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## Baiba Krogzeme - Mosgorda about Folksongs

**Baiba Krogzeme-Mosgorda:** I am Baiba Krogzeme Mosgorda, and I work in Institute of Folklore and Art. Institute of Folklore and Art includes three departments, and I work in archives of Latvian folklore where I am the leading researcher and I have two fields of interest: one of them is Latvian folksongs and the presentation in pictures in book art, and another one is the so-called folk writing culture traditions to which belong also memory albums which will be exhibited in our national museum.

- [Courtship song](#) (the girl chooses between two young men who want to marry her). Singer: Helēna Sprinģe from Skrunda, Kurzeme (Western part of Latvia). Record is made 1928 on phonograph (wax cylinders)

For Latvian culture folk songs are one of the key symbols because with folklore collections was started, it was realized that Latvians also have fairy tales and proverbs and lots of folklore things, like things in all over the world but Latvian folk songs called also ... like quatrains and the specifics of singing these folk songs are very special for Latvians. Folk songs were used in people's everyday life, represented present culture until the middle of 19th century and present life was all through sung with folk songs because with every happening for work for celebrations, for weddings, funerals, therefore we say that folk songs in some sense are the encyclopedia of Latvian nation and ancient life and of course by the national movement, the national independence movement, which started at the end of the 19th century like elsewhere in Europe, Latvians needed to define some symbols of their nation so some folk songs, have become Latvians define them as a singing nation, as also Estonians and Lithuanians have done, but this singing nation and folk songs have become a key word for Latvian culture, also through all the history as a turning point of history, as the times of establishing an independent state in 1918 which was existing until 1940 when after Russian occupation so then folklore and folk songs became a part of school curricula and become a part of university study programs. And again at the end of 90s Latvia gained independence and then afterward became a part of European Union, folk song festivals and folk song singing is one of the features of how we represent us in the world, in world culture.

- [Song while working and singing collectively in field harvesting](#). Singers: women from Baltinava, Latgale (Eastern part of Latvia). Record is made 1993, video recorder (VHS)

They were passed by singing, as we say by auto word as epics were sung so folk songs were sung from generation to generation. And right now it is also interesting to see that folk songs are still alive, not as traditional singing, because that was pretty complicated and substantial and characteristic for previous generations, but right now folk songs are widely used in literature, in art, in modern music all the time, used in poetry. Therefore also the scholars have this pretty complicated task now to research the folk songs so that they would be still essential and interesting for newer generations. It is a poetry and they are also highly symbolic so folk songs need some explanations. Also how folk songs, can we accept that folk song changes, can we accept that folk song takes new forms, can we accept that they are written in children memory albums and sometimes made fun of, and that the songs which are as we say folk songs, in a wider sense alongside with the ancient folk songs there are also some romances, which are sang from generation to generation and which also have become a part of our national song repertoire.

- [Kumeliņi, kumeliņi, tu man kaunu padarīj](#). Collection of Jānis Rozembergs recorded in 1985 with a MC recorder

We have recordings, the first recordings of folk songs were made in 19, before 1920s and then they were special kinds of machines which could record on a vox tapes some first verse or just to catch the melody of the song. And then of course later the folk song tradition has been regularly taped in let's say the regions of Eastern Latvia...where they are still sung in weddings or on some occasions we started to take videos of folksong singers. At the beginning I was in field work I think 1987, was the first time I was filmed, also videotaped folk song singing.

- [Spring song, when girls come together singing outside the house in nature](#). Singers: Emīlija Ezergaile and Emīlija Celmiņa, Lielvārde, Vidzeme (Central part of Latvia). Record is made 1951, reel-to-reel tape recorder.

As folk songs were first published we saw this folk [song Cabinet](#) which was also the basis of the first big folk song publication which was published from 1895 until 1915 and included 8, 6 volumes, 8 books and more than 200 folksong texts. Since folk songs were first published and they, more and more people turned to literature, let's say culture turned from countryside to the urban culture, and of course schooling and education things took over, so folk songs more or less became as a literature, texts which can be read from books, or selections or also written down by people. And in this sense these memory albums as I call them, they are also called in English could be autograph albums, written by schoolchildren, also include folk song texts, because folk songs texts are published in study books. And interesting enough, that they were published both in times of the first independent state of Latvia in 20s, 30s, and also in Soviet times, Soviets also used some of the national cultures, tried to mix it in Soviet culture and folk songs, of course, as part of the working people culture, was an excellent example to use. The only thing was that in study books of Soviet times folk songs were selected. In this way folk songs in schoolchildren culture came in both through family singing, because each

family sang lullabies and each family has its folksong repertoire. a su propio repertorio de canciones folclóricas.

- [Skaisti dzieda lakstīgala](#). Collection of Vilis Bendorfs in 1988 with tape recorder



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