

An impressionistic painting of a landscape. In the foreground, there are dark, textured brushstrokes in shades of brown, orange, and yellow, suggesting trees or foliage. The middle ground features a body of water in various shades of blue and green, with a distant shoreline visible. The background is filled with soft, blended colors of blue, pink, and white, creating a hazy, atmospheric effect. The overall style is characteristic of Impressionism, with visible brushwork and a focus on light and color.

ONDINE

TĀLIVALDIŠ
KĒNIŅŠ

Symphonies Nos. 2, 3 & 7

Latvian National Symphony Orchestra
Andris Poga



TĀLIVALDIS KĒNIŅŠ

TĀLIVALDIS ĶENIŅŠ (1919–2008)

Symphony No. 2, "Sinfonia concertante" (1967)

19:42

for flute, oboe, clarinet and orchestra

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I. Lento | 3:31 |
| 2 | II. Molto moderato: Tema e variazioni | 12:08 |
| 3 | III. Molto animato e marcato | 3:58 |

Symphony No. 3 (1970)

19:23

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------|
| 4 | I. Allegro moderato | 4:56 |
| 5 | II. Lento inquieto | 8:30 |
| 6 | III. Molto animato e brioso | 5:52 |

Symphony No. 7 (1980)

28:55

Symphony in the form of a Passacaglia

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-------|
| 7 | Intrada. Moderato – | 3:21 |
| 8 | Passacaglia – | 8:02 |
| 9 | Allegro molto – | 3:45 |
| 10 | Aria | 13:42 |

Tommaso Pratola, flute (1–3)

Egils Upatnieks, oboe (1–3)

Mārtiņš Circenis, clarinet (1–3)

Zanda Švēde, mezzo-soprano (10)

LATVIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

ANDRIS POGA, conductor

Tālivaldis Ķeniņš is one of Latvia's most important composers, an individual inclined to Neoromanticism, plain-spoken, and full of vitality, in addition to being a composer of great technical virtuosity. Born in Latvia, educated in France, he lived the remainder of his life in Canada.

Ķeniņš' body of work comprises mainly instrumental music including eight symphonies, symphonic miniatures, more than ten instrumental concertos, an impressive array of chamber music, piano, and organ works, as well as solo and choral pieces, three cantatas, and an oratorio.

His abilities, knowledge, and talent bloomed at the Paris Conservatory which he attended after fleeing Latvia shortly before the second Soviet invasion, along with thousands of other members of the Latvian intelligentsia.

His schooling in Grenoble and later studies in Paris permanently imbued his signature style with a Cartesian attitude. He came to believe that truth and value only come through that which is constructed with the utmost logic and rationality. A laconic style of expression becomes his motto, and at his core he remained a Latvian composer and not a French composer.

In person, Tālivaldis Ķeniņš was somewhat brusque and direct, but also warm-hearted. He valued his family highly—the wonderful Valda he married in Paris and she later gave birth to two sons. After Grenoble, he enjoyed alpine skiing, but also played tennis and avidly followed hockey. He loved to travel, was fascinated by high-speed rail schedules, liked bridge puzzles, appreciated old French films, even though composing remained his true pastime.

In his musical language Ķeniņš has been described as a "contemporary romantic" and a "conservative modernist". *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* remarks upon its structural clarity and masterful use of counterpoint. In her expansive book *Starp divām pasaulēm* [Between Two Worlds], the noted Latvian musical historian Ingrīda Zemzare provides a compelling analysis of his love of fugue and the concertante principle.

Symphony No. 2, "*Sinfonia concertante*" (1967)

Tālivaldis Ķeniņš turned to the symphony genre at the age of 40, and almost a decade passed between his Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2.

Symphony No. 2 is better known as *Sinfonia concertante* and this is almost the first occurrence where, in the score, Ķeniņš presents such a vividly expressed embodiment of a sympathetic solo instrument and orchestra interplay or the *concertante* principle. The symphony was commissioned by the University of Saskatchewan Cosmopolitan Club. Work on the symphony began in 1967, and, in January of 1968, the composer completed the instrumentation of the new work. The work was premiered by the Saskatchewan Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Kaplan on March 3, 1968. Soon after that, the symphony was also performed by the CBC Orchestra, conducted by Eric Wild, and the work was broadcast on radio internationally. A year later, the symphony received the North American Latvian Cultural Fund Award.

With regards to timing, the three movements of the symphony are formed asymmetrically. The second movement is more than half of the entire work, and it envelops the playful, care-free first movement and the slightly impudent, vital third movement.

The foundation of the expansive second movement is a lullaby of the Mi'kmaq First Nations people, a song which Ķeniņš also used in 1967 when composing his Suite in D major for organ. The composer chose a variation form with a few characteristic genres of the Baroque era, and the listener may be interested to follow along with the flow of the second movement and knowing at which point the next variation begins. Variation I — Chorale: 2:54, Variation II — Ricercar: 3:48, Variation III — Scherzo: 5:37, Variation IV — Canon: 6:21, Variation V — Dialogue: 7:39, Lullaby and Conclusion: 9:27.

Symphony No. 3 (1970)

With his fiftieth birthday approaching, Tāivaldis Ķeniņš was very prolific. In 1968, he completed his Symphony No. 2, along with the Quintet for flute, oboe, viola, cello and piano, *Dialogues* for cello and piano, while in 1969 he completes his exceptionally beautiful *a cappella* choir work *Piae cantiones novae* and, at the same time, composed the expansive vocal instrumental opus *Gloria* and his Symphony No. 3, which was commissioned by the Canadian Latvian Song Festival Society and which was planned to be premiered at the 5th Canadian Latvian Song Festival in 1970. This was Ķeniņš first symphony to be composed for large symphony orchestra.

The significance of the Song Festival should be noted again — the regular gatherings of exiled Latvians and its facilitation of exiled Latvian composers' academic creative work. The skill of the exiled Latvian choirs was not one to entrust music of the highest level of difficulty, however, there were always attempts to find ways to include a professionally prepared programme in the Festival repertoire that included new vocal and instrumental works.

Latvian Academy of Music Professor Georgs Pelēcis, an internationally recognised researcher of polyphony, wrote the following about Symphony No. 3: "Ķeniņš rejects seemingly essential symphony ingredients, such as the sonata form. That does not appear in any of the three movements. ... Only one main theme is developed in each movement, and they are all interrelated. The unifying element is the rich chromaticism intonations, which form an expansive, flexible line in a somewhat narrow, almost compressed, strained range."

Pelēcis raises the idea of a lyrical hero — or the symphony's main content guideline — in Symphony No. 3, which, in the ears of the listeners, could be personified. It is true, the hero's lyricism is what it is, but as the professor indicates, it is likely a very determined person, whose bright intellect, ability to separate the important from the insignificant, choleric temperament and, as with many outwardly invulnerable personalities, a corner of his soul, which is revealed only to

those closest to him. Here we will search for similarities with the islands of beauty of Ķeniņš' music, which appears in even in his most ferocious works.

The glue that holds together all the elements in the works of Tālivaldis Ķeniņš is a constant polyphony, and, with its help, he achieves the ideal forms for his works. In Ingrīda Zemzare's book *Starp divām pasaulēm* [Between Two Worlds], the composer says: "Form, in my opinion, is the most important element in a work's existence. In my opinion — it is everything. One can go astray with the music language, rhythmic combinations, but, if form is missing – that is bad. ... Questions of form are the most important to me — like great lines, as well as the preparation and cohesion of separate fragments."

And then, after the intellectual strain of all the fugues, counterpoint, and canons, in the seventh minute of the second movement we are suddenly entranced by a pure beauty, which remains until the end of the movement. The third movement begins with rampaging blows to the world bourgeois order, but even in this movement, the composer offers a moment of beauty (in the third and fourth minute).

The first and second movements end with uncertainty and insinuations for the next movement. As a contrast, the third movement concludes with a sharply drawn signature: I am responsible for everything that I have said and done.

The premiere of the symphony took place at the 5th Canadian Latvian Song Festival on July 5, 1970 — the musicians of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra were conducted by Ķeniņš' colleague and fellow notable composer Jānis Kalniņš.

Symphony No. 7 (1980)

Ķeniņš considered his best symphony to be his Sixth, which is the most Bach-like (see previous Ondine releases). This author would like to raise the Eighth to this pinnacle (I am not alone in this opinion, as I have heard so far). However, if we are to speak of the most personal of Ķeniņš' symphonies, that would likely be the Seventh.

In 1992, when Ķeniņš's Latvia was already free from Soviet occupation and regained independence, the composer said: "The boulder on my nation's and my family's fate has still not been lifted, and there have been many traumatic experiences." Symphony No. 7 is the quintessence of Ķeniņš' emotional experience: the lost Latvia that was suffocated under Soviet occupation, which he could only see again after being away for nearly fifty years, the dramatic fate of his mother, his father's two deportations to Kazakhstan – torn links and subconsciously smouldering nostalgia was that part of Ķeniņš which was likely not seen by his students nor (who may know?) his closest family members. However, it can be heard in Ķeniņš' music. And No. 7 is the *magnum opus* of this aspect of the composer's life. Additionally, this was appreciated by his non-Latvian colleagues: in the music section of the *Canadian Encyclopedia*, composer and musicologist John Beckwith considered Ķeniņš' Symphony No. 7 as one of the pinnacles of Canadian symphonic music.

The genre classification of Symphony No. 7 is a symphony in the form of passacaglia. As a reminder, passacaglia is a genre whose classification originated in Spain (first documented at the beginning of the 17th century) and whose literal translation is 'to walk down the street'. It may be that this relates to the concept of open-air performing, but possibly, with the custom of the popular music of that time, these interludes classified as passacaglias are meant for dancing. Over time, the model of passacaglia has changed, and, beginning in the 18th century, it was often confused with chaconne and, even until today there is no clear differentiation between these two genres, whose main characteristic in a modern understanding is a defined bass figure, which is repeated unchanged many times, while there are some variations in the higher voices.

Tāļivaldis Ķeniņš' Symphony No. 7 expands and forms from a characteristic motif with a minor fourth, which can be heard at the very beginning or introduction of the symphony. This motif is at the foundation of the passacaglia and episodic fugues and arias are heard. The many layers of Ķeniņš' thinking can

be appreciated when looking at the score: we see that the primary motif or the core of the symphony is rhythmically varied (rhythm — an element of Ķeniņš' music since he studied the music of India with Messiaen), as it comes into view in the various layers and heights of the texture, and, additionally, the sequence of sounds can also be mixed.

In his analysis, Georgs Pelēcis writes: "In fact, the passacaglia determines the form at two levels. Over the course of the work, the main theme is continuously heard (not including separate intonations, a fuller count of the exposition is 19), and one of the movements (the second) is a passacaglia in both name as well as in the development principle."

The listener will not have the score available, but Ķeniņš' monolithic thoughts can be felt when listening. The symphony concludes, and we have experienced something majestic, homogenous, and complete.

Composer and music analyst Imants Zemzaris writes: "The symphony's steel waves, constantly rising anew and tormenting our memories, stormily envelop us." He also indicates that "how masterfully the rigid Atis Ķeniņš poem verse is 'dismantled' in the vocal part by the soulful asymmetries."

The composer himself gives us these words of guidance: "The mezzo-soprano solo links the composer more tightly with his family roots, expresses itself in more trusting and optimistic feelings, however, the unease in the harmonies and rhythm likely cannot hide the composer's fears about our era. The concluding epilogue is like an *Agnus Dei*, and the developed passacaglia symbolises the course of our inevitable fate. The finale should express hope and faith, which stands over life's troubles, soothing our darkest predictions and suppressing our fears."

The composer's father Atis Ķeniņš (1874–1961) was a poet, active in society, and a statesman. As a representative of the Latvian Nation's Council (the predecessor to the state parliament) — he was one of the founders of the Republic of Latvia on November 18, 1918. In the first period of Latvian independence, he was the Minister of Education and Justice Minister. In literature, Ķeniņš was

considered a new romantic, whose main themes were nature, the homeland, national inclinations. Ķeniņš' song of destiny was taken from his 1913 collection *The Land of Potrimps* (Potrimps — a member of the ancient Baltic pantheon, similar to Dionysus, and also the god of water).

Ķeniņš once told the flutist and music researcher Edgars Kariks the following: "Of all my symphonies, this is the one that most has a programmatic influence. To express my or the world's fate in music? Try to become a Latvian Mahler? In no way was that done consciously. I wanted to find a synthesis between the pure classical form and my internal world of feelings."

Orests Silabriedis

(Translation: Egils Kaljo)

Tommaso Pratola is the principal flute of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra since December 2019. Formerly, Tommaso was a member of the EU Youth Orchestra and Italian Youth Orchestra and the first flutist of the Teatro Petruzzelli Orchestra in Bari. In 2017, he received a scholarship from the Haus Marteau masterclass with Andrea Lieberknecht and an honourable mention at the Società Umanitaria International Competition.

Pratola has been selected as Academist in several renowned music festivals, including the Young Artists Festival in Bayreuth, Pacific Music Festival, and Zermatt Music Festival. He was invited to participate at the Rome Chamber Music Festival in 2012 and 2017. Tommaso substituted for the first flute at the Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino in February 2020.

Egils Upatnieks is the principal oboe of the LNSO since 2009. Often voted best principal musician of the year in the LNSO's annual poll. Prizewinner of many international competitions. Since 2009, Egils is a member of Denmark-based wind quintet Carion, with frequent performances in Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and other countries. Member of the Latvian National Opera Orchestra since 2010. Egils was the principal oboe of chamber orchestra Sinfonietta Rīga since it was founded in 2006 until 2011. Guest performer with chamber orchestra Kremerata Baltica, the Iceland SO, and Nordic SO. Lecturer at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music (JVLMA) since 2010.

Mārtiņš Circenis is the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra's principal clarinetist since 2015, and solo clarinetist of the Latvian National Opera orchestra since 2006. Since January 2020, Circenis is also the principal clarinetist of the Sinfonietta Rīga chamber orchestra.

Member of the LNSO since 2002, former member of the Riga Chamber Players and the Riga Festival Orchestra, Circenis is Lecturer at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music since 2011. Circenis was nominated for Latvia's Grand

Music Award for outstanding work in an ensemble in 2013. Circenis is laureate of international competitions, including second prize in the Concertino Praga competition. He is also former member of the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester.

Circenis has partaken in several recordings on the radio and is founder of the woodwind quintet Quintus Anima. Together with Agnese Egliņa Circenis has played a number of programmes.

Zanda Švēde thrilled audiences in her first season as a soloist in the Oper Frankfurt (2018/2019) with the title roles in Bizet's *Carmen* and Handel's *Xerxes*. Last season, she performed in Handel's opera *Radamisto* and also appeared as Sonjetka in Shostakovitch's *Lady Macbeth von Mtsensk*. This season, audiences will hear Zanda Švēde in the title roles of a new production of *Orlando* and *Carmen*, as well as Herodias' Page in Barrie Kosky's new *Salome*.

Before the pandemic Švēde was due to sing in concert performances of *Mignon* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* in Frankfurt and *Carmen* at Pittsburgh Opera, a role she has sung at Seattle Opera, the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and the Latvian National Opera.

Zanda Švēde has appeared at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, North Carolina Opera, Palm Beach Opera and Seattle Opera. While a member of San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program she sang roles of Suzuki, Maddalena (*Rigoletto*), Tisbe (*La Cenerentola*), and Lena in the world premiere of Marco Tutino's *La Ciociara*. The artist's repertoire includes Endimione (Cavalli's *La Calisto*), Olga (*Eugene Onegin*), Grimgerde (*Die Walküre*), and the lead roles in Massenet's *Cléopâtre* and Piazzolla's tango opera *María de Buenos Aires*.

www.zandasvede.com

The Latvian National Symphony Orchestra is one of the cornerstones of Latvian national culture, its history spans almost a century. The LNSO is a six-time winner of the Latvian Grand Music Award. Since 2013, the music director of the LNSO is maestro Andris Poga, a conductor sought after by top orchestras from around the world.

The orchestra's most notable former music directors include Jānis Medīņš, Leonīds Vīgners, Edgars Tons, Vassily Sinaisky, Olari Elts, and Karel Mark Chichon. The orchestra has participated in music festivals in France, Germany and Switzerland as well as the Bratislava Music Festival. On its most recent tours the LNSO teamed up with world-renowned soloists such as Latvian violinist Baiba Skride, cellist Alexander Knyazev, pianists Nicholas Angelich, Boris Berezovsky, Lukas Geniušas and Lucas Debargue.

Inso.lv

Andris Poga is the Chief Conductor of the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra since 2021/22 season. He was the Music Director of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra (LNSO) from 2013 till 2021 and will continue to collaborate with the LNSO as its Artistic Advisor.

He is frequent guest conductor with the leading orchestras of Germany, France, Italy, Japan and Scandinavia. After the first successful collaborations he has been invited back to the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, DSO Berlin, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester Hamburg, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, SWR Symphony Stuttgart, WDR Sinfonieorchester, NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo and many others. He has also conducted the Wiener Symphoniker, Saint Petersburg Philharmonic, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Orchestre National de France, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony.

www.andrispoga.com



Tommaso Pratola



Egils Upatnieks



Mārtiņš Circenis



Zanda Švēde

Symphony No. 7

Caur ciešanām un ilgām
Tavs ceļš tev mūžam ies,
Kā nakts zem zvaigznēm zilgām,
Kā teikā satinies.

Cik liktens bij, cik vaina,
Kas to šai brīdī teiks,
Bet zini – rīta aina
Visbaigo nakti veiks.

Jo tumšāka top taka,
Jo klintis stāvāk stāj,
Jo drošāk sirds lai saka:
Man Dieva roka māj!

Ej droši naktij pretī,
Tā tikai vārti vien,
Kas tevī, tavu laiku
Ved augstāku arvien!

Saņem, saņem, dvēsele,
Saules spēku sevī,
Ļauj, lai gaišā pasaule
Laistās, margo tevī!

Saņem, saņem, dvēsele,
Lielo mieru sevī,
Ļauj, lai zvaigžņu pasaule
Viegli pārslo tevī!

Through suffering and yearning
Your path shall yet endure,
Like night beneath stars that tremble,
Within a legend bound.

How much was chance or guilt,
Who can this moment say,
But surely — comes a morning
To quell each dreadful night.

As darker looms the pathway,
And steeper stands the cliff,
More boldly let the heart say:
God's hand shall shelter me!

Go boldly 'gainst the midnight,
It is only but a gate,
That leads you and your fortunes
To greater heights ever yet!

Accept unto yourself, O soul,
The power of the sun,
Let this world of splendour
Blaze and shine on you!

Accept within yourself, O soul,
A vast and perfect peace,
Let these threads of starlight
Weave their love 'round you!

Text: Atis Ķeniņš (1874–1961)
(English translation by Uldis Fogels)

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ANDRIS POGA

TĀLIVALDIS ĶENIŅŠ (1919–2008)

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