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# Jeronimas KAČINSKAS

## Chamber and Instrumental Music

### Nonet String Quartet No. 3 Chamber Fantasy Reflections

Gabrielius Alekna, piano  
Daumantas Kirilauskas, piano  
Giedrius Gelgotas, flute  
Arnoldas Gurinavičius, double-bass  
Vilnius String Quartet  
St Christopher Quintet

FIRST RECORDINGS



# JERONIMAS KAČINSKAS: A LITHUANIAN RADICAL RECOVERED

by Danutė Petrauskaitė

Jeronimas Kačinskas was one of the most important Lithuanian composers and conductors of the twentieth century. He lived and worked in Lithuania until 1944, but after his motherland was occupied by the Soviet Union, he moved to the west; there, based in Boston, he continued his activities as organist, conductor and composer. During his time in Lithuania he was regarded as one of the country's most original artists, someone who defied conventional ways of thinking, for whom a composer should first of all express an individual, not collective, consciousness; he prioritised imagination and intuition, not academic clichés, and thus became an icon of Lithuanian modernism in the first half of the twentieth century. Moreover, he always supported the idea of an open society and attempted both to decentralise Lithuanian musical life and integrate it into the development of western European art-music. Simultaneously, he was all for creative and flexible relations between individual efforts and folk traditions, he tried to find a proper place for Lithuanian music on the concert stage, and did his best to encourage progressive innovations in different areas of music. In exile, too, he wanted music to help his compatriots survive the loss of their home country and represent Lithuania abroad at the highest standard. In Soviet times the names of emigrant artists were removed from the annals of national culture, but the historical memory of Lithuanian musical life continued to pass from generation to generation, and the exiled Kačinskas remained a symbol who influenced indirectly composition in Lithuania for decades afterwards. And in the end he had better luck than many of his compatriots in exile: he lived to see the rebirth of Lithuania, and to return in triumph and enjoy the performance of his compositions by his fellow Lithuanians.

Kačinskas was born in Viduklė (in central Lithuania, equidistant between Kaunas and Klaipėda) on 17 April 1907 and started learning music at the age of six with his father, a church organist. The outbreak of World War I interrupted his studies, as he and his family were evacuated to Russia; they returned to the newly independent Lithuania in 1918. Kačinskas' curiosity fed his formal training: he used to play all the compositions he could find in his father's library – and he also began to compose. In 1923, he finished at Viekšniai secondary school in north-western Lithuania and, on his father's advice, entered the Klaipėda Music School, then recently founded by Stasys Šimkus<sup>1</sup> (it soon became a conservatoire).

<sup>1</sup> Šimkus (1887–1943) studied with Lyadov, Steinberg and Vītolis in St Petersburg and, in Dresden, with Graener and Karg-Elert and was active as a conductor and administrator as well as a composer. Although his music includes a symphonic poem and some instrumental works, it was chiefly as a writer for the voice that he made his mark, particularly through his exploitation of Lithuanian folksong, with an opera, two cantatas, 55 solo songs and 252 choral compositions, 245 of which are harmonisations or elaborations of folk originals.

The pianist **Daumantas Kirilauskas** studied piano at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, with Liucija Drąsutienė, and at the University Mozarteum Salzburg, with Karl-Heinz Kämmerling. He is renowned for performing a very broad repertoire – from early music to jazz. He appears as a soloist with orchestras and pursues active career as a recitalist and chamber musician. Since 2001 he has taught the piano at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, and can be often found performing in both classical and contemporary music festivals. His website is at [www.daumantaskirilauskas.com](http://www.daumantaskirilauskas.com).



Photo: Dmitry Matveyev

**Arnoldas Gurinavičius** (b. 1954) graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. From 1975 to 1987 he played with the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, and today is the principal double-bass of the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra. He has performed with such chamber ensembles as Ex Tempore, Saga Duo and the Vilnius String Quartet.



The flautist **Giedrius Gelgotas** completed his BA (2000) and his MA (2003) at the Lithuanian Academy of Music. He also studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London with William Bennett in 2002–3 and at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna with Barbara Gisler-Haase. He has a number of international prizes to his name and has appeared as soloist and chamber and orchestral musician around the globe, in the United States, across Europe, in Egypt and Japan. He was a founder of the Lithuanian Flute Quartet and the St Christopher Woodwind Quintet.



Photo: Kęstutis Pleita

**Gabrielius Alekna** was born in Vilnius and began to study music at the age of five. After graduation from the M. K. Čiurlionis Arts Gymnasium in his home town, he continued his studies at the Lithuanian Music Academy and in 1996 was invited to attend The Juilliard School in New York, where he studied with Jerome Lowenthal, receiving bachelor's and master's degrees before becoming the first Lithuanian to hold the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts from the Juilliard. Winner of the second prize at the International Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna in 2005, Gabrielius has appeared as a soloist in the Musikverein with the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra (RSO Wien) under Bertrand de Billy. He has been a soloist with the Juilliard Orchestra and the New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra in New York, and with the Belarus State Symphony Orchestra in Minsk; in his native Lithuania he appears regularly with the major orchestras including the National Symphony, the State Symphony, the Lithuanian Chamber and the St Christopher Chamber Orchestras. Recently described by Daniel Barenboim as 'a highly gifted pianist and musician', Gabrielius has garnered more than a dozen top prizes in competitions on both sides of the Atlantic, such as the Hilton Head (United States), Maria Canals (Spain) and Čiurlionis (Lithuania).



Photo: Gedimantas Kropis

In 2003 Gabrielius was one of only six pianists invited by Carnegie Hall for *The Daniel Barenboim Workshop: The Beethoven Piano Sonatas*. His recorded concerto performances were broadcast on the BBC, Österreich 1, and *EuroClassic* radio programmes in twelve European countries, while in the US he was heard on WQXR (New York) and on XM satellite radio (Channel 113). He was named Artist-in-Residence for the 2002–3 season at International House, New York, a community of selected graduate students and interns from around the globe.

Gabrielius Alekna was appointed a Visiting Associate Professor at the Music Academy of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, in autumn 2011. In 2007 Lithuanian National Radio released a CD of music for cello and piano by Brahms, Schumann and Franck recorded by Gabrielius with the cellist Edvardas Armonas. For Toccata Classics he is recording the complete piano music of Vytautas Bacevičius: Volume One (rocc 0134) appeared in 2012.

There he studied piano and, from 1925, viola. He played in the school symphony orchestra and in different chamber ensembles, and led the school male-voice choir. He also attended additional composition classes with Šimkus and, after he had left, with Juozas Žilevičius.<sup>2</sup> Even as a student, he stood out for his diligence, erudition, rapid progress and original musical thinking, and composed his first works under the influence of impressionism and expressionism.

In 1929 Kačinskas decided to continue his studies in the Prague Conservatoire: the Klaipėda Music School faced an uncertain future and the Czech teachers who worked there encouraged him to look further afield. A set of variations for piano impressed the teaching staff at the Prague Conservatoire, but in other subjects Kačinskas' knowledge was less commanding. He was therefore enrolled in the final year of the composition class on one condition: he had to master the syllabi of all the theoretical subjects in the course of one year – and in due course, in spring 1930, he graduated from Jaroslav Křička's<sup>3</sup> composition class with his First String Quartet, and within a year obtained a BA in the conducting class.

The strongest influence on Kačinskas' outlook and the formation of his musical language during his time in Prague was Alois Hába,<sup>4</sup> who became known for his microtonal and athematic music. Kačinskas was fascinated by the gentle consonances generated by the split semitone and the new modal shades it created, and he was especially taken with the possibilities opened up by athematism – which seemed to allow free self-expression, unfettered by traditional canons. Hába could discern thematism – that is, repetition – in nature and in some aspects of human existence, whereas athematism was a manifestation of individualism, of the spiritual qualities of human beings. Kačinskas duly became one of Hába's favourite students. It didn't take him long to grasp the laws of quarter-tone music and master the athematic style, and in 1931, graduating from Hába's studio, he composed his Second String Quartet, using quarter-tones. Hába tried to persuade him to stay in Prague, but he wanted to return to Lithuania as soon as possible.

In autumn 1931 Kačinskas settled in Kaunas, then the provisional capital of Lithuania (at the time Vilnius was occupied by Poland), and tried to involve himself in the musical life of the town, but he failed to find a proper job. He had to take work as an accompanist, but he did not lose hope of stepping onto the conductor's platform

<sup>2</sup> Žilevičius (1891–1985) studied in St Petersburg with Glazunov, Kalafati, Vítols and Steinberg, animating musical life in Kaunas (1920–24) before settling in Klaipėda. Sent to the United States in 1929 by the Ministry of Education, he remained there for the rest of his life, active as a choral conductor and organist in New York and, from 1961, Chicago. His large output of around 400 compositions, chiefly choral music but also including orchestral and chamber works, was much influenced by Lithuanian folksong.

<sup>3</sup> Křička (1882–1969) had studied at the Prague Conservatoire himself before working in Russia for a while. Back home from 1909, he was appointed to the Conservatoire staff in 1918 and later became its rector. His children's operas became popular, and his songs and choral pieces were also widely taken up.

<sup>4</sup> Hába (1893–1973) studied with Vítěslav Novák in Prague and Franz Schreker in Berlin. His use of microtonal tuning began with the Second String Quartet in 1920. With the support of Josef Suk, in 1924 he was able to found a microtonal department at the Prague Conservatoire, where he was awarded a professorship in 1936. Hába's best-known work is the folk-inspired comic opera *Matka* ('Mother'), Op. 35, of 1929.

and of opening a class to teach quarter-tone composition. But reality was unforgiving: he was able to conduct the orchestra of the State Opera House on only a handful of occasions, and the course on quarter-tone music that he had started to teach at the Kaunas Music School was stopped by order of the principal – the conservative musical establishment in Kaunas was suspicious of such radicality. Yet even in this unfavourable environment, Kačinskas managed, in 1932, to form the Association of Progressive Musicians of Lithuania, and at the end of the previous year, together with other like-minded individuals, he began publishing a journal, *Muzikos barai* ('Fields of Music'). His friends in Prague offered support: Hába, the conductor Karel Ančerl<sup>5</sup> and the composer Karel Reiner<sup>6</sup> were among those who sent articles for his journal. He used *Muzikos barai* to tackle the most pressing issues of musical life as he saw them: the one-sided perception of musical nationalism, the poor teaching of music in comprehensive secondary schools, the repertoire of the State Opera House and the principles of selecting staff members, the decline of choral culture and the shortage of choral literature. To compensate, he published songs of his own and other young composers in supplements to *Muzikos barai*.

Kačinskas had already moved to Klaipėda, as he saw no future for himself in Kaunas. He still cherished the idea of enriching Lithuanian musical culture with quarter-tone music and planned to obtain special instruments for performers, establish different ensembles for its performance and to teach quarter-tone music at the music school, training composers and performers. He had bought a quarter-tone harmonium himself, but his efforts to help others acquire instruments of this type failed: as they were very expensive, not everybody could afford them. His quarter-tone class did not last long, either: students with a poor background in theory soon lost interest, as Kačinskas lamented in his letters to Hába.

In Klaipėda Kačinskas led the music students' obligatory piano-classes and a chamber-ensemble class, and he conducted various choirs in the town. But his biggest efforts were directed towards the restoration of a symphony orchestra and establishment of an opera house. Thus in 1933, together with the most capable teachers and students of the music school, as well as instrumentalists from the town, he started organising concerts of orchestral music; and in December 1934 the local premiere of Verdi's *La traviata* was given. Mounting concerts was difficult, since the performers received no material support – although on a visit to Klaipėda in 1935 Fyodor Chaliapin was impressed by their enthusiasm. In spring 1935 Kačinskas conducted Gounod's *Faust*, but that was the last premiere: soon after, the opera house was liquidated, and in 1936 the symphony orchestra also ceased its activities. In autumn 1936 Kačinskas tried once again to obtain a conductor's position at the Kaunas State Opera House,

<sup>5</sup> Ančerl (1908–73) gave the premiere of Hába's *Matka* in 1931. As a Jew he was incarcerated in Terezín, but survived both that and Auschwitz, becoming principal conductor of the Czech Philharmonic in 1950, resigning from the post and emigrating to Canada after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

<sup>6</sup> Reiner (1910–79) likewise studied quarter-tone composition with Hába. Like Ančerl, he was imprisoned in Terezín as a Jew and then sent to Auschwitz, surviving also confinement in a camp near Dachau and a death march. Back in Prague after the War, he was accused of 'formalism' by the Communists and his music rarely performed. His Cello Concerto, written in 1941–43 just before his deportation to Terezín, can be heard on Toccata Classics TOCC 0083.

the United States in 1997. The work is in three movements: *Andante quasi adagio* [10]; *Intermezzo: Adagio* [11]; *Finale (Fantazija): Allegro* [12]. It gives an impression of inherent consistency based on thinly layered atonal and athematic patterns.

*Danutė Petrauskaitė has been Director of the Musicology Institute at Klaipėda University since 2001. Her research into Lithuanian musicians exiled in the USA has resulted in a number of articles on Jeronimas Kačinskas and Vytautas Bacevičius and the book Jeronimas Kačinskas: Gyvenimas ir muzikinė veikla ('Jeronimas Kačinskas: Life and Musical Activities'), published by Baltas Lankos in Vilnius in 1997.*

The creative work of the **Vilnius String Quartet** (Audronė Vainiūnaitė and Artūras Šilalė, violins; Girdutis Jakaitis, viola; Augustinas Vasiliauskas, cello), now spanning almost five decades, has left a distinct trace on the Lithuanian cultural scene. Ever since their debut in 1965, members of the Quartet have persistently polished their musicianship to achieve a deep sense of unanimity and richness of sound expression which has won accolades both in Lithuania and abroad, as well as several important honours. Named after Vilnius in 1973, the ensemble has always felt its mission to put its eponymous city on the map by performing a vast repertoire of over 450 works on extensive world-tours, averaging 80 concerts a year. The group specialises in the traditional string-quartet repertoire, including all the classics, but also performs over 150 contemporary works and about 100 quartet pieces by Lithuanian composers (half of them written for the ensemble). The Quartet has developed a very distinctive style derived from the Russian and central-European schools of string-quartet interpretation, with which they became familiar during their post-graduate studies at the Moscow Conservatory (with Viktor Gvozdetzky) and in Budapest (with András Mihály). The Quartet has appeared at the world's major venues and is a frequent visitor to the recording studios: its record credits now include over 40 albums on various international labels. Their website can be found at [www.vilniusquartet.com](http://www.vilniusquartet.com).

The **St Christopher Quintet** (Giedrius Gelgotas, flute; Justė Gelgotaitė, oboe; Andrius Žiūra, clarinet; Andrius Pupluskis; bassoon; Paulius Lukauskas, horn) was formed in 2003. All of its members were educated at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and now combine their concert activities with their regular work as orchestral musicians with the Lithuanian National and Lithuanian State symphony orchestras. Since its inception the Quintet has already appeared in a number of festivals and concerts in Lithuania, France, Russia and Switzerland. Its debut CD was released in 2005. International acclaim came in 2007 when the Quintet was awarded the first prize for the best performance of obligatory work at the Henri Tomasi International Woodwind Quintet Competition in Marseilles. More information can be found at <http://en.flute.lt/kristupo-kvintetas>.

response from the public. The piece did not take long to return in Lithuania where it was first performed by Lithuanian musicians at the Gaida festival in Vilnius 1997. It has now, at last, found its place in the canon of Lithuanian music, a witness to the long and winding road of Kačinskas' music back to Lithuania.

It was John Bavicchi's encouragement that persuaded Kačinskas to write the cycle *Atspindžiai* ('Reflections') in 1957, one of his few works for piano solo. The first of the four movements – *Andante grazioso* [5] – is distinguished for its light character, full of impressionistic colours and free play of sounds; it makes a perfect introduction to the playful *Allegretto* [6] (which Kačinskas later thought was unnecessary). The third movement – *Adagio* [7] – offers pensive repose before the dashingly energetic fourth movement, *Allegro con fuoco* [8], which suggests a quest for an ultimate goal. *Reflections* was first performed by the American pianist Victor Griffeth at the Public Library of Brookline, Massachusetts, on 19 March 1958. Bavicchi was especially fascinated by Kačinskas' use of a complicated musical language in conveying fragile, impressionist soundscapes, each one revealing a different kind of beauty. In Lithuania *Reflections* has attracted the attention of some of the major pianists who include it in their concert programmes.

The *Chamber Fantasy* for flute, piano and string quartet [9] was composed in 1981. Like many of his chamber works for various instruments, this one was most probably written for his colleagues at the Berklee College of Music. When the score was brought to Lithuania, the work caught the eye of performers from Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda and since then it has received many performances at concerts and festivals throughout the country.

Structurally, this one-movement composition is built from two sections. The opening section (*Allegro – Adagio – Allegro*) begins with a conversation between the flute and the string quartet, accompanied by shorter rhythmic values in the piano part, which also supports the melodic line in the flute and remains active even after the flute falls silent, until the *ff* mark at the end of the section. The beginning of the *Adagio* section brings back the flute melody, meandering through the quasi-improvisatory succession of narrow intervals in the string background. The piano colours this background with arpeggios and remains with the string quartet after the return of the *Allegro*, playing without the flute. The *staccato* motifs of the second section (*Allegro vivace – Andante – Lento*) intensify the dynamics – from *pp* to *ff*; *tutti*, though, is used sparingly. At the beginning of the *Lento* the flute enters in expressionistic unison with the strings and builds up to the main climax of the *Fantasy*, not without the help of the piano. Tension remains unresolved till the final bars.

The *String Quartet No. 3* was composed in 1993 and dedicated to the Stasys Šimkus Conservatory in Klaipėda which celebrated its 70th anniversary that year. It had its first performance a year later, performed by the Regnum Quartet. Soon afterwards, the Vilnius String Quartet included the piece into its repertoire and took it on their tour in the United States in 1996. One of the stops in their concert route was the town of Norwood, near Boston. The members of the Quartet dropped by to see their compatriot composer in his Boston home and play him his Third String Quartet, to his huge delight, repeating their performance on a return visit to

but after six months of futile attempts he returned to Klaipėda and made music as best he could, playing the viola in the string quartet of the music school, accompanying soloists, playing an active part in the choral movement and, whenever he was invited, conducting concerts for Kaunas State Radio. Although not much time was left for creative work, he still held out hope of entering the international music arena.

In that same year, 1936, Kačinskas applied to the International Society for Contemporary Music for Lithuania to be accepted as a member. The applying country had to distinguish itself in modern music and to be recommended by an existing member country. That endorsement Kačinskas obtained from Czechoslovakia, and his application was granted. As a result, when in 1937 an ISCM festival was held in Paris, Lithuania was the first Baltic republic to participate as a member with equal rights, represented by three composers: Kačinskas, Vytautas Bacevičius<sup>7</sup> and, later, Vladas Jakubėnas.<sup>8</sup> ISCM concerts consisted of compositions selected by a jury and in 1938 they chose the Nonet, which was performed in London by its Czech musicians and deemed one of the most interesting items of festival; Bartók was one of a number of composers who congratulated Kačinskas. The ISCM festival in Warsaw in 1939 was to be the last for Kačinskas: Lithuania, occupied in 1940, lost its membership and renewed it only in 1991, when it became an independent state once again.

Back home the government did not support musical institutions, and cultural life in Klaipėda was inactive. At the same time the local German nationalists were becoming more and more vociferous, and so in autumn 1938 Kačinskas accepted the job of conductor of the orchestra of the state radio and left for Kaunas. At that time concerts were not recorded, and the music was broadcast live. Although Kačinskas made a point of covering the symphonic output of Lithuanian composers in his concerts, he include works by composers of different countries and eras in his repertoire, even receiving an official message of thanks from London for popularising British music in Lithuania.

At the beginning of 1940, when Vilnius was returned to Lithuania from Polish occupation, the radio orchestra moved to the old capital. The work-rhythm remained the same: two concerts a week broadcast direct and a public performance about once a month. With the Soviet occupation in August, the orchestra received a hard blow: the Communist authorities censored the programmes and forced Soviet compositions onto the orchestra. Vilnius was occupied by German troops on 24 June 1941, two days after the Nazis launched Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union and now it was the Hitlerites who dictated which compositions could be performed and which not;

<sup>7</sup> A fellow radical, Bacevičius (1905–70) was on a tour of South America as a pianist when the Second World War broke out and he was never to return to his homeland. Two of his six symphonies and other orchestral works can be heard on Toccata Classics TOCC 0049, and Volume One of his piano music can be found on TOCC 0134.

<sup>8</sup> As composer, critic, teacher and musical activist, Jakubėnas (1904–76) was one of the major cultural figures in pre-World War Two Lithuania, before his post-war exile in the USA. As a student of Schreker in Berlin in 1928–32, he initially wrote in a neo-Classical style, earning the sobriquet of 'the Lithuanian Hindemith'. Back home, he began to compose in a late-Romantic, gently modernist idiom, tinged with the influence of Lithuanian folk-music; in exile his output of original compositions lessened considerably. Some of his chamber and instrumental music can be heard on Toccata Classics TOCC 0013 and a disc of *a cappella* choral songs (TOCC 0028) is in preparation.

the Jewish musicians in the orchestra were dismissed.<sup>9</sup> When the running of the orchestra was transferred to the Vilnius Philharmonic Society, Kačinskas was relieved to have escaped the immediate supervision of the Nazis and he began organising regular public concerts of orchestral music; he was also one of the first in Lithuania to teach orchestral conducting, at the Vilnius Music School. In 1942, when an opera company was formed in Vilnius, he became one of the conductors and *La traviata*, *Madame Butterfly* and *The Barber of Seville* were staged under his supervision. In the opinion of some of the critics, Kačinskas was one of the best conductors in Lithuania, and one of the most productive, too: at the head of the Radio and Philharmonic orchestras, he arranged about 450 public, closed and radio concerts and conducted about 250 performances in the Vilnius Opera House.

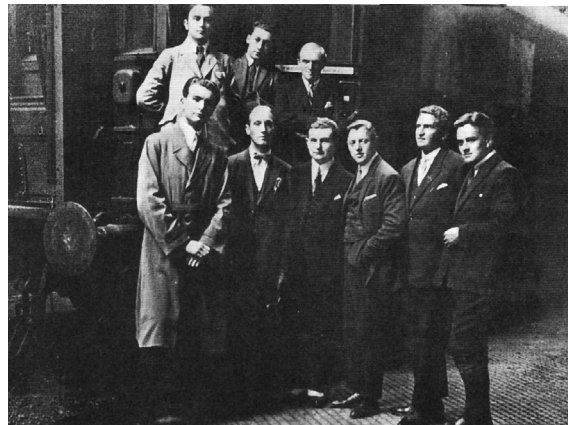
With the front approaching Vilnius in 1944, Kačinskas discovered that the Communists had included his name in a list of people condemned either to death or to exile and he realised he had to leave Lithuania. His journey west, with his wife, Elena, began in the autumn. He had to hide, starve and suffer illness, and also abandon his manuscripts. He paused for a while in the southern-Moravian town of Lednice (Eisgrub in German), then still occupied by the Nazis, making his living with hard manual work. He had hoped to find a job in Prague with Hába's help but found that the Soviets were already there. Sheer luck enabled him to escape and in autumn 1945 he and Elena settled down in Hochfeld, a suburb of Augsburg, in the zone controlled by the Americans.

A few thousand Lithuanian refugees had already found shelter in Augsburg and to preserve their traditions and culture they began to lead an active cultural life. Kačinskas involved himself immediately, conducting a mixed choir, accompanying singers, arranging concerts and composing music – including his best choral songs. He got in touch with the Augsburg Symphony Orchestra, and, together with Estonian and Latvian musicians, they gave a few orchestral concerts. Working with an orchestra stimulated him to return to writing symphonic music, and playing the organ in church brought him into contact with liturgical themes.

In 1947 Kačinskas, like most of the other refugees, began to think about finding a safer refuge: staying in Europe seemed dangerous. He therefore wrote to his old friends Vytautas Bacevičius and Juozas Žilevičius, both now resident in the USA, and they helped him to get an entry visa. In spring 1949 Kačinskas accepted the invitation of the priest of St Peter's Lithuanian Church in Boston and began work as an organist there.

Lithuanians had been living in Boston since the end of the nineteenth century, establishing cultural organisations, associations and schools to preserve their national identity. But the circumstances were very different from those that had prevailed in Lithuania, and Kačinskas did not find working with the church choir very easy: he wanted not only to include new religious compositions of religious music but also to prepare programmes of secular music, whereas the singers were content with the usual liturgical repertoire. Yet his persistence meant that the choir of St Peter's became a cultural focus for Lithuanians. He regularly arranged concerts in Boston and its environs and participated in music festivals organised by other ethnic communities. Still, the job of

<sup>9</sup> The Holocaust began in Lithuania almost immediately after the German invasion, and well before the end of the War an estimated 196–198,000 of the pre-War Jewish population of around 210,000 had been slaughtered.



*The Czech Nonet in the 1930s – founded in 1924, the group is still active today*

The fourth movement, *Andante* [4], composed in 1936 is quite different from the preceding ones in scope and mood, to the extent that Hába saw it as an individual piece and advised Kačinskas not to perform it as part of the Nonet. Thus it was that only the three opening movements were performed at the ISCM festival in London in 1938. Vladas Jakubėnas, in his special report from London to the daily *Lietuvos aidas*, wrote that this particular performance revealed what he was really dealing with – ‘a creation of true talent, full of ideas and meaning’.<sup>16</sup> Kačinskas’ flight from Lithuania in 1944 meant the loss of most of his scores, including the Nonet, and its complexity made it impossible to reconstruct from memory. After he settled in Boston, Kačinskas tried to retrieve copies of the parts he had sent to the members of the Czech Nonet by writing to the musicians, still living in Prague. He received no response: obviously, it was not safe for the citizens of Soviet Czechoslovakia to maintain contacts with emigrants living in the west. After the dissolution of the Soviet bloc, Kačinskas again tried to regain the missing parts of his score, and this time his attempts were successful. John Bavicchi, his colleague and friend at Berklee College, was able to reconstruct the score from the parts and proposed it to the ensemble Speaking in Tongues; and so the newly reconstructed Nonet had its American premiere on 4 March 1993, to an enthusiastic

<sup>16</sup> 25 June 1938; reprinted in *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 304.

he would think for a long time. The ideas were born sometimes slowly, sometimes spontaneously, yet at the start there was no knowing where they would take him. He did not operate a strict system of sound-organisation, such as serialism; his atonality emerged not from a specific series but rather as the result of chromaticised sounds. He used to compare composing to climbing and descending a mountain, to fighting limitations. And he was never content with the results he achieved – looking back at the music he had composed, even listening to his best works, he would habitually say: 'I would have written it differently nowadays.'

Jeronimas Kačinskas finally retired from St Peter's in June 1995, after almost half-a-century of service and died in Boston on 15 September 2005, aged 98.

The **Nonet** for woodwinds and strings is one of the most remarkable of Kačinskas works from the years between the two World Wars and it brought him international renown. It also brought Lithuania an undeserved reputation as a country with an adventurous musical culture. The three opening movements – *Largo maestoso* [1], *Allegro moderato* [2] and *Allegro con fuoco* [3] – were composed in 1931–32 under the title *Three Movements from the Nonet*, in response to a commission from the Czech Nonet. Upon presenting the score to the performers in Prague, Kačinskas invited them to visit Lithuania and so, after the piece was premiered in Prague in October 1932, the Czech Nonet came to Lithuania at the end of the month and performed the piece in several Lithuanian towns, including Klaipėda, Panevėžys, Šiauliai and Kaunas, to the general bafflement of the Lithuanian public. What stumped them was the atonal musical language and unusual musical form, which is determined by athematic development – that is, the succession of structural sections was shaped by freely pulsing rhythms and sequences of parallel voices, without the binding thematic material and the strict logic of functional harmony familiar in more conventional music. The relationship between sections is not based on sharp contrast but rather on the principles of addition and continuity. With each successive section, new images are evoked which only seemed similar to one another; in reality they were very different. Traditional musical dramaturgy does not quite work here, and so the piece does not open with a statement and continue with a development. There is no narrative behind the music and it does not serve to illustrate anything; its sole purpose is to reveal the beauty of transitory states, the depths of the human soul, revolving endlessly in the eternal circle of time. In the words of Vldas Jakubėnas,

With this work, Jeronimas Kačinskas introduced himself as an intellectual and creative personality. A thorough and serious technical execution, lots of original harmonies, effective use of instruments, interesting answers to the problems of composing – all these features reveal Mr Kačinskas as a musician of cultivated taste. [...] As a matter of fact, his manner of composing is not widely accepted in Lithuania; and it did not take hold in western Europe either. But ... this could not be taken as a criterion upon which to judge the absolute value of Mr Kačinskas's work.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Lietuvos aidas*, 7 November 1932; reprinted in Vldas Jakubėnas, *Straipsniai ir recenzijos*, ed. Danutė Mėlyniėnė, Lithuanian Musical Academy, Vilnius, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 84

organist restricted what he could do: he lived in a closed and, from an artistic point of view, limited community of compatriots, and so he tried to integrate himself into American musical life. It was not easy: American musicians did not know much about immigrant Lithuanian artists; even when they did, the competitive pressure tended to close doors.

In 1951 Kačinskas produced one of his most important works, the *Missa in Honorem Immaculati Cordis Beate Mariae Virginis*, dedicated to the 700th anniversary of the baptism of King Mindaugas.<sup>10</sup> It is a masterly combination of the consonance of the Gregorian chant and of mediaeval organum with the bifunctional complexes popular in the twentieth century, with quartal chords, extended tonality and Kačinskas' favourite athematicism. It proved too innovative for his Lithuanian audiences. Still, even though they failed to understand his atonal, athematic music and were not always able to perform it, they did value him as a conductor. In 1952 a group of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians arranged a concert at Carnegie Hall with the joint NBC Radio and New York Philharmonic orchestras, and in 1953 he conducted the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington. The Americans were impressed with Kačinskas' professionalism, but when they found out he was only a church organist, they refrained from making him any serious offers. And so he stayed in St Peter's, devoting most of his time to the church choir and to composing.

Naturally, he started looking for a job somewhere else. Around 1956 he made the acquaintance of John Bavicchi, a graduate of the New England Conservatoire and Harvard University with whose encouragement he wrote a cycle for the piano *Atspindžiai* ('Reflections') and *Four Miniatures* for flute, clarinet and cello. The compositions were a success with both American and Lithuanian performers and were performed in a number of venues. In 1958 Kačinskas accepted the job of organist in the Slovakian parish in Whiting, Indiana, and left Boston – but not for long: in half-a-year he was back, disappointed by his new working conditions.

Kačinskas was one of a number of enthusiasts who tried to show that the Lithuanians are capable not only of dancing folk-dances and singing folksongs, and so persuaded his compatriots in Boston to present a programme of Lithuanian orchestral music with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1958. The concert was a success and opened more opportunities for him. In 1959 he was invited to conduct the Brockton Symphony Orchestra and in 1960 the Cambridge Civic Symphony Orchestra; in autumn 1960, on Bavicchi's recommendation, and having passed a competition, he became permanent conductor of the Melrose Symphony Orchestra, one of the oldest orchestras in the environs of Boston. He himself was then 53.

The fruitful co-operation between Kačinskas and Bavicchi continued: they arranged joint concerts of Lithuanian and American music and were active members of The Institute for Progress in Music. With the widening of his audience, Kačinskas had a stimulus for his creative work and so, in the 1950s and '60s he wrote a handful of orchestral works; but in his own opinion he was more successful in chamber genres and thus moved in

<sup>10</sup> Mindaugas (c. 1203–63) was the first known Grand Duke of Lithuania and its only king; his reign lasted from 1253 until his assassination ten years later. He was baptised into the Catholic church around 1250–51; the date is uncertain.



Four Lithuanian composers in exile: from left to right, Jeronimas Kačinskas, Juozas Žilėvičius, Vladas Jakubėnas and Vytautas Bacevičius before the concert of Baltic music that took place in Carnegie Hall, New York, on 12 October 1952.

that direction. In 1965 he was invited to conduct the (American) choir Polymnia in Wakefield, north of Boston – an appointment which benefitted the choir of St Peter’s, too, since it brought additional singers and instrumentalists to their concerts. Invitations from orchestras saw Kačinskas able to conduct not only the classical repertoire but also works by such Lithuanian composers as Bacevičius, Banaitis,<sup>11</sup> Čiurlionis,<sup>12</sup> Gaidelis,<sup>13</sup> Gruodis,<sup>14</sup> Jakubėnas, his old teacher Stasys Šimkus and Kačinskas himself.

In 1967 he began to teach conducting and composition at the Berklee College of Music in Boston; it meant giving up Polymnia and the Melrose Symphony Orchestra, but he continued working as an organist for the church. The new job meant new contacts, and he was approached by performers commissioning compositions, which were immediately performed in concerts by faculty members. In the nineteen years he spent at Berklee College of Music with its benevolent and creative atmosphere, he produced a number of compositions – and he never ignored requests from the Lithuanian community, writing cantatas, motets and hymns for the religious and national festivals. In one of his largest compositions, the one-act opera *Black Ship* (1975), staged by the Chicago Lithuanian Opera, he proved that atonal music can be melodious, sound natural and be understood by any listener.

<sup>11</sup> Kazimieras Viktoras Banaitis (1896–1963) was active in Kaunas as composer and teacher, he, too, fleeing the Soviet occupation in 1944 and emigrating to the USA, also via Bavaria, in 1949, surviving precariously as a teacher and finishing his opera *Jūratė*.

<sup>12</sup> Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911) is regarded as the father of Lithuanian art-music (though he was also a competent painter), writing the first orchestral works by a Lithuanian composer but leaving a large legacy of piano music.

<sup>13</sup> Julius Gaidelis (1909–83) was another émigré composer, he likewise settling in Boston after leaving Lithuania via Germany. His output includes six symphonies, a violin concerto, a ballet, four operas, two oratorios and four cantatas.

<sup>14</sup> Juozas Gruodis (1884–1948) was the leading composer in inter-War Lithuania, from 1933 director of the Kaunas Conservatoire. His music is cast in a national-Romantic language but also explores elements of Lithuanian folk-music.

In 1990s, with the composer in his eighties, new tendencies began to appear in his music, not least the elements of Lithuanian colour which before now he had consciously avoided. As he explained, he was much influenced by composers residing in Lithuania and, as a result, stopped avoiding repetition or contact with tonality. But he did feel that the direct Lithuanian manner was limiting and so he stood by his old compositional principles, merely treating them more freely. But even in his atonal and athematic music a Lithuanian spirit was now perceptible: pastel colours, a sense of transparent sadness, lyrical melancholy or restrained joy, a lyrical-mystical outlook.

In Soviet Lithuania the name of Kačinskas was mentioned only infrequently. Occasionally, one or another song by him would be performed but his music as a whole was little known, and official institutions recommended that no interest be shown in it: Kačinskas was considered a representative of the ‘formalism’ of western Europe. But the Lithuanian people had not forgotten him, and at the end of the 1980s, as the political climate in Lithuania began to warm up, concerts of his compositions were held. The Lithuanian Composers’ Union elected him an honorary member and invited him to visit his newly independent motherland – and so in 1991 he visited Lithuania for the first time in almost half-a-century. The musical community took enormous interest in his visit: the major cities presented concerts of his music, and after them many people wanted to talk to this famous musician who had been out of reach for so long. Klaipėda elected him an honorary citizen, and Vilnius nominated him for the 1991 National Prize – which he received in 1992, during a second visit. Renewed ties with Lithuania accelerated his retirement from teaching, after which he could devote all his efforts to composition and to writing his memoirs, as well as to St Peter’s parish choir.

When Kačinskas looked back on his output, he admitted that, as a supporter of a free creative process and a rebel against tradition, he had dived into dense, complex textures, harmonies and melodic writing. He felt he could not divide his compositions into distinct periods: stylistic elements of different trends criss-cross in different ways and make periods difficult to define. He nonetheless thought of a first period, that of the Nonet, with radical expressionism and a maximalist outlook, as lasting from 1929 till 1952. A moderately modernist period with almost imperceptible features of romanticism followed. The years 1970–80 were a time of searching, after which he started using elements of Lithuanian folksong without retreating from his athematism or atonality.

He never regretted having emigrated in 1944, as he could not imagine himself writing cantatas glorifying the Communist Party and its leaders – but, of course, life in exile meant having to adapt his aims to performers of different standards and make concessions for them. Moreover, having lived with despair for a long time and seeing no future for his works, he stopped recording both his compositions and concerts, which makes it difficult to state exactly how many times he mounted the conductor’s podium in the USA. He must have conducted orchestras on at least 50 occasions, and choirs probably three or four times more often. His own estimate was that he had written about 100 compositions, from short hymns to large vocal-instrumental works.

For Kačinskas a composition was a kind of improvisation, though a strictly fixed one. Before starting work,