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***The Institutionalization of Traditional Music in Latvia***

There has been a big gap between different kinds of music – institutionally recognized and not – in Latvia. Traditional music – officially stated as the basis for national professional music – in fact existed without any institutionalization until 1987, when the position of folklore expert was established at the Folk Arts Centre (today the National Centre for Culture). Collections and publications of traditional music, from the very beginning in the 1890s until the 1990s, focused on written music almost exclusively with the aim to preserve this material both for the archives and for use by composers. Local music practices lived their own life without any connection with the institutionalized world of music. The Department of Folk Music Instruments was also established at the Latvian Conservatoire (today the Latvian Academy of Music) in 1987, but it had a completely different approach to folk music performance with arranged and stylised folk music on big stages by professional national folk music bands, including opera singers, and dance ensembles, today called folk ballet. The gap between the officially institutionalized ‘folk music’ on the big stages and the ‘traditional music’ performed by folklore ensembles that often came from the villages, turned into a real conflict. This was not only because of the ideological differences concerning traditional music performance but also due to politics, since the ‘old, official folk music’ was associated with the Soviet occupation and the ‘new, authentic traditional music’ with the Singing Revolution. As an indirect result of this fight, the Department of Folk Music Instruments was closed in 1993. After a more than 10-year-long period of silence in traditional music education, the Department of Ethnomusicology was established at the Academy of Music in 2006. Now the so-called ‘folklore movement’ has transformed into a controlled system due to institutionalization. Regular evaluations with juries are organised, and ICH lists are created. The folklore festival plays a central role with the claim that this is how traditions live today.

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