



PĒTERIS  
PLAKIDIS

GLANCE BACK  
ATSKATĪŠANĀS

# PĒTERIS PLAKIDIS (1947–2017)

## GLANCE BACK ATSKATĪŠANĀS

LATVIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
VASSILY SINAISKY, CONDUCTOR

1. CANTO / DZIEDĀJUMS / 20:45
2. VARIATIONS / VARIĀCIJAS / 19:31
3. LEGEND / LEĢENDA / 15:31
4. GLANCE BACK / ATSKATĪŠANĀS / 15:27

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PĒTERIS PLAKIDIS

It is said that PĒTERIS PLAKIDIS (1947–2017) was not a prolific composer but that his compositions have always been regularly performed. The musicologist Arnolds Klotiņš says: "His compositions remain in the repertoires of musicians or return there again and again over the course of decades, and, as we know, that is a relatively rare thing in contemporary music. This love for Plakidis' work is rooted in its accessibility to performers; his scores have a quality that is not always so common in contemporary music, namely, everything written in them – all of the texture, from monophony to aleatoric swirling – is also truly controllable by ear and justified in the actual sound."

The truth of this statement is confirmed on this album by four of Plakidis' symphonic works that the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra (LNSO) has frequently performed. Moreover, the LNSO has chosen to perform Plakidis' work on very significant occasions, commissioning new works from him for season-opening or anniversary concerts, including in the 1970s and 80s, when the orchestra was conducted by Vassily Sinaisky.

Plakidis' music speaks in a very clear language and tells vivid stories. Music critics have even referred to it as crystal clear in terms of expression. However, Plakidis spoke very little about his own work, often only briefly commenting on the composition's form or some particular technique he had applied. Nevertheless, the vivid imagery in his music sparks our imagination as well as our desire to link it with the life we all live.

A significant work in this sense is *Glance Back* (Atskatišanās), which premiered in 1991 and might be called a kind of boundary marker, a way-stop on Plakidis' creative path.

The 1990s. Latvia has regained its independence, and the life of the entire nation, including the field of culture, must be reorganised to correspond to the country's new turn towards capitalism and the free market. The state can no longer support artistic activities and institutions, which had previously been heavily subsidised. Former structures collapse, orchestras and chamber ensembles close. At times, the 1990s are frighteningly desolate.

Also frightening is the fact that Plakidis falls silent. He no longer composes. Well, he still writes music, but he is no longer the same Plakidis we knew before. Back when the premiere of each of his compositions was a significant event, no matter whether a solo or choir song, chamber music or a symphonic work.

Almost all he does now in his music – including his symphonic work – is jest, cleverly and elegantly parodying his beloved Brahms, Weber and Rossini. Of course, in this he is still professionally brilliant. But for some reason, it doesn't seem on par with the earlier Plakidis, whose music was created with a profound feeling of a composer's responsibility to his fellow human beings and his own countrymen. The Plakidis whose truths expressed in sound rang out like a confirmation, like a revelation and a comfort. Even when advancing at the pace of a funeral procession, like a funeral toll. Like *Glance Back*.

Did Plakidis truly fall silent and then radically change his style and the pathos of this oeuvre merely in response to exterior conditions? I do not think so.

I believe that this permanent stylistic metamorphosis took place due to Plakidis' professional honesty. In the 1970s and 80s, the dominant aesthetic and stylistic vein in his music was Latvia itself, the image of his native country and his own people. But now this well of aesthetics and style had run dry. The idealistic dream – his country's freedom – had been achieved. He did not wish, nor was he able, to reproduce himself. But to prove this statement, we must continue to look back.

In the mid-1980s, composers Pēteris Vasks and Imants Zemzaris discussed the need to speak in one's native language in one's music – to speak Latvian in their own music. There was no lack of reasons for this call. First of all, of course, the fact that the Soviet regime's policy of Russification was reducing Latvians to a minority in their own land and making the Latvian language a kind of *persona non grata*, thus threatening its survival.

It seems that Plakidis never spoke about "speaking Latvian in one's music". He simply did it. And already since the mid-1970s, a full decade before the discussions of his colleagues. Truly, it seems that he was one of the very first to cultivate this paradigm, which lasted almost three decades.

Because following the premiere of *Legend* (Leģenda, 1975), music critics keenly commented on Plakidis' innovative approach to melding elements of folk music into a "new, aleatory and heterophonic orchestral language."

Plakidis himself said: "When writing *Legend* for symphony orchestra, in which I used only seven tones instead of twelve, I felt like I had gone out into the fresh air. It was very pleasant to refrain from chromaticism, from dissonant accumulations of chromatic notes, because pure diatonicism – even if it is played all at once, say, in a cluster – nevertheless sounds very clear. It seems to have very much air. In any case, this period of creating purely diatonic music is one of the most pleasant in my whole career."

It is precisely at this time, in the mid-1970s, that Plakidis consolidated the form of expression that we may most definitely call "speaking Latvian in one's music". In order to describe this style, we must address the importance of Latvian folklore in the genesis of Plakidis' personal style.

Clearly, it is also folklore that helped a characteristically national sound emerge at the very beginning of professional Latvian music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. How and why did Plakidis take over this same concept in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century?

Plakidis made his debut as a composer in the late 1960s, a time when the so-called “new folklore wave” was gaining in popularity across eastern Europe, manifesting itself most vividly in Latvia with the choral music of Pauls Dambis. However, Plakidis’ own vocal and instrumental chamber works, as well as his symphonic music, still contained no traces of folklore. Instead, it reflected the lightness of 1960s modernism in its geometric, plastic and stylish beauty.

In the late 1960 and early 1970s, Plakidis composed quite a bit for theatre and cinema. He played piano, both improvisation and special compositions, for the avantgarde performances of the Riga Pantomime Theatre. Already then, he was very fond of chamber music and often performed with chamber musician friends.

All of this contributed to Plakidis’ style. It is full of sharp contrasts and dramatic effects, but at the same time it is very laconic and precise. His music is dominated by a concerto-like dialogic expression, because Plakidis loved to pose questions, to raise objections, to search for and find answers in and through music. He enjoyed conversing through music.

In the 1970s and 80s, images, signs and symbols rooted in Latvian folklore became the main object of discussion and driving force in Plakidis’ work. It is precisely the inspiration and “tools” provided by folklore that allowed him to develop his own unique “Plakidesque” style, which soon attracted many followers.

What exactly does Latvian folklore offer a professional composer?

Due to its long period of isolation (until the abolishment of serfdom in the 19th century), the musical heritage of the Latvian peasantry preserved intact very old strata of folklore, some even dating back to the Bronze Age. These are characterised by ancient modes; melodies spanning tetrachords, trichords and even seconds; and drone as the oldest example of polyphony. Just as in Hungary during the time of Kodály and Bartók, these ancient songs had already disappeared from active music-making practices amongst the Latvian folk in the 20th century. They therefore offered very fresh and modern-sounding material to a forward-thinking composer.

Beginning with *Legend*, Plakidis began to use the diatonic and ancient modes more consistently in his music. Also melodic motifs covering a narrow diapason, which are characteristic of the oldest music material in Latvian folklore. Also intervals common to folk music, such as perfect fourths and fifths as well as, of course, augmented fourths (as heard in that masterpiece of Latvian vocal folk music, the *garais sauciens*, or ‘long call’, from Bārta in western Latvia). Also important to Plakidis were allusions to the playing of folk music instruments – especially wooden flutes, the goat’s horn and other wind instruments – as well as the ornamented, signalling motifs in the calls of livestock herders.

Plakidis always wove these ‘elements of construction’ into a dramatically focused, masterfully built sound that each time added up to a different, unique story. The images conjured in Plakidis’ scores may range from an explosive *battaglia* scene in *Legend* to an almost pantheistic, orgy-like impression in the *Interplay* concerto for orchestra and soloist group, from bitter yet enlightened seriousness in *Glance Back* to an intellectually tense debate in the Concerto for two oboes and string orchestra.

Latvian folklore is stylistically present and formational in more than half of the approximately twenty scores for symphony orchestra by Plakidis.

In trying to define the role, significance and meaning of folklore in Plakidis’ music, I believe it must be sought somewhere between symbol and argument. It serves as an argument in a conversation about the nation’s future and the individual as a part of that nation. And as a symbol, it is able to provide true catharsis in the solutions to Plakidis’ masterfully woven musical debates (or characterisations). Because, almost like haiku, the four-line verses of Latvian folk songs also contain a comprehensive panorama of the ancient, mythological worldview. In each verse, both the personal and the universal is present in the parallels between human and nature.

And yet, I believe folk music permeated Plakidis’ music not merely for its purely musical or textual qualities. To find the real reason for its integration into the work of an absolutely modern and professionally minded 20<sup>th</sup>-century composer, we must still search “beyond the text”, into the context in which this integration took place.

The 1970s were a very contradictory period in Soviet Latvia. Beyond the bright facade of internationalism and generously funded cultural life, a very focused destruction of the Latvian nation was taking place at all possible levels and in all possible forms: in the economic, social and, of course, also the ideological and cultural spheres. Precisely for this reason, it seems that this decade of deepest stagnation and denial of the true history and character of Latvians encouraged the creation of splendid art inspired by folklore. Poets, painters and composers took a stand against the official ideology each with his or her own means of expression. Ojārs Vāciētiis, Vizma Belševica, Māra Zālīte, Jānis Peters, Džemma Skulme, Līga Purmale, Pēteris Pētersons, Māra Ķimele. From poetry to cinema, from theatre to the visual arts. And also music. Likewise, Plakidis meditated on, visualised and dreamt about his people’s true history, nature and potential future.

The significance of context in the transformations of his work is also confirmed by Plakidis’ “stylistic burnout” in the 1990s, a step that had apparently been dictated by his sense of honesty and an artist’s social responsibility. Because it was no longer necessary to speak about these very essential themes. And, as mentioned before, Plakidis never wished to duplicate himself.

To recall and directly feel the pathos of the 1970s and 80s – the pathos in writing, speaking, dreaming and struggling through one’s art – we here republish an excerpt from Imants Zemzaris’ essay about Plakidis’ *Canto* (Dziedājums), first published in the *Literature and Art* (Literatūra un Māksla) periodical in 1987.

And to conclude this reflection, a few apt lines about Plakidis’ *Variations for Orchestra* (Variācijas orķestrim) from an article by composer Tālvāldis Keņiņš that appeared in the February 15, 1997, edition of the *Latvia in America* (Latvija Amerikā) newspaper: “Is not each one of us a bit of a romantic, including Plakidis? Classically framed, the wave of emotional experience in his music pulls us along. That alone suffices to explain how convincingly beautiful this composition is, with flowing enthusiasm, a lustrous orchestral language and explosive tension. The finale arrives as if suddenly, but not unexpectedly: the composer has spoken.”

Ināra Jakubone

## THE STEPS OF A GRAND IDEA

Pēteris Plakidis’ *Canto* (Dziedājums) is dedicated to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra and features the cohesion, power and radiance of each instrument group. And there will forever be a climb up a green hill, but a blind abyss will forever lurk beyond it...

“In writing the *Canto* for symphony orchestra, I would like to make the string section and also the harp sing, but also, of course, the wind instruments, including the brass, maximally saturating the broad, horizontal melodic lines. Even if just for the sake that this sort of thing has been less characteristic of my work. For once, I wanted to stretch out and compose with a broader stroke. I feel this composition as a convergence with our nature and with my people in the way that I perceive them.”

A meagre comment from the composer. Mostly about technique. Perhaps this is how the composer’s ethics manifest themselves – by not making known or imposing the content of the programme, by not babbling about the thoughts and ideas contained in a work. In the music – that’s where it can all be found. Each listener will carry away from the music whatever is most important to him or her, whatever is most needed at that particular moment; each will hear the music differently. And afterwards, no one is forbidden from composing his or her own version or writing his or her own novella about the music they’ve just heard.

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Attempts to converge with one’s native land, with the eternal, the changeless, the mighty – this demands great simplicity of means, broad and unbroken modal fields.

Modality of rhythm. The entire work is a procession, a clear approach in three, in triple metre (sixes and nines also appear, but three is the predominant rhythm). Is it some sort of magical minuet? A polonaise? A grand march? The length of an entire lifetime? Sixty years long? Seventy years? The entire span from the very beginning to the very...? So, steps as a symbol. The steps of a great history, of a grand idea. No instrument gets a procession going like the bass guitar. A single bass guitar against the whole orchestra. Timbrally, it pushes off, as the foot pushes off from the ground. And with this upbeat, the procession can begin. The bass guitar “throws a log on the fire” from time to time, keeping up the time, until it very gradually melts into the procession, which becomes ever grander and grander.

Modality of key. The whole trumpet and horn group plays in a reserved mode, and the landscape is coloured in, conjured in a single unique, especially ancient-like colour: here it’s heroes and chieftains blowing horns, calling together their troops, calling them to the road, to the march. (...)

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The landscape of one’s native land. Almost all of our master composers have left us lasting paintings of their native land in sound. Perhaps Alfrēds Kalniņš, Pēteris Barisons, Helmers Pavašars and Jānis Ivanovs in particular. Plakidis also produced his own before *Canto*, such as *Legend* (Leģenda) and *Interplay* (Sasaukšanās). Balanced, harmonically weighed, as if predicted long ago, because the heavy arc of clouds in our land leans up against the arc of the hill in proportions that at our latitude will never be drastic, extreme, exceptional. As we walk up the hill and see the horizon, all we realise is that our native land is, to quote a beloved song, “Too big to hold in my lap/ And embrace/ A little too small to release on its own/ Out into the wide world.” Thus is the modality programmed into this music.

The development very gradually gathers into a storm cloud. A slope, which is suddenly followed by an abyss – yes, except that the black blindness of these abysses has always been unexpected, imperceptible... The thread is broken. The end? Is that it? No, the harp (*kokle*) episode stitches it, weaves it together, and the march continues.

Then another large hill of our native land is upon us, and an even bigger storm cloud. An abyss. A catastrophe, after which the ends of the thread are lost again, the end, nothing more. And yet, the harp (the ‘wonder kokles’ – the ‘wonder drugs’) again stitch and weave together the ends of the magical red thread of life, and the march continues.

As if predicted long ago: there will be three hills, three steps, and the hero will fall three times. Finally the third wave arrives, the most severe, and it destroys everything. The kokles no longer resound. Silence. No more. The end of the procession. Is a continuation anticipated? In a different world, a different form of consciousness? The coda tells about this, and it must not be played too quickly, too simply, too lightly. Just like Latvian music must not be played without love and pain.

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How could Plakidis know everything so placidly and prophetically, predict it so unswervingly modally – predict the past and remember the future? That is the riddle this composition poses, that is the miracle of this composition.

Imants Zemzaris

## VASSILY SINAISKY

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 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-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 2018 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.

VASSILY SINAISKY'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.

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 State 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 Grand Music Award in 1999 for popularising Latvian music in the 1970s and 1980s.





## LIELAS APJAUSMAS SOĻI

Pētera Plakida "Dziedājums" ir veltījums mūsu Valsts simfoniskajam orķestrim sešdesmitgadē un ļauj reprezentēt katras instrumentu grupas saliedētību, spēku un spožumu. Un mūžam būs kāpiens zaļā pakalnā, bet aiz tā akls bezdibenis mūžam uzglūnēs...

"Rakstot simfoniskam orķestrim skaņdarbu "Dziedājums", man gribētos likt dziedāt stīgu grupai un arī arfai, un arī, protams, pūšamajiem, ieskaitot metāla pūtējus, maksimāli piesātināt horizontāli izvestas plašas melodiskas līnijas. Kaut vai tāpēc, ka man tas agrāk bijis mazāk raksturīgi. Gribējās tā vienreiz atvēzēties un ar plašāku triepienu sacerēt. Es pats šo darbu izjūtu kā saplūšanu ar mūsu dabu un ar savu tautu tādā veidā, kā es to uztveru."

Skops komentārs no autora. Galvenokārt par tehnoloģiju. Varbūt tā izpaužas komponista ētika – neizpaust un neuzspiest programmas saturu, neplāpāt par darbā ietvertajām domām, idejām. Tas viss – mūzikā. Katrs no tās paņems sev vissvarīgāko, tobriid visvajadzīgāko, katrs saklausīs savādāk. Bet nevienam nav liegts pēc tam sacerēt savu versiju, uzrakstīt savu noveli par dzirdēto mūziku.

Centieni saplūst ar dzimto zemi, ar mūžīgo, pastāvīgo, diženo – tas prasa lielu vienkāršību līdzekļos, plašus, nesaskaldītus modālos laukus.

Ritma modalitāte. Viss darbs ir gājiens, nāciens nepārprotami uz trīs, trijdaļu taktssoli (ir arī sešas un deviņas daļas te rodamas, bet visam cauri – trīs). Kaut kāds maģisks menuets? Polonēze? Goda solis? Diža mūža garumā? Sešdesmit gadu garumā? Septiņsimt gadu? Visa gaita no pašiem pirmsākumiem līdz pašam...? Tātad – solji kā simbols. Lielu sakarību, lielas apjausmas solji. Neviens instruments labāk par basģitāru neiekustinās gājienu. Basģitāra viena pret visu orķestri. Tembrāli atgrūžas, un atgrūžas pēda no zemes. Līdz ar šo uztakti gājiens var sākties. Un tad atkal laiku pa laikam basģitāra "piemēt pagali", uztur soli, līdz mazpamazām iekausējas gājienu, kurš iegūst arvien dižākas nozīmes.

Skaņkārtiskā modalitāte. Visa tauru un ragu grupa spēlē izturētā skaņkārtiskā modusā, un aina iekrāsojas, uzburas vienā īpatnā, īpašā senēji vēsturiskā krāsā: tur pūš varoņi, vīrsaiši, saucot kopā savus pulkus, uz ceļu, uz gaitu, uz gājienu saucot. (.)

Dzimtenes ainava. Paliekošus tās gleznījumus skaņās atstājuši gandrīz ikviens no mūsu klasiķiem. Varbūt īpaši – Alfrēds Kalniņš, Pēteris Barisons, Helmers Pavasars, Jānis Ivanovs. Arī Pēteris Plakidis jau līdz "Dziedājumam" devis savējos – "Leģendu" un "Sasaukušanos". Izsvērtus, harmoniski samērotus, it kā sensenīsi pareģotus, jo padebešu smagais klaipts atspiežas pret pakalna klaiņu proporcijās, kas nekad nebūs krasas, galējas, ārkārtējas mūsu platuma grādos. Pakāpjoties pakalnā un ieraugot horizontu, mēs apjaušam vien, ka tā "Par lielu, lai paņemtu klēpi/ Un apmīlotu/ Mazliet par mazu, lai palaistu vienu/ Pasaules plašajos ceļos." Tāda ieprogrammēta modalitāte.

Attīstība mazpamazām sakrāj tūci. Kāpums, pēc kura piepeši nāk bezdibēnīga aiza – jā, vienīgi šo aizu melnais aklums arvien bijis neparedzams, nenojaušams... Pavediens pārrauts. Beigas? Viss? Nē, arfu (kokližu) epizode sadiedz, saauz kopā, un gājiens turpinās.

Nāk atkal liels dzimtenes pakalns, jau lielāka tūce. Bezdibenis. Kataklizma, pēc kuras pavediena gali zūd, beigas, viss. Un tomēr arfas (brīnumkoklītes – brīnumzālītes) atkal sadiedz, saauz kopā sārto dzīvības nīti, un gājiens turpinās.



**LATVIJAS NACIONĀLAIS SIMFONISKAIS ORĶESTRIS** (LNSO) ir viena no valsts klasiskās mūzikas aprites pamatvērtībām – augsti profesionālu mūziķu apvienība ar spēcīgām tradīcijām, dāsnu skanējumu 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 kamerģitāras programmu sēriju un kopš 2015. gada svin vasaras izskaņu festivālā “LNSO vasarnīca”. LNSO darbība piecas reizes novērtēta ar Latvijas augstāko apbalvojumu klasiskās mūzikas jomā – Lielo mūzikas balvu 1993, 2009, 2012, 2013 un 2016. 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 Vigners, Edgars Tons, Vasilijš Sinaiskis, Olari Elts un Karelis Marks Šišons. Viesdiriģentu vidū – pasaulslavenie latvieši Arvīds Jansons, Mariss Jansons un Andris Nelsons, arī Vladimirs Fedosejevs, Valērijs Gergijevs, Nēme Jervi, Pāvo Jervi, Kirils Kondrašins, Kurts Mazūrs, Kšištofs Pendereckis, Genādijs Rožděstvenskis, Jevgeņijs Svetlanovs. Plašs ir LNSO koncertbraucieni diapazonā ar vieskoncertiem Japānā (toskait Tokijas Suntory Hall), Krievijā (toskait Maskavas konservatorijas Lielajā zālē) un daudzās Eiropas valstīs, kur nozīmīgākie koncerti notikuši Amsterdama Concertgebouw, Berlīnes Valsts operā, Leipciģas Gewandhaus, Frankfurtes Alte Oper un citās ievērojamās koncertzālēs.

**VASILIJA SINAISKA** (1947) pirmais koncerts Latvijas Nacionālā simfoniskā orķestra (tolaik – Latvijas TV un radio simfoniskā orķestra) galvenā diriģenta amatā notiek 1975. gada 18. septembrī, vien divus gadus pēc tam, kad viņš uzvarējis Herberta fon Karajana diriģentu konkursā Berlīnē. Uz Rīgu tobrīd 27 gadus vecais Sinaiskis dodas Kirila Kondrašina iedrošināts, jo tobrīd ir Kondrašina asistentdiriģents Maskavas filharmonijas orķestrī.

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 dīži. Arī Šnitke, kurš par savu darbu atskaņojumiem allaž bija priecīgs. Bieži spēlējām Deņisova un Gubaiduļinas opusus. Visu, kas radās jauns un interesants, mēs uzreiz spēlējām. Arī ārzemēs”, tā Vasilijš Sinaiskis intervijā LR 3 “Klasika” teicis 2017. gadā.

Tagad, tiekoties ar Latvijas Nacionālo simfonisko orķestri gan koncertos, gan ierakstu sesijās, Vasilijš Sinaiskis saka – Rīgā pavadijis savus labākos gadus un ar orķestri te izveidojis lielisku kontaktu, psiholoģiska saikne, kas saglabājusies līdz pat mūsdienām. Viņš jūtas tiešām lepnis par to, ka 2017. gadā Latvijas Nacionālais simfoniskais orķestris viņu tituleja par savu Goda diriģentu.

Vasilijš 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 Krievijas 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 devē par vienu no pasaulē izcilākajiem krievu mūzikas repertuāra pazinējiem.

Pašreiz Vasilijš Sinaiskis diriģēšanu māca Sanktpēterburgas Valsts konservatorijā. Savulaik viņš to darīja arī Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmijā – pie viņa mācījušies gan Imants Resnis, gan Jānis Zīrnis.

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

