

# The Revival of Lithuanian Polyphonic *Sutartinės* Songs in the Late 20th and Early 21st Century

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## Introduction

In contemporary ethnomusicology, attention is increasingly paid to the definition of the terms 'tradition' and 'innovation'. These definitions include stability and mobility; repetition and creativity; 'first' and 'second existence'<sup>1</sup> and similar concepts, and how these phenomena relate to folklore traditions. Most of today's musical traditions can be described as 'revival'. This term is used widely yet ambiguously in research in the English language.<sup>2</sup> The word is applied to the phenomena of revitalisation, recreation, innovation, and transformation, these terms often being used synonymously and interchangeably.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, there are some ethnomusicologists who take a purist approach, adhering to the original meanings of these terms. The Swedish ethnomusicologist Ingrid Åkesson describes three basic concepts that apply to the processes of change in folklore, each with its own shade of meaning: 'recreation', 'reshaping'/'transformation', and 'renewal'/'innovation' (Åkesson 2006: 1, 8–9). I will use some of these in my work when describing the trends in today's *sutartinės* traditions.

Sometimes the terms mentioned above are applied only to distinct folklore genres or to changes in style. Sometimes they can describe certain periods in time or general phenomena in the development process. Special significance is attached to folklore revival in the Baltic countries.<sup>4</sup>

The 'Neo-Folklore movement' (in Lithuania, *folkloro judėjimas*, *folkloro ansamblių judėjimas*; in Latvia, *folkloras absambļu kustība*; in Estonia, *folklooriliikumine*) is the term used in the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) to denote the increased interest in folklore tradition during the 1970s and 80s. The term also 'describes the practical forms of actualizing folklore in daily life and in the expressions of amateur art that have accompanied the spiritual awakening of the people and their fight for the restoration of independence at beginning of the 1990s' (Klotiņš 2002: 107). In Soviet times, the Lithuanian folklore ensemble movement,<sup>5</sup> one among thousands of its kind, was a form of resistance to denationalisation and to other Soviet ideologies. Without this ethnic, cultural union there would not have been a Singing Revolution.<sup>6</sup>

This movement encompassed a variety of folklore genres and styles, reflecting the general revival and reinvigoration of folklore. However true *sutartinės* remained on the periphery of the movement. They belonged to private rather than public worlds of small groups of singers, and were characterised by the control of the emotions and by the hypnotic qualities of the songs. *Sutartinės* were seldom employed as an outward expression of communal national spirit of liberation. *Sutartinės* are therefore described today as a separate phenomenon which survived its own

<sup>1</sup> Felix Hoerburger's concepts of 'first existence' and 'second existence' folk dance were laid out in a two page article 'Once again: On the concept of folk dance' in the *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* (Hoerburger 1968: 30–31).

<sup>2</sup> Livingston 1999; Wickström 2002/2003; etc.

<sup>3</sup> Åkesson 2006; Baumann 1996, 1989, 2000, 2001; Bohlman 1988; Cook and Everist 1999; etc.

<sup>4</sup> Boiko 2001.

<sup>5</sup> The term 'folklore ensemble' ('folk group', 'folklore group') here applies to groups of traditional musicians, as well as 'folk' in 'folk music'; in other words, to traditional music, rather than to the much broader concept of 'folk music' often used in the English language.

<sup>6</sup> A group of historians and sociologists researched the origins of the Sąjūdis-Lithuanian reform movement (a three-year research project entitled "The Phenomenon of 'Sąjūdis': a Network Analysis of the Civic Movement"). The conclusion was that the most prominent and most mobilising was the ethno-cultural movement closely linked with the Catholic underground. This movement began in the 1970s and reached its peak in 1988–1992. Anthropologists apply the term 'subculture' to this movement. It was made up of three closely-linked elements: hiking clubs, local lore groups. From 1969 onwards folklore ensembles began to be established in Vilnius and elsewhere (Kavaliauskaitė, Ramonaitė 2011: 34).

re-invigoration and revival.<sup>7</sup> It seems that today's tendency towards 'reshaping' and 'renewal' also needs to be distinctive, retaining the musical and spiritual qualities of *sutartinės*. Before I discuss the revival of *sutartinės* I will define these qualities.

The name for ancient multipart chants, called *sutartinės*, derives from the verb *sutarti* 'to agree' or 'to reach an accord'. Characteristic features of *sutartinės* are

- a narrow melodic range
- the prevalence of dissonances (the intervals of the second) in the harmony
- heterophony
- complementary rhythms
- a syllabic relationship between music and text
- onomatopoeic sounds such as *tūto, sadūno, tititi, totata*
- vocalisations which imitate birdsong and/or the tootling of instruments
- polytextuality
- song-dance-music syncretism
- singing (dancing) in the round

Imitation (canon) is especially important in the old Lithuanian musical tradition, which encompasses not only primordial poetic and archaic musical thought, but also the concept of space. This involves singing (and dancing) in a circle, periodically repeating short, rhythmic-melodic motifs. It also involves achieving a state of mind close to meditation.

## Historical sources

Study in Lithuania of original Lithuanian polyphonic hymns, called *sutartinės*, began early in the 19th century, but serious publications did not appear until the early 20th century. Adolfas Sabaliauskas 'discovered' *sutartinės* containing the dissonant interval of the second in the Biržai

region at the end of the 19th century, after an introduction to them by Professor Robert Aukusti Niemi of Finland, a leading authority at the time. Together these compiled a treasury of songs from the Biržai region and *sutartinės* texts. This collection, published in 1911 in Helsinki, was entitled *Lietuvių dainos ir giesmės šiaurrietinėje Lietuvoje* (Lithuanian Songs and Hymns of North-eastern Lithuania). This work was followed by another of great importance for its analysis of *sutartinės*, *Lietuvių dainų ir giesmių gaidos* (Notes on Lithuanian Songs and Hymns), compiled by Sabaliauskas and published in Helsinki in 1916. These two volumes provide a wealth of material on *sutartinės*, including texts, 150 melodies, and important information regarding styles of singing, and the functions of songs. The two volumes are also first sources of instrumental polyphonic melodies, intended to be played on wooden trumpets called *ragai* (horns) or *skudučiai* (multi-part whistles). This extensive material was reprinted in the 1958–59 work by Zenonas Slaviūnas.

Most established Lithuanian musicians of this period, including composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911), knew nothing of *sutartinės*.<sup>8</sup> Sabaliauskas considered *sutartinės* to be one of the most significant symbols of Lithuanian national identity. In his opinion, *sutartinės* should be the basis of professional music in Lithuania. He published more than one article on the subject, claiming 'we must record all we can of the melodies. For any Lithuanian composer, they will even be a vital melodic resource for works which will move the Lithuanian spirit and maintain the immortality of the Lithuanian way of life. This will not only lift the spirit of Lithuanians, but also of those from other countries, who will realise their true value'.<sup>9</sup> These opinions were published in 1904, more than 100 years ago.

<sup>7</sup> According to Magdalena Sobczak, '[t]he object of the revival can be music from a large geographical region but the revival can also have a narrower scope. In such a case, the object would be a single instrument (like the revival of the interest of the *nyckelharpa* in Sweden), one musician, or one band'. (Sobczak [s.a.]).

<sup>8</sup> According to Sabaliauskas, Lithuanian musicians, among them Juozas Naujalis, Priest Teodoras Brazys, did not understand *sutartinės* at this time (from a letter by Sabaliauskas to Adomas Jakštas-Dambrauskas; Vilnius University Manuscript Library, D 243, 1.5). Česlovas Sasnauskas considered writings by Sabaliauskas about *sutartinės* to be 'incomprehensible, and probably impossible', and this type of music [*sutartinės*] as 'horrible'. In one of his letters to Sabaliauskas (never sent), Sasnauskas described it as 'a crocodile singing in parallel seconds.' Sarcastically, he added that the crocodile 'was no Lithuanian!' (Taken from a draft of a letter by Sasnauskas to Eduard Wolter; cit. from: Landsbergis 1980: 62–63).

<sup>9</sup> Žalia Ruta [Sabaliauskas] 1904: 37–38.

Similar ideas were expressed in print in the first half of the 20th century. Edwin Geist<sup>10</sup> paid particular attention to the ancient and modern characteristics of *sutartinės*. On more than one occasion he compared them to works by well-known twentieth-century composers such as Igor Stravinsky. In Geist's opinion, '*sutartinės* represent an early form of atonal music. We see in *sutartinės* a rapidly-disappearing tendency towards atonal music in the 20th century.'<sup>11</sup> At this point we should remember that the Lithuanian composer Kazimieras Viktoras Banaitis expressed similar ideas:

*Sutartinės*, sung in seconds and sometimes with harsh dissonances, are our true folk treasure! We might say that Lithuanian country singers developed and even emancipated the dissonance in antiquity and in doing so, overtook modernist European music by centuries.<sup>12</sup>

It is interesting that Geist and Banaitis, both composers and independent artists in the first half of the 20th century, had the ideas almost simultaneously. The ethnomusicologist Prof. Jadvyga Čiurlionytė claimed that '*sutartinė* is totally isolated. It has neither a clear future, nor a clear past. It doesn't even have a beginning in music; it is one of those totally idiosyncratic phenomena which are destined to die out in our lifetimes'.<sup>13</sup> These composers were greatly respected at the time.

In the first half of the 20th century *sutartinės* were displaced from their natural rural environment and formed the basis of the music of Lithuanian composers. *Sutartinės* are quoted in the works of, among others, Juozas Gruodis, Stasys Vainiūnas, Vytautas Montvila, Bronius Kutavičius, Feliksas Bajoras, Algirdas Martinaitis, Vaclovas Augustinas, and Remigijus Merkelys, although these will not be examined in this article. Neither will many other composers who wrote, or are writing, works of specialist folk music for instrumental ensembles and orchestras. The specifics of these works, and

the orchestras themselves, are a product of the Soviet era and require separate study.

### Transformation of tradition

The subject of this article is the revival of the living tradition of *sutartinės*. This is defined as the active, authentic use of *sutartinės* by a variety of age groups and social groups. Particular to this renewal is chanting, playing traditional musical instruments, and dancing in contemporary culture.

However, before analysing the process of revival of *sutartinės*, it is worth discussing briefly the period of their disappearance from rural areas. The nearly 40 different types of chanting still in existence are testimony to the deep-rootedness and former vitality of the tradition. However, *sutartinės* were no longer sung collectively by the beginning of the 20th century. They no longer held any of their former magical-utilitarian functions, nor any longer had any meditative or aesthetic impact.

These singers of the *sutartinės* began to be ridiculed. 'If they were teased for clucking like a chicken, then they'd sing like one', explained Elžbieta Janavičienė-Tamėnaitė (born in 1841).<sup>14</sup> Stasys Paliulis wrote of a parody which made fun of the 'clucking' sound of the singers. The women would converse as if they were chickens, and would 'cluck' a song:

*Čia tavo, čia mano,  
Sudėsim abiejų -  
Bus tik mūsų dviejų  
(This is yours, this is mine,  
Put together,  
Both are ours).*<sup>15</sup>

Singer Elena Bratėnaitė (born in 1852) described the events: 'the boys sang like this, making fun of the girls singing the *sutartinės*'.<sup>16</sup> Modern culture began on the one hand to replace the old music, and on the other, to reinforce it through the

<sup>10</sup> Geist was a German composer and musicologist of Jewish origin who lived and worked in Lithuania from 1933–1942.

<sup>11</sup> Geist 1940: 71.

<sup>12</sup> Kučiūnas 1990: 23.

<sup>13</sup> Čiurlionytė 1999: 28.

<sup>14</sup> Paliulis 1959, piece nr. 334.

<sup>15</sup> Paliulis 1984: 93.

<sup>16</sup> Paliulis 1959: 413.

work of enlightened individual members of the society.<sup>17</sup> Yet it could be said that during the first half of the 20th century, *sutartinės* music remained a natural and essential part of the lives of the performers, the last of the singers and musicians of such music.

Sabaliauskas would have said that it was simply in their blood. When friends and relatives gathered at the homes of many of the *sutartinės* families, the *skudučiai* (multi-pipe whistles) would be taken out and played. All greatly enjoyed this music. Kostas Burbulys described a wedding in 1928, when long-standing friends found a set of old *skudučiai*. They first soaked the whistles in ale to improve the sound. They then began to play:

As soon as we came to play 'Untytė' (Duck), we didn't need the other musicians any more! We played those *skudučiai* for two whole days.<sup>18</sup>

The links to *sutartinės* music are witnessed in the vivid stories of Paliulis. Juozas Mitras at 95 years in age describes it thus: 'I feel as if I'm in another world when I hear the sound of a *sutartinė*.'<sup>19</sup> Another of his stories described how the face of the old lady, Viktė (Viktorija) Našlėnienė, would become animated at the mere mention of *sutartinės*: "*Sutartinė* 'Lioj, bajoroita' (Lioj, little lady) she sang, stamping her feet, twirling and virtually dancing."<sup>20</sup>

Emilija Kuzavinienė's story about her mother clearly reflects the nostalgia felt for *sutartinės* music. Her mother, Alena Zaukienė, was a well-

known singer of hymns from Obeliai. Kuzavinienė said of her: 'Mother would have time on Sundays to sit at her son's out-of-tune piano for an hour or more. She'd play as the mood took her, and she would sing hymns at the top of her voice. She found it moving, because this reminded her of the way the *sutartinės* used to sound...'<sup>21</sup>

The demise of *sutartinės* seems to be related to more than historical and economic factors. It is paralleled by the abandonment of other types of ancient songs from the everyday lives of people. In the course of time, a new sense of aesthetics developed that was totally opposed to the old style. The harsh dissonance of the second ceased to be considered beautiful, and more importantly, lost its significance. Repetitive rhythms, limited dance movements, and the monotony which induced a sort of meditative state, became displeasing. In other words, all that had been the life and soul of *sutartinės* became unacceptable to the modern ear.

At the start of the 20th century, in the whole of the *sutartinės* area of the north-eastern part of Aukštaitija, only a few select women's groups remained. These continued the tradition of collective chanting. Such groups resided in the areas surrounding Ukmergė, Biržai, and Kupiškis.<sup>22</sup> These women accomplished a tremendous cultural and historical mission (ex. 1). They immortalised *sutartinės* songs through phonograph recordings, leaving a legacy for future generations. Currently, only a few isolated singers still remember the

<sup>17</sup> Preservation of this music would not have been possible without the incentives provided by the authorities. Canon Sabaliauskas was a great enthusiast of *sutartinės*. And without question, the visit by Finnish Prof. Aukusti Roberti Niemi in 1910 left a great impression on *sutartinės* fans from the lands of Biržai. To mark the occasion a large-scale concert was held at Sviliai. As might be expected, Niemi motivated many of musicians and singers to revive this musical art and teach it to others to keep its memory alive (Paliulis 1985: 109). The singers of Kupiškis were probably supported by Priest Kleopas Kuzminas (1858–1938), who also directed the local choir in which the famed Ona Glemžienė sang. She remembered that Kuzminas was especially fond of *sutartinės*. After World War I, Glemžienė gathered together her girlfriends from Kupiškis, and again they began singing *sutartinės* hymns. Later, she invited male *skudučiai* and *lumzdeliai* (simple wooden flutes) players to join the group. With them all, she organized a May Day festival of ancient dance and song in 1923 (Žebrytė 1988: 82). To this day, traces of this woman's work can still be encountered in the areas surrounding Kupiškis.

<sup>18</sup> Paliulis 1985: 111.

<sup>19</sup> Paliulis 1985: 94.

<sup>20</sup> Paliulis 1985: 128.

<sup>21</sup> Kuzavinienė 1985: 313.

<sup>22</sup> As many as several groups of singers came from the regions of Ukmergė, residing in Užulėnis, Tatkūnai and Vidiškiai. The group from Užulėnis (Taujėnai rural district), including Teresė Diršienė (born 1865), Morta Jasikonienė (born 1869) and Karolina Masiulienė (born 1867), provided numerous examples of syncretic *sutartinės*. Their repertoire included those, which had been danced, accompanied by *skudučiai* (multi-part whistles), and sung; the song being distinguishable by sharp accords. The group from Tatkūnai (Deltuva rural district) – Marijona Gričienė (born 1870), Agota Gričienė (born 1850), and Barbora Stimburienė (born 1849) – recorded *sutartinės*, which are related to the ones from Užulėnis by their

*sutartinės*. Few are still able to describe accurately the occasions or styles of singing the *sutartinės* which they had learned or heard in their youth.

By the mid-20th century ethnomusicologists stated pessimistically that the authentic group chanting tradition of *sutartinės* would disappear completely. In 1949 Jadvyga Čiurlionytė claimed:

Young people of course aren't interested. *Sutartinės* have become museum-pieces in today's musical culture. They sound really strange to ears more accustomed to contemporary music.<sup>23</sup>

### Revitalisation

The general mood lightened at the end of the 1960s when the choir conductor Povilas Mataitis directed a concert by a Folk Music Theatre troupe during which *sutartinės* were publically performed on stage for the first time in Vilnius. Of the concert, Čiurlionytė wrote excitedly

[t]he *sutartinės*, long-since doomed, were freed from the archives and brought to life on the concert stage, in delightful performances by young singers. It transpired that *sutartinė* is not an archaic relic, but very much a living form of song.<sup>24</sup>

And so the concert in 1969 was to become definitive, giving the *sutartinė* a fresh start, from which it could develop and flourish (ex. 2). Since then, *sutartinės* have become a part of every folklore group's repertoire.

There is no doubt that the new wave of revival for the *sutartinės* does not conform directly to authentic tradition, since in most cases, it is no longer possible to hand down *sutartinės* intact from one generation to the next. However, this

**Ex. 1.** Singers from Smilgiai Village, Panevėžys district, dancing 'Dobilalis' (Little Clover) (photo by Balyš Buračas 1936; VDKM 3880).



is still a vital, rejuvenating, and ever-changing tradition.

We shall now look at the dissemination of the *sutartinės*, from the end of the 20th to the beginning of the 21st century. These headings are chronological, although this subdivision is arbitrary.

texts. However, the singing style of this group is different. It lacks the more rhythmic accents, thus, the style is calmer. The group from Vidiškiai (Žemaitkiemis rural district), including Apolonija Usorienė (born 1881), Kastulė Ališauskienė (born 1866), and Salemona Mikalauskienė (born 1871), provided a unique manner of performance, different from any found in any other area. The Biržai group was atypical, featuring one male performer, Petras Lapienė (born 1864), and two women, Marė Jakubonienė and Ona Stružienė. The *sutartinės* of this group are notable for their syncopated melody, and dense use of discords of a second. The effect is similar to the *sutartinės* from Užulėnis, but the manner of singing is different. The group from Kupiškis, Ona Mažeikienė (born 1859), Domicelė Šlapelienė (born 1862), and Domicelė Petrylienė, uses fewer discordant seconds, and more sequential melodies. Various trios of singers tend to dominate these performances (Račiūnaitė-Vyčiniene 2002: 55–56).

<sup>23</sup> Чюрленине 1949: 64.

<sup>24</sup> Čiurlionytė 1969: 47.

**Ex. 2.** Folk Music Theatre troupe from the Lithuanian SSR State Academic Drama Theatre in 1980 (photo from the archive of Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum).



**I. ~ 1970–1982.** In certain folklore ensembles in Vilnius,<sup>25</sup> there were small groups of female singers who tried to make this complex genre their own. This style sounded ‘exotic’ even to Lithuanians themselves. These groups, and groups that were founded later, performed *sutartinės* in a quiet, even and unforced manner. They aimed at accurate intonation. Their chanting was so close to ‘conventional’ singing that it sometimes sounded like a technical exercise rather than a traditional song form.

**II. ~ 1983–1998.** In Lithuania a new generation of ethnomusicologists emerged. Many of these had not only studied folk songs but had also performed them and led folklore ensembles. The activities of the Lithuanian Centre for Folk Culture and other regional cultural centres expanded and strengthened. The Centre organised courses in traditional singing and seminars for folklore ensemble leaders and those working in the arts. They began to discuss *what* folklore ensembles should sing (with regard to age groups, regions, etc.) and *how* they ought to perform. Gradually the feeling emerged that *sutartinės* were a complex genre which not everybody was enthusiastic about and whose performance required management and preparation. The annual international folklore festival *Skamba skamba kankliai* in Vilnius gave rise to a traditional *Sutartinės* Evening, organised by Daiva Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė. This has continued up to the present day. Groups of different ages and experiences perform *sutartinės* and play whistles and horns, although in recent years only those specialist groups giving performances to a high standard have been selected to perform.

Between 1982 and 1983 the M. K. Čiurlionis Art School folklore ensemble formed a *sutartinės* group, led by Daiva Račiūnaitė. This consisted of professionals working in the field of ancient polyphonic song performance. They reconstructed many of the forgotten styles of chanting (ex. 3).<sup>26</sup> This group later became independent from the Art School, calling itself *Trys Keturiose* (Three in Four). This group promotes *sutartinės* not only in Lithuania but also abroad. The group takes

<sup>25</sup> The ensemble at the Vilnius State University led by Aldona Ragevičienė, and later by Laima Burkšaitienė. The ensemble later changed its name to *Ratilio* and was led by Zita Kelmickaitė; *Poringė* at the State Pedagogical University, led by Marija Baltrėnienė; *Sadauja* at the Vilnius Electrography Institute, led by L. Burkšaitienė and Kazimieras Kalibatas, and later by Anatolijus Lapinskas, and others. *Sadauja* stands out among other ensembles because Emilija Kuzavinienė (1903–1992) was involved with it from its inception and the songs and *sutartinės* were passed down from her mother, the well-known Rokiškis singer Alena Zaukienė (born in 1863). Nonetheless, the way the last members of this generation sang them was heavily influenced by the modern culture, and was far removed from the traditional way of singing.

<sup>26</sup> In 1985 this group recorded a single on vinyl, called *Sutartinės* (Vilnius: Vilnius Recording Studio, 1985; Ленинград: Мелодия, 1986). The *sutartinės* were sung by Austė Bareikytė, Ingrida Karbauskaitė, Aušra Navasaitytė and Daiva Račiūnaitė. On this vinyl record the rye-harvesting *sutartinė* ‘*Turėjo liepa, liai siudijo*’ has been given a creative interpretation by the Latvian folk group *Rasa*, led by Valdis Muktupāvels. On *Rasa*’s CD *Lettonie. Musique Des Rites Solaires* (Latvia. Music Of Solar Rites), recorded in April 1993 at Latvian Radio, made in France by MPO, 1995, *Maison des Cultures du Monde*, a *sutartinė* ‘*Turėjo liepa, liai siudijo*’ was performed as the song ‘*Sajāja Brammaņi*’ (Nobleman Rode Together; No. 21). The *sutartinė* (newly-developed Latvian song) from this CD was later interpreted by the group *Enigma*. ‘Beyond the Invisible’ is a 1996 song created by the musical project *Enigma* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUUnnd2rVOo0&feature=related>). This is the first of only two singles taken from the album *Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi!* (A.R.T. Studios, 1996). The track also includes samples of a Latvian folk tune ‘*Sajāja Brammaņi*’ performed by the folk ensemble *Rasa* and a Gregorian chant (Isaiah 64:9–11) from the album *Gregoriani Cantus* (conductor Pierre Kaelin; Tudor, 1987).

part in folklore festivals, and contemporary and alternative music festivals.

There are other folklore ensembles successfully performing *sutartinės* chants. Excellent singing, with a rich vocal timbre and articulation close to authentic *sutartinės* chanting, were performed by the Jievaras<sup>27</sup> singers. This ensemble has sadly disbanded and one of its main singers has since died. Other folklore groups have tried to bring authentic colour to *sutartinės* chanting. These include VISI,<sup>28</sup> the Vilnius Arts Institute Ensemble,<sup>29</sup> Gastauta.<sup>30</sup> Along with this new understanding of *sutartinės* inevitably there came an increase in folklore expeditions and familiarisation with the singing of native country singers.<sup>31</sup>

The revived *sutartinės* tradition became a part of the Lithuanian Restructuring Movement, which began in 1987. This period saw the search for national identity among various public groups and individual members intensify. Members of folklore collectives, especially the young, began to pay more attention to earlier traditions of folklore including *sutartinės*. *Sutartinės* have become a springboard for adherents of ancient Baltic religion, in their quest to recreate ancient traditions that had disappeared for a time and had not been passed by their parents or grandparents.

New life was injected into the *sutartinės* tradition by Kūlgrinda (ex. 4), a ritual folklore group set up in 1990 by Jonas Trinkūnas and his wife Inija Trunkūnienė, leaders of Romuva, the Society of Ancient Baltic Beliefs. By disseminating ancient Baltic music, Kūlgrinda, whose music is based on Eastern Lithuanian songs as well as on *sutartinės*, has retained its ancient sound even though its aim is to reach a contemporary audience. *Sutartinės*, which are intoned in large, mixed groups, are most often accompanied by large drums: recently, Indian drums. Members of Kūlgrinda dress in clothing made according to historical research. These have hook fastenings in the shape of adders. Kūlgrinda's interpretation of *sutartinės* in authentic costume, as opposed to

**Ex. 3.** *Sutartinės* singers from the M. K. Čiurlionis School of Art folklore ensemble: Austė Bareikytė (on the left), Daiva Račiūnaitė and Ingrida Karbauskaitė at the Skamba skamba kankliai folklore festival (photo by Vytautas Daraškevičius 1984).



**Ex. 4.** Ritual folklore group Kūlgrinda (photo by Austė Nakienė 2007).



the over-decorated, multi-coloured, traditional national dress of the 19th century, has had a huge impact on young people searching for their roots. This will be discussed later in this article.

<sup>27</sup> Head by Kazimieras Kalibatas, and later Evaldas Vyčinas.

<sup>28</sup> Head by Evaldas Vyčinas.

<sup>29</sup> Head by Jonas Trinkūnas.

<sup>30</sup> Head by Algis Svidinskas and later by Nida Lungienė.

<sup>31</sup> A similar trend is observed in Latvian folklore movement of the same period. According to Arnolds Klotiņš, folklore groups tried to maintain as well the typical features of singing in oral tradition, including peculiarities of language and dialects. 'The best singers had mastered some characteristics of articulation typical in peasant folklore, i.e., use of the throat voice, glissando, *Sprechgesang*, and portamento' (Klotiņš 2002: 117).

**Ex. 5.** Folk-rock group Atalyja (photo by Simonas Gutautas; <http://www.atalyju.com/main.aspx>).



**III. ~ 1998–2010.** This period saw the beginning of the ‘post-folklore’ movement. A number of groups interested in different post-folklore categories sought new modes of expression and experimentation. For many of them *sutartinės* have become an important starting point. The folk-rock groups Atalyja,<sup>32</sup> formed in 1998, (ex. 5), Žalvarinis<sup>33</sup> (2001) and others seek to popularize archaic Lithuanian folklore and bring the ancient songs closer to the contemporary listener.

There are new school and youth ensembles, originally formed as folklore groups, which perform folk songs, among them *sutartinės*, for contemporary audiences. These include Ale Va,<sup>34</sup> Lygaudė,<sup>35</sup> and Gilė.<sup>36</sup> At the beginning of the 21st

century many more were founded, an example being Mindrauja.<sup>37</sup>

One example of renewal in the Åkesson sense<sup>38</sup> is the style of the group Spanxti.<sup>39</sup> Most of these members were young intellectuals and experts in ancient Lithuanian and Latvian culture, mythology and traditional music.<sup>40</sup> Their creative journey began as the ethno-rock group Spanxti but soon began moving towards other ethnic concepts. Post-folklore interpretations of Lithuanian folk songs gave way to passages of original electronic music enriched by the sound of traditional instruments. The driving force behind this became ancient mythical texts. Recent years have seen the group maturing to explore ideas more profoundly than at the start of the Spanxti project. This includes non-traditional, neo-folk compositions where Baltic mythological folklore and cheerful Latvian melodies combine with ancient Indo-European national texts. In their concert performances the group try to present the folkloric tradition as a whole, to present and interpret traditional Baltic culture as an indivisible, yet non-unified entity.

Another example of fusion is the folk group Aitsvara whose repertoire mostly consists of arrangements of Lithuanian folk songs and *sutartinės*, but also includes their own compositions derived from folklore and mythology.<sup>41</sup>

One more example of fusion is Marga Muzika (‘Motley Music’, begun in 2009). This is a group bringing musicians together to play a variety of

<sup>32</sup> The melodies of traditional songs are mixed with elements of Indian music, classic rock, metal rock, blues rock, funk, and progressive rock, as well as classical music. Atalyja is distinguished by its professional view of folklore. Three ethnomusicologists are among its members: Dr. Rytis Ambrazevičius, Dr. Eirimas Velička and Ernestas Jepifanovas, the multi-instrumentalist, who plays the *bansuri* (Indian flute).

<sup>33</sup> Žalvarinis was formed of musicians from the rock group Ugnėlakis and singers from the ‘ritual folklore group’ Kūlgrinda making music together. They combine different musical styles, from light to heavy rock, incorporating elements of jazz and blues.

<sup>34</sup> The Kaunas Jesuit Gymnasium folklore ensemble, formed in 1997 and led by Vita Braziulienė.

<sup>35</sup> The Rasa Gymnasium folklore ensemble of Vytautas Magnus University, formed in 2004, and led by Vita Braziulienė and Jonas Misevičius.

<sup>36</sup> The folklore ensemble of Kaunas catholic middle school Ažuolas, formed at the end of the 20th century and led by Dobilās Juška.

<sup>37</sup> An experimental post-folklore group from Zarasai, led by Augustė Gaidytė.

<sup>38</sup> Åkesson 2006.

<sup>39</sup> In 2001 in Vilnius, Vytautas Rinkevičius, from the industrial art group Lauxna Lauksna started a project called Spanxti, which gave rise to a group of the same name.

<sup>40</sup> The group’s creator and driving force was Dr. Vytautas Rinkevičius of the Baltic Philology department at Vilnius University, and one of the group members was the accordionist Martinš Vilums, the well-known composer and doctor of musicology; the ethnomusicologist and violinist Žaneta Svobonaitė, and others.

<sup>41</sup> In 2007 the Vilnius children’s and youth folklore ensemble Reketukas joined up with the progressive metal group Human Prototype to form the group Aitsvara.



national folk music, interpreting it freely, and combine melodies from different countries. Authentic Lithuanian *sutartinės* enhance Latvian folklore, and the sounds of ancient Russian, Serbian and Ukrainian songs are accompanied by mandolins, Indian flutes, and bagpipes. In the words of the group, 'a song having more than one language, and a melody heard a thousand times is *motley music* [*marga muzika*]'.<sup>42</sup>

Leaving aside the categorisation of the many other post-folklore groups I will now focus on the diffusion and trends of *sutartinės* from the late 20th to the early 21st centuries.

### The orally-inherited tradition

*Sutartinė* chanting in rural areas, as I have already mentioned, has almost totally disappeared. The last vestiges of the authentic tradition are found in the Švenčionys region. Here we find the unique Lazdiniai-Adutiškis ethnographic ensemble, led by Palmira Krivickienė. The ensemble sings a number of their own region's *sutartinės*: *paruginės*<sup>43</sup> (literally: along the rye) songs, some of which are learnt (or reconstructed) by Marija Semėnienė, a singer from the Lazdiniai village who, at over 80 years of age, is still an active member of the ensemble. The Lazdiniai-Adutiškis ethnographic ensemble is attempting to preserve this genre. Folklore experts and lovers have witnessed their performances in Vilnius. For the oldest members of the ensemble, *sutartinės* represent a part of their former lives. They consider performances a natural event, and do not differentiate between *sutartinės* and other items in their repertoire. Nevertheless, there is a real danger that authentic *sutartinė* will disappear, not least because the ensemble does not always consider it a priority to sing what academics and ethno-cultural experts most value. To the ears of those living in small towns and villages such as Švenčionys, Lazdiniai, Adutiškis, etc. *sutartinės* can sound completely unintelligible, and impenetrable.

In the village of Jakeliai in the same area of Švenčionys, there is another lady who continues

**Ex. 6.** Three generations of *sutartinės* singers: Emilija Kuzavinienė (on the left) with her daughter Edita Meškuotienė and granddaughter Gėliūnė Meškuotytė (photo by Klaudijus Driskius 1982).



the authentic *sutartinės* tradition. Pelagija Bučėlienė, born in 1916, taught *sutartinės* to her daughter Nijolė Bučėlytė, a medic living in Vilnius. These two women still remember several of their region's *sutartinės* and occasionally perform them in concerts.

Edita Meškuotienė, who lives in Vilnius, is a member of a *sutartinė*-singing dynasty, one of 7 generations of *sutartinės* singers from the village of Obeliai in the Rokiškis area. Here the tradition is passed down from one generation to the next. Edita inherited the *sutartinės* from her mother, Emilija Kuzavinienė, who in turn inherited them from her mother, Elena Zaukienė. She has passed them on to her daughter Gėliūnė Meškuotytė and granddaughters (ex. 6). With the greatest respect

<sup>42</sup> See <http://www.music.lt/lt/grupe/Marga-Muzika/8522/>.

<sup>43</sup> *Paruginė* (adj. n; sing.), *paruginės* (pl.) – a hymn, performed while walking, visiting the spring rye. Generally, two groups shared the song. The hymns related to going out into the fields for the spring rye or other crops will be presented in greater depth here. These *paruginės* 'along the rye' hymns have only survived in a small part of the Eastern Lithuanian territory. The rye and other crops would be collectively visited from the time the rye blossomed to Whitsuntide.

**Ex. 7.** The folklore ensemble *Sadauja* led by Edita Meškuotienė (in left) (photo by Andrius Morkūnas 2011).



to the family, they have developed an individual way of singing *sutartinės*.

Obviously, the damage to the tradition has been caused by education. We know that in the 1930s Edita's grandmother, Elena Zaukienė was invited to record her songs and *sutartinės* onto a phonograph record. Elena was too weak at the time to make the recording, and so her daughter Emilija took her place. Emilija (a young teacher) was well-known for her 'very beautiful' voice, in the sense of being professionally trained. Her singing voice, as well as her manner of singing, was therefore very different from the traditional, rural style of singing *sutartinės*.<sup>44</sup> This was the only way that Edita heard *sutartinės* being sung, since she grew up in the educated family. This was therefore the style of singing that she passed on to her daughter and granddaughters, but also to the folklore ensemble, *Sadauja* (ex. 7) and to the children's folklore ensemble, *Šilelis*. So, although we can speak of this as being part of the uninterrupted tradition, it was itself influenced by

an earlier process of folklorisation. We will now examine the transformation of these traditions in the early 20th century.

## Revival

Several trends have been noted among the various groups involved in *sutartinės* performance in recent years:

- 1) Traditional singing in small groups of twos, threes and fours
- 2) Singing in large groups, with women and men singing together
- 3) '*Sutartinės* revival' music<sup>45</sup>
- 4) Traditional singing combined with other music and art forms (recreation/reshaping/renewal).

**1) Traditional singing.** *Sutartinės* singing follows the conventions of traditional group singing: in twos (*dvejinės* – duos singing in counterpoint), threes (*trejinės* – trios singing in canon) and fours (*keturinės* – quartets singing in counterpoint, with the two pairs singing alternately). With this type of singing in small groups, songs are notated by hand, preserved in sound recordings, and described in ancient accounts by singers. As a singer, Ieva Kaukėnienė, comments an example, "a foursome is not 'sung', but rather, it is produced with a 'hiccupping sound'".<sup>46</sup>

The character of the various different *sutartinės* groups is determined by their different understandings of *sutartinės* genre and by the different intentions of the singers. In some cases, the intention is to vary the ensemble's repertoire regardless of the subtleties of performance. In other cases, it is a means of displaying musical prowess, or the beauty of voice. In another cases, it can be a desire to explore traditions more deeply, attempting to understand them 'from within'. It can also be an attempt to transport oneself into another era and to enter into the *sutartinės* way of thinking, and thus, into the subtleties and

<sup>44</sup> Musicologist Živilė Ramoškaitė, researching Emilija Kuzaviniene's repertoire and singing style, noticed that as she approached old age, her voice became more natural and her style became closer to the traditional. The musicologist thinks that these changes – individual folklorism – were influenced by Emilija's long involvement with the Vilnius folk groups *Sadauja* (Ramoškaitė 2003).

<sup>45</sup> I use the term '*sutartinės* revival' to reflect the prevalence of the term 'folk revival music' (or 'contemporary folk music') and to distinguish it from earlier folklore forms.

<sup>46</sup> Sung by Ieva Kaukėnienė, aged 80, Rizgūnai village, Paringys district, Švenčionys county. Written down by Juozas Aidulis in 1933 (Slaviūnas 1959, piece nr. 1173).

nuances of performance. Performance style is also determined by an understanding of the genre. This may be note-for-note singing from notation, trained singing or a traditional style of singing which approaches authentic singing.

At the beginning of *sutartinės* revival, most songs were learnt from Slaviūnas' three-volume set of *sutartinės*. Only in exceptional cases were they learnt from the archive sound recordings at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, to which few people had access. It is therefore unsurprising that when groups began to sing *sutartinės*, they had no idea how they should sound. Their singing was musical and pure, but bore little resemblance to the traditional articulation of *sutartinės*, with their 'deep', 'heavy' sound and cohesion of vocal parts. This is the style chosen by most participants of Tramtatulis, the Republic's Children's Folklore Performance Contest.

The long-standing creative folklore group<sup>47</sup> Sedula, formed in 1994, moved in a similar direction (ex. 8). Sedula members claim that their collective is different from others in its vocal sound, softness of timbre, wide range, and original performance style. They believe their singing and their ensemble's uniformity are best heard in their performances of polyphonic *sutartinės*. Several years ago, Sedulas' leader, the historian Daiva Steponavičienė, implemented her idea of medieval (14th–16th century) Lithuanian costumes, based on historic Lithuanian material and comparative material from Western Europe. One would have thought the scientifically reconstructed costumes to be rather at odds with their cloying interpretations of *sutartinė*.<sup>48</sup>

**Learning from sources.** Other ensembles are trying to examine more deeply the differences in musical dialect, intonation, and features of articulation, in different *sutartinės* areas. Their interpretations of *sutartinės*, where clearly defined vocal lines clash against each other, are close

**Ex. 8.** Creative folk group Sedula.



to the lost tradition of *sutartinės* performance. These ensembles include Kadujo, led by Laura Lukenskienė; Sasutalas, led by Andrius Morkūnas; Varangė, led by Varsa Zakarienė; Kupkėmis, led by Alma Pustovaitienė; Dobile, led by Violeta Balčiūnienė; Vaiguva, led by Diana Martinaitienė; Seluona, led by Rima Vitaitė; and Gastauta led by Nida Lungienė. One of the most notable and successful groups is Trys Keturiose, led by Daiva Vyčiniene. Exploiting its considerable experience in performing *sutartinė*, this group provided the performances on a *Sutartinės for Beginners*<sup>49</sup> CD compiled by Vyčiniene. This publication is in great demand with beginner's groups.

A useful resource for those interested in *sutartinė* traditions are the recently published archive sound recordings,<sup>50</sup> through which the listener can become familiar with the *sutartinė* sounds of the Biržai, Kupiškis and Ukmergė regions. These recordings at last provide a means of comparing interpretations. However, this excellent resource has also brought about a new set of erroneous *sutartinės*: the verbatim imitation of archive recordings, in the belief that these represent an authentic tradition. As we know, tradition evolves, so this 'personalisation' is considered 'a static connection with the past' (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983: 8).

<sup>47</sup> Thus, this group is defined by the singers themselves.

<sup>48</sup> *Sutartinė*, as Geist accurately observed, never sounds attractive, as its sound lacks passion and its association with atonal music, although basic, is very close (Geist 1940: 71).

<sup>49</sup> Račiūnaitė-Vyčiniene, Daiva 2004. *Kokių giedosim, kokių sutarysim? Sutartinių pradžiamokslis su CD* (What shall we sing? The Beginner's Book of *Sutartinės*, with CD). Vilnius: Lietuvos muzikos akademija.

<sup>50</sup> Nakienė, Austė, Rūta Žarskienė (eds.; 2004). *Aukštaitijos dainos, sutartinės ir instrumentinė muzika. 1935–1941 metų fonografo įrašai* (Songs, *Sutartinės* and Instrumental Music from Aukštaitija. Phonograph records of 1935–1941. 2 CD and book). Vilnius: LLTI.

**Ex. 9.** Kūlgrinda singing *sutartinė* with drum accompaniment.



**Learning from secondary sources.** New means of oral transmission are developing. Daiva Vyčinienė spent considerable time with the last of the *sutartinės* Mohicans, Stasys Paliulis, Emilija Kuzavinienė, the chanters of Puponys village in the Kupiškis region, and of Lazdiniai village in the Švenčionys area, recording their singing and *skudučiai* (multi-part whistles) playing. She willingly passed on her experiences to beginner chanters. She now runs camps such as the traditional *sutartinė* singing and fiddle-playing camp at Antanas and Jonas Juška's museum in Vilkija, in the Kaunas area. She also runs practical courses: an important part of the Lithuanian High School Festival called O kieno žali sodai (Whose Green Gardens), as well as the international folklore festivals Skamba skamba kankliai, Pokrovskie kolakola. Similar courses run in different parts of Aukštaitija: for example, in Rokiškis, run by Nida Lungienė, in Kupiškis by Alma Pustovaitienė, in Zarasai by Rima Vitaitė, in Švenčionys by Violeta Balčiūnienė. Here experienced local *sutartinės* chanters teach skills to beginners.

For most city folklore ensembles, the *sutartinė* is not only an interesting song form but also a form of ritual meditation. Aspects of *sutartinės* and their performance, such as meditation, cannot be sustained in today's culture in the traditional way. The activity of most of the *sutartinės*-chanting groups mentioned should perhaps be categorised as 'recreation and reshaping/transformation' rather than just 'recreation'. Group chanting, which requires a high degree of cooperation and concentration, can, however, appear dull and lifeless to young people.

**2) Chanting in large mixed groups.** The chanting together of both men and women is not found in the authentic tradition.<sup>51</sup> This is seen only in later in certain isolated cases (doubtless hastening its decline). In recent years, however, this performance method has found favour among the young. The reason is clear: anyone can join a *sutartinė* circle who wishes to do so, without any special preparation or effort. Participating communally in a musical group, often accompanied by strong drum rhythms, and with hypnotic choruses, has a great appeal (ex. 9). The *sutartinės* circle provides a sense of participation in ancient customs; the strong bond of communality and a sense of unity ensure that a trance-like state is quickly reached.

**The Neo-pagan movement.** The Neo-pagan movement branch of *sutartinės* has grown out of a spiritual quest of young people who are seeking their ethnic roots in the ancient Baltic worldview.<sup>52</sup> According to Renatas Delis

[t]he image of traditional culture understood by Lithuanian neo-pagans is multiple rather than monolithic, without clear contours and form. The substantial bulk of their rhetoric is not so much the concept of traditional (ethnic) culture as such, but primarily the categories

<sup>51</sup> Paliulis has spoken and written about *sutartinės* dancing in pairs, in a circle. At the beginning of the circle there would be two pairs of women chanters: they sang, while the other, mixed pairs danced (without singing) in the circle in tow (Vyžintas 2002: 331–335; Urbanavičienė 2009).

<sup>52</sup> The Lithuanian version of the neopagan nature worship movement is Romuva, and should be regarded as a revival of an old religion (as it was the official state religion in Lithuania until 1387). Similarly to the Latvian Dievturi, Romuva is practiced in the US and Canada as well as Lithuania in addition to being reconstructed from archeological findings and folklore. Romuva identifies the idea of a Baltic Religion, a way of looking at the world and living within this world that has been present in the Baltic tribes and cultures of the Lithuanians, Latvians, Prussians, Yotvingians, Curonians, Zemgalians, Selians, Latgalians for thousands of years. The beliefs are based on seeking harmony (*darna*) with the help of over a hundred deities (see Wiench 2007; Delis 2006; Glodenis 2000; Hanley 2010; Saltanavičiūtė 2006; Mažeikis 2006; Shnirelman 2002; etc.).

of ‘conventionalism’ and ‘authenticity’ which extend the boundaries of the imagined traditional culture. The analyses of empirical data show that Lithuanian neo-pagans associate ‘authenticity’ with an ethnic tradition which, according to their opinion, is, or almost is, free of any foreign influence. According to neo-pagans, ‘authenticity’ means peculiarity and distance from other systems of value and ideology. (Delis 2006: 222).

The ritual folklore group *Kūlgrinda* and their followers describe their creative activity as the reconstruction of ancient, ritual *sutartinė* chanting (ex. 10). This can be seen as a unique cultural landmark stretching back not one or two, but many generations, thus reviving a distant past. The ethnologist Egida Ramanauskaitė notes that in this kind of ensemble, history is not viewed as linear, but rather as a kind of cultural database<sup>53</sup> from which segments can be taken, used and interpreted at will. In such cases, as Ramanauskaitė says, there is

creation of a new cultural model, formed according to principles of one’s cultural environment, including playfulness, aestheticizing and mythologizing the cultural environment, and, especially, ritual creation.<sup>54</sup>

Her observations are particularly apt descriptions of *Kūlgrinda*’s folkloric interpretations. The ensemble has released CDs entitled *Ugnies apeigos* (Fire Rituals; 2002); *Perkūno giesmės* (Hymns of Perkūnas; 2003); *Prūsų giesmės* (Hymns of Prussia; 2005); *Giesmės Saulei* (Hymns to the sun; 2007); and *Giesmės valdovui Gediminui* (Hymns to Lord Gediminas; 2009). The folk songs and *sutartinės* on these CDs are freely interpreted or newly created, often with completely new texts. These are dedicated to deities: for example, to Gabija the Fire Goddess and Perkūnas, the Lord of Thunder; to Grand Duke Gediminas, or to Prussian tribes massacred by the crusaders. Hobsbawm’s

**Ex. 10.** *Kūlgrinda* at the First Green of Spring pagan festival *Jorė* (Molėtai district, 2009).



and Ranger’s phrase ‘invented tradition’ could be applied to this practice. That is, ‘a constructed, formalised and ritualised tradition, characterised by selected isolated items of the past’ (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983: 8). *Kūlgrinda*’s creative activity could, at least at times, be called a kind of ‘kitsch-oriented reconstruction’. This further exemplifies the notion of ‘invented traditions’.

The trend towards communal *sutartinė* singing is much seen at neo-folk, alternative folk, and similar types of festivals. These include *Suklegos* and *Mėnuo Juodaragis*. In recent years, this singing has also featured at folklore festivals which feature authentic traditions, such as *Skamba skamba kankliai*. To what extent this trend is *traditional* is hard to say. On the one hand, it could be attributed to the most common processes of revival.<sup>55</sup> On the other, it could be interpreted as an already existing *sutartinė* performance style. Although this tradition is not documented (apart from the evidence given by Stasys Paliulis, mentioned before), we cannot reject the proposition that it did exist, far back in the past. It is thought that singing in small groups in various cultures around the world could have crystallised slowly, alongside singing in large groups. Traditional *sutartinė* chanting in twos, threes and fours could

<sup>53</sup> Ramanauskaitė 2004: 32.

<sup>54</sup> Ramanauskaitė 2004: 25.

<sup>55</sup> Dr. Rie Kochi, who researches Japanese Ainu music, told me about a similar process in Ainu polyphonic singing tradition in modern Japan. The former tradition of singing in small groups has become singing in large groups today. She thinks it is easier this way, and more cheerful to sing, and helps the singers not to ‘lose’ their part. (This was Kochi’s verbal information, gained during the Fifth International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony, held on 4–9 October, 2010, in Tbilisi, Georgia).

**Ex. 11.** Pievos & Gastauta at the festival Mėnuo juodaragis 2011 (photo by Renata Drukteinytė; [http://www.fotogriasmus.lt/g3/index.php/koncertai/2011/lt/Festivalis-M-nuo-Juodaragis-2011/PIEVOS/IMG\\_9985](http://www.fotogriasmus.lt/g3/index.php/koncertai/2011/lt/Festivalis-M-nuo-Juodaragis-2011/PIEVOS/IMG_9985)).



be considered refined and more professional. It could be that group chanting is related to certain aspects of *sutartinė* singing (at this point we ought to remember that the archaic symbolism is hidden in the *sutartinė* structure: choreography, poetic lyrics, rhythmic formulae, and so on). It is possible that the number of *sutartinė* chanters was specified at some point, and that it was connected not only with certain forms of polyphony (two-part counterpoint,<sup>56</sup> three-part canon, four-part antiphonic counterpoint), but also with the sacred numbers 2, 3 and 4. This is a topic for another discussion, however.

**3) *Sutartinės* revival music.** This trend towards dissemination continues. Apart from the groups already mentioned (Žalvarinis, Atalyja, Ale Va, Lygaudė, Aistvara, Mindrauja) Rugiaveidė and Sedula, Pievos (ex. 11), and others are bracketed to this trend. These interpretations are dependent on the performers' desire not to be seen as museum pieces but to be noticed and listened to by a young audience which understands the language of 'their music'. These groups take various forms including ethno-rock, folk rock, and post-folk. Following this trend are the composers Linas Rimša and

Linas Paulauskis, who created special *sutartinės* for the club music project *E-Sutartines Party*. This featured in the 2003 Berlin Contemporary Music Festival MaerzMusik, together with the *sutartinės*-chanting group Trys Keturiose.<sup>57</sup>

Listening to the groups following this trend, little difference is heard between the pieces based on *sutartinė* and pieces based on monodic (or homophonic) song. In most cases, the music takes a similar course. In fact, we most often recognise a group not by its specifically arranged folk songs (the *sutartinės*), but by the components of its musical making such as its instrumentation and vocal timbre. When *sutartinės* are integrated into pop music, the listener initially hears a pop music idiom, during which the *sutartinė* is silent. This was seen with the Trys Keturiose chanters when they performed the *E-Sutartines Party*. One had to listen to the angular rhythms of club music and electronic sounds, leaving the subtleties of the *sutartinės* to so that each influenced the other. It is difficult to determine whether this trend is transitory or something more permanent, since we do not know what direction the genre may take. *Sutartinės* are not intended to be a part of popular culture, cheap goods aimed to appeal to young people as their own 'music-speak'.

**4) Recreation/reshaping/renewal (traditional singing, mixed with other music and other arts).** Another way in which *sutartinės* are being disseminated today is in combination with contemporary classical (rather than popular) music, and visual art. Modern-day *sutartinės* groups, well acquainted with the archaic manner of intonation and articulation, are no less interesting to contemporary composers than are authentic archive recordings and the ethnic music of other 'exotic' cultures, such as Gregorian choral. The articulation of ancient music and the timbres of individual chanters' voices can become an important part of a composers' vocabulary.

The *sutartinė* dissemination trend closest to traditional chanting is that long used by the group Trys Keturiose. Compositions in this genre are (ex. 12, 13):

<sup>56</sup> As can be seen in various national examples, the ancient practice of singing in twos is most likely explained by the idea of symbolic binary (for more about this, see Račiūnaitė-Vyčiniene 2003).

<sup>57</sup> Present project was released as a CD entitled *Sutartines Party* (Bėgantis Mėnulis, 2009). It had comprised 10 compositions and a variety of performers in 2003–2007.

Šv. Pranciškaus Asižiečio Saulės giesmė (St. Francis of Assisi's Sun Hymn, an oratory by composer Algirdas Martinaitis, 1996);

*Lino mūka* (Linen Torment, a musical, video and 'movement sculpture' project with artist Mija Grudžinskaitė, 2002);

*Lino laikas* (Linen Time, a project with media artist and photographer Jorė-Jurgita Treinytė), which was performed in the 2006, Skamba skamba kankliai folklore festival and later released in DVD format;<sup>58</sup>

*Bienenmensch* (Martinaitis's composition for Trys Keturiose and string quartet was written especially for the Berlin contemporary music festival MaerzMusik in 2003);

*E-sutartines* (composition by Antanas Jasenka; MaerzMusik, 2003);<sup>59</sup>

*Mūsų Laisvė: Septynios invokacijos* (Seven Invocations, Martinaitis's oratorio, which was dedicated to the Defenders of Freedom Days and performed at the Lithuanian National Philharmonic Hall by the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra and soloists on 13 January, 2006);

*Non in commotione*, a composition by Rytis Mažulis written for the instrumental ensemble Gaida and Trys Keturiose, and performed at the contemporary music festival Festival 4020 [mehr als musik] minimal::maximal 2008 in Linz, Austria

*WAFT*, an original audiovisual performance created by electroacoustic band Fusedmarc together with Trys Keturiose, first performed on October 11, 2010 at Tonlagen festival in Hellerau, Germany;

*Genus. Išnykusi Gentis* (Genus. Disappeared Tribe), a composition by Remigijus Merkelis, dedicated to Trys Keturiose and the

**Ex. 12.** Trys Keturiose performing *Lino laikas* (Linen Time) at the Užupis Alternative Art Festival (photo by Jurgita Treinytė-Jorė 2007).



**Ex. 13.** Trys Keturiose at the Glatt&Verkehr festival in Krems (photo by F. Schulte 2011; <http://www.lrytas.lt/-13104836751309444413-try-s-keturiose-ir-gaid-atidar%C4%97-kremso-muzikos-festival%C4%AF-nuotraukos.htm>).



instrumental ensemble Gaida, written for the Glatt&Verkehr music festival in Krems, Austria;<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *Lino laikas*. Vilnius: Kronta, 2008. The DVD is dedicated not only to amateur traditional musicians, but also to fans of contemporary art, in its attempt to establish a link between olden times and the present, between tradition and innovation. In this syncretic audio/visual production, singers of the group Trys Keturiose wanted to reveal the creative principles common to ancient art – the *sutartinės* and ancient textiles: certain genuine segments recurring in both art forms (musical and flax weaving), creation from scraps, continually-recurring elements – strictly symmetrical structure, the cyclical nature of time, eternal flow, and so on. Many of these things are universal, recognised in numerous ancient cultures and recurring in modern art (e.g., the minimalist composition in the creation).

<sup>59</sup> Two last compositions were performed again in the same year at the Vilnius contemporary music festivals Jauna muzika (Young Music) and Gaida (Note).

<sup>60</sup> The composition was repeated at the 21st Gaida music festival on 26 October 2011 at the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius.

*Varom, sutartinės, varom!* (Go, *sutartinės*, go!), a composition by Mindaugas Urbaitis dedicated to Trys Keturiose and the instrumental ensemble Gaida, written for the 21st Gaida music festival, 2011.

Trys Keturiose claims that archaic *sutartinės* are 'not just museum pieces', but could become a valuable part of contemporary culture. The singers of Trys Keturiose aim to demonstrate one of the links that the *sutartinė* has with other art forms without defiling the *sutartinė*, or distorting its innate sanctity. They aim to protect the unique intonation of the *sutartinės*, an archaic articulation achieved by giving the voice a good 'beating', or 'striking'.<sup>61</sup>

These are the main ways in which *sutartinės* are being disseminated. At the moment it is rather difficult to embrace and to classify every form of *sutartinės* revival. All the more so because in some forms of the revitalisation processes we see different phenomena (such as

recreation, reshaping, or renewal) coexisting and interweaving. The main aim of this article has been to embrace, to name, and to describe as far as that is possible at this point in time, the various forms of *sutartinės* revitalisation.

We can say that in the larger Lithuanian towns, *sutartinės* have already become 'entertainment'. Special *Sutartinės* Evenings (concerts) have become a tradition. These attract a lot of public interest, as audiences listen attentively and seek to understand.<sup>62</sup> Unfortunately, it is an entirely different story in provincial towns and villages, including the former regional *sutartinės* centres, where the local audience has yet to 'mature'.

In 2010 *sutartinės* were added to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO), recognising the attention paid to this unique genre of Lithuanian folklore. It is difficult to say at this point what influence the *sutartinės* will have on living tradition, as part of the UNESCO List. We will only be able to discuss this after some years have passed.

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<sup>61</sup> According to the old singers, 'voices are like toll' (Slaviūnas 1958, piece nr. 262).

<sup>62</sup> The special impact it has on today's listeners comes from the continual repetition of the *sutartinės* sound and its form in rhythmic occasions. According to the great Lithuanian composer and artist Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, 'rhythmic monotone is one of the most important, and – dare I say it – most beautiful features of our music. This monotone produces a great, intensifying rhythm which begins to feel deep and mystical, the longer you listen to it' (Čiurlionis 1960: 299).



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## Leedu polüfooniliste laulude *sutartinės* taaselustamisest 20. sajandi lõpus ja 21. sajandi alguses

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(tõlkinud Žanna Pärtlas)

Polüfoonilised laulud *sutartinės* kuuluvad kahtlemata rahvamuusika taaselustamise üldisesse protsessi, mis leidis aset 20. sajandi lõpus. Siiski võttis rahvamuusika taaselustamine Balti riikides 1970.–1980. aastatel mõnevõrra teise suuna kui teistes maades. Tol ajal oli see üheks tähtsaks vastupanu vormiks Nõukogude ideoloogiale. Folklooriliikumine, mis kulmineerus aastatel 1988–1992, sai laulva revolutsiooni üheks peamiseks jõuks. Tõsi küll, *sutartinės* ei mänginud laulvas revolutsioonis olulist rolli, kuna neid laule ei laulda massides ja nad ei väljenda suuri väliseid emotsioone. Need polüfoonilised laulud eristuvad ülejäänud Leedu folkloorist omapäraste tunnuste poolest, milleks on: sekundi kooskõlad, meloodia kitsas ulatus, sünkopeeritud komplementaarne rütm, helijäljenduslikud sõnad (*tuto, saduno, tititi, totata* jt.), lauljate spetsiifiline artikulatsioon – linnulaulu ja traditsiooniliste puhkpillide imiteerimine – ning esituse sünkreetiline iseloom (seos tantsu ja liikumisega). Tundub, et *sutartinės*'te taaselustamise tee on eriline ja nõuab tähelepanelikku käsitlemist. Käesolevas artiklis üritatakse esitada ja üldistada *sutartinės*'te taaselustamise protsessi põhilisi tendentse ja suundi.

Toetudes säilinud kommentaaridele, mis pärinevad 19. sajandi keskpaigas või lõpus sündinud külalauljatelt, võib arvata, et 19. sajandi lõpus ja 20. sajandi alguses, mil *sutartinės*'te traditsioon hakkas hääbuma, kõlasid need laulud veel küllaltki tihti pulmades või teistes improvisatsioonilistes situatsioonides. Võib oletada, et lauljatel ei olnud kerge loobuda traditsioonilise muusikalise mõtlemise spetsiifikast – laulmisest sekundites. Selle iidse muusikasüsteemi nostalgia üheks näiteks võiks olla kuulsa *sutartinės*'te laulja Alena Zaukienė käitumine. Kõrges eas meeldis talle mängida tütre klaveril juhuslike klastreid ja nautida nende kõla, mis oletatavasti meenutas talle *sutartinės*'eid.

*Sutartinės*'te traditsiooni viimasteks kandjateks võib pidada väheseid lauljate rühmi Ukmergė, Biržai ja Kupiškis'e ümbruskonnast, keda Zenonas Slaviūnas salvestas 1935.–1941. aastatel fonograafiga.

*Sutartinės*'te kollektiivse laulmise autentne traditsioon lõppes Leedus 20. sajandi keskpaigas. Tolle aja suurim Leedu rahvamuusika spetsialist Jadvyga Čiurlionytė avaldas trükis kahetsust, et *sutartinės*'ed kaovad lõplikult ja noored ei võta seda traditsiooni üle.

*Sutartinės*'te renessansi alguseks võib pidada 1969. aastat, mil Rahvamuusika Teatri Trupp (Liaudies muzikos teatro trupė) Povilas Mataitise juhendamisel näitas Vilniuses etendust, mis põhines vokaalsetel ja instrumentaalsetel *sutartinės*'tel.

Artiklis tutvustatakse erinevaid tendentse *sutartinės*'te taaselustamise protsessis, mis on tinglikult grupeeritud kronoloogilises järjekorras.

**I. ~1970–1982.** Mõnedes Vilniuse folklooriansamblites moodustati lauljate rühmi, kes üritasid praktiseerida seda ebatavalist stiili. Sel etapil ei pööratud tähelepanu laulmismaneerile.

**II. ~1983–1998.** Seoses etnomusikoloogide uue generatsiooni ilmumisega folklooriliikumisse hakati mitmesugustel seminaridel ja kursustel tõstatama küsimust mitte ainult sellest, mida laulda, vaid ka, kuidas. Loodi väikesi lauljate rühmi, kes olid valmis süvenema *sutartinės*'te laulmise spetsiifikasse – hääletekitamise ja artikulatsiooni probleemidesse. Üks sellistest rühmadest tekkis M. K. Čiurlionise nimelise Kunstide Kooli folklooriansambli raames. Hiljem sai sellest iseseisev rühm, tuntud Trys Keturiose („Kolm neljas“) nime all.

Suurt mõju *sutartinės*'te taaselustamise protsessile avaldas rituaalse folkloori ansambli Külgrinda asutamine (selle ansambli juhid on Jonas Trinkūnas ja Inija Trunkūnienė, kes on ühtlasi Baltikumi Muistsete Uskumuste Seltsi Romuva liidrid). Külgrinda's esitati *sutartinės*'eid suurtes segarühmades (naised ja mehed koos) ning enamasti suure trummi saatel. Külgrinda lauluinterpretatsioonid koos lihtsate ajalooliste kostüümidega, mis vastandusid ülidekoreeritud paljuvärvilistele 19. sajandi rahvariietele, avaldasid väga tugevat mõju noortele, kes otsisid oma juuri.

**III. ~1998–2010.** Sel perioodil algas „postfolkloorne“ liikumine. Palju ansambleid, kes olid huvitatud erinevatest postfolkloorsetest kategooriatest, otsisid uusi mooduseid eneseväljendamiseks ja eksperimenteerimiseks. Paljud neist leidsid *sutartinės*’tes tähtsa lähtepunkti.

Sel perioodil võib rääkida nii suuliselt edasikantud kui ka taaslustatud *sutartinės*’te traditsioonist. Autentse traditsiooni viimasteks üksikuteks kandjateks on Švenčionyse regiooni elanikud, kuid ka näiteks sealse Lazdiniai-Adutiškise etnograafilise ansambli üksnes väheste lauljate jaoks (nagu Marija Semėnienė) on *sutartinės*’te traditsioon loomulik ja katkematu.

Samas piirkonnas Jakeliai külas elab ka teine laulja, kes jätkab autentset *sutartinės*’te traditsiooni. Pelagija Bučelienė õpetab *sutartinės*’eid oma tütrele Nijolė Bučelytėle, Vilniuses elavale meedikule.

Vilniuses elav Edita Meškuotienė on *sutartinės*’te lauljate suguvõsa liige (üks seitsmest põlvkonnast) Obeliai külast Rokiškise piirkonnas. Üheks teguriks, mis võis kahjustada traditsiooni, on ilmselt haridus. Seega, kuigi me võime mõningatel juhtudel rääkida katkematust traditsioonist, on see ikkagi mõjutatud varasemast folkloriseerimisprotsessist.

Mitmesuguste ansamblite seas, kes tegelevad viimastel aastatel *sutartinės*’te esitamisega, võib leida erinevaid suundi:

- traditsiooniline laulmine väikestes rühmades (kaks, kolm või neli inimest);
- esitamine suurtes rühmades, kus naised ja mehed laulavad koos;
- „taaselustatud“ *sutartinės*’ed (*sutartinės revival music*);
- traditsiooniline laulmine, mis on kombineeritud teiste muusika ja kunsti vormidega – taasloomine/ümberkujundamine/uuendamine (*recreation/reshaping/renewal*; vt. ka Åkesson 2006).

**Traditsiooniline *sutartinės*’te laulmine** järgib teatud reegleid: „kahekesi“ (*dvejinis*) on dueti laulmine kontrapunktis, „kolmekesi“ (*trejinis*) on trio laulmine kaanonis ja „neljakesi“ (*keturinis*) on kvarteti laulmine kontrapunktis, kus on kaks vaheldumisi laulvat lauljate paari. Selline väikestes rühmades laulmise viis on jäädvustatud käsikirjalistes noodistustes, varajastes helisalvestistes ja seda on kirjeldanud informandid.

Suurema osa linnas tegutsevate folklooriansamblite jaoks ei ole *sutartinės*’ed mitte ainult huvitav laulmisviis, vaid ka rituaalse meditatsiooni vorm. *Sutartinės*’te esituse sellised aspektid nagu meditatsioon ei saa eksisteerida tänapäeva kultuuris traditsioonilisel kujul. Paljude kaasaegsete *sutartinės*’e-ansamblite tegevust peaks iseloomustama pigem kui „taasloomist ja ümberkujundamist/transformatsiooni“ (*recreation and reshaping/transformation*), mitte lihtsalt kui „taasloomist“ (*recreation*). Rühmalaulmine, mis nõuab kooskõlastatuse ja kontsentratsiooni kõrget taset, võib aga tunduda noortele inimestele igava ja elutuna.

Viimastel aastatel on noorte seas populaarsust leidnud **laulmine suurtes segarühmades**. Põhjus on ilmne: igaüks, kes soovib, võib ühineda *sutartinės*’e ringiga ilma spetsiaalse ettevalmistuse vaevata. Kollektiivne osalemine muusikarühmas, mida sageli saadavad tugevad trummirütmid ja hüpnootilised koorid, on väga atraktiivne. *Sutartinės*’te laulmise **neopaganliku liikumise** haru kasvas välja noorte inimeste vaimsetest vajadustest, nende etniliste juurte otsingutest muistses Balti maailmavaates.

Paljud noorteansamblid (Žalvarinis, Atalyja, Ale Va, Lygaudė, Aistvara, Mindrauja) esindavad suunda, mida võiks nimetada „**taaselustatud *sutartinės*”**. Nende rühmade interpretatsioonid lähtuvad esitajate soovist mitte paista muuseumieksponaatidena, vaid olla märgatud ja kuulatud noorte inimeste poolt, kes saavad aru nende muusika keelest. Need rühmad esindavad igasuguseid stiile, nagu *ethno-rock*, *folk-rock* ja *post-folk*.

Teine viis, kuidas *sutartinės*’ed võivad levida tänapäeval, on kombinatsioonis **kaasaegse akadeemilise muusika** (pigem selle kui populaarse muusika) **ja kujutava kunstiga**. Tänapäeva heliloojad pole kaasaegsetest *sutartinės*’te ansamblitest (nagu Trys Keturiošė), kes on hästi tuttavad intoneerimise ja artikuleerimise arhailise maneeriga, mitte vähem huvitatud kui autentsetest arhiivisalvestistest ja teistest „eksootiliste“ kultuuride etnilisest muusikast.