

1st February 12:20 pm St. Alphonse Church

CONCERT

“GENTLE AND LOWLY IN HEART”

Latvian folk songs

(Dina Liepa and Ansis Jansons)

accompanied by video projections about Latvia and
Latvian culture

(Toms Liniņš)



Gentle, lowly, loving, gracious, and full of compassion, near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth, He wipes away tears from our eyes, makes everything new, fulfils the desires of the poor and orphans, people in need, He is our fortress, stronghold, shield, in whom we take refuge - that is the image of God in Latvian folk songs.

Latvian folksongs (Dainas) are the immortal Latvian backbone and exist outside of time and space and beyond pages and print. Dating back well over a thousand years, more than 1.2 million texts and 30,000 melodies have been identified and preserved.

The kokle is widely used and recorded as a part of Latvian folk music heritage, a symbol of the spirit of folk singing and its tradition is believed to be more than two thousand years old. In mythology the kokle is associated with the singing, "soul-inhabited" tree (the kokle was traditionally carved of wood). People's memory holds a perception that "the kokle is from God".

Kokle player Ansis Jansons is from Limbaži in Latvia and is well-known as one of the semi-finalists in the show “Latvian golden talents”. He plays many instruments – clarinet, piano, accordion, bagpipe, recorder, mouth harmonica and birch-bark bugle, but his particular love is the kokle. "The kokle has a special quality – it gives a feeling of freedom and flight. One can achieve something similar through extreme sports. When playing the kokle, one gets a dose of adrenalin, stress disappears and one has emotions that cannot be described in words," says the young kokle player.

Dina Liepa, Ansis Jansons' teacher, is involved in various projects to ensure that traditional cultural heritage lives on and is handed down to future generations. The largest are the children's and youth education programme "Pulkā eimu, pulkā tekū" (Let's join in) and the folkloric festival "Baltica".

In her professional work with students in Rīga, Dina Liepa leads the children's and youth folklore group "Kokle", which comprises five groups of children and young people from the ages of 4 to 27. Dina teaches several folk music instruments – recorders, kokles, violins-, and sings, dances, plays games with the children and tells them folk-tales. Dina's own children also participate in this folkloric ensemble.