PART FIVE

MODERN PAGANISM

PAGANISM-INSPIRED FOLK MUSIC, FOLK MUSIC-INSPIRED PAGANISM AND NEW CULTURAL FUSIONS IN LITHUANIA AND LATVIA[1]

Michael F. Strmiska

Introduction

As the Baltic States of Lithuania and Latvia pass their twentieth anniversaries of political independence from Soviet communism, both contemporary folk music and modern Pagan religious movements draw inspiration from earlier epochs of history. This is something deeper than mere nostalgia. Throughout history, the Baltic peoples have struggled for self-preservation against external threats, from colonising Germanic Crusaders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to Tsarist, Nazi, and Soviet domination in the nineteenth and twentieth.[2] Each Baltic people has its own memories of invasion, occupation and oppression, and lessons learned about the necessity of maintaining cultural traditions against the twin threats of extinction and assimilation. Therefore, the preservation and further refinement of earlier forms of folk music and Pagan religion have immense emotional and political significance in Latvia and Lithuania, which is vividly expressed through the cultural product of Paganism-inspired folk music and related musical forms.

[1] The author would like to express his deep gratitude to the many people who provided assistance at different stages of research and writing. Particular thanks go to the following individuals for their participation in interviews and email correspondence over many years, as noted more fully in the bibliography: Romuva and Kulgrinda leaders Jonas Trinkūnas and Inija Trinkūnienė; Žalvirinis member Ineta Meduneckytė-Tamosiūnienė; the members of Atalyja; Dievturi leaders Oļģerts Tālivaldis Auns, now deceased, and Jānis Siliņš; ethnomusicologist and kokles player extraordinaire Valdis Muktupāvels; Ilģi founder Ilga Reizniece; Vilcenes member Inese Krūmiņa, wife of Vilki founding member Jānis Krumiņš; Skyforger member Peter; and former Latvian President Vaira Viķe-Freiberga (Vīķis-Freibergs).

[2] For a fine single-volume overview of Baltic history, see Palmer (2005). For a compact but well-informed tour of Lithuanian history, see Sužiedėlis (1997: 4–46). Concerning Latvia, see Plakans (1995).

Historical Background

A distinctive feature of Baltic history with direct bearing on the musical and religious phenomena discussed in this chapter is the long duration of the region's pre-Christian, indigenous religious traditions, and the consequently late entry of the Baltic peoples into Christianised Europe.[3] This Christianisation occurred despite native resistance, by a combination of Germanic missionary efforts, armed crusades, and commercial and cultural colonisation. The tenacity of Baltic adherence to Pagan traditions in the face of Germanic Christian colonisation caused historian Tiina Kala to reflect with amazement;

> [o]ne can ask how the local peoples actually managed to remain heathen up until the thirteenth century. The Christian neighbors of the northern Baltic lands were neither too weak to launch successful campaigns against the heathens, nor were the local power-structures strong enough to organize long-lasting resistance . . . [Although] little is known about the local pre-Christian power structures . . . by the beginning of Christianization these structures must have been considerably modest by comparison to those of the Christian neighbors. Despite this, not only the actual conversion of the indigenous rural population, but even the formal administrative incorporation of these lands was a long and painful process lasting for decades, or perhaps, even centuries (Kala 2001: 20).

The Christianisation of the region brought with it benefits including the development of the first cities (the transformation of Riga, the capital city of Latvia, from a small trading port to a substantial medieval city from 1201 CE), and the establishment of the first universities (beginning with Vilnius in 1569 CE), yet these benefits came at the cost of a suppression of indigenous culture, particularly traditional religion. For this reason, the pre-Christian religions of the Baltic peoples remain cherished expressions of indigenous culture and symbols of Baltic resistance to foreign domination.

Portions of current-day Latvia and Estonia (medieval Livonia), were brought into the Christian fold in the thirteenth century by the Germanic crusading order, the Sword Brothers, with the rulers of Lithuania pro-

[3] Concerning Baltic mythology and religion (both Lithuanian and Latvian), see Biezais (1987; 2004), Gimbutas (1963, 2001), Greimas (1992), and Puhvel (1974; 1987). Concerning Lithuanian traditions, consult Beresnivičius (2000), Gimbutas (1974), and Vėlius (1989). Concerning Latvian traditions, see Biezais (1972), Vīķis-Freibergs (1989) and Vīķe-Freiberga (2004).

moting Christianisation in the late fourteenth century as a condition of alliance with Catholic Poland in a struggle for survival against another colonising, crusading order, the Teutonic Knights (Christiansen 1997; Urban 1989; Urban 1998; Urban 2000; Sužiedėlis 1997: 295–297; Murray 2001). To the west of Lithuania, the threat of cultural extermination was painfully illustrated by the fate of Baltic Prussia, now the Russian-controlled state of Kaliningrad. Baltic Prussians' distinctive language, culture and Pagan religion disappeared after conquest by German Christians in the thirteenth century and subsequent assimilation. In a cruel etymological and historical irony, Prussia, the name of a non-German, Baltic society, would become synonymous with a German empire (Sužiedėlis 1997: 233–235). In this way, Baltic Prussia, Latvia, and Estonia all came under German Christian domination in the thirteenth century (Plakans 1995: 1–29).

Facing the same threat of foreign domination, Lithuania transformed into a militarily powerful, multi-ethnic and poly-religious state, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Kiaupa and Kiaupienė 2000: 43–240; Mickūnaitė 2006). This expansionist state, "a Pagan empire within East-Central Europe" (Rowell 1994), not only successfully resisted German conquest, dealing an overwhelming defeat to the Sword Brothers in the Battle of Saulė near the modern Lithuanian city of Šiauliai on 22 September 1236 CE (Sužiedėlis 1997: 260), but expanded eastwards throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries through both conquests and alliances.

Conflicts with the increasingly powerful Teutonic Knights caused Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland to unite militarily and politically against the common enemy in 1386 CE. The German threat was eliminated in 1410 CE by a Lithuanian-Polish victory over the Teutonic Knights at the battle of Grünwald (Žalgiris in Lithuanian, Tannenberg in German). The Polish-Lithuanian alliance, sealed by the 1386 CE wedding of the Polish Princess Hedwiga to the Lithuanian Grand Duke Jogaila, known in Polish as Władyslaw Jagiełło II, evolved into one of the largest, most powerful, and ethnically and religiously diverse states of medieval Europe, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. As philosopher Dalia Marija Stančienė reflects,

> Lithuania is a multinational and multireligious country . . . without noticeable internal ethnic and national conflicts. Independence constitutionally established the equality of all nationalities and religious beliefs in the country. But this was not something new for Lithuania; on the contrary, it was a continuation of the old Lithuanian cultural and political tradition, which, though interrupted for 50 years by the Soviets, survived deep in the

> spirituality of the nation . . . As far back as the second part of the 16th century Lithuania had become a center of religious tolerance in Europe. In 1563, the Lithuanian parliament granted freedom of practice to all religious confessions without exception . . . (Stančienė 2008: 273–275).

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth dominated Eastern Europe until internal divisions and political paralysis led to its dismemberment by Austria, Prussia and Russia in three stages between 1764 and 1795 CE (Kiaupa and Kiaupienė 2000: 241–357; Stone 2001).

Latvia, Estonia, Prussia, and western Lithuania were dominated by a German Christian elite until the twentieth century, but Pagan customs and traditions persisted in the rural regions beyond the urban centres. Paganism likewise survived at the folk level in rural areas of Lithuania, despite the process of Christianisation that was initiated when Lithuania allied with Poland (Gimbutas 1958; 1963). Poland gradually claimed the dominant position in the alliance, and the Lithuanian elite adopted Polish language and culture, including Catholicism, as markers of status. Thus, despite differing experiences of foreign domination, Latvia and Lithuania underwent a shared process of social bifurcation between a Christianised ruling class that favoured Polish or German religion, language and culture over indigenous traditions, and peasant classes who continued to practice native forms of language, culture, and religion.

Ethnic Nationalism, Folk Music and Paganism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

In the nineteenth century, the trends of ethnic nationalism and romantic reappraisal of native peasant culture that sent shock waves across Europe had a powerful effect on the Baltic region as well. Arguably, these currents had Baltic origins. The German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Herder (1744–1803), one of the intellectual progenitors of nineteenth-century nationalism and folklore studies, lived in Riga from 1764–1769 CE. During his residence in Latvia, Herder was moved by Latvian folk music and singing, partially inspiring his influential theory of an ethnic nation's 'folk-soul' being expressed by native languages and indigenous folk arts, particularly native forms of music. Herder praised the rough beauty and rustic profundity of Latvian folk music in works including *Stimmen der Völker in Lieder* (*Voices of the Folk in Song*, 1807), sparking interest in the collection and study of folk music as touchstones of ethnic culture and national identity across Europe, with important consequences in the Baltic region itself. As Frederick M. Barnard observes,

> [e]specially in Central and Eastern Europe his apotheosis of national belonging, its necessity—if not sanctity—created an extraordinary stir, for such rousing talk was clearly celestial music to nationalist ears. No wonder, then, that Herder was acclaimed as the father of . . . national revival. Czechs, Poles, Latvians, Slovenes and Ukrainians, as well as the slavophiles in Russia, enthusiastically followed Herder's call to resuscitate their hallowed traditions, their ancient literatures, their folksongs and . . . their indigenous languages (Barnard 2003: 13–14).

Nineteenth-century Baltic scholars preserved and popularised Latvian and Lithuanian mythology, folklore, and folk music as a means of upholding national identity against the political, cultural, and linguistic domination of their respective countries by German, Polish, and Russian elites.

This collective cultural effort became known as the 'National Awakening' in the Baltic States. Multiple volumes of Latvian and Lithuanian folk songs were published. Krišjānis Barons' monumental collection of *Latvju dainas* ('Latvian songs') containing 217,996 folk songs was published in six volumes between 1894 and 1915 (Trapāns 1989). Andrejs Jurjāns' *Latvju tautas muzikas materiali* ('Latvian folk music materials'), also in six volumes, appeared from 1894 to 1926. Jurjāns' folk song collections also included documentation and analysis of other Latvian folk customs and folklore. Antanas Juška collected seven thousand Lithuanian folk songs, which he organised into several volumes of *Lietuviškos Dainos* ('Lithuanian songs'), printed between 1880 and 1882, and a collection of traditional wedding songs, *Lietuviškos svodbinės dainos*, published in 1880, along with a study of wedding customs, *Svotbinė Rėda* ("Antanas Juška" 1980). Other important Lithuanian collectors of *dainos* include Liudvikas Rėza (*Dainos oder Littausiche Volkslieder*, 1825),[4] Simonas Stanevičius (*Dainos Zemaičiu* ['Samogitian Songs'], 1829), and Adolfas Sabaliauskas, together with the Finnish scholar Augustas Niemi (*Lietuvių dainos ir giesmės šaurytineje Lietuvojė* ['Lithuanian Songs and Chants from Northeastern Lithuania'], 1911, and *Lietuvių dainų ir giesmių gaidos* ['Melodies of Lithuanian Songs and Chants'], 1916) (Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė 2006). In addition to celebrating the traditional Baltic worldview, Pagan mythology, and rural life, Baltic folk songs also articulate social and political grievances of disenfranchised groups, which added to their appeal and significance in this time (Ray 2003).

[4] "Rašytojai: Liudvikas Rėda." Internet site, Rašyk.lt, http://www.rasyk.lt/rasytojai/liudvikas-reza.html. Accessed 18/12/2010.

With the rising tide of ethnic nationalism, the tables turned on the centuries-long privileging of foreign culture over native tradition. The previously despised Pagan myths, songs, and folklore were now applauded as foundations of national identity. The new comparative linguistics established that the Indo-European Baltic languages shared structural features with the ancient Sanskrit tongue of India. Studies of Indo-Baltic parallels further raised the stature of traditional Baltic culture (Chatterji 1968; Mallory 1989; Puhvel 1974; Puhvel 1987; Strmiska 2011). Timothy Snyder 2004: 96–97) notes that the nineteenth-century glorification of the Lithuanian language as the closest philological relation to Sanskrit was a boost to Lithuanian self-image in the Tsarist nineteenth century, and remained a point of national pride throughout the Soviet period.

In the later nineteenth century, nationalistic pride in Latvian and Lithuanian traditional culture, including folk songs and Pagan customs such as solstice rituals, came into direct conflict with the Tsarist imperial policy of Russification, which suppressed Baltic languages and traditions and promoted Russian culture. Government agencies and educational institutions enforced a Russian-only language policy. The Baltic peoples resisted Russification, rallying behind national independence and cultural preservation movements (Krapauskas 2000; Plakans 1995: 80–111; Valaniejus 2002; and Zake 2007). Lithuanian nationalist newsletters such as *Aušra* ('Dawn') and *Varpas* ('The Bell'), published in defiance of Tsarist policy in the late nineteenth century, were both celebrations of ethnic culture and calls to arms for independence (Stražas 1996).

After the collapse of the Tsarist Empire during World War I, Lithuanians and Latvians saw their dream of political independence fulfilled. Lithuania and Latvia became internationally recognised, independent states between 1918 and 1921 (von Rauch 1974: 49–75). From the Lithuanian point of view, one sour note was the loss of Vilnius to Poland in 1920, for which reason Lithuania's second city of Kaunas was made the new republic's capital (von Rauch 1974: 79, 118–119; Sužiedėlis 1997: 317–318, Venclova 2002: 55–60). Lithuania and Latvia's hard-won independence would prove short-lived. Within twenty years, the Baltic States found themselves trapped between the aggressive intentions of German Fascism and Soviet Communism. The Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement of 23 August 1939 opened the way to a series of alternating conquests; first the Soviets in 1939, then the Nazis in 1940, and then the Soviets again in 1945. Each succeeding wave of occupation brought devastation, including the mass extermination of Baltic Jews and the exile to Siberia of many of the

regions' leading politicians and intellectuals (Eidintas 2002; Misiunas and Taagepera 1983: 58–62; Šteimanis 2002; Sužiedėlis 1997: 139–143).

The defeat of the Nazis in 1945 brought not deliverance from oppression, but the absorption of Lithuania and Latvia into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Under this new, totalitarian colonialism, Russian language and Soviet ideology were forced on Latvians and Lithuanians, and native languages and traditions were once more out of favour (Misiunas and Taagepera 1983: 74–125). To openly embrace native folk culture could have serious repercussions. This happened to the university student and future Romuva leader, Jonas Trinkūnas, in the late 1960s and early 1970s when official Soviet displeasure with his folklore-collecting and folk song-performing activities cut his academic career short and required Trinkūnas to take up various odd jobs for a time, including chiselling epitaphs on gravestones, as Trinkūnas noted in several interviews with the author (Trinkūnas, 1996; 2009).

The Singing Revolution

Under the policies of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s, the Soviet stranglehold on social and cultural life in the disgruntled socialist republics was relaxed enough to allow the spark of national pride to burst into defiant flame in the Baltics. As in the nineteenth century, enthusiasm for political independence went hand-in-hand with pride in ethnic culture (Lieven 1994: 109–130; Dreifields 1996; Čiubrinskas 2000). The importance of Baltic folk music in the face of Soviet oppression has been eloquently stated by the Latvian-Canadian professor of psychology and folklore, Vaire Viķe-Freiberga, later to become President of Latvia.

> To the Latvian, the *dainas* are more than a literary tradition. They are the very embodiment of his cultural heritage, left by forefathers whom history had denied other, more tangible forms of expression. These songs thus form the very core of the Latvian identity and singing becomes one of the identifying qualities of a Latvian (Viķis-Freibergs [Viķe-Freiberga] 1975: 19).

Viķe-Freiberga's words would prove prophetic. Among the most potent and popular expressions of resurgent Baltic nationalism in the late 1980s were national song festivals, in all three Baltic States, in which hundreds of thousands of citizens joined together for exuberant mass celebrations of national culture, singing once-suppressed native-language music,

ranging from ancient folk songs to Christian hymns, to popular tunes of more recent vintage (Thomson 1992).

These musical demonstrations were no twentieth century innovation, but the revival of a nineteenth century tradition of song festivals organised to bolster national pride and protest against Tsarist oppression. Music became a potent weapon of political protest in the mid to late 1980s, as Daina Eglitis describes;

> [i]n 1986, a song called *Dzimta valoda* ['Mother Tongue', literally, "language of birth"] by the rock group Livi was hugely popular, in the words of one Latvian, "a national anthem" of the time. The song reflected a shared concern that the Latvian language was losing ground in Latvia and highlighted a primal tie between language and life: "The language of my birth is my mother," went the refrain. That the song spoke to public grievances against the Soviet regime was confirmed when, in early 1987, the Latvian Communist Party Central Committee issued a statement condemning the song's selection as the most popular song of 1986 (Eglitis 2002: 27).

The public expression of anti-Soviet, pro-Baltic sentiment reached a peak on 23 August 1989, the fiftieth anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, when a combined total of two million Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians joined hands to form a 373-mile human chain across the length of the Baltic States in a peaceful protest known as "the Baltic Way" (Lieven 1994: 219). Though this event was not organised as a musical protest, it was widely understood as an outgrowth of the song festival activities of preceding years, and the ultimately successful drive for the Baltic States came to be known as the 'Singing Revolution'. The Baltic States were formally granted independence by the disintegrating Soviet Union in August 1991. The 'Singing Revolution' was successful, and to this day, folk song festivals and singing competitions remain popular in all three Baltic States.

As has been demonstrated, traditional folk music played a key role in mobilising ethnic nationalism in the Baltic States' drive for independence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The same is true of religion. Indigenised versions of Christianity, such as Lithuanian Catholicism, became vehicles of ethno-national identity, as did Pagan religious customs, myths and beliefs, which were not long-buried relics, but still vital elements of rural folklore, particularly in folk music. Pagan elements, from references to native deities to a general deification of nature, are so embedded in traditional Baltic folk songs that it is impossible to remove them without destroying the cultural, spiritual, and artistic coherence of the songs.

A sub-genre of Lithuanian and Latvian folk songs of particular interest is *dainas*, performed at the summer and winter solstices in honour of Saulė, the goddess of the sun. Here is one such Lithuanian mythological *daina*, which pays tribute to the sun-goddess:

> O little Saulė, Dievas' daughter
> Where have you been dwelling?
> Where have you been straying?
> Why have you left us alone?
>
> I have kept shepherds warm,
> I have shielded the orphans
> Beyond the seas and mountains.
>
> O little Saulė, Dievas' daughter
> Who kindled the fires in the evening?
> Who kindled the fires in the evening?
> Who made your bed for you?
>
> O morning and evening star!
> The morning star my fire,
> The evening star my bed.
> Many kinsmen have blessed me,
> And many are my treasures![5]
> (Landsbergis and Mills, 1964: 27–28).

In both Lithuanian and Latvian mythology, the sun goddess Saulė is one of the chief deities, along with the sky-god Dievas (Dievs in Latvian), the moon-god Mėnulis (Mēness in Latvian) and the thunder-god Perkūnas (Pērkons in Latvian) (Gimbutas 2001; Vīķis-Freibergs and Freibergs 1978; Vīķis-Freibergs 1989, Vīķe-Freiberga 2004). She drives a chariot across the sky by day and returns by boat across the northern sea at night. Her brief marriage to the unfaithful Mėnulis is unhappy, but Saulė delights in her daughters. She dances with them in the sky on the eve of the summer solstice, known in Lithuania as Kupolinės or Rasos, often anglicised as Rasa, and in Christianised form as Joninės (Saint John's Day), and in Latvia as Līgo or Jāņi (also John the Baptist's feast day in Christianised form). The summer solstice celebrates her full strength and brilliance and the winter solstice her rebirth from darkness, or alternately, the marriage of the sun's

[5] The translation has been slightly altered to insert the actual Lithuanian names of Saulė, the sun-goddess, and Dievas, the sky-god and creator-deity who is Saulė's father in Lithuanian mythology. The original translation represents Saulė as 'little sun' and Dievas as 'God.'

daughter and her return from the darkness, bringing light and warmth back into the world.

Traditional Baltic solstice activities such as folk dancing, cooking and eating special foods, playing games including dragging a Yule log from house to house and visiting neighbours in disguise, and singing folk songs, are all intended to rouse the winter sun to new life and energy, but also served a political purpose in the Soviet era of rousing the Baltic peoples against authorities bent on suppressing such assertions of ethnic identity. Leaders in the two major Baltic Pagan revival movements, Romuva in Lithuania and Dievturība in Latvia, were heavily involved in organising solstice events. Romuva means 'sanctuary' or 'peace' in Lithuanian, and Dievturība, which is often shortened to Dievturi, means "those who keep faithful to Dievs" (the sky and creator god) in Latvian (Dundzila and Trinkūnas 1999; Strmiska and Dundzila 2005; York 1995). Romuva, the leading Pagan or 'Baltic Native Faith' association in Lithuania today, was at this time known as *Ramuva*, supposedly a strictly folkloric organisation; the declaration of its Baltic Pagan religious function coming only after independence ended the need for such subterfuge (Dundzila 2008; Strmiska 2005). In interviews, Romuva leader Jonas Trinkūnas and Dievturi leader Oļģerts Tālivaldis Auns told how they created a network of folklore enthusiasts and political activists in both Soviet republics in the late 1980s to organise joint Latvian-Lithuanian summer solstice festivities, which were arranged in an underground manner to avoid Soviet police detection, possible arrest, and interrogation (Trinkūnas and Auns 2002). In recognition of his service to Lithuania through these activities, Auns, a Latvian, was presented with the Officer's Cross Award by the President of Lithuania in June 2004.[6]

After 1991, with the threat of Soviet persecution removed, the solstice gatherings were acknowledged as national holidays. Attending the summer 1998 Rasa celebration at the ancient site of Kernavė in Lithuania, the author could not fail to be impressed by the exuberance of the singing, dancing, and sharing of food and drink by many thousands of Lithuanians. As the midsummer night grew dark, flaming wagon wheels representing the temporarily absent sun were mounted on poles or rolled down hills, matching the energy of the raucous Lithuanian revellers.

---

[6] Internet site, http://paksas.president.lt/ordinai/table_e.phtml. Accessed 18/12/10. Oļģerts Tālivaldis Auns passed away on 3 November 2010, with Jonas Trinkūnas' remembrance of his friend at http://blog.delfi.lt/jonastrinkunas/7970/. Accessed 18/12/2010.

The Pagan solar symbolism of the Rasa ceremonies was expressed on multiple levels, from the songs referring to Saulė to the blazing wheels to circle dances in which spinning couples represented the turning of the sun. Many participants were Catholics untroubled by these Pagan associations. This relaxed coexistence of the Christian and the non-Christian is another example of how Pagan religion, folk music and national pride are interwoven in Lithuanian culture and society, as in Latvia. Catholic Lithuanians, Lutheran Latvians, and other Baltic Christians may not fully endorse the nature-centered spirituality inherent in the solstice celebrations, or the Pagan mythology in cherished *dainas*, but they value them as elements of national culture and ethnic tradition. At the same time, and possibly singing the very same song or spinning in the same dance, there are Latvians and Lithuanians who have taken the Pagan spirituality of the occasion as their religious path, including but not limited to the members of Romuva and Dievturi. Two other groups are those who may combine together or alternate between Christianity and Paganism, with no concern for doctrinal distinctions or theological niceties, and those who have no religious affiliation but who enjoy folkloric activities because they are exciting and fun. Over and above all of these different dimensions of meaning there is the overarching and unitary one of shared ethnic pride and national identity.

Paganism-Inspired Folk Music and Folk Music-Inspired Paganism in Lithuania

In the twenty years since gaining independence in 1991, Baltic Paganism and music have remained intertwined in both Lithuania and Latvia. Jonas Trinkūnas and his wife, the gifted folk singer Inija Trinkūnienė, are leaders of both the Romuva religious movement and also the folk music ensemble Kūlgrinda, formed in 1989 and dedicated to researching, recording and performing traditional Lithuanian songs rooted in Lithuanian Pagan heritage (Trinkūnas 1996; Trinkūnas 1998; Trinkūnas 2002; Trinkūnas 2004; Trinkūnas and Trinkūnienė 2009). *Romuva*, as observed earlier, means 'peace' or 'sanctuary,' originally denoting a Pagan temple in Baltic Prussia prior to the forced Christianisation of the region. *Kūlgrinda* translates as 'hidden path or road,' referring to secret underwater roads in swampy regions used by Pagan Lithuanians in their battles against invaders in the medieval era. Modern Romuva is therefore a sanctuary for those seeking to understand and practice Baltic Paganism, and Kūlgrinda is a path

through music to such understanding and practice. There is no absolute distinction between Romuva's religious activities and Kūlgrinda's musical ones. Romuva gatherings on the solstices and other seasonal events feature the singing of traditional songs that are also performed by Kūlgrinda. Kūlgrinda has recorded a series of compact discs of song cycles related to Lithuanian Paganism that have become 'musical scriptures' for Romuva members. Kūlgrinda can be understood as the musical manifestation of Romuva.

Inija Trinkūnienė has lectured and published on Baltic Paganism (2005). As the co-leader of Kūlgrinda, Trinkūnienė specialises in the archaic polyphonic song-chants called *sutartinės*, in which several singers vocalise different melodic parts in interlocking patterns of great complexity, in intricate tapestries of woven sound. These chants become increasingly powerful and hypnotic through rhythmic repetition. Lithuanian musicologist Daiva Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė has commented on the intriguing parallels between *sutartinės* and weaving.

> The interweaving of the two independent melodies is reminiscent of the process of weaving, during which the heddles dive one after another: at one moment rising up to view, at another sinking out of sight. It is this constant change that creates the multicolored cloth, too. The melody of a *sutartinė* sung with a meaningful text is called *rinkinis* (from the verb *rinkti*, "to collect; to select, to choose; to create"), while the refrain is called *pritarinis* (from the verb *pritarti*, "to approve, to agree with; to accompany") . . . Interestingly, some of the traditional names for the *sutartinė*'s voice parts have corresponding weaving (plaiting) terms: there is a *rinktinė* sash, *rinktiniai* cloth or just *rinkiniai* (*rinkinys* is a patterned or multicolored cloth). In traditional thought, *rinkimas* is associated with the collection or creation of woven patterns, i.e., the technology of weaving patterned cloth. According to archaic mythological thought, all creative processes organized by strict rules, including singing, dancing, weaving, and plaiting, are perceived as a form of magic that transforms chaos into cosmic harmony. Therefore, the text of the *sutartinė* and the concept of the melody's selection and harmony dovetails with a specific canonized understanding of musical "order," that is, coherence (Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė 2006).

Kūlgrinda's recordings are generally straightforward folk performances without much studio enhancement, focusing on the vocals of Jonas and Inija either as soloists or enhanced by Kūlgrinda backing singers. The singing is unpolished and direct, raw and powerful, eschewing the sometimes-sterile manner of academic folk musicians. The sparse instrumentation is usually restricted to traditional Lithuanian folk instruments, most notably the enchanting zither-like or harp-like stringed instrument known as the

kanklės. The *kanklės* is known in Latvia as the *kokles* and has analogues in the *kannel* of Estonia, and the *kanteles* of Finland and Karelian Russia. Latvian ethnomusicologist and *kokles* player Valdis Muktupāvels (2000a; 2000b) has written on these related instruments. Occasional drums, violin and panpipes complete the sonic landscape, but the main focus is always the vocals.

Kūlgrinda records are organized on themes of Pagan religious and/or ethno-historical significance, with all songs drawn from the corpus of Lithuanian folk music. The 2002 disc *Ugnies Apeigos* ('Rite of Fire') is a musical textbook of Lithuanian Paganism, with bilingual Lithuanian-English liner notes explaining such matters as the use of fire in Baltic Native Faith rituals, the various layers of meaning in the deceptively simple *dainos*, and which gods are honored with which songs. In 2003 Kūlgrinda released *Perkūno Giesmės* ('Hymns of Perkunas'), a song-cycle dedicated to the Lithuanian god of thunder, strength, and wisdom. This was followed in 2005 by *Prūsų Giesmės* ('Prussian Hymns'), a collection of folk songs in the extinct Prussian language that paid tribute to this lost branch of Baltic indigenous culture. In 2007, Kūlgrinda released *Giesmės Saulei* ('Hymns to the Sun'), with songs to the goddess Saulė, and in 2009, another more historically-oriented work, *Giesmės Valdovui Gediminas* ('Hymns to King Gediminas'), a tribute to Grand Duke Gediminas (reigned 1316–1341 CE), who is remembered as one of the most illustrious of medieval Lithuanian rulers (Sužiedėlis 1997: 119–121). This alternation between explicitly religious and historical subject matter reinforces the importance of ethnonational consciousness to both Lithuanian Paganism and Lithuanian folk music.

Kūlgrinda has also collaborated with other musicians for recording projects that have expanded their musical horizons. Perhaps their finest such effort is *Sotvaras* (2002), a winter solstice song-cycle created with Donatas Bielkauskas, a musician who records under the name Donis. Entirely different musically from Kūlgrinda, Donis tends toward ambient, electronic, and industrial styles of contemporary popular music. *Sotvaras* is best summarised as a typical Kūlgrinda collection of traditional folk music augmented by ambient sound-textures tastefully applied by Donis. The result is a beautiful, melancholy recording that is primarily folk music but also something more. Donis is a prolific artist, and of his many projects, mention must be made of his collaboration with Darius Gerulaitis in the band Wejdas. The two began working together in the mid-1990s, and have released such recordings as *Wejdas* (1997) and the 2004 *Žemės*

Alsavimas ('Breathing Earth'). While working in a ambient, electronic vein emphasising synthesizers and computer programming, Wejdas incorporates a Pagan sensibility by sampling and manipulating sounds of natural elements like birdsong and flowing water, with lyrics that hint at transcendence in the natural world. The music of Wejdas shows that a Pagan worldview can be manifested through computerised electronica, as well as *dainos* and *kanklės*.

In 2010, Donis released *Kas Tave Šaukia*... ('What Calls You?'), timed to coincide with the six hundredth anniversary of Lithuania's victory over the Teutonic Knights in the Battle of Grünwald (Lithuanian Žalgiris) in 1410 CE. In this majestic work, Donis takes the Lithuanian sub-genre of traditional war songs, many of which are mournful reflections on the passing away of brave young warriors, and accentuates their emotional depth with lush arrangements combining folk and rock instruments from Lithuanian bagpipes (*dūda*) to *kanklės* and electric guitar, as well as a classical string section and assorted electronica. The vocalist is the acclaimed Rasa Serra, who also appeared on an earlier Donis recording exploring Lithuanian military-historical folk songs, *Bite Lingo* (2006). Serra has also sung with Kūlgrinda.

In the early 2000s, several younger female members of Kūlgrinda, including Rimgailė Trinkūnaitė, daughter of Jonas Trinkūnas and Inija Trinkūnienė, became friendly with young men involved in a heavy metal band, Ugnėlakis. Socialising in Vilnius pubs, they would often sing folk songs, with the Ugnėlakis players occasionally adding guitar, violin, or other instruments.[7] These jam sessions inspired a project called Žalvarinis ('Brass'), a name with folkloric and historic significance as a metal valued in ancient Lithuania for jewellery and other items. The resulting recording, credited to both Ugnėlakis and Kūlgrinda, was entitled *Žalvarinis*. Traditional Lithuanian folk songs, both *dainos* and *sutartinės*, were given a hard rock treatment, trading in the gentle, tinkling sound of the *kanklės* for raucous electric guitar, but with a vocal style much like that of Kūlgrinda.

The disc received an enthusiastic response, and the one-off experiment became an ongoing project. Žalvarinis is now a popular band applying rock dynamics to Lithuanian traditional music. Guitarist and arranger Robertas Semeniukas leads a line-up of three female vocalists, two guitarists (including himself), and a rock rhythm section of bass and drums. Other Žalvarinis releases to date are the 2005 *Žalio Vario* ('Raw Copper'),

[7] Ineta Meduneckytė-Tamosiūnienė (Žalvirinis member), pers. comm, December 2010.

and *Folk'n'Rock* (2008). *Žalio Vario* both nods to the 'metal' theme of the group's name and its origins in heavy metal, and refers to a traditional warrior song (also performed by Donis on his *Kas Tave Šaukia* . . .) that gives the disc its name. 'Žalio Vario' is in fact the very same traditional song that Donis cites as 'Kas Tave Šaukia'. The two different titles derive from the first line of this song, "Kas tave šaukia, žalio vario?" ("What calls you, raw copper?"), with 'raw copper' a metaphor for the young soldier called to battle in the fateful days of the Baltic Crusades. Žalvarinis has a substantial following in Lithuania, appearing on film and television and winning a number of awards, and has also performed to acclaim at festivals in Estonia and Latvia.[8]

Žalvarinis' method of updating and popularising traditional music with a hard rock approach may not please folk purists, but it represents an important bridge between tradition and modernity with great appeal to younger Lithuanians. Such hybridisation and popularisation has not met with universal acclaim, as is attested in the following thoughtful critique by the *sutartinės* scholar Daiva Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė.

> In recent years, the question of the preservation or extinction of authentic folklore (and consequently the *sutartinė*) in today's culture has frequently been considered . . . I do not believe that the *sutartinė* has to become a part of popular culture, a cheap ware offered to the young in "their own musical language." When the *sutartinė* lands in the pop music grinder, it speaks to the listener only in the language of pop music, and in the meantime the chants themselves are silent. You can feel this while listening to folk-rock groups like "Žalvarinis" or "Atalyja." . . . There are other artistically valuable forms of spreading the *sutartinė* in the modern world. This could be the combination of authentic performance with visual or applied arts, pantomime, etc. The archaic incantation of the *sutartinė* combined with modern art should be interesting and attractive to today's viewer . . . the *sutartinė* should sound "the highest note" in today's culture—it should become one of the most striking symbols of Lithuanian spiritual culture. (Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė, 2006).

Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė's concern that the integrity of traditional musical and cultural forms not be sacrificed on the transient altar of modern popular culture is a dilemma that faces attempts to combine the art forms of folk tradition with those of the post-traditional, post-modern present. Yet, while Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė might seem to be an arch-conservative opposed to all modernisation of traditional art forms, she ends by

[8] Internet site http://www.frype.lt/zalvarinis. Accessed 21/12/2010.

advocating even more radical and experimental, mixed-media approaches to old-new cultural fusion. Her main complaint is not that Žalvarinis has dared to modernise the *sutartinė*, but that the effort is, in her view, simple and crude. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Robertas Semeniukas and Žalavarinis have succeeded in rendering traditional music more appealing to a youthful audience that might otherwise gravitate toward non-Lithuanian, non-traditional, global pop.

Atalyja, another band mentioned by Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė, has also produced a series of striking recordings that blend together traditional and popular genres. While Žalvarinis has mainly grafted heavy metal guitar and rock and roll energy onto *sutartinės* and other traditional Lithuanian forms, Atalyja employs a lighter touch with a somewhat more eclectic sonic and stylistic palette, with occasional forays into jazz. Atalyja uses traditional Lithuanian instruments like *kanklės* and panpipes with acoustic and electric guitar, violin, bass, and drums, while also making use of Indian instruments, such as Indian flute and *tablas*. Like Žalvarinis, Atalyja has a trio of female singers and one male vocalist. The band's recorded work consists of the albums *Atalyja* ('Falling Rain') in 2001, *Močia* ('Mother') in 2004, and *Saula riduolėla* ('Sun the Roller') in 2009, and the shorter-length *Žemaitiu Ruoks* (2008).

Atalyja had its beginnings in the autumn of 1998. Founding members Gediminas Žilys and Eirimas Velička were inspired by the groundbreaking Latvian folk-rock band Iļģi, discussed below, to develop a new style that would "connect Lithuanian folk music with modern instruments and styles. Our aim is to present the beauty, deepness and uniqueness of Lithuanian folk songs, especially the *sutartinės*, the ancient Baltic worldview and life philosophy."[9] Asking about the religious affiliations of the band, the author was told in email correspondence, "some of us are members of Traditional Baltic Faith community [Romuva], some of us are Christians, and a few are interested in the philosophy and spirituality of Hindu tradition."

The joining together in Atalyja of Pagans, Christians, and students of Indian religion illustrates the multiple perspectives with which Lithuanians engage with their folk traditions. The Pagan associations of the old songs may function as spiritual touchstones for some, but for others, the Paganistic veneration of nature and references to deities in the *dainos* and *sutartinės* function more as cultural signposts of Lithuanian

[9] Members of Atalyja, pers. comm, November 2010.

traditions than as statements of religious dogma. Atalyja's Indian interests, as reflected both in the religious viewpoints of several members and the use of Indian instruments, is also to be found among other Lithuanian musicians and artists and among the general population, with much the same in Latvia, echoing the nineteenth century fascination with Indo-Baltic connections.

Ernestas Jepifanovas, a member of Atalyja, also appears on *Bitinėlio Raga* ('Bee Raga'), a 2004 disc in which the renowned Lithuanian folk singer Veronika Povilionienė collaborates with Jepifanovas and other members of an Indian music ensemble, Lyla, to add Indian spice to Lithuanian song forms including the *sutartinė*. Povilionienė, a champion of Lithuanian ethnic culture and recipient of multiple awards, has also experimented with jazz, as documented in the 1992 disc *Išlėk, Sakale* ('Fly, Falcon, Fly') (re-released 2006), again illustrating the receptivity of contemporary Lithuanian folk musicians to other musical forms. Povilionienė also recorded a disc of war songs, akin to Donis' *Kas Tave Šaukia . . .*, entitled *Kada Sūneliai Sugrįš* ('When Our Sons Come Back') in 2006.

With the rise to prominence of bands and musicians like Žalvarinis, Atalyja and Donis, the term 'folk music' has become increasingly inadequate to describe the more eclectic, experimental, and hybridised musical paths pursued by the younger generation of musicians who are inspired, but not limited, by folk music. The term 'post-folk music' is now in use to designate these new directions. Mention should also be made of Pievos ('Meadow'), another fine Lithuanian post-folk band with Pagan leanings, led by singer and poet Virginija Skeirienė. The band's name reflects their musical approach of gentle, melodic folk-rock. Pievos' two recordings are 2007's *Mėnuli Baltas* ('White Moon'), and 2010's *Papraustas Pasaulis* ('Ordinary World').

It was previously noted that Žalvarinis began as a collaboration between heavy metal musicians from Ugnėlakis and folk singers from Kūlgrinda. There are also other 'metal' bands in Lithuania that make Pagan themed music, but with less direct connection to folk music than Žalvarinis and the aforementioned post-folk bands, and more of an emphasis on the fierce guitar and pounding rhythms typical of heavy metal. Such Baltic Pagan metal bands have clearly been inspired by the 'black metal,' 'Pagan metal,' 'folk metal' and 'Viking metal' subgenres of European heavy metal that gained popularity in the early 1990s (Harris 2000: 13–30; Kurtagić 2010:1–10; Moynihan and Søderlind 2003; Purcell 2003). Stylistic differences aside, these subgenres share an interest in Pagan mythology and history, viewed as both a romantic alternative to, and a tragic victim of, modern

European civilisation. The angry, defiant energy of the music explodes against a sombre background of enveloping darkness and despair, with a whispered hope of rebirth amidst the desolation. All of these fit perfectly with the Baltic cultural landscape with its intense pride in ethnic traditions, including pre-Christian Pagan religion, and common experience of painful resistance to foreign domination.

While post-folk musicians mainly apply themselves to reinterpreting traditional folk songs, what might be termed 'pouring old mead into new bottles', Baltic Pagan metal groups do not generally perform folk songs, but take mythological and historical subject matter common to such songs as inspiration for new works. Thus, while Atalyja or Žalvarinis might provide a new musical interpretation of a traditional *daina* to Saulė or Perkūnas, a Baltic Pagan metal band is more likely write new songs about these deities. Influential Lithuanian Baltic Pagan metal bands include Poccolus, Zpoan Vtenz, Obtest, and Andaja. Poccolus was one of the first Baltic Pagan metal bands, founded in 1993 and gaining a lasting reputation with its only full-length album, released in 1996, also titled *Poccolus*. The band is named for Poccolus, the god of fertility and death of the extinct Prussian Balts. In Lithuanian mythology, Poccolus is the chthonic god Velnias, later identified with the Christian devil (Gimbutas 1974).

The songs on *Poccolus* conjure a mysterious world of magical nature and tragic destiny, typical of Baltic Pagan metal music. The listener is immersed in a dark world of ominous forests, howling wolves, blazing fires, poisonous snakes, and screeching owls, reminded of the deeds of heroic warriors, and invited to mystical encounters with transcendent powers. Poccolus' lyrics are not straightforward Pagan hymns, but evoke a quasi-Pagan or 'Paganistic' atmosphere. Poccolus' sound is hard-driving metal softened by occasional acoustic guitar, keyboards, and electronica, with a melancholy undertone not unlike that of Kūlgrinda's *Solvaras* collaboration with Donis. The *Poccolus* album has remained sufficiently popular to be re-released in 2006, and a 1994 demo tape was repackaged into a new release, *Ragana*, in 2009.

Guitarist, keyboardist and vocalist Ramūnas (Mūnis) Peršonis, the leader of Poccolus, also founded another Baltic Pagan metal band, Zpoan Vtenz, which also recorded only one album, 1998's *Gimę Nugalėt* ('Born to Conquer'). The musical approach is more varied, with plentiful use of synthesizer and keyboards that provide a mournful, ambient accompaniment to the usual hard-grinding electric guitar. Some songs are sung by Peršonis in a low-pitched, ultra-masculine manner, others by Vilma Čiplytė, a trained folk singer with a beautiful voice. Sadly, Čiplytė passed

away in 2009, which compromised the future of the band. The songs are not original compositions but traditional *dainos*, with an explicit intention of creating a bridge between folk tradition and metal-electric modernity. For this reason, *Gimę Nugalėt* may be classified as a folk-metal or post-folk album, showing again the limited utility of these genre distinctions.

Gimę Nugalėt is a collection of Lithuanian war songs, mining the same military-historical folkloric vein as the aforementioned Donis and Veronika Povilionienė discs. The persistent reinterpretations of this sub-genre by contemporary musicians is not only a tribute to the lasting appeal of these often sorrowful songs and a powerful expression of Lithuanian nationalism, but also an indication of Lithuanians' lingering sense of trauma from the German, Russian, and Soviet occupations, and continuing anxiety over their country's vulnerability to foreign domination. Though Lithuania's membership of NATO has provided some security against the ever-present possibility of Russian invasion, the threat remains, and inclusion in the European Union has occasioned both enthusiasm at being accepted into modern Europe and apprehension about the extent to which external economic and cultural influences may erode Lithuanian sovereignty and cultural identity. Therefore, these war songs, many of which refer to the tragic fate of the Baltic Prussians, whose extermination represents the 'worst case scenario' for all Baltic peoples, remain highly resonant even now. The constant alternation between mythological and historical themes in the music of post-folk and Pagan metal groups illustrates another important point. Pagan religious elements are so interwoven with Lithuanian ethnic nationalism in this music that while the two can be distinguished for purposes of academic analysis, they cannot be separated in lived reality. The same holds true in Latvia, as will be seen.

Obtest, another prominent Baltic Pagan metal band, was founded in 1992. Of all the bands surveyed in this chapter, Obtest is probably the one most devoted to a strictly heavy metal guitar approach, eschewing any use of alternative instrumentation that might lessen the 'metal quotient' of the music. This gives Obtest's music a relentless, rumbling consistency animated by hoarse, urgent vocals and fast-slashing lead guitar. Obtest's songs engage with the usual themes of Baltic Pagan metal: nature mysticism, warrior valour, tragic death, and references to Lithuanian gods and history, with an overall sense of foreboding. In the group's fourth and most recent recording, 2008's *Gyvybės Medis* ('Tree of Life'), nature is alive, with wolves howling, hawks circling, ravens soaring, black stallions charging, and oak trees rooted in rich black soil watered by the blood of fallen warriors. Mythological references include Medeinė, goddess of trees

and forests, and Velinas, another name for the underworld and death god, Velnias. The legend of the founding of the city of Vilnius from the Grand Duke Gediminas' dream of an iron wolf is recounted in 'Geležinas Vilkas' (literally, 'Iron Wolf', but translated on the liner notes as 'The Wolf of Steel').

The album opens with 'Apeigos' ('Rites'), which invites the listener to undergo an agonising spiritual transformation, with such lyrics as: "The wound is gaping, blood flows freely . . . Is this a prayer or is it a journey from which no man will ever return? . . . Rise up in flames from enchantments and spells . . . Darkened eyes shine from purest wells... Hands spread like sycamore branches embracing all life." The final song 'Tai Ne Pabaiga' ('This is Not the End') also describes a ritual, this time a funeral feast, with the grim but defiant conclusion, "Silence will pass, the wisdom ripened in tears/We are all as one, when are all embraced by death/This is the final journey for my body, but still this is not the end." Obtest provides English translations of all songs, which points to the band's ambition to reach an international audience while remaining grounded in Lithuanian culture and history and devoted to Lithuanian Paganism.

The final Lithuanian Pagan Metal band that will be considered in this chapter is Andaja. Formed in 2002 by Lithuanian musicians who had formerly played in Kūlgrinda, Ugnėlakis, Žalvarinis, Poccolus, and Obtest, the band is named for a shadowy Lithuanian goddess of fate associated with swamps and bogs, which were key sites of ritual in ancient times. Andaja's 2006 recording *Į̨š Atminties* ('From Memory') indicates the band's purpose of retrieving knowledge and wisdom from the dark swamps of collective memory, from the Pagan traditions of the Baltic past. Their lyrics allude to Lithuanian gods including Perkūnas, Velnias, and Andaja, striking the standard Pagan metal chords of magical nature, ominous darkness, fire, blood, death, defiance and the hope of renewal. Andaja's music features an intense guitar sound, approaching the grinding roar of Obtest but with more variety in tempo and style. Occasional keyboards add further texture, and the closing instrumental tune on the disc features not an electric guitar, but a Lithuanian *dūda* (bagpipe), ending the recording on a distinctly folkish note and underlining their devotion to Lithuanian traditional culture.

To conclude this section on Lithuania, it is evident that primarily folkloric bands like Kūlgrinda, post-folk groups like Atalyja, Pievos and Žalvarinis, ambient-electronic ensembles like Wejdas, and Pagan Baltic metal bands like Andaja and Obtest contribute to a broad panorama of musical activity, from the highly traditional to the experimental, united

by an underlying commitment to upholding the Pagan elements of traditional Lithuanian culture. The importance of Jonas Trinkūnas and Inija Trinkūnienė in both promoting Baltic Native Faith as a religion through Romuva, and in fostering appreciation for the Pagan dimension of traditional Lithuanian folk music through Kūlgrinda, cannot be overestimated. It is striking how many of the musicians included in this survey have some connection with Kūlgrinda, which has served as something of a Pagan music 'university' for many young Lithuanians. Summer folklore camps operated by Romuva are further evidence of the Trinkūnases' unceasing efforts to educate younger Lithuanians, and also emigrant Lithuanians who are encouraged to attend, about the Pagan roots of Lithuanian culture. For his work to promoting Lithuanian folk culture over several decades, Jonas Trinkūnas received the high honour of the Jonas Basanavičius Award for activities in the field of ethnic culture from the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture in 1997.

Paganism-Inspired Folk Music and Folk Music-Inspired Paganism in Latvia

In Latvia there are parallels to the Lithuanian situation and some interesting differences as well. As with Romuva in Lithuania, there is a well-established Pagan religious association, Dievturi, yet this organisation has not given rise to a musical counterpart like Kūlgrinda. This is partly a function of the different time frame in which modern Latvian Pagan religion is operating. While Romuva in its current incarnation, and Kūlgrinda, took root in the late Soviet period and then blossomed after independence, Dievturi has much earlier origins, dating back to the interwar period preceding the long nightmare of Nazi invasion and Soviet occupation (Misāne 2000; Krūmiņa-Koņkova 1999). The founder of Dievturība in that time, Ernests Brastiņš (1892–1942), is long since departed, thus foreclosing any possibility of Dievturi's original leadership creating a contemporary musical group as happened with Romuva and Kūlgrinda. The singing of Latvian *dainas* of mythological nature and the playing of the Latvian *koklės* did however play a role in Dievturi gatherings (Strmiska 2005; Muktupāvels 2005a).

In Latvia as in Lithuania, the late 1980s saw a folk music revival that marched hand in hand with the political movement for national independence and surging pride in Latvian ethnic culture, including its Pagan traditions. One of the first and most important Latvian folk music groups

in this period was Skandinieki, founded in 1976 by Dainis and Helmi Stalts and still active in the twenty-first century, with further generations of the Stalts family involved. Combining traditional Latvian and Livonian folk songs and instruments with a choral approach utilizing up to forty voices singing in a polyphonic style reminiscent of a Russian folk choir, Skandinieki has been an extremely influential presence on the Latvian folk scene (Muktupāvels 2011). This family-based ensemble has dedicated itself to preserving the musical traditions of the Livonians, a once-populous but now vanishing ethnic group with a Finno-Ugric language unrelated to Latvian.[10] The simple, unadorned production and minimal instrumentation resembles the musical approach of Kūlgrinda. The two most recent Skandinieki recordings are *Dzied un spēlē Skandinieki* ('Sing and Play Skandinieki'), a selection of Latvian folk music from different regions recorded in 2003, and *Veļu upe pārplūdus'* ('The River of Spirits is Overflowing'), a collection of traditional funeral songs from 2006.[11]

With many Latvian *dainas* celebrating the natural world, marking the cycle of seasons, and evoking the Pagan gods, Skandinieki has elevated knowledge of Latvian folk culture and of Latvian Pagan mythology. Inese Krūmiņa, a Latvian Pagan friend of the author, whose own musical and folkloric contributions are discussed below, noted, "Every single song they sing is filled with pre-Christian worldview—so in some kind—if they aren't saying they're Pagans, they're singing it out every time they open their mouths" (Krūmiņa 2011).

Two musicians who rose to prominence as performers in Skandinieki would play important roles in further promoting the Pagan elements of Latvian folk music. In the 1980s, Valdis Muktupāvels joined Skandinieki as a graduate student in ethnomusicology specialising in folk music genres and particularly the *kokles*, the Latvian equivalent of the Lithuanian *kanklės*.[12] Ilga Reizniece came to Skandinieki as a conservatory-trained violinist who shifted her focus toward Latvian folk music.[13] Academic posi-

[10] A touching reflection on the dwindling of the Livonian population in Latvia is provided in Specter (1997).

[11] Thoughtful and informative English-language reviews of Latvian music recordings are available at the *Latvians Online* website. See Kaljo (2004) and Jātniece (2007).

[12] Valdis Muktupāvels' biography online, http://www.music.lv/mukti/cv.htm. Accessed 29/12/2010.

[13] Ilga Reizniece and Iļģi English-language information online at http://ilgi.lv/en_biografija.php, with original Latvian text available at http://ilgi.lv/lv_biografija.php. Accessed 29/12/2010.

tions provided them with protection from the political persecution that often befell promoters of ethnic culture, thus Muktupāvels and Reizniece began their own folk music projects.

Muktupāvels went on to form a group, Ensemble Rasa, which performed Latvian summer and winter solstice songs using traditional instruments and singing styles. After independence, the ensemble recorded an album of these songs entitled *Latvia-Music of Solar Rites/Lettonie-Musique des rites solaires.* This was a landmark recording, issued first in cassette form in 1993 and then as a compact disc in 1995. Muktupāvels' bilingual French/English liner notes provided an introduction to Latvian *dainas* and solstice rites and the Pagan mythology of Saule and other deities, distinguishing native Latvian religion and mythology from Christianity, a foreign faith imposed by a German minority. The notes also explained Latvian instruments and singing styles. Traditional wedding, orphan, and funeral songs were interwoven with the Jāņi and Līgo songs to create a single song-cycle tracing both the arc of the year from spring to summer to winter and the life-cycle of an individual person from youth to marriage to death. Though the words 'Pagan' and 'Paganism' are not mentioned, the disc is a primer in Latvian Paganism, as the music listener and the reader of the notes is immersed in songs, deities, and rituals of the native Paganism of Latvia. The disc thus can be compared to Kūlgrinda's *Ugnies Apeigos*.

In the same year as *Music of Solar Rites* was first issued on cassette, Muktupāvels also released a solo recording of traditional *kokles* songs, showcasing the various styles of regions of Latvia. This 1993 recording would eventually be repackaged with a very different set of *kokles* compositions as the two-disc set *Valdis Muktupāvels: Kokles*, released by UPE records in 2002 as part of its Latvian Folk Music Collection. One disc contains traditional *kokles* tunes, and the other features Muktupāvels' own experimental compositions, incorporating the Indian *sarod* along with violin, cello, bass guitar, hornipe, and overtone whistle and voice, as well as his wife Rūta's singing. While grounded in Latvian folk sensibility, these 'Muktukokles' compositions possess a mystical, expansive quality, representing an intriguing post-folkloric direction for the master *kokles* player and ethnomusicologist, who is now an associate professor at the University of Latvia and a member of the National Culture Board. The Indian flavourings of the 'Muktukokles' recording are also, like the Indian explorations of Atalyja and Veronika Povilionienė in Lithuania, a nod to the Indo-European affinities of Baltic religion and culture. Another project that combined Latvian and Indian elements, including singing in

both Sanskrit and Latvian to showcase linguistic affinities, is Ramadance, a now-defunct group from the early 2000s, led by singer Aigars Grāvers. They recorded two albums, *Sāga* (2000) and *Extravagance* (2003).

In the early 1980s, Ilga Reizniece teamed up with another *kokles*-playing Muktupāvels, Valdis' brother Māris, who was not an academic but a skilled musician and folklore enthusiast, to form the post-folk ensemble Iļģi, which became the most famous and accomplished of all such music groups in Latvia. Though dedicated in its early years to performing Latvian traditional music in an 'authentic' manner, with band members conducting their own ethnographic expeditions to gather folk songs from rural areas, Iļģi would eventually chart a different, more eclectic and adventurous course.

As much state-sponsored, Soviet-approved Latvian folk music in the early 1980s was an artificially upbeat concoction that was almost comically out of tune with the actual social and psychological conditions in late Soviet era Latvia, Iļģi initially gained attention for performing more solemn, heartfelt, and minor-key forms of folk music. The public responded warmly; the authorities, less so. As bass player Gatis Gaujenieks reflected;

> [a]t the time, the folklore movement was more of a political statement than a musical trend. Singing and playing was inevitably linked to Latvian history, archaeology, ethnography, mythology and traditions, and the nascent independence movement . . . As a result, folk ensembles became de facto centers of national and cultural studies. References to 'pagan' Gods that appear in many a folksong, were also causes of concern to Soviet censorship . . . At that time in Latvia, the music that was 'allowable' was very up-tempo and cheery; sort of the sugar-coated version. The more somber and sincere folk melodies were the ones that appealed the most to Ilga (*Global Village Idiot* 2001).

As Gaujenieks notes, there was an inherent Pagan sensibility in much of the folk music researched and performed by Ilga Reizniece and her bandmates. This was also reflected in the name of the band, with *Iļģi* literally translating as "spirits of the departed," a concept with both religious and political resonance. On the one hand it expressed reverence for the past and for ancestors, who are of great concern in Baltic Pagan tradition, but on the other hand, the name could refer to the hundreds of thousands of Latvians who departed this life due to Soviet oppression and brutality.

Due to Soviet censorship, many of Iļģi's first recordings were only available outside the country. An anthology of these early works was issued by UPE records in 2002 as *Agrie gadi* ('Early Years'), a two-disc set

comprised of one disc, also titled *Agrie gadi*, with music from 1981–1991, and a second, *Rāmi rāmi* ('Quiet, quiet', or 'Calm, calm'), repackaging music first released on cassette in 1993. The music on the first disc is subdued and solemn, with minimal instrumentation consisting of *kokles*, violin, *ģīga* (a low-toned, two-stringed trough violin), and percussion. The second disc has more variety in tempo, mood, and instrumentation, hinting at the experimentation that characterises the band's music from the late 1990s to the present. It was with *Rāmi rāmi* that the members of Iļģi began to speak of their music as 'post-folk' or 'post-folkloric'.

With *Saules Meita* ('Daughter of the Sun'), released in 1998, this new musical approach had matured, with arrangements that augment traditional Latvian instruments with acoustic guitar, electric bass, synthesizer, computer programming, bongos and drums, weaving a rock-and-roll element into this folk music tapestry, but Ilga Reizniece's distinctive voice and violin, Māris Muktupāvels' *kokles* and *dūdas* (Latvian bagpipe), and the *ģīga* preserve the essence of Iļģi's characteristic post-folk sound. Some credit for this widening of musical horizons must go to Reizneice's and Muktupāvels' collaboration with the popular and influential pop-rock band *Jauns Mēness* ('New Moon') in the mid-1990s. Jauns Mēness was led by singer Ainars Mielavs, who was also the impresario behind the Latvian record label UPE, which became the primary distributor of Iļģi's recordings.

Another member of Jauns Mēness who would come to play an important role in Iļģi was bass and *ģīga* player Gatis Gaujenieks, a Latvian-American who had played in a Latvian-American rock band called Akacis in the United States in the 1980s and then emigrated to Latvia after independence, eventually becoming a member first of Jauns Mēness, then Iļģi (*Global Village Idiot* 2001; Kaljo 2009). Gaujenieks was a proficient studio technician as well as a talented bassist, and in both capacities helped to create the dynamic new Iļģi style on *Saules Meita*. Singer Māra Kalniņa, formerly in Latvian pop-dance band, Marana, also joined Iļģi at this time. The addition of musicians from outside the folk music world signified Iļģi's transformation into a post-folkloric ensemble.

Saules Meita also displays the post-folkloric direction of Iļģi in the combination of traditional material with original compositions. Though most of the songs are folk music *dainas*, four out of twelve songs are original compositions. It is a tribute to the artistry of the musicians that the original and traditional songs blend together smoothly. Taken as a whole, *Saules Meita* is a coherent song-cycle organised around the theme of a

young woman on the edge of adulthood, observed through the lens of the traditional Latvian Pagan worldview, which interweaves human concerns with mythological reflections. As the liner notes explain,

> [w]ho is this 'traditional girl' in a national costume with a wreath of flowers in her hair? She is your great great grandmother, who lived her life as fully in her day and time, as we do now. Her songs tell us her hopes, desires, fears and circumstances. Through her we can enter the world of myth—as it was in the past, and as we create our own myths for today and tomorrow. This young woman is passionate, she is full of wonder, she makes mistakes and sometimes acts foolishly. To call her by her given name, she is the Daughter of the Sun.

This brief statement provides an insight into how Iļģi relates to Latvian traditional culture and native Baltic Paganism. There is no desire to return to a fossilised, frozen-in-amber form of music, style of living, or way of thinking. Traditional culture and religion is seen as a foundation and an inspiration, as both a ground to stand on and a guide to future horizons, but not sealed off from new ideas or information. Ilga Reizniece explained her ideas about religion, tradition and Paganism in an email communication to the author.

> Iļģi are neither pagans nor neopagans. Had true ancient wisdom, rituals, shamans, teachers, etc. survived in Latvia, as, hopefully, they did for Indians and other peoples untouched by civilization, and if I lived out in the country, in nature, as seems to be necessary for ancient religions, then maybe I would observe some of the rituals and consider myself a pagan. (Because I truly believe each people's own religion and beliefs are the best for them, and I have strong objections to what the Christian church has done!) The truth is important to me, and as soon as I realize someone labels as a ritual something thought up by me or a colleague—that's not for me. If someone says my compositions seem to be a thousand years old, then that is a compliment.
>
> The only celebration in which I not only take an active role, but also have shared with others for years, what to do and how to do it, is Jāņi. First of all, it is due to the existence of an enormous volume of related music as well as a wealth of information about the traditions. Everyone can pick and choose what they want to take from this and do or renew, without faking it. If I can explain to a child why we do what we do, then I can do it. I don't have the same answers for many other holidays, which is why I don't observe them. And nature plays a role. Nature in Latvia at the summer solstice is the richest and most beautiful. It is a time when even the most modern people can feel at one with nature. It could be said that the religion of my ancestors is expressed in nature and music . . . Because other holidays have far fewer songs and less opportunity to feel at one with nature (too cold) I celebrate them less than Jāņi.

> In Iļģi's early days I did search for the most ancient songs and melodies—so, of course, there was a desire to find that which others, such as Dievturi, claim to have found.
>
> And, singing and playing, I also feel God [Dievs] as well as Laima. I also feel the Meža māte [Forest Mother] when in the forest, Jūras māte [Sea Mother] when at the sea (at beaches where days go by and you see no one, and there are such beaches in Latvia. Of course, not at seaside resorts.) But to practice some sort of rituals that have been thought up by a folklore ensemble member—that really is not acceptable to me. I am not saying they can't do it. Everyone does what they think is good and helps them live. Occasionally I participate, if the rituals are done tastefully and inoffensively (a good example—the Krūmiņš family).
>
> Perhaps it could be called post-traditional religion, but under no circumstances should it be called traditional, because no one knows how our ancestors worshipped the gods—exactly how they did it, what they felt and what they thought. Maybe it comes to some in a dream . . . or from a [woven] belt[14] or a sign on a tree or a rock, or in the sky . . . Maybe that can happen. Maybe some hear something like that in our music. That would make me especially happy. Because it is important to me to believe our ancestors were truly pure Baltic people, *daina* Latvians, and God came to them quietly, peacefully, without disturbing a flower. Not with fire and a sword, as with other peoples. What is important to me are my great grandmothers and grandfathers, the rhythm and order of their lives, my identity, and of course, I don't like to present as fact what I only feel.
>
> I can express myself in music. My beliefs and dreams.
>
> For many years I have been very interested in everything about the lives of my ancestors, their culture, religion. Iļģi's early repertoire included "God Songs" and "Sun Songs." Through music I sought my way, but it did not lead me to religion. It did lead me to Latvian identity. I will stick with music. As I said, neopaganism in Latvia to me seems pleasant, but for me—too artificial [*samākslots*] (Reizniece 2010).

What Reizniece says about elements of pre-Christian, Pagan religious tradition being important to her sense of Latvian culture and identity and her experience of nature without feeling the need to adopt a comprehensive new-old Pagan or Neo-Pagan religion out of the folkloric fragments of the past, is similar to the views of many other Latvian (and Lithuanian) musicians consulted for this chapter. They enjoy, embrace and celebrate Pagan elements of their cultural traditions, but do not see the need to formalise this as an official 'religion' *per se*. Thus, though their music and

[14] Traditional Latvian weaving has beautiful designs that incorporate mythological motifs in another testimonial to the interconnectedness of traditional arts and the Pagan Baltic worldview. See *Latvju rakstu zīmes* ("Latvian Symbols"), internet site, http://valoda.ailab.lv/kultura/kultura/orno1.htm. Accessed 18/12/2010.

indeed their own personal spiritual leanings might be described as Pagan or at least 'Paganistic', they would not describe themselves as Pagans or Neo-Pagans.

Another Iļģi-related music project from the late 1990s that highlighted the Pagan dimension of Latvian folk culture was the aptly titled *Pagānu Gadagrāmata* ('Pagan Yearbook') released in 1999, in which Reizniece, Muktupāvels and other musicians with classical composer and rock keyboardist Uģis Prauliņš provided a contemporary, world-music interpretation of traditional Latvian *dainas* along with original compositions by Prauliņš.[15] The songs are arranged in sequence according to the seasons, from spring through summer and fall and back to freezing winter once more, an aural 'yearbook' of traditional Latvian nature as it changes through the year. Prauliņš states in the liner notes,

> [i]t's about the constant alternation of seasons outside the city, at places we hardly ever visit these days—by the river that's running night and day, by the sea that lives a life of its own, in wild blooming meadows with its birds and forests where the beasts hide . . . I wouldn't like these songs to climb the Latvian pop charts and go down as swiftly afterwards. These songs are meant to be a retrospection of a whole year for the inner self of an urban man—at places we hardly every visit these days.

Though Prauliņš does not explain why he calls his songs a 'Pagan' yearbook, the implied explanation is that the active awareness and warm love of nature expressed in these songs are grounded in the Latvian Pagan veneration of the natural world.

The arrangements on this recording take several further post-folk steps beyond where Iļģi leaves off with *Saules Meita*. Traditional Latvian instruments, particularly the *kokles*, are still very much in evidence, but there is heavier use of electronic keyboards, both electric and acoustic guitar courtesy of *Jauns Mēness* member Gints Sola, and a liberal use of African percussion instruments like *kalimba, balafon* and *djembe*, contributed by percussionist Nils Īle. The adventurous spirit of *Saules Meita* and *Pagānu Gadagrāmata* was well received in Latvia, with *Saules Meita* receiving the 'Greatest Music' and 'Record of the Year' awards in 1998, and *Pagānu Gadagrāmata* recognised as 'Best Folk Music Album of the Year' in 1999.

[15] There is a profile of the multi-talented Uģis Prauliņš at the Living Composers Project internet site, at http://www.composers21.com/compdocs/praulinsu.htm. Accessed 29/11/2010.

Iļģi kicked off the new millennium with 2000's *Sēju Vēju* ('Sow the Wind'), which was a male-themed counterpart to *Saules Meita*, with songs concerning young men attaining manhood and marriage. All songs are traditional *dainas* with no original compositions, but the arrangements are less traditional than *Saules Meita*, with pounding drums and driving acoustic guitar adding rock-and-roll exuberance. This was somewhat disorienting to some folk music purists and long-standing Iļģi fans, such as the Latvian-American reviewer Amanda Jātniece, who titled her ambivalent review, "Post-folk wind blows a bit hard," but it helped Iļģi reach a younger audience (Jātniece 2000). As with the earlier album, Latvian Pagan mythology is a continual theme, beginning with the first song, 'Kas varē ja grožus vīt' ('Who Weaves the Reins?'), praising the miraculous works of the sons of god (*Dieva dēli*) and the daughters of the sun (*Saules meita*).

In the decade since *Sēju Vēju*, Iļģi has continued to experiment on its ongoing artistic odyssey, never abandoning traditional Latvian instruments, but supplementing them with everything from electric guitar to symphony orchestra to *tanpura* to banjo to *tablas*, as noted in a retrospective essay by Egil Kaljo (2006). Traditional *dainas* remain the main source of the band's material, though original songs occasionally appear. Pagan mythology and Paganistic sensibility characterise the band's overall body of work. The more traditionally-oriented albums include 2003's *Kaza Kāpa Debesīs* ('The Goat Climbed up into the Sky'), a collection including a seven-song sequence commissioned for the Latvian Dance Festival, with three original compositions and one inspired by Lithuanian folklore, *Totari* (2005), a set of winter solstice Kalado songs, 2006's *Ne Uz Vienu Dienu* ('Not Only For One Day'), a collection of wedding *dainas*, voted second best European world music recording for 2006 by World Music Charts Europe (WMCE), and *Īsākās Nakts Dziesmas* ('Songs of the Shortest Night'), a 2009 compilation of summer solstice Jāņi songs. The two most ambitious recordings that the band has produced are 2002's *Krusta Dancis* ('Cross Dance'), a second collaboration with Uģis Prauliņš that blends traditional and electronic instrumentation with the soaring voices of the Latvian Radio Choir, and in the same year, *Spēlēju, Dancoju* ('I Sang, I Danced'), an operatic adaptation of a mythological play by an eminent Latvian author, Jānis Rainis (1865–1929) that teams the members of Iļģi with Uģis Prauliņš and guest vocalists, most notably Rūta Muktupāvela. *Spēlēju, Dancoju*, conceived as a spectacular, multi-media extravaganza, was performed in Riga with the Lithuanian experimental

puppet theatre Miraklis as part of an international theatre festival in 2001 (Muktupāvels 2002).

In addition to such musical explorations, Ilga Reizniece and the band remain devoted to fostering awareness and appreciation of Latvian folk culture, both in Latvia and abroad. Reizniece, a former music teacher at the Jurmāla Alternative School, lectures on folk music and folk lore, including regularly participating in the annual '3 × 3' (three generations) summer folklore camps in Latvia, which parallel the Lithuanian camps run by Kūlgrinda. In 2006, the Latvian Ministry of Culture honoured Ilga Reizniece with its Grand Award in Folklore.[16]

If Iļģi can be defined as post-folk or post-folkloric, having moved from 'pure' folk music to a more experimental and contemporary approach that still takes inspiration from traditional Latvian folk music, then the religious perspective of the band and its music can be defined as *post-Pagan* in that the traditional world-view and religious sensibility that informs much of Iļģi's music is drawn from Baltic Paganism, without Reizniece or her colleagues being committed to or directly involved in any attempt to revive Paganism as a religion.

While Skandinieki, Valdis Muktupāvels, and Iļģi all perform Latvian music with strong Pagan elements without directly associating themselves with Paganism, the folk music ensembles Vilki ('Wolves') and Vilcenes ('She-Wolves') have been forceful and unequivocal in asserting their Pagan religious identity. The members of these two related groups are not professional, academically trained musicians, but folklore enthusiasts who have attained a high degree of professionalism over years of activity. Vilki was first formed in 1992 by Edgars Lipors, a man of diverse occupations from acting to teaching, as a men's choral ensemble for the performance of traditional Latvian warrior songs, which some members had already been doing in the 1980s. *Vilki* means 'wolves', and was chosen to mark the valour of Latvian warriors in resisting invasion and occupation, from the German crusaders of the twelfth century through the Nazis and the Soviets in the twentieth. It is no coincidence that Jānis Krūmiņš, one of the founders of Vilki and currently a member of the Riga City Council, has worked for years as an administrator of Latvijas Okupācijas Muzejs (the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, also known as the Occupation Museum), a house of horror in which the mass executions and

[16] Noted on the band's Facebook page, http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ilgi/264378146686#!/pages/Ilgi/264378146686?v=info. Accessed 13/12/2010.

deportations of Latvians under Nazi and Communist rule are described in heartrending detail.[17] Jānis' wife Inese Krūmiņa lost both her mother and grandmother to the Soviet gulags, as she explained in a 2002 interview.

Vilki is a nine-person, male-only group, the gender focus accentuating the warrior orientation of the ensemble. Some songs performed by Vilki are believed to date to the medieval period, with more recent songs referring to World Wars I and II. In events organised for educational and folkloric purposes, Vilki combines performances of folk songs, played on traditional instruments, with demonstrations of traditional Latvian horsemanship, weapons, and fighting techniques. Another purpose in founding Vilki was to stimulate the interest of young Latvian men in folklore, folksongs, and the traditional Baltic Pagan worldview. During the Soviet era, folklore study and performance in Latvia had mainly been the domain of women, and Vilki's founders wanted to restore male interest, participation and pride in the traditions of the past.

Vilki's activities have expanded from performances of warrior-related folklore to recreating pre-industrial folk crafts and Latvian Pagan religion. Group members learned to make weapons, personal adornments such as rings and pendants, musical instruments, and other items by pre-industrial craft methods. The original male orientation of Vilki was eventually supplemented by a female group, *Vilcenes*, formed in 1996, which sings traditional women's songs similar to those performed by Iļģi on *Saules Meita* and *Ne Uz Vienu Dienu*. The 'she-wolves', most of whom are the wives of the Vilki 'wolves', practice traditional women's crafts such as sewing and weaving, faithfully recreating garments, as well as the complex designs used for belts, sashes and other items.[18] Jānis Krumiņš and Inese Krūmiņa have also played a leading role in organizing the '3 × 3' Latvian summer folklore camps that Ilga Reizniece contributes to as well.

The emphasis on historical reconstruction by Vilki and Vilcenes has influenced other ensembles, such as Trejasmens and Vilkači ('Werewolves'), which also pay tribute to past warrior traditions and pre-industrial lifestyles. Another important figure in the traditional crafts in Latvia is Daumants Kalniņš, a smith, artist and scholar of Baltic metallurgy and jewellery traditions based in Cēsis. Kalniņš held an international

[17] Internet site, http://www.omf.lv/index.php?lang=english. Accessed 02/01/2010. See also Kelleher (2008).

[18] A fine illustrated study of traditional Latvian folk clothing in historical perspective is available at internet site, http://www.li.lv/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=42&Itemid=1129. Accessed 03/01/2011.

seminar on the relationship of Latvian metalworking traditions to folklore and mythology entitled 'Mīts un Metāls' ('Myths and Metals') at the Cēsis History Museum in 1997, with a number of lectures and exhibits from the seminar subsequently published in an illustrated volume (Kalniņš 1997).

Musically, Vilki and Vilcenes are first and foremost choral ensembles, with deep, booming male voices on the part of Vilki and higher, soaring female voices in Vilcenes. The accompaniment is limited to traditional Latvian instruments such as *kokles, dūdas, ģīga*, drums, horns, whistles, pipes, and percussion. Though the instrumentation is minimal compared to the post-folk complexity and instrumental variety of Iļģi, the arrangements are effective and even dramatic. The vocals are also strong and compelling. To date, Vilki has produced two albums, 2000's *Dzelzīm dzimu* ('Born to the Iron') and 2007's *Mans bērīt's kumeliņš* ('My Dearest Bay Horse'), and Vilcenes the disc *Karavīra līgaviņa* ('Bride of the Warrior'), released in 2006.

The religious aspect of Vilki and Vilcenes stems from members' past involvement, and eventual disillusionment, with the major Latvian Pagan movement Dievturi. Inese Krūmiņa (2002) states that they have no disagreement with the belief structure of Dievturi, which draws on the *dainas* and Pagan Baltic gods of Latvian tradition. Their discontent arises from the perception that the ritual aspect of Dievturi, devised during the interwar period by Dievturi founder Ernests Brastiņš, is imitative of Protestant Christianity. The typical Dievturi gathering begins with a spoken 'praisegiving' or convocation, followed by the singing of *dainas* and a lecture on moral and spiritual issues not unlike a Protestant minister's sermon. While recognising that the existing records of Pagan Latvian religion, as of most European Pagan traditions, are too fragmentary to provide the basis for a full range of ritual practices, Krūmiņa and other members of Vilki-Vilcenes felt it was wrong to use Christianity to fill in gaps in Baltic ritual tradition and more appropriate to draw on related forms of Indo-European religion, with respect to the original Indo-European basis of Baltic Paganism. This has tended to mean borrowing from Hinduism, as the only original Indo-European religious tradition to have never been suppressed or exterminated, but to have continued to thrive and develop. During a visit by the author to Latvia in 2002, Inese Krūmiņa displayed photographs of a wedding ritual she had created, which draws on Hindu ceremonies, with the couple making several circuits around a sacred fire as in Hindu nuptials. Like Kūlgrinda in Lithuania, Vilki-Vilcenes maintains the importance of a sacred fire as a continuation of Indo-European ritual

tradition with both Baltic and Hindu analogues. It might seem contradictory to Vilki-Vilcene's intense devotion to Baltic, and specifically Latvian, traditional culture to draw on Indian religion in this way, but the Indo-Baltic connection has been a matter of concern to Latvian and Lithuanian scholars for two centuries now, and is thus a 'tradition' in its own right, albeit more academic than folkloric (Strmiska 2011).

Pagan religious elements manifest in Vilki and Vilcenes songs by references to native Latvian deities and a Paganistic glorification of nature. *Mans bērīt's kumeliņš* ('My Dearest Bay Horse') is devoted to horse-lore, including tributes to equine deities, mining a very rich stream in Latvian folk tradition that is still influential today, even at the level of government, as the following illustrates. In June 2008, one year after this Vilki album was released, the Latvian Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis endorsed the proposal of Defense Minister Vinets Veldre, an avid horseman, to purchase twenty-five horses to create an elite equestrian honour guard for use in greeting visiting foreign dignitaries (*New Europe* 2008). Veldre was reported as stating that his goal was to "restore military traditions" of the past. It is not known if the Defense Minister is a fan of Vilki, but they certainly seem to have some common interests.

One very unusual and interesting type of Latvian Pagan lore offered by Vilki in several songs on *Dzelzīm dzimu* are magical charms and incantations used to preserve warriors from harm in battle. The song *Māte mane lolodama* ('Cherished by Mother') is a genuinely eerie rendition of a spell that a mother would chant to protect her son. The title track, *Dzelzīm dzimu* explains procedures for rendering the warrior invincible through magical use of stone and iron. Between its mystical, martial and ethno-historical elements, Vilki-Vilcenes has carved out a distinctive niche in the folk music world in Latvia, and also extended awareness of other possibilities for Latvian Paganism beyond Dievturi.

As in Lithuania, there is a lively heavy metal subculture in Latvia, including Baltic Pagan metal bands that draw on Pagan mythology, folklore, and folk songs. The most prominent group is Skyforger, a band whose name direct references the thunder-god Pērkons (Lithuanian Perkūnas). Formed in 1995 by members of an earlier Latvian metal band, Grindmaster Dead, the band colourfully describes its musical approach on its internet home page.

> Skyforger have been tempering their music in the smithy of the Thunder-god since 1995. For the last decade, the band has been fighting under the flag of Latvian Pagan Metal; an extreme blend of traditional Baltic Folk

> music and various Metal influences ranging from Norwegian inspired Black Metal through to 80s-rooted Heavy Metal. The band's unique combination of ancient and modern influence has given them a wide appeal throughout both the Metal and Folk scenes, and has brought great variety to their song writing over the course of the six Skyforger albums.[19]

Thematically, Skyforger covers similar ground to Vilki, celebrating the valour, glory and tragedy of warriors' lives from medieval times to the present, honouring Latvian Pagan gods, and expressing a sense of kinship with nature. The mood is typical of Baltic Pagan metal, dark and foreboding. 'Werewolves', from the band's first album, *Semigalls War Chant* (1997, re-released 2005), sets the tone.

> The pale moon casts its evil eye/ Over the man in the forest
> He calls wolves with the soundless bagpipe
> Utters the magic words of summoning
> And when the snowstorm starts its icy dance
> Wolves come—red burns their eyes
> Hungerful howlings fill the night sky
>
> In the depth of the forest/There live people far from the others
> They live by the elders' custom and worship pagan gods
> Wolves guard them against the persecution of Christians
> As they deny the dogma of Christ
>
> People from the neighbouring villages
> Call this place—the forest of werewolves
> (They tell:)Those who pass by the marsh of wolves
> Never return (English translation from CD liner notes).

Skyforger recordings evoke the same kind of mystical atmosphere and quasi-medieval world as on this song, reflecting with solemnity on the thirteenth century conquest of Latvia by German Christians and celebrating the defiance of the Pagan Balts in maintaining their culture and traditions against foreign invasion. The band's 1998 album, *Kauja Pie Saules* ('The Battle of Saule'), re-released in 2006, commemorates one of the greatest victories of Baltic Pagan resistance, the 1236 CE battle in which a coalition of Baltic tribes annihilated the forces of the German Sword Brothers. With *Semigalls' Warchant* and *Kauja Pie Saules*, Skyforger established themselves as Latvia's premier Baltic Pagan metalsmiths, with a

[19] Internet site, http://www.skyforger.lv/en/index.php?main_page_id=10&page_type=text. Accessed 04/01/2011. Information about the band can also be found on other internet social network sites such as MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter.

hard-crunching rock guitar sound and guttural, impassioned vocals delivering their tales of past Baltic Pagan glory with full metal gusto. 2000's *Latviešu Strelnieki* ('Latvian Riflemen'), takes on a more contemporary topic, the bravery of Latvian soldiers in World War I. The fourth Skyforger recording, 2003's *Pērkoņkalve* ('Thunderforge'), returns to the themes of the earlier albums.

On the band's fifth and most atypical recording, *Zobena Dziesma* ('Sword Song') from 2003, Skyforger took a break from Pagan metal. Band members traded in their electric guitars for the Latvian folk instruments of *kokles, ģīga*, and *dūdas* as well as acoustic guitar and drums. This was not a total stylistic departure, however, as they had often mixed in traditional folk instruments with their contemporary electric ones. The difference with *Zobena Dziesma* was that the traditional instruments were the main focus rather than an embellishment. The songs are traditional *dainas* supplemented by acoustic versions of several past Skyforger compositions. In the liner notes, Skyforger emphasises that its members do not consider themselves to be professional folk musicians, but this recording demonstrates their solidarity with Latvian folk music tradition and their understanding of their own music as a modern, heavy metal expression of that older tradition. Despite the all-acoustic instrumentation, the music still has a forceful, hard-driving feel, proving that it is easier to take the electricity out of the instruments than to take the metal out of the musicians. In Skyforger's most recent album, *Kurbads* (2010), the band returned to its Pagan metal roots, with occasional folk elements such as *dūdas* and *ģīga*. This is an ambitious 'concept album' concerning the adventures of Kurbads, a hero from Latvian mythology who is born from a white mare, another indication of the ubiquity of equine themes in Latvian folk tradition.

Skyforger's attitude toward religion is complex. There are frequent tributes to Latvian Pagan gods in their music, and the band's internet home page features a section called "A Brief Look at Latvian Mythology," a concise but informative glossary of Latvian deities and myths. This concludes with the following caution:

> In the early twenty-first century, people may have an idea of Latvian mythology that is somewhat closer to what it must have been centuries ago, yet perfection in this area is far away and perhaps unreachable. All we can do is try to reconstruct an image of Latvian mythology from whatever remains of it there are left after both Christian religiousness and Soviet anti-religiousness have done their best to destroy all memory of it. (Skyforger n.d.)

The home page also contains a FAQ (frequently asked questions) section, which includes the statement, "Skyforger is a completely non-political band, and none of the band members are interested in any of the world's religions. They consider all of them equally false." In email communications with the author, Peter, Skyforger's lead singer and guitarist, offered some further clarification of the band's perspective on religion and particularly, Baltic Paganism.

> We consider all so-called official religions, especially Christianity and Islam as a tool for brainwashing, to keep people in obedience to ruling power and spiritual ignorance . . . Our Baltic pagan believing was very different from those. Our ancient gods and deities were seen not as grim rulers in the sky—but more or less as spirits who can help or harm people in their daily life. They lived around and people tried to live in harmony with them. Rituals and offerings were made to make those gods and spirits more well-disposed to people, but there was nothing like blind obedience which was asked—or idea to spread and force one and only religion towards all people around . . .
>
> Today personally we see this old Baltic pagan religion more as a philosophy of life, a way of how to look on things in world, as a wisdom of our ancestors who had lived in harmony with Mother Nature and were part of it . . . Sometimes I see much similarity in our religion with Northern America Indians, there is so many things we share, especially how people treated Nature and world where they lived.
>
> Unfortunately not much is left from where we can take our knowledge: mainly they are *dainas*—our old traditional songs and some old writings/church books made by German priests or scholars who lived here. We can find some things in folk tales, old customs and magic incantations, which was luckily written down in 19th century by local folk enthusiasts such as Krisjanis Barons . . .
>
> As for neo pagan movements, here are some of my thoughts. Dievturi was made by one man (Ernests Brastiņš) in times of so called "romantic nationalism" we had here, between two World wars 1920–1940. This religion, even if it tried to be pagan-like, took a lot of things from Christianity; sometimes it really feels like it is Christian religion just made to pretend to be Latvian pagan religion! At those times there were a lot of speculations going around about such things. Well known poets and writers tried to make their own pantheons for Latvian mythology, everyone believed he and only he is right and had found how it all was by reading some shady historical books. Many times they were writing down their own fantasies, just to make it through. So same was with Dievturi movement, while they used many traditional things, the rest is just self made and what's worse—they took and implanted things from Christian religion with a purpose to adapt Christian people into this new "only true Latvian" religion.

> Another bad thing here is that for years we write our history by ignoring other nations who lived around us. Our Baltic paganism wasn't separated inside iron walls—people were constantly in contacts with other nations around: Slavs, Vikings and Germans. I bet they made great impact on people who lived here. We can discover a lot by studying their mythology, traditions and folklore (Peter 2010).

Peter's thoughtful and nuanced scepticism does not by any means reject the value of Latvian Baltic Paganism, but acknowledges the difficulty of fully recreating it due to the limitations of the historical and ethnographic records. It seems that he understands Baltic Paganism primarily as a nature-cantered worldview powerfully expressed in the folklore, songs and myths from the past, deserving of both continued contemplation and continued celebration. Peter explains Skyforger's religious perspective as 'Paganistic' or 'Post-Pagan' in the way of Ilga Reizniece and Iļģi rather than straightforwardly 'Pagan' in the way of Kūlgrinda and Vilki-Vilcenes. Peter's criticisms of Dievturi echo those of Vilki, but his final point is something of a new departure. Due to the nationalistic orientation that tends to dominate the discourse of both modern Baltic Paganism and related musical forms like Baltic Pagan metal music, it is rare to find any positive appreciation of Baltic culture and religion having possibly benefited from interaction with neighbouring peoples and their traditions. This openness and receptiveness to other peoples, cultures, and traditions may mark Skyforger as not only post-Pagan, but also, in a qualified sense, post-nationalistic. Skyforger's songs nearly burst with pride and love for the Latvian nation and its history, but its members are able to see beyond a narrow, parochial and defensive nationalism in constructing their sense of Latvian identity and pride. This is in line with the 'liberal nationalism' of the political philosophers Yael Tamir (1994) and Will Kymlicka (1995), also endorsed by the Lithuanian political philosopher Leonidas Donskis (2002).

Another band that has succeeded in melding heavy-metal attitude with traditional Latvian instruments is Auļi, an ensemble formed in 2003. Auļi's sound is centred around thundering Latvian *dūdas* bagpipes and pounding drums, supplemented by *ģīga* and occasional string bass. Auļi does not use electric instruments, but does not seem to need them. Their third album, 2010's *Etnotranss* ('Ethnotrance'), is a powerful and engaging work suggesting a very bright future for these post-folkloric dudes with pre-industrial *dūdas*. The album also features an intriguing mytho-poetic essay imaging a shamanistic journey to the underworld by the writer Laima Muktupāvela, another talented member of the Muktupāvels clan.

Auļi made a joint appearance with Skyforger at the Latvian Music Records Annual Awards on 23 February 2010.

It would be remiss to conclude this discussion of Pagan-related Latvian music without mentioning that Vaire Viķe-Freiberga, President of Latvia from 1999–2007, recorded *Vairas Dziesmas* ('Vaira's Songs'), a disc of traditional Latvian *dainas* in 2008, under the musical direction of Valdis Muktupāvels with instrumental and vocal support by Valdis and Māris Muktupāvels and several members of Iļģi. The woman who has served as the voice of her country on the world stage now proves to also have a fine voice as a folk singer, singing traditional songs from her childhood. The material includes songs with direct mythological references. *Laima sēdi liepiņā* ('Laima in the linden') and *Upītē olu metu* ('I threw a stone into a river'), address Laima, the Latvian goddess of fate, and *Saulīt, mana krustamāte* (Saule, my godmother), portrays the sun-goddess Saule as follows:

> The Sun, my godmother
> Reached out her hand across the Daugava [river].
> The fingers of both her hands
> Were covered with gold spirals.
>
> "Oh Sun, you are so bright.
> Give me some of your brightness.
> Oh Laima, you are so good,
> Give me some of your goodness."
>
> The sun sets in the evening,
> Adorning the tree-tops.
> On the linden she sets a crown of gold,
> On the oak—a crown of silver
> (English translation of *daina*
> by Viķe-Freiberga, from liner notes).

This is clearly not intended as a 'Pagan' recording, but as a tribute to the Latvian folk culture that Viķe-Freiberga has been involved with all her life and championed as both a scholar and a political leader. As with Iļģi and Skyforger, this is a recording that celebrates Baltic Paganism as a cherished component of Latvian folk culture, but stops short of endorsing or promoting any modern version of Latvian Paganism. Yet it is worth noting that there are no Christian hymns or Christian references in this collection of favourite Latvian songs, while there are, as noted, explicit and significant Pagan references.

The former Latvian President was asked by the author for her thoughts on Latvian Pagan movements such as Dievturi. She responded via email,

"[m]y own impression is that 'neo-paganism' of any kind has been on the wane for the last ten years at least, while Christian fundamentalists from abroad continue to be aggressively active" (Viķe-Freiberga 2010). While she refrains from explicitly embracing Latvian Paganism, Viķe-Freiberga's concern regarding Christian evangelical onslaught is fully in line with the point of view of modern Baltic Pagan movements, from Romuva to Dievturi to Vilki, which all agree on the need to protect native Baltic culture, including the remains—and refrains—of pre-Christian Lithuanian and Latvian Paganism against the threat of Christian domination in the twenty-first century, just as their Baltic ancestors fought off crusading Christian knights in the thirteenth-century Battle of Saulė and the fifteenth-century Battle of Grünwald.

The Post-Folkloric, the Post-Pagan, and the Paganesque

There is a rich and varied body of contemporary music in both Lithuania and Latvia inspired by Baltic Paganism, which is itself grounded in the traditional folk music of the two countries. Shared understandings of Baltic history, ethnic identity, and nationalism also add strength and significance to the Pagan elements in the music and culture of Latvia and Lithuania. References to pre-Christian gods, like the Lithuanian Perkūnas or the Latvian Pērkons, conjure up ways in which the worship of such native gods was suppressed and Christianisation imposed via conquest, crusade, and colonisation. This helps explain the persistent intertwining of Pagan and military-historical themes by Baltic artists from Donis to Žalvarinis to Veronika Povilionienė to Vilki to Skyforger, who have together created a sizable set of recordings that pay homage both to Baltic Pagan traditions of the past, and the triumphs and tragedies of Baltic resistance to foreign invasion and domination.

It is notable that, of the musicians and music groups examined in this chapter, it is those most directly involved in creating a modern version of Baltic Paganism, namely Kūlgrinda and Vilki-Vilcenes, who are also those whose music is the most 'traditional,' in the sense of restricting the choice of material, the types of instruments, and the style of performance to those found in traditional Lithuanian and Latvian music as documented in folkloric and historical research. Their focus on recreating a 'purist' style of traditional music is in accord with their intention to also recreate traditional Baltic religion, that is, Baltic Paganism, as accurately as possible. In contrast, other musicians and groups such as Atalyja and

Iļģi are much less tradition-bound, with a greater focus on artistic creativity than folkloric or religious purity, drawing inspiration from Baltic folk music and Paganism without making it their mission to reproduce such musical and/or religious traditions in an exact form. This contrast should not be overstated, however. The highly traditional Kūlgrinda has been open to collaborations with non-traditional musicians, and while Ilga Reizniece's band Iļģi has expanded its musical horizons far beyond folkloric recreations, the music remains grounded in Latvian folk music and Ilga remains a passionate advocate of traditional Latvian culture.

The overall situation should therefore not be understood as a dualistic division between mutually antagonistic traditionalists and anti-traditionalists, Pagans and non-Pagans, but as a continuum between the more traditional, the more strictly folkloric, and the more self-consciously Pagan on the one end of the spectrum extending toward the progressively less traditional, less overtly Pagan, and more musically experimental at the other end. All who occupy various positions along this continuum are united by a strong affection for Baltic folk music, but they respond differently to the Pagan elements in Baltic folklore, just as they construct different musical edifices over the original folk song foundations. For a Jonas Trinkūnas or an Inese Krūmiņa, Pagan folklore is a call to arms to revive and restore native Baltic religious traditions, but for a Donatas Bielkauskas or a Valdis Muktupāvels, it is an enchanting echo of the Baltic past, still reverberating in the present, that inspires national pride and further artistic creativity without constituting the basis of a new, old or revived 'religion.'

The distinction between (highly traditional) folk and (partially traditional but partially experimental and eclectic) post-folk music, which could alternately be phrased as a contrast between folkloric and post-folkloric musical approaches, could also be applied to a typological analysis of attitudes toward Paganism. Distinguishing Pagan from post-Pagan perspectives, the former would consist of unequivocal devotion to pre-Christian religion and spirituality, and the latter would designate a positive regard for pre-Christian elements of traditional songs and other folklore that does not give rise to such religious activities as prayer or worship, a perspective perhaps better described as 'Paganesque' than Pagan. That is to say, where a true, dyed-in-the-wool Baltic Pagan will worship Baltic gods and perform recreations of Baltic rituals, the post-Pagan or Paganesque Lithuanian or Latvian will enjoy references to Baltic gods and Pagan traditions as they appear in daily life or popular culture and find them attractive,

meaningful, and inspiring in various ways, without thinking of the gods as being literally 'real' or 'true' or feeling the necessity to seriously engage in any worship or ritual activity. This distinction could also be described as one between 'committed' and 'casual' Pagans.

One might ask whether the major world religions of the contemporary, post-modern world do not also involve a division between committed 'believers' and casual 'post-believers,' those who deeply believe in the truth, or at least meaningfulness, of a religion's doctrines, myths and dogmas, and those who sometimes, sort of, but never unequivocally, believe, but that is obviously beyond the scope of this chapter.

The Moon of the Black Horn: Paganism-Inspired Subculture

All of the different meanings and functions of the Pagan heritage inherent in the permutations of Baltic folk music, and all the possible attitudes, responses and perspectives to this heritage found among the people of the region, from the devoutly Pagan to the more distanced post-Pagan, to the merely Paganesque, come together in joyous profusion each August at an alternative music and culture festival held annually in Lithuania, *Mėnuo Juodaragis* ('The Moon of the Black Horn'). The brainchild of music impresario Ugnius Liogė, the founder of the Lithuanian music company Dangus, the festival was in its thirteenth year in 2010 and shows no signs of slowing down. A three-day, outdoor affair that takes place in locations of historical significance, from Kernavė, the ancient capital of Lithuania, to Trakai, a medieval castle town, Mėnuo Juodaragis offers performances on several simultaneous stages by a wide range of Lithuanian and Latvian musicians from Kūlgrinda to Atalyja to Poccolos to Skyforger to Auļi to Donis, with kindred groups from other regions of Europe also occasionally appearing. This coming together of folk, post-folk, Pagan metal, industrial, ambient, and other forms of music illustrates the interweaving of folklore, Paganism, and shared historical consciousness across what might at first glance seem irreconcilable genre lines.

The festival offers much more than music, however, and an even broader sub-cultural milieu becomes evident.[20] Festival goers may participate in guided tours of nearby historic locations, lectures by folklorists and historians, many of which focus on issues of Pagan religion and mythology,

[20] For further analysis of Lithuanian subcultures, see Ramanauskaitė (2004) and (2009).

craft demonstrations on traditional arts from metal smithy to leather tanning to cloth weaving to jewellery design to textile dyeing, as well as storytelling sessions and animated cartoons for children, staged medieval-style battles by historical re-enactment societies, film screenings, art exhibitions, musical jam sessions, and modern dance performances. Liogė's genius is in combining the traditional with the experimental, the folkloric with the electronic, around a sometimes explicit, sometimes hinted, but always underlying theme of celebrating ancient Baltic culture and the Pagan worldview. The value of the festival in preserving, promoting, and updating Lithuanian and European folk cultural heritage has been acknowledged with financial support from the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture and UNESCO (*Eastern Folk* n.d.).

From ancient Latvian *dainas* and Lithaunian *dainos* to the National Awakening movements of the nineteenth century to the Singing Revolution of the twentieth to the multi-media exuberance of Mėnuo Juodaragais in the twenty-first, Baltic folk music and its spiritual connection to Baltic Paganism remain important sources of inspiration in the cultural life of Latvia and Lithuania, and will remain so, even as new forms of music, religion and culture develop.

References

Barnard, F. M. 2003. *Herder on Nationality, Humanity and History*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press,

Beresnivičius, G. 2000. "Lithuanian Mythology." In Jūratė Baranova ed., *Lithuanian Philosophy: Persons and Ideas*. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Humanity, 31–42.

Biezais, H. 1972. *Die himmlische Götterfamilie der alten Letten* [The Gods of the Ancient Latvians]. Stockholm and Uppsala: Almquist and Viksell.

———. 1987. "Baltic Religion." In M. Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Vol. 2. New York and London: Macmillan, 49–55.

Biezais, H. and Ankrava, S. 2004. "Baltic Religion: An Overview." In L. Jones, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed. Vol. 2. Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 756–762.

Chatterji, S. K. 1968. *Balts and Aryans in their Indo-European Background*. Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study.

Christiansen, E. 1997 [1980]. *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and Catholic Frontier*. Rev. ed. London: Penguin.

Čiubrinskas, V. 2000. "Identity and the Revival of Tradition in Lithuania: An Insider's View." *FOLK: Journal of the Danish Ethnographic Society*. 42, 19–40.

Dangus Records. At http://www.dangus.net/releases/index.htm. Accessed 09/11/2010.

Donskis, L. 2002. *Identity and Freedom: Mapping Nationalism and Social Criticism in Twentieth-Century Lithuania*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Dundzila, A. [Vilius Rudra] and Trinkūnas, J. 1999. "Romuva—Lithuanian Baltic Religion." In J. Trinkūnas, ed., *Of Gods and Holidays: The Baltic Heritage*. Vilnius: Tvermė, 137–162.

Dundzila, V. R. 2008. "Baltic Lithuanian Religion and Romuva." *Tyr: Myth-Culture-Tradition*. 3, 279–360.

Eastern Folk. "The Menuo Juodaragis Festival." At http://www.gadki.lublin.pl/east_eng/festivals/menuo.html. Accessed 12/01/2011.
Eglitis, D. S. 2002. *Imagining the Nation: History, Modernity and Revolution in Latvia*. University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania.
Eidintas, A. 2002. *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*. Trans. V. Arbas and E. Tuskenis. Vilnius: Versus Aureas.
Encyclopedia Lituanica, 1980–1984. "Antanas JUŠKA (Juškevičius)." *Lietuviškos Židos* [The Lithuanian Word]. At http://www.spaudos.lt/LietKalba/Antanas%20Juska.en.htm. Accessed 18/12/2010.
Gimbutas, M. 1958. *Ancient Symbolism in Lithuanian Folk Art*. Philadelphia: American Folklore Society.
———. 1963. *The Balts*, London: Thames and Hudson.
———. 1974. "The Lithuanian God Velnius." In G. J. Larson, ed., *Myth in Indo-European Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 47–52.
———. 2001. *The Living Goddesses*. Ed. M. R. Dexter. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Global Village Idiot, 2001. "Iļģi." At http://www.globalvillageidiot.net/Ilgi.html. Accessed 20/12/2010.
Greimas, A. 1992. *Of Gods and Men: Studies in Lithuanian Mythology*. Trans. M. Newman. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Harris, K. 2000. " 'Roots?' The Relationship between the Global and the Local within the Extreme Metal Scene." *Popular Music*. 19:1, 13–30.
Iļģi. At http://ilgi.lv/en_biografija.php. Accessed 04/12/2010.
Jātniece, A. 2000. "Post-folk wind blows a bit hard." *Latvians Online* review of Iļģi CD *Seju Veju*. At http://latviansonline.com/reviews/article/1775/. Accessed 29/11/2010.
———. 2007. "Funeral Music CD Isn't All That Somber." *Latvians Online*. At http://latviansonline.com/reviews/article/2402/. Accessed 06/12/2010.
"Antanas Juška (Juškevičius)." In *Encyclopedia Lituanica* (Boston, 1980–1984), http://www.spaudos.lt/LietKalba/Antanas%20Juska.en.htm. Accessed 18/12/2010.
Kala, T. 2001. "The Incorporation of the Northern Baltic Lands into the Western Christian World." In A. Murray, ed., *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier, 1150–1500*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
Kaljo, E. 2004. "Skandinieki Recording is Very Infectious." *Latvians Online*. At http://latviansonline.com/reviews/article/2380/. Accessed 06/12/2010.
———. 2006. "Iļģi Marks Twenty-Five Years of Pushing Folk's Boundaries." *Latvians Online*. At http://latviansonline.com/news/article/2233/. Accessed 31/12/2010.
———. 2009. "Rock band Akacis grew from summer camp to renown." *Latvians Online*. At http://latviansonline.com/news/article/6053/. Accessed 29/11/2010.
Kalniņš, D. At http://kalve.cesis.lv/?page_id=36&lang=en. Accessed 01/01/2011.
———. 1997. *Mīts un Metāls/ Myth and Metal*. Cēsis, LV: Cēsu Muzeju Apvienība [Cēsis History Museum].
Kiaupa, Z., Kiaupienė, J., and A. Kuncevičius. 2000. *The History of Lithuania Before 1795*. Vilnius: Lithuanian Institute of History.
Kiaupa, Z., and Kiaupienė, J. 2000. "The Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the Establishment of the State to the Union of Lublin." In Z. Kiaupa, J. Kiaupienė, and A. Kuncevičius, ed., *The History of Lithuania Before 1795*. Vilnius: Lithuanian Institute of History, 43–240.
———. 2000. "The Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Republic of Two Nations." In Z. Kiaupa, J. Kiaupienė, and A. Kuncevičius, ed., *The History of Lithuania Before 1795*. Vilnius: Lithuanian Institute of History, 241–357.
Kelleher, M. 2008. "The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia." *Public Historian*. 30:4, 163–165.
Kurtagić, A. 2010. "Black Metal Ethno-nationalism." *American Renaissance*. 21:6, 1–10.

Krapauskas, V. 2000. *Nationalism and Historiography: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Lithuanian Historicism*. Boulder and New York: Eastern European Monographs/ Columbia Press.
Krūmiņa-Koņkova, S. 1999. "New Religions in Latvia." *Nova Religio*. 3:1, 119–134.
Kūlgrinda. At http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kulgrinda/112796572067716. Accessed 17/11/2010.
Kymlicka, W. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Landsbergis, A., and Mills, C. (eds). 1964. *The Green Linden: Selected Lithuanian Folksongs*. New York: Voyages Press.
Latvian Folk Institute. "Latvian Folk Dress." At http://www.li.lv/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=42&Itemid=1129. Accessed 03/01/2011.
Latvijas Okupacijās Muzejs. At http://www.omf.lv/index.php?lang=english. Accessed 02/01/2010.
Latvians Online. At http://latviansonline.com. Accessed 29/11/2010.
Latvju rakstu zīmes. At http://valoda.ailab.lv/kultura/kultura/orn01.htm. Accessed 18/12/2010.
Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidentas. At http://paksas.president.lt/ordinai/table_e.phtml. Accessed 18/12/2010.
Lieven, A. 1994. *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*, Second Revised Edition. New Haven: Yale University.
Living Composers Project. "Prauliņš, Uģis." At http://www.composers21.com/compdocs/praulinsu.htm. Accessed 26/12/2010.
Mallory, J. P. 1989. *In Search of the Indo-Europeans: Language, Archaeology and Myth*. London: Thames and Hudson.
McKay, G., Williams, C., Goddard, M., Foxlee, N., and E. Ramanauskaitė (eds). 2009. *Subcultures and New Religious Movements in Russia and East-Central Europe*. New York and Wien: Peter Lang.
Mėnuo Juodaragis Festival. 2010. At http://www.mjr.lt/mjr2010/index_eng.html. Accessed 10/1/2011.
Murray, A. (ed.) 2001 *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier, 1150–1500*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
Moynihan, M., and Didrik, S. 2003. *Lords of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground*. Port Townsend, WA: Feral Press.
Mickūnaitė, G. 2006. *Making a Great Ruler: Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania*. Budapest: Central European University Press.
Misāne, A. 2000. "The Traditional Latvian Religion of Dievturiba in the Discourse of Nationalism." *Religious Minorities in Latvia*. 4:29, 33–52.
Misiunas, R. J. and Taagepera, R. 1983. *The Baltic States—Years of Dependence, 1940–1980*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Muktupāvels, V. 2000a. "On Some Relations Between *Kokles* Styles and Contexts in the Twentieth Century." *Journal of Baltic Studies*. 31:4, 388–405.
———. 2000b. "Latvia." In T. Rice, J. Porter, and C. Goertzen, ed., *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Vol. 8: Europe*. New York and London: Garland, 499–508.
———. 2002. "New Disc Brings Alive Rainis' Phantasmagoria." *Latvians Online*. At http://latviansonline.com/reviews/article/2203. Accessed 29/11/2010.
———. At http://www.music.lv/mukti/cv.htm. Accessed 29/12/2010.
New Europe. 2008. "Godmanis Backs Horse Guard Idea." *New Europe*. 786. At http://www.neurope.eu/articles/Godmanis-backs-horse-guard-idea/87757.php. Accessed 03/01/2010.
Palmer, A. 2005. *The Baltic: A New History of the Region and Its People*. Woodstock: Overlook.
Plakans, A. 1995. *The Latvians: A Short History*. Stanford, CT: Hoover University Press.
Purcell, N. J. 2003. *Death Metal Music: The Passion and Politics of a Subculture*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Puhvel, J. 1974. "Indo-European Structures of the Baltic Pantheon." In G. A. Larson, ed., *Myth and Law in Indo-European Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California, 75–85.
———. 1987. "Baltic and Slavic Myth." In J. Puhvel, ed., *Comparative Mythology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 222–240.
Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė, D. 2006. "The Archaic Lithuanian Polyphonic Chant." *Lituanus* 52:2. At http://www.lituanus.org/2006/06_2_03%20Vyciniene.htm. Accessed 19/12/2010.
Ramanauskaitė, E. 2004. "Subcultural Resistance and Cultural Underground: Manifestations in Lithuanian Youth Groups." In R. Apanavičius, ed., *Ethnic Culture: Traditions and Innovations*. Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 120–130.
Rasyk. "Rašytojai: Liudvikas Rėza." At http://www.rasyk.lt/rasytojai/liudvikas-reza.html. Accessed 18/12/2010.
Ray, M. L. 2003. "Recovering the Voice of the Oppressed: Master, Slave and Serf in the Baltic Provinces." *Journal of Baltic Studies*. 34:1, 1–21.
Romuva. At http://www.romuva.lt/new/index.php?page=en. Accessed 10/11/2010.
Rowell, S. C. 1994. *Lithuania Ascending: A Pagan Empire within East-Central Europe, 1295–1345*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Skyforger. "Brief Look at Latvian Mythology." At http://skyforger.lv/en/index.php?main_page_id=39&page_type=text. Accessed 27/12/2010.
Snyder, T. 2004. *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Specter, M. 1997. "Riga Journal: Balts' Onetime Rulers Have Shrunk to a Handful." *New York Times.* At http://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/04/world/riga-journal-baltic-s-onetime-rulers-have-shrunk-to-a-handful.html. Accessed 10/01/2011.
Stančienė, D. M. 2008. "The Historical Roots of Liberalism and Tolerance in Lithuania." In J. Hroch, D. Hollan, and G. F. McLean, ed., *National, Cultural and Ethnic Identities: Harmony Beyond Conflict*. Washington, DC: The Council for Research and Values and Philosophy, 273–280.
Šteimanis, J. 2002 [1995]. *History of Latvian Jews.* Trans. H. Belova, rev. and ed. E. Anders. Boulder and New York: Eastern European Monographs/Columbia Press.
Stone, D. 2001. *The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386–1795*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
Stražas, A. S. 1996. "From Auszra to the Great War: The Emergence of the Lithuanian Nation." *Lituanus*. 42:4. At http://www.lituanus.org/1996/96_4_03.htm. Accessed 25/03/2010.
Strmiska, M. 2011 forthcoming. "Romuva Looks East: Indian Inspiration in Lithuanian Paganism." In M. Ališauskienė and I. Schroeder, ed., *Religious Diversity in Post-Soviet Society: Ethnographies of Catholic Hegemony and the New Pluralism in Lithuania*. Surrey: Ashgate.
———. 2005. "The Music of the Past in Modern Baltic Paganism." *Nova Religio*. 8:3, 39–58.
Strmiska, M., and Dundzila, V. R. 2005. "Romuva: Modern Lithuanian Paganism." In M. Strmiska ed., *Modern Paganism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 241–297.
Sužiedėlis, S. 1997. *Historical Dictionary of Lithuanian History*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.
Tamir, Y. 1994. *Liberal Nationalism*. Princeton, PA: Princeton University Press.
Thomson, C. 1992. *The Singing Revolution: A Political Journey Through the Baltic States.* London: Michael Joseph.
Trapāns, J. A. 1989. "Krisjānis Barons: His Life and Times." In V. Vīķis-Freibergs, ed., *Linguistics and Poetics of Latvian Songs*. Toronto: McGill-Queens University Press, 14–32.
Trinkūnas, J. (ed.) 1999. *Of Gods and Holidays: The Baltic Heritage*. Vilnius: Tverme.
———. 2010. "Olgerts Auns—Dievturiai—Baltų vienybė." At http://blog.delfi.lt/jonastrinkunas/7970/. Accessed 18/12/2010.
Trinkūnienė, I. 2005. "Lithuanian Folklore as a Source of Baltic Religion: The Fire Ritual." In J. Trinkūnas, et al eds, *Syncretism: An Indo-Romuva Strategy of Integration: A Collection of Papers Presented Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA*. Bensalem,

PA: International Center for Cultural Studies, 9–18. At http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/h_es/h_es_trink_i_fire.htm. Accessed 13/01/2011.
Urban, W. 1989. "The Teutonic Order and the Christianisation of Lithuania." In P. Rabiskauskas, ed., *La Cristianizzazione Della Lituania, Atti Del Colloquio Internazionale Di Storia Ecclesiastica In Occasione Del Vi Centenario Dell Lituania Cristiana* (*1387–1987*). Vatican City: Editre Vaticana, 105–136.
———. 1998. "Victims of the Baltic Crusade." *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39:3, 195–212.
———. 2000 [1980]. *The Prussian Crusade*. Rev. ed. Chicago: Lithuanian Research and Studies Center.
Vėlius, N. 1983. *Sėnoves baltųpasaulėžiūra*. Vilnius: Mintis.
———. 1989. *The World-Outlook of the Ancient Balts.* Vilnius: Mintis.
Valaniejus, A. 2002. "Early Lithuanian Nationalism: Sources of its Legitimate Meanings in an Environment of Shifting Boundaries." *Nations and Nationalism*. 8:3, 315–333.
Venclova, T. 2002. *Vilnius City Guide*. Vilnius: R. Paknio leidykla.
Vīķis-Freibergs, V. [Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga]. 1975. "Echoes of the *Dainas* and the Search for Identity in Contemporary Latvian Poetry." *Journal of Baltic Studies*. 6:1, 17–29.
Vīķis-Freibergs, V. [Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga] and Freibergs, I. F. 1978. "The Sun-Songs of Latvia: A Computer-Accessible Corpus." *Journal of Baltic Studies*. 9:1, 20–31.
———. 1988. *Saules Dainas/Latvian Sun-Songs.* Montreal: Helios.
———. 1989. "The Major Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Latvian Mythology." In V. Vīķis-Freibergs ed., *Linguistics and Poetics of Latvian Folk Songs*. Montreal: McGill-Queensland, 91–112.
———. 2004. "Saule." In L. Jones ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second Edition, Vol. 12. Woodbridge, CT: Macmillan Reference, 8131–8135.
———. 2007. *Logique de la poésie: Structure et poétique des daïnas lettonnes*. Bordeaux: William Blake and Co.
von Rauch, G. 1974. *The Baltic States: The Years of Independence, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, 1917–1940,* trans. G. Önn. Berkeley: University of California.
York, M. 1995. "Pan-Baltic Identity and Religio-Cultural Expression in Contemporary Lithuania." In R. Towler, ed., *New Religions and the New Europe*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 72–85.
Zake, I. 2007. "Inventing Culture and Nation: Intellectuals and Early Latvian Nationalism." *National Identities*. 9:4, 307–329.
Žalvirinis. At http://www.frype.lt/zalvarinis. Accessed 21/12/2010.

Recordings. All titles in compact disc (*CD*) *format unless otherwise indicated*

Atalyja. 2001. *Atalyja.* CD LT IK 2216383. Vilnius: Sutaras Records.
———. 2006. *Į̄š Atminties*. DGCD 021. Vilnius: Dangus Records.
———. 2004. *Močia* ("Mother"). DGCD 013. Vilnius: Dangus Records.
———. 2008. *Žemaitiu Ruoks*. DGCD 029. Vilnius: Dangus Records.
———. 2009. *Saula riduolėla* ("Sun the Roller"). DGCD 030. Vilnius: Dangus Records.
Auļi. 2010. *Etnotransss* ("Ethnotrance"). Westpark CD 87200. Germany: Westpark Records.
Donis. 2010. *Kas Tave Šaukia . . .* ("What Calls You?"). DGCD 033. Vilnius: Dangus Records.
———. 2006. *Bite Lingo*. DGCD 018. Vilnius: Dangus Records.
Iļģi. 1998. *Saules Meita* ("Daughter of the Sun"). UPE CD 004. Riga: UPE Records.
———. 2002. *Agrie gadi* ("Early Years"). UPE CD 032. Riga: UPE Records.
———. 2000. *Sēju Vēju* ("Sow the Wind"). UPE CD 016. Riga: UPE Records.
———. 2002. *Spēlēju, Dancoju* ("I Sang, I Danced"). UPE CD 038. Riga: UPE Records.
———. 2003. *Kaza Kāpa Debesīs* ("The Goat Climbed up into the Sky"). UPE CD 048. Riga: UPE Records.
———. 2006. *Totari*. UPE CD 062. Riga: UPE Records.
———. 2006. *Ne Uz Vienu Dienu* ("Not Only For One Day"). UPE CD 069. Riga: UPE Records.

——. 2009. *Īsākās Nakts Dziesmas* ("Songs of the Shortest Night"). Platforma CD 242. Riga: Platforma Records.
Kūlgrinda. 2002. *Ugnies Apiegos* ("Rite of Fire"). DGCD 003. Vilnius: Dangus Records.
——. 2003. *Perkūno Giesmės* ("Hymns to Perkūnas"). Dangus DGCD 008. Vilnius: Dangus Records.
——. 2005. *Prūsų Giesmės* ("Hymns to Perkūnas"). Aurea Studija CD. Vilnius: Aurea.
——. 2007. *Giesmės Saulei* ("Hymns to the Sun"). Aurea Studija CD. Vilnius: Aurea.
——. 2009. *Giesmės Valdovui Gediminas* ("Hymns to King Gediminas"). Aurea Studija CD. Vilnius, Aurea.
Kūlgrinda and Donis. 2002. *Sotvaras*. Dangus DGCD 011. Vilnius, Dangus Records.
Muktupāvels, Valdis. 2002. *Valdis Muktupāvels. Kokles*. UPE CD 043. Riga, UPE Records.
Muktupāvels, Valdis and Ensemble Rasa. 1993. *RASA. Saule deva savu meitu janits jaja katru gadu* (RASA. The Sun married off her daughter, Yanis was riding every year). Music cassette. Latvijas Radio MRCC 072. Riga: Latvijas Radio.
——. 1995. *Lettonie-Musiques des rites solaires/Latvia-Music of Solar Rites*. Inedit CD W 260062. Paris: Inedit.
Obtest. 2008. *Gyvybės Medis* ("Tree of Life"). Osmose OPCD 203. Paris: Osmose Productions, 2008.
Pagānu Gadagrāmata. 1999. *Pagānu Gadagrāmata* ("Pagan Yearbook"). UPE CD 009. Riga: UPE Records.
Pievos. 2007. *Mėnuli Baltas* ("White Moon"). Dangus DGCD 023. Vilnius: Dangus Records.
——. 2010. *Papraustas Pasaulis* ("Ordinary World"). 2010. Publication details unknown.
Poccolus. 1996. *Poccolus*. Hammerhead Productions CD Hammer 2. UK: Hammerhead, 1996. Out of print.
Povilionienė, Veronika. 2006. *Kada Sūneliai Sugrįš* ("When Our Sons Come Back"). CD. Blezdinga-KAM CD. Vilnius: Blezdinga-KAM Records.
Povilionienė, Veronika and Lyla. 2004. *Bitinėlio Raga* ("Bee Raga"). Bidruva CD. Kaunas, Bidruva Records.
Povilionienė, Veronika and Vyšniauskas, Petras. 2006 [1992]. *Išlėk, Sakale* (Fly, Falcon, Fly). Semplice CD. Vilnius: Semplice Records.
Prauliņš, Uģis and Reizniece, Ilga. 2002. *Krusta Dancis* ("Cross Dance"). Latvijas Radio CD 051. Riga, Latvijas Radio.
Ramadance. 2000. *Sāga*. Platforma CD 038. Riga: Platforma Records.
——. 2003. *Extravagance*. Platforma CD 096. Riga: Platforma Records.
Skandinieki. 2003. *Dzied un spēlē Skandinieki* ("Sing and Play Skandinieki"). UPE CD 049. Riga: UPE.
——. 2006. *Veļu upe pārplūdus'* ("The River of Spirits is Overflowing"). CD. RS 058. Riga: Rīgas skaņu ierakstu studija.
Skyforger. 1997. *Semigalls' Warchant*. 1997. Music cassette. Publication date unknown.
——. 2005. *Semigalls' Warchant*. Folter CD 034. Germany, Folter Records.
——. 2006 [1998]. *Kauja Pie Saules*. ("The Battle of Saule"). Paragon CD. USA: Paragon Records.
——. 2000. *Latviešu Strelnieki* ("Latvian Riflemen"). Mascot CD. USA: Mascot Records.
——. 2003. *Pērkoņkalve* ("Thunderforge"). Folter CD. Germany: Folter Records.
——. 2003. *Zobena Dziesma* ("Sword Song"). Self-published by Skyforger.
——. 2010. *Kurbads*. Metalblade CD 3984–14905–2. USA: Metalblade Records.
Ugnėlakis and Kūlgrinda. 2002. *Žalvarinis*. Dangis DGCD 002. Vilnius: Dangus Records.
Viķe-Freiberga, Vaira. 2008. *Vairas Dziesmas* ("Vairas Songs"). Lauska CD 21. Riga: Lauska Records.
Vilcenes. 2007. *Karavīra līgaviņa* ("Bride of the Warrior"). Lauska CD 10. Riga: Lauska Records.
Vilki. 2000. *Dzelzīm dzimu* ("Born to the Iron"). UPE CD 020. Riga: UPE Records. Out of print.
——. 2007. *Mans bērīt's kumeliņš* ("My Dearest Bay Horse"). Self-published by Vilki.

Wejdas. 1997. *Wejdas*. Redstream CD RSR-0122. California: Redstream.
——. 2004. *Žemės Alsavimas* ("Breathing Earth"). Dangus DGCD 015. Vilnius: Dangus Records.
Žalvarinis. 2005. *Žalio Vario* ("Raw Copper"). Prior Records CD 019. Vilnius: Prior Musica.
——. 2008. *Folk N' Rock*. Monako M-024–2. Vilnius: Monako Records.
Zpoan Vtenz. 1998. *Gimę Nugalėt* ("Born to Conquer"). Eldethorne ELD CD 005. UK: Eldethorne Records. Out of print.

Interviews
(by author unless otherwise noted)

Oļģerts Tālivaldis Auns and Jānis Siliņš. Riga: March 2002. Interpreting by Agita Misāne.
Inese Krūmiņa. Riga: March 2002 and November 2004.
Jānis Krumiņš and Inese Krūmiņa. Riga: March 2002.
Jonas Trinkūnas. Vilnius: March 1996, June 1998, March 2002, and December 2004.
Jonas Trinkūnas and Inija Trinkūnienė. Vilnius: March 2009.

Email correspondence
(with author unless otherwise noted)

Atalyja (individual names not given). November 2010.
Inese Krūmiņa. March 2002, April 2002, and January 2011, and numerous other exchanges in between.
Ineta Meduneckytė-Tamosiūnienė (Žalvirinis member). December 2010.
Valdis Muktupāvels. January 2011.
Peter (Skyforger member). December 2010.
Ilga Reizniece. December 2010. Translated by Benita Jaundalderis.
Vaira Viķe-Freiberga. December 2010.