

# Baltic Fund News

Autumn 1996

---

Home
Program Info
Program History
Baltic Links
Courses
Newsletter
Lectures & Events
Multimedia
Encyclopedia
Program Fund
Guest Book

## Latvian Opera Singer to Visit University of Washington



The University of Washington Baltic Studies Program is proud to present a concert by Sonora Kalnina, Lyric Coloratura Soprano at the Latvian National Opera. The concert will take place on Wednesday, November 6, at 7:30 pm in Brechemin Auditorium (Music Building). Admission is \$20.00 (\$10.00 for students). Tickets may be purchased at the University of Washington Department of Scandinavian Studies, Raitt Hall 318 (206) 543-0645.

Sonora Kalnina came to the attention of international audiences in 1992, as the first prize winner at the St. Petersburg Young Vocalists' Competition "Stars of the Baltic Sea," and as the grand prize winner at The Second International Jazeps Medics Vocalists' Competition in Riga.

Kalnina was awarded a grant by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, to study at the Beri Conservatory in Rome with noted teacher Katia Angeloni.

The concert will feature works by Handel, Rossini, Mozart, Medins and other European composers. In Riga as well as in Rome, Kalnina received acclaim for her interpretation of Violetta in Giuseppe Verdi's "La Traviatta," and the audience is certain to be treated to an aria from this opera.

The Baltic Program is particularly grateful to Sonora Kalnina, who agreed to perform also at a Baltic Program Endowment event: A reception for the donors of \$500.00 or more, on Tuesday, November 5. Kalnina has prepared a special concert for this event, featuring Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian folksongs.

---

## Upcoming Events

*All friends of the University of Washington Baltic Studies Program - students, faculty and public alike, are cordially invited to lectures on the University of Washington campus. For further information, call the Department of Scandinavian Studies, (206) 543-0645.*

On November 8, **Rasma Karklins** will speak about "Human Rights and Ethnopolitics in the Baltic States. " The lecture will be at 11:00 are in Thomson Hall Room 125.

Rasma Karklins is professor and chair of political science at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is a long-standing expert on ethnic politics in the former Soviet Union. Her study *Ethnic Relations in the USSR: The Perspective from Below* was recognized with the 1987 Ralph J. Bunche Award of the American Political Science Association "for the best scholarly work in political science exploring the phenomenon of ethnic and cultural pluralism." Her most recent book is *Ethnopolitics and Transition to Democracy: The Collapse of the USSR and Latvia* (Johns Hopkins University Press 1994). In 1994-1996, Professor Karklins was the President of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies.

Also on November 8, **Violeta Kelertas** will give a guest lecture, "Lithuanian Women Writers," at 1:30 pm in Savery Hall 146.

Professor Kelertas, Endowed Chair of Lithuanian Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago, is among the most prominent American experts on Lithuanian literature. She edited the collection of short stories *Come into My Time: Lithuanian Prose Fiction 1970-1990* (University of Illinois Press 1992), and has published many articles on Lithuanian literature, in Lithuanian as well as English language journals. In 1996-1997, she is Director of the Baltic Studies Summer Institute at the University of Illinois. She is the President of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies.

On Friday, January 10, 1997, **Agate Nesaule** will give a lecture in Smith Hall Room 211, at 1:30 pm.

Agate Nesaule, Professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, received a 1996 American Book Award for *A Woman in Amber: Healing the Trauma of War and Exile* (Soho Press 1995, paperback edition to be published this year by Penguin). The book was also selected for the *Choice* list of Outstanding Academic Books of 1996. The well-known American literary critic, Doris Lessing, writes, "This book, about the sufferings of civilians during the Second World War is unlike most war books, because it deals with the long-term effects of war, and this makes it relevant now with more and more people in the world hurt by war. I wholeheartedly recommend it."

## **New Course. SCAND 345 - Baltic Cultures**

In Spring Quarter 1995, thirty four University of Washington students enrolled in a new course: Baltic Cultures, taught by Guntis Smidchens. The course gave a broad introduction to the cultures of the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians. No knowledge of the three languages was required. Students learned about the folksongs and folktales of the three nations and read about the feats of national heroes such as Kalevipoeg, Lacplesis, Mindaugas. They read literary classics by authors such as Biliunas, Kreve, Rainis, Blaumanis, Kross, and others in English translation. The terrible experiences of the Soviet period came to light in short stories by Klidzejs, Aputis and Granauskas. Translated letters sent to America by a Lithuanian family from 1948 to 1966 gave a very personal view of the Lithuanian countryside under Soviet rule. Jokes from the Soviet period showed a sense of sarcastic humor which helped people through difficult times. Poems by Kaplinski and Belsevica revealed the unbending opposition of the Baltic peoples to Soviet rule. Baltic Requiem, a documentary film about the Singing Revolution, showed that the very core of the Baltic cultures is found in songs and singing. Student written evaluations remarked, "Fascinating!" "Interesting and thought provoking," "opened new windows to view the Baltic cultures." We hope that courses such as this one will become a permanent part of the curriculum. With the help of our donors, future generations of students will continue to study the greatest treasures of the Baltic nations - their cultures and languages.

---

## **Textbooks from Vilnius University**

Two members of the Committee for the Baltic Studies Program at the University of Washington, Nanci Andvik and Irene Blekys, returned from Lithuania with heavy suitcases. They carried Lithuanian language textbooks donated to the UW Baltic Studies Program by the Vilnius University Lithuanian language program, and by Lithuanian scholars interested in supporting the Baltic initiative at the University of Washington.

Michael Biggins, the head of the University of Washington's East European library collection, reports growing numbers of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian books as contacts improve with libraries in the Baltic States. These books will be an invaluable resource to students at the University of Washington and elsewhere. We list only a few examples of recent acquisitions:

*Country Profile. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania*(London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1996)

*Via dolorosa: Stalinisma upuru liecibas*, four volumes, edited by A. Lice (Riga: Liesma , 1990). [memoirs about the Soviet concentration camps during the Stalin era, written by political prisoners and deportees].

*Karlis Ulmanis trimda un cietuma: Dokumenti un materiali*, edited by I. Ronis and A. Zvinklis (Riga: Latvijas Vestures Instituta apgads, 1994). [documents and historical materials about the Soviet deportation of Karlis Ulmanis, the last President of Latvia].

*Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Estonia Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment* (U.S.G.P.O., 1996)

*War in the Woods: Estonia's Struggle for Survival, 1944-1956*, by Mart Laar (Washington DC: Compass Press, 1992). [Soda metsas, translated into English by Tiina Ets, with a foreword by Tonu Parming].

*Estiinia-Rossia: Istoriia granitsy i ee problemy*, by Edgar Mattisen (Tallinn: Ilo, 1995). [history of the Russian-Estonian border negotiations].

*Jaunimo dainos. Meiles dainos*. compiled by Nijole Laurinkiene and divide Rarnoskaite, edited by Leonardas Sauka et al. (Vilnius: Lietuvill Literaturos ir tautosakos Institutas, 1995).

*Die litauischen and lettischen Arbeitslieder. Ein Vergleich*, by Magdalene Huelmann (Munchen: Otto Sagner, 1996). [comparative study of Lithuanian and Latvian folksongs of work].

---

## Profile: Four Graduate Students at the University of Washington

Following our profile of three graduate students studying Estonian in the Spring Issue of *Baltic Fund News*, we received requests for more information about Baltic specialists and scholars studying at the University of Washington. The Baltic Studies Program is proud to introduce four more graduate students:

**Jura Avizienis** received her B.A. in Linguistics from the University of Chicago in 1986, her M.A. in Lithuanian Language and Literature from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1996, and is currently studying toward a Ph.D. in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Washington. Her languages of specialization are Lithuanian, Spanish and French. She has translated short stories by several Lithuanian writers, including Ricardas Gavelis, Rimantas Savelis and Birute Baltrusaityte, which were published in the book by Violeta Kelertas *Come into My Time*. Avizienis was administrative assistant and instructor at the 1996 Baltic Studies Summer Institute in Chicago. She is currently teaching Basic Lithuanian at the University of Washington.

**Sean McDonald** graduated from the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1992, with degrees in Linguistics and Germanics. At the University of

California he was introduced to Lithuanian and the importance of its relationship to philology by Professor William Shiply. He is studying toward the Ph.D. in the Germanics Department at the University of Washington. He is interested in Germanic philology and is studying West Germanic compounding and inflection, as well as historical phonology and inflection. He currently teaches German in the Department of Germanics, and is fluent also in Italian. He has been to Lithuania several times, and has become familiar with much of the landscape and culture. He wishes to do comparative research in Indo-European linguistics with Lithuanian as a basis.

**Agita Misane** graduated from the Faculty of History and Philosophy, University of Latvia, in 1987. Since then, she has worked as a Research Associate at the Latvian Academy of Sciences Institute of Philosophy and Sociology. In summer of 1993, she received a grant to study at the Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture in Oslo, Norway, and in 1994-1995 she was Teacher-Fellow in Latvian at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London. Misane is working toward an M.A. degree in the Department of Scandinavian Studies. Her research interests are the religions and mythologies of the Northeast Baltic area. In October of 1996, Misane represented the University of Washington in a conference on Myth and Nationhood, held at the University of London. She presented the paper, "National Myth in the History of Ideas in Latvia: A View from Religious Studies."

**Steve Grosse** graduated from South Dakota State University in 1992 with a B.A. in German Landuate, a B.S. in Electronic Engineering and minors in History and Russian Language. He spent three years living in St. Petersburg, Russia. He studied for eight months at the State Technical University of St. Petersburg, and worked at the United States Consulate General in St. Petersburg, in Security and Consular Affairs/Antifraud. During that time, he travelled extensively to the Baltic States and became interested in the history of the area. He returned to the USA this September and began graduate training at the Jackson School of International Studies. He is planning to study 20th century Baltic history, in particular the re-Sovietization in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Germanic influences on the region, and Riga in particular, are also of interest to him. He hopes to learn Latvian in order to do research in Riga in the future.

---

## **Ballroom Dance Benefit for the Baltic Program**

On August 12, 1996 at the Latvian Community Center, Seattlites were treated to a performance of ballroom dance by Dr. Anita Balodis and Peter Liatos. Balodis and Liatos have won numerous awards at American ballroom dance competitions, including the national amateur ballroom dance competition held in Seattle this summer. They specialize in Latin dance, and treated their audience to several award winning performances of steamily romantic steps.

Liatos and Balodis refused to accept an honorarium, and the proceeds from the event - over \$1000.00 - were donated to the UW Baltic Studies Program.

[Top of Page](#)

---

Send comments or questions to: [uwscand@u.washington.edu](mailto:uwscand@u.washington.edu)