

150 years of Estonian Song Festival – Digitized Heritage

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Song Festival Grounds in Tallinn, 2014. Photo: Kaupo Kalda

1985 Song Festival fanfares and traditional opening song
(Sound file on DIGAR from Forte Classical CD „125 years of Estonian Song Festivals“ 1994)



Importance of song festivals to Estonians

President of Estonia, Lennart Meri said in 1999:

„It is fashionable to say that song festivals are no longer fashionable... Song festivals were never fashionable because a song festival is not a matter of fashion. Song festival is a matter of the heart. Just as the Estonian language and mind, and just as love.“

Estonian Broadcasting Company video [2014 Song Festival Opening](#)

2013 poll results:

96% important, (63% very important)

51% have participated

33% have visited

90% watched on TV

9% no experience

About the tradition

- The song festivals in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List
- 26 Song Festivals every five years since 1869
- The joint or mass choirs grew to more than 33,000 singers performing to an audience more than 80,000 people in 2009

Song Festival materials at the National Library

- Subject „Song festivals“ at [ESTER](#) database:
- 28 DVDs and VHS (10 of great festivals)
- 21 LPs and CDs
- 271 music scores
- Posters, postcards, town schemes, ephemera

Song Festival materials at the National Library

Earliest vinyl records from the 1965 Song Festival:

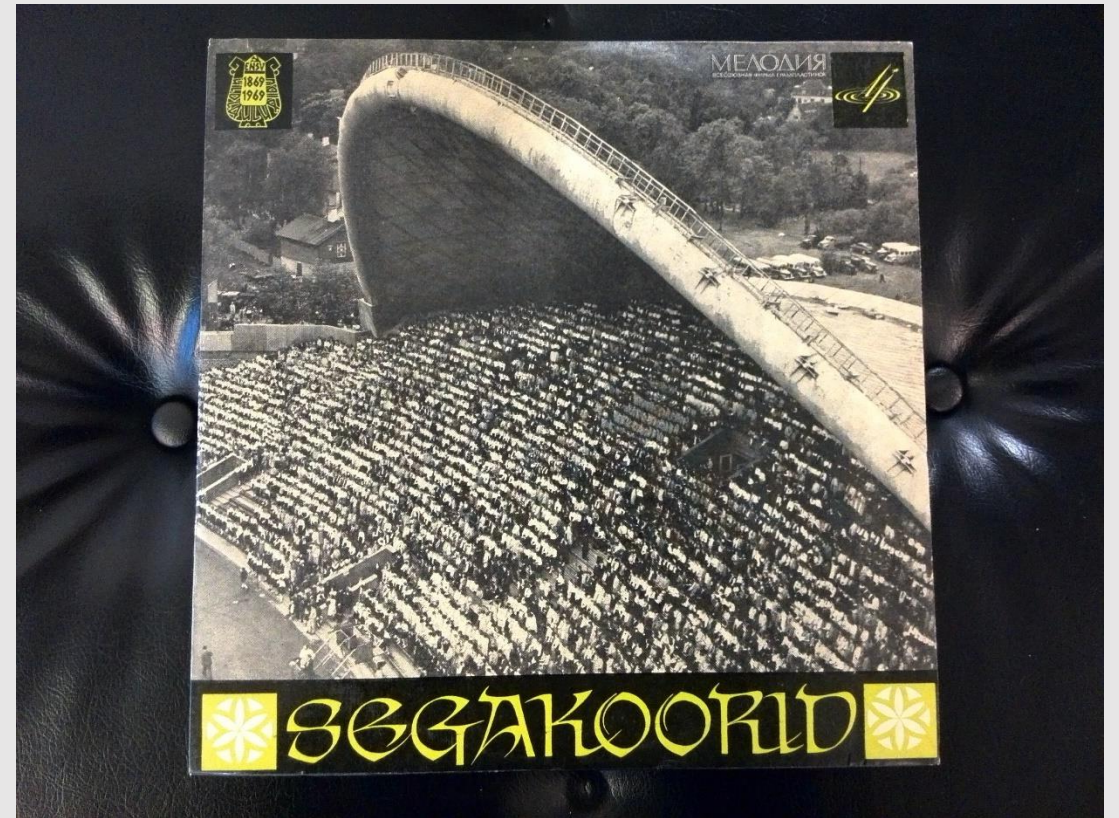
„Estonian SSR General Song Festival in 1965: musical fragments“

And „Estonian SSR General Song Festival in 1965: procession marches“

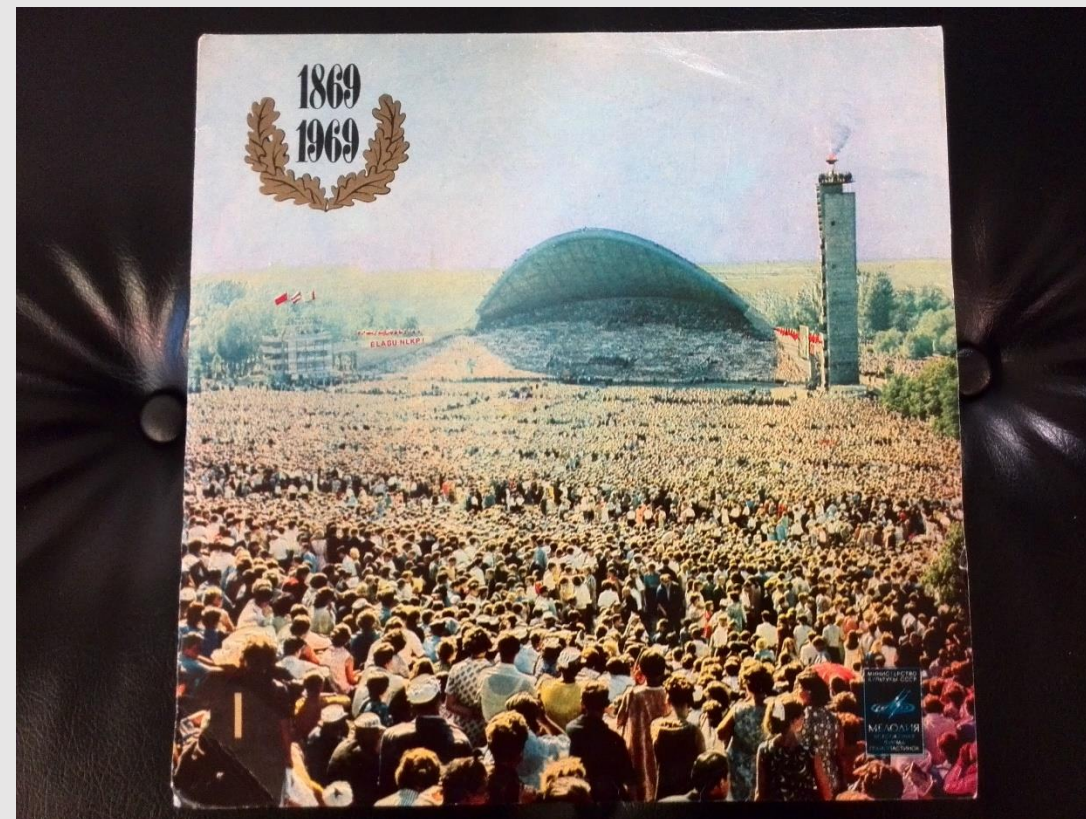


1969 Jubileum Festival recordings

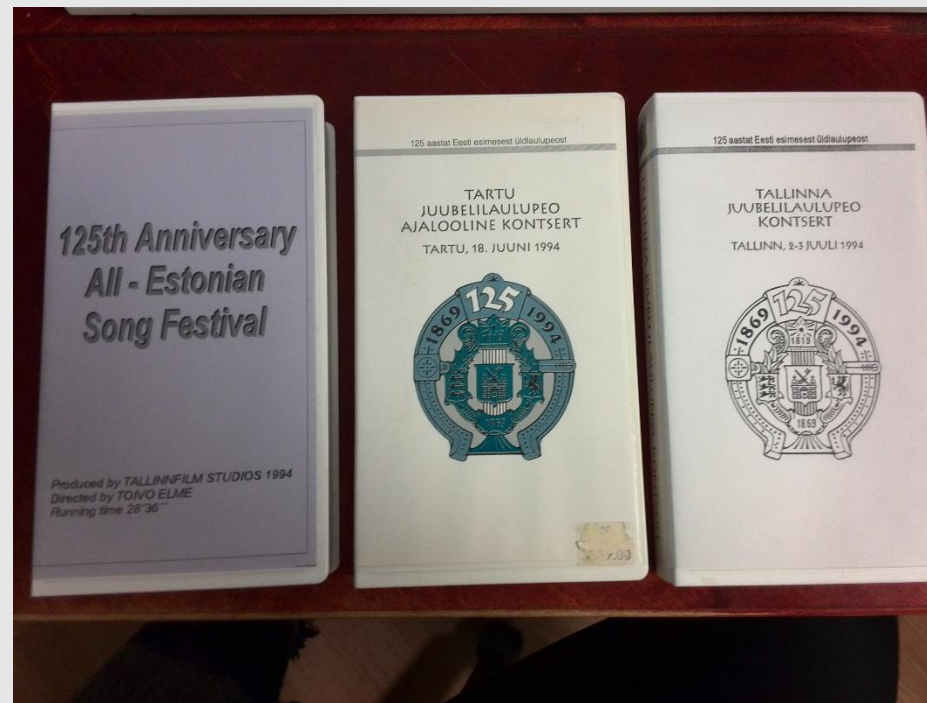
(Vinyl records made at Riga Melodija factory, Tallinn 1975)



1969 Festival LPs from National Library collection



DVDs „To breathe as one“ made in USA and
VHS from 1994



DIGAR.ee – digital archive of the National Library

Search digar.ee with keyword „song festivals“

All posters

- All sheet music for Great Song Festival
- Postcards
- Photos
- Schemes, maps

Digital materials about song festivals at other institutions

- Rahvusarhiiv ([National Archives](#))
 - Filmiarhiivi Infosüsteem ([Film Archives Information](#))
- Eesti Filmi Andmebaas ([Estonian Film Database](#))
- Eesti Muuseumide Veebivärv ([Museums Public Portal](#))
- Estonian [Public Broadcasting](#)
- Estonian [web archive](#) at National Library (song festivals' official websites)
- Filmimuuseum (Filmmuseum)
- Estonian [Song and Dance Festival Foundation](#)
- Song and Dance Festival [2019](#)
- Amateur video recordings etc on Youtube ([Kreisiraadio](#) comedy)

No photos of 1st Festival found so far...
First photos from 1891 and 1894 festivals,
at Estonian Theatre and Music Museum



1869 photo of Tartu Market Square
Estonian History Museum, photo: Carl Schulz, 1869

1869 Song Festival booklet for participants (digar)



7th Song Festival, 1910 in Tallinn

10 000 participants

First postcards of a Great Festival. Digar.ee



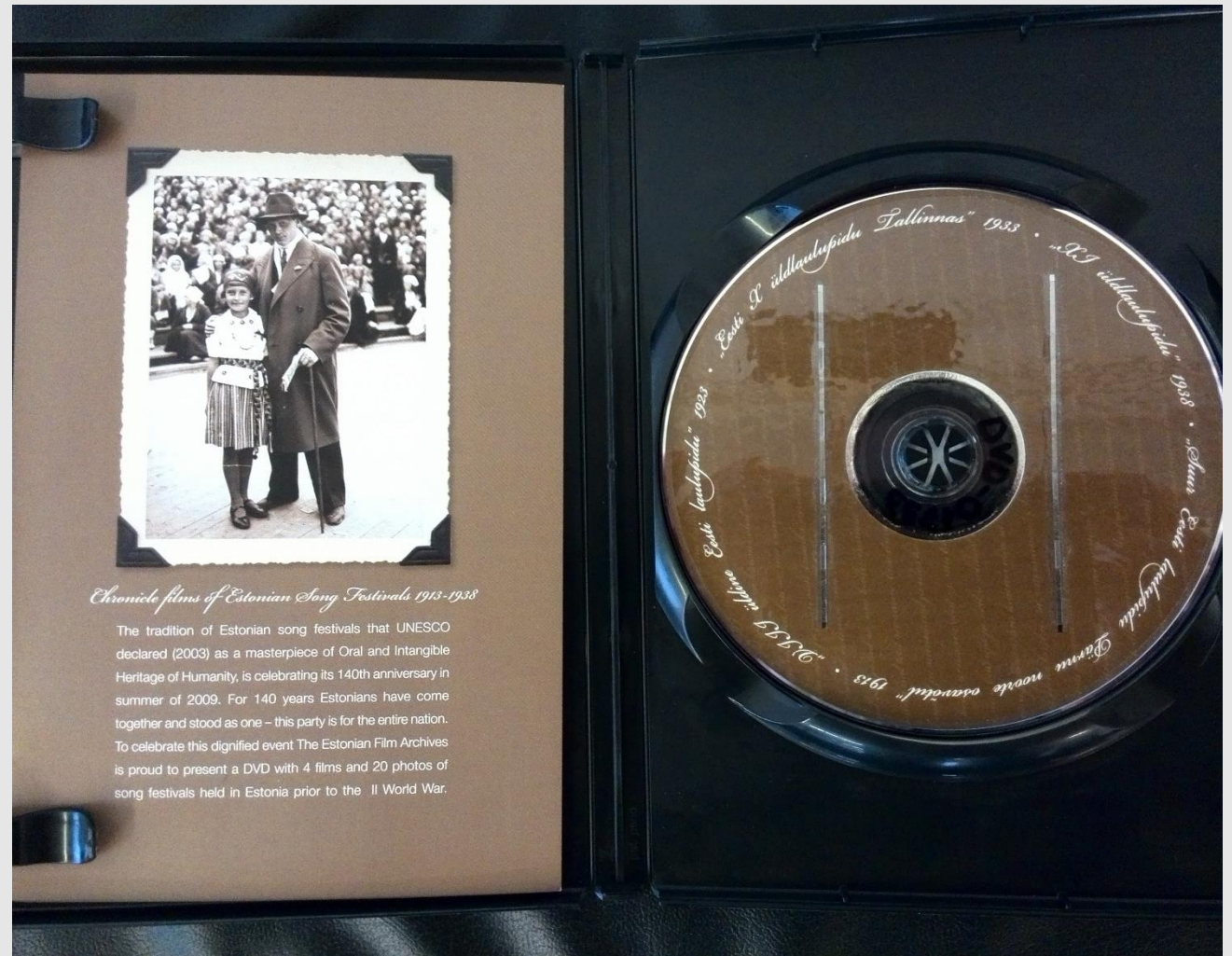
8th Song Festival 1923 in Tallinn

First festival since Estonia
gained Independence in 1918

386 choirs and orchestras:
10 562 participants

DVD „Chronicle films of
Estonian Song Festivals 1913-
1938 (Estonian Film Archives).

Material not used in the film
at the [Film Archive
Information System](#)



10th Song Festival 1933

Film shootages at [Estonian Film Archives](#)
(keyword „laulupidu“)

- *Same on [Youtube](#)*

1935 Tartu Song Festival

- Film shootage at Film Archives Information Systems:
[„Failed“ Song Festival in Tartu](#)

1938 poster and town scheme



- [Scheme](#) of Tallinn for participants.
- Postcard



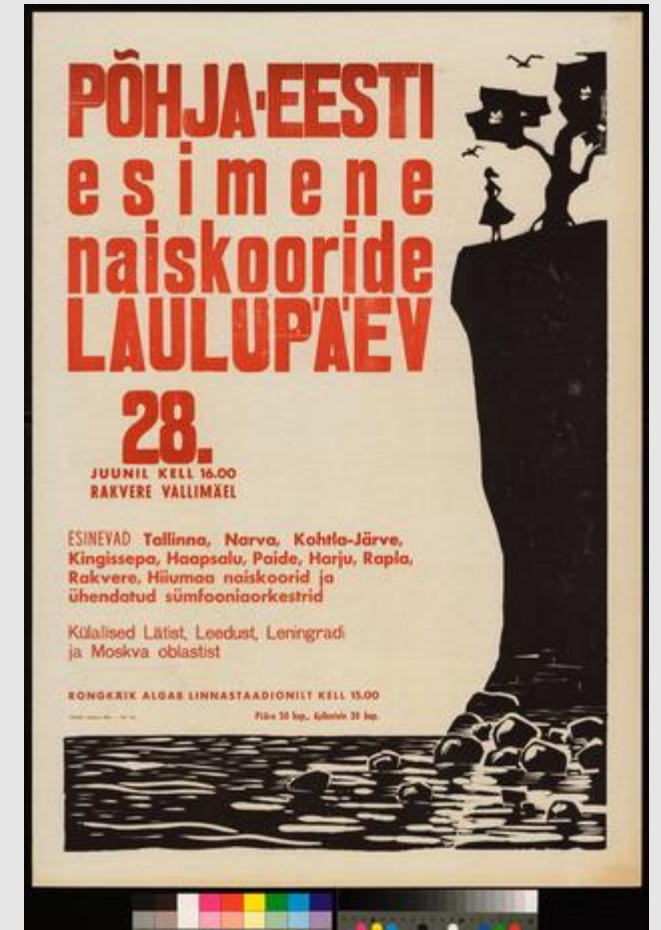
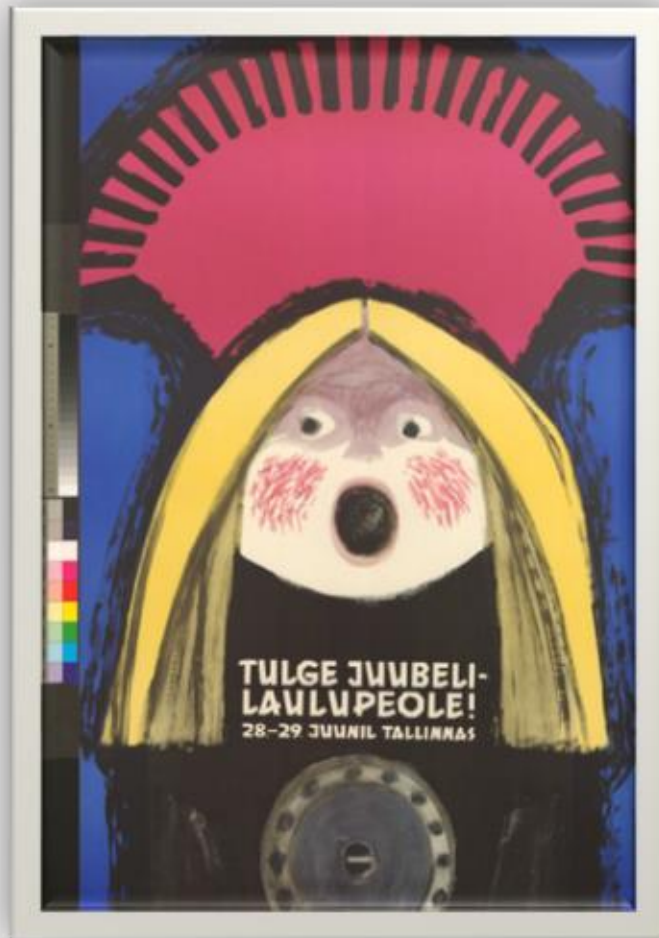
Song Festivals in 1947 and 1955, in Soviet Estonia



1960 Song Festival poster and photo



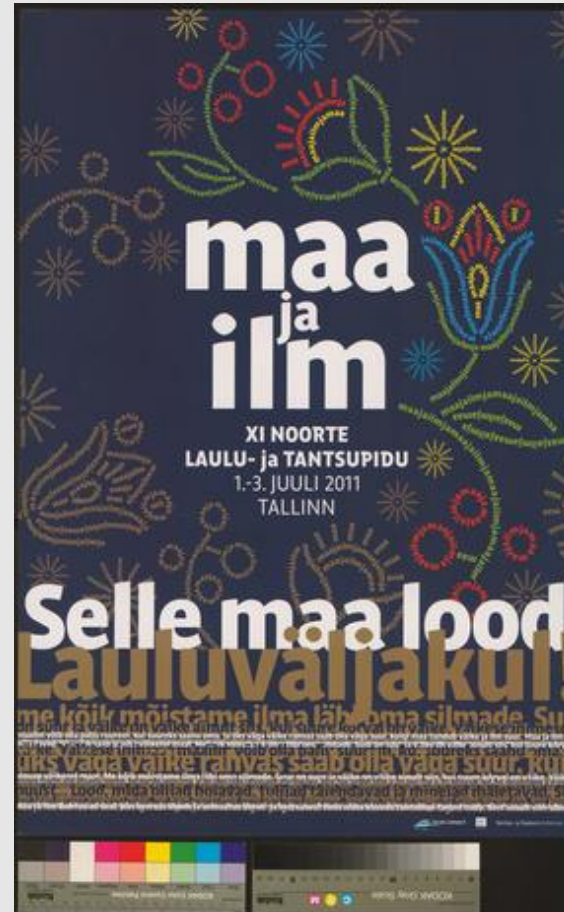
100th anniversary Festivals in 1969 in Tallinn and in Tartu,
and example of first Women's Choirs' Festival poster from 1964



1980 and 1978



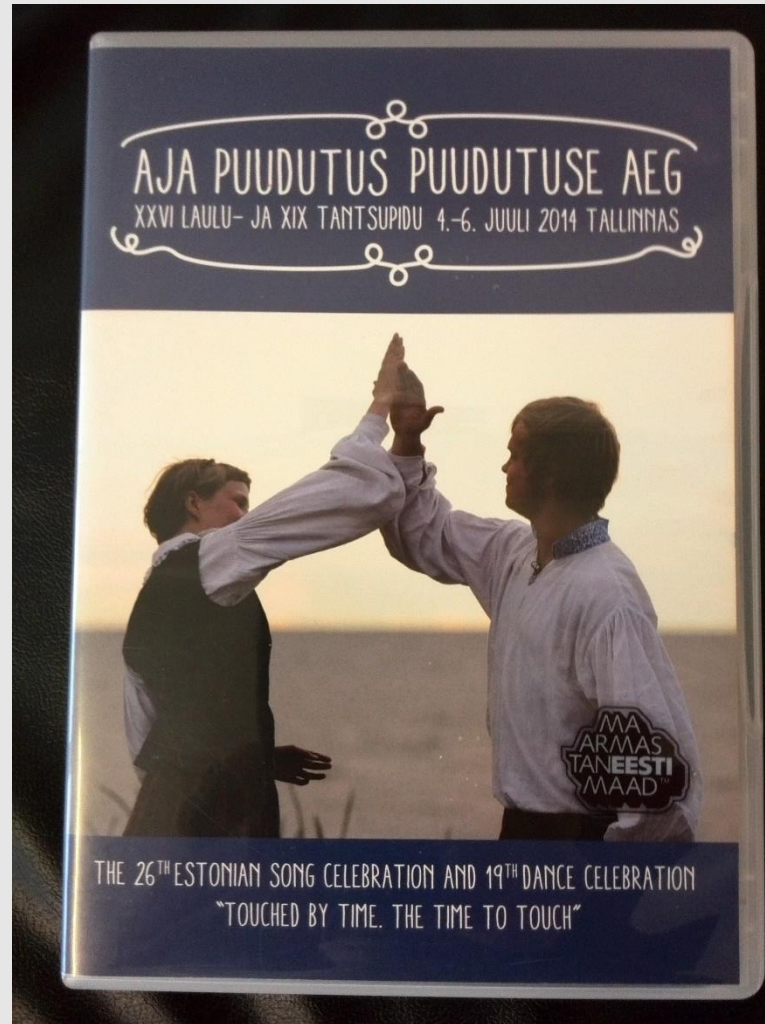
Youth Festivals 2007 and 2011



26th Song Festival in 2014

1,046 choirs and wind orchestras:
33,025 participants

DVD of the 2014 Festival



Song Festival exhibits at the National Library

- May-October 2019



- Special focus on ephemerals from the archive collection

National Library's Women's choir

(photo Eve Toomra)



Tartu song festival muuseum

- Photo at Estonian National Museum





Song Festival Museum's yard
Not far from 1869 1st Song Festival grounds
in Tartu

[27th Song Festival](#) will be 4.-7. July
2019

[ESTO](#) 29. June-3. July 2019
Tartu-Tallinn

[Tartu Song Festival](#) 22. June 2019

Opera about the First Song Festival

- Alo Põldmäe „ Emajõe ööbik“ (Nightingale of Mother River)
- Lydia Koidula, J. V. Jannsen, A. H. Willigerode
- Tartu Uus Teater (Tartu New Theatre)
- June 7th, 2019

World Singing Day

- English speaking nations have founded a [World Singing Day](#) in 2012, celebrated on the third Saturday in October each year.





1990 Song Festival with speaker on the left



1990, song festival's parking lot after the party.

Speaker (middle) with Mom and Grandma

Photos by Dad

Thank you and welcome to the Song Festival
4.-7. July 2019!





2014 Festival Fire. Photo: Ivo Kruusamägi