

**Wanted: Country Music in Russia and the  
Ex-USSR  
by Andrei Gorbatov**

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**American country music increasing in popularity in Russia**

Carlsbad, Ca., April 22, 1993 - Even though Levi's 501 jeans and McDonald's cheeseburgers remain some of Russia's favorite imports from the U.S., country music is finding its way into the former Soviet Union's (achy-breaky) hearts.

NAMM's President Larry Linkin was recently paid a visit at NAMM's Carlsbad headquarters by Andrei Gorbatov during his visit to the United States. Gorbatov, an international author of many articles on country and bluegrass music, is touring to promote his new book: *Wanted: Country Music in Russia and the Former USSR*, scheduled to be released in September of 1993. During his visit, Gorbatov said that American country music is growing in popularity in his homeland.

Gorbatov's book contains numerous photographs, reviews of country music festivals in Russia and Eastern Europe and humorous anecdotes about country stars such as Kris Kristofferson, Ricky Skaggs and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. Also included are listings of addresses for Russian country band contacts, international exchanges and country music management companies.

The author has also produced a 30-minute video documentary on U.S. country music in the former Soviet Union. He is well-known to country and bluegrass amateur musicians due to his numerous prior publications in magazines in Europe, Russia and the United States.

*(Taken from the NAMM Press Release of June 1993)*



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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER, ALLA GORBATOVA, A CHILDREN'S PIANO TEACHER, THE INSPIRATION OF MY LIFE AND WHO GAVE ME THE GIFT OF A LOVE OF MUSIC



## THE HEART OF RUSSIAN COUNTRY

What is Russian-American country music like, and how did it develop? Well, first of all it is important to realize that until the mid-1980s country music was a distant, exotic sound to which few Soviet citizens had any exposure at all. What we did have was our own tradition of ancient and honorable bards who united around their favorite guitars, softly singing of campfires, mountains and brigandines. Then there was the young and angry generation of rockers screaming with hoarse or piercing, high-decibel voices about social evils, risking their vocal cords, electric guitar strings and social standing. Pop exploited themes of multi-colored roses and chrysanthemums, and was interested only in money. Jazz was a thing in itself, not very ac-

cessible to the general public, and not at all conducive to lyrics. Only young musicians with violins, banjos, acoustic guitars, double-bass, harmonicas and Dobros, and with souls of post-folklorists ("folkniks") were in-souciant and funny. Rockers sent them to bards, and bards sent them somewhere very far away.

Nevertheless, the sounds and culture of American country music have quietly seeped into the former USSR: four international country music festivals -- Farmer-89, -90 -91 and 92 -- have already been organized, and the Moscow Country Club now unites more than twenty country and bluegrass groups from all over Russia.

The process of country music development in Russia is still in

its early stages, emulating the way in which Russian rock musicians began by playing Beatles songs; only later did they begin to synthesize their own, unique style. Likewise, Russian country musicians are now mainly performing classic country songs. But there do exist some bands -- the brightest and most original groups -- who already have begun to write their

own lyrics (in English) and their own music. How can it be defined? Russian country? Folk music? I think it's a new direction in music.

**Andrei Gorbatov "Looking for Russian Country Music"**

P.S. I shall be happy if my book becomes the hero of this Woody Guthrie song:

*Allegretto*  
*Refrain*

I'm gon-na wrap my self in pa-per,  
I'm gon-na daub my self with glue, stick some stamps on

*top of my head: I'm gon-na mail my self to you!*  
*Verses*

I'm a-gon-na tie me up in a red string,  
I'm gon-na tie blue rib-bons, too. I'm a-gon-na climb up  
in my mail box: I'm gon-na mail my self to you!

## PSALM 150

**1. PRAISE YE THE LORD. PRAISE GOD IN HIS SANCTUARY:**

**PRAISE HIM IN THE FIRMAMENT OF HIS POWER.**

**2. PRAISE HIM FOR HIS MIGHTY ACTS: PRAISE HIM ACCORDING**

**TO HIS EXCELLENT GREATNESS.**

**3. PRAISE HIM WITH THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET: PRAISE**

**HIM WITH THE PSALTERY AND HARP.**

**4. PRAISE HIM WITH THE TIMBREL AND DANCE: PRAISE HIM**

**WITH STRINGED INSTRUMENTS AND ORGANS.**

**5. PRAISE HIM UPON THE LOUD CYMBALS: PRAISE HIM UPON**

**THE HIGH SOUNDING CYMBALS.**

**6. LET EVERY THING THAT HATH BREATH PRAISE THE LORD.**

**PRAISE YE THE LORD.**

## BLUEGRASS IS ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN SOUTHERN GERMANY

from *British Bluegrass News*,  
August 1992

by *Mike Pryor*

During June, I had the pleasure of going to a bluegrass festival near Stuttgart which was organized by Karl-Heinz Siber, who also runs the BJCF club in Guglingen. The festival is now in its seventh year and always has an international flavor. This year was no exception, with bands from the USA (Shady Mix), Italy (Hot Stuff), Germany (Helmut & the Hillbillies) and the UK (Southern Exposure).

There was one person I met in Guglingen who has a very special problem -- Andrey Gorbatoev from Moscow, who is a promoter, journalist and enthusiast, and who organizes a festival in March each year. He told me that there are over 50 groups playing bluegrass and country music throughout the Commonwealth. A Russian

journalist recently interviewed Andrey about the history of bluegrass and country music in the CIS, and that article is reproduced below.

Although there are now shops in Moscow selling records, tapes and equipment, the cost is enormous and ideally needs to be made in US dollars. This is because of the restriction that rubles cannot be taken out of the country. He would really appreciate help from us, to be able to buy instruments, equipment and recorded music for the young players and members of the Russian Country & Bluegrass Club. Andrey asked me to publish his plea for help, so if anyone would like to give support to bluegrass music in the CIS, please write myself and we'll give you Andrey's details.

Our address: 12 Audley Grove,  
Bath, Avon, BA13BS, England.

## THE SMELL OF BLUEGRASS ON THE ASPHALT OF POP MUSIC

*Bluegrass is a genre of American country music. The style was invented by Bill Monroe, based on the folk music of the rural, white population of America at the end of the 1920s.*

**(BLUEGRASS - ALSO ORIGINAL NAME OF A FLOWER FROM APPALACHIA)**

I had no idea that someday I would have an opportunity to meet a music critic. Of course, everyone loves music, but the same cannot be said about music critiquing. Nowadays there are as many styles, it seems, as people. Nevertheless, it is sometimes so difficult to find something that will speak to your soul in this boundless world of music. But one day I happened to read in my favorite newspaper, *Moscovsky Komsomolts*, about Farmer, a festival of country and folk music. I decided to visit it just out of curiosity. Can you imagine my impressions? I myself did not expect that I would like it. There were a lot of groups. And they were not all alike. Most of all I was impressed by Kukuruz; *Svoya Igra*, featuring a brilliant violinist, Tamara Sidorova; *Yabloko*, with Marina Kapuro singing; and the extraordinary *Nadezhda Babkina*, with her "Russian Song." All of this was so amazing, it differed so much from what I had been used to listening to, that I wanted to learn more about this style.

So what is country music? Of course, I know that it came from America, but it is so hard to imagine a cowboy sitting near the house and playing an old banjo or guitar. What does it really look like?

"You know, in general it is really so," answers Andrey Gorbatoev with a smile. Andrey is the organizer of the Farmer Festival in Russia, and one of the first organizers of this movement here.

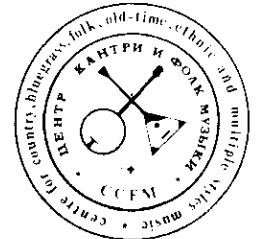
"Speaking seriously, country is an original and independent style, not just an antecedent of rock."

"We are living in a time when everyone can be called a preacher. Are you a preacher of country music in the USSR?"

"I'm not sure that I can be called a preacher, but country musicians are really striving for communion with God. In some American churches you can hear country songs. If you've watched Jimmy Swaggert's programs on TV, you've heard his country songs. All this is part of American culture, well known all over the world. But Russians are just starting to learn about it."

"So, what is 'Great Country'?"

"It is not difficult to understand. Over the past three hundred years people from different countries have emigrated to America. Each nation brought along its own culture and its own music -- Scottish ballads and French chansons,



German songs and Slavic melodies, Italian canzones and Spanish cantatas. Along with such different roots as African blues and bittersweet Jewish melodies, these various influences combined and interlaced to yield an original and brilliant style. American country music, then, can be seen as a kind of musical melting pot of world civilization."

"So it's like the Americans themselves. As for the music, is it just a reflection of the people?"

"That's right. Just as it is for us, where everything taking place in Soviet society is reflected in our music. Although we no longer have Vertinski or Shalyapin, today we have the talent of Gradskiy and the intellect and philosophy of Boris Grebenshchikov. It's a great pity that Khvorostovskiy, Rostropovich and many other talented musicians work outside of our country. But perhaps that is their fate."

"Andrey, you place rock and classic musicians in the same class. Can we really compare them?"

"Without a doubt. I'm sure that neither Vishnevskaya nor Spivakov would be offended by this comparison, because there are musicians of a very high caliber even among rock musicians."

"Well, OK, I know that you are the author of more than 70 articles about rock music. But tell me about country music and the Farmer festival."

"I began to study rock music in 1987. I received my diploma in the history of the development of rock music in Sverdlovsk [Yekaterinburg], where at the end of the '70s rock began its rapid development in the Soviet Union. For instance, such groups as Nautilus Pompilius, Urfin Juice and Agatha Christie

were formed there. It was really very impressive. So, I decided to learn about "Sverdlovskii Rock." Perhaps because I was born there -- a damned, though not really guilty city, where the Bolsheviks murdered the tsar and his family. But that's another story.... I received my diploma on this topic [rock music] at the university, and decided to close the book on this topic for myself."

"Did you feel sorry when you were through?"

"Of course I felt sorry, because it was already so close to my heart."

"And then country music won your heart, didn't it?"

"It was not necessary for this music to win me over. I had always loved this style."

"Really? From early childhood?"

"Well, I'll tell you my 'love story.' It happened during the Period of Stagnation [under Brezhnev] when, because of Jimmy Carter, we heard the word 'disarmament.' Our cultural contacts with the USA became closer. The central cities felt it more, of course. Americans started to visit our country. The 'tsar' of country music, Roy Clark, came to Moscow in 1976 with his group. After that, many other famous country groups came to the USSR. The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band came to Moscow in 1978. Pro-Soviet Dean Reed also sang some American songs. By the way, the Communist Pete Seger, folk singer and banjo player, loved visiting Moscow from the first time he arrived here in 1956 to sing at the Festival of Youth. He also gave several concerts during the Period of Stagnation. And in the '80s I heard Travellers and Swimmers, country bands from Czechoslovakia. I was lucky enough to have met all of them.

But Roy Clark impressed me most of all. He influenced me greatly. During his visit in 1989 I told him that he had made me love country music."

"What happened then?"

"I began to enlarge my knowledge. I tried to get tapes and information, which were almost inaccessible in the USSR, and learned to play the guitar and the four-string banjo, called 'claw hammer' or 'old banjo' in the U.S. I regret that I never learned to play the classical five-string banjo, but I had to stop playing because of my urge towards journalism. In 1985 I met John Denver, a brilliant country player. In 1987 I saw Kris Kristofferson play in Moscow. That was unforgettable! Oh, and I sang in a country group while still at the university. We shared a rehearsal room on a rotating basis with Nautilus Pompilius, the most popular rock group at the end of the '80s. I can even boast that I was one of the first people to hear their famous song 'Goodbye, America,' which was composed by my friend Dmitry Oumetsky. Incidentally, the real name of the composition is 'Goodbye, Letter'; 'America' is used here not in the geographic sense, but as a metaphor. This song is a real masterpiece and, though its style is far from country music, I thought it would be interesting to try to give it a newgrass arrangement. However, I've never had the courage to propose it to the musicians."

"It seems that you never parted with country music. Is it a kind of religion for you?"

"Maybe. This 'religion,' if you will, has its own idols and temples. The center of it is an American town called Nashville, in the state of Tennessee. During the '40s an original style, bluegrass, became independent

[though it wasn't until the '50s that it was named and recognized as a unique form]. Its centers are in Owensboro and Petersburg, Kentucky. The 'father' of bluegrass is Bill Monroe, a mandolin player and leader of the group The Blue Grass Boys. This new 'religion' was joined by thousands of Americans and later was taken up in Europe and all over the world."

"What are the differences between country and bluegrass?"

"Country music is a very wide phenomenon. Bluegrass is a specific trend, nearer to the folk music of America. 'Nashville country' primarily uses electric instruments and a rhythm section. Sometimes, it seems to me to be too sweet. Bluegrass is an acoustic music, closer to folk; its instruments are contrabass, banjo, guitar, mandolin, often violin, and sometimes harmonica and Dobro. It's real music! I hope Russia will have an opportunity to hear the famous bluegrass groups."

"But why don't the stars of country music want to visit us?"

"First of all, because our society doesn't know them. We were brought up on other songs: Young Pioneer songs, dull Communist hymns, fast songs about heroic deeds, and pop music -- as a rule, feeble and untalented. Most of our listeners have absolutely no taste. Nobody came to listen to Bob Dylan in Leningrad [St. Petersburg] in 1989; the hall was empty when Paul Simon played Moscow in 1990. The other reasons are our infamous Russian 'service' and the political situation in the country, which are even more important."

"I'm sure you have visited various country festivals. What have you found that was really impressive?"

"I often visit Estonia. An international festival takes place

there every year. Groups from other part of the world usually come -- even from Finland. I was really impressed by the Finnish group Lake Country Boys. Later, I was lucky enough to visit a family in Finland, Borje Niculund, a musician in the band Country Life, and his wife, the Danish country singer Tina Silvest. They really love, and moreover play, country music. They are farmers. Can you imagine this?"

"It would seem that Finland would be far from any American influences. Is country music so popular among the Finns?"

"Oh, yes! They have a lot of professional country groups, and they also hold international festivals in, for example, Helsinki and Turku. I was also impressed by Czechoslovakia. Every year I visit the Porta festival there. This country has the largest number of country groups of any in Europe. I also like to visit a festival in Poland. Musicians from all over Europe gather there."

"Are there any other festivals of country music in Russia besides Farmer?"

"It is a great pity, but we are far behind Europe in this field. They have hundreds of groups and dozens of festivals. But in all of the ex-USSR only the Baltic republics of Estonia and Lithuania have interesting country groups. I'm in contact with almost all of the musicians in the Baltics and, in my opinion, the country singer Virgis Stakenas and the group Jonis

from Shauliai are the most promising and interesting revelations of the last few years."

"Can you tell us about the best of the Russian country groups?"

"You know, I've been telling you a lot about professionals, but we have many young country groups. They are very talented and original: Country-bandists, Country Saloon, Ladushki and many others. My personal favorite is Vesolyi Dilizhans (Merry Stagecoach) from Obninsk. They are only teenagers, but they are working so hard to become professionals. As for me, I'm always trying to help musicians. I try to organize tours for them, and I write a lot about their life and work. I have a dream, to write a book about Russian country music. In general, I am fond of many different kinds of music. Somebody once said that there could be no bad music, just as there could be no really ugly woman. I think that everyone must simply have his own music..."

"I'm beginning to understand something. Now I see that country music is not only a cowboy with a banjo, but a lifestyle, a way of thinking, maybe even a philosophy. For me, it is a great pity that I didn't ask my school friends about this music when I visited America last year. And the only "cowboys" I saw were not real, but just models in advertising photos. After this talk with Andrey, I started to listen to country music. It can really help you to stay happy and lighthearted."

## WE ARE ALL A PRODUCT OF OUR CHILDHOOD

The '80s generation, to which I belong (for my views were formed then), was much cheated by a lack of information, the Brezhnev regime and the Afghan War. We lacked bright impressions and many other things. In our teens we were interested in music, but in the '70s rock could hardly be heard in the Soviet Union. At about the age of 12, I heard something of the Beatles -- I don't remember the song exactly, though I liked it greatly. The Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd and Kiss didn't touch me much. I was 14 when my uncle, a graduate of the Law College, a young "Pinkerton" and a music fan, brought home a confiscated tape recorder with tapes. I couldn't even have dreamed of such a miracle! Once, I dared to listen to the tape -- in spite of my uncle's strict prohibition. It was the rock opera "Jesus Christ

Superstar," by Lloyd-Webber and Tim Rice. It made me start learning English seriously, and to listen to more music. I knew nothing then of country music. Neither my friends nor I had heard anything of the Newport Festival in 1965. We knew nothing about historic Woodstock. We associated nothing with such names as Woody Guthrie, Joan Baez, Pete Seger or Bill Monroe. Only Elvis Presley was lucky enough to be heard by us, the Soviet teenagers of the '70s.

To that time I refer one more of my discoveries. Once (about 1975) I was looking through some old records, brought by my school friend from his parents' collection. I found nothing interesting until I laid my hands on a very old, thick and hard-as-a-rock record produced by the Aprelevka Record Factory (near Moscow). It contained songs of



Roslin-town, Kentucky. Bill Monroe's birthplace

**SMALL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF EX-SOVIET COUNTRY, FOLK BAND (BY ANDREY GORBATOV)**

A-FOND BAND	(ROOSNA ALLIKU ESTLAND)	bluegrass, Estonian country
ACOUSTIC COUNTRY BAND	(IVANOVO)	trad bg
ADO	(MOSCOW)	Russian folk
ANDERSON, PETE	(RIGA)	rock-n-roll & American folk
APPALACHIAN PATH	(MOSCOW)	bluegrass
APELSIN	(TALLINN)	Estonian country
APPLE (YABLOKO) AND MARINA KAPURO	(ST. PETERSBURG)	Russian folklore & country
ASSORTI	(MOSCOW)	Russian folk
BABKINA, NADEZHDA AND RUSSIAN SONG	(MOSCOW)	Russian pop-folk
BABRAVICHUS, SIMAS BAND RUNOS	(VILNIUS)	Lithuanian country folk
BEERGRASS	(TALLINN)	trad bg & Estonian country
BLACK CURRENT BLOSSOM DANCE BAND	(TALLINN)	honky tonk dance & Estonian folk dance
BICHEVSKAYA, ZHANNA	(MOSCOW)	Russian Joan Baez (Russian & American folk)
COUNTRY COUNT BAND	(MOSCOW)	trad Nashville & bg
COUNTRY SALOON	(NIZHNY NOVGORODI)	blue- & newgrass
COUNTRY-BANDISTS	(SMOLENSK)	bluegrass & country
DEFICIT	(VILNIUS)	Lithuanian country folk
DEREVIANNŌE KOLESŌ ("HOLZRAD")	(MOSCOW)	Russian folk rock
ELDORADO	(MOSCOW)	Russian & Canadian Cajun
FINE STREET	(ST. PETERSBURG)	blue- & newgrass
FLOKTUS & LEONID AGRANOVICH	(MOSCOW)	Russian folk
FOLK OPERA	(MOSCOW)	Russian folklore
GLADKOV, GRIGORY	(MOSCOW)	children's music
GRAND FUNS	(MOSCOW)	Russian folk rock
JONIS	(SHIAULIAI, LITHUANIA)	Lithuanian country
JAZZ-BALALAIKA	(MOSCOW)	new age/new acoustic & Russian folk
JUST WHAT YOU NEED & IRA GUSHINA	(MOSCOW)	world music
JUSTAMENT	(TARTU, ESTLAND)	Estonian country & bg
JUSTIN, JULIA & CHERRY BERRY BAND	(RIGA)	country, bluegrass, gospel
KANAPŪRTS	(TALLINN)	Estonian country & bg
KAPELL & ANDRES LOIGOM	(TALLINN)	Estonian folk & country
KAZUS (THE CASE)	(KOMSOMOLSK-ON-AMUR)	country & bg
KILLEP COUNTRY BAND	(TARTU, ESTLAND)	Estonian country
KIND TALE-TELLERS	(MOSCOW)	Russian folk
KLOVA, ALGIS AND KIKILIS	(VILNIUS)	Lithuanian country & folk
KONTOR	(TALLINN)	Estland country rock
KRAZY MAN KRAZY	(MOSCOW)	Rockabilly
KUZHALIEV, KONSTANTIN	(MOSCOW)	world music
KUKERPILLID	(TALLINN)	Estonian country & folk
KUKURUZA - (CORN)	(MOSCOW)	country, blue- & newgrass, Russian country
KULDNE TRIO (GOLD TRIO)	(TALLINN)	Estland's Estonian folk
LADUSHKI	(KHABAROVSK)	bg & country
LEAGUE OF BLUES	(MOSCOW)	Blues gospel
LIMONADE JOE	(MOSCOW)	Nashville country & pop-rock
LIMPOPO	(MOSCOW)	comedy, musical jokes
LOZA, YURI	(MOSCOW)	country rock
MARDER, ANDY	(RIGA, NOW: USA)	blues
MERRY STAGECOACH	(OBNINSK)	bluegrass
MISTER TWISTER	(MOSCOW)	bluegrass & rockabilly
NAZAROVYS, VLADIMIR FOLK ENSEMBLE	(MOSCOW)	world music
ORNAMENTS	(RIGA)	Latvian country folk
OWN PLAY AND TAMARA SIDOROVA	(MOSCOW)	world music
PESNYARY	(MINSK, BELARUS)	Belorussian folk
POKROVSKY ENSEMBLE	(MOSCOW)	Russian folk
RED GRASS BAND & LARISSA GRIGORIEVA	(MOSCOW)	country, bg & Russian folk
RED RIVER VALLEY BOYS	(MOSCOW)	trad bg
REDISKA	(MOSCOW)	Russian folk
ROCK-HOTEL	(TALLINN)	Estland country rock
ROMO GIZIO TRIO	(VILNIUS)	Lithuanian country & folk
ROSENFELD, YURI	(TALLINN NOW FINLAND)	blues
SACVOUAGE ("SAC-VOYAGE")	(YEKATERINBURG)	bluegrass & country
SILVER ROUBLE BAND	(MOSCOW)	blues
STAKENAS, VIRGIS	(SIAULIAI, LITHUANIA)	Lithuanian country folk, showman
STARAYA GWARDIYA ("OLD GUARD")	(MOSCOW)	rock & roll
THE LAST CHANCE	(MOSCOW)	joke Russian music
TELEFON DOVERIYA	(MOSCOW)	country & bg
TUTTI FRUTTI	(CHEREPOVETS)	bluegrass & country
VARIANT	(SOLIKAMSK)	bluegrass & country
VARVUKE	(TALLINN)	Estonian country
VIENKIEMIS	(VILNIUS)	Lithuanian country & folk
VRITE, SILVIA AND IVO LINNA	(TALLINN)	white & negro blues
WALLA VANEM	(TALLINN)	Estonian country
T-T WEEKEND BAND AND EINARS VITOLS	(RIGA, LATVIA)	trad r&r COUNTRY
WESTERN S (STYLE/SIBERIAN)	(OMSK)	bg & country
YAT	(MOSCOW)	Russian folk
YEMELYA	(PAVLODAR)	Cossack russian folklore
X-ROADS	(MOSCOW)	Blues
ZEWDRUOLS	(AKMIANE, LITHUANIA)	Lithuanian country folk

the world. There were sambas, rumbas and much more. I was attracted by the last song on the disk. It was a salty, nostalgic blues sung in the basso profundo of Tennessee Ernie Ford (as the inscription read). Penned by Merle Travis, and entitled "16 Tons," it was a miner's song:

*Now, some people say a man's  
made out of mud,  
But a poor man's made out of  
muscle and blood,  
Muscle and blood, skin and  
bones,  
A mind that's weak, and a  
back that's strong,  
You load 16 tons and what do  
you get?  
Another day older and deeper  
in debt.  
Saint Peter, don't you call me,  
'cause I can't go,*

*I owe my soul to the company  
store.*

The peculiar thing was that the song was known by the Soviet people. I had heard a Russian variant of it to the same melody: "16 tons -- a dangerous cargo/ And our plane is going to bomb the Soviet Union." So, the folklore of the Russians had interpreted the song in an anti-Soviet way -- a very bad Uncle Sam, killing the Vietnamese people in the war, was going to bomb the socialist Motherland -- and the thought of it made us suffer greatly. It was a real blues song! "16 Tons" was the first song that didn't resemble any rock song, to my mind. And then, I got to know the real contents of the song, having translated it into Russian.

## "UNCLE OAKIE" IN MOSCOW

Pete Seger, one of the fathers of American folk music, influenced country music a great deal. The son of a professor of music history, Charles Seger, Pete had grown up with the folklore of the United States. Woody Guthrie, a grandfather of American folk music, became his spiritual godfather.

It is remarkable that Pete Seger also greatly influenced the Soviet audience, including the intelligentsia of the '60s under the Khrushchev regime as well as the youth of the '70s and '80s.

Music expert Giorgi Shneerson, in his book "The American Song" (Moscow, 1977), wrote: "I often recall Pete Seger's concerts in the Tchaikovsky Hall, the concert hall of Moscow University, and vividly remember his hootenannies." I never saw Pete Seger ("Uncle Oakie" to his friends and fans) perform live, because he stopped coming to Moscow in the '70s. But I was lucky to find in Soviet Music magazine's supplement No. 5, 1953 (during Stalin's rule!), the notes of "If I Had A Hammer" to Alfred Hase's lyrics, arranged for a voice and piano by Eugene Svetlanov with translation into Russian by S. Bolotin.

The first time Pete Seger came to Moscow was in the summer of 1957. He came to take part in the International Youth Festival. Before him, just after WWII and during Stalin's time, Paul Robeson had visited the Soviet Union several times. He was made out by Soviet propaganda to be a "big friend of the Soviet Union" and to be "just like a common



Soviet citizen." Unlike Paul Robeson, though, Pete Seger never became Soviet, though he was an American Communist. But these two notions are not synonyms, as it has lately become apparent. At any rate, in 1957 Muscovites saw a five-string banjo for the very first time.

Pete Seger's second visit to the USSR came about in the mid-'60s. Records by his group, The Weavers, appeared in Moscow at that time, too. He was most warmly welcomed by the students. My friend's father, a passionate music fan, still remembers Pete Seger's concerts.

My musician friends in Czechoslovakia told me that Pete Seger's visit to Prague in 1964 gave impetus to country and bluegrass music development in that country. There was some effect here, too, though it is not easy to "shake and wake" this country. Still, it is possible and maybe even fruitful. In this book, then, I will speak about such impetuses to promote folk and country music in Russia and the USSR.



## "BACK IN THE USSR"

The world's interest in the 15 republics of the land called the Soviet Union has never waned. Why should American singer Woody Guthrie have written a song about the famous woman Soviet sniper, Lyudmila Pavlichenko, who shot more than 300 fascists? He did it because of the impression the brave lady made on him during her visit to the United States. What made Pete Seger spend his time on a long article about American folk music especially for the Soviet magazine *Musical Life* (No. 9, May 1970), and the vast amount of material he wrote in "Pop Music in the Flood," in which he gave brilliant analyses of musical styles and trends (*Soviet Music*, No. 2, 1972)?

Perhaps it is not so surprising, then, that the Beatles gave a nod to the Soviet Union as well when, in 1968, they composed the brilliant "Back in the USSR." It is ideal as a whole -- '60s lyrics and music. Why should the Beatles have dropped mentally into the USSR?

There is a story here: In 1968, on their way back from a tour of India and Japan, the Beatles spent about three hours in Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport. The word got out, but their fans were unable to break through the "locked borders." The Soviet mass

media, however, turned out to be quite indifferent to the Beatles' presence on Russian soil. But the Beatles themselves paid great attention to the incident. And in time, so did Russia. The song has been popular in the USSR (now former) for more than 25 years now.

In 1990 Paul McCartney recorded an exclusive-for-Russia LP, which quickly became a rarity for Russians and a collector's item in the West as Soviet black marketeers snapped up the album to sell for hard currency. Also at that time, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* newspaper organized a direct telephone line for Paul to answer his fans' questions. The words of the famous song may come true some time, and the ex-Beatles may come to the ex-USSR, but unfortunately without John Lennon....

Incidentally, Yoko Ono visited Moscow in 1989 to take part in the World Forum of Science and Culture.



## STRINGBAND



The Canadian country folk group Stringband performed in Moscow in the fall of 1983. Their concerts weren't a stunning event for the Moscow audience, but the Canadian musicians' performances became one more bridge between Eastern and Western folk culture. The audience was even given posters with the musicians' photos and emblazoned with the slogan "Thoroughly Canadian." The band also toured to Tallinn, Minsk, Riga and Kishinev. Bob Bossin and Mary-Lynn Hammond based their repertoire mainly on folk melodies popular in Canada, but there were also a number of political protest songs about the threat of nuclear weapons, war, winged rockets that could destroy the world and so forth. They sang, as far as I remember, a song called "Speaking Atom." Another composition was called "What Can Woman Do." It was written by Mary-Lynn after protest demonstrations against some ominous

government actions. Multi-instrumentalist Bossin composed a song, "Tugboat," about the hard work of Canadian sailors. By the time the concert ended, I was left with the impression of having been at one of the notorious "festivals of political songs," which were very popular during the Brezhnev and Andropov years. I think this was the main reason for having allowed these Canadian musicians to tour behind the Iron Curtain. It should be noted, however, that the Stringband performed many truly good compositions -- Canadian dance melodies, honky tonk tunes and Cajun songs. Fiddler Chris Kelvin's passages were full of energy and inspiration, true *chef d'oeuvre*s. For a few hours a miracle happened. We felt as though we really were in the Wild West, because it was true country music. Its drive entered the hearts of the fans. They weren't very numerous, but their love of country music united and warmed them. It was terrific!

Where are they now, this group called Stringband? What are they singing about today? Does the group exist at all? Only the trans-Atlantic wind knows the answer. Pity, but I never took down the addresses of these interesting and masterful musicians!

## SIMPLY A VALUABLE PRESENT

It is hard to learn now who worked the miracle and broke the Soviet bureaucratic mechanism in 1978, but it was then that the American group, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, brought the wind of change to the Soviet Union. Soviet national television shot part of the group's concert, and the whole Union was able to watch the extravagant and skillful country show of Jeff Hanna, Jimmy Fadden, Jimmy Ibbotson and John Macwayne on TV. Roy Clark's 1976 concerts were not broadcast, so a massive injection of country music got to the Soviet people for the first time through the filmed concerts of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band.

A decade passed, and on June 28-30, 1989, fortune gave me a chance to meet the musicians personally and to interpret for them in Moscow. This time, they brought the genius of fiddler Marc O'Connor along with them. And this time, both the Green Theater in Gorky Park and the Moscow Variety Theater were overflowing with fans!

The musicians and I became such close friends that I scratched my head trying to think of the perfect farewell present for them. Finally, it occurred to me that I had a full military outfit in my wardrobe. In that uniform I had served my two-years' military duty. I gave this "valuable" present to the group's manager, Marc Blasener (a fan not only of his band, but of new-wave demigod Elvis Costello), and noticed that the Americans could not hide their joy. I saw them moved sincerely by a present not from a shop, but from the blood, sweat and tears of a Soviet soldier. In October of '92 I told the story to the country music star Ricky Scaggs and his wife Sharon. She exclaimed, "Oh, I've seen that uniform in Marc's house in Denver!" It's true, the circle of country musicians is tight. And unbroken. "Will The Circle Be Unbroken!"



THE NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND

DE  
**Chuck Morris**  
 Entertainment  
 1333190-0297



## TWO SINGERS -- INDIVISIBLE MUSIC

In the middle of June, 1989 the famous American bard Paul Simon made up his mind to visit Moscow, Russia. He fulfilled his wish, but without his old sidekick Art Garfunkel. Instead, he brought Miriam Makeba and a big choir of black singers who performed spirituals and gospels. The whole company gave only two concerts in the Green Theater of Gorky Park. The audience was big, though some seats were empty it is true. There were a lot of English-speaking foreigners -- tourists and people working in Russia on contracts -- students both Russian and foreign, people from embassies, black people and white.... It was twilight over the stage, getting darker every minute. Simon was the perfect host, and every artist performed to his utmost. But the hit of the concert was the song "El Condor Pasa." When the song was announced the audience began to light matches and cigarette lighters, so that the sky was lit by thousands of points of light. It is incredible that in the past our press had been so eager to beg such people as Tom Anders or Sandra for an interview, but this time paid no attention to such a great music legend as Paul Simon. No one shot him with a video camera, no interviews were published and he received no radio airplay. I'm still not sure if there are any Simon and Garfunkel tapes at our radio stations.

The night fires at the Paul Simon concert made me think of Kris Kristofferson's concert in the summer of '87 at Luzhniki Sports Palace. Shortly before that event, he had played a role in the allegedly anti-Soviet film "America." Because of this, our government was unwilling to accept him here. Nevertheless, he was able to somehow overcome official resistance and to give a concert at Luzhniki. Until then, Kristofferson had been known in Russia only as an actor. His films -- "Convoy" and "Flashpoint," for example -- had found their way to Russian movie screens and become quite popular. But in Moscow Kristofferson showed another of his many talents, that of a country music artist. There were plenty of fans -- and fires -- at his concert, not only young people, but middle-aged spectators as well. This is not so very surprising, after all, for country music can be listened to by a wider audience than rock music, jazz or even pop. Of course, our journalists tortured Kristofferson with questions about "America." He tried hard to convince them that the film wasn't anti-Soviet at all, but he failed, judging by articles that subsequently appeared in Komsomolskaya Pravda and other then-Bolshevik publications. But let's put the Soviet press aside, for the concert was great indeed!



Paul Simon's band,  
Paul Simon,  
Kris Kristofferson with  
Alexander Gradsky and  
Andrei Makarevich



## THE RUSSIAN TIMES, THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'



*Before he is called a man?*

*How many seas must the  
white dove sail,*

*Before she sleeps in the sand?*

*How many times must the  
cannonball fly,*

*Before they're forever banned?*

*The answer, my friend, is  
blowin' in the wind.*

*The answer is blowin' in the  
wind.*

"Rich Men Cry As Well." Bob Dylan is pretty well-to-do, I would think. Could he also cry? He, the folk-rock star with dozens of gold and platinum records, John Lennon's idol. The answer is Yes. For he cried in Russia, in Leningrad [St. Petersburg] in the summer of '89. They were not tears of tender feelings, joy or happiness -- quite the opposite. His eyes brimming with tears, sentimental Bob Dylan refused to perform in an empty concert hall.

Was such a situation possible in Russia, then? In Russia of that time, yes. But in the Russia of today country music gathers quite a good audience. As Mikhail Gorbachev used to say, "The process has started." I'm sure that should Bob Dylan come to Russia now, he would find an abundance of fans. As Dylan used to sing some time ago, "The times, they are a-changin'." And the Russian manager who invited Bob Dylan in 1989 wouldn't have to pay a forfeit fee today. For I believe that not only that manager paid a forfeit then, but so did the whole bottomless, corrupted State known as the Soviet Union.

Do you remember?

*How many roads must a man  
walk down,*

The Russian poet Andrei Voznesensky, well known in the West, wrote: "1985. Bob Dylan, a poetic genius in white jeans now sings in Luzhniki, the biggest stadium in Russia. Tomorrow, we wait for him to attend an evening of poetry, where true music lovers and connoisseurs will be present. But today -- no contact with the audience, alas! The Festival of Youth and Students is to begin in some days, and Moscow resembles a fortress besieged! The audience at the concert was specially chosen and only "politically loyal" listeners were allowed to attend. They were even brought to Luzhniki in free buses! But they didn't understand the music and, of course, couldn't get the words. The audience kept polite silence, and Dylan was almost crying; though his eyes were hidden behind sunglasses, it was evident...."

One more observation from the poet: "My ancient writer's armchair looks like an old lamp-socket into which many lean asses in jeans have been screwed. Bob Dylan himself has sat there. I should donate this 'electric' armchair to the museum of home rock music."

## "HE BECAME MY GODFATHER..."

It was in the frosty days of 1988 that Moscow and all the outlying areas of the USSR celebrated the anniversary of the Communist Revolution. Those three snowy days were warmed by the songs and music of the leading figure in country music, Roy Clark, with his program "The Roy Clark Country Show," subtitled "Sunshine That Country Music Gives Us." My mind was flooded with memories of that time in the spring of 1976 when I, still in my teens, attended Roy's concert in Moscow. He performed with the Oak Ridge Boys and a women's trio, Sugar. That concert changed my life, for I truly perceived for the first time then the magnetic,

magical power of country music. Now, I consider Roy Clark to be my godfather in my country music initiation.

In November of 1988 Roy Clark staged a brilliant country session in the Moscow Country and Folk Music Club, playing together with such Moscow groups as the Country Count Band and Lemonade Joe. He drank vodka like a Russian and was still able to play somersaults on the banjo, guitar and fiddle, so that his fans got dizzy and breathless with the thrill of it all. Roy later presented me with his latest recordings, personally autographed. I dearly hope that Roy Clark will come again to our country some day soon.



## A COUNTRY BOY IN MOSCOW

I learned about the visit to Moscow of one of my country idols, John Denver, in August of 1985. To my great sorrow I was virtually a prisoner, for although I was stationed in Moscow and it was theoretically possible for me to get leave from the Army, in reality it was not so. Then, suddenly, my father came to visit me and I was able to escape for a while. How I thanked my father and God!

Before the Army, I was a singer in the country group Sakvoyage, in the city of Sverdlovsk [Yekaterinburg] where I was born. In our repertoire there were songs by John Denver, among them "Grandmother's Feather Bed" and "Thank God I'm A Country Boy." Imagine my euphoria when I sat in a cozy armchair at the Olympic Village in the southwest of Moscow, listening to songs new and old sung by my idol himself. On stage I saw four acoustic guitars by Martin, Gibson and other famous companies. After singing some songs with one, Denver would pick up

another and the sound would change. Sometimes it seemed that a whole country band was playing! It was a bit strange that Denver had come to Moscow just after the Youth Festival. But even though television and the press seemed indifferent, the concert hall was filled, albeit with a mainly English-speaking audience.

I was unlucky enough to miss Denver's second visit to Moscow when he came with the Children As Teachers of Peace organization in late October, 1986. That time I failed to escape from the Army. John Denver is a sincere lover of children, dedicating to them many of his songs. One of them, in fact, was dedicated to Russian children during his first visit here. I remember the American composer Irving Berlin, born in Russia, with his "Russian Lullaby," so Russian and so American all at once. Indeed, Russian folk and American country music have much in common.



## ONE DEATH THAT DIDN'T SHAKE THE WORLD

The death of this particular singer-musician is one of the most mysterious events of recent history, and not only in musical circles. His life, though, was equally mysterious. His guitar is still kept as a relic on exhibit in the State Museum of Musical Instruments, after Glinka, in Moscow.

Dean Reed (like another revolutionary with the same family name, John Reed) believed in Communism deeply and unselfishly. I'm looking at his photos: In this one he's amongst the Palestinian fighters, holding an Uzi in one hand and his guitar in another and surrounded by people clothed like Hussein or Arafat. In another photo Reed is standing on the truck's hood, singing a song about the Baikal-Amur Railroad. And in another, he is singing of the American Indian civil rights activists at Wounded Knee in 1973. The next song is "Love Your Brothers."

I was just a boy when I first saw Dean Reed on the movie screen. He was playing Victor Hara, the Chilean singer and martyr murdered by Pinochet's soldiers. He directed this film, "Singer," and starred in it as well. Later, he played a cowboy in the East German production of "Sing, Cowboy, Sing."

The liner notes on a single of his that my mother bought in 1966 testify that "Dean Reed was popular all over the world, not only as an artist, but also as a social worker and fighter for peace." In the fall of that year he had come to Russia, and this single was one of the results of his visit. Another was the Soviet people's boundless love for this handsome American Com-

munist. But was Reed a true (Soviet-style) Communist?

At the beginning of the Eighties, Reed had shown such disrespect to the American authorities that he was stripped of his U.S. citizenship. He had spent some months in prison "for violation of the Constitution" and later deported. The destination of his deportation (exile?) Reed had chosen himself. The country in which he wanted to live was prosperous East Germany, the fortress of totalitarianism in Eastern Europe. Eric Hoenecker gladly presented the rebellious singer with a residence permit. Soon after arriving in East Germany, Dean married the actress Renata Blume. (She had portrayed Jenny, Marx's wife in the East German/Bulgarian/Soviet film about the patriarch of Communism. Before meeting Reed, Renata had been Goiko Mitich's girl. Her first love interest was a local star of East German "westerns," who played noble and courageous Indians, always winning out over the cruel and foolish cowboys.)

Dean Reed often visited the USSR on tours and at festivals. He personally knew Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko. But to live in Russia? Never! I had actually been to some Dean Reed concerts, and he really did on occasion perform songs in true C&W style. He was always in perfect athletic form; he walked on his hands and rode horseback and performed seemingly impossible stunts in all his movies -- no stuntmen for him!

Then, in the latter half of the '80s, newspapers all over the world carried the story that the famous composer and singer Dean Reed had drowned while

swimming in the lake near Leipzig. But that was very strange, for everybody knew that Reed was a magnificent swimmer. I never doubted for a minute that his death was no accident; I'm sure that it was a political assassination. It seems to me that

Reed must have been involved in either some political espionage or mafiosi games, and that eventually he had to pay for his indiscretion with his life. I felt really sorry for him. To tell the truth, whatever else he may have been, he was a fine singer.



## ONE STORY ABOUT ONE INSTRUMENT

An old black Gibson mandola fell into my hands one day, and I tried to play some chords on it. The instrument was almost of the same age as its owner, who showed the rare prize to me. And he told me the story of how he, a Russian soldier and a veteran of World War II, had come to possess this American mandola.

During the time of the historic Meeting at Elba between the American and Russian allies, my narrator was a young lieutenant. Though hungry and ruined, Germany had yet some beer available. So, one evening some American and Russian officers (though hard to believe now) were sitting together in one of the pubs by the side of the Oder River. They were having a good time, indeed. One young American officer took out a...no, not a banjo, but a mandolin of unusual design, and started to sing and play. My narrator, a military interpreter, thank God, knew English well enough. The song

was called "Good Night, Irene," and there was not a single American soldier who did not know it by heart:

*Irene, good night, Irene, good night.*

*Good night, Irene, good night, Irene,*

*I'll see you in my dreams.*

*Sometimes I live in the country.*

*Sometimes I live in the town.*

*Sometimes I take a great notion*

*To jump into the river and*

*drown.*

I think, with such much nostalgia for this song, that it must have been a No. 1 hit in the United States! Well, to make a long story short, when my narrator was parting with his American friend, the mandolin player gave him his instrument as a going-away present. Nowadays, that mandolin is being played in one of our Russian country bands. I won't say which. Perhaps you can guess for yourself.



## A SHORT HISTORY OF COUNTRY MUSIC CRITICISM IN RUSSIA

In promoting country music in Russia in the '70s, Leonid Pereverzev, an expert in jazz, played a definitely positive role. In his numerous articles and books on jazz, some information on American country music could be fished out as well. By the way, the first favorable mention and objective criticism of the Beatles' music in the Soviet press (after a lot of other journalists' negative criticism, ordered by the regime) was published by Leonid Pereverzev in 1968 in the magazine Musical Life.

I have had some meetings with this legendary veteran music critic (his first work was published in 1958). In 1976 he appeared to be the only journalist who could give a comprehensive analysis of Roy Clark's concerts in Russia. Earlier, in Musical Life (No. 24, 1974), Pereverzev had told the readers about the history of country music and about the visit to Moscow in 1974 of the "Country Music Show" with Tennessee Ernie Ford, Sandy Barnett, and a troupe of dancers. Pereverzev's article in the youth magazine Rovesnik (No. 1, 1976) entitled "Country Music Moves to the Cities," did a lot to help the movement, too.

Quite a lot of attention was paid to country music by the critic V.V. Konen as well in her book, "The Ways of American Music," and by Giorgi Shneerson in his book, "The American Song," though this was a very limited edition publication. Also at that time, on Shneerson's initiative four small records of classic country songs were released by the State recording company, Melodia. This was 1977.

In the '80s, the magazine America -- put out especially for the Soviet



V. Konen



L. Pereverzev

Union -- published an excellent collection of color photos on country music instruments and stars and a big article about the music. Otherwise, I don't know of any Soviet journalists or musicians who were interested in country music at that time, other than those already mentioned here. The first attempts to stage country music shows by Russian musicians began in the late '70s. At that time, there appeared some cowboy numbers in the repertoire of a folklore group under the direction of Vladimir Nazarov. Even the famous ballet by Igor Moisseyev hadn't included any American traditional dances!

## NEW COUNTRY MUSIC IN THE C.I.S.!

According to the American press, country music became extremely popular on a wide, commercial scale this past year. Quite unexpectedly, it has surpassed all other genres to top the national pop charts. Garth Brooks, the "city cowboy," overcame even Michael Jackson on his way to No. 1, multi-platinum.

Grammy-winning success. Then, on October 15-17, 1992 in St. Petersburg and on October 18-20 in Moscow appeared Ricky Skaggs, a singer very popular in the U.S. and the

country music world. Ricky's popularity, I guess, is even greater than that of Garth Brooks, as he has been at the top of the Billboard country charts for the past ten years and been awarded 15 Grammys for his achievements as a singer and multi-instrumentalist.

Ricky Skaggs is a true God-fearing man, and he came to Moscow on a religious mission. He was accompanied by his wife Sharon White, the singer; Tom Stipe, a pastor and country singer; and singer-musicians

Ray Hughes and Milton Carrol. I shot a video of Ricky and other musicians at their concert at Moscow University, and of my interview with them. I asked Ricky about his impressions of Russia, and his honest reply was, "There's no telephone or any other connection with America. I always fail to speak to the U.S.A." I wish he'd been in our shoes and had developed Russian patience!

Ricky Skaggs promised to come in the summer of 1993. He said he was considering bringing along with him the likes of Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, Emmy Lou Harris, Clint Black, Vince Gill and even Garth Brooks!



St. Petersburg, October 1992. Author and Ricky Skaggs

## CHARLES AZNAVOUR

of nothing about "Latin Quarter" was

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## KUKURUZA -- THE GREATEST COUNTRY MUSIC BAND IN RUSSIA

Kukuruza (Russian for "corn"), a Soviet country music group, got together in Moscow a while before *perestroika* made new artistic pursuits possible. A few guys just happened to hear U.S.-made recordings of what Earl Scruggs, Roy Clark and Tony Trishka can do on just a few banjo strings, or Bill Monroe on his "hot" mandolin, and... And their feeble musical souls were sold out to the zesty and romantic country-style music for good. Well, for good or bad, what came to be known (famous?) as Kukuruza has never reneged on their original lifetime commitment.

Yes, times are a-changin', and traditional bluegrass has been supplemented with new music such as "newgrass" or the Nashville sound, and drums, electric guitar, piano and steel guitar have been added to the group's arsenal.

Now, meet the Kukuruzians, please:

Andrei Shepelev: Banjo, Dobro, steel guitar. A composer

and lyricist who also sings many of his songs. He is at his romantic softest when vocalizing but shows a tougher edge when doing his virtuoso instrumental work.

Sergci Mosolov: The first and only fiddle in the group. A most talented musician who really knows how to improvise and give vent to his emotions. At such moments his musical soul becomes audible and visible (?) to the stunned audience.

Misha Venikov: Guitar and its younger electric sister. A virtuoso and true-blue pro of unlimited imagination.

Giorgi Palmov: He can play it all--mandolins and clarinets, harmonicas and guitars, washboard and what-not. Amazingly, he can sing at the same time.

Alexei Aboltynsh: A tuba player and graduate of a college of music, he was offered a job with the Bolshoi Ballet. He opted for Kukuruza instead and has not regretted it, maybe because he is also allowed to play double-

bass (could he have in the Bolshoi?).

Anatoly Belchikov: The drum man who, together with Alexei, creates the Kukuruza drive audiences enjoy so much.

Irina Surina: The group's vocalist. Her rich voice and feel for style go well with both Russian and American folk songs. Before joining Kukuruza she used to sing in a church choir. That helps, you know.

Andrei Zachessov: Producer and sound engineer.

The bottom-line soundman (at first, until 1991), was Andrei Tarabukin. Today, Kukuruza is working under the sponsorship of the Rossiiskaya Promyshlennost Company, and tours all around Russia and in foreign countries as well.

In the autumn of 1991 the first American tour took place. Kukuruza performed about 20 concerts in New England, as well as in Washington, D.C.; and in Nashville, Tennessee, where they participated in the All-Star Gala Concert on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry. A CD was released. In 1992 the group toured

across the USA for the second time, participating in several festivals, including the International Bluegrass Music Association Fan Fest in Owensboro, Kentucky; and at the Third Annual International Bluegrass Music Awards show. The group is planning to participate in the Merle Watson Memorial Festival in Wilkesboro, N. Carolina, and to record their new CD in Nashville. At press time, they are on tour in America, until October of this year.

In Russia Kukuruza has released two LPs, "Let's Sing It In English" (1986) and "The Magician" (1987). They frequently appear on popular TV shows, but Kukuruza's members modestly believe their popularity is due to their lively behavior onstage and their good audience communication.

It so happens that corn ("kukuruza") can be subject to essential conditions: a suitable climate and skilled farmers. Russia's climate is still OK for Kukuruza -- and the Kukuruzians will never get tired of perfecting their skills.





Is it true what they say?

Question: "Mr. Clark, yesterday you met with our Kukuza band. What are your impressions?"

Roy Clark: "They are just great! It's amazing -- not only do they play great bluegrass and country, they have a feel for the style! Few people can do it as well as Kukuza does."

**(Roy Clark in an interview with St. Petersburg television.)**

"And so they called their band Kukuza ('corn'). It was funny and country-like. And unlike anyone else."

**(Rabochaya Smena, No. 2, 1986)**

"The young country musicians were not about to blindly imitate their foreign counterparts. Although they do have an LP with all traditional stuff, they preferred a quest for something new -- like singing in Russian."

**(Leninskoye Znamya, September 25, 1987)**

"The Russian folk-dance tune played country-style really got the audience going -- and so did an American folk tune. Our U.S. guest reporters, Linda and Alan, applauded. They said it was country all right, no two ways about it. They should know."

**(Moscow News, June 7, 1987)**

"It comes as no surprise that the Kukuza musicians have really won our hearts. Those who have missed live music -- a real fiddle, double-bass and guitar, who missed a good melody -- had their prayer answered."

**(Mariyskaya Pravda, October 27, 1990)**

## KUKURUZA A RUSSIAN COUNTRY CONCERT

KUKURUZA -- Irina Surina, lead vocals. Misha Venikov, gui-

"The group is a stable outfit, which is rare these days. What keeps them together is their love for country music. While at first they were more willing than able, they are now one of the most popular country groups in this country. They have arrived. Remember what Roy Clark said about Kukuza?"

**(Narodnoye Tvorchestvo [Folk Arts], No. 8, 1989)**

"For five years already Kukuza have tried their best to break through the layers of pop asphalt with their bluegrass and make folk music heard."

**(Russian Musical Gazette, No. 2, 1991)**

"Leaving their families behind but bringing their own vodka.... The Russian bluegrass group Kukuza, which means 'corn', are on a whirlwind tour of the northeast United States."

**(Brattleboro Performer, No. 194, October 18, 1991)**

"In the United States, where music is categorized in little boxes, Kukuza would probably be labeled as 'cross-over artists,' because of the way the group integrates different musical styles into its own idiosyncratic blend."

**(Arts and Entertainment, October, 1991)**

"Kukuza has become known throughout Eastern Europe for its 'bluegrass with feeling.'"

**(Taconic Newspaper, October 23, 1991)**

"Kukuza is going to turn a lot of heads.... They can pick and sing with the best; they've put the fun back in bluegrass."

**(Country Courier, No. 10, October 4, 1991)**

tar, Alexei Abolynsh, acoustic bass, lead vocal on "The Asphalt

Blues." Sergei "Pasta Man" Mosolov, fiddle and harmony vocals. Giorgi Palmov, mandolin and harmonica, lead vocal on "Johnny B. Goode." Andrei Shcpelev, banjo and Dobro, lead vocal on "A White Song," rhythm guitar on "If I Know Where" and "White Song." Grigori Auerbach, artistic director, arranger and harmony vocal on "Stenka Razin."

Recorded at Golden Studios, Hancock, New Hampshire, October 21-23, 1991.

Engineer: David Torrey. Producers: Steve Van Ness, Dan Lindner. Liner notes: Dan Lindner.

Project coordinator: Philip Martus. Graphic design: Cheryl Matulonis.

Andre's banjo donated by the Gibson Company. Misha's guitar donated by Martin Guitar Company. Strings and accessories

donated by Gibson, and by Caliope Music, Burlington, Vermont, and Again Sam, Montpelier, Vermont. Bookings and information: Impact Arts, 449 Bonnyvale Rd., Brattleboro, Vermont 05301; telephone: (802) 257-5186.

Heartfelt thanks to Project Harmony, without which the discovery of Kukuza, the tour and the recording would never have happened. Also to Lauri; and the staff at Senator Jefford's office for visa rescue, to Jo Walker-Meador and Hal Durham for the Opry invitation, to Miller Brewing Company for making the Nashville trip possible, and to all the great folks who contributed money, time, bookings, beds, beer, meals, picking parties, shopping sprees and friendship, the "Kuks" will never forget you; neither will Dan and Steve.

## THE TOUR

The fall of 1991 witnessed a remarkable event in the recent history of bluegrass music. A band called Kukuza, from Moscow, Russia visited the United States and, over the course of 28 days, played a total of 17 concerts, plus an assortment of showcases, radio and TV appearances. It was the first extended American tour by a country music group from the Soviet Union, and it was a truly memorable experience for all involved. It was also the tour that almost didn't happen.

In 1988 my own group, Banjo Dan and the Midnite Plowboys, was privileged to tour the Soviet Union with Project Harmony. We were amazed to find this excellent Russian bluegrass group right there in Moscow, virtually in the shadow of the Kremlin. Our first meeting with Kukuza was brief, but we returned in 1989 and this time made sure to

set aside plenty of time for jamming, and even did some shows together. I was determined that someday, somehow, I had to bring this wonderful band to the U.S.

Around Christmas 1989, Arts and Events producer Steve Van Ness found himself helping to organize a program of Russian traditional music and dance in southern Vermont, featuring a terrific young troupe from Leningrad -- again, under the auspices of Project Harmony. Steve was also bitten by the Soviet bug, and before long he and I were kicking around the idea of a cultural exchange program for American and Soviet professional performers. Kukuza was the obvious candidate for our first effort.

Early in 1991, we began working in earnest, and after months of hard work and hassles the tour was set, reservations made

and contracts signed. Then the last remnants of Communist hardliners decided to take over the government of the USSR and -- would you believe it? -- they didn't even consult us! We spent a gloomy several days, I can tell you. Those old *apparatchiks* just don't believe in things like international travel, Western music ("contamination" they call it) and *glasnost*. But thanks to the spirit of the Russian people, the coup was toppled, Gorbys came back, and the tour seemed on safe ground once more.

Bookings went back on fast forward and the tour was set, or so we thought. A mere three days before Kukuruzza's departure it came to light that they had no visas, because they had applied for the wrong kind. Panic again and back on the telephone to Moscow, Washington and New York, the phone bills be damned. In the end, with a whole lot of help from Senator Jeffords' office (thanks, Laurie) and some sympathetic folks at the State Department, Kukuruzza did get their visas -- ten minutes before the U.S. Embassy in Moscow closed on the night before their 6 a.m. flight!

Steve and I met the "Kuks" at JFK in New York in an RV aptly

dubbed the "Kukmobile," and a month of madness was underway. We rolled up thousands of miles from Vermont to Tennessee and met some terrific people along the way. Kukuruzza played some wonderful music, shared stages and backstages with some of the legends of bluegrass, got their first taste of capitalism and many tastes of American beer, saw the sights of Washington and New York, and realized the dream of country musicians of all the world around when on November 1, 1991 they played at the Grand Ole Opry. Everywhere they went their music was met with cheers, standing ovations and cries for more!

Kukuruzza has returned to Russia, where they are widely recognized as the top country band in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. They've left behind some wonderful new friends and some great musical memories -- and, fortunately for us all, this fine collection of songs and tunes from the 1991 tour. Enjoy it! And stay tuned -- the West has only just begun to hear from these folks, and you can be sure they'll be back before long with more great music. "Kuk-style."

### THE BAND

In the middle 1970's, a loosely-knit group of 11 students started playing American and British traditional songs for fun, learning mostly from records and songbooks. By 1984 they had become quite accomplished, and were performing regularly in Moscow and beyond. In 1986 they decided to become a full-time professional band, choosing the name Kukuruzza ("corn" in Russian). The name of course has country references, as well as humorous connotations. At that time,

Western influences on the arts were highly suspect in the USSR, and they could only perform country and bluegrass tunes if they came across as a sort of novelty act. To this end, they recorded an album of children's songs by composer Grigori Gladkov.

However, they also began featuring their own finely-crafted original music and developing the professionalism that today marks Kukuruzza as the leading force in country music in their part of the world. They took on

Grigori Auerbach as artistic director, and membership stabilized to include some of the finest talent available. They have established a very clear band identity, with their combination of bluegrass and country styles, distinctive instrumental and vocal sounds, and material including traditional Russian and American songs, spirited instrumentals, and beautiful new music of their own creation.

Andrei Shepelev. Andy is one of the founding members of Kukuruzza, and is referred to, only half-jokingly, as "the Bill Monroe of Moscow bluegrass." It's an apt description -- he was among the first in his country to play this fiery brand of country music, is recognized as one of the finest instrumentalists east of Maine, and is an inspired songwriter. Andy is equally at home on banjo and on Dobro, as well as guitar, pedal steel and, in fact, anything with strings. A quiet and intense man, he's the philosopher and poet of the band.

Giorgi (Yura) Palmov. As the most fluent English speaker of the group, this gregarious fellow did the show-host work on the tour, finishing up his band introduction by adding, "...and me, I'm George." George is the other original "Kuk," and has played guitar and clarinet with the group, though he now concentrates on mandolin (actually an old pre-war Gibson mandola) and harmonica. He's a great lover of all music, including old country and rock'n'roll, and he has a classic Russian bass voice. Although he doesn't take a lot of solos on mandolin, he's an excellent rhythm man and provides some wonderfully tasty backup passages. George was trained as an engineer, but enjoys pointing out that he is making a tremendous contribu-

tion to Soviet aviation technology by not pursuing his career in engineering. He'd rather be on the road with the Kuks, where he can play music. George also loves to collect and cook mushrooms.

Irina Surina. Irina is the lead vocalist -- a young woman with a great voice, tremendous range and a heartfelt, passionate delivery. She studied music throughout her school years, including classical vocal training in college. She enjoys music of all kinds, and has been receptive to influences from country, blues and pop singers. When Kukuruzza had a vacancy for lead vocalist in 1989, Ira, fresh out of college, auditioned for the job. As Kukuruzza's director puts it, she was "clearly the best singer around -- she had just the right sound for Kukuruzza." Irina has one of those voices that just carries you away -- and people from New Hampshire to Nashville are still talking about her.

Sergei Mosolov. Serge is the fiddle man, and he's got a style of his own. He is a character, tons of fun to be with, and totally dedicated to gastronomic as well as musical excellence. Serge frequently acted as cook on the tour, and his inclination to choose spaghetti for breakfast, noodles for lunch and macaroni for dinner earned him the much-deserved title of "Pasta Man." A violin student since childhood, he heard fiddle music on the first "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" album around 1985 -- and immediately began working on his fiddle technique. He joined Kukuruzza in 1986, and in addition to his fiddle work he provides fine harmony vocals on most of the songs. During the tour, "Pasta Man" loved to practice his language skills, and was fond of interrupting the flow of

Kuk concerts with "And how about my English?"

Alexei Abolynsh. Or, as George was fond of introducing him, "Big Alex on bass!" In his Kuk costume, a sort of cowboy suit with an open chest, he looks every bit the circus strongman. But Alex is a gentle giant of a guy, always cool, full of humor and a delight to be with. And he's a great bass player. His instrument, held together by glue, bubble gum and luck, is a half-

sized bass that almost looks like a toy in his hands, especially when he spins it around for effect. But it's got a great pickup in it and sounds terrific. Alex is fond of sliding up to notes to give a unique sound to certain passages, and his intonation, as well as his timing, is perfect. A tuba player by profession, he joined Kukuza in 1986, and plays acoustic and electric bass, as well as contributes to the vocals.



Mikhail Venikov. Simply put, Misha (or Mike), is an astounding guitar player. Like some of his bandmates, he studied music in school and college, actually beginning with the balalaika. As a young guy he found himself naturally drawn to rock and pop music and began playing guitar, both electric and acoustic, during his school days. He has been with Kukuza on and off since 1988, bringing a wealth of musical ideas to the group. His rhythm is right on, and his lead work, which thrilled American audiences, is all his own -- a syncopated and inventive style like I've never heard in an acoustic context. This guy is on his way to becoming a phenomenal instrumentalist.

Grigori Auerbach. Now when was the last time you heard of a country band with an artistic director? Right -- I never did either. My conversations with Grisha, in a mishmash of English, Russian and French, revealed a man of great musical understanding and intelligence. His father was the conductor of one of his country's most pres-

tigious orchestras -- that is, until Stalin's purges in the late '30s forced him out of his position. Grisha followed in his father's footsteps, however, and pursued academic training in composition, arranging and conducting. After working for a while as composer and arranger for theater groups, he met Kukuza in 1986 when he worked on the Gladkov recording as arranger. He became fascinated with the banjo and the interplay of acoustic stringed instruments whose beauty and simplicity he eventually came to appreciate as much as the riches of classical orchestral music. He was asked to join Kukuza as artistic director, and his work has become an important factor in their professional success. Although he performs with the group on piano at times, his chief role involves arranging, selecting material and, literally, directing the band. The Kuks' confidence in him is well-earned; he has molded this group into a first-rate professional unit.

Winter 1991.

### THE SONGS

1. "Porushka-Paranya" (A great old Russian folk song about a vivacious, flirtatious country girl, featuring Ira's powerful vocal and a driving, al-

most Cajun-style instrumental accompaniment.)

**2. "If I Know Where"**

(This lovely original song by Andy deals with searching for love. It was tour manager Steve's favorite song, and he's determined to learn to sing it in Russian before the end of the decade.)

**3. "A Lucky Man"**

(George introduces this lively instrumental by pointing out that it was composed by a friend who lives in Latvia and is therefore, as of a few months ago, a foreigner. Hence the title.)

**4. "Steppe"**

(A beautiful old Russian folk song about a man dying on the frozen steppe. He asks his friend to take his horses, bring the news to his parents and bid his wife to marry another.)

**5. "The Asphalt Blues"**

(The first original song featured by Kukuruza, this is a lament about urban life.)

**6. "A White Flower in Bluegrass"**

(Andy wrote this lovely tune when he was in the Far East with the Soviet Army, missing his home. He wanted to prove that the banjo can produce gentle, lyrical music.)

**7. "Stenka Razin"**

(Grisha has taken this classic Russian ballad, usually played in a stately 3/4 time and rearranged it "Kukstyle." Stenka Razin was a national hero, leader of a peasants' uprising, though he had the nasty habit of throwing his girlfriends into the Volga River as a gift [to nature].)

**8. "Johnny B. Goode"**

(George sings it, and everyone gets a solo -- a masterpiece of "rock'n'roll-grass.")

**9. "Sally Goodwin"**

(A standard American dance tune known to just about every country fiddler, even in Russia.)

**10. "Za Kamen" ("Beyond The Mountain")**

(A haunting melody by Andy combines with wistful lyrics by former Kukuruza vocalist Larissa Grigorieva to create this wonderful love song.)

**11. "Gentle River"**

(A showcase for Irina's beautiful voice, and abundant evidence that Kukuruza can deliver an American country song as well as anyone.)

**12. "The Jerry Douglas Tune"**

(An irresistible toe-tapper, this is Andy's tribute to Dobro wizard Jerry Douglas.)

**13. "Doroga" ("The Road")**

(Grisha has taken a haunting, mesmerizing poem by Anna Akhmatova and set it to music, creating a beautiful song.)

**14. "Govorushka"**

(A lively song about a free spirit that you'd swear was an American bluegrass standard -- if you could understand the words.)

**15. "Byelim-byelim" ("A White Song")**

(Andy reveals his true Russian soul in this poem-song, written after the death of a close friend. His vocal here follows in the tradition of Slavic bards, while Ira weaves a delicate vocal backup.)

**16. "Can-Can," from the operetta "Orpheus In The Underground" (Jacques Offenbach)**

(This one never failed to bring down the house as Grisha mounted the stage in his Stetson hat, baton in hand, to conduct his bluegrass band through

this simultaneously comical and rousing tune.)

**17. "Nyet, Nye Nado" ("No, I Don't Need It")**

(A fine country song written by Serge and Andy, and performed

by Kukuruza on the Grand Ole Opry. No, I don't need your love -- not much!)

**"EVEN RUSSIANS SING THE BLUEGRASS" (from Leisure Weekly magazine, U.S.A.)**

If, during the next week or so, you run into some people who don't speak English but you suspect are part of the country music and bluegrass scene, then you've come in contact with Kukuruza. Despite their less-than-traditional name, they are the latest bluegrass band to hit the area.

Kukuruza (pronounce it coo-coo-roo-za) in Russian means "corn," and Russia is where they hail from. Under the auspices of the Montpelier-based Project Harmony they are making their first visit to the United States. It is a visit that will take them on a whirlwind three-week performance tour.

They will be playing in at least 15 different venues in a tour that will run from Virginia to Middlebury College. There is even a chance that they might make it to Nashville.

Since the late '80s Kukuruza has been the hottest and best-known bluegrass band in Russia, and is in constant demand to play at festivals in Finland, Romania and Czechoslovakia, as well as their native Russia.

While most modern Russian musicians rush to imitate the popular sound of American and British rock'n'roll, this seven-piece band draws its inspiration from American bluegrass and country music.

It all started in the early '80s. A bunch of folk-singing Moscow students saw the movie "Deliverance." It gave them their first exposure to banjo music and the country idiom. Soon, they were buying up every American country and bluegrass record they could find, and soon formed a band. (Stop me if you've heard this story before, but it is true.) By 1986 they had given up their daytime jobs and gone full-time.

It didn't take them long before they met, jammed with and opened concerts for both Roy Clark and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. By 1988 they were polished professionals. Clark has been quoted as saying that "[Kukuruza] is just great. Not only do they play great bluegrass and country, but they play with real emotion, and that's one of the hardest things to do."

### Project Harmony

Kukuruza's visit to the United States has its roots in Montpelier and Project Harmony. It was formed in the mid-'80s for the purpose of fostering and sponsoring cultural exchanges, which first occurred in 1985.

Project Harmony, which once had been a volunteer organization that set up one exchange a year, now has a paid staff of three that organizes and coordinates over 20 student cultural exchanges per year. Some of you might recall a Russian youth circus troupe that toured Vermont and New Hampshire last summer and fall. This was a Project Harmony-sponsored event.

In November, 1988 popular Vermont folk and bluegrass performer Banjo Dan with his Midnite Plowboys led a group of Vermont high school students on a

singing tour of three Russian cities. It was while they were staying at the Hotel Orlyonok in Moscow that Kukuruza showed up in the lobby one day. As Banjo Dan (Dan Lindner) describes, "It was a very magical moment. Myself and the Plowboys ran to our rooms for our instruments. Soon, we were all jamming in the lobby. The students were there and they started singing. It was real magic."

From that point on Kukuruza and Lindner kept in close touch. In 1989 the Plowboys did a second tour with high school students and the two groups got together for a couple of public appearances. The relationship between the groups blossomed and the current tour is the result.



Left to right: Giorgi Palmov, Andrei Shepelev, Bill Monroe (The Father of Bluegrass), Misha Venikoo

### The Music and the Musicians

When asked to describe Kukuruza's particular style, Dan said that it will not be exactly the traditional brand of bluegrass stuff, that they use the traditional instrumentation found in bluegrass bands, but they write quite a bit of their own material and incorporate a large number of Russian folk songs. And, of course, they do some traditional American bluegrass.

"But this band is going to turn a lot of heads. They can pick and sing with the best, and most important for me, they've put the fun back in bluegrass."

American audiences are pretty much attuned to listening to bluegrass bands fronted by

musicians named Bill, Charlie or Alison. But with Kukuruza, your featured instrumentalist is Andrei on banjo and Dobro. Fiddling is handled by Sergei, while Giorgi adds a bluesy sound with mandolin and harmonica. The lead guitarist is Misha, and the acoustic bass player is Alexei. Vocals are handled by a young woman named Irina. Even the group's manager, Grisha, sometimes joins in with his accordion. And the group has been known to add a flute or clarinet riff or two.

Certainly, it is not bluegrass that you can easily pigeonhole in any traditional way.

### The Local Scene

For a good ten days of their three-week visit to the United States, Kukuruza will be staying in Brattleboro at a place donated by Showcase Realty. From there they will be running out to their different gigs throughout the region.

Steve Van Ness of Impact Arts, producer of the concerts, explains that part of Project Harmony's program includes having the groups be supported by the people in the country they are visiting. Kukuruza will arrive without a cent. As Van Ness explains it, "This will mean that they will have to be an event. Showcase provides the rooms and we'll be buying the food and taking them shopping. So, you could just as easily find them shopping at the Brattleboro Coop or Grand Union, or at The Melody Shop in Rapacity."

Lindner added that, "All Russian musicians want to

come and play in America, if only for the fact that they can buy items that are difficult to find, such as quality strings for their instruments. Steve and I will be with them throughout their trip, and we hope to be able to pay for their visit through the ticket sales"

Van Ness goes on to explain that another aspect of their visit to the U.S. is to foster cultural exchange. In practically all the venues they will be playing, Kukuruza will be visiting schools. For example, while in Brattleboro they will spend a morning at Brattleboro Union High School, visiting and meeting with students in the history and language arts classes, then in the evening they will be at Marlboro College where they will participate in a colloquium held in conjunction with SIT and the World Studies Program. The evening will include, naturally,



music with Kukuza jamming with folk musicians from Marlboro and the School for International Training.

In a world where the borders are getting blurred rapidly, but still old hatreds die hard, it is re-

freshing to see that locally we can still find room for the untraditionally traditional. It should be a happy, toe-tapping, kncc-slapping time for everyone. We might want to lift a toast to the corn in all of us.

## RUSSIAN BLUEGRASS? YEP, AND IT'S IN HANCOCK TO BOOT

by Ben Malcolm

Thursday, August 27, 1992,  
MONDAY

**'The political, social situation is very difficult now. People don't have money to go to concerts....Travel, hotels, it is very difficult.'**

**Giorgi Palmov,  
Russian Musician**

HANCOCK -- Russian musician Giorgi Palmov of Moscow struggled for the right English translation to describe his stay in the Monadnock Region.

"It is very beautiful here...the nature," he said at first, and then added, "I hope we make good music here."

They already have.

Palmov and the six other members of Kukuruza (pronounced Coo-coo-roo-za), a Russian country bluegrass band, are concluding a series of recording sessions at Wayne Greene's private studios this week.

This represents the second time the band has visited the country. The first was last year when the group pressed its first album with Greener Pastures Records, Inc.

Formed in 1986, the "Kuks" reached a rare level of success in the American country scene as they played at the Grand Ole Opry in November 1991.

Discovered during a tour of Moscow in 1988 by producer Dan Lindner of Impact Arts, Brattleboro, Vt., Kukuruza has crammed a series of recording sessions and concerts into a seven-week period during this 1992 trip.

Accompanied by Impact Arts producer Steve Van Ness, who helped with the successful 1991

tour, the band has made quite a splash in the international country scene. Van Ness has been hosting the band in his parent's house in Jaffrey, and serves as main "Kukmobile" driver, translator, and general helper.

Van Ness said that the company's introduction to Kukuruza was unique, as Lindner ended up meeting and "jamming" with the group in a hotel hallway in Moscow with his own band, Banjo Dan and the Midnight Plowboys.

The mostly all-male Kukuruza includes a female, vocalist Irina Surina, who lends another unique slant to the outfit. She is also the only unmarried member of the outfit. According to Grace Cohen, an assistant with the record company, Kukuruza has an interesting array of bought and built instruments, including a home-made steel pedal.

The band will appear at The Folkway tonight, and are booked for the Putnam Fund Concert Series in Laconia Friday and the River Valley Performing Arts Center in Putney, Vt. Saturday. The three dates will be the band's only local appearances.

The group is planning to head to the Opry again, and is also looking forward to a rare invitation to the International Bluegrass Music Association Fan Fest in Owensboro, Kentucky.

Kukuruza's musical style is not easy to describe, as it combines elements of bluegrass, country, Russian folk and rock'n'roll. American music is given a Russian voice; Russian folk is given a country beat.

On their original album, cut during their tour in 1991, the music ranges through a variety

of music, from the pure country of "Gentle River" to a lively playing of the standard rocker "Johnny B. Goode."

Palmov sat down to speak with the Ledger Tuesday afternoon, as the other members of the band worked through a set of "Blue Bayou" by Roy Orbison (and covered by Linda Ronstadt).

Originally pursuing a career in aviation technology, Palmov got hooked during college into American country music, after his first playing of a record by T. Texas Taylor. He said Kukuruza came together during the 1970s and early '80s and became a professional unit in 1986.

He said the music scene in the country had changed since the revolution and the move into a Commonwealth of Independent States.

"The political, social situation is very difficult now; people don't have money to go to con-

certs....Travel, hotels, it is very difficult," he said.

Palmov said the current situation is breeding a loose form of "competition" among bands, and that many of the weaker groups are dying off. He said "cheap pop" music is prevalent among the younger generations.

"Maybe my age not so good for that music," he said of his "older" taste.

Country music is also popular in both Poland and Czechoslovakia, according to Palmov.

The translation of the name "Kukuruza" works out to "corn" or, more specifically, "maize." Palmov said the name evokes images of American country and agriculture, as well as adding an element of humor.

Van Ness said rising air fares and other costs are making logistics difficult. He was unsure whether the band would be back for a third round.

## YOUR NEXT 55 HOURS

**WEEKEND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE, Sept. 4-7, 1992.**

**Festival keeps red-hot bluegrass growing.**

**Performers include a Russian group that fiddles with an American style.**

**By GARY MULLINAX**

**Staff reporter**

WOODSTOWN, N.J. -- Bluegrass may be an old-time music, but it still has a cutting edge. And the Delaware Valley Bluegrass Festival has often found that edge in its 21-year history.

This weekend's festival will feature not only the red-hot progressive bluegrass group California, which includes guitar whiz Dan Crary and fiddle phenom Byron Berline, but also a band called Kukuza, which has been turning heads, at least partly because its members come from Russia.

Why does a Russian band play bluegrass? It started in the 1970s after the founding members, then college students in Moscow, discovered records by the likes of Eric Weissberg (the "Deliverance" theme), Roy Clark and other American country performers.

"Our audience was students," said Giorgi Palmov, whose band will perform at the Festival Saturday afternoon and night. "But we were amateurs. After we finish college, some of us go to the Army, some to work. After Army, we continue playing music. That was 1984. In 1986 we began to play professionally."

Kukuza means "corn" in Russian. "This [corn] is Ameri-

can culture, American agriculture," Palmov said. "It's like country music. It was born in America and now is popular around the world."

The band began touring the United States last year, but will return to Russia. "This is a beautiful country, but we have our own," Palmov said.

Still, "the situation there is very difficult -- not good for artists, musicians. Many people are very poor now. It is very expensive -- travelling and tickets are very expensive."

In addition, the taste of the Russian audience has been, well, warped. "The music on TV and radio in our country is not so good. It is...he groped for the words, then found them. "It is cheap pop music."

Kukuza plays mostly Slavic folk melodies sung in Russian with bluegrass instrumentation. But the group also mixes in regular American folk, country and bluegrass numbers.

Palmov said Americans are often surprised to find Russians performing bluegrass. But he is often surprised by Americans.

"Many people come to me after a show and ask about our instruments. They don't know what is a Dobro, even though it is an American instrument."

The festival, presented by Delaware-based Brandywine Friends of Old Time Music, also includes such veteran bluegrass performers as Jim and Jesse and the Osborne Brothers.

## MESSENGER-INQUIRER

**Friday, September 25, 1992**

**Awards: Douglas has a good night.**

There were moments bluegrass fans will talk about for years -- the NBB and the legendary gospel group the Fairfield Four in a hand-clapping a cappella "Roll, Jordan, Roll" and John McEuen joining the Russian band Kukuza on a rousing traditional folk song with vocalist Irina Surina singing the rapid-fire Russian lyrics, her long skirt swirling.

"You see Kukuza and the Fairfield Four and you know bluegrass is universal in the best sense of the word," co-host Tim O'Brien said.

"WOW!" was the catch phrase of the night.

"WOW!" said David Grier, who won his first pyramid as guitar player of the year. "This is really cool." He advised those not nominated to keep practicing -- "It only took me 25 years."

"WOW!" said Laurie Lewis, holding her first pyramid for female vocalist. "I didn't really expect this. I didn't prepare anything to say."

Del McCoury continued his reign as male vocalist, taking the honor for the third consecutive year.

"Well, I'm having a good time," Douglas said on one of his many trips to the stage.



## DIRTY LINEN RECORDINGS

**Kukuruza: A Russian Country Bluegrass Band Greener Pastures GPR-005 (1992)**

About the time the USSR was ceasing to exist, a number of hard-working people on both sides of the Atlantic were scrambling to salvage plans for a tour by a bluegrass band from Moscow called Kukuruza. I, for one, am glad that the tour worked out in late 1991, because while Kukuruza was over here they recorded a great CD of bluegrass, Eastern style. We all know that bluegrass is popular in all sorts of places we wouldn't expect, given its rural Southern roots: London, New York, Dublin, just to mention a few. But there is also bluegrass, and good bluegrass at that, behind what's left of the Iron Curtain. Kukuruza have been playing professionally since 1986, and their music, while bluegrass, shows definite Russian characteristics. Good examples of this are the songs in Russian. Done in bluegrass style. And it works.

Not all the songs are in Russian. Singer and mandolin player Giorgi Palmov sings an odd-sounding version of "Johnny B. Goode" and Irina Surina, who does most of the lead vocals on the CD shows off her fantastic voice and a very natural American accent on "Gentle River." Leader Andrei Shepelev plays a sweet Dobro and a versatile banjo, even including a slow piece for banjo that he wrote. The guitar picking by Mikhail Venikov is as good as any I've heard on any side of any ocean. Sergei Mosolov, the fiddler, plays a very swingy style which fits in perfectly. The material ranges from "Sally Goodwin" to original instrumentals to Russian folk songs done bluegrass style to Offenbach's "Can-Can." If this CD were only a novelty item of mediocre quality, it would be worth a listen just to hear what kind of bluegrass music you can find in Eastern Europe. But this is just plain great bluegrass.

**Bruce Baker (Easley, SC)**

## BILLBOARD

**THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSWEEKLY OF MUSIC, VIDEO AND HOME ENTERTAINMENT**  
FOLLOWS PAGE 48

NOVEMBER 14, 1992.

Album Reviews EDITED BY PAUL VERNA, CHRIS MORRIS, AND EDWARD MORRIS

## COUNTRY

**KUKURUZA**  
**A Russian Country Bluegrass Band**  
**PRODUCERS: Steve Van Ness, Dan Lindner**  
**Greener Pastures 005**

This seven-member Russian band, which first toured the U.S. last year, was a hit at the recent International Bluegrass Music Assn. awards show. Irina Surina's lead vocals are particu-

larly impressive. The album contains a mixture of Russian and American songs, as well as -- believe it or not -- Offenbach's "Can-Can." Contact: 800-677-8838.

**70 Route 202 North**  
Peterborough, NH 03458-1107  
1-800-677-8838  
Phone: (603) 924-0058;  
Fax: (603) 924-8613

1992.

## KUKURUZA ITINERARY\*

\* indicates tentative listing. Subject to revision. Updated 8/21.

Fri. 8/14 arrive NYC from Moscow  
Sun. 8/16 **Brooklyn, NY**, "Celebrate Brooklyn"  
Sun. 8/16 **NYC**, "New York City Banjo Contest"  
**PLACED 2nd!**  
Mon. 8/17 **Hancock, NH** Rehearsal in Studio  
Tues. -- Thur. 8/18 -- 8/20 **RECORDING IN STUDIO**, Hancock, NH  
Fri. 8/21 **Killington, VT**, "Crossroads Arts Council"  
Sun. 8/23 **Bethlehem, PA**, "Musicfest"  
Mon. -- Thur. 8/24 -- 8/27 **RECORDING IN STUDIO**, Hancock, NH  
Thur. 8/27 **Peterborough, NH**, "Folkway"  
Fri. 8/28 **Laconia, NH** "Putnam Fund Concert Series"  
Sat. 8/29 **Putney, VT**, "River Valley Performing Arts Center"

Mon. -- Thur. 8/31 -- 9/3 **RECORDING IN STUDIO**, Hancock, NH

Fri. 9/4 **Bethlehem, PA** Godfrey Daniels

Sat. 9/5 **Greenville, DE**, "Delaware Bluegrass Festival"

Mon. 9/7 **New York City**, "Belmont Race Track"

Wed. 9/9 Recording Syndicated Bluegrass TV show Herb Sudzin

Thur. 9/10 **Brooklyn, NY**, "Fulton Mall Lunchtime Concert"

\*Fri. -- Sat. -- Thur. 9/11 -- 9/12, Possible Catskills date

Sun. 9/13 **Trenton, NJ** Tir Na Nog

\*Tues. 9/15 **Washington DC**, Washington International School

Fri. 9/18 **Gettysburg, PA**, "Gettysburg Bluegrass Festival"

Sat. 9/19 **Charlottesville, VA**, "Prism Coffee House"

"Prism Coffee House Radio Hour"

\*(Sun. 9/20 Mountain Jam AL/Charlie Daniels, et. al.)

Thur. 9/24, **Owensboro, KY**, International Bluegrass Music Association "IBMA Awards Ceremony"  
Fri. 9/25 **Owensboro, KY**, IBMA "Fan Fest"  
\*Sat. 9/26 **Nashville, TN**, tentative appearance "Grand Ole Opry"  
Sun. 9/27 **Chattanooga, TN**, Chattanooga Arts Council  
Mon. 9/28 **Huntsville, AL**, Kalleeklatch  
Tues. 9/29 **Nashville, TN** Station Inn

Wed. 9/30 **Decatur, GA**, "Freight Room"  
Fri. 10/2 **NC State Univ** Stewart Theater 8(p. m.),  
Sat., Sun. 10/3, 10/4 **Orlando, FL**, "Orlando Fall Harvest Bluegrass Festival"  
Mon. 10/5 **New York City**,  
Tues. 10/6  
Wed. 10/7 **New York City**, depart for Moscow  
New CD: "Where The Sunshine Is" SoLyd Records 99Z (1993)

## RUSSIAN GIRL WENT COUNTRY CRAZY IN SPITE OF KGB

She went country crazy long before the Berlin Wall fell to clear the way to the East and to the West for all people, regardless of their political views.

Being a schoolgirl, she had a rare chance to meet Americans, to talk to them and to listen to them singing. She always loved folk music and used to perform Russian songs for her guests. While other kids were interested mainly in chewing gum, foreign pens and badges, she took to collecting American traditional songs. There was no other way to hear them in Russia but from foreigners or from the only Soviet record featuring Joan Baez singing "Lily Of The West," "Henry Martin," "The Banks Of The Ohio" and other traditional ballads. Western-made records with such music were rare birds in the USSR and never reached her. Rock music and disco were in fashion at that time (the late '70s) and fathers going abroad usually brought back Deep Purple, Black Sabbath and ABBA to their kids in Russia.

She liked those groups all right, but used to sing country songs on the guitar to her friends.

Luckily enough, she ran across a band playing country and bluegrass in the Moscow Institute of Architecture. They played together for a couple of years, and then the boys went into the Army. She became a student at the Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages, then worked as a clerk in a bank. But she often used to visit an International Friendship Club, where she met people from all over the world -- chatting and singing with them, and dancing at the discotheque. Her schedule was

extremely tight and her mother saw little of her, complaining, "I forget your face." Larissa got dizzy-tired every day, but was happy living a life without boring routine.

Lara Grigorieva knew about the KGB, but never took them seriously until one day her mother received a telephone call advising her to look more properly after her daughter, who was mingling with foreigners. Her mother has always been a brave woman and so she answered that she knew everything about her daughter, and approved of her experiencing life and different kinds of people. That ended the matter. There were no more calls from the KGB.

Her fellow country musicians returned from the Army and formed a new group, Kukuruza ("corn"). But singing in English by professional groups was prohibited in Russia at the time; it was the language of the enemy, after all. Still, they managed to bend the rules by singing the anti-war hit "Down By The Riverside" and some other traditional tunes. And they recorded some country-style tunes by passing them off as a novelty item -- children's songs sung in Russian. They toured around the Soviet Union and even had an LP. But still she wanted something more. So Larissa parted company with Kukuruza and started writing her own compositions. Over the past few years she's written quite a number of songs, and in 1993 released an album in Moscow entitled "Red Grass."

Larissa does her best to popularize country music in Russia, making TV programs as a host and as a singer. One of them is



a serial about contacts between Russia and other countries -- McDonald's, Tetra Pak, the Swedish former hockey player Tumba Juhansson organizing golf courses in Moscow, an American school for models, August Seven and other firms and people. The serial, "Baseball, Giraffes, Russian Country Music and More," is still on the air, travelling to any country to which they are invited to shoot an interesting topic to show to the Russian public. The program is permeated with country music. The most recent episode was shot in Finland at the festival Country Road 13.

It would have been much easier for Larissa to have become a

pop music star if she had but sung in a normal rock'n'roll manner, but she never was one to just follow the latest fashion. Larissa's sure there's more soul and sincere joy in country music than in many pop songs. She's firm in her resolve to follow her heart and make her own way in music here in Russia.

She hopes that she'll be able to enter the world family of country music soon, because there's no Berlin Wall between Russia and the West anymore.

She and her Red Grass Band are ready to give concerts for any audience interested in Russian country music.

Winter 1993.

### Larissa Grigorieva & the Red Grass Band

The Red Grass Band was formed in 1990 by the leader of the group, Larissa Grigorieva. She is the group's vocalist and the author of the songs she sings in English and in Russian. Before 1990 Larissa used to perform in bluegrass style, but now the Red Grass Band plays its own unique style, a mixture of bluegrass, country & western, and Russian traditional



music. The instruments are guitars (acoustic and electric), fiddle, accordion, Russian harmonica, mandolin, drums (percussion) and bass (electric or contra-bass). "Extremely talented and gorgeous." These were the words the press used to describe the appearance of country-folk singer-songwriter Larissa Grigorieva, who performed at the Edin-

burgh International Festival Fringe in August of 1992 with her Red Grass Band. Larissa and her band are versatile musicians, equally good at traditional music (Russian, American, Celtic) and modern ways of country, bluegrass and rock-n-roll.

Larissa Grigorieva is well-known in Russia as a singer, a songwriter and hostess of popular musical television programmes and festivals ("Farmer", "Widen Our Circle", "Baseball, Giraffes and Russian Country Music") being an advert of folk culture and a pioneer of country music in Russia.

Larissa is a master of singing traditional Russian and Gypsy romances, that demands a real artistic talent.

In 1993 Larissa's album "Red Grass" was released in Moscow. The album featured compositions by Larissa Grigorieva in a very original "redgrass" style, a mixed flavor of country, bluegrass and Russian traditional music. Larissa's songs vary from deeply soulful to very joyous dancing rhythms with fine melodies.

**From Russia with Optimism  
Larissa Grigorieva and her Red Grass  
Fantasy**

**"Can you stop me? No, you can't!  
Hold me tight and strong!  
Let us dance to the Red Grass Band  
Until the morning's dawn!"**

**"Red Grass Dance" by Larissa Grigorieva  
(from the album "Red Grass")**

**DISCOGRAPHY:**

**LP "FOKUSNIK" (1988); LP "RED GRASS"  
(1993), MELODIA**

Before starting her own career in 1989 Larissa had been Kukuruz's vocalist, and with whom she had recorded two albums ("Let's Sing In English" and "Fokusnik").

A gifted actress, dancer, singer and songwriter, Larissa Grigorieva is a bright sparkle of talent at any international festival -- of which she's been a participant of late in the United Kingdom, Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Bulgaria and Finland.

**COMMENTARY:**

\*"Farmer" -- annual festival of country and folk music, international, held since 1989 in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other cities in Russia.

\*\*"Widen Our Circle" ("Shire Kroog") -- big stadium program shown by CIS National Television Channel four times a year (seasonally) featuring professional and amateur pop and folk artists.

"B.G.&R.C.M." -- Larissa's own musical show with unexpected contacts with people of different nationalities and countries, promoting cultural and business ties with Russia.

**TEA DRINKING IN "COUNTRY  
STYLE" WITH A PLASTIC CROW**

I came out of the elevator and pressed the ancient doorbell. It shrilled its announcement and the door was opened...by a dog. His name is Dick. He is just a mongrel, but lack of a pedigree hasn't prevented him from becoming the star of a country music TV show -- and even one of the hosts(!) of the radio program "Country Club." But Dick doesn't give himself airs. He licked my hand, wagged his tail and then, nodding his head, politely showed me into the kitchen. His duties fulfilled, Dick settled down contentedly to gnaw on a nice, meaty bone, while his master, musician and composer Grigori Gladkov, welcomed me with tea and conversation.

Plastic Crow, a character from a famous Russian animated movie, much loved by children and adults alike, looked down on me from the kitchen wall. She was a present to Gladkov from the other members of the film crew. Grigori is very fond of animation, and has written songs for "Last Year's Snow Falling" and "Vera and Anfissa," the radio special "Koloboks Are On the Trail" and other children's shows. Uncle Grisha Gladkov, as he is affectionately known, has already written six LPs for children of all ages. Indeed, my own little girl loves them, the last best of all.

Oh, but please don't misunderstand... Grigori is not "just" a children's composer, that is not true at all. For Grigori loves country music and is, indeed, one of the founders of the original Moscow Country Club -- now known to all as the Country and Folk Music Center. How does he do it all, I wonder?

"I don't know how. When I lived in Leningrad [St. Petersburg], I composed bardic songs. And now I record some LPs with songs based on Russian poets' lyrics. I don't think it so strange and eccentric. It's all interdependent -- children's songs and Russian lyrics and country music. All of us remember our childhood -- and I consider "us" to be all of humanity. I'm sure that when American grandmothers sing for their grandchildren they have the same feelings and emotions as do Russian ones. Great poets are also recognized everywhere!"

Of course he is right. You don't have to be English to appreciate Shakespeare or Russian to value Pushkin. Or American to laugh at Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck.

"But country music is pure American art. Even its European roots are quite shallow," I said as I finished the first cup of tea.

"Yes, but this music is very close to Russian melodies and Slavic traditions. Every nationality can hear its own melodies in this music," Gladkov parried, as he proffered a fresh cup of tea.

"What do you think will be the future of country music?" I wonder.

"I'm sure that country and bluegrass will last," he says. This music is now popular all over the world! It's full of originality, and it's easy to understand. Then, too, country music is always sincere."

"I enjoy your radio and TV programs about country music," and, yes, I am being quite sincere. "But tell me more about the Third International Festival of Country and Folk Music, also



known as 'Farmer-91', which is to be held in Moscow."

"I can tell you that we are planning to hold the Festival in the concert hall of the Orlyonok Hotel. Matinee concerts will offer special children's programs, and evening sessions will be held for the adult audience. Later, the Festival will visit Zagorsk. There, we have planned a veritable feast of Russian folk music, songs and dances; and a special costume show called "Sitets and Parcha" ("Printed Cotton and Brocade"). The next day the Festival will move to Tver, an ancient Russian city not far from Moscow. Farmer-91 will be concluded in Leningrad [St. Petersburg], in the concert hall Oktyabrski. So, you see, our program is very wide. That's why we need sponsors. I want to appeal to all the country music fans: Please, help us to promote Russian and American folk art in Russia!"

"And who is to perform at the Festival," I wonder?

"The Festival's choice is very impressive," he proudly replies. "The best groups from all over the [former] USSR will participate. Beergrass from Estonia, our perennial participant, will be there of course. Country Saloon will come from Nizhni Novgorod, a group from Solikamsk called Variant will make its debut, and Tutti-frutti will come from Cherepovets. There will be two bands from the Far East: Ladushki from Khabarovsk and Kazus from Komsomolsk-on-Amur. Besides these, a number

of well-known Moscow groups will take part in the festival: Kukuruzza; Svoya Igra; To, Chto Nado; Yabloko; Floctus; Ryzhaya Trava; and others. All of them are true friends of the Festival.

Our conversation is interrupted by Dick. We saw him sadden and a few moments later we heard his barking. But as we came into the room, we found that he just peacefully "speaks" with Grisha's cat. All the animals living in this wonderful house are great friends -- cat and dog truly love each other. "I nearly forgot to mention," Grisha adds, pouring our last cup of tea, "that I hope to see at the Festival some classic country musicians -- Americans and guests from Europe whose names are well-known in the world. We sent an invitation to Roy Clark. Maybe he will come to Farmer-91...."

"The future will tell," I say as I'm leaving this hospitable home.

Maybe it was just a hallucination, but it seemed to me that Plastic Crow winked at me from her wall. But then, in this house full of surprises any miracle can occur, because the composer himself is full of funny ideas and devices. After all, he's a grown-up children's musician and, as the French say, "noblesse oblige!"

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**SEVEN LPs (1984-1993)**  
**BARDIC AND CHILDREN'S SONGS)**

**February 1991, Moscow.**

## TAMARA SIDOROVA'S "OWN PLAY" (SVOYA IGRA) (MOSCOW - MUNICH)

It may seem paradoxical, but a recent movie festival honorary title -- "Miss Kinotaur" -- went to Tamara Sidorova. Though a lovely, charming and talented girl, she is the violinist with the popular folk group Svoya Igra, not an actress or director, cameraman or any other sort of film worker. Of course, I had to interview her after such a stunning success at the Kinotaur Festival.

Q: Tamara, your audience has admired your magnificent playing and your artistic gifts for more than ten years now. But tell us, please, about your path from music school in Sverdlovsk [Yekaterinburg] to this magnificent "star" achievement in your career.

TAMARA: You are exaggerating, speaking about my "star" position now!... When I was four years old, my parents presented me with a violin. Then, I won the concert to enter the musical school for specially-gifted children. I tried very hard, but my life wasn't full of roses and I left the school after finishing the 8th grade. I began to live like a hippie, but later I stopped and entered the Tchaikovsky Musical School in Sverdlovsk [Yekaterinburg] -- but my temperament didn't let me finish it. Then I began to play in restaurants.... You see, it's not easy.

Q: Who are your parents?

TAMARA: My father is an opera singer; I think he is the best in the Urals. My mother was a very beautiful, graceful woman who looked like Lubov Orlova [a Soviet movie star of the '30s]. My father was a soldier during the Second World War;

he came back, but only as a disabled soldier. All the members of my family are musicians, but amateurs. I'm the second daughter. I'm ashamed to confess it, but in my childhood I hated the violin. It wasn't until I was 14 that I felt its power over me....

Q: You've played all over the world....

TAMARA: In more than 40 countries! Everybody likes folk music, and I'm sure that music helps to unite people. It may seem strange, but Svoya Igra is more popular abroad than in Russia. Our solo concerts have never attracted big audiences here. But then, only variety shows with many bands gather the crowds.

Q: What can you say about your private life?

TAMARA: The purpose of my life now is to bring up my child. He is six years old. His name is Nikita. All my problems are in myself, I think. I'm quite a problem person, not easy to live with. But my son helps me, as he has gone with me on all the tours from the moment he turned one year old. He's become used to the Spartan way of life now. He has begun to study playing on the violin and wind instruments.... And I have a friend who shares all my troubles with me.

Q: Tell me about Miss Kinotaur's tastes: Your favorite flowers?

TAMARA: Tulips.

Q: Precious stone?

TAMARA: Emerald.

Q: Your sign?



TAMARA: Libra. By the way, I was born in the Year of the Swine by the Chinese calendar.

Q: I've heard that our filmmakers liked you so much that there are already offers....

TAMARA: Yes, and I'm thinking about it now. We'll see.

Q: Tamara, what do you want to wish for your fans?

TAMARA: I want to wish them to love one another more. I have a dream -- to organize one merry village, which would be state-sized, and everybody would sing, dance and play music! Oh, sure, it's just a joke.... But there is a bit of truth in it. Every time I

perform I'm looking for the eyes in the hall, the eyes of my listener, and I'm playing for him.

I look for the hundredth time as Tamara performs at the scene. I'm always glad to listen to her interpretation of Monty's "Chardash," as well as the Jewish, Moldovian and innumerable exotic folk melodies she plays. And I'm not the only one. Everybody loves Miss Kintaur!

**DISCOGRAPHY: CASSETTE ALBUM "SVOYA IGRA" (1991), MOSCOW-GERMANY Winter 1992.**

## RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF LIFE

Konstantin Kuzhaliev was a unique and interesting man, a musician and talented arranger who died a little over two years ago, in February of 1991.

A man of many talents, he was the first(!) musician in Russia to master the five-string banjo; and he played his Ovation guitar and all manner of other exotic instruments -- during the '70s, during Brezhnev's Era of Stagnation! He wrote his own music and recorded indigenous music from all over the world. For many years he was a member of V. Nazarov's folk music band, where he displayed his amazing virtuosity. He visited half the countries of the world, receiving acclaim wherever he went.

Perhaps some of you will even remember Kostya's small (but brilliant) role in the film "The Life and Death of Joaquin Murieta," based on the book by Pablo Neruda.

In the last year of his life Kostya played in the folk music group To, Chto Nado ("Just What You Need"). Kostya Kuzhaliev's star was bright; his music will live on in the hearts of all of those who heard and admired him; his art helped bring a little sunshine into our lives during those somber years. I have no doubt that Kostya's soul is recorded in the Book of Life.

On September 25, 1991, in the House of Culture at Melnikova Street, a memorial 40th-birthday concert was held for Kostya Kuzhaliev. State Folk Music Theatre director Vladimir Nazarov invited all of Kostya's fans and admirers to attend a free concert in his honor.

On October 8, 1991 a memorial party was held in the State Concert Hall. All the musicians who had once worked with this patriarch of folk and country music in Russia took



part in the concert. And as a result, Kuzhali, an international fund, has been set up, its charter being to aid folk and country musicians from all over the former USSR, establishing contacts between them.

This communication and mutual assistance has become vital since the Soviet Union disintegrated and the CIS is being torn apart by ethnic nationalism. It is important that we help this music -- and the people who

play it -- to survive because, although its aesthetics seem to revolve around national or ethnic preservation, folk music actually transcends state and national barriers to unite people everywhere. And maybe, just maybe, music can help us overcome our nationalistic problems....

Why not?

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**MANY CASSETTE ALBUMS (1980-1991), MOSCOW**  
**September 1991. Moscow.**

## THE RED RIVER VALLEY BOYS (MOSCOW)

Originally put together by Kostya Kuzhaliev, and taking its name from the classic bluegrass song, the Red River Valley Boys of Moscow have been together for about one year now. Kuzhaliev was one of the grandfathers of the modern folk and country music movement in the USSR, a banjo player and Ovation guitarist extraordinaire -- though he and many of the next generation of musicians followed different paths.

The band includes truly remarkable musicians:

Alexander Shchukin: He builds banjos by hand, and performs. His friends say that he is a little bit crazy, because Sasha keeps a lot of his country and bluegrass music inside himself -- though, to be honest, the other members of the band are no less devoted to their music. Fanatics, all of them. But it is thanks to such people that country music is still alive and well in Mother Russia.

Original bluegrass, a style of acoustic folk music with Scottish and Irish roots, born and baptized in the USA, would not seem to have much to offer Russians. But the Boys know otherwise.

"Rockers, heavy metal fans, everybody likes bluegrass," claims Shchukin. "And when you play bluegrass for the old folks they say, 'Now this is our music.' Everyone comes 'round to bluegrass once they hear it."

Shchukin, the heart and soul of the Boys now, fell in love with the sounds of bluegrass legends Bill Monroe and Jimmy Martin in the late 1970s. Unable to reproduce the music on the instruments that were then available in Soviet music stores, he

set out to make his first five-string banjo -- a project that only took him 14 years to complete! "When I start something, I usually finish it," Shchukin said of his dogged determination. That instrument, by the way, is now on display at the Bluegrass Museum in Kentucky.

Dressed in the white hats and dress suits favored by old-time Kentucky musicians, the Boys favor the particular classic, acoustic style of bluegrass that includes a heavy emphasis on gospel. And they are dignified. Explains Shchukin: "We don't jump around when we play. Bluegrass is serious music."

Their traditional approach has won them acclaim and an invitation to the 1991 International Bluegrass Music Association Fan Fest. Last September the group jammed alongside their idols: Bill Monroe, the Osborne Brothers and banjoist Earl Scruggs. "It was a dream come true," Shchukin recalls.

In addition to their regular concert series, the Red River Valley Boys have several other ongoing projects in the works in an effort to advance the cause of their music. Shchukin has his own banjo school where he claims he can "teach anyone to play in two months"; and the group have started a business which will produce four- and five-string banjos in former military factories, with part of the proceeds going to benefit blind children. But the focus of the Red River Valley Boys remains the music. "That's the most important thing," says Shchukin. "We can't live without this music."





The Red River Valley Boys and Bill Monroe, Earl Scruggs (this page), Alison Brown (page 68)

**DISCOGRAPHY:  
FIVE CASSETTE ALBUMS  
(1990-1993) MOSCOW-USA  
September 1992.**

"The band's name expresses traditional American bluegrass roots; at the same time it denotes the Russian soil where their music has germinated."  
**(The Evansville Courier)**

"The Russians met Bill Monroe in a dressing room of the Grand Ole Opry, where they were getting ready for the show. The invitation came from the Osborne Brothers. After the RRVB were introduced to him and his boys, they all sang and played together. Monroe sang a couple of his early songs with the Russians accompanying."  
**(Time Out, No 6, 1991, Moscow)**

"The RRVB took home with them a DR Sigma guitar from Martin, a traditional mandolin by Gibson USA, just like the company made back around the turn of the century, and the first prototype of the new Earl Scruggs Banjo which has a bowtie fingerboard. And the IBMA got the bard's home-made instruments for its new IBMA Museum, which opens next fall in Owensboro."  
**'Bluegrass Homecoming '91' Bulletin)**

"The RRVB may have been new to bluegrass, but the crowd at the third annual Bluegrass Homecoming week kickoff loved it. From the moment the band launched into "Jambalaya," the audience was screaming, clapping along and boogieing in their lawn chairs ... a crowd of 3,000 bluegrass fans from across the United States and several other countries gave them two stand-

ing ovations and called them back for an encore at the twilight concert on the lawn of Texas Gas Transmission Corp.  
**(Messenger-Inquirer, September 24, 1991)**

"We are highly honored and, yes, a bit overwhelmed to have you, the first bluegrass band from the Republic of Russia, visit our town, the birthplace of Bluegrass music. As your visit here today clearly shows, bluegrass music is now known and performed throughout the world. We know from publicity preceding your visit here that you play true bluegrass."  
**(Rosine Bluegrass Music Association, Kentucky, USA, September 25, 1991)**

"Rosine - When the RRVB opened with Bill Monroe's 'Blue Moon of Kentucky' the people in Monroe's hometown couldn't help but tap their feet and clap their hands to the music."  
**(Messenger-Inquirer, September 9, 1991, Owensboro, Kentucky)**

"The Russian quartet brought the music back 'home' to western Kentucky at the IBMA World of Bluegrass Trade Show and Fan Fest."  
**(Bluegrass Homecoming '91' Bulletin)**

"The Red River Valley Boys is the only Soviet group which has, for the history of bluegrass, been invited to attend the IBMA's annual festival, World of Bluegrass And Fan Fest in Owensboro, Kentucky."  
**(Bluegrass Unlimited, September 1991)**

"When 3,000 people gathered on the lawn of Texas Gas in south Owensboro Monday, September 23rd, the first story line quickly emerged, the Russian boys. In a few high-intensity days Moscow's Red River Valley Boys moved from unknowns to the toast of the bluegrass world.

Dressed the old way in suits and white hats, the Russians earned two encores on Monday opening for the Nashville Bluegrass Band. That set them off on a whirlwind saga that included drawing more than 200 people to Bratcher's Grocery in the Monroe home town of Rosine on a Wednesday afternoon, earning another two encores on the Grand Ole Opry Friday night, meeting Mr. and Mrs. Scruggs at their home, and receiving new instruments and cases from Gibson, Martin Guitar Company, and Acrospace Case Company during their Fan Fest show Saturday. Throughout, they earned their cassettes and Russian memorabilia.  
**("International Bluegrass", No. 6, 1991)**

"You sing well, and this banjo sounds good, too. I wish you every success."  
**(Earl Scruggs, September 1991)**

"The RRVB from the ex-USSR were presented with instruments and accessories by such manufacturers as Gibson, Martin, Climate Case and others after their Saturday performance. For their finale they called the various band members that were backstage to join them on "Will The Circle Be Unbroken."  
**("Bluegrass Unlimited", September 1991)**



## SERGE & JOURNEY BAND (MOSCOW)

Serge & Journey Band (S&JB) was founded in October 1992 by two ex-members of the Red River Valley Boys -- Serge Kutin and Victor Zadorozhny. There are five of them now:

1. Serge Kutin: Lead vocals, guitar, drums, harmonica, mandolin. He was born June 27, 1963 on Sakhalin Island in the Pacific, just north of Japan. (His citizenship -- like that of everyone born on this holy-contested island -- is a topic of discussion between the Russian and Japanese governments.) When he was five, his family moved to the town of Ivanovo, about 300 km from Moscow. At 14 he began to dream of being in a band. At 15 he heard the Beatles for the first time. He was greatly impressed. A little later he heard Elvis and went mad about his music -- about rock'n'roll -- even though at that time rock was officially prohibited in the Soviet Union.

In the '80s he became a student at the Textile Institute, and there he finally realized his dream when he put together his first band, Personal. He played drums and sang his own songs -- in Russian, because it was prohibited to sing in English on the stage. He graduated from the Institute and began working as an engineer, but in the evening he played music at parties. In '87 he quit his day job but he soon found himself in dire straits because music, not too surprisingly, didn't pay as much as being an engineer. He couldn't even afford to buy a harmonica, which he loved to play so much. About that same time, though, he began to study and write lyrics in English.

Then, in 1989, Igor Bushyev, the leader of the Acoustic

Country Band, heard him playing at a party and invited him to join ACB. His professional career was finally on its way. While with ACB he and the band participated in the festival Farmer-90 in Moscow. They were a success, performing songs by Bill Monroe ("Blue Moon Of Kentucky," "Little Community Church"), Ricky Scaggs and others. The Red River Valley Boys (RRVB) heard him there, and invited him to join in with them. So, in December of '91 he moved to Moscow. At Farmer-92 in Moscow he sang with RRVB, performing such perennial favorites as Hank Williams' "I Saw The Light," Jimmy Martin's "Widow Maker," and Bill Monroe's "Blue Moon Of Kentucky." In April of that year the Red River Valley Boys were invited to participate in Billy Graham's Revival-92 mission, and in May the band was invited to Turkey to tour the resorts along the Mediterranean. In June they parted ways. The banjo player, fiddler and guitarist returned to Moscow to continue as RRVB, while Serge and Victor Zadorozhny (double-bass) remained in Turkey. They worked in five-star hotels (like the Grand Azure -- the hotel-of-choice for the likes of ex-UN Secretary General Peres de Cuelar and Presidents of Turkey past and present; and the Laguna, Paradise and Altyn Yunnus). In September of '92 Serge and Victor returned home to establish a new group.

2. Victor Zadorozhny: Double-bass. Born in December of '54 in White Church City, Ukraine. He fell in love with music, and at 16 began to play bass in a school band. After leaving school he



entered the Kiev Institute of Sound and Acoustics where he played guitar in the institute's rock band until he graduated, after which he began to write his own ballads in Russian. He heard country music for the first time when Roy Clark and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band came to Moscow in the '80s. He was instantly smitten, gave up the guitar and began playing country and bluegrass on the double-bass. In 1990 RRVB asked him to join the band. At the same time he worked as a director in the Folk and Country Music Center. He went with RRVB in '91 on a 10-day tour of the United States, with appearances at the Bluegrass Trade Show & Fan Fest-91 in Owensboro, Kentucky, the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville (with Bill Monroe, Jim & Jesse, the Osborne Brothers and the Nashville Bluegrass Band); and cut a disc with Butler Records. He's taken part in festivals in Germany and Estonia, all the Farmer Festivals in Moscow, and Billy Graham's Revival-92 mission. With all his travels, Victor now has musician pals in Germany, Italy, France, the U.S....

3. Victor Chaplgin: Fiddle, piano. He was born in May of 1957. As a young student he became interested in classical music, and in 1976 he entered the Conservatoire in Nizhni Novgorod, graduating in 1981. At first he worked at a children's music school, but then moved on to play solo violin with the Philharmonic Orchestra in Ivanovo. In 1986 he returned to school. Once he heard the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band on TV with their "Rocky Mountain High," he decided this was his kind of music. In 1989 the Acoustic Country Band invited him to play fiddle with them, and in October of 1992 Serge Kutin invited him into the Serge & Journey Band.

4. Andrci Goltsin: Banjo, Dobro, mandolin. Born in September 1964 in Moscow. In 1984 he entered the Pedagogical Institute. There he became interested in music, especially bluegrass, and began to play in the Cindy Folk Band. In 1990 he founded Appalachian Path and took part in the Farmer-92 Festival in Moscow and several TV programs. In October of 1992 Serge Kutin invited him into S&JB.

5. Rustam Kuzhaliev - Mandolin, guitar. Born in May of 1975 and already at 13 in a band called Tonerer with his father, who was a very famous Russian musician. He toured Germany in 1988 (the future members of RRVB were there, too). From 1991 he played in Appalachian Path, and in 1992 he was invited by Serge Kutin into S&JB.

**"MY SOUL"**

*My soul yearns to be in  
Nashville,*

*It will be there when I die,  
I'll go and never come back,  
No more your dying cry.*

*"You're crazy," maybe you'll  
say.*

*I tell you, I agree.  
My sufferings belong to me,  
But I never will bend my knee.  
(chorus)*

*You will never see the pain on  
my face,*

*You will never see my feelin's.  
I cannot make my heart base,  
I will always conceal my  
scalding tears.*

*I have no understanding,  
I have not one dollar bill.  
You know I'm very needing,  
But with me you can deal.*

**Serge Kutin**

**October 1990**

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**DISCOGRAPHY:**

**CASSETTE ALBUM**

**"JOURNEY BAND" (1993)**

## ALEXANDER KAZANKOV A MUSICAL PARADOX

Kukuruza is my favorite group, so in 1987 when I noticed a new soloist I decided to find out what he is all about. It seems he is quite an unusual person. His name is Alexander (Shura) Kazankov, and he has studied, at one time or another, in virtually every institute in the country! He even has done some post-graduate work at the Ethnography Institute at the Russian Academy of Sciences.

When we met for the first time, Shura assured me that he was the only person in Moscow who could really sing the blues. Of course, his declaration was quite boastful but I had seen his performance and can testify that he feels the blues from the bottom of his heart to the very tips of his fingers.

Sitting with him in his Moscow communal flat one evening, he treated me to a smorgasbord of

classic blues songs by Big Bill Broonzy, Muddy Waters, Robert Johnson, Elmo James and the like. As as if that wasn't enough, he next regaled me with Hungarian folk songs, which he also loves. And then, suddenly, he began to dance -- something Transylvanian -- after which, with the announcement "Bolivia," he launched into a "Harkas" song, complete with an "ay-ay-ay!" refrain.

Alexander Kazankov is a true polyglot; he speaks fluent English and Hungarian; and understands Spanish, German, Danish, Swedish and French. Also, he has a very unusual hypothesis -- crazy (or brilliant?) -- about the origins of the human race. He thinks that Homo sapiens appeared about 50,000 years ago in the Palestinian region, and that the principle agent of natural selection was

the ability to keep a childish attitude toward life. As soon as Homo sapiens appeared, Shura believes, he began to spread, though within a limited territory, interbreeding with or exterminating the indigenous Neanderthals. This early civilization had its own pre-language, pre-culture and pre-music -- which "can now be identified," Kazankov asserts, "in the songs of the Australian aborigines, African bushmen, American Indians, inhabitants of Southeast Asia and, possibly, Nizhni Novgorod provincial peasants."

Of course, that's just Shura's hypothesis. The third stage of

world culture degradation, according to Kurt Zaks, will result in "returning to the future," i.e., ancient melodies of different world cultures, and in the creation of a universal style in music, "folk-fusion." The Bakha Ula religion preaches just such an idea.

As you read these notes, Shura Kazankov will be singing the blues in some Copenhagen or Budapest pub -- and studying local folklore.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM 'ETHNIK, FOLK, KAZANKOV' (1993)**

**Summer 1992.**



## FLOCTUS MUSICAL "AGRO-TECHNIC" (MOSCOW)

As group leader Leonid Agranovich said in his interview with Narodnoye Tvorchestvo (People's Creation) magazine, the name Floctus is a hybrid of "flox" and "cactus." Their songs most closely resemble well-known Russian satiric verses called "basnya" ("fable"), about the lives of people, animals and flowers. They are full of optimism and humor, feelings which are transferred from the singers to the audience. The result is that quite often the audience spontaneously sings along with Floctus, for although they don't know the words the simple refrains of "la-la-la" or "ya-ya-ya" are immediately understandable to everyone.

At the Farmer-90 Festival in Moscow in January of 1990, the

group won not only an award but the audience's affection as well. It was...living green parrot. Floctus' triumph at the Festival showed both their originality and their growing popularity in the then- now ex-USSR.

But just why is this band so popular now? Well, there are several answers to this question. First, its simple (but not primitive) musical style is original and not easy to categorize. Is it non-formal folk music? Country-rock? Folk-punk? Then there are their very simple lyrics, which makes it easy for the audience to memorize them and sing along at the Floctus concerts. But above all is the musicians' openness to the audience, their natural way of playing on stage and their absence of affect-

tation, which is an all-too-common ailment of Soviet popular music. Every show creates an atmosphere of a "happening," both onstage and in the concert hall.

Floctus was formed in 1985 with:

Leonid Agranovich - leader, acoustic guitar, guitar, vocals;  
Veniamin Oleinikov - accordion;

Alexander Baru - percussion, accordion;

Vladimir Polyakov - electric bass, guitar, vocals.

The group has performed with great success in Moscow,

Leningrad [St. Petersburg], Western Siberia, the Urals and in many other cities, towns and provinces across the width and breadth of the former Soviet Union. They also are regular participants on many of the country's popular radio and television shows

**PRODUCER PETER SHULZMANN.**

**DISCOGRAPHY:  
CASSETTE ALBUM  
"FLOCTUS" (1990)  
MOSCOW.**

**Summer 1992.**



## FICTUS: A POP-CLAP GROUP (MOSCOW)

Fictus took its unusual name in December of 1990 after Floctus splintered and some musicians left to form a new group. These experienced musicians had all been winners in the international festivals Farmer-89 and Farmer-90, and had participated in the John Lennon Memorial Concert -- one of the biggest international concerts ever to have taken place in the USSR -- as well as numerous charity concerts.

Fictus' contribution to music is the new style called "pop-clap." It's a funny show, based on humor, dancing and merry music full of energy and drive. Their songs comprise elements of pop, country and folk music from around the world. Their program includes merry shakes, twist, rock'n'roll, folk songs sung in quite an informal style,

cantata for choir, and pop-clap band/audience joint performances. Their audience is not just a passive spectator, but an integral part of the show.

Fictus concerts invariably put the audience into a happy mood, and an evening in their company is full of laughter and surprises. The band often takes part in popular radio programs and their shows are broadcast on TV.

The main lineup consists of three musicians -- Vladimir Pol-yakov (vocals, keyboards, electric contrabass), Mikhail Doulsky (guitar, vocals), and Alexander Baru (accordion, percussion) -- who continually work on perfecting their performance art.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM "FICTUS"**  
**(1992), MOSCOW**  
**Winter 1992.**

## APPALACHIAN PATH (MOSCOW)

Appalachian Path was formed in the spring of 1991, playing their debut gig at the international festival of country and folk music in Moscow, Farmer-92. In America along the length of the Appalachian Mountains, there is a special trail, a path for lonely wanderers, nomads by vocation. Seven thousand kilometers and not one sign of civilization. This is the Appalachian Path, and to the members of this band the name seemed to sum up the character of their music.

Andrei Goltsin is the arranger for Appalachian Path these days, but back when he worked as an animal technician at the zoo he tortured his banjo until the bear in his cage roared his delight. Andrei is especially fond of Earl Scruggs' music, but plays American tunes in his own inimitable Russian style.

The band's soloist is a fiddler and a girl, Lena Perova, and she is very popular with the public. "It brings me much happiness to look out into the hall and see smiling faces in the audience; their joy is the greatest reward for me," she says. But of course she has an idol of her own -- Tamara Sidorova. "I listened to her while studying at school in Russia; it seems to me she has no equal. However, I don't imitate her -- I'm different by character and by temperament."

And the youngest member of the band, for whom they have great hopes, is 17-year-old Rustam Kuzhaliev.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM**  
**"APPALACHIAN PATH" (1992)**  
**Summer 1992.**



**MUSICAL PICTURES...  
AND THE LETTER "YAT"  
(MOSCOW)**

The first time I saw this group -- with the very strange name of Yat -- happened to be at the Farmer-91 Festival. Their style was (and still is) as unconventional as their name.

The music is fresh and vivid, combining guitar and flute, psaltery (an ancient Russian folk instrument), vargan, domra (another Russian folk instrument) and trombone. There are elements of jazz, country and folk in the music, though the resulting sound does not fit well into any of these genres.

"Yat" is a letter from an ancient form of the Russian alphabet, now almost forgotten. The musicians discovered it in Mikhail Ancharov's novel, "The Box-tree Forest," and decided that it would be quite a good name for their band.

The members of Yat are:

Fyodor Fulin: Plays a wide range of instruments.

Alexander Chernomashentsev: Guitar player. "Serious" patriarch of the band, with a terrific sense of humor.

Yekaterina Orlova: Plays the flute, and is the band's astrolo-

ger and all-around very pleasant girl.

Igor Samoilov: Clarinet; a very calm and imperturbable person, who also perfectly compliments the show.

Dmitri Soloviev: Bass guitar.

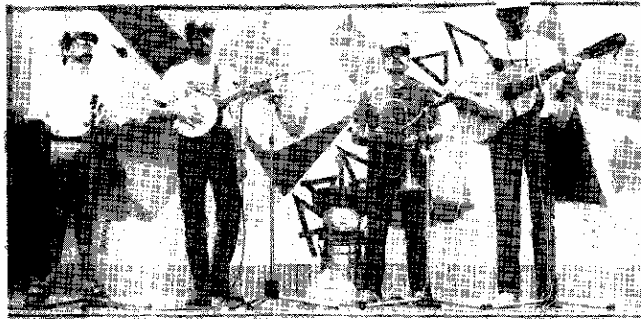
Alexander Yaryin: Percussion.

Everybody sings, and everybody is a multi-instrumentalist. The astrological explanation for the band's birth is that all of the members of the group were looking for the answer to many different questions in their previous lives. Their having met and come together in Yat is their destiny; the band is a means for finding the final solution(s) to all their problems.

Yat songs are neither posters nor Christmas cards. Rather, they resemble paintings created with music. The lyrics are written by children's poet Oleg Grigoriev.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM "YAT"**  
**(1993)**

**Summer 1992.**



**TELEFON DOVERIYA  
("THE TRUST TELEPHONE LINE")  
(MOSCOW)**

...took part in the U.S. Peace March in 1989. The group's five-string banjo player, Igor Sazonov, and lead guitarist, Zhenya Goryachkin, are trying to combine Russian musical folklore with American country music. Their experiments along these lines have proven to be both interesting and convincing. The group's concerts provide an offbeat fusion of classic American folk songs turning suddenly

into purely Russian tunes. If you visit Moscow, be sure to take in a concert of The Trust Telephone Line; you won't be disappointed. The group has been a winner at more than one of the Farmer Festivals.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM "THE TRUST TELEPHONE LINE"**  
**(1992)**

**Spring 1992.**

## LEMONADE JOE (MOSCOW)

There is a legend that Valery Shapovalov, the group's leader and famous singer and composer, named his band after the Czechoslovakian movie "Lemonade Joe," which was well-known in the USSR in the late '60s. The film's hero, Cowboy Joe, was nicknamed "Lemonade" because he never drank whiskey or any other spirits ever since he once unknowingly imbibed and nearly died -- although of course he survived so that the movie could have a happy ending...

Valery Shapovalov is a Moscow rock'n'roll patriarch who began performing in the late '60s as a member of the band Muscovites, playing traditional rock'n'roll and country music. At the beginning of the '70s Valery organized his own group, Lemonade Joe. In 1988 during Roy Clark's visit to Moscow, Valery was the instigator of the Moscow

Country Club session. He also supplied the party with vodka, beer and snacks. Clark was enchanted!

Valery Shapovalov is a lyricist and composer. He writes songs for children. He also loves country music and often performs it. His hit song, "Can't Go There, Can't Go Here" (about the Soviet people having no rights to go abroad before *perestroika*), hit the top of the charts at the end of the '80s and beginning of the '90s, when charts were first introduced into the Soviet Union.

Today, Valery has become a professional painter, but he still often listens to his favorite country songs!

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
LP "HALT, WHO GOES THERE?" (1988), *MELODIA*  
Winter 1993.





## MASHINA VREMENI ("TIME MACHINE") AND ITS LEADER, ANDREI MAKAREVICH (MOSCOW)

I saw this group for the first time in 1978 in my native city, Sverdlovsk (Yekaterinburg), at a student's song festival with the funny name of The Spring of the Politechnical Institute. They were already popular at that time -- having been composing and performing since 1969 with great success. Their concerts were like gulps of fresh air in the stagnant atmosphere of the '70s.

In Russia Makarevich's name carries the same stature as Bob Dylan's name in America or Paul McCartney's in Great Britain. But since good old country music is in some ways the ancestor of rock'n'roll, many rock musicians (including Makarevich) often pay homage to the style. The leader of Time Machine has composed many remarkable songs, some of which

are stylistically very close to country: "Fire", "Marionettes," "Soldier," "Birthday," "Captain," "Foolish Starling," "The Dangers of Alcohol Blues," "Cafe Lira," "Turning Point," "Bluebird," and many other country-rock compositions.

Over the past few years, Makarevich has often performed solo. He is a remarkable lyricist, composer and performer.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**REALLY BIG AND WONDERFUL. MY APOLOGIES, BUT TO DO THIS GREAT FIGURE IN COUNTRY AND ROCK MUSIC JUSTICE IS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THIS BOOK -- (AUTHOR).**

Winter 1993.

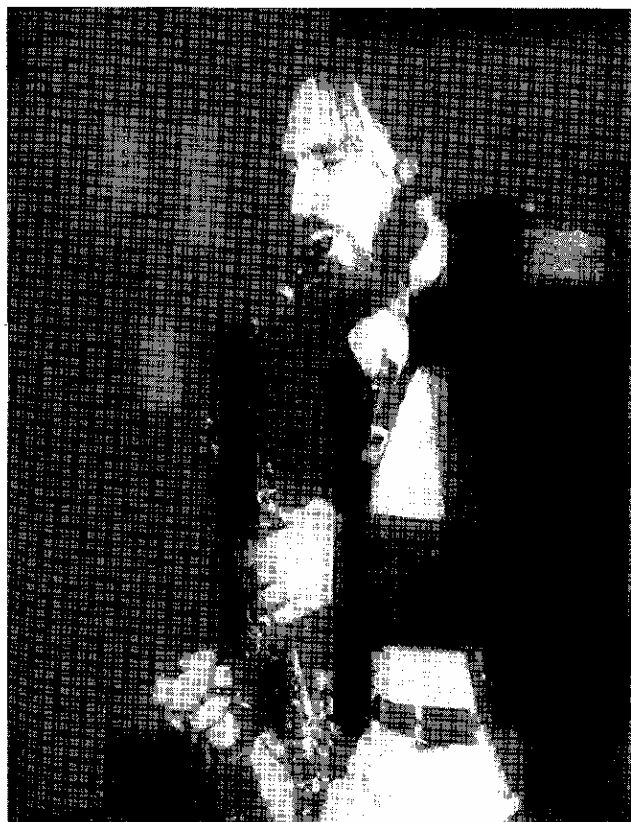


## ARSENAL (MOSCOW)

In the 1950's jazz and rock saxophonist Alexei Kozlov became one of the early "Styliagas," Soviet citizens who dressed in a Western style. In 1973 he formed Arsenal, choosing the name to convey the band's philosophy of employing a wide range of instruments and styles. Indeed, they played jazz, rock, funk, folk -- even chamber

music -- and utilized everything from modern electronic equipment to ancient folk instruments such as the sitar. They recorded six albums, one of which was produced in an American recording studio, East Wind.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTES ALBUMS, LPs AND CDs (1960s-1993)**



## JAZZ-BALALAIKA (MOSCOW)

The Moscow group Jazz-Balalaika was born in 1987 within the confines of the very traditional Moscow Gnesins Music Pedagogical Institute by some students who were fond of non-traditional music. Their later work in the Tula region with the local Philharmonic Society was a real test of solidarity and dedication to the band. Basically, Jazz-Balalaika was confined to gigs at factories, industrial plants and village clubs. Initially the group hardly differed from traditional folk ensembles, but little by little they found their own original style -- a mixture of music, clowning and eccentric dance. Yuri Kizinyok, who graduated from the State Institute of Theater Arts, helped the musicians a lot. Jazz-Balalaika have continued to search for their identity in a purely instrumental vein, but has also worked with the famous tenor-soloist and Honoured Artist of Russia, Viacheslav Voinarovsky.

Jazz-Balalaika have taken part in many popular TV shows and in the International Farmer Festivals. Beginning in 1989 the group began to give concerts all over Russia, touring through many towns and cities. In 1990, they visited Holland and Belgium together with the clown group Mimicrichy and the en-

semble Bim-Bom. Shortly after that, they twice visited the U.S., journeyed to Slovenia, and in 1992 successfully toured in Germany and Austria. There, they garnered many complimentary reviews and received several promising offers for the future.

Over the course of their five-year history Jazz-Balalaika have recorded two LPs and are now preparing to record a CD of their own compositions. Group leader and accordionist Valery Chernyshov is responsible for all of the instrumental arrangements.

The band is young and has great plans and hopes for the future. Their unique style excites all audiences, and their original sound is both a pleasure to listen to and easy to remember. Once you've seen and heard Jazz-Balalaika, you'll never forget them!

**Performers:**

Valery Chernyshov - accordion  
Boris Boltzhansky - flute  
Pavel Masliukov - balalaika,  
contrabass

Vladimir Friedman - guitar  
Alexander Paperny - balalaika  
Music by Kerbenko, Tamarin,  
Piazzolla, Chernyshov.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM**  
**"JAZZ-BALALAIKA" (1993)**

**Winter 1993.**



## ЇAZZ — БАЛАЛАЙКА

## ZHANNA BICHEVSKAYA "THE RUSSIAN JOAN BAEZ" (MOSCOW)

As a child, she often listened to Russian folk songs -- all the members of her family loved this music. But young Zhanna did not think of becoming a professional singer. She dreamed, rather, of becoming a surgeon because her hands were always as hard as steel -- as was her will. But, as fate would have it, Zhanna Bichevskaya's future was determined by her father's gift of a guitar on her 16th birthday.

After this, she began to take guitar classes at the musical school, and later graduated from the Variety and Circus School. Her teacher was Irma Yaunzem, the famous singer and collector of folk songs. Yaunzem's creative work had been the synthesis of folk culture's best elements back in the '30s. She taught young Zhanna many important elements of singing and arranging traditional Russian songs.

Then, as a third-year student, Zhanna attended a concert by Bulat Okudzhava at the Moscow House of Literary Men. There, she heard the famous bard singing "Matushka," which was destined to become her signature song. The arrangement she heard that night in no way resembled the usual variety style. He sang this ancient Russian song not with the accompaniment of a bayan or a balalaika, nor with a band of ancient instruments, but with a guitar! Was such a thing possible?! It was a revelation, and Zhanna's future path was decided at this moment.

When she won the 5th All-Union Contest of Variety Artists in 1973, Zhanna's name became well-known in the world of music.

She became famous not only in Russia, but abroad as well.

Bichevskaya's musical range is seemingly limitless; she sings ancient Russian ballads, city romances, Russian folk songs, the songs of modern Russian bards.... She sings in country-rock style, folk-rock style, and songs of political protest. Every song is colored with her own unique interpretation. She's a singer, an actress, a composer and arranger, a guitarist, a collector of folklore and an ardent traveller.

As time passed, Zhanna recorded one album after another. Now, she is the author of six albums. She was the winner of the Farmer-91 country music festival in St. Petersburg. It was soon after this that I first met her at a concert in the Moscow Olympic Village Concert Hall, where she performed a series of White Guard officer's songs (the famous "Lieutenant Golitsyn" among others), as well as a series of religious songs. The lyrics to the latter were composed by Father Roman, a celibate priest of the Pskovpechersky Monastery. Zhanna also included songs from the album "Butterfly," which she had recorded in collaboration with pianist Valentin Zuev and guitarist Gennady Ponomarev.

I remember seeing the TV broadcast of Zhanna's concert at the famous Olympia Concert Hall in Paris in 1985. The French critics called her the "Russian Joan Baez." It is impossible to find a better characterization of Zhanna's singing talent and creative work.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**SEVEN LPs (1970s-1993)**  
**Winter 1992.**



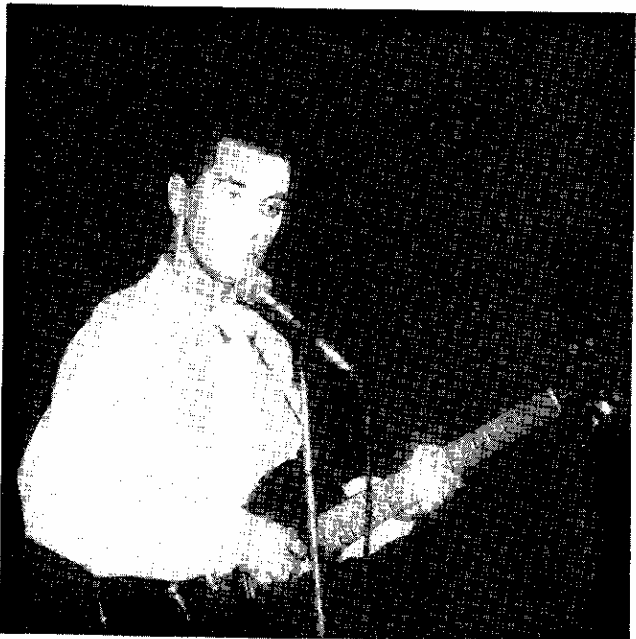
### VEZHLIVY OTKAZ ("POLITE REFUSAL") (MOSCOW)

I was stunned by the voice of Roman Syslov, the group's vocalist. Vezhlivy Otkaz wasn't performing classic country or folk music at the concert I attended in 1989. Rather, they seemed to have somehow instinctively found the style of the ancient Slavs, the way our ancestors sang in the 9th and 10th centuries A.D. The group's repertoire includes a lot of such

soaring vocals performed a cappella.

The concert took place at the Moscow State University Palace of Culture, where they played with the folk-rock Alians (Alliance). I won't forget their singer, Inna Zhelannaya, either.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM, LP**  
*Winter 1992.*



### SANDRO ERISTAVI (RUSSIA - USA)

An amateur singer, Sandro sings like a professional. Georgian by birth, his repertoire consists of native Georgian songs and American blues, spirituals and hootenanny songs. His duo with sister Tamara was on TV screens in April, 1989 on a show called "Friends, Let's Take Each Other's Hands." It was a great success, as the family of Eristavi captured the hearts of their audience with their beautiful, nostalgic songs -- not only classic blues, but also their own original compositions in Georgian, Russian and Eng-

lish. In 1990 Sandro recorded a disc in France, but here in Russia he has only amateur recordings on very rare cassettes. He gave only a few concerts at the end of the '80s, but every one was a real pleasure for blues lovers. Now Sandro lives in Los Angeles and works in a recording studio there.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUMS**  
**"TAMARA & SANDRO" (1990),**  
**MOSCOW; "SANDRO IN THE**  
**USA" (1993), LOS ANGELES**  
*Summer 1992.*



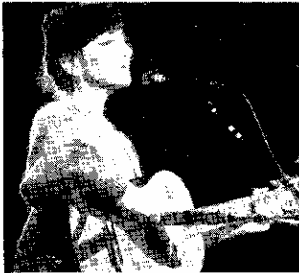
## GOOD-BYE, CANT... OR HELLO?

Moscow's Country Count Band was the only Russian group playing Cajun music. A very rare sound in this country, Cajun was developed in Canada and Louisiana, cultivated in North America, and based on French melodies intertwined with classic American C&W.

It's a very original-sounding group made up of session musicians who twice yearly get together for some concerts. Dmitri Vakhrameev (now playing in Fine Streets, a St. Petersburg-

based band) began his career in Cant some years ago. He is a magnificent five-string banjo player. At times, the group leader was Tatiana Petrosian, who is now a famous singer giving solo concerts comprising Scottish and Irish country ballads and songs from the catalogues of Joan Baez, Dolly Parton and many other great American singers. Oleg Blokh, accordionist and sometime-leader of Cant has formed a new group called Eldorado. They played with great success at the festivals Farmer-91 and Farmer-92 in Moscow. Later, one of the band members, Eduard Gershtein emigrated to the U.S. Eldorado's new album is ready and the musicians would gladly tour....

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**TWO CASSETTE ALBUMS**  
"CCB" (1989); "EL DORADO," (1991)  
Spring 1992.



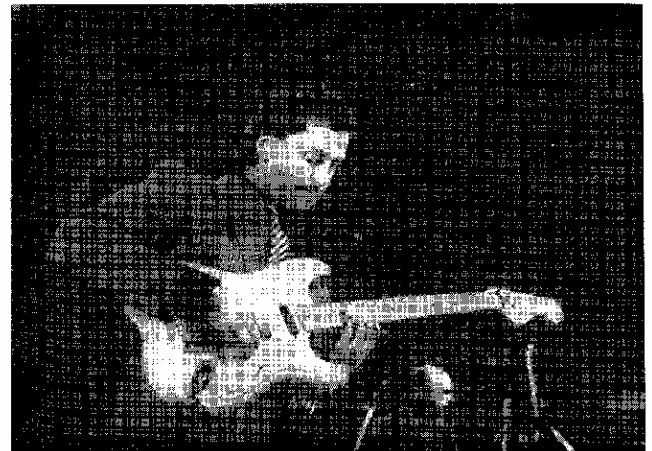
## SOVIET BLUES LP "BLUES IN RUSSIA"

### BANDS:

*Crossroads, Ultima Thule, I. Vdovchenko And Co., Blues Street Friends, Blues-Office, Rain, Sats Blues Band, Silver Ruble, Old Guard, Compromise Blue, Udachnoye Priobretenie, Veto Bank, League Of Blues.*  
**PRODUCER: A. Demidov**  
1992. Moscow.



Top: League Of Blues Bottom: Alexander "White" Belov



## X-ROUDZ (formerly CROSSROADS) (MOSCOW)

X-Roudz was founded three years ago by the famous blues guitarist Sergei Voronov. He had played in several non-professional bands until 1986, when he joined The Stas Namin Band. That same year the group toured the U.S., where Sergei jammed with The Dinosaurs and Kenny Loggins; and in December the band played with Peter Gabriel, Little Steven and Lou Reed at the Japan Aid Festival in Tokyo.

In 1987 Sergei left to form The Blues League with his friend Nikolai Arutyunov. In 1988 they toured in Sweden, Columbia and Peru. That summer in New York City, Steve Jordan introduced Voronov to Keith Richards, and his name subsequently appeared on the Stones guitarist's solo LP, "Talk Is Cheap." A couple of months later, Sergei left The Blues League, performing as a session musician and touring with popular Russian rock groups such as Brigada S and SV.

By April of 1990 Sergei had found the

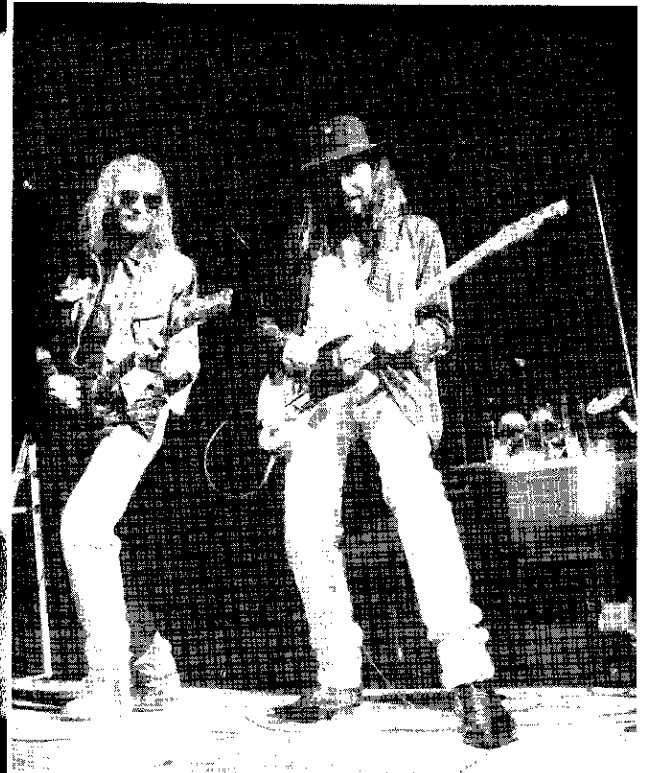
musicians he needed to form Crossroads -- bassist Andrei Butuzov, drummer Alexander (Sasha) Toropkin and guitarist Mikhail Savkin. The name of the group comes from the title of a recording by the great blues legend, Robert Johnson, and the style corresponds with the name of the group -- hard blues and classic rock'n'roll, mostly from the repertoires of Chuck Berry and the Stones; and, of course, original compositions by Sergei Voronov.

Their first public appearance came just one month later -- in front of 3,000 people. Their first TV appearance quickly followed,

and they were seen by tens of millions of viewers across the Soviet Union. In 1991 the band took part in the Rock Against Terror festival. Rock Fuzz magazine from St. Petersburg had this to say: "They were announced as 'giants of rhythm & blues' at the concert, and without a doubt they are...." They toured the Baltic Republics, towns across Russia, Byelorussia and Central Asia. In January of 1992 they were one of the headliners at the Blues in Russia Festival (the name coming from the band's song, "The Blues Live In Russia"). The popular music magazine Joker pronounced Sergei Voronov as "The No. 1 bluesman in the CIS." Their video "Diamond Rain" became a top hit in Russia, as did the soundtrack to the movie.

In July 1992 the band made its first trip to France -- which revealed a name conflict, prompting the change to "X-Roudz" -- and in December went back again to Paris. The French magazine ADA said: "...This is not a rough vodka folklore beloved by Russian ethnography fans. X-Roudz is freshness, good sound, good voice, good melodies that attract you.... This is something new in 'new old music.'" In July of 1993 X-Roudz appeared at Rock Summer Festival 1993 in Tallin, Estonia with Faith No More, Procol Harum, New Model Army and a host of other international acts.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**LP "BLUES IN RUSSIA"**  
**(1992), EVITA RECORDS;**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM (1992);**  
**LP (1993), FRANCE**  
**Summer 1993.**



## SILVER RUBLE BAND (MOSCOW)

One of the few Russian rhythm and blues bands, SRB was formed by lead vocalist, guitarist and harmonica player Alex Mikoyan, grandson of Stalin's right-hand man, Anastas Mikoyan. For more than 20 years Alex played the blues in the Moscow underground scene, but he got tired of combating the Soviet authorities' allergy to unorthodox music and in 1985 he became a race car driver. This career switch did not last long, however.

In three years he was back with a new blues project. Alex had found three other passionate enthusiasts bidding their time in various groups. "We almost lost all hope to play real music," says Max Kuzmin (bass, vocals, keyboards). But now at last they have a strong local following for their versions of American R&B classics and their own original songs. Alex says: "There's not much money in blues, but we hope one day our silver ruble will be worth a silver dollar!"

My acquaintance, Dima Soloviev (bass, vocals) recently left Larissa Grigorieva's Red Grass Band to join SRB -- demonstrating one again the close affinity of blues and country music.

### DISCOGRAPHY: DEMO TAPE (RECORDED IN DECEMBER 1990)

1. "I Just Want To Make Love To You" (W. Dixon)
2. "Walkin' The Dog" (R. Thomas)
3. "Bad Loser" (R. McCoy/C. Rushing)
4. "I Can't Be Satisfied" (Morganfield)
5. "Street Fighting Man" (M. Jagger/K. Richards)
6. "Blue Suede Shoes" (C. Perkins)
7. "I Can't Hold Out" (E. James)

### DOUBLE LP "BLUES IN RUSSIA"

1. "Walkin' The Dog" (R. Thomas)
2. "Love In Vain" (Payne)

### Musicians:

A. Mikoyan (vocals, guitars, harmonica, percussion)  
M. Savkin (guitars, bass, percussion)  
M. Shevyakov (drums)  
I. Clark (piano, percussion)  
F. Pomarev (saxophone)

### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

K. Nikolsky (guitars)  
N. Balakirev (drums)  
D. Soloviev (bass, vocals)  
E. Margulis (bass, vocals)  
Winter 1992.



## A HISTORY OF SOVIET AND RUSSIAN ROCKABILLY

The very first Soviet rock'n'roll groups also played rockabilly and Nashville-style country music: the Revengers (1961) and the Melody Makers (1963) from Riga, and the Juniors and the Optimists from Tallinn. In the early '70s some Estonian groups began to sing country songs in the Estonian language: Kukerpillid (1971), Dr. Friedrich and Apelsin (1975) among others. Soon after, a group of musicians -- Apelsin's soloist Ivo Linna; Heigo Mirka, the bass guitarist from the Optimists and Kyrvits; and brothers Tiit and Harry from Kukerpillid -- formed

a new band. Rock Hotel was the first Soviet band performing classic rock'n'roll and country songs in the USSR.

Toomas Lunge, leader of the Estonian group Justament, told me once that John Porry's orchestra played in Tallinn before the Second World War. They performed mainly jazz but also played two compositions in country style, one of which was the theme from the movie "Sun Valley Serenade." The orchestra disintegrated soon after fascism was established in Estonia.

*Winter 1993.*



*Pele Anderson (left)*

## BRAVO (MOSCOW)

This group, which plays good old rock'n'roll and rockabilly, was put together by guitarist Eugene Haftan in 1983. Before long, they had found a magnificent vocalist in Zhanna Aguzarova, but she eventually left to live in America -- though she is still quite popular in Russia. These days, Valery Siutkin, an eccentric and energetic young man, handles vocal du-

ties. In 1992 Bravo's popularity sent them to the top of many Russian music charts. Their idol is Elvis Presley.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUMS**  
*(1983-1993); LP "BRAVO"*  
*("MOSCOW BEAT") (1993),*  
**SINTEZ/RITONIS**  
*Winter 1993.*





## MISTER TWISTER (MOSCOW)

Mister Twister is Moscow's most popular rockabilly outfit. Their music is a fresh, unique mixture of powerful jazz influences and various musical styles that first evolved in the '50s.

While covering the classic standards of their idols -- legendary rock'n'rollers like Bill Haley, Carl Perkins, Chuck Berry, Johnny Burnette, Gene Vincent, Eddie Cochran, Johnny Cash and Chubby Checker -- they refused to be looked upon as purists, always sounding like 1956. They write much of their own material in both Russian and English -- enough to record three LPs, which, however, have never been released due to obvious Soviet-Communist bureaucratic obstacles. Nevertheless, the band is very well-known all around their huge country and never fails to get an ecstatic reception.

Mister Twister has three singers on lead and backup vocals, who are quite different from one another. This turns their overall sound into something beyond compare, no matter what they do -- a catchy ballad or a lightening-speed rocker. One for the music...two for the show. To say that Mister Twister are wild and crazy on stage is an understatement. The guitarist rolls around on the floor, the drummer hops over the 3-piece kit and the bassist mounts his "good lady" string bass, all without missing a beat! As the saxophone solo takes your breath away, the crowd goes totally mad and bops till they drop.

All this helps Mister Twister hold their own against the biggest and best of our Soviet pop

acts. The rockabilly cats have played student clubs and cafes, stadiums and 10,000-seat arenas throughout the Soviet Union, scoring quite a number of gigs and tours in Europe as well.

Besides numerous sellout tours and TV appearances, the band has been featured in many Western films on Russian rock that have been broadcast by television all over the world. Melodia, the only Soviet recording company (which is State-owned), saw fit to press 220,000 copies of Mister Twister's debut album. Half of this first pressing was snapped up within a month, and within three months the sales figures exceeded 1,300,000 rubles -- which meant more than a million copies sold.

Mister Twister is the biggest rockabilly band from Russia. The Moscow-based quartet fuses rockabilly, jive, blues and jazz, blending three striking voices with energetic and elaborate arrangements and infusing the brew with new, young and modern attitudes of the '90s in their brilliant, nowhere-to-be-found sound.

"Tough yet clear, jiving sax-guitar riffs a la Bill Haley."

"Powerful, slapping bass-driven, rocking rhythm section."

"Skillful and diversified guitar, now madly rocking like Chuck Berry, now jazzy and pensive like Jose Pass."

"Rasping, groovy saxophone solos."

"Unique, triple-layered vocals with a Beatlesque touch to the songs -- rockers, ballads, twists, shuffles and blues."

Mister Twister are:

Oleg Butenko - guitars, vocals

Oleg Usmanov - string bass, vocals

Valcyr "Hedgchog" Lysenko - drums, vocals

Pavel Verenchikov - tenor sax, piano, accordion

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
TWO LPs "MISTER TWISTER"  
(1991 and 1993)

**FROM THE BAND THAT IS STILL RISING!**

Winter 1993.



## PORT WAY (MOSCOW)

From cold Russia comes the hot rockabilly group Port Way, formed in 1988 by three school buddies who got together to play rock'n'roll. The lineup of Ivan "Boczman" ("Boatswain") Voronov (lead vocals, guitar, music and lyrics), Alexei "Cans" Kitaitsev (vocals, double-bass) and Stanislav "Wolf" Kutuzov (drums) has remained stable all these years.

At first, their music was influenced by such groups as Status Quo and Kiss, but later Port Way began to play classic rock'n'roll and rockabilly. They had fallen in love with rock'n'roll forever, it penetrated deeply into their hearts. They felt that it is such fun to play live, to give concerts "unplugged."

A new sound was brought into the group when Pavel Verenchikov, a professional and stylish saxophonist, began to work with them. His abilities as an arranger helped to polish Port Way's songs, and he has participated as a session musician in the recording studio and

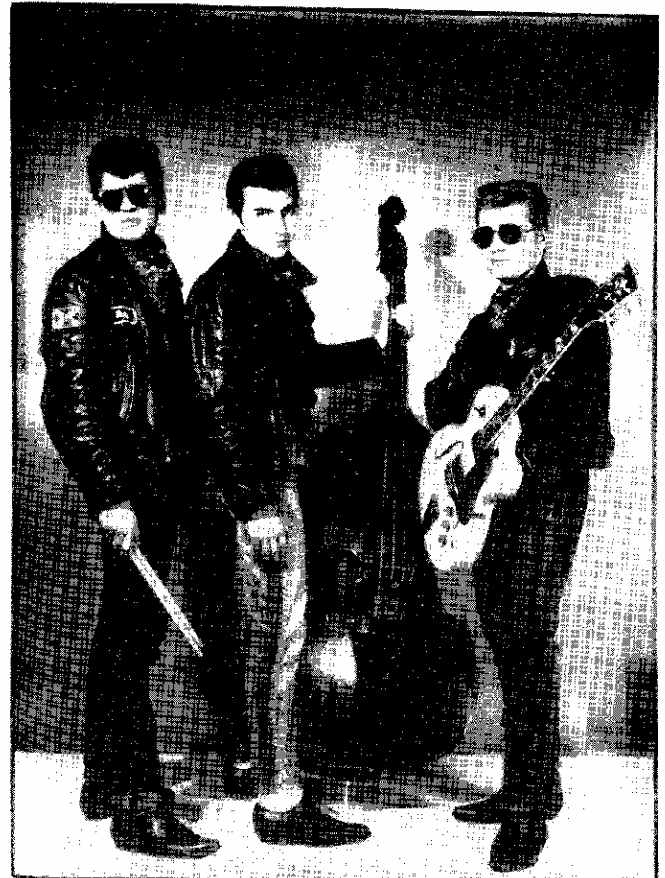
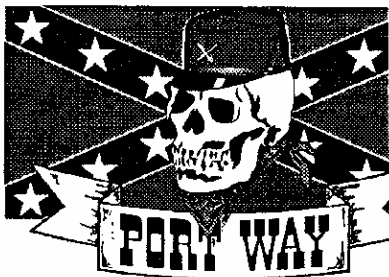
the occasional live concert. There is also unofficial member Gleb "Sam" Serin, who joins the band as a background vocalist at every concert. Port Way's image is that of "romantic hooligans" dreaming about the "far-off (American) '50s, the Golden Era of Rock'n'Roll" they never experienced because they were born too late. The spirit of the South flows through their songs, enhanced by the costumes, gleaming with a million colors -- and the Confederate flag.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM "PORT WAY" (1991)**

**CODA:**  
*Today this band has a new name, Jailbreakers, and sing only in English.*

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**TWO CASSETTE ALBUMS "BEER, WOMEN, MOTORCYCLES AND, OF COURSE, ROCK-N-ROLL!"; "CRAZY '50s..." (1993)**

**Winter 1993.**



## STARAYA GVARDIYA ("OLD GUARD") (MOSCOW)



The members of Staraya Gvardiya ("Old Guard") -- founded by the fiftyish Sykorsky brothers -- personify the band's moniker. They've been around for a while; in the mid-'60s they put together their first band, Atlanty....

I'm sitting now in older brother Alexei Sykorsky's home, getting acquainted with his unique phonoteque. Alexei tells me that his grandmother was the first to translate the lyrics of Woody Guthrie, Pete Seger and other famous American folksingers into Russian.

Alexei plays the drums and his brother sings and plays guitar for the band that performs Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis roots rock. They also love Nashville country music.

Misha Sokolov, a masterful harmonica player helped Old Guard to fall in love with the blues.

**Lineup:**

- Alexei Shachnev - bass
- Denis Mazjukov - piano
- Valery Geluta - guitar
- Alexander Sykorsky - vocals

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
CASSETTE ALBUM "OLD GUARD" (1992) DOUBLE LP "BLUES IN RUSSIA" (1992), EVITA RECORDS  
Winter 1993.



Top: Staraya Gvardiya  
Bottom: Misha Sokolov under the logo of Third Moscow rhythm-and-blues festival

## ET CETERA

Today in Moscow there are also some very popular bands, such as White Spirit (blues-rock); Rockabilly Trio, Cry Baby, and Miller Genuine Draft, Bri-

olinovaya Mechta (Brioline Dream) etc.

Also, every weekend there is a concert called "Girls, Beer and Rock'n'Roll."

Fall 1993. Moscow.



Briolinovaya Mechta

## "MR. RUSSIAN COUNTRY" (MOSCOW)

Musician and composer Yuri Loza was thus christened by Farmer-92 host, Grisha Gladkov.... When I heard Loza's songs for the first time in 1982, I liked his music very much. I was captivated by their true country style -- not to mention very good and realistic lyrics.

Backstage at Farmer-92 I asked Yuri to tell me about his life, and this idol of the '80s spoke willingly about his career in music without putting on any airs.

"I was born February 1, 1954 in Sverdlovsk [Yekaterinburg]," he began. "When I was three, my parents moved to Alma-Ata, where I spent my childhood and youth. After school I became a member of the Geodesic faculty at Alma-Ata University, but soon left as I wanted to learn to play music. Then I was drafted, and

after the Army I began to play in cafes, bars, pubs, sometimes even at weddings. In 1978, I was lucky enough to get a job in a country group Zochkiye ("Architects"), but they preferred to compose songs that were really parodies, full of sarcasm and satire. I wasn't comfortable with that style, so I left and began my solo career as a country bard. In 1988 I organized my own group, Plus-Minus."

Yuri Loza has already recorded six albums. I consider his style to be "Russian country," a country music that continues Nashville traditions, though it's not bluegrass.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**THREE LPs (1989-1993),**  
**MELODIA; CASSETTE**  
**ALBUMS (1982-1989)**  
**Spring 1992.**



## INTEGRAL (MOSCOW)

Andrei Shepelev, Kukuruzza's leader and the only professional Dobro guitarist in Russia told me about this group:

"After graduating from the Institute of Architecture I found a job as -- guess what? -- an instrument porter for the Utesov State Orchestra. I began to learn country music all by myself, sitting behind the stage. I began to play the five-string banjo, and there just wasn't anyone in all of the USSR who could help me -- no one played that kind of banjo then. Once, I had the honor of playing a few bars on my banjo with the orchestra when they performed something in a country style, but I don't remember the name of the song. Then I was fired -- but that's another story. Integral's creator, Bary Alibasov, picked me up in 1982. We worked under the roof of Saratov Philharmonia and we could perform real country music. All the musicians in the

group were self-taught and everybody was just great! Then in 1984 I joined Kukuruzza, where I play to this day...."

In 1990 Andrei Shepelev was invited by Russian rock'n'roll superstar Andrei Makarevich to take part in the recording of one of my favorite records, "Good Slow Music." Blues, country, rock and other styles are combined on this album, and Andrei's playing leaves an unforgettable impression on all the compositions. Without a doubt, the record wouldn't be so touching without his trademark Dobro guitar playing. He received "special thanks" on the album cover.

In December of 1992, Andrei Shepelev successfully participated at the Banjo Institute in Nashville, Tennessee.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM**  
**"INTEGRAL" (1985)**  
**Winter 1993.**



## NARODNAYA OPERA ("FOLK OPERA") (MOSCOW)

...comes on stage in traditional Russian costumes. The group's leader is folklore-collector, musician and composer Boris Bazurov, who popularized Russian folk music for many years. The group performs ancient Russian folk music, found in the archives. Listening to Narodnaya Opera perform gives you an understanding of ancient Russian times. The ensemble's repertoire includes numerous folk songs performed in the traditional style of the Don Cossacs, old Novgorod townsfolk, Cossacks from other districts and Russian peasants. Through their performances you can also become acquainted with the calendar songs of pagan Russia,

and hear music played on instruments used in the 9th to 13th centuries.

The ensemble not only performs Russian music in traditional ways, but also at times transforms the ancient sounds into a new folk style through their use of modern electronic instruments.

Specialization of B. Bazurov: Ancient Russian culture of the 11th-17th centuries. In the author's versions, early folk polyphony and improvisation are played on rare, authentic instruments of the northwestern region of Russia in the 12th-15th centuries. Also, Russian spiritual poems from the peasant's traditions, psalms and apocrypha, accompanied by the traditional Russian psalterium and hurdy gurdy. Mr. Bazurov has worked professionally in the State Moscow Philharmonic Society since 1979.

**Spring 1992.**

**Instruments:**

*Gusli - Novgorod harp, psalterium  
Boweng - gusly (13th Century)*

*Boweng harp - Viking style (11th century)*

*Lira - Russian hurdy gurdy (15th century)*

*Smyk-Gudok - Russian fiddle (12th-16th centuries)*

*Jew's harp - wargan  
Cows horn (rozok) - shepherd's pipe from the Vladimir Region; analog of German serpent and shwarzzenzink.*



Over the years, the works of B. Bazurov have received expert marks of the academician from U. Bramly and B. Rybakov; the Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences; the State Collection of Unique Instruments (Boweng); the Soviet Ministry of Culture; the Moscow Conservatoire and two central museums: one named after Glinka and the other of Folk Art.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
1. SINGLE "CLUB MAGAZINE" (1988), MELODIA

2. "FOLK OPERA", (1990) (FOLK-ROCK GROUP OF B. BAZUROV), MELODIA  
3. CD "ECHOES OF PAGAN RUSSIA" (1992) (ETHNIC SUTTE), BSA RECORDS, GERMANY  
4. CD "COSSACK STENKA RAZIN (PART 1)" (1992) (ETHNO-ROCK OPERA), BSA RECORDS, GERMANY-RUSSIA  
5. CD "COSSACK STENKA RAZIN (PART 2)" (1993) (ETHNO-ROCK OPERA), BSA RECORDS, GERMANY



## POSLEDNY SHANS ("LAST CHANCE") (MOSCOW)

The group and its leader, Sasha Samoilov, have created a unique folk show based on Russian melodies but full of grotesque humor and even sarcasm. Last Chance has performed for more than twenty years. One of the winners at the Farmer-91 Festival, they often

tour abroad and are very popular with children, rockers and country music lovers.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUMS**  
**(1970s-1993)**

**Spring 1991.**

## WOODEN WHEEL (MOSCOW)

The band's style can best be defined as "eccentric folk," not pure country. The musicians presented their show, a synthesis of various musical styles from many countries and ages, at the Farmer-92 Festival. One

of their freshest shows is based on Tolkien's famous trilogy, "The Lord of the Rings."

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM "THE**  
**LORD OF THE RINGS" (1992)**  
**Spring 1992.**



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## SAN CHRISTOPHER'S BEST DAYS

There are a lot of noisy people behind the scenes at the Moscow Palace of Youth as I look for the director of San Christopher's American Folk Ballet. Ah, I see her at last, a very charming middle-aged lady, limping a little as she leans on her walking stick. She smiles as she tells me about the performances I'll soon be watching -- "Prairie Years" and "The Old South."

San Christopher is fanatically devoted to her troupe and to American folklore. Her career as a dancer began before the Second World War. Later, she worked as a dance teacher, and today dozens of dancers can say they were trained by her. A foot injury sidelined her for a while, but this energetic lady could not stay idle for long and soon she had begun work on a new project.

Looking for all the world like some angel just descended from the heavens, "sunny" Christopher explains her motivations: "In America, trailblazers went west, and their hearts were full of dreams about a new land blessed with justice and mercy. A new people would live there -- beautiful, kind and big-hearted. The people of the prairies lived in peace and mutual consent. Like the land they lived on, the trailblazers were generous and open-hearted. They grew as quickly as prairie grass. They were full of energy, of freedom; their ideals were as high as the prairie sky. Virgin nature lay between them and the officials. Conscience was the religion and the law of these magnificent people."

I listen to San Christopher, smiling kindly and speaking as if she is recounting an epic tale. And in a few minutes I meet these people -- I mean, the de-

scendants of those prairie pilgrims. I see how solicitous they are with the rich folklore traditions of their ancestors, both European and African. We Russians could learn a lot from such attitudes toward the past, as our connections with those who came before us have been broken and it's so difficult to find them now....

The show begins; I see a mulskinner and hear his sad, sincere song. Then an Indian suite follows, performed by real Indians. Another scene features a wagon train, a pioneer settler, his friend, the owner of the wagons, the cook, little children, a coquettish girl and her brother. All the actors are dressed in period costumes, and each creates his character so unforgettably, sincerely, masterfully. The little girls, five-year-old Hope Gradski and six-year-old Heidi Wielsen are truly touching. They are, by the way, children of adult members of the American troupe.

The scene changes and we see Scottish settlers performing the ancient Scots' dances with dignity, restraint and even a little arrogance. The next act takes us to a pioneer camp where the Creole girl Jacqueline Taylor-Sutton and virtuoso acoustic guitarist David Azur sing head-spinning, heart-stopping blues. The audience can't resist the temptation to sing along.

"Prairie Years" has a brilliant epilogue: The entire troupe gathers for Uncle Wharton's party. Merry, simple and energetic songs and dances are very beautiful, and the performers seem to enjoy their roles no less than the audience enjoys watching them. It's so good to see a ballet being a joy and not just work for the dancers.

During intermission, San Christopher has time to explain the second suite, "The Old South," to me: The Southern states are full of contrasts. It's a unique part of the American heritage. The mountain men -- "hillbillies" -- had no land and were full of prejudices. Indeed, Edgar Allan Poe wrote, "The Southern mountains are inhabited by fierce and rough people." These Southerners still feel, "We have suffered more than other Americans. We lost the Civil War and we were blamed for slavery." That's why the drama of the Southerners is really one of global implications for America.

The ballet begins, and again I'm transported to America -- but to the South, not the West. I see cotton pickers, baptisms in the river, a ball at historic Wingate Plantation, and Catfish Crossing -- a symbol of America and part of its history.

Again, the troupe gathers at the end of the show to sing "Rumpest Street," and the Moscow audience stands and joins in singing this unforgettable spiritual. Russians and Americans together repeat the refrain, as if they want to continue this unique "moment of truth" forever.

The cheers and applause seem as though they will never stop! I see tears of happiness in the eyes of one American dancer -- who produced, directed and choreographed this dazzling show. I hope San Christopher was pleased to see the emotions of the Moscow audience. Maybe the impressions of her magnificent work will help us to remember their kindness, sacrifice and spirituality, and to help us keep the sacred memory of our own Russian ancestors in our hearts. **June 1991. Moscow.**

BURCH MANN'S



## REDNECKS IN MOSCOW

Dockworkers in England and the New World are called "rednecks." This slang word was chosen by a group of country musicians from Helsinki, Finland, as the name for their band.

Unfortunately, the arrival of the group's manager, Markku Parkkinen, in our capital was overshadowed by other cultural and political events, and Moscow showed little interest in the Finnish band's music. Nevertheless, the author of these notes hopes that the Rednecks will be able to pique the curiosity of Moscovite and regional music lovers in the future.

The Rednecks and Dave Taylor, a rock'n'roll singer-musician from London, will tour in Moscow, Vladimir and Ryazan, according to the contract with Pavel Kalenov, a representative of the Central Committee of the Russian Youth League.

Parkkinen told me that they dreamed about touring all over

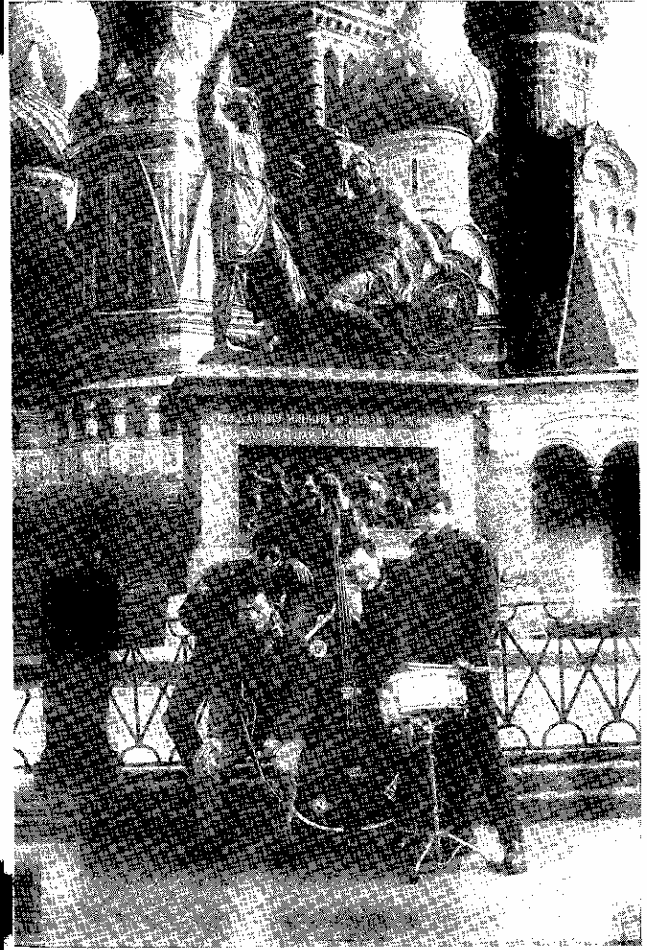
Russia and added that all the musicians are unanimous in this opinion. I think that the Moscow audience as well as provincial ones will love them, because country music can be understood by everybody. It doesn't matter whether the songs are sung in Russian, English or Finnish.

**October 1991.**

**CODA:**

This tour can be called a mini-festival, as Russian musicians will also perform -- I mean singer-composer Larissa Grigorieva and her magnificent group, Ryzhaya Trava ("Red Grass"), which has just returned from a tour in Finland. And Krazy Man Krazy, which played really "krazy" rockabilly with beer. And now, Russian, Finnish and English musicians are paying a return visit.

**October 1992.**





## "WE WOULD LIKE TO COME ONCE MORE...."

The sky turned ominously black about 15 minutes before the concert's beginning, and the first drops were the sign that soon it would be raining cats and dogs. "Surely the rain will disperse the audience," I thought as I was opening my umbrella. But nobody left. They simply opened their umbrellas, too, and slipped into raincoats. Everyone courageously waited for the concert to begin.

Unfolding the colorful program, I learned that the American Folk Dance Ensemble from Brigham Young University, performing today in Gorky Park's Green Theater, had arrived from Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. This dance troupe has been successfully performing at the most important folk festivals all over the world for almost 30 years.

The rain seemed to understand that its efforts to disperse the crowd were useless; it stopped at precisely 8 p.m., just as the concert was scheduled to begin. The audience, hearing the merry sounds of banjos, guitars and violins, forgot about the wet benches, as square dancing alternated with a potpourri of pioneer Mormon dance tunes. After several traditional folk dances of the English, Scottish and Irish settlers, the ensemble treated us to exciting tap, Charleston, swing and rock dances. It was a true "short history of the USA," but a musical one.

The Americans prepared a special surprise for the Russian audience. A girl in a Ukrainian costume appeared on the scene and announced: "And now we'll try to sing a Russian song and to dance the Ukrainian hopak." The audience reacted very boisterously. The famous "Katiusha"

was the song they performed, and the hopak was so full of energy that we clapped our hands from the very first bars until our palms were burning with enthusiastic applause. Colorful costumes, bright "American" smiles and the young dancers' skills -- all of it could not fail to leave an unforgettable impression. The audience also behaved in an American style -- the spectators applauded during the performance, stamped their feet, whistled and yelled....

A merry crowd gathered near the stage after the concert, and it seemed that the whole troupe gave out autographs, badges, handshakes and smiles. The Americans expressed themselves exclusively in exclamatory sentences: "Oh! We like Moscow so much!" "Oh! We were received so magnificently! Oh! Russian people are so wonderful!"

"We would like to come once more, to visit not only Moscow, but other cities as well," one of the members of the troupe told me. "And it would be magnificent if Soviet students would come to our country to sing their songs and to dance. We must meet each other as often as possible and be friends. We must sing together, dance together, play together.... It's time to stop fighting. Nobody needs it; it's such...."

"Nonsense," I prompted.

"Yes, nonsense," he agreed. "We must be united." He spread his hands as if trying to embrace the world. "We must be together! It's not just beautiful words, I really feel it!"

"I think," I answered, smiling as broadly as I could, "that we feel the same."

**August 1990, Moscow.**

## BLUEGRASS UNLIMITED (USA) DECEMBER, 1990 BLUEGRASS MUSIC IN RUSSIA

*By Irena Pribylova*

It is not easy to get to the Soviet Union, even nowadays, and even from Czechoslovakia. In January 1990 I succeeded only with a written invitation from a Soviet music journalist, Andrei Gorbatov. I visited Moscow and its second annual country and folk music festival, Farmer-90. More than twenty different bands appeared on the stage of the Kosmos Hotel (built especially for the Olympics) over the course of the festival's scheduled three days of music. There were drummers from the Daghestan region, accordionists from Moscow, large folklore-costumed ensembles with dancers, modern folk music and folk-rock bands, and also several country and bluegrass bands.

Andrei Shepelev is probably the best-known personality in bluegrass music in Russia. He plays a 5-string banjo customized from a Czech 6-string, and an original Dobro. Shepelev recalled that the first information about bluegrass came to the country with Eric Weissberg and the movie "Deliverance;" he remembers hearing "Dueling Banjos" somewhere.

The beginnings of his Kukuruz ("Maize") band go back some thirteen-plus years,

when some students -- and fans of bluegrass music -- from different institutes and Moscow University got together. There was Larissa Grigorieva, a student at the Institute of Foreign Languages (who spoke fluent English) and, among others, two Czech students -- who brought their instruments and, most importantly, vital information. The band utilized a variety of instruments: banjo, fiddle, homemade Hawaiian guitar (Dobro), drums, bass guitar, accordion, acoustic guitar, mandolin and percussion. They played traditional music, ballads and some bluegrass, and sang in English. After they finished their studies the



Czechs went home and the group broke up.

Several of the original members met again after a two-year period and decided they wanted to play together again. The question was, What to sing about? They all wanted to have their repertoire in Russian rather than English this time. Fortunately, there was a songwriter, Grisha Gladkov, who wrote for children mostly but who wanted to use his abilities for the band. So they did some songs by Gladkov; their own original music and lyrics followed. The music still focused on country and bluegrass styles, but they also included rearrangements of traditional Russian folk songs and some American classics, such as "Vamp In The Middle" (with Russian words), "Footprints In The Snow," "She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain," "Jordan," "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," "Cripple Creek,"

"Groundspeed," and "Lonesome Road Blues."

In 1986 the musicians quit their day jobs, relying solely on their music to make their living. They also felt they needed another change, and so they stopped playing traditional bluegrass and singing in English. Andrei explains: "There was a language barrier and nobody knew bluegrass. It was necessary to make some common foundation. But anyway, we keep playing bluegrass music at jam sessions. Roy Clark, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Banjo Dan and the Midnite Plowboys and others who visited Moscow could prove that." Kukuruzza thinks about playing abroad, but as of two years ago, still had not been able to arrange that -- they haven't been able to secure visas for the USA. The band did play the Golden Orpheus Pop Music Festival in Bulgaria and toured across Poland, though they weren't able to visit its

Mragowa Country Music Festival. In January of 1990 there was a possibility of visiting Czechoslovakia in April to play to Russian garrisons there.... Kukuruzza's current lineup is Alexei Aboltymish, bass; Giorgi Palmov, mandolin; Sergei Mosolov, fiddle; Misha Venikhov, guitar; Andrei Shepelev, banjo and Dobro; Sergei Chernyshov, drums; and Irina Surina, vocals. The youngest is 24 and the oldest 36. At the Farmer Festival they played two sets of four songs each, starting with a bluegrass instrumental medley. And in the second set, "Vamp In The Middle," then Andrei's blues song, "Asphalt Under My Feet," followed. I enjoyed this song the most and could hear in it that Andrei was a fan of Jerry Douglas. There was another original, and the last was "Stenka Razin," a famous Russian folk song.

As is true of all Soviet country and bluegrass bands, Kukuruzza suffers from lack of contact with the music world outside their own country, a situation that reminded me of the way things were in Czechoslovakia twenty to thirty years ago. However, Andrei says, "I am a lucky exception. I succeeded in getting the Earl Scruggs, Bill Keith, Peter Wernick and Tony Trischka banjo books. I got some Bill Monroe and Earl Scruggs records on tape. After visiting Czechoslovakia in 1981 I even heard some tapes and records with melodic banjo. Before that, I had the books but I'd never heard the music. The five-string banjo is an exotic instrument over here -- even music research workers ask me why it has the fifth string. As for the Dobro, I have the Stacy Phillips book and I taped some Jerry Douglas and Mike Auldridge music. I am proud that Mike Auldridge personally chose a Dobro for me."

There were no other Dobro players on the stage; what's more, nobody was able to even think of another. So it was a surprise when I met a young and

**Rod Kennedy Presents**  
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LIMPOPO (Brazil) Bob's Yard Photo



very orthodox bluegrass music fan from Moscow in the audience who claimed to play Dobro. Hopefully, there are others.

It seems that bluegrass is spread around the world by banjo players. Usually they are the ones who initiate the formation of a band, learn as much as possible about the music, and do a kind of "enlightenment" of those around them. The Soviet Union is no exception to this rule. Amongst all the musicians I spoke with in Moscow, banjo players invariably knew the most about music and, in spite of their bands playing a mixture of different styles, they themselves kept strictly to bluegrass.

The most remarkable player, to my mind, was 12-year-old Ilya Toshinsky from Obninsk, a town near Moscow. He played a nice, pure Scruggs-style banjo at backstage jam sessions. His teacher, Alexei Gvozdyev followed him. Ilya has been playing the banjo for two years. (Before that, he played the guitar.) His instrument is a small Japanese make. He is confident in his ability, more than satisfied with his teacher, practices every day and is really a good player. The only trouble he admits to is a lack of music to listen to and sheet music to play by. His band's repertoire consisted of "Flint Hill Special" and some Kazak music.

At the jam session they played "She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain" -- which seemed to be the most popular American song over there -- "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," some other bluegrass instrumentals and some Russian children's songs. They played the banjo, mandolin (an old Italian-style instrument), guitar (Russian custom-made), fiddle, bass and drums. The bassist also played the harmonica. They sang in Russian and in

English, too. Incidentally, this is an advantage Soviet children have, compared to those in the former Soviet-bloc countries; they can learn English beginning at the age of ten. (I don't complain about having been taught Russian -- it comes in handy when I'm at the Moscow Country Music Festival.) There were also other children, both boys and girls, who performed on the last day of the Festival as the Vesolyi Dilzhans band.

All the musicians in Country Saloon, a band from Nizhni Novgorod, are university students and teachers. Maybe they'll be able to take a giant leap forward in several years and buy American instruments instead of being forced to make their own. Who knows?

Grisha Gladkov visited the USA twice under the auspices of an American peace group (Project Harmony). As mentioned above, he is a singer-songwriter and guitarist, and has recorded four albums for children. But more important for us, he is not only the head of the Moscow Country and Bluegrass Music Club, but also dj's a 20-minute country and bluegrass music show in Moscow on Soviet radio.

Journalist Andrei Gorbatov comes from Sverdlovsk (Yekaterinburg) and as a university student played bluegrass and country music there. In 1976 Roy Clark played in the Soviet Union and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band made it over in 1978. Their visits influenced Soviet country and bluegrass music fans a great deal. After Andrei moved to Moscow in the mid-'80s, he started to put fans and musicians together. By the end of 1987 Gladkov decided to found a club -- about 100 people were actively interested in country and bluegrass music out of Moscow's population of seven mil-

lion. They meet once a month in a cultural center and exchange information. Two years ago they founded the Farmer Festival. "We don't have a special country and bluegrass audience here," says Gladkov. "That is why we invite other types of bands, too." Because the Festival didn't receive much notice from government-run television or the newspapers, they didn't have a large audience. But its mere existence in Moscow is an accomplishment and, hopefully, fans will see its popular success in the future. The Soviet people seem to have too many troubles to play and listen to music nowadays.

Without doubt, the biggest audience for country and bluegrass music within the USSR is in Estonia. The tiny republic (1.6 million inhabitants) has about twenty bands, four of them full-time, and five festivals, the biggest of which is held on the shores of Harku Lake (July 6-7, 1990). Anton Baturin is the president of the Country Music Club in Tallinn. He speaks Estonian, English and Russian and says the Estonians have good relations with the Finns. They know each other well, and Finnish musicians help the Estonians to get strings, magazines, records, blank tapes and sometimes even instruments and other equipment. A Finnish bluegrass band, the Lake Country Boys, visited Estonia. A thousand people attend the Harku Festival, and this is probably the best place for American bluegrass bands to come. "In Estonia both young and old listen to country and bluegrass music," says Tonu, the guitar player from the band Beergrass (sponsored by a brewery, hence the name). "And that is why we can make a living from music."

Anton also told me how country music managed to be-

come so popular in Estonia: "Estonia is a seaside state. Its sailors get to Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, France.... A lot of them have visited America, too, where they heard the music. Besides, it is easy for us to accept because American country music sounds similar to Estonian folk music. Estonia is the only place in the USSR like this. And don't forget, we can watch not only Moscow, Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and Tallinn TV in Estonia, but also Helsinki and Stockholm TV. This counts." Beergrass evolved from Justament and Testament, and has been together for nine years. The average age of the musicians is 25. I admired the banjo player Arvo at jam sessions. The band was able to play an instrumental using three fiddles. "This Heart Of Mine" sounded quite exotic for me in the Estonian language, but the musicians evidently enjoyed it as well as the "Fiddle Man" and "Great Balls Of Fire." Beergrass utilizes banjo, mandolin, fiddle, guitar, bass, drums and piano.

There were also the Country Count Band and Ryzhaya Trava, featuring Larissa Grigorieva -- Moscow-based groups -- at the Farmer Festival. Both bands play bluegrass or real country music. Dima Vakhrameyev plays 5-string banjo for both bands. He studied economics and used to be a bank clerk, but he quit his job for music. Dima knows a lot about this music, and we talked about the first Soviet bluegrass SP records that appeared some ten years ago, bringing the sound of American bluegrass to the country. (They are collectors items now, and I'm glad I bought them when I was in Leningrad in 1981.) Dima also told me about the first Russian book about American country

music -- he hasn't seen it himself, just heard about it. He also admires John McEuen. He credits the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's first visit to Moscow with bringing him to the banjo, and he enjoyed the band's recent second visit. Dima also happened to see Hickory Wind during its Soviet visit. He likes the band Newgrass Revival and Courtney Johnson. He was surprised to hear about Bela Fleck, and even more surprised to hear about Newgrass Revival breaking up.

In conversations with various musicians I heard that there are four bluegrass bands in Moscow but, unfortunately, I didn't learn their names. There is also one such band in Smolensk and another in Omsk, and even a bluegrass and country festival in faraway Bryansk. The Soviet Union is so huge and its media so centralized that a lot of information simply vanishes into thin air. It is impossible for anybody to know it all. The lack of information concerns not only Amer-

ica and the rest of the world, but even the USSR itself. The Soviets do get some information about country and bluegrass music from neighboring Czechoslovakia and -- with several years' delay -- they can buy some Czech commercial country music records. But I discovered that nobody in Moscow had ever heard about the 17-year-old Banjo Jamboree Festival or, for that matter, any other music events happening past their borders.

I returned home with many and varied feelings. I was probably the first foreign journalist who was able to get information about country and bluegrass music in the USSR. I met several enthusiastic and a lot of very good people there. I realized that the farther East you go, the more difficult become the conditions for bluegrass music. But despite everything bluegrass is being performed by Russians now, and there will be more of it in the future I am sure.

## FARMER OPENS THE GATES AGAIN

(FEBRUARY, 1991)

The Third International Festival of Country and Folk Music, aka Farmer-91, took place in Moscow from the 2nd to the 5th of March, 1991 in the concert hall at the Orlyonok Hotel. From the Far East came Ladushki (Khabarovsk), Kazus (Komsomolsk-on-Amur) and Western S (Omsk). The north of Russia was represented by the Cherepovets group Tutti-Frutti and a band from Solikamsk called Variant. Old friends of the Festival arrived in Moscow from Russia's West: Countrybandists from ancient Smolensk, Fine Street from Leningrad, and the young musicians in Vesyolyi Dilizhans ("Merry Stagcoach") from Obninsk. Country Saloon represented the Urals city of Nizhni Novgorod.

Moscow musicians also respect the Festival. Greeting the audience again this year were Kukuruza, Svoya Igra, Yabloko, Floctus, Rizhaya Trava, and To, chto nado. Each of the Baltic states contributed one band -- Beergrass from Tallinn in Estonia, Tip-Top from Latvia, and Jonis from Lithuania.

Foreign guests were also present. The author of these notes had made an agreement with the president of the Country Association of Finland, Yuhanni Aalto, who is also the editor of Folk and Country magazine, to arrange for two

Finnish groups -- Lake Country Boys from Helsinki and Country Life from Pjannanen (about 650 km from the Finnish capital) -- to attend Farmer-91. Also, from Sweden came Kentucky, a group we had invited during June of 1990 when they appeared at the Country Picnic Festival in Poland. And Hege Hamilton (The 5), legendary Nashville country singer and the winner at Country Picnic -- which, incidentally, is one of the most prestigious European festivals -- came to Moscow, too.

The organizing committee also invited musicians from Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Poland, France and Great Britain. Plava Trava Zaborava ("Blue Grass of Oblivion") came from Yugoslavia -- these musicians are true masters of bluegrass. And the old friend of Muscovites, Roy Clark, was invited as well.

As noted, Farmer-91 began in Moscow, and then travelled to Zagorsk and Tver, finishing in the Leningrad (St. Petersburg) concert hall Oktyabrsky.

**February 1991. Moscow.**



## FARMER-92 WALK BY RUSSIA

The 4th Festival of Country and Folk Music took place on the last day of winter [February 29 in Russia—ed.] and the first day of spring. Held in the well-suited Moscow concert hall Meridian, Farmer-92 attracted quite a number of participants from different towns and countries. Two days were given over to this music by real bluegrass fans who tried not to miss a single event.

The concert was set to begin at 6 p.m. However, there was so much excitement that many people appeared three hours early, even though there were no musicians inside the concert hall and the entrance was guarded by vigilant, aged female controllers. However, the light and roomy cafe area was full of musicians from various bands who had gathered there to test their techniques before going onstage. Speakers and microphones were set up right on the tables where they were having a

good, relaxing time with great bluegrass and refreshments.

Some people were hovering around, looking at the special stands that had been set up with information about the Festival. Many fine journalists had contributed really helpful notes about the bands coming to Farmer-92, and there was much interesting news from the world of bluegrass and country. Information had also been drawn from famous magazines, including Peter V. Kukendall's Bluegrass Unlimited. But soon the people who had been scanning this information had to take their seats because some of the musicians from the Red River Valley Boys had begun to perform, right there in the cafe.

There had been some personnel changes in RRVB since their appearance at Farmer-91, including a new vocalist, Sergei Kutin (ex-Acoustic Country Band from Ivanovo). And the fiddler Alexander Korotenko had been invited to play with them at



Red River Valley Boys

the Festival. Both newcomers fit into the existing band quite well. The peculiar timbre of Sergei Kutin's voice and his emotional manner of singing allowed the band to include in its repertoire some songs by the King of Bluegrass, Jimmy Martin. And Korotenko's lush, ripping solos helped bring the band closer to the traditional sound of original bluegrass.

The tempo in the cafe was increasing by leaps and bounds, as with each song the musicians strove to outdo themselves. The master bluegrass players inflamed other musicians to leave their tables, then, and to show how skillful they were too. Julia Iostinia from Riga, who usually sings gospels, demonstrated her fine feel for bluegrass peculiarities when she got up and sang with the Red River Boys on "Molly And Tenbrooks," by the Father of Bluegrass, Bill Monroe. Along with many of the other musicians jamming in the cafe, she would be seen later

that night in the official concert program.

Bluegrass proper was presented at the Festival by a few bands, and every one of them was destined to come down a success. The musicians from a new band Appalachskaya Tropa ("Appalachian Path"), formed in the spring of 1991, had its own unique style and effortlessly drew the audience's attention to their playing of pure, hot bluegrass. Lively, joyous fiddler Lena Perova was unanimously welcomed. Her smooth playing -- and that of her band -- was very well received indeed; they seemed to really strike a responsive chord in the hearts of the people in the hall. Each gifted band, in fact, had its own style distinguishing it from the others.

An hour before the beginning of the first concert, our guests from St. Petersburg, the band Fine Street, appeared on the cafe stage. Dmitry Vakhrameyev, the banjo picker, is an experienced figure in Russian country music,



having played in the past with both the Country Count Band and Red Grass. By this time a lot of people had gathered near the doors to the hall, as the first concert was due to begin in just a few minutes.

It's become something of a tradition for RRVB to open the Farmer Festival every year, and Farmer-92 was no exception. Besides the Jimmy Martin composition, people heard "I Saw The Light" by Hank Williams. This song, successfully rearranged in bluegrass style, is something like a business card for this band. They also played the famous "Black Mountain Rag."

The sounds of Vladimir Sushkevich's hot guitar were organically altered by the ringing, saturated sound of the Gibson Scruggs Mastertone '49 in the hands of the outwardly calm but emotionally charged playing of banjo-picker Alexander Shchukin.

After the first number Victor Zadorozhny, the bass player for the Red River Valley Boys, read

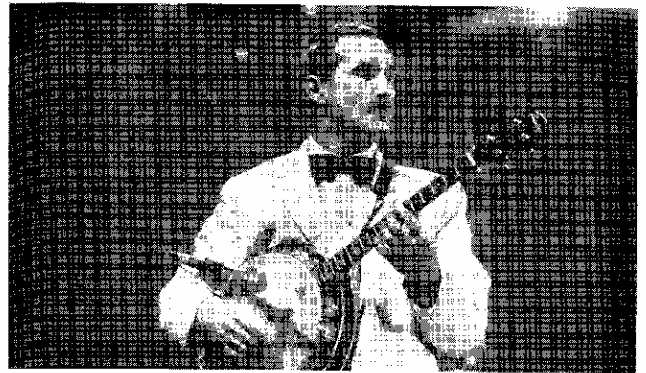
the welcoming letter from the executive director of IBMA, Dan Haze, wherein Mr. Haze wished success to all the musicians performing at the Festival as well as to the fans gathered in the Meridian.

The bluegrass musicians set a befitting tone for the Festival, and soon different folk groups began replacing one another on the stage. Apalachskaya Tropa came on, but suddenly something went wrong with the fiddle. However banjo picker Andrei Goltsin performed double duty, taking on the fiddle part in addition to his own, so expertly that the audience never even imagined that there was anything wrong -- the band got a great response.

Then came various folk groups from different corners of the world, including Peru and Bolivia, performing once again. Julia Iostinia came to us from Latvia (now an independent country). She really had a great welcome, just like last year at Farmer-91. A little bit later Pine



Grigori Gladkov and Rostislav Prisekin



Doctor Jazz

Street appeared on the stage; their songs were much appreciated.

Our country music fans enjoyed the wonderful playing of Sunday and its leader Rostislav Prisekin (ex-Kukuruz). They created quite a furor, in fact. Prisekin and his band -- with their duel guitarists -- proved once again the old truth that just one instrument in the hands of a master can sound better than a whole band, whether it be an acoustic guitar or anything else.

And speaking of bluegrass bands, I must not forget to mention the children's group Vesolyi Dilzhans ("Merry Stagecoach") from the town of Obninsk. Despite their ages, the kids tried very hard to play true bluegrass at a high level, and they played some traditional tunes. The youngest member of the band, on mandolin, appeared on the stage to the thunderous applause of his admirers. (Farmer-92 was not their first festival appearance.) Vesolyi Dilzhans was really one of the most popular groups to play on the first day of Farmer-92.

Soon the day came to an end. Fans went to their homes, looking forward to the second day of the Festival, but the musicians were in no hurry and left the Meridian very late indeed.

Sunday March 1, 1992, the first day of Spring in Russia: From the very beginning of the day the cafe was filled with musicians and fans. There were several clumps of people, where a musician was surrounded by listeners but, in general, time seemed to drag on. At this point it was difficult to imagine that before too long the hall would be packed with people, some sitting on the floor because there were no more seats.

At 5 p.m. the Red River Valley Boys began performing in the cafe, just as they had the day before. The difference was that they were not performing in the hall tonight, and so they organized an extemporaneous concert in the cafe. They played the whole of their repertoire, but the fans did not want to let them go. Though it was time for the Festival proper to begin, the people in the cafe still were eager to go on listening to bluegrass traditionals, Bill Monroe and Scruggs

compositions, and religious songs. A great impression was made by the pastor of Calvary Chapel in California, who joined in on the singing of "I Saw The Light." Some Russian fans also tried to sing it in English. It was clear that some of our people came closer that night to an understanding of those who have had revealed to them the true spirit of God. In this time of great hardship in Russia it was a very moving act on the part of the Russian audience.

There were a great number of journalists both in the hall and in the cafe -- where bluegrass tunes were being performed parallel with the concert program. No wonder that quite a few fans preferred to stay in the cafe and enjoy listening to the bluegrass melodies of those musicians whose performance on Saturday night they had already heard. And so, the official part of the concert began half an hour late....

Meanwhile in the hall there was a clear predominance of country music. A very interesting band, Country Saloon, came from Nizhni Novgorod (which is in the Urals region of Siberia). Though this band was practically unknown to the wider public -- not only abroad but in our own country, too -- the level of their performance is always very high, particularly that of Andrei Baranov (guitar and vocals) and Stanislav Shelukhin (mandolin). Some members of the band complained that it's not easy at all to play country and sing in English in a town which has never been a center of music. However, they managed quite well to satisfy the audience in Moscow this night. Though all of them had "Never Been To Nashville," they recorded this song in 1991.



Ostrou Paskhi

On Sunday there were not so many men on the stage, the soloists being mainly women. Songstress Tatiana Petrostan performed some old Irish ballads. And the first part of the concert was concluded by Chris Williamson, a female singer from America.

In the foyer during intermission people were treated to an impromptu performance by Makosha, a folk group from Bryansk. Other fans went to the cafe, where an improvised band was quickly formed. It comprised Alexander Shechukin (Red River Valley Boys, banjo), Andrei Goltsin (Appalachian Path, banjo), the guitarist from Countrybandists, and Vladimir Sushkevitch, who usually plays mandolin with Red River Valley Boys, but fulfilled bass duties in this jam session. There was an impression that the musicians played in the cafe with no less zeal than they brought to the stage in the hall. Indeed, they were indefatigable.

By the way, both the Red River Valley Boys and Appalachian Path can be seen at one of the cultural centers in Moscow every

week under a program called "Saturday Bluegrass." We can only express our hope that bluegrass musicians in the rest of our country are no less active, and that in the near future bluegrass will conquer the hearts of the people across the whole of this vast country. Although, to be honest, real progress in this direction is unthinkable without current information about the world of bluegrass. To this end, it would be highly desirable to distribute more widely in Russia publications such as Bluegrass Unlimited, which sheds light on the main events in bluegrass life, commenting on them objectively and competently.

But let's return to Farmer-92. After the intermission the first band on the stage, whose performance had been eagerly awaited by a great many fans, was Kukuruza. This band was one of the early pioneers of country-style music here in Russia, and has single-handedly made great contributions to the popularity of the genre. Much has changed since their early days, including personnel and overall style. But the skill of the veterans -- Giorgi Palmov (mandolin and vocals), Andrei Shepelev (mandolin and Dobro), Sergei Mosolov (brilliant improvisational fiddler) -- remains unchanged. The audience appreciated their performance. After Kukuruza, Finc Street made another appearance.

Great excitement filled the hall when Red Grass appeared with its vocalist and leader, Larissa Grigorieva. As we all know, American country music has its

roots in a blend of native tunes brought there by its millions of immigrants from around the world. And Larissa has brought to Red Grass a sound that is much like the music of the first settlers in America. The band's songs, however different, could thus be easily perceived as belonging to one cultural trend. At the same time Larissa is a very Russian singer with a deep Slavic soul, and so it was easy for her to establish contact with the audience. It must be admitted that American music is not always so easily understood by Russians. But there was no such problem when listening to Larissa's performance. The value of this contact and the sincerity that she brings to her songs is great indeed.

It was far into the night before the Festival was finally wrapped up. In fact, some folk groups were still performing when people began leaving the hall. But at the very end Appalachian Path appeared unexpectedly once again, bringing a final, bright moment to the Festival stage.

Farmer-92 is over. These concerts were organized by the Country and Folk Music Center, and took place not only in Moscow, but in Bryansk and Saint Petersburg as well.

Make no mistake, bluegrass is penetrating Russia. Now, all lovers of this style can see how new bands are formed and perceive their ideals and purpose. Vsevolod Tobotras' photos will help the reader form a clear picture of the events described.

## YABLOKO ("APPLE") (ST. PETERSBURG)

Marina Kapuro has an utterly unique, crystal-clear voice and sings Russian folk and American country songs. She is the winner of various competitions in Sweden, Poland, Germany and the ex-Soviet Union and Russia.

Yabloko ("Apple") consists of Viktor Potolov (vocals), Sergei Smolyaninov (keyboards, harmonica), Viktor Kristosov (drums, violin, viola) and the leader of the band, Yuri Berendyukov (guitar, balalaika).

Yabloko was the winner at the festival Physicists Against Nuclear Weapons, held in Hiroshima, Japan in 1989. Also in 1989 they toured India, giving

concerts in Bombei, Poona and New Delhi. In 1990 Yabloko toured 20 Southern cities in the U.S. And they have toured to 45 of the largest cities of the ex-USSR.

They are deeply and honestly Russian folk musicians, where the words are of paramount importance. Thus, the music of their traditional instruments never obscures the lyrics or the preeminence of the voice in the overall sound of the band. Yabloko bathes the listener in shades of love, light, peace and harmony.

*Spring 1991.*

## RUSSIAN TROUPE WOWS AREA CROWD

*By Tricia Polley  
Missourian Staff writer*

A contemporary Russian folk music group gave an "experimental" acoustic performance Monday night at Stephens College when a misunderstanding left members without amplifiers and equipment.

Yabloko group, whose repertoire includes traditional Russian folk songs, as well as music by Woody Guthrie and John Lennon, entertained more than 200 people in Windsor Auditorium on the second stop of the group's first American tour. Group's leader Yuri Berendyukov, 41, said he was surprised but excited that the group would be playing without its usual electric equipment.

"We decided, why not to play without equipment?" he said. His sense of humor showed when he continued, "Hopefully

your loud and good applause will help us."

The audience obliged with enthusiastic cheers.

Berendyukov started the group in 1979 in Leningrad with his wife Marina Kapuro, 28, the group's star. Their 9-year-old son accompanied them on the trip, which began in St. Louis.

Tedford Lewis, the group's American promoter, said the tour will consist of 60 performances in 50 cities, ending Dec. 8.

Berendyukov said folk music makes people feel free and independent, and he is pleased that it is becoming popular again.

"For a long time it was dangerous for us, but now Russian people want to remember Russian songs and Estonian people want to remember Estonian songs", Berendyukov said. "It is a good process."





Although an American tour seemed unlikely two years ago, Berendyukov said the group is enjoying the opportunity.

The Columbia concert was sponsored by the Friends of Peace Studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia and

Stephens College's Freshman Seminar.

"We're pleased to be able to offer the community this kind of experience so soon after the Cold War is over," said Liz Barnes, a Friends of Peace Studies board member.

## RUSSIAN FOLK GROUP TOURS U.S. TO PROMOTE PEACE, GOOD WILL

by James Madsen

Through the light of music, Soviet group Yabloko seizes the opportunity to aid in making the corners of the world come together as one peaceful unity and diminish international hostilities.

They have travelled through Japan, India, Western and Eastern Europe and now the United States to bring the world the gift of shared understanding.

"Even though we are standing on a different stage, we feel very much at home," Yuri Berendyukov said. "The language of music unites us."

Berendyukov, Marina Kapuro, Victor Porolov, Sergei Smolyaninov and Sergei Osintsev are the members of Yabloko. Berendyukov is the music director and folklorist.

His wife Kapuro is the guitarist and lead female vocalist. She won the All-Russian Song Fest in 1986, and had visited 10 U.S. cities before her visit with Yabloko.

Victor Potolov, lead male vocalist, plays guitar and violin. Sergei Smolyaninov plays a Korg keyboard, the bayan (a Russian accordion) and the gosly (a traditional folk string instrument). Sergei Osintsev plays the balalaika and is the technician and manager.

Together they have one purpose. They see their music as

the common bond between humans, because it is everywhere one goes and is everything one hears.

Although the style of Russian folk music differs from American, both release a sense of glowing warmth. The Soviet folk performance negates misunderstandings and hostilities between East and West and cultivates good will among the performers and members of the audience.

"The commonality of the human spirit and warm hearts has made us feel very comfortable," Berendyukov said.

The blend of old and new Russian folk music distinguishes the Yabloko format. They perform traditional country and folk music from the Soviet Union, as well as rock music -- including their own original version of Russian light rock.

Their impression of America is one of warm-hearted people and an absence of problems. The tour began October 8 at the central campus and ends November 30 in New Haven, Conn.

Their American tour organizer, Tedford Lewis, is travelling with the band. Lewis helps with the language gap and provides the audience with a humorous background information on the group.

With the deterioration of international borders that once bound nations to their roots,

and world unity becoming a focus of all, Yabloko takes root in their music and in spreading

goodwill and peace to all of mankind.

## YABLOKO IN STAMBAUGH AUDITORIUM

November 20, 1990, 7:30 p.m.

Organizing co-sponsors: Peace Council Of Youngstown & The English Center

Thanks to Shure Microphones and Korg Keyboards for supplying equipment for Yabloko's use. Pushkar, a game revived from antiquity, is available here at the concert.

Vladimir Ivanchin plays acoustic guitar and sings. Though he came to Yabloko only recently, it seems as though he has been in the group for a long time. Vladimir graduated from musical college in St. Petersburg (Leningrad) and then worked in the Musical Theatre in Leningrad as an actor and musician. Then, at the end of 1990 he met Marina Kapuro and Yuri Berendyukov, and now his heart belongs to Yabloko.

### MARINA KAPURO & YABLOKO

Marina was born in Leningrad. Both she and her twin sister demonstrated musical ability at an early age. At eight, Marina entered the children's ensemble at the Leningrad Pioneer's Palace as a vocal soloist, where she studied for eight years.

At the age of 17, motivated by the Beatles and other English and American rock music, she decided to pursue a career in music. She met Yuri Berendyukov, a pop musician and folklorist, who was organizing a new folk-rock group to be based on Russian folk music. In 1989, the newly-formed group was in-

vited to take part in a traditional pop-music festival in the Baltic Republic of Latvia. As the group travelled by car to Latvia, they often stopped to pick apples along the road. From this trip, the name of the group -- Yabloko ("Apple") was born.

1980 proved to be a big year. The group recorded its first album and Marina and Yuri got married. With the birth of their son, Alyosha, in 1981 Marina stopped performing for a while. Times were hard for the young family.

In 1986, Marina became a winner at the All-Russian Song Festival, and the group became professional artists of the Leningrad Concert Agency. Since that time, Yabloko has toured 45 Soviet cities, Poland, Germany, Austria, Sweden, and India. Most recently, Marina performed at the 1988 US/USSR Mississippi Peace Cruise; and the group won first place in the 1989 Cease Fire Concert to End Nuclear War held in Hiroshima, Japan.

When not on tour, Marina lives with her son Alyosha and husband Yuri in a small room in the center of Leningrad, and dreams of owning their own flat. A few of her personal loves include: the city of Leningrad, nature and animals, her cat Gosha, and macaroni and cheese.

### VICTOR POROLOV

Victor is the vocal soloist of the group and has been with Yabloko since its first day. He was

born in 1953 in the small town of Shakhty in southern Russia near the river Don to parents of Cossack heritage. His father is a miner and his mother a teacher. At the age of two, Victor sang his first folk song -- which is not strange because the Don region is known as the Songland of Russia.

As a schoolboy he sang at school parties, accompanying himself on guitar. In his youth he also engaged in sports, which eventually lead to being a volleyball player for his hometown team. At the same time he began studying the violin and dreamed of becoming a musician, but his mother wanted him to be a doctor. In 1970 he went to Leningrad and became a student at the First Medical Institute.

While in medical school Victor continued to sing and play the guitar. After graduating from the Institute he decided to continue his medical career, and for twelve years he worked as a surgeon in one of the best hospitals in Leningrad. In 1978, Victor met Berendyukov who was starting a new folk-rock group. He joined the group and for eight years sang with them while he continued to practice medicine. At last, in 1987 he decided to become a professional artist.

While still in med school, Victor fell in love with a fellow student who was considered one of the most beautiful girls in his college. For almost 20 years now, the two have been married. His family includes his 16-year-old daughter, his wife who is a doctor, and their dog. On a personal note, Victor enjoys fishing and growing both flowers and vegetables.

#### SERGEI SMOLYANINOV

Sergei is a multi-talented vocalist and musician. He plays keyboards, the Russian harmo-

nica, and the gosly, a traditional folk string instrument. Sergei was born in Leningrad in 1953, where he studied first at a music school and then at a Russian conservatory. In 1981, he met Yuri Berendyukov and began performing Russian folk music with the group Yabloko.

Sergei's father is a military officer and his mother is a teacher, while his sister is now studying to become a painter. Between performances, Sergei likes to write short stories and fairy tales. He likes short answers and long hair. His favorite dish is mushroom soup. Second only to music, he loves his wife and his seven-year-old son.

#### YURI BERENDYUKOV

Yuri wears many hats, including leader/art-director of the group, guitarist and composer. He was born in Moscow in 1949 to a father who is an officer in the military and a mother who is a doctor. Yuri's mother introduced him to music at an early age by singing and playing the F-string (a Russian guitar). In his early school years he learned to play the G-string guitar and the balalaika.

Next, Yuri entered the Radio-Electronic Institute in Leningrad. There, he organized his first rock group and began concurrently studying guitar at a musical college. Upon graduating with two degrees in 1972, Yuri began his dissertation work on the problems of multi-channel stereophonic sound. At the same time, he continued to organize different performing groups and began working to develop a Russian branch in rock music.

In 1978, Yuri met Marina Kapuro, who first became the vocalist of his group and then his wife. In 1979, Yuri successfully defended his dissertation

work and received a baccalaureate in technical science. When Yabloko became a professional group in 1986, Yuri left the Institute to become a full-time musician.

Since that time, Yuri has toured with the group and tried to make time for his wife and nine-year-old son. Being fond of country life, he has purchased a small piece of land about 60 km from Leningrad and dreams of someday building a small home there. His hobbies include hunting for mushrooms, walking in the woods and making baskets from branches.

#### Country songs of Russian composers

##### 1. "The Flying Loon" (A. Morozov/N. Tryapkin)

(Beautiful pictures of nature from the north of Russia, where a country girl is waiting for her sweetheart.)

##### 2. "My Dear" (Y. Berendyukov/A. Molodov)

(An unlucky guy gets rejected by his girl every time he proposes marriage.)

##### 3. "In My Chamber" (A. Morozov/N. Rubtsov)

(Deep night. But there's a light in my chamber because a star is shining through my window. My mother would take a pail and bring some water in silence.)

##### 4. "My Village" (A. Maximov/M. Pushkina)

(A humorous song about the life and problems of a modern Russian country village.)

##### 5. "Oh, Russia!" (Y. Berendyukov/N. Rubtsov)

(Oh, Russia! Why do your church bells not ring? Why are you sad? Why are you silent? Why are you sleeping?)

##### 6. "A Grey Horse" (A. Morozov/A. Poperechny)

(A grey horse gallops in the field. Where does he run? Who knows? Mother is thinking about her son. Where is he now? Like a grey horse he runs through his life, but mother's heart is always with him.)

##### 7. "A Bouquet Of Red Roses" (A. Morozov/S. Romanov)

(My sweetheart presented me with a bouquet of red roses and I thought his love was forever. But the flowers faded and my darling left me.)

##### 8. "Troika" (Y. Berendyukov)

("Troika" -- three horses harnessed abreast; a traditional Russian carriage. "My fate is like a troika/It is running through the night." But who knows where it may stop? What gypsy can tell me my fortune, my fate?)

##### 9. "Camellia" (A. Morozov/V. Gin)

(My camellia lost its petals and I knew that my fellow was unfaithful to me.)

#### Traditional Russian Folk Songs

##### 10. "Russia, Mother Russia"

(Oh, Mother Russia, land of glory! You have had much grief, you've shed much blood. And you gave birth to your son and called him.)

##### 11. "Along the River Don"

(Traditional popular Russian ballad of the 19th century.)

##### 12. "My Dear, Loving Friend"

(Traditional popular Russian ballad of the 19th century.)

##### 13. "A Monotonous Bell Rings."

(One of the most popular Russian romances of the 19th century.)

##### 14. "Strawberry"

(A dance tune from southern Russia. A strawberry has grown in the woods, becoming as nice and ripe as the girl that I love.)

**15. "The Moonlight Appeared Early In The Evening."**

(A traditional, drawling old peasant song of the Don Cossacks. Paints beautiful pictures of Russian nature at night.)

**16. "An Apple Tree"**

(A south Russian wedding song.)

**17. "Stenka Razin's Dream"**

(A very popular Russian ballad from the 19th century about Stenka Razin, a Russian peasant hero, who organized a popular uprising against the tsar in the 18th century. He had a dream that he would soon die.)

**18. "Maiden's Chastooshka"**

("Chastooshka" - untranslatable; A two-line folk verse, usually humorous and topical, sung in a lively manner. It's often about love, and often about unhappy love.)

**19. "Soldier's Chastooshka"**

(A very sad chastooshka, because many young peasant men in old Russia were sent into the Army for 25 years.)

**20. "At The End Of The Yard"**

(Byelorussian wedding song. A very old story: A young girl is given in marriage to a man she does not love.)

**21. "Porushka, Paranya"**

(A very popular dance tune from south Russia. "Paranya" - a girl's name; "Porushka" - a pet

name from Paranya. Oh, Paranya! Why do you love Ivan? I love him because he has curly hair.)

**Contemporary Songs**

**22. "Cease Fire Now!"**

(Y. Berendyukov/B. Bondarenko)

**23. "Arms Are For Hugging"**

(Y. Berendyukov/B. Bondarenko)

**24. "Think of Nature"**

(Y. Berendyukov/B. Bondarenko)

**25. "Let's Try Another Way"**

(Y. Berendyukov/Tedford Lewis/Larry Long)

**26. "Along the Blue Highway" (Larry Long)**

**27. "To My Son"**

(Y. Berendyukov/B. Bondarenko)

**28. "The Trust Of Children"**

(Y. Berendyukov/B. Bondarenko)

**29. "Happy New Year!"**

(B. Anderson)

**30. "Yesterday" (J. Lennon)**

**31. "Imagine" (J. Lennon)**

**32. "You've Got A Friend" (C. King)**

**33. "This Land Is Your Land" (W. Guthrie)**

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
LP "YABLOKO" (1989);  
CASSETTE ALBUMS (1990, 1991, 1992, 1993).

**BLIND MIX BAND  
(ST. PETERSBURG)**

Dima Yasstreba, aka Blind Mix, is one of the foremost country musicians in Russia. He was born into a family of professional actors and started to appear on the stage in his early childhood. He began his career as a rock musician in 1986. Though he switched styles more than once over the next few years, he managed to become quite well-known and popular as a musical personality.

At the end of 1989 he quite unexpectedly became interested in country music, and by the beginning of 1990 he had been invited to join a young group called Fine Street. He stayed with them for two years, during which time they became quite successful. But eventually that perennial problem for musicians in bands -- "musical differences" -- surfaced. Blind Mix wanted to explore more modern forms of country music, and so he left Fine Street to form his own group, the Blind Mix Band.

Blind Mix writes and sings songs only in English. Besides his own compositions, the songs of Willy Nelson, Kris Kristofferson and other modern-day

American country musicians can be found in Blind Mix's repertoire.

In addition to his band, Blind Mix also often works as a session and studio musician with many St. Petersburg bands. He had two of his songs included in the soundtrack to last year's "A Way To Paradise," shot at the Odessa Film Studio. He was highly praised in the September 1991 issue of the American magazine, Bluegrass Unlimited. In August he opened a club at the music center Nord, the first country music club with permanent premises in St. Petersburg.

Blind Mix says that his major influences were Willie Nelson, Bob Dylan and John Lennon. When composing new melodies Blind Mix and his band look for inspiration to such musicians as Randy Travis, Dwight Yoakam, Mark Knopfler and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. The guiding ideal of the musicians is to make "kind and beautiful music."

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
CASSETTE ALBUM "BLIND MIX" (1993).  
ST. PETERSBOURG



## FINE STREET (ST. PETERSBURG)

The St. Petersburg group Fine Street plays every spring and summer in Dvortsovaya Square. They began to play together in September of 1988 when two proletarians, Rustam Mamynov and Sergei Starodubsev, created a country-rock group consisting of just the two of them. On May 30, 1989 they gave their first street concert. Over time other musicians joined the band: Vladimir Liapunov, Julia Mikhailova, Misha Antropov, Dima Pistoletov; and the well-known St. Petersburg guitarist Blind Mix became the group's lead vocalist.

In December of 1989 Fine Street participated in the now-famous jam sessions with Kukuruzza, Merry Stagecoach and the American band Banjo Dan and the Midnite Plowboys. Music lovers from the USA made a professional full-length movie about Fine Street, produced by a private video company. The Japanese music magazine Aera published a very interesting interview with the members of the group. Then, in 1990, Fine Street took part in the Harku-Jaarve Music Festival, becoming its laureate.

Dmitri Vakhrameyev - five-stringed banjo; left in the winter of 1993 to join Kukuruzza.

Rustam Mamynov - banjo, harmonica, violin, vocals.

Julia Mikhailova - flute (doesn't play now).

Sergei Starodubsev - mandolin, manager.

Vladimir Liapunov - contra-bass, vocals.

Alexei Smirnov - guitar, lead vocals.

Blind Mix (Dima Yasstreba) - vocals, acoustic guitar, harmonica; left in 1992 to form the Blind Mix Band.

Igor Bushuev - banjo.

Arthur Kestner - double-bass.

### Cassette album "Looking For A Job In Town"

#### Side 1

1. "She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain" 3:35

2. "Pike County Breakdown" 1:20

3. "Little Community Church" 3:22

4. "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" 2:00

5. "The Sunny Side Of Life" 3:13

6. "Nine-Pound Hammer" 1:52

7. "Dear Old Dixie" 1:42

8. "Folsom Prison Blues" 2:48

#### Side 2

1. "Rocky Road Blues" 2:39

2. "Auld Lang Syne" 2:08

3. "Down The Road" 2:17

4. "Flint Hill Special" 2:07

5. "There's No Place Like Home" 2:46

6. "Seven By Seven" 3:14

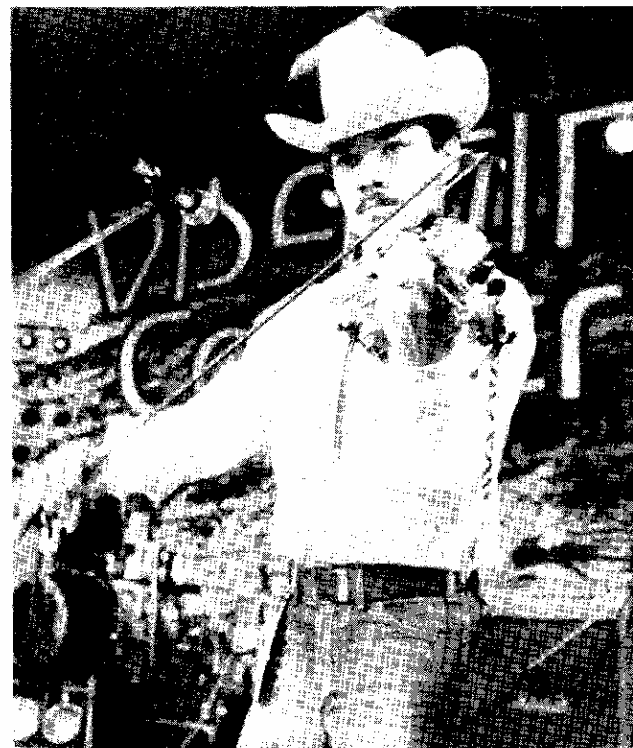
7. XXXX 1:42

8. "Plant Your Fields" 2:47

Produced by Fine Street.

Recording Engineer:

Sergei Alipov.



## STREET MUSIC IN RUSSIA, OR MAN ORCHESTRA (ST. PETERSBURG)

Vladimir (Volodya) Nakhimov is called Man Orchestra by his fans and listeners. His street concerts are always very successful. Valodya knows a lot of songs, comprising English and Scottish ballads, songs written by him with lyrics based on the works of both Russian and European poets, and his own originals. Last year Valodya had an international adventure -- he flew to Belgrade, taking with him nothing but some lutes and six harmonicas. There, he sang on the streets, earning enough money to take time to rest and sunbathe. Then he took a train to Denmark, where he again sang songs in the streets. The Danes liked him no less than St. Petersburg music lovers.

In the summer you are welcome to go to St. Petersburg and listen to his songs. His concerts take place near Kazansky Cathedral, on Nevsky Prospect. You won't be disappointed.

He started singing in the streets in 1988. To understand what this means, you must realize that at that time in the Soviet Union, singing in the streets was officially forbidden. Only a few people were bold enough to challenge the authorities, and they often found themselves finishing their concerts in the local police station. But they persevered. For musicians like Valodya, this was part of the struggle toward democracy. Often, people fought the police when they tried to take the musicians away -- the police found themselves without many friends.

Vladimir remembers once cutting out an article that had been written about him and the other

street musicians in Smena, Leningrad's newspaper for young people. He carried the article in his pocket and showed it to the police, saying, "You see, it is written here about me that I am a very good guy, that there's nothing wrong with me and what I am doing. Why do you want me to go with you?" Before these times, when *perestroika* had begun, all the newspapers were controlled by the Communist Party, and everything written in them seemed to be the official Party line. So, for him this article was like a green light. Really, we were naive. It was only a very few years ago, but how everything has changed!

Since it became possible to leave Russia, everybody who



could afford it began to travel to the West. Actually, "to afford it," meant one had to find some job in the West, because all our savings here had been wiped out by the monetary "reforms." Playing street music was helpful, because it allowed one to have a job in every town of every country where one travelled. So, Valodya spent about a year moving around Europe -- Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Germany, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece, even Turkey and Israel. He tried to move to a different town every day.

But playing music on the street in Europe was not like it had been in Russia in 1988; there was no feeling that you were doing anything very good for the people. Europe was quite indifferent. In Europe he had the feeling that he was strange; but it's not so bad to be an independent stranger, after all. When nobody pays any attention to you, you can see how things really are. And when you go every day to a different town, you see the changing reality -- you don't notice the town names, you don't stare at remarkable things, and you begin to lose your ego somewhere in space. You only feel an atmosphere of places. And instead of palaces and cathedrals, your eyes come to rest on some very simple things that happen with quite ordinary people. When Vladimir is asked what he saw in Berlin, for instance, he answers: "The air was like milk. There were Vietnamese who slept like kittens in the railway station, and there was a policeman who kicked them awake...."

When you begin to travel with street music it is like a drug. Now, Valodya cannot have a regular job. Here and there he has been offered a job to sing in a

cafe and although he always agrees, he always finds that after three days he feels so bored with being bound to one place that he leaves. And moves on again. He and his instrument -- which is quite unusual, made of pieces of other broken ones he's collected in junkyards. Very unique.

Now he is trying to do something in Russia again. Travelling gives you a new taste for home. People can understand the language in which you sing! The times have changed, and street music in Russia no longer has anything to do with fighting for democracy. But, really, fighting is not the best thing a man can do with his life. Valodya Nakhimov doesn't write protest songs anymore.

Here's one of Nakhimov's songs in its English version. There's a Russian one, too, which he likes more....

### LULLABY FOR MY DAUGHTER, BORN IN WINTER

*There lived two brothers,  
headman and thief;  
Sleep, my child, don't cry,  
Brother headman knows no  
neck is too stout,  
And no lock will keep brother  
thief locked out.*

*There lived two brothers,  
headman and thief;  
Sleep, my child, don't cry,  
Hand washes hand, wolves  
howl through the land.  
When the truth comes to light  
You'll lose your head with  
fright.*

*It's the headman's task to  
slash with all his might.  
Hand washes hand, wolves  
howl through the land.  
Sleep, my child, there's a lock  
on the door,  
A young dog guards there on  
the floor.*

The young dog's fangs are two  
milk teeth,  
And when he begins to bark  
he'll scare away the thief.  
Sleep, my child, there's a lock  
on the door,  
A young dog guards there on  
the floor.  
It's freezing outside, the  
blizzard whirls about,  
The door's locked, but from  
without.  
The hand of the thief took the  
key from the lock,

The key can't be found, it's in  
the headsman pocket.  
It's freezing outside, the  
blizzard whirls about,  
The door is locked, but from  
without.  
But you fall asleep in innocent  
peace....

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM**  
**"BARD-FOLK" (1993)**  
**ST. PETERSBURG.**  
**Summer 1992.**

## ARIEL FLYING FOREVER

I heard the first Ariel hits at the beginning of the '70s. This group was organized in 1969 in the God-forsaken, provincial Urals town of Chelyabinsk. The geographic place of its birth itself made the group unique, because Chelyabinsk was a classified town restricted for foreigners.

Valery Yarushin, the group's head, brought the musicians together. Ariel established a unique record of permanency: they still exist with insignificant changes in the lineup.

In the middle of the '70s Ariel prepared folklore programs. Two songs -- "Porushka, Paranya" and "On Bouyan Island" -- became all-Union hits. Later Ariel composed and performed the suite "Russian Pictures", as well as the folk opera "The legend of Yemelyan Pougachov, Russian Rebel."

In December, 1981 Ariel's folk-opera successfully opened in Moscow. The opera was com-

posed after the works of A.Voznesensky, based on his poems "Masters," "Lonjumo" and "Queen of Clouds". The folk opera "Masters" became an important artistic event in Moscow and beyond; it was dedicated to the creator of the famous Vasily the Blessed St. Basil's cathedral in Moscow Red Square.

Ariel was one of the few groups allowed to tour abroad before *perestroika*. Its musicians often performed at "court" parties in the times of Brezhnev's and Andropov's regimes. But now Ariel has been lost in the numbers of groups that have been arised since the revolutionary times of *perestroika* and post-*perestroika*.

In 1990 V.Yarushin left Ariel and founded his new group Ivanyeh in Chelyabinsk. But Ariel still remains quite popular amongst some segments of the CIS population, despite the changing times and tastes.

**Winter 1992.**



## COUNTRY SALOON "NEVER BEEN TO NASHVILLE" (NIZHNI NOVGOROD)

The mandolin and banjo play beautiful tunes and the vocalist sings the songs that are the favorites of Texas cowboys and California farmers.... Are these guys really Americans? No! The musicians are from Nizhni Novgorod! The quintet Country Saloon are quite popular even though they play music from the other side of the world. Although, to be honest, they are more popular outside their own country -- more even than in their native city. Americans have written about them. Czechs and even Slovaks know their colorful music very well. But still our press ignores them. Talk about your Iron Curtain of silence!

The members of the group are: Mikhael Dushin (5-string banjo), Slava Shelukhin (mandolin), Maxim "Mad Max" Kashalin (bass, violin) -- these three are students at the Institute of Foreign Languages; Andrei Baranov (guitar) the leader of the band and the one who writes all the music and lyrics; and Marik "Klaus" Firer (drums), the youngest member of the band



and a student at the music school.

Formed in 1988, Country Saloon has taken part in such festivals as Farmer-89, -90, and -91 in Moscow; the Tallinn Country Festival in 1989, '90 and '91; in Czechoslovakia in 1990; Caravan of Peace in Rostov in 1989; and Up With People in 1991; and more -- it's impossible to name them all.

At first they played traditional country, but now they play more complicated newgrass music. In writing, Andrei generally brings in the main ideas, the whole band contributes to the final music, and Andrei adds his lyrics.

I'd been wanting to visit them for a long time but had been putting it off due to other, more urgent business. But finally, near the end of 1991, I found the time to sit down with the band:

Q: Tell us about the beginnings of Country Saloon -- where and when.

ANDREI: Its inspiration comes from America. Country music evolved from the musical traditions of Irish, English and Afro-American immigrants. More recently, bluegrass split off as a distinct branch of country music, appearing at the beginning of the 1940s. It differs from traditional country in its distinctive sound coming from its emphasis on solo vocals, minor chords and 5-string banjo.

Q: Who would you say is the most distinguished Russian bluegrass band?

ANDREI: I like Svoya Igra, it's a truly professional band.

Q: Why do you sing mainly in English?

ANDREI: We are studying English in the Institute [of Foreign Languages], and it's the native language of country music. So, you see, it's very simple. We call ourselves Country Saloon because "country" is the style of music that we play and "saloon" is the place in which it is performed.

Q: Where do you rehearse?

ANDREI: At Sergachev's River Transport Workers Palace of Culture.

Q: What have you already done, and what are your plans for the future?

ANDREI: This year we recorded an album on tape, called "Never Been To Nashville." We also took part in a musical review for television, "Music Clef-a-for," produced by Igor Domashnenko.

Q: Which of your songs do you consider to be your best?

ANDREI: If you mean the hits, I would say "Fiddleman," "Last Cowboys," "Looking At The Moon," "Back On The Road," and "Italian Summer."

Q: What are your favorite things? And I want to hear from all of you....

MISHA: To shave.

STAS: To smoke Bulgarian cigarettes.

MARK: To listen to the pop group Laskovy Mai ("Sweet May").

ANDREI: Koumyss [fermented mare's milk -- the national drink of Mongolia--ed.] and Cinzano.

Everybody but Max likes the band New Grass Revival, and he doesn't just like it, he loves it.

Q: How much did you make at your most profitable concert?

ANDREI: 3,000 rubles. [At that time about \$300, which was a great deal of money when you consider Gorbachev was making \$29 per month--ed.]

Q: And the least profitable?

ANDREI: A concert for the Arabian Desert Farmers Foundation. It was a joke!

Q: How much do you cost today?

ANDREI: We ask 1,000 rubles for a concert. [Today, in the fall of 1993, 1,000 rubles will buy you one pack of Marlboro's.--ed.]

Q: What are you composing now?

ANDREI: A new song, "Pretty Woman."

Q: My last question is for all of you: Your dream? (everyone answers simultaneously)

ALL: To buy new shoes for Stas!

**December 1991.**

\*\*\*

We are sitting in the kitchen of some of the musicians from the Country Saloon band. The leader of the group, Andrei Baranov, singer and guitarist, speaks:

"Our group was founded in 1979. We were studying English in the Pedagogical Institute in the city of Gorky. Thank God our city became Nizhni Novgorod again! Our group took part in the city's music festival, Students' Spring, every year and we were always the laureates. The first leader of Country Saloon was Valery Nyadcnov; later, it was Misha Predushenko who graduated from our Institute. We took part in the cultural action 'The Friendship Train' [between the USSR and East Germany], toured in Kazakhstan, and participated in the cultural program of the International Ecological Students Seminar in Moscow. We were participants at Farmer-89, -90 and -91. Twice, we were guests of the Tallinn summer music festival Harku-Jaarve, in 1989 and 1990. The Estonians were very friendly to us -- because politics and music



are two different things, aren't they?"

Unlike many other groups, Country Saloon has never shared Cinderella's fate. They have been playing like this for years. But instead of simply becoming staidly "professional," they have retained great enthusiasm and appeal to their audience. You should see them onstage! There are none of your usual stage cliches, just spontaneous performances with spontaneous song order and jokes, jokes, jokes and more songs....

But when it comes to their sound, their songs, the right chords, they are very serious indeed. In one of their recent songs, "Queen Of The Night" (dedicated to the late Freddie Mercury), every chord is in the right place, the vocals are great....

Their first album, "Never Been To Nashville," was their final tribute to multi-stylistic performance. Now, Andrei says, "No more rock'n'roll or props, just bluegrass." But Stas corrects him, "Everything we like in music."

All of their hits were written by Andrei, though without the help of the rest of the band the songs would have just been beautiful music. And, the arrangements are done mainly by Mikhail -- he is the most bluegrass-oriented of them all.

The boys rehearse twice a week with obligatory revision of the old stuff, but passing on to the new ones they find themselves in the heavenly warm and cozy atmosphere of bluegrass sound.

Andrei is the oldest and cleverest one, at least he thinks

so. Mikhael cannot imagine his day without an hour of playing his 5-string banjo. Unlike him, Stas can leave his mandolin behind in the rehearsal room heading home for supper, but his music progress is great; he is the soul of the band. Max is as serious as a Boeing 747 landing in zero visibility. Mark likes everything which helps him to be himself. Ilya is the newest of all and consequently the most mysterious.

Their plans are as great as ever -- dreaming of Nashville and California, also of Ulan-Bator and good times and playing bluegrass music forever.

May 1992.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM "NEVER BEEN TO NASHVILLE" (1991)**

1. "Never Been To Nashville"
2. "Junior"
3. "I'm A Cowboy From Now On"
4. "Doggie"
5. "Back On The Road"
6. "Nobody"
7. "Fiddleman"
8. "Ngulele"
9. "Susanna"
10. "Italian Summer"
11. "I'm Looking At The Moon"
12. "A Long Goodbye"
13. "Modern Times: Last Cowboys Fade Away"

All compositions by Country Saloon

Produced by Country Saloon, 1991.

Summer 1991.



## VESYOLYI DILIZHANS ("MERRY STAGECOACH") (OBNINSK)

Merry Stagecoach is the name of a country music group from the suburban Moscow town of Obninsk. It is quite a special group: the age of its six members -- four boys and two girls -- ranges from 11 to 15 years of age. The most notable among them is their 5-string banjo player, Ilya Toshinsky (who, as of November 1992 became a student at the School of Banjo in Nashville, Tennessee). The boy has been mastering the instrument for three years already and is an ardent bluegrass music lover. He attracted the attention of Roy Clark and the musicians from the American group Banjo Dan and the Midnite Plowboys. Even more, several American and European managers have expressed interest in him. But the bulky, clumsy Soviet/Russian management system just hasn't understood the value of these talented young performers. You would think that by now Merry Stagecoach was charming the ears of Tennessee and Kentucky with their performances -- instead, they are still touring the ex-Soviet Union. But they are quite happy. No less happy is the manager of the group, Alexei Svuzdev, a guitar instructor at the Obninsk Musical School.

The group was organized in 1988. The members are the pupils of the secondary schools of the town of Obninsk (where the first Soviet power station was built in 1954). The main musical trend of the group is traditional rock'n'roll, boogie, bluegrass and songs by Moscow

composers Larissa Grigorieva and G. Gradkov.

They have participated in many country music festivals in Estonia and Lithuania; taken part in the programs "Let's Make Our Circle Wider" and "The Morning Star;" been winners at the all-Union music festivals Farmer-90, -91 and -92 in Moscow and St. Petersburg; played at the same concert as Dieter Bohlen and C.C. Catch; taken part in the international charity action "The Children of Chernobyl Are Our Children"; and were winners of the children's program "The Sun's Disc."

Members of the band:

Natasha Sapunova - fiddle; 15 years old, reads novels, spends much time with her cats.

Natasha Borzilova - vocals, guitar; 13 years old, her hobby is breeding frogs and newts.

Ilya Toshinsky - banjo; 14 years old, likes to skateboard and cycle and dreams of owning an excellent instrument.

Andrei Miskhin - double-bass; 15 years old, he like to play hockey and volleyball, his best friend is his dog Linda, and he is learning to play the guitar.

Sergei Pasov - mandolin; 11 years old, he likes sweets but doesn't like to smile, and he plays the violin as well.

Mike Tolstikov - drums; 12 years old, his hobby is walking in the woods, his dream is to live there, and he is learning to play the guitar.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM**  
**"DILIZHANS" (1993)**  
**Winter 1993.**



## THE VOCAL ENSEMBLE CLUB 19-A (SMOLENSK)

The Vocal Ensemble Club 19-A was formed as family trio by the Monakhov brothers, Sergei and Dmitri, and Dmitri's wife Lyudmila. Later, they were joined by two more singers, Olga Fedoseyenkova and Sergei Khandrik.

As for the somewhat formal name, it reflects the singers' devotion to the traditions of home music practice rather than the ensemble's family birthplace (although 19-A was the house number where the Monakhovs were born and lived for many years). Club 19-A also embodies complete creative freedom and independence from commercial and official State cultural and public service institutions. Such

independence was a rare phenomenon in the Soviet Union.

The ensemble's repertoire includes a variety of music -- from Mozart to Sviridov to Russian folk songs to American blues. Recently, the singers have taken a deep interest in sacred songs (both Russian Orthodox church songs and American spirituals), appealing to all generations.

What is really unique about Club 19-A is the opportunity they provide to hear rarely-performed or unknown music, and with the singers' voices blending harmoniously in a charming ensemble.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM, 1992**



Dmitri Monakhov

*Wanted: Country Music in Russia*

### RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH HYMNS

**(Performed in Russian)**

"Cherubical Hymn"  
"Many Years"  
"Cherubical Hymn, 2"  
"6th Song In The 6th Tone"  
from *Heirmoses*  
"60th Song Of The Canon  
For The Most Holy  
Theotokos"

### RUSSIAN SECULAR MUSIC

**(Performed in Russian)**  
"Praise To The Host"  
(*Partesny Concerto*)  
"Be Glad, O Land Of Russia"  
(cant)  
"A Storm Over The Sea"  
(cant)  
"Oh Happiness, Happiness"  
(cant)  
"Listen To Me, My Darling"  
"Vast Sadness"  
"That's What I Wish, My  
Friends"  
"Snowball Tree Turned Red  
In The Field"

### MUSIC OF EUROPEAN COMPOSERS

"April" (*madrigal*)

**(Performed in English)**  
"Philomena" (*madrigal*)  
**(Performed in German)**  
"Canon"

**(Performed in Latin)**  
"Odi et Amo" (*from the  
cantata "Carmina"*)  
T. Morley (1557-1603)  
T. Morley (1557-1603)  
W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)  
C. Orff

### AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC

**(Performed in English)**  
"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"  
(*spiritual*)  
"Good News" (*spiritual*)  
"Midnight Special" (*blues*)  
"Alberta" (*blues*)

**Performers:**

Olga Fedoseyenkova -  
soprano.  
Lyudmila Monakhova - alto.  
Sergei Khandrik - tenor.  
Dmitri Monakhov -  
baritone (*group leader*).  
Sergei Monakhov - bass.  
Summer 1991.

## COUNTRYBANDISTS (SMOLENSK)

The third all-Union country and folk music festival Farmer-91 took place in Moscow in the concert hall at the Orlyonok Hotel from the 2nd to the 5th of March, 1991. A group from Smolensk, Countrybandists, participated.

Smolensk music lovers like and respect not only folk songs of their ancestors but also the music of the American West, so the appearance of a country group in this Russian city wasn't as strange as it might seem. Trailblazers of American folk music in this town, Countrybandists founded their group in November of 1987 at the Smolensk Variety Theater for Youth. In just two years they were able to qualify as participants in the Farmer-89 Festival. Besides singing traditional American folk songs they write their own music in country style. Their compositions include "Grandfather Pakhom" (N. Glazunov), "Don't Smoke" (L. Romanov) and "Parting" (I. Ro-

manov with A. Akhmatova's lyrics). When composing, they utilize the unique sound of Alexei Tumashov's Dobro guitar. They held many concerts in Smolensk and neighboring towns, building up a real audience for the country sound. As a result, Smolensk staged its own festival, Veselukha ("Merry Feast") in November of '89.

The group's lineup is:

Alexander Naumov - banjo, vocals

Igor Romanov - guitar, vocals

Nikolai Glazunov - mandolin, vocals

Alexei Tumashov - Dobro guitar

Alexei Levin - violin

Natalia Golomedova - vocals

Vladimir Osterenok - contra-

bass

### DISCOGRAPHY:

CASSETTE ALBUM

"COUNTRYBANDISTS" (1992),

SMOLENSK

Spring 1992.



## ACOUSTIC COUNTRY BAND (IVANOVO)

The group is from Ivanovo, a little town typical of provincial Russia.

The musicians from ACB respect bluegrass and country music very much. The first and only banjo player in Ivanovo, Igor Bushuev, speaks:

"I recall with pleasure the tour of the Moscow group Integral in Ivanovo in 1985. After the concert I met Andrei Shepelev, a very well-known banjo- and guitar-player; he gave me my first banjo lesson. Later, I often visited him in Moscow and learned to play the banjo. In 1988, I went to Tallinn and met the country group Testament (now Beergrass). They are good guys and brilliant musicians! In the autumn of 1988 I met Sasha Shchukin, who not only plays banjo but also made his instrument himself! In the summer of '89 I took part for the first time

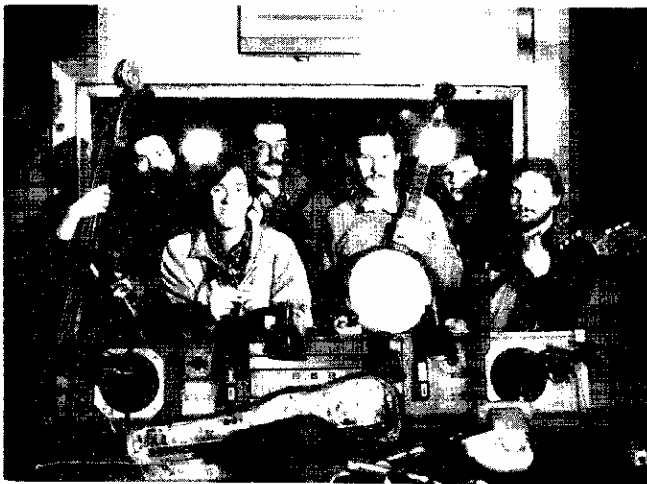
in a jam session of the Estonian country festival Harku-Jaarve. And only in October of 1990 did my dream come true -- I gathered together my friends and we created a country group in our city. Now we are touring and learning new songs."

The members of the group are: Victor Chaplygin (fiddle)  
Sergei Kufin - lead vocals, drums; Now in Journey Band, Moscow.

Arthur Kestner - contrabass.  
Yuri Ilyichev - mandolin.  
Valery Sturov - guitar  
Igor Bushuev - banjo, harmonica

The group took part in the Moscow Farmer Festivals and in some TV programs.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM**  
**"COUNTRY ACOUSTIC" (1991)**  
**Winter 1991.**



## SYEDMAYA VODA ("SEVENTH WATER") (RYBINSK)

The group was formed more than six years ago, and still one can find no proper definition of its style. But unlike music critics, musicians have easily defined their work as "acoustic country-folk."

Over the years, the musicians have composed dozens of original songs (some of them are really good!) and recorded two amateur albums: "Who's With Us" (1987) and a compilation of their best songs of 1988-1989. In 1990 the band recorded a professional LP, "Beauty," at Classic Studios in the USA.

They like touring and gladly agree to give concerts all over Russia. Sometimes, they even tour abroad -- Kazakhstan (Medeo Stadium!), Great Britain, Ireland, the U.S....

They don't like to advertise themselves, but their songs sometimes break through onto the air (Rybinsk Radio; Yaroslavl and Alma-Ata radio stations; Youth Radio, which is broadcast all over the CIS; the BBC's 2FM, Ulster and Dublin; and Boston Radio). The Voice of America mentioned Syedmaya Voda amongst such well-known Russian bands as Kukuruza and Svoya Igra in a program about country music. I can assure the readers that the musicians did not make any promotion of their music and the former "Enemy Voice" broadcast the group's songs entirely on its own initiative.

"We seldom watch television, so we've never seen ourselves on the screen," they told me,

"though in 1988 we did make a video for the 'Opened Door' program on Leningrad TV." Three years later one more program was prepared for the same TV studio. After its broadcast, the group's popularity began to grow; the musicians are even getting fan mail now. Syedmaya Voda doesn't work with Ostankino, the main CIS television company, "because their approach to music is purely commercial -- in the worst sense of the word." They got an invitation from "Vzglyad" ("The Look") -- the most popular TV show in the USSR in 1990 -- but soon after they received the proposition to make a video, "Vzglyad" was shut down for political reasons. Later, after the August '91 coup, "Vzglyad" was allowed back on the air, but the invitation to Syedmaya Voda was not renewed.

"We are changing every day, with every new song, every new concert," they said before their concert in Rybinsk in December of '91, on the anniversary of their first gig.

Syedmaya Voda's lineup is:  
Marina Sokolova  
Dmitri Kouznetsov  
Nikolai Penin  
Dmitri Sokolov  
Yevgeny Anreyev  
(sound effects).

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM**  
**"SEVENTH WATER" (1993),**  
**RYBINSK**  
**Spring 1992.**

## VARIANT (SOLIKAMSK)

The musicians from this little Urals town have been working together since 1979. After their performance at the Farmer-92 Festival they told me: "Our band is still alive. We are fully united with the country movement; we have begun to buy land and lay out gardens. Our interests include vegetable growing as well as the breeding of cattle and, especially, pigs."

The music Variant plays is unpretentious and has a wide, mass appeal. "Our music re-

sembles our Urals region. In the twelve years since we came of age we have travelled all over the ex-USSR and appeared in three local films and several television programs -- for instance, "Broad Circle" and "Let's Sing, Friends." We have also put out a cassette album [a "record" promoted only as an unofficial, or "underground," release on tape]."

### DISCOGRAPHY:

**CASSETTE ALBUM "VARIANT"**  
Spring 1992.



## COUNTRY FROM IRTYSH WESTERN S (OMSK, SIBERIA)

When I travelled to Omsk in Siberia in 1992, I asked this band why they'd named themselves Western S. The musicians answered, smiling: "First, because we are from Western Siberia; and secondly, because our style is country and western."

They are not professional musicians but they play brilliantly! They use only acoustic instruments and play in a traditional Nashville style. Their first album was recorded in 1990. Their best cuts are improvisations based on John Denver's

"Country Roads"; Hank Williams' "I Saw The Light"; Merle Travis' "Dark As A Dungeon" and "The Mine Is Like A Prison"; and Bob Dylan songs. Their music is unusual and original, and they are always glad to sing for you!

The group began to sing in 1988, but their first public appearances were not particularly successful. Then in 1990 they made a video, which they showed every time foreign guests came to Omsk. In April 1992, Western S toured New York City, Boston and other cities in Massachusetts.



Sergei Shokolov - harmonica, vocals

Andrei Marinevich - guitar, vocals

Alexander Kashirin - guitar, vocals

Sergei Gruzdev - banjo, vocals

The history of this band seems to be typical for many Russian groups, whether famous or unknown. All four of its members graduated from Omsk Pedagogical Institute where they had all studied foreign languages. Though they were in different grades, music united them. Sergei Gruzdev and Alexander Kashirin played together in the rock group Perspektiva -- of which Gruzdev was the leader -- before turning to country music. Alexander Kashirin and Andrei Marinevich had previously put together their own band specializing in political-protest songs, and Sergei Shokolov had played with them.

Instead of the band breaking up when they graduated, as commonly happens, their mutual love of music overcame all the usual obstacles and the ex-students continued to meet for rehearsals. Before long, they came to realize that it was not rock or a love of political songs that they were obsessed with, and step by step they began to move closer and closer to their true style. Eventually, they began to sing American folk songs -- that is, country and western.

But who knows about them, even now, these four musicians with no professional music education or training? Even in Omsk, they are essentially unknown. It may seem strange, but they are better known by foreigners. But then, foreigners better understand their work.

I remember well how stunned were the Americans -- members of an amateur chorus from Mas-

sachusetts. They had become a little tired of all the Russian folk music (their hosts had been very "generous" in providing such entertainment), so when the guests from across the ocean heard their own C&W songs in Siberia they were stupefied! But that wasn't the main reason for their surprise. They were truly delighted with the style with which these four boys played and sang!

The success at an "international" level was great. And soon the acknowledgement of Russian audiences followed as Western S took part in the Farmer-91 Festival, where all the Russian bands who play country were present. There were famous bands and singers such as Kukuruzza and Marina Kapuro, and Western S just popped up from nowhere. The veteran professionals were truly impressed with this obscure young band from Siberia. Western S was promptly accepted into the Bluegrass Association, where only the most trustworthy keepers of country traditions are admitted.

Many participants at the Festival sang in English, Western S among them. By the way, within this genre in Russia, English is the preferred language; indeed, that is why Western S became one of the favorites. Incidentally, Sergei Gruzdev, the band's leader, confessed that country music is the main reason, inspiration and source for his perfecting his knowledge of English -- reading in English is very irregular as books are hard to find, and the opportunity to communicate in English is an even more uncommon occurrence.

The songs Western S plays are quite different in style and composition; some of them are rarely performed at concerts, others

are well-known all over the world. Also, the band recently began to write their own songs, now that they have satisfactory conditions for creative work. Then, too, after Farmer-91 they seemed to acquire a second wind. The biggest problem now is a lack of good instruments, which often hampers them in their effort to create the music they want to play. They do the best they can to somehow solve this problem but it is not always possible to do so. For instance, they had two banjos, one four-string and one six-string -- but not the requisite five-string -- so they decided to make one real banjo instead of having two unsatisfactory substitutes. But some instruments -- harmonica, for example -- are nowhere to be found and cannot be made up out of others. Strings are also very difficult to find. And the band dreams of having a fiddle in their group, but where can they find a fiddler playing country music -- for free, in Omsk?

## AN AMERICAN TRIP FOR WESTERN S

"They come from Omsk, Siberia, but they play banjos and sing bluegrass and country & western music in English."

*(The Patriot Ledger, Thursday, April 30, 1992)*

"Really, there were times when it seemed as if the twangy English of the four members of Western S was drawn straight from a Tennessee roadhouse, rather than from the steppes of Siberia."

*(Duxberry Clipper, Wednesday, April 29, 1992)*

That's how the dreams came true.

"The craziest dreams come true..." sing the West Siberian boys in one of their own original

On the other hand, Western S has had many invitations to tour in America, but how are they to get there? They have only rubles, not dollars, and cannot buy the plane tickets. So the band is forced to decline all offers -- with thanks and great sorrow.

Of course it must be disconcerting, but the love of music outweighs all these problems. At least the boys are playing for themselves; they simply refuse to devote their lives to work and homelife ("so tedious and boring"). They haven't any "global" plans -- they aren't going to conquer the world. They prefer to get together as often as possible to rehearse and to write new songs. And they try not to think about their obscurity even in Russia -- an obscurity due to reasons much more complicated than just their English-language lyrics.

**Spring 1992.**

**DISCOGRAPHY:**

**CASSETTE ALBUM**

**"COUNTRY IN SIBERIA" (1993)**

songs, dedicated to their tour of the northeastern American states of Massachusetts and New Hampshire. They'd been dreaming of this since they first met in the mid-'80s.

Otherwise, the band's story is a common one for many Russian musicians:

All of them graduated from the Foreign Languages Department of the Omsk Pedagogical Institute. During their school years, they'd played in different bands. Sergei Gruzdev (graduated 1983) and Alexei Kashirin (graduated 1985) played rock'n'roll in a band called Perspektiva. Later, Alexei and Andrei Marinevich (graduated 1988) organized their own group

and played popular songs from different countries.

It often happens that after graduating from college musicians go their own separate ways. Sometimes they quit music altogether in order to earn a living. Then, too, obligatory service in the Red Army makes it almost inevitable bands will split up. But in this case, the musicians met again in 1988 to continue playing and singing in English. In point of fact, they just couldn't help themselves; I suppose you could say they were obsessed. Alexei, Sergei and Andrei performed essentially for their own pleasure (and still do).

At first the band's style was difficult to find. But step by step preference was given to American folk songs, or "country" as it is called in Russia. "I Saw The Light," "Dark As A Dungeon" and "Country Roads" were the first such songs to be performed by Western S -- a name thought up by Sergei. "Western style [music] is known everywhere in the world, even in Western Siberia, though country music is known to the majority of the Siberian population in the same way as Cossack songs are known to the people of Tennessee."

Their concerts were and still are infrequent. They attract mostly foreign audiences, whose first reaction is shock. It is understood that Omsk is the last place in the world one would expect to hear country music. But one such "shock" led to the band being invited to play in the U.S.

A Massachusetts choir on their "Sharing A New Song" tour heard Western S and arranged for the musicians from Omsk to travel in America, visiting a number of towns in New England and giving several successful concerts.

Three guys, Sergei, Andrei and Alexei, are permanent performers, and sometimes they are joined by session musicians, usually friends. The number of guest musicians varies, depending on the program and the size of the stage -- bass players, electric guitarists and percussionists come and go.

All of them can sing lead solos or harmony, as required. Their choice of music is not limited to any one style; they play bluegrass, folk, oldies, even rock'n'roll -- just so long as it is American music. And their English language usage and pronunciation is excellent. In fact, while doing a live show at WRHB radio in the U.S., the boys were asked to perform something in Russian to prove that they were really Russians and not Americans pretending to be Russians!

Russia is going through very hard times. So are the Western S boys. They have to earn their living working day jobs: as interpreters (Andrei and Sergei) or in computer engineering (Alexei). However, they are hoping for better times to come, and in the meantime they keep on playing...

*Spring 1992.*

## LADUSHKI (CHABAROVSK)



In 1980 three students from the foreign languages department of Chabarovsk Pedagogical Institute (Andrei Logunov, Vladimir Sydenko and Sergei Nesterov) formed the band Ladushki. Later they were joined by Anatoly Djarkov, who had

studied in the mathematics department at the institute. Over the past ten years they collaborated with many Khabarovsk bards (popular local folk musicians), including Roman Lupatov, Yevgeny Lupatov and Nikolai Malyshev in the development of a distinctive country sound to their original tunes. Their repertoire eventually consisted of these songs based on Russian and Ukrainian folk music together with a number of classic American C&W and folk songs. Their originality brought them critical acclaim in the press and popularity on television -- local as well as national. They have recorded one LP.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM**  
**"LADUSHKI" (1993)**  
**Spring 1991.**

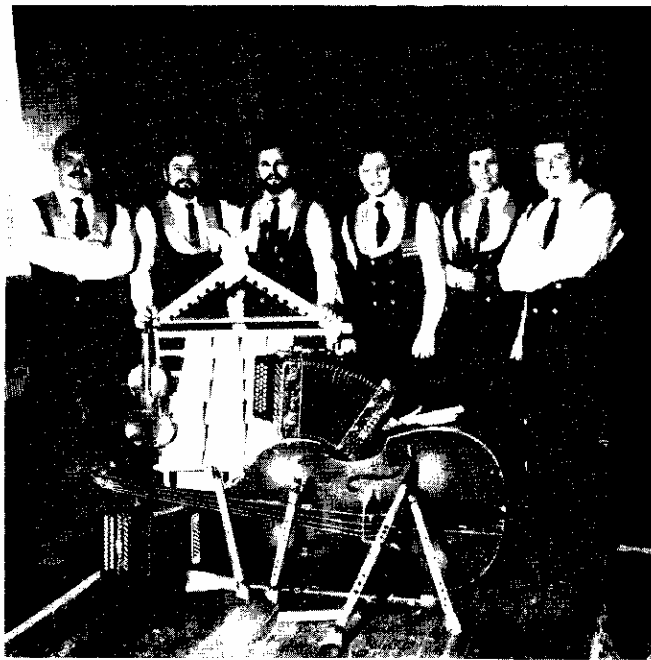


## POP-FOLK IN LITHUANIA

In 1968 several bands, among them Kertukai, Aitwarai, Antanelis, Favourites and Velu Vaikai, began to develop a "country" style incorporating elements of traditional Lithuanian folk music. Antanelis

also directed, staged and performed the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar." This cultural action stayed in the memory of Soviet music fans as one of the greatest events of the decade. **Summer 1992.**

*Trimitas  
Klaipeda's musicians  
Lietuva Dance Company*

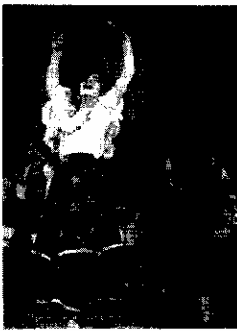




## POP-FOLK IN MOLDOVA

On a visit to Kishinev in 1981 I fell in love with Moldovian folk music. Its energy and drive are incomparable, stunning and utterly infectious! In July, 1970 the Czechoslovakian magazine Mlady Swiat put the Moldovian band Norok ("Hi, How Are You") on its cover. This unlikely happening came about after the band took the Bratislavskaya Lira Festival by storm. The Czech people still bitterly remember the events of 1968 when Soviet tanks were in the streets of Prague, so the administration of the Festival literally

implored the musicians not to sing in Russian. In spite of having to sing in a language nobody could understand, Norok came down a storm. The combination of Moldovian folk music and Beatle-esque influences had the effect of a bombshell on the unsuspecting Czech audience. (I was told this story by Moldovian musicians in a Trandafir hotel room as we drank the world-famous Moldovian wine Rosy de Pourkar -- reputedly the favorite of England's Queen Elizabeth III!)  
**Summer 1992.**



Zhok, Orizont, Flueraash

## POP-FOLK IN UKRAINE

Pop-folk music first surfaced in Ukraine in 1966 when the band Once brought their original interpretations of Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Everly Brothers, The Shadows and other early American rock music to their public.

The first band to begin the "Ukrainization" of pop-folk music was Berczin ("March") from Kiev. With just two members -- A. Avakian (guitar, piano, lyrics) and I. Bestsenay (guitar, banjo, vocals) -- the group was in existence from 1962 to 1974. Their repertoire consisted mainly of spirituals and Pete Seger songs. Later, Avakian and Bestsenay joined the folk group Vesnyanka, which had been organized by students at Kiev University. They also were members of ethnographic expeditions in the Carpathian Mountains.

Eney existed from 1968 to 1977 and was one of the best of the bands from the second wave of Kiev pop-folk. Its name was taken from the poem by Kotlyarevsky, and reflected the musicians' wish to establish Ukrainian folk songs as one of the

finest musical achievements in the world of folk music.

Kobza began its activities in 1968 as a folk instrumental trio of banuras-playing students at the Kiev Conservatory. They recorded two records (1971 and 1980). Their music was original and quite beautiful, its energy and drive combining successfully with easy-to-remember melodies. As a result, both albums were very popular.

Originally calling themselves Dzvoni ("The Bells"), they began in 1967 with a repertoire that included Ukrainian folk songs, popular American compositions ("Aquarius"), and original Ukrainian-language songs.

The list of the best Ukrainian folk groups wouldn't be complete without mentioning Trio Marcnich, who had a head-spinning, stunning success in Ukraine and Russia. The group originated from a little town called Lutsk.

Pure American country music has never been played in Ukraine because the influence of local folk music on the audience is too great to overcome.  
**Spring 1992.**



Illustrations:  
Kapella Banduristov  
(next page)  
Kobza  
Medobory  
Veryovka State Choir  
Trio Banduristok



## PESNYARY (MINSK, BYELORUSSIA)

The patriarchs of modern Byelorussian pop-folk, Pesnyary, performed at the Farmer-92 Festival. By that time, Pesnyary had reigned on Soviet stages for almost 20 years -- I remember hearing them in my childhood, about 1973. The band's leader, Vladimir Mouliavin, told me: "Pesnyary was formed on September 1, 1969. We have always held true to our guiding principle, which is to integrate ancient Byelorussian melodies into the world of contemporary music. To this end, we combined intricate multi-vocal stylings, guttural vocal timbres, folk instrumentation and modern drums and electric guitars. At first, the officials accused us of 'perverting the people's music,' but they shut up and left us

alone when we became the winners of the 5th All-Union Variety Contest. From then on we were the leaders in Soviet variety music."

In May 1979 a young composer, Vladimir Kourian, made his debut with the folk oratory "Byelorussian Kolykhankha."

The band Souzorie produced a contemporary musical version of the famous "Polotsk Notebook," a compilation of 18th-century secular instrumental folk music.

A group from Minsk, Neza-planirovannoe Meropriyatie ("Unplanned Event") plays rockably. Such bands as Syabry and Verasy use elements of Byelorussian folk music in their compositions.  
**Spring 1990.**



Verasy. Right: Pesnyary



## POP-FOLK IN KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKMENIA

Respect for one elders is a traditional Eastern ethic, and an outgrowth of this is a great love of folk music. Modern-day Kazakh and Turkmenian musicians always honor their regional country music; indeed, this trend exists in all the Eastern republics of the CIS.

Gunesh, a band organized in 1970 by Gosteleradio of the Turkmenian SSR (the State radio and TV station), performed exclusively local folk music but with modern arrangements. We may call such a funny phenomenon Turkmenian country music.

In Kazakhstan's capital, Alma-Ata, a band called Jetyguen was very popular in the '70s. Its musicians were the first to intro-

duce Kazakh folk instruments into their exotic compositions. The father of the band's leader, Algat Sarybaev, was a famous folklore collector who owned many folk instruments -- and his son played them well.

I also must mention Kazakh folk singer Roza Rymbaeva and the Aray group, both of whom did a lot for the promotion of their national folk music. Their work has not been in vain as the next generation of country musicians won't be starting from nothing. The first results are quite obviously ready now: The Voice of Asia Festival discovered a very interesting folk-rock group, Roxanaki, in 1990.

**Summer 1992.**

## POP-FOLK IN AZERBAIJAN

"The East is a tricky business" is a proverb quite popular in the ex-USSR. Eastern music is full of mystery, but it can be defined as a sort of country music, in the sense that "country" is folk music.

From 1968 to 1972 the festival Zolotaya Osen ("Golden Fall") was held in Bakh, Azerbaijan's capital, featuring music ranging from jazz to folk. A group called Tree Ognya ("Three Fires") began to play folk music as far back as the beginning of the '70s. Experiment OK, led by Azer Mekhtiev, invented a new style combining Azerbaijanian folk music

and rock. Ashougui, a band led by Ilchan Shikaliev, used folk instruments. Vassif Akhundov, the founder of Rust, successfully synthesized soul and funk styles with ethnic influences. Gaya, Talisman, Action and other Azerbaijanian bands continued the musical traditions of the '70s through the '80s, using folk motifs in their music. Perhaps we can distinguish a new style in country music -- an Eastern one?

**Summer 1992.**



Gunesh

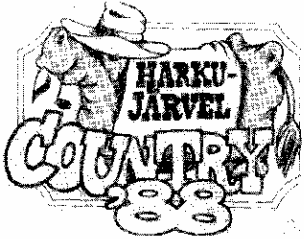


Roza Rymbaeva



Sarkhan Sarkhan

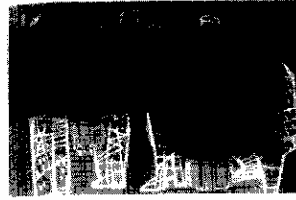
## HARKU-JAARVE COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVALS



Perhaps I should start with a couple of words about the origins of the Harku-Jaarve Festival: The two-day Festival was first held in 1987 and has taken place every summer since, becoming one of the biggest in not only the Baltic states, but Russia too. In fact, the Festival has become so popular that it is one of the most important events of the summer in Estonia. Over the two-day period now, approximately 30,000 to 50,000 people attend the 6-hour concerts, with bands playing sets of 20-45 minutes, depending on their level.

Most of the bands and singers have come from Estonia, the best of whom have been Kukerpillid, Justament, Rock Hotel, Karavan, Kapell, Beergrass, Walla Vanem, Western Symphonics, Apelsin, Silvia Vrite, M.T.J., Vanaviisi and Folkmill. But we've also had participants from other countries; Seppo Sillanpaa, Lake Country Boys, Erkki and the Orpollapset, Dixie Fried, Aima (Finland); Elvert Underground (Sweden); the Einars Vitols Band (Latvia); Jonis, Virgis Stakenas (Lithuania); and Kukuruza, the Country Count Band, Vesolyi Dilzhans, Fine Street, Red River Valley Boys and J. Jastin (Russia).

Owing to our political system in the past, we weren't able to communicate with musicians in other countries. But now [due to *perestroika*] we are very happy because we will be able to establish contact with the whole of the country and bluegrass music world.



Our fax: 292-6511 for box 001022 Moscow. For Kapell Music, Andres Loigom and Andrei Gorbatov.

### DISCOGRAPHY: KAPELL:

#### Side 1

1. "Today" 2:11 (A. Loigom, trad.)
2. "Old Sailor" 2:54 (A. Loigom, H. Muller)
3. "Woman's Day" 2:11 (A. Loigom, H.R. Hellat)
4. "Joyful Dance" 2:17 (A. Loigom, H. Karmo)
5. "Market" 3:40 (A. Loigom, H. Karmo)
6. "Fiddle And Banjo" 4:22 (trad.)
7. "Portie" 3:37 (A. Loigom, A. Loigam)
8. "Seeing Is Going" 3:26 (A. Loigom, H. Karmo)

Total Time 24:38

#### Side 2

1. "Joy For The War" 6:03 (A. Loigom, A. Loigom)
2. "Lonely Cowboy Of The Stone City" 6:03 (A. Loigom, H. Karmo)
3. "Lazy and Ego..." 3:13 (A. Loigom, A. Loigom)
4. "Snow Land" 3:03 (A. Loigom, L. Tungal)
5. "Gifts" 3:43 (J. Haavic, Fr. Kamseni)
6. "King's Song" 3:31

Total Time 25:41

#### The Members of Kapell:

A. Loigom - guitar  
G. Ausmaa - bass  
A. Johanson - drums  
A. Ramm - mandolin, fiddle  
K. Imatov - accordion, mandolin

#### Special Thanks:

I. Tüisel  
M. Krell  
S. Vrite  
A. Kaer  
T. Rull  
J. Arder  
Winter 1993.

## HARKU-JAARVE -- FESTIVAL ON THE LAKE



August 1989. Paul Simon had already visited Russia, leaving Russian folk, gospel and hootenanny lovers under the spell of his magic music. The last sounds of the incomparable Nitty Gritty Dirt Band (patriarchs of country-rock, they have been playing for more than 25 years -- no kidding!) were still in the air, but Moscow's Green Theater was empty and the country music relay-race had headed for Estonia. Its capital, Tallinn, hosted the 4th International Festival of Country, Folk and Bluegrass Music.

The Festival takes place each year in the Tallinn suburb of Harku-Jaarve. There is a lovely lawn area not far from Harku Lake where country musicians, their friends and music lovers gather to sing and play music.

The Harku-Jaarve Festival has become a place for musicians from Moscow, Riga, Tallinn and Gorky (Nizhni Novgorod now) to rendezvous. A band from Helsinki was there this year; it is

the traditional bluegrass group Lake Country Boys. Their virtuoso music impressed me, so I asked the banjo player, magnificent musician Jussi Mattikainen, to tell me more about the band.

"Our band has been in existence for only two years," he responded, "but we are already famous, even outside Finland. All of our instruments are handmade. Our musicians are also masterful craftsmen in wood and metalwork. I made my banjo and now I'm playing on it. My colleague Ilpo Niiranen made his bluegrass guitar. Our mandolin and contrabass are also handmade -- down to the smallest part. We love our work and our music and we are very dedicated. As a rule, we have rehearsals every day for 5-6 hours. We also work at a factory which produces musical instruments. Our dream is to play at the festival organized by Bill Monroe [The Father of Bluegrass] in Kentucky; we hope to go there



next year. We also hope that our Russian colleagues will have a chance to play in the USA."

To tell the truth, I listened to these words with bitter feelings. I felt in Jussi Mattikainen's speech not a patronizing tone, but real sorrow for Russian country musicians, who have now no possibility to tour outside the USSR. The officials who decide the lives and careers of our musicians always give the same lame reason for their denials: "What a strange idea, to play foreign music! Why do Russian boys and girls want to play American folk and country music? Let them play their own, that's OK. But not foreign!"

That's why one of the best professional groups, Kukuruz, can neither tour nor study in the U.S., though the musicians have been longing to visit America for years. That's why the only Russian band touring abroad now is the group Svoja Igra ("Own Play"), whose repertoire includes many different styles, with country music songs making up only about ten percent. The officials still cannot understand that in music "foreign" and "domestic" are meaningless terms. Folk music is the people's art, and if one people love some kind of music, another people can also love it. It seems so obvious, but those who decide the fate of our musicians refuse to acknowledge this simple truth.

Country musicians can only learn from each other. In Russia, there are no schools or colleges for this genre. There are many good professional organ players in our immense country, but there are only a very few professional banjo players. I know practically all of them -- Andrei Shepchev, the best professional five-string banjo player in Moscow; Alexander Pmozov, a true master of the bluegrass Dobro guitar, who plays in Kukuruz; Alexander Pomozov, a professional banjo player who works with the group Selsky Chas ("Country Hour") from Riga -- whose leader is the magnificent guitarist, Marder; Dmitri Vakhrameev from the Country Count Band and his colleague Tet Saviauk, who plays in Justament, the band from Tartu. And that's almost all of them. I want to point out that there are, however, many jazz banjo players in our country -- they have the possibility to learn in school. There are also many amateur banjoists playing in rapid country style in Russia, but there are few true professionals.

The musicians are tired of this situation; they cannot tour and they have no contact with an



audience. I've heard that one of the best banjo players, Konstantin Kuzhaliev, from V. Nazarov's band, has already left the scene. And I'm afraid that the same fate awaits the rest if the situation doesn't soon change.

The future for country musicians does not look good at all. Every attempt to promote country and bluegrass music in the USSR up to the present time has been unsuccessful. Grigory Gladkov, the famous Russian composer and author of "Plastic Crow" has been trying to promote country music in Russia for three years already, working at it day and night to no avail.

However, the Moscow Country Festival was very successful; Russian country bands even gave a concert in which Roy Clark himself agreed to take part. The true musical highlights of the year were the concerts by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and Paul Simon, arranged by Erkin Tuzmukhammedov, professional translator and music connoisseur. But this is just a drop in the world's bucket of country and bluegrass music, which is performed on a grand

scale not only in America, but in most of the Western countries of the world. But I digress....

The level of organization of the Harku-Jaarve Festival truly amazed me. The service was exemplary, advertising and promotion were magnificent, and any problems that arose were solved quickly and efficiently. It was truly stunning for us Russians -- even in Moscow the musicians could only dream about such conditions. The explanation, I suppose, lies at least in part due to the fact that our Estonian colleagues already have strong traditions in country music, which has been popular here for decades now. Besides, Estonia has more connections with the West, as half of the nation's previous population has already emigrated to the USA, Canada and Western Europe.

The Estonian country music audience is quite large and very enthusiastic. Moscow's audience, on the other hand, is quite small, as country music traditions in Russia are very shallow. Hell, our Soviet-Russian nation knows very little at all about any aspect of American culture. It

may seem paradoxical, but every American I've ever met could sing me at least one or two Russian songs. Maybe only one -- but everybody! But try making the same request of a Russian; ask any one of them to sing or whistle just one tune to any American song. The most favorable reaction would be surprise, in the worst case he will begin to swear, but either way the answer will be negative.

Thousands (maybe tens of thousands) of Estonians came to the Harku-Jaarve Festival. The audience sang along with the musicians, they danced, they laughed -- they relaxed!

Who was in charge of the Festival? The director was the president of the Estonian Country Music Association, Anton Baturin, and his colleague was Andres Loigom. The sponsors of the festival were the state agricultural farm near Tallinn (its representative was the chairman of the trade union, Virgo Kungla); and the firm Marat, famous clothes manufacturer, who received the right to use the festival emblem on their products. Their sponsorship was quite businesslike: everybody worked hard, and the profits were good. Enough money was raised to stage the next festival, Harku-90, which promises to be even better than this one.

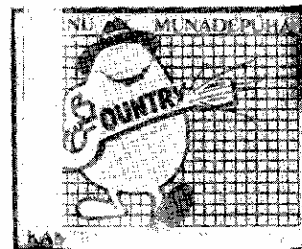
The editor-in-chief of the Finnish magazine *Musiikkiuutiset*, Pentti Niemi, was truly satisfied. Published in Helsinki, the magazine is targeted for a youthful audience. The quality of the print is fantastic -- especially compared to Soviet music magazines. When I was presented with the latest issue and began

to leaf through it, I could hardly suppress envious feelings. Hell, here, in "our beautiful, magnificent land," we'll probably never have such a quality magazine devoted to country music. My pessimistic gloom was lifted a little, though, when Mr. Niemi complimented me on the 6th edition of the Russian Musical Gazette I'd given him to look at. That was so comforting!

But other things weren't... The great American banjo player Tony Trischka was also going to participate in the Harku-Jaarve Festival, but his Soviet visa never came through. So, after waiting in London for three weeks he finally headed for the Porta Festival in Plzen, Czechoslovakia. ("It could be even funny," he said, "but it's too sad.") Maybe next year the Harku Festival will give us the opportunity to meet American country and bluegrass musicians. And maybe Russian country bands will eventually reach the coasts of that "faraway and mysterious land" opened by Christopher Columbus five centuries ago. There is always hope.

**Summer 1989.  
Tallinn-Moscow.**

Coda: In September, 1991 the Lake Country Boys played at the International Bluegrass Music Association Fan Fest in Owensboro, Kentucky -- and so did Moscow's Red River Valley Boys.



## COUNTRY AT HARKU-91

One weekend in the middle of July, 1991 the 5th International Country Music Festival Harku-Jaarve was held in the Tallinn suburb nearby picturesque Harku Lake.

Its popularity is unique. The second day of the festival was marked by awful weather -- rain was pouring endlessly from the sky. But the crowd (about 15,000 spectators) had nevertheless gathered near the stage. Vesolyi Dilizhans ("Merry Stagecoach") from Obninsk, Russia, performed successfully, as did Moscow's Red River Valley Boys. The Estonians welcomed the Russian musicians with an ovation. "Country music has nothing to do with politics!"

Famous Estonian singer Silvia Vrite opened the Festival. She sang classic blues songs accompanied by a symphony orchestra of about 40 musicians. Ivo Linna "the Father of Estonian Rock'n'Roll" was warmly welcomed, as usual.

Elvert Underground, a group from Sweden, played Irish

country music using a new, unusual white-colored fiddle, ancient lute, four-string banjo (clawhammer) and other strange instruments. The Finnish band Dixie Fried made the audience truly crazy with its music full of drive, as the musicians combined different styles -- country, rock'n'roll and rockabilly -- in their compositions. Its fantastic sound and boundless energy made Estonian children laugh and dance. They even ran about full of delight, and their mothers didn't stop them -- such "democratic" behavior actually seemed usual for them! Everybody on the huge lawn near the stage was drinking fresh, cold homemade beer -- they took it to the concert by the bucketful!

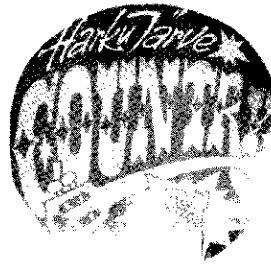
Most of the Festival's participants were, of course, Estonian groups. Some of the bands are the "fathers" of country music in Estonia: Kukerpillid, patriarchs of the style, who played with the same lineup they've had since 1971(!); Justament from Tallinn; and from Tartu, the Killep Band;

and a group called Kapell, led by Andres Loigom, who is one of the Harku-Jaarve Festival's founders.

The audience was charmed by such bands as Pivnaya Trava ("Beergrass"), Walla Wanem; Varvuke, a honky-tonk group that performs cowboy music; Virgis Stakenas, a showman from Lithuania; and Leningrad's Fine Street.

The jam session began in the evening in the Sport Hotel, which is situated on the seashore. It continued all through the night till 8 a.m. Blues, country, good old rock'n'roll, bluegrass, hillbilly and Western music were performed. Seagulls were flying over the musicians' heads, they were crying and flapping their wings....

August 1991.  
Tallinn - Moscow.





**APELSIN  
("THE ORANGE")  
TALLINN, ESTONIA**

I heard their songs for the first time in 1978 when Apelsin came on tour to my native city Sverdlovsk (now Yekaterinburg). I got the tickets and invited my classmate Igor Haliasmaa, whose father Vello (also invited) was an Estonian. They lived in Sverdlovsk because of political cataclysms, resulting in Estonia's annexation to Russia after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Thousands of Estonians were subsequently exiled to Siberia and the Urals [where Sverdlovsk/Yekaterinburg is located--ed.]

Igor's father Vello translated the lyrics to Apelsin's songs for me. Their compositions included satirical elements of folk, country and rock music.

Apelsin appeared in May, 1974 in a TV program. The original lineup included Ants Nuut (trombone, vocals, sound ef-

fects), Tynu Aaare (guitar, harmonica, banjo, balalaika, mandolin, vocals), Jan Arder (violin, piano, bass guitar, vocals), and Harry Kyrvits (drums). Harry had worked in The Optimists, Microns, Electra, Baltica and Vega before joining Apelsin. A new singer, Ivo Linna joined the group in 1975. Various patriarchs of Estonian country and rock music -- Vello Yurton, Vladimir Sheripov, Rein Roos, Jaan Kyrs, Priit Pichlap, Tarmo Pichlap and Andres Loigom -- sporadically worked with the band. After 1989 Apelsin disintegrated. Some of its musicians have emigrated to their rich neighbor, Finland. But Apelsin's songs are still often broadcast on CIS radio stations.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
"APELSIN" (1976, 1980);  
"GROUP APELSIN" (1987)  
Spring 1991.



**JUSTAMENT  
(TARTU, ESTONIA)**

Justament ("That's All Right" or "OK") was formed in 1980 by six Tartu students who were interested in folk and country music. Their repertoire is a mixture of bluegrass, Estonian folk songs, American country, and rock music from around the world. They have released a number of records, one of which appeared at the end of 1990. The band often performed with the well-known Estonian singer Silvia Vrite.

Some years ago the solo guitarist of Justament, Yuri Rosenfeld, emigrated to Finland and now Finnish country lovers can hear him play. For approximately two years Andy Marder, the famous guitar picker from Riga, Latvia, worked in the band, but he emigrated to America in 1991. Nevertheless, the band continues to record and tour.

Toomas Lunge - mandolin, percussion, vocals

Jaani Elgula - guitar, jew's-harp, vocals  
Ivo Peetso - bass, vocals  
Teet Saviauk - harmonica, vocals

Aavo Valtna - drums  
Ants V. Karu - electric guitar (Victor Vasilev) - fiddle, steel guitar (Dobro)

Tiit Nikopensius - soundman  
Joosep Klemens - JUSTAMangement

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
LP "JUSTAMENT" (1990);  
CASSETTE ALBUM  
"JUSTAMENT", CASSETTE  
ALBUM "MURUMANGUD  
MUNAMAE" (1992), TALLINN  
STUDIA, ESTONIA

Side 1  
"Murumangud Munamael"  
(Oma Matta Otsast) 4:29  
"Karude Elust"  
(Tailor/Saviauk) 3:00  
"Vladislavi Marss"  
(Rosenfeld/Sutt) 2:45  
"Ringmangulaui"  
(Lunge/Runnel) (Dedicated to



**JURI ROSENFELD  
ESTONIAN BEATLES  
CLUB VOL. 1.**

Lauri Saatpalu & Alvar  
Joonas) 5:28  
"Kivihing"  
(Toomemets/Saviauk) 6:45  
Side 2  
"Uus Maailm"  
(Lunge/Saviauk) 3:26  
"Kui Saabub Hommik" 3:26

"Good Old Country"  
(Young/Salumets) 2:49 (for  
Vello Toomemets)  
"Kodutनावद"  
(Lunge/Saviauk) 4:29  
"Annie's Song"  
(Denver/Denver) 3:06  
"Kogu Elu On Tee" (Lunge)  
5:27



## BEERGRASS (TALLIN, ESTONIA)

From 1985 to 1989 this band from Tallinn called itself Testament. The name change occurred when they picked up a beer manufacturer, Saku, as their sponsor. But the name Beergrass suits them just fine because the musicians themselves like beer so much that they could've named the band Champions of Beer Drinking.

My good friend Emil Oja, mandolin and fiddle player for Beergrass, had this to say about his band:

"We work professionally and often go on tour -- for example, in the summer of 1990 we performed at the Mragowo Country Picnic Festival in Poland. But we prefer to visit Finland. Finnish fans like our style -- tickets for our shows in, for instance, Ruotsinpyhtaa are always sold out. But commercial success isn't the main thing for us; we love

country and bluegrass. In 1990 and 1991 we met with a very warm reception at the Moscow country festival Farmer. Thank God for festivals in Lithuania; Rock Summer in Tallin; and in Denmark in August, 1992. I'm glad that you have good country groups in Russia. Here in Estonia this genre has been popular for a long time!"

### Side 1

1. "I'll Start With You"
2. "Tivoli's Train"
3. "Arrowhead"
4. "Rise And Shine"
5. "Back Forty Rip-off"
6. "Are You Wasting My Time?"

### Side 2

1. "Country Boy"
2. XXX





3. "In The Mine"
4. "Orange Blossom Special"
5. "Uncle Pen"

Lineup:

Raivo Tihanov - banjo, harmonica, vocals

Vahur Parve - electric bass, vocals

Margus Mottus - electric and acoustic guitars

Indrek Veskimae - fiddle, piano

Toomas Pae - drums

Emil Oja - mandolin, vocals

Ilona Aasvere - vocals

Toomas Lunge - special guest star vocals

Production: Emil Oja & Beergrass Country Club

DISCOGRAPHY:

CASSETTE ALBUMS

"COUNTRY BOY," "TULE TUU"

Side 1

1. "The Fiddle Man" (M.M. Murphy/C Rains/J.E. Norman/T. Timm)
2. "Traditional" (trad./R. Tihanov)
3. "Musing" (I. Veskimae/O. Arder)

4. "Come On, Wind" (R. Roodla/R. Roodla)
5. "Baltic Rag" (T. Timm)
6. "Foggy Road" (R. Tihanov/R. Tihanov)
7. "Great Balls Of Fire" (T. Hammer/R. Tihanov)
8. "Vamp In The Middle" (J. Hardford/ H Kao)
9. "Businessman's Christmas" (I. Veskimae/A Meedlind)

Side 2

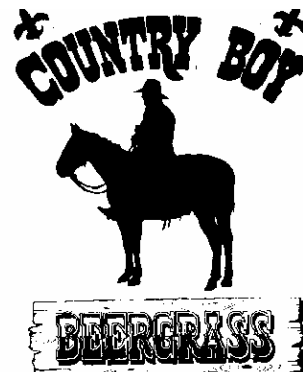
1. "Bluegrass" (J. Smith/ U. Meister)
2. "Diamonds" (J. Hanna, J. Leo/ T. Tamm)
3. "Dueling Banjos" (trad.)
4. "Luck In My Eyes" (k.d. lang/B. Mink)
5. "The Pub" (R. Tihanov)
6. "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down"
7. "I Know Where I'm Going" (T. Judds/T. Judds)
8. "The Camel" (V. Toomemets/ T. Timm)

Musicians:

Tonu Timm - guitar



Raivo Tiganov - banjo  
harmonica  
Vahur Parve - bass guitar  
Emil Oja - mandolin  
Indrek Veskimae - fiddle,  
piano  
Arvo Kaer - fiddle  
Toomas Pae - drums  
Anneli Aken - vocals



Ilona Aasvere - vocals  
Enn Kesa - soundman  
Special Thanks to the J.J.  
Lannenmiehet group for  
their help  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED,  
1991

## LUCKY LUKE PROJECT

### Side 1.

1. "Merehundi Jutt"  
(G. Kruk/H. Kao)
2. "Teddy O'Neil"  
(Irish Ballad)
3. "Rodeo"  
(S. Starander/M. Lepa)
4. "Hakkii's Polka"  
(Scottish dance tune)
5. "Viis Mill"  
(R. Chesnul/M. Lepa)
6. "Katie"  
(J. Tyson/U. Niklarinen)

### Performers:

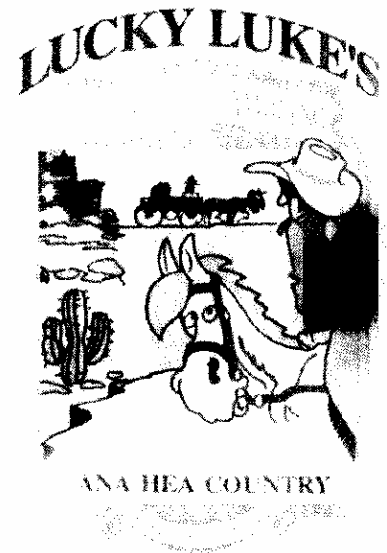
1. Vanaviisi
2. Folkmill
3. Rodeo
4. MTJ
5. Folkmill
6. Walla Vanem

### Side 2.

1. "See Vana Hea Country"  
(N. Young/V. Salumets)
2. "Melancholy" (R. Roomus)
3. "TUUL" (L. Lepp)
4. "In The Mine" (Traditional)
5. "Segi"  
(M.S. Tillis/ A. Joamets)
6. "Laanevaa Tuu Ster"
7. "Are You Wasting My Time?"

### Performers:

1. Justament
  2. Vanaviisi
  3. Puhast Vuuk
  4. Beergrass
  5. MTJ
  6. Folkmill
  7. T. Lunge & Beergrass
- Christmas 1992/93.  
Tallinn-Moscow.



OLUK NÕUKSUSKONNAST **Emil Oja**  
BEERGLASS COUNTRY CLUB

ALAMKÜLMALA, KESKSEISKOLA TÄHE KÜLDE  
TÄHE KÜLDE, TÄHE KÜLDE

**HÄID JÕULUPÜHI**  
**ÕNUSAT AASTAVAHETUST!**

## THE SOLDIER OF ROCK'N'ROLL

In the summer of 1989 at the Harku-Jaarvc Festival near Tallinn I became acquainted with Peeter Volkonsky, who was a very colorful man. A singer, actor and composer, he graduated from Tallinn Conservatory with a major in scenic arts, and later worked in the Estonian State Youth Theatre. From 1979 to 1980 Peeter simultaneously played in the jazz/folk/rock group Hyum (with Rein Rannap) and in the punk group Propeller. After that he worked in the Vanemuine Theater in Tartu -- the intellectual center of Estonia.

When I met him Volkonsky was the host of the Festival, presenting the bands and telling jokes and funny stories between sets. He was so good at it that sometimes the people laughed so hard they fell down -- of course, the grass under our feet was quite comfortable.

But after four hours of this, Peeter had quite run out of material. What to do? There were still a number of groups to go. Quickly, I whispered to him a funny American story I'd once heard: "Two girls are trying to talk across a wide street. There are very big tomatoes at the market!" cries the first one.

"What?" says the other. "And such big cucumbers," the first demonstrates with her hands. "What a magnificent cowboy! And where does he live?" asks the second girl..." I wish you could've heard this story in the Estonian language! I have to confess that I know only a few words in Estonian, but as Peeter told the story I wanted to laugh. As for the audience, it listened in complete silence. A pause. And suddenly -- a storm of laughter. The Estonians seemed to love this American joke!

There are many legends about Volkonsky. Peeter was always known as a devout fan of classical rock'n'roll and folk music. One day Volkonsky Jr. brought home a record of some conventional and standard pop music like C.C. Catch or some idiotic Soviet pop group like Laskovy Mai. His father immediately broke the disc. The next day his son brought home a Beatles album. Father's methods were truly tough, but the results proved to be brilliant.

We have not met since 1989. Maybe Peeter has changed? He had such a colorful appearance. He could change externally, yes, but internally -- never!

Winter 1993.



## SYLVIA VRITE "WOMAN IN BLUES"

This the second LP by Silvia Vrite (born April 28? 1951). When the Estonian rock elite got together for the tenth time in Tartu in May of '88, it was discovered that only one singer, Silvia Vrite, had performed at every festival -- from the first up to the present. This fact alone is sufficient to illustrate her position in Estonian popular music -- she is in demand everywhere. Her versatility is astonishing, extending from spirituals and gospels to rock and pop music, with blues and jazz in between. If we add to this her carefully polished, expressive and true-to-style interpretations, we can easily understand why she has remained popular through the years.

Silvia Vrite's first LP (1985) contains mostly songs by Estonian composers. On the present one the stress is laid upon widely-known jazz songs, to which Silvia Vrite has given her own individual expression.

Valter Ojakaar

DISCOGRAPHY:

"SILVIA"

Side 1

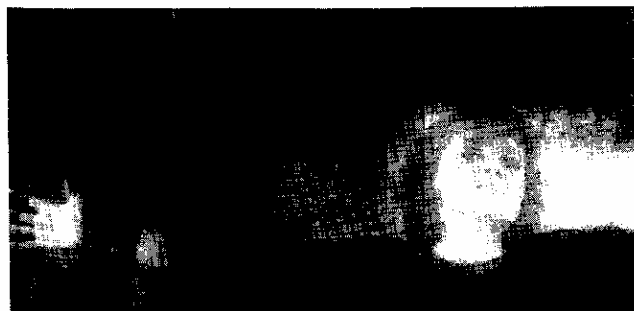
1. "Neil Paeuil" (U. Naissoo/H. Kamo) 4:58
2. "Give Me The Simple Life" (R. Bloom/H. Ruby) 3:32
3. "Stairway To The Stars" (M. Malneck/F. Signorelli) 4:12
4. "Fine Brown Frame" (J.M. Williams/G. Cartiero) 3:00

Side 2

5. "Some People Cry The Blues" (G. Allman/G. Allman) 2:52
6. "The Nightingale Sings In Berkeley Square" (M. Sherwin/E. Maschwitz) 3:44
7. "Sugar Blues" (C. Williams/L. Fletcher) 2:33
8. "Undecided" (C.J. Shavers/S. Robin) 3:08
9. "Black Sheep" (Traditional) 2:39

Performers:

- H. Aniko group (1,2,5)  
 H. Aniko big band (3,4,7,8)  
 Vocal group (5)  
 J. Jurisson, piano (6,9)  
 Christmas 1992.



## BLACK CURRANT BLOSSOM (TALLINN, ESTONIA)



The leader of this dance group speaks to me after the concert:

"The dance group Black Currant Blossom came together at the beginning of 1989. Although there are people from various fields of activities among us, we have one thing in common: an abiding love for dance and good music. We always strive to bring to our performances youthful originality, taking into consideration the time, place and situation. We choose our repertoire ourselves, ignoring outside pressures and attempts to influence us. And so we perform a variety of dances: English country, Irish set, American square and contra, and to some extent 16th-18th Elizabethan-era country. We are proud to say that we are the only troupe in Estonia performing these dances.

"Our second aim is naturally concerned with Estonian folklore, which we appreciate

and honor. The Estonian national culture is somewhat similar to Scandinavian cultures, but still has some principal differences. For that reason we have studied Scandinavian dances that have been influenced by various country dances (e.g., Swedish, Scottish and Finnish).

"There are about 20 of us in our group, ages 16-20. Our country has just become independent "de facto." That makes us all very happy because now we have far greater opportunities to communicate with the rest of the world. So, we are turning to you to find new friends!"

### Lineup:

Priit Raud  
Hannes Arro  
Peeter Pais  
Janek Molotov  
Hille Altvalja  
Inga Karrik  
Kerttu Martin  
Katrín Ollo

Spring 1992 - September 1993.  
Visagino-fest, Lithuania.



## A-FOND (ROOSNA-ALLIKU-PAIDE, ESTONIA)

This group was the only one from the USSR at the 23rd International Country Music Festival in Plzen, Czechoslovakia in July 1990. The irony is that A-Fond is from Estonia -- at the time still a part of the USSR, though nobody doubted that soon Estonia would be an independent country. [Estonia became independent in 1991--ed.]

The musicians now live literally in the country -- in an Estonian village on a farm called "Roosna Alliku." Every year a musical festival of the same name takes place here. (Estonia is famous for its music festivals, which are held every year Tallinn, Pjarnu and Tartu, and on the Saarmaig Island.)

The music A-Fond plays isn't purc. traditional American country -- a saxophone is in-

cluded. Their performance in Plzen, though, was liked by everybody. So there is hope that other countries' audiences will like them too.

### Lineup:

Jaan Arvola - manager

Hannes Loopere - drums, vocals

Andrus Kilk - guitar, vocals

Andrus Pijago - bass

Olavi Oismann - saxophone

Andres Torin - synthesizer, vocals

Sergei Tenno - lead vocals

Raivo KIRSTII - soundman

### DISCOGRAPHY:

CASSETTE ALBUM

"ROOSNA-ALLIKU" (1993)

Spring 1992.



## VARVUKE (ESTONIA)

There is no trouble with interpreting the name Varvuke -- it means "small bird." The band evolved from a group that used to play Estonian folk music for a troupe of folk dancers. After a year of this, though, three of the musicians decided to form their own band. The first concert was on Friday the 13th of October, 1989 -- and they sang 13 songs.

### Lineup:

Pecter Rebane - guitar  
Veiko Pitkanen - bass  
Reiko Teepere - banjo, mandolin, harp

Of course, there have been some additional players from time to time:

Tiit Kikas - fiddle  
Aivar Nurmik - banjo, mandolin

Varvuke used to play at birthdays, weddings, etc. as well as at some country festivals:

Pjarnu Country ('91 and '92);  
Harku Country ('91 and '92);  
Farmer ('92).

Now the entire lineup has changed and there is nothing left of the original Varvuke. Though the present musicians still play country music, they will soon change the name of the band.

### DISCOGRAPHY:

**CASSETTE ALBUM**  
"VARVUKE" (1993), TALLINN

### Songs:

1. "Reindeer Of Deer" (R. Teepere)
2. "Picture Of A Girl" (P. Rebane)
3. "Steamroller" (R. Teepere)
4. "Quiet Night" (P. Rebane)
5. "My Dear" (R. Teepere)

Winter 1993.

## WALLAVANEM (ESTONIA)

Wallavanem was formed in 1988. They play a different kind of music, but which could easily be labelled country-rock. At the Rock Summer Festival in Tallinn in July they were introduced as "part rock, part country, part Estonian, part-English...." And, perhaps, part-party! To date, the band has released only one cassette, "Years 88-91", but soon they will be releasing another. Wallavanem successfully toured Poland in 1989 and have been to Finland about ten times; plus, they've played at Germany's Kieler Woche Festival in 1990 and at Sweden's Scandinavian Country Music Festival in 1991.

### Lineup:

Aivar Hindreko - electric guitar, vocals

Kalle Erm -accordion

Mart Silla - fiddle, vocals

Urmas Nikkarinen - vocals, bass

Sulev Vorno -acoustic guitar, vocals

Lauri Viikna - drums, percussion.

### DISCOGRAPHY:

**CASSETTE ALBUM**  
"WALLAVANEM COUNTRY" (1991), AUVI, TALLINN

"SONGS OF 1989--1991" COLLECTION

### Side 1

"Nalg" (Johnson/Nikkarinen)

"Kel Joud, Sel Ougus" (Liivak/Nikkarinen)

"300 Hobust" (Silla/Nikkarinen)

"Raamas Rongiaken" (Vorno/Nikkarinen)

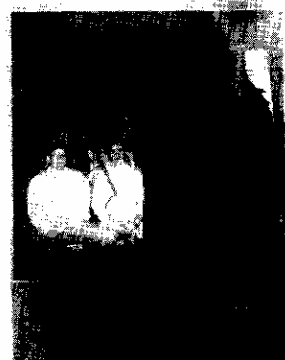
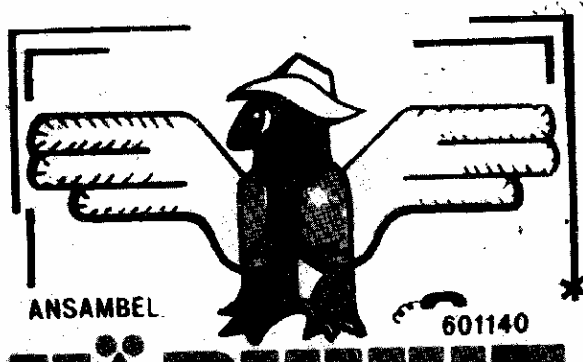
"Laksin Mereranda" (Rahvaluule)

"Joulvoo" (Blaine/Nikkarinen)

"Joulu Hallitaul" (H.Vorno/S. Vorno)

### Side 2

"Silmadest Naeb Sudant" (Lonster/Nikkarinen)



"Harku Jam"  
(Spourse/Nikkarinen)  
"Kantrikuningas"  
(Wilson/Silla)  
"Randaja"  
(Polder/Nikkarinen)

"Alcoholic"  
(Wildwood/Nikkarinen)  
"Ambliku Tutor"  
(Ivask/Kivistik)  
Manager - Lauri Viikna  
(ESTONIAN LANGUAGE)

## KANAPURTS (TALLIN, ESTONIA)

Kanapurts ("Camellia") from Tallin, Estonia, plays a blend of American bluegrass and Estonian country music with driving rhythm and intelligent lyrics. Tit Kik (violin), Kale Kiao (electric guitar), Peter Rebane (bass), Juris Soar (drums), Indrek Tisel (harmonica) and Riho Vastrik

(vocals, mandolin and leader-ader) have participated at the Estonian festival Harku-Jaarve and Lithuanian Visagino-92.  
**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM**  
**"KANAPURTS"**  
Winter 1993.





## PETE ANDERSON

One day in the spring of 1992 I suddenly got the urge to go to Latvia. I wanted to meet once again the musicians from the Riga country band Selsky Chas ("Country Hour"). Unfortunately, I failed to meet them as the group had split up some time ago when its founder, the guitarist Andy Marder, emigrated to the United States. (I had seen Marder only once, at the Harku-Jaarve Festival in Tallinn, but he had impressed me greatly with his dazzling playing and real feel for the true spirit of blues and country music.)

But I couldn't regard my trip as completely unsuccessful since I met a promising newcomer, country singer Julia Justin (her real name is Julia Jostynia and she is from Moscow), who helped me to meet one truly legendary person. We took a battered bus and went to the Riga suburb of Imanta where

Pete Anderson lives in a village cottage.

His real name is Peteris Andersons. When I saw him, he looked exactly like a typical "eternal student," with his huge glasses and shaggy hair. As we sat in his kitchen drinking hot tea, Pete recalled those days before *perestroika* when playing Western music was a difficult, even dangerous, undertaking. "In 1961 I was a teenager; one day I happened to meet the boys from a band called the Revengers. They were not avenging anybody or anything, it was just an exotic-sounding name thought up by their vocalist, Valery Saintsky -- who lives in America now, by the way. But in 1961 he led a hippie life, singing in Riga's parks and accompanying himself on an electric guitar. The song 'When The Saints Go Marching In' was his trademark;

that's why he was nicknamed 'Saintsky.'

"Electric guitars made in Czechoslovakia were on sale in the Soviet Union at this time, but there were no bass guitars. So, we sawed the frame and fingerboard on a regular guitar and used piano strings -- the bass player had to wind insulating tape around his fingers to play!

"They played at school dances. I wasn't playing with them, but I helped to decipher the lyrics since my English was fluent. Western records were impossible to get, but we were catching scraps and snatches of songs from the radio, listening to Western stations. Elvis Presley was our idol.

"It took me a month to learn to play guitar. Then I organized my own group, the Melody Makers. We played blues, rockabilly and some Nashville country songs. Soviet music lovers found a way to record unofficial music [that is, music forbidden by the authorities] -- they recorded bootlegged music on X-ray plates! These 'phonograms' were commonly called 'discs on the ribs.' Of course the quality was terrible, but for a long time discs on the ribs were popular since they were the only source of unofficial music in the Soviet countries."

Pete Anderson's life hasn't been easy. Since his music was forbidden in Riga, Pete emigrated to neighboring Tallinn, Estonia, where he joined the rock group The Optimists. By

1967, however, he had returned to Riga and put together a new band, Natural Products. But in 1971 the group disintegrated because of continual conflicts with the authorities. After this, Pete disappeared from the stage for 11 years.

In 1982 he emerged from his self-imposed oblivion when he formed The Archives. Four years later he left the underground and took part in the student song festival Bilde-86. The following year Pete's concert at the Lycopayas Dzintars Festival in Latvia was shown on TV, earning much praise for his artistic resurrection in the world of music.

As I listened to Old Pete's nostalgic recollections about the Soviet underground music scene of the '60s, I couldn't believe that soon he would be 50 since we spoke as equals. But, finally -- hell and damnation -- the conversation drew to a close.

As Pete drove Julia and me to Riga in a chic 1940 Buick Super V8, the radio filled the car with great, oldtime rags -- and I thrilled to the eerie sensation of having gone back in time to the '40s.... "A dream of mine is to get a real rock'n'roll style car -- a '50s American "Cruiser," Pete said wistfully. And I hope that someday this dream of his will come true.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**LP "PETE ANDERSON"**  
**(1988), MELODIA, RIGA**  
**Spring 1992.**



## EYNARS VITOLS BAND (RIGA, LATVIA)

The Eynars Vitols Band from Riga plays bluegrass and country music. Eynars is known in Latvia as a rock'n'roll musician, professional singer and winner of the Yurmala-86 Festival. In the mid-'80s the group was rock-oriented, but when Sasha Pomozov, banjo and Dobro guitarist, began to play with them in 1988 their style completely changed -- to country and bluegrass. Their performance at the Country Picnic Festival

in Poland in 1990 was a real sensation!

Incidentally, Sasha Pomozov emigrated to Germany in 1992 where he now works as a professional masseur in a sauna and occasionally plays country music in beer pubs.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM "SELSKY CHAS" ('COUNTRY HOUR') (1990)**

**Spring 1992. Riga-Moscow.**



## THIS IS JULIA JUSTIN (MOSCOW - RIGA)

She is 27, married to a Lutheran minister and the mother of two boys, seven and five years old. Though she lives now in Riga, Julia was born in Moscow. Her mother worked as an English-language interpreter in the Diplomatic Corps. Naturally, many of her friends were the children of diplomats and so she began to speak English at an early age. One of the girls, the daughter of the Malaysian diplomat, had a beautiful voice and it was Julia's childhood dream to sing like Mazvin (who is now a famous singer in Malaysia). In time, a friend taught Julia to play the guitar, and a friend of her mother's brought back recordings of Western music from her trips abroad -- Julia could not of course buy them in Moscow. She fell in love with American country music, listening to it day and night. She surprised even herself with her great

success with her first concert at school -- She had never had any formal music training, being almost entirely self-taught. After this she gave a few concerts at the institute of Foreign Languages, where she studied. When she married a Latvian boy and left Moscow for Riga, her appearances at country music festivals in Riga, Moscow and Tallinn were shown on Latvian television.

And what are her plans for the future? Well, she was invited by a well-known Russian group to perform with them. Who knows, but probably she'll agree. As to what she will sing, she is certain that it can only be American country music and her own songs in English.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**  
**CASSETTE ALBUM "I AM JULIA" (1993)**

*Spring 1992. Riga - Moscow.*



## VECIE DRAUGI (RIGA, LATVIA)

Field of activity: Dance music based on Latvian folk music, played wherever people gather to celebrate or relax -- weddings, family celebrations and parties, in country taverns, at fairs and open-air dances. If country music were moved to Latvia, it would sound like Vecie Draugi.

Repertoire: Variations of Latvian folk songs and folk roundelays -- Latvian, German and other peoples' popular songs from the first half of the century -- good for singing and dancing together: waltzes, swings, polkas and foxtrots.

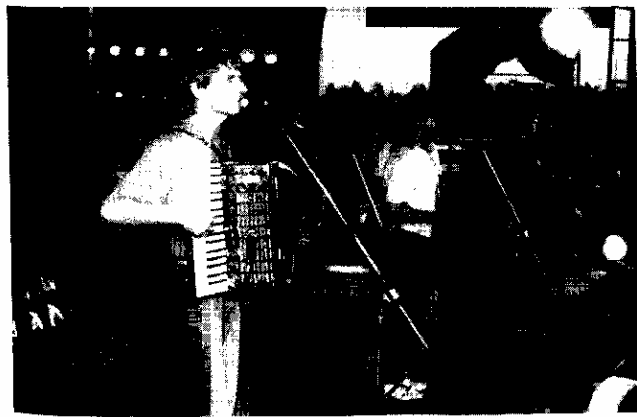
Features: excited manner of performance, improvisation, intonations of jazz.

Qualifications: In 1990: 11th place on "Vecais Ratins" ("Old Wheel"), the most popular annual competition of oldies, organized by Latvia Radio. In

1991: #1 with "I Don't Care" (recorded together with the rock group Bet Bet) and #7 with "Violin Player," out of the 72 songs submitted.

Records: Three tape albums recorded in the Melodia studio (State-owned): "Wish I Had The Legs Of Dalins" (1989) - single; "Daugvin Foams In White" (1991) - LP; six recorded songs have also been included on various compilation records issued by Melodia.

Radio and TV: Since 1986 Vecie Draugi's songs have frequently been aired on Latvia Radio. During the past year, Vecie Draugi took part in two live concerts on the radio and seven different TV shows (16 songs broadcast on Latvian TV and two on the East German "Offener Kanal Kiel").



Concerts: Vecie Draugi yearly give about 80 concerts all around Latvia. They also tour abroad on occasion: Poland (1987); France (twice in 1989); Germany (1989); Netherlands, on a cultural program in the exhibition "Overijssel: Welcome to Latvia" (1992); and Germany "Kieler Woche" (1992).

Music: Their music is like a layer cake: The bottom layer -- accurate, measured and solid -- is laid down by the rhythm section comprising drummer Juris -- who was in several rock groups prior to Vecie Draugi -- and bassist Aldis. The next layer is formed by a dynamic accordion sound saturated with thick chords as played by Guntis. This is supplemented by the melodic or, in the case of a rapid tempo, sharp, rhythmic strokes of Ivar's fiddle. The melodic center in this layer is formed by Ansis's unceasing passages on clarinet, which are so distinctive it is impossible to mistake Vecie Draugi for any other band. The top layer of this cake is made up of Ivar's, Juris'

and Guntis' vocals. There is no distinct leader among them; they are equal partners respectful of one another, whether soloing or playing backup. The second Ivar, the sound engineer, is responsible for keeping the cake together. He is not intimidated by all the acoustic instruments and voices: his ability has been proven in his work with Melodia and the leading Latvian rock groups.

Established: 1981.

Lineup:

Ivars Erdmanis - violin, vocals  
Ansis Pavasaris - clarinet  
Guntis Urtans - accordion, vocals

Aldis Abolynsh - bass  
Juris Korps - drums, vocals  
Ivars Pilka - sound engineer  
Abstract: Vecie Draugi ("Old Friends") is one of the Latvian folk music bands.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**

**CASSETTE ALBUM "OLD FRIENDS" (1993), RIGA**

**Summer 1992.**

## ORNAMENTS (RIGA, LATVIA)

Ornaments perform their own interpretations and parodies of both well-known and ancient Latvian folk music, popular contemporary melodies and classical music.

They have often been broadcast over All-Union and Latvian Radio stations, and have taken part in a number of television programs. Latvian TV made a short concert film about them. The group successfully collaborated with the All-Union recording company Melodia. These enthusiastic musicians have taken their special brand of folk music abroad to Finland,

France, Germany and other countries.

Lineup:

Ingus Feldman - leader, vocals, guitar

Ugis Peterson - violin, keyboards

Alberts Vilcand - drums, accordion

Romuald Ostrovski - rhythm guitar, vocals

Bruno Ostrovski - bass, vocals

**DISCOGRAPHY:**

**CASSETTE ALBUM**

**"ORNAMENTS" (1993), RIGA**  
**Summer 1991. Riga-Moscow.**

Concerts: Vecie Draugi yearly give about 80 concerts all around Latvia. They also tour abroad on occasion: Poland (1987); France (twice in 1989); Germany (1989); Netherlands, on a cultural program in the exhibition "Overijssel: Welcome to Latvia" (1992); and Germany "Kieler Woche" (1992).

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Abstract: Vecie Draugi ("Old Friends") is one of the Latvian folk music bands.

**DISCOGRAPHY:**

**CASSETTE ALBUM "OLD FRIENDS" (1993), RIGA**

**Summer 1992.**

## **ORNAMENTS (RIGA, LATVIA)**

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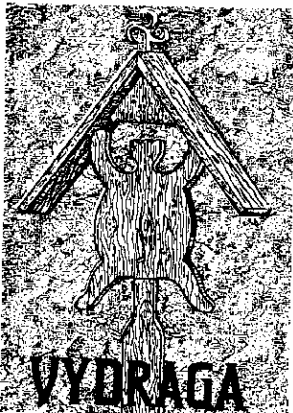
Bruno Ostrovski - bass, vocals

**DISCOGRAPHY:**

**CASSETTE ALBUM**

**"ORNAMENTS" (1993), RIGA  
Summer 1991. Riga-Moscow.**

## LITHUANIAN COUNTRY MUSIC



Lithuanian musicians playing folk, jazz and classical music have appeared on the stages of many countries. Yet this goal remains but a dream for those playing country music.

The country music genre, consisting of various musical styles -- bluegrass, Cajun, country & western, folk-country, country-rock -- evolved out of the intermingling of various native folk tunes brought by European immigrants to the U.S., where it was shaped and formed by the special experiences of these new American people. This music became popular because of its melodic tunefulness and structural simplicity; its ability to express the common man's everyday life problems, hopes and dreams; and its great democracy.

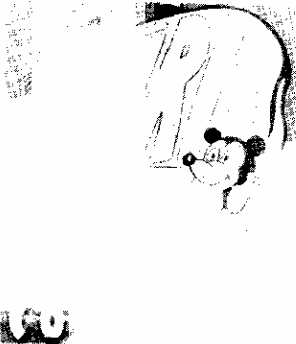
Over time, this music of one group of people (white Americans from the upper south and southeastern parts of the country) has spread around the world. Today, there are hundreds of organizations, thousands of festivals and mil-

lions of banjo fans from even the most unlikely countries -- such as Russia and Finland -- who can make us feel that "cowboy music" is near for those who have never ridden a horse.

And what about Lithuania? It is a country where -- like the birthplace of country music -- the best helpmate for every farmer is the horse and the best instruments for any family or neighborhood evening get-together are the harmonica and violin. For Lithuanians, American country music, out of all the foreign styles, provides at least the same kind of tunefulness and comfortable articulation for the tongue as their own folk songs.

At the very beginning of the '80s Vytautas Babravichius began to play the guitar at student parties. For his listeners, the whole of Europe was swept from their minds on a tide of guitar glissando and vocal stylings seemingly born on the winds of the faraway, lonesome prairies and backwoods mountain "hollers" of old-time rural America....

Almost ten years passed and Vytautas formed his own country group from a number of young students. He named it,



rather coyly, Deficit. These first Lithuanian country musicians were instantly seen as a force of opposition to the officially approved light pop music. Satirical of course -- what else could one be in those days of ideological censorship -- their lyrics touched upon "non-recommended" social themes. Even their acoustic instruments (accordion, guitar, banjo) sounded innovative and therefore subversive. And, of course, the group's name was in the language of the enemy. But as much as the authorities hated them, the people loved them; they were a sensational phenomenon.

Soon, other Lithuanian musicians joined the new movement. Some students from the Vilnius Music Conservatoire, including Algis Klova, formed Kikilis. These professional musicians became leaders in the evolution of Lithuanian country music, performing traditional opuses and romances of pre-war independent Lithuania. Algis Klova himself was interested in country music and jazz as well

as folk music. Being a good fiddler, he liked to play with other Lithuanian country musicians as well as in Kikilis. After the students graduated from the Conservatoire, Kikilis splintered, with the individual musicians eventually playing in various places around the country. Vytautas recorded a country-rock single, "Sky Larks, My Dear...." in 1988. Then he tried to form a new group, Runjos, but the musicians were busy with their own careers and couldn't fit in a more active concert life. Today, Algis is a producer, professional composer and the leader of the Vydraga Ensemble. He also successfully works with the radio station Vilnius Bell. Algis remains a passionate propagandist for country music.

The breakup of Kikilis wasn't the end of country music in Lithuania, however. The genre was kept alive by such groups as Farmstead, Vienkiemis, Harmonika ("Accordion"), Vairas ("Wheel") and various other musicians who included some country music in their reper-



toires. Harmonika even performed a country-folk piece "Cowboy In Zemaitija" (by A. Klova). Political and economic changes in Lithuania also touched Lithuanian country music.

Another step in the evolution of Lithuanian country music came by way of the family ensemble Jonis, which was formed by Pranas Trijonis in 1986 in Siauliai.

Mathematician and journalist Romas Gigys, engineer Alus Sirgetas, psychologist Zita Povilenaite, phylologist Alfredas Kukaitis, actor Vytautas Kernagis and the teacher Virgis Stakenas also belong to the history of Lithuanian country music.

Once Upon a Time During Easter was the name of the festival of country music held in Kaunas in 1990. Unfortunately, many of the intended participants were unable to get into the country because of the economic and political blockade imposed on the Baltic states by the Soviet

Union -- this was when they were trying to secede from the USSR and form independent countries. Nevertheless, the Festival took place. The main participants were the Lithuanian groups Jonis, Runos, R. Gigys's Trio and Virgis Stakenas; Latvia's Einars Vitols; and Estonia's Beergrass. The announcers were the team of Tadas Padas and Rapolas. (They had a special program which they repeated at Palanga-90, the festival of light music.)

Many Lithuanian country bands -- e.g., Jonis, Latvian-the Einars Vitols Band) took part in the Country Picnic Festival in Mrongovo, Poland. The second country festival in Lithuania took place in the spring of 1991, this time calling itself "A Fortnight After Easter." It was more commercial and widespread as three towns were involved -- Vilnius, Kaunas and Alytus. The name of the next festival in Lithuania is Visagino Country.

**Summer 1992, Lithuania.**



CODA: Every Friday at the Iron Wolf Cafe in Vilnius, country and folk ballads are performed in the evening. Irena and Valdas Marozai have created a real country music inn, where everything about the place shall be in a country style and spirit--from the moment you enter the front gate to the glasses from which you drink. Certainly, country music is the first item on the menu. The same Algis Klova appears every Friday from 6-7 p.m. on the radio station Vilniaus Varpas (USW 69.5 and FM 103.1 MHz) with his program "Country Saloon." Siauliai is famous not only for the being the home of the country's first purveyors of country music (Jonis, Vairas, Travellers, Zewizdruolis, V. Stakenas), but for the country music club Juone Pastuoge. Concerts and parties are held, and a recording studio is operating. From here came the cassette of Lithuanian country music, a compilation entitled "Cheese"; and the first issue of country music, the CD "Laika Ope."

**LITHUANIAN COUNTRY  
COLLECTION  
CASSETTE ALBUM (1993)**

**Side 1**

1. "Kaime" (M.W./E.Punkrio)
2. "Zemaichiu Robin Hood" (V. Babravichiaus/V. Babravichiaus)
3. "Vakar Vakare" (A. Klova/J. Strielkunas)
4. "Tie Mergeliu Pazjadai" (A. Kybartas/P. Sirvys)
5. "Upe" (R. Gizjio/ V. Riemeris)
6. "Prisipazjinimas" (A. Klova/M. Chernaiute)
7. "Mazjas Lietus" (M. Punkrio/W. Punkrio)
8. "Karveleli, Paukshtuzjeli..." (P.R. Trijonis/A. Vienazjindis)
9. "Vaistai Nuo Senatves" (V. Stakenas/V. Stakenas)
10. "Amerikanka" ("American Woman")

**Performers:**

1. E. Punkris
2. Simas
3. Kikilis
4. Vienkiemis
5. Gizjio Trio
6. Kikilis
7. E. Punkris
8. Jonis



9. V. Stakenas  
10. Kikilis Polka

Side 2

1. "Prie Ezjero"  
(A. Kybartas/V. Bloze)
2. "Emmigrants"  
(V. Stakenas/V. Stakenas)
3. "Vieje Vaaks"  
(R. Teniukas/K. Binkis)
4. "Dvi Prigimtus"  
(R. Gizjis/V. Reimeris)
5. "Girdzjani Kede"  
(R. Gizjis/A. Mikita)
6. "Hey, Vlad"  
(E. Punkrio/E. Punkrio)
7. "Broliai"  
(V. Katilius/V. Stakenas)

8. "Alukshtaitija"  
(R. Trijonis/S. Geda)
9. "Seni Draugai"  
(V. Stakenas/V. Stakenas)

Performers:

1. Vienkiemis
2. V. Stakeans with Jonis
3. Zjevizjdruolz
4. Gizjio Trio
5. Gizjio Trio
6. E. Punkris
7. Vairas
8. Jonis
9. V. Stakenas

Recorded in Lithuania in  
the summer of 1993  
(Lithuanian Language)

## VIRGIS STAKENAS (SIAULIAI, LITHUANIA)



("Bosas," "Virginia," Mr.  
Elephant," "Stakanas").  
Date of birth: August 10,  
1953, 6 a.m.

Origin: Lithuanian resident of  
Siauliai, from a family of musical  
semi-literates.

Party membership: Member of  
the International Bluegrass  
Music Association IBMA (Ken-  
tucky, USA).

Physical attributes: height -  
191 cm, weight - 130 kg, shoe  
size 44-45.

Identifying attributes: sparse  
beard, eyeglasses, lazy gait.

Family status: Married. One  
child is formally registered.

Activities: Creates ballads and  
strives to perform them before a  
crowd of witnesses.

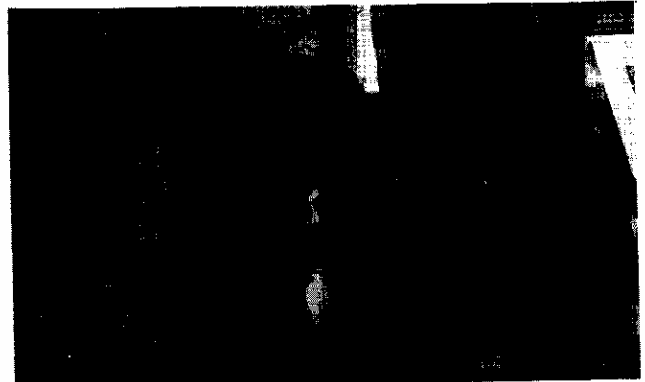
Equipment: Acoustic guitar,  
harmonica, kazoo and left shoe.

Genre: Country and folk bal-  
lads with elements of blues and  
rock'n'roll.

Publications: Author of one  
book of songs, four albums, 230  
songs. Contacts: Constantly  
goes to meetings under the code  
"Festival." In 1992 alone was no-  
ticed in Holland ("East Muzyk"),  
Russia ("Farmer"), Estonia  
("Kantripidu") and Czecho-  
slovakia ("Porta").

Bad habits: Weakness for ap-  
plause, bean soup, water exer-  
cises, good music.

Conclusion: Dangerous on the  
stage! Safe distance - not less  
than 100 m from the micro-  
phone.







**DISCOGRAPHY: LPs "LIFE" (1979), MELODIA; "VAKARAS" ("EVENING") (1986), MELODIA; "YOUR HOME IS HERE" (1989), MELODIA; CASSETTE ALBUM "SIAULIAI" (1991), RITONIS**

**CODA:** It all happened to me.... You might find it difficult to understand the words in Lithuanian.... So, just listen to the beating of the heart.... Mine and yours.... And you won't be disappointed. We are sure to meet.

**VIRGIS STAKENAS**

**Side 1 (29:25)**

1. "Fire Rain" (protest song)
2. "Tea Blues"
3. "We And Our Children"
4. "Former Friends"
5. "You Are Passing By"
6. "Cheap Love Is Crazy"

7. "Nobody Can Help Me But The First Aid Ambulance"
8. "Photo Model"

9. "The End Of The Love Story"

10. "Hey, Soldier Guy!"

11. "Hey, Lithuanian!"

**Side 2 (27:42)**

1. "Back To The '60S"
2. "Medicine For Old Age"
3. "How Can You Live After Death?"
4. "Spring In My Heart"
5. "I Was Too Old For Her"
6. "It Seems For Me Too Early, For Others Too Late"
7. "Street Girl!"
8. "My Childhood"
9. "The Morning After A Night Of Love"
10. "Roads, Cars, People"

**MUSIC AND LYRICS BY THE AUTHOR**

**OLD FRIENDS**

*We hear from each other  
With every year less.  
We keep unlit candles  
On the table again.*

*We hope our elapsed days  
Will return back,  
If only the dusty yard  
Be laid with asphalt.*

*We enjoyed our sweet song  
A long time ago,  
When were sitting together  
Throughout the night.*

*Long ago we sat silent  
Feeling all right.  
Our roads had to cross again  
Long long ago.*

*We have less will to think of*

*"What happens then?"  
And more often we search the  
land  
For where to go.*

*We hope time will forgive us  
Beyond all doubts,  
If our eternal mistakes  
Materialize.*

*We enjoyed our sweet song  
A long time ago,  
When were sitting together  
Throughout the night.*

*A long ago we sat silent  
Feeling all right.  
Our roads had to cross again  
Long, long ago.  
**Summer 1992.**  
**Vilnius-Moscow.***

## JONIS (SHIAULIAI, LITHUANIA)

Jonis was formed in 1986. It is among the top groups following the traditions of folk-country style. The eight musicians, including the four Trijonis Brothers, write their own music but the lyrics are usually the verses of Lithuanian poets. They use a variety of traditional national instruments such as concertina, skudacil (a kind of pan-pipes) and lumzdeliat, which are particularly suited to this genre. The group has given 600 concerts in the last three years and every year they take part in festivals held in the Baltic countries and abroad -- Wrangowo, Poland (1990); Harku-Jaarve, Estonia (1990); and Viena Karta per Velikas in Lithuania (1990, 1991). Their songs have been recorded on two LPs and two audio cassettes. In 1991 Jonis organized themselves as an independent concert firm. The group hopes to gladden your hearts with the

beauty of Lithuanian folk songs, so you are sure to have a nice time!

**Lineup:**

Pranas Trijonis - banjo, mandolin, Dobro, vocals

Petras Trijonis - drums, vocals

Edmundas Gribliauskis - accordion, harmonica, vocals

Kestutis Rupshis - fiddle

Arvidas Uiauberis - contra-bass

Litauras Milishauskas (violin)

**DISCOGRAPHY:**

LP "CHIA MANO NAMAI..." (1989), MELODIA C 60

28995 008;

LP "KALEDOJANT PO NAUJIKUS" (1990), MELODIA C 30 30507; CASSETTE

ALBUM "VAKARAI ILGI KAIP GIESMES" (1991), MKKF, TALLINN; CASSETTE ALBUM

"POPULARIAUSIOS DAINOS" (1991), RITONIS; CASSETTE

ALBUM/CD "LAIKA OPE" (1993), JUONE PASTUOGE



## LITHUANIAN COUNTRY

### POPULIARIAUSIOS DAINOS (Siauliai, 1991)

Pranas Trijonis - Leader  
Stasys Trijonis - Manager

#### Side 1

"Mano Kaime Lyja Lietus" (F. Klova/D. Ramoskaite)

"Country Sokis" (A. Strazdes)

"Lietuvaite" (P. Trijonis/J. Ardzijauskas)

"Pirmoji Karta Nuo Zagres" (P. Trijonis/ A. Baltakis)

"Zemaiciu Himnasp" (P. Trijonis/F. Vienazingys)

"Berneliu Viliotinis" (P. Trijonis)

"Kas So Gadyne!!" (P. Trijonis)

"As Sugriciu..." (P. Trijonis/P. Arlauskas)

#### Side 2

"Pusele, Lietuva" (E. Grubliauskis/J. Ardzijauskas)

"Ten Gerai" (P. Trijonis/P. Arlauskas)

"Pirmas Sienas" (P. Trijonis/J. Ardzijauskas)

"Iseiki Prie Vartu" (P. Trijonis/Z. Kupstys)

"Aukstatija" (P. Trijonis/S. Geda)

"Pusrysiu Metas" (P. Trijonis/A. Baltakis)

### BROLIAI TRIJONIAI

**Franciskus** - 12-stye akustine gitara, lupine armonikele, kazu, vokalas

**Stasys** - kontrabosas

**Romas** - mandolina, bandza, havaju gitara, isilgine fleita, vokalas

**Petras** - musamieji, perkusija

**Kestutis Rupsys** - smuikas, vokalas

**Edmundas Grubliauskis** - akordeonas, armonika, lupine

"Na Tai Kas" (arranged by Jonis)

"Lenru Zemej Daugel Vietu" (P. Trijonis/A. Strazdas)

"Lietuva" (arranged by Jonis)  
(All songs in Lithuanian)

#### Side 1

"Kaledojant Po Naujikus" 2:20

"Geguzes Vakarelj" 2:31

"Daina Apie Susieda" 2:50

"Pirmas Sienas" 3:11

"Pusele, Lietuva" 2:00

"Lietuvaite" 2:47

"Muge" 3:35

#### Side 2

"Rudenelis" 1:35

"Kaip Pradesiu Tik Dainuoti" 3:40

"Zemaictu Himnas 2:55

"Lenku Zemej Daugel Vietu" 2:37

"Na Tai Kas" 3:24

"Lietuva" 4:46

#### MUZIKA:

Prano Trijonio (1 - 4, 6, 8-10)

Romo Trijonio (11)

Edmundo Grubliauskio (5)

Alberto Pukleviciaus (7)

Liaudies (12, 13)

## ROMO GIZIO TRIO (VILNIUS, LITHUANIA)

Born in 1951, Romo first performed with the late Zita Povilenaite. In 1987 he formed the Romo Gizio Trio with Alius Sirgetas (banjo, acoustic guitar, block flute) and Rima Kranauskate (violin, vocals). Soon they will release a cassette, "Auksinis Vakara" ("Gold Eve-

ning"). Romo Gizio's country-folk poetic ballads nostalgically express everyday life.

CODA: In September of 1993 the band released a cassette album.

**Summer 1992.**  
**Visagino-fest.**  
**Vilnius-Moscow.**



Eugenijui Motiejunui.

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## VIENKIEMIS (VILNIUS, LITHUANIA)

The group was founded in 1982. At first they played in the style of a country orchestra -- with some innovations: electric bass guitar and banjo. But gradually over time they oriented themselves toward Lithuanian country music. The group have performed all over the country and even managed to go abroad:

Poland (1984), Czechoslovakia (1985), Yugoslavia (1987), East Germany (at February 16th High School, 1992), and Poland (for Lithuanians of Pusk and Suvalkai, 1992).

They also participated in the Second Country Music Festival in Kaunas. A Fortnight After Easter.

The structure of the group has changed a little, but remained essentially stable:

E. Simanonis - acoustic guitar, vocals

D. Skatisepas - lead guitar, vocals

E. Mikshys - bass guitar, vocals

V. Jdusaitis - concertina, banjo, lumszdelis, vocals

h. Burauskas - accordion

V. Skatisevas - percussion

A. Ramonas - keyboards

A. Kybartas - violin, band leader

Future plans: To organize more concerts in Lithuania and to visit foreign countries where they have not yet toured.

### DISCOGRAHY:

**CASSETTE ALBUM "FROM POLKA TO ROCK-N-ROLL" (1993), ROMS, VILNIUS**

#### Side 1

1. "Linksmoji Armonika" (Marcijonas) 1:55

2. "Kur Tas Saltinelis" (arranged by A. Kybartas) 2:17

3. "Kaip Cigonas Arklius Maine" (V.Y.T. Jozapaitis) 1:35

4. "Balnoju Zirgeli" (T. Makacinas/P.R. Rascius;

arranged by A. Kybartas) 2:55

5. "Laiptai" (A. Kybartas/A. Zukauskas) 3:24

6. "Ei, Vladai" (E. Punkris; arranged by A. Kybartas) 2:07

7. "Dievedovanok" (V. Stakenas; arranged by A. Kybartas) 3:48

8. "Prie Ezero" (A. Kybartas/V. Bloze) 3:10

9. "Kaip Sunku Tave Palikti" (Garth Brooks, arranged by A. Kybartas) 2:50

10. "Raudonas Sparnas" (Red Wing; arranged by A. Kybartas) 2:53

11. "Vakarone" ("Evening Feelings") (Willie Nelson, arranged by A. Kybartas) 2:25

#### SIDE 2

1. "Tie Merges Pazada" (A. Kybartas/P. Sirvus) 2:22

2. "Vaikuste" (S. Janushka; arranged by A. Kybartas) 4:05

3. "Louisiana" (Traditional American; arranged by A. Kybartas) 3:02

4. "Manno Ledi" (Hank Williams; E. Simononis, Lithuanian text) 4:13

5. "Meilei Armonikai" (A. Kybartas) 2:40

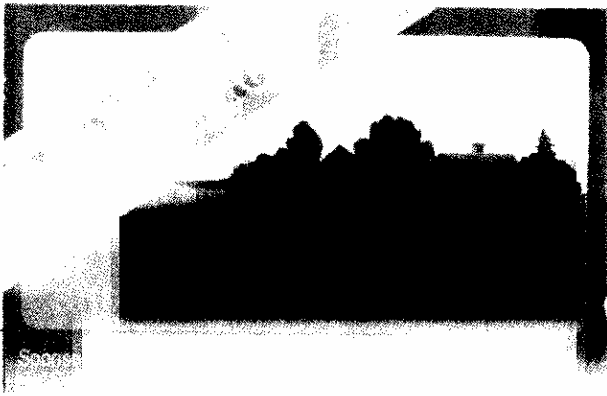
6. "Ji Niekada Nebus Liudna" (Billy Ray Cyrus; arranged by A. Kybartas) 3:37

7. "Sudzuzsi Sirdis" (Roy Clark; A. Kybartas, Lithuanian text)

8. "Gera Joti" (Traditional American; A. Kybartas, Lithuanian text) 3:20

9. "Viskas Gerai Mama" (Elvis Presley; arranged by A. Kybartas) 3:42

(All songs in Lithuanian)



## V. LANDSBERGIS LOVES COUNTRY MUSIC AND BEER



INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL  
CENTRUM

As I flew out of Lithuania, I had plenty of time to reflect on my visit:

In Brezhnev's time Lithuania was called the "linen republic," though "beer" ("alus") republic" would be much more appropriate since beer is drunk any-

where and everywhere by everyone from childhood on. Though Lithuania has declared itself an independent country, this fact has not yet been fully accepted by the ex-Soviet Union. Lithuania remains inside "the ruble zone" and so beer can be bought not with the new national currency, the lit, but with ordinary torn rubles or funny "coupons" (interim money -- it took a while after independence to actually mint the new money; at this time it existed only in theory--ed.)

But rivers of beer flowed into the spectators at Visagino Country Festival, held in the late summer in Lithuania. Opening remarks were presented by ex-President Vitautas Landsbergis, who declared that the Visagino Country Festival occupied an important place in the process of Lithuanian self-definition and self-determination as a nation. Then, a charming Lithuanian girl in national costume brought

him the traditional bread and salt and, according to custom, he nipped off a piece of the round bread and sprinkled it with salt. Professor Landsbergis then assured the public that he loved country music (like President Bush in the States) and adored real Lithuanian beer. For the people it was a great moment -- watching one of their national leaders relishing country music and beer at the 2nd Annual Visagino Country Festival. (At the first festival there had been no V. Landsbergis -- because of the coup, I suppose.)

My familiar musicians from Germany couldn't come to the festival. They wanted 2,000 DM from the founders of the festival -- Pop-Centrum (the city of Kaunas) and sponsors from the Ignalina Atomic Stations. Lithuania is a capitalist state now, but newly organized. "Valutas nera" ("no real money") was the Lithuanian people's response to this announcement, the meaning of which was understood by the Russians very well.

The groups playing came mainly from other Slavic countries: the Czech group from Ostrava. Mister B. Pine; and two Polish groups, Little Maggie from Warsaw and Country Five from



Nova Sol (Poland). They played real, tough bluegrass and energetic country music. And in the evening, after the Festival, they all played together in a tremendous jam session with rivers of barrel beer. Country music with beer -- what could be better?

The plane carried me to Moscow and landed not in Red Square, like that of the Western daredevil aviator Rust, and even not at the international Sheremetyevo-2 Airport, but at an ordinary Soviet airport.

**August 1992.**  
**Lithuania-Moscow.**



## SIMAS AND HIS RUNOS

Born in 1952, Vytautas Bravichius is known as the Father of Lithuanian Country Music. He started playing guitar in 1968; was the leader of a band called Diskoteka; and has performed throughout his native republic of Lithuania as well as in Russia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Sweden, Argentina and Korea. Everywhere he's gone he has been greeted enthusiastically and won contests. He was a member of the rock group Saules laikrodis, which released an album. After that, Vytautas formed a new country group, Runos. Today, this well-

renowned musician (who has released three albums, appeared on television and is heard on the radio playing his guitar and mouth organ) will be performing with Andrus Komarovskis (guitar, vocals) and the remains of Runos.

### DISCOGRAPHY:

EP "AUTOSTRADA  
VILNIUS-KAUNAS" (1983),  
MELODIA C 62 21021 009;  
LP "VYTURELIAI, JUS  
MANO..." (1988) MELODIA C  
60 26727 008

Summer 1992.  
Vilnius-Moscow.

## ONE EASTER EVENING

Leaving Moscow for mutinous Lithuania I had an overwhelming foreboding of danger. And even though up to that point the riots had been bloodless, when I arrived in Kaunas the feeling of peril literally saturated the air we breathed.

Oh, my mission had absolutely nothing to do with politics -- I came to attend the first country music festival in Lithuanian history at the invitation of my friend Harry Matskiavichus, the local music club manager. I was pessimistic in my expectations but, happily, I was

completely wrong. The atmosphere of friendship engendered by the festival manager was an achievement of no small measure given the circumstances. But the hosts, popular country bard Virgis Stakenas and Raimonades -- the King of Comedy -- are well-known and beloved here -- and they kept the audience filled with laughter, joking and merry folk dances, which accompanied every performance and concert.

April 1990.  
Lithuania-Moscow.



# RUNOS



## VISAGINO COUNTRY THE FESTIVAL WAS A SUCCESS

The dissident Lithuanian town of Kaunas -- which had been disgraced in the eyes of the Soviet authorities -- has been left behind.... The fortress of Lithuanian mentality looks fairly bourgeois -- pretty houses and fat cows. It's a week now since the coup in Moscow failed, and proud, dissident Lithuania is holding a country music festival. My mind keeps returning to the barricades in Moscow -- which are still standing! And I realize that without our victory in Moscow the Lithuanian festival would have been impossible! But the Visagino Country Festival will be held this year. (Visagino is the name of the lake near the town of Snechkus, where the first all-Baltic country festival took place.) But the August coup was behind us now; the war hawks lost the battle. Today the Festival will be a thanksgiving feast for the winners, whatever their nationality.

How different it all was in May of '91. The Easter Country Music Festival in Vilnius had been a gloomy affair. The mood was dismal -- nobody could think about music, as the blood of the victims who tried to stop Russian tanks near the Vilnius TV station was still fresh and the bullet holes could be seen in the walls of the houses. Everybody was thinking only about the hunger-striking journalists, the "devil's dozen" of sacrificial crosses and the bonfires lit every night near the Television Center. Terrible, bitter, ominous feelings and premonitions completely overwhelmed the Lithuanian people. Still, the music and songs served as a symbol of the people's will, the people's quest for freedom.

The emcee of the Visagino Country Festival was Virgis "Tadas Padas" Stakenas, famous Lithuanian country bard, a man full of charm and playfulness. His credo is "The larger a good

man, the better he is." (Virgis is quite a fat person.)

Moscow's own star of country music, Larissa Grigorieva, stole the show to become the leading lady of this wonderful Festival. Besides the songs, the show included night fireworks, country homemade beer and a famous Russian beverage, *medouukha* (mead).

The arrival of the American group Piper Road Spring Band was acknowledged by all to be nothing short of a miracle. Later after the concert the band's magnificent mandolin player, Bob Mason, cried when I presented him with a tri-colored Russian flag I had taken from the Moscow barricades.

Russia's top country band, the original and inventive Kuku-ruza, were at the White House barricades all those "three days in August." But the most touching thing is that they don't consider it as a heroic deed -- they say they just did what they had to do. They also performed on the Day of Mourning for those slain in overthrowing the coup's victims. And today they reminded the Lithuanian people, who were celebrating our mutual victory, of the bitter memory. They performed Jerry Douglas' astringent bluegrass symphony. A little Russian tri-colored flag waved near the edge of the scene....

**August 1991.**

**Lithuania-Moscow**



## THE SMELL OF BLUEGRASS IN VACLAV HAVEL'S COUNTRY

I had last visited Czechoslovakia seven months ago; returning now at the beginning of 1990, I found that much had changed. Now, in Prague and in provincial towns, in pubs and in restaurants, I heard the same names and catch phrases over and over again -- "Masaric" (the first Czechoslovakian President since the revolution), "Vaclav Havel," "freedom," "independence"... Everybody spoke endlessly about the events of 1988 and 1989. Politics seemed to be the only thing anybody was interested in and could talk about. Communist publications were closing one after another. But, surprisingly, there was no violence on the streets. Everything that needed to be done was done quickly, effectively and, above all, correctly and intelligently. The epithet for what had hap-

pened -- the Velvet Revolution -- could hardly be more apt.

But would Czechoslovakians, I wondered, be interested in a music festival during such a time of social and political upheaval? As it turns out, I can give an eyewitness account of the greatest interest in country music here. I can testify that in the hearts of Havel's fellow citizens, music occupies the same place as ever.

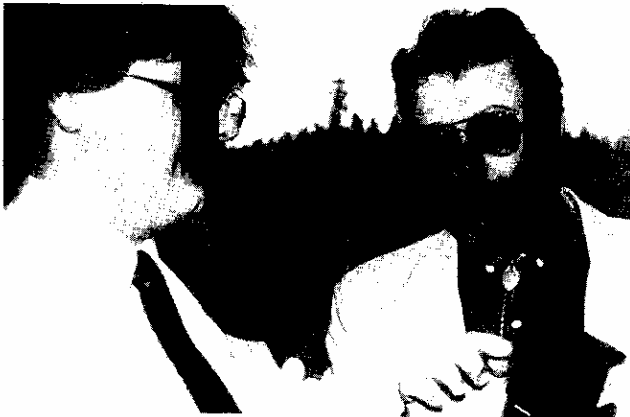
I had come to Czechoslovakia by invitation from the journalist Irena Pribylova. She had been a guest of the Moscow Farmer-90 Festival, and now I was paying a return visit to her country. During my stay in Czechoslovakia I visited a lot of cities and towns and met many famous musicians and groups who play folk, country and bluegrass music. One of the best guitar players, Michal Chromcic,

who also sings gospel style, showed me his latest compositions. Michal had been a winner at the well-known Porta Music Festival a number of times. Michal lives in Brno, and his name is famous all over Czechoslovakia.

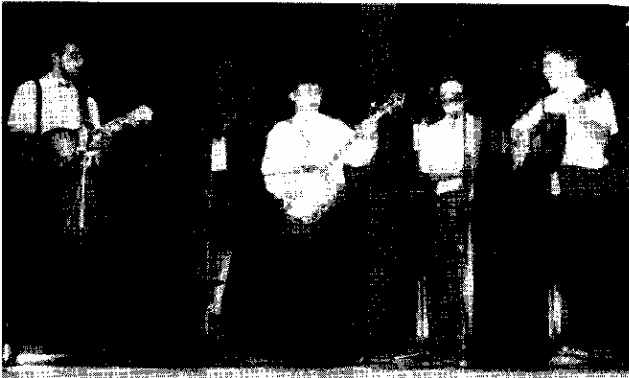
Bratislava met us with bright sun and an open Austrian border -- *perestroika* seemed to have succeeded completely here! In the Slovakian capital I was welcomed by the popular group Bluegrass Album. I attended their 3-hour concert and later spoke with them for a long time. Their singer, Katka Porijkova, has a brilliant voice, cheerful manner and impressive appearance; she has been christened the "Czechoslovakian Joan Baez" by the media. Soon after our meeting Katka was to leave for San Francisco for music studies. I also remember meeting the famous professional bluegrass group Putniki ("Travelers") at a concert in a little town in Western Czechia called Klavtovi. All of them were born in

Brno but they've visited all the countries of the world over the course of their 20-year professional career. Their performance was truly perfect. They play brilliantly, sing and dance...it's fantastic! Putniki performs as a tight, cohesive unit though every member has a very individual personality. When the group began to perform a fragment of Berjich Smetana's opera "Sold Bride," the whole audience stood up and sang along with them.

Over the course of several decades Czech musicians have been able to develop their own following! And it is obvious that a new generation of listeners won't allow their musical traditions to die. (The same holds true in politics.) I had a very interesting conversation with the group's leader, Joseph Pradi; the vocalist and songwriter, Robert Krestan; the banjo player and songwriter, Liubosh Malina; co-leader and guitarist Frantisek Lynharek; and others. Putniki became interested in the Moscow country music festival







Farmer and expressed a desire to come to the Russian capital to participate next year.

Karel Tampier, the founder of the South-Bohemian Association of Czechoslovakian Country Music, warmly welcomed us in Ceske-Budejovitse. Karel is legendary in the country music scene here. He had been the leader of the first Czechoslovakian bluegrass group, Bobry ("The Beavers"), for whom he played the mandolin, sang and wrote songs. He told me the history of the folk movement in his country; it was called "trumpet" here. There was no analogous movement in any other European country. The meeting with the group's first fiddle-player, Vaclav Shimecck, also was very important. Vaclav and Karel are the patriarchs of the folk movement in Czechoslovakia. Both are fifty years old, but their souls are eternally young and full of music.

The beer capital of Czechoslovakia -- I mean Plzen --

greeted us with rain and dampness, but the musicians from Centrum met us with a warm, friendly welcome. The group's leader, Yara Pertlichec, is fanatically devoted to good old bluegrass music. He has been constantly perfecting his banjo playing since 1981. Centrum's musicians agreed to take me with them as they drove to a little town, Takhov, situated near the German border to attend a preliminary contest for the Plzen region -- "Mini-Porta." The winners would go to the actual Porta Festival. Approximately 20 bands competed in the contest of country and folk music, but only two of them -- Centrum and Katro -- would go to the all-European festival, held in Plzen.

As a result of meeting with all these musicians, composers and journalists I've gained quite an exact perception of the reasons for the success of country music in Czechoslovakia. This art has been cultivated here for decades, thoroughly and meticulously.



There is no need to search for a country music audience -- it is always here, eager and waiting for a new concert or album. A crowd of professional and amateur country musicians has existed in Prague for many years. It's called Na Petinze. I became

acquainted with the club's administrator Petr Kuklik and director Yupp Konechny. They know the history of country music in Czechoslovakia in detail, and possess a deep knowledge of world music history as well. Their work includes the organization of concerts and musical sessions; providing the musicians with information on events in the world of music; and help in establishing contacts between musicians. The evening I was there, there was a concert by a band called Spiritu-als.

It's so good and comforting to know that the people of Czechoslovakia think not only about politics even now in a time of political upheaval. The winds of change have served to spread the smell of bluegrass over the country of Vaclav Havel.

**Spring 1990.**  
**Prague-Moscow.**

## BLUEGRASS - HIGH CLASS

Four-year-old Jacob begins to cry every time his father tells him to go to bed. He cries because he doesn't want to part with his violin. Maybe this little boy from Plzen, Czechoslovakia, will someday become the new Paganini, but now Jacob is crazy about country and bluegrass music. This young musician plays first violin in a family band. I met him in the spring of 1991 at the Porta Festival.

Country and bluegrass music is very popular in Czechoslovakia; 160 bands are working and touring all the time, and many of them are family bands. This tradition has been rooted in Czechoslovakia for some decades now.

There was a special contest for family country bands at the

Porta Festival. One of the most interesting groups were Karel Tampier's musicians. Karel is a true patriarch of Czechoslovakian bluegrass. He's the head of the family and the group leader. His wife and three daughters sing, play and help him. They live in Chezsk-Budeiovizi, one of the most beautiful towns in Europe, which is also a native place for another famous family bluegrass band, the Vaclav Shimecek Group. Vaclav teaches violin in the local music school. This year he and his colleague Tampier became the laureate of the family country and bluegrass group contest.

July 1990, Czechoslovakia.



## PLZEN COUNTRY

In 1990, a traditional folk and country music festival in Plzen (West Czechia) took place. The festival has been held every year since 1967; it's called Porta, which in Latin means "open gates." The festival and its mood had never betrayed the name.

One hundred and sixty groups from Czechoslovakia performed at the festival in 1990. There were also guests from abroad: a country group from Tallinn, A-Fond; Country Ramblers from Zurich; and Olafsongs from Copenhagen. Their performances took place simultaneously on several stages, depending on the band's style.

I happened to be one of the organizers of the Russian equivalent of Porta -- Moscow country festival, Farmer. But I'm afraid I have to regretfully acknowledge that our audience's interest in other nation's folk music is weak comparing with the enthusiasm I saw in Czechoslovakia.

The organizers, Czechoslovakian journalists Milan Petrichak, Ivan Dolejal, Ivan Rossler and Irena Pribylova, had many problems with the festival's organization. Nevertheless, the days and nights of this musical feast were full of happiness, and the tens of thousands of Czechoslovakians who attended the festival witnessed a truly great event in music history.

### OBJEVY PORTY 90

1. "Bez Hrani A Zpivani"  
(Traditional/J. Steikora/  
F.T. Prim)

2. "Tanezs Na Mlate/Parta Staryho Hrouze"  
(P. Hrouzek/P. Hrouzek)

3. "Silhavy Marinak/BPT"  
(A. Vodrazka/A. Vodrazka)

4. "Hej Chloveche Bozje/Vraska"  
(E.P. Pokorny/M. Zavrilova)

5. "Ty A Jmeno/Piano"  
(J. Svec/J. Svec)

6. "Strazjce Majaku/Weteren Western"  
(Dobner/M. Leskauer)

7. "Copata Holka/Rohachi"  
(V. Tomashko/V. Tomashko)

8. "Chtel Bych Mit Jazz Band/Nadoraz"  
(J. Petera/J. Petera)

9. "Zbojnik/Bokomara"  
(L. Javurek/J. Brabec)

10. "Ledova Knajpa/Sekvoj"  
(O. Doleis/O. Doleis)

11. "Vyznani/Modrotisk"  
(L. Herman/L. Herman)

12. "Omnia Vinzsit Amour/Clich"  
(J. Marian/  
P. Bashtar and J. Marian)

Recorded 4-6 July, 1990.  
Porta-Fest, Poland

### Lineup:

Lubosh Chmelar  
Roman Pokorny  
Bohuslav Blin  
Ivan Rossler  
Jaromir Formanek  
Summer 1990.  
Plzen-Moscow.

## COUNTRY PICNIC IN MRAGOWO



The 8th Annual Festival of Commercial Country Music, held in the resort town of Mragowo, Poland, is over. It proved to be quite successful; its regular sponsor, Marlboro, had no reason to be disappointed.

The Poles are quite pragmatic and astute businessmen. Besides Marlboro, the Festival was

sponsored by some Polish enterprises and organizations such as Kodak's Polish subsidiary and a German-Polish joint venture producing baby food. The Festival promoters made a good profit with the beer and food concessions (which had been brought in from the West). But they preferred to keep silent about this commercial side of the matter.

The financial director of the Festival, Wojtek Valzerj, proved to be a greedy man: he refused to pay "his Slavic brothers," that is, the Russian musicians, for their appearance. The only group from Russia happened to be the Moscow band Kukuruza, whose concerts became true highlights of the Festival! Kukuruza did get its fee at last, thanks to the efforts of the general director of Rosconcert, A. Gribanov, but Rosconcert was forced to become the actual sponsor for Kukuruza. Gribanov handled the touchy subject brilliantly, so that the musicians

weren't left feeling inferior to their American, Swedish, Czechoslovakian and Polish colleagues!

**August 1990. Poland.**

CODA: At this Festival I met the singer Hege, son of George

Hamilton V. He told me that his father, the great star of American country music, George Hamilton IV, went to Moscow in 1962! I was amazed, to say the least.



## A MUSICAL GALLOP THROUGH THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

When Russian citizens visit Western Europe -- or any other Western country for that matter -- it's sometimes sad and sometimes comical from the Westerner's point of view, but for Russians it's almost always humiliating.

The window into Europe was opened a crack by Gorbachev, and the wind of change almost immediately blew a gaping hole in the Iron Curtain between Russia and the West. For the

Baltic peoples and Moldovians there have been relatively few problems in crossing the cultural gap, but for us Russians there are such problems they seem sometimes to be insurmountable. Take the situation with money, for instance: any foreigner -- even African, Asian or Latin-American -- has more real money than a Russian citizen when going abroad (because the ruble is not real money, and



Biber's Farm, Switzerland



Carol Black Band



Country Pickers, Switzerland



COUNTRY PICKERS



BRIAN SKLAR



H.S. KRUSH



Rolf Raggenbass



JOHN BRACK



Daniela Mühleis & Band

utterly useless outside of Russia--ed.).

I remember seeing a film by documentary director Yuri Belyankin about the film and literature critic Victor Schklovsky. In 1913 Schklovsky, then a mere cub reporter, wrote an essay on literature and published it in Petersburg Vedomosti newspaper. His payment was sufficient for him to travel to Paris and live there for a while. He didn't need a visa and he paid in Russian money at Parisian cafes and hotels, because before the 1917 Revolution the Russian ruble was a far more stable currency than U.S. dollars! I remember seeing a recent film by Stanislav Govurukhin, "The Russia We Lost" -- there are many bitter words about then and now....

Before *perestroika* my fate allowed me to visit only those countries that were Russian colonies or USSR satellites: Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia. And this limitation lasted for a long time; but now, for the first time in my life, I'm going to Switzerland. My plane is taking me from Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow to Basel.

The Swiss people remember Lenin, who lived and worked there before the Bolshevik Revolution, but can't recall the name of their own President. Almost everyone in Switzerland knows about Souvorov, the 18th century Russian military leader who, after conquering Switzerland, gave the country its independence. And that's not just the workers and farmers but even my colleagues, like the editor of the culture section at the newspaper *Zoiotuner Zaitung*. Atung couldn't remember his own country's leader in 1992! But Russia is famous here for its literature -- the names Chekhov, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy are quite well-known here. (America

is known for its movies and music.)

### The European Interpretation of the American Model

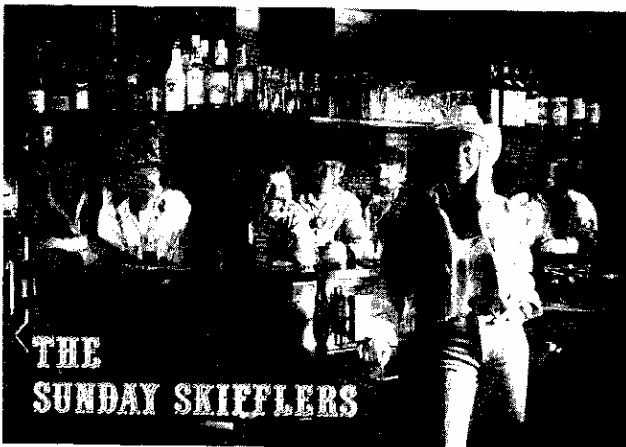
American country music evolved in the upper South in the 1920's then, over time, spread around the world. Europe fell under its spell when American troops came during WWII to defend them against the Nazis, bringing their music with them. In the late '40s and early '50s country music became very popular in Western Europe as well as in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Hungary. But it wasn't until *perestroika* that Russian TV began to introduce country music to its audience, and the music festival *Farmer* served to consolidate the position of American folk and country music in what had been "the Land of the Soviets."

Fritz Portner is a top Swiss music manager, with a number of country groups and singers, including John Brack, a 200-kilo giant, under contract. As I sit in his comfortable office we talk while he prepares coffee with aromatic liqueur, sends and receives faxes, makes Xerox copies and phones across the ocean to somebody at a major recording studio in Texas or Nashville. At the same time he drinks coffee, jokes, sings, laughs and works at his computer.

As far as I know Fritz is not a millionaire, but he has a beautiful Western car, as do both his wife and secretary, Ursula; and their 10-year-old daughter has already visited all of the countries of Europe (except Russia). Fritz works out of his 6-room apartment. The Portner family has a capitalist attitude toward business -- that's why they live so well and interestingly!



Nashville Train



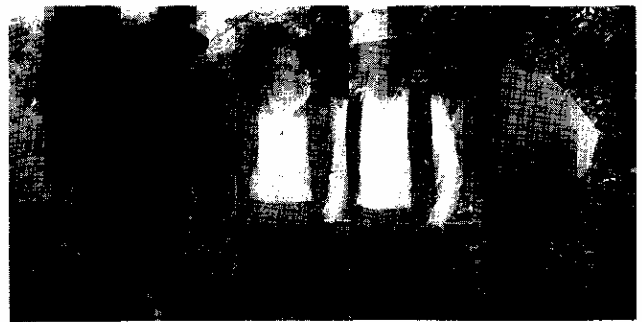
Here in Switzerland one of the most impressive country festivals, International Frutigen, takes place every year beginning in the first days of summer and continuing every weekend until October. These open-air concerts are held in a very picturesque spot at the foot of the Swiss Alps. As I listened to Fritz talk about them, it made me think of country festivals I'd attended in the past -- in Plzen, Czechia and Mragovo, Poland -- when I'd sat on the green grass and listened to high-class bluegrass! But now it was wintertime in Switzerland, so all the con-

certs were being held indoors in pubs and bars.

There are 75 professional and amateur country groups in Switzerland. I met with a few: sweet and slender Susan Klee, the bluegrass band Country Pickers, and the musicians from Zurich who call themselves Country Ramblers.

**HERMANN LAMMERS  
MEYER**

...from Papenburg sent me my first invitation to visit Germany. The officials at the German Consulate in Zurich told me I must have permission from Moscow to cross the Swiss-German border,



*Les Brown Country Band  
Chicken Train  
Europastrasse Vier (Germany)  
Emsland Hillbillies*

but my friend Fritz just drove me into Germany without any permission or visa. It took him exactly 50 minutes to reach Singentown. The first musician I met in Germany was the incomparable Russian violinist Tamara Sidorova, who was working under a contract in Munich. She was recording her first CD, together with the group Svoya Igra. By the way, she is from Sverdlovsk and her friends call her "The Queen of Chardash"--and, she was crowned Miss Kinotaur at the famous CIS Film Festival.

Hermann help me cross the Dutch border without a visa. I had a great meeting with the editor, Rienkjanssen, of Strictly Country Magazine from Wagtwedde; then with the Van Damm family from Bouskoop; Theo Van Gorp from the Floralia Festival in Breda; and the very large family of a Christian pastor, Hein De Haan from Gouda, a fan of Christian country and bluegrass music. Many thanks to everyone!

### "BUFFALO WAYNE"

"Hi, Andrew! Buffalo Wayne speaking..." It was my pen-pal, a singer and music critic calling from Luxembourg. (I remember a Russian wine called "Bear's Blood," but I never met a man called "Buffalo Wayne" before.)

He met me at the railway station. As I stepped out into the land where Buffalo lives, I decided immediately that the name "Luxembourg" must have been derived from the word "lux," which in Russian means "the highest quality." Especially when I found that tiny Luxembourg not only has its own TV station and basketball team, but also the world-renowned Radio Luxembourg. Buffalo is the leader of a country band and a radio dj. Together, we did a two-



Buffalo Wayne   
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hour radio program about Russian and European country music. Shortly thereafter, Buffalo took part in the charity concert "The Children of Chernobyl Are Our Children, Too." Even his 9-year-old daughter Shevon



took part, playing "When the Saints Go Marching In" on keyboards; her interpretation was magnificent. Incidentally, Buffalo gave some concerts in Moscow and the Urals in August of 1992.

### "You Will Drink Red Wine in Paris"

...predicted Buffalo when I was leaving. It wasn't long after my arrival that I understood why he'd said that: red wine is much, much, much cheaper there than

milk or juice. I met some terrific musicians in Paris, from the bluegrass band Station. Every member of this group is a true virtuoso, and listening to them was a real pleasure. They're professionals, they live for and

thanks to their music, their concerts pull big audiences and they've already recorded a number of CDs. There are 14 songs on their most recent album, "Blue Wave," and every one of them became a hit in France in 1991.

I listened to the music of Paris; I heard the melodies of the city, which is "a movable feast." Its harmonies resonated along the quays at Pont-Neuf, in the book bazaars.... But, alas, everything must eventually come to an end.

I reached Zurich thanks to the help of my new friends, the French musicians. Fritz Portner helped me to get a ticket to Moscow and drove me to the airport. Our flight was full of Albertville athletes -- those who won and those who lost. The smell of magic music accompanied me home as I left the United States of Europe.

February 1992.  
 Western Europe-Moscow.



Beppe Gambetta (Italy)



Station (France)

## SUMMER 1992: MILAN, ITALY

### I MEET A WONDERFUL GUY

#### MASSIMO GATTI Mandolin & Vocals

He's a legend in the history of Italian bluegrass. He is a truly eclectic mandolinist -- considered to be one of the foremost in all of Europe -- who has collaborated with many people of different and varied disciplines, including Irish folk singers, jazz songwriters, and classical orchestras and ensembles. Frets magazine had this to say about him: "Massimo Gatti is a wonderfully talented mandolinist and composer in his own right. Gatti's playing is characterized by a bright, trebly tone and a strong right-hand tremolo and crosspicking facility. His highly rhythmic compositions borrow from bluegrass, jazz,

blues, ragtimes and new acoustic styles."

#### DINO DI GIACOMO Guitar and Vocals

He is an excellent guitar player and lead vocalist. His powerful voice and the strong sound of his guitar have made him one of the most original artists in Italy.

#### GUILIO GOLFETTI Fiddle and Vocals

He is certainly one of the most important talents emerging from the European bluegrass scene. Although his role in the group is that of fiddler he also plays mandolin, banjo, guitar and bass exceptionally well. He has played in classical and popular groups; and in September, 1989 won the first national competition of

Swiss folk music held by RTSI, Swiss television.

#### CLAUDIO PARRAVICINI Banjo and Vocals

He is a great banjoist of staggering ability and, despite his youth, is known as one of the best in all of Europe. Gifted with an exceptional technique, beautiful tone and extraordinary sense of rhythm, he plays from a repertoire that covers every bluegrass style, showing him to be a true master of his instrument.

#### ANDREA TOGNOLI Bass & Vocals

He is a bass player of great experience with a temperament and rhythmic sense rarely en-

countered. He has played in many groups with internationally famous artists and is a well-known session player. He has an innate capacity to communicate. His personality enables him to give to his playing the kind of drive that has characterized all the best bluegrass bands.

Hot Stuff have captured the attention of both the critics and the public due to their exceptional vocal and instrumental abilities. They've played at the most important festivals all over Europe and the United States and participated at the inauguration of Expo 90 in Osaka, Japan.

**Summer 1992.  
Milano-Zurich.**



Hot Stuff (Milano, Italy)



## INTERNATIONAL KOTZER COUNTRY & WESTERN MUSIC FESTIVAL

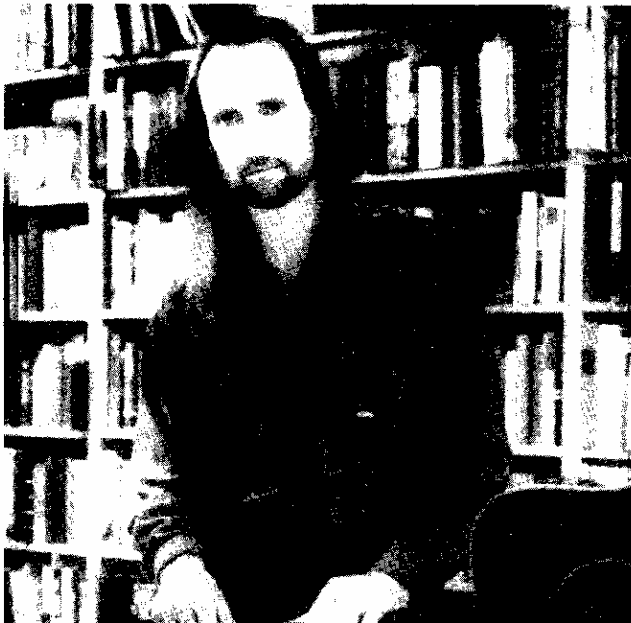
By invitation of Eberhard Finke, editor of Bluegrass Stage magazine, I attended a festival promoted by the manager Peter Vroblevsky. The following bands appeared:

**12 June, 1992**  
Texas Heat  
Hot Stuff

Richard Dobson & Band

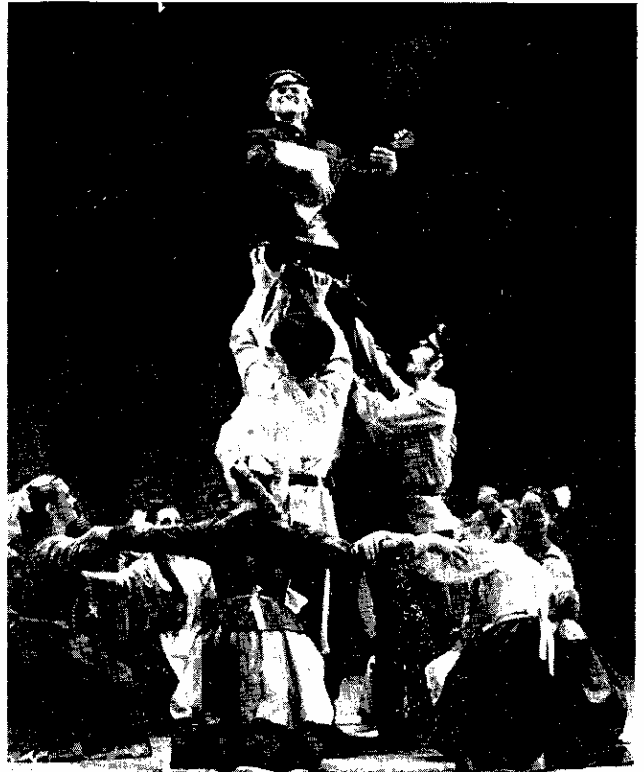
**13 June, 1992**  
C&W Line Dance  
Shady Mix  
George Hug  
Hugh Moffatt  
David Price  
Lewis Niderman  
It was very interesting!

*Andy -  
I'm very glad to meet you.  
I hope to see you in Moscow next year  
All the best, Harry 13/6/02*



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## THE RUSSIAN BALALAICA

Russian instrumental folk music is very rich and diverse. Across the vast reaches of Russia numerous folk instruments may be heard, among them horns and zhaleikas, pipes and kugiklies, psalteries and violins, balalaikas and domras, Russian concertinas and bayans, guitars and accordions.

The balalaika became widespread in Russia at the beginning of the 18th century, but the exact date of its first appearance has never been established.

In 1887 V. Andreyev organized "a group of balalaika lovers" consisting of eight performers, including the conductor. The group gave its first concert on March 20, 1888 in St. Petersburg. This was followed by tours of the towns of Russia and performances in Paris (in 1889 and 1892). The French composer Jules Massenet gave the following account of a concert he at-

tended: "I listened with tremendous interest to the group of Russian balalaika players and was overwhelmed by their talent and the music they produced with their colorful instruments."

We find an interesting description of a small folk instrument ensemble in Dostoyevsky's "Notes from the Underground": "The orchestra began to play... This orchestra is worthy of mention. Eight musicians took their places alongside the bunks: two fiddles... three balalaikas -- all handmade, two guitars and a tambourine instead of a double-bass. The violins merely scratched and scraped, the guitars were rotten but the balalaikas were unimaginable. The deftness with which the fingers plucked the strings was equal to the most agile of tricks. Every possible dance tune was played. In the most animated places the balalaika players

knocked the sounding board with their knuckles; the tone, the taste, the rendition, the handling of the instruments, the interpretation -- everything was highly individual, original. Upon my word I had no idea what simple folk instruments could produce: the harmony of sounds, the perfect ensemble and, what is most important, the spirit, the understanding and the manner of conveying the very essence of the motive were simply amazing. This was the first time in my life that I caught the spirit of rollicking gaiety and buoyancy of Russian dance songs."

Nowadays the balalaika is one of the most beloved and popular Russian folk instruments. Technically improved, it has taken a leading place in Russian folk orchestras due to its ability to convey the specific features of Russian folk music: the free, expressive melodic breath in a tremolo cantilena; the dynamic movement and fanciful rhythms of round-dance songs; effective

chordal accents; expressive melodic variations; and so forth.

1. "Near The Valley" (folk song)
2. "Siberian Polka" (Y. Shchekotov)
3. Variations on the Theme of the Folk Song "Evening Bells"
4. "Barynya" (folk dance)
5. "Kamarinskaya" (folk dance)
6. "Dance Of The Red Cossack Cavalry" (B. Alexandrov)
7. "Little Birch Tree" (Russian round-dance)
8. "I Was In The Garden" (folk song)
9. "I Danced With A Gnat" (folk song)
10. Dance Tune
11. Russian Ditties
12. Variations on the Theme of the Folk Song "Pedlars" (V. Ditel)



Ayushka



Skaz

13. Variation on the Theme of the Folk Song "Pedlars" (V. Ditel)

14. Variations on the Theme of the Folk Song "The Moon Shines"

15. "I Play The Balalaika" (R. Shchedrin)

**Special Credits:**

2. A. Shalov and L. Samsonov-Rogovitsky (balalaika)

4. O. Glukhov (balalaika), V. Azov (Russian accordion)

5. B. Feoktistov (balalaika) and orchestra

6. Orchestra of the Soviet Army Song and Dance Ensemble

7. Orchestra of the State Choreographic Ensemble, Berezka

10. B. Feoktistov (balalaika) and ensemble of folk music instruments

11. Quintet of folk music instruments

14. V. Andreyev, I. Rozhkov (balalaikas), G. Minaev (guitar)

15. Ensemble of folk music instruments

Winter 1993, Moscow.

## RUSSIAN FOLKLORE ENSEMBLES LP RECORDS OF 1992-93 (HIT PARADE)

1. "Russian Song"

2. "Russian Bells"

3. "Freedom"

4. XXXXX

5. "Beauty Room"

6. XXXX

7. "Future"

8. XXXX

9. XXXX

10. XXXX

3. Volnitsza Ensemble (leader S. Nikitin) 5274

4. Ossipov Russian Folk Orchestra (leader, N. Kalinin) 4896

5. Gornitsza Ensemble (leader, V. Ufimtzev) 4122

6. Northern Russian Folk Choir (leader, E. Kuzmich) 2108

7. Nasledie Ensemble (leader/choirmaster, E. Kuzmich) 2108

8. Omsk Russian Folk Choir (leader, G. Pantiukov) 1480

9. Pyatnitsky Russian Folk Choir (art director, V. Levashov) 1385

10. Music, Play, Folklore Ensemble (leader, G. Kolodochka) 1299

**Performers:**

1. Russkaya Pesnaya Ensemble (leader, N. Babkina)

2. Zvony Russkie Folk Trio (leader, V. Ivanov) 8936



M. Rozhkov & Yu. Chernov

## OSSIPOV RUSSIAN FOLK ORCHESTRA

"Honour and glory to you, Vasily Vassilyevich, for having introduced a new element in our musical life," Anton Rubenstein wrote to Andreyev. The Orchestra also found warm supporters in Glazounov, Tchaikovsky, Balakirev, Shaliapin, Gorky and Repin.

After the October 1917 Revolution, folk instruments also came into use in orchestras. In 1919 Boris Troyanovsky, a virtuoso balalaika player, organized a folk orchestra in Moscow, the first after the Revolution. Its principal members at the time were soldiers of a special heavy artillery division, but Troyanovsky also brought in a group of musicians from the former Andreyev Orchestra, with Pyotr Alexeyev at their head. They gave concerts in workers' clubs and at the front during short respites in the fighting, where they entertained their comrades with Russian folk and revolutionary songs. The well-known Russian singers Antoninia Nezhdanova and Valery Barsova frequently sang accompaniment

when the Orchestra entertained the fighting men.

In the late 1920's the orchestra became officially associated with Moscow Radio, and in 1936 it was named the USSR Russian Folk Orchestra. Nikolai Ossipov, a gifted balalaika player who became its director in 1940, augmented the basic domra and balalaika string group with bayans, Russian concertinas, Vladimir horns and such ancient Russian instruments as the gusli (a kind of psaltery), kugikly, rattles and zhaleikas.

The Orchestra's highly professional level has aroused the interest of many leading musicians, composers, conductors and soloists over the years. Ippolitov-Ivanov, Vasilenko, Gliere and Budashkin wrote music for it, and such prominent singers as Nezhdanova, Obukhova, Pirogov, Maksakova, Kozlovky, Lemeshev, Laptev and Reisen appeared with it.

After the death of Nikolai Ossipov in 1945 the orchestra was renamed in his honor. In recent years it has played under the

baton of such well-known conductors V. Smirnov, V. Gnutov and V. Dubrovsky.

Its rich repertoire accumulated over the years of its existence includes original pieces of the most diverse genres: arrangements and adaptations of Russian songs as well as classical and modern pieces. The orchestra has won popularity both at home and abroad.

### Side 1

*"Down On The Moskva River"*  
(Introduction to the opera  
*"Khovanshchina"*)  
(M. Moussorgsky)

*"Cracoviene"* (From the opera  
*"Ivan Susannin"*) (M. Glinka)  
*"Dance of the Small Swans"*  
(From the ballet *"Swan Lake"*) (P. Tchaikovsky)

*"Round Dance"* (From *"Eight Russian Folk Songs For Orchestra"*) (A. Lyadov)

*"Dance With Swords"* (From the ballet *"Gayane"*)  
(A. Khachaturyan)

*"Fantasy on Russian Folk Themes"* (P. Kulikov)

### Side 2

*"Concert Piece For Byan And Orchestra"* (V. Konyaev)  
(Soloist Yu. Chekanov)

*"Scherzo"* (V. Kionchakov)

*"Fantasy On Themes Of Two Russian Folk Songs"*  
(V. Gorodovskaya)

*"Gutsol Dance"* (N. Chaikin)

*"Jolly Tunes"* (V. Yakovlev)  
(Soloist V. Yakovlev, domra)

### Conductors:

Vitali Gnutov (1-8, 10)  
Victor Dubrovsky (9, 11)

### Adapted by

A. Kabanikhin (1)  
Yu. Chernov (2, 5)  
A. Alexandrov (3)  
V. Poponov (4)

Winter 1993. Moscow.



## PICTURES OF THE RUSSIAN CALENDAR

The Russ State Vocal-Choreographic Ensemble was founded in 1974 for the purpose of promoting the traditional songs, music and dances of the middle region of Russia. Its organization Vladimir was no accident, as the town has long been famous for its history and high level of artistic culture -- embodied in the beautiful architecture of the white stone Golden Gate of the Dormition and St. Dmitry Cathedrals; the unique decorative and applied works of native artisans in lacquered miniatures and embroidery; and its original song and dance tunes of the famous Vladimir horn players. All this serves as a nutritive soil for the young musicians entering the professional ensemble. Its cast is mobile enough. It has become possible because each of the 40 participants is equally skillful in dancing, singing and playing two or three folk instruments. Such universality of performance is characteristic of the grass roots of the Russian folk traditions, reflecting in the best way the synthetic nature of folk song artistry. The artists achieve an extremely high level of realism on stage in their mastery of these traditions.

Of course, the perception of such a bright ensemble as Vladimir Russ is much richer and more fully emotional when one attends a live concert, where the musical impression is reinforced by the non-standard, evocative choreography. Nevertheless, even one sound series -- the recording of the musical "Pictures Of The Russian Calendar" -- yields a reasonable notion not only of the artistic performance of the live ensemble, but also of

specific Russian folklore sources.

On the LP you can find the music of a theatrical composition dedicated to ancient Russian folk ceremonies, executed according to the annual cycle of the "Russian Peasant's Calendar." One specific part is a wedding play, showing poetically-inspired episodes of the traditional Russian wedding ceremony, *devishnik*: "leading to the altar" and the wedding party. The bride's lamentation is a pearl of a cappelia singing. This unique example of Russian polyrhythmic singing is performed by the vocalists in an extremely sincere manner.

Mikhail Firsov graduated from the Gnesins Pedagogical Institute of Music and became director of the Vladimir Russ Ensemble in 1986. From the beginning he showed himself to be a talented master of staged folklore art. He managed to upgrade the Ensemble in a comparatively short period of time to an essentially superior level of artistic and technical skill. In the preservation of its main genre and style, the Ensemble features a sensitive attitude to folk music sources. Firsov accomplished the remodulation in a very delicate and organic manner with a sense of style and artistic measure such that the live performance leaves the impression that the music is authentic traditional material. While preserving tunes like incontestable quotations, Firsov at the same time freely develops them dramatically, texturally and with nuances and colorations utilizing the whole, expressive range of professional music.



A big role is assigned to the orchestra. Interludes and ritornelles seem to cement all the song episodes into a unified, logically-developed action. The high professional level of the musicians and the wide range of timbres -- from simple village to classical instruments, of which the performers are masters -- compose the main quality of the instrumental group.

When led by Nikolai Litvinov, the virtuoso bayan player, the Vladimir Russ Ensemble became the Laureate of the 4th All-Russia Competition of Folk Instruments (1990). Despite its short history, Russ is well-known not only in its native country but abroad as well: in Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Zimbabwe, Lebanon, Cyprus.... Everywhere the Ensemble has

appeared it has been a great success and receives a cordial welcome. The artistic director Mikhail Firsov was awarded the State Prize of the RSFSR in 1990 for the program "Pictures Of The Russian Calendar."

### New Records:

#### Side 1 (24:06)

1. Spring Cry. "Krasnaya Gorka" ("Easter Week")
2. Egori ("Shepherds")
3. Whitsuntide
4. Night of St. John the Baptist's Nativity

#### Side 2 (19:57)

5. Christmas-tide
  6. Wedding Play
  7. Shrovetide (folk words)
- Winter 1993. Moscow.

## RUSSKAYA PESNYA -- LAUREATE OF THE FARMER FESTIVALS (MOSCOW)

Russkaya Pesnya ("Russian Song") is such a concrete name for a music ensemble that there hardly seems to be any need for annotating its program. Russian Song -- it is so clear and simple! A multitude of melodies from the various provinces and times of Russia, so different in character and style, are woven into a wreath of beauty and harmony. And the songs thus intertwined reinforce and accentuate each other's special charm.

A love of traditional Russian songs rallied several graduates of the Gnesins Pedagogical Institute of Music in 1975. How many discoveries they had made during folklore expeditions into the backwoods when students! How eager they were to breathe life into fossilized melodies retained by some miracle in the memories of the older generation at a time when the entire nation was being drowned in a deluge

of insipid pop music pouring from their radios and TV sets.

During their student years, the future Russkaya Pesnya women had engaged in a kind of competition over whose regional songs were the best. Nina Zhelyabina claimed that the songs of the Orel Region excelled, while Lyudmila Alexeyeva preferred those of the Tambov Region. Tatiana Savanova from Moscow praised the songs of the Moscow suburbs, while Nadezhda Babkina believed in the irresistible charm of the freedom-loving songs of her native land in the southern Astrakhan region.

It was perhaps her irrepressible Cossack temperament that prompted Nadezhda Babkina to organize a Russian song ensemble. Not one to waste time once she'd decided what she wanted to do, the project immediately went into fast-forward. The first concert was given in the Composers Union Hall, so



that their initial recognition came from the most exacting and professionally competent audience imaginable.

In 1976 the Russkaya Pesnya Ensemble participated in the All-Russia Musical Contest in Sochi and won its special prize "For the Purity of Sounds." This honor came just one year after the organization of the Ensemble. Three years later in Leningrad [St. Petersburg], Russkaya Pesnya won a prize at the All-Union Contest for "The Best Rendition of Folk and Author's Songs." In 1978 the Ensemble was awarded the highest prize, the Gold Medal, at the International Radio Contest of Folk Music in Bratislava.

As a matter of course, the Ensemble performs diverse programs, attracting the attention of composers such as A. Pakhmutova, B. Tikhomirov, V. Belyayev, Yu. Zatsarny and Zh. Kuznetsova, who now write songs especially for them. Meanwhile, the Ensemble has made steady creative progress, successfully experimenting with various programs.

Russkaya Pesnya performs often and with invariable success, appearing in differing venues and before varied audiences. Their programs always take into account the interests of the particular audience and the qualities of the hall. Programs for chamber performance, for instance, include Glinka and Sviridov followed by some pieces of authentic 17th and 18th century rural music. If the performance is in a huge Sports Palace, the program would include more energetic folk songs with dances; musical accompaniment played on wooden spoons, rattles and rolling pins; jokes and whistles. If they are part of a big variety concert and the singers see that the audience is tired, they immediately switch over to merry patter, so rapid and

*wanted: COUNTRY MUSIC IN RUSSIA*

hence so comical that the audience can hardly follow, let alone repeat it, so that they are greatly amused and enlivened.

The artistry developed over the years has made the Ensemble flexible, elegant and mobile. Humor and a perfect command of the audience's attention allow them to venture the most unexpected scenic experiments: Now they form a duet with the Ariel rock group; now appear together with the popular minstrel Alexander Rozenbaum; now stage a folk pageant with songs and dances of some particular region. And they do all this with no apparent strain, as if just for the pure pleasure of it.

### NEW RECORDS OF THE RUSSKAYA PESNYA ENSEMBLE

#### "POSIDELKI" ("EVENING ENTERTAINMENT PARTY")

*Russian Songs and Dances: "Russia"; "Fuss In The Street"; "My Darling" "Ol, Frost, Frost"; "Barynya"; "A Guelder Rose By The Valley"; "Chebotukha dance; "Unharness The Horses, Lads"; "Lots Of Golden Lights" (K. Molchanov/N. Dorizo); "Ach, Samara-Town"; "The Ducks Are Flying"; Gypsy dance; "A Young Cossack Enjoys Himself On The Don"*

*Arrangements by:  
A. Simon (2,5,8,12,13)  
The Russkaya Pesnya Vocal Ensemble, artistic director Nadezhda Babkina (1-4,6-11,13)*

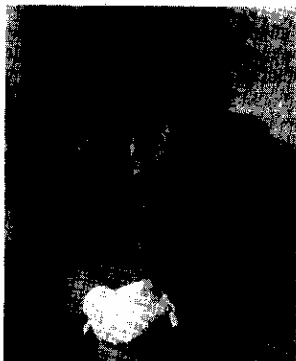
*Soloists Ensemble of the N. Ossipov Russian Folk Orchestra*

*Conductors:  
Anatoly Simon (2,8,13)  
Nikolai Kalinin (5,12).*

**C20 26275 000**

**Winter 1993. Moscow.**

## A COMPOSER FROM SIBERIA



*A. Murov's works delight the listener with their profound feeling and great mastery. His gift for composing is exceedingly worthy and distinctive.*

**D. SHOSTAKOVICH**

Askold Murov is an artist who has his own serious theme, his own creative method and language. The audacity of his deeply felt and conceived themes, strictly logical and natural narration and brilliant mastery are the striking features of the composer's mature works.

He is the author of eight symphonies -- choral chamber, instrumental, and chamber-vocal works -- and music for theatrical performances and films. In each of his works we can hear the author's voice. He is preoccupied with mankind's quest for spirituality and morality, and with reflection on our contemporaries roles in history. These themes are often treated by the composer by way of utilizing material from the 19th century. He is attracted by difficult, tur-

bulent, revolutionary epochs, and uses them as a means of searching for the moral ideas, norms of life, thoughts and feelings developed during the millennia of our history. These norms form the basis for his pondering of the today's problems, since his main hero is our contemporary.

Addressing himself to images of Russia's past, he seeks to use those stylistic devices whose style is close to the epoch which he depicts. They are like signs of those times, although through their interpretation by an artist living at the end of the 20th century they are naturally enriched with all the devices of contemporary musical language.

All this is true of Murov's cantata for choir a capella, "Russian Portraits," recorded on this disc. This 1975 composition sets to music verses written by 14th century Russian poets, and is dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the rebellion on Senate Square. The cantata is not only a tribute to this moral victory of our ancestors, but is also an appeal to those of us who continue their noble cause.

Murov is greatly attracted by Siberian folk poetry and music. He regards folk art as one of wisdom's eternal sources nurturing our life. Rather than make ethnographic sketches and depict genre scenes, the composer utilizes a foundation of folk material to create generalized emotional images to convey varying moods.

The cantata "Siberian Wedding Songs" for choir a cappella, composed in 1980, reproduces the most important moments of the traditional Russian wedding ceremony, as reflected in the names of its parts.

**A. Murov (b. 1928-)**

*Side 1*

*"Russian Portraits"*

*Cantata "150th Anniversary Of The Rebellion On Senate Square"*

1. "Student Cant" (Alexei Pleshcheyev) 1:54
2. "Russian Song" (Anton Delwig) 3:04
3. "Storm" (Nikolai Yazykov) 1:48
4. "Message" (Nikolai Ogarev) 3:02
5. "Field, Wide Field" (Alexei Khomyakov) 2:49
6. "On The Death Of Tsar Nicholas I" (Fyodor Tyutchev) 1:57

*The Moscow Chamber Choir*

*Conductor Vladimir Minin*

*Side 2*

*Siberian Wedding Songs Cantata*

1. "Asking In Marriage" 2:36
2. "Bride-Show" 3:14
3. "Engagement" 2:51
4. "Evening Party" 1:39
5. "Second Evening Party" 2:59
6. "The Maiden's Party" 1:42
7. "Honoring" 3:05

*The Novosibirsk Chamber Choir*

*Conductor Boris Pevzner*

*Winter 1993, Moscow.*

## PYATNITSKY RUSSIAN FOLK CHORUS

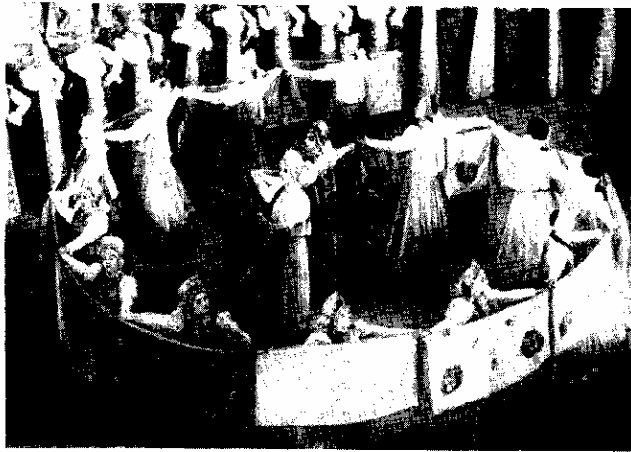
ART DIRECTOR: VALENTIN LEVASHOV

### Side 1

1. "I Love You, My Russia" (V. Levashov) 4:30
  2. "Down The Volga River" (Russian folk song, arranged by V. Levashov) 3:20
  3. "I Tormented The Lad Unjustly" (P. Savintsev/V. Tatarinov) 2:00
  4. "Beyond The Urals, The River" (Russian folk song) 1:45
  5. "The Twentieth Spring" (V. Levashov/N. Palkin) 2:20
  6. "I Love You, Siberia" (L. Lyadova/L. Kondyrev) 3:10
- Soloists:
1. V. Sobantseva
  2. B. Nikolayev
  3. Ye. Leonova
  4. Y. Reshetnikov, male group of the chorus
  5. Z. Ostapchenko, L. Shlyakhova
  6. A. Gukov, V. Godunov

### Side 2

1. Kaluga tunes (arrangements by V. Sigalov) 7:40
  2. "My Grass" (Russian folk song) 1:20
  3. "Yakonovsk Laments" (arranged by V. Levashov, V. Kalinin) 5:20
  4. "Ach, You Dear Winter" (Russian folk song, arranged by V. Levashov) 2:00
- Soloists:
1. G. Krasnova, T. Baranova
  2. A. Gukov
  3. Z. Ostapchenko, G. Mezentseva, Female Group Chorus
  4. N. Oleinik
- Russian Folk Instruments (1-3, 5-10)  
Winter 1993.



254

## MARIA MORDASOVA

### RUSSIAN FOLK SONGS

#### Side 1

1. "Morshansk Laments" (M. Mordasova)
2. "By Our Gate"
3. "Mother Sent Me On An Errand" (M. Mordasova)
4. "Dear Mariushka Awoke" (wooing song)
5. "A Black Ram"
6. "I Walked On The Grass" (round-dance song)
7. Long ditties
8. "Oh, What A Disappointment" (M. Mordasova)

#### Side 2

"Barynya-Rassypukha"

"Dunya Walked In The Yard"  
Kynakyrki ditties (words by M. Mordasova)

"Oh, My Pancakes"  
"Doves Sit In The Oak Tree"  
"A Merry Milkmaid" (ditties)  
"Timonya" (words by M. Mordasova)  
"A White Swan"  
Arrangements by:  
I. Rudenko (1, 15)  
Ye. Kuznetsov (3, 6)  
M. Mordasova (4, 10)  
Valentina Klodnina (3, 12)  
The Voronezh Russian Folk Choir (9)

Winter 1993. Moscow





**NADEZHDA KRYGINA**  
**"MIST WAS RISING FROM BEHIND**  
**THE HILL"**



The land of the Kursk region is rich not only in natural resources but also in a talented people with a great love for life, colorful characters and clear-voiced singers of wonderful songs -- which have become well-known thanks to the famous Nadezhda Plevitskaya, a citizen of Kursk. Now, on this disc you can listen to another singer from the Kursk region whose name is Nadezhda, too. Nadezhda Krygina is a graduate of the Gnesins Pedagogical Institute of Music where she studied under L. Sukhanova. At the same time she was a member of the Rossiyanochka ("A Russian Girl") Ensemble. In 1991 Nadezhda won 1st Prize at the First All-Russia TV-Radio Competition in Smolensk. Her clear, sparkling voice can express any nuance of mood or feeling, effortlessly putting the listener under her spell. She has toured

throughout Russia and abroad. We wish her good luck and success in her creative life.

**"Russian Folk Songs"**

**Side 1**

1. "Subhotea" 2:43
2. "A Hat On The Sea" 2:05
3. "A Mist Was Rising From Behind The Hill" 1:38
4. "Grass Was Growing In The Ditch" 3:13
5. "Votalinka Tunes" 2:46
6. "Oh, Vasya-Vas" (Volga region airs) (I. Rudenko/M. Mordasova) 2:43
7. "Oh, Hens, Hens" 1:59
8. "White Flax" 2:21

**Side 2**

9. "Kamarinskaya" 2:42
10. "A Duck Was Swimming" 3:52
11. "Ryazan Laments" 1:38
12. "My Dear Vanyusha" 3:06
13. "My Golden Bee" 2:09
14. "I, A Young Maiden" 2:29
15. "The Volga River Has Overflowed" 3:55

**Arrangements by:**

- V. Korotkov (1,13)  
 B. Ivanov (2,6,10)  
 V. Petrov (3,9)  
 V. Kulikov (4,5,11,13,14,15)  
**"Masters Rossii" ("Masters Of Russia") Russian Popular Music Orchestra Under the baton of V. Petrov (1-6, 9-15)**  
**"Rossiyane" ("Russian People") Ensemble under the baton of L. Zhuk (7,8)**  
 Winter 1993. Moscow.

**ALEXANDRA STRELCHENKO**  
**SINGS**



4. "Maiden's Fate" (Voronezh lament) 3:59

5. "Ach, Samara Town" (Volga ditties, arrangements by Yu. Zatsarny) 4:41

- "Hour After Hour" 4:39

**Side 2**

- "Russian Field, Native Field" (Yu. Zatsarny/V. Bokov) 3:35

- "Ducks, A Leaf" (M. Fradkin/M. Plyatskovsky) 6:10

- "Volga, Volga, Native Land" (Yu. Zatsarny/P. Kudryavtsev) 2:12

- "Echo Of Love" (Ye. Ptichkin/R. Rozhdestvensky) 3:40

- "Bygone Days" (I. Tamarin/Y. Galperin) 3:57

**Performers:**

Academic Russian Folk Orchestra; Art Director, Nikolai Nekrasov (1-7, 9, 10) Naigrush Instrumental Trio (8, 11)

Vladimir Demidov (balalaika) (6)

Recording engineer:

P. Kondrashin

Editor: B. Tikhomirov

Winter 1993. Moscow

**Side 1**

**Three Kursk Wedding Songs:**

1. "O Hop, Dear Hop" 2:14

2. "On A Fir Tree By The Gate" 4:21

3. "Dappled Hens" 2:31

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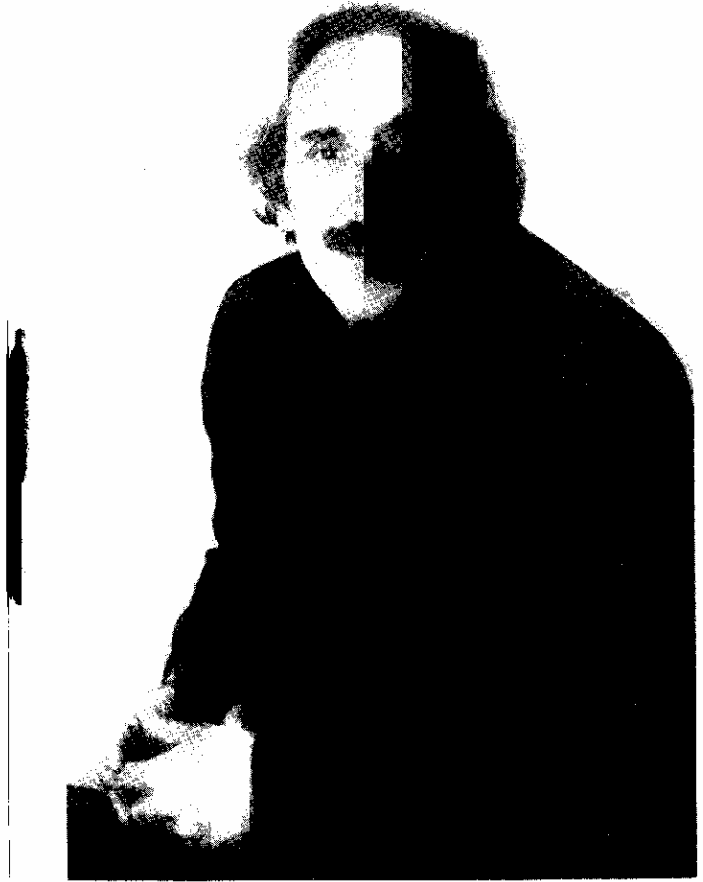
## DMITRY POKROVSKY'S FOLK ENSEMBLE

Dmitry Pokrovsky's Folk Ensemble holds the position of being one of the greatest cultural highlights in Russia during the past several decades. Full and proper recognition did not come immediately, however, because of the political and therefore the cultural climate in the Soviet Union at the time of its formation. As it turned out, the group was organized at the very moment that "adapted people's music" forced true folklore out of the people's minds, and Soviet propaganda claimed Lyudmila Zykina and Olga Voronets were the most famous nightingales of true Russian songs. [In other words, traditional Russian culture was replaced by manufactured, "politically correct" Soviet culture.--ed.]

The same phenomenon occurred in Soviet science with the

spectacular rise to power by the academician Lysienko, false scientist and true charlatan, whose instant recognition and reward by the system was possible only in a distorted totalitarian society such as existed in the Soviet Union. The careers of Voronets, Zykina and other officially approved-of "folklorists" looked a lot like Lysienko's story. Artificial folklore. It sounds absurd, it seems ridiculous, almost unbelievable, but that's the way it was in the Soviet Union.

Pokrovsky says: "Folk music represents to me a kind of music possessing high energy and superlative technique. I am interested in a problem that may seem droll: What is our voice and how can it be used? I wonder if anyone has ever noticed that the human voice is always used in stress situations.



Folk songs are full of energy, and they are performed at the stress moments of our lives -- births, funerals, marriage ceremonies...."

As Pokrovsky's band already enjoyed phenomenal popularity in the '70s, it could not pass unnoticed by the authorities. Pokrovsky himself recalls: "We performed in the most prestigious concert halls, we were included in the Olympic Games' cultural program, but at the same time we were officially blacklisted. Many of the Party bosses refused to accept our style, our songs. But two days before Chernenko's death we sang in his home; his wife gave a party for various officials and their families and invited us to distract them. While they were

having a good time, Chernenko was dying...."

"I remember another interesting episode: Every year on the 7th of November, after the Revolution Day Parade, all the leaders of our country and their guests would go into the Kremlin Palace, upstairs to the banquet hall. We were invited to sing at such a reception in 1978. The members of the Politbureau were sitting near the stage, isolated from the rest of the crowd. All the time we were performing, there was a terrible din in the hall. Nobody was listening, everybody was just eating and drinking and chattering. I felt offended and cried out something from the stage. Brezhnev covered his ears because of my terrible voice, but all the guests shut up.

"We couldn't go down from the stage into the hall; everything



### Paul Winter Consort (USA) and Dmitri Pokrovsky Folklore Ensemble



was fenced and our passports had been taken from us before we went up onto the stage. [All Soviet (and ex-Soviet) citizens must carry at all times an in-country passport, which is actually an identification document as to who that person is and where he is registered to live, or face arrest by the militia.--ed.] We couldn't even jump down from the front of the stage -- the guards would have shot us without warning."

In the winter of 1991 Dmitri Pokrovsky lectured at Dortmund University. His course was called "Music, Traditions and Cultural Politics in Russia." One of the lectures was held as a show trial of Tikhon Khrennikov, leader of the Union of Soviet Composers. He had been its chairman since 1939! One professor, who knew nothing about

the circumstances of life in the Soviet Union -- nor of the jury or the defendant, for that matter -- attended the "trial." Pokrovsky played the role of the prosecutor. He presented serious evidence against Khrennikov. He showed newspaper clippings of his speeches: "Here are the words Khrennikov said in this year, and that's what he did in that year...." And the jury acquitted Khrennikov! Because not one composer had been arrested or executed during all of Stalin's time! The Super-punisher had murdered and tortured to death thousands of famous Soviet writers, artists, actors, journalists and film and theater directors. But not one single composer or musician had fallen victim to Stalin's insanity. Thanks to Khrennikov, all had been pro-

ted. A truly astonishing accomplishment.  
Summer 1992.

#### Side 1

"Kurski Funk" (Traditional song from Kursk Region in southern Russia, with new music by Paul Halley, Oscar Castro-Neves and Paul Winter) 3:21

"The Horse Walked In The Grass" (Traditional Russian song, with new music by Paul Halley, Eugene Friesen and Paul Winter) 4:07

"Kyrie" (Paul Halley) 3:55

"Steam Bath" (Traditional wedding song from Pskov in northern Russia, with new music by Paul Halley, Eugene Friesen and Paul Winter) 3:30

"Song For The World" (Traditional pan-pipes song from Kursk Region in southern Russia, with new music by Paul Halley) 3:16

#### Side 2

"Down In Belgorod" (Traditional song from Belgorod Region in southern Russia, with new music by Oscar Castro-Neves, Paul Halley, Eugene Friesen and Paul Winter) 2:52

"The Lake" (Paul Halley) 4:09

"Epic Song" (Traditional Cossack song from the northern Caucasus, with new music by Oscar Castro-Neves and Paul Winter) 2:56

"Green Dreams" (Traditional wedding song from Belgorod Region in southern Russia, with new music by Paul Halley, Eugene Friesen and Paul Winter) 3:47

"Garden Of The Earth" (Traditional Russian song, with English words by Paul Halley and Paul Winter) 3:39

#### Performers:

Paul Winter - soprano sax  
Eugene Friesen - cello  
Paul Halley, keyboards  
Oscar Castro-Neves, guitar  
Russ Landau, bass  
Ted Moore, percussion  
Glen Velez, percussion  
Neil Clark, additional percussion on ("Kyrie" and "Down In Belgorod")

#### DMITRY POKROVSKY FOLKLORE ENSEMBLE:

Dmitry Pokrovsky  
Maria Nefedova  
Alexander Danilov  
Yelena Sidorenko,  
Sergei Zhirkov  
Tamara Smyslova  
Arthur Partosh  
Anna Konukhova  
Andrei Kotov  
Nina Savitskaya  
Dmitry Fokin  
Vladimir Teplov  
Irina Ponomareva  
Sergei Grigoriev  
Irina Gaidukova, manager  
Philipp Nikolayev, interpreter

Produced by Paul Winter,  
Oscar Castro-Neves and Ted Levin

Recorded in Moscow, March 1987, at Melodia Studio

Recording engineers: Dixon Van Winckle, Gary Clayton, Sergei Teplov

Editor V. Ryzhikov

Recorded in New York, April-June 1987, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine

Recording engineer: Glen Kolotkin

Summer 1992. Moscow.

## LIGHT DAY

This Russian folk music ensemble was formed in 1989 by students of the Gnessin State Pedagogical Institute of Music in Moscow, the most famous music college in Russia.

The ensemble Light Day is a unique company of gifted young musicians. All of them share the same sublime and noble feature: They strive to revive the true and

Selections from both the Western and Russian classics are included - Bach, Mozart, Paganini, Strauss, Liadov, etc. Classical jazz, when performed on Russian folk instruments, sounds quite unique, seemingly "born again." Popular songs and melodies from many different countries are also included. But most of all, Russian country folk



genuine traditions of ancient Russian ensembles of the Middle Ages.

In old Russia folk ensembles not only performed music and accompanied the solo singers, but also functioned as small folk theatres.

These young musicians - their average age is 24 -- think that their Russian ensemble's repertoire should be a versatile one. Consequently, their concerts marked in their versatility of styles and dynamics.

melodies and songs!

Helen Verhovskaya - Soloist. The American daily, the Denver Post, called her a "Russian Pearl."

Valery Semin - Accordion. Many Americans have been said that if he were not a Russian musician, he could successfully double for the famous American comic actor, John Belushi.

Alexander Izumsky - Balalaika. One of the best, he plays Paganini on the balalaika!

Vladimir Pak - Domra. A talented Korean born in Russia.

Alexander Ivanov - Accordion.  
Jakov Eigof - Domra and per-  
cussion. German by origin.  
Alexei Novokov - Two-meter  
basbalalaika player.

The ensemble has already  
criss-crossed the world giving  
concerts!



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## PHOTOS

## RUSSIANS, AMERICANS & OTHERS

**my special THANKS:**

"Miss country" Larissa Grigorieva,  
Volodya Grigoriev and "Red Grass";  
Giorgi Palmov, Andrei Shepelev  
& "Kukuruz";  
Julia Jostynia;  
Dmitry Vakhrameev;  
Big country fan -- Yura Andretchuk;  
"Jan Blin Band";  
Serge Starodubtsev &  
"Fine Street";  
"Blind Mix" Dmitry Jastroba;  
Natasha Markova;  
Mike Zulin & Helen Dubrovskaya;  
Oleg Podobed & band;  
Andrey Boichenko;  
Marina Kirsanova;  
Liza Mokrushina;  
Nadejda Gromova;  
Valera Slobodchikov;  
Rostislav Prisekin;  
Oleg Kozlov & "Armadillo";  
Kirill Kotelnikov & family;  
Tatiana Kulikova;  
Nikolai Nilov;  
Sasha Sokolyanski;  
Peter Khlebnikov &  
Sasha Anichkin;  
Michinori Kabe;  
Eristavi's family;  
Serge Lukoshnikov;  
Yuri Berendyukov & "Yabloko";  
"Big Virgis" Stakenas;  
Alus Singtas;  
Pete Anderson;  
Emil O'YA & "Beergrass";  
Andres Loigom;  
Toomas Lunge & "Yustament";  
Aarne Solvak & Aare Holm;  
Anton Baturin;  
Reet & Ivo Linna;  
Satu Toffela & Juhanny Aalto;  
Ussi Mattikainen & "LCB"  
Harry Johanssen & his bands;  
Jirna Lagerstedt & Eila Rantonen;  
Irena Pribylova & "Poutniei";  
Ivan Dolezjal & Ivan Rossler;  
Ivan Petrichak;  
Lenka Jaksova & band;  
Karel Tampier & family;  
Ivan Bel & band;  
Sonia Krecchanova;  
Mihal Leicht & band;  
Sveta & Karel Vach;  
Marie Kropachkova & Jaromir Koppl;  
Vazlav Prohazka;  
Eberhard Finke & his family";  
Jurgen Klonezynsky & family;  
Hermann L. Mayer & family;  
Mark Stoffel;  
Michael Stephan;  
Thomas Schubert;  
Mike Beetz & "Forum Berlinum";  
Peter Vroblevsky & his family;  
Les Brown & band;  
John Brack and band;  
Fritz Portner & his family;  
Kaclin's family;  
Ruth Inderbitzin's family;

Horst Krush & band;  
Suzanne Klee & band  
Daniela Muhleis & band;  
Over Easy BG Band;  
Willie Ninninger;  
Margaretha Tierney;  
Christine Mader &  
Paolo R. Dettwiler;  
Geri Stocker;  
Roger Lehmann & his family;  
Fransua Aubaret;  
Jean-Denys Chertx;  
Buffalo Wayne & Olga Rylova and Jr  
Bernard Writing;  
Metral's family;  
Jean Luc Pignol &  
Cyrilque Jacquat;  
Thierry Lecoq & Gilbert Rout;  
Serge M. Lenfant;  
Chris Bertelle & Lucia Wettstein  
"Rockin' Boy" Jacques Dufour;  
Rienk Jannssen;  
Hein DE Haan & his family;  
Theo Van Gorp;  
Eva Dobrovska & "Little Maggie";  
Igor Nazaruk & father;  
Massimo Gatti & "Hot Stuff";  
Hugh Moffatt;  
Bob Cheevers;  
Paul F. Kingsbury;  
Jeff Green;  
Jim Patterson;  
Saul Broudi;  
Larry L. Linkin & NAMM;  
Brett Dalton;  
David Matthews;  
John Mellissen;  
Rudi Amirehanyan;  
C. Verkoijen & "Tenderfoot";  
LeGrady Peter & "Varnyu Country"  
Nona Mgeladze  
Anna West;  
Alan E. Fairall;  
Mike Show;

My American family:  
Shubert, Mrs. Ann.  
Shubert, Mr. & Mrs. Carol and Norn  
Shubert, Mr. Lawrence  
Shubert, Ms. Linda  
Smith, Mr. & Mrs. Judie and Steve  
Gross, Mr. & Mrs. Nez and Michael  
Shubert Deborah & Diamond Kenn  
Heller, Mr. Philip B.  
My wife Irene & daughter Stasy for t

Nikolai Butov and Russian State  
concert company "Commonwealth"

Alexander Shumsky, Dmitriy Anoshi  
Katya M. Alexeeva, Anna Zueva,  
Angela Avakova and all in *InterMedi*

Bob Vinogradov

Anatoliy Fedotov, Nclya Grigorieva,  
Lilya, Tanya, Lena and all in *Reclan*  
printing house

## CHARLES AZNAVOUR

"I understand nothing about business," he confesses, "but I know everything about my work. If my style of music will survive," continues Little Charles, "it will be only thanks to country music. As I begin to compose, I can take you, or me, or the children, or the telephone, and make up a story. Songs must be like that." This little man, who once was called "a baby from the

Latin Quarter," writes his songs in a style close to the Nashville sound. A prize for the best composition in country style is good evidence of a musician's interests as well as his talent. The song is "Yesterday When I Was Young." "Sure, I compose in country music style," he laughs. "But my country is France."

**Associated Press.**  
**Winter 1993.**

