



Julia Vysotska, Financial Manager on Chess Composition

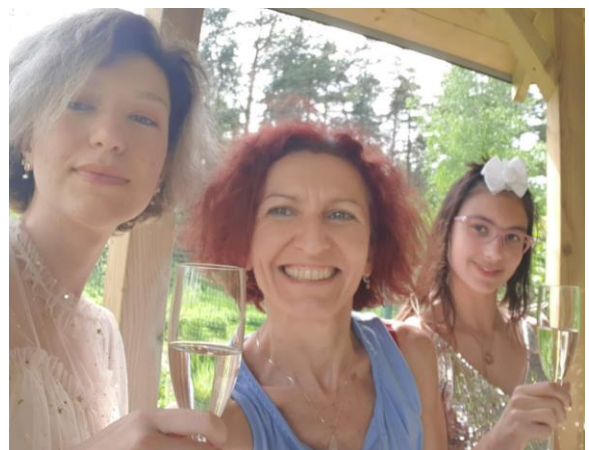
General

1. Who are you and what do you do?

A woman who has a magnetic chess board in her bag ☺

Living in a private house on the border of Riga (Latvia). Having two daughters, 13 and 17 years old.

In 1995 have finished Riga Technical University with Master degree in computer sciences, while already working in one of the first Internet



companies in Riga doing the both – customer support and programming for company needs - billing and statistical system. It happened that I've changed my working carrier, and since 1999 I'm in finance. Currently, financial manager in Proact IT Latvia, a part of Proact IT Group AB. Still in IT, still doing some very little programming for my own needs, but missing real programming as well. Maybe the one who ever tasted it couldn't forget it and has to feel it again.

2. What inspired you to choose your job?

Programming I liked from school, when just getting to know it. But it made my decision about the next education. Later on, a combination of private contacts together with the wish to learn more and to be a part of it at the moment when IT technologies just started to come to Latvia, in 1993 have got a place in Internet company, LvNet-Teleport. A wonderful team of enthusiastic young people, first emails, first web pages. I liked everything there! Our work up to the late nights, and our Friday's parties with singing and dancing.

Later, some changes in that company, in my private life, brought me to absolutely different field. And it was inspiring too, to learn something new, to use my computer knowledge for being more efficient in finance and accounting.

3. Have you always lived in your current location? If not, what brought you there?

Was born in Riga, Latvia. And never wanted to leave it. I love this town, very much.



Creative – Activities – Hobbies

1. What do you love to do outside of your job?

Not very much communicable, but enjoying a good company of friends. Liking music and dancing, riding horses, playing piano and guitar a little, caring about the garden at summer, enjoying sunsets and sunrises on the beach, walks in the nature. I'm mostly serious and shy, but can be playful too, sometimes a bit conservative, but sometimes can jump into risky or a bit crazy things. As 10 years ago I've jumped into my long lasting hobby, chess composition.

2. When did you first become interested in Chess Composition?

Oh, this is the story I can tell in details, but it might be boring. So, please, shorten it! ☺

Have to mention, I'm not a chess player. Have learned to play chess at school, being 7, but it was nothing more than playing at home with family members. So, I came to chess composition without any special background in chess!

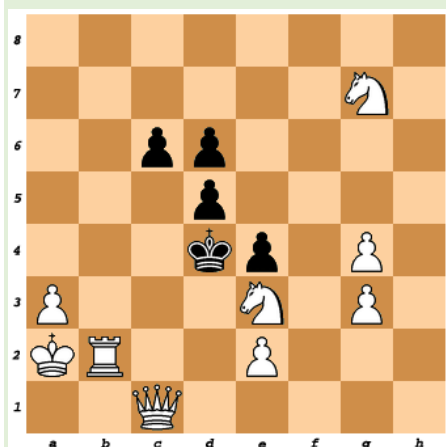
It was autumn 2010 when one of old friends, Ilja Ketris, occasionally mentioned he's preparing to go to Crete for the World Congress of Chess Composition (WCCC). And out of curiosity I asked: what's that? This clever man (a programmer who was always giving only laconic answers! ☺) didn't explain me much, but offered to send me a chess problem to solve, just mate in 2. To my shame, I couldn't solve it for several hours. Asked for a help, and understood.

----- The problem I couldn't solve ☺ any chess player can! -----

First, English notation for chess pieces: K=King, Q=Queen, R=Rook, B=Bishop, S=Knight, no letter for the Pawn, just its position.

Ilja Ketris (Latvia)

Problem Online, 2004-10-12



Mate in Two (#2)

You have to find the only first move by White that leads to mate on the 2nd move whatever Black does. Those who know how chess pieces move could try to solve.

The solution is quite surprising. The white Queen, seemingly standing on a very good position and controlling squares c5, c3 & e3, moves to the corner, to form a mating battery with white Rook:

1.Qa1 ! zugzwang

1...Kc3

2.Rc2 #

1...K*e3

2.Qg1 #

1...Ke5

2.Rb5 #

1...Kc5

2.Se6 #

1...c5

2.Rb3 #

So, I asked for another problem – had to prove I'm able to solve! Got to know there're different genres. Discovered a helpmate for myself – a partnership instead of fight in chess! And was fascinated by the play in helpmates, having usually several solutions, perfectly thematically matching. When you find one, you can practically “see” the other one, as you can see the picture on the stereogram – suddenly and surprisingly!

Up to the summer of 2011 I was solving chess problems found on Internet. During that time I had a feeling that chess composers are absolutely special people, almost like Gods who can produce such things! How they do so??



It was a grey rainy day at the beginning of July when I was looking at one more chess problem to solve. But why it was so simple, having nothing special? Even an amateur like me could compose such a problem! Or maybe better? Or maybe I should try? Yes, right away! And the idea (or the thematic content) of my first chess problem started to crystallize in my head...

But the fate was even kinder to me! When I announced the idea to compose to the same friend, he suggested to look at the official website of upcoming W FCC Congress, where some thematic competitions for chess problems might be already announced. So, I did. And only one thematic competition was announced at the moment, helpmate but

with Chameleon Pieces (later on I got to know there's a Fairy Chess genre in Chess composition, and that Chameleon Pieces belong to it; but that time I didn't care, it was just kind of trick to use another piece in addition to standard ones!). What to do? I had one month for my first try! And finally the problem was composed and sent to the Congress in Jesi (Italy). The only composition from the woman composer, a Special Prize I've got for it... it all made me known too quickly, and motivated highly as well.

So, exactly 10 years ago, in summer of 2011, I've composed my first chess problem, a Fairy problem, as I was told later 😊

3. Can you briefly tell us about Chess Composition (rules, different puzzles, etc.)?

No, not puzzles. We call them Chess compositions, or Chess problems.

Two main activities in Chess Composition are solving and composing chess problems. We use to say that solving of chess problems is more of a sport, while composing is more of the art 😊

In the both fields we have competitions of different levels, and titles too.



New Year Solving Tournament 2019, with Latvian and Lithuanian guests.

It asked for publishing problems by other composers, appointing judges for each period, publishing awards. To compare with the printed magazines it allows much faster publication (sometimes the same day or the next day after I get the problem), and the possibilities to comment, to correct and improve the originals, to keep the tracks of all.

I'll always be grateful to the judge of my first JF tournament, Narayanan Shankar Ram (India), who accepted the invitation to judge it before getting to know me, the quality and number of the problems in the competition.

Some words about the Julia's Fairies phenomenon.. Within a short span of time this website has evolved from being a novice composer's space for publishing her own problems.. to a very professionally managed fairy chess problem resource. Along the way, Julia has also evolved .. as a composer and editor. Of course, her energy and passion is boundless.. and infectious.. as seen in the enthusiastic participation of so many composers.. not only in the originals, but also in the comments and discussion about the published problems. Something heartening is the support and encouragement offered to new composers. Indeed a "miraculously friendly garden" (Marjan Kovačević)!

(Shankar Ram, [Award JF-2012](#))

In the spring of 2013 the president of the WFCC, Harry Fougiaxis, invited me to become a webmaster of the official website of our Federation. I was a bit afraid to get into one more job, but felt it as a great honor, and accepted.

So, my version of [wfcc.ch](#) website was announced in June, 2013. This website made me to learn php, and to use MySQL (for the tables and queries for rating lists). I was happy about it, because SQL was among my favorites during the time of education.



WFCC

HOME WHAT IS WFCC MEETINGS COMPETITIONS FIDE ALBUMS TITLES RULES SOFTWARE

Solvers' ratings 01.04.2021

Go to the list for Period

Calculated tournaments:

Open of A. Suetin Memorial 2021 | A. Suetin Memorial 2021 | 17th International Solving Contest 2021 Cat 1 | 17th International Solving Contest 2021 Cat 2 | Open tournament Championship of the Central Federal District of Russia 2021 | Open Solving Championship of CFO 2021 | 15th Urals Problemist Cup 2021 | RSSU-Cup 2021 Alexander Pochinok Memorial Tourney | Kornilov-90 Tournament | Open of E.Bykova solving MT 2021 | E.Bykova solving MT 2021 | Open solving tournament: Tula 2021 | Open of the 35 Ukrainian Solving Championship 2021

Country Category ?

Sort by Ratings with decimals Go

All results

Three different colors are used for Rating. Half-rating. Non active solvers.

Rank	Pos.change	Title	Name	Country	Rating	Change	Max
1		GM	Evseev, Georgiy	RUS	2747		2819
2			Zhuravlev, Andrey	RUS	2683		2757
3		GM	Murdzia, Piotr	POL	2661		2860
4		GM	Nunn, John	GBR	2630		2774

5. What do you love the most about Chess Composition?

A hard question... As if you'd be asking me what I love the most in a person I love. Who knows? All in one.

First, Chess Composition replaced the programming I missed. The both have so much in common! Some creative and algorithmic thinking. The idea of the problem; first workable version, testing and improving, almost the same as testing a program. Getting rid of unintended solutions is similar to the seeing that your program works correctly. Making the chess problem looking better (some aesthetic criteria) is about the same as improving your program code.

Next, the creativity. The idea which suddenly comes, the process of making it work - exciting and passionate process, hard to describe. You might have some idea, not knowing if it is possible at all. But later on, the picture starts to appear on the diagram...



Chess-solving competition in Fujairah, UAE (Marjan Kovačević and Julia).



The ambitions? Well, enjoying the process of composing very much, I'm still not deprived from competitive feeling. Yes, waiting for the awards with a trembling, hoping to be in... ☺

Society: meeting so many composers from all around the world! Different countries, different educations and fields of work, different ages and interests. Some meetings are only online, emails, comments on websites. Some are alive on our annual meetings.

Discovering myself: maybe this is something what I like most of all at the moment, after 10 years. In my "previous life" I was mostly in accounting, and my social life was limited mostly by 15 people in my office. Now I'm not only chess composer. I compose chess problems, I'm an editor of a famous fairy website, webmaster of the official one.



WCCC Meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania 2019. Presenting prizes at Youth Chess Composing tournament.

In 2015 I've met a soul-mate, Serbian GM in chess composition Marjan Kovačević, the one not only helping me to develop my skills in composing, but also pushing me into some more of social activities, turning my



Chess-solving competition in Fujairah, UAE.

enthusiasm into general development of chess composition.

We both share the same wish to popularize chess composition and to develop it among new generations. So, since 2016 I organize regular solving competitions in Latvia; in 2019 and 2020 I took part in organizing a very ambitious solving tournaments in UAE; in 2019 I became a delegate of Latvia in WFCC; and with all of it I'm learning to be different, active in the fields of life I never was before, discovering the abilities I didn't know about.

6. Do you have any favourite chess compositions?

Favourite compositions are not necessarily the best ones. From about 150 composed problems I mostly remember those connected to some events or emotions.

Initially I was mostly fascinated with thematically connected solutions in helpmates.

Helpmate is a type of chess problem in which both sides cooperate to achieve the goal of checkmating Black. In a helpmate in n moves, Black moves first, then White, each side moving n times, to culminate in White's nth move checkmating Black.

So, I'll show it on the example of one of my first composed problems, the one I still like not only because of the content, but because of all memories around it.

It was autumn of 2011, right after my first success during the Congress time in August. There is a forest park close to my place of living, and on one evening I was riding on roller skates, smelling autumn's wood and planning my chess problem...

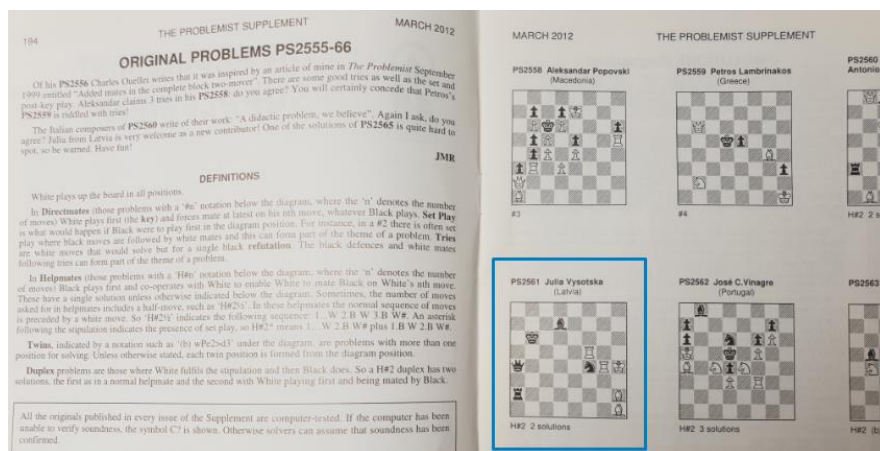
I had some unclear idea and needed it to settle in my mind.

Have to tell, my first tries in composing were mostly intuitive, without any theory, just after my 9 months of solving chess problems I had some idea what is a good chess problem (those I liked).

This time I've read some theory, and wanted to try all I've read about, one by one.

Battery mate was my first one on the list. And I was thinking about combination of Bishop/Rook and Rook/Bishop (2 thematically connected solutions). From the solving experience I also knew that problem becomes more complicated for solving if a King makes some move. So, I had to have it!

I knew that after coming home I'll put the pieces on the board and see the details. It was several weeks of composing and riding... Every time when I was afraid it will never work, after some time in the forest it was getting better. This was the problem with the smell of falling leaves...



(I) 1.Se2 Re4 2.Kc6 Rb4 #

(II) 1.Se6 Be5 2.Kc5 Bc7 #

Battery mates (positions without pawns are called Aristocratic).

Sent to the magazine of British Chess Problem society, The Problemist Supplement in October 2011, appeared in March 2012 (it was nice to get the magazine with my own problem by postal mail):

Two thematically connected solutions (see the first one and try to find the second one yourself):

I jumped into composing Fairy problems almost right from the beginning, so I had only several orthodox helpmates in 2012. Later on, most of my compositions were Fairies (but always with a help-play).

What the Fairies are? In addition to normal chess pieces we have hundreds of other pieces and conditions, changing moves, colours and types of the pieces! Those fairy elements are not to scare you but to allow you to open your mind, to have a wider space for creativity, originality, for expressing yourself. Nobody knows all of them! But most of composers have their favourites.

Before I show some of my Fairy problems (without much of explanations - it would be too complicated) let me give you some examples of my favourite Fairy elements and motives in the problems.



I like horses. And on the board I always had some special feelings about Knights (the figurine is a horse). And here appears the Nightrider! On the dark night, under a bright moon, a black silhouette of rider on the horse. The Nightrider is more powerful than ordinary Knight, its move is jumping along the line of Knight's moves, like repeating several of Knight's moves in a row. The line of Nightrider can be closed by the piece staying on the square of Knight's landing. (i.e. from a1 it can move to d7 by the trajectory a1-b3-c5-d7, and pieces on b3 or c5 can close Nightrider's line). This is my favourite dynamic Knight!

Neutral pieces – I really love them! On whose side is this piece? – on the one who plays! On the diagram we have those pieces half white and half black. I'm sorry there're no chess sets with neutral pieces! If the White moves Neutral piece, it behaves as white, if the Black – it is black. If the White gives check with Neutral piece, then on the next move the Black can move it away! How to give a mate? The tricks to discover!

Chameleon piece was my first fairy experience. On each move it changes its type. You have a Chameleon Knight on the board. If you move it, after a move it becomes Bishop, on the next move it is already Rook, and later Queen. But why Chameleon Queen is a weak piece on the board? Because on the next move it turns back from Queen to the Knight's stage. As a Cinderella in the midnight! ☺

One of most dynamic conditions and with its growing popularity exactly during my time in chess composition is called Take & Make. If a piece captures another piece, then it

makes one more half-move as continuation of its move, the way captured piece would move. Like, if Knight is capturing Queen, then it makes one more move as a Queen (remaining to be Knight!). Your one move turns into 2!

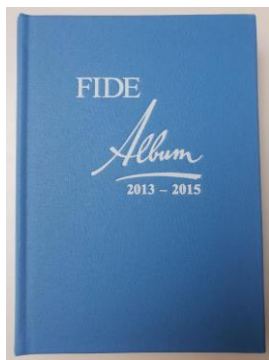
But if you compose with Fairy elements, you have to find some paradoxical or non-standard idea, something special what couldn't be done in orthodox play.

My problems are help-play problems. Instead of the fight, there's a partnership to create some surprising mates. My favourite approach is inventing some mating positions, and then I think how it can be shown twice in thematically connected solutions, and what might be the play before the mate in both. Later on, I started liking some surprising introductory moves, seemingly not having any "improving" effect on the position. Only on the mating moves it becomes visible how without them the mates would be avoided.



The beginning of 2014. This problem took me about a month of moving pieces on the board, writing down on the paper all possible combinations of moves on each step, comparing and changing again and again.

Three fairy conditions make it not easy to understand even for experienced composer. You have just to trust me, that in the both solutions the play goes absolutely with the same "rules". As in the dance when the pairs are staying in the cycle, and the partners make a step along the cycle to change the place, and now we have a new pairs, but dancing the same dance.



J. Vysotska
Julia's Fairies 2014-1
1st Prize

G206

G206 - Julia Vysotska (WCCI=8.5)
1. ♖e5(♖e5) ♗xh8(♗b5; ♜d6) 2. ♜g6(♜g6) ♜xg6(♜f5; ♜c4)#
1. ♜e2(♜e2) ♜xg1(♜g6; ♜c1) 2. ♗f4(♗f4) ♗xc1(♗h1; ♜c5)#
Cyclic exchange of functions between Bh2, Nh8, and Rg1:
colour change in B1 and capture in W1; captured in W1+W2
with self-block; colour change in B2. Numerous specific effects,
ideal mates. Miniature, white Rex solus.

h#2 2.1.1.1. (1+5) C+

Anti-Andernach chess
Take&Make
Anti-Take&Make
♜ = Nightrider

Published on February 14th, 2014, on my own website, juliasfairies.com, with a nice number 500 (<https://juliasfairies.com/problems/no-500/>). The only white piece is white King, plus 5 black piece and... mate to the Black in 2 solutions! Got the 1st Prize in the informal competition of the site; and later on was selected for the FIDE Album 2013-2015 (a heavy book of 692 pages!)

Or something different, relatively new,
with the idea to present in help-selfmate
problem a check to Black and mate to
White with the same neutral piece.
See the dance of Chameleon pieces
showing full cycle of changes and three
cross-checks in each solution!

This problem includes it all:

- One of my favourite fairy kinds - Neutral pieces
- One of my favourite help-play genres – helpselfmate
- A favourite man, my co-author, Marjan Kovačević (GM, Serbia)
- And the Chameleons in the memory of my very first problem

The 3rd Prize winner in JF's informal

tournament in 2019, [JF-1414](#).

The publication offers animated solutions, use it to understand the idea better!

HOME SITE INTRO FAIRY TERMS ARTICLES JF PROBLEMS JF TOURNAMENTS

No.1414
Julia Vysotska (Latvia) & Marjan Kovačević (Serbia)
Original Fairy problems
JF-2019/I:
January – June 2019

Definitions: (click to show/hide)

No.1414 Julia Vysotska & Marjan Kovačević
Latvia / Serbia
original – 26.06.2019

Solutions: (click to show/hide)

1...b1=nR 2.nRg1=nQ a1=nQ+ (a1=nR +?)
3.nQga7=nS+ nSc6=nB# (3...nQxa7=nS??)

1.Ka7 b1=nQ 2.nQb4=nS a1=nR+ (a1=nQ +?)
3.nSa6=nB+ nBb7=nR# (3...nRxa6=nQ??)

(C+ by Popeye 4.81)
Reciprocal promotions and 2 complete cycles of changes. (Authors)

hs#3* (2+2+2)
Neutral pawns a2, b2
Chameleon Chess

15

Kjell Widlert (Sweden)

June 29, 2019 03:30

This is a wonderful find! Even the little Pb5 has many functions – at least two in each solution.

7. Speaking about your own experiences, can you tell us about some of your personal achievements with either Chess or Chess Composition?

Several days ago I got to know that the selection of problems for the FIDE Album 2016-18 (best problems of each 3 years period) brought me the title of FIDE Master for Chess Composition. This is a great achievement. And, I have to boast: I'm the first woman ever getting this title!



So, this summer I have a double celebration: 10 years in composing, and the title of FM in composing.

(12 FIDE Album points needed for FM in composing, 1 point you get for 1 published problem if without co-authors, but with co-authors the point is split accordingly; the next possible title in composing is International Master, 25 points)

In March 2020 I was mentioned in the article "[The Queens of Problem Chess](#)" by Satanick Mukhuty (published @ ChessBase)

About the websites:

- Next spring julfairies.com will celebrate 10 years! For many years nobody mentions the full name of the site anymore, it is just JF, and it's already a sign of a great popularity! When I see composers writing in different forums something like "No.1500 on JF" or Petko's article on JF... it feels special! As of today I have 1627 original problems (plus some versions) published on JF.
- 8 years webmaster of wfcc.ch. A bit tiring position with the time, but it helped me to get to know better all different activities of WFCC, the key members, important processes. To know things from the inside. And to get a wish to improve them! 😊

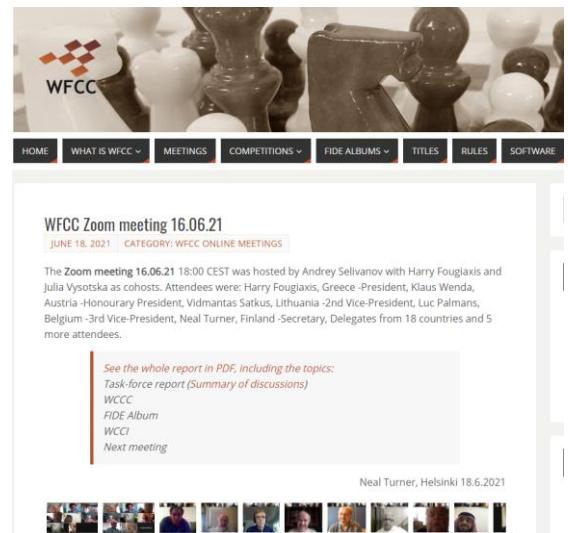
8. Do you have any future goals with Chess Composition?

Have to think about it... The next title in composing is International Master. Some 5-10 years more? 😊

Development of chess composition in Latvia.

Improvements in our Federation – a better promotion in the first place as we're really not very much known.

For now I'm trying to push the society into online life, in addition to yearly live meetings.



Chess Composition and Tech

1. Do you see any similarities between Chess Composition and your current occupation?

Not really - if comparing with finance. But for sure it is very close to my previous job and education in programming.

2. Do you think that your experiences with Chess & Chess Composition have been a benefit to your technological career, or vice versa?

It is like a cyclic way up... step left, step right, but still up 😊

My education and different abilities from my "IT life" for sure helped me a lot to come to the position I have now in Chess Composition.

I was told it is not so common for a chess player to jump so easily into Fairy chess. I guess it was my abstract (or algorithmic) mind (trained in the programming?) which helped me. In fact, for me there is no difference if fairy or not. Fairy piece was just another piece, with its own move and logic.

The ability to run websites, to publish problems, to manage the databases, to test problems with different software. etc made me known and appreciated very quickly. And, gave me a nice feeling of being important and useful for the society.



Progressing in Chess composition quickly made me more self-assured and active in private life and career as well. Many international contacts in chess composition improved my English. This is also a benefit for my primary work in international company, taking me out of the borders of financial terms to the wider scope.

After all, my experience in Finance, and in general my work in International commercial company gives me better vision about the management of the WFCC and possible future improvements in it.

3. What's your best piece of advice for someone interested in Chess Composition?



Girls, girls, you're missed there!! Chess composers are all different. Some might be too self-oriented, but many are really very much helpful, appreciating newcomers, especially girls who are so unique here! So, for sure you'd get a support!

To everybody: you might be a chess player or not at all! Your style of composing or preferred genres might be different, but if you have an algorithmic (or logical, or abstract) and creative mind and would like to try yourself in our art, please do! And start from solving a chess problem – mate in 2, or

helpmate in 2, or an endgame. I believe, only after you've solved some problems you can start feeling what it is about, what are the problems you would praise, would want to be able to create...

4. Finally, how important is it to help share the passions of technologists from all over the world – is there always more than tech?

Not sure if I understood the question right.

I believe the best is to have a combination of the tech... and something!

What would be the pure tech? This is more like an instrument the one can use nicely to achieve some goals, being it a business or joy.

In our days the technologies improve our every step. And on our every step, in any activity, we can apply our technological knowledge to develop the field of our interest, to be more successful, and to have more of joy in life!



Where Daugava river meets the Baltic Sea... 2240m long walking lane to see the sunset from the Lighthouse.