**JUOZAS DOMARKAS – Honorary Conductor of the LNSO**

**Juozas Domarkas** (b. 1936) is one of Lithuania’s most accomplished conductors with a distinctive manner of interpretation, as well as an experienced and influential conducting pedagogue. His innate vitality, perseverance and acquired volition helped him greatly in achieving his most earnest goal – to raise a symphony orchestra of the highest artistic standard in Lithuania. An almost half-century intense and diverse career may well attest to this – for 51 year (1964–2015) he served as the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra (LNSO). In 2015, for his long-time dedication to the Orchestra’s highest professionalism he was endowed with the title of Honorary Conductor of the LNSO.

Domarkas started his music education in S. Šimkus Conservatoire in Klaipėda. In 1955–60, he studied clarinet at the present Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, LAMT. He got fascinated with conducting and in 1957 became conductor of the Vilnius Wind Orchestra (present *Trimitas*). In 1960, aspiring to pursue conducting career he went on to study conducting at the Leningrad (presently St Petersburg) Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory with prof. Ilya Musin, a renowned teacher and founder of the modern Russian school of conducting. In 1965, Domarkas earned the symphonic and operatic conducting diploma. It was on Musin’s recommendation that he was chosen, in 1963, among the sixteen young conductors from all over the Soviet Union to have a unique opportunity to participate in the four-month master course in Moscow with Igor Markevitch, the world-famous French conductor and composer. The influence of these professors has left an indelible mark on Domarkas’ personality and can still be traced in his repertoire, which, besides the greatest classical masterpieces, encompasses many works by Russian composers and contemporary music.

In 1964, he took up the leadership of the LNSO. The proficiency of the Orchestra’s members grew in pace with their director’s artistic personality, presenting the audiences with many classical masterpieces previously unheard in Lithuania: Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and Missa solemnis, symphonies by Mahler and works by Stravinsky. For more than 50 years Maestro’s work was closely associated with the LNSO, resulting in expanding of concert routes and growing international recognition. Noteworthy was his initiative to organise appearances of young performers with the LNSO, which developed into the “Atžalynas” Young Performers’ Festival that over the years has triggered many a successful career. Lauded by the critics for his musical acumen and culture, vivid and emotional manner of performing, Domarkas since the start of his career has been frequently invited to perform with the best orchestras of Russia, Poland, Latvia, the Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Estonia, Turkey, Venezuela, Mexico, Argentina and Chile among other countries. In 1988–1991 and 1995–1997 he was one of the Artistic Directors of the Baltic Academy (involving Vilnius, Riga, Tallinn and St Petersburg conservatoires) Student Symphony Orchestra (the Orchestra was also led by V. Chernyshenko). In 1989, Domarkas led the Baltic Academy Orchestra in the concert at the newly opened Opéra Bastillein Paris.

Maestro has conducted opera and ballet productions at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre (LNOBT) and the Klaipėda Musical Theatre. At the LNOBT he put on and led productions of Bizet’s Carmen (1985) and two one-act ballets – Ravel’s Daphnis et Chloé and Bizet-Shchedrin’s Carmen Suite (1997), as well as Stravinsky’s Oedipus Rex (1997) and Bizet’s Carmen (1998) at the Klaipėda Musical Theatre. Since 2010, he has served as the Artistic Director of the International M. Ogiński Festival in Plungė.

His vast repertoire ranges from the masterpieces of classical and romantic era to contemporary music, from large-scale symphonic-oratorio genres to small-scale opuses by composition tyros. Contemporary music makes a substantial and important portion of Domarkas’ repertoire, in which works by Lithuanian composers occupy a special place. Under his artistic leadership, the LNSO has performed great majority of Lithuanian symphonic scores – from symphonic poems by M.K. Čiurlionis, symphonic works by E. Balsys, J. Juzeliūnas, A. Rekašius, F. Bajoras, V. Barkauskas and O. Balakauskas to the first symphonic opuses by young composers. Domarkas premiered and promoted majority of Lithuanian symphonic works written in the last 50 years. Some of these works have been inspired by his long-time friendship with the composers and bear a dedication to their first performer. Thanks to Maestro Domarkas, these works can be heard today not only in the concert halls, but also on numerous recordings released in Lithuania and abroad (“Melodiya”, “Marco Polo”, “Col legno”, “Ella Records” and “Naxos”).

His accomplishments in cultivation of Lithuanian musical culture have garnered Domarkas the highest national distinctions: the Lithuanian State Prize (1974), the Lithuanian Government Art Prize (1998), the Officer’s Cross of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas (1994), the Grand Cross of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas (1998) and the Lithuanian National Arts and Culture Prize (2000). In 1986, Domarkas became the last Lithuanian artist to be awarded with the People’s Artist of the Soviet Union title (in total, 19 Lithuanian artists and musicians were decorated with this award). In 2006, he was awarded the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland for his contribution to Polish-Lithuanian cultural collaboration. In 2011, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania decorated Maestro with honorary insignia “Carry Your Light and Believe”, and Vilnius Municipality with Golden Medal “For Contributions to Culture of Vilnius”. On October 4, 2014, on occasion of the 50th anniversary of Domarkas’ artistic directorship of the LNSO, Dalia Grybauskaitė, the President of the Republic of Lithuania, honoured Maestro with the Order of the Great Cross “For Contributions to Lithuania” in recognition of the promulgation of Lithuania and his remarkable contributions to Lithuanian culture, art and education. The same year, the Lithuanian Business Confederation presented Maestro with Petras Vileišis nomination.

Since 1968, Domarkas has been teaching at the LAMT. In 1972, he initiated the inclusion of the percussion instruments into the Wind Department. Fuelled by his far-reaching vision of educating the future members of the LNSO, he led the LAMT students’ symphony orchestra from 1972 to 1991. His ambition to bring into being the Department of Conducting at the LAMT was realised in 1995. Up until 2015, he served as its Head. Currently, he is the professor at the Department of Conducting. The list of his disciples includes Modestas Pitrėnas and Modestas Barkauskas, winners of the prestigious Grzegorz Fitelberg International Competition for Conductors in Katowice (Poland); Dainius Pavilionis, winner of the W. Lutosławski International Competition for Young Conductors in Bialystok and Grzegorz Fitelberg International Competition for Conductors in Katowice; talented conductors – Virgilijus Visockis (Kaunas State Musical Theatre), Egidijus Ališauskas (the Lithuanian Armed Forces Orchestra), Michał Łukasz Niżyński, Michał Czubaszek, Sofia Guz (Poland), Cristian Frattima (Italy), Alaksiej Fralou (Belarus), Jan Bubák (Czech Republic), Aigars Meri (Latvia), Mikhail Zemtsov (Holland), Juozas Mantas Jauniškis, Karolis Variakojis, Tomas Ambrozaitis, Vytautas Kiminius, Giedrius Vaznys, Imantas Šimkus, etc. Domarkas was invited to serve as a jury member at the international competitions for conductors, including Fitelberg (1991, 1995, 2003, 2007, 2012 and 2018) and Prokofiev (1993 and 1996, St. Petersburg, Russia).

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**Short biography**

**Juozas Domarkas**, one of the most accomplished Lithuanian conductors and experienced and influential conducting pedagogues, has served as the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra (LNSO) for 51 year (1964–2015). In 2015, for his long-time dedication to the Orchestra’s highest professional standard he was endowed with the title of Honorary Conductor of the LNSO.

Lauded by the critics for his musical acumen and culture, vivid and emotional manner of performing, Domarkas since the start of his career has been frequently invited to perform with the best orchestras of Russia, Poland, Latvia, the Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Estonia, Turkey, Venezuela, Mexico, Argentina and Chile among other countries. Maestro has conducted opera and ballet productions at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre (LNOBT) and the Klaipėda Musical Theatre.

His vast repertoire ranges from the masterpieces of classical and romantic era to contemporary music, from large-scale symphonic-oratorio genres to small-scale opuses by composition tyros. Contemporary music makes a substantial and important portion of Domarkas’ repertoire, in which works by Lithuanian composers occupy a special place. Thanks to Maestro Domarkas, these works can be heard today not only in the concert halls, but also on numerous recordings released in Lithuania and abroad (“Melodiya”, “Marco Polo”, “Col legno”, “Ella Records” and “Naxos”).

The recipient of the Lithuanian National Arts and Culture Prize, Domarkas was also awarded the Lithuanian Government Art Prize, the Officer’s Cross of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas, the Grand Cross of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas, the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania’s honorary insignia “Carry Your Light and Believe”, the Order of the Great Cross “For Contributions to Lithuania”, Vilnius Municipality’s Golden Medal “For Contributions to Culture of Vilnius” and the Lithuanian Business Confederation’s Petras Vileišis nomination.

In 1960–1965, Domarkas studied conducting under the legendary professor Ilya Musin at the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory in St Petersburg; in 1963, he honed his skills under the world-famous French conductor and composer Igor Markevitch at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow.

Since 1968, Domarkas has been teaching at the LAMT. He serves as the professor at the Conducting Department, which he headed in 1995–2015. The long list of Domarkas’ disciples includes Modestas Pitrėnas, Modestas Barkauskas and Dainius Pavilionis, the winners of the prestigious Grzegorz Fitelberg International Competition for Conductors. Domarkas was invited as a juror to the international competitions for conductors, such as Fitelberg and Prokofiev among others.

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