



VALDIS ZARIŅŠ
violin

Latvian National Symphony Orchestra
Vassily Sinaisky, conductor

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Gundaris Pone, conductor*

CD1

JEAN SIBELIUS Violin Concerto in D minor, op. 47

1. Allegro moderato / 15:37
2. Adagio di molto / 8:23
3. Allegro, ma non tanto / 7:38

BÉLA BARTÓK Violin Concerto No. 2, Sz 112

4. Allegro non troppo / 19:02
5. Andante tranquillo / 10:06
6. Allegro molto / 12:46

CD2

GUNDARIS PONE Violin Concerto

1. Allegro non troppo sempre di gran maniera / 11:17
2. Adagio elegiaco un poco rubato / 5:38
3. Allegro molto vivace / 7:29

ROMUALDS KALSONS Violin Concerto

4. Allegro ma non troppo / 6:23
5. Adagio elegiaco un poco rubato / 4:20
6. Andante con moto / 9:56
7. Allegro non troppo / 6:08

* Gundaris Pone, Violin Concerto

TT: 125:15

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VALDIS ZARIŅŠ (1942-2018)

The early 1960s. Before a concert in Valmiera, Valdis Zariņš – still a student at the conservatory but already first violin in the string quartet of the Latvian Philharmonic – makes a bet with the other members of the quartet that he can walk across the Gauja River on the bridge's railing. Who knows, maybe the bridge was lower back then? But the river was the same as today: wide and full of eddies and whirlpools. Although tilting perilously towards the water every now and then, Zariņš really does cross the river, dressed in his concert tuxedo at that. On the other side, he jumps off the railing and smiles, as if nothing out of the ordinary has just happened.

This performance inspired by the recklessness of youth comes to mind when listening to Zariņš' recordings. Because it's not the least bit easier to move from the first to the final note of a violin concerto than it is to walk across the Gauja on the railing of that damned high bridge! It requires boldness and courage to take that very first step into the universe created by a composer. It requires a sense of balance to see all of the possible road signs and border crossings in it, which, translated into musical categories, probably means having a perfect understanding of style and content. And of course, it requires faith in one's own abilities. And conviction that the road ahead is worth the risk. And an ability to fully concentrate, forgetting about everything else in the world (and this, translated into musical categories, might be a precondition for being able to wholly identify with the composer's message). Plus, at the end of it all, one also needs to be able to flash a warm smile. Only then can the violin resound in such a light and silky manner as it does for Zariņš.

Zariņš seemed to experience no technical difficulties whatsoever. But virtuosity was never an end in itself; instead, it was a self-evident precondition for his very active, expressive manner of playing. He always bought at least ten E strings at a time. They broke one after another, and usually during concerts, remembers Mārtiņš Grīnbergs, a cellist with the Latvian Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra and Zariņš' fellow quartet member who also told about the bridge episode. "His saturated tone can immediately be recognised on recordings, even amongst a hundred different violinists. And these recordings do not grow old. They still sound fresh. The secret is in their naturalness and simplicity. Not simplification, but simplicity," says cellist Ligita Zemberga, who was Zariņš' colleague in the Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra and later in the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra as well. She adds: "He always asked us to put a little bit of the warmth in our hearts in the music, so the phrase comes alive and sings. 'Put yourself in there,' he'd say."

While being a superb soloist and chamber musician, Zariņš was also a phenomenal, first-rate concertmaster and one in which both the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra and the Latvian Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra took pride.

And it seems that Zariņš' regular work in the orchestra also coloured his distinctive style as a solo player. It enriched his playing by instilling in him a unique sense of teamwork, of work done together by many people. Even as a soloist, Zariņš played as if from the perspective of the whole orchestra. He believed it was important to not only perform the solo part and demonstrate his virtuosity or unique interpretation, but also to jointly create music, together with others, as a sum of parts: the soloist plus the orchestra. He would not only bring a solo phrase to an elegant conclusion, but also use its final sounds to provide generous nourishment for the subsequent orchestral response. The character created by his violin was never autonomous or self-sufficient; instead, it meaningfully merged with the whole, with the jointly created panorama. It seems that, as a soloist, Zariņš continued to help his colleagues in the orchestra feel secure, inspired and confident; he ensured that they never lost this feeling of having a supportive shoulder nearby, this satisfaction of doing a job together. Certainly, the immense experience with and knowledge of the symphonic repertoire that Zariņš had accumulated through his work as concertmaster – above, below, behind and far beyond the solo repertoire of his own instrument – gave him a unique and inestimable understanding of music as a soloist. And this understanding allowed him to develop truly benchmark interpretations, such as those of the violin concerti by Romualds Kalsons, Jānis Ivanovs and Gundaris Pone as well as the "golden" solo part in the second movement of Ivanovs' Symphony No. 14.

Zariņš was first seated in the first chair of the violin section at age seventeen, while still a first-year student at the conservatory, during his first rehearsal with the Latvian Conservatory Orchestra. As the rehearsal began, conductor Leonīds Vīgners pointed to him and said, "Come here, you're going to sit here!" Many years later, when receiving the Latvian Great Music Award in 1998, in his very short acceptance speech Zariņš expressed a special thank you to Vīgners for this momentous decision, which had so greatly affected the violinist's career.

Zariņš went on to be the concertmaster of the Latvian Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra (1969-1975), the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra (1976-1999) and the Bergen Symphony Orchestra (1995-1999). He also played first violin in the Latvian Philharmonic's string quartet from 1963 to 1967.

In order to better understand the jobs of his orchestra colleagues, such as how well they saw the conductor and concertmaster, Zariņš sometimes sat alongside the last chairs in the instrument sections during rehearsals. He believed that the orchestra's ability to quickly become accustomed to a conductor, to "get in the swing" of his style, was crucial to its success. As concertmaster, he was also often forced to take on the role of conductor himself, such as when Vīgners left the conductor's podium or stepped out of the spotlight during ovations at performances by the Conservatory Orchestra. Then all of the caesuras, rubatos and accelerandos were Zariņš' responsibility.

Zariņš had a special talent for leadership, the skill to establish and maintain a unified orchestra group, and also an enviable ability to communicate with his colleagues, earning their respect and love. Orchestra members unanimously called him the ideal concertmaster. Some even ascribed almost superhuman qualities to him. In any case, he was someone other people wished to emulate.

No matter how early musicians arrived to rehearsal, Zariņš was always ahead of them, already sitting in the first violin chair. "He would always be playing E major scale. I don't know why. We would hear E major, so that meant work could begin," remembered Zemberga. She also spoke about Zariņš' tremendous capacity for work. Like the time, for example, when he perfectly recorded three whole violin concerti (Beethoven, Brahms and Sibelius) with the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra in a single week. Or when he played the concertmaster's solo part in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* in the first half of a concert and then stepped back on stage in the second half of the concert, now as a soloist, to play one of the big violin concerti. "His professionalism was unrivalled. It's not hard to play in good conditions, but to play in conditions that are not so good – that's an art," says Zemberga, remembering the time Zariņš played Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* with heavily scalded hands. He not only performed the work but "played it like a god".

And, speaking of playing in not so ideal conditions, it is tempting to mention the instrument available to our most prominent violinist during the Soviet era in Latvia, in the 1960s and 1970s... Zariņš always spoke lovingly about his violin, an instrument made by Latvian luthier Mārtiņš Zemītis and which he had played since the age of thirteen. He said it was a very good instrument and became better with each passing year. He was particularly proud of the fact that he recorded Bartók's Violin Concerto on the Zemītis violin. Zariņš played that violin until Latvijas Radio, persuaded by conductor Vassily Sinaisky, bought a Bavarian Mittenwald violin for the then-astronomical amount of 30,000 rubles (the violin was initially erroneously believed to have been Guarneri's own instrument!).

Zariņš recorded 260 compositions at the Latvijas Radio studios between 1962 and 1999. More than one hundred of those were recorded together with his wife, pianist and composer Ieva Zariņa. He also recorded and published several LP records through the Soviet state-owned record label *Melodiya*. Zariņš can also be heard on CDs released by *Simax* in Norway and the British labels *Marco Polo* and *Campion Records*.

According to concert posters and the library of recordings at Latvijas Radio, Zariņš played countless concerts together with his wife and other chamber musicians as well as with larger or smaller orchestras under the direction of Vīgners, Sinaisky, Edgars Tons, Paul Māgi, Terje Mikkelsen, Gintaras Rinkevičius, Eri Klas, Okko Kamu and other masters. Zariņš called solo playing "an ordinary thing already since I was a student", when, not yet twenty years old, Vīgners invited him to participate as a soloist in concerts hosted by Latvijas Radio.

Together with the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, Zariņš performed the widest possible range of music as a soloist: from Beethoven, Brahms and Bartók to Ivanovs and Kalsons. He played violin concerti by Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Sibelius, Sallinen, Vītns, Vasks, Pone and others. He performed not only in Latvia but also in the other Soviet republics, from Sakhalin in the Far East and Norilsk beyond the Arctic Circle to the Caucasus and Central Asia. In the United States he performed at the Chautauqua Conference in 1986-87 as well as in New Paltz, New York City, and elsewhere. He also performed in Canada, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Yugoslavia, Poland, Iceland, Sweden, France, Portugal, Spain, Germany and elsewhere. He received his first Latvian Great Music Award in 1993 for his performance of Kalsons' Violin Concerto at the Europamusicale festival in Munich and his second award in 1998 for his performance of the violin concerti by Kalsons, Pēteris Vasks and John Adams as well as popularising the music of Latvian composers and musicians beyond Latvia's borders. Zariņš was also awarded the Order of the Three Stars, Latvia's highest state honour.

Zariņš studied violin in Riga under Izrail Abramis at the Emīls Dārziņš Music High School, at the Jāzeps Medīņš School of Music and at the Latvian Academy of Music under Yakov Targonsky; did graduate work at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. He taught violin at the Latvian Academy of Music from 1968 to 2008. Zariņš' students confirm that the authority and example set by their professor inspired them to play the violin for even 24 hours a day. Zariņš himself was also always ready to learn, such as when, during his Bergen period, he agreed to play with the BIT20 Ensemble, whose exclusively contemporary repertoire he considered a wonderful opportunity to test his own skill and ability in the "new complexity".

Inherent musicality, full tone, expressive phrasing, and the combination of emotion and intellect – it is with phrases such as these that music critics describe the style of superb Latvian violinist Valdis Zariņš.

This album presents these qualities in truly impressive stylistic and emotional amplitude through four 20th-century musical masterpieces. Three of these were recorded in collaboration with Vassily Sinaisky. For Sinaisky, the 1975–76 season was his first as the artistic director and chief conductor of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra (LNSO; then, the Television and Radio Symphony Orchestra of the Latvian SSR). From the very beginning, he invited Zariņš, who was then still the concertmaster of the Latvian Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, to collaborate with the orchestra. They recorded Béla Bartók's Violin Concerto No. 2, which was immediately released by Melodiya. Zariņš played the concerto on his Mārtiņš Zemītis violin with such fervour and virtuosity that even an expert cannot tell that the instrument was made by a Latvian luthier. He also performed the concerto at the 100th anniversary of Bartók's birth in 1982.

Interestingly, the composers of the other three violin concerti – Sibelius, Pone and Kalsons – also all studied violin at some point. In his youth, Sibelius even applied for a position as a violinist with the Vienna Philharmonic. The composers were therefore very well acquainted with the instrument and its potential, which helped them to write the solo violin parts with masterful brilliance and vivid imagination as well as make them technically convenient for the soloist.

It is often said that **JEAN SIBELIUS** (1865–1957) realised his dreams of being a violinist in his Violin Concerto (1904/05). In early 1904 his wife, Aino, wrote in letters that Janne was composing day and night, ceaselessly playing themes from the concerto on his violin: "He has so many themes in his head that he feels literally intoxicated. He does not sleep at night; he's playing unbelievably beautifully and cannot pull himself away from the splendid melodies."

Zariņš plays Sibelius very emotionally and very personally. When he plays, it is his own loneliness, his own hopes, longings, melancholy and bitterness. His own reverential wonder, delight, pure joy and spontaneity. His own pantheistic view of the world. From an almost metaphysical calmness in the second movement of the concerto to the fascinating rhythms of incantations in its finale.

First and foremost being a composer of symphonies, Sibelius anticipated equal importance for the soloist and orchestra, entrusting a much more significant role and material to the orchestra than was usual at that time in the concerto genre. The ideal balance between the soloist and orchestra allows both to reveal themselves to their full potential. Even the most virtuoso passages in the violin part are incorporated into the musical whole, and the development is so natural that no seams are noticed in the concerto's "fabric". Nor are they felt in the performance by Zariņš, the LNSO and Sinaisky. Instead, one senses the previously mentioned feeling of doing a fine job together, shoulder to shoulder.

BÉLA BARTÓK'S (1881–1945) Violin Concerto No. 2 (1937/38) provides a glimpse into what it was like to live in the mid-20th century, with the foreboding sense of the cataclysms to come. When Austria was annexed in April 1938, Bartók was horrified by the thought that Hungary might fall to the Nazi regime as well. He demonstrated his civic stance and conviction by not responding to the questionnaire artists were obliged to fill out regarding their Aryan roots. Quite the opposite, he considered answering with "We Hungarians are a Finno-Ugric people. Ethnically speaking, we could be considered northern Turks; in other words, we are a non-Indo-European people and are therefore not Aryans."

Bartók believed that creative interaction between ethnic groups, rather than racial purity, was most enriching. He had recorded several thousand Hungarian folk songs and hundreds of Slovak, Romanian, Turkish and Bulgarian melodies on his folklore expeditions. In the Violin Concerto No. 2 he welcomed this diversity with the means of expression available to him. Here we hear the improvisational, ballad-like character of Hungarian folk music and allusions to folk music instruments, particularly the cimbalom.

The folklore-inspired themes continually interact and are modified, leading to an unceasing feeling of playfulness. It seems that Zariņš' interpretation and the chiaroscuro of his violin timbre, which sensitively yet temperamentally reacts to changes in mood, perfectly echo this playful, changing nature of the music.

Of course, Bartók's Violin Concerto, written in the middle of the 20th century, also serves as a vivid example of modernism and contains stylistic elements of that era, for example, the sporadic use of Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique. The second movement of the concerto is often called an example of the "night music" so characteristic of Bartók. And the light timbre of Zariņš' violin easily identifies with the gently subdued as well as the energetically folkloric and the expressive and virtuoso modernist characters in the concerto.

Bartók emigrated to the United States in 1940. **GUNDARIS PONE** (1932–1994), who was born in Liepāja, Latvia, and had fled from his native country as a child in 1944, arrived in the United States in 1950. He studied violin as well as composition at the University of Minnesota, where he earned his doctorate in 1962. He composed his Violin Concerto in 1959, intensely and impulsively confirming his professional abilities and creative ambitions as a young composer.

In the later 1960s, Pone travelled to Europe, where he met and became friends with Luigi Nono, György Ligeti and Pierre Boulez. Having joined the global avantgarde elite, he enriched it with his own theories regarding composition, namely, the action–reaction theory and the theory of univalent and polyvalent structures. It is often said that Pone was not only a Latvian composer with a style stimulated by the European musical avantgarde but also the only Latvian who truly embodied the avantgarde.

Nono encouraged Pone to focus not only on the avantgarde and serialism but also on the study of dialectics. As a result, Pone turned his attention to the ideas of Maoism and Marxism and during his theoretical studies also attempted to become involved with concert life in the Soviet Union. He visited Latvia for the first time in the early 1970s, where his music was performed in relative secrecy in Riga; only a select audience of people approved for contact with Latvians living abroad was allowed into the venues. Zariņš played Pone's Violin Concerto in an arrangement with piano accompaniment. The premiere with an orchestra took place in late summer of 1983 at the Dzintari Concert Hall. Musicologist Guntars Pupa described the concert: "The Violin concerto's musical language generally corresponds with our preconceptions of 20th-century classics; it coincides with the styles of Mahler, Bartók or Shostakovich. And yet it is characterised by great independence and highly artistic ethical pathos. The good impression was enhanced by Zariņš' masterful playing – sensitive, pictorial, virtuosic."

Two years later Pone invited Zariņš to perform in the United States, but Goskontsert, the state-run concert promoter that determined the fate of Soviet musicians, did not respond to the invitation.

Pone conducted the recording of his Violin Concerto heard on this album. He had debuted as a conductor in 1966 with a programme of contemporary music at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Later in life, Pone returned to the conductor's podium several times with the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, including with his own music, which by then contained a strong manifestation of neo-romantic expression.

Zariņš' daughter, Ilze Zariņa, performed Pone's Violin Concerto in 2015 together with the Liepāja Symphony Orchestra. When asked whether her father shared his experience of his own performance of the concerto, she responded, "No, my father fully trusted my own personal interpretation."

Immediately following its premiere, the Violin Concerto (1977/78) by **ROMUALDS KALSONS** (1936) was deemed a composition of lasting importance in Latvian music. The concerto's expressive message still delights audiences with the vitality, dynamism, dazzling timbral colour and apt accents of the grotesques and sarcasm so characteristic of the composer's music.

Kalsons' symphonic works (five symphonies for large orchestra, three symphonies for chamber orchestra, poems, suites and three concerti for soloist and orchestra) are some of the most vivid examples of orchestration in Latvian music. These compositions grew out of his composition studies under the notable master of orchestral colour Ādolf Skulte as well as his studies in orchestral conducting. In the 1970s Kalsons was also Sinaisky's assistant conductor.

Since the 1960s Kalsons' music has been influenced and enriched by various stylistic trends: expressionism, neo-romanticism, neo-classicism, the new wave of folklore. His String Quartet (1973) is one of the rare examples of the twelve-tone technique in Latvian music. Humour, sarcasm and parody are typical elements of Kalsons' style; a psychologically refined portrayal of modern man's feeling for life is a central theme of his oeuvre.

Musicologist Ilma Grauzdiņa's note regarding the Violin Concerto is significant: "In this score by Romualds Kalsons, the violin – one of the most emotionally sensitive and warm instruments – is alone and solitary also in the literal sense. In the Violin Concerto, the solo violin is the only representative of its kind, because there are no violins in the orchestra."

Musicologist Baiba Jaunslaviete describes Kalsons' Violin Concerto: "The four-part structure of the composition contains intense drama and the volatile excitement of a game (first movement), grotesque and sarcasm (second movement, scherzo), and allusions to the music of the past as a symbol of everything pure and clear, which are particularly characteristic of the slow third movement. [...] Lastly, the grotesque and sarcastic sphere returns in the finale and is associated with the aggression of multitudes against the values expressed by ancient symbols. Only in the coda does this wave of aggression subside, and the composition ends ambiguously, without resolution, in a contemplative mood."

After the premiere in 1978, Ingrida Zemzare wrote: "Romualds Kalsons' Violin Concerto blossomed like a bright-coloured exotic flower in our underprivileged concerto genre. It seems that his new work will occupy an honourable position in our violin repertoire alongside Jānis Ivanovs' Violin Concerto, because it corresponds to the demands of the genre: it is vivid and representative. [...] Valdis Zariņš felt free as a bird in the limited aleatory of the concerto dedicated to him. And the truly concentrated concerto full of exotic ostinato rhythms earned the appreciation of the audience."

The Latvian National Symphony Orchestra with Vassily Sinaisky and later also other conductors have often performed Kalsons' Violin Concerto while on tours abroad as a calling card for Latvian music. They performed it during their tour of Germany in 1983 and also in the legendary Europamusikale rendition performed in Munich in 1992, when we at home listened along in suspense on the radio to the outstanding performance by our orchestra and soloist and the subsequent accolade of listeners in Munich. Kalsons' Violin Concerto remains the composer's most-played work.

VASSILY SINAIISKY'S (1947) first concert as the chief conductor of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra (then, the Television and Radio Symphony Orchestra of the Latvian SSR) took place on September 18, 1975, just two years after he had won the Herbert von Karajan Conducting Competition in Berlin. Encouraged by Kirill Kondrashin, to whom he was an assistant conductor at the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, the twenty-seven-year-old Sinaisky had headed to Riga.

In 1975, music critics in Riga noted that the concert season had begun unusually actively; by the end of October Sinaisky had already conducted five concerts – one every Thursday evening! This level of activity continued throughout the "Sinaisky era", until 1987.

"We played many exciting compositions back then, including lots of Latvian music, but mostly Mahler and Richard Strauss. Latvia was far from Moscow, so we were also able to play 'forbidden' music, and these were composers who later became quite prominent, such as Schnittke, who was always happy that his work was performed. We also often played work by Denisov and Gubaidulina. We immediately played everything that was new and interesting. Also when we travelled abroad," said Sinaisky in an interview with Latvijas Radio 3 "Klasika" in 2017.

In the early 1980s, Sinaisky conducted a performance of Romualds Kalsons' Violin Concerto in Germany, and the critics in Berlin described the conductor as "a fanatic of precision endowed with temperament under whose direction the orchestra plays dramatically and dynamically, with surprising bravura". Elsewhere, too, critics spoke highly of Sinaisky's orchestra – of its first-rate intonation, the tender sound of its string section, the balance between the various instrument groups, its equilibrium.

Sinaisky often entrusted solo parts to members of the orchestra: "The orchestra was very strong back then. I always wanted to highlight all of the good musicians as soloists: Vilnis Strautiņš, Vilnis Pelnēns, Ģirts Pāže, Arvids Klišāns. When I arrived, Valdis Zariņš was not yet a part of the orchestra; he was playing under Tovy Lifschitz with the Latvian Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra. But I wanted all of the best for myself – I had ambition! I won over Zariņš, convinced the administration to pay him a good salary, we bought him a good violin. But the main thing was that I tried to give them all an opportunity to play solos in concerts."

Nowadays, when he meets the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra in concert or at recording sessions, Sinaisky confesses that he spent his best years in Riga. Here he established wonderful contacts and a psychological connection with the orchestra that remains to the present day. And he feels truly proud of the fact that the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra named him an Honorary Conductor in 2017.

Sinaisky is also an honorary conductor with the BBC Philharmonic and the Malmö Symphony Orchestra. In addition to working with these orchestras, he has also been a principal conductor of the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, the Russian State Orchestra and the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra. He has been the principal conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow (2010–2013) and has conducted opera performances at opera houses in Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, San Francisco and London. As a guest conductor, he has regularly performed with the leading orchestras in Great Britain, the United States, Finland, Japan, Russia and elsewhere. Sinaisky began his career as a conductor in 1971 with the Novosibirsk Symphony Orchestra directed by Arnold Kats, and, thanks to his studies and first professional experience under the legendary interpreters of Russian music Ilya Musin and Kirill Kondrashin, he is regarded as one of the world's finest experts on the Russian musical repertoire.

Sinaisky currently teaches conducting at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. He formerly also taught at the Latvian Academy of Music, where both Imants Resnis and Jānis Zirnīs were among his students.

Sinaisky received the Latvian Great Music Award in 1999 for popularising Latvian music in the 1970s and 1980s.

THE LATVIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (LNSO) is a team of highly professional musicians with strong traditions, generous sound and devoted performance. The LNSO mainly focuses on 19th- and 20th-century orchestral masterpieces, classical and contemporary works by Latvian composers and occasionally concert performances of operas or musicals. The orchestra pays great attention to educational children and youth programmes. For several years, it has successfully performed a series of chamber music programmes, and since 2015 it celebrates the end of the summer with the LNSO Summer Festival. The LNSO is a five-time recipient of the Latvian Grand Music Award.

Since November 2013, the music director of the LNSO is Andris Poga.

Among the orchestra's former music directors are Vassily Sinaisky, Olari Elts and Karel Mark Chichon. Guest conductors have included world-renowned Latvians Arvids Jansons, Mariss Jansons and Andris Nelsons as well as Kurt Masur, Kirill Kondrashin, Yevgeny Svetlanov, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Neeme Järvi, Paavo Järvi, Jean-Claude Casadesu, Vladimir Fedoseyev, a.o.

In recent years, the LNSO has given performances also at the Alte Oper in Frankfurt, and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris among other places. In 2017, the LNSO with Andris Poga had two tours in France. In winter the LNSO performed at the Grand Théâtre de Provence in Aix-en-Provence and Arsenal in Metz as well as in prestigious festival La Folle Journée in Nantes. In August the LNSO and Andris Poga received standing ovations at the Festival International de Piano de La Roque d'Anthéron. In October 2018 the LNSO and Andris Poga collaborated with Nicholas Angelich at the Philharmonie de Paris.



1975.gadā Rīgas mūzikas kritiķi fiksē – sezona iesākusies neierasti aktīvi, līdz oktobra beigām Sinaiska vadībā notikuši jau pieci koncerti - ik ceturtdienas vakaru! Tik aktīvs darba režīms saglabājas visu „Sinaiska laiku” - līdz pat 1987.gadam.

“Daudz efektīgu skaņdarbu toreiz spēlējām un daudz latviešu mūzikas, bet visvairāk - Māleru un Rihardu Štrausu. Latvija no Maskavas bija tālu, tāpēc mums bija iespēja spēlēt arī “aizliegtu” mūziku, un tie bija komponisti, kuri vēlāk kļuva diži - Šnitke, kurš par savu darbu atskaņojumiem allaž bija priecīgs; bieži spēlējām Denisova un Gubaiduļinas opusus. Visu, kas radās jauns un interesants, mēs uzreiz spēlējām. Arī ārzemēs”, tā Vasilij Sinaiskis intervijā LR 3 „Klasika” teicis 2017.gadā.

Astoņdesmito sākumā, Vasilija Sinaiska diriģētš, arī Romualda Kalsona Vijoļkoncerts spoži izskan Vācijā, un Berlīnes kritiķi pēc šī atskaņojuma diriģentu raksturo kā „ar temperamentu apveltītu precizitātes fanātiķi, kura vadībā orķestris spēlē dramatiski piesātināti, ar pārsteidzošu bravūru, dinamiski”. Arī citviet kritiķi slavē Sinaiska vadīto orķestri - par pirmklasīgo intonāciju, stīgu grupas maigo skaņējumu, orķestra grupu izlidzinātību, sabalansētību.

Viena no Sinaiskim raksturīgām darba metodēm bija vēlme orķestra mūziķiem uzticēt solistu partijas. „ Toreiz orķestris bija ļoti spēcīgs. Visus labos mūziķus - Vilni Strautiņu, Vilni Pelnēnu, Ģirtu Pāzi, Arvīdu Klišanu - allaž gribēju izcelt kā solistus, tāpēc atbilstoši izvēlējos skaņdarbus. Kad atnācu, Valda Zariņa orķestri vēl nebija - viņš spēlēja pie Tovija Lišica Latvijas Filharmonijas kamerorķestrī, bet es visus labākos gribēju sev - azarts man bija! Pārvilināju Valdi, pārliecināju priekšniecību, lai tā maksā labu algu, nopirkām viņam labu vijoli. Bet pats galvenais - centos, lai viņiem visiem iznāk spēlēt solo koncertos.”

Tagad, tiekoties ar Latvijas Nacionālo simfonisko orķestri gan koncertos, gan ierakstu sesijās, Vasilij Sinaiskis saka – Rīgā pavadījis savus labākos gadus, un ar orķestri te izveidojies lielisks kontakts, psiholoģiska saikne, kas saglabājusies līdz pat mūsdienām. Un ka viņš jūtas tiešām lepns par to, ka 2017.gadā Latvijas Nacionālais simfoniskais orķestris viņu tituleja par savu Goda diriģentu.

Vasilij Sinaiskis ir arī BBC Filharmoniskā orķestra un Malmes simfoniskā orķestra Goda diriģents. Galvenā diriģenta statusā viņš savulaik strādājis ne tikai ar šiem, bet vēl arī ar Maskavas filharmonijas simfonisko orķestri, Krievijas Valsts simfonisko orķestri, Nīderlandes Filharmonisko orķestri. Viņš ir bijis Maskavas Lielā teātra galvenais diriģents (2010 – 2013), diriģējis operu izrādes Berlīnes, Vīnes, Budapeštas, Sanfrancisko un Londonas opernamos. Viesdiriģenta statusā viņš regulāri muzicē kopā ar vadošajiem Lielbritānijas, ASV, Somijas, Japānas, Krievijas un citu valstu orķestriem. Viņa diriģenta karjera aizsākās 1971.gadā Arnolda Kaca vadītajā Novosibirskas simfoniskajā orķestrī, un, pateicoties studijām un pirmajai darba pieredzei leģendāro krievu mūzikas interpretu Iljas Musina un Kirila Kondrašina vadībā, viņu dēvē par vienu no pasaulē izcilākajiem krievu mūzikas repertuāra pazinējiem.

Pašreiz Vasilij Sinaiskis diriģēšanu māca Sanktpēterburgas Konservatorijā. Savulaik viņš to darīja arī Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmijā – pie viņa mācījušies gan Imants Resnis, gan Jānis Zirnis.

1999.gadā Vasilij Sinaiskis saņēma Latvijas Lielo mūzikas balvu – par latviešu mūzikas popularizēšanu 70.-80.gados.

LATVIJAS NACIONĀLAIS SIMFONISKAIS ORĶESTRIS (LNSO) ir viena no valsts klasiskās mūzikas aprītes pamatvērtībām – augsti profesionālu mūziķu apvienība ar spēcīgām tradīcijām, dāsnu skaņējumu un atdevīgu spēli. LNSO uzmanības lokā ir galvenokārt 19. un 20. gadsimta pasaules simfoniskie šedevri, Latvijas komponistu radītās klasiskās vērtības un mūsdienās sacerēti jaundarbi, kā arī palaikam kādas operas vai mūzikla koncertatskaņojums. LNSO lielu uzmanību pievērš bērnu un jauniešu izglītības programmām, vairākus gadus veiksmīgi īsteno kamerģmūzikas programmu sēriju un kopš 2015. gada svin vasaras izskaņu jauntapuša festivālā “LNSO vasarnīca”. LNSO darbība četrkārt novērtēta ar Latvijas augstāko apbalvojumu klasiskās mūzikas jomā – Lielo mūzikas balvu 1993, 2009, 2012 un 2013. Kopš 2013. gada novembra LNSO mākslinieciskais vadītājs un galvenais diriģents ir Eiropas un Japānas labāko orķestru pieprasītais maestro Andris Poga – mūziķis ar spožu tehniku, augstām prasībām pēc nevainojami profesionāla mūzikas lasījuma un izcilu formas izjūtu. Orķestra iepriekšējo māksliniecisko vadītāju saraksta nozīmīgākie ir Jānis Mediņš, Leonīds Vīgners, Edgars Tons, Vasilij Sinaiskis, Oļari Eltss un Karelis Marks Šīsons. Viesdiriģentu vidū – pasauleslāvenī latvieši Arvids Jansons, Mariss Jansons un Andris Nelsons, arī Vladimirs Fedosejevs, Valērijs Ģergijevs, Nēme Jervi, Pāvo Jervi, Kirils Kondrašins, Kurts Mazurs, Kšištofs Pendereckis, Ģenādijs Roždestvenskis, Jevģēņijs Svetlanovs. Plašs ir LNSO koncertbraucieni diapazonš ar vieskoncertiem Japānā (toskait Tokijas Suntory Hall), Krievijā (toskait Maskavas konservatorijas Lielajā zālē) un daudzās Eiropas šovalstīs, kur nozīmīgākie koncerti notikuši Amsterdamas Concertgebouw, Berlīnes Valsts operā un Leipģigas Gewandhaus. 2013. gada rudenī LNSO spēlēja koncertu Frankfurtes Alte Oper, atklājot Latvijai veltītās Eiropas Centrālās bankas kultūras dienas. 2015. gadā LNSO viesojās Parizes Elizejas lauku teātrī, Andra Pogas vadībā atskaņojot Verdi Reģviēnu, un klavierģmūzikas festivālā Les Piano folies du Touquet-Paris-Plage (Francģija).