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## **Latvian Blues Band Wins Spot in International Blues Challenge**

**The annual Baltic Blues Challenge competition was held in the German town of Eutin on October 30 and 31, and the Latvian Blues Band convincingly won in the category of blues groups. This means that it will take part in the International Blues Challenge finals in the United States.**

Baltic Blues Challenge is a regional competition for blues performers, with artists from 10 countries in the Baltic Sea region. The aim is to find the best of the best for the International Blues Challenge in Memphis, which is the largest and most representative forum for the blues. The 2010 International Blues Challenge will be the 26<sup>th</sup> event, and it will bring together more than 100 groups and 60 soloists and duets from all around the world.

The international jury at the Baltic Blues Challenge included a representative from the umbrella organisation, Blues Foundation, in the United States, as well as music journalists and producers from major European blues festivals. They evaluated the originality of each performance, its appropriateness for the genre, the artistic presentation and stage image of each group, and the individual talents of each member.

During the preparatory process, the organisers of the event concluded that the artistic level among this year's participants would be very high, and the battle would be fierce. In order to stimulate the professionalism of competitors, a series of additional rules were implemented, and failure to observe those rules meant a loss of points. For instance, groups were allowed to perform for 20 minutes, and points were deducted if the performance was more than 10 seconds over that limit. Points were also deducted if the submitted promo materials were not in line with the fairly strict requirements which applied.

The Latvian Blues Band is delighted at the victory. "This victory and the subsequent publicity in the international blues media is equal to an expensive advertising campaign," says Jānis "Bux" Bukovskis, the group's soloist and guitarist. Manager Dailes Zigis adds: "We've been playing the blues and growing for the last 10 years. This is a logical result which testifies to our love for the blues and the self-denying work that we have done. Still, the group continues to have unlimited opportunities for growth."

Learn more about the Latvian Blues Band at [www.latvianbluesband.com](http://www.latvianbluesband.com).

This article was prepared by the Latvian Blues Appreciation Society.