**ROBERTAS ŠERVENIKAS – Conductor**

**Robertas Šervenikas** (b. 1966) is the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Kaunas State Choir (since 2021). He also serves as the Second Conductor of the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra (LNSO), with which he started working in 1993.

Šervenikas is especially praised for the intensive and diverse creative activities ranging from the first performances of large-scale symphonic compositions by Lithuanian composers to distinctive and mature interpretations of contemporary and classical repertoire. Maestro pays equal attention to opera, ballet and symphonic music, with a special emphasis on contemporary opuses.

Šervenikas is the first performer of many works by Lithuanian composers, among which most memorable are a terrific production of O. Narbutaitė’s opera *Cornet* presented with the LNOBT company, performance of such majestic opuses as Algirdas Martinaitis’ *Pieta*, Onutė Narbutaitė’s *Tres Dei Matris Symphoniae*, Vidmantas Bartulis’ *Poor Little Man Job* together with the ensembles of the LNOBT and the Lithuanian National Philharmonic Society. The conductor regularly participates in contemporary music festivals in Lithuania (*Gaida*, *Jauna muzika*, *Iš arti*, *Marių klavyrai*) as well as Vilnius Festival. He has recorded several dozen CDs of contemporary music, many of them issued by Naxos, Finlandia Records and other record companies.

Šervenikas began working with the LNSO in 1993. The maestro led this orchestra in Rheingau, Ludwigsburg and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany), Forbach, Berlioz and Evian (France), A. Benedetti-Michelangeli (Italy), Vilnius, *Gaida* and other festivals.

Šervenikas’ international career was launched in 1997, when Mstislav Rostropovich invited him as an assistant in the production of Prokofiev’s ballet Romeo and Juliet at the Evian Festival. Since 1998, the tandem has repeatedly shared the stage of the world’s major concert halls. Šervenikas has been invited to conduct Israel Camerata, St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra and the National Opera Orchestra, the Russian State Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic (Great Britain) among other foreign orchestras. In addition, he regularly collaborates with the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra. Maestro has led various orchestras in almost all European countries, Japan, South Korea, China, Thailand, Republic of South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, Oman, Israel and Russia. He has graced the podium in such halls as the Great Hall of the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Auditorium de Nationale in Madrid, Alte Oper in Frankfurt, Cadogan Hall in London, Konzerthaus in Berlin, Festival Hall and Symphony Hall in Osaka, Tokyo Suntory Hall, Metropolitan Art Space, as well as the philharmonic halls of Cologne, Hamburg, St. Petersburg and Moscow. The German daily *Der Tagesspiegel* wrote:

*“The way Šervenikas lightens the density of texture, punctuates transitions and electrifies the development till the last highly tense outbreak, reveals his truly international level. No less than the fact how the orchestra follows him with great attention, combines passion with professional precision.”*

Prior to the pandemic, the conductor’s recent concert tours stretched across Germany, Sweden, and Mexico.

Maestro has collaborated with cellists Mstislav Rostropovich, David Geringas and Mischa Maisky, trumpeter Maurice André, pianists Denis Matsuev, Arcadi Volodos, Mikhail Pletnev and Freddy Kempf, violinists Sarah Chang, Maxim Fedotov and Julian Rachlin, violists Wolfram Christ and Yury Bashmet to name but a few.

2017 saw a release of CD featuring British contemporary composer Peter Fribbins’ music in a performance of the Scottish Royal National Symphony Orchestra led by Šervenikas (Resonus Classics), 2018 – a new release of M.K. Čiurlionis’ symphonic poems under Maestro’s baton.

Opera and ballet occupy an important place in Šervenikas’ repertoire. In 2008–2018, he served as the Music Director at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, where he was instrumental in the production of many operas (Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*, Verdi’s *La traviata*, Bizet’s *Carmen*, J. Tamulionis’ *The Tiny Lingonberry*, Ponchielli’s *I Lituani*, Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin*, Wagner’s *Lohengrin*, O. Narbutaitė’s *Cornet*, Bartók’s *Bluebeard’s Castle*) and ballets (*Barbora Radvilaitė*, A. Šenderovas’ *Desdemona*, Delibes’ *Coppélia*, G. Kuprevičius’ *Čiurlionis*, Bartók’s *Miraculous Mandarin*). His repertoire also includes ballets *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Red Giselle*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Giselle* and *Don Quixote*.

Since 2008, he has enjoyed invitations to conduct at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. The recent rave reviews about Maestro Šervenikas’ triumphant reception at the Bavarian State Opera of Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker* staged by a celebrated American choreographer John Neumeier came from Munich. *Abendzeitung Munich* wroteon December 11, 2018:

*“Conductor Robertas Šervenikas, in full harmony with the dancing on the stage, made the Bavarian State Orchestra play melodiously and velvety.”*

On the same day *Süddeutsche Zeitung* lauded:

*“Thanks to Robertas Šervenikas at the conductors stand you will hear Tchaikovsky quite anew, shining and brilliant.”*

The following was written about *Romeo and Juliet* in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*:

*“The Bavarian State Orchestra, conducted by Robertas Šervenikas, revealed all the values ​​of Sergei Prokofiev’s music. The long journey of Romeo and Juliet to death and the awakening to a flowering life was wonderfully conveyed.”*

Šervenikas has also conducted the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra at the World Ballet Festivals in Japan. In 2020, he made his debut at the Zurich Opera House with the production of the ballet *Sleeping Beauty* under the pandemic conditions (conducted the orchestra from the rehearsal hall while the artists danced in the theatre). After the premiere, critics wrote:

*“The sound was amazingly in sync. R. Šervenikas conveyed Tchaikovsky’s rich score not only enthusiastically, but also very subtly”* (*Oper actuell*);

*“Tchaikovsky’s music sounds wonderful not in the opera house, but in the rehearsal hall. But still live. Conductor R. Šervenikas and violinist H. Weinmeister were charming”* (*Tanznetz.de*);

*“The conductor’s pace showed determination, self-confidence – regardless of the expensive equipment, we felt as if back to the good old days of tape recordings”* (*Neue Zurcher Zeitung*);

*“Robertas Šervenikas conducted in the rehearsal hall, one kilometre apart from the opera house. The music was broadcast via fiber-optic cable and sounded really amazingly considering the empty orchestra pit. The musicians could hear a round of applause for* Sleeping Beauty *and the ballet”* (*Dance for you*).

For his intensive creative work Šervenikas was honoured with the highest Lithuanian award – the Lithuanian National Arts and Culture Prize in 2005. In 2016, in recognition of his accomplishments and contribution to Lithuanian culture and art the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania decorated Maestro with insignia “Carry Your Light and Believe”.

After graduating from M.K. Čiurlionis School of Arts, Šervenikas furthered his education at the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory in St. Petersburg, where he studied choral, opera and orchestral conducting. Since 1996, he has taught at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre; is a professor at the Conducting Department. In 1996–2012, he has served as the conductor of the LAMT Symphony Orchestra. In the *young.euro.classic* festival in Berlin (2002), he led the LAMT Symphony Orchestra in the premiere of Anatolijus Šenderovas’ *Concerto in Do*, which received very favourable reviews in Germany and Lithuania (soloist – cellist David Geringas). Maestro is regularly invited to be a jury member in various competitions. For a number of years, he has served as an Artistic Director of the International Tytuvėnai Summer Festival and Chaim Frenkel Festival in Šiauliai.

\*\*\*

Short biography:

Bringing greatest number of the new symphonic works by Lithuanian composers to life, **ROBERTAS ŠERVENIKAS** has served as the Second Conductor of the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra (LNSO) since 2000, and since 2021 he has been the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Kaunas State Choir.

Admired for his active and diverse creative activities, his impressive and mature interpretations of both classical and contemporary repertoire, as well as promotion of Lithuanian music the conductor is regularly invited to conduct at major contemporary music festivals in Lithuania and abroad.

The 2024-2025 season is full of important events for Šervenikas, including concerts with the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, his debut at the Opéra *National* de *Bordeaux* in France, productions at the Gran Teatre del Liceu of Barcelona, performances with the Kaunas State Choir of Mahler’s monumental symphonies No. 2 and No. 8, Verdi’s *Requiem*, Britten’s *War Requiem*, L. Boulanger’s *Du fond de l’abîme* (From the Depths of the Abyss, based on Psalm 130), recording of Narbutaitė’s oratorio *Centones meae urbi* (Patchwork for My City), the Choir’s tour with the London Symphony Orchestra. The Maestro was decorated with the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Merit for Lithuania.

Šervenikas’ international career was launched, when the renowned cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich invited him as an assistant at the 1997 Evian Festival. From 2008 to 2018, Šervenikas served as Music Director of the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, and in 2016 he was awarded the Ministry of Culture’s Honorary Badge of Merit “Carry Your Light and Believe”. Since 2008, Šervenikas has been a welcome guest at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, made his debut at the Oslo Opera House in 2019 and at the Zurich Opera House in 2020. Recipient of the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Art, Professor of the Conducting Department of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, he has performed in almost all European countries and on other continents and has collaborated with the world’s leading soloists.