



CHAUSSON
Poème de l'amour
et de la mer

BRITTEN
Les illuminations

Edgaras Montvidas

**Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra
Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra
Modestas Pitrenas**







Ernest Chausson		
(1855–1899)		
Poème de l'amour et de la mer, Op.19		
1	I. La Fleur des eaux	10:26
2	Interlude	2:34
3	II. La Mort de l'amour	13:14

Edgaras Montvidas, tenor
Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra
Modestas Pitrenas, conductor

Benjamin Britten		
(1913–1976)		
Les illuminations, Op.18		
4	I. Fanfare	2:00
5	II. Villes	2:27
6	IIIa. Phrase	1:11
7	IIIb. Antique	2:17
8	IV. Royauté	1:32
9	V. Marine	0:58
10	VI. Interlude	2:24
11	VII. Being Beauteous	2:57
12	VIII. Parade	2:40
13	IX. Départ	2:56

Camille Saint-Saëns		
(1835–1921)		
14	Extase	3:46

Edgaras Montvidas, tenor
Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra
Modestas Pitrenas, conductor





Julijus Grickevičius in conversation with Edgaras Montvidas and Modestas Pitrenas

Julijus Grickevičius

This program spans nearly a century of musical expression – from Camille Saint-Saëns's *Extase*, set to a poem by Victor Hugo written in 1835, the year of the composer's birth, to Benjamin Britten's *Illuminations*, composed in 1939.

How did the idea for this program first take shape for the two of you?

Edgaras Montvidas

Before taking on the orchestral version of Ernest Chausson's cycle, I had performed its piano version. At first, I couldn't even find an arrangement for tenor – even though, interestingly, at the premiere, the composer himself accompanied a tenor – an interesting aside. Britten's *Illuminations* was a delightful discovery. Modestas, if I remember correctly, it was your suggestion. That's how Britten entered my repertoire – though I've yet to sing in any of his operas.

Modestas Pitrenas

If I may jump in – first, I want to express my sincere admiration and deep respect for Edgaras as an artist. He has a rare gift for unfolding the inner life of a poem through music. That's what truly captivated me. And Julijus, if I may gently disagree: to me, this program doesn't feel scattered across time – quite the opposite. It strikes me as remarkably cohesive. Both poets – Jean Nicolas Rimbaud and Maurice Bouchor – were born around the same time. Their work

belongs to the realm of decadent poetry and speaks to the same historical moment. After hearing these cycles performed by a soprano, I felt Edgaras could convey them with exceptional subtlety and emotional resonance.

Julijus Grickevičius

In recordings and concert programs, Chausson's music is often paired with his other works, which makes sense, given that he led a meticulous life but died tragically in a bicycle accident, leaving behind a relatively modest œuvre. Similarly, *Illuminations* is usually performed alongside Britten's other vocal cycles. So what led you to place Chausson and Britten side by side?

Edgaras Montvidas

It really came down to circumstance. Both pieces were already part of our repertoire and fully prepared, so there wasn't a deliberate conceptual reason behind the pairing.

Modestas Pitrenas

Although recorded at different times and with different orchestras, both works feature the same soloist and were recorded in the same venue. I keep returning to the idea that it's the poetry that unites them – that's the real thread running through it all.

Edgaras Montvidas

Yes, taken together, it feels like a beautiful coincidence...

Modestas Pitrenas

If we even believe in coincidences. More likely, it reveals a kind of inner logic – something inevitable.

Julijus Grickevičius

When listening to Chausson's cycle, it feels as though the singer enters a kind of emotional refuge – a space suspended between centuries, where echoes of the past remain vivid and alive. The music offers generous space to both the soloist and the orchestra. Modestas, would you say Chausson's cycle creates a kind of artistic shelter?

Modestas Pitrenas

Like many late Romantic composers drawn toward the aesthetics of Impressionism, Chausson wrote with clarity, sensitivity, and a distilled, tightly woven sense of form. Though his body of work is relatively modest, his music stands out for its freshness, emotional richness, and subtle intensity. At times, it brushes against lyrical exaltation – yet never slips into sentimentality or pathos.

His music is suffused with shadow, with color, with the shimmer of half-tones – all of which prepare the listener for an experience shaped more by suggestion than assertion, more by silence than by direct statement. This veiled musical language has its roots in Romanticism, shaped by mentors such as César Franck and Richard Wagner. Yet, it already leans toward the aesthetic of the French Impressionists, including Debussy and Ravel, among others. That transition – from Romanticism into the evolving musical idiom of the twentieth century – feels deeply familiar to me. It's something I recognize and something I carry within.

Julijus Grickevičius

Edgaras, both of these cycles are performed by different voice types. As you mentioned, Chausson originally wrote his cycle for tenor, although baritones now dominate the recordings. How does vocal range shape interpretation?

And what distinct color does the tenor voice bring?

Edgaras Montvidas

I'd also mention that Britten's *Les Illuminations* was originally composed for soprano. A male voice, in a sense, anchors the music – it brings it closer to earth. The poetry feels less exalted, less celestial. Those ethereal qualities emerge more naturally with a female timbre. Even a high tenor carries a more grounded resonance – there's a kind of physicality in the male voice. It lends the music a certain muscularity, a weight and tension.

Both cycles adapt surprisingly well to different voice types, which isn't always the case. Take Strauss's *Four Last Songs* – there have been male interpretations, but the piece never truly takes flight that way. In our program, there's nothing out of reach for a tenor. The range is entirely comfortable. What matters most, though, is timbre – the color of the voice. That's what emotionally anchors this music. That's where its expressive truth lies.

Julijus Grickevičius

Les Illuminations is one of Britten's earliest vocal cycles – in many ways, his artistic debut. Listening to it, the orchestra feels almost kaleidoscopic: textures shift constantly, as if wandering through a dream. Modestas, how elusive is this score?

Modestas Pitrenas

In this work, Britten is discovering himself, translating artistic intuition into compositional technique. Though scored for string orchestra rather than full symphonic forces, the music reveals astonishing richness in texture and color. He brought to it his deep experience as a violist, conductor, and composer. His creative friendship with Dmitri Shostakovich – to whom he later dedicated his Fourteenth Symphony – also helped shape his artistic sensibility. That shared

creative spirit, that spiritual climate – the zeitgeist – compelled Britten to seek a new musical voice.

At the time, he had not yet committed to a singular artistic path. He was exploring many forms – ballets, operas, choral works, and oratorios – testing each possibility. This cycle presents a genuine challenge for the orchestra, yet it is also a beautiful journey through a landscape of shifting sonorities and colors.

Julijus Grickevičius

Let's pause for a moment to talk about timbre.

The score includes many interpretive cues – for example, at times the orchestra sounds like a guitar, and at the beginning, the strings almost seem to imitate brass instruments. What does the score suggest to the conductor?

Modestas Pitrenas

Much is already expressed in the text itself – it draws directly from poetry. These elements are quickly deciphered, but the composer also employs specific devices, such as the association you mentioned with wind instruments, as well as the ringing of bells and shimmering percussion. All of this conveys a certain message – one that feels especially relevant in these unsettled times, when so much raw tension runs through our geopolitical reality. Only an artist who attentively observes the world can truly understand it – and give it meaning.

Edgaras Montvidas

That message is repeated three times throughout the cycle: "I alone hold the key to this savage parade." As you said, it's as if the artist is viewing it from the outside.

Modestas Pitrėnas

Exactly. Britten brings that phrase to life by repeating it at the beginning, in the middle, and again at the end. It's a powerful, enduring idea. And the poetic imagery of the text naturally suggests a broad spectrum of orchestral colors.

Julijus Grickevičius

Edgaras, I once described your singing as that of a nimble horse galloping through a dream – and I'll add another metaphor: you seem like a runner built for both sprints and marathons, with a broad vocal range and bursts of vivid expression. What posed the greatest challenge?

Edgaras Montvidas

I've sung a great deal of chamber music, but in this project, performing with orchestra was a particularly special experience. Singing with piano accompaniment is like sketching; with orchestra, the sound must be shaped quite differently. Still, in this case, I wanted to sing with the orchestra as if I were singing with piano accompaniment – intimately, sensitively, and naturally. I think that worked, because above all, the most important thing is to remain true to your instrument – to your voice.

It's worth noting that this all unfolded during the pandemic – we couldn't work freely, but we were hungry for creativity and for the shared experience of making music together.

As I mentioned, this was my first time performing Britten – my first real encounter with his music. And I must say, at times it reminded me of Stravinsky – with unexpected harmonic leaps, driving rhythms, and imaginative color choices. Although the two composers are very different, they were shaped by the same era and reflected similar ideas – the spirit of modernism. And perhaps... there is

even a shadow of *Lohengrin* lingering here. It also helped that singing in French isn't new to me – I've performed a fair amount of repertoire in that language, so I feel naturally attuned to its intonation and nuances.

Modestas Pitrėnas

You can clearly hear that Edgaras sings a great deal of French music; his vocal training and stage experience come through clearly in Britten's cycle as well.

Julijus Grickevičius

Modestas, would you say *Les Illuminations* is a true cycle, or more of a continuous lyrical narrative?

Modestas Pitrėnas

I'd lean toward the latter. Even in Chausson's cycle, the voice isn't just a soloist – the orchestra comments, shapes the thought, interrupts. It tells its own story. You hear this in Britten's other cycles as well. He transcends simple accompaniment, composing with great finesse, dissolving the boundary between the 19th-century tradition of intimate domestic vocal music and something more atmospheric – a decadent mood expressed in the language of neoclassicism.

Edgaras Montvidas

I agree. Both works embody a profound psychological experience, and the orchestra is an equal partner in that. Soloist and orchestra are equals – two voices in genuine dialogue.

Julijus Grickevičius

Before we wrap up, I'd like to return to the poetry with a more personal question. These lines are rich in imagery – which ones spoke to you most? What do you carry with you?

Edgaras Montvidas

The most challenging part was decoding the symbolism and giving the words meaning. You have to read between the lines, intuit the spirit of the time, and engage with the questions the poetry raises. We're still grappling with the same truths, the same dilemmas, the same view of the world. The title line from *Illuminations* left the strongest impression on me. Then, as now, the artist is the one who stands apart, observes, and draws conclusions.

Julijus Grickevičius

Modestas, I'd like to ask you the same, and add this: you and Edgaras are nearly the same age. And while age is just a number, it can still mark a threshold. It reminds me of a line from Victor Hugo: "... I no longer want to grow old..."

Modestas Pitrenas

Absolutely. That wild, unruly parade – the one we sometimes join, and sometimes simply watch – never leaves us indifferent. At the same time, Bouchor's reflection on impermanence feels just as vital: that nothing lasts. Love, like a lily once in bloom, withers. And I don't say that sentimentally. Nothing remains as it was. We can't reinhabit our parents' triumphs, nor retrace their missteps. We're all part of life's great turning wheel, and love passes, just as the seasons shift, and the colors change.

That's a kind of mature knowledge. And even though these poets wrote those lines in their youth, they saw with clarity – and left behind insights – deep, enduring – the kind you keep close. Like a Bible on your table. A personal touchstone.

Translation: Erik Dorset





Julijus Grickevičius pokalbis su Edgaru Montvidu ir Modestu Pitrėnu

Julijus Grickevičius

Ši programa aprėpia beveik šimtmetį – nuo Camille'o Saint-Saënso dainos *Exstase*, kurios žodžius Victoras Hugo parašė 1835-aisiais, kompozitoriaus gimimo metais, iki Benjamino Britteno *Nušvitimų*, sukurtų 1939-aisiais. Kaip Jums abiem kilo šios programos idėja?

Edgaras Montvidas

Prieš imantis šio Ernesto Chaussono ciklo su orkestru, teko atlikti ir jo forte-pijoninę versiją. Tiesą sakant, iš pradžių net nepavyko rasti versijos tenorui, nors per premjerą pats autorius akompanavo būtent tenorui – įdomus niuansas. Britteno *Nušvitimai* tapo malonių atradimu. Modestai, regis, tai buvo Tavo idėja. Taip mano repertuaras pasipildė Britteno kūriniais – jo operose man dar neteko dainuoti.

Modestas Pitrėnas

Leisk įsiterpti: pirmiausia noriu išreikšti savo prierašumą ir pagarbą Edgarui, kaip menininkui, gebančiam išskleisti žodžio ir poezijos prasmę. Būtent atlikimo aspektas mane ir sužavėjo. Ir, Julijau, norėčiau šiek tiek paprieštarauti: man ši programa atrodo ne išsibarsčiusi laike, o labai koncentruota. Abu poetai – tiek Jeanas Nicolas Rimbaud, tiek Maurice'as Bouchoras – gimė beveik tais pačiais metais. Jų kūryba priklauso dekadentinės poezijos laukui ir byloja apie tą patį

laikmetį. Išgirdęs šiuos ciklus, atliekamus soprano, pagalvojau, kad Edgaras galėtų juos perteikti nepaprastai subtiliai ir paveikiai.

Julijus Grickevičius

Paprastai Chaussono kūriniai įrašuose ar koncertų programose girdime šalia kitų jo paties opusų – ir tai atrodytų natūralu, turint omenyje, kad kompozitorius gyveno pedantiškai, tačiau mirė dėl nelaimingo atsitikimo ir nepaliko gausaus kūrybos palikimo. Panašiai ir *Nušvitimai* dažniausiai skamba kartu su kitais Britteno vokaliniais ciklais. Tad kodėl nusprendėte šiuos du ciklus – Chaussono ir Britteno – sudėti greta vienas kito?

Edgaras Montvidas

Taip tiesiog lėmė aplinkybės. Abu kūriniai įtraukti į mūsų repertuarą, jie jau buvo paruošti, tad nebuvo kažin kokios specialios priežasties.

Modestas Pitrenas

Kūriniai įrašyti skirtingu laiku ir su skirtingais orkestrais, toje pačioje erdvėje ir su solistu. Grįžtu prie minties, kad juos labai vienija poezija, tai yra siejanti gija.

Edgaras Montvidas

Taip, kartu tai gražus atsitiktinumas...

Modestas Pitrenas

Jeigu tikėsime, kad gyvenime būna atsitiktinimų... Greičiau tai dėsningumas.

Julijus Grickevičius

Klausantis Chaussono ciklo, susidaro įspūdis, kad dainininkas tarsi patiria tam tikrą komforto būseną – čia atpažįstamas tiltas tarp dviejų amžių, aiškiai girdimos praeities įtakos. Kūrinys suteikia daug erdvės tiek solistui, tiek orkestrui.

Modestai, ar Chaussono ciklas – tai tam tikra komforto zona?

Modestas Pitrenas

Kaip ir daugelis vėlyvųjų romantikų, linkusių į impresionizmo estetiką, Chaussonas kūrė lakoniškai, jautriai ir kompaktiškai. Nors nepaliko gausaus kūrinų sąrašo, jo muzika išsiskiria gaivumu, emocionalumu ir subtiliu afektingumu. Kartais ji priartėja prie lyrinės egzaltacijos, bet niekuomet nesklinda į patetiką. Chaussono muzikoje gausu šešėlių, spalvų, pustonių žaismo – visa tai tarytum paruošia klausytoją impresijai, kurioje daugiau nutylėjimų nei atvirumo, daugiau užuominų nei tiesioginio išsakymo. Jo vualizuota muzikinė kalba kyla iš romantizmo, iš mokytojų Césaro Francko ir Richardo Wagnerio pasaulio, tačiau veda jau link prancūzų impresionistų – Claude'o Debussy, Maurice'o Ravelio ir kitų – estetikos. Man artimas ir atpažįstamas šis perėjimas iš romantizmo į XX amžiaus muzikinę kalbą.

Julijus Grickevičius

Edgarai, abu ciklai gali būti atliekami skirtingų balsų. Chaussono ciklas sumanytas tenorui, apie tai jau užsiminei, bet diskografijoje dominuoja baritonai. Ką keičia skirtingi balsai šiuo atveju ir konkrečiai kokią spalvą atneša tenoras?

Edgaras Montvidas

Papildysiu: Britteno *Nušvitimai* iš pradžių buvo sukurti sopranui. Vyriškas balsas tam tikra prasme įžemina šią muziką: poezija tampa mažiau egzaltuota, ne tokia dangiška – šias savybes labiau išryškina moteriškas tembras. Net ir aukštas tenoras turi žemiškesnius obertonus – vyriškasis pradą tarsi suteikia šiai muzikai „raumenų“.

Abu ciklai, mano manymu, gana gerai prisitaiko prie skirtingų balsų, deja, to negalėčiau pasakyti apie, pavyzdžiui, Richardo Strausso *Keturias paskutines dainas*. Nors ir bandyta jas atlikti vyrų balsais, vis dėlto kūrinys tiesiog ne-

suskamba. Mūsų programoje nėra ypač sudėtingų vokalių užduočių, kurių tenoras negalėtų įveikti. Diapazonas pakankamai patogus, tačiau balso spalva čia lemia labai daug – vyrų balsas šiai muzikai suteikia daugiau žemiškumo.

Julijus Grickevičius

Nušvitimai – tai vienas iš ankstyvųjų Britteno vokalių ciklų, kuriuo jis iš esmės prisistato pasauliui. Klausantis kūrinio atrodo, kad orkestras tarsi chameleonas – muzikos tekstūros šuoliuoja, tarsi keliautume per sapną. Modestai, kiek įnoringa ši partitūra?

Modestas Pitrenas

Brittenas čia ieško savęs, kaip kompozitoriaus, kuris nori perteikti kūrybą techninėmis priemonėmis. Styginių orkestras, lyginant su visos sudėties simfoniniu, nėra toks išraiškingas, todėl Brittenas išnaudoja daug skirtingų spalvų ir faktūrų – partitūra skamba ypač įvairiapusis. Jis turėjo didelę patirtį kaip altininkas, dirigentas, kompozitorius, draugavo su Dmitrijumi Šostakovičiumi, kuriam vėliau dedikavo ir savo 14-ąją simfoniją. Ta kūrybinė draugystė, bendras dvasinis kontekstas – zeitgeist – skatino jį ieškoti naujo muzikinio žodžio. Brittenas išmėgino įvairius žanrus: rašė baletus, operas, chorinę muziką, oratorijas. Tuo laikotarpiu jis dar nebuvo apsisprendęs, kur nukreips savo pagrindinį dėmesį. Šis ciklas – tikras iššūkis orkestrui, bet kartu ir graži kelionė per tembrų pasaulį.

Julijus Grickevičius

Stabtelėkime ties tembrais.

Partitūroje daug pastabų, pavyzdžiui, orkestras skamba kaip gitara, o pradžioje atrodo, kad styginiai imituoja varinius instrumentus. Kas partitūroje yra pasufluota dirigentui?

Modestas Pitrenas

Daug kas pasakyta tekste, atsispiriama nuo poezijos. Šie dalykai greitai iššifruojami, kita vertus, kompozitorius naudoja priemones, kaip ir Jūsų paminėta asociacija su pučiamaisiais, dar skamba varpai, ataidi perkusija. Tai tam tikra žinia, aktuali šiais neramiais laikais, kai tiek daug nervo mūsų geopolitiniame gyvenime, kad tik menininkas įdėmiai stebintis pasaulį gali jį suprasti ir įprasminti.

Edgaras Montvidas

Jis pakartoja šią žinią tris kartus per visą ciklą: aš turiu raktus į žmogaus pasaulį, žiūriu į jį kaip į laukinį pasaulį. Kaip Tu sakai, tarsi menininkas, žiūrėdamas iš šalies.

Modestas Pitrenas

Būtent. Atrakina šią frazę, pakartodamas ją pradžioje, viduryje ir pabaigoje. Tai labai aktuali, neblėstanti idėja. Tos teksto idėjos, žinoma, sufleruoja daug orkestro spalvų.

Julijus Grickevičius

Edgarai, jau vartojau eiklaus žirgo šuoliuojančio per sapną metaforą ir papildysiu ją kita – regis, turi būti skirtingų distancijų bėgikas: platus diapazonas, spalvingi proveržiai. Kas kėlė didžiausią iššūkį?

Edgaras Montvidas

Esu dainavęs nemažai kamerinės muzikos, tačiau šiame projekte ypatingu potyriu tapo orkestro akompanavimas. Nors dainavimas su fortepijonu – tarsi eskizas, su orkestru garsas turėtų būti formuojamas visai kitaip. Vis dėlto šiuo atveju norėjau dainuoti su orkestru taip, tarsi būtų atliekama fortepijonu – intymiai, jautriai, natūraliai. Manau, tai pasiteisino, nes svarbiausia – likti ištikimam savo instrumentui, savo balsui.

Reikia pasakyti, kad viskas vyko dar pandemijos laikotarpiu – negalėjome laisvai dirbti, bet buvome ištroškę kūrybos ir bendros muzikavimo patirties. Kaip minėjau, iki šiol nebuvo dainavęs Britteno kūrinių – tai pirmasis mano susitikimas su jo muzika. Ir, turiu pasakyti, ji man net šiek tiek priminė Igorį Stravinskį netikėtais harmoniniais šuoliais, ritmika, spalviniais sprendimais. Nors šie du kompozitoriai labai skirtingi, juos vis tiek sieja laikotarpis, idėjos, modernizmo dvasia. O galbūt čia jaučiami ir *Lohengrino* šešėliai... Be to, šiuo atveju labai padėjo ir tai, kad dainuoti prancūziškai man nėra naujiena – šia kalba esu atlikęs nemažai repertuaro, todėl jautriai jaučiu jos intonaciją, subtilybes.

Modestas Pitrenas

Girdžiu, kad Edgaras daug dainuoja prancūzų kompozitorių muzikos; vokalo mokykla bei sceninė patirtis gaiviai atsispindi ir Britteno cikle.

Julijus Grickevičius

Modestai, *Nušvitimai* – tai ciklas ar ištisas lyrinis naratyvas?

Modestas Pitrenas

Sakyčiau, labiau antrasis variantas. Net ir Chaussono cikle. Balsas nėra tik solistas, o orkestras ir komentuoja, formuoja mintį, įsiterpia, pertraukia, pasakoja savo istoriją. Tai būdinga ir kitiems Britteno ciklams, kur išeinama iš akompanimento teritorijos, jis elgiasi rafinuotai, nutrindamas ribą tarp to, ką įpratę girdėti XIX amžiaus vokaliniame namų muzikavimo tradicijoje, ir išskleidžia dekadentinę nuotaiką, perkelia į neoklasicizmo kalbą.

Edgaras Montvidas

Paantrindčiau, kad abiejuose kūrinuose perteikiamas stiprus psichologinis iš-

gyvenimas ir orkestras yra stiprus šio išgyvenimo partneris. Abu – tiek solistas, tiek orkestras – visaverčiai dialogo dalyviai.

Julijus Grickevičius

Pabaigoje norėčiau grįžti prie poezijos ir užduoti asmeninį klausimą. Šiose eilutėse yra daug stiprių įvaizdžių, o kas tapo artimiausia Jums, ką pasiimate ir išsinešate su savimi?

Edgaras Montvidas

Išsifruoti simbolizmą ir įprasminti šiuos žodžius buvo sudėtingiausia. Turi skaityti tarp eilučių, intuityviai, pajaušti laikmetį ir tapatinti save su eilių problematiką. Mus sieja tos pačios tiesos, problemos ir požiūris į pasaulį. *Nušvitimų* titulinė eilutė man paliko didžiausią įspūdį. Tiek tada, tiek dabar menininkas ir yra tas žmogus, atsiribojęs nuo pasaulio, stebintis jį ir darantis išvadas.

Julijus Grickevičius

Modestai, užduodu šį klausimą ir Jums. Papildysiu: Jūs su Edgaru esate beveik bendraamžiai ir, nors kalbame tik apie skaičius, jie simbolizuoja tam tikrą slenkstį, o čia V. Hugo eilutės: „... aš nebenoriu senti...“

Modestas Pitrenas

Žinoma, laukinis, nesuvaldytas paradas, kuriame kartais dalyvaujame ir kurį kartais stebime, negali palikti abejingų. Kartu, manau, svarbi ir Bouchoro mintis apie laikinumą, kad nieko nėra amžino, ta meilė, kaip ir lelijos žiedas, nuvysta. Tai sakau be sentimentalių pastebėjimų. Nieko nebebus, kaip buvo. Negalime atkartoti tėvų laimėjimų ir klaidų. Žmogus iš esmės yra gyvybės rate ir meilė praeina taip, kaip keičiasi metų laikai ir spalvos. Šis žinojimas brandus, nors poetai tą rašė jaunystėje, jie turėjo galias ir gražias poetines įžvalgas, kurios gali tapti Tavo stalo biblija.

Ernest Chausson
Poème de l'amour et de la mer

Text by Maurice Bouchor
(1855–1929)
Taken from: Poèmes de l'amour et de la mer
(1876)

La Fleur des eaux

L'air est plein d'une odeur exquise de lilas,
Qui, fleurissant du haut des murs jusques en bas,
Embaument les cheveux des femmes.
La mer au grand soleil va toute s'embraser,
Et sur le sable fin qu'elles viennent baiser
Roulent d'éblouissantes lames.

Ô ciel qui de ses yeux dois porter la couleur,
Brise qui vas chanter dans les lilas en fleur
Pour en sortir tout embaumée,
Ruisseaux qui mouillerez sa robe,
Ô verts sentiers,
Vous qui tressaillerez sous ses chers petits pieds,
Faites-moi voir ma bien-aimée!

Et mon cœur s'est levé par ce matin d'été;
Car une belle enfant était sur le rivage,
Laissant errer sur moi des yeux pleins de clarté,

Et qui me souriait d'un air tendre et sauvage.
Toi que transfiguraient la Jeunesse et l'Amour,
Tu m'apparus alors comme l'âme des choses;
Mon cœur vola vers toi, tu le pris sans retour,
Et du ciel entr'ouvert pleuvaient sur nous des roses.

Quel son lamentable et sauvage
Va sonner l'heure de l'adieu!
La mer roule sur le rivage,
Moqueuse, et se souciant peu
Que ce soit l'heure de l'adieu.

Des oiseaux passent, l'aile ouverte,
Sur l'abîme presque joyeux;
Au grand soleil la mer est verte,
Et je saigne, silencieux,
En regardant briller les cieux.

Je saigne en regardant ma vie
Qui va s'éloigner sur les flots;
Mon âme unique m'est ravie
Et la sombre clameur des flots
Couvre le bruit de mes sanglots.

Qui sait si cette mer cruelle
La ramènera vers mon cœur ?
Mes regards sont fixés sur elle;
La mer chante, et le vent moqueur
Raille l'angoisse de mon cœur.

La Mort de l'amour

Bientôt l'île bleue et joyeuse
Parmi les rocs m'apparaîtra ;
L'île sur l'eau silencieuse
Comme un nénuphar flottera.

À travers la mer d'améthyste
Doucement glisse le bateau,
Et je serai joyeux et triste
De tant me souvenir bientôt !

Le vent roulait les feuilles mortes ;
Mes pensées
Roulaient comme des feuilles mortes,
Dans la nuit.

Jamais si doucement au ciel noir n'avaient lui
Les mille roses d'or d'où tombent les rosées !
Une danse effrayante, et les feuilles froissées,
Et qui rendaient un son métallique, valsaient,
Semblaient gémir sous les étoiles, et disaient
L'inexprimable horreur des amours trépassés.

Les grands hêtres d'argent que la lune baisait
Étaient des spectres : moi, tout mon sang se glaçait
En voyant mon aimée étrangement sourire.

Comme des fronts de morts nos fronts avaient pâli,
Et, muet, me penchant vers elle, je pus lire
Ce mot fatal écrit dans ses grands yeux : l'oubli.

Le temps des lilas et le temps des roses
Ne reviendra plus à ce printemps-ci ;
Le temps des lilas et le temps des roses
Est passé, le temps des œillets aussi.

Le vent a changé, les cieux sont moroses,
Et nous n'irons plus courir, et cueillir
Les lilas en fleur et les belles roses ;
Le printemps est triste et ne peut fleurir.

Oh ! joyeux et doux printemps de l'année,
Qui vins, l'an passé, nous ensoleiller,
Notre fleur d'amour est si bien fanée,
Las ! que ton baiser ne peut l'éveiller !

Et toi, que fais-tu ? pas de fleurs écloses,
Point de gai soleil ni d'ombrages frais ;
Le temps des lilas et le temps des roses
Avec notre amour est mort à jamais.

Benjamin Britten Les Illuminations

Text by Arthur Rimbaud
(1854 – 1891)

I. Fanfare

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

II. Villes

Ce sont des villes! C'est un peuple pour qui se sont montés ces Alleghanys et ces Libans de rêve! Des chalets de cristal et de bois se meuvent sur des rails et des poulies invisibles. Les vieux cratères ceints de colosses et de palmiers de cuivre rugissent mélodieusement dans les feux... Des cortèges de Mabs en robes rousses, opalines, montent des ravines. Là-haut, les pieds dans la cascade et les ronces, les cerfs tettent Diane. Les Bacchantes des banlieues sanglotent et la lune brûle et hurle. Vénus entre dans les cavernes des forgerons et des ermites. Des groupes de beffrois chantent les idées des peuples. Des châteaux bâtis en os sort la musique inconnue... Le paradis des orages s'effondre. Les sauvages dansent sans cesse la fête de la nuit. Quels bons bras, quelle belle heure me rendront cette région d'où viennent mes sommeils et mes moindres mouvements?

IIIa. Phrase

J'ai tendu des cordes de clocher à clocher; des guirlandes de fenêtre à fenêtre; des chaînes d'or d'étoile à étoile, et je danse.

IIIb. Antique

Gracieux fils de Pan! Autour de ton front couronné de fleurettes et de baies, tes yeux, des boules précieuses, remuent. Tachées de lies brunes, tes joues

se creusent. Tes crocs luisent. Ta poitrine ressemble à une cithare, des tintements circulent dans tes bras blonds. Ton cœur bat dans ce ventre où dort le double sexe. Promène-toi, la nuit en mouvant doucement cette cuisse, cette seconde cuisse et cette jambe de gauche.

IV. Royauté

Un beau matin, chez un peuple fort doux, un homme et une femme superbes criaient sur la place publique: «Mes amis, je veux qu'elle soit reine!» «Je veux être reine!» Elle riait et tremblait. Il parlait aux amis de révélation, d'épreuve terminée. Ils se pâmaient l'un contre l'autre.

En effet ils furent rois toute une matinée où les tentures carminées se relevèrent sur les maisons, et tout l'après-midi, où ils s'avancèrent du côté des jardins de palmes.

V. Marine

Les chars d'argent et de cuivre
Les proues d'acier et d'argent,
Battent l'écume,
Soulèvent les souches des ronces.

Les courants de la lande,
Et les ornières immenses du reflux,
Filent circulairement vers l'est,
Vers les piliers de la forêt,
Vers les fûts de la jetée,

Dont l'angle est heurté par des tourbillons de lumière.

VI. Interlude

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

VII. Being Beauteous

Devant une neige un Être de Beauté de haute taille. Des sifflements de mort

et des cercles de musique sourde font monter, s'élargir et trembler comme un spectre ce corps adoré: des blessures écarlates et noires éclatent dans les chaires superbes. Les couleurs propres de la vie se foncent, dansent, et se dégagent autour de la Vision, sur le chantier. Et les frissons s'élèvent et grondent, et la saveur forcenée de ces effets se chargeant avec les sifflements mortels et les rauques musiques que le monde, loin derrière nous, lance sur notre mère de beauté, – elle recule, elle se dresse. Ô! nos os sont revêtus d'un nouveau corps amoureux. Ô la face cendrée, l'écusson de crin, les bras de cristal! le canon sur lequel je dois m'abattre à travers la mêlée des arbres et de l'air léger!

VIII. Parade

Des drôles très solides. Plusieurs ont exploité vos mondes. Sans besoins, et peu pressés de mettre en œuvre leurs brillantes facultés et leur expérience de vos consciences. Quels hommes mûrs! Des yeux hébétés à la façon de la nuit d'été, rouges et noirs, tricolores, d'acier piqué d'étoiles d'or; des faciès déformés, plombés, blêmis, incendiés; des enrouements folâtres! La démarche cruelle des oripeaux! – Il y a quelques jeunes – ...

Ô le plus violent Paradis de la grimace enragée!... Chinois, Hottentots, bohémiens, niais, hyènes, Molochs, vieilles démences, démons sinistres, ils mêlent les tours populaires, maternels, avec les poses et les tendresses bestiales. Ils interpréteraient des pièces nouvelles et des chansons «bonnes filles». Maîtres jongleurs, ils transforment le lieu et les personnes, et usent de la comédie magnétique... .

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

IX. Départ

Assez vu. La vision s'est rencontrée à tous les airs.
Assez eu. Rumeurs des Villes, le soir, et au soleil, et toujours.
Assez connu. Les arrêts de la vie. – Ô Rumeurs et Visions!
Départ dans l'affection et le bruit neufs!

Camille Saint-Saëns

Extase

Text by Victor Hugo
(1802–1885)

Puisque j'ai mis ma lèvre à ta coupe encore pleine;
Puisque j'ai dans tes mains posé mon front pâli;
Puisque j'ai respiré parfois la douce haleine
De ton âme, parfum dans l'ombre enseveli;

Puisqu'il me fut donné de t'entendre me dire
Les mots où se répand le coeur mystérieux;
Puisque j'ai vu pleurer, puisque j'ai vu sourire
Ta bouche sur ma bouche et tes yeux sur mes yeux;

Puisque j'ai vu briller sur ma tête ravie
Un rayon de ton astre, hélas! voilé toujours;
Puisque j'ai vu tomber dans l'onde de ma vie
Une feuille de rose arrachée à tes jours;

Je puis maintenant dire aux rapides années:
Passez! passez toujours! Je n'ai plus à vieillir!
Allez-vous-en avec vos fleurs toutes fanées;
J'ai dans l'âme une fleur que nul ne peut cueillir!

Votre aile en le heurtant ne fera rien répandre
Du vase où je m'abreuve et que j'ai bien rempli.
Mon âme a plus de feu que vous n'avez de cendre!
Mon coeur a plus d'amour que vous n'avez d'oubli!

Edgaras Montvidas

Edgaras Montvidas is a celebrated Lithuanian opera tenor known for his extensive and distinguished international career. After studying at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (LMTA) under Professor Virgilijus Noreika, he embarked on a remarkable journey in the world of opera. Montvidas' career gained significant momentum in 2003, when he unexpectedly replaced an ill tenor in the role of Alfredo in *La Traviata* at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. His international engagements soon expanded to leading opera houses across Europe, including Zurich, Geneva, Basel, Hamburg, Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt, Lyon, Copenhagen, and Paris, among many others.

Montvidas' diverse repertoire spans operas from Monteverdi to Berg, with notable roles including Werther, Des Grieux in *Manon*, The Duke in *Rigoletto*, Titus in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Erik in *The Flying Dutchman*, Tom Rakewell in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, and Don José in *Carmen*. He has performed at some of the most prestigious opera festivals, including Aix-en-Provence, Glyndebourne, BBC Proms and Vienna's Festwochen.

In addition to his stage presence, Montvidas has performed in major concert halls worldwide, collaborating with prominent conductors like Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Antonio Pappano, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Charles Dutoit, Kirill Petrenko and Pierre Boulez, among others. His discography includes a variety of CD and DVD recordings, showcasing his vocal prowess.

For his contributions to Lithuanian culture, Montvidas has received numerous accolades, including the Medal of Order "For Merits to Lithuania" and the Golden Stage Cross for his roles in *Werther* and *La Traviata*. In 2023, he was awarded the prestigious Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Arts. Montvidas is also dedicated to the cultural development of Lithuania, serving as the artistic director of the Pažaislis Music Festival and as a visiting professor at LMTA.





Modestas Pitrenas

Modestas Pitrenas, the artistic director and principal conductor of the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, enjoys invitations to conduct in opera theatres and concert halls in various countries. He has given performances with various symphonic orchestras. Pitrenas has served as the principal conductor of the Latvian National Opera (LNO) as well as the Kaunas Symphony Orchestra. Since 2018, he has served as the principal conductor of the St. Gallen Opera Theatre and symphony orchestra (Switzerland). In 2022, he made his debut at the Frankfurt Opera House.

In addition to many memorable symphonic music programmes, performed in major concert halls in Europe, Pitrenas has been instrumental in a number of opera productions in Lithuania, Latvia, Switzerland, Germany, Poland, Finland and other countries. He has conducted Bizet's *Carmen* at the Warsaw Grand Theatre, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute) at the Cologne Opera House, Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* at the Frankfurt Opera House. Among the productions he has led at the LNOBT are R. Strauss' *Salome*, Eötvös' *Love and Other Demons*, Wagner's *Die Walküre* (The Valkyrie), Puccini's *Turandot*. At the Latvian National Opera, he has conducted the premieres of Massenet's *Werther*, Puccini's *Triptych*, Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (The Barber of Seville), Muscat's *Valentina*, and other operas. At the St. Gallen Theatre he conducts R. Strauss' *Salome*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Verdi's *Ernani*, Massenet's *Le Cid*, Catalani's *La Wally* and other productions.

Pitrenas has collaborated with renowned performers including such masters as singers Matti Salminen, Jaakko Ryhänen, Aleksandrs Antonenko, Virgilijus Noreika, Edgaras Montvidas, Egils Siliņš, Ain Angers, Vladimiras Prudnikovas, Inga Kalna, Violeta Urmana, Asmik Grigorian, Ieva Prudnikovaitė, Kristine Opolais, Pretty Yende and Alfredo Nigro, violinists Tatiana Grindenko, Baiba Skride and Pavel Berman, cellists David Gering and Alexander Kniazev, pianists Mūza Rubackytė, Peter Donohoe and Petras Geniušas, oboist Francesco di Rosa, and other famous soloists.

Pitrėnas studied conducting at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and the Mozarteum in Salzburg. He teaches at the Conducting Department of the LAMT and is regularly invited to participate in the juries of international competitions. The list of his numerous awards in competitions includes 1st Prize, Gold Medal and Special Prize of the Silesian Philharmonic Orchestra at the 7th Fitelberg Competition in Katowice (Poland) in 2003. In 2012, he was awarded the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Art, and in 2019, he was decorated with the Officer's Cross of the Order For Merits to Lithuania. For his contribution to Latvian musical culture Pitrėnas has received Latvian music awards, the Latvian Cross of Recognition. In 2015, in Riga the Joint Jury of the Baltic Assembly adjudged the Baltic Assembly Prize for the Arts to Pitrėnas.



Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra

The Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra (LNSO) was founded in 1940 by the composer, conductor and pianist Balys Dvarionas. In 1964–2015, the orchestra was conducted and directed by Juozas Domarkas, and since 2015, Modestas Pitrenas has served as the artistic director and the principal conductor of the orchestra. Robertas Šervėnikas is the second conductor of the LNSO, and J. Domarkas is the Honorary Conductor of the orchestra.

The orchestra performs around 50 annual concerts at the Lithuanian National Philharmonic Concert Hall and other Lithuanian venues, and frequently tours abroad. It has performed in many European countries, Japan, South America, South Korea, in renowned venues such as Vienna's Musikverein, Cologne's Philharmonie, Berlin's Philharmonie, London's Barbican Centre, Frankfurt's Alte Oper, Stockholm's Berwaldhallen and Town Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Tokyo's Metropolitan and Suntory Hall, Osaka's Festival Hall, Mumbai's National Centre for the Performing Arts, Thailand's Cultural Centre, etc. The orchestra has appeared at prestigious music festivals such as Schleswig-Holstein, Warsaw Autumn, Beethoven Easter in Warsaw, Prague Spring, Stresa, Meran, Rheingau, Brussels, Ludwigsburg, Riga, Gstaad, and others.

The LNSO has been conducted by all of Lithuania's foremost conductors and world-renowned masters of the baton, such as Mstislav Rostropovich, Krzysztof Penderecki, Kurt Masur, Justus Frantz, Cyril Diederich, Neeme Järvi, Christoph Spering, Richard Hickox, Christoph Eschenbach, Olivier Grangean, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla and others. The orchestra has performed with many famous artists of different generations – singers Monserrat Caballé, Jessye Norman, Sergei Larin, Violeta Urmana and Virgilijus Noreika, pianists Emil Gilels, Dmitry Bashkurov, Daniel Pollack, Sergio Tiempo, Freddy Kempf, Mūza Rubackytė and Petras Geniušas, violinists Gidon Kremer, Leonid Kogan, Vladimir Spivakov, Julian Rachlin, Sergej Krylov, Philippe Graffin, Arabella Steinbacher and Vilhelmas Čepinskis,

cellists Mischa Maisky, Ivan Monighetti, David Geringas, Danjulo Ishizaka, Mstislav Rostropovich and many other famous instrumentalists and singers.

The LNSO's repertoire includes oratorio and symphonic works from past epochs, as well as modern contemporary music, in the context of which monumental scores by Lithuanian composers, as well as the first symphonies of many young Lithuanian composers, stand out. The orchestra is a regular participant of the Gaida Festival of Contemporary Music and has presented the music of Lithuanian composers in live broadcasts on Euroradio. The LNSO's recordings have been released by the Lithuanian and foreign labels Melodiya, Marco Polo, Col legno, Naxos, Accentus Music, Ondine and others. Among the most recent recordings is a CD of works by Ukrainian composer Valentin Silvestrov, featuring the LNSO, conductor Christopher Lyndon-Gee, singer Inna Galatenko and pianist Oleg Bezborodko (Naxos, 2020). Also, a recording of Pärt's *Lamentate* with pianist Onutė Gražinytė, cellist Edward King, the LNSO and conductor Pitrenas (Accentus Music, 2020), which was awarded the highest, 5-star, rating by the critics of the renowned music magazine Fono Forum; a CD Saudade, featuring Ž. Martinaitytė's works, with the LNSO, Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, conductor Giedrė Šlekytė and pianist Gabrielius Alekna (Ondine, 2021).



Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra

A celebrated cultural treasure of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra is widely recognised as one of the world's finest chamber orchestras. The remarkable history of the orchestra features over a hundred performances with Mstislav Rostropovich and Lord Yehudi Menuhin; a recording of Bach's 12 Keyboard Concertos and Haydn Concertos for Piano and Orchestra with Tatjana Nikolaeva; Beethoven's *The Creatures of Prometheus* narrated by Sir Peter Ustinov and a recent recording of Vivaldi's violin concertos with Sergej Krylov released by DG. Over the years its soloists have included Janine Jansen, Vadim Repin, Daniel Hope, Oleg Kagan, Yuri Bashmet, Misha Maisky, Natalia Gutman, David Geringas, Daniel Muller-Schott, Evgeny Kissin, Bruno Canino, Sergei Nakariakov, Alexei Ogrinchuk, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Mojka Erdmann, Avi Avital and others.

Based on a group of enthusiastic young musicians, LCO was created in 1960 by distinguished conductor Saulius Sondeckis, who remained at the helm until 2004. A new chapter in LCO's history began in 2008 with the arrival of Sergej Krylov as their new Artistic Director and Chief Conductor. His dedication to the highest professional standard and finesse of music making, as well as a constant widening of the repertoire, opened new exciting horizons in the Orchestra's development resulting in more than 200 highly acclaimed joint performances across the world. The critics described the dynamic musical partnership between the orchestra and Sergej Krylov as "a harmonious and conspiring relationship with the orchestra", "an absolute attunement between the violinist-conductor and the orchestra" and "the charming and aristocratic gallantry, without improper familiarity, but with confidence in each other."

The LCO has performed to great audience and critical acclaim at major European venues such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna's Musikverein, London's Royal Festival Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Salle Pleyel and Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, St Petersburg Philharmonie, Great Hall of Moscow

Conservatoire, Leipzig's Gewandhaus, Mupa Budapest. The orchestra appeared at music festivals in Salzburg, Lucerne, Schleswig-Holstein, Stradivari Festival in Cremona, Sion, Gstaad, Rheingau, and Musikfest Berlin to name just a few. The LCO has pioneered and inspired numerous works by composers such as Alfred Schnittke, Sofija Gubaidulina, Arvo Pärt, Pēteris Vasks, Gyia Kanceli, Rodion Schedrin, Edison Denisov, Sergei Slonimskij, Lera Auerbach and others, many of whom dedicated their works to the Orchestra. Thanks to an ingenious idea of inviting Schnittke as a harpsichordist in the LCO on its tour to Austria and Germany, the composer was able to bypass the official ban by Soviet authorities on his travel outside the USSR and be present at the premiere of his Concerto Grosso No.1 in the West – a piece written specially for Gidon Kremer, Tatjana Grindenko and the LCO. The live recording of this concert, which also included Arvo Pärt's *Tabula rasa*, became one of the 20th century's bestselling CDs. Schnittke's Concerto Grosso No. 3 was dedicated to the LCO to mark its 25th Anniversary.

From the very beginning and throughout its history, the LCO has always been a passionate ambassador of Lithuanian music worldwide. The orchestra has performed over 200 works by M.K. Čiurlionis, Balys Dvarionas, Stasys Vainiūnas, Eduardas Balsys, Bronius Kutavičius, Teisutis Makačinas, Vytautas Barkauskas, Algirdas Martinaitis, Mindaugas Urbaitis, Onutė Narbutaitė, Vidmantas Bartulis, Raminta Šerkšnytė and others.

Throughout six decades the LCO has produced over a hundred recordings of diverse repertoire released on labels such as Deutsche Grammophon, Sony Classical, Melodiya, ECM and Teldec.

Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra always supported the progressive civil movement. Together with Lord Menuhin they gave an iconic performance of the *Messiah* with the African choir in a township outside Johannesburg in the newly liberated of apartheid Republic of South Africa. During Lithuania's struggle for independence,

LCO was instrumental in raising awareness in the Western countries about the tragic events of 1991 and bringing medical and humanitarian help for its homeland. LCO was one of the first orchestras in the world to start live performances for socially distancing audiences as soon as the Covid-19 lockdown was lifted in early June 2020. They opened Vilnius Festival with two sold out concerts (Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* with Sergej Krylov and another concert featuring works by Baltic composers), which were streamed and broadcast over multiple channels and on social media.

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