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## **Latvian Blues Band Heading for International Blues Challenge Finals!**

On January 20, the winners of the regional audition competition for the world's largest and most representative blues forum, the International Blues Challenge, will be flying to Memphis, Tennessee for the event. Who won the competition? It was the Latvian Blues Band.

The audition competition took place in late October last year in Germany, and it involved blues performers from ten countries around the Baltic Sea. The Latvian Blues Band won convincingly and won an all-expenses-paid trip to the finals of the International Blues Challenge.

The event this year will be held from January 20-23, and it is organized by the Blues Foundation, which is the world's main blues organization. The forum is celebrating its 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year with new records in terms of participants – 224 performers and groups from 13 countries and 39 states in the USA. Some of American blues artists who have performed at the Bite Blues Club in the Latvian capital city of Rīga will be competing against the Latvian Blues Band.

In addition to the finals themselves, there will be special concerts, seminars and master's classes. The culmination to the three-day event will be the awards ceremony, including the presentation of the legendary "Keeping the Blues Alive" award to veterans in the field of the blues. It's expected that some 10,000 people will attend the event.

Blues Foundation president Jay Sieleman says that the professional level of all competitors is unbelievably higher, and it is increasing from year to year. Participant numbers have also increased, which means more work for the jury, as well as stricter criteria for evaluation.

Asked about their prospects, the young men of the Latvian Blues Band are full of enthusiasm: "We know that participation in this event means not just meeting people, seeing old friends again, and playing some music together, but also moderate stress, full concentration and absolute giving it all up onstage. We know our strengths, and we are more than ready to present them!"

For more information:

[www.latvianbluesband.com](http://www.latvianbluesband.com)

[www.blues.org](http://www.blues.org)

This release was prepared by the Latvian Blues Appreciation Society