

Agris Engelmanis

Musica Alba

Atvars Lakstīgala
Liepāja Symphony Orchestra

Agris Engelmanis (1936–2011)

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Liepāja Symphony Orchestra

Atvars Lakstīgala, conductor

Elīna Bērziņa, piano (1-9)

Diāfonija Nr. 1 / Diaphony No. 1

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| 1. Allegro moderato | 5:49 |
| 2. Allegro non molto e rubato | 4:06 |
| 3. Allegro moderato | 7:40 |

Diāfonija Nr. 2 / Diaphony No. 2

- | | |
|-----------------------|------|
| 4. Allegro non troppo | 5:50 |
| 5. Allegro moderato | 3:13 |
| 6. Allegro molto | |

Diāfonija Nr. 3 / Diaphony No. 3

- | | |
|---|------|
| 7. Largo. Larghetto | 5:16 |
| 8. Andante e rubato | 3:26 |
| 9. Allegro possibile. Allegro ma non troppo | 4:01 |

10. Musica Alba

8:23

Mūzika simfoniskajam orķestrim / Music for Symphony Orchestra*

- | | |
|------------------------|------|
| 11. Molto allegro | 4:58 |
| 12. Allegro non troppo | 2:28 |
| 13. Lentare | 2:16 |
| 14. $\text{♩} = 70$ | 4:00 |

TT: 65:29

* Live recording

Recorded at: Great Amber Concert Hall, Liepāja, January 8-9, 2024 (1-9), November 6, 2015 (11-14, live recording),
Liepāja Latvian Society House, January 23-24, 2014 (10)
Recording producer & sound engineer: Normunds Slava
Sound engineer assistant: Jānis Straume
Editing, mixing, mastering: Normunds Slava
Booklet text: Orests Silabriedis
English translation: Amanda Zaeska
Photos: Irina Tīre
Design: Gundega Kalendra, Raugs.eu
Executive producer: Egīls Šēfers
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Booklet in English / buklets latviešu valodā

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Agris Engelmanis (1936–2011)

20. gadsimta otrajā pusē Latvijas iedzīvotājiem ir diezgan skaidrs: Rīgā notiek viss svarīgākais, pārējais ir tāda provinces niekošanās. Jūs, Agri Engelmani, būtu vērā ņemams komponists, taču nez kāpēc izvēlaties dzīvot Liepājā, nevis nākt uz Rīgu. Bet Liepājā dzimušais Agris visu mūžu paliek pilsētā starp jūru un ezeru un, kad nav pilsētā, tad kā zemnieks pašreizējā kopj savu lauku māju, bez kuras, iespējams, nebūtu tapis dažs labs viņa opuss.

Agra Engelmaņa daiļrades lielās zonas ir simfoniskā mūzika un kordziesma, pieskaitīsim vairākus vokālinstrumentālus lieldarbus, kādus instrumentālās kameramūzikas paraugus un pāris ērģeļdarbu. Tas arī viss. Katra skaņa kā nagla iedzīta vienīgajā pareizajā skaņdarba taktī.

Agris Engelmanis visu mūžu iet savu vienīgo iespējamo radošo ceļu, nevienam nelīdzinādamies, ne ar vienu nesacenzdamies. Viens no modernistiski ievirzītākajiem Latvijas autoriem. Plašākā nozīmē pagalam nenovērtēts. Pats savas dzīves ietvarā mūža nākumu, liekas, piepildījis un varbūt pat laimīgs.

Imic.lv/engelmanis

vita

Agris Engelmanis piedzimst neilgi pirms Otrā pasaules kara – 1936. gada 26. aprīlī piecos no rīta. Agri nācis – būs Agris, nolemj mamma.

Tēvs bija strādnieks, brauca uz tā krāna, kas ar milzīgo magnētu “Metalurgā” pārvadā dzelzi. Mamma dzīvoja pa māju. Pēc kara bija šausmīgi grūti. Mums ar māsu pāršuva apģērbu no vecām drēbēm. Māte gāja parkā lasīt skābenes, lai būtu, no kā zupu uztaisīt. Zvēriņi smaga bija bērniņa. Iedomājieties, nākam pēc uzlidojuma no patvernes uz māju un redzam – raustās norauta roka, guļ zirgs bez galvas. Vājprāts. Konservatorijā nāca viens no universitātes mācīt mums filozofiju vai psiholoģiju, neatceros. Es viņam prasu – kā jūs varat izskaidrot, ka mana simfoniskā mūzika ir tik smaga, nu, nevaru es uzrakstīt tā mocartiski. Viņš man saka, a kā tad tu, vecīt, domā rakstīt mocartiski, ja tev tāda bērniņa bijusi? Tevī tas ir iekalts kā akmeņi.

1956. gadā Engelmanis ar izcilību absolvē Liepājas Lietišķās mākslas vidusskolas Koktēlniecības nodaļu, kopš tiem laikiem viņa mīļākais koks ir priede.

Esmu gan lustras taisījis, gan skulptūras, gan svečturi kādu, visu ko. Arī vēl tagad nevaru vienaldzīgi paiet mežā garām saknei, ja tāda eleganta gadās.

Līdztekus privāti mācās klavierspēli un 1959. gadā beidz Liepājas Mūzikas vidusskolas Mūzikas teorijas nodaļu.

Ar kokiem mēs pieskaramies trešajai vai ceturtajai, vai astotajai manai mīlestībai. Man ārkārtīgi mīļi ir koki. Gan dzīvi, augoši, gan arī kā koksne pēc tam, kad koks savu mūžīgu nodzīvojis. Tā nu es aizgāju uz tiem koktēlniekiem. Tomēr vienlaicīgi gāju arī uz klavierstundām. Bija tāda Austru Būmeistare. Viņa Vīnes konservatoriju vai ko bija beigusi. Brīvmāksliniece.

Klavieres spēlēju no četrpadsmit gadu vecuma. Es vispār biju baigais brīvdmātājs. Lasīju par Bēthovenu, kā viņam tur grūti gājās. Ja man lika iet uz šito pusi, noteikti gāju uz otru. Spītīgs. Bet pasniedzēja bija ļoti mīļš un laipns cilvēks. Saka – Agrī, tu paspēlī vienreiz, otrreiz, desmito reizi, un tev iznāks. Bet es gribu tā – uzlietu rokas un aiziet tas Bēthovens. Skolotāja saka – tu nedaudi, kaimiņi nāks iekšā. Lists patika. Vāgners. Šopēns arī patika. Es nezinu, kas man nepatika.

Kompozīcijas studijas nāk vēl vēlāk – Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmijas profesora Ādolfa Skultes klasi Engelmanis absolvē 1971. gadā trīsdesmit piecu gadu vecumā, un šajā pašā laikā top “Mūzika” simfoniskajam orķestrim.

Nebrīnos, ka klausoties manu jaunības dienu avangardiskās konstrukcijas, profesors Valentīns Utkins (viņš tolaik bija Liepājas Mūzikas vidusskolas kompozīcijas nodarbību konsultants) skraidīja pa telpu un lamājās. Visbeidzot viņš tica: “Ja jūs konservatorijā stāsities pie manis, noteikti netiksiet.” Nonācu pie viņa partitūras lasīšanā. Utkins saka: “Nu, vecīt, cauri ir ar tevi.” Bet mans profesors Ādolfs Skulte: “Mieru, mieru, atnāc tik un spēlē.” Četrinieku [piecu punktu sistēmā] galu galā dabūju. Man mēdz jautāt, kāpēc tu simfonijas raksti tik sarežģītas un kordziesmas tik vienkāršas? Nupat vokālajai grupai “Putni” uzrakstīju tautasdziesmas apdāri, kur ir tikai trijskaņi – svarīgi jau, kā viņus sakombinēt.

Pēc dabas vispār esmu vientuļnieks. Nevaru ciest baru. Man prasa, kāpēc tu, ticīgs cilvēks, neej baznīcā? Es nevaru visas tās auras, to spiedienu apkārtējo. Tad labāk aizbraucu uz laukiem, tuvākā kaimiņmāja ir puskilometru, apkārt mežacūkas, brieži un sunīts mans. Tur es ļoti labi jūtos.

Bet tās laikmetīgās kompozīcijas tehnikas uzgāju, lasot visu, kas bija pieejams. Vāciski, poliski, krieviski. Pētīju partitūras, ko varēju atrast.

Ādolfs Skulte par to visu neko neteica. Viņš bija ģeniāls pedagogs tajā ziņā, ka nekad nepielika zīmuli pie tavas partitūras un pats nelaboja. [Jānis] Ivanovs mēdza padzīt studentu nost no klavierēm, sakot, nu ko tu āksties, te vajag tā. Skulte lika man pašam pārrakstīt kaut septiņas reizes, līdz pateica: “Nu, tā var palikt.”

No 1964. līdz 2001. gadam Agris Engelmanis ir Emiļa Melngaiļa Liepājas mūzikas vidusskolas mūzikas teorijas un kompozīcijas pasniedzējs. No 1987. līdz 1996. gadam – skolas direktors.

1988. gadā žurnālā “Māksla” asredzīgā Aija Živitere raksta: “Ir labi, ja cilvēks spēj saskaņot sev nospraustās darbības laukus. Agris Engelmanis – komponists-direktors – to spēj: traģiski skaudri reālās sociālās situācijas novērtē, bīkstīgi labvēlīgi – profesionālās mūzikas dzīves norisē, riskanti uzņēmīgi – skolas attīstības virzībā. Viņš ir no tiem, kas plēš (un plēš) robežu “atļauts – neatļauts”. Taisnais, kas runā saskaņā ar domām un rīkojas saskaņā ar vārdiem. Kura mākslinieciskā domāšana izpaužas galēji koncentrētās (miniatūrās) formās, savukārt domas piesātinājums prasa simfoniskā skanējuma plašo elpu.”

Direktora gaitu sākumā Agris Engelmanis skaidri redz, ka vienlīdz intensīvi jādomā gan par skolotāju garīgā līmeņa celšanu (“Tagad pedagogi ir kāda zemāka kasta – kas neko citu nevar – iet uz skolu. Bet pelēcība rada pelēcību.”), gan par fasādes remontu. Neskaitāmo atzinības rakstu vietā (ar tādiem pilnas atvilktnes) pedagogiem prēmijas – kaut nelielas, bet tomēr kas vairāk nekā apzīmogots papīrgabals. Skeptiķi saka – sapņo vesels! Uz ko Engelmanis – ja tev nav sapņu, tu esi miris cilvēks.

Ap to laiku piedzimst Latvijas Mūzikas biedrība, un 1988. gada 14. aprīlī tiek izveidota Lejaskurzemes Mūzikas biedrība, kur Agris Engelmanis top par goda prezidentu – “ēju ar savu [Komponistu savienības biedra] sarkano karti pa priekšu kā gavs ar vainadziņu; iestādēs jau tas reizēm brangi palīdz”.

Agra Engelmaņa ceļš lielā mērā bijis pašizauklēts.

Smadzeņu pods ir tikai, lai mūsu ķermeni apgādātu, lai izdomātu, kur iet, ko ēst, kā izdzīvot. Viss pārējais no citurienes nāk. Prieks, bēdas, sāpes. Es taču nevaru izdomāt, pag, tagad bēdāšos kādu pusstundu. Savulaik diezgan ilgi mocījos, mēģinot panākt, lai mana mūzika nebūtu banāla, primitīva un tajā pašā laikā piedāvātu emocijas.

Mūzikas neordinaritāti nevarēja neietekmēt komponista interešu daudzveidīgums.

Ar gleznošanu savulaik aizrāvos, to jau visi liepājnieki zina. Staigāju ar krāsu kasti. Jocīgi iznāca, apprecējās mana māsa, es aizgāju no vecāku mājām, un māsasvīrs visas tās manas bildes kaut kur noliferēja. Tur bija eļļa, akvareļi. Nu, tas tā. Dzeju daudz rakstīju, sevišķi 80. gados.

Vienmēr paticis lasīt. Garīgo literatūru, sākot ar Bībeli un beidzot ar mūsaiņu rakstītājiem. Ar interesi lasīju Stīvenu Hokingu. Kā es gribētu ar viņu satikties! Hokings bieži izvirza kādu versiju, ko nākamajā lappusē nolīdzina līdz ar zemi. Tas mani tā kaitina un vienlaikus patīk!

Savulaik kvantu mehāniku sāku studēt. Tagad es lasu Hokingu, un man ir skaidrs, par ko viņš runā. Hokings saka — mēs daudz ko zinām, mēs tikai nezinām, vai tā ir taisnība. Mani jau no bērna kājas šokēja fakts, ka kosmiskā telpa pēc uzbūves ir viens pret vienu ar atoma struktūru. Vai tik tas pats Dievs priekš mums nav milzīgais visums, tāpat kā mēs esam visums priekš saviem atomiem?

Esmu interesējies par kibernetiku, par fiziku, astronomiju, astroloģiju. Tā esība mani kaut kā baigi interesē. Armijā biju lidotājs. Pabeidzu aviācijas skolu. Ausis bija kārtībā, iemācījies Morzes ābeci. Ieguvu pirmo sporta klasi un pirmo armijas speciālista klasi. Dienesta otrā gada beigās mani un vēl vienu labu radistu no Maskavas sāka sūtīt riņķī apkārt uz sacensībām. Tā nu mēs braukājām un pīkstinājām. Tiku arī pie lidošanas, bet pēc tam, kad ilgāku laiku reizi nedēļā divos naktī mūs modināja un lika braukt uz nakts mācībām, lidošanas prieks visai ātri pārgāja. Mani gan mēģināja piesaistīt militārajai karjerai — pēc dienesta beigām nozīmēja studēt Orenburgas lidotāju skolā, kur savulaik mācījās Gagarins, taču es samīļējos un neaizbraucu uz iestājekšāmeniem. Varēju kļūt par kosmonautu.

Netapa par kosmonautu, atgriezās Liepājā, apprecējās, kļuva par komponistu un, meklējot savrupību, lūkojās pēc lauku mājas. Kolēģis ieteica uzvest aci Liepienu Ausekļiem akurāt sakramentālajā trijstūrī starp Nīcu, Bārtu un Rucavu.

Aizbraucu. Dadži tādi, nātres šitādas, jumts caurs, taču vieta — kā svētnīca. Nopirku. Pusgadu braucu — tā māja mani nepieņēma. Nevarēju ne ēst, ne gulēt tur. Un tad pēkšņi kaut kas mainījās. Aizbraucu — jā, tā ir mana māja. Pati nāk pretī, tā teikt. Saki vēl, ka nav mājas gariņu. Aiztransportēju uz turieni savu veco koncertflīģeli. Dažkārt aizmirstu durvis aizslēgt, viss paliek vaļā, taču man ir šis melnais sargs. (norāda uz suni) Tā nu es zināju, ka neviens svešs neienāks. Ziemā aizbraucu, vasarā aizbraucu. Liepājā vienpadsmitos vakarā man ir neomulīgi. Laukos — nekad.

ars

Agra Engelmaņa pirmais katalogizētais opuss ir Pirmais stīgu kvartets, datēts ar 1970. gadu. Skaņdarbu saraksts nav pārāk garš, un joprojām nav apkopotas ziņas par atskaņojumiem un arī par to, kas pagaidām mīt tikai atvilktnē. Laba ziņa — šī tvartā kļājā nāksanas laikā būs sākts darbs pie grāmatas par Engelmani.

Zinu, ka ir komponisti, kas, pirms sēžas komponēt, mēdz paklausīties kaut ko no citiem. Es pat uz koncertiem maz eju. Man tās skaņas iespiežas smadzenēs. Dzeju gan palasu pirms strādāšanas. Man bija puse istabas ar dzejas krājumiem.

Viens gudrs cilvēks reiz teica: “Paklau, tev tur nepārtraukti viss mainās, vislaik kaut kas jauns un jauns. Nekāda forma neiznāk.” Pēc tam, kad noklausījās līdz galam, forma bija kārtībā. Nevajag fragmentus

klausīties. Ar to formu vispār ir tā strīdīgi. Kad biju direktors, aicināju no Rīgas visādus speciālistus – pūtējus, stūdziniekus, visu ko. Kā kompozīcijas konsultants brauca Romualds Kalsons. Vienudien viņš man saka: “Ko tu nemies ar to mūzikas skaidrošanu, kam visas tās mūzikas psiholoģijas, filozofijas? Svarīga ir forma. Iemāci viņam formu, lai viņš pēc skolas beigšanas liek tajā formā, ko grib.” Es savukārt skolniekiem teicu: “Lai rakstītu, jābūt iemeslam, idejai. Tā ideja jau pati tev pieprasīs, kāda būs forma, kāda būs attīstība. Tas, ka tu pianistam iemācīsi spoži gammas dīrāt, nepataisīs viņu par ģeniālu mūziķi.”

Jaunībā brīnījos, kā Čaikovskis Kļīnā varēja rakstīt bez klavierēm. Kā Bēthovens varēja rakstīt, neko nedzirdēdams. Tagad saprotu – kad tu visu mūžu esi kalies un dzīvoies pa šito mūzikas pasauli, to var.

Jau visai daudzi manu pēdējo gadu darbi sacerēti nevis Liepājā, bet laukos. Dienas mīļākais moments ir brīdis, kad saule riet. Tā es tos savus verķišus, ap māju staigājot, esmu izdomājis. Tad es atbraucu uz Liepāju un pierakstu. Kad rakstīju sarežģītākus darbus, bija dažs labs klasteris jāpārbauda uz klavierēm, nevar jau visu saklausīt. Bet tagad – ko man trīsskaņus nedzirdēt? Bet ar tiem jau arī var smalki balansēt.

Bieži vien impulsu darbam dod dzeja, laba vizuālās mākslas izstāde. Patik pasēdēt uz krustādeses. Visi tie enerģijas veidi, ko spējam akumulēt sevī, lai atrāsitū mūsu pašu radošo enerģiju.

Būtisks iedvesmas un uzlādes avots Engelmanim ir tautasdziesma. Viņš savulaik skaidrījis, kā dzied Dienvīdurzemes sievas, pētījis avotus, un darbošanās šajā laukā atbalsoja mūzikā: kāds trihorda vai tetrahorda raksts, pabikla gana stabule vai spalgs saimnieces ūjinājums, putna dziesmas motīvs (*Musica Alba* izskaņā!) – Engelmanis strādā ar motīvu un ornamentu krāvujiem, virknējumiem, fragmentējumiem. Tik pārdroši kā viņš dara vien retais.

Diafonijās šie paņēmieni padarīti sevišķi reljefi ar tīši griezīgām disonansēm (senajā Grieķijā diafonija bija disonanse pretēji simfonijai jeb konsonansei), kurām līdzās likti skaisti līgani plavas viņņojumi vai rieta mākoņu sārts slīdējums. Šajā brīdī Agris, iespējams, mēģinātu iebilst – diez vai viņš vēlas, lai mūziku tulkotu konkrētos tēlos. Tomēr uzskatīsim šo par impulsu klausītāja iztēles atraišanai. Te visam jāļaujas galējā atbrīvotībā.

Diemžēl pagaidām nav izdevies nākt uz pēdām paša komponista dotām anotācijām par darbiem, un viss paliek interpretā ziņā.

Ir aizdomas, ka “**Pirmā diafonija**” (1972) līdz šim nebija atskaņota. “**Otrā diafonija**” (1979) un “**Trešā diafonija**” (1996) gan tika spēlēta, bet studijā šis ir pirmieskaņojums.

Musica Alba (1988) ir salīdzinoši biežāk atskaņots opuss. Nosaukums latviski – “Baltā mūzika”. Darbs ieskaņots Liepājas Latviešu biedrības namā 2014. gadā.

“Mūzika” simfoniskajam orķestrim (1971) ir, visticamāk, pirmais Agra Engelmaņa opuss simfoniskajam orķestrim, komponēts Mūzikas akadēmijas absolvēšanas gadā. Šo skaņdarbu kā Liepājas autora līdz šim nezināmu “jaundarbu” Atvars Laktīgala izvēlējis Liepājas jaunās koncertzāles “Lielais dzintars” atklāšanas koncertam 2015. gada novembrī, un tvartā iekļauta šī koncertatskaņojuma versija. Ticams, ka “Mūzika” pilnā apjomā līdz tam nebija tikusi spēlēta, tādējādi visa jūsu rokās esošā albuma būtība ir – likt pamatakmeni Agra Engelmaņa mūzikas pilnvērtīgai un daudzpusīgai atklāšanai un daudzīnāšanai!

noslēgums

Agra Engelmaņa tuvs draugs un domubiedrs dzejnieks Olafs Gūtmanis raksta: “Ir tādi cilvēki, kuri labāk jūtas ēnā. Vakara mijkrēsli, kad saule norietā, kad iestājas intīma stunda, nodzēšot dienas spilgtos iespaidus, kad vientulība skar vissmagāk un ilgus gūst traģisku nokrāsu. Nevis klievēdējot domas un jūtas, bet koncentrējot tās asā un vitālā pārdzīvojumā. Biezē mākoņi debesis, biezē koki mežā, un ēnas saplūst dziļā un omulīgā tumsā. Un cilvēks atmet no sevis visgarāko ēnu, līdz tā saaužas ar dabas ēnām, līdz cilvēks kļūst nepamanāms kā būtne. Viņš ir iekusis dabā, viņš ir paslēpies no ziņkārīgās gaismas, iegājis naktī. Un tur viņš jūtas vislabāk. Tur atraisās viņa, naktsputna, spārni. Tur sākas lidojums.”

Pie naktsputna Engelmaņa mūzikas gribas atgriezties vēl un vēl. Viņa mūzika ir kā avota ūdens: dzerdams neatdzersies.

Orests Silabriedis

Liepājas Simfoniskais orķestris (1881) ir senākais orķestris Baltijas valstīs, un vienīgais profesionālais orķestris Latvijā ārpus galvaspilsētas.

Īpašā uzmanības lokā ir Latvijas komponistu mūzika un Latvijas skaņražu daiļrades veicināšana un popularizēšana. Orķestris piedalās gan pirmatskaņojumos, gan pasūta jaundarbus, par ko saņemtas vairākas balvas. LSO ir vairākkārtējs Latvijas Lielās mūzikas balvas laureāts un Latvijas mūzikas ierakstu gada balvas “Zelta mikrofons” ieguvējs.

Sākot ar 2022./2023. gada koncertsezonu, LSO galvenais diriģents un mākslinieciskais vadītājs ir Guntis Kuzma.

lso.lv

Agris Engelmanis (1936–2011)

In the second half of the 20th century, it was quite clear to the inhabitants of Latvia: everything important happens in Riga, the rest is just provincial frivolity. You, Agris Engelmanis, could be a significant composer, but for some reason you choose to live in Liepāja instead of coming to Riga. But Agris, who was born in Liepāja, remained in the city between the sea and the lake his whole life. And when not in the city proper, he selflessly tended to his house in the countryside, without which some of his works would perhaps never have been written.

Engelmanis mainly composed symphonic music and choral songs, plus several vocal-instrumental works, a few pieces of instrumental chamber music, and a couple of compositions for organ. That is all. Like a nail, he drove every sound into precisely the only possible measure of every piece.

Likewise, Engelmanis followed his only possible creative path; he did not compare nor compete with anyone. He was one of the most modernist-oriented Latvian composers, yet he remains utterly underrated. Within the framework of his own life, however, he seems to have fulfilled his call and perhaps even been happy.

imic.lv/engelmanis

vita

Agris Engelmanis was born shortly before the Second World War, on 26 April 1936, at five in the morning. His name will be Agris, decided his mother. The word agrs meaning 'early' in Latvian.

My father was a labourer, he drove the magnet crane used to move iron at the *Metalurgs* metalworks. My mother was a housewife. Life after the war was very difficult. My sister and I wore clothes sewn from old clothing. Mother gathered sorrel in the park for our soup. Childhood was brutally hard. Imagine returning home from the shelter after an air raid and seeing a twitching, severed arm or a headless horse lying on the ground. It was insane. At the conservatoire, a lecturer from the university came to teach us philosophy or psychology, I don't remember exactly which. I asked him whether he could explain why my symphonic music is so heavy, why I can't write in a Mozart-like manner. He said to me, "Man, how do you think you can write in a Mozart-like way if you've had such a childhood? It's engraved in you like in stone."

In 1956, Engelmanis graduated with honours from the Woodcarving Department of the Liepāja School of Applied Arts, and since his school days his favourite tree was the pine.

I've made chandeliers, sculptures, a few candelabras, you name it. Even today, I can't help passing an elegant-looking tree root in the forest.

In addition to private piano lessons, Engelmanis graduated from the Music Theory Department of the Liepāja Music Secondary School in 1959.

With trees, we touch upon my third or fourth, or maybe eighth, love. Trees are very dear to me. When they're alive and growing, but also as wood after the tree has lived its life. That's why I joined the woodcarvers at school. But at the same time I also attended piano lessons. There was an Austra Būmeistere. She had graduated from the Vienna Conservatoire or somewhere similar. A freelance artist.

I started playing piano at age four. I was a total freethinker. I read about Beethoven, about his difficulties in life. If I was told to go one way, I would definitely go the opposite way. Stubborn. But my teacher was a very sweet and kind person. She said, "Dear Agris, you play it once, twice, a tenth time, and you'll succeed." But I want to do it so - I put my hands on the keys, and the Beethoven comes out. The teacher says, "Don't pound the keys so hard, the neighbours will complain." I liked Liszt. Wagner. I liked Chopin, too. I don't know that I disliked anything.

Later came composition studies. Engelmanis studied under Prof. Ādolfš Skulte at the Latvian Academy of Music, from which he graduated in 1971 at the age of thirty-five. It was also at this same time that he composed Music for symphony orchestra.

It doesn't surprise me that, while listening to the avantgarde constructions of my youth, Prof. Valentīns Utkins (who was then the tutor for composition classes at the Liepāja Music Secondary School) ran around

the room swearing. Finally he said, "If you apply at the conservatoire to study under me, you'll certainly not get in!" But I did have him as my teacher in score reading. Utkins said, "Well, man, you're done for." But my professor Ādolfs Skulte just said, "Calm down, everything's OK, just come and play." In the end, I got a four [in the five-point system]. I used to be asked why I write such complicated symphonies and such simple choral songs. I've just written a folk song arrangement for the vocal group *Putni* that consists only of triads – but it's how you combine them that's important.

I'm a loner by nature. I can't stand crowds. People ask me why I, a believer, do not go church. But I can't handle all those auras, all that pressure around me. Then I'd rather go out to the countryside, where the nearest neighbour's house is half a kilometre away and where I'm surrounded by wild boars, deer, and my dog. I feel very good there.

I found the contemporary compositional techniques by reading everything that was available. Sources in German, Polish, Russian. I studied all the scores I could find.

Skulte said nothing about all this. He was a brilliant teacher in the sense that he never put a pencil to your score and corrected it himself. [Jānis] Ivanovs used to chase the student away from the piano, saying, "What have you scribbled there? This is the way it should be." Skulte made me rewrite the score, sometimes even seven times, until he finally declared, "Alright, it can stay like that."

From 1964 to 2001, Engelmanis taught music theory and composition at the Emilis Melngailis Liepāja Music Secondary School. From 1987 to 1996, he served as the school's director.

In 1988, the sharp-witted Aija Živitere wrote in the magazine *Māksla*: "It's good if a person is able to balance the fields of activity he has set for himself. Agris Engelmanis, the composer-director, has succeeded in this: with tragic poignancy assessing real social situations, with timid benevolence conducting his professional life in music, with audacious initiative directing the school's development. He is of those people who stretch (and tear down) the boundary between what is allowed and what is not allowed. The righteous one, who speaks according to his thoughts and acts according to his words. The one whose artistic thinking is expressed in extremely concentrated (miniature) forms, while the fullness of his thought requires the broad breadth of a symphonic sound."

Starting out in his role as the school's director, Engelmanis clearly saw that he would need to devote just as much intensive effort to the renovation of the school's façade as to raising the spiritual level of the teachers ("Teachers are currently a sort of lower caste; those who cannot do anything else, teach. But dullness breeds dullness."). Instead of countless certificates of appreciation (they already have drawers full of them), teachers would receive bonuses – small ones, but at least more than just a stamped piece of paper. Dream on, said the sceptics. To which Engelmanis replied, if you have no dreams, you are dead.

Around this time, the Latvian Music Society was born, and on 14 April 1988 the Lower Kurzeme Music Society was founded, with Engelmanis becoming its honorary president. "I walk around flaunting my red [Composers'

Union membership] card like a cow with a garland of flowers; that sometimes works like a charm at the government institutions.”

Engelmanis largely forged his own way.

Our brain is only there to support our body, to figure out where to go, what to eat, how to survive. Everything else comes from somewhere else. Joy, sorrow, pain. I mean, I can't just decide that, wait a minute, I'm going to be sad now for half an hour. For quite a long time, I tormented myself by trying to make my music not banal or primitive but at the same time offering emotions.

Engelmanis' wide variety of interests most definitely influenced the unconventional nature of his music.

In my early days, I was into painting – everyone in Liepāja knows that. I used to walk around with a box of paints. But then my sister got married, I left my parents' house, and my brother-in-law somehow sold or got rid of all my paintings. There were oils, watercolours. But oh well, that's beside the point. I wrote a lot of poetry, too, especially in the 1980s.

I always liked to read. Spiritual literature, everything from the Bible to contemporary writers. I read Stephen Hawking with interest. How I would like to meet him! He often presents a hypothesis that he then razes to the ground on the very next page. It annoys me so much, and yet I love it at the same time!

Back in the day, I began studying quantum mechanics. Now I read Hawking and I understand what he's talking about. He's saying: we know many things, we just don't know if they're true. Already as a child it shocked me that outer space is structured exactly like an atom. Isn't God Himself the vast universe for us, just as we are the universe for our atoms?

I've been interested in cybernetics, physics, astronomy, astrology. Somehow I'm terribly interested in existence. I was a pilot in the army. I graduated from aviation school. My hearing was fine, I learned Morse code. I received first-class sports certification and also first-class specialist certification in the army. At the end of my second year of service, they started sending me and another good radio operator from Moscow around to competitions. So we travelled around and beeped. I also got to fly, but after a long time of being woken up at two o'clock in the morning once a week for night training, one loses the joy of flying quite quickly. They did try to attract me to a career in the military – after my service I was to study at the Orenburg Aviation School, where Gagarin had once studied – but I fell in love and didn't show up for the entrance examinations. I could have become a cosmonaut.

Engelmanis did not become a cosmonaut. He returned to Liepāja, got married, became a composer and, in a search for space and independence, began looking for a house in the countryside. A colleague suggested that he take a look at the “Ausekļi” farmstead in Liepiena, right in the middle of the sacred ethnographic triangle between Nīca, Bārta, and Rucava.

So I went to have a look. It was overgrown with thistles and nettles and the roof leaked, but the place itself

was like a sanctuary. I bought it. I visited it for half a year, and still the house wouldn't accept me. I couldn't eat nor sleep there. And then suddenly something changed. I arrived, and ... I finally felt that yes, this is my house. It came towards me itself, so to speak. Try and tell me there's no such thing as house spirits. I moved my old concert grand piano there. Sometimes I forget to lock the door, everything stays open, but I've got this black guard [points to his dog]. And so I knew that no stranger would come in. I now go there in winter, I go there in summer. In Liepāja, I feel uneasy at eleven o'clock at night. But never so in the countryside.

ars

The first catalogued opus by Agris Engelmanis is the String Quartet No. 1 dating from 1970. The list of his compositions is not very long, and there is as yet no compiled record of their performances nor of what currently may still lie forgotten in drawers somewhere. The good news is that work on a book about Engelmanis will have begun by the time this album is released.

I know there are composers who tend to listen to music by other composers before they sit down to write music themselves. But I don't even go to concerts very much. For me, the sounds just enter my brain. I do, however, read poetry before I work. Half of my room was full of poetry.

A wise person once said: "Hey, everything's always changing in your music, it's always something new and new. No form emerges." But then, after listening to the piece to the very end, everything was fine with the form. One shouldn't listen to excerpts of music. But form is a bit of a contentious thing anyway. When I was a director, I invited all kinds of specialists from Riga: brass players, string players, everyone. Romualds Kalsons came to consult the students about composition. One day he said to me: "Why do you spend so much time explaining the music? What's with all the psychology and philosophy of music? The important thing is form. Teach them form, and then after they finish school, they can put whatever they want into the form." But I said to my pupils: "To compose, there must be a reason, an idea. The idea itself will demand what form you use, what the development will be. Just because you teach pianists to play the scales brilliantly will not make them exceptional musicians."

In my youth I wondered how Tchaikovsky could write music in Klin without a piano. And how Beethoven could compose without hearing anything. Now I understand – when you've been forging ahead and living in this world of music all your life, you can do it.

Quite a few of my works from these past years were composed not in Liepāja, but out in the countryside. My favourite moment of the day is when the sun sets. That's how I came up with those little pieces of mine, just walking around the house. And then I come to Liepāja and write them down. Back when I wrote more complex pieces, I had to go over and check some of the clusters on the piano; after all, you can't hear

everything in your head. But now – how can I not hear a triad? But of course, a lot of fine balancing can go on with triads as well.

Poetry often provides the impetus for a work, or a good exhibition of visual art. I also like to sit on an intersection of ley lines. All these types of energy that we can accumulate in ourselves in order to unleash our own creative energy.

Folk songs were also an important source of inspiration and energy for Engelmanis. He listened to the women of southern Kurzeme sing, studied the sources, and his work in this field is echoed in his music: a trichord or tetrachord pattern, a timid shepherd's flute or the sharp call of a farmwife, a motif based on a bird's song (the conclusion of *Musica Alba!*)... Engelmanis worked with stacks, strings and fragments of motifs and ornaments. Few others do so as daringly as he did.

In the *Diaphonies*, these techniques are made particularly tactile by the deliberately cutting dissonances (in ancient Greece, diaphony was dissonance, as opposed to symphony or consonance), which are juxtaposed against the beautiful, smooth rippling of a meadow or the pink gliding of clouds at sunset. At this point, Engelmanis perhaps would have tried to object – he probably would not want his music translated into concrete images. But let us instead consider this an impulse to unleash the listener's imagination. Here one must surrender to everything with total laxity.

Unfortunately, any notes by Engelmanis on his compositions have yet to be found, and therefore everything is left up to the interpreter.

It is possible that his **Diaphony No. 1** (1972) had never before been performed publicly. **Diaphony No. 2** (1979) and **Diaphony No. 3** (1996) have been performed, but this album marks the first recordings of these pieces.

Musica Alba (1988), meaning 'white music', is a relatively more frequently performed opus. This work was recorded at the Liepāja Latvian Society House in 2014.

Music for symphony orchestra (1971) is most likely Engelmanis' first work for symphony orchestra, composed the same year he graduated from the Academy of Music. Atvars Lakstīgala chose this piece as a previously unknown "new work" by the Liepāja native for the inaugural concert in November 2015 of the Great Amber Concert Hall (Liepāja's new concert venue), and this version is included on the present album. It is believed that Music had never before been performed in its entirety; thus, the goal of the album in your hands is to lay the foundation for a full and diverse discovery and celebration of Engelmanis' music!

conclusion

Olafs Gūtmanis, who was a close friend and colleague of Engelmanis, once wrote: “There are people who feel better in the shadows. In the twilight of the evening, at sunset, when an intimate hour has arrived, extinguishing the vivid impressions of the day, when loneliness hits the hardest and longing takes on a tragic hue. Not by dispelling thoughts and feelings, but by concentrating them in a sharp and vital experience. The clouds thicken in the sky, the trees thicken in the forest, and the shadows merge into a deep and cosy darkness. And man casts off his own longest shadow until it merges with the shadows of nature, until the human becomes unnoticeable as a being. He has melted into nature, he has hidden himself from the curious light, he has entered the night. And that is where he feels best. There his wings, the wings of the nocturnal bird, unfold. There his flight begins.”

We wish to return again and again to the music of the nocturnal bird Engelmanis. His music is like the water from a spring: we drink but can never drink our fill.

Orests Silabriedis

The Liepāja Symphony Orchestra (1881) is the oldest orchestra in the Baltic States and the only professional orchestra in Latvia outside the capital.

Special attention is paid to the music of Latvian composers and the promotion and popularization of Latvian compositions. The orchestra participates in premieres and commissions new works, for which it has received several awards. The LSO is a multiple laureate of the Latvian Grand Music Award and the Latvian Music Recording of the Year Award winner.

Starting from the 2022/2023 2018 concert season, the chief conductor and artistic director of the LSO is Guntis Kuzma.

[Iso.lv](http://iso.lv)

Olafs Gūtmanis

Liepienos / At Liepieni

Veltīts Agrim Engelmanim
Dedicated to Agris Engelmanis

Tās liepas nu jau sirmas,
Kas Liepieni ar saknēm satvērušas
Un nelaiž vajā.
Tās ābeles jau vecas,
Kas godīgi nes augļu nastas,
Līdz atkalst zari.
Un cerīni jau stiegros stumbros
Ir pārauguši krūmu jaunību.
Bet vēl no meža pārstādītā priedīte
Šo zemi nesaprot un ļaujas vējam.
No augsnes izšūpotas, no smalcis ņemtas,
Vēl egles nezina, kas ir plašums, —
Stāv samulsušas šmaugās atvasēs.
Tu, meža dārzniek, neprasi
Nevienam savu zemi mīlošam
Ne labuma, ne lietderības.
Vien uzticību saulei,
Vien spītu pastāvēt
Pret šķinājumiem un lauzējiem.
Un koku dvēselītes
Tev sanāk apkārt, ieslēdz zaļā lokā, uzdzied
Par zemi, debesīm,
Par cilvēkiem, kas paši
Tik līdzīgi šiem kokiem, kuri nezina
Ne sava labuma, ne lietderības.

The lindens that have grasped Liepieni* with their roots
And do not let go
Have already turned grey.
The apple trees that bear their fruit honestly,
Until the branches wither and die,
Are already old.
And the lilacs with their sinuous trunks
Have long overgrown the youthfulness of the bushes.
But the small pine transplanted from the forest
Does not yet understand this land and yields to the wind.
Rocked out of the soil, taken from the thicket,
The spruces do not yet know what vastness is;
They stand confused in their slender stands.
And you, the forest gardener,
Ask neither goodness nor usefulness
Of anyone who loves his land.
Only loyalty to the sun,
Only stubbornness to stand
Against those who pull and break.
And the delicate souls of the trees
Gather in a green circle around you and sing
Of earth, of heaven,
Of people who, themselves
So like these trees, know neither
Of their own goodness nor usefulness.

* Liepieni means 'place of the lindens'.

