1WLdosogc>