**LITHUANIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**

Founded by Prof. Saulius Sondeckis (Artistic Director and Chief Conductor, 1960–2004) the **Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra (LCO)** is recognised as one of the finest and most internationally acclaimed Lithuanian orchestras. On the 23rd of April, 1960, the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra (LCO) began rehearsing as a new formation and invited to its first public concert on the 30th of October the same year to gain instant recognition among the audiences and critics both at home and away.

Having formed an orchestra and embarked on tailoring the collective’s individual voice and repertoire Prof. S. Sondeckis started exploring new niches for its activity. Gradually these creative aspirations grew into dynamic traditions of cultural life in Lithuania. New Year Eve concerts at the Vilnius Cathedral (then the Painting Gallery), launched on 31st December, 1966, gained special popularity. Farewell to Old Year concerts at St. Johns’ Church featuring Haydn’s Abschiedssinfonie are gathering numbers of connoisseurs to this day: for almost 50 years the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra has been performing the legendary opus in a vanishing candlelight.

In 1967, the Orchestra was the first to organise concert series in a newly restored Trakai Castle (the Lithuanian National Philharmonic revived this tradition as Chamber Music Series *Music in Trakai Castle* in 2009). Inaugurated in 1971, *Night Serenades* on the terrace of Amber Museum in Palanga have become the LCO’s hallmark drawing thousands of holidaymakers to enjoy al fresco summer evening classical music concerts in Palanga Botanical Garden.

The LCO became the first Lithuanian orchestra to receive an official permission to tour outside the Soviet Union: in 1966, it gave two concerts in the then German Democratic Republic. The young and energetic group of Lithuania’s finest string players was instantly noticed both by music record companies and festival organisers alike. Yet more intense advance towards the international music scene began a decade later, in 1976, when the LCO appeared at the Echternach festival in Luxembourg to great critical acclaim. The Orchestra participated in this festival seven times and was awarded the Great Lion medal.

Over the years tour itineraries of the LCO, an ambassador of Lithuanian music culture, have covered the length and breadth of Europe, reached both Americas, Cuba, Egypt, the Republic of South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, Australia, Iceland, China, Japan, Costa Rica and Lebanon. It has been many times applauded at many major European halls such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna’s Musikverein, London’s Royal Festival Hall, Rome’s Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, Salle Pleyel and Gaveau in Paris, Leipzig’s Gewandhaus to name but a few celebrated concert halls in Europe.

Among the many world-celebrated masters of the baton who stood at the helm of the LCO on its numerous tours, the legendary humanist Sir Yehudi Menuhin stands out. From the first rehearsals with the LCO in Spain in 1992 to his death in 1999, he conducted almost 60 concerts on the Orchestra’s annual tours. Some of these performances were committed to disc such as Handel’s *Messiah*, Haydn’s *Die Schöpfung* and Schubert’s Mass No. 4 and Mass No. 5 (released on Apex).

A great number of distinguished soloists have joined the Orchestra in concerts, including violinists Gidon Kremer, Tatyana Grindenko, Igor Oistrakh, Sergei Stadler, Gil Shaham, Daniel Hope, Julian Rachlin, Vadim Repin and Janine Jansen; cellists Mstislav Rostropovich, Natalia Gutman, Natalia Shakhovskaya, David Geringas, Mischa Maisky, Alexander Kniazev, Danjulo Ishizaka, and Denis Shapovalov; violists Yuri Bashmet, Hartmut Rohde and Maxim Rysanov; pianists Mūza Rubackytė, Andrius Žlabys, Lukas Geniušas, Evgeny Kissin, Alexei Lubimov, Dmitry Bashkirov, Vladimir Krainev, Barry Douglas, Denis Matsuyev, and Alexei Volodin; trumpetists Timofei Dokschitzer, Guy Touvron and Sergei Nakariakov; flutists Jean Pierre Rampal, and Denis Bouriakov; oboist Alexei Ogrintchouk; composer and pianist Ezio Bosso and many others. The collective collaborates with conductors Modestas Pitrėnas, Robertas Šervenikas, Modestas Barkauskas, Adrija Čepaitė, Vilmantas Kaliūnas, Nicholas Milton, Georg Mark, Ronald Zollman, Pietro Borgonovo, etc.

During the five decades the LCO has not only performed countless programmes in close collaboration with various soloists, conductors and choirs, but also produced over a hundred vinyl records and CDs of diverse repertoire, with special attention to the music of Bach and Mozart. The latter’s output occupies a special place in the LCO’s repertoire: the Orchestra has recorded his complete symphonies and the opera *Don Giovanni* (Melodiya), performed all instrumental concerti. The staged production of the opera *Così fan tutte* at the Lithuanian National Philharmonic Hall as part of Vilnius Festival 1998 has received accolades from both audience and critics alike. The LCO’s repertoire includes Bach’s instrumental concerti, suites, passions and numerous cantatas; Great Mass was performed in Lithuania, France, Spain, Italy, Russia and many other European countries. Frankfurt Alte Oper applauded to the performance of *The Art of Fugue*. The German tours of 2000 and 2001 with the legendary British actor and reciter, Sir Peter Ustinov, as narrator resulted in the unique recording of Ludwig van Beethoven’s ballet music *The Creatures of Prometheus* (conducted by Karl Anton Rickenbacher and released on RCA Red Seal label), which became the bestseller of the BMG Company. Several collaborations and tour of Japan with young Russian trumpet player Sergei Nakariakov led to the recording of the album *Echoes from the Past* featuring transcriptions of concerti by Hummel, Mozart, Weber and Saint-Saëns (Teldec Classics, 2002), which received 5 stars in the Classic CD category. In 2016, the world’s classical record leader Deutsche Grammophon released the CD of the Lithuanian collective (for the first time!) featuring LCO and Sergej Krylov in Vivaldi’s *Seasons* as well as Concerti No 8 and No 9 for violin and strings. With this CD the LCO is the first Lithuanian collective to enter the world’s classical music elite.

Along with performances of Baroque and classical masterpieces, the Orchestra has frequently included contemporary opuses in its programmes and recordings. It has always been an active promoter of Lithuanian music, having performed works by Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, Eduardas Balsys, Julius Juzeliūnas, Osvaldas Balakauskas, Teisutis Makačinas, Jonas Tamulionis, Algirdas Martinaitis, Mindaugas Urbaitis, Arvydas Malcys, Vidmantas Bartulis, Raminta Šerkšnytė, Justė Janulytė, Loreta Narvilaitė, Žibuoklė Martinaitytė and Ramūnas Motiekaitis.

In recent years the LCO appeared in Luxembourg, Spain, Switzerland, Slovenia, Poland and China, toured Costa Rica and Italy. In 2018, the Orchestra presented programme *Freedom of the Baltics* dedicated to the Centennial of the Restored State of Lithuania in Lebanon (Emile Bustani Hall in Beirut), Lithuania and Estonia; represented the restoration of Lithuanian State in gala concert together with pianist Mūza Rubackytė and conductor Robertas Šervenikas at the Gaveau Hall in Paris.

Today the LCO not only keeps the high standard of artistic excellence but also explores new creative resources and presents original programmes each year. “The Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra is like the finest quality instrument, having the distinctive sound and traditions of performance. I rank this Orchestra among the leaders of the genre. Sixty years is a long history. Not so many orchestras in Europe can pride themselves on such glorious past,” says violinist Sergej Krylov who has been appointed the artistic director of the LCO in December 2008, after several successful appearances at the National Philharmonic in Vilnius. His broad purview and contacts in the musical world, as well as polished musicianship and professional experience raised the Orchestra to the next professional level. The critics have not spared accolades in describing a dynamic musical partnership between the Orchestra and its new leader: “an absolute attunement between the violinist-conductor and the orchestra,” “the charming and aristocratic gallantry, without improper familiarity, but with confidence in each other.” (*atgimimas.lt*)

“I demand from the Orchestra what I am endeavouring myself: to achieve the best instrumental and technical quality of performance; to be constantly involved in searching for the new approaches to interpretation. I believe it is achievable and the LCO is worthy of its deserved place among the top ten chamber orchestras in Europe,” aspires Krylov, whose ambitious plans stimulate the members of the LCO to muster up the strength and energy for new creative challenges.

Artistic Director and Conductor – **Sergej Krylov**

Manager – **Egidijus Mikšys**

*\*\*\**

**The LCO’s short biography**

Founded in 1960 by Professor Saulius Sondeckis the **Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra** (LCO) today enters its sixtieth season. The LCO is one of the most outstanding and highly acclaimed Lithuanian ensembles in the world. For twelve years, since 2008, the renowned violin virtuoso Sergej Krylov has served as its artistic director and conductor.

Over the years tour itineraries of the LCO, an ambassador of Lithuanian music culture, have covered the length and breadth of Europe, reached both Americas, the Republic of South Africa, Japan, China, Australia and Iceland. The LCO has graced the stages of Berlin Philharmonie and Vienna’s Musikverein, London’s Royal Festival Hall, Rome’s Santa Cecilia, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, Leipzig’s Gewandhaus, Paris’ Salle Pleyel and Salle Gaveau and many more. The LCO has collaborated with Mstislav Rostropovich, Gidon Kremer, Yuri Bashmet, David Geringas and other prominent musicians. The great musician and humanist Lord Yehudi Menuhin left a deep imprint on the Orchestra’s biography.

The LCO performed with violinists Julian Rachlin, Vadim Repin and Sergej Krylov, viola players Maxim Rysanov and Hartmut Rohde, cellists Mischa Maisky and Denis Shapovalov, pianists Mūza Rubackytė, Andrius Žlabys, Lukas Geniušas, Dmitri Bashkirov and Alessandro Deljavan, flutist Denis Bouriakov, conductors Ronald Zollman and Modestas Pitrėnas, as well as composer, pianist and conductor Ezio Bosso. In recent years the LCO has given concerts in Luxembourg, Spain, Switzerland, Slovenia, Poland, China, Italy, Costa Rica and Lebanon.

In addition to baroque and classical masterpieces, interpretations of contemporary music occupy an important place in the Orchestra’s concert programs. Being an ardent champion of the works of Lithuanian composers, the LCO often performs opuses by Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, Eduardas Balsys, Julius Juzeliūnas, Osvaldas Balakauskas, Teisutis Makačinas, Jonas Tamulionis, Algirdas Martinaitis, Mindaugas Urbaitis, Arvydas Malcys, Vidmantas Bartulis, Raminta Šerkšnytė, Justė Janulytė and Loreta Narvilaitė.

The LCO has recorded over 100 vinyl and CDs showcasing the most diverse repertoire. In 2016, Deutsche Grammophon, the world’s most renowned classical music record label, released the first CD of the Lithuanian ensemble featuring the LCO and Sergej Krylov in Antonio Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* as well as Concerti No. 8 and No. 9 for violin and strings. With this CD, the LCO became the first Lithuanian ensemble to enter the elite of the world’s classical music.

*LNPhS information, 2021*