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BRIDGES

• LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL •

Volume 24

Issue 7, September 2000



Communism on the Run...M.K. Čiurlionis...The Lithuanian World Community

P e r s p e c t i v e s

Two years ago I took my eldest son to "Lietuva" to introduce him to the country, which meant so much to his parents and grandparents. An open and talkative boy, he went enthusiastically. This year was to be my younger son's turn.

Quiet and contemplative by nature, he had always maintained a laissez faire attitude regarding "Lithuania and things Lithuanian". Yet, he approached this trip with zeal equal to his brother's. We had never been able to read in him how much his heritage meant to him – until now.

Traveling with him throughout Lietuva was easy and calm. We visited many museums, churches, and cultural attractions. Mary Abbott, editor of VYTIS the Knight magazine, had sent us photos of the Frank Zappa memorial (thank you so much!), and we had successfully found the bust. He was intrigued with Lithuanians' fascination with him. This, in turn made him curious about what Lithuanians found to be exciting. But what really affected him was meeting the people, and having to communicate and share experiences with them. Here was his chance to understand the "inside" workings of a people so closely related to him by soul and spirit.

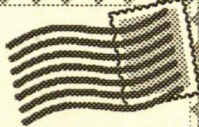
Naturally, he never came out and explained the trip's effect on him. Little things started to surface – actions spoke louder than words. He opened a dialogue via e-mail with a similarly aged boy he had met in Lithuania. He asked when we would return. He started to make a list of what else he would like to do and see in Lietuva. He even started to look up the news from Lietuva. Being a Lithuanian became a solid source of pride and strength.

What comes out of this can hopefully be an ongoing journey. I'm just glad that the memories from this summer will always be an indelible part of his road to manhood.

Rasa Ardys-Juška

Editor

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reading BRIDGES!
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1212 Mohegan Road
Manasquan, NJ 08736-1650**

BRIDGES

Lithuanian American News Journal

USPS 017131 — Published 10 times per year (Jan/Feb. and July/Aug. combined). Address of publication is LAC, Inc./BRIDGES, 1927 West Blvd., Racine, WI 53403. BRIDGES is the official publication of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., 11250 Roger Bacon Dr., Suite 17C, Reston, VA 20190. E-mail: lacinc@erols.com

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THE INFORMATION CENTER FOR
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Address all editorial correspondence to:
BRIDGES Editorial Office,
c/o Rasa Ardys-Juška, 1212 Mohegan
Road, Manasquan, NJ 08736-1650.
Unsolicited manuscripts must be
accompanied by a stamped, self-
addressed envelope if return is desired.

For subscription and advertising
information, please contact:

LAC, Inc./BRIDGES,
c/o Ramas Pliūra,
1927 West Boulevard,
Racine, WI 53403.

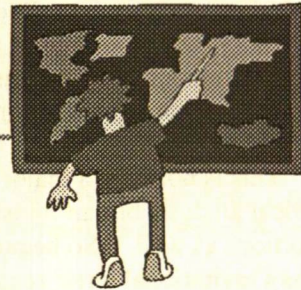
Subscription rate is \$18.00 annually
(US Mail serviced subscribers;
subscriptions to other addresses are
\$28.00), payable in advance (US
funds). Periodicals postage paid at
Racine, WI; and additional locations.

Contact us on the Internet at:
www.javlb.org

Postmaster: Send any address corrections
and/or changes to LAC, Inc./BRIDGES,
1927 West Boulevard, Racine, WI 53403

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It's School Time!

Young and old alike have started Lithuanian language and heritage classes at schools around the U.S. It's not too late to register! Schools are located in the following cities:

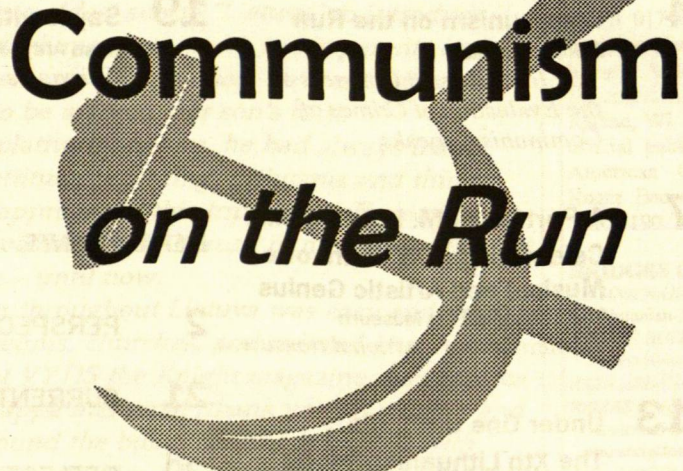
- ♦ Baltimore, Maryland
- ♦ Boston, Massachusetts
- ♦ Brooklyn, New York
- ♦ Chicago, Illinois
- ♦ Cleveland, Ohio
- ♦ Detroit, Michigan
- ♦ Hartford area, Connecticut
- ♦ Lemont, Illinois
- ♦ Los Angeles, California
- ♦ Omaha, Nebraska
- ♦ Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- ♦ St. Petersburg, Florida
- ♦ Washington, D.C.

For more information, contact the Lithuanian Educational Council — Regina Kučienė at www.javlb.org or by writing to her at 13648 Kickapoo Trail, Lockport, IL 60441.

On the cover:
Baravykal, or the tasty mushrooms under the order Boletales, are eagerly collected in Lithuania. Once picked, they are used fresh or cleaned and dried. Wonderful soups, fillings, and side dishes are created throughout the year.
Photo: Bernard Narušis

From Lithuania

Communism *on the Run*



"As we are approaching the end of the Millennium, it is clear that Communism has been one of the two worst [scourges] of mankind. While its twin brother, [Nazism], has been critically evaluated, condemned, and its major perpetrators punished (e.g. Nuremberg Trials), so far nothing of this sort happened to Communism which is responsible for even greater (sometimes far greater) numbers of victims according to many international analysts. This is not only a major gap in social/historical analysis but an injustice of historical proportions as well." So began Vytas Miliuskas's invitational letter regarding the **International Congress on the Evaluation of Crimes of Communism (ICECC)** held in Vilnius on June 12th to 14th and September 4th to the 6th.

Miliauskas, Chairman of the ICECC Organizing Committee, sent out announcements of this important Congress because, "... we, the victims of Communism, do believe that the system and its perpetrators should be brought to account for all the crimes against humanity. There will be no lasting peace or progress in the post-communist world without a minimum of justice!"

A coalition of Former Political Prisoners' organizations, Former Political Deportees' organizations, and Former Freedom Fighters' associations established The Communist Crimes Research Foundation. This Foundation, in turn, was the chief sponsor of the Congress.

During the first three-day session held on June 12th to the 14th the Congress's first stage was called the International Public Tribunal to Evaluate the Crimes of Communism. Its chief goal was to collect evidence and examine deeds indicting Communism. The evidence against Communism was so overwhelming that a verdict could not be decided at that time. The tribunal's collegium, chaired by the lawyer Vytautas Zabiela, reiterated the chief prosecutor's, Zita Slicytė's, proposal that Communism was not an ideology, but a means to justify crimes committed. The Soviet Union was indicted for plotting, preparing, and implementing aggression.

The organizers referred to this tribunal as the second Nuremberg process. Politicians and representatives of public organizations from 20 countries took part in the tribunal.

The second session of the International Congress on the Evaluation of Crimes of Communism started at the Lithuanian parliament on

This is a compilation of news stories from THE BALTIC NEWS SERVICE and a press release from THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON THE EVALUATION OF CRIMES OF COMMUNISM.

Sept. 4th. This session was attended by two supporters of Communism; whereas no defense speeches were made at the Tribunal's first session in mid-June. One of the supporters, philosophy professor at the Vilnius Gediminas Technical University Jurijus Radovičius, gave a speech in support of Communism, which last an hour and a half. In addition, 29-year-old engineer Mykolas Okulic-Kazarinas spoke in favor of Communism by "protecting Communism from nonobjective accusations."

A seven-member international panel of tribunal judges, three Lithuanian members and one from Latvia, Ukraine, Germany and Romania each, were to assess all of the evidence and reach a verdict. New accusers from Bulgaria, Belarus, Poland, Moldova and Chechnya attended the second four-day session.

The Tribunal was expected to announce its verdict on Friday, September 8th, after closing its three-day session in Vilnius on the 6th, but again postponed its verdict until the end of September because of the abundance of evidence. The deputy chairman of the Tribunal's organizing committee, Arturas Flikaitis, told BNS that they had failed to foresee that the judges would need more than one day to draw up conclusions.

The ICECC produced resolutions and appeals directed to specific world organizations. Resolutions included the condemnation of Communist ideology and doctrine; extending the meaning of the concept of "genocide"; compensation for the damage done by Communist occupation regimes; preventive measures to be taken against the restoration (renewal) of Communism; international cooperation in investigating and legally assessing crimes of Communism; and the spiritual consequences of genocide.

The appeals, in their full context, are included below:

A P P E A L

To the United Nations organization, parliaments, and governments of the world states concerning the establishment of the Interna-

tional Tribunal for the Prosecution of the Crimes of Communism and their Perpetrators.

The International Congress on the Evaluation of Crimes of Communism held in Vilnius on 12-14 June 2000 decided:

- to appeal to the United Nations Organization, Parliaments and Governments of the World States urging them to immediately establish the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of the Crimes of Communism and their perpetrators.
- All crimes against humanity recognized by the Nuremberg process were also in an adequate way committed by Communists. In some places, where they came to power, it was perpetrated for a much longer period of time than were those of the Nazi.
- A horrible consequence of the Communist dictatorships is the largest political massacre that has ever been carried out throughout world history. It is thought that from 1917 to 1990 communist regimes killed about 100 million people. The court should also severely condemn a systematic long-term spiritual mutilation of the people.
- Nazism was condemned a long time ago and Nazis perpetrators were punished. Communist perpetrators must be punished in the same way as well.

A P P E A L

To the world community and international public organizations concerning the establishment of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of the Crimes of Communism and their Perpetrators.

The International Congress on the Evaluation of Crimes of Communism held in Vilnius on 12-14 June 2000 decided:

- to appeal to the World Community and International Public Organizations calling upon them to urge the Parliaments and the Governments of their countries to initiate the estab-

lishment of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of the Crimes of Communism and their Perpetrators.

- The memory of hundreds of millions of innocent victims of the communism terror is still calling for justice. Our future and the future of our children must be protected against the threat of communist, as well as that of Nazi, genocide.
- Set up public committees to make the course of the establishment of the International Court more active!

In awaiting the Tribunal's verdict, it is im-

portant to remember the words written in one resolution regarding spiritual consequences of genocide. "Unable to withstand the spiritual stress, people forgot the norms of morality and the scale of societal values diminished. This became particularly evident following the withdrawal of communism. The International Congress proclaims that the spiritual terror of communism constitutes a major crime against humanness and humanity, exerting a negative influence against its future." These words come from nations who have climbed out of Communist strongholds and seek a "humane" political style to guarantee a future for their respective countries. ♦

Lithuanian Parties Launch Campaigns for Oct 8 Parliamentary Elections

VILNIUS, *BNS* — Lithuanian political parties have officially stated their intents and goals in time for the Oct. 8 parliamentary elections.

According to the Law on Parliamentary Elections, all parties and independent candidates running at single-mandate constituencies will be offered an opportunity to use state-owned media free of charge.

Every candidate list will be able to appear on the national TV and radio for at least 90 minutes during the next month, while independent candidates at single-mandate constituencies will be allowed to speak for at least five minutes on the national television and seven minutes on the national radio.

Some 27 out of 39 parties and political organizations registered in Lithuania have put up their candidates at 71 single-mandate constituencies and for proportional voting.

A total of 1,180 persons will run for the parliament through party lists for 70 seats of the Lithuanian 141-member parliament.

Another 700 individuals have registered as candidates in Lithuania's 71 single-seat districts. Most of them are members of political parties, and 50 will run for the parliament as non-affiliated candidates. The independent candidates were to collect

at least 1,000 signatures in support of their candidacies to the parliament.

The ruling Homeland Union (Lithuanian Conservatives) is planning to put up 140 candidates in a multi-seat district and 40 candidates in single-mandate districts. The Conservatives have formed an informal coalition with the Lithuanian Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees and included 19 candidates into the Conservatives' candidate list. The Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees will run separately in six single-mandate districts.

Other parties include the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party, the Christian Democrats, The Social Democracy 2000 Party, the Moderate Conservative Union, and others.

The oppositional Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party (LDDP), the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, the Union of Russians of Lithuania and the New Democracy party (formerly the Women's Party) have formed a Social Democratic coalition with former president Algirdas Brazauskas and are planning to propose a joint list of candidates in a multi-mandate district.

The parliament to be elected during the forthcoming elections will be the fourth group of legislators including this one, which declared independence on March 11 1990. The parliament is elected for a four-year term. ♦

The Lithuanian Art Museum


A Portrait of M. K. Čiurlionis: Celebrating 125 Years of a Musical and Artistic Genius

It's a lot easier these days to find the name "M. K. Čiurlionis" listed in art books and music libraries. That's only because Lithuania's re-entry into the world has helped his artwork, music, and persona to become better known. In addition, Lithuania's Seimas (parliament) President and musicologist, Vytautas Landsbergis, has championed the works of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis for many years through books, magazine articles, concerts, recordings, and films.

And now, 125 years since the birth of M. K. Čiurlionis, special concerts and exhibits throughout the U.S. and Lithuania will highlight his works and life. Most of these events will take place in October and November. Their purpose is to continue to pay respect and homage to a true Lithuanian artistic genius.

Čiurlionis's life and works take on a mystical, creative, yet short journey. The Lithuanian Art Museum in Lithuania produced a thorough biography of Čiurlionis and an analysis of his artwork and compositions. According to the

Museum, he was born on September 22nd, 1875, in Varėna, southern Lithuania, where his father was an organist. Three years later his father moved to Druskininkai, a health resort on the Nemunas, to take up the post of organist. It was here that Čiurlionis grew up and was to frequently spend his holidays. He was more than usually fond of the delicate and dreamlike quality of the natural surroundings of Druskininkai. Their influence can be felt in both his music and his painting.

Taught by this father, he could read music without any difficulty at the age of seven. He continued his musical education at Prince Oginski's orchestra school in Plungė. Here, from 1882 to 1893, he learned to play the flute and several other instruments and attempted to compose music. Some of his compositions were played on the occasion of the Prince's name day. The Prince, who gave the talented young man his support, directed him to the Warsaw Conservatory of Music.

Čiurlionis was in Warsaw from 1893 to

THE LITHUANIAN ART MUSEUM'S writing staff includes Romualdas Budrys, director of Lithuanian Art Museum, Danutė Mukienė, main editor, Nerutė Kligienė, technical editor, and Dalia Sirgėdaitė, writer/editor.

1899. At first he studied piano and later composition. During his free time he studied the natural sciences, the history of culture, and literature. The grandeur of the universe and its astonishing harmony deeply interested him. He attempted to understand cosmogonic problems from the popularly and poetically written works of C. Flam Marion and from the hypotheses of Kant and LaPlace.

While studying at the Warsaw Conservatory, he composed the cantata "De Profundis" (for choir and symphony orchestra), two sonatas, variations for string quartet, choral and instrumental fugues, and many short pieces for piano.

When he graduated from the Conservatory, he was offered the position of director of the Lublin School of Music, but declined and earned a living by giving private lessons.

In 1901, Čiurlionis completed the symphonic poem "In the Forest", which won first prize in the competition organized by Zamoy-ski. He again received the support of Prince M. Oginski, as well as that of some of his own friends, and was able to go to the Leipzig Conservatory of Music, where in 1901 and 1902 he studied composition under K. Reinecke and counterpoint under S. Jadaßohn.

While studying in Leipzig, he composed the overture *Kęstutis*, a fugue for string orchestra, and a four-part string quartet. This was his diploma work on finishing the Leipzig Conserva-

tory.

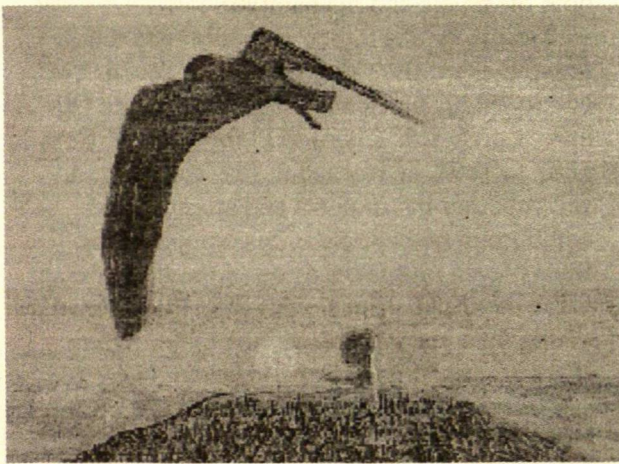
When he returned to Warsaw in the autumn of 1902, he was offered a teaching post at the Conservatory, but continued to give private lessons for rich and cultured families. In Plungė, he sketched details of the Prince's mansion and park; in Druskininkai, he drew landscapes.

When he returned to Warsaw from Leipzig, he at first attended Kausik's drawing school; and then from 1904 to 1906, he studied at the Academy of Art under I. Tichy, K. Krzyzanowski and F. Ruszczyc. Although he was anxious to get to know the principles of painting, he nevertheless took to free composition more willingly. It satisfied the development of his imagination, which was enriched with new visions from the Bible, the ancient Hindu religion, and the works of Tagore, Ruskin, Wilde, Kipling, Merezhkovsky, and others. His paintings were almost always awarded a prize at the competitions held by the Academy. The Academy acquired the cycle of six paintings called "The Storm", in which man's spiritual struggle between evil and good was depicted.

More freedom in the field of culture came to Lithuania after the revolution of 1905, and Čiurlionis made up his mind "to dedicate all his past and future work to Lithuania" (in a letter dated Jan. 7, 1906 to his brother Paulius). Čiurlionis's works were put on display at the first Lithuanian art exhibition held from Dec. 27, 1906 to Feb. 15, 1907 in Vilnius.

In Vilnius, he was an active member of the Lithuanian Art Society, organized the music section, conducted the Rūta Society Choir, and wrote on music and art in the Lithuanian press. He put about sixty of his works on show at the second art exhibition, which was opened on March 12, 1908. In the autumn of 1908, he went to St. Petersburg, hoping to find better living conditions there than in Vilnius.

His first works were put on show at the exhibition held at the St. Petersburg Academy of Art, and were well received by Russian



A Fairy Tale. Triptych. Part II

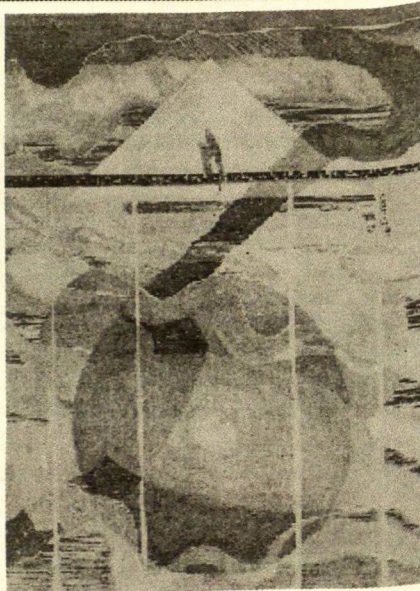
critics. Several of his better works were put on show a second time (in 1908) at an exhibition organized by the art journal *Apollon* (edited by S. Makovsky). However, Čiurlionis was badly off materially, not always having enough money to buy paints. Besides that, he was in poor health and became mentally ill through overworking in 1909. He was taken to a sanatorium near Warsaw and showed signs of improvement, but caught a cold and died unexpectedly on April 10th, 1911. His short, but creative life produced over 250 compositions for piano, string instruments, orchestra, and choir, and some 300 paintings.

Čiurlionis's Musical Works

Čiurlionis made his mark primarily as a composer with exceptional talent and good professional training. He is the first to have written Lithuanian chamber and symphonic music.

He was most prolific in writing for the piano (over 150 compositions). The most outstanding of these is the three-part cycle "The Sea"; others consist of short preludes, fugues, canons, etudes, and variations. Their themes are short, condensed, of clear and finished form, melodious and emotional. Some of them are serene and optimistic; others are imbued with an indefinable unease and tragic pessimism.

Sometimes contrasting moods of tempestuous rage and quiet resignation alternate in the same composition. Čiurlionis achieved this through the masterful use of polyphonic technique, which he had grown fond of. The most striking example of this technique is the "Fugue in B flat for four parts of wide compass" (1909).



Sonata of the Stars. Andante.

In his most important piano composition "The Sea" (1908), the third and last part of the cycle (Finale) is written on the monothematic principle, characteristic of Čiurlionis' last musical compositions. Other works include the overture "Kęstutis" (only the piano-score remains), the symphonic poems "In the Forest" and "The Sea" for orchestra, and the cantata "De Profundis" for orchestra and mixed chorus. The cantata is in three parts, its text being based on the well-known psalm of David.

There is more individuality in the symphonic poem "In the Forest" (1901). This is the first of his poems, and the first of its kind in Lithuanian music, to be written on the free form of the sonata for a symphony orchestra (with harp) -- three times its normal constitution but without percussion instruments. Its melody is lyrical, and serene; the harmony and rhythm are not complicated; the instrumentation is colorful. Čiurlionis re-created the idyllic landscape of his wooded native land by means of this poem.

His second symphonic poem "The Sea" (1908), written by an already mature composer, is more complex and pithy in all of its compositional structure. This is Čiurlionis's greatest and most original musical work. It is also written in sonata form, and is for a large orchestra with three times the usual number of woodwind instruments, six French horns, four trumpets, two harps, and organ. "The Sea" is strong in dramatic expression with rays of calm subsidence. It was the composer's aim to express the anxiety and calm of the human soul through sound images, on the parallel of the sea raging and abating.

Folk songs used for piano music and har-



Sonata of the Sea. Finale.

monized for chorus constitutes a separate group. In harmonizing folk songs, Čiurlionis used his own stylistic devices (a lively bass, wide range of pitch, chromatic progressions and altered chords, and canons) in moderation, and maintained the form, simplicity and mood of the folk songs.

Čiurlionis' musical works and harmonized folk songs were published in the following publications: *Vieversėlis* (The Lark) in 1909 -- a collection of folk songs for elementary schools; *Muzikos Kūriniai* (Musical Compositions) in 1925; *Kūriniai Fortepijonui* (Works for the Piano) in 1957; *Liaudies Dainos ir Kūriniai Fortepijonui* (Folk Songs and Works for the Piano) in 1959; *Prelūdai ir Fūgos* (Preludes and Fuges) in 1959; *Fūgos, Kanonai ir Prelūdai* (Fugues, Canons, and Preludes) in 1965; and *Styginis Kvartetas* (String Quartet) in 1966.

Čiurlionis's Paintings

Čiurlionis is not as well known for his melodious music as for his colorful paintings in which he showed himself to be an original and

M. K. Čiurlionis Events

Sept. 29, 2000: New Lithuanian compositions in honor of Čiurlionis's 125th birthday celebration will be premiered at the University of Chicago 3:00 PM. Reproductions of Čiurlionis's artwork will be exhibited. Musicologist Linas Paulauskis will introduce the event.

Nov. 1, 2000: "Dainavos" ensemble, the Vilnius String Quartet, Actress Audre Budrytė and pianist Rokas Zubovas will perform at a concert at the Chicago Cultural Center – Bradley Hall at 6:00 PM. Chicago-Vilnius Sister Cities Committee, Balzekas Lithuanian Cultural Museum and The American Lithuanian Art Society sponsors this event.

Nov. 3, 2000: The Vilnius String Quartet and pianists Sonata and Rokas Zubovai will perform new compositions from Lithuanian composers in honor of Čiurlionis; while American artwork dedicated to Čiurlionis's birthday will be displayed at the World Lithuanian Center in Lemont, Illinois starting at 7:00 PM.

Nov. 4, 2000: The Lithuanian Youth Center will also sponsor a repeat performance of the Lemont event in its Center rooms for the Lithuanian Saturday School at 12:00 PM, and later in the evening for the general public. Its Čiurlionis Gallery will display reproductions.

Nov. 5, 2000: The Čiurlionis Festival will close with a play based on Čiurlionis's and his wife's, Sofija Kymantaitės-Čiurlionienės letters, "The Sonata of Longing" at the World Lithuanian Center in Lemont at 1:00 PM.

The Vilnius String Quartet, pianists Sonata and Rokas Zubovai will perform, while Musicologist Linas Paulauskis will introduce events at: Boston University, Mass. — Nov. 7, 12:00 PM. Steinway Hall, Akron, Ohio — Nov. 10, 7:00 PM. Severance Hall, Cleveland, Ohio — Nov. 12, 3:00 PM.

Other events may be found in your area. Contact the Lithuanian American Artists Society at 773-776-8818 or log on at www.mkc2000.tripod.com.

To View Čiurlionis Exhibits in Lithuania

THE MIKALOJUS KONSTANTINAS ČIURLIONIS MEMORIAL MUSEUM

35 M. K. Čiurlionio St, Lt-4690 Druskininkai
Tel.: (8-233) 52755.
Fax: (8-233) 52755

The museum contains a memorial exhibition illustrating M. K. Čiurlionis' biography and photographs, documents, reproductions of the artist's works, as well as a collection of works dedicated to M. K. Čiurlionis by contemporary artists from different countries.

The museum was founded in 1963 in the home of the artist and parents, and in which he lived sporadically from 1890 to 1910. It was in Druskininkai that M. K. Čiurlionis wrote his symphonic poem *The Sea* ("Jūra") and painted the series "The Grass-Snake Sonata" ("Pavasario sonata") and created many other works.

M. K. ČIURLIONIS STATE MUSEUM OF ART

V. Putvinskio str. 55, Kaunas
Phone: +370 7 204446
Fax: 204612
Guided tours booked on tel: +370 7 207709
Open: March-October - Tue - Sun 12-18
November-February - Tue - Sun 11-17
Closed: last Tuesday of each month.

The museum houses much more than the 360 works of the great mystic modernist. The vast collection of 20th century Lithuanian paintings and sculptures is of equal importance, as the 3,643 pieces of Lithuanian folk art also exhibited. The colorful collection of iron heads of crosses is of particular interest.

profound artist of great feeling. The second talent that lay in him broke through of its own accord in artistic work of independent type when he attended the Warsaw Academy of Art for a short while after completing his music studies. He stands alone in Lithuanian art because of his unusually individual style of painting, more an inner flair than an acquired technique.

Čiurlionis began to paint when he was already a mature composer and carried music over into painting. He not only used the principles of musical composition in his art work, but also gave musical terms to some of his paintings, calling them preludes, fugues, and sonatas.

Especially near to and characteristic of music is the development of a theme in several paintings, where each of them reveals diverse scenes and moods. The compositional structure of the three or four-part sonata is found most often. The frequent repetition of motifs, the melodic rhythm of the lines, and the playful harmony of colors also join his painting to his music. For example, the symphonic poem "The Sea" and the cycle of paintings "The Sonata of the Sea" (1908) draw on this kind of analogy as a means of expression. Besides, one theme joins both of these works; namely the dialectics of rest and movement in the rhythm of nature.

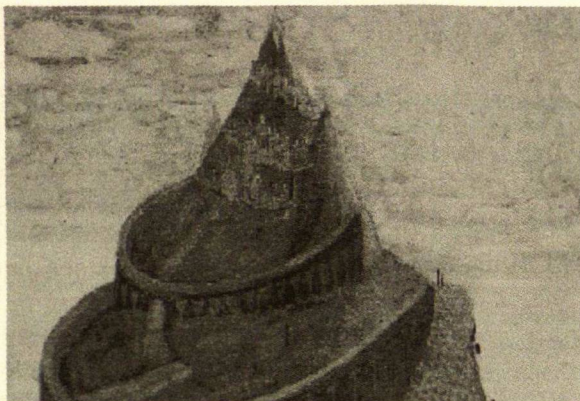
Delving into the foundations of the universe, of nature and man's existence, Čiurlionis formulated his own conceptions and visions, which led him from music to painting. He painted his first works and cycles of symbolic characters while attending the Warsaw Academy of Art from 1904 to 1906: "The Serpent" (Vision); "Rex"; "The Creation of the World" (Let There be Light); "The Deluge"; "The Storm"; "Silence"; "Stillness"; "Knowledge"; "The Music of the Forest"; "The City"; "The Bridge"; "The Ship"; "The Funeral" and others. Most of these paintings were put on show at the student exhibitions at the Warsaw Academy of Art and at the first Lithuanian Art Exhibition held in Vilnius in

1906.

Čiurlionis did his best artwork between 1907 and 1909, while living in Vilnius and St. Petersburg. At that time he passed over from realistic symbolism to a more mystical kind of symbolism, which fitted better to the view of the world that he had created. In the universe and in nature he saw a peculiar inner life, full of mystery and elemental force. Depicting this through his paintings, he gave the visible world a spiritualism appearance as if it were some kind of echo or reflection of another invisible world. Both merged in his fantasy and became an astonishing symphony of symbols. This is how his triptychs, sonatas, and cycles, making up the greater part of his work, came into being -- as for example the 1907 triptychs: "Spring", "Sonata of Spring", "The Cycle of Winter", "The Triptych of the Folk Tale", "The Sonata of the Sun", "The Cycle Signs of the Zodiac", and the 1908 "Sonata of the Sea", "Sonata of the Pyramids", "The Triptych of Summer", "Sonata of Summer", "Sonata of the Stars", "Sonata of the Serpent", and others. In these works Čiurlionis achieved great sensitivity as well as expressiveness and elegance of artistic form.

The above-mentioned series of works, painted on subjects concerning the universe and nature, develop one idea or another through scenes of diverse moods. The sonata composition of four scenes predominates. The first (Allegro) is usually lively and dynamic in mood; the second (Andante) is quiet and serious; the last scenes (Scherzo, Finale) are impetuous and stormy, dramatic in mood, expressing victory or sudden resignation. On the whole, the sonatas are bright and optimistic, as if they were enthusiastic hymns to eternal life.

Symbols drawn from natural phenomena



Fairy Tale of the Castle.

are strikingly vivid in some of Čiurlionis's other paintings: "Hymn" (1907), "My Road" (1907), "The Black Sun" (1908), and the great "Rex" (1909). Visions of a world of happiness, beauty, and peace are united to these predominating subjects in others: "The Altar", "The Offering", "The Angel" (all 1908),

and "Paradise", "Fairy-Tale of the Castle" (1909).

A couple of paintings depict the life of Lithuania symbolically: "The Fairy-Tale of Kings" (1908), "The Knight" (1909). Čiurlionis felt deeply about the natural beauty of Lithuania, fascinating and dream-like in its nuances of gentle colors, and he carried it over into his paintings. Lithuania's nature and the world outlook of the Lithuanian nation are reflected in all his principal works. He was acquainted with this outlook through knowledge of the people's way of life and customs, folk tales and songs.

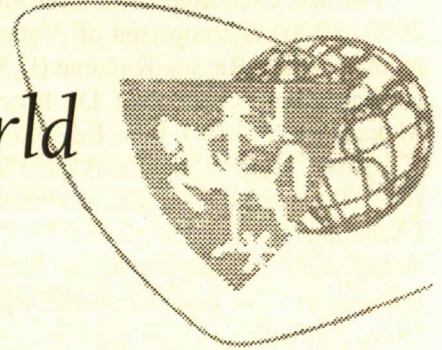
Various works of engraving make up a separate group: prints, drawings, book covers, initials, vignettes. Most of his works are painted in watercolors or tempera on paper, very few in oil on canvas.

Čiurlionis' paintings belong to those works of art that stir the imagination, compelling one to think and to interpret them in a variety of ways. Some people hold his paintings to be the first examples of abstract art; others would deny this. The individualistic form of his paintings is strongly bound up with a meaningful idea content. The basic meaning of his work was to reveal the profound foundation of eternal life and its divine harmony in the reality of nature. ◆

From the Lithuanian World Community

Under One Umbrella...

The Xth Lithuanian World Community Parliament



After World War II, Lithuanian exiles fled to many parts of the world thinking that this may be temporary. Lithuania will return to its normal self and life will go on. Yet, the lives of these exiles continued in the distant lands, and the fear that russification and sovietization would obliterate Lithuanian culture and language increased with each passing year.

By 1949, it became apparent that the responsibility to maintain and support Lithuanian culture outside of Lithuania would depend on the unity of this widely dispersed group of people. On June 14th, 1949, the Lietuvių Charta (the Lithuanian exiles' constitution) was written and signed by representatives of the exile communities. With this, the Lithuanian World Community (LWC) started its work sustaining and nurturing Lithuanian cultural, educational, and societal growth beyond Lithuania's borders.

With the exiles under one umbrella, the Lithuanian World Community, it was imperative to maintain communication. The Lithuanian World Community Parliament (Pasaulio

Lietuvių Bendruomenės Seimas — not to be confused with the present Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania) became the instrument to effectively gather representatives from each country in which exiles were living every four to five years to determine the (democratically elected every three years) executive committee's focus and work goals.

When Lithuania reestablished her independence, she did so with the help of many people, including the untiring support of the Lithuanian World Community. The LWC met for their ninth Parliament in Lithuania in 1997. They had succeeded in keeping "Lithuania" alive throughout the world.

The LWC Xth Parliament was held in Vilnius, Lithuania on August 15th to the 20th. One hundred twenty nine Lithuanian Community delegates, including Youth Association chairpeople, came together from 28 countries. Those countries represented were: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Byelorussia, Canada, Colombia, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Kaliningrad, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Moldova, Poland,

*THE LITHUANIAN WORLD COMMUNITY released a special edition of **The World Lithuanian** highlighting the Parliament's events and the World Community's regions.*

Russia, Siberia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, and Venezuela. Guests from Spain and New Zealand also participated. Representatives from Holland, Denmark and Hungary could not attend.

The new executive committee elected for 2000 to 2003 is comprised of: Vytautas Kamantas (U.S.), Regina Kučienė (U.S.), Milda Lenkauskienė (U.S.), Prof. Dr. Bronius Makoškus (Poland), Rev. Edis Putrimas (Canada), Algis Rugienius (U.S.), Marytė Šmitienė (Germany), Gabrielius Žemkalnis (Australia), Laima Žliobienė (U.S.), and Youth Association Chairperson Rimas Baliulis (Germany). The new committee elected Vytautas Kamantas as their chairperson and Gabrielius Žemkalnis as LWC representative in Lithuania.

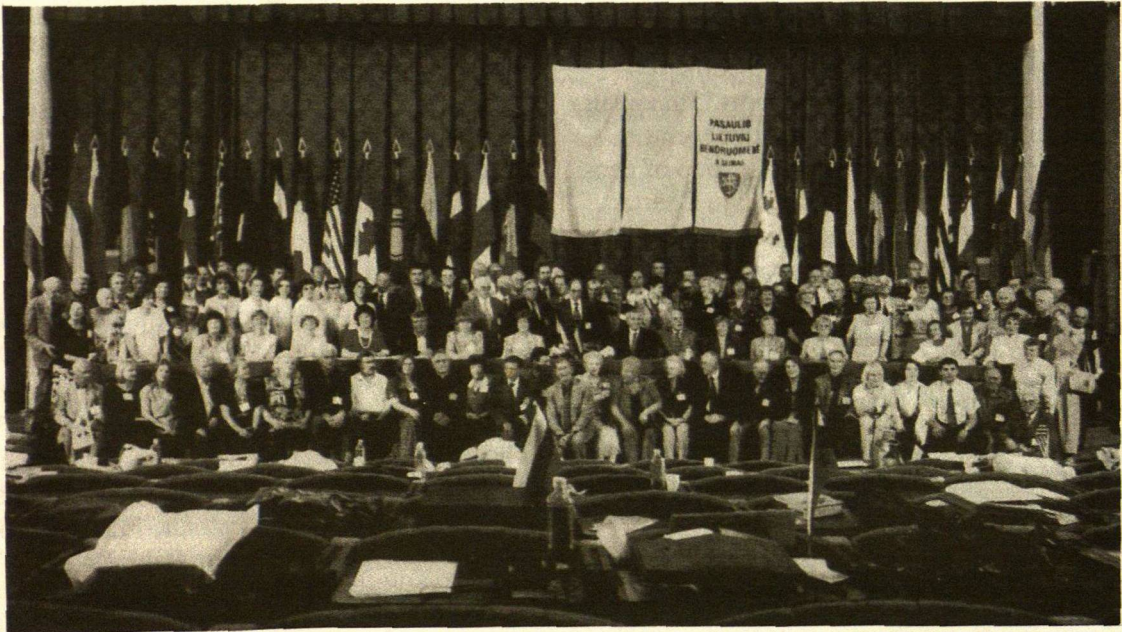
During the five-day session, the following subjects were discussed and resolutions and appeals were decided:

- goals for the Lithuanian World Community and the representative communities;

- Lithuania's road to NATO;
- Lithuanian education – in Lithuania and abroad;
- linking Lithuania's organizations and institutions with LWC's projects;
- Lithuania's genocide and exile commemorations; and others.

During the Parliament, Lithuania's President Valdas Adamkus bestowed the "Didžiojo Lietuvos Kunigaikščio Gedimino" 2nd order medal of honor to the Lithuanian World Community's President Vytautas Kamantas and the Educational Council's President Regina Kučienė.

The Xth Lithuanian World Community Parliament can be summed up with Vytautas Kamantas's words in his address to the representatives and guests. "We are one Lithuanian nation in the world, sisters and brothers throughout the world's continents, and for us there is but one Independent Lithuania." ♦



The Lithuanian World Community Xth Parliament with 129 representatives from 28 countries.

Photo: Algimantas Žižiūnas

Jeanne Dorr

The Same, But Yet So Different

It's hard to believe that another summer is over and our thoughts now turn to fall and winter. I was fortunate to have spent the summer in Lithuania, and I hope you will join me on my many journeys. We'll travel the entire country together while we share some hilarious moments and shed more than a few tears. Everything and everyone cooperated, except the weather. It was cold and rained almost every day. Oh well, you can't have it all.

I visited many of our children, interviewed a partisan fighter, spent an evening with some of the widows whose husbands were murdered at the Medininkai checkpoint in 1991, and enjoyed an afternoon of camp life with Operation Snowball. I spent time at several hospitals and group homes and visited a printing press that was hidden underground for ten years. I also have some very special "surprise" interviews to share with you. As always, the focus will be on the children and the elderly: the two groups who are struggling the most. I hope you will accompany me all over Lithuania, so check your *Bridges* subscription expiration date; I wouldn't want you to miss a single issue, and let's get going.

During the past two years I have written about two young ladies who share the same name – Jurgita. They have both become favorites, and I think you will understand why. I met Jurgita N. more than six years ago and Jurgita K. about four years later. Each girl has had an impact on my life as well as the lives of their sponsors.

They are so much alike: they have the same name, both live on farms, neither has a tele-

phone. Grandmothers who are trying to hold together their families on less than \$75 a month are raising them. Jurgita N.'s mother is dead and her father is unable to raise her; while Jurgita K.'s father is dead and her mother has chosen not to raise her. They are almost identical in age. They have sponsors who care for them very deeply. Both have smiles that seem to radiate directly from the sun. And both love their grandmothers with a fierce and powerful love.

But there are astounding differences. Jurgita N. has never spent a day in school, while Jurgita K. entered Vilnius University this fall. Jurgita N. is unable to write her name, while Jurgita K. is a prolific writer. One is small and blonde, and the other is tall and dark. Jurgita N. cannot be left alone for very long, while Jurgita K. walked many kilometers in the morning darkness to school. Jurgita's N.'s sponsor has never heard from her while Jurgita K.'s sponsor waits eagerly for her letters.

Please allow me to share my wonderful memories of my visits with both girls. Although Jurgita N. is over eighteen, her sponsor has continued to support her. He doesn't hear from her because she can't write, and I really don't think her grandmother is able to write. After I return from my trips I fill him in on my visit to Jurgita and her grandmother. He always sends me something "extra" to take to them. I have the grandmother sign her name and the amount of money she received on a piece of paper, and then I give it to her sponsor.

Once again, Jonas Svoba, editor of *Valstiečių*

JEANNE DORR is a member of the Board of Directors of Lithuanian Orphan Care, a branch of the Human Services Council of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. She is also a social studies teacher in New Jersey.

laikraštis, the newspaper which sponsors Countryside Children's Fund, drove me to Jurgita's house. The weather was -- what else but -- raining and cold. It seems the older I get, the longer this trip takes. I keep hoping against hope that these village roads will be paved, but I guess that isn't to be. Oh well, who needs a smooth ride in the pouring rain. We went through mud that was so thick we got stuck when we tried to back up. Most of the time was spent in pleasant conversation with Jonas. Both he and his wife, Regina, try so hard to make life better for the people who live in the villages.

We finally reached our destination and made a mad dash from the car into the room and a half, wooden farmhouse. Much to our dismay we found Jurgita laying on her little cot, her leg swathed in bandages. Her grandmother just brought her home from the hospital the day before -- a vein had broken in her leg. Her grandmother tried and tried to stop the bleeding but she just couldn't. A neighbor was summoned, and Jurgita was taken to the hospital where she remained for two weeks.

Imagine her terror. You see, Jurgita has the mind of a five-year-old child. The trauma of all the blood and staying in a strange place without her beloved grandmother frightened her to the point of hysteria. Her grandmother spent as many hours with her as she could, but there was



Jurgita N. and her grandmother.

a cow that to be milked twice a day, pigs and chickens had to be fed, and the farm had to be tended. The elderly woman was sick with worry over this granddaughter she loves so much. Neither has anyone else in this world.

But Jurgita is a real sweetheart and some things just don't change -- she has a real sweet tooth. Unfortunately, in our haste to beat the weather and leave Vilnius at early hour, neither Jonas nor I remembered Jurgita's love of sweets. We saw the disappointment in her eyes when she asked for candy and we didn't have any. Now what do we do? These farms are in the middle of nowhere and one does not simply drive to the nearest convenience store. We momentarily stood there looking at each other, when Jonas remembered a half bottle of soda in the car. He dashed out of the house through the downpour and returned with the prized bottle. Let me tell you that it was well worth it. Jurgita was beside herself with joy. Soda is a luxury. So this was like Christmas in July.

The house was spotless, although there were no modern conveniences. I did notice a small black and white television set that was not there on my last visit. Before I could mention it, Jurgita's grandmother began to thank Jonas over and over for the wonderful present. Did he know how quickly the long winter nights passed, now that they had a television? Did he know how she and Jurgita sat together at night and enjoyed the new set? I wasn't the least bit surprised when I learned that Jonas, after hearing that they had no radio or television on our last visit, bought them a small set with his own money.

I could see how embarrassed he was getting, so at that point, I handed the grandmother the additional money from her sponsor. She turned her head and I could see the tears streaming down her face. This man and his wife are strangers to her and Jurgita and yet they always remember them. She asked me to tell the sponsors that the only gifts she and Jurgita could give their sponsors were their prayers and their love. Who could ask for more?

She started scurrying around and setting the table. We said we couldn't eat a bite, but one

thing you learn quickly is never to argue with a Lithuanian grandmother when it comes to food. Jurgita insisted on joining us at the table. She hobbled on one leg as Jonas and I each supported her. Through all this fuss she never let go of her bottle of soda. In a few minutes the table was set and a plate of bacon, from their own pig, appeared along with their homegrown tomatoes and cucumbers. This was topped off by juice, boiled down from the berries they picked. We were hungrier than we realized.

I could see how much the grandmother aged in the two years since my last visit. Now she had not only the strain of caring for Jurgita, but also all the farm chores to do on her own. As we took our leave, Jurgita's grandmother once again asked me to pray for them. She still needs more time on earth to care for her beloved granddaughter and, maybe with enough prayers, she will be given the gift of time.

On the other hand, from our first meeting, Jurgita K. and I corresponded by letter. She was thrilled when I printed one of her essays in *Bridges*; I was thrilled because it was so well received by the readers. I celebrated with her via letter when she wrote me that she led her debate team to first place and they received a trip to Paris as a gift from the French government. Incidentally, the debates were all held in French! She sent me pictures and postcards from this trip of a lifetime.

I was honored when she asked me for a letter of recommendation to Vilnius University. I worried when she wrote how difficult it was for her grandmother to make ends meet. And we counted the days until we would meet in person. Since she also does not have a phone, I wrote her of my arrival date and my cousin's phone number in Kaunas. I barely put my suitcases down when the phone rang and I heard Jurgita's voice. Because my schedule was so tight, we planned that she and her grandmother would meet me at a friend's house in Prienai the following Sunday. My friend is the principal of a village school in the area and his wife is a special education teacher. They are among the most caring people I have ever met. Whenever there was a lapse in



Jurgita K. and her grandmother.

letters from Jurgita, they would go to her school and check that all was well.

The big day arrived and Jurgita and her grandmother made the hour and a half bus trip from their farm. While they were riding the bus, I was visiting my great aunt who is in her nineties and bedridden. My friends picked up Jurgita and her grandmother from the bus station and then came for me. There are times I get very embarrassed when I am in Lithuania because so many people go out of their way for me and this was one of those times. As I approached the car, Jurgita jumped out from the back seat, threw her arms around me, and the two of us stood in the middle of the sidewalk crying like there would be no tomorrow. But of course, there will be a tomorrow for her, and God willing it will be a great one.

We headed for the house with everyone talking at the same time. As we arrived, our hostess met us in the driveway and immediately put Jurgita and her grandmother at ease. The table was beautifully set and out of nowhere appeared a sumptuous meal. But Jurgita and her grandmother were perfect Lithuanian guests; they opened their shopping bag and produced bacon from their pig, honey from their bees, and vegetables from their farm for their hostess. For me there was a lovely tablecloth and I will always treasure it.

Because it was Jurgita's graduation from high school and she would be starting Vilnius Univer-

sity, I wanted her to have something special. I bought her a watch. Needless to say, she was thrilled. I also gave her an envelope from her sponsor, which brought a huge smile to her face. This gift would help her live in Vilnius for the coming school year.

When I asked her why there were such long gaps between her letters last year, she grew quiet. Then she said she didn't want to worry me with her problems. I explained to her that worrying is what I do best. Apparently she worried so much about her grandmother, the farm, and school that she ended up in the hospital very near to a nervous breakdown. Her grandmother, who is in her seventies, was on top of the hay wagon when something scared the horse. He bolted, and she fell to the ground seriously injuring her back. But thank goodness, she made a full recovery, although she is often in pain.

But grandmother did not want to talk about her ailments. She was so excited about being a guest and having someone wait on her and foot. With her delightful chuckle, she was trying to remember if that had ever happened to her before, but she didn't think so. She said she heard of people who took vacations although she never had one. Was it possible that visiting such a nice house and having people serve you was the same as a vacation? Yes, grandmother just experienced her first vacation, albeit a short one.

Both Jurgita and her grandmother expressed their gratitude to Jurgita's sponsor not only for his financial support but also for his words of encouragement. Soon our wonderful day came to an end, and more tears were shed. I would not be seeing Grandmother and Jurgita for two more years, although I would speak to Jurgita several more times on the phone. This in itself was a real feat with Jurgita not having a phone and me traveling all over Lithuania. But she did manage to find me, and her enthusiasm always made my day. After some more hugs, they were back on the bus for their return trip home.

Two Jurgitas, so much the same but so very different. Although they are in the same small country, they are world's apart, each special in her own way.

I want to thank both grandmothers for the loving care they give to their beautiful granddaughters, both sponsors who have gone beyond the call of duty, and the people in Lithuania who make my journeys so much easier. Special thanks to Jonas Svoba for driving me so far in terrible weather and having a bottle of soda with him, as well as Virginija and Jonas Kirkliauskai for giving Grandmother her first vacation and practically turning their house into a hotel to accommodate me.

So many children are still waiting for sponsors and so many families need your help. Although we do our best and ask the families to personally write to their sponsors, we cannot guarantee this will happen. For a guarantee, we would have to hire people in Lithuania to sit with the families and write letters with them. To do this, we would have to withhold money from the families and we will not do this.

The economic situation in Lithuania is not good, many people are without jobs. These are not lazy people or alcoholics; there are just no jobs available. Please open your hearts to these children; let them know that someone cares.

The cost to sponsor a child for a year is \$150 but ANY donation is gratefully appreciated.

Several of our groups in Lithuania would like to give small Christmas gifts to children who will not receive any other gifts. These gifts consist of items such as a coloring book, crayons, and maybe, just maybe, if they are lucky, a chocolate bar! These packages can usually be put together by the volunteers in Lithuania for about \$1 a child. If you cannot sponsor a child, perhaps you can provide a donation for a few Christmas gifts.

Thank you, readers, for allowing me to share my memories with you.

Please send your tax deductible checks to:

Lithuanian Orphan Care
2711 W. 71st St.
Chicago, IL. 60629 ♦

Rasa Ardys-Juška

Say it with...*license plates*?!

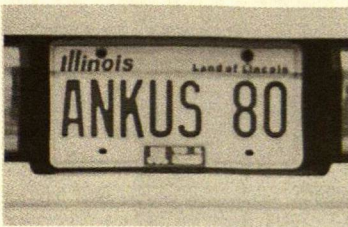
We've seen the "I'm proud to be..." bumper stickers that many American cars sport these days. But, who would have guessed that you can tell when a Lithuanian is driving a car by simply reading the license plate.

During the July 2000 Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival in Toronto, one of the most interesting parts of the day was cruising in the parking lots and scoping out the creative Lithuanian license plates.

If you had a question as to what geographic location the driver preferred, you would have seen...



How about a name?



Is it mom or sister at the wheel?



If you're a "marksman" on a "horse", these might not be very easy prey...



"Shark"



"Bear"

Road rage wouldn't occur if everyone would drive around with "I love..." plates as this one. Or you could try to "catch" the one at right!



Keep an eye out for those Lithuanian license plates. If you see one that speaks for itself, send it along, and we'll "park" it in Bridges! ♦

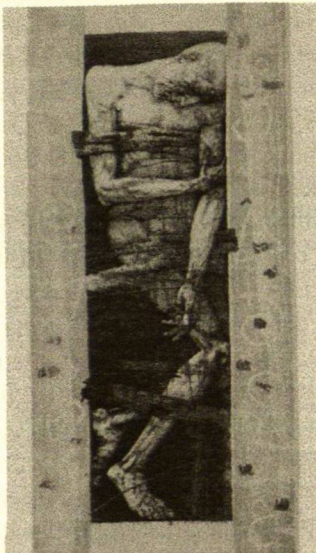
C u r r e n t E v e n t s

"His works are a Feast, a Celebration"

Lithuanian art critic, Algis Uždavinsys, wrote in one of his articles that contemporary art too often reflects the desperation and the cynicism of the age, which we are living in. Art lost its spiritual roots and became a circus where so called "artists" play their games usually on the edge of vulgarity. But there are still a lot of artists, who, like the old masters, tell, and retell the soul's story, her loves and sorrows, desires and quest. One of them is the Lithuanian contemporary artist, Egidijus Rudinskas, a Professor of the Kaunas Art Institute, whose deeply moving, spiritual art can be appreciated in the Walsh Library Gallery of the Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, at the group exhibition called "A Response to Emotionalism: Recent Works by Eastern European Artists".

More than twenty etchings and an artist's book "The Last Hour" executed by Mr. Rudinskas will be on view in the gallery for almost two months. His recent work, called "The Garden of Memories" awarded in July 2000 the 1st Prize at the Biennale Internazionale di Grafica at Francavilla al Mare, Italy, will also be included into the show.

His art is a great example of the cultivation and admiration of the traditional values of Fine Arts like proportion, balance and harmony. It is art full of expression, feelings and emotions. His art shows life like something miraculous and epiphanic. It talks straight to the heart of the viewer who can find in it his own expression of life, good and bad times, happiness, loves and sorrows. His etchings have a special value of prophecy, an ability to change viewers into better, more sensitive human beings.



The Sleep I

Rudinskas' art is one of a kind Lithuanian art that can be appreciated by other nations because of its difference and originality. It is art based on an artist's experience, education, devotion, and what is the most important, talent.

Looking at his works is a feast, a celebration. We can find there everything we have lost. We can find our childhood, our youth, our innocence, and our dreams, which never came true. With the miraculous world of his etchings, full of patience, mercy, and compassion, Rudinskas is one of the best, most original contemporary Lithuanian graphic artists.

"Egidijus Rudinskas is an amazing draftsman whose intricate narrative etchings evoke a dark gothic realm. Beautifully rendered nude male and female corpses lie buried beneath a cathedral or are combined with small houses, horses, leaves, eggs in birds nests, and other objects in symbolic compositions that make one think of Durer, albeit with a more contemporary sensibility influenced by Freud and Surrealism. Rudinskas is a literary artist in the best sense of that term" wrote an American art critic, Lawrence Downes, in the January/February 2000 issue of the "Gallery&Studio".

Walsh Library Gallery

Seton Hall University

400 South Orange Ave.

South Orange, NJ 07079

Show runs September 1 till October 27, 2000.

Walsh Library Gallery is open Monday - Friday

10:30 - 4:30 pm

For more information call Ms. JoAnn Cotz, Director of the Walsh Gallery,

tel. 973-275-2033, or a curator of the show, Mr.

Jan K. Kapera, tel. 973-779-3382 ♦

- Jan K. Kapera

Second Step to NATO Prepared

A new second project of the program for NATO membership preparation has been submitted to the Lithuanian government for approval. The Governmental NATO Integration Coordination Commission, which was in conference in Vilnius on Sept. 18th, adopted the project for 2000-2001. The Government will evaluate the project at a sitting later this month.

The Lithuanian Foreign Ministry's report a plan for practical measures. The program is divided into different chapters, which deal with political and economic, defense and military, resources, protection of secret information, and legal questions. Informing the Lithuanian public about NATO integration forms a separate part in the program. Its goal is to objectively inform the public about Lithuania's aspirations as well as to disseminate information about the relations among Alliance, NATO, and Lithuania.

Lithuania, basing itself on the Membership Action Plan (MAP) adopted in the Washington summit meeting of NATO states and governments last year, has already implemented the first NATO membership preparation program for 1999-2000.

The evaluation of the implementation of the 1999-2000 program, prepared by the Alliance, reads that Lithuania has made general progress in each part of the Membership Action Plan. NATO remarks and the experience acquired while implementing the 1999-2000 program were taken into consideration when drawing up the 2000-2001 program.

The Coordination Commission headed by the foreign and defense ministers was set up last April. It embraces vice-ministers of quite a few Lithuanian ministries, heads of the Lithuanian mission to NATO, and Lithuanian security department. ♦

Lithuanians Recognized Righteous Among the Nations

Thirteen Lithuanian families, who put their lives at risk to save Jews during the Nazi rule, were awarded medals and diplomas of Righteous Among the Nations on behalf of Jerusalem in Vilnius on Sept. 21st.

Many of the rescuers are deceased, so Israeli Ambassador to the Baltic states, Ronit Ben Dor, handed the medals and diplomas of the Yad Vashem Institute to their descendants.

"The honoring of the righteous has become a tradition, which is particularly bright on the eve of the Day of Lithuanian Jewish Genocide, September 23," chairman of the Lithuanian Jewish community, Simonas Alperavičius, said at the ceremony.

"During the Nazi rule, there were villains who killed innocent people just because they were Jews, and there were large numbers of righteous people who risked their lives and the

lives of their families to rescue the condemned," said Alperavičius, "These noble people can be safely called heroes."

The Israeli ambassador gave a short description of the heroic deeds of every person decorated with the awards of the Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority.

Lithuanian Parliamentary Chairman Vytautas Landsbergis received the award on behalf of his aunt, Jadvyga Jablonskienė, who rescued a Jewish girl. Landsbergis' mother has also received a medal of the Righteous Among the Nations. The medal received by Landsbergis is the 445th award received by Lithuanian citizens for saving Jews. The Lithuanian president has awarded another 360 Lithuanian rescuers. ♦

News from Lithuania - The Baltic News Service

UN Assesses Situation of Women in Lithuania

The United Nations (UN) has advised Lithuania to improve the situation of working women and take measures to prevent crimes against women, domestic violence, prostitution and trade in women.

These Sept. 11th recommendations came in response to Lithuania's report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women presented to the UN in June.

The UN was also provided with an alternative report prepared by Lithuanian women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which gave a critical assessment of the activities of the country's government with regard to the increasing scale of prostitution and trade in women. The report noted the insufficient number of women elected to the parliament and city councils, prob-

lems regarding sponsoring and financing NGOs, as well as discrimination against women on the labor market.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has suggested that the Lithuanian government should enter into closer cooperation with NGOs, provide them with financial assistance, encourage political activity of women, and focus more on the problems of women in rural areas and elderly women in general.

Equal Gender Opportunities Ombudsperson Aušrinė Burneikienė told BNS that the UN committee called attention to the lack of educational programs and media campaigns examining the negative conception of stereotype female and male roles in education, labor, political and administration sectors. ♦

Lithuania's Putin Vodka not a Tribute to Russian Leader

The Lithuanian alcoholic beverage producer Alita has put on the market its latest product, Putin Vodka, but it denies any allusions to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

There are three crowns resembling the symbol of Russian czar rule portrayed above the Putin Vodka caption on the blue, white and red label of the bottle -- the colors of the flag of the Russian Federation. Yet, Alita's Finance and Administration Director Vilmantas Pečiura told BNS that Putin Vodka has nothing to do with the Russian president.

"There is a plant in Lithuania, and we decided to give its name to our new vodka," said Pečiura referring to patinas [Lithuanian for "snowball tree"], which has been glorified in Lithuanian folklore.

Pečiura said that the three crowns on the label of the Putin Vodka were related to Alita's trademark, the blue background behind the name of the product means that the vodka should be consumed cold, adding that the red background behind "vodka" stands for the red berries of the snowball tree.

Asked to comment on the use of the English

word "vodka" rather than its Lithuanian equivalent, Pečiura said that "everything is in line with the European Union (EU) standards."

"Lithuania is aspiring for membership in the European Union, and the European Union uses "vodka", he said.

The 40-volume Putin Vodka costs \$7 a bottle. ♦

Lithuania Still "Somewhere Over There"

The *Cable News Network (CNN)*, considering itself the "leader of the world's news", still regards Lithuania as a country "somewhere over there".

On Sept. 21st, while announcing the results of the Olympic basketball game between the U.S. and Lithuania, the Kuwaiti flag was shown next to the name of Lithuania. The flag of this Persian Gulf region country does not resemble the Lithuanian flag at all. Lithuanian basketball players lost to the U.S. "dream team" with a score of 76:85. Specialists considered such a small difference to be a sensation. ♦

Lithuania's Castles at Your Fingertips

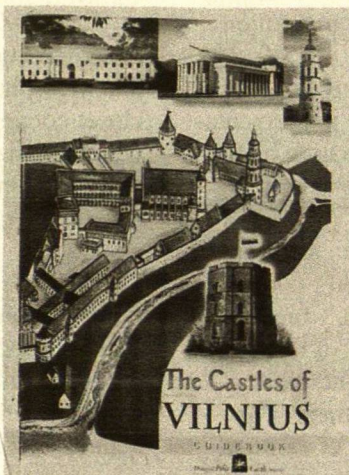
A guidebook, *The Castles of Vilnius*, relating the history, facts and legends of the Vilnius Upper, Lower, and Kreivoji Castles is now available. This 24-page book describes the museums and points of interest within the territory of the Castles, including the Arch-Cathedral, National Museum of Lithuania, Applied Art Museum, the Upper Castle Museum and the Royal Palace archaeological research site.

The small format, glossy print book is a collaborative result of Lithuanian-Americans

now living in Lithuania and local scholars. It is authored by Kazys Almenas, edited by Edmundas Kulikauskas, and designed by Ramūnas Krupauskas. The publisher, Draugija Pilis (Castle Society), 2000, "promotes research, restoration and publicity of the Castles of Vilnius and other castles in Lithuania".

The Castles of Vilnius may be obtained in the U.S. from DRAUGAS, 4545 W. 63 St., Chicago, IL 60629; tel. 773-585-9500. ♦

— Ramune Kubilius

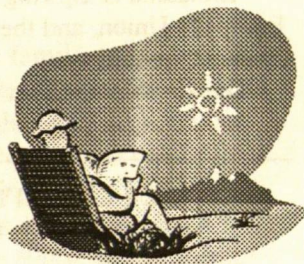


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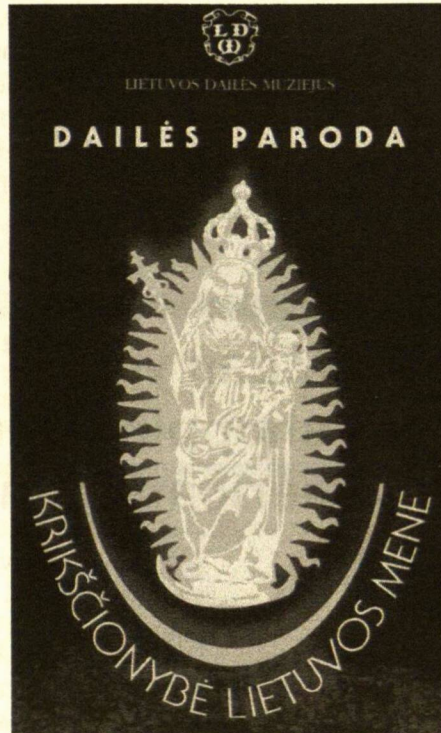
CHRISTIANITY IN ART

Among a number of interesting events taking place in Lithuania to celebrate the Great Jubilee is a magnificent exhibit of religious art titled "Christianity in Art". Some 5,000 art treasures are on display at the Vilnius Art Museum housed in the Armory of the lower Vilnius Castle, at the foot of the Hill of Gediminas.

The exhibit was officially inaugurated by President Valdas Adamkus on December 28, 1999 and will be open to the public until October 30, 2003. This date marks the 750th anniversary of the coronation of King Mindaugas who was baptized a Christian in 1252 and crowned in 1253.

This art exhibit is the largest ever and includes paintings, sculpture, sacred vestments and vessels, tapestries, historical documents and parchments, as well as unique examples of religious folk art. The artists who created them came not only from Lithuania, but also from the Italian and Flemish schools of Western Europe.

Historically the exhibit spans 1000 years. Its oldest document is an account of the mar-



tyrdom of St. Boniface, which took place on Lithuanian soil in 1009. This Boniface was a Camaldolese monk who came to preach Christianity to the Prussians.

The centerpiece of the entire exhibit is an extensive collection of religious artifacts belonging to the Vilnius Cathedral. This collection dates soon after 1387 when Lithuania as a nation accepted Christianity. It grew over the centuries augmented by gifts to the Catholic Church given by Lithuanian rulers and the great noble families. Among the 270 art treasures are jeweled chalices and monstrances, reliquaries

and ornate liturgical vestments.

The Vilnius Cathedral Art Collection has a most interesting history. Even native Lithuanians did not know of its existence until last year. They now have the opportunity to see it for the first time.

These art works were hidden inside the thick wall of the Vilnius Cathedral and plastered over in 1939, just as World War II started. After the war, Lithuania found itself annexed to the Soviet Union. In 1950, Vilnius Cathedral -- the pride of the whole nation --

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was nationalized by the Soviet government and could no longer be used as a church. In 1956, it was given to the Vilnius Art Museum and turned into a picture gallery and so it remained for 40 years.

The Cathedral was returned to the Catholic Church in 1989, renovated and reconsecrated. Archeological excavations made in 1984 - 85 had discovered the secret cache of art treasures, but only a few persons knew about it. Art Museum Director, Romualdas Budrys, and the archeologists who had found the art treasures decided to keep the find a secret for fear that the Soviet authorities would confiscate them and take them away to Russia.

An inventory was made of everything that had been found and included in the Art Museum books. In 1991, however, Soviet tanks

once again rolled through the streets of Vilnius, and the secret art collections was returned to its hiding place. Its existence was announced to the Lithuanian public in 1999.

At the opening ceremonies of the "Christianity in Art" exhibit, President Adamkus said that we can all appreciate the initiative of the Vilnius Art Museum for giving us the opportunity to celebrate 1000 years of Lithuanian history. It is thanks to Christian culture that the European people of the Middle Ages first heard of Lithuania in 1009. Archbishop Audrys Bačkis, head of the archdiocese of Vilnius, also spoke on this occasion. One thousand people patiently waited in line to see this unique exhibit for the first time and many more will be visiting it over the years. ♦

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• LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL •

Volume 24

Issue 7, September 2000

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