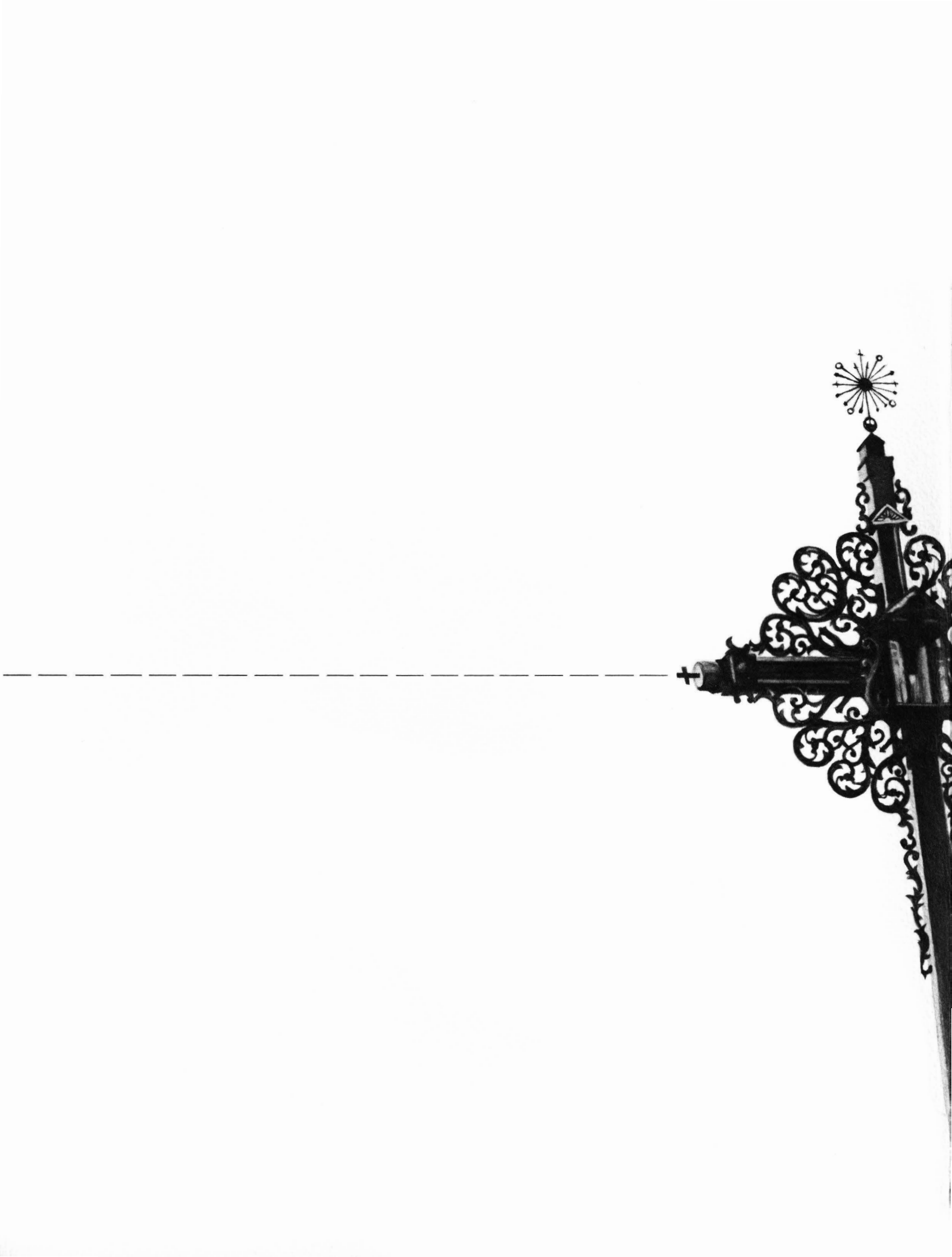




700 years



Lithuania



The Festival of Lithuanian Art and Music

700
*Commemorating the 700th anniversary of Lithuania and
its contributions to the culture and freedom of America*

*Sponsored by the National Lithuanian Society of America
under the auspices of the National Arts Foundation*

HOTEL STATLER

JUNE 20, 1953

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Edited by WARD WALKER
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By VYTAUTAS KASUBA

Mindaugas

FIRST KING OF LITHUANIA — CROWNED 1253 A.D.

Men with the light of freedom in their eyes and courage in their hearts . . . Men of many races, drawing their strength from ancestral roots as varied as the winds . . . Of such is the pride and might of this America.

This America . . . They gathered under freedom's banner. They beat a wilderness into shape. They threw their brains and their brawn into the struggle, each man and each race giving full measure to the great experiment.

And from the jumble of many voices, the mixing of many bloods, the desperate struggles against common enemies, emerged a new and dominant figure on the stage of history: The American.

He towers on the world scene as the symbol of free man, living proof that each man can speak his mind and shape his destiny and yet forge a government which works. There is confidence and pride in the set of his shoulders, in the cock of his head: He is an American.

No small part of the pride Americans feel is the knowledge of the contributions their ancestors made to the construction and culture of this nation. More than one million Americans of Lithuanian descent share that proud emotion.

The origins of the Lithuanian race are lost in the mists of time. Since the language has been linked to Sanskrit, it seems probable the tribe was one of the Aryan groups which left a cradle of the human race deep in the Himalayan Mountains of northern India thousands upon thousands of years ago.

The Lithuanians settled on the broad and rolling plains along the shore of the Baltic Sea, a land of rich earth and heavy forests, wide rivers and many lakes. Their country

—in modern times a heart shaped land of 33,000 square miles—lay between Russia and Germany, like a walnut in the jaws of a nutcracker.

All of the evidence of archeology and ethnology indicates the Lithuanians were firmly settled in their land by 1500 B.C., an independent and warlike people who were to markedly change the history of Europe.

The Mists of Time . . .

Time and again the Tatar hordes swept out of the East, determined to overwhelm Europe. And as many times the Lithuanians rallied from their small farms and their hunting parties to beat back the invaders.

Still another constant threat came from the Huns and other Germanic tribes to the west. These attacks, too, were repulsed and with each battle the Lithuanians came closer to establishing a national government.

This strange tribe, which remained apart from the Teuton and Scandinavian, the Finn and the Slav, were a song-loving people with a highly developed culture from earliest days. Their folksongs, known as “Dainos”, are rich in historical material, and their earliest burial pits have yielded finds of iron knives, chisels, sickles, spears, swords, bronze bridles, spurs, bracelets, buckles, clasps, glass beads, and gold and silver ornaments.

Along with most of Europe in the first centuries after the birth of Christ, the Lithuanians worshiped a pagan mythology; Perkunas, God of Thunder and Lightning; Zemininkas, God of the Earth; Patela, God of the Underworld; Gabija, God of Fire; Bangputys, God of the Four Winds; Vieshpats, God of Life, and a host of others. The pagan priests were known as Vaidilas who were aided by vestal virgins called Vaidilutes.

Throughout these early centuries the Lithuanians were governed by the clan and tribal patriarchs, with the various tribes rallying to defend jointly their land whenever danger threatened from without.

Gradually this loose form of government tightened under the pressure of enemy attacks. The tribal heads took the title of duke, although all of the adult males of each tribe apparently had a voice in the selection of the leader.

While the Lithuanians asked only to be left alone in their land of plenty, by the year 1200 A.D. it was apparent their powerful neighbors—the Teutons and the Russians—were intent on conquest. To meet this crisis arose one of the tribal dukes, Mindaugas.

Then King Mindaugas . . . A powerful man who was a diplomat, statesman, and military genius, Mindaugas succeeded in gathering the other Lithuanian dukes under his banner.

He, his wife, Martha, and their two sons were baptized in the Christian faith in 1251 A.D., and two years later in the summer of 1253—700 years ago—he was crowned King of Lithuania by Bishop Henry of Colonia.

For nearly three hundred years the fierce legions of Lithuania held the balance of power in eastern Europe, a period known as the Golden Age of Lithuanian history. Lithuanian power extended through all of Poland, deep into Germany, and beyond Moscow in Russia.

With the death of King Vytautas in 1430 A.D., the Lithuanian government weakened. The Polish throne was given up in 1572 A.D., and in 1795 the country was overwhelmed by the legions of Russia.

Historians record that freedom was never very far below the surface in any Lithuanian. Caught in mighty tides of diplomatic intrigue, Napoleonic wars, and the oppression of the Czars, the Lithuanians refused to accept their conquerors.

In 1812, 1831, 1863, and again in 1904-05, the Lithuanians revolted. Each time they were overwhelmed but each time the fury of their fighting won them some concessions from the Russians.

Freedom Smoldered . . .

Shortly before 1800 they founded the University at Vilnius, the capital city, a center of learning which was to become famous throughout Europe. Despite Russian edicts the language and culture was kept intact, waiting for the time the Lithuanians knew would come: The time of freedom.

In 1918 on the heels of World War I the moment came. Lithuania was again free—free to form her own government and take her place in the family of nations.

The Lithuanians with the example of the United States of America before them chose to form an independent Republic with three divisions—legislative, executive and judicial with a constitution as the supreme law. The preamble read:

Freedom Blazed . . .

“In the name of Almighty God, the Lithuanian people, thankfully recalling the glorious efforts and noble sacrifices of its sons, made to deliver the Motherland, having re-created its State independence and desiring to extend the firm democratic foundations of its independent life, to develop conditions of justice and equity, and to guarantee the equality, freedom and well being of all citizens, and suitable State protection for human labor

and morality, through its authorized representatives, convened in the Constituent Assembly, August 1, 1922, has adopted the following Constitution of the Lithuanian Republic.”

The time in which to work was short, but the Lithuanians unaware that a second World War was to again submerge their nation, drove ahead with their task.

By 1937 this nation of three and one-half million people had increased its primary schools from 877 at the time of freedom to 2,696; and they had built 100 secondary schools (including two years of college) for more than 20,000 youngsters. There was the Great University of Vytautas at Kaunas for 4,000 advanced students. There were special schools for Music, Art and Ballet.

Industry and commerce flourished. The great majority of the people owned their own homes and farms. Virtually every city of more than 5,000 population supported an opera season during which the world’s great operas—many of them translated into Lithuanian—were given.

Today Lithuania is again ruled by a conqueror, absorbed by the U.S.S.R., cut off from the western world by the Iron Curtain with her fate as uncertain as that of a pawn on a chess board.

Soviet troops seized control of the small Republic on June 14-15, 1940. The German war machine rolled over her from 1941 to 1944 when the Russians again entered.

Today . . .

The Western countries, including the United States, have not recognized the Russian annexation of Lithuania. As a Republic, Lithuania lives only in the art and music of her sons, in the hearts of free men everywhere who know, in the words of Herbert Spencer, “No one can be perfectly free till all are free . . .”

The Festival of Lithuanian Art and Music

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and

The National Lithuanian Society of America
2202 W. Cermak Rd., Chicago 8, Illinois
Anthony L. Lapinskas, President

THE FESTIVAL OF LITHUANIAN ART AND MUSIC

Lithuanian Art Exhibition — Saturday and Sunday, June 20-21, 1953

(Under Direction of Vytautas Jonynas)

Hotel Statler — Federal Room — Washington, D. C.

Banquet and Concert — Saturday, June 20, 1953 — 8:00 P. M.

Hotel Statler — Presidential Ballroom — Washington, D. C.

PROGRAM

1. Invocation
2. Dinner
3.
 - a) "Star Spangled Banner"
 - b) Lithuanian National Anthem
4. Anthony L. Lapinskas, President, National Lithuanian Society of America
5. Lieutenant-General Albert C. Wedemeyer, U. S. A. (ret.)
6. The Ciurlionis Ensemble
 - Alfonsas Mikulskis—Director
 - Ona Mikulskiene—Director of Kankles Orchestra
 - Regina Malcanaite—Announcer
 - Antanas Kavaliunas—Scenario Director
 - Edwardas Karnenas—President
 - a) "By the Green Forest"*J. Gudavicius*
 - b) "The Goat Song"*S. Simkus*
 - c) "Shepherd's Song"*J. Svedas*
 - d) "On the Shore"*A. Mikulskis*
Soloists—R. Malcanaite and A. Kavaliunas
 - e) "The Ring of the Kankles"*A. Mikulskis*
 - f) "Reaping the Flax"*A. Mikulskis*
Soloists—Vince Jonuskaite and V. Giedraitis
 - g) "Over the Seas and the Oceans"*A. Mikulskis*
Soloist—Vince Jonuskaite
 - i) "The Blacksmith"*A. Mikulskis*
7. Andrius Kuprevicius, pianist.
 - a) Prelude*Ciurlionis*
 - b) Nocturne*Ciurlionis*
 - c) Etude in C Major, Op. 25*Chopin*
 - d) "The Gate of Heroes"*Moussorsky*
8. 70 Members of the National Symphony Orchestra
 - Jeronimas Kacinskas—Director
 - a) "Legend"*V. Jakubenas*
 - b) "In Lithuania"*Gruodis*
9. Ciurlionis Ensemble and Orchestra
 - a) "Freedom for Lithuania"*J. Zilevicius*
 - b) "God Bless America"*I. Berlin*

Anthony Olis — Toastmaster

THE FESTIVAL OF LITHUANIAN ART AND MUSIC
Hotel Statler, Washington, D.C. June 20, 1953

under the auspices of

The National Lithuanian Society of America, Anthony L. Lapinskas, *President*

in cooperation with

The National Arts Foundation, Carleton Smith, *Executive Director*