

‘Listen how the fiddle cries and laughs’:
traditional Lithuanian fiddling in Soviet-era Siberia

Gaila Kirdienė

Excerpted from:

Ón gCos go Cluas

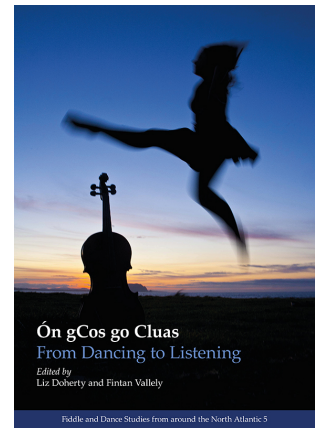
From Dancing to Listening

Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic 5

Edited by Liz Doherty and Fintan Vallely

First published in 2019 by The Elphinstone Institute,
University of Aberdeen, MacRobert Building,
King’s College, Aberdeen, AB24 5UA

ISBN: 978-1-85752-073-6



About the author:

Gaila Kirdienė is a senior researcher and lecturer at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre where she graduated in violin and ethnomusicology in 1992. Her doctorate (1998) is in ethnology, and she has published over 70 works on traditional music and fiddling, among them a monograph *Fiddle and Fiddling in Lithuanian Ethnoculture* (2000), instrumental music collections (2007, 2010), and four digital method books (2003, 2006, 2008). A well-known and acclaimed traditional instrumental performer, she is leader of the Griežikai ensemble.

Copyright © 2019 the Elphinstone Institute and the contributors.

While copyright in the volume as a whole is vested in the Elphinstone Institute, copyright in individual contributions remains with the contributors. The moral rights of the contributors to be identified as the authors of their work have been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.



‘Listen how the fiddle cries and laughs’: traditional Lithuanian fiddling in Soviet-era Siberia

GAILA KIRDIENĖ

This article is based on the paper presented at NAFCo conference in 2012, which was the first presentation given abroad of Lithuanian music-making in forced exile in Soviet-Era Siberia. The aim of this article is to highlight the role and significance of Lithuanian traditional fiddle, fiddlers, fiddle makers, and fiddling in political imprisonment and/or deportation taking into account updated material and scientific knowledge.

Imprisonment and/or deportation to the Soviet Union’s remote places (broadly called Siberia) and other victimisations, or even genocide against guiltless people persecuted by the Soviet Union’s authoritarian Stalinist regime has been noted as one of the supreme crimes against humanity. It touched all countries and nations that belonged to or fell under the regime.¹ Over 280 thousand Lithuanians, among them 39 thousand children, out of a population of 3 million, were exiled to Siberia or imprisoned in camps in 1939–1953. Some 23,000–26,000 Lithuanians were exiled or imprisoned from 1939 to 1941.

During the Soviet times it was not possible to talk about the political prisoners² and deportees’ cultural and musical life. Neither were the ex-deportees willing to take a risk and openly share their experience. The situation in Lithuania changed significantly at the end of the 1980s. A lot of materials and memorials by the former deportees, among them musicians, have been published. Many of them wrote about music making and its relevance to them. Other important sources I have consulted for the investigations are hand-written and published documents, some digitized, from the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania: the registers and databases of all deportees, their incriminatory cases worked up by the Committee for State Security of Soviet Union (Rus. *NKVD, KGB*), and especially unique historical documents – contemporary letters, diaries and photographs written and taken by the deportees in Siberia.

In 2010 I started publishing articles on instrumental music making by Lithuanians in Siberia.³ In 2013–2014 three more of them were published: the first was devoted to the professional violinists, folk and amateur fiddlers and their musical activities in Siberian forced exile and forced labour (also called concentration) camps (2013); the second dedicated to the significance of instrumental music making (2013); and the fourth considered ethnic

musical-cultural relationships among Lithuanians and other native or exiled nations in Siberia (2014).⁴ In 2013 I published a scientific study in a book with the musicologist Jūratė Vyliūtė.⁵

Many musicians of several ranks, and even their whole families and kinships, were exiled to Siberia or imprisoned there by the Soviet Union government between 1939 and 1953 or later. In 1987 I met my first interviewees, folk musicians and fiddlers, who had survived one (and some of them, even two) forced exiles to Siberia, and I have been meeting new interviewees up until the present time. Although most of them were still children or very young people at the moment of their detention (some of them were taken directly from a gymnasium or studying at a university),⁶ they informed me about their parents and other musicians of older generations in Siberia. In addition I have been compiling a list of Lithuanian instrumentalists who suffered similarly, a compilation which by 2018 had registered nearly 400 musicians. Nearly a quarter of them (95) – mainly men, only four women – played fiddle, violin or cello, a bowed bass or double-bass. Most of these (70) were folk or amateur musicians (mainly documented by myself); of the fifteen professional musicians, some went on to become violinists/cellists and educators; five became teachers; three became organists and two became Catholic priests. Various types of older and newer accordions, likewise brass instruments, and a guitar or mandolin were very popular among Lithuanians in Siberia, too. Sometimes a Lithuanian zither *kanklės* or hammered dulcimer were brought to Siberia and played there. According to Lithuanian tradition, many of the musicians were multi-instrumentalists. Since teachers and organists able to perform traditional repertoires, are usually regarded as traditional musicians in Lithuania, one can state that approximately 13% of all documented Lithuanian traditional fiddlers had to suffer forced exile in Siberia.⁷ These statistics attest how much Lithuanian traditional fiddling has been affected by Soviet occupation and the communist regime.

In the middle of the twentieth century, fiddles and other bowed string instruments were mastered and/or played by Lithuanians throughout almost all places of forced exile or imprisonment in Soviet Siberia: from the Urals to the Far East and from the Arctic Ocean to Altay and Kazakhstan.

Fiddling at forced labour camps

It is important to distinguish between official amateur art activities and non-formal, traditional (or amateur) music making. Since the 1920s, official bands and orchestras together with singing, theatrical performances and film shows, as part of cultural re-education of the masses, including prisoners (though at first political prisoners were regarded as impossible to improve), was regarded by the Soviet authorities as one of the most powerful ideological tools.⁸

With rare exceptions, we have no data on music making by Lithuanians imprisoned in camps in 1941. Most of them – military, officers, teachers, and other intelligentsia, often able to play a musical instrument such as a fiddle – were either shot or perished from starvation, frost or exhaustion.⁹

Informal instrumental music making was hardly possible in the camps, however sometimes prisoners managed to find time, energy and a place to play for themselves or their

fellows (also called brothers) in fate. In the 1950s in a Karaganda camp a small band was founded by a West Lithuanian (Samogitian) master folk fiddler Povilas Grigalis (1901–1987), who in 1947 was imprisoned in Perm, and in 1950 moved to Kazakhstan. An imprisoned Lithuanian priest used to ask this band to perform religious hymns at secretly celebrated Masses.¹⁰

However, participating at official amateur art activities was also relevant for the political prisoners for many existential and psychological benefits, primarily for allowing them to feel human. Lithuanian fiddlers and violinists, likewise musicians of other nationalities, in camps played in various bands and orchestras (except brass bands), usually with musicians of other nations. Some traditional fiddlers reported that they were taught by professional violinists of Lithuanian or other nationalities in concentration camps: for instance, Jonas Krištaponis, who in 1947 was imprisoned for ten years in Vorkuta, Komi, was taught by a former Kapellmeister of Kaunas Radio, a multi-instrumentalist named Salemonas Kazla(s), born in 1920, who from 1950 was imprisoned for fifteen years in Vorkuta.¹¹

East Lithuanian folk fiddler Boleslovas Ankėnas (1919–2006) in 1946 was imprisoned in the Ivdel camp of Sverdlovsk district, which was reserved for political and serious-crime prisoners. Like many other documented musicians, he stressed how exhausted he was: ‘My body weight dropped from 90 kg to only 40 kg’.¹² Later he was brought to the Inta camp in Komi Republic and had to work as a collier in a mine. Nobody with this kind of job was able to play music, as it was too exhausting. Only thanks to his high blood pressure Ankėnas was allowed to work above ground and therefore he could play in a mixed orchestra which was led by a former organist and consisted of three fiddles, five mandolins, a clarinet, and a saxophone.¹³



Figure 1 Mixed orchestra of the Spask camp’s political prisoners, Karaganda district, 1955.

Photograph LGGRTC GAM TF 574.

In 1954–1955, a mixed orchestra performed in the Spask camp of Karaganda district (see Figure 1). A talented young Lithuanian man, Vytautas Kiela (born in Marijampolė

district and sentenced to ten years in a camp in 1948, but died in 1955), played a double-bass there and sang bass solos. He had been taught by a professional Lithuanian musician Vladas Korsakas. A whole bundle of his heartfelt letters has been preserved from 1954–1955. They are written in an expressive style (at first in Russian, then, when it was allowed, in Lithuanian), to his relatives, mainly to his sister Aušra, nicknamed Aušrelė, and his beloved girlfriend. These letters provide a multi-faceted insight into the role of music making in political prisoners' lives.

'Dear Aušrelė, [...] I also give concerts [...]. In our orchestra it is not so easy to play. We don't move without written music' (15 November 1954).¹⁴

'Our amateur circle has been joined with that of the women. Just don't think that we all are already together. Oh no! Not really! But they come to our camp for the rehearsals. And damned jailers, oh-oh! [...]. They think that we are not human beings. The devil knows who we are. But so thinking they err [...]. Last Sunday we presented the first concert in the women's camp, which is next to ours. The audience applauded damned superbly. Every number was asked to be repeated. Afterwards there was lunch' (27 July 1955).¹⁵



Figure 2 A women's band in the Abez camp, Komi Republic, 1955.
Photograph LGGRTC GAM MD1402.

In the female camps there were also bands with fiddlers (see Figure 2).¹⁶

There was a lack of musical instruments for amateur art activities in the camps. Some musicians asked for them to be sent from home or made them themselves, despite all the hardship they bore. It also was possible to buy a fiddle for food and cigarettes.

Lithuanian fiddle makers in the camps

We know of five Lithuanian folk masters who made fiddles and played in camps in Siberia. East Lithuanian folk fiddler and master, Jonas Danilevičius (1921–2007), along with his parents and other family members, was brought to a camp in the Tomsk region of Parabijsk district, in 1941. He fashioned a fiddle there in the workshops. Danilevičius' 'fellows in

fate' appreciated his fiddling very much. His father, a former organist, died in a camp, but in 1946 other family members were released and allowed to return home because 'no guilt was found'.¹⁷

Central Lithuanian (Aukštaitian) folk musician and master Vladas Žeromskis (1906–1995), who in 1945–1946 was imprisoned in a camp in Primorsk region at Amur River, fashioned two out of his fifteen fiddles and a guitar there. He wrote that he made the first of his fiddles at an especially difficult moment, and the fiddle helped him to live through that whole severe period. According to the 'principles of the socialistic race' or competition, the wardens encouraged fiddle-making by the prisoners with the slogan, 'We make fiddles before deadlines' [Rus. '*Sdielajiem skripku ran'she sroka*']. When Žeromskis boasted of being able to make fiddles, he was allowed to work. At first all he had to use was wood and other suitable materials that he found on the scrapheap. Later he was allowed to go to the workshops and was given some additional food to be able to work there:

In half a month my fiddle was completed [...]. Everyone has got interested in my playing. True, I was still a poor fiddler, though knew some polkas, waltzes, foxtrots, and a lot of Lithuanian folk [songs] tunes. My fiddle also differed from a real [violin] – no paintwork, made from eye, many of its parts were not proportional. But still I played [...]. When I brought my fiddle into the barrack first day, a crowd of people surrounded me. All asked to play. Most of the Russians had never seen, nor heard a fiddle, they kept asking, if it's possible on this *skripka* [Rus. fiddle] to perform Russian tunes.¹⁸

The guard and officers used to ask him to play at their parties beyond the camp zone, liking his Lithuanian music and dancing to it, but he also had to learn some Russian dances; sometimes he was given food in return for the playing. On the way to Lithuania he sold one fiddle for 80 roubles to buy food.¹⁹ Another fiddle which he had brought home was later lost.

In the 1950s in one of the Karaganda camps, Grigalis fashioned a fiddle, starting with an old fiddle-neck he found.²⁰ In 1947 Samogitian folk musician and master Julijonas Butkus (1920–2002) was imprisoned in Karelia (see Figure 3). In the 1950s he carved two of his six fiddles in camps. Instead of maple, which does not grow there, he used birch for the fiddle-back. He also said that cedar, growing inside the Arctic Circle, might serve instead of fir for a fiddle sound-board. In 1956 he returned home to his wife and children. He preserved one of his 'camp carved' fiddles and intended to re-master it.²¹

In 1991, a fiddle was given to the Lithuanian National Museum by the Ukrainian folk fiddler Stepan Kuriliak (see Figure 4). It was made in 1957 in Dubravlag concentration camp in Mordovia by the Lithuanian master fiddler Adolfas Genys (1907–1963). He was imprisoned in 1949 (in the same year his wife was also exiled), and in 1963 he was released and returned to West-Lithuania (Samogitia). This fiddle was probably not the first instrument he had crafted as it is made very skilfully and lovingly, with a handsome design on the back. According to a Ukrainian journalist who published Kuriliak's story, 'a fiddle born in the hands of a master in a Bolshevik concentration camp is a living memory of the fates of guiltless captives, many of whom were gone or killed'.²²



Figure 3 Julijonas Butkus playing the fiddle he carved in a camp in 1952.
The photograph was taken at home in Kartena, 1980.

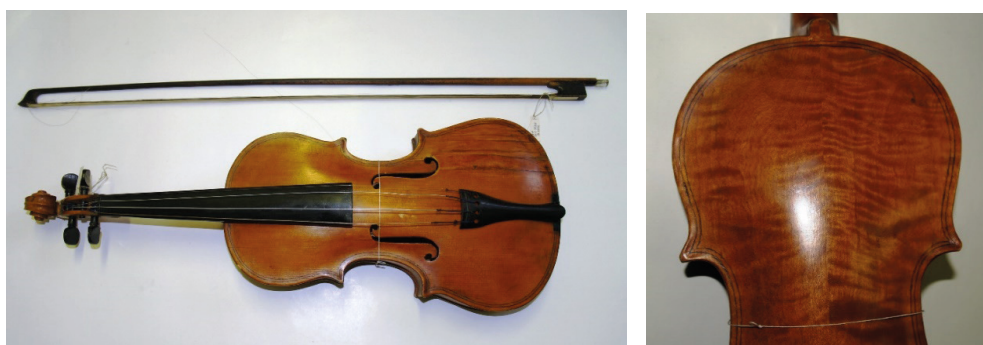


Figure 4 Violin and bow by Adolfas Genys crafted in Dubrovlag, 1957.
Photographed by Arvydas Kirda, 2011.

In camps and in places of exile Lithuanians also made larger bowed instruments, even double-basses. In 1954, Kiela wrote to his sister that with a friends' assistance he mastered 'a real bowed double-bass. Nobody would say that it wasn't made in a factory; just the strings aren't very good' (see Figure 1).²³ Thus, it was quite common for Lithuanians, especially Samogitians, to master fiddles and bowed-string basses in forced labour camps in Siberia, though they had to adjust to the poor conditions of imprisonment and scarce available materials, as well as to the local, Arctic wood. Their fiddles and fiddling were relevant not only to themselves, they were also highly-appreciated by their fellows in fate.

Lithuanian fiddlers and their musical activities in Siberia

For a long time it was prohibited for deportees not only to make any music and celebrate their traditional year with family feasts, but even to gather together. Those, who celebrated traditional feasts even after their work or were heard singing partisan or politically-flavoured songs, or lyrical patriotic songs, could be sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment in camps – even when they had already been deported to Siberia. Ex-deportees were aware that songs were prohibited, but dance and instrumental music was not, as they had no lyrics (but the

lyrics of a song could be implied in the tune); and so they were safer for their spiritual resistance.²⁴

Since the first mass deportations in 1941, Lithuanians flocked to celebrate their feasts, knowing that the next day they could be punished.²⁵ Some deportees took their fiddles, and other instruments, except stringed basses, from home. On the coast of the Laptev Sea of the Arctic Ocean (the islands in the mouth of Lena and Jana Rivers), approximately two thousand of the Lithuanian deportees, mainly women with children and old men, were brought from the Altay Region in 1942. They were completely ill-equipped and ill-prepared, such that many died from hunger and the intense frost. Despite these unbearable hardships there were those who managed to survive the first winter and who, with great enthusiasm, continued their cultural and musical traditions. Many young people were willing to play a musical instrument, and the playing of skilled musicians ‘was a true light in the darkness’ for the community.²⁶

Four Lithuanian male fiddlers and one Lithuanian Jewish girl fiddler²⁷ from this place of exile have been documented. The teacher Antanas Vaitkevičius (born in 1907), who was exiled together with his family in 1941, stated that mathematics and his ability to play musical instruments were his ‘secret weapons’.²⁸ He was one of the first who started playing a ‘not of first youth *bayan*’ (type of accordion) for dancing in the newly-built Bykov club in 1943. He was joined by a cornet player, A. Černeckis, a professional violinist, Algis Stašenis, who, after his return to Lithuania, played at Kaunas Music Theatre, and soon after by a guitarist, and they enjoyed playing in ‘some’ orchestra.²⁹ Stašenis was also very active in organising concerts and theatrical performances. A former deportee wrote that he ‘made them “cry” with the fiddle, playing “Dear Lithuania”’ [Lith. *Lietuva brangi*, a patriotic song, regarded as a second national anthem].³⁰ Even bigots had to acknowledge that Lithuanians in deed and not in name are ‘people of culture’.³¹ One of the most active youth leaders in Bykov, Šukaitis, loved to direct shows, in which he played fiddle and accordion.³²

Fiddlers and other musicians played for youth who danced in order not to die from frostbite. In 1944 one of the deportees wrote in her letter from Tit Ary to Lithuania:

Polar nights and hard storms will be coming [...]. We store ice to build the windows and to make water, as well as some firewood and fish [...]. There are some young people able to play. A Samogitian, Balys [Boleslovas, born in 1921], has a fiddle, Jurgaitis Bronius a harmonica, someone a guitar or balalaika. At the Advent or Lent seasons, we played various games, and danced to keep warm, because firewood was lacking and storms could last [two weeks] long.³³

After World War II

Many Lithuanian fiddlers were exiled after World War II and later. In some cases, especially if in a larger Lithuanian colony, fiddlers could continue their music-making traditions, including sets of their music and repertoire. Famous Samogitian folk musicians, brothers Domininkas (1904–1985) and Jonas (born in 1909) Lileikiai, along with their families, were exiled to Gelot, in the Bratsk district of Irkutsk region in 1951, taking with them two fiddles and a guitar. Together with other Lithuanians they played at Easter and Christmas, and for weddings and other parties.³⁴

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

In 1948 approximately 300 families from South Samogitia were exiled to Central'nyj Chazan, Zima district, Irkutsk region. In the 1950s, up to eight musicians would gather in a mixed string and modern accordion band for special occasions (see Figure 5). They had a folk double-bass, too. Four fiddlers have been documented there: a multi-instrumentalist Jonas Tverijonas (1906–1976), who was also a leader of the Lithuanian brass band there, Juozas Jazdauskas (born in 1922), Stasys Petkus (born in 1930), and Steponas Sadauskas (born in 1938).



Figure 5 Lithuanian musicians at Whit Sunday in Centralnyj Chazan, 1955 or 1956.
Photograph LGGRTC GAM 2105.

In 1953–1958 in Solovyov, Nizhneudinsk, Irkutsk region, deportees from South-West Lithuania (Sudovia) played in a string band consisting of two fiddles, a guitar and a drum (see Figure 6). Fiddler Sigitas Pételis (born in 1928) related that in Lithuania he used to play



Figure 6 A Lithuanian band in Solovyov, 1954: Sigitas Pételis (fiddle), Gedas Simniškis (fiddle), Jurgis Juozapavičius (guitar), the name of the drum player is not known.
Photograph LGGRTC GAM MD 1296.

bass in his older brother's (1925–2009) string band and later started playing fiddle. However, in 1946, his brother was imprisoned in Norilsk camps, and, in 1948, he was exiled along with his parents. At first 'neither music, nor fiddles were our concern – there was a famine. [...] There were about forty young Lithuanians, who all wanted to dance [...]. In Siberia I learned to play fiddle better'. Twice they were called on to perform at weddings.³⁵

Fiddlers who were exiled to multi-national settlements had to learn Russian songs and dances. One of the most talented Sudovian fiddlers, Pijus Vaškevičius (1900–1993), along with his pregnant wife and six children, was exiled to the Tomsk region from 1951 to 1956. His daughter said that he worked as a smith there and was always asked to play during holidays at the *kolkhoz* (a form of collective farm). At first he played only Lithuanian songs and dances, but the Russians could not understand them and they used to ask him to learn Russian ones. They appreciated his fiddling very much. After their release, the chair of the *kolkhoz* did not allow the family to go, thus they had to escape by crossing the Ob River by boat during a storm with high waves; the fiddle travelled with them.³⁶

There is lots of evidence of how the Soviet occupation and post-World War II oppressions, like forced exile, destroyed Lithuanian families' music-making traditions. For instance, the family of the famous Samogitian folk master, Albertas Martinaitis (born in 1953 in Ukar village, Nizhneudinsk district of Irkutsk region, now living in Šiauliai), bore the hardships of forced exile. His maternal grandfather Kazimieras Eitmantis (1881–1956) played fiddle, and his brothers – and later on, the sons – played fiddles or other instruments. In 1946 his son – the bass player Stanislovas (1913–1970) – was the first from the family to be brought to a concentration camp. In 1948 Kazimieras and his wife were exiled to the settlement of Zima in the Irkutsk region.

For Lithuanians, who are mainly settled farmers, deportation (a sudden separation from their home and land) was always a deep shock. For Kazimieras, his fiddle, which he loved profoundly, provided solace and a sense of spiritual well-being. He took the fiddle into his hands and sat waiting until he and his family were taken away into exile. From 1949 to 1956 his son, the fiddler Petras (1929–2004), worked in a coal mine in Karaganda, and in 1949 his daughter Ona and her husband (who would become Albertas's parents), were exiled to the Nizhneudinsk district of the Irkutsk region where she found her father (her mother was already dead), and took him in. Whilst the parents worked at the *kolkhoz*, the grandfather looked after the children and used to play them the fiddle. While putting them to bed and telling them fairy-tales, he would play his fiddle and say: 'Children, listen, how the fiddle cries and laughs.'³⁷ This has left an indelible impression on the children. He also played during feasts, but only at home, behind closed doors and windows.

In 1956 Kazimieras, already very ill, took his fiddle and set out on the journey home – as he wanted to die in his homeland – but sadly he died on the way. In 1997, Martinaitis carved a tombstone in the likeness of his grandfather and in 2004 made a fiddle to commemorate all his family members, weather-beaten in forced exile.³⁸

The fiddle and musical education

The fiddle was one of the main instruments for musical education of children and youths in exiled Lithuanian families and communities. On 14 June 1941, a teacher, Liudas Baltutis

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

(1897–1954) was exiled together with his family, wife and three children, to Tenga in Altay. This was considered ‘lucky’, for usually the men were sent separately to the concentration camps. Liudas’s brother Leonas – who had played a clarinet from his youth – was also exiled. Since Liudas was a multi-instrumentalist, from 1942–1947 he taught and led a Lithuanian children’s string band which had mandolins, seven-string guitar, balalaika, dombra baritone, folk bass, and a small drum. They repaired the instruments themselves from the scrap materials found in the *sovkhos* storage; a fiddle and a button accordion joined them. Another teacher, Bronius Tėvelis, played accordion; and his son played a children’s fiddle that had been brought from Lithuania. In 1947 the Baltutis family escaped to Lithuania, but in 1948 was exiled for the second time – to the Kemerov region, Kiseliovsk city. Again, Baltutis formed a band there, consisting of a fiddle, a button accordion, and a guitar. His son, Romualdas, already played fiddle, too. He was asked at school to lead an orchestra of various stringed instruments in which he alone played a fiddle. The orchestra performed Ukrainian and Russian pieces by ear. Only Romualdas could read musical notation.³⁹

Such friction-string orchestras, including balalaikas and domras, besides guitars and mandolins, are not typical of Lithuanian traditions, but they are for Russian stylized ‘folk orchestras’ (in Siberia called Russian *shumovoj*, meaning ‘noise orchestra’). These were very popular in the Soviet Siberian education and culture system.⁴⁰

Only one other Lithuanian has been documented as leading such an orchestra in forced exile: in Tulun city of Irkutsk district. In 1951, a folk fiddler, Juozas Liuberskis (1903–1984), formed a *barracks orchestra* from members of his family (wife, daughter and son), and other children of the Lithuanian community who lived in the barracks (see Figure 7).⁴¹ This orchestra had no balalaikas or domras, since they were regarded as Russian instruments.

Thus, if Lithuanians formed or lead a friction-string orchestra in Siberia, they usually included a fiddle in it – orchestras of friction-string and bowed string instruments (one to four fiddles) were very popular in the pre-war period in Lithuania. Lithuanians rarely played balalaikas and still rarer *domras* in their non-formal music ensembles in Siberia.



Figure 7 Fiddler Juozas Liuberskis with his family’s and other Lithuanian children’s orchestra in Tulun city, 1951. *Photograph LGGRTC GAM MD3091.*

In some cases young musicians learned to play the fiddle without anybody's help. In 1948 Rimgaudas Vitkus (born in 1933), took his father's fiddle and started playing in Talyany, Usol, a district of Irkutsk region, where he was exiled together with his mother and brothers. Their father, Juozas Vitkus-Kazimieraitis (1901–1946), was a folk fiddler and military officer of Independent Lithuania, later a partisan.

About 900 Lithuanians were there [...] [though young Lithuanians including myself mainly played accordions for dances], I played traditional songs on the fiddle: 'Lietuva brangi' and a religious hymn 'Kad širdį tau skausmas kaip peiliais suspaus' [When pain spears your heart like knives]. [...] I also used to take the fiddle into the taiga [forest], and play after work in the barracks – other Lithuanians asked me to play very much.⁴²

Thus, traditional Lithuanian fiddlers of older and younger generations continued fiddling traditions in many places of forced exile in Siberia. They played solo or led ensembles and even orchestras on various non-formal occasions: for community performances, dance-evenings, calendar feasts, and, usually only after 1953 (the year of Stalin's death, when the regime got more lenient), for weddings.

Conclusion

The fiddle, likewise a much rarer musical instrument, the Lithuanian zither *kanklės*, became a symbol of Lithuanness, distinguishing Lithuanians and their bands and orchestras in the middle of the twentieth century in Soviet-era Siberia. It also had multi-faceted psychological, communicative functions and symbolic meanings, significant to the political prisoners and deportees.

During traditional customs, fiddle music played one of the greatest roles in representing and maintaining Lithuanian national and cultural identity, which was much more important in forced exile than at home. Traditional fiddling was of great relevance to the deportees' and political prisoners' states of mind, their spiritual resistance, if not their physical survival.

Lithuanian traditional fiddle repertoire was very broad in Siberia: it comprised not only dances, marches, and songs, but also anthems, religious hymns, and musical fairy-tales for children. Not only was the sound and music of the fiddle expected to be able to express and discharge sadness and other negative emotions, to afford compassion and quieten, but also to exhilarate, suffering people, and awaken their tenacity and vitality.

Generally fiddlers were enlightened individuals and spiritual leaders in Lithuanian communities. Besides other works and activities, they used to teach traditional fiddling to the children and young people of their community, hence, striving to develop their abilities and to guarantee the continuation of their traditions.

Unquestionably many talented Lithuanian fiddlers and their families were lost to Siberia, not solely to exile, but also because of the prohibition of ex-deportees from living in their native places, and, for political prisoners, in their native countries. This has proved to be one of the principal factors in the demise of Lithuanian traditional music culture and folk fiddling traditions in the latter part of the twentieth century. Nevertheless those musicians

who did return from deportation participated very actively in their homeland's musical and cultural life and left valuable imprints: their music is now being listened to, recorded, and published.

Notes

¹ Stéphane Courtois, 'Komunizmo nusikaltimai' [Crimes of Communism], in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartosek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *Juodoji komunizmo knyga: nusikaltimai, teroras, represijos* (Vilnius: Vaga, 2000), pp. 11–17. Translation into Lithuanian from *Le livre noir du communisme: crimes, terreur, répression* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1997).

² In the Soviet era political prisoners were designated as 'dangerous elements' or 'the biggest enemies of the folk'.

³ Gaila Kirdienė, 'Sovietinę tremtį ir lagerius patyrę lietuvių liaudies muzikantai ir jų muzikavimas' [The Lithuanian Folk Musicians Who Survived in Soviet Exile and Camps and their Music Making], in *Nepriklausomybės dvidešimtmetis: kultūros lūžiai, pokyčiai ir pamokos, tapatybės problema. Konferencijos, įvykiosios*, 2010 m. balandžio 14 d. pranešimai ir moksliniai straipsniai (Vilnius: Lietuvos muzikos ir teatro akademija, 2010), pp. 106–131.

⁴ Gaila Kirdienė, 'Lithuanian Fiddle and Fiddling in Forced Exile', in *Mūzikas zinātne šodien: pastāvīgais un mainīgais* [Musical Science Today: Stability and Changes], 5 (Daugavpils universitāte, Akadēmiskais apgāds "Saulē"), pp. 93–107; 'Significance of Instrumental Music Making in Forced Exile: A Case Study of Lithuanians', in *Studia Instrumentorum Musicae Popularis III (New Series)*, edited by Gisa Jahnichen (Verlagshaus Monsenstein und Vannerdat OHG Munster), pp. 167–196; 'Sovietmečiu į Sibirą ištremtų ar įkalintų lietuvių santykiai su kitomis tautomis: tradicinio muzikavimo tyrimų duomenys [Relationships among Lithuanians and Other Nations Exiled to or Imprisoned in Siberia: Data of Traditional Music Making]', in *Tradicija ir dabartis: Mokslo darbai* [Tradition and Present. Scientific Works], 9 (Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla, 2014), pp. 89–111. Internet access: <http://journals.ku.lt/index.php/TD/article/view/996/1108> [accessed 14 June 2018].

⁵ Gaila Kirdienė, 'Lietuvos muzikantai ir instrumentinis muzikavimas sovietinėje tremtyje ir lageriuose' [Lithuanian Musicians and Instrumental Music Making in Soviet Forced Exile and Camps], in Jūratė Vyliūtė, Gaila Kirdienė, *Lietuviai ir muzika Sibire* [Lithuanians and Music in Siberia] (Vilnius: Lietuvos kompozitorių sąjunga, 2013), pp. 431–630, 641–644, 654–694.

⁶ Some of my interviewees were imprisoned in the camps despite their young age (under eighteen years); and some were born in Siberia.

⁷ Gaila Kirdienė, *Smuikas ir smuikavimas lietuvių etninėje kultūroje* [Fiddle and Fiddling in Lithuanian Ethnic Culture] (Vilnius: Kronta, 2000), pp. 207–245 (list of 645 traditional fiddlers); investigations of music making by Lithuanians in Siberia provided 55 names of traditional fiddlers, not previously documented.

⁸ Inna Klause, *Der Klang des Gulag: Musik und Musiker in den sowjetischen Zwangsarbeitslagern der 1920-er bis 1950-er Jahre* [Sound of the Gulag: Music and Musicians in Soviet Forced Labour Camps] (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2014).

⁹ Kirdienė (2013c), pp. 451–458.

¹⁰ Kirdienė (2013c), p. 507.

¹¹ Kirdienė (2013c), p. 494.

¹² Boleslovas Ankenas, 'Mano gyvenimo vingiai' [Turning Points of my Life], in *Mažoji Reškutėnų kronika* [A Little Reškutėnai Village Chronicle], part 2, compiled by Viktorija Lapėnienė (Reškutėnai, 2010), pp. 31–34.

- ¹³ Kirdienė (2010), pp. 114–116, 120–121.
- ¹⁴ Manuscript Archive of Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (Vilnius; hereafter GGRTC) 10433.
- ¹⁵ GGRTC, 10421.
- ¹⁶ Kirdienė (2013a), p. 102.
- ¹⁷ Documented by Kirdienė in 1996, comp. Kirdienė (2010), pp. 93–94.
- ¹⁸ Vladas Žeromskis, ‘Apie kalinimą’ [On Imprisonment], in *Vadinkite mane sėjėju. Vladas Žeromskio poezija, atsiminimai, rinkta tautosaka, atsiminimai apie Vladą Žeromskį* [Call me a Sower: Poetry, Memorials, Folklore, Collected by Him, and Recollection about Him]. Compiled by Birutė Panumienė (Baisogala, 2014), pp. 240–242.
- ¹⁹ Kirdienė (2013c), p. 465.
- ²⁰ Documented by Kirdienė in 2000, comp. Kirdienė (2013c), p. 507.
- ²¹ Documented in 1987, comp. Kirdienė (2013c), p. 462.
- ²² *Ква*, no. 4, November (Kiev, 1991), pp. 2–3.
- ²³ LGGRTC 10433.
- ²⁴ Kirdienė (2013b), p. 181.
- ²⁵ Kirdienė (2013c), pp. 439–442, 472, 642.
- ²⁶ Vytautas Akelaitis, ‘Mokytojai ir mokiniai’ [Teachers and Pupils], in *Amžino įšalo žemėje* [In the World of Perpetual Ice]. Compiled by Aldona Žemaitytė (Vilnius: Vyturys, 1989), p. 191.
- ²⁷ Ita Milc, born in 1936, lived in Kybartai, Vilkaviškis district. In 1941 together with parents exiled to Altay, in 1942 ferried to Bykov. In 1950 she moved to Yakutsk city, was released in 1958 and in 1961 returned to Lithuania, lived in Vilnius.
- ²⁸ Antanas Vaitkevičius, ‘Slaptieji ginklai’ [Secret Weapons]. *Leiskit į Tėvynę* [Let us go to the Homeland]. Memorials collected and edited by Kęstutis Pukelis. (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1989), p. 113.
- ²⁹ Vaitkevičius (1989), p. 105; Ona Sirutienė, comp. ‘1941 m. birželio 14-osios žaizdos’ [Wounds of the 14th of June 1941]. *Leiskit į Tėvynę* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1989), p. 36.
- ³⁰ Sirutienė (1989), p. 36.
- ³¹ Leonas Bojarskas, ‘Sekmadienio reportažai nuo Laptevų jūros’ [Sunday Reporting from the Laptev Sea], in *Leiskit į Tėvynę* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1989), p. 230.
- ³² Olga Merkienė, ‘Pasaulis – ne be dorų žmonių’ [The World Isn’t without Honest People], in *Leiskit į Tėvynę* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1989), p. 295.
- ³³ LGGRTC ApS KĖ-1005, pp. 14–15. No trees, but only grass grew on these islands, therefore deportees had to gather beached firewood. Fishing was their main duty, however, they were not permitted to take a fish to eat.
- ³⁴ Kirdienė (2013c), pp. 550–551.
- ³⁵ Kirdienė (2013c), pp. 541–547.
- ³⁶ Documented by Kirdienė in 2012, comp. Kirdienė (2013 a), p. 99.
- ³⁷ Comp. Kirdienė (2010), pp. 108–109.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Romualdas Baltutis, *Septyniolika metų be tėvynės (1941–1958)* [Seventeen Years without Fatherland], Šiauliai: Saulės delta, 2001; Kirdienė (2013 c), pp. 483–492.
- ⁴⁰ Comp. Kirdienė (2013a), p.100.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Documented by Kirdienė in 2018.