



Concert of Latvian military orchestras to be held in Ventspils, Latvia

On Thursday, 2 March, at 19.00, Ventspils will host a concert of the National Armed Forces orchestras dedicated to the 104th anniversary of the first military orchestra of the Latvian army. The concert will feature all three Latvian military orchestras – the National Armed Forces Headquarters Orchestra, the Naval Orchestra and the National Guard Orchestra. The artistic director of the concert is Major Andis Karelis, Chief Conductor of the National Armed Forces.

The concert will be opened by the National Armed Forces Headquarters Orchestra conducted by Captain Lieutenant Guntis Kumačevs. The programme includes academic music for wind orchestra and soloists, including works by *Eric Whitacre*, *Scott McAllister* and Marina Vidmonte. Solo performances will be given by Sergeant Major Gunter Gedroics, Corporal Rīčards Lapiņš (clarinet), Senior National Guard Luīze Krasta and Senior National Guard Gita Puikevica-Puikevskā (vocals). The compositions included in the Naval Orchestra programme are by *Goff Richards*, *Gilbert Tinner*, *Otto M. Schwarz*, *John Williams* and *Mark Koos*. Conductor: Captain Aleksandrs Kreišmanis, soloist: Roberts Zonis (clarinet).

The concert will close with the National Guard Orchestra under the direction of Major Andis Karelis, playing original music for wind orchestra by *John Williams* on the theme of freedom, as well as music by *Benny Andersson* from the musical Chess and *Richard Rodgers* from the musical The Sound of Music.

“Latvia’s first independence period has been musically rich in the field of military music since the founding of the Latvian state, so this part of history should be remembered and honoured. With this concert we want to show that culture and music are still a great strength and pride of our country and nation. Today’s Latvian army musicians have changed, preserving traditions and creating new, colourful and modern concert programmes. This will be a great opportunity for the audience to enjoy the contrasts and the diverse sound possibilities of the orchestras,” says Major Andis Karelis.

The National Armed Forces Headquarters Orchestra was founded on 2 February 1992 and is one of the most recognisable units of the Latvian Army. The Orchestra is most often associated with important national festivals and events. The Orchestra combines several functions: ceremonies, parades, demonstrations of defile programmes, orchestral and chamber ensemble concerts. During its existence, the Orchestra has participated in many international and world renowned military music festivals. The Orchestra’s performances have been widely acclaimed by audiences in many foreign countries and also in its native Latvia. The head of the National Armed Forces Headquarters Orchestra is Captain Lieutenant Guntis Kumačevs.

The Naval Orchestra was founded on 6 June 1995. Its main functions include the musical presentation of military ceremonies, professional concert activities and participation in international military and professional wind orchestra festivals.

2009. In 2009, the Naval Orchestra was transformed into a jazz orchestra and renamed the National Armed Forces Big Band. The Big Band has prepared several varied concert programmes, which have been performed together with distinguished conductors of big bands from Latvia’s allied countries and NATO member states from Norway, Switzerland, Germany, Lithuania, Finland, the USA and Canada.

Since 2019, the National Armed Forces Big Band has made its return to the Navy to be fully known as the Naval Orchestra once again, and has regained a more orchestral sound. Last year, the Naval Orchestra visited Washington, USA, to celebrate the centenary of diplomatic cooperation between Latvia and the United States. The head of the Orchestra is Captain Lieutenant Uldis Locenieks.

The National Guard Orchestra was founded on 1 November 2011. It is a separate unit of the National Guard, comprising a wind orchestra, big band, choir “Stars”, various chamber ensembles and folk dance ensemble “Bramāņi”. The task and mission of the National Guard Orchestra is to provide musical performances at National Guard and National Armed Forces ceremonies, to promote the National Guard in society, and to care for the spiritual and cultural well-being of the Latvian people by providing the audience with concerts of high artistic quality, rich in creative challenges and inspirational. During the years of its existence, the National Guard Orchestra has also taken part in various city festivals and public events. The Orchestra has also performed in Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Ukraine, the USA and Canada, and has collaborated with popular performing artists in Latvia, as well as with the 126th Army Band of the Michigan National Guard, the Central Band of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Spanish Operational Combat Support Force Band. The head of the National Guard Orchestra is Major Andis Karelis, the Chief Conductor of the National Armed Forces.

The first military orchestra of the Latvian Army was founded on 6 February 1919, when the commander of the newly formed forces, Ludvigs Bolšteins, issued Order No 11, instructing the 11th Company of Volunteers to form a team of musicians. According to this Order, the first military orchestra of the Latvian Army was established in Liepāja. Its leader was First Lieutenant Pauls Strunge.

Continuing the tradition of the National Armed Forces orchestras, the concert is free of charge. The concert is organised in cooperation with the Ventspils State City Municipality and SIA “Kurzemes filharmonija”.

2023. GADA 2. MARTĀ PLKST. 19.00
VENTSPILS KONCERTZĀLĒ “LATVIJA”

LATVIJAS ARMIJAS PIRMĀ KARA ORĶESTRA
104. GADADIENAI VELTĪTS

MILITĀRO
ORĶESTRU
KONCERTS

PIEDALĀS:
NBS ŠTĀBA ORĶESTRIS
JŪRAS SPĒKU ORĶESTRIS
ZEMESSARDZES ORĶESTRIS

DIRIĢENTI:
MAJORS ANDIS KARELIS
KAPTEINLEITNANTS GUNTIS KUMAČEVŠ
KAPTEINIS ALEKSANDRS KREIŠMANIS

SOLISTI:
LUĪZE KRASTA, GITA PUIKEVICA-PUIKEVSKA (VOKĀLS)
GUNTARS GEDROICS, RĪČARDS LAPIŅŠ, ROBERTS ZONĪS (KLARNETE)

PROGRAMMĀ:
DŽ. VILJAMS, E. VITAKRS, B. ANDERŠONS, S. MAKALISTERS,
R. RODŽERS, O.M. ŠVARCS, M. KOOS, G. RĪČARDSS, M. VIDMONTE

ĪEEJA BEZ MAKSAS