

# Estonian Choirs and Song Festivals in World War II Displaced Person Camps: Preserving Cultural Identity in the Face of Displacement

During World War II, approximately 100,000 Estonians were forced to flee their homeland as the Soviet Union occupied Estonia. Many of these refugees ended up in displaced person (DP) camps in Germany and Austria. In these camps, choirs and song festivals played a vital role in preserving Estonian cultural identity and providing a sense of community.



## Resilient Voices: Estonian Choirs and Song Festivals in World War II Displaced Person Camps by Ramona Holmes

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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The first Estonian choir in a DP camp was founded in 1945 in Bergen-Belsen, Germany. This choir was quickly followed by others, and by the end of the war, there were over 100 Estonian choirs in DP camps. These choirs sang a wide repertoire of Estonian folk songs, patriotic songs, and classical music.

In addition to choirs, song festivals were also held in DP camps. The first song festival was held in 1946 in Bergen-Belsen, and it was attended by

over 10,000 people. This festival was a huge success, and it helped to inspire other song festivals in DP camps throughout Europe.

Estonian choirs and song festivals in DP camps played a vital role in preserving Estonian cultural identity. They provided a sense of community and continuity for Estonians who had been displaced from their homeland. They also helped to keep Estonian culture alive during a time when it was under threat.

## **The Significance of Estonian Choirs and Song Festivals**

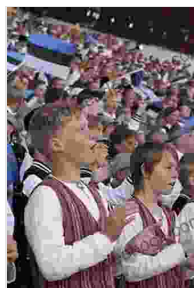
Estonian choirs and song festivals have a long and proud history. They have been a part of Estonian culture for centuries, and they have played an important role in preserving Estonian identity. Choirs and song festivals have also been a source of inspiration for Estonians during difficult times, such as during World War II.

The following are some of the reasons why Estonian choirs and song festivals are so important:

- They preserve Estonian cultural identity.
- They provide a sense of community.
- They keep Estonian culture alive.
- They inspire Estonians during difficult times.

Estonian choirs and song festivals are a valuable part of Estonian culture. They are a testament to the resilience of the Estonian people and their commitment to their culture.

Estonian choirs and song festivals in World War II DP camps were a vital means of preserving Estonian cultural identity and providing a sense of community. They also helped to keep Estonian culture alive during a time when it was under threat. Today, Estonian choirs and song festivals continue to play an important role in Estonian culture.



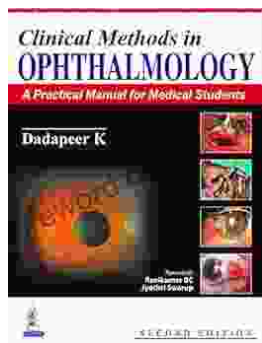
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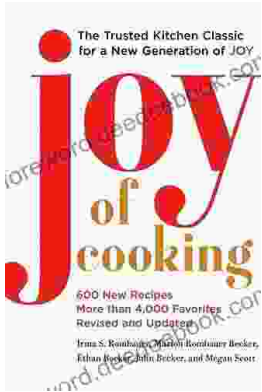
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