



ONDINE

ALGIRDAS
MARTINAITIS

Seasons and Serenades
Works for String Orchestra

Rūta Lipinaitytė, violin
Asta Kriškčiūnaitytė, soprano

St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra
Modestas Barkauskas



ALGIRDAS MARTINAITIS

ALGIRDAS MARTINAITIS (b. 1950)

The Three M'art Comedy Seasons

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------|
| | (Trijų M'art komedijų sezonas) (2014) for violin and string orchestra | 21:59 |
| 1 | I. Commedia Dell'arte Seasons | 8:05 |
| 2 | II. Ballet-Comedy Seasons | 6:41 |
| 3 | III. La Caccia Comedy Seasons | 7:13 |
| 4 | Artizarra (2001) for string orchestra and harpsichord | 5:07 |
| 5 | Serenade for Mistress Europe (Serenada panelei Europai) (1999)
for string orchestra | 18:31 |
| 6 | Birds of Eden (Rojaus paukščiai) (1981) for string orchestra | 8:43 |
| 7 | Valse triste (2020) for soprano and string orchestra | 6:25 |
| 8 | Chant de la Lointaine (2014) for soprano, string orchestra and piano | 12:23 |

Rūta Lipinaitytė, violin (1–3)

Asta Krikščiūnaitė, soprano (7–8)

Daumantas Slipkus, harpsichord and piano (4, 8)

St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra

Modestas Barkauskas, conductor

The Divine and the Comic

Classical music in Lithuania has eternally been at a crossroads, stuck between the traditions of Germany, Austria, Poland, and Russia. It is no surprise that contemporary figures like Algirdas Martinaitis musically seems continually within his own crossroads.

Martinaitis (1950*), like his colleagues Vidmantas Bartulis (1954–2020), Onutė Narbutaitė (1956*), and Anatolijus Šenderovas (1945–2019), cut his musical teeth at a time of great socio-political change, challenge, and ultimately, confusion. Though there are assumptions that musical life in the Eastern Bloc was pretty 'stagnant', the reality is a bit more complex due to changes a wide variety of factors, either through which tutors were where, opinions of leaders, or even curiosities of different nationalities; ultimately meaning the unique nature of Lithuania and Lithuanian music became a powerful conduit to shape composers.

Lithuania was in a unique position, due to its closeness to Poland, and as Pēteris Vasks has highlighted; due to the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (Lietuvos Tarybų Socialistinė Respublika) being more liberal than other members of the Soviet Union, this allowed many musical experiments to come in from abroad – The Warsaw Autumn and the connections to the Fluxus Movement in New York being the most significant. Since declaring independence from the Soviet Union, Lithuania has still been in a state of flux, be it finding its feet as an independent nation, it's shift towards EU membership, or its current political waves. All these changes have meant composers have had changing and differing roles and impact within the Baltic nation.

So, when you combine a nation with a curious and unique history and a time of significant socio-political change (most notably in the 1980s), it is little surprise a composer who graduated their studies in 1978 would be such an eclectic musical figure. Much like his aforementioned colleagues, the pressing issue for Martinaitis' music has been history, heritage, and national identity. For Lithuanian artists in all fields, the question of history and national identity continues to be a complex issue, ultimately fighting between elements of pride and upset about the past, a curious dialectical relationship has evolved where artists love being a free Lithuanian but are proud of a lot of Lithuanian history. This dynamic, particularly present in Martinaitis' work,

has produced a quality that dances between a serene beauty and sincerity before collapsing into an almost sarcastic nihilism.

For keen fans of music within the Baltic states, Algirdas Martinaitis is quite a familiar name, however his reputation (like most other Lithuanian composers) has struggled to become ingrained into Western European ears, which makes the nature of this album even more important.

Algirdas Martinaitis, began his compositional studies in the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (Lietuvos Muzikos ir Teatro Akademija) with Eduardas Balsys. His early career saw him working in theatre, among other idioms, before becoming the director of the Academic Drama Theatre in 1995, as well as receiving notable accolades like the Lithuanian National Award in 1989. His early chamber works *Cantus Ad futurum*, *Birds of Eden* (*Rojaus paukščiai*), and *Music of the Last Gardens* (*Paskutinių sodų muzika*) demonstrated his unique voice and his delicate dance between ancient idioms and naturalistic visions. These works are what saw him grouped with the neo-romantic movement within Lithuania. However, never wanting to be predictable or stuck in an idiom, he later shifted to a newer style which he nominally calls *new animality*. Within this style, much like Henryk Górecki's 'circus pieces', sarcasm, irony, and subversion of expectations become central to the music making. In more recent years, his music does not seem to be softening, his wit and sarcasm is as sharp as ever – however one feels with age it is getting finer, almost like a fine whisky it is delectable, sharp, and surprising.

The works featured in this album give a very broad vision of the composer, and all centre around the St. Christopher's Orchestra (Šv. Kristoforo kamerinis orkestras) who since their foundation in 1994 have played a vital role in contemporary music in Lithuania. ***Trijų M'art komedijų sezonas*** (The Three M'art Comedy Seasons) for solo violin and strings makes numerous references, not least to the famous *Seasons* of Vivaldi, but also to the *Commedia Dell'arte*, *La Caccia*, and comic-ballet. The three variations show a different light to comic and satirical thinking. The opening *Commedia Dell'arte Season* creates a comic reflection of the pomp and stereotypes often associated with the classical comic Italian performances. One could imagine the shifts in musical character are like appearances of new characters showing the comic and silly nature of their

lives. The *Ballet-Comedy Season* drawing upon the often allegorical nature of the form evokes an almost Tchaikovskian ballet, with the bold rumblings, before slowly opening up a traditional dance – with an almost stereotypical Slavic character. The season takes on a scherzo-like quality, in the sense of rhythmic character, the comic nature often reserved for scherzos is certainly not in low supply in the other seasons. Towards the end of the season, we feel a shift into a musical environment akin to Shostakovich, another composer renowned for his scherzos. The final season, *La Caccia Season* (the hunt) is a reference to Vivaldi again. The energised nature of the soloist, evokes memories of the seasons, as well as the emotive sensation of a hunt. The concluding appearance of Vivaldi, though short lived, feels like a hell of a punchline after all the energised heroics of the hunt which preceded it.

Artizarra for string orchestra and harpsichord 2001 has an energised and bouncy nature which is comparable to J. S. Bach's concerti for multiple harpsichords or the latter movement of Górecki's concerto for the instrument. The modal figures allow for increasingly intricate patterns to emerge born out of a harsh single note. And much like Martinaitis' older 'classic' work *Cantus ad Futurum* the harpsichord plays an ornamental role – with the instrument either decorating the key melodic line or embellishing it with its unique timbre. The end comes after an abrupt halt, which unlike the aforementioned comparable works, this almost empty conclusion leaves a question of what purpose did the early energy bring?

Serenada panelei Europai (Serenade for Mistress Europe) for string orchestra written in 1999 brings to question European tradition while also having jovial moments to poke fun at it. One could say a thorough inspection of tradition, history, and legacy while never taking itself too seriously. The barrage of perfect cadences is repeated ad nauseum depriving them of their normal feeling of completion, allowing all material that follows, no matter how abstract or familiar, to feel connected while equally alien. Though we are playfully forced into an uncanny musical situation, the moments of beauty that creep out and fade into nothing can be incredibly touching, and almost made more beautiful by the brevity amidst the hustle and bustle of what precedes and follows it.

Rojaus paukščiai (Birds of Eden) written in 2016 for string orchestra is a reworking of his 1981 seminal work for four electric cellos (also of the same name). Written in his 'neo-romantic' phase, the circling musical patterns are akin to a woven mat of small gestures which twist and turn into much larger musical and colourful shapes. Though lacking the wonderful gritty character of the electrified original, the beauty and energy is not lost. The chattering birds in dialogue with the longer, more serene birdcalls, make a truly wonderful harmonious whole.

The final two works, are two separate settings of words by Oscar Vladislas de Lubicz Milosz. ***Valse Triste*** written in 2020 and ***Chant de le lointaine*** from 2014. The choice of Milosz is particularly significant when one considered his importance for Lithuania as a diplomat in the League of Nations. Both works written a few years either side of Lithuania's centenary in 2018, shows Martinaitis more deeply reflecting his identity, and question what modern Lithuania wishes to be. These works show a deep sincerity and longing. As Milosz is famously quoted "I am a Lithuanian poet, writing in French" we see the complexity and uncertainty of what it means to be Lithuanian – as the nation has changed massively over the generations, with borders, language, ideology, and ideas falling to dust with them. In these two settings by Martinaitis, we hear a deeply concerned composer searching for answers he is yet to find, which ultimately adds a new understanding of his more satirical works, it gives them a certain frustration and annoyance – why love or hate a tradition you are unsure even applies to you?

Ben Lunn

RŪTA LIPINAITYTĖ studied at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. Studies in Lithuania were combined with studies at the Malmö Academy of Music in Sweden with Prof. Alexander Fischer on violin and later at the Paris Conservatory of Music and Dance in the violin class of Boris Garlitzky. In 2004 she earned a Master's degree (violin classes by Prof. Raimundas Katilius and Prof. Undinė Jagėlaitė). In 2008 Rūta Lipinaitytė published her thesis on principles of chamber orchestra performance and was granted PhD degree by the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre.

As a soloist, she has appeared with numerous orchestras including Dresden, Brno and Qatar Philharmonic, Croatian Radio Symphony, Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, and with Kremerata Baltica, Lithuanian, St. Christopher, Tallinn, Klaipėda, VDU, Šiauliai and Arkhangelsk Chamber Orchestras, Accademia d'Archi Arrigoni Chamber Orchestra and Moscow Chamber orchestra "The Seasons", to name a few.

Although the repertoire of Rūta Lipinaitytė is versatile and diverse, Lithuanian contemporary music remains at the heart of the violinist. Lipinaitytė has released several music albums with Lithuanian music. In addition, there are more than 30 audio recordings in the Lithuanian radio archives with performances together with various Lithuanian orchestras and a video cycle on Lithuanian music which includes more than 20 pieces for violin solo. Also a video recording of J. Corigliano's "Red Violin" concerto with Lipinaitytė as soloist has been released together with the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Keri-Lynn Wilson.

Rūta Lipinaitytė was a member of the Grammy-winning Kremerata Baltica orchestra, established and headed by Gidon Kremer, since its foundation from 1998 to 2014. During 2004–09 the violinist was a member of the Kremerata Baltica Sextet.

The violinist is often invited to participate in various orchestral projects as Concertmaster or Assistant Concertmaster. In 2015 and 2017, Lipinaitytė was Concertmaster of the East-West Chamber Orchestra in the International J. Bashmet Festival and in 2016 she was guest Concertmaster of the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra. In 2019 the violinist was invited on tour with the Stuttgart SWR Symphony Orchestra as Assistant Concertmaster and performed in Russia, Japan and Europe with the MusicAeterna Symphony Orchestra led by Teodor Currentzis.

Lipinaitytė has been awarded several times with the State Scholarships for Lithuanian Artists, and in 2020 the violinist received the Golden Disc Award of the Lithuanian Musicians' Union in the solo instrumentalist category.

Currently Lipinaitytė is professor of violin, and since 2015, the head of the string department at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. There are winners of both national and international violin competitions among her students. She often gives violin master classes and has been invited as a member of the jury at national and international violin competitions (including J. Heifetz and V. Huml).

rutilipinaityte.com



ST. CHRISTOPHER CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The beauty and clarity of **ASTA KRIKŠČIŪNAITĖ**'s (soprano) voice were noticed at a very early stage – she was awarded a Diploma at L. Pavarotti International Voice Competition in Philadelphia (USA); later she furthered her professional skills in the USA, where she studied under the tutelage of famous vocal teachers.

The sophisticated palette of the singer's voice – from gentle lyricism to profound dramatism – offers the ability to perform the music of various genres. During her professional career, she has performed operas, oratorios, chamber music, Lied, and contemporary works, among others. Krikščiūnaitė has created memorable roles in opera theaters and has performed under the baton Lord Y. Menuhin, M. Rostropovich, A. Volmer, A. Mustonen, M. Sidlin, K. Penderecki, J. Domarkas, S. Sondeckis, K. Cord, P. Berman, and F. Zehnder.

The soloist collaborates with Lithuanian and foreign symphonic and chamber orchestras, and has performed in prestigious concert halls and at European music festivals, such as Musica Sacra Nuremberg, Ljubljana Festival, Potsdam Sanssouci, Rheingau, Kammermusikfest Hopfgarten, Ch. Milosz Festivali in Krakow, among others. Krikščiūnaitė's performances have been highly valued at the Warsaw National Philharmonic, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, the Luxembourg Palace, the French Senate in Paris, the Royal Palace and the Music University in Warsaw, the Black Diamond Hall in Copenhagen, the Essen Philharmonic Hall, the Tampere Concert Hall, the Great Hall of Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory, the Glinka State Academy in St. Petersburg, the Slovenian Philharmonic, and collaborations with the Lithuanian, Polish, Estonian and Israeli National Operas.

Krikščiūnaitė's performances have been broadcasted live on Euroradio, and her recordings played on BBC and BBC2, Norwegian P2, Lithuanian, Estonian, Israeli National, and Italian RAI radio stations.

Krikščiūnaitė's merits in Lithuanian culture have been recognized by the Lithuanian National Culture and Art Prize. For her contributions to the Estonian and Polish culture, she has received the Order of the White Star of Estonia and the Honorary Prize of the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Poland. Krikščiūnaitė is professor and Head of the Department of Vocal Performance at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre.

The Vilnius City Municipality **ST. CHRISTOPHER CHAMBER ORCHESTRA** (Artistic Director and Chief Conductor: Modestas Barkauskas; Honorary Conductor: Donatas Katkus) is a collective known for its versatility, professionalism, and artistic imagination. The orchestra is a welcome guest not only in the prestigious concert halls of Lithuania but also abroad, such as the Paris Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Reykjavik Harpa, Berwaldhallen in Stockholm, the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, the Royal Palace of Warsaw, St. Petersburg's Glinka Hall, Moscow's Tchaikovsky Conservatory, to name a few.

The orchestra was formed in 1994 by the initiative of prof. Donatas Katkus who implemented the idea of setting up a baroque orchestra. There was little experience of performing music from this period in Lithuania at the time where most musicians had been trained based on the principles of the Russian romantic school. In February of the same year, talented young musicians from Vilnius gathered in the first dress rehearsal. In 1995 the ensemble was named after St. Christopher, the patron of Vilnius and travelers, in a ceremony directed by Monsignor Kazimieras Vasiliauskas at the Vilnius Cathedral.

From the first days of life of the orchestra, St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra has worked with great intensity gaining wide recognition in Lithuania and abroad. The orchestra has successfully represented Lithuania at international festivals, such as Strefa Cisy, Pärnu (Estonia), Europäisches Musikfest Münsterland, Cascade, Mystik und Maschine, Berlin Jazz, Hermann Hesse (Germany), Berlioz (France), Reykholt Chamber Music Festival (Iceland) and others; and in concert halls: Boston Symphony Hall, Warsaw Philharmonic, The Konzerthaus Berlin, and the St Petersburg Philharmonic. The orchestra cooperates with well-known Lithuanian and foreign collectives and soloists, including Kerstin Avemo (soprano), Charles Castronovo (tenor), Violeta Urmana (soprano), Alfredo Nigro (tenor), violonists Maksim Vengerov, Ivan Monighetti, Anton Barakhovsky, Jacques Israelievitch, Moti Shmidt, pianists Maria João Pires, Leonid Chizhik, Konstantin Lifschitz, Tamami Honma, Petras Geniušas, Julian Joseph, cellists David Geringas, Dominique de Williencourt, Marko Ylönen and Maria Kliegel, and also with Camilla Hoitenga (flute), Petras Vyšniauskas (saxophone), Linda Maxey (marimba), and others.

Being an orchestra of the City of Vilnius, the ensemble tries to maintain a broad view of the common good and constantly engages itself in various charity events organized for the welfare of the city. Members from various social groups are also included in the concert audience enabled through the donations granted by various organizations, such as the National Blood Center, Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, and the National Defence Volunteer Forces.

www.kristoforas.lt

MODESTAS BARKAUSKAS is one of the most accomplished and well-known young Lithuanian conductors. In 2006–2013 he studied orchestral conducting with professor Juozas Domarkas. Modestas Barkauskas is artistic director and conductor of the Vilnius St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra and Vilnius B. Dvarionas Youth Symphony Orchestra. He lectures at the Conducting and Choir conducting Departments at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre.

In recent years, Barkauskas has presented many critically acclaimed programs with the Lithuanian National Symphony, Lithuanian Chamber and Latvian National Symphony Orchestras, Hamburger Camerata, Tallinn Chamber Orchestra and Baltic Academies Orchestra, to name a few.

Barkauskas' repertoire ranges from music of the 17th century to contemporary works and encompasses all genres: symphonic, operatic as well as chamber music. Barkauskas has dedicated his energy and passion to audiences of all age groups and has maintained a leading role in the development of a Family and Education Series conducting regularly concerts with the Lithuanian National Symphony orchestra, the Lithuanian opera, as well as performances of ballet classics and pop concert series. At the Lithuanian opera and ballet theatre he has premiered ballets *Carmen* (based on Bizet's opera), *Tristan und Isolde* (with music by Wagner), *"Bolero +"* based on music by Ravel, Mozart, Satie, Vivaldi, and Max Richter, *Der Prozess* composed by Mindaugas Urbaitis, and has conducted classic ballets *The Nutcracker*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cinderella*, and others.

In 2016 Modestas Barkauskas was acknowledged as young artist of the year and awarded with a Golden Stage Cross. In November the same year, Barkauskas became a laureate in a category of conductors at the St Petersburg M. Glinka Cappella festival competition. In November 2017, Modestas Barkauskas won the 3rd Prize and bronze baton in the prestigious X Grzegorz Fitelberg International Competition for Conductors in Katowice, Poland.

7

Valse triste

C'est la vieille chanson qui vient pleurer tout
bas
Dans le parc orphelin de jadis, c'est l'amère
Et chevrotante mélodie

Chante, chante donc, coeur, la vie invite

C'est la vieille chanson qui vient pleurer tout
bas
Du pauvre bon vieux temps qui ne reviendra
pas...

Sad Waltz

It's the old song that comes to weep very quietly
In the orphaned park of bygone days, it's the
bitter
And trembling melody

Sing, then do sing, heart, life invites

It's the old song that comes to weep very quietly
Of the poor good old days that won't come
back...

8

Chant de la lointaine

Ô mon amour lointain,
toutes ces choses sont si loin, mon amour
lointain

Je serai, dans ton coeur, mon amour
Je serai, ta Forêt, tes Nuages,
Je serai le sanglot de la bonne fontaine

Je serai, dans ton coeur, l'été sans fin des îles
du Sud

Je serai solitude, et serai la nuit

Mon amour, la couleur de la nuit
était belle comme la douleur
Toutes ces choses sont si loin

Ô mon amour,
la rose du silence au coin de cette bouche

Song of my faraway love

O my faraway love,
all these things are so far, my faraway love

I'll be, in your heart, my love
I'll be, your Forest, your Clouds,
I'll be the good fountain's sob

I'll be, in your heart, the endless summer of the
isles of the South

I'll be solitude, and I'll be the night

My love, the color of the night
was beautiful like the pain
all these things are so far

O my love,
the rose of silence in the corner of this mouth

Et dans ces mains de miel la coupe du
sommeil

and these honeyed hands the cup of sleep

Je serai, dans ton coeur, l'été sans fin des îles
du Sud

I'll be, in your heart, the endless summer of the
isles of the South

Je serai le sanglot de la bonne fontaine
Je serai solitude, o mon amour

I'll be the good fountain's sob
I'll be solitude, O my love

Texts: Oscar (Vladislas de Lubicz) Milosz (1877–1939)
(English translations: Susan Praeder)

This album was produced in cooperation with the Lithuanian Council for Culture
and VŠĮ Cantus firmus



Publisher: Music Information Center Lithuania (Three M'art Comedy Seasons); M/s

Recordings: Lithuanian National Culture Centre Recording Studio, Vilnius, February 2020

Executive Producer: Reijo Kiilunen

Recording Producers: Vilius Keras & Aleksandra Kerienė

Recording Engineer: Giedrė Žarėnaitė-Molenaar

Baltic Mobile Recordings | www.bmr.lt

© & © 2022 Ondine Oy, Helsinki

Booklet Editor: Joel Valkila

Cover: Shutterstock

Artist photos: Dmitrij Matvejev (Krikščiūnaitė & Lipinaitytė);

Rytis Šeškauskas (Barkauskas)



Asta Krikščiūnaitė



Modestas Barkauskas



ODE 1398-2

RŪTA LIPINAITYTĖ

ALGIRDAS MARTINAITIS (b. 1950)

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------|
| 1–3 | The Three M'art Comedy Seasons (2014)
for violin and string orchestra | 21:59 |
| 4 | Artizarra (2001) for string orchestra and harpsichord | 5:07 |
| 5 | Serenade for Mistress Europe (1999) for string orchestra | 18:31 |
| 6 | Birds of Eden (1981) for string orchestra | 8:43 |
| 7 | Valse triste (2020) for soprano and string orchestra | 6:25 |
| 8 | Chant de la Lointaine (2014)
for soprano, string orchestra and piano | 12:23 |

Rūta Lipinaitytė, violin (1–3)

Asta Krikščiūnaitė, soprano (7–8)

Daumantas Slipkus, harpsichord and piano (4, 8)

St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra

Modestas Barkauskas, conductor