XXVIII Song Celebration: KINSHIP

The opening concert of the Song Celebration will take place at Tallinn's Song Festival Grounds at 19:30 on Saturday 5 July 2025

The detailed programme starts on page 90.

COMBINED CHOIR

Dawn
Music by **Mihkel Lüdig**
Lyrics by **Friedrich Kuhlbars**
Conducted by **Raul Talmar**

My Native Land, My Pride and Joy
Music by **Fredrik Pacius**
Lyrics by **Johann Voldemar Jannsen**
Conducted by **Olari Elts**

What Holds Us
Music by **Mart Saar,**
Otepää parish folk song
Lyrics from an **Otepää parish folk song**
Conducted by **Heli Jürgenson**

ESTONIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Crossed Sticks Dance
'Suite on Estonian Dances', Part I
Music by **Eduard Tubin**
Conducted by **Neeme Järvi**

SELECTED MEN'S CHOIR

From Sõmera to Sõrmiku
Music by **Eduard Tubin,**
Haljala parish folk song
Lyrics from a **Haljala parish folk song**
Conducted by **Kuldar Schüts**

SELECTED WOMEN'S CHOIR

The Song Leader
Music by **Mart Saar,**
Southern Estonian folk song
Lyrics from a **Põlva parish folk song**
Conducted by **Ingrid Kõrvits**

SELECTED CHILDREN'S CHOIR

The Singer's Childhood
Music by **Miina Härma,**
Tarvastu parish folk songs
Lyrics from a **Põlva parish folk song**
Conducted by **Elo Üleoja**

SELECTED WOMEN'S CHOIR

Äiu-püiu (lullaby)
Music by **Ester Mägi,**
folk song from Muhu parish
Lyrics from **Muhu** & **Harju-Jaani**
parish folk songs
Conducted by **Maarja Soone**

ESTONIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Incantation of Tempest
Dedicated to Veljo Tormis
Music by **Erkki-Sven Tüür**
Conducted by **Olari Elts**

SELECTED MIXED CHOIR

Flax Puller
Music by **Peeter Süda,**
folk song from Helme parish
Lyrics from a **Helme parish folk song**
Conducted by **Heli Jürgenson**

SELECTED CHILDREN'S CHOIR

How Can I Recognize My Home
Music by **Veljo Tormis, folk song from**
Kolga-Jaani parish
Lyrics from **Paide, Simuna, Karksi** &
Äksi parish folk songs
Ensemble: **Weekend Guitar Trio**
Conducted by **Maret Poll**

SELECTED MEN'S CHOIR

Our Life
Music by **Mart Saar, folk song**
Lyrics by **Märt Mohn**
Conducted by **Mikk Üleoja**

SELECTED MIXED CHOIR

Oh How Blessed Are
the Saints in Heaven
Music by **Cyrillus Kreek,**
folk chorale from Reigi parish
Lyrics from a **Reigi parish folk chorale**
Conducted by **Ingrid Mänd**

ESTONIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Hellworks
Music by **Ülo Krigul**
Conducted by **Arvo Volmer**

SELECTED MEN'S CHOIR

Going to War
Music by **Veljo Tormis,**
folk song from Kanepi parish
Lyrics from a **Karula parish folk song**
Conducted by **Peeter Perens**

SELECTED WOMEN'S CHOIR

Estonian Lullaby
Music by **Arvo Pärt, folk song from Jõhvi parish**
Lyrics from a **Jõhvi parish folk song**
Conducted by **Tõnu Kaljuste**

SELECTED MIXED CHOIR

Fly from Your Sorrows
Music by **Tõnu Kõrvits,**
folk chorale from Otepää parish
Lyrics from **Otepää parish folk chorale**
Conducted by **Kaspar Mänd**

SELECTED COMBINED CHOIR

Praise God, Ye People, for He Is Generous
Music by **Pärt Uusberg,**
folk chorale from Reigi parish
Lyrics from a **Reigi parish folk chorale**
Conducted by **Pärt Uusberg**

ESTONIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Pastorale
Music by **Eino Tamberg**
Conducted by **Kristiina Poska**

SELECTED CHILDREN'S CHOIR

The Flower Waltz
Music and lyrics by **Lee Taul**
Music arranged by **Andre Maaker**
Conducted by **Ave Sopp**

SELECTED MEN'S CHOIR

Who Was That Brewing?
Music and lyrics from a **Setomaa folk song**
Music arranged for male choir and symphony orchestra by **Ülo Krigul**
Conducted by **Kuno Kerge**

SELECTED WOMEN'S CHOIR

O, If It Was All Up To Me
Music by **Rasmus Puur,**
folk song of Siberian Estonians
Lyrics from a **Siberian Estonian folk song**
Conducted by **Toomas Voll**

SELECTED MIXED CHOIR

Young Brethren, Sing!
Music by **Mart Saar, Seto folk tune**
Lyrics from a **Seto folk songs**
Conducted by **Triin Koch**

SELECTED COMBINED CHOIR

Beautiful Land
Music by **Rein Rannap**
Lyrics by **Hando Runnel**
Conducted by **Rasmus Puur**

My Song Turns Sea into Land
Music: **Folk song from Tõstamaa parish**
Lyrics from **folk songs from around Estonia collected by Celia Roose**
Orchestral arrangement by **Tõnu Kõrvits**
Lead singer: **Celia Roose**
Conducted by **Tõnu Kaljuste**

XXVIII Song Celebration: KINSHIP

Tallinn Song Festival Grounds at 14:00 on Sunday 6 July 2025

The detailed programme starts on page 106.

WIND ORCHESTRA

I Dedicate to You
Based on 'The Most Beautiful Songs' by Friedrich August Saebelmann
Music by **Tauno Aints**
Conducted by **Bert Langeler**

Solemn Estonia
Music by **Rein Rannap**
Music arranged for wind orchestra by **Peeter Saan**
Conducted by **Peeter Saan**

Under the Lofty Sky
Music by **Riho Esko Maimets**
Conducted by **Karl Abro**

Estonian Motifs
Music by **Tõnis Kõrvits**
Conducted by **Priit Rusalepp**

Estonian Rhapsody
Based on the Estonian folk song 'When I Was Little'
Music by **Eduard Tamm**
Music arranged by **Riivo Jõgi**
Conducted by **Bert Langeler**

BOYS' CHOIR

I'd Like to Sing a Song
Music by **Riho Päts**
Lyrics by **Gustav Suits**
Conducted by **Janne Fridolin**

The Schoolbag Bearer
Music by **Piret Rips**
Lyrics by **Contra**
Orchestration by **Riivo Jõgi**
Choreographed by **Märt Agu**
Conducted by **Mariliis Kreintaal**

Simply My Home
Music by **Piret Laikre**
Lyrics by **Marek Sadam**
Orchestration by **Riivo Jõgi**
Conducted by **Janne Fridolin**

BOYS' CHOIR & MEN'S CHOIR

Up We Go, Dear Brothers
Music by **Andres Lemba, folk songs from Vändra** & **Tõstamaa parishes**
Lyrics from **Vändra** & **Tõstamaa parish folk songs**
Conducted by **Kuno Kerge**

The Bread Is Cooling
Music by **Andres Valkonen**
Lyrics by **Leelo Tungal**
Arrangement for choir and orchestration by **Riivo Jõgi**
Conducted by **Kuldar Schüts**

YOUNG CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Father in Heaven
Music by **Mari Amor**
Lyrics by **Artur Adson**
Orchestration by **Tõnu Kõrvits**
Conducted by **Raili Kaibald**

When I Sing
Music by **Mart Saar, folk song from Rõngu parish**
Lyrics from a **Rõngu parish folk song**
Conducted by **Jaanika Kuusik**

Time's Path Is Bumpy
Music by **Tõnis Kõrvits**
Lyrics by **Priit Aimla**
Choreographed by **Iren Voites**
Conducted by **Vilve Maide**

Sneaky Game
Music by **Kaarel Kuusk, folk song from Kihelkonna parish**
Lyrics from **Kihelkonna, Valjala** & **Saarde parish singing games**
Choreographed by **Regina Rebane**
Conducted by **Jaanika Kuusik**

Here It Is, My Home
Music by **Piret Rips**
Lyrics by **Leelo Tungal**
Orchestration by **Riivo Jõgi**
Soloist: **Liisi Koikson**
Conducted by **Ilona Muhel**

WOMEN'S CHOIR

Ringing in the Fields
Music by **Urmas Sisask**
Lyrics by **Urmas Sisask from a Catholic prayer book**
Soloist: **Mirjam Mesak**
Conducted by **Andrus Siimon**

The Maiden's Voice
Music by **Riivo Jõgi, folk song from Räpina parish**
Lyrics from a **Räpina parish folk song**
Conducted by **Elen Ilves**

Look and You Will See
Music by **Karin Tuul**
Lyrics by **Veiko Tubin**
Conducted by **Ode Pürg**

You Are Golden
Music by **Kadri Voorand**
Lyrics by **Kristiina Ehin**
Orchestration by **Rasmus Puur**
Conducted by **Külli Kiivet**

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Seto Dance
Music by **Eduard Tubin**
Conducted by **Imre Rohuväli**

What Holds Us
Music by **Mart Saar,**
folk song from Otepää parish
Music arranged by **Rasmus Puur**
Conducted by **Riivo Jõgi**

When I Was Young
Music by **Madis Järvi**
Conducted by **Jüri-Ruut Kangur**

Spring Fly
Music by **Lepo Sumera**
Music arranged by **Ott Kask**
Conducted by **Ott Kask**

The World Resounds Across the Globe
A mix of works by Curly Strings
Music by **Eeva Talsi**
Music arranged by **Riivo Jõgi**
Conducted by **Riivo Jõgi**

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Modal Études
Spring
Fog
Snow
Spring
Music by **Veljo Tormis**
Lyrics from **folk songs from Kursi parish** & **elsewhere**
Orchestration by **Tauno Aints**
Conducted by **Aarne Saluveer**

Circle Game Song
Music by **Heino Kaljuste, folk song**
Lyrics from a **folk song**
Conducted by **Kadi Härma**

I Praise Thee
Music and lyrics by **Liisi Koikson**
Arrangement for choir and orchestration by **Rasmus Puur**
Conducted by **Silja Uhs**

The Forest of My Thoughts
Music by **Aare Külama**
Lyrics by **Haldi Välimäe**
Orchestration by **Tõnis Kõrvits**
Conducted by **Mai Simson**

MEN'S CHOIR

On the Mount Munamägi
Music by **Karl August Hermann**
Lyrics by **Juhan Kunder**
Music arranged by **Tuudur Vettik**
Conducted by **Heldur Harry Põlda**

We Must Build Bridges
Music by **Valter Soosalu**
Lyrics by **Juhan Viiding**
Conducted by **Valter Soosalu**

The Singer
Music by **Veljo Tormis**
Lyrics by **Kristjan Jaak Peterson**
Organist: **Piret Aidulo**
Conducted by **Hirvo Surva**

MIXED CHOIR

The Singer
Music by **Mart Saar**
Lyrics from a **folk song**
Conducted by **Kärolin Tuisk**

Forget-Me-Not
Music by **Veljo Tormis**
Lyrics from **folk songs**
Conducted by **Triin Koch**

O Adam, Your Fault
Music by **Margo Kõlar,**
folk chorale from Otepää parish
Lyrics from an **Otepää parish folk chorale**
Conducted by **Pärt Uusberg**

Choir of Life
Music and lyrics by **Mari Kalkun**
Music arranged by **Rasmus Puur**
Conducted by **Rasmus Puur**

COMBINED CHOIR

Tuljak
Music by **Miina Härma, Estonian dance tunes**
Lyrics by **Karl Ferdinand Karlson**
Conducted by **Triin Koch**

The Spring
Music by **Ardo Ran Varres**
Lyrics by **Hasso Krull**
Conducted by **Heli Jürgenson**

You Are the Only One
Music by **Olav Ehala**
Lyrics by **Leelo Tungal**
Conducted by **Risto Joost**

Like a Homing Bee
Music by **Peep Sarapik**
Lyrics by **Juhan Liiv**
Conducted by **Hirvo Surva**

The Land of My Fathers, the Land That I Love
Music by **Gustav Ernesaks**
Lyrics by **Lydia Koidula**
Conducted by **Heli Jürgenson**

XXVIII

SONG CELEBRATION

KINSHIP

Opening concert of the Song Celebration

5 July 2025

COMBINED CHOIR
654 choirs
21490 singers

RAUL TALMAR
Conductor of Song Celebrations 1993, 1997 & 2002-2019
General conductor of young women's choir 2007 and general conductor of women's choir 2009 & 2019
Programme manager of Song Celebrations 1999, 2002 & 2004
Conductor of combined choir 2025

OLARI ELTS
Conductor of Song Celebrations 1993, 1997, 2004, 2011, 2014, 2019 & 2025
Conductor of Estonian National Symphony Orchestra at Song Celebrations 2025

Dawn

Music by **Mihkel Lüdig** (1880–1958)
Lyrics by **Friedrich Kuhlbars** (1841–1924)
Conducted by **Raul Talmar**

This song was performed at the Song Celebrations in 1923 and 1960 and has been the opening song of the Song Celebrations and Youth Song Celebrations since 1969 and 1982, respectively.

'Dawn' has been the opening song of our Song Celebrations for more than half a century. Mihkel Lüdig wrote it for the Viljandi Singing Society in 1904. The song came about when, during a choir rehearsal, the men asked Lüdig to create a flagship song for the society. Lüdig agreed on the proviso that he had lyrics to go on. Kuhlbars, who happened to be present, penned the lyrics in just 10 minutes – and so to match him, Lüdig wrote the music in a quarter of an hour.

My Native Land, My Pride and Joy

Music by **Fredrik Pacius** (1809–1891)
Lyrics by **Johann Voldemar Jannsen** (1819–1890)
Conducted by **Olari Elts**

This song was performed at the Song Celebrations in 1869, 1891, 1894, 1896 and 1910 and has been the national anthem of Estonia since 1920.

Commissioned from Fredrik Pacius for the Helsinki Student Spring Festival in 1848, this song was an instant hit in Finland. When Finnish friends of Johann Voldemar Jannsen visited his family in 1867, they taught the now beloved song to Jannsen's daughter Lydia. With her help, Jannsen penned Estonian lyrics for the song and added it to the programme of the first national song festival. It won the hearts of the people to such an extent that it was chosen as the Estonian anthem in 1920.

HELI JÜRGENSON
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2002, 2004, 2009 & 2014-2025
General conductor of mixed choir 2002 & 2014 and general conductor of mixed and selected choirs 2009
Artistic director of Song Celebrations 2017
Artistic director of Song Celebrations and conductor of selected mixed choir and combined choir 2025

What Holds Us

Music by **Mart Saar** (1882–1963), **folk song from Otepää parish**
Lyrics by **Otepää parish folk song**
Conducted by **Heli Jürgenson**

This song was performed at the 1923, 1938, 1947, 1960, 1965, 1967, 1969, 1975, 1994 and 2014 Song Celebrations.

Mart Saar's music has been called the voice of Estonia's national spirit. This work, which he composed in 1918 during the German occupation of the country, has been performed at Song Celebrations almost every decade since the very first song festival held in an independent Estonia. Even in later difficult times, when the song was suppressed by the authorities, its powerful message resounded at the Song Festival Grounds under the titles 'We Longed to Free Ourselves from the Yoke' and 'Leelo'. The folk song used in the choral piece was sung by Gustav (Kusta) Ilves (1841-1923) from Loku Farm in Vastse-Otepää parish. The melody was recorded by August Kiiss and the text by Edgar Eisenschmidt in 1908.

We create our own lives and our own happiness.
We speak our own language.
We sing our own songs with our own voices.
We are celebrating our own song festival.
To grow with our people.
To love our own Estonia.

Heli Jürgenson
Artistic director of the
XXVIII Song Celebration 'Kinship'

ESTONIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

NEEME JÄRVI
Conductor of Song Celebrations 1965, 1969, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019 & 2025
General conductor of symphony orchestras 1965 & 1969
Conductor of Estonian National Symphony Orchestra and combined choir 2025

SELECTED MEN'S CHOIR
17 choirs
574 singers

KULDAR SCHÜTS
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2014-2025
General conductor of boys' choir 2023
Conductor of selected men's choir and boys' choir 2025

Crossed Sticks Dance

'Suite on Estonian Dances' (ETW 15), Part I

Music by **Eduard Tubin** (1905–1982)
Conducted by **Neeme Järvi**

This piece was performed at the 1969 and 2007 Song Celebrations..

Eduard Tubin has been called the father of Estonian symphonic music. The 'Suite of Estonian Dances', completed in 1938, consists of three parts: 'The Crossed Sticks Dance', 'A Long Anglaise' and 'Seto Dance'. The main theme of the first part is a bagpipe melody played by Jaan Piht, or Torupilli-Jaan (1875-1950), who lived on Rauna Farm in the village of Vanakubja in Mustjala parish. The song was recorded by Herbert Tampere and August Pulst in 1936.

From Sõmera to Sõrmiku

Music by **Eduard Tubin** (1905–1982), **folk song from Haljala parish**
Lyrics from a **Haljala parish folk song**
Conducted by **Kuldar Schüts**

This song was performed at the Song Celebration in 1965.

This male choir song composed by Eduard Tubin during his years of exile was premiered at a concert of the Estonian Young Men's Christian Association male choir conducted by Tubin in Stockholm in January 1959. Peppered with gentle humour, the song soon found its way into the repertoire of the Estonian National Male Choir and became very popular. The choral work is based on a folk song sung by Viilip Klaas (1857-1917) from the village of Kõldu in Haljala parish, Vihula municipality. The song was recorded by Karl Viljak in 1913.

SELECTED
WOMEN'S CHOIR
50 choirs
1847 singers

INGRID KÕRVITS
Conductor of Song Celebrations
2002 & 2007-2025
General conductor of
children's choir 2007
Conductor of selected
women's choir 2025

SELECTED CHILDREN'S
CHOIR
27 choirs
1118 singers

ELO ÜLEOJA
Conductor of Song Celebrations
1999 & 2007-2025
General conductor of mixed choir
1999 and general conductor of
children's choir 2011
Conductor of selected children's choir 2025

The Song Leader

Music by **Mart Saar** (1882–1963), **folk song from Southern Estonia**
Lyrics from a **Põlva parish folk song**
Conducted by **Ingrid Kõrvits**

This song was performed at the Song Celebration in 1990.

This tune is based on a folk song common throughout Southern Estonia which is known by the title 'Haanja Man'. However, according to the composer, 'Custodian of the Song', written in 1910, is not a folk tune in the direct sense, but rather his own composition based on folk music. The lyrics come from a folk song that was likely sung by Jaan Piho (1829-1917) from the village of Mammaste in Põlva parish. It was collected by Jakob Hurt in 1865 and published in a Runic verse collection entitled 'The Old Kannel: Vol. 1' (1875). The lyrics have been adapted to align them more closely with literary Estonian.

The Singer's Childhood

Music by **Miina Härma** (1864–1941), **folk songs from Tarvastu parish**
Lyrics from a **Põlva parish folk song**
Conducted by **Elo Üleoja**

This song was performed at the Song Celebrations in 1938, 1947, 1960, 1969, 1972, 1987 and 2004.

This song is a meeting of two minor and two major cowherders' songs from Tarvastu that were composed by Aino Tamm (1864-1945), a singer from the area. Miina Härma transformed them first into a song for a solo singer and later into a choral piece. The lyrics come from Põlva parish, from Jakob Hurt's collection of Runic verse songs entitled 'The Old Kannel: Vol. 1' (1875), collected by Joosep Hurt between 1865 and 1875. Härma used a shortened version translated from the Võro language which Ado Grenzstein had published in 'Singing in Schools' in 1878.

SELECTED WOMEN'S CHOIR
50 choirs
1847 singers

MAARJA SOONE
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2007-2014 & 2019-2025
General conductor of children's choir 2014 & 2019
Conductor of selected women's choir 2025

Äiu-püiu (lullaby)

From the choral cycle 'Six arrangements of Estonian folk songs'

Music by **Ester Mägi** (1922–2021), **folk song from Muhu parish**
Lyrics from **Muhu** & **Harju-Jaani parish folk songs**
Conducted by **Maarja Soone**

For Mart Saar's student Ester Mägi, folk music was an inexhaustible role model, just as it was for her teacher. 'Äiu-püiu' is based on two lullabies, with the composer setting the simple melody in canon. Georg Kipper (1907–1995) from the village of Lalli in Muhu parish, Hellamaa municipality, sang the melody and the opening verses, which were recorded by Cyrillus Kreek between 1925 and 1927. The main part of the text was sung, at the age of 80, by Mari Kotkas from the village of Kiviloo in Harju-Jaani parish, Peningi municipality, and recorded by Gustav Vilbaste in 1912.

ESTONIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

OLARI ELTS
Conductor of Song Celebrations 1993, 1997, 2004, 2011, 2014, 2019 & 2025
Conductor of Estonian National Symphony Orchestra at Song Celebrations 2025

Incantation of Tempest

Dedicated to Veljo Tormis

Music by **Erkki-Sven Tüür** (1959)
Conducted by **Olari Elts**

According to its composer, 'Storm Spell', which was written in 2014 as part of the 'Additional Song' project of the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, is a perfect way to both start and end a concert. The work also stands as a tribute to Veljo Tormis.

SELECTED
MIXED CHOIR
90 choirs
3369 singers

HELI JÜRGENSON
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2002, 2004, 2009 & 2014-2025
General conductor of mixed choir 2002 & 2014 and general conductor of mixed and selected choirs 2009
Artistic director of Song Celebrations 2017
Artistic director of Song Celebrations and conductor of selected mixed choir and combined choir 2025

SELECTED CHILDREN'S
CHOIR
27 choirs
1118 singers

MARET POLL
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017-2025
General conductor of young children's choir 2019 & 2023
Conductor of selected children's choir 2025

Flax Puller

Music by **Peeter Süda** (1883–1920), **folk song from Helme parish**
Lyrics from a **Helme parish folk song**
Conducted by **Heli Jürgenson**

Peeter Süda, who died at the age of just 37, devoted almost all of his talent to the organ. He first used folk songs in 'The Linen Quilter', which he composed in 1913 and which was his only foray into choral music. It is based on a folk song sung by Toora Kurvits from the village of Ala-Pikre in Helme parish, Koorküla municipality. The song was collected between 1881 and 1885 by Karl Ruut, who gave it a choral arrangement that was published in Song and Game Journal in 1885. Süda likely took the folk song from this arrangement.

How Can I Recognize My Home

Music by **Veljo Tormis** (1930–2017), **folk song from Kolga-Jaani parish**
Lyrics from **Paide, Simuna, Karksi** & **Äksi parish folk songs**
Ensemble: **Weekend Guitar Trio (Mart Soo, Robert Jürjendal & Tõnis Leemets)**
Conducted by **Maret Poll**

Veljo Tormis became the foremost advocate of Estonian Runic verse singing in the 1970s. 'Where I Feel at Home' (1973) is based on a folk song from Kolga-Jaani parish that was sung by Marie Sepp (1862-1943) and recorded by Herbert Tampere and August Pulst in 1937. The lyrics, by Jaan Kaplinski, come from Runic verse songs performed by a number of singers: one known only by their surname Sõnajalg, as well as Abram Põltsam (76), Ann Lott (1844-1915) and probably also Maret Koorits (76). It was recorded by Karl Voldemar Rosenstrauch in 1892 (and again in 1908), by Paul Sepp in 1894 and by Peeter Tatz in 1908.

SELECTED MEN'S CHOIR
17 choirs
574 singers

MIKK ÜLEOJA
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2009, 2014, 2019 & 2025
General conductor of men's choir 2014 & 2019
Conductor of selected men's choir 2025

Our Life

Music by **Mart Saar** (1882–1963), **folk song**
Lyrics by **Märt Mohn** (1811–1872)
Conducted by **Mikk Üleoja**

This song was performed at the Song Celebration in 1910.

Mart Saar's passion for the repertoire of his ancestors came from his father's side, and following trips to collect folk tunes in the summers of 1904 and 1907 he took folk singing to his heart. Saar found 'Our Life' among the choral pieces of Karl August Hermann. According to Hermann, the song was 'well known among all people', but its origins are a mystery. The lyrics are based on a poem by Võru-based Märt Mohn (1811-1872) which was recorded by Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald.

SELECTED MIXED CHOIR
90 choirs
3369 singers

INGRID MÄND
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017–2025
Conductor of selected mixed choir 2025

Oh How Blessed Are the Saints in Heaven

Music by **Cyrillus Kreek** (1889–1962), **folk chorale from Reigi parish**
Lyrics from a **Reigi parish folk chorale**
Conducted by **Ingrid Mänd**

Folk tunes form the basis of most of Cyrillus Kreek's compositions. He was an active collector of folk songs himself, recording them on phonographs. He was very interested in Estonia's spiritual folk songs. 'Oh How Blessed...' is based on a folk chorale that was sung by Juhan Kappel (61) and Maret Liiv (63) from Kõpu village in Reigi parish. It was recorded by Peeter Süda in 1905. The lyrics come from the quill of Simon Dach (1605-1659).

ESTONIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

ARVO VOLMER
Main conductor of 1st concert at Song Celebrations 1999
Conductor of Estonian National Symphony Orchestra at Song Celebrations 2025

SELECTED MEN'S CHOIR
17 choirs
574 singers

PEETER PERENS
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2007-2025
General conductor of mixed choir 2007 and general conductor of young men's choir 2011 & 2017
Artistic director of Song Celebrations 2019
Conductor of selected men's choir 2025

Hellworks

Music by **Ülo Krigul** (1978)
Conducted by **Arvo Volmer**

Written especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Ülo Krigul: 'The musical material for this piece was derived from the battle songs of different nations. A closer look reveals that although they have different origins, they share a lot of similarities. So when it comes to singing them, you mightn't even know who recorded the tunes or where they came from. Moreover, just like on the battlefield, motives (motifs) that were initially clear can change beyond all recognition in the course of action. We sometimes hear people exclaim 'What's going on?!' when circumstances and surroundings seem absurd and incomprehensible. Let this piece stand as one possible answer to the question that inevitably arises when we look around ourselves today.'

Going to war

Music by **Veljo Tormis** (1930–2017), **folk song from Kanepi parish**
Lyrics from a **Karula parish folk song**
Conducted by **Peeter Perens**

In his works, Veljo Tormis breathed new life into Runic verse songs. 'Going to War', from 1973, was dedicated to the Sakala male choir. The choral work is based on two folk songs. Emilie Leiss (56) from Kanepi parish, Erastvere municipality, sang the melody, which was recorded by Herbert Tampere in 1936. The lyrics of the Runic verse-based 'Brother's War Song' were sung by Els Koemets (46) from Karula parish, Vana-Antsla municipality, and recorded by Rudolf Tamm in 1910.

SELECTED
WOMEN'S CHOIR
50 choirs
1847 singers

TÕNU KALJUSTE
Conductor of Song Celebrations 1993, 1997-2004, 2009, 2014, 2019, 2023 & 2025
Conductor of selected women's choir and selected combined choir 2025

SELECTED MIXED CHOIR
90 choirs
3369 singers

KASPAR MÄND
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2014-2025
General conductor of mixed choir 2017
Conductor of selected mixed choir 2025

Estonian Lullaby

Music by **Arvo Pärt** (1935), **folk song from Jõhvi parish**
Lyrics from a **Jõhvi parish folk song**
Conducted by **Tõnu Kaljuste**

Arvo Pärt: 'Lullabies are like fragments of a paradise lost – a consolation that is both intimate and profound.' This work is based on a folk song that was sung by Liina Krassmann (23) from the village of Kurtna in Illuka municipality. It was recorded by Peeter Penna and Karl Luud in 1905. The tune features lyrics from the song 'Playing Tag' with the traditional opening verse starting '*Kuuts, kuuts, kullike*' ('Hush, hush, my precious'), but likely due to a mistake on the part of the person who recorded it, the word *kullike* ('my precious') became kallike ('my darling').

Fly from Your Sorrows

Part VI of 'Kreek's Notebook'

Music by **Tõnu Kõrvits** (1969), **folk chorale from Otepää parish**
Lyrics from an **Otepää parish folk chorale**
Conducted by **Kaspar Mänd**

Tõnu Kõrvits: 'In terms of the folk chorale, I like to think that it's been sung by so many people throughout the ages, and each one of them has left something of themselves in it.' This tune was sung by Jüri Illak (1853-1937) from Otepää parish, Neeruti municipality, and recorded by August Kiiss in 1908. Kreek replaced the original chorale lyrics with those of 'Fly from Your Sorrows' by Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676), which were published in Estonian in New Songbook in 1899.

SELECTED
COMBINED CHOIR
154 choirs
5635 singers

PÄRT UUSBERG
Conductor of Song Celebrations
2019, 2023 & 2025
Artistic director of Song Celebrations 2023
Conductor of selected combined choir and
mixed choir 2025

Praise God, Ye People, for He Is Generous

Music by **Pärt Uusberg** (1986), **folk chorale from Reigi parish**
Lyrics from a **Reigi parish folk chorale**
Conducted by **Pärt Uusberg**

Pärt Uusberg: 'In my view, we Estonians have had two musical treasures passed down to us through our mothers' milk: Runic verse songs and spiritual folk music.' This song is based on a folk chorale whose music was written by Ludwig Senfl (ca 1486-1543). The tune was sung by Mari Quarnström (1851-1917) from the village of Reigi in the parish of the same name. It was recorded by Peeter Süda in 1905. The lyrics were penned by Johann Horn (1487-1547) and published in Estonian in New Songbook in 1899.

ESTONIAN NATIONAL
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

KRISTIINA POSKA
Conductor of Song Celebrations
2019 & 2025
Conductor of Estonian National
Symphony Orchestra at Song
Celebrations 2025

Pastorale

Music by **Eino Tamberg** (1930–2010), **folk song**
Conducted by **Kristiina Poska**

'Pastorale' is the only known folkloric piece by Tamberg that features the melody of the runic verse song 'Big Oak'. There is a well-known audio recording of the folk song sung by Anton Hansen Tammsaare's sister Marta Hansen (1886-1979) from Järva-Madise parish, recorded in 1971 by Tallinnfilm. The song made it Järve-Madise through Tammsaare's parents from their home, Suure-Jaani parish. The folksong has also been used in pieces by Mart Saar and Veljo Tormis, among others.

SELECTED CHILDREN'S CHOIR
27 choirs
1118 singers

AVE SOPP
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2011, 2023 & 2025
General conductor of children's choir 2023
Conductor of selected children's choir 2025

SELECTED MEN'S CHOIR
17 choirs
574 singers

KUNO KERGE
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2019, 2023 & 2025
Conductor of selected men's choir and boys' choir 2025

The Flower Waltz

Music by ja tekst **Lee Taul** (1992)
Music arranged by **Andre Maaker** (1980)
Conducted by **Ave Sopp**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Lee Taul recalls that 'The Flower Waltz' was born from strumming her guitar and dreaming. The song embodies the gentle lightness of spring, as well as hope and the feeling of falling in love with life itself. The piece found its way into the repertoire of the band Midrid, where it became a hit.

Who Was That Brewing?

Music and lyrics from a **Setomaa folk song**
Music arranged for male choir and symphony orchestra by **Ülo Krigul** (1978)
Conducted by **Kuno Kerge**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

This folk song is performed by the ensemble Liinatsuraq, with lead vocals by Paul Hagu (1946). Hagu learned this song from the folklore of the village of Molnika in the Petseri district of Setomaa. Ülo Krigul: 'The aim of an arrangement should be to highlight what is at the core of the song. Here too, the orchestral environment will give the singers the chance to draw more easily on the dynamics already within the lyrics of the song and to notice the other singers around them, becoming part-listener themselves in the process.'

SELECTED
WOMEN'S CHOIR
50 choirs
1847 singers

TOOMAS VOLL
Conductor of Song Celebrations 1997-2002, 2007-2017 & 2025
General conductor of boys' choir 1999 and general conductor of young women's choir 2002
Conductor of selected women's choir 2025

SELECTED MIXED CHOIR
90 choirs
3369 singers

TRIIN KOCH
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2007-2025
General conductor of young women's choir 2011 & 2017, general conductor of women's choir 2014 and general conductor of mixed choir 2019
General conductor of mixed choir and conductor of selected mixed choir and combined choir 2025

O, If It All Was Up To Me

Music by **Rasmus Puur** (1991), **folk song of Siberian Estonians**
Lyrics from a **Siberian Estonian folk song**
Conducted by **Toomas Voll**

Rasmus Puur: 'Reading the lyrics of the song, one is reminded of the world of Old Barny from Andrus Kivirähk's novel *Rehepapp*, where the Estonians of yore, their eyes blazing, imagined themselves in place of their German overlords. Leaving aside that devilish gleam, this is ultimately a story about a dream, a desire for freedom and a better life.' The choral work is based on a folk song sung by Emilia Naarits (1916-2008) from the Siberian Estonian village of Ryzhkovo in the Krutinsky district of Omsk. It was recorded by Anu Korb in 1999.

Young Brethren, Sing!

Music by **Mart Saar** (1882–1963), **Seto folk tune**
Lyrics from **Seto folk songs**
Conducted by **Triin Koch**

This song was performed at the Song Celebration in 2019.

Mart Saar magicked up a powerful choral symphony from a two-bar folk tune. It uses a common Setomaa melody called the *praasniga ääl* or 'party tune'. The lyrics are woven together from Seto leelo verses in the collection 'Songs of the Seto People II' compiled by Jakob Hurt in 1905. Parts of the lyrics are from songs performed by Andre and Iro from the village of Saagre, Tsia Ann from Veriora municipality and Ado Nool (Nuul) from Orava municipality, recorded by Victor Stein between 1872 and 1873, Johan Kotli in 1877 and Jakob Jagomann in 1878.

SELECTED COMBINED CHOIR
181 choirs
6720 singers

RASMUS PUUR
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017, 2019 & 2025
Conceptual designer and assistant to artistic director 2017
Conductor of mixed choir and selected combined choir & assistant to artistic director 2025

TÕNU KALJUSTE
Conductor of Song Celebrations 1993, 1997-2004, 2009, 2014, 2019, 2023 & 2025
Conductor of selected women's choir and selected combined choir 2025

Beautiful Land

Music by **Rein Rannap** (1953)
Lyrics by **Hando Runnel** (1938)
Conducted by **Rasmus Puur**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Rein Rannap: 'In the late spring and early summer of 1982, all 10 melodies of the cantata 'Beautiful Country' form themselves in my mind in just two days. As soon as I see the cycle of Runnel's poems, I know it's going to be a cantata – and not just any cantata, but a rock cantata! I had the opportunity to perform it at the Tartu Pop Music Days and in autumn at Linnahall in Tallinn in 1983. After that, it was banned. Apparently the fact that 4000 people stood up during the climax, and remained standing in silence during the very quiet last part, upset the authorities.'

My Song Turns Sea into Land

Music and lyrics from a **Tõstamaa parish folk song**
Lyrics from **folks songs from around Estonia assembled by Celia Roose**
Orchestral arrangement by **Tõnu Kõrvits** (1969)
Lead singer: **Celia Roose**
Conducted by **Tõnu Kaljuste**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration.

'My Song Turns Sea into Land' forms part of a collection of folk songs called 'The Power of Song'. It was sung by Liisu Orik (1873-1970) from the village of Alu in Tõstamaa parish and recorded by Herbert Tampere and August Pulst in the studios of the national broadcaster in Tallinn in 1938.

Opening concert of XXVIII Song Celebration | 'Kinship'

Artistic director: Heli Jürgenson
Assistant to artistic director: Rasmus Puur
Music editor: Ave Sopp

Conductors:
Arvo Volmer, Ave Sopp, Elo Üleoja, Heli Jürgenson, Ingrid Kõrvits, Ingrid Mänd, Kaspar Mänd, Kristiina Poska, Kuldar Schüts, Kuno Kerge, Maarja Soone, Maret Poll, Mikk Üleoja, Neeme Järvi, Olari Elts, Peeter Perens, Pärt Uusberg, Rasmus Puur, Raul Talmar, Toomas Voll, Triin Koch & Tõnu Kaljuste

The concert will feature **6720 singers from 181 selected choirs**. The choirs have been led by **203 conductors**.

Accompanying orchestra:
Estonian National Symphony Orchestra
Principal conductor and artistic director:
Olari Elts | Orchestra manager: Marko Metsaru
Concertmaster at Song Celebration: Dalia Dedinskaite

Director & **dramaturg:** Mikk Jürjens
Animation artist: Sander Joon
Lighting artist: Priidu Adlas
Sound designer: Hendrik Kaljujärv
Designer of song stage & **conductor's podium:** Kristjan Suits

Voices: Lauli Koppelmaa & Karmo Nigula

Director's assistants: Liis Lindmaa & Ingrid Noodla

Directors of movement for performers
Lining-up coordinator: Priit Oks | Assistant: Kaisa Lõhmus
Stage manager of accompanying orchestras: Marko Lõhmus
Team: Aivar Surva, Aune Seppel, Jan Markus Tinno, Katrin Puur, Laine Randjärv, Margus Luur, Maria Liisa Luur, Marika Pärk, Marju Mäger, Markus Lehar Luur, Mattis Thor Piigli, Riina Ristimets & Sirly Illak-Oluvere

Senior sound director: Haar Tammik
Sound directors: Siim Hiob & Rene Liitmaa | Monitor director: Robert Ruben
Sound engineering services: Eventech, led by project manager Rainer Koik

Recordings used in concert:
'Cross Dance' as played by Jaan Piht a.k.a. Torupilli-Jaan (1875-1950) from the village of Vanakubja in Mustjala parish and recorded by Herbert Tampere and August Pulst in 1936 (ERA, Pl. 3 A3)
'In My Youngest Days' as sung by Alfred Ruus (1888-1971) from the village of Viitina in Rõuge parish and recorded by Ingrid Rüütel in 1961 (RKM, Mgn II 635 d)
'Where I Feel at Home' as sung by Marie Sepp (1862-1943) from the village of Soosaare in Kolga-Jaani parish and recorded by Herbert Tampere and August Pulst in 1936 (ERA, Pl. 46 B1)
'Brother Jonathan' as sung at the age of 52 by Elsa Kikas from the village of Lalli in Rõuge parish and recorded by Erna Tampere and Ingrid Rüütel in 1977 (RKM, Mgn II 2946 (3))
'If I Were' as sung by Emilia Naarits (1916-2008) from the Siberian Estonian village of Ryzhkovo in the Krutinsky district of Omsk and recorded by Anu Korb in 1999 (ERA, CD 305 (15))
'When I Start to Sing' as sung by Veljo Tormis (1930-2017) from the village of Aru in Kuusalu parish, from the ERR video archive, as recorded in the programme *Folk Artists 14: Veljo Tormis* hosted by Enn Eesmaa and directed by Georg Jegorov, first broadcast on 7 August 1980

The archive recordings used in the concert and its sound design are from the Estonian Folklore Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum.

Advisors: Jüri Viikberg (interim texts) & Taive Särg (archive recordings)

Flame relay & **thank-you music:** Margo Kõlar
Based on 'O Adam, Your Fault', a folk chorale from Otepää pa rish
Performed by Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, Margo Kõlar (bagpipes), Triin Preisfreund (chromatic kannel), Krista Citra Joonas (bamboo flute) & male singers from the Good Night, Brother chamber choir
Sound director: Margo Kõlar

Procession commentators: Helena Lotman, Hilje Murel, Kaspar Velberg & Ülle Kaljuste

XXVIII

SONG CELEBRATION

KINSHIP

Song Celebration

6 July 2025

WIND ORCHESTRA
54 collectives
1547 players

BERT LANGELER
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017-2025
General conductor of wind orchestra 2019
General conductor of wind orchestra 2025

PEETER SAAN
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2009, 2014, 2019 & 2025
General conductor of wind orchestra 2009 & 2014
Conductor of wind orchestra 2025

I Dedicate to You

Friedrich August Saebelmanni loo
„Kaunimad laulud' ainetel

Music by **Tauno Aints** (1975)
Friedrich August Saebelmann
Conducted by **Bert Langeler**

Written especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Tauno Aints: 'The idea of tackling a piece based on Saebelmann's 'The Most Beautiful Songs' came about during a conversation with Bert Langeler in Viljandi. It wasn't easy, since the original, recognisable material still needed to be heard, but as part of something completely new, not just a new arrangement. Luckily, a muse came to the rescue and worked its magic on the score.'

Solemn Estonia

concert march

Music by **Rein Rannap** (1953)
Music arranged for wind orchestra by **Peeter Saan** (1959)
Conducted by **Peeter Saan**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Rein Rannap: 'I wrote 'Solemn Estonia' for a competition for compositions to mark the 100th anniversary of our independence that was looking for festive concert marches. I tried to express the mood of the celebrations in musical form: their brightness and dignity.'

KARL ABRO
Conductor of wind orchestra 2025

Under the Lofty Sky

Music by **Riho Esko Maimets** (1988)
Conducted by **Karl Abro**

Written especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Riho Esko Maimets: 'This piece reminds me of birds flying over Estonia in summer, when worries seem so far away and it's time to enjoy the first proper harvest. 'Under the High Sky' is like a thank-you for that.'

PRIIT RUSALEPP
Conductor of wind orchestra 2025

Estonian Motifs

Music by **Tõnis Kõrvits** (1944)
Conducted by **Priit Rusalepp**

Written especially for the 2025 Song Celebration.

Tõnis Kõrvits: 'It was a lot of work sifting through collections of folk songs and the Viljandi Culture Academy's music library to find motifs that could be used in writing the song.' The song used in the work, 'Calling the Cattle Home', was sung by Maali Sikk (62) from Rõuge parish in Varstu municipality, recorded by Juhan Zeiger in 1952. The songs of Juhan Maaker (1845-1930) a.k.a. Torupilli Juss were recorded in the village of Muda in Emmaste municipality, as played by the man himself, and recorded on phonograph by Cyrillus Kreek, Johannes Muda and Andrei Laredei in 1921.

BERT LANGELER
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017-2025
General conductor of wind orchestra 2019
General conductor of wind orchestra 2025

BOYS' CHOIR
66 boys' choirs
20 boys' mixed choirs
2123 singers

JANNE FRIDOLIN
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017, 2023 & 2025
General conductor of children's choir 2017
General conductor of boys' choir 2025

Estonian Rhapsody

Based on the Estonian folksong 'When I Was Little'

Music by **Eduard Tamm** (1897–1941)
Music arranged by **Riivo Jõgi** (1987)
Conducted by **Bert Langeler**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Narva-born Eduard Tamm, who lived in Võru for 18 years, laid the foundations for authentic Estonian wind music. 'Estonian Rhapsody' was completed in 1932. Riivo Jõgi describes the arrangement that was created from it: 'It's a rather complex song, but an amazing one, lasting over 10 minutes. The idea of devising a new arrangement for it came from a desire to make it accessible to smaller orchestras.'
The melody of 'When I Was Young' comes from Mulgi region cowherders' tunes that were cobbled together from memory by Aino Tamm (1864-1945), a singer from Tarvastu. Miina Härma is said to have provided lyrics for the song, and arranged it for both solo singers and choirs – in which form we know it by the title "The Songstrel's Childhood".

I'd Like to Sing a Song

Music by **Riho Päts** (1899–1977)
Lyrics by **Gustav Suits** (1883–1956)
Conducted by **Janne Fridolin**

This piece was performed at the 1947, 1987, 1994 and 1999 Song Celebrations.

The contribution made to Estonian music education by composer, teacher, choirmaster and man of letters Riho Päts was truly pioneering: for nearly half a century, youngsters from primary school through to university age trained under his tutelage. It was important to him that children enjoyed singing. 'I'd Like to Sing a Song', written in 1939, gained symbolic meaning in preserving Estonia's sense of national unity during the years of occupation.

MARILIIS KREINTAAL
Conductor of Song
Celebrations 2023 & 2025
Conductor of boys' choir 2025

The Schoolbag Bearer

Music by **Piret Rips** (1965)
Lyrics by **Contra** (1974)
Orchestration by **Riivo Jõgi** (1987)
Choreographed by **Märt Agu** (1980)
Conducted by **Mariliis Kreintaal**

This song was written by Piret Rips for the Võro-language song festival '*Uma Pidu*' ('Our Party'). It has since been sung by choirs in both Võro and Estonian. The words to Contra's poem were originally in Estonian, but he translated them for the Võro-language version of Täheke magazine. 'I wanted to show, via a joke, that little kids really do have massive schoolbags,' Contra once said.

JANNE FRIDOLIN
Conductor of Song Celebrations
2017, 2023 & 2025
General conductor of children's choir 2017
General conductor of boys' choir 2025

Simply My Home

Music by **Piret Laikre** (1979)
Lyrics by **Marek Sadam** (1978)
Orchestration by **Riivo Jõgi** (1987)
Conducted by **Janne Fridolin**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Piret Laikre: 'It's my heartfelt wish that this lyrical song about home truly touches the boys in the boys' choir. I hope that it radiates simplicity, nostalgia and a sense of happiness and gratitude for family and home.'
Marek Sadam: 'Lyrics come easily when the music they're being set to is good. These ones dig down into the very soul of how I think about my country and my home.'

BOYS' CHOIR & MEN'S CHOIR
86 boys' and boys' mixed choirs
34 men's choirs
3511 singers

KUNO KERGE
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2019-2025
Conductor of selected men's choir and boys' choir 2025

KULDAR SCHÜTS
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2014-2025
General conductor of boys' choir 2023
Conductor of selected men's choir and boys' choir 2025

Up We Go, Dear Brothers

Music by **Andres Lemba** (1968), **folk songs from Vändra** & **Tõstamaa parishes**
Lyrics from **Vändra** & **Tõstamaa parish folk songs**
Conducted by **Kuno Kerge**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Three folk tunes are used in the song. The first, from Vändra, was recorded by Jüri Peterson and came to us via Ernst Sokolowsky's choral arrangement published in *Song and Game Journal* in 1885. The folk text 'Up, up...', whose origins are unknown, was adapted for the choral arrangement. The folk song 'Sing, Sing, Little Mouth' was sung by Liisu Orik (1873-1970) from the village of Alu in Tõstamaa parish. It was recorded by Erna and Herbert Tampere in 1965.

The Bread Is Cooling

Music by **Andres Valkonen** (1951–2025)
Lyrics by **Leelo Tungal** (1947)
Arrangement for choir and orchestration by **Riivo Jõgi** (1987)
Conducted by **Kuldar Schüts**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Dancers from the **Lee, Soveldajad** and **Sõprus** dance troupes will be performing.
Choreographed by **Maido Saar** (1957)

Inspired by his longing for home and the person he held most dear, Andres Valkonen wrote this tune in 1974 while serving in the Soviet army in Kazakhstan. Leelo Tungal was given carte blanche to choose the theme of the lyrics. 'The melody did feel a bit melancholy in parts, but there was no bitterness,' Tungal recalls. 'For some reason it brought to mind a big dark loaf of black bread fresh out of the oven.'

SELECTED YOUNG CHILDREN'S CHOIR
188 choirs
6244 singers

RAILI KAIBALD
Conductor of young children's choir 2025

JAANIKA KUUSIK
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017-2025
General conductor of young children's choir 2025

Father in Heaven

Music by **Mari Amor** (1973)
Lyrics by **Artur Adson** (1889–1977)
Orchestration by **Tõnu Kõrvits** (1969)
Conducted by **Raili Kaibald**

Mari Amor: 'Of all the songs I've written so far, 'Father in Heaven' came together the easiest. The minute I came across Artur Adson's text in a Võro language textbook, I played the whole song on the piano in one go.' Adson brings to life the image of children hurrying to school in the middle of a storm. Growing up without a father and left in the care of his aunt, Adson started at the Tartu School for Orphans at the age of six, always walking there alone.

When I Sing

Music by **Mart Saar** (1882–1963) based on **Rõngu parish folk songs**
Lyrics from **Rõngu parish folk songs**
Conducted by **Jaanika Kuusik**

Mart Saar was one of the first Estonian composers to shine the spotlight on our old folk songs and what makes them unique, and to link them to modern sounds. He was also a great lover of nature. Johannes Jürisson once wrote: 'The forest is the composer's lodge and temple... He loves to sit and spend hours in one place so as to explore the nature of a bush or a tree or a flower.' The folk tune and lyrics used in this song come from the village of Pühaste in Rõngu parish, Aakre municipality. They were recorded by Peeter Kurg and a Mr [?] Bruus in 1906.

VILVE MAIDE
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2019-2025
Conductor of young children's choir 2025

Time's Path Is Bumpy

Music by **Tõnis Kõrvits** (1944)
Lyrics by **Priit Aimla** (1941)
Choreographed by **Iren Voites** (1964)
Conducted by **Vilve Maide**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Tõnis Kõrvits: 'There was a TV show called The Adventures of Uncle Tik-Tak, and 'Time's Path Is Bumpy' served as its opening theme. The ticking of a clock was in my mind the whole time I wrote it. There are a lot of clocks in the production, so the first part of the song is a bit faster and the second a bit slower, imitating the ticking of different clocks.'

JAANIKA KUUSIK
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017-2025
General conductor of young children's choir 2025

Sneaky Game

Music by **Kaarel Kuusk** (1987), **folk tune from Kihelkonna**
Lyrics from **Kihelkonna, Valjala** & **Saarde parish singing games**
Choreography by **Regina Rebane** (1963)
Conducted by **Jaanika Kuusik**

The folk tune used in this song, and the words to the first and third verses, are from a singing game that was sung by Tiina Prei (1879-1961) from the village of Koimla in Kihelkonna parish, Lümanda municipality. They were recorded by Elmar Prei in 1941. The words to the second verse were recorded by Aino Mütsak from the village of Allikukivi in Saarde parish, Voltveti municipality in 1935, while those to the fourth verse are from a song that was sung by Maria Villsaar (Marie Vilsaar) (1881-1944) from the village of Kõnnu in Valjala parish, Kogula municipality. They were recorded by August Villsaar in 1935.

ILONA MUHEL
Conductor of young children's choir 2025

Here It Is, My Home

Music by **Piret Rips** (1965)
Lyrics by **Leelo Tungal** (1947)
Orchestration by **Riivo Jõgi** (1987)
Soloist: **Liisi Koikson**
Conducted by **Ilona Muhel**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Written for the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, this song tells of the turbulent history of our country. Piret Rips-Laul: 'Home and a sense of home have long been very dear to Estonians. A lot can change in life, but home and our homeland always remain part of our souls.'

WOMEN'S CHOIR
134 choirs
3970 singers

ANDRUS SIIMON
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2002, 2007-2014 & 2019-2025
General conductor of young men's choir 2007
Conductor of women's choir 2025

Ringing in the Fields

From the cycle '12 Songs in Honour of the Virgin Mary'

Music by **Urmas Sisask** (1960–2022)
Lyrics by **Urmas Sisask from a Catholic prayer book**
Soloist: **Mirjam Mesak**
Conducted by **Andrus Siimon**

This piece was performed at the 2002 Song Celebration.

Urmas Sisask once said: 'I don't think of myself as a composer, but as a writer of music. Music comes from some invisible reality. It's created on a higher plane. Man is given the opportunity to make something of that energy from God.' Sisask's choral pieces are singer-friendly, with beautiful melodies, resounding harmonies and clear phrasing. This includes the choral cycle he created in 1992, of which the fourth song, 'Ringing in the Fields', is its most frequently performed.

ELEN ILVES
Conductor of women's choir 2025

The Maiden's Voice

Music by **Riivo Jõgi** (1987), **folk song from Räpina parish**
Lyrics from a **Räpina parish folk song**
Conducted by **Elen Ilves**

Riivo Jõgi: 'To me, the message of this song is that life should be full of humour and laughter – because the more cheerful we are, the more good energy and positive vibes we feel around us.' The music and lyrics here were cobbled together from two songs from Räpina parish found in Viido Kiudoski's play *Martinmas Beggars: A Setu Comedy with Songs in Three Acts*, dating from 1886. To what extent they were Kiudoski's own creations, as compared to oral tradition, is unknown.

ODE PÜRG
Conductor of women's choir 2025

Look and You Will See

Music by **Karin Tuul** (1994)
Lyrics by **Veiko Tubin** (1983)
Conducted by **Ode Pürg**

Karin Tuul: 'Veiko Tubin's text spoke to me as soon as I read it, and the piece took shape very quickly, in just a couple of days. For me, it's about love in its most universal sense. Every singer can put their love and thoughts into a song, be it love for a friend or family member or their significant other, or for nature, or their home, or country, or God.'

KÜLLI KIIVET
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017-2025
General conductor of women's choir 2025

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
30 orchestras
914 players

IMRE ROHUVÄLI
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2023 & 2025
Conductor of symphony orchestra 2025

You Are Golden

Music by **Kadri Voorand** (1986)
Lyrics by **Kristiina Ehin** (1977)
Orchestration by **Rasmus Puur** (1991)
Conducted by **Külli Kiivet**

Written especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Kadri Voorand: 'When Külli called me and described the sort of song she felt was missing from the programme, I was delighted, because the idea and the need for just such a song had been brewing in me for quite a while – a song that encourages and uplifts women, that tells them everything that gives them strength and confidence and makes them shine, and whose lyrics could be a mother talking to her daughter.'

Seto Dance

'Suite of Estonian Dances' (ETW 15), Part III

Music by **Eduard Tubin** (1905–1982)
Conducted by **Imre Rohuväli**

This piece was performed at the 2014 Song Celebration.

Eduard Tubin did for orchestral music what his teacher Heino Eller did for chamber music, and what Cyrillus Kreek and Mart Saar did for choral music: he developed Estonia's musical idiom and enriched it with modern forms of expression. He also sought material for his work from the Estonian Folklore Archives. As a result, he wrote 'Suite of Estonian Dances', which uses Estonian folk tunes throughout, in 1938.

RIIVO JÕGI
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017-2025
General conductor of wind orchestra 2023
General conductor of symphony orchestra 2025

What Holds Us

Music by **Mart Saar** (1882–1963), **, Otepää parish folk song**
Music arranged by **Rasmus Puur** (1991)
Conducted by **Riivo Jõgi**

The basis of this magnificent song for mixed choir is a folk tune that was recorded in Otepää parish in 1908. Rasmus Puur produced an arrangement of the song for string orchestra in the summer of 2018: 'Since there's a great deal of instrumentality in Saar's choral songs, it was easy and very organic to orchestrate them, because the core of its story, its essence, was able to be very effectively translated into the language of the instruments.'

JÜRI-RUUT KANGUR
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2007 & 2011-2025
General conductor of symphony orchestra 2007 & 2011-2023
Conductor of symphony orchestra 2025

When I Was Young

Inspired by the Estonian folk song
'When I Was Still Just a Young Thing'/'Our Life'

Music by **Madis Järvi** (1988)
Conducted by **Jüri-Ruut Kangur**

Written especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Madis Järvi: 'This is an orchestral piece with a bright, positive feel to it. It includes a callback to the Estonian folk song 'Our Life', which I know above all from the film *Spring*, where it was known as 'When I Was Still Just a Young Thing'. That version of the folk song became more widely known through a calendar printed by the Postimees newspaper in 1876, where it was accompanied by a note reading: 'Estonian folk tune by K. A. Hermann, said to have been recorded by R. Kallas'.

OTT KASK
Conductor of Song Celebrations 1997, 2002, 2017 & 2025
General conductor of wind orchestra 2002
Conductor of symphony orchestra 2025

Spring Fly

Waltz from the puppet film 'Spring Fly'

Music by **Lepo Sumera** (1950–2000)
Music arranged by **Ott Kask** (1962)
Conducted by **Ott Kask**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Lepo Sumera wrote the music for a total of 49 films. In 1986, he composed the score for the puppet film *Spring* Fly by Riho Unt and Hardi Volmer, based on A. H. Tammsaare's *The Fly, the Cockroach and the Spider*. According to Ott Kask, who devised this arrangement, the melody of Sumera's piece is rooted in Italian *bel canto*-style music, which he mixed, in his own words, with 'urban music dialects from other parts of the world like the Caribbean and the legacy of electronic jazz'.

RIIVO JÕGI
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017-2025
General conductor of wind orchestra 2023
General conductor of symphony orchestra 2025

The World Resounds Across the Globe

A mix of works by Curly Strings

Music by **Eeva Talsi** (1988)
Music arranged by **Riivo Jõgi** (1987)
Conducted by **Riivo Jõgi**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Eva Talsi: ''Around the Globe', 'The World Rings Out' and 'Retribution' were my first three melodies,' the composer explains. ''The World Rings Out' was born in the practice room at EMTA, when boredom set in with me from practising the compulsory pieces. At the time, fatigue and tedium were the perfect breeding ground for new creative works. The melody of 'The World Rings Out' took shape in about 10 minutes flat.' When devising the orchestral arrangement, Riivo Jõgi sought to preserve the characteristic sound of the ensemble.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR
162 choirs
5285 singers

AARNE SALUVEER
Conductor of Song Celebrations 1993 & 1997-2025
General conductor of young children's choir 1993, 1997-2002, 2011 & 2014 general conductor of children's choir 2004 & 2009 and general conductor of young women's choir 2023
Artistic director of Song Celebrations 2007
Conductor of children's choir 2025

KADI HÄRMA
Conductor of children's choir 2025

Modal Études

Spring
Fog
Snow
Spring

Music by **Veljo Tormis** (1930–2017)
Lyrics from **folk songs from Kursi parish** & **elsewhere**
Arranged for orchestra by **Tauno Aints** (1975)
Conducted by **Aarne Saluveer**

In 1970, Veljo Tormis was commissioned by Heino Kaljuste to create seven folklore miniatures for Ellerhein entitled 'Modal Etudes'. Their lyrics are based on Runic verse songs. In the first part, 'Spring', the composer used lyrics from the folk song 'Spring in the Field', sung at the age of 83 by Mai Paiu from the village of Pööra in Kursi parish, Härjanurme municipality, and recorded by Marie Kärt in 1911. The lyrics for 'Fog' and 'Snow' are based on Runic verse songs that are well known in many parts of Estonia.

Circle Game Song

Music by **Heino Kaljuste** (1925–1989)
Lyrics from a **folk song**
Conducted by **Kadi Härma**

This piece was performed at the 1969, 1994 and 2009 Song Celebrations.

Heino Kaljuste's life's work was primarily the development of children's musical literacy. He was the founder of the children's choir Ellerhein. The majority of his songs were performed first and foremost by the choir. The arrangement of 'Circle Game Song' is based on a song entitled 'I Would Make a Room for Myself Under My Own Oak Tree' published in 1927 in the book *Games V: Singing games for young people (circle games)* by Anna Raudkats (1886-1965). It is highly likely that the song sprang from folklore and was collected and adapted by Raudkats herself.

SILJA UHS
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017 & 2025
General conductor of children's choir 2025

I Praise Thee

Music and lyrics by **Liisi Koikson** (1983)
Arrangement for choir and orchestration by **Rasmus Puur** (1991)
Conducted by **Silja Uhs**

This song was commissioned from Liisi Koikson by the Estonian Radio Children's Singing Studio for its new album to mark the 100th anniversary of Estonia's independence. Liisi Koikson: 'Since it's always nice to sing the praises of the birthday boy or girl, I wanted to put all the best qualities we appreciate about our country into the song and show how we can look at it from the most beautiful angle.'

The Forest of My Thoughts

Music by **Aare Külama** (1985)
Lyrics by **Haldi Välimäe** (2000)
Orchestration by **Tõnis Kõrvits** (1944)
Conducted by **Mai Simson**

Written especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Aare Külama: 'Music can take you into yourself, into a space where you can be safely wrapped up in your own world and dreams. It's a place where you can generate new thoughts and ideas that could change the world. You have to be brave so that the sapling of those ideas grows into a big, sturdy tree. Being one with yourself: therein lies the miracle. Nobody can take that away from you.
No one. Never!'

MAI SIMSON
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017-2025
Conductor of children's choir 2025

MEN'S CHOIR
47 choirs
1429 singers

HELDUR HARRY PÕLDA
Conductor of men's choir 2025

On the Mount Munamägi

Music by **Karl August Hermann** (1851–1909)
Lyrics by **Juhan Kunder** (1852–1888)
Music arranged by **Tuudur Vettik** (1898–1982)
Conducted by **Heldur Harry Põlda**

This piece was performed at the 1933, 1950, 1955, 1993 and 2011 Song Celebrations.

Karl August Hermann was one of the most wide-ranging Estonian cultural figures of his time: his name is associated with virtually everything that happened in the musical life of the country in the late 19th century. However, he was a graduate of Leipzig University with a degree in linguistics and a doctorate in philosophy, and was only interested in music as a hobby. Hermann also contributed to our linguistic heritage: for example, he came up with the Estonian words *helilooja* ('composer'), *keelpill* ('string instrument') and *kolmkõla* ('triad').

VALTER SOOSALU
Conductor of Song
Celebrations 2017-2025
General conductor of mixed choir 2023
General conductor of men's choir 2025

We Must Build Bridges

Music by **Valter Soosalu** (1992)
Lyrics by **Juhan Viiding** (1948–1995)
Conducted by **Valter Soosalu**

Written especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Valter Soosalu: 'This piece was born from a need for new music for male choirs. Sifting through texts as a team, we came across a poem by Juhan Viiding with a clear and pure idea at its heart. I hope the song inspires us all to see and understand one another more. The Song Celebration is a great example of how sometimes very different people are able to listen to each other and work together for a good cause.'

HIRVO SURVA
Conductor of Song
Celebrations 1993-2025
General conductor of boys' choir
2002-2011 & 2019
Artistic director of Song
Celebrations 1997, 2002 & 2014
Conductor of men's choir 2025

MIXED CHOIR
296 choirs
10781 singers

KÄROLIN TUISK
Conductor of mixed choir 2025

The Singer

An ode to the men's choir, organ and percussion instruments
Dedicated to Gustav Ernesaks

Music by **Veljo Tormis** (1930–2017)
Lyrics by **Kristjan Jaak Peterson** (1801–1822)
Organist: **Piret Aidulo**
Conducted by **Hirvo Surva**

Veljo Tormis enjoyed a long and fruitful partnership with what is now known as the Estonian National Male Choir. In 1974, he took part in a song competition marking the choir's 30th anniversary, creating three dedicated works for the choir's conductors, one of which was 'The Singer' for Gustav Ernesaks. In it, the composer uses two motifs from Ernesaks' best-known works, 'The Land of My Fathers, the Land That I Love' and 'The Poet's Winter Loneliness'.

The Singer

Music by **Mart Saar** (1882–1963)
Lyrics from **folklore**
Conducted by **Kärolin Tuisk**

This piece was performed at the 1965, 1985 and 2004 Song Celebrations.

Mart Saar combined the poetry of the forests and bogs of his beloved home town of Hüpassaare with the ancient, unspoilt nature of folk song and European musical traditions. 'The sound of the kannel – the call of a distant cuckoo in all its warmth and heartfelt sadness – created our folklore,' he once wrote in a letter to Hendrik Toomingas. 'The Songster', written in 1953, is about singing itself. The origins of the folklore text used in this choral work are unknown.

TRIIN KOCH
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2007-2025
General conductor of young women's choir 2011 & 2017, general conductor of women's choir 2014 and general conductor of mixed choir 2019
General conductor of mixed choir and conductor of selected mixed choir and combined choir 2025

Forget-Me-Not

In memory of Gustav Ernesaks

Music by **Veljo Tormis** (1930–2017)
Lyrics from **folk songs**
Conducted by **Triin Koch**

This piece was performed at the 1994 Song Celebration.

Veljo Tormis composed 'Forget-Me-Not' for the Estonian Choral Society in memory of Gustav Ernesaks in 1993, the year of Ernesaks' death. Tormis took the motif from Ernesaks' 1936 women's choral song of the same name (with lyrics by Juhan Liiv), which is musically contrasted with a folk lament. The lyrics were cobbled together from those of a number of different folk songs.

PÄRT UUSBERG
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2019-2025
Artistic director of Song Celebrations 2023
Conductor of selected combined choir and mixed choir 2025

O Adam, Your Fault

Music by **Margo Kõlar** (1961), **folk chorale from Otepää parish**
Lyrics from an **Otepää parish folk chorale**
Conducted by **Pärt Uusberg**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

This folk chorale was sung by 75-year-old Mari Paulus from the Ilmjärve almshouse in Otepää parish, Pühajärve municipality. August Kiiss recorded the music and lyrics in 1908. Lazarus Spengler (1479-1534) was the author of the chorale text, the oldest translation of which dates back to 1690. The song has been part of the repertoire of Heinavanker for years. It tells the story of the fall of the first man, Adam, the burden of guilt that has trickled down to us, and every person's chance to find redemption through Jesus Christ.

RASMUS PUUR
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2017, 2019 & 2025
Conceptual designer and assistant to artistic director 2017
Conductor of mixed choir and selected combined choir & assistant to artistic director 2025

COMBINED CHOIR
470 choirs
15576 singers

TRIIN KOCH
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2007-2025
General conductor of young women's choir 2011 & 2017, general conductor of women's choir 2014 and general conductor of mixed choir 2019
General conductor of mixed choir and conductor of selected mixed choir and combined choir 2025

Choir of Life

Music by ja tekst **Mari Kalkun** (1986)
Music arranged by **Rasmus Puur** (1991)
Conducted by **Rasmus Puur**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

Mari Kalkun has described 'The Choir of Life' as a very personal story and a comfort song she wrote for someone dear to her at a difficult time. The title was inspired by the lyrics of the song and the idea that life is like a choral song: to sound good, you have to practise, practise and practise again, singing with all your heart and soul. The piece uses the folk song 'Sing, Sing, Little Mouth' as sung by Liisu Orik (1873-1970) from the village of Alu in Tõstamaa parish and recorded by Erna and Herbert Tampere in 1965.

Tuljak

Music by **Miina Härma** (1864–1941), **Estonian dance tunes**
Lyrics by **Karl Ferdinand Karlson** (1875–1941)
Conducted by **Triin Koch**

This piece was performed at the 1928 and 1947 Song Celebrations and has been performed at every Song Celebration since 1980.

Miina Härma founded a choir in Tartu in 1894 which has been called Estonia's first concert choir. For this purpose, she composed the now hugely popular song '*Tuljak*' (1897) for mixed choirs. Härma took a polka melody she had heard as a child, and which her father loved to play on the violin at weddings, and worked three folk tunes into it. To come up with lyrics for the song, she turned to the singers in her choir. The challenge was taken up by Karl Ferdinand Karlson, a student at the time, who chose 'The Tale of Tõnn and Manni's Wedding' by his friend Andres Alver as the basis for the lyrics.

HELI JÜRGENSON
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2002, 2004, 2009 & 2014-2025
General conductor of mixed choir 2002 & 2014 and general conductor of mixed and selected choirs 2009
Artistic director of Song Celebrations 2017
Artistic director of Song Celebrations and conductor of selected mixed choir and combined choir 2025

COMBINED CHOIR
571 collectives
19196 singers

RISTO JOOST
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2009-2014, 2019 & 2025
Conductor of combined choir 2025

The Spring

Music by **Ardo Ran Varres** (1974)
Lyrics by **Hasso Krull** (1964)
Conducted by **Heli Jürgenson**

Written especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

According to composer Ardo Ran Varres, he sifted his way through almost 1000 texts to find lyrics for this song, until the idea popped into his head to ask Hasso Krull to write them. 'It was clear to me from the beginning that the song should be about the forest,' Krull once noted. The lyrics were based on a story recorded in Torma parish: lost in the forest, a brother and sister stumble across a spring. Even though a voice from the forest warns them that whoever drinks of its waters will be turned into a deer, the brother cannot resist the temptation due to his great thirst. Hasso Krull: 'The creation story of the deer is not a tragic one, but symbolises a benign relationship with the forest.'

You Are the Only One

Music by **Olav Ehala** (1950)
Lyrics by **Leelo Tungal** (1947)
Conducted by **Risto Joost**

Arranged especially for the 2025 Song Celebration

This song was crafted in honour of the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia. The composer was inspired by Leelo Tungal's lyrics, which themselves had been inspired by love of the fatherland. Tungal recalls that she thought long and hard about what the song's subject matter should be: 'Travelling around Estonia, I noticed how clean and beautiful and distinctive our towns and villages had become. That hadn't just happened, or happened easily, but through love and effort and hard work. Instead of the lyrical pathos of the Age of Awakening and the Singing Revolution, there's now a pathos of deeds, the realisation that Estonia lives inside us and is always changing with us.'

HIRVO SURVA
Conductor of Song Celebrations 1993-2025
General conductor of boys' choir 2002-2011 & 2019 and artistic director of Song Celebrations 1997, 2002 & 2014
Conductor of men's choir 2025

Like a Homing Bee

Music by **Peep Sarapik** (1949–1994)
Lyrics by **Juhan Liiv** (1864–1913)
Conducted by **Hirvo Surva**

This piece was first performed at the 1993 Song Celebration and has been sung at every Song Celebration since 1999.

Written in 1989, 'Like a Homing Bee' has already earned anthem status at the Song Celebrations. It has been performed at all of them since 1999, even when it was not part of the official programme, with choirs taking it upon themselves to sing it. Sadly, its composer did not live to revel in his song's triumph, just as lyricist Juhan Liiv did not enjoy wider recognition during his lifetime. Karl Ristikivi once described Juhan Liiv's poetry thus: 'He is the first to dare to see his country as it is, and still he manages to love it.'

HELI JÜRGENSON
Conductor of Song Celebrations 2002, 2004, 2009 & 2014-2025
General conductor of mixed choir 2002 & 2014 and general conductor of mixed and selected choirs 2009
Artistic director of Song Celebrations 2017
Artistic director of Song Celebrations and conductor of selected mixed choir and combined choir 2025

The Land of My Fathers, the Land That I Love

Music by **Gustav Ernesaks** (1908–1993)
Lyrics by **Lydia Koidula** (1843–1886)
Conducted by **Heli Jürgenson**

This piece was part of the official programme of the 1947 Song Celebration. It was then sung spontaneously at the 1960 event, and has been performed at every Song Celebration since 1965.

'The Land of My Fathers, the Land That I Love' gained the status of the hymn of Estonians' hearts at the 1960 Song Celebration. Choirmaster Kuno Areng once recalled: 'After the official final song, the singers spontaneously broke out into 'The Land of My Fathers'. They sang the first verse without a conductor. During the second verse, Gustav Ernesaks himself rushed to the conductor's podium. The painful message of his music and Lydia Koidula's lyrics poured out of the mouths of thousands of singers into the audience as a powerful protest from the depths of their souls against the communist ideology and the terror that was destroying Estonia.' 'The Land of My Fathers, the Land That I Love' has been the closing song of all Song Celebrations since 1965.