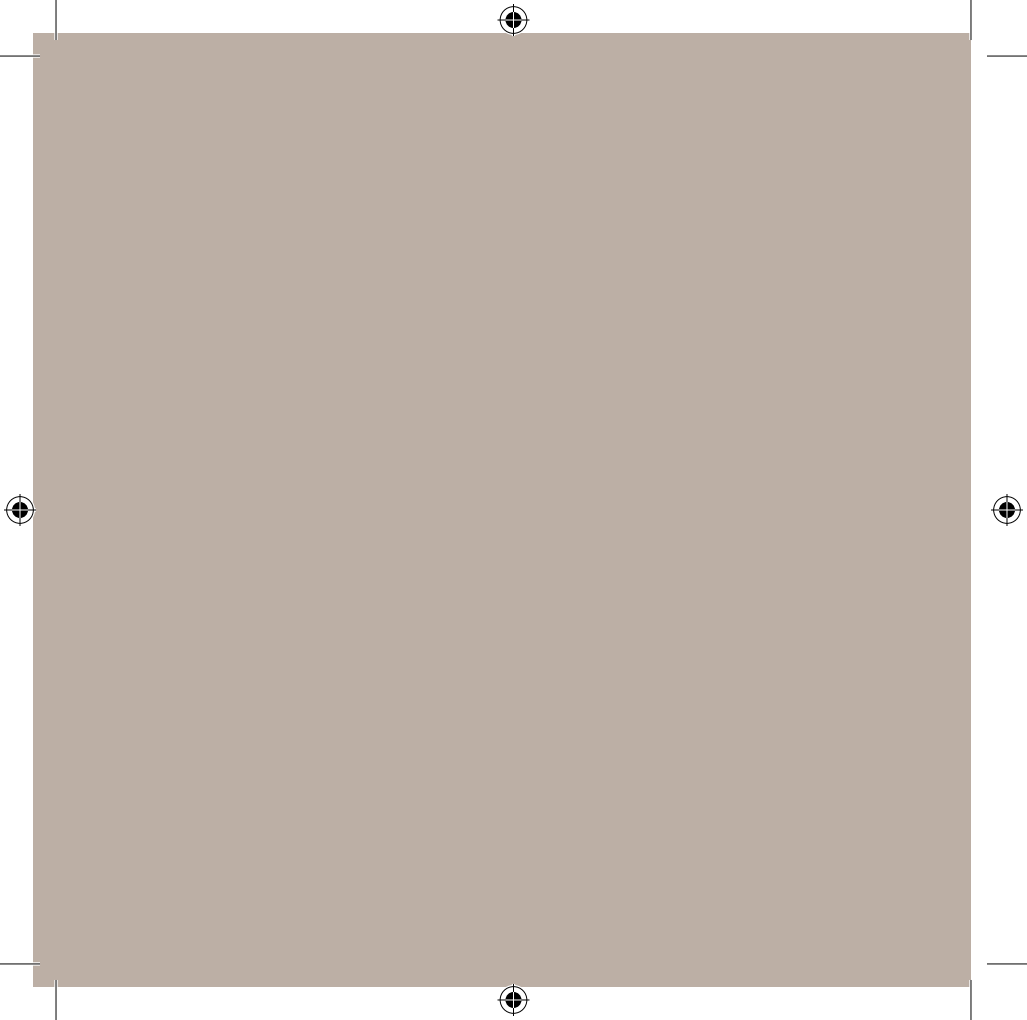




BALTIC PRAYER

DALIA DĒDINSKAITĒ | **violin**
GLEB PYŠNIAK | **cello**


Vilnius Municipal Choir **JAUNA MUZIKA** | Conductor **VACLOVAS AUGUSTINAS**






ABOUT DEPTH, CONVERSATION AND PEACE

The phrase 'Baltic music' is not just a label, but a key that unlocks the rich creativity of composers living around the Baltic Sea. However, it is more than a specific style, mood, or aesthetic. It is about a diverse landscape of Baltic music, each piece being a unique story of individual experience, desire, and reflection of identity. The Baltic identity manifests itself in the most diverse ways, as a cultural tapestry that is both engaging and intriguing.




The album *Baltic Prayer* opens up part of this landscape, united by the motifs of peace, and a conversation with oneself, others, or God. Works by the Lithuanian composers Anatolijus Šenderovas and Jurgis Juozapaitis, by the Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks, and by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, are presented. Next to them are some stylistically close compositions by the Norwegian star of choral music Ola Gjeilo, the British composer John Tavener, and the Ukrainian Myroslav Skoryk.



Pēteris Vasks (b. 1946), one of the most influential composers of the 20th century, found a way to harmonise the language of contemporary music with tonal harmony, recognisable forms, and memorable melodies. His work *Plainscapes*, celebrating the wonder of nature, has been likened to a mirage or a song, not quite human, and not quite a bird. This emotional depth in his work is what connects and moves the audience.

In the work of the composer Anatolijus Šenderovas (1945–2019), the motif of dialogue was essential, a dialogue between different cultures, between the 20th-century rationalistic character of the composer and the emotional nature of the creator, composer,








Vilnius Municipal Choir JAUNA MUZIKA, Conductor Vaclovas Augustinas



Dalía Dédinskaitė, Gleb Pyšniak




performer and listener, into which Šenderovas' music quickly found its way. One of his works, in which there is no shortage of sharp consonances, or 'collisions' that eventually lead to 'reconciliation', received the name *Dialogues*. Šenderovas himself prepared a version of *Dialogues* for violin and cello for Dalia Dėdinskaitė and Gleb Pyšniak, which was played at one of the duo's first concerts in the Netherlands.


'Da Pacem, Domine' is a text that has inspired many composers from different eras. The Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (b. 1935), who wrote his *Da Pacem, Domine* for a cappella choir in 2004, was also inspired by it. Despite the work's connection to a specific event, Pärt's composition is a universal prayer for peace, speaking about the suffering and the pain of humanity. It is a reminder that in troubled times we can find solace and inspiration in music.

Jurgis Juozapaitis (b. 1942) has tried many contemporary techniques in his work, from serialism to aleatoric devices, and minimalism. However, as he admitted, in his later work he began to move away from composing based on numbers, because it became much more important to feel 'the natural flow of the music'. Speaking about one of his recent pieces, *Ave Maria* for violin, cello, and choir, the composer has claimed that he wanted the piece to be 'a meditation, a prayer, flowing from the depths of the soul, filled with musical sounds'. The work was premièred by the JAUNA MUZIKA choir and Duettissimo.


The album also features several works by composers who are not from the Baltic, but their work is close to the aesthetic quality and mood of the album. The Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978) is a star of choral music of our times, whose work is an important part of the contemporary choral repertoire.




His style was greatly influenced by his native Norway and the United States of America, which he calls his second home. In his music, the composer combines what is familiar and what is modern. Rich harmonies and rich textures, and music that is sometimes reminiscent of a movie soundtrack, can be heard in his works for choir. The Latin chant 'O Magnum Mysterium' was especially loved by Renaissance composers, and was later also popular with composers in the 20th century. It inspired the Norwegian composer as well. This is how *Serenity (O Magnum Mysterium)* was born for violin and choir, whose long phrases seem to 'freeze' listeners in time and space.






The work of the British composer John Tavener (1944–2013) is attributed to the 'New Spirituality' that originates from a deep religiosity, leading to an inner dialogue with God and oneself. In 1995, Tavener's composition for choir and cello *Svyati* was accompanied by the sad parting with his dear friend and publisher John Williams. The composer learned that his close friend was dying while he was writing this composition. The work is based on an Orthodox liturgical text, and is dedicated to John Williams and his daughter Jane.




The album ends with a composition that became a symbol of the Ukrainians' struggle for freedom and a sensitive musical reflection of their pain after the start of Russia's brutal war. *Melody* by the Ukrainian composer Myroslav Skoryk (1938–2020) is often called 'the spiritual anthem' of Ukraine. Originally written in 1982 for flute and piano for a film soundtrack, *Melody* has been arranged for a wide variety of instruments over time. This release features an arrangement of it for choir, violin, and cello.







Amongst the most prominent performers of Lithuania, the violinist DALIA DĒDIN-SKAITĖ and the cellist GLEB PYŠNIAK, frequently perform in important concert halls in Lithuania and abroad. Dubbed the 'Dream Duo' by the Dutch newspaper *Noordhollands Dagblad*, they have been playing together since the year 2011. They fascinate audiences with their skill, which captivates listeners and music critics. 'Nothing seems to be impossible for Dalia and Gleb, nothing restricts them. The sound of the instruments flows freely, rich but not overpowering. The relationship between the performers is very clear, and the phrasing is convincing, as if by itself diving into the most important thing, the aspect of thought and emotions in the work' wrote the musicologist Svetlana Barkauskas after their debut in Vienna Musikverein in 2014. The performers named themselves *Duettissimo* after the work by Vytautas Barkauskas dedicated to them. The composer wrote it specially for the duo's concert in the prestigious Musikverein Hall in Vienna where it was premièred. Having won recognition in international competitions and played on several continents, Dalia and Gleb, to the joy of the growing group of fans of *Duettissimo*, decided to put down roots in Lithuania. The duo's debut album *Duettissimo* was released in the autumn of 2022.

Vilnius Municipal Choir JAUNA MUZIKA, founded in 1989, is one of the best-known vocal ensembles in Lithuania. It has been led by the conductor and composer Vaclovas Augustinas since 1992. The choir gives about 30 concerts a year in Lithuania and abroad, and has won 15 first places and six Grand Prix in various international competitions. In 1993, the choir received the Grand Prix Europe, the highest possible rating,






in a competition in Bulgaria organised by the International Federation of Choral Music. The choir's professionalism is appreciated nationally and internationally: it has gone on tour in Europe, Japan, China, and Israel. JAUNA MUZIKA regularly participates in international festivals, and cooperates with famous conductors, ensembles and orchestras worldwide. The choir has been promoting the renewal of choral music for many years by organising the Vox Juventutis competition for new works of choral music.



The conductor composer, and professor VACLOVAS AUGUSTINAS, the longstanding leader of JAUNA MUZIKA, and laureate of the National Prize for Culture and Art, is one of the most prominent figures in Lithuanian music. He participates as a choral scholar in symposia held all over the world, gives masterclasses in choral conducting, and cooperates closely with famous European specialists in choral music. Most of his compositions are sacred choral works and are often performed in Lithuania and abroad. In 2010, Augustinas won the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Art for developing the power of choral music and modernising sacred music. Since 2014 he has been the head of the Composition Department at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. One of his most important works was written to mark the centenary of the restoration of the Lithuanian state in 2018, the centennial *Missa pro centesimo anno restitutionis Lituaniae*, and was performed in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda. In the same year, Augustinas' first compact disc *Tau bet kokios sutemos šviesios* was released, sung by JAUNA MUZIKA.



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