**VILNIUS STRING QUARTET**

**DALIA KUZNECOVAITĖ** (1st violin)
**ALGIRDAS ŠOCHAS** (2nd violin)
**KRISTINA ANUSEVIČIŪTĖ** (viola)
**VIKTOR REKALO** (cello)

**The Vilnius String Quartet**, a recipient of several prestigious prizes, has been enjoying the reputation of one of the leading collectives in the cultural life of Lithuania. Its performances have won accolades both in Lithuania and abroad. Having made its debut in 1965, the Quartet garnered the first prize at the International String Quartet Competition in Liege (Belgium) in 1972; in 1973, it was named after the city of Vilnius. In 1979, the Quartet received the State Prize, in 2002 – Dr. Antanas Razma prize of the Lithuanian Foundation (USA), in 2004 – the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Arts, in 2005 – the Baltic Assembly Prize. In 2012, for its contribution to culture the Vilnius String Quartet was honoured with the St. Christopher Statuette.

In 2015, Prof. Audronė Vainiūnaitė, the Vilnius String Quartet’s principal violin since day one, handed over the duties of first violin to her student, violinist Dalia Kuznecovaitė, and in 2020 cellist Augustinas Vasiliauskas, who had been playing in the Quartet for five decades, retreated. The year 2023 the ensemble welcomes Dalia Kuznecovaitė (1st violin), Algirdas Šochas (2nd violin), Kristina Anusevičiūtė (viola) and cellist Viktor Rekalo (Ukraine).

The Vilnius String Quartet has always seen its mission in putting its namesake on the world map. Having toured around the world, the Quartet has appeared in the world’s top concert halls, such as the Carnegie Hall in New York, Gewandhaus in Leipzig, Musikverein in Vienna, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Bayerische Rundfunk in Munich, Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto, Salle Olivier Messiaen in Grenoble, Mozarteum in Salzburg, etc. In 2013, on occasion of Lithuania’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union the Vilnius String Quartet has given concerts in Egypt and France. The Quartet has represented Lithuania at numerous international festivals such as Bregenz (Austria), Echternach and Bourglinster (Luxembourg), Cervantes (Mexico), Kuhmo and Naantali (Finland), “Liturgical Calendar” (Italy), “Schreyahner Herbst”, “Musica viva”, “Ükermerkische Woche” and Schleswig-Holstein (Germany), the Ohio State University (USA), Mill Hill (Great Britain), “Rencontres musicales le Prée”, “De Radio France et Montpellier”, Hector Berlioz, “West-East”, “Les Hautes-Pyrénées” and “Lisztomania” (France), “West Cork” (Ireland), Vilnius, Pažaislis, “Gaida”, “Thomas Mann” and Festival of String Quartets of Vilnius (Lithuania), etc.

In 2018, on occasion of the centenary of the restoration of the Lithuanian state, the concert tours took the Vilnius String Quartet from Vilnius to Tel Aviv and Jafa in Israel, Kyiv, Lviv, Ivano Frankivsk and Dnipro in Ukraine. The Quartet presented various concerts and the educational programme “Lithuanian Music for the 100th Anniversary of Lithuania” in Lithuanian cities and towns.

The Vilnius String Quartet has collaborated with both renowned masters and young performers such as Tatyana Nikolayeva, Mikhail Pletnev, Michel Lethiec, David Geringas, Yury Bashmet, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Mūza Rubackytė, Andrius Žlabys, Golda Vainberg-Tatz, Vytautas Sondeckis, Jonė Kaliūnaitė, Indrė Petrauskaitė, Merūnas Vitulskis, Jomantė Šležaitė, Jurgis Karnavičius, Guoda Gedvilaitė, Zubovas Piano Duo, Ugnius Pauliukonis, Onutė Gražinytė, Viktor Paley, Dovilė Kazonaitė, Katerina Diadura, and others.

The Vilnius String Quartet’s intriguing and remarkable programmes and concert series draw numerous audiences, refine their musical taste, introduce the Lithuanian listeners with both the music masterpieces and lesser-known repertoire, illustrious performers and talented aspiring musicians. The Quartet has accomplished concert series “Art Masters of the World and Vilnius String Quartet”, “Music for String Quartet by Lithuanian Composers”, “Complete String Quartets by Beethoven”, “Complete String Quartets by Haydn”, a series of six concerts “Soirees of Romantic and Contemporary Lithuanian Music”, a series of fifteen concerts “Soirees of Chamber Music of Countries of European Union”, a series of eight concerts “Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Vienna”, a series of nine programs “Quartet and Piano”, etc. Annually, the Vilnius String Quartet presents programmes “New Year Eve Evenings with Vilnius String Quartet”, “The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross” by Haydn (during the Holy Week); regularly takes part in family concerts, educational programmes, carries on with a tradition of concert series “Young Lithuanian talents and the Vilnius String Quartet”. The Quartet annually presents its connoisseurs with new opuses focusing on Lithuanian music – has performed more than 100 works (half of them being especially dedicated to the ensemble) by Lithuanian composers.

The Vilnius String Quartet’s numerous recordings are housed at the Lithuanian Radio archives. The Quartet’s record credits currently include over 40 vinyl records and CDs on various Lithuanian, Russian, German, French, Finnish, Swedish, British and American labels. In 2010, a CD of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis’ works for string quartet was released in Sankt Petersburg; together with other performers the Quartet has recorded a CD of Jeronimas Kačinskas’ chamber music. 2011 saw a release of the Quartet’s CDs dedicated to Robert Schumann’s 200th birth anniversary and featuring tenor Merūnas Vitulskis and soprano Ona Kolobovaitė. In 2012, the Quartet and bass Liudas Mikalauskas recorded a CD *In the Voice of Maironis* (introduced at the concert in the LR Seimas on August 9th, 2012, on occasion of the World Lithuanian Congress). In 2012–2013, the LNPh released two CDs documenting *Intro musica* concert series recorded with flutist Vilmantė Kaziulytė, clarinettist Vytautas Giedraitis and organist Karolina Juodelytė. In 2012 and 2013, the major record label Toccata Classics released CDs of Vladas Jakubėnas and Jeronimas Kačinskas’ chamber music (which included several opuses recorded by the Vilnius String Quartet). In 2019, the Vilnius String Quartet and soprano Asta Krikščiūnaitė recorded Arvydas Malcys’ Jasmine’s Song featured on the composer’s personal CD.

In 2020, commissioned by Ondine, the most famous Finnish classical and contemporary music record label, the Vilnius String Quartet recorded complete string quartets by Jurgis Karnavičius, the Lithuanian music classic. The first two opuses were recorded with Augustinas Vasiliauskas, the Quartet’s long-time cellist, and No. 3 and No. 4 – with his student Deividas Dumčius.

“In the light of the Quartet’s 55th anniversary, I would like to think about the shocks and upheavals of the 21st century, about this time, which is capable of bringing the cultural process to the background, stopping the continuation of traditions, locking down within. The passing on of cultural tradition stands for perpetual struggle with destructive force, with oblivion. Who else if not us, the representatives of the cultural world, are responsible for the survival of art, for the foundations of tomorrow’s culture, for the values ​​we will be guided by in life? I see it as one of my and the Quartet’s biggest responsibilities and tasks”, said Dalia Kuznecovaitė, the first violin of the Vilnius String Quartet.

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**The VSQ’s short biography**

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*LNPh information*