

## There is no equivalent to the Estonian Traditional Music Centre in neighbouring countries

Along with the renovation of the home of the Estonian Traditional Music Centre – Kirsimäe storehouse in Viljandi – an opportunity was born to deal with traditional music of innovative quality, which is possible thanks to the concert hall with impressive acoustics, but also an information collection, the materials of which offer a long-term pleasure of discovery to the interested parties.



Photo: Andres Putting

The renovation of the storehouse was inspired by Viljandi Folk Music Festival or the Traditional Music Festival, which has been taking place for years. The festival generated the idea that there should be a house offering the possibility to attend traditional music events on a daily basis. The completed Kirsimäe Ait (“Cherry Hill Storehouse”) constitutes a new home of the Estonian Traditional Music Centre, having under one roof the concert hall with adjustable acoustics and 400 seats, the information collection of traditional music with professional literature and a collection of audio recordings, a smaller hall intended for trainings, and a school

for informal education named August Pulsti Õpistu (August Pulst School).

According to Ando Kiviberg, the head of the Traditional Music Festival, who has also managed the storehouse renovation project, the changes began as early as from the first opportunity for the acquisition for use of this house. The former non-profit association Viljandi Traditional Music Festival became a non-profit association Estonian Traditional Music Centre, expanding its activities significantly with regard to the distribution and teaching of traditional music. „Until the years 2003 and 2004, we organised a summer folk music festival, the Estonian Ethno before that and the Maa ja ilm (World and Wide) festival in Tartu in the winter,“ explained Ando Kiviberg. „But since 2005, after changes in the organisation, we started, for example, the project of a series of lessons and concerts introducing traditional music, which we offered to Estonian general education schools. It was very successful right from the beginning.”

Since the foundation of the Traditional Music Centre plans were immediately begun for all kinds of informal education programmes, courses and seminars related to traditional music. The publication of study materials regarding the traditional music was commenced in cooperation with the music teachers’ association. „Our activities expanded in the course of preparing this project. Now, when the house has been completed, we are able to say that all our activities have a so-called „nest“ and excellent technical and material opportunities,“ noted Ando Kiviberg. „A completely unprecedented phenomenon was born in the former post-Soviet space and I have never experienced anything like this on this side of the Baltic Sea. Anybody can come and start to learn from zero any kind of folk instrument they want or get acquainted with Estonian folk songs, runic verses or folk dances.”

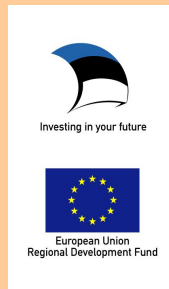
The concert hall is used all the year round. People practising different styles of music have been invited to perform there. It is possible to find a folk song for every occasion from the collection of audio recordings. If you are interested in music and folk music, then you should certainly visit this place.



Photo: Urmas Volmer

The employees of the Estonian Traditional Music Centre are not lacking in future plans. „Our intention is to distribute informal education related to traditional music at a vastly greater extent than before, in cooperation with both the system of general education school and music schools,“ Ando Kiviberg noted. „It is likely that one branch of the Estonian Traditional Music Centre, August Pulsti Õpistu, which is taking its first steps, will soon become independent and it will have its own house along with all the necessary means. Regardless of the fact that the house of the Estonian Traditional Music Centre is rather big, it is already getting too small,“ Kiviberg noted.

## Program for Strengthening of the Competitiveness of Regions



ERDF support:

15 000 000 kroons

Applicant: town of Viljandi

Supported activities:

- Purchase of the building
- Archaeological investigations
- Construction works
- Procurement and installation of the equipment

Project duration: 2005-2008

In 2008 a non-profit association Estonian Traditional Music Centre also received 11 355 219 kroons structural assistance from ERDF to furnish the building.

