

## PREFACE

By M.K. Čiurlionis, we reflect on our present and ourselves. The creative work of this outstanding artist is an axial time of inner and historical experience, a special mental endurance in which we discover the world as such – given and at the same time hidden. Čiurlionis and the world is not just a topographic dimension of universal scientific research. It is an endless experience of the artist's openness to the spiritual, intellectual, as well as temporal and spatial, physical and metaphysical worlds, pervading different times, generations of people, societal and scientific changes. Approaching his works, we experience the world together with Čiurlionis.

“Čiurlionis and the World” – such an all-encompassing utterance was the name of the conference series over the 15 years in Druskininkai. From 2003 to 2018, every year (with a one-year break), Čiurlionis Festival organised by LMTA associate professor Rimantas Astrauskas became an exceptional Lithuanian cultural phenomenon, which every summer awakens artist's historic houses, their inhabitants and beloved locations. Over the course of 15 years, above 280 scientific papers have been read, more than 70 prominent Čiurlionis's followers from Argentina, Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Israel, Japan, USA, UK, Canada, Poland, Lithuania, Mexico, Norway, France, Russia, Finland and Germany took part in the feast of thought.

This book, appearing as the sixth volume in the series *Aesthetics and Exploration of the Philosophy of Art*, is an attempt to breathe in the source of generosity and present the reader with a modern worldview on perception on Čiurlionis, in which a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches, insights and sensations become possible. The collection consists of five parts with laconic, one-word titles that gradually phase in Čiurlionis' experience from abstract, universal and cosmic to personal, intimate and unique to the researcher, many of whom are artists working in various fields. Stepping over these imaginary stages, looking down from Čiurlionis like from a tall tower, we descend into the valley, into the daily place of thought and being, where any experience resonates with the twinship of a man and the world. It resides like an endlessly multi-voiced polylogue centred on Čiurlionis' unique personality.

Over the past couple of decades, research in Čiurlionis has become deeper and deeper, drawing inspiration from ever stronger and bolder scientific imagination. Simultaneously, the intensification of the dissemination of Čiurlionis' work requires a profound understanding of thinking and creative development of

this great creator, and his significance in the context of European and global art. A new intensive phase of Čiurlionis' creative analysis and its theoretical dissemination has just begun. Compared to the previous research on Čiurlionis' works several decades ago, a more pronounced analytical beginning can be discerned, together with a completely new approach to Čiurlionis' creations, incorporating his contextual view of occidental culture and including the latest advances in contemporary humanities. In this collection, many of the articles are symptomatic, showing future research areas of Čiurlionis' work, problematic lines of analysis, and junctions of various disciplines. This collection aims to show how the exploration of Čiurlionis' creative work can reach the level of systematicity and versatility characteristic to the cases of the research of many prominent creators of modernism and other eras. This is a new step in Čiurlionis' studies with an international dimension, demonstrating the cumulative and advanced nature of such exploration.

Four major stages can be distinguished in the development of research on Čiurlionis. The first surge of interest in his work arose immediately after Čiurlionis' death when a huge pleiad of distinguished Russian researchers (N. Benua, N. Berdiaev, V. Ivanov, N. Rerich, V. Chudovsky, S. Makovsky) appreciated the exceptional importance of Čiurlionis' work. The second wave refers to the post-World War II studies in the West (A. Rannit, Ch. Wiegand, W. Haftmann, G. Poensgen, L. Zahn, M. Seuphor, C. Bellioli, etc.), which focused on the relevant question of the genesis of abstractionism at that time and other trends in modernist art. The third rush had emerged in Lithuania starting in the 1960s when a new important flow of thorough works on Čiurlionis appeared in which we could prioritise the research by V. Landsbergis, J. Umbrasas, A. Savickas, G. Vaitkūnas, and J. Bruveris. At the beginning of the 21st century, a new fourth wave of Čiurlionis' research was forming, to which the issues of artistic establishment of Čiurlionis' work, restoration of his national identity, key stages of intellectual and creative evolution and source research became irrelevant.

Čiurlionis' creation occupies a diverse position in Lithuanian self-consciousness. Čiurlionis' paintings have been collected and stored in the museum. His musical heritage has been archived and printed in various forms, as well as Čiurlionis' epistolary and articles have been published. One can assume that the current analytical and comparative phase of Čiurlionis' original research, focusing on authentic details, theoretical articulation and cognition, as well as comparing his work in broader cultural contexts, illuminating its current relevance and originality takes a start from the stage of systematising and legitimising historical material. From the list of the latest the 21st-century Lithuanian publications, the monograph *M.K. Čiurlionis: Between Symbolism and Modernism*, (Vilnius: Versus

aureus, 2004) by Rasa Andriušytė-Žukienė, Rimantas Janeliauskas' monograph *Unrecognised Music Cycles of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis* (Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, 2010), collection of articles *Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875 (1911) His Time and Our Time*, (G. Daunoravičienė, R. Pavilionienė (ed.), Vilnius: Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, 2013), as well as *Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis in Vilnius*, (N. Gaidauskienė (ed.), Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 2016), and others could be mentioned.

Therefore, the book *Čiurlionis and the World* resembles an attempt to sense and reflect on the multilayered phenomenon of Čiurlionis rather than to explore the specific facts, fields and meanings of his creation ultimately. Perhaps, it gives a reason for a group of philosophical texts, which are not yet customary in today's setup, to open the book. Probably, it is time for a new turning point in Čiurlionis' research – the research, which will not focus on the fragmentation of scientific division but will lean on a phenomenological array of experience like on some Švendubrė stone looming in Čiurlionis' native landscapes.

So, the first chapter of the book **Perceptions** brings together a constellation of rare, hitherto extremely wanted philosophical texts reflecting on Čiurlionis' personality and creation. Different philosophical methodologies, including the most dominant phenomenological approach, bring the perception of Čiurlionis' world closer to the mediate observer and the experienter. This specific timeless approach to the present reconstructs and sometimes carefully designs the most inaccessible dimensions of Čiurlionis' self, combining the source and reflection into an indivisible entity. The article by academician Antanas Andrijauskas tells about the universality and integrity of Čiurlionis in the world of art topography while the text of Algis Mickūnas, one of the most prominent emigrant Lithuanian philosophers, in the philosophical frenzy opens the dance of cosmic consciousness in Čiurlionis' worldview perception. Charles Ridoux, medievalist and the expert on J.R.R. Tolkien explores Čiurlionis' visionary universe by linking it to the eschatological sense of the postmodern world. Proceeding from the connection between Čiurlionis' painting and the Platonic doctrine of recollection (anamnēsis), and drawing the distinction between static and dynamic abstractionism, Naglis Kardelis presents new arguments why Čiurlionis can be considered the initiator of the Western abstract art and, with some minor reservations, possibly in the art history of the world.

Rasius Makselis' text also deepens this philosophical access. Makselis manages to draw the Neoplatonism toward Čiurlionis, through the understanding of his contemporaries, which resonates with Čiurlionis' visionarism. The text of Viktorija Daujotytė, reflecting on the artist's phenomenon of the *other space* is very distinctive. Salomėja Jastrumskytė reveals a sensory image of elevation

in Čiurlionis' paintings, accommodating synaesthetic dimensions to vision and touch, and exposing the potential of Čiurlionis' paintings as the sensorial images, the potential of which has not yet been exploited. This new and extensive line of Čiurlionis' research will likely mature sooner or later, become self-contained, and the case of Čiurlionis' creation will become the subject of focused philosophical research.

The second chapter of the book **Totalities** traces the unexpected conceptual connections between different cultural dimensions and Čiurlionis' creations and further emphasises the intent of reflecting the world with Čiurlionis. The intersections of multiple meanings are discovered as unexpected realities and include both works of music and painting. This part of the book is full of scientific imagination, insight, and courage of intellectual action. For example, Gražina Daunoravičienė's article thoroughly explores the issue of cultural parataxis in Čiurlionis' music. The research carried out by the scientist reflects the latest approach in the critique of composers' musical creation. At first glance, a much-unexpected text by Vytautas Landsbergis is an essayistic impression of the nature of the sonata. However, sonata as an idea and a way (expression, construction method) throughout the works of M.K. Čiurlionis, while the author personally mentions, is convincingly and artistically embraced. Meanwhile, Daniele Buccio from Italy painstakingly anatomises the theme of variation in the development of Čiurlionis' music, revealing both the importance of this compositional principle to Čiurlionis and its influence on the musicians of that time. Rimantas Janeliauskas develops the idea that various manifestations of sonorism derive from sonantic relationship with sound. Sonorism is most often found in the music of the later Čiurlionis and appears as a feature of the era of the altered sound environment.

The paradigms of the spiritual worlds of M.K. Čiurlionis and Carl Gustav Jung in the article by Juratė Landsbergytė-Becher breathes with the esoteric dimension of parallels. Here, a largely unexplored projection of the interaction between the psychology of depth and Čiurlionis' creation opens up. Wiesna Mond-Kozłowska extensively covers the interrelationship of motifs of a bird and a tree among different cultures of the Middle East, Central Asia and the Far East, and analyses the manifestations and patterns of this symbolism in Čiurlionis' visionary and archetypal artworks. Kozłowska seeks to contextualise Čiurlionis' contribution to the multicultural mythopoetic landscape of nature-inspired universal human creativity and thinking. In contrast, Dalia Micevičiūtė follows the topographic segments of Čiurlionis' musical becoming: Warsaw, Leipzig, and St. Petersburg, based on the idiom of True and Unknown Čiurlionis and explores how the internal authentic Čiurlionis composer's identity is (re)constructed. Natalya Bartosh's article also covers the mythopoetic aspect and places it at the end the

19th century and the beginning of the 20th century in the context of European art, and deduces possible influences on Čiurlionis' imagination.

The third chapter **Nexus** brings together articles based on a variety of comparative approaches. They differ in style, nature and scope. Intellectual amplitude spatially accommodates near and remote historiographic and geographical dimensions. In his research, Vytautas Tumėnas demonstrates that the ornamentation and musicality of Čiurlionis' paintings are based on the proximity of the principles of composition to the compositional schemes of applied art and especially to folklore textiles. The researcher explores whether the artist gave the paintings a deeper conceptual philosophical-aesthetic meaning applying composition principles of textile. For his starting point of comparative analysis, Julius Vaitkevičius chooses the fundamental *qi* category of Chinese philosophy and adopts it as a method of reflection and phenomenological empathy to explore the most complex painting cycles from Čiurlionis' "sonata period" and in particular the "Sonata of the Serpent" which becomes the main object for cognition. In the course of the research, the field of semantic meanings of the *qi* category expands into five different aspects of complex analysis: 1) inner heart feeling, 2) polarity, 3) impulse of life, 4) complex organism, and 5) flow. They are used as an approach to reflection, discussing the stylistic features of Čiurlionis' most original late musical painting.

Sun Min associates Čiurlionis' artworks with *yun* aesthetics, which greatly flourished in paintings of the art of erudite. Her article expands the fundamental category of Chinese painting aesthetics *yun* 韵 in various aspects and discusses in detail its two crucial semantic meanings – "elegance *ya* 雅" and the "inexhaustible more". These criteria of aesthetic evaluation of the *yun* category are applied both in analysing Čiurlionis' works and noticing that the works of this Lithuanian artist have much in common with the Chinese and East Asian aesthetics taken under its influence. Christine Marstrand observes the presence of many similar symbols linking Lithuania and the Nordic countries. This similarity is revealed in the works of Čiurlionis and his contemporaries. Yumiko Nunokawa compares Čiurlionis' unfinished opera *Jūratė* and Rimsky-Korsakov's symphonic poem *Sadko* as similarly developing the sea motifs. Nunokawa also reconsiders the assumption drawn by Landsbergis that Čiurlionis may have been familiar with Rimsky-Korsakov's octatonic derivative. In his paper, Vygintas Orlovas focuses on the comparative analysis of audio-visual integration strategies of M.K. Čiurlionis and his three contemporaries W. Kandinsky, A. Scriabin, and A.W. Rimington. The article of Ieva Kuzminskaitė-Staigienė reveals versatile stylistic interaction points between Čiurlionis and Galdikas' landscape paintings that have not yet been analysed in depth. The author notes that, in today's field of art criticism, early and

late works of Galdikas, forgotten by art critics Alexis Rannito, Waldemar George, Viktoras Vizgirda, Stasys Goštautas, Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas and others, was associated with a symbolic and abstract mindset of Čiurlionis. José Luis Palacios Garoz takes an unexpected look at Čiurlionis' epoch, finding a spiritual kinship with a versatile Spanish artist Federico García Lorca.

The fourth chapter **Placescapes** of the collection overlays the topographic markers with the facts of Čiurlionis' biography, their unexpected insights from the present time, likewise revealing previously missed but nowadays important nuances. In her article, Nida Gaidauskienė reviews the prehistory of M.K. Čiurlionis' commemoration in Vilnius. At the current moment, we can observe the actions aimed at the memorialisation of this artist in Lithuanian topography. M.K. Čiurlionis' visits to different places in Vilnius are being revised, taking into account the chronology of events, investigating concrete addresses and expanding the map of the city's cultural memory. Rasa Andriušytė-Žukienė reviews the peculiar manifestation of Čiurlionis' Lithuanianness. At the end of the article, the author concludes: "There is no argument on Čiurlionis' direct influence on Lithuanian art. It was determined by the uniqueness of the artist's perception of the world, his method of painting based on individual reflections and experiences, but not through in-depth studies of nature". Rimantas Astauskas focuses on Čiurlionis' choral music being an important transformation of Lithuanian musical culture for that period. Čiurlionis' choral works are also essential because his choral excellence spread earlier and brought fame to the artist's name. Milda Mildažytė-Kulikauskienė discusses the historical and political peripeteia which Čiurlionis' younger sister Valerija has faced to preserve her older brother's creative legacy. Pillé Veljataga examines the evaluation of Čiurlionis' works in early Soviet times, exploring the indoctrination and ideological control of the Stalinist concept of art at that time.

The fifth chapter **Revelations** carries this name, not by accident – it is like a glimpse into the distance, climbing the peaks of Čiurlionis' creative self. Something, what just has opened up, at times can emerge as a unity, which only later will be articulated more precisely, and what will continuously fragment into the research fields and methodologies. Stanislovas Mostauskis raises the question on the extent to which the Čiurlionis' painting perspective does not coincide with the realistic (observed by eye) image-reproducing perspective and how to interpret such discrepancies – specifically the Čiurlionis' way of constructing the space. Giedrius Kuprevičius focuses on the genesis of the unfinished Čiurlionis' symphonic poem "Dies Irae", the peculiarities of its musical language, style, the uniqueness of means of artistic expression and the problems of reconstruction of this work to adapt it for public performance. Darius Kučinskas rethinks the

accumulation of Čiurlionis' interpretations, inviting to return to the urtext of Čiurlionis' music. In this case, the urtext helps the musicians to purify the works from the editorial coating, return to the composer's original idea, and see a piece of music exactly as it was written by the author. In his article, the author discusses the purpose of Urtext publications, the history of editing Čiurlionis' musical works, the methods and provisions of editing. Theatrical themes are not left behind, either. Antanas Kučinskas highlights the most important aspects of the usage of Čiurlionis' music in the theatre. Čiurlionis' music is analysed regarding the biographical and non-biographical scripts of drama, musical and dance performances. Rūta Brūzgienė reveals that Čiurlionis was one of the first Lithuanian creators to adapt the musical form to literary texts, which became a unique manifestation of literary synthesis. The research of Neringa Butnoriūtė is also dedicated to the literary work of Čiurlionis. She states that "M.K. Čiurlionis' intertexts are a valuable phenomenon in the 20th-century Lithuanian poetry". And finally, we read the retrospective analysis of the Baltic perception of individual M.K. Čiurlionis' works put together by Nina Panina. The author also presents an authentic experience of Čiurlionis' works in the historical context of the Novosibirsk Akademgorodok in the 1970s and 1980s.

Hopefully, this new multilayered accumulation of insights into Čiurlionis' world will create the new states of thought by experiencing the unfolding Čiurlionis' creativity in the present world. In fact, we are witnessing the rare phenomenon of a genius creator of one nation, slowly blending into the universe, fitting into a place which is dedicated to him, but happened to be unfilled in his lifetime, and creating infinite polylogues among other creators in the three dimensions of art time where any significant creation robustly roots into life. Subsequently, it is probably worth to discuss the present Čiurlionis, approaching and coinciding with the unremitting, uninterrupted, even impenetrable modernness of his creation, so characteristic to all visionaries who had overstepped the time.

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