

KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

YUMIKO NUNOKAWA

CONTEXTUALITY OF THE ARTISTIC
LANGUAGE OF M. K. ČIURLIONIS: LINKS
AND INFLUENCES OF CULTURES OF THE
EAST AND THE WEST DISCOVERED IN
ČIURLIONIS' ART

Doctoral Dissertation
Humanities, History and Theory of Arts (03H)

2017, Kaunas

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KAUNO TECHNOLOGIJOS UNIVERSITETAS

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ČIURLIONIO MENINĖS KALBOS
KONTEKSTUALUMAS:
RYTŲ IR VAKARŲ KULTŪRŲ SAŠAUKOS IR
ĮTAKA ČIURLIONIO KŪRYBAI

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INTRODUCTION

Čiurlioniana is one of the most significant Lithuanian topics of art criticism (art research), which encompasses more than a century lasting, multi-layered and diverse field of research. Research of Čiurlionis life and his works reveal not only the individual, but also Lithuania's and even Europe's art development and patterns. The last two decades after Lithuania rebuild its independence opened new possibilities to expose Čiurlionis' art abroad and newly evaluate his place in the European art. As prof. Eero Tarasti wrote, "namely the research of Čiurlionis may reveal something very important in the future in the whole field of inter-art problems" (Tarasti, 1987).

International Čiurlionis centenary conference, held in Vilnius 2011, became like a border summarizing the results of research done during last 100 years and drawing new guidelines for a future research. The new signification of Čiurlionis' art, the new contexts, parallels and influences appeared as the main topic of future research in understanding Čiurlionis art and music in contemporary world.

Multidimensional nature of an artist encourages us to think on the multilayer traces of contextuality in Čiurlionis' art. The one problem here is that selection of one or another side of Čiurlionis' art makes some difficulties to understand Čiurlionis' art as the whole. Another problem is that Čiurlionis was researched for a long time only by Lithuanian researchers. It was because of different political, educational and social reasons. Though Čiurlionis was understood as a leading figure in Lithuanian culture, it was difficult to set up his importance and influence into Europe, to compare him with other European and world artists of his time. Only after political changes in Europe in the last decade of the 20th century the world opened to Lithuania. The possibility to present Čiurlionis' art in Europe appeared and successfully was used holding retrospective exhibitions in Warsaw, Tokyo, Milan, and Paris. Čiurlionis' music was performed for the first time in main cultural centres of Europe (Warsaw, Berlin, Paris, and London). Therefore, Čiurlionis' creative heritage was returned to the history of Europe even it means the late returning in almost one century. Also it was understood that local canonical tradition of Čiurlionis' art interpretation or explanation needs a new re-examination, new re-evaluation and new re-thinking. It became obvious that a cultural heritage of East and West which influenced and formed an artistic language of Čiurlionis first of all should be reconsidered anew. And it became the main aspect of **novelty** of this dissertation.

During last two decades (after restitution of Lithuanian independence) a new generation of researchers has emerged in the field of Čiurlionis studies (R. Andriušytė-Žukienė, A. Jurkėnaitė, R. Povilionienė, D. Kučinskas, R. Okulycz-Kozaryn, K. Holm-Hudson). The research of Čiurlionis works naturally became more versatile and plural. And a single canonical tradition, based on research of Landsbergis, which dominated for several decades in Lithuania, has been changed. Being researcher of foreign country (Japan) and not belonging to the canonical tradition of Čiurlionis' research in Lithuania, an author of a dissertation puts Čiurlionis into a new light of its understanding and interpretation of his art. This is a **relevance** of dissertation and

research presented here.

The **main aim of dissertation** is to reveal and re-evaluate canonical and new narratives and links of East and West cultures which influenced Čiurlionis' art and to present it in a context of cultural and philosophical ideas of Europe in the turn of the 20th century.

The **object of research** is the contextuality of Čiurlionis art – the objective and subjective factors and aspects which made an impact on Čiurlionis as an artist and to his artistic language.

Exploring the main aim of dissertation **additional tasks** are held:

1. To summarize previous research done on Čiurlionis' contextuality, especially focusing on the last two decades, and exploring an idea of the multidimensional nature of an artist as the main creative method of Čiurlionis.

2. To set up an influence of *fin de siècle* Europe to Čiurlionis and his creative works.

3. To reveal impact of cultural heritage of the East to Čiurlionis' art. To explore an idea of *japonisme* in Čiurlionis art.

4. To re-examine narratives, links and cultural contexts of the West, which influenced and formed an artistic language of Čiurlionis, concentrating on cultural centres and geographical places where Čiurlionis lived and studied: Warsaw, Leipzig, Vilnius and St. Petersburg.

5. To re-examine links with and expression of Lithuanian folk art in Čiurlionis paintings and music.

6. To determine links and mutual contexts between Čiurlionis and Russian artists, emphasizing on indirect influence by N. Rimski-Korsakov and in I. Stravinsky.

Research was done using several **research methods**. An analytical studies of sources (manuscripts and printed scores) was used for precise deciphering of music scores, literature studies formed and understanding of historical background and trends in development of artistic ideas in Europe and the world, comparative analysis of creative heritage of an artist was used for an analysis and determination of important links and contexts, chronological reconstruction of historical events helped to set up and to determine role and importance of various life events of an artist, genetic analysis of creative process of Čiurlionis let to understand the “born” of single compositions and separate creative periods of an artist, case studies used to reveal musical and cultural contexts of individual art works of Čiurlionis.

Analysed **literature** is divided according to an aspect of topics and formed in three groups:

- a) General sources and literature on art history (Berman, Bowlt, Droba, Galaunė Maur, and Taruskin)

- b) Literature on Čiurlionis art and life (Čiurlionytė, Eberlein, Kazokas, Landsbergis, and Vorobjov)

- c) Literature on special aspects of contextuality of Čiurlionis artistic language (Andrijauskas, Bruveris, Fedotov, Kennaway, Kučinskas, and Tarasti)

Dissertation **composed** of introduction, six main parts, conclusions and list of

bibliography. Introduction part is dedicated to overview of the large panorama of literature and to summarize previous research done on contextuality of Čiurlionis during last century. Each of six parts present new links and contexts of Čiurlionis creative heritage related with cultural centres of Europe – Warsaw, Leipzig, Vilnius, and St. Petersburg. Geographical places were selected as the best way to reveal different aspects of influence of West and East cultures to formation of Čiurlionis artistic language. Conclusions summarize research done in previous parts.

1. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ON ČIURLIONIS' CONTEXTUALITY

In a review of more than a hundred years of ongoing research on the life and works of Čiurlionis in terms of contextuality, four periods can be distinguished which naturally formed as the result of various events both in Europe and Lithuania. The political history of Europe was a crucial factor which defined and determined the current boundaries. As a result, the evaluation and contextuality research stages of Čiurlionis and his works reflect the evolution of Lithuanian nationhood:

1. Up to the declaration of independence of the Republic of Lithuania in 1918.
2. The period of independent Lithuania in 1918-1944 until the second Soviet occupation.
3. 1945-1990 – the period of Soviet occupation.
4. Since 1990 – the period of restored independence.

The first period of evaluation of Čiurlionis' works started when the artist was alive. This period includes the first evaluations of Čiurlionis works which were discovered in the letters and memoirs of the contemporaries and the reviews of the first exhibitions and concerts in the Lithuanian, Russian and English press. The significant role here is played by the reviews of the art critics of St. Petersburg. These highlight the essential features (mostly of art) of Čiurlionis' creative work, and his importance for the development of international art. Also, the comments and reviews of Lithuanian artists about Čiurlionis, published in Vilnius periodicals, are of importance. In addition, one must also mention the first evaluations of Čiurlionis' works which were published in the foreign (English) press. In terms of contextuality, this period is characterized by the desire of the critics to understand and explain synthesis of Čiurlionis' artistic creation, to reveal the uniqueness of Čiurlionis talent and his works, significance to the development of Lithuanian, Russian the world's art.

During the second period, the creative heritage of Čiurlionis was concentrated in Lithuania (Kaunas). At first, the heritage was hardly accessible (it belonged to Sofija, Čiurlionis' wife, as personal property), later redeemed by the state and exhibited in the gallery specially built for works of Čiurlionis (since 1925). This period is characteristic for the fact that special attention was paid to the concern for preservation of Čiurlionis' creative heritage in general rather than for the research and evaluation of his works. In the context of that period, the solid monograph (in German) of Nikolai Vorobjov (1903-1954) stands out which for the first tried to cover sequentially and completely the entire period of the artist's life and to discuss such issues as his creative background and influences.

The third period of Čiurlionis' evaluation is characterized by ambivalence. There was a sort of parallel discussion in the Soviet-occupied Lithuania and abroad (mainly USA). The published works (firstly in Lithuania and throughout the Soviet Union) during this period are particularly characterized by hard political and ideological implications and negative preconception in respect of investigators from other countries. On the other hand, musical works were systematically published and

after opening of a permanent exhibition (1968) of Čiurlionis' paintings there were all the conditions for the comprehensive research of Čiurlionis' works historically, aesthetically and in terms of contextuality. At this time, the scientific publications and concert activities of Vytautas Landsbergis especially stood out. These had a crucial influence on the evaluation of Čiurlionis in Lithuania and abroad.

The fourth period started after Lithuania regained its independence and this period is marked by the availability and international spread of Čiurlionis works.

When the borders between the Eastern and Western Europe were eliminated, there arose a possibility to evaluate Čiurlionis' works in a much broader context. Not only scientists of Lithuanian origin but also art critics of other countries appeared who sequentially and in detail studied life of Čiurlionis and his creative heritage. The first synthetic scientific works about Čiurlionis were published. All the periods will be further discussed in terms of contextuality.

The first period (1906–1918). The first to evaluate the works of Čiurlionis were his contemporaries from St. Petersburg. These were the collaborators from the magazine *Apollon* – artists and art critics who bunched together into the organization *Mir Iskusstva*. This magazine published several important publications after the death of Čiurlionis. In addition to short, more informative, texts, three the most important articles, analysing works of Čiurlionis, were published in the magazine *Apollon* by Sergei Makovsky, Valerian Chudovsky and Viacheslav Ivanov. There was also a separate edition of the monograph published in St. Petersburg by Boris Leman dedicated to Čiurlionis (Leman, 1912). These publications represent a clear starting point for Čiurlionis research. Certain similarities and significant differences may be found among these publications in terms of contextuality.

All the authors agree that Čiurlionis dissociated his paintings from the environmental influences. The art of Čiurlionis is assessed as unique, individual, and peculiar. According to Valerian Chudovsky, the only possible external impact on Čiurlionis' paintings – the Lithuanian movement where Čiurlionis participated as well. Also, Chudovsky discovers the creative power of Čiurlionis in Lithuanian-ness:

Lithuanians are the true descendants of the Aryans, who did not undergo the Middle Ages, this nation has that old active Aryan power of creation, and Čiurlionis is the proof of it (Chudovsky, 1914, p. 26).

As Viacheslav Ivanov states in his article, Čiurlionis is a lonely, odd artist, continuity of his works is not possible, his influence on painting is not possible, and it can be hardly explained what makes him exceptional. With his loneliness he resembles some other creators of that time whose loneliness becomes a sign of all that period, for instance, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche: “philosopher–not philosopher, poet–not poet, philologist–not philologist, musician without music, who established religion without religion...” (Ivanov, 2014, p. 16).

All three authors are also trying to answer the question: what is the relationship of music and art in Čiurlionis' paintings? And here their views form three main positions in the investigation of this matter which subsequently found new followers. As S. Makovsky states, Čiurlionis' music is adequate and equivalent to his paintings

and 'Earlier [painting] works are even more clearly musical: they are nothing else than a graphical illustration of musical works (Makovsky, 2014, p. 23).

V. Chudovsky, apparently not knowing well the biography of Čiurlionis, says that from the very beginning Čiurlionis was the painter and only due mere chance and coincidence he also was the musician (his father - the church organist). The true calling of Čiurlionis, according to Chudovsky, was painting and music was only for recreation and entertainment (Chudovsky, 2014, p. 23).

V. Ivanov set himself an objective to discover the creative approach of the painter Čiurlionis and he discovered it in his musicality: 'Painting expression of visual contemplation from music borrowed principles - we believe that this is his creative approach'. (Ivanov, 1914, p. 6).

This article is the first attempt to formulate the concept of obvious ignorance of perspective in art of Čiurlionis, his refusal of representativeness (abstract painting), and space-forming principles arising from musical thinking (*ibid.*, pp. 6-8). V. Ivanov sees a particular importance in Čiurlionis' musical role. Music, according to Ivanov, always lived inside Čiurlionis, its rhythm, melody and harmony materialized in his visual expression.

The criticism and assessment of Čiurlionis' works, which appeared in Lithuania during the period in question, was not so deep and consistent. The members of the Lithuanian Art Society, who wrote about art, and the post-mortem exhibition reviewers, did not consider that contextuality was important issue to consider. They often raised the question of how to understand and whether it is worth understanding the art of Čiurlionis (Veljataga, 2013).

The first known reflection to the art of Čiurlionis in Western Europe is the reviews of the Russian Post-Impressionist exhibition held in London in 1912. Three paintings of Čiurlionis were exhibited in this exhibition, which were seen in the context of contemporaneous Russian artists, were attributed to the symbolist tradition and their perceived spiritual kinship with the English painter and poet William Blake (Kennaway, 2005).

The second period (1918-1940). During the interwar period, a few works were published which had a great importance on Čiurlionis reception and further contextuality research. These works are: seven music books (in total 75 pieces published for grand piano, organ, choir) of Čiurlionis edited by the composer Stasys Šimkus (1887-1943) in 1925 and a set of articles 'M. K. Čiurlionis' made up by Paulius Galaunė in 1938 (Galaunė, 1938). However, this period is also characterized by the fact that creative works of Čiurlionis were separated from the context of the development of European art and were forgotten. Having returned Čiurlionis' creative heritage to Lithuania, the artist was quickly forgotten both in St. Petersburg and Moscow. As a result, Čiurlionis' art and music pieces, which were essentially known only to a few local art critics and to foreign specialists who accidentally used to visit the Čiurlionis gallery, had no role in the European context. On the other hand, during this period published works performed an important representative function of the creation of his reputation during the Soviet occupation when foreigners were banned

from entering the Čiurlionis Gallery in Kaunas. As a result, the discussions during the post-war on the originator of abstract art (Čiurlionis or Kandinsky?) and on the originator of the serial music (Čiurlionis or Schönberg?) generally relied on the pre-war publications.

The monograph 'M. K. Čiurlionis', published in Kaunas in 1938, the best describes the range of researches on Čiurlionis' creative works during the second period. In terms of contextuality, there should be distinguished three articles. These are the article of Stasys Čiurlionis (brother of the composer) *Features of Life of M. K. Čiurlionis*, the article of Vladas Jakubėnas *M. K. Čiurlionis – the Musician* and the article of Vytautas Kairiūkštis *Creation of Art of M. K. Čiurlionis*.

The first biography of M. K. Čiurlionis written by S. Čiurlionis reveals a number of cultural and especially emotional and spiritual aspects of life of Čiurlionis. There are also important authentic descriptions of the family and the childhood environment of Čiurlionis which affected his further creative works, such as ancient Lithuanian fairy tales and legends, and Lithuanian folk songs. Thereafter other factors are revealed which had an impact on the subsequent creation of Čiurlionis, such as the literature he read during his studies, the people he met, and the impact of his fellow students and their discussions. A special emphasis is put on Čiurlionis' analytical interest in the Holy Bible and the acts of the Apostles, which is further reflected in his religious music pieces and symphonic music themes (for example, the symphonic poem 'Dies irae').

New features of Čiurlionis music were discussed in the article of V. Jakubėnas. In line with typical context (study environment, cultural environment) affecting the artist, the author of the article also refers to specific parallels and the potential impacts - R. Wagner, R. Strauss, C. Debussy (Jakubėnas, 1938, p. 23). Although Jakubėnas does not provide any historical facts about Čiurlionis' hearing of Debussy's works, the creative linkup of both composers does not raise any doubts to the author of the article (compared sea-themed symphonic poems and methods of their realization). He acknowledges that the music of Čiurlionis is still only partly known. Jakubėnas says that: "in paintings, Čiurlionis at once appears extremely original; his first, realistic symbolist paintings are full of identity. Meanwhile, in music, Čiurlionis matures slowly, at the beginning not to avoid alien influences; but his original features frequently flash here too". It is also important that V. Jakubėnas is the first Lithuanian art critic who paid attention to the musical origin of Čiurlionis paintings.

The article of V. Kairiūkštis about M. K. Čiurlionis' art is mainly based on the previously announced views of St. Petersburg critics. Kairiūkštis emphasizes associative affinity of Čiurlionis' paintings and music pieces through the perception of space: "Without spatial associations between music and paintings, or between the impressions of sounds and colours there is a commonality and connection also due to the same or analogous feelings and moods which are caused by the sounds – on the one hand, and by colours – on the other hand" (Kairiūkštis, 1938, p. 37). By summarizing Čiurlionis' art, Kairiūkštis assesses him as a representative of symbolism who is not used to abstract shapes, lines, colours:

Here you can see one feature of Čiurlionis: music images and impressions occur in his paintings not as abstract lines, spots of colours and forms (as it can be reflected in painting of some other subsequent artists, for instance, in works of Kandinsky), but these impressions of music and images for him always connect with nature, with nature elements and effects; and not so much with the colours - their variety and intensity, but with linear, graphical form of the outside world, I would say, with architectonics of the nature and objects, with graphical rhythm of natural forms and with poetic (literary) symbolism (*ibid.*, p. 37).

Mikalojus Vorobjovas is at that time an exceptional voice in Čiurlionis research. His monograph *M. K. Čiurlionis. Der litauische Maler und Musiker* (Kaunas, 1938) – is the first serious attempt physically and intellectually to return Čiurlionis' art to the context of European art. Unfortunately, this work did have a great impact on the local (Lithuanian) art critics – the work was not published in the official language, and in addition it was published just before the World War II (1938). As a result, one can agree with the opinion of the painter Justinas Vienožinskis (1886-1960) expressed in 1935, that during the second discussed period 'Čiurlionis' art in Lithuania was too little studied and the origin of his creative works and the process were not analysed at all (Vienožinskis, 1970, p. 137, cited by Mikalojus Vorobjovas, 2012, p. 11).

The monograph of Vorobjovas was specially written in German language since it was firstly intended for the European audience. The author personally sent his book to various art and science institutions and received favourable evaluations. These evaluations revealed that issue of Čiurlionis art in the European context is relevant and meaningful. Mikalojus Vorobjovas was the first who discussed the cultural environment of Čiurlionis by aptly incorporating him into the global context of *modern* of the beginning of twentieth century:

Čiurlionis is not bound by any programmatic art trend, but remarkably, completely independently he represents a 'modern', which radical idealism at the turn of the century conquered all creative areas and, as determined due to worldview, that period sense of artistic form (Vorobjovas, 2012, p. 22).

Rooting the worldview of Čiurlionis in the deep national identity of the artist and closeness to nature – the typical Lithuanian *primal mystical* survival – the art critic marks the trajectory of Čiurlionis' creative development which transcended the boundaries of nationality and acquired *exclusive meaning in the entire European space spirit* before the World War I (*ibid.*) and formulates the idea of four contextuality stages defining creation of the artist.

The first stage comprises what is given to the artist, which is formed from the inborn features and early childhood experience, and impressions. This experience is acquired without personal reflection and is natural as the character traits of the artist. The second is the rational accumulation phase, mostly concerned with the artist's study period when intensive and systematic accumulation and formation of knowledge takes place. This stage is very important, but this period still does not reflect active reflection of the artist. The third stage comprises the impressions and

selected personal experience of the artist, based on their emotional impact and marked by strong reflection, considerations and evaluations. The fourth contextuality field is a natural cultural field which implies genre, style, prevailing forms and creative ideas of that times. Vorobjov was the first of researchers of Čiurlionis who also sought to mark Čiurlionis' spiritual (on the basis of Šalkauskis and Ivanov insights) and stylistic creative relations, clearly visible from already emerging historical perspective, with artistic phenomena of that time and other periods, also starting the studies of contextual approaches to Čiurlionis.

Vorobjov returned to the theme of Čiurlionis' art context in his dissertation *Era of Modernism in European Art*, written during the World War II in Vilnius University. The art critic relates Čiurlionis with modernism movement in Europe and also comments that the artist succeeded to avoid too excessive modernist decorative and other narrowing aspects of creativity. Vorobjov writes:

To be sure, Čiurlionis cannot be wholly accommodated within the confines of Modernism. Whatever remains outside, however, might constitute precisely that which is most essential: the profound originality of Čiurlionis' unique, inimitable creative personality that leads to the art of a distant future, to the timeless realm of the ever recurring artistic nature, a realm in which Čiurlionis encounters William Blake, some of the German landscape artists of the Romantic era, masters of the Far East, and dilettantes of genius in painting, such as Victor Hugo (*ibid.*, pp. 208-9).

The third period (1945–1990). The third period of Čiurlionis' reception is characterized by the fact that at the same time two completely unrelated narratives of evaluation and interpretation of Čiurlionis art have evolved. It happened due to the artificial post-war isolation of Lithuania from the rest of the world, as well as the communist ideology and the doctrine of socialist realism established by the Soviet Union. The ideological tension of this period which was also prevailing in Čiurlionis' creative works of that time is best reflected in the collection of essays and sources edited by Stasys Goštautas *M. K. Čiurlionis. Painter and composer* (Vaga, 1994), which contains the main texts or their extracts of current Čiurlionis' creation.¹ Moreover, this collection was the first attempt to draw up the comparative table of the history of Lithuania, Čiurlionis' life, and the intellectual, as well as cultural, movements that, more or less, influenced Čiurlionis' creation (Goštautas, 1994, pp. 12-23). This clarified the courses of migration of the artistic ideas and their interception.

The most important of accents of Čiurlionis' reception in the Western world of that time had become the second Art Critics Congress, which took place in Paris in 1949. There, an Estonian art critic Aleksis Rannit (1914-1985) announced a hypothesis, stating that Čiurlionis is to be considered as the originator of the abstract art. This resulted in the heated discussions among the art critics, which occasionally

¹ *Čiurlionis: Painter and Composer. Collected Essays and Notes, 1906–1986*, ed. Stasys Goštautas, Vilnius: Vaga, 1994. The texts published in the book also include the previous periods of Čiurlionis's creation, from 1912 to 1986.

are recurring to the present day (Andriušytė-Žukienė, 2004, pp. 176-190). In the meantime in Lithuania, the art of Čiurlionis was criticized by the party ideologists that disproved any possible value of the artist (articles of K. Kamenskis, V. Mackevičius, J. Kuzmickas). Čiurlionis was assessed taking into consideration the Communist class conflict, he was called “the manifestation of bourgeois nationalism in Lithuania” and his creation was seen as “decadent and mystically symbolic”; moreover, Čiurlionis paintings were referred to as “chaotic mess of the disordered lines” (V. Venslova, 1953). After the death of Stalin (1953), the ideological criticism deteriorated (the moderation of the oppression of the overall policy of Soviet Union in 1965-1968 had an impact on this as well) and the promoters of the art of Čiurlionis were able to commemorate the centenary of the artist with the weighty publications and exhibitions of his paintings. At this point one could distinguish three publications that disclosed the new creative horizons of contextuality in creation of Čiurlionis. First of all, it was the set of brother's letters and articles, framed by the sister of the artist Valerija Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (1886-1982) *M. K. Čiurlionis. About the music and the fine arts. Letters, notes, and articles* (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė, 1960). For the first time, the position and approach of the artist himself towards various events of the era, social phenomena, and search for aesthetic was revealed through the letters and articles. This allowed a closer look at the creative workshop of the artist; moreover, it provided new approach to the evaluation of factors that influenced his aesthetic experience, decisions, as well as choices. Another important publication – bibliography of Čiurlionis (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė, 1970), drawn up by Čiurlionytė-Karužienė and the co-authors (Simonas Egidijus Juodis, Vladas Žukas). The sources that were collected and brought together revealed a particularly broad and multiple prospect of Čiurlionis creation. The third particularly significant book of the period under consideration is the memoirs of the youngest sister of the artist Jadvyga Čiurlionytė (Čiurlionytė, 1970). This is a very important document, evoking the authentic environment of Druskininkai of that era, as well as the landscape of the family. Extremely attractive portraits of family members and their characteristics, as well as the peculiarities of their communication, their daily routines, holidays, and works, are presented here. The facts of Čiurlionis life and creative works, and various stories, as well as the memories of the family, have revealed uniquely a wide range of interests, inclinations, hobbies, and experiences of the artist himself that led to the better understanding of the origins of creation of Čiurlionis and factors that played a key role in it - the family environment, nature in Druskininkai and Lithuania, art and cultural centers (cities), the most famous philosophers and artists of the time.

During this creative period of Čiurlionis, in the terms of contextuality, the first memories of Valerija Čiurlionytė-Karužienė, recorded in 1971 when she visited Chicago, are important as well (the memories were published only in 2000; see Čiurlionis, 2000). The important fact is that these memories are focused on the creative process of Čiurlionis, as well as its origins; in addition to this, the creative integrity of artist's art-music is considered, as well as the relation between sound-color, and all of this is based on the observation of the creative work of elder brother:

The whole time he connected his painterly hours with music hours. Sometimes he used to paint and suddenly he abandoned this activity, coming into the next room [with the piano], [...] and he was compelled to try his contrived [art] tune of sonata, the movement of sonata in music (Pšibilskis, 2006, p. 232).

The memories of the composer's oldest sister Juzefa Sofija Čiurlionytė-Stulgaitienė rehearse some of the previously published details; however, they also reveal some new things. The aforementioned memories of Juzefa for the first time were published in 1951 in USA and reprinted in Lithuania only in 2006.² In these memories the family household environment, as well as the diversity of relationships and family stories regarding the creation of Čiurlionis, are presented. The religiousness of the family and the approach of Čiurlionis himself to religion and faith of the people are disclosed as well.

The national dimension of Čiurlionis and his creation is disclosed in the works of musicologist Jonas Bruveris, as well as in his book which was composed for the centenary of Čiurlionis (Bruveris, 1977). In the published articles aspects of the folkloric side and nationalist character of Čiurlionis predominate; however, the essential manifestations regarding the abstract art, avant-gardism, symbolism, and even mysticism in the creation of Čiurlionis that at the same time were discussed in the Western world, are not mentioned.

Particular attention in the contextuality studies of Čiurlionis should be paid to the musicologist Vytautas Landsbergis. He was one of the first who issued and based the question of art synthesis (Landsbergis, 1965), revised the chronology of his paintings and musical works (Landsbergis, 1976), identified and specified plenty of biographical details, especially during the period of living in Warsaw (Landsbergis, 1980), and in addition to this, for the first time he formed the list of musical compositions of Čiurlionis that was scientifically based (Landsbergis, 1986).

Despite the question regarding the originator of abstract art which was raised by Rannit, the context that formed ideological-spiritual world of Čiurlionis' creative works became very important in the Western world. The art critics living in Lithuanian emigration (exile) formed the ideological counterweight to the texts published in Lithuania often emphasizing the other aspects of Čiurlionis' creation that were "not visible" in Lithuania - the religious symbols that were characteristic in his creation, spontaneity of visions, idealism, Theosophical influence, individualism, as well as the tendency to abstraction. In this respect, two articles should be noted: the article of J. Žilevičius covering the expanses of studies of M. K. Čiurlionis, as well as his area of interests (Žilevičius, 1950), and the article of Stasys Yla, dedicated for the centenary of Čiurlionis, in which the author identifies the fundamental sources of Čiurlionis creative works, "the religious rather than aesthetic relationship with the nature", which is typical for Lithuanians and the infinite idealism of the creator" (Yla, 1975).

In the monograph, published in 1986 by three authors, *Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis: Music of the Spheres* (Senn, 1986), the art critic E. Bowlt, when writing

² This is based on the text of 2006 (Pšibilskis, 2006).

about the painting of Čiurlionis and pursuing to determine the context of Čiurlionis art, continues the tradition of Vorobjov analysis, stating that: “Čiurlionis has to be considered as a key representative of Modernism in the Baltic countries and Eastern Europe”, and concludes that more comprehensive study of this cultural region is still waiting for its hour and that the aforementioned study will reveal the important contribution to the entire European art development in the twentieth century which is still lying dormant (cited by Goštautas, 1994, p. 250).

Other researchers working outside Lithuania had focused on the musicality of Čiurlionis painting as well. For example, in the article *The first painted fugue* (Metmenys, 1980) Genovaitė Kazokienė also derives the cyclical nature of Čiurlionis paintings from the musical thinking considering it as the origin of music typical phenomenon, such as continuous narrative and variation, in painting (Goštautas, 1994, p. 318). Several years later, Russian musicologist Vladimir Fedotov argued that the basis for the entire fine arts of Čiurlionis is the polyphonic thinking of Čiurlionis which has influenced all of the levels of painting expression, as well as its separate elements (Fedotov, 1989). Another researcher of Čiurlionis’ creation Andrea Botto takes completely opposite position, arguing that in Sonatas of Čiurlionis one should be looking not so much for the associations with music but for the immensity of manifestations of nature, the interest in the elements of folk art, and the relation with “mystical theories” (Botto, 1990).

The fourth period (1990 - 2015). With the latest, fourth period of research of Čiurlionis’ creation and its spread the particular renaissance of Čiurlionis has begun. His art as if returned to the European, as well as the world, context. This was achieved by exposing the art of Čiurlionis (especially fine arts) in international exhibitions of significant importance and resonance, as well as by organizing the retrospective exhibitions of the art of Čiurlionis in the most important European cultural centers. The first such exhibition, that predicted the start of new period of Čiurlionis creation, was organized in 1989 in Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum in Duisburg, (*Čiurlionis and Lithuanian painting 1900-1940*). It allowed Western art critics to access Čiurlionis paintings directly, without any prior ideological evaluations or comments. It was followed by a series of exhibitions, which become not only the recognition of Čiurlionis art in Europe but also the new step of contextual studies. In exhibitions where the paintings of Čiurlionis have been exhibited alongside the works of his contemporaries, both the uniqueness of Čiurlionis and the general features of that time have been revealed.³

³ In addition to Duisburg, since 1990 Čiurlionis’s creation has been exhibited in these major exhibitions: *Fantast and Mystic of Fin-de-Siècle Lithuania*, Tokyo, Sezon Museum of Art, 1992; *Okkultismus und Avantgarde: von Munch bis Mondrian, 1900 - 1915*, Frankfurt, Schirn Kunsthalle, 1995; *Die Welt als große Sinfonie. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875-1911)*, Köln, Oktagon-Verlag, 1998; *Cosmos. Del romanticismo a la vanguardia 1801-2001*, Barcelona, Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Institut d’Edicions, 1999; *M. K. Čiurlionis (1875 – 1911)*, Paris, Musée d’Orsay, 2000; *Le Symbolisme russe*, Bordeaux, Musée des Beaux Arts de, 2000; *Analogias musicales. Kandinsky y sus contemporaneos*, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid 2003; *Aux Origines de l’Abstraction (1800-*

If in the third period, which was identified by the ideological contradictions, it was intended to find and justify the place of Čiurlionis in the history of art, in the last period (1990) the obvious tendency for a more detailed look and a more comprehensive examination of the separate aspects of Čiurlionis' creation is emerging. However, the issue regarding the synthesis of arts remained fundamental. In the monograph of M. V. Fedotov, which was published in 1989 (Fedotov, 1989), the author does not just evaluate all the intertextuality studies of Čiurlionis' creation that were compiled before his study – he provides his own conception of the fact that the entire painterly legacy of Čiurlionis is based on his polyphonic thinking as well. This question is further developed by the Australian art critic of Lithuanian origin Genovaitė Kazokas. Her monograph *Musical paintings. Life and work of M. K. Čiurlionis* (Kazokas, 2009) is focused on two issues of the context of Čiurlionis' creation - the differences between the usage of metaphor and symbol in the painting of Čiurlionis and the influence of Lithuanian folklore on the Čiurlionis artistic language. The author of the monograph attempts to find the answer by detailed analysis of the painterly sonatas, where she discovers not only the archetypical forms and structures of music, manifestations of thematic and motivic development, but also reveals the parallels of modal plan and chromatic solution, as well as other aspects that are inherent to musical thinking only.

The studies of the art critic Rasa Andriušytė-Žukienė are very important in the aspect of contextuality. In her monograph published in 2004 (Andriušytė-Žukienė, 2004) she aims to define more precisely the position of Čiurlionis in the rapidly changing cultural map of Europe at the turn of the 20th century. This attempt is realized by comparison of Čiurlionis' and his contemporaries' creation and by the detailed analysis of the creation method. The monograph analyzes the aesthetic and ideological coherence of all the stylistic trends prevailing at the time in geographical crossroads of Germany-Poland-Russia-Lithuania in comparison with the creation of Čiurlionis.

The monograph of the Polish philologist Radosław Okulicz-Kozaryn published in 2009 *A Lithuanian among Heirs of the King-Spirit* (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2009) is very significant for the assessment of the source of Čiurlionis creation. The aforementioned monograph mainly analyses the Polish movement *Młoda Polska* and its influence, as well as the reflections, in the creation of Čiurlionis. According to the author of the book, the Polish period of Čiurlionis life and creation was directly influenced by this movement, and that this is the only way to explain many of the solutions (features) in the subsequent creation of Čiurlionis, its aesthetic and ideology.

During the last period of research of Čiurlionis' creation it can be observed that more comparative studies emerged and that they were more professional. Their purpose was to assess the influence of one or another artist, artistic movement, or the

1914), 2003; *Andererseits: Die Phantastik. Imaginare Welten in Kunst und Alltagskultur*, Wien, 2004; *Čiurlionis: Un viaggio esoterico 1875–1911*, A cura di Gabriella Di Milia e Osvaldas Daugelis, Milano: Mazzotta, 2010.

cultural phenomenon on the creation of Čiurlionis. Or vice versa – to determine the influence of Čiurlionis creation, as well as its meaning, on the other artists or on the complete cultural tradition. This is, for instance, in the monograph of the art critic Laima Petrusevičiūtė, where she provides and compares the comprehensive analysis of spiritual-creative worlds of Edvard Munch and Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, their topics and aesthetic aspirations, as well as the personal qualities of character; moreover, she discovers a lot of related aspects between the Lithuanian expression of the soul and Northern world of Munch (Petrusevičiūtė, 2008). In the viewpoint of music creation, these comparisons and influences are discovered in the monograph of musicologist Rimantas Janeliauskas *Unrecognized musical cycles of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis* (Janeliauskas, 2010). The author of the book analyzes the circularity of Čiurlionis' thinking and creation. The important new fact is that it seems as if Janeliauskas flips the direction of the vision to the opposite direction and claims that the cyclical nature of music derives from the parallels with painting cycles. That is how the previously unnoticed and spontaneously formed cycles of music creation are discovered. According to the author, the element of spontaneous cycle reveals a substantial characteristic of Čiurlionis creation.

The possibility of preparing the aforementioned studies during the last period of the research of Čiurlionis' creation was facilitated and even enabled by the works structuring and publicizing Čiurlionis creation. These were specifically: all of the musical works of Čiurlionis that were published during the period of 1993-2005 by the Petronis publisher; the catalogue prepared by musicologist Darius Kučinskas *Chronological Catalogue of Čiurlionis Music* (Kučinskas, 2007); and the album composed by art critic Milda Mildažytė-Kulikauskienė *Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis: drawings, sketches for compositions, graphics* (Mildažytė-Kulikauskienė, 2007). These fundamental works bring together all of the works of Čiurlionis, not even excluding those that remained in the form of sketches, thus allowing the detailed and very close look at the creative process and the work laboratory of Čiurlionis.

The contemporary contexts of Čiurlionis' creation and methods of research are best reflected by two forums of Čiurlionis' creation organized in recent years and the works that were published as consequence. It was the exhibition organized in National Gallery of Art in Vilnius in 2009 *Dialogues of Color and Sound. Works by Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis and his contemporaries* and the set of articles which was published by its organizers, as well as the topic and the content of reports of the international scientific conference *Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911): his time and our time* organized in Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in Vilnius in 2011 commemorating the centenary of the death of Čiurlionis. In the articles prepared for exhibition, the aspects of the era lived by Čiurlionis are studied; in addition to this, the artistic processes and interactions between music and painting are analyzed. Three stages of contextuality are revealed in the conference organized by musicians - pre-textual, textual, and post-textual. The pre-textual field of contextuality which is related to the formation of outlook is best exemplified by the article of Jonas Bruveris regarding the magnificence in the creation of Čiurlionis (Bruveris, 2013b).

In the aforementioned article, the author is very explicitly analyzing the reflections of the bible and religion in the creation of Čiurlionis. The pre-textual context is also studied by Jūratė Trilupaitienė discussing national relations between Lithuanians and Poles during the era of Čiurlionis and recognizing how suddenly the Lithuanian self-awareness changed from the year 1904 when Otonas Zaviša expressed his notion stating that, “we are left to think about the birthplace in Polish words but in Lithuanian thought”, to the year 1906 when A. Dambrauskas-Jakštas raised the slogan, “Lithuanian - is Lithuanian, Pole - is Pole, and the current Lithuania is where the Lithuanian language is spoken by Lithuanian people. The Pole cannot be Lithuanian, and Lithuanian cannot be Pole” (Trilupaitienė, 2013, p. 36). The publication includes many topics regarding the issues of intertextuality in Čiurlionis’ creation: Wiesna Mond-Kozłowska is analyzing the topic of Angel in the music and painting of Čiurlionis; Gerhard Lock, as well as Maris Valk-Falk, provides the cognitive perceptual analysis of simultaneous painting and musical work (symphonic poem *The Sea* and the cycle of paintings *Sonata of the Sea*); furthermore, Konstantinas Zenkinas discusses the general art foundations of Čiurlionis – the time structures in music and painting. The publications of Antanas Andrijauskas, as well as Finnish semiotician Eero Tarasti, should be more likely considered as the comparative essays of the broad philosophical-aesthetic nature where, through the modern analytical study methods and models, new perspectives of interpretations and research of Čiurlionis’ creation are revealed.

Summarizing the research of Čiurlionis’ creation that were conducted more than a hundred years and the aspect of contextuality that is revealed in such research, it can certainly be concluded that there are particular constant (or even unanswerable) questions regarding the creation of art: the question of art synthesis and the relationship between the painting and music in Čiurlionis’ creation; the relationship between spontaneity and rationality of creation itself; the logic of choices and decisions of the artist; aspects of nationality and modernity; and finally, the relationship between the innate genius of the artist and school, as well as the contextuality.

At the same time, it is possible to notice how, with the passage of time, the approach of researchers towards the art of Čiurlionis developed. The first researchers began from the pretty short list of possible influences, visualizing Čiurlionis as a lonely, unique artist having no influences from either side. He was in particular considered as the painter, who forsook the profession of musician, as the inadequate for his self-expression. In the middle of the 20th century, the polemic regarding the abstract art arose and in the break of the 21st century the contextuality, as it was noted by the art historian and anthropologist Joan M. Vaštokas, it was not confined solely to the research of the historical context, inasmuch as: “ from the point of view of systematic interpretation, the creative process involves a structure or constellation of at least three essential levels or spheres of significance – the ‘personal’, the ‘cultural’ and the ‘universal’” (Vaštokas, 1989, p. 233). According to Joan M. Vaštokas, while analyzing Čiurlionis, whom the author attributes to the third group (the artists, who

pay particular attention to the *universal* sphere), it is necessary to go beyond the boundaries of the historic contextuality and to look at their creation from the untrammelled by time human perspectives.

Although the research of Čiurlionis' creation is one of the most complete among all of the Lithuanian artists; however, even after a hundred years of research it is possible to notice that there are numerous gaps, especially when determining the factors that influenced his creative path (contextuality).

It is obvious that the compilation of a chronology of all the creative explorations of Čiurlionis could make a substantial contribution toward the aforementioned research; moreover, it would both allow the more detailed look at the migration of ideas of Čiurlionis, as well explaining the variety of stylistic parallels and the characteristics of creative thinking in the late music and art works of Čiurlionis.

2. *FIN DE SIÈCLE* IN EUROPE. LISZT, WHISTLER, DEBUSSY, JAPONISME AND SYNTHESIS OF THE ARTS

Čiurlionis lived in the time of *fin de siècle*, when the idea of synthesis of the arts penetrated through the European artistic world, and even became *Zeitgeist*. Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867)'s aesthetic of *Correspondences* fascinated many artists such as Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898), Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) and Claude Debussy (1862-1918) with inner resonances of various senses. Richard Wagner (1813-1883)'s idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* was showing the possibilities of collaboration of cross-genre arts. Even though there are different stories about the origin of the idea, it is regarded as the term first used by Wagner in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1849) to describe his concept of a work of art for the stage, based on the ideal of ancient Greek tragedy, to which all the individual arts would contribute under the direction of a single creative intention in order to express one decisive idea. By the late 19th century, the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* was accepted with enthusiasm in Symbolist and Post-Impressionist circles.

Around the same period, one of musical genres, symphonic poem was first introduced by Franz Liszt (1811-1886) as a piece of orchestral music of a Romantic movement which was inspired by literary, pictorial, and dramatic associations in music. The symphonic poem usually consist of one movement on a literary, poetic, or other extra-musical idea and it developed into an important form of programme music in the second half of the 19th century. Liszt applied descriptive terms to his 13 one-movement orchestral works and tried to combine features of the overture and symphony with descriptive elements, and produced a number of narrative, one-movement orchestral works such as *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*, *Les Préludes*, *Mazeppa*, *Hunnenschlacht*, *Hamlet* and *Von der Wiege bis zum Grabe*.

Other subsequent composers considered the symphonic poem as a suitable means for expressing nationalism in music. For example, Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884), composed a cycle of six symphonic poems entitled *Má vlast* [My Country] which describes scenes from the history and everyday life of his homeland Bohemia. Since then, the symphonic poem became as a popular means to illustrate their homeland by many composers of the time such as Dvořák, Suk, and Janáček. In Russia, the genre of symphonic poem became popular in the second half of the 19th century such as Balakirev, *Russia* in 1863–64 and *Tamara* in 1867–82; Tchaikovsky, *Fatum* [Destiny] in 1868; Borodin *In the Steppes of Central Asia* in 1880; Glazunov, *Stenka Razin* in 1885 and Rachmaninoff, *The Isle of the Dead* in 1909. In France, the symphonic poem was less popular as a means to express nationalism, but its well-established tradition of narrative and illustrative music, tracing back to Berlioz, meant that composers were attracted to the poetic elements of the symphonic poem. Some musical culture were influenced by Lisztian model from Germany in the 1870s such as: Saint-Saëns' *Le Rouet d'Omphale* (1871) and *Danse macabre* (1874), Duparc's *Lénore* (1875) and Dukas's *L'Apprenti sorcier* (1897), which handed down the genre into the 20th century in the work of Debussy, Roussel, Koechlin, Ibert, and others.

The most successful composer of the genre was Richard Strauss (1864-1949). As a pupil of Alexander Ritter, Strauss succeeded in its scale and its depth of expression, through a wide choice of subjects, excellent orchestration, vivid realism, and supremely skilful compositional crafts of thematic transformation. Strauss' symphonic poems manage to illustrate narrative, philosophical, pictorial, and even autobiographical themes, and include *Don Juan* (1888-9), *Tod und Verklärung* (1888-9), *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* (1894-5), *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1895-6), *Don Quixote* (1896-7), *Ein Heldenleben* (1897-8), and *Sinfonia domestica* (1902-3). It could be said these works by Strauss firmly established the genre of symphonic poem and they have retained their place and popularity in the concert repertory even in the current era.

In Paris, a symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé's famous Tuesday evenings gatherings had played a very important role for intellectuals of the time. Well-known poets, writers, painters and composers, such as Paul Verlaine, Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Claude Monet (1840-1926), Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Paul Gauguin and James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) and young Claude Debussy gathered at Mallarmé's house on the rue de Rome for discussions of poetry, art and philosophy; Enthusiasm for Wagner's music drama and interests for Japanese arts were shared among them. Especially Monet, Degas, Whistler and Debussy were regarded as ardent collectors of Japanese objects. *Japonisme* seemed to have been firstly introduced by them. Another idea of the search of the secret link between music and colour, which had been attempted by French poets such as Baudelaire, Verlaine and Mallarmé, seemed to have greatly inspired Whistler's artistic aim of the synthesis of the arts.

From the 1860s, after moving to London, Whistler attached unusual titles to his paintings such as *Symphony*, *Nocturne*, *Harmony*, *Variations* and *Arrangements*.⁴ The strong influence of the aesthetic of Baudelarian *Correspondances* is appreciable in these musically-titled paintings.

Even though his works were bitterly criticized in the Whistler vs. Ruskin trial,⁵ he did not stop attaching musical titles to his works. The notorious trial took place in London in 1878; Whistler won over the media by insisting the idea of 'art for art's sake'. It was in order to prove British critics' incomprehension of his paintings. Whistler explained his use of the word 'nocturne' during the trial:

By using the word 'nocturne' I wished to indicate an artistic interest alone, divesting the picture of any outside anecdotal interest which might have been otherwise attached to it. A nocturne is an arrangement of line, form, and colour first (Merrill, 1992, p. 144; Also quoted by Ono, 2003, p. 72).

Whistler's aim was to achieve his idea of the synthesis of the arts. He attempted to express it by introducing musical titles in his series of *Nocturnes*. To fulfil his

⁴ The first painting with musical title was *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl* (1862), even the title "Symphony in White" was an afterthought to be used by the artist in 1872.

⁵ The trial was brought by Whistler over John Ruskin's critical attack on Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*. It took place on 25 and 26 November 1878.

artistic idea, innovative materials from an unknown foreign culture were required. That was fulfilled by Japanese *ukiyo-e*. By using totally different methods from those used in the West, Whistler attempted to accomplish his purely pictorial ideal similarly to music. He emphasised the beauty in the combination of forms, colours and lines, which directly attracts human senses like music.

In Whistler's *Nocturne: Blue and Gold – Old Battersea Bridge* (c. 1872-75) (pic. 1), we could see strong influence from Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)'s *Bamboo Quay by Kyōbashi Bridge* from "One Hundred Famous Views of Edo" (pic. 2). What inspired Whistler here was the unique composition adopting a bridge pier in the middle of the painting and the peculiar viewpoint from the river under its arches. These tactics were very innovative and unseen in Western paintings before. The characteristic faded blue tone evoking silence of the night was undoubtedly taken from Hiroshige's example.



Pic. 1. James Whistler. *Nocturne: Blue and Gold – Old Battersea Bridge*. 1872-1875.



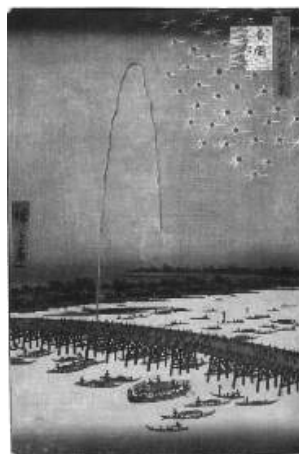
Pic. 2. Utagawa Hiroshige. *Bamboo Quay by Kyōbashi Bridge*

In Whistler's well-known painting, *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (1874) (pic. 3), pictorial ambiguity was drastically increased and it caused a great deal of controversy. Some resemblances with Hiroshige's *Fireworks at Ryōgoku* from "One Hundred Famous Views of Edo" (pic. 4) are also seen in the common subject matter and its rendering.⁶ Here Whistler learned how to express the "night music" by interweaving of black colour, light and shade.

⁶ These resemblances have been pointed out by many scholars: Child (1889), Pennell (1911) and Ono (2003).



Pic. 3. James Whistler. *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*. 1874



Pic. 4. Utagawa Hiroshige. *Fireworks at Ryōgoku*

Thus, the innovative motives from Hiroshige's *ukiyo-e* made it possible for Whistler to express his nocturnal idea that "a nocturne is an arrangement of line, form, and colour first" in his paintings. Here we could see how much Whistler got closer to musical thinking in art, which is a gateway to abstract paintings of the coming generation in the early 20th century.

On the other hand, a French composer of the same period, Debussy composed visually-associated music such as *Images*, *Estampes*, *Blanc et noir*. His works for piano are usually named with visually evocative titles such as *Reflets dans l'eau*, *Des pas sur la neige*, *Feux d'artifice*. Some pieces were even inspired by specific paintings or illustrations (*L'Isle joyeuse*, *Les Fées sont d'exquises danseuses*, *Ondine*).⁷

Like other artists, Debussy was deeply inspired by Baudelaire's aesthetics of *Correspondences* and composed five songs after Baudelaire's poems from *Les Fleurs du mal*. In 1890, when Debussy's songs *Cinq Poèmes de Charles Baudelaire* were performed, Mallarmé was attending by chance and was very impressed by his music. The following year, Debussy was invited to the Mallarmé's famous Tuesday evenings gatherings of poets and painters. Since then Debussy became a regular visitor to the gathering. His famous *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* for orchestra (1892-94) was inspired by Mallarmé's poem *L'après-midi d'un faune* and later formed the basis for the ballet choreographed by Vaslav Nijinsky (1890-1950) in 1912.

An orchestral work of Debussy which was entitled *Nocturnes* (1897-99) is an elaborated combination of three pieces, *Nuages* [Clouds], *Fêtes* [Festivals] and *Sirènes* [Sirens]. Even though the work is entitled *Nocturnes*, this is quite different

⁷ It has been thought that *L'Isle joyeuse* was inspired by Antoine Watteau (1684-1721)'s painting, and *Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses* and *Ondine* were inspired by Arthur Rackham (1867-1939)'s book illustrations respectively.

from ordinary nocturnes of what by John Field and Chopin. In Debussy's *Nocturnes*, there is no sentimental easiness, rather it is coloured by the vague mood of Verlainian spleen and misty atmosphere of greyish tone. Even though no conclusive evidence was found, some scholars had suspected direct influence from Whistler's *Nocturnes* paintings in Debussy's. Debussy himself wrote about the work as follows:

The title *Nocturnes* is to be interpreted here in a general and, more particularly, in a decorative sense. Therefore, it is not meant to designate the usual form of the *Nocturne*, but rather all the various impressions and the special effects of light that the word suggests. *Nuages* renders the immutable aspect of the sky and the slow, solemn motion of the clouds, fading away in grey tones lightly tinged with white. *Fêtes* gives us the vibrating, dancing rhythm of the atmosphere with sudden flashes of light. There is also the episode of the procession (a dazzling fantastic vision), which passes through the festive scene and becomes merged in it. But the background remains persistently the same: the festival with its blending of music and luminous dust participating in the cosmic rhythm. *Sirènes* depicts the sea and its countless rhythms and presently, amongst the waves silvered by the moonlight, is heard the mysterious song of the *Sirens* as they laugh and pass on.⁸

Debussy's words such as 'decorative sense', 'the special effects of light', 'the immutable aspect of the sky and the slow, solemn motion of the clouds, fading away in grey tones lightly tinged with white', 'the vibrating, dancing rhythm of the atmosphere with sudden flashes of light' and 'the waves silvered by the moonlight' can be read as his visual intention and evoked pictorial images of Whistler's *Nocturnes*. The grey tone of the orchestration colouring Debussy's music surely reminds us of Whistler's. Since both of Debussy and Whistler were attending Mallarmé's gatherings, it is considered that Debussy should take a strong interest into Whistler's ambitious series of paintings. Another clue could be read in the letter to Whistler by his friend Théodore Duret (1838-1927), a French art critic and a famous collector of *ukiyo-e*. Duret wrote of his impression when he listened to Debussy's *Nocturnes* to Whistler on 30 June 1903:

Have you heard of Debussy and of his nocturnes? After reproaching you so much for having borrowed from the language of music to apply it to painting, now music comes in search of inspiration from your – painting. How things come full circle! (University of Glasgow, 2011).

This letter proves that at least one of Debussy's contemporaries sharply noticed the hidden influence from Whistler's *Nocturnes* in Debussy's namesake work.

As mentioned above, Debussy was well-known as an ardent collector of Japanese arts and there were various Japanese objects in his house in Paris. In his working room, there was his favourite frog-shaped paper weight on the desk and were displayed several *ukiyo-e* on the wall, plates of Japanese lacquer and even a statue of Buddha.

⁸ The introductory text written by Debussy from the music score of *Nocturnes*. See Vallas (1973): 112.

His piano piece *Poissons d'or* has been believed to be inspired by a Japanese lacquerware panel of Golden Fish in his collection (pic. 5). There is a famous photo of Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) and Debussy, taken by Erik Satie (1866-1925) at Debussy's house in 1911 (pic. 6). On the wall we can recognise two framed *ukiyo-e* behind them. The upper one is Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849)'s famous *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* from "Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji" (pic. 7) and the lower one must be Kitagawa Utamaro's *Shizuka of the Tamaya House* from "Flourishing Beauties of the Present Day" (pic. 8).



Pic. 5. Golden Fish. Lacquerware panel, owned by Claude Debussy



Pic. 6. Claude Debussy and Erik Satie. Paris, 1911



Pic. 7. Katsushika Hokusai. *The Great Wave of Kanagawa*



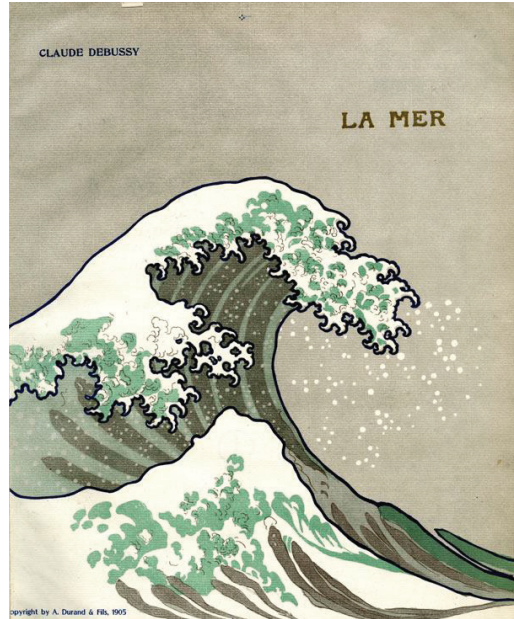
Pic. 8. Kitagawa Utamaro. *Shizuka of the Tamaya House*

Many scholars have discussed that Hokusai's "Great Wave" would possibly be the inspiration of Debussy's masterpiece *La Mer* (1903-05). This orchestral music is not conceived as a symphonic poem, but named as "Trois esquisses symphoniques," therefore, there are various opinions about the character of the sea depicted in it; is it the real sea, the sea depicted in some painting or, from composer's inner imagination, and so on.

What we can declare is that there is a fact that when *La Mer* was completed and the score was to be published by the publisher Durand in 1905, Debussy himself requested to adopt Hokusai's "Great Wave" on its cover (pic. 9).⁹

In the letter to Jacques Durand, Debussy mentioned not only the contents of the score but also the detail of the cover design.¹⁰ Debussy was obviously taking initiative with the cover design. At least, it is certainly deduced that Debussy should have recognized Hokusai's "Great Wave" as a suitable image for his own endlessly dynamic sea music.

Thus, we could have seen that in the time of *fin de siècle*, intellectuals such as poets, writers, painters and composers were influenced each other and was seeking the direction towards the synthesis of the arts over their own artistic genres all over Europe.



Pic. 9. Claude Debussy. *La Mer*. Score with a Hokusai's picture used on front cover. 1905

⁹ Jacques Durand (1865-1928) himself described the episodes about Debussy and *La Mer* in his memoirs in 1924-25.

¹⁰ Lesure (1987): 158. "P.S. Do you like the shiny outlines they've given the waves on the cover of *La Mer*?"

3. ČIURLIONIS AND WARSAW

3.1. Time, Place, and People around Čiurlionis in Poland

Čiurlionis lived in Warsaw for just more than 10 years in total. Warsaw was one of the main centres of music and art in Eastern Europe where Čiurlionis encountered authentic music and art of the world for the first time and nurtured his basic abilities as a composer as well as painter.

The most influential person in Warsaw was the composer Zygmunt Noskowski (1846-1909). In 1899 to 1894, Čiurlionis studied composition with him at the Warsaw Institute of Music and absorbed the most advanced composition skills. As a result, Čiurlionis' symphonic poem *In the Forest* received an Honourable Mention from the Maurycy Zamoyski Competition in Warsaw in 1901.

During his life, Čiurlionis composed five symphonic poems: *In the Forest* (1900-01); *The Sea* (1903-07); *The Creation of the World* (unfinished) (1907-10); *Poem in C major* (unfinished) (1907) and *Dies irae* (unfinished) (1910). The symphonic poem became one of his most favourite musical genres throughout his life. In those works, he tried to express nationalism with fragments of Lithuanian folk songs. His first teacher of composition Noskowski at the Warsaw Institute of Music had a great talent in Poland of the second half of the 19th century especially in songs and symphonic music in which many of Polish expressions were found. A song *Skowroneczek śpiewa* [A Skylark is Singing] in the rhythm of a cracovienne which even today is considered to be one of his best songs. He won his first composer's laurels with the *Cracoviennes* (for piano, four-handed), which roused Liszt's admiration when he played them together with Noskowski who paid Liszt a visit in Weimar. Noskowski's symphonic music followed rather traditional trends. The first of his three symphonies was first performed at a concert in Berlin in 1875. The other two were programme symphonies, *Elegiac Symphony in C minor* and *Od wiosny do wiosny* [From Spring to Spring]. The most important of his symphonic music is his concert overture *Step* [The Steppes] or rather, to be quite precise, the first – alongside Moniuszko's *The Tale* – Polish symphonic poem, which for years was the most representative piece of Polish symphonic music. The programme basis of this composition was provided by the description of a Ukrainian steppe in the novel *With Fire and Sword* by Henryk Sienkiewicz, the Nobel Prize winner (Ochlewski (ed.), 1979, p. 95).

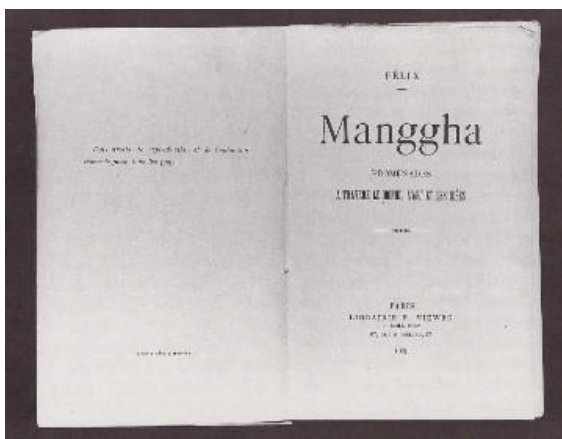
Therefore, it is natural to consider that Noskowski's symphonic poems were much influenced by those of Liszt, which were at the cutting edge of the time. Together with Noskowski's patriotism, this trend must have come down to Čiurlionis. Even though their countries were different, he also tried to illustrate his homeland Lithuania through the genre of symphonic poems.

The second Warsaw influence came from members of the *Młoda Polska* [Young Poland] movement, the young painters who almost all studied in Paris, London, Munich or Vienna and absorbed the aesthetics of *Japonisme* in these cities. Even though, Čiurlionis never visited Paris or London, he could absorb the art trend of the time of *fin de siècle* from their paintings.

The third influential person in Warsaw was the wealthy collector Feliks Jasiński (1861-1929, pic. 10) and his Japanese arts collection. Even though, Čiurlionis did not meet Jasiński directly, he encountered two epoch-making exhibitions of Japanese arts held in Warsaw in the end of his stay in the city. And the concept of Japanese arts influenced his paintings throughout his life. The first exhibition was of Japanese *ukiyo-e* printings held in J. Kriwult's salon in 1900-01 and the second, an exhibition of Jasiński's famous collection of Japanese arts, was at the beginning of 1901. (Alber. 1990, pp.14-17).



Pic. 10. Feliks Jasiński



Pic. 11. Feliks Jasiński's book "Manggha". 1901

Jasiński was a dedicated Japanese arts collector who brought back an abundant collection of Japanese artworks from Paris to Poland. Jasiński had stayed in Paris from the mid-1880s where he encountered arts from all over the world, and was especially fascinated by Japanese art. His stay in Paris gave him the opportunity to become acquainted with the latest aesthetic trends, and this experience increased his enthusiasm for collecting oriental art. At the same time, he promoted Japanese art in Poland by holding exhibitions and contributing many articles to major journals. He published a book titled *Manggha, Promenades à travers les mondes, l'art et les idées* (1901, pic. 11). The name of "Manggha" is naturally taken from *Hokusai Manga*. Jasiński also used "Manggha" as his own nickname. His collection of oriental art, donated to the National Museum in Krakow in 1920, consisted of 15,000 objects in total including 6,000 Japanese works. Jasiński considered the 4,500 *ukiyo-e* prints to be "the most elegant and powerful expression of human spirit" (Martini, 1999, pp. 162-166).

The name of Hokusai often appeared in the famous French art magazine *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in 1870s. The earliest example was an article "Le Japon à Paris" written by Ernest Cheneau (1833-1890) for the commemoration of the Exposition Universelle in Paris 1878. In the article, Cheneau mentioned the characteristics of Japanese art and acclaimed it highly. He especially referred to 15 volumes of *Hokusai*

Manga and emphasized the flat and unsymmetrical expressions of Japanese art which cannot be seen in Western art. Even though the word 'manga' is regarded as Japanese 'comics' or 'cartoon' nowadays, it was originally used for expressing fanciful and satirical drawings in the Edo period.

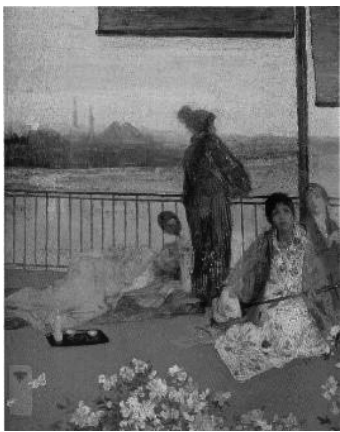
Hokusai had started drawing in autumn 1812 and drew over 300 sketches during half a year. The sketches were published in handbook form as *Hokusai Manga* in 1814 and gained a favourable reception. Originally it was conceived as a reference work for art students, but it became a bestseller at the time and had been published posthumously by 1878 in a total of fifteen volumes, consisting of 970 pages with over 4000 illustrations. *Hokusai Manga* consists of various illustrations from everyday life of human beings, manners and customs, plants and animals, and apparitions in different styles such as caricatures, satirical drawings, multiple-panel illustrations, and narrative depictions, which undoubtedly became the source of inspirations for 'manga' as it is understood nowadays. There was an anecdote about *Hokusai Manga* that it was first brought to Europe with *ukiyo-e* prints as cushioning material for ceramics in 1830s and gradually came to the attention of artists.

In the next section, we would like to analyse paintings influenced by *Japonisme* by members of *Młoda Polska* in detail and then, a process how Čiurlionis took the trend into his paintings.

3.2. Analysis 1: Japonisme in paintings of members of Młoda Polska and Čiurlionis influenced by Japanese ukiyo-e via Impressionists paintings

Painters in Mallarmé's famous Tuesday evenings gathering, such as Whistler, Monet and Van Gogh, whose works were deeply influenced by *Japonisme*, passed this on to members of the *Młoda Polska* movement as well as to Čiurlionis. It is well-known that Whistler was an ardent collector of Japanese objects of art and we can easily recognise many Japanese motifs such as *kimonos* and ceramics in his paintings. Around the same time as Whistler, painters such as Édouard Manet (1832-1883), James Tissot (1836-1902) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) were fascinated by Japanese arts as early as the 1860s; however, adopting exotic motifs as eagerly as others, Whistler was outstanding in his originality in consciously introducing the manner of composition peculiar to Japanese art in order to realise his own artistic ideas.

First of all, here are Whistler's paintings influenced by Japanese *ukiyo-e*. There are obvious resemblances between his painting *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green: The Balcony* (1864/70) (pic. 12) and Torii Kiyonaga (1752-1815)'s *ukiyo-e*, *June* from "Twelve Months in the South" (diptych) (c. 1784, pic. 13). Not only introducing Japanese objects into the painting such as *kimonos*, *shamisen* (a guitar-like instrument) and *uchiwa* (paper fan), Whistler also adopted a whole compositional scheme and scenic setting which takes a broad view from the high ground to the surface of the water. The vertical and horizontal structural outline, a woman who is leaning against the fence and even the Japanese *sudare* (bamboo blind) hanging from the ceiling were surely inspired by Kiyonaga's *ukiyo-e*.



Pic. 12. James Whistler. *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green: The Balcony*. 1864-1870



Pic. 13. Torii Kiyonaga. *June*. 1784

Many Polish painters from the *Młoda Polska* movement studied abroad and were inspired by the aesthetics of *Japonisme* and painted works *à la japonaise*. Sometimes the influence of *Japonisme* was absorbed through paintings by the Impressionists. For example, Whistler's influence can be found in paintings by two Polish painters. One was Olga Boznańska (1865-1940), who studied art in Munich and was active in Krakow and Paris as a follower of French impressionism. Several Japanese artefacts can be seen in her paintings, such as in her *Japanese Woman* (1889, pic. 15), in which an influence from Whistler's *Symphony in White No. 2* (1864, pic. 14) is present in the white dress and typical Japanese *uchiwa*. Another was Wojciech Weiss (1875-1950), who studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow: his *Róża in Kimono* (Date unknown, pic. 16) shows a distant echo of Whistler's famous portrait.



Pic. 14. James Whistler. *Symphony in White No. 2*. 1864



Pic. 15. James Whistler. *Japanese Woman*. 1889



Pic. 16. Wojciech Weiss. *Róża in Kimono*. Undated

In his *Musicians* (1904, pic. 17), we can easily recognize the influence of Whistler's *Nocturne: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge* (c. 1872-75, pic. 18), the reminiscence of the famous *ukiyo-e*, Hiroshige's *Bamboo Quay by Kyōbashi Bridge* from "One Hundred Famous Views of Edo" (1857, pic. 19).



Pic. 17. Wojciech Weiss.
Musicians. 1904



Pic. 18. James Whistler.
Nocturne: Blue and Gold – Old Battersea Bridge. 1872-1875

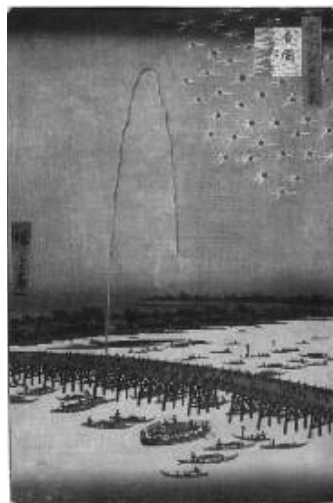


Pic. 19. Utagawa Hiroshige.
Bamboo Quay by Kyōbashi Bridge

Similar to Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (1874) (pic. 20), Čiurlionis' *Sketch for a Composition* (1908, pic. 22) shows strong influence from the above-mentioned Hiroshige's *Fireworks at Ryōgoku* (1856-58, pic. 21). In the Čiurlionis' sketch, a person on a ship is looking at the sky with stars. The depiction of the stars seems remarkably similar to Hiroshige's depiction of fireworks. Moreover, Čiurlionis turned over the stars into his "Allegro" from *Sonata No. 5 (Sonata of the Sea)* (1908, pic. 23). What noteworthy here is that, like Whistler's example, Čiurlionis provided a musical title "Allegro" from *Sonata No. 5 (Sonata of the Sea)* for the painting. From this point of view, Čiurlionis may have known Whistler's paintings, probably under the same influence as above-mentioned Polish painters of *Młoda Polska*.



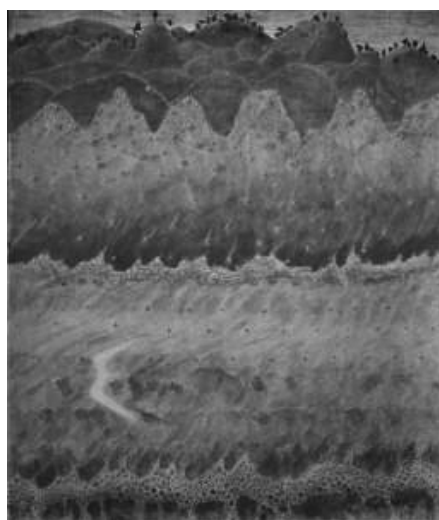
Pic. 20. James Whistler. *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*. 1874



Pic. 21. Utagawa Hiroshige. *Fireworks at Ryōgoku*



Pic. 22. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Sketch for a Composition*. 1908



Pic. 23. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Allegro from Sonata No. 5 (Sonata of the Sea)*. 1908

Another Impressionist painter who further influenced painters in Poland and Čiurlionis was Monet. Here is his *Poplars in the Sun* (1891, pic. 24). The two-dimensional arrangement of a line of trees, through which the distant view is partly seen, has been unanimously regarded as influenced by Hokusai's, *Hodogaya on the Tōkaidō* from "Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji" (c. 1830-32, pic. 25). Similar examples are easily found among Impressionist and Post-Impressionist landscape

paintings (Mabuchi 1997, p.131). In Čiurlionis' *Summer I* from the triptych (1907, pic. 26) we can recognise the analogous composition of trees. Is it possible to regard it as influenced by *ukiyo-e*? As mentioned above, Čiurlionis surely saw the exhibitions of *ukiyo-e* in Warsaw about 1900. *Japonisme* was a trend among young Polish artists and they attempted to adopt innovative techniques learned from *ukiyo-e*. The compositional scheme which shows distant views through trees was also tried by Polish painters contemporary with Čiurlionis' such as Jan Stanisławski (1860-1907)'s *Poplars on the Water* (1900, pic. 27), Stanisław Kamocki (1875-1944)'s *View over the Monastery at Czerna* (1908, pic. 28), and Ferdynand Ruszczyc (1870-1936)'s *Winter Tale* (1904, pic. 29).



Pic. 24. Claude Monet.
Poplars in the Sun.
1891



Pic. 25. Katsushika Hokusai.
Hodogaya on the Tōkaidō.
1830-1832



Pic 26. Mikalojus
Konstantinas Čiurlionis.
Summer. 1907



Pic. 27. Jan
Stanisławski. *Poplars
on the Water.* 1900



Pic. 28. Stanisław Kamocki.
*View over the Monastery at
Czerna.* 1908



Pic. 29 Ferdynand Ruszczyc.
Winter Tale. 1904

Another influence by the same *ukiyo-e* on Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) and Čiurlionis is Hiroshige. Let's look at Van Gogh's *Japonaiserie: Bridge in the Rain*

(after Hiroshige) (1887, pic. 30). He became interested Japanese *ukiyo-e* in 1885 when he still lived in Arnhem. In Antwerp he decorated the walls of his studio with *ukiyo-e* prints. After he moved to Paris at the end of February in 1886, he often visited the famous antique shop of Siegfried Bing (1839-1905) on the rue de Province and collected hundreds of *ukiyo-e* together with his brother Theo. At that time he made three copies of *ukiyo-e*: *The Courtesan* after Keisai Eisen (1790-1848), and two other studies after Hiroshige. One of these examples is shown here from Hiroshige's *Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake* from "One Hundred Famous Views of Edo" (1857, pic. 32).

After 1889, Van Gogh spent his final years at a sanatorium in Saint-Paul-de-Mausolée in southern France. From a window of his room he could see a field of wheat, which he drew in his paintings almost twelve times. "This picture [*Rain* (1889, pic. 31)] of the wheat field during a rainstorm is the only work of its kind he did in the South, and while the idea of representing rainfall by diagonal slashes of paint clearly relates to Van Gogh's interest in Japanese prints, the final effect is completely personal and well beyond any borrowed source. There is truly nothing quite like it in his considerable output truly nothing so gently and objectively observed, nothing so completely revealing his own state of mind" (Rishel, 1995, p. 203).

The depiction of the rain from dark sky by black lines seems to be made by Van Gogh for the first time among Impressionists. Furthermore, it is interesting that similar expression can be seen in Čiurlionis' *Summer* (1907, pic. 33). Even though it is more ambiguous and not in straight lines, the rain lines from dark sky could be regarded as an influence from Hiroshige's *ukiyo-e* print or Van Gogh's paintings.



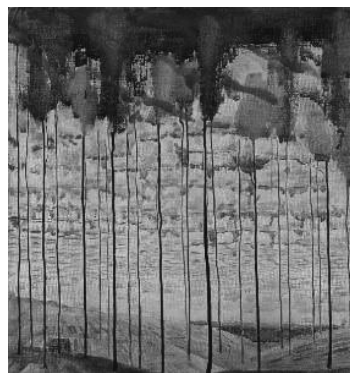
Pic. 30. Van Gogh. *Bridge in the Rain* (after Hiroshige). 1887



Pic. 31. Van Gogh. *Rain*. 1889



Pic. 32. Utagawa Hiroshige. *Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake*. 1857



Pic. 33. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Summer*. 1907

A direct influence from Japanese illustration could also be admitted in paintings by Ferdynand Ruszczyk (1870-1936), who was from a Polish-Danish family, lived in Lithuania and completed his studies at the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg. Later in 1904, he established Warsaw Art Academy, together with other artists, where Čiurlionis studied. He encountered Japanese art at an exhibition during his studies there. According to his letters to Jasieński, he was especially fascinated by Hiroshige's *ukiyo-e* landscapes and adopted his way of depiction in his own paintings (Martini 1999, pp. 172-177). In his *Winter Fairy Tale* (1904, pic. 29), the snowscape itself suggests the influence of Japanese art, and the resemblance of the shapes of the branches to an illustration from *Hokusai Manga* (pic. 34) is hardly accidental. Interestingly, a similar representation of a tree appears in Čiurlionis' etching *Leafless Tree* (1905-06, pic. 35).

Some paintings shown below are just the hypothetical examples that suggest that Čiurlionis seems to have referred some compositional and representational ideas from *Hokusai Manga* of Jasieński's Japanese art collections.



Pic. 34. Katsushika Hokusai. *Manga*



Pic. 35. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Leafless Tree*. 1905-1906

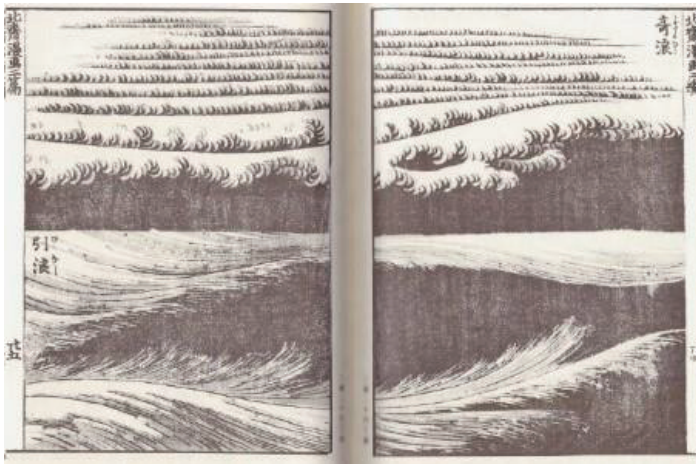
Čiurlionis' painting, *The Sea* (1906, pic. 36) could be considered to be drawn under the influence of an illustration depicting the waves of the sea in *Hokusai Manga* (pic. 38). What is interesting here is that Čiurlionis turned the waves into the field of wheat in his other painting, *Adoration of the Sun* (1909, pic. 37) in which he depicts the shade of an elephant implying an Asian image in the background of the painting. Waves are a basic motif for painters, so it cannot be said with absolute certainty, but the shapes of the waves show considerable similarity in these works by Čiurlionis and Hokusai.



Pic. 36. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis.
The Sea. 1906



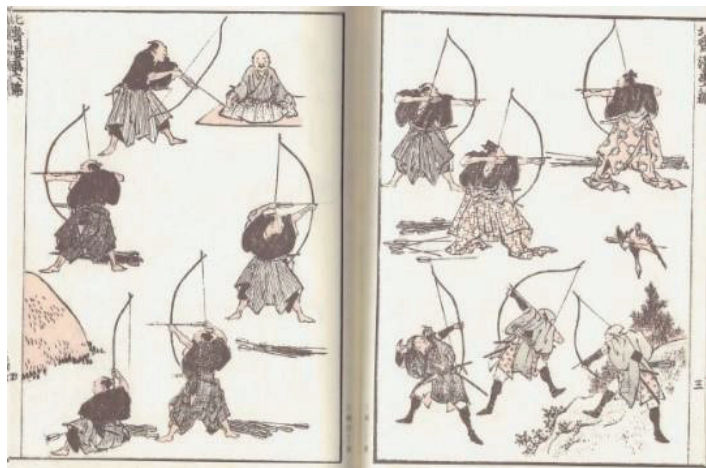
Pic. 37. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis.
Adoration of the Sun. 1909



Pic. 38. Katsushika Hokusai. *Manga*

Some parts of *Hokusai Manga* consist of illustrations from people's movements in everyday life. Two pages are devoted exclusively to showing people bending bows with Japanese-style archery (*kyūdo*) (pic. 39). Čiurlionis also left sketches of people who are bending bows with Western style archery in his *Sketches for Sagittarius and Scorpio* from cycle of 12 paintings "The Zodiac" (1906, pic. 40), completed as *The Sun is Passing the Sign of Sagittarius* (1906/ 07, pic. 41). Even though, there are

different styles of archery in Japan and the West, the fact that both Hokusai and Čiurlionis depicted the movement of people bending bows shows an interesting conceptual coincidence between East and West.



Pic. 39. Katsushika Hokusai. *Manga*



Pic. 40. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. Sketches for Sagittarius and Scorpio. 1907



Pic. 41. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *The Sun is Passing the Sign of Sagittarius*. 1907

Thus, we could see that the artistic trend of *Japonisme* was quite influential to such an extent that gave influence on Polish painters via Impressionists in an indirect way. It is natural to deduce that Čiurlionis also adopted the same setting *à la japonaise*, inspired directly by Japanese arts or indirectly through the examples of Polish artists.

3.3. Analysis 2: Contextuality of *Japonisme* in Čiurlionis' paintings

Even though Čiurlionis seemed to have met Japanese art in Warsaw for the first time, he had many opportunities to see them throughout his life. He was educated both as composer and painter in Warsaw and undertook further compositional studies in Leipzig. He travelled to Prague, Dresden, Nuremberg, Munich, and Vienna in 1906. He moved some years later to St. Petersburg to meet Russian artists. Though, Čiurlionis never visited London and Paris, where the world expositions were held, he had chances to encounter Japanese artworks directly and indirectly. Therefore, in this section, we would like to consider the contextuality of *Japonisme* in Čiurlionis' paintings throughout his life.

The most famous and well-appreciated *ukiyo-e* in Europe must have been Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* from the series of "Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji" (c. 1831-33, pic. 7). Because of its unforgettable uniqueness, Hokusai's masterpiece influenced many French artists including Georges Lacombe (1868-1916)'s *Blue Seascape, Effect of Wave* (c. 1893), Henri-Gustave Jossot (1866-1951)'s *The Wave* (1891) and Camille Claudel (1864-1943)'s *The Wave* or *The Bathers* (c. 1893-1903). Hokusai was praised as "one of the most outstanding artist in human history" by Louis Gonse (1841-1926), French art historian and chief editor of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, in his own journal in 1883. Hokusai's oeuvre was thoroughly described in several books such as *Hokusai* (1896) by Edmond de Goncourt (1822-1896), and *Etude sur Hokusai* (1896) by Michel Revon (1867-1947). It is a well-known fact that an English painter and illustrator Walter Crane (1845-1915) "introduced new levels of artistic sophistication to the art of illustration: after c. 1870 his designs show the influence of Japanese prints in the use of flat areas of colour and simple, often asymmetrical compositions, and of classical sculpture in the figures and draperies" (Newall, 2007-2013). The influence of Hokusai's *Great Wave* could be obviously seen in Crane's famous painting, *Neptune's Horses* (1892). Čiurlionis adopted the similar "Great Wave" motive in his painting "Finale" from *Sonata No. 5 (Sonata of the Sea)* (1908, pic. 42).

The most unique and extraordinary feature in this picture is that he put his initials "MKČ" in the middle of the wave. Incidentally, the similar motive of "Great Wave" could be seen in Russian Ivan Bilibin (1876-1942)'s illustration for the picture book, *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* by Aleksandr Pushkin (1905), published three years before Čiurlionis' painting. It clearly shows that Hokusai's masterpiece had been well known among the artists of *Mir Iskusstva* in St. Petersburg too.

Even though Japanese ceramics were imported and appreciated as a part of *chinoiserie* in the time of Louis XIV of France, the major influence of Japanese art was only possible after the end of the *Sakoku* policy which strictly limited foreign exchanges in Japan from the 17th to the middle of the 19th century. The first major opportunities to introduce Japanese arts in Europe were the International Exhibition in London (1862) and the Exposition Universelle in Paris (1867). Simultaneously, several merchants in Paris and London actively imported Japanese artworks including *ukiyo-e*. From 1870s onward, Japanese art fascinated European artists such as Whistler,

Beardsley, Manet, Degas, Monet, Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Klimt. They unanimously valued Japanese *ukiyo-e* highly, not only because of its exotic motifs but also because of its unusual modes of artistic representation. One important source of inspiration for those artists was an art magazine *Le Japon artistique* edited by Siegfried Bing (1838-1905) published in 36 volumes in total in 1888-91. The magazine consisted of articles on Japanese arts written by specialists with illustrations of *ukiyo-e*, ink paintings, ceramics and many other handiworks from the Edo period.

The influence of Japanese art on Čiurlionis' paintings was firstly argued by a Japanese researcher Ichiro Kato (1930-2003) in 1976. In his article, he pointed out that Čiurlionis' "Finale" from *Sonata No. 5 (Sonata of the Sea)* (1908, pic. 42) has similarities to Hokusai's, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* from "Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji" (c. 1831-33, pic. 7) and he presumed that it would be direct influence from the famous Japanese *ukiyo-e*. This theory has been received favourably and accepted generally as an established theory to the present. However, Kato did not consider how Čiurlionis came to know Hokusai's work. In the article, he also mentioned about similarity of colours between Čiurlionis' paintings and Japanese Buddhist pictorial art Mandala, and even invoked a Japanese aesthetic sense of *Wabi-sabi* [a sense of acceptance of transience and imperfection] irrelevantly. These comparisons are interesting enough however, there are only superficial resemblances and he did not clarify when and how Čiurlionis discovered Japanese art in factual contexts.

In Japan, art historians have researched on *Japonisme* from 1970s onwards and showed many remarkable achievements. However, the research by Kato was almost unrecognised in Japan because he did not have any connection with an academic society in Japan. Even though an excellent exhibition of Čiurlionis' paintings was held in Tokyo in 1992,¹¹ none of *Japonisme* specialists in Japan have tried to consider about the influence of *Japonisme* on Čiurlionis since then.

On the other hand, scholars of Čiurlionis' studies in Lithuania were stimulated by Kato's discovery and has started consider about the influence of Japanese or Oriental art on Čiurlionis' art. Researches by Antanas Andrijauskas (2003, 2011 and 2013) and



Pic. 42. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis.
Finale from *Sonata No. 5 (Sonata of the Sea)*

¹¹ Exhibition title "M. K. Čiurlionis: Fantast and Mystic of Fin-de-siècle Lithuania". Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo. From 7 March to 5 April 1992. 150 works in total were exhibited including 60 paintings.

Rasa Andriušytė-Žukienė (2004) were the major achievements, especially, the insightful theory proposed by Andrijauskas (2011 and 2013) in which he discussed the possibility of the influence from Chinese and Japanese ink wash paintings (*suibokuga*) on Čiurlionis. As examples he pointed out some common features between them, mentioning Shūbun's folding screen (*byōbu*) in the 15th century, *Landscape of the four seasons* (pic. 43), and Čiurlionis' "Allegro" from *Sonata No. 4* (*Sonata of Summer*) (1908, pic. 56) and *Summer II* (1907, pic. 44). However, these similarities seem not fully persuasive lacking substantive historical evidence. Similar to Kato's case, Andrijauskas' theory still remains hypothetical and requires more thoughtful consideration to prove how Čiurlionis could have known about such an old medieval Japanese *suibokuga*.



Pic. 43. Landscape of the four seasons. 15th century



Pic. 44. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Summer II*. 1907



Pic. 45. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Allegro* from *Sonata No. 4* (*Sonata of Summer*). 1908

We instinctively feel some sort of similarities between Čiurlionis' quasi-monochrome paintings such as "Allegro" from *Sonata No. 2 (Sonata of Spring)* (1907, pic. 45) and Chinese/ Japanese landscape paintings of *suibokuga*, however, there is no affirmative evidence which proves direct or indirect influence from Oriental art. Therefore, the possible influence from Japanese *ukiyo-e* on Čiurlionis' paintings will be considered only with materials which Čiurlionis actually had opportunities to see in all probability.

In fact, Čiurlionis' paintings contain complex mixtures of influences from various cultures and times. It is not an easy task to point out clear signs of the inspirations from each of them including *ukiyo-e* or adoptions of Japanese motifs in each individual work of Čiurlionis. The paintings described below are just the hypothetical examples that Čiurlionis seemed to have referred some compositional and representational ideas from *ukiyo-e*.

The contextuality of *Japonisme* in Čiurlionis' paintings will be considered in three stages: the first stage is partial borrowing of exotic *japonaiserie* motifs. The second is the stage of application of *ukiyo-e*'s pictorial schemes or whole compositions into his paintings, and finally, in the stage of borrowing and application, there appears the elaborate assimilation of *ukiyo-e*'s expressions into his own sublime style.

First, some examples of *japonaiserie* motifs in Čiurlionis' early paintings should be considered. In Čiurlionis', *Night*, from the cycle of 10 paintings "Fantasies" (1904/ 5, pic. 46), there is a depiction of a bridge whose peculiar shape strongly reminds us of the gate of a Japanese shrine (*torii*) such as we can see in Hiroshige's *The Fork of Akiba in Kakegawa* (1843-47, pic. 47). *Torii* is a very popular type of gate in Japan and is depicted in many other *ukiyo-e* prints. Therefore, Čiurlionis may have seen another example of this kind of *ukiyo-e*, and adopted it as a motif in his paintings.



Pic. 46. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Night*. 1904



Pic. 47. Utagawa Hiroshige. *The Fork of Akiba in Kakegawa*. 1843-1847

The next example of a motif shows a somewhat strange interest of Čiurlionis'. In *Spring Motif* (1907, pic. 48), the shapes of clouds are depicted in a very different way from his other paintings. It is most likely that Čiurlionis adopted the characteristic depiction of clouds from Hokusai's famous *Mount Fuji Viewed during a Fine Wind on a Clear Morning* from "Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji" (c. 1830-34, pic. 49).



Pic. 48. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Spring Motif*. 1907



Pic. 49. Katsushika Hokusai. *Mount Fuji Viewed during a Fine Wind on a Clear Morning*. 1830-1834

Likewise, the image of a big bird hovering in the sky in Čiurlionis' *Fairy Tale No. 2* from cycle Triptych "Fairy Tale" (1907, pic. 50), and Hiroshige's *Susaki and the Jūmantsubo Plain near Fukagawa* from "One Hundred Famous Views of Edo" (1856-58, pic. 51), are compositional concepts.¹²



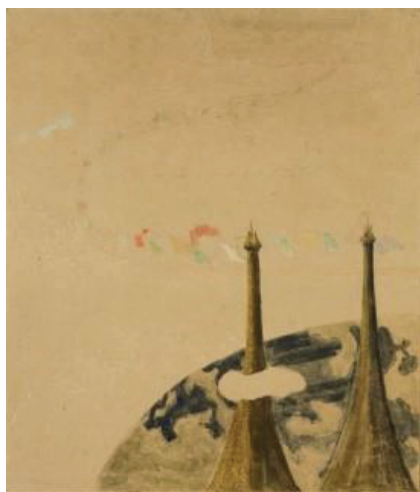
Pic. 50. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Fairy Tale No. 2*. 1907



Pic. 51. Utagawa Hiroshige. *Susaki and the Jūmantsubo Plain near Fukagawa*. 1856-1858

¹² Also mentioned in Andriušytė-Žukienė (2004): 98.

When we compare Čiurlionis' "Finale" from the cycle *Sonata No. 2 (Sonata of Spring)* (1907, pic. 52) with Hiroshige's *The City Flourishing, the Tanabata Festival* from "One Hundred Famous Views of Edo" (1856-58, pic. 53), similarities can be found between the colourful papers (or small flags) flying in spiral in both images.



Pic. 52. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis.
Finale from Sonata No. 2 (Sonata of Spring). 1907



Pic. 53. Utagawa Hiroshige. *The City Flourishing, the Tanabata Festival*.
1856-1858

As another example, in Čiurlionis' "Allegro" from *Sonata No. 3 (Sonata of the Serpent)* (1908, pic. 54), the strange shape of the maze-like bridge and its long bridge footings may have been influenced by Hokusai's *Old View of the Eight-part Bridge at Yatsushashi in Mikawa Province* from "Remarkable Views of Bridges in Various Provinces" (1834, pic. 55). Many similar bridges were depicted in Hokusai's several other *ukiyo-e* prints, but the similarity of concepts between Čiurlionis and Hokusai is surely undeniable.

As the second stage, let us look at the whole composition or settings. In Čiurlionis' "Allegro" from *Sonata No. 4 (Sonata of Summer)* (1908, pic. 56), tiny sailing boats floating on the water and the position of islands may be inspired by Hiroshige's *Shinagawa Susaki* from "One Hundred Famous Views of Edo" (1856-58, pic. 57).



Pic. 54. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Allegro from Sonata No. 3 (Sonata of the Serpent)*. 1908



Pic. 55. Katsushika Hokusai. *Old View of the Eight-part Bridge at Yatsushashi in Mikawa Province*. 1834



Pic. 56. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Allegro from Sonata No. 4 (Sonata of Summer)*. 1908



Pic. 57. Utagawa Hiroshige. *Shinagawa Susaki*. 1856-1858

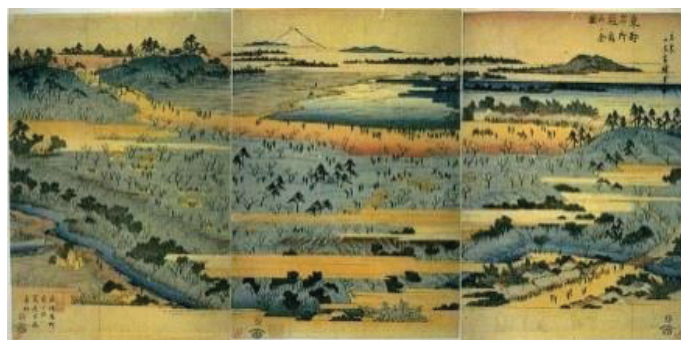
Furthermore, the triptych painting *Raigardas* (1907, pic. 58), which is known as a realistic landscape of peacefully gentle hills in the Sothern Lithuania, shows some quite unusual features. An attempt to produce panoramic scenery by using three panels sequentially is very unusual among his existing paintings. However, in *ukiyo-e*, it is not rare to use two or three successive papers to represent the spatial dimension and the effect of a bird's eye view. For example, if we put Hiroshige's triptych *Whole View of Asukayama* from "Famous Views of the Eastern Capital" (c. 1835-39, pic. 59) beside Čiurlionis' *Raigardas*, both panoramic scenes seem remarkably similar. He

may have seen this kind of triptych of *ukiyo-e* in Warsaw or elsewhere.

In Čiurlionis' paintings, several traces of influence from *ukiyo-e* of Hokusai and Hiroshige can be found in its pictorial schemes and fragmentary uses of motifs. Čiurlionis differs from other painters in that whenever he absorbed Japanese *ukiyo-e*, he accomplished his personal approach by adopting the whole composition and the characteristic point or view.



Pic. 58. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Raigardas*. 1907



Pic. 59. Utagawa Hiroshige. *Whole View of Asukayama*. 1835-1839

Finally, as the third stage, let us consider the sublime style of Čiurlionis' "Great Wave" motif adopted in his painting "Finale" from *Sonata No. 5 (Sonata of the Sea)* (1908, pic. 42). The influence of Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* was firstly pointed out by Ichiro Kato in 1976 (Kato, 1976, pp. 40-44). Since then, many scholars have followed him and accepted it as a fact.¹³ His initials "MKČ" in the middle of the wave shows probably a symbol identifying his own high creativity. Since Čiurlionis seldom signed his paintings, this painting is very rare in that he drew his large initials in such an eye-catching position. Moreover, the characters are integrated in the wave of the central motif. Čiurlionis, as a composer, was following the tradition of Western music to compose in tone rows based on the spelling of someone's name.¹⁴ There are many composers who adopted their own initials as the hidden theme of compositions

¹³ Lithuanian scholars, Andrijauskas (2003, 2011 and 2013) and Andriusytė-Žukienė (2004) also mentioned about the influences of Japanese *ukiyo-e* on Čiurlionis' paintings.

¹⁴ Čiurlionis composed *Variations on the Theme Sefaa Esec* (VL 258) (1904) and *Variations on the Theme Besacas* (VL 265) (1904-05). Both of the works adopt his friend's initials as the themes.

such as Bach's B-A-C-H. Considering this heritage, Čiurlionis might have proudly put his initials into the "musical painting" as a proof of himself as a composer-painter. The gigantic waves which involve the whole may be the symbol of his strong creative motivation. Furthermore, there is a remarkable fact that "Allegro," "Andante" and "Finale" from the series of *Sonata of the Sea* lets us feel an inner link with his musical work, *The Sea: Cycles of Small Landscapes* for piano (1908, VL 317). Cycle consists of three pieces. The first piece could be heard as expressing the constantly repeated waves in the painted *Allegro*, the second piece evokes the mysterious and silent image of the sea in the painted *Andante*, and in the third piece the chromatic scales could be heard as breaking gigantic wave of painted *Finale*.

4. ČIURLIONIS AND LEIPZIG

4.1. Time, Place, and People around Čiurlionis in Germany

By receiving further financial support by Prince Michał Ogiński (1849-1902), Čiurlionis entered to Leipzig Conservatoire (Königliches Konservatorium der Musik) in November 1901. At the time, Leipzig was one of the artistic centres where the great composers Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847), Wagner, Liszt and Richard Strauss had played active roles. At the Gewandhaus and the Opernhaus, works by the leading composers of the time were performed almost every day where Čiurlionis appreciated live authentic music. Also, many art works from ancient Egypt to paintings of Symbolists were exhibited at the museums of the city.

The Leipzig Conservatoire was distinguished for musical education in Europe and Čiurlionis studied counterpoint under Salomon Jadassohn (1831-1902). Jadassohn was regarded as “the King of Counterpoint” and it is no doubt that Čiurlionis mastered counterpoint and authentic composition of polyphonic music with the great professor. Regrettably, Jadassohn passed away soon after on February 1st, 1902. Another professor who gave much influence to Čiurlionis was Carl Reinecke (1824-1910). Reinecke was a successor of German Romanticism, a student of Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann (1810-1856) as well as a conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra for more than three decades. Reinecke promoted old-fashioned early Romanticism and forced his students to write in style of Mendelssohn and Weber. Čiurlionis’ preference was to write advanced music with dissonances which was “not fine” for Reinecke. Čiurlionis became tired of Reinecke’s out-of-date style and suffered the strain between his teacher’s ‘old and conservative’ approach and his own ‘progressive and radical’ inclinations.

It seems very suggestive that Reinecke commented on Čiurlionis’ paper (diploma), as “Čiurlionis was an ardent student and has well mastered the composition technique; however, he still composes in excessively grey colours and become carried away in dissonances” (National Čiurlionis Museum: Čiurlionis’ diploma from Leipzig Conservatoire on 20 July 1902 (Čpf-17.a)). Apparently, Čiurlionis was seeking for new possibilities in music which express something different artistic sense not common in Romantic music. After leaving Leipzig, Čiurlionis became increasingly interested in bitonality, atonality, proto-serialism, musical cryptograms and modal styles such as the nine and seven tone-row systems. He was interested in nine and seven tone-row system since 1904 and composed the Variations “Sefaa Esec” and “Besacas” by using key notes after from his friends’ characters. Čiurlionis dared to compose works adopting modals.

Instead of these Romantic old masters, Čiurlionis’ secret idol was the budding young Richard Strauss. He did not hesitate to go to the library of Edition Peters to make a copy of score of Strauss’ symphonic poem *Tod und Verklärung* [*Death and Transfiguration*], Op. 24, whose plot of the tragic “death” and serene purification clearly excited Čiurlionis’ artistic sympathy, and of *Ein Heldenleben* [*A Hero’s Life*], Op. 40. It seems likely he was disappointed in Reinecke’s instrumentation lessons,

and wanted to study the music of Berlioz or R. Strauss, and in particular the music genre that meant most to him – the symphonic poem. In his letters Čiurlionis reports the situation at the conservatoire to his friend, Morawski:

More and more often they dig out Berlioz, and rightly so. I always liked that man. Recently I heard his overture “Benvenuto Cellini”: charming, and it sounds – even pleasurable. I would like to orchestrate like him and Strauss. Nothing to say, paints nicely. [...] Reinecke is a pedant about form, yet in this matter he never reproaches me, even when I am writing some of these things for a first time (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.), 1960, p. 93).

But all of this is nothing. You shouldn't care about the instrumentation. You will look at few good scores, you will be fine not only without professors but without textbooks as well. You will get from me two of Strauss's things: “Death” and “Heroic Life”. This will be enough for your whole instrumentation study (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.), 1960, p. 162).

In the first page of the score of Strauss' *Tod und Verklärung*, there is a poem which was written by Strauss' friend Alexander Ritter (1833-1896) according to the composer's request. The story of the symphonic poem is clear - “a dying artist, obsessed by an artistic Ideal, is transfigured at death to recognize his Ideal in eternity” (Gilliam, 2007-2013). It was written in modified sonata form in C minor, and the whole life of a man is described by “a quiet, syncopated introduction (‘breathing irregularly’), then an agitated exposition (‘racked by terrible pain’), followed by an episodic developmental space: dreams of childhood, youthful passions. What follows is the principal theme of the work, that of the artistic Ideal. The restatement of this lofty melody in the extended coda is what Strauss termed the ‘point of culmination’, and it is indeed one of the most exquisite moments in all his symphonic works: even his arch-conservative father was moved” (Gilliam, 2007-13). In *Ein Heldenleben*, Strauss's another symphonic poem, the ‘hero’ is again Strauss himself. Gilliam explains that “The six sections of the work – the hero, his adversaries, his life's companion, his deeds of war, his works of peace, his withdrawal from the world – do not go beyond this fundamental idea. [...] *Ein Heldenleben* treats two important subjects familiar from earlier works: the Nietzschean struggle between the individual and his outer and inner worlds, and the profundity of domestic love” (Gilliam, 2007-13). In here, Nietzsche's theory of eternal recurrence which represents positive affirmation of “life” and connected to an idea of “death” could be seen in its narrative.

In fact, some influences from Strauss are found in Čiurlionis' symphonic poem *Dies irae*. His symphonic poem was also based on modified sonata form in C minor and consisted of the series of themes from musical works which were composed throughout composer's life. It could be regarded as the recollection of his whole life by a person who was resigned to die.

At the City Museum (Museum der bildenden Künste) in Leipzig, Čiurlionis absorbed dark and heavy mood of the time of *fin de siècle* from Symbolist's paintings. Like major composers and painters of the time, a painting of Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901), *Isle of the dead* (*Die Toteninsel*) stimulated Čiurlionis and gave huge influence

for his creative process of paintings. In the next section, we will consider how contextuality of concept of “death” worked in his paintings and how it was developed as a symphonic poem *Dies irae*.

4.2. Contextuality of Concept of “death” in paintings of Čiurlionis and its’ creative process

When we look at the art works of Čiurlionis, we can find several works related to the theme of death. After he got artistic inspirations in Leipzig, he started painting the cycle of *Funeral Symphony* in 1903 (the musical titles of his paintings may have been inspired by Whistler). During his studies in Leipzig, he was impressed by Böcklin’s painting *Isle of the Dead*, and painted the series of *Serenity* (I 1903/ 04 and II 1904/ 05 respectively) which most clearly show the influence of ideas of “death” and “serenity” of Böcklin. Moreover, his most unusual response to the Böcklin’s painting can be found in his peculiar triptych of *Rex* (1904-05).

Among European symbolist paintings, Böcklin’s *Isle of the Dead* was quite popular throughout Europe and had impact on not only writers and painters but also several composers. The symbolic motive of *the Isle of the Dead* fascinated Böcklin and he painted it several times from 1880 to 1886 – five versions in total. The pictorial structure of *Isle of the Dead*, common to all five versions, is quite simple: a calm sea around a solitary island. Tall cypress trees grow in clusters in the rocky island, and a stone structure (a kind of a cemetery) surrounds an inlet. A boat approaches the island slowly. A person in a white cloth stands on board, accompanying a coffin. The scene appears extremely quiet without the slightest sound or movement of winds or waves. It had been reproduced many times in books and journals, and on printed sheets and postcards. It is said that every German family owned one of these reproductions.

The first version of *Isle of the Dead* (pic. 60) was painted in 1880 before Böcklin established his fame. It was executed by request of Marie Berna (later the Countess Oriola) who had lost her husband, as “a landscape over which one could dream” (Burroughs 1926, p. 146). Although the total quietness seemed to be unrelated to any music, Böcklin’s *Isle of the Dead* had attracted some contemporary composers one after another, and made them to compose orchestral works inspired by the painting.

In European history, there were very few composers who were influenced by specific art works and dedicated their own “musical versions” to them. We may mention Franz Liszt’s symphonic work with solo piano, *Totentanz* [Dance of the Dead] (1849) which was inspired by the famous late-medieval fresco *Triumph of Death* at Campo Santo in Pisa, and Modest Mussorgsky’s suite for piano, *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1874) based on specific drawings, designs and paintings by his friend Viktor Hartmann (Gartman). Therefore, it is quite unprecedented that several composers were simultaneously inspired by Böcklin’s *Isle of the Dead*. The composers concerned are Hans Huber (1852-1921), Serge Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) and Max Reger (1873-1916), who were incidentally nearly contemporary with Čiurlionis.

Huber was a Swiss composer who studied composition under Carl Reinecke at Leipzig Conservatoire in 1870-74. He was active in Basel where Böcklin had once lived for a long time. Even though Huber never met Böcklin, he participated with a pageant dedicated to the painter in 1897. He was influenced by Richard Strauss and Debussy, but his musical style is fundamentally romantic, often connected with Schumann, Wagner and Brahms. His strong affection for his native land and its nature was quite obvious in his theatrical works. His Symphony No. 2 (c. 1900), subtitled “*Isle of the Dead*”, was obviously indebted to Böcklin’s painting for its musical concept and descriptions. Since it’s premiered in Zurich in June 1900, the work was repeatedly performed with success by eminent conductors such as Felix Weingartner in Munich and Artur Nikisch in Berlin (Lenger (trans. Barnett), In Huber 1997, p. 16-18). It is noteworthy that in the final (fourth) movement, many of Böcklin’s paintings are depicted by the music: *Meeresstille*, *Prometheus*, *Flötende Nympe*, *Die Nacht*, *Spiel der Wellen*, *Der Eremit*, *Die Gefilde der Seligen*, *Liebesfrühling*, and *Bacchanale*.



Pic. 60. Arnold Böcklin. *Isle of the Dead*. 1880

Čiurlionis attended a performance of Huber’s Symphony No. 2 *Isle of the Dead* in February 1902 during the period of his studies on composition in Leipzig and wrote of his impression:

Last Wednesday for the first time the *Symphony of Böcklin* was performed. I cherished so much the great hope – and nothing. A lot of noise, organ, solo, strings, etc. but that what was the most significant was missing. The finale consists, it seems, of eight short pieces – illustrations to Böcklin’s pictures. Some are not bad, some very beautiful, but on the whole I hoped for much more from the *Symphony of Böcklin* (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.), 1960, pp. 91-94).

From his bitterly disappointed comment, it could be presumed that Čiurlionis had already knew many paintings of Böcklin and by imaging these works in his mind, he judged Huber’s music as not satisfactory. However, there is no evidence that Čiurlionis as a composer was inspired by any of Böcklin’s paintings.

Rachmaninoff composed the symphonic poem, *The Isle of the Dead*, op. 29 in 1909. He knew the painting only by its black and white reproduction when he composed the work. Later on, Rachmaninoff was deeply disappointed by the oil painting, and confessed that he would not have composed it if he saw the original first

(Bažanovas 1979, pp. 230-231). In comparison with his other orchestral works, it has less colours in its orchestral sound; however, it is well-structured with wide variety of rhythms.

Another composer who was inspired by the painting was Max Reger. He composed *Vier Tondichtungen nach Arnold Böcklin* [Four Böcklin Tone Pictures] in 1913. It is obvious from the title that Reger composed the work as a four-part suite consisting of four pictures by Böcklin: *Die Toteninsel*, *Der geigende Eremit*, *Spiel der Wellen*, and *Bacchanale* (*Bacchantenfest*). Reger left Leipzig in 1911 to become court conductor to Duke Georg II of Sachsen-Meiningen. The new position provided him much opportunity to perform his own orchestral works, and he started to compose a work based on the paintings of Böcklin which were still popular. For Reger as a fervent supporter of *Brahmsian* absolute music, it was a new challenge to write descriptive programme music. Reger's *Die Toteninsel* is rhythmically less rich than Rachmaninoff's work, but surpasses it in poignant expression of its pathetic darkness.

In fact, Čiurlionis had been known Böcklin's painting *Isle of the Dead* in his early years in Warsaw through his fellow Polish artists of *Młoda Polska* [Young Polish] movement such as Henryk Siemiradzki, Zofia Górczalska, and Adam Chmielewski. Siemiradzki's *Departure from an Island at Night* (c. 1890) (pic. 61) shows a strong resemblance to Böcklin's original painting (Okulicz-Kozaryn 2010, p. 95). However, it was in Leipzig where he saw the real painting of Böcklin with other symbolist's paintings, listened to live music influenced by the painting of Böcklin and deepened his understanding on trend of Symbolism.

In May 1902, Čiurlionis saw the painting for the first time at the Museum der bildenden Künste in Leipzig. It was Böcklin's fifth version (1886) (pic62), with brighter-coloured sky and sea, slightly lacking the mournful serenity of the earlier versions. In his letter to his friend Eugeniusz Morawski, Čiurlionis wrote:

In the local museum, there are eight halls. I walked in there for the first time, and I was surprised: in the main hall, there were Murillo and Böcklin. What will come next? But in the other rooms the paintings were less beautiful, while in the last room they were indescribably ugly. I remember that in the last hall I felt sorry and sad that I had not



Pic. 61. Henryk Siemiradzki. *Departure from an Island at Night*. 1890



Pic. 62. Arnold Böcklin. *Isle of the Dead*. 1886

seen any more beautiful paintings. So I returned to Böcklin (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.), 1960, pp. 150-152).

As a painter, Čiurlionis tried to assimilate himself into Böcklin's view of the world. In September 1903, he wrote from Warsaw to his brother Povilas, on the back of a postcard of Böcklin's *Prometheus* (pic. 63): "I've already painted a symbolic painting. If you want, I can send you the reproduction." (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.) 1960, p. 168). A month later, he wrote: "So far, I am drawing 'Funeral Symphony', I have five images" (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė 1960, *ibid.*); he wrote this on the back of another postcard with his own watercolour drawing of *Serenity* (pic. 64), depicting an island with two lighthouses which very much resemble human eyes. Here is a notable description on "serenity" in his letter to Morawski: "[...] I like serenity, but today I cannot stand it. It seems like someone is snooping. Scary. An idea came to my mind that in this serenity there is an important secret [...] now the serenity makes the grand pause impression. (Geniek, please explain). It's hard. Past has disappeared, future is no longer there, and the present – pause, - nothing. Imagine that, if you will. [...]" (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.) 1960, p. 146).



Pic. 63. Arnold Böcklin. *Prometheus*.
1883



Pic. 64. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis.
Serenity. 1903

From these letters and the drawing, his commitment to Böcklin's works seems obvious, most especially his inclination towards symbols of "death" and "serenity".

Among Čiurlionis' paintings, the series of *Serenity* (*I* 1903/ 04 and *II* 1904/ 05 respectively) (pics. 65 and 66) most clearly show the influence of Böcklin's *Isle of the Dead*. The motive of a rocky desert island surrounded by calm sea is almost identical, and the gloomy mood of tranquillity of Čiurlionis' *Serenity* reveals his devotion to the example of Böcklin. The depiction of two lighthouses may be a reminiscence of the frontal gate of *Isle of the Dead*.



Pic. 65. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis.
Serenity I. 1903



Pic. 66. Mikalojus Konstantinas
Čiurlionis. *Serenity II.* 1904

Also, Landsbergis pointed out that “Full of mysterious mood *Night* (other name – *Evening* [pic. 46]): boatman, silently rowing towards us through a dark gorge under a glowing in the sky bridge arc, would have come here from A. Böcklin’s *Isle of the dead*. This obvious parallel (a figure standing in a boat with white long clothes) indicated by A. Savickas.-“Menotyra”, 4, p. 74., could be also seen in the first painting of the *Rex* cycle, and through plot etymology could be also linked to Charon from the antic myths” (Landsbergis, 1976, p. 252).

Another series of *Funeral Symphony (IV and V, 1903)* contains vague echoes of Böcklin’s imagery. The settings of these scenes are totally different; however the motifs of cypress trees, “a pre-Christian symbol of death, since it was believed that once it was cut it would never grow again” (The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Art & Architecture (2nd ed.) 2013, p. 140) and the sombre mountainous area somewhat remind us of Böcklin’s iconography.

Čiurlionis’ most unusual response to Böcklin’s *Isle of the Dead* can be found in his peculiar triptych of *Rex* (1904-05). In these three pictures, the scenery is fundamentally identical. Only distances from the viewer differ, with the same view of an island with a colossal monument presented from three different distances. The transfer of viewpoint in the triptych is surely an unprecedented invention, demonstrating Čiurlionis’ pictorial genius. He might have conceived this unusual device of viewpoints from the depiction of a tiny boat approaching the island in Böcklin’s *Isle of the Dead*.

Even though, Čiurlionis was not inspired by Böcklin’s *Isle of the Dead* as a composer, he undoubtedly absorbed the dark mood of the *fin de siècle* through the musical works by Rachmaninoff and Huber, and many predecessors’ compositions which adopted “Dies irae” theme as well as by Polish paintings first and later by symbolists’ paintings. Therefore, he surely got inspiration of the art trend of the time beyond the realm of the arts and adopted as the concept of “death” in his musical works.

4.3. Analysis 3: Čiurlionis' symphonic poem "Dies irae"

One of the latest surviving manuscripts of Čiurlionis contains a symphonic poem titled *Dies irae*. This unfinished (not orchestrated) composition was created in the first days of February, 1910. Until the 21st century this composition was "forgotten" by researchers because of the opinion suggested by Landsbergis: "it is not finished composition written by already mentally ill person" (Landsbergis, 1986, p. 93). However it was restored, orchestrated (by a composer Giedrius Kuprevičius) and performed with a great success in Kaunas Philharmonic on 18 November, 2015.

The theme of the ancient plainchant *Dies irae* has inspired many composers to express the mood of death in their musical works. Some research on music and art based on the concept of "death" or "Dies irae" has been done already by Ernest Newman (1915), Robin Gregory (1953), David Rubin (1962), Malcolm Boyd (1968), Radosław Okulicz-Kozaryn (2010) and Audra Versekėnaitė (2011).

The *Dies irae* is a melody of plainchant or Gregorian chant which was sung with a poem attributed to Thomas of Celano (d c. 1250) which starts with words "Dies illa, Dies irae" (pic. 67). The poem began to be included in the Requiem Mass in Italy from the 14th century and in French missals of the late 15th century.



Pic. 67. Sequence *Dies irae*

It was one of the four sequences retained by the council of Trent (1543-63) in the 16th century. However, the *Dies irae* became more dramatic and descriptive to express imagination of composers in the 18th century, which represented by Requiems by Michael Haydn and Mozart.

In the early Romantic period, the melody of plainchant *Dies irae* started to be adopted in secular music to express *idée fixe* of the death which associated with Celano's vivid portrayal of the Last Judgment and its ability to inspire listeners with a feeling of terror appropriate to a particular context. The first example of it is the last movement of Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Op. 14 (1830) which is a programme symphony subtitled as "An Episode in the Life of an Artist". Franz Liszt was inspired by the work and composed *Totentanz* [Dance of the Dead], S. 126 (1839-59) which also subtitled "Paraphrase on *Dies irae*". Since these two works appeared, the *Dies irae* was regarded as a motif to express "the death".

Around the same time as *Totentanz*, Liszt composed *Les Préludes* (1845) which was regarded as the first symphonic poem. The work based on an idea of "Life is a prelude for death" from an Ode of Alphonse de Lamartine.

Rachmaninoff was the very person who showed strong interest in the death motif of the "Dies irae". In an extended research of David Rubin (1962) has done by Malcolm Boyd (1968), there is a notable quote to prove Rachmaninoff was deeply

fascinated by “Dies irae” theme:

He [Rachmaninoff] began to tell me that he was very much interested in the familiar medieval chant, *Dies irae*, usually known to musicians (including himself) only by its first lines, used so often in various musical works as a ‘Death theme’. However, he wished to obtain the whole music of this funeral chant, if it existed (though he wasn’t sure of this); he would be extremely grateful for my help in this matter, for he had not time for the necessary research. He also asked about the significance of the original Latin text of this chant [...] with our offering a word of explanation for his keen interest in this”. (J. Yasser, “Pamyati Rakhmaninovna”, ed. M. V. Dobuzhinsky (New York, 1964); quoted in S. Bertensson and J. Leyda, “Serge Rachmaninoff. (New York, 1956, p. 278)).

In the 7th variation of *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43, he adopts “Dies irae” motif along with a slower version of the opening motif of the Paganini theme by the orchestra. The “Dies irae” motif is also heard in the 3rd movement of his Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 28 which was originally inspired by Goethe's play, *Faust*.

Moreover, Rachmaninoff composed a symphonic poem, *The Isle of the Dead*, Op. 29 (1909) which was inspired by Arnold Böcklin’s painting of the same title (pic. 60). In this symphonic poem, Rachmaninoff quotes the first four notes of “Dies irae” motif in turns in different instruments. Boyd (1968) mentioned about the work together with a comment by Gregory (1953): “Rachmaninov’s symphonic poem *The Isle of the Dead* is a case in point. Gregory, together with most writers on Rachmaninov’s music, recognizes the ‘Dies irae’ here, presumably in the passage beginning eleven bars after figure 22. However, only the first four notes are employed, and in spite of the subject and title of the piece the possibility of a mere coincidence seems very strong indeed.” (Boyd, 1968, p. 353).

Čiurlionis started composing religious music during his studies in Warsaw 1894-99 and Leipzig 1901-02. At the Warsaw Institute of Music, Čiurlionis composed religious music such as separate parts of the Mass – “Kyrie” (1897, DK 11.14/ VL 12), “Requiem” (1897, DK 11.12/ VL 13), “Gloria” (1897, DK 11.12/ VL 14), “Glorify” (1897, DK 11.19/ VL 15), “Agnus” (1899, DK 24.2/ VL 16), as well as religious music for mixed choir “Let Us not Grieve” (1899, DK 24.6/ VL 17), “You, oh Lord” (The second part of the cantata *De Profundis*) (1899, DK 25/ VL 9), “Święty Boże” (Sanctus Deus) (1899-1900, DK 40/ VL 70) and a cantata “De Profundis” for mixed choir and symphony orchestra (1899, DK 25/ VL 8). In 1901, he composed a prelude for piano “Angelus Domini” (1901, DK 57/ VL 184) whose title was known from family reminiscences and given by a brother of the composer, Stasys Čiurlionis, in his 1902 letter, while the composer’s youngest sister, Jadvyga Čiurlionytė, linked this music to the church bell in Druskininkai and evening prayer (Landsbergis 2004, p. 411). At the Leipzig conservatoire, Čiurlionis composed further religious music with a “Sanctus” (1902, DK 104/ VL 18) and “Kyrie” (1902, DK 116/ VL 19). In later years, he composed a prelude for piano titled “Pater Noster” (1904, DK 153/ VL 260), whose “title was according to the first edition, authentic and known from reminiscences of Čiurlionis’ family” (Landsbergis 1986, p. 277-278). Also, a prelude

for piano was titled “Swęty Boże” (1909, DK 323/ VL 343, Manuscript unfinished): its missing final bars were given different reconstructions by J. Čiurlionytė and V. Landsbergis. The melody was identified by the composer’s sister, Jadvyga Čiurlionytė, but she did not use it as a title in her editions due to the total prohibition of religious themes under the Soviet regime. The original title, *Šventas Dieve*, was used for the first time in Landsbergis’s edition in 2004 (Landsbergis 2004, p. 358-360). According to Bruveris (mentioned in 2014), “*Święty Boże - Sanctus Deus* (Lith. Šventas Dieve, Šventas galingasis, Šventas amžinasis) is a Trisagion (sung by Catholics in Great Friday liturgy) as well as a start of public prayer. Čiurlionis fully used the melody in this Prelude”. Finally, Čiurlionis composed a symphonic poem *Dies irae* at the very end of his life.

Music for the Mass Ordinary, especially for the sung Ordinary, usually consists of “Kyrie”, “Gloria”, “Credo”, “Sanctus” and “Agnus Dei”. However, Čiurlionis composed “Kyrie”, “Gloria”, “Credo”, “Sanctus”, “Pater Noster”, “Agnus” as original, independent works and he also composed “Requiem” (not finished, only 22 bars of the manuscript survived) and “Dies irae”.

Some of his religious music was based on the rhymed Psalm text by Polish classical poet Jan Kochanowski (1530-1584) (Misiukevičius 2000, p. 6). According to Vytautas Landsbergis, “J. Kochanowski’s Psalter was arranged in the 16th century by M. Gomulka, a Polish composer of the Renaissance. Gomulka’s compositions were included in the repertoire of the choir of the Warsaw Institute of Music when Čiurlionis studied there. It is a fact that for the length of his study at Warsaw Institute of Music, Čiurlionis sung in the Institute’s choir conducted by J. Statler” (Landsbergis 1986, p. 147) – and the choir’s repertoire included a lot of religious music. Other compositions such as “Glorify” (1897, DK 11.19/ VL 15), “Let Us not Grieve” (1899, DK 24.6/ VL 17), “You, oh Lord” (The second part of the cantata *De Profundis*) (1899, DK 25/ VL 9) and a cantata “*De Profundis*” for mixed choir and symphony orchestra (1899, DK 25/ VL 8) are also based on the text from Kochanowski’s Psalter (Misiukevičius 2000, pp. 6-7). Though Čiurlionis did not compose a single complete setting of the Mass, his deep immersion in religious music is evident from these facts.

Čiurlionis did not use the well-known plainchant *Dies irae* as a resource of thematic material for his composition, using instead a popular chant *Sanctus Deus* as it was sung in his own country. The manuscript of Čiurlionis’ *Dies irae*¹⁵ remained unpublished on 65 sheets of music with 1,111 bars.¹⁶ Mainly it is not a score ready for a performance – rather, the manuscript is of a large sketch in which some additional improvements are required by a music editor or even another composer. But the main idea of thematic and structural expression is clear. The genre of a composition is obvious from its dedication – *Dies ira[e]* poemat symfoniczny dla mojej Zoski (pol. – *Dies ira[e]*, symphonic poem for my Sophie).¹⁷ Let us now examine the structure and

¹⁵ On the manuscript, the title handwritten by Čiurlionis was misspelled as “Dies ira”.

¹⁶ It was not 1,122 bars as counted and written by Čiurlionis himself on the manuscript.

¹⁷ National M. K. Čiurlionis art museum. Manuscript Čm 16, p. 00804.

some main themes used in the work.

After a thematic analysis of the symphonic poem, we can notice that Čiurlionis included a lot of themes from previous musical works, composed in 1900-1906. The themes used here are from compositions for the piano (Pater Noster, Preludes DK 283/ VL 318, DK 292/ VL 328 and DK 242/ VL 300), for the organ (Fugue in C minor), for choir (“Švęty Bože“, “Bėkit, bareliai” and “Sėjau rūtą”) and even fragments from symphonic poem *In the Forest*. There are also some themes or melodic fragments which are still not identified. In total, there are 12 identified themes, 4 rhythmic themes imitating fanfares and 5 not identified themes (pic. 68).¹⁸ Usage of known themes in the symphonic poem *Dies irae* means that early works of Čiurlionis were understood by him not only as discrete compositions but as if they were sections or main musical ideas of a grand new composition composed in his last years.



Švęty Bože (1899-1900; DK 40/ VL 70)



Fugue in C minor (1902; DK 92/ VL 219)



Sėjau rūtą (1900; DK 42/ VL 179)



Bėkit, bareliai (1906; DK 202/ VL 279)



Tėve mūsų (Pater noster) (1904; DK 153/ VL 260)



Prelude (1906; DK 242/ VL 300)



Prelude in C major (1908; DK 283/ VL 318)

¹⁸ Identification of themes was made by Prof. Dr. Darius Kučinskas.



Prelude in D minor (1908-1909; DK 291/ VL 325)



Prelude in C major (1908; DK 292/ VL 328)



Fugue in B flat minor (1908-1909; DK 293/ VL 345)



Poem in C major (1907; DK 254/ VL 7)



Poem "In the Forest" (1901; DK 56/ VL 1)



Fanfare I



Fanfare II



Fanfare III



Fanfare IV



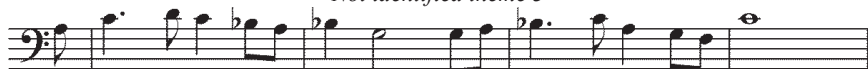
Not identified theme 1



Not identified theme 2



Not identified theme 3



Not identified theme 4

Pic. 68 Lithuanian folk song melodies and other melodies used in Čiurlionis' Symphonic Poem "Dies Irae" (1910, DK 330)

Five themes repeatedly reappear in the composition. They are "Święty Boże" (Sanctus Deus), Fugue in C minor, "Bėkit bareliai", "Sėjau rūtą" and "Pater Noster". Interestingly, these five themes consist of two religious themes, two Lithuanian Folksong melodies and a fugue. Also, the usage of another melodic fragments and shorted themes remind us of Wagner's operas or Scriabin's musical works where the system of leitmotifs was developed. The difference is that Čiurlionis did not explain the meaning or related mood, emotion or sense of these short melodic fragments.

Returning to the structural analysis of the symphonic poem, it can be explained in three possible ways. First, it is possible to understand the overall structure of the symphonic poem as being in three parts – "A- B- B₁". This structure is based on proportional repeating of the theme of "Święty Boże" (Sanctus Deus).

A second possible way to explain the symphonic poem's structure is based on the dominating themes, their sequence of tonalities and usage of diminished 7th chord which obviously separate one part from another. The structure of four parts arises in this case: "A- B- C- D".

The third way of explaining the symphonic poem's structure could be understanding it as a freely modified sonata form, consisting of "Intro- A- B- A- Coda": that is, an overture-like Introduction with themes of "Święty Boże" (Sanctus Deus) and Fugue in C minor in main tonality (Tonic), followed by themes of "Bėkit bareliai" (principal theme) and "Pater Noster" (subordinate theme in subdominant), and then, the added new theme of "Sėjau rūtą" (an episode instead of usual development part, again in the subdominant), return of "Bėkit bareliai" and "Pater Noster" (recapitulation part, in main tonality - Tonic) and then Coda with themes of "Święty Boże" (Sanctus Deus) and Fugue C minor in Tonic at the end of a poem. The development part of traditional sonata form is missing and the only feature of the

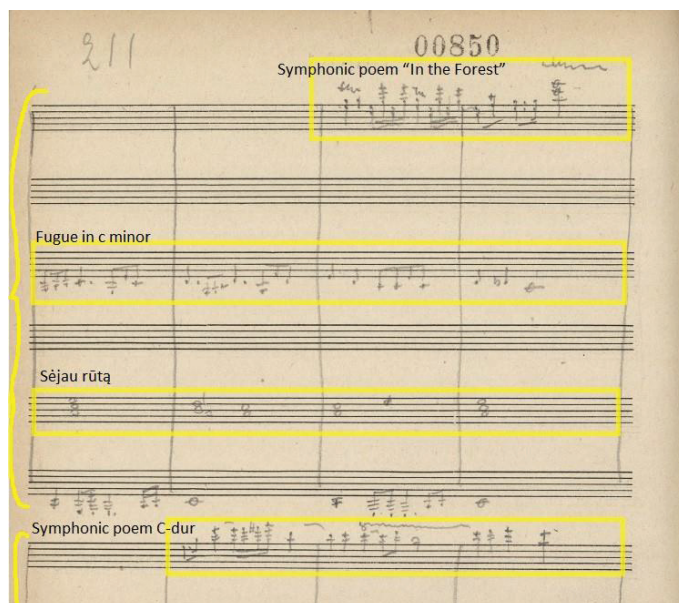
sonata structure can be noticed in the way Čiurlionis used main themes and its tonalities (repeated themes are put into main tonality).

As a matter of course, a more precise analysis of the structure of the symphonic poem *Dies irae* needed. But even now, if we agree Čiurlionis tried to use the sonata form as a basis for a whole composition, it shows us that Čiurlionis was continuously thinking about various explorations of sonata form all his life since his studies in Warsaw where he wrote his first piano sonatas. Furthermore, after his professional studies in painting, he tried to explore sonata form in his paintings (since 1906) and in literary poems too (about 1905-07). So there is a solid history behind Čiurlionis' return to sonata form in his music, after all his efforts to embody this structure in other forms of art expression.

As we can see here, Čiurlionis elaborately adopted these themes into his symphonic poem *Dies irae*, not just presenting them in a simple sequence of musical events. For example, on sheet No. 826 (pic. 69) three themes such as an unidentified theme, a theme from “Šwėty Boże” (Sanctus Deus) and Prelude DK 242/ VL 300 are presented concurrently, in counterpoint, within three bars.

Pic. 69. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. Symphonic poem “*Dies irae*”.
Manuscript p. 00826

Also, on sheet No. 850 (pic. 70), four themes such as a theme from symphonic poem *In the forest*, Fugue in C minor and “Sėjau rūtą”, could be seen in counterpoint within four bars in one brace of staves, and also a symphonic poem in C major (DK 254/ VL 310) is included in the same sheet.



Pic. 70. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. Symphonic poem “Dies irae”.
Manuscript p. 00850

On sheet No. 865 (pic. 71), two themes such as a theme from “Švęty Bože” (Sanctus Deus) and Fugue in C minor are also seen presented in counterpoint.

Pic. 71. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. Symphonic poem “Dies irae”.
Manuscript p. 00865

In such a way, Čiurlionis composed this huge symphonic poem by connecting themes like the main thematic material, sometimes putting themes together simultaneously in counterpoint. This work had been forgotten for a long time. However, it could be said that this symphonic poem *Dies irae* is a treasure trove of themes from his previous musical works. Even though this symphonic poem was composed at the very end of his life, we cannot forget its characteristics of “death” and “autobiographical elements” evoke R. Strauss’ symphonic poem *Tod und Verklärung* and *Ein Heldenleben* that Čiurlionis made copies of the scores in his younger age during his studies in Leipzig. Therefore, it could be said that his long journey which had started under strong influence by R. Strauss ended in this work as a grand sum of Čiurlionis’ all musical works.

5. ČIURLIONIS AND VILNIUS

5.1. Spirit of Lithuanians and folk art

Even though Čiurlionis was living mostly abroad during his short life, his Lithuanian spirit was always together with him and he never lost awareness as a Lithuanian. It was still in Warsaw around 1904-05 where he became acquainted with the Lithuanian national movement when he enrolled as a student into the newly created Art School chaired by Kazimieras Stabrauskas (1869-1929). He wrote in a letter to his brother Povilas in January 1906 that “I am determined to dedicate all my previous and future works to Lithuania” (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.) 1960, p. 192). Keeping in mind that Lithuania declared its independence only 12 years later (16 February, 1918), already after Čiurlionis death, it shows what clear and profound decision Čiurlionis took for himself. From the end of 1906, he gradually got involved in Lithuanian cultural life and moved to Vilnius in 1907 where he got acquainted with noted Lithuanian activists, painters, and writers. Vilnius also became a city where he met his wife Sofija Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė.

Vilnius was a small provincial city of Russian empire at the beginning of the 20th century with no opera theatre, symphony orchestra, or active musical and artistic life which Čiurlionis had in Warsaw. Čiurlionis naturally felt sadness and disappointed on the first days in Vilnius. He expressed his feeling in a letter to brother Povilas of June 1907: “Vilnius is still in a diaper, any sense on art” (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.) 1960, p. 203). A letter to Bronisława Wolman few months later on 16 December 1907 described the situation more clearly in which Čiurlionis stationed and how he felt: “the work [with a choir] is very hard – few talented [choir singers] and having a good voice, but others are unutterable sweeps, without any [musical] ears, without voices and without mind (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.), 1960, p. 205). Political isolation among local intelligentsia also influenced Čiurlionis’ musical activity in Vilnius. Because Čiurlionis felt himself as more progressive person, he adjoined a small group of progressivists. Other political parties were more national conservatives. And this party initiated boycott of Čiurlionis’ choir concerts because there were only few Lithuanians in the choir (others were Polish) (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.), *ibid.*). Though he was elected as a head of “Lithuanians Art Society” he felt alone in Vilnius and did not see his own perspective for a future – “without them [letters from Bronisława Wolman] I will not endure. It’s the only moral support for me” (16 December 1907, a letter to Bronisława Wolman; Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.), 1960, p. 206).

Time Čiurlionis spent in Lithuania – a year and a half (1907-1908 autumn) – was enough for him to understand that it is not a place he could realize himself as an artist. Čiurlionis was disappointed of Vilnius cultural life and of the fact that he in general was not understood and recognized. These feelings became obvious especially after the 1st Lithuanian exhibition in 1907 when most important artist in newspapers reviews was named his teacher K. Stabrauskas. Čiurlionis later wrote these ironic words after he moved to Petersburg: “its pity you [Sofija] didn’t see my fig and tongue

I showed to Vilnius side” (October 17th, 1908 a letter from Čiurlionis to Sofija; Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.), 1960, p. 222).

It explains why Čiurlionis did not stay in Vilnius for a longer time. The one and only reason why he stayed in Vilnius was a young writer and active cultural person Sofija Kymantaitė. She became an exclusive person in Čiurlionis’ life. They soon fell in love and got married after one year of very romantic friendship. Sofija was a fully educated girl at that time. As a pupil she studied in St. Petersburg and Riga gymnasiums, later finished philosophy and philology at Krakow University. Sofija grew up in a west part of Lithuania, *Samogithia*, where were strong patriotic sentiments remained and the national language (*Samogithian* dialect) was spoken. Though Sofija, was 11 years younger than Čiurlionis, she had already mature personality with definitely patriotic and political views when they met. She strongly influenced Čiurlionis to study Lithuanian folk art and to create professional national Lithuanian arts. On the other hand, Čiurlionis was already ready to turn to the same side himself. Therefore, the arrangements of Lithuanian songs for a choir and folk elements in his paintings appeared not accidentally in his artistic life during Vilnius period.

Starting in 1906, Čiurlionis devoted all his energies to Lithuanian cultural and artistic activities. Upon being anxious about the future of Lithuania, he wrote of the difficult fate of the Lithuanian nation and its culture; ardently and unequivocally he urged people who had creative capabilities to join in the task of creating a distinctive national culture, art and music; and he ceaselessly opposed any sort of cosmopolitan bourgeois phenomena in renascent national movement (Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.), 1960, pp. 228, 289 and 297). Čiurlionis soon became the most active figure among them.

He contributed to establish the Society of Lithuanian Art and elected as the vice-president in 1907. After the former president of the society Antanas Žmuidzinavičius (1876-1966) left for Munich and the United States, Čiurlionis took over its leadership and organised the Second Exhibition of Lithuanian Art, which included Lithuanian music competition by Lithuanian composers and musicians. He also collaborated with the amateur theatre group “Rūta”. Čiurlionis directed the choir “Vilniaus Kanklės” Society and proposed the idea of a so-called National Palace (a cultural centre with halls for concerts and exhibitions), and also contributed with his own creative works.

At that period he painted a masterpiece of landscape, *Raigardas* (1907), and continued expressing Lithuanian motifs until his later years in paintings such as *Wayside Crosses of Žemaitija* (1909), *Lithuanian Graveyard* (pic. 72, 1909) and *Graveyard Motif* (pic. 73, 1909). The bell in the poster of the Second Exhibition symbolised his deep love for his native land, Lithuania. Moreover, we see this trend the most vividly in his graphic works such as book designs, vignettes and initials (pic. 74, 1909). New tones of local colour, similar to those found in folk weavings, were embedded in his paintings.



Pic. 72. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Lithuanian Graveyard*. 1909



Pic. 73. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Graveyard Motif*. 1909



Pic. 74. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. Vignette for an arranged Lithuanian folk song "Bėkit, bareliai". 1909

Around same time, together with other artists, Čiurlionis was concerned with collection, preservation and propagation of Lithuanian folk art objects such as weavings, sashes, aprons and woodcarvings etc.

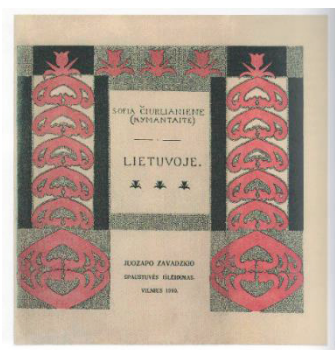
"National art occupies a highly important position in the cultural development of every nation", Čiurlionis wrote in 1908. "It is the original manifestation of love, the love of art, the first evidence of the spiritual, the first evidence of creation". Čiurlionis proclaimed that folk art "must be the foundation of our art, from it must rise a

distinctive Lithuanian style..., because the beauty it contains within itself is pure, distinctive, and exclusively Lithuanian” (*Vilniaus žinios* [News of Vilnius] 25, 1908; Also quoted by Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.), 1960, pp. 279-280).

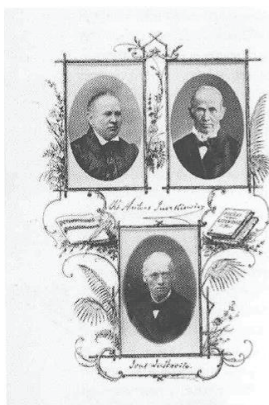
Activities as a Lithuanian composer were more evident. Čiurlionis was gradually getting to be conscious of Lithuanian folk traditions, especially folk songs. According to his sister musicologist Jadvyga Čiurlionytė, “At that time it was the folk song that played a particularly significant role in his life and his work — it became the core of Čiurlionis’ patriotic feelings, awakened him a love of his native land, and reinforced his creative flights.” (Čiurlionytė, *Liaudies Dainos*, 1959, p. 80).

In the winter 1905-06 in Druskininkai, Čiurlionis arranged over thirty Lithuanian folk songs for piano and choir. Before that he was active as a choir director of Lithuanian choir in Warsaw. A lack of Lithuanian songs arranged for a mixed choir prompted Čiurlionis to start this work. After he moved to Vilnius and became a conductor of the choir of “Vilniaus Kanklės” Society, and he performed Lithuanian folk songs in his own arrangements. At that time, there were only a few published Lithuanian song anthologies accessible in Lithuania; *Kanklės* [Baltic psaltery] (2 vols., 1895-99) by Vincas Kudirka (1858-1899) and *Dainų balsai* [The Voices of the songs] (2 vols., 1886-1889) by Kristianas Barčas [Christian Bartsch] (1832-1890) (which consisted of 453 Lithuanian folk songs with melodies, mainly music by Liudvikas Rėza (1776-1840) and Simonas Stanevičius with German translation and the first verses were written in Lithuanian language after the notes, and an article discussed the Lithuanian folk song melodies, texts and musical instruments, were added). Even though *Melodje ludowe litewskie* [Lithuanian Folk Melodies] (1900) compiled by Antanas Juška [Anton Juskiewicz] (1819-1880) was the greatest source of inspiration for Lithuanian composers of chorus at that time, it was compiled by foreign scholars and some problems and mistakes were found there. Therefore, as for actual composition, two first publications were mainly referred to by Čiurlionis, and indeed some influence from Kudirka’s anthology was seen in Čiurlionis’ arrangements of Lithuanian folk songs for choir.

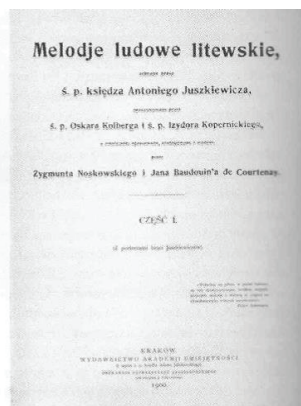
In his essay *Apie Muziką II* [On Music 2] in a book *Lietuvoje* [In Lithuania] (pic. 75, 1909) which was published in co-authorship with his wife Sofija Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė (1886-1958), Čiurlionis insisted the importance of Lithuanian cultural tradition. Moreover, he referred to an anthology *Melodje ludowe litewskie* (pic. 76) compiled by Juška published in Krakow 1900. Čiurlionis pointed out some problems of the music editing. One of the editors of the anthology was Zygmunt Noskowski (1846-1909), a professor of composition at the Warsaw Music Institute. Čiurlionis was a student of Noskowski at that time and, according to Landsbergis, “It is difficult to imagine that [Noskowski] would not speak about it with a Lithuanian student, or even show something” (Landsbergis 1986, pp. 44-45). More detailed examination of the process where the anthology *Melodje ludowe litewskie* was prepared and published, reveals some aspects which is important for a contextuality of Čiurlionis’ folk song arrangements.



Pic. 75. Sofija Čiurlionienė (Kymantaitė) [and Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis]. *Lietuvoje*. 1910



Pic. 76. Antanas Juška. *Melodje ludowe litewskie*. 1900



Antanas Juška was a Catholic priest and a dedicated collector of Lithuanian folksongs, who devoted his spare time for that purpose, visiting various districts of Lithuania in the exercise of his holy calling. We cannot say today whether he did it as a hobby or on purpose, with an aim to collect folk songs. It is certain, however, that his musical background from childhood had a strong influence on his song collecting; he could write down not only the lyrics, but also the melody. Juška left manuscripts of about 7000 lyrics and about 2000 melodies, which are mostly from the areas of central part of Lithuania (*Veliuona*, *Pušalotas* and *Vilkija*).

After Juška's death in 1880, the manuscripts stayed with his brother Jonas, who then gave them to prof. Jean Baudouin de Courtenay (1845-1929), a linguist and one of the most famous specialist on general and comparative historical linguistics, founder of so-called Kazan-, and later St. Petersburg schools of linguistics. After the death of Jonas Juška, the manuscripts were sent to the Warsaw Academy of Sciences, where they were partly revised by Oscar Kolberg (1814-1890), well versed in folklore, in association with the celebrated anthropologist, Izydor Kopernicki (1825-1891). However, these two figures died before the task was completed.

In 1893, prof. J. Baudouin de Courtenay moved to Krakow and, in cooperation with Zygmunt Noskowski, he prepared the manuscripts for publishing at the Krakow Academy of Sciences. In June 1899 the bulk of the collection was already printed. Printing of the entire collection with 1780 melodies was completed in 1900. In addition to lyrics and melodies, the volume includes a foreword by Baudouin de Courtenay, correspondence on editing issues, etc. Explanations of the songs and some of the annexes are provided by Noskowski in Polish and German. The second part was not published and it remains unknown what would have been published in it.

Thus the complicated story of the publication of Lithuanian folk song collection, collected by the Juška, has ended, leaving priceless treasures of Lithuanian nation's spiritual culture to the future generations. Unfortunately, since Lithuania was annexed

by Russia since 1795 and all Lithuanian writings in Latin letters were also prohibited from 1863 until December 1904. All the publications they initiated appeared far away in foreign lands, and were only distributed here under uneasy conditions.

Furthermore, in above mentioned essay, Čiurlionis insisted the importance of Lithuanian cultural tradition. By introducing Juška and Noskowski, he quoted some folksong melodies from the Juška's anthology, and pointed out problems of the endings of each melodies:

Much can be said about this publication. At times, the endings are altered, and often the 3/4 rhythm is replaced by a 2/4, or vice versa. This should not surprise anyone. It is the result not of a lack of good will, but because neither of the editors had ever heard Lithuanian songs or knew the Lithuanian language, and because of considerable confusion in the recorded notes. A great deal of effort and expense went into that publication, and we should be grateful, for it is a precious book for us in every respect. It is valuable not simply as a museum piece but as a source of inspiration for our composers. We should not be discouraged by its shortcomings, for the songs in it were not recorded according to any standard system... (Čiurlionis, 1910; quoted from Landsbergis, 1992, p. 174).

Although no trace was found that Čiurlionis directly adopted any melodies from Juška's anthology, it is certain that it was a great source of inspiration for him as well as other Lithuanian composers. Moreover, he adopted some Lithuanian folk song melodies in his later symphonic works. He never forgot to express Lithuanian spirit and the importance of preservation of Lithuanian folk songs until his death in 1911.

In the next section, Lithuania folk song melodies which adopted in Čiurlionis' later symphonic works will be shown and by introducing those melodies, the contextuality of the melodies will be considered.

5.2. Čiurlionis and Lithuanian folk songs

An article with the similar title (Čiurlionis and the folk song) was written by Čiurlionis' youngest sister Jadvyga Čiurlionytė and published as an introduction text to an edition *Liaudies dainos* [Folk songs] in 1959 (Čiurlionytė 1959, pp. 79-86). It was a time after Stalin's death in 1953 when appeared the first possibility to rehabilitate Čiurlionis and his art after a total prohibition in Soviet government in post-war regime. An article described and analysed main roots and features of Čiurlionis' interest in Lithuanian folk art in general and in Lithuanian folk songs first of all. This article served as a basis for music performers and researchers for decades. However, during the last 50 years there were many new articles and books published and many new aspects such as research of sources (Landsbergis, 1986), methodology of arrangements (Astrauskas, 2014), edition and interpretation (Misiukevičius, 1999) were researched. Now it is possible to go further and to pay more attentions to still untouched or less developed aspects of this question.

Čiurlionis' loyalty to Lithuania was mentioned previously became stronger after the 1905 revolution. His declaration to dedicate all his art to Lithuania followed soon

after political demonstrations he saw personally in Warsaw.¹⁹ In Čiurlionis' essay *Apie Muziką II* [On Music 2] (1910), we also see how much Čiurlionis was considering about the future of Lithuania, especially of on old Lithuanian folk songs. He mentioned on problems of the time as:

Because Lithuanian music still lies hidden in folk songs or recorded on paper, suitable merely as a museum exhibits. Those songs, like a block of marble, still await the genius who will be able to create unforgettable works from them. Many folk songs have been collected. Antanas Juškevičius has close to 2000 of them (published by the Cracow Academy), and several hundred can be found in German publications. But many of the finest songs have yet to be recorded; you can hear them sung by the old people. They are a rich source and give us a hope that in the future our own authentic professional musical tradition will be able to develop. That we do not yet have one is not surprising: our culture is just beginning to "emerge" (Čiurlionis, 1910; quoted from Landsbergis, 1992, pp. 171-172).

Especially, Čiurlionis analysed German, Russian, Italian, Scandinavian, French, Spanish, Hungarian and Polish music and those characteristics. He continued writing the history of classical music which started in the time of Ancient Greece and how the current style of music were started developing.

Subsequently, he classified Lithuanian folk songs by its metres, forms and contours and wrote down their common characteristics (Čiurlionienė-Kymantaitė and Čiurlionis 1910, pp.73-74):

- 1) The last bar of each lines is quiet and sometimes it is dropped altogether. At least half the songs end like this. As we know, in the ordering of musical phrases the standard is that the last note in each phrase must be the quietest and the weakest. All good musicians follow this regulation, and we see that the regulation is innate to the Lithuanian people, so an illiterate singer would not violate it.
- 2) Another important characteristic is that most of the songs of the major key end in a tierce, whereas in other nations songs nearly always end in tonic.
- 3) Sometimes the songs of the major key sound so sad as if they were in minor. This happens due to the steadiness and monotony of the rhythm.

Regarding No. 3 above however, he also mentioned that "This monotony of rhythm is one of the most peculiar and, I dare say, most beautiful features of our songs" (Čiurlionis, 1910; quoted from Landsbergis, 1992, p. 173).

In addition, he mentioned about bad tendencies on new Lithuanian folk songs which was invaded by Russian and Polish folk songs into Lithuanian's. And he concluded his thought as below:

We should not forget how great our responsibility is. We are the first Lithuanian composers, and future generations will look to our works as an example. We are the link between folk song and the Lithuanian music of the future. [...] Let our oldest songs

¹⁹ Čiurlionis described all he saw during demonstration in Warsaw in his letter to a brother Povilas, 7th January, 1906 (published in Čiurlionytė -Karužienė (ed.) *Apie muziką ir daile*, 1960, p.188-192).

are credo and the music of the future. Then we shall not be offended by having the truth flung into our faces and shall continue along the road, helping one another and remembering that a Lithuanian composer has a single goal – Lithuanian music (Čiurlionis, 1910; quoted from Landsbergis, 1992, p. 175).

Since these texts were written in the very end of his life in 1909 (published in 1910), we understand how much Lithuanian folk song melodies were important in his artistic activities. Therefore, now we will see how Čiurlionis left his trace in his music as a highly motivated Lithuanian composer.

5.3. Analysis 4: Lithuanian folksongs in Čiurlionis' later symphonic works

Traces of national folk tunes can be discovered in all Čiurlionis music, but it became evident after 1905 revolution in Warsaw and his movement to Vilnius. Čiurlionis started to use folk elements more and more often not only in music (arranged folk songs) but also in his paintings and drawings and sketches (various crosses, shrines). The usage of folk melodies in arrangements for choir or piano has been already analysed by many researchers (Čiurlionytė, Landsbergis and Astrauskas). Far fewer analyses have been done on Lithuanian tunes used in his later symphonic works. The main reason was that these compositions (two symphonic poems and one symphony) are not finished and not published. Another reason was an opinion of the most authority of Čiurlionis' researcher Vytautas Landsbergis who expressed an idea that late symphony music of Čiurlionis is only drafts of mentally ill person (Landsbergis, 1986, p. 93). This point of view had been very influential in Lithuanian and international musicologists' community for decades. Only after commemoration of anniversary of Čiurlionis' death in 2011, interests into Čiurlionis' late (and last) music compositions arose anew with the publication of research articles by Kučinskas and Nunokawa (2014) and first performances of reconstructed scores of symphonic in 2015.²⁰

Comparing the methods by which Čiurlionis involved folk melodies in his piano pieces and late symphonic music, we discover some similarities and differences. Here some additional research is needed. Starting from piano pieces we could form two groups on the method how Čiurlionis used folk melodies: a) pieces where folk melodies serve as a main thematic material like a core of all the composition and b) pieces where folk melodies are used as short fragments (inlays) or there are used only separate elements of folk tunes (only melodic lines or only rhythmic patterns). The first group is represented by direct folk song arrangements for piano. Čiurlionis composed those like another version of his arrangements for choir. And most of all

²⁰ Symphonic poem *Dies irae* was reconstructed by Giedrius Kuprevičius and performed in Kaunas Philharmonic on 18th November, 2015 by Kaunas Symphony orchestra, conductor Robertas Šervenikas. Symphonic poem *Creation of the World* was reconstructed by Arvydas Malcys and performed in Lithuanian National Philharmonic (Vilnius) on 5th December, 2015 by Lithuanian National orchestra, conductor Modestas Pitrenas.

there are cycles of variations (*Bėkit, bareliai; Oi giria giria*). The method of thematic transformation or variation is different from methods used in other cycles of variations by Čiurlionis. The folk tune here is not changed, only additional voices are modified in each new variation. As noted by Landsbergis, it is because Čiurlionis cherished and appreciated folk songs very much (Landsbergis, 1986, p. 115).

Another group of piano pieces contains folk songs which are transformed and hidden in a texture of a composition. For example, the main theme of Prelude (DK242/ VL 300) composed in 1906, is based on the first bars of Lithuanian folk song “Motule mano” [My dear mother]. But it is separated in different registers, the rhythmic pattern (accents, punctuation) is changed from 2/4 into 3/8, and the traditional tranquil tempo of folk song is changed into something more precipitate. These transformations made the Prelude more expressive and folk melody here is difficult to recognize (pic. 77).



Pic. 77. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. Prelude (1906, DK 242/ VL 300)



Pic. 78. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. Prelude in D minor (1909, DK 318/ VL 340)

Another piano piece where Čiurlionis used folk song as a very short quotation is the Prelude in D minor (1909, DK 318/ VL 340). Here Čiurlionis also used the same folk tune “Motule mano”. However, Čiurlionis quoted only the first bar. He did not changed the melody line, but rhythmic pattern is changed and it is used in augmentation after few bars. Though the folk song is more recognizable in this piece it has obvious transformations and clearly represents the second method of usage of folk songs in instrumental music (pic. 78).

Now we check how Čiurlionis used Lithuanian folk melodies in his late symphonic music. His decision to select folk songs as a basic resource for his last symphonic compositions confirms us that Čiurlionis saw a future of Lithuanian music only in this way. Poetically it recalls his dream “to compose a symphony of the rustle of waves, of a centenarian forest’s mysterious speech, of stars’ shimmering, and my vast longing” (Landsbergis (ed.) 2011, p. 230).²¹ It was written in a letter to Sofija on 19 November 1908. It means that Čiurlionis already had a profound decision to involve Lithuanian folk songs as a basic material for new compositions two years before he started to compose it. Even during a preliminary view of a score we can calculate more than a dozen (13) folk songs used in symphonic poem *Creation of the World*, 8 songs used in Symphony No. 2 (Pastoral, Lithuanian) but only 2 songs in symphonic poem *Dies irae*. There is a list of these songs:

Creation of the World

1. *Subatos vakarėly* [On a Saturday Night], DK 186a/ VL 286, DK 186b/ VL 63, (Čm 16, p. 00717).
2. *Sėjau rūtą* [I Sowed Rues], DK 42/ VL 179, (Čm 16, p. 00795).
3. *Oi lekia, lekia* [Oh They Fly, Fly], DK 189a/ VL 273, (Čm 16, p. 00798).
4. *Vienam kiemely* [In One Yard], DK 192a/ VL 274, (Čm 16, p. 00799).
5. *Oi giria giria* [Oh Forest Forest], DK 197a/ VL 276, (Čm 16, p. 00800).
6. *Vai močiute* [Oh Grandma], DK 198a/ VL 277, (Čm 16, p. 00800).
7. *Aš prašiau Dievą* [I Asked God], DK 200a/ VL 30, (Čm 16, p. 00800).
8. *Bėkit, bareliai* [Run, Fields], DK 202a/ VL 279, (Čm 16, p. 00801).
9. *Prapuoliau, močiute* [Grandmother, I am Gone], DK 204a/ VL 58, (Čm 16, p. 00801).
10. *Beauštanti aušrelė* [Coming Dawn], DK 264b/ VL 31, (Čm 16, p. 00802).
11. *Nemune, upeli* [The Nemunas, a Stream], DK 206/ VL 48, (Čm 16, p. 00802).
12. *Močiute, noriu miego* [Grandmother, I am Sleepy], DK 208/ VL 281, (Čm 16, p. 00802).
13. *Išėjo mergaitė* [A Girl Went Out], DK 209 / VL 278, (Čm 16, p. 00802-p. 00803).

Symphony No. 2 (Pastoral, Lithuanian)

1. *Siuntė mane motinėlė* [Mother sent me], From V. Kudirka „Kanklės“, part 2, p. 8, (Čm 16, p. 00873).
2. *Bėkit, bareliai* [Run, Fields], DK 202a/ VL 279, (Čm 16, p. 00874).

²¹ Čiurlionis. *Laiškai Sofijai*. Ed. by Vytautas Landsbergis. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2011.

3. *Nemune, upeli* [The Nemunas, a Stream], DK 206/ VL 48, (Čm 16, p. 00879).
4. *Oi giria giria* [Oh Forest Forest], DK 197a/ VL 276, (Čm 16, p. 00884).
5. *Beauštanti aušrelė* [Coming Dawn], DK 264b/ VL 31, (Čm 16, p. 00892).
6. *Nemune, upeli* [The Nemunas, a Stream], DK 206/ VL 48, (Čm 16, p. 00895).
7. *Aukštuos kalnuos jodinėdams* [While Riding in High Mountains], DKK 1.5.26, (Čm 16, p. 00896).
8. *Kai mes augom* [When We Were Growing Up], DK 199/ VL 39, (Čm 16, p. 00903).

Dies irae

1. *Sėjau rūtą* [I Sowed Rues], DK 42/ VL 179.
2. *Bėkit, bareliai* [Run, Fields], DK 202a/ VL 279.

We can notice that some of folk songs are used twice and one song “Bėkit, bareliai” used in all three scores. Another specific aspect is that Čiurlionis used not only melodies of folk songs but also quotations from his previously composed arrangements of folk songs for piano (the texture is the same). Here we see that Čiurlionis tried to develop folk songs arrangements further, and that piano arrangements (separate pieces and cycles of variations) composed few years before (1905-1906) are not the final version of a composition.

Čiurlionis adopted many melodies from his previously composed musical works such as themes of compositions from piano, organ, choir, string quartet, even “De profundis” music (symphonic poem *Creation of the World*). Most of all are from piano pieces, composed during study years in Warsaw and Leipzig as well as in later years (1907-1908). Comparing these three late compositions it is obvious a great difference with a symphonic poem *Dies irae* where Čiurlionis used only two folk songs. It is because of the role composer devoted to these songs; it serves as main themes of *sonata allegro* structure. Though Čiurlionis used more themes in constructing symphonic poem *Dies irae* (12 identified themes, 4 rhythmic themes imitating fanfares and 5 still unidentified themes), five themes repeatedly appears through the composition. These are:

- “Šviėty Bože” [Sanctus Deus] (DK 40/ VL 70)
- Fugue in C minor (DK 92/ VL 219)
- “Bėkit bareliai” (DK 202a/ VL 279)
- “Sėjau rūtą” (DK 42/ VL 179)
- “Tėve mūsų” [Pater noster] (DK 153/ VL 260)

Since three of those “Šviėty Bože”, “Bėkit bareliai” and “Sėjau rūtą” were also used in symphonic poem *Creation of the World*, these themes seemed to be specially selected melodies for Čiurlionis, even though this composition showed religious and sacred commitments rather than showing Lithuanian folk song melodies.

Symphony No. 2 has another feature of the usage of folk songs. What is interesting here is “Nemune, upeli” [The Nemunas, a Stream], DK 206/ VL 48 was used twice. Also, we could see a trace that Čiurlionis may have been thinking of lyrics of folk songs “Aukštuos kalnuos jodinėdams” [While Riding in High Mountains] (DKK 1.5.26) as special. In a letter to Sofija Kymantaitė on 24 December (11

December) 1908, Čiurlionis wrote: “It is very important that you send me the words of the song. They are needed for the Vilnius choir (of the society Vilniaus kanklės)” (Landsbergis (ed.) 2011, p. 266-267). Moreover, we detect a trace that he explored more other Lithuanian folk songs which were not used before.

From these three symphonic works, we infer Čiurlionis’ broad attitude toward Lithuanian folk songs. In the symphonic poem *Creation of the world* (1910, DK 249/VL 6), we see melodies of folk songs related to major features of Lithuanian life such as, songs on fields, forest, sky, river, grandmother and god. In symphonic poem *Dies irae* (1910, DK 330), in addition to major Lithuanian folk songs, he explored new themes and rhythms and showed religious and sacred commitments. Finally in Symphony No. 2 (Lithuanian, Pastoral) in A major (1910, DK 331), it seems that Čiurlionis returned to his favourite folk songs and tried to fit those into a symphonic style.

Thus, Čiurlionis’ patriotic mind for his native land Lithuania was strongly expressed in these symphonic poems and a symphony with Lithuanian folk song melodies. Even though these were composed in last years in his life, we must not forget that his patriotism for Lithuania was already nurtured in his younger years during his studies in Warsaw via his teacher Noskowski, a great admirer of Liszt. Noskowski was regarded as the first Polish composer of symphonic poem in which his patriotism for Poland was fully displayed. Since symphonic poems were his favourite genre, Čiurlionis continued composing them in every phases of his life. We can trace back the transitions of his artistic styles through his symphonic poems as well as how Čiurlionis was trying to leave and take over Lithuanian folk songs to the future generations as a part of his composition and to conclude his life with his most beloved music.

6. ČIURLIONIS AND ST. PETERSBURG

6.1. Time, Place, and People around Čiurlionis in Russia

It was during his studies in Leipzig in 1902 when Čiurlionis wrote of his ambition to continue his career as a composer: “[...] from here I will go to Saint Petersburg. There I will be able to support myself by giving private lessons and will study instrumentation” (A letter to E. Morawski, March 4, 1902; Čiurlionytė-Karužienė (ed.) 1960, p. 100). Even though Čiurlionis did not mention the name of Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908), Landsbergis proposed a hypothesis: “he [Čiurlionis] purposed to travel to St. Petersburg to learn instrumentation with Rimski-Korsakov, but it is unknown, if he [Čiurlionis] studied any of his scores” (Landsbergis 2008, p. 569). Furthermore, Landsbergis wrote that Čiurlionis used in some compositions an artificial mode made of repeating chains of tone and semitone (diminished mode, “Scale of Rimski-Korsakov”) (Landsbergis 2008, p. 542). These remarks make us deduce that Čiurlionis may have been influenced by Rimsky-Korsakov’s music.

It has been believed for many decades by Lithuanian musicologists that Rimsky-Korsakov attended a concert of the 46th evening of “Contemporary music” which took place in St. Petersburg on January 28th 1909 in which Čiurlionis’ music was performed. On the programme booklet, there are remarks supposed to be written by Rimsky-Korsakov with pencil on compositions of Čiurlionis (Landsbergis 2011, p. 208). However, Rimsky-Korsakov passed away half a year before the concert, therefore now it became apparent that the remarks were not written by Rimsky-Korsakov himself - this was shown in recent research by Daunoravičienė (2011). In addition, Rimsky-Korsakov did not like concerts of “Contemporary music” and had very conservative view of all modern music in Europe. The best expression of his views is his opinion of Richard Strauss’ opera “Salome” – “it is such a filth that not exist never else in the world” (Rimsky-Korsakov 1982, p. 322).²²

Čiurlionis arrived in St. Petersburg for the first time in autumn 1908 after the death of Rimsky-Korsakov. Since Čiurlionis had received the greatest admiration as a promising painter at the exhibition of the Art Schools of the Empire in Saint Petersburg 1906 where the Warsaw Art School participated, he had it in mind since then to achieve major recognition as a painter and composer in St. Petersburg.

Upon arriving in St. Petersburg, because of his very shy character, Čiurlionis did not dare call on anybody. Instead, he first sent his brother to Mstislav Dobuzhinsky (1875-1957) for unknown reason. Later when Čiurlionis himself finally came to see Dobuzhinsky, he quickly gained courage. Čiurlionis began to visit him more often, and Dobuzhinsky had the opportunity to know him better. According to a memoir by Dobuzhinsky, he had received some information about Čiurlionis beforehand:

I received news from Vilnius of a painter there who used colours to depict subjects

²² An opinion on Russian composers, Richard Strauss also expressed in a short conversation with Rimsky-Korsakov. After one of Russian music concerts in Paris 1907, R. Strauss said: “Everything here is good, but unfortunately, we are already not children” (Rimsky-Korsakov 1982, p. 323).

pertaining to music. “Eccentric”, “decadent”, and even stronger epithets, which I heard from those who had seen his paintings and had made dilettante appraisals, only served to pique my interest in that apparently unusual artist, even more since, it was said, he was a composer as well (Goštautas (ed.), 1994, p. 160).

Also, it was Dobuzhinsky who visited Čiurlionis’ rented room where he actually saw *Sonata of the Sea* for the first time. He told about Čiurlionis’ paintings to his friends and set up an opportunity to show them all the works that Čiurlionis brought with him. For the gathering, Alexandre Benois (1870-1960), Konstantin Somov (1869-1939), Yevgeny Lansere [Lanceray] (1875-1946), Léon Bakst (1866-1924) and Sergei Makovsky (1877-1962) were all invited. All were former members of the group *Mir Iskusstva* [World of Art]; Makovsky was an editor of the art journal *Apollon*. However, Čiurlionis did not attend, since it would have made him uneasy. During that time Makovsky had plans to organise a large art show. Čiurlionis’ works made such an impression on everyone that a unanimous decision was made to invite him to participate in the “Salon” show. Čiurlionis’ works amazed everyone first of all by their originality and singularity – he resembled no other painters – and the source of his art seemed profound and mysterious (Goštautas (ed.), 1994, p. 161).

The exhibition at the “Salon” was held in St. Petersburg from January 4th to March 8th, 1909. Six of Čiurlionis’ paintings were displayed; “Allegro”, *Sonata No. 5* (1908), “Finale”, *Sonata No. 5* (1908), “Andante”, *Sonata No. 6* (1908), *Fugue* (1908), “Finale”, *Sonata No. 3* (1908), and Diptych *Prelude and Fugue* (1908). There were 422 entries in the catalogue which included works by major Russian painters: Benois, Borisov-Musatov, Bromirsky, D. Burliuk, Dobuzhinsky, Falk, Gaush, Jawlensky, Kandinsky, Konchalovsky, Krimov, Lukomsky, Milioti, Ostriumova-Lebedeva, Petrov-Vodkin, Sapunov, Sudeikin, Verevkina, Vrubel and Yakulov (Gordon 1974, p. 297). Here is an impression by Sergei Makovsky who saw Čiurlionis’ paintings at the “Salon”:

These illustrations are strange dream-figures, shadows of unreal landscapes. They bewitch not only with their subtle rhythmic quality and the deep musicality of their mood, but also with their purely plastic qualities: by the nobility of colours, the decorative refinement of composition. When I saw them for the first time three years ago, during the Salon exhibition, I immediately recognised the talent of Čiurlionis and allowed him the possibility of performing his “sonatas” among the select masters of the brush. Until then he had not exhibited himself in paintings, even though he was already famous in modernistic circles as a musician. I am convinced that for the artist himself the success of his first experiments in painting (the passionate attacks and praise with which their appearance was met at the Salon) was a complete surprise. He did not intend to betray his calling as a composer with these works; he simply wanted to express his love for music. Drawing sonatas and fugues, he dreamed only of the secret beauty of sounds, much like medieval monks who were inspired by a dream of another world as they portrayed madonnas and angels (Goštautas (ed.), 1994, pp. 168-169).

From this comment, we can see that Čiurlionis seemed to succeed to be recognised both as a painter as well as a composer. Moreover, it echoed the opinion

from the group of *Mir Iskusstva* about Čiurlionis:

It might seem strange that we recognise Čiurlionis' art, so ultrapersonal and standing completely apart, as quickly and ardently as we did. It was because of individuality and spirituality. The spirit of *Mir Iskusstva* [World of Art] sought just such a personal and sincere, in no way superficial, formalism, and for that reason Čiurlionis was immediately perceived as one of us (Goštautas (ed.), 1994, p. 161).

From these words, we could see that they surely accepted Čiurlionis as a member of the *Mir Iskusstva* group not only formally but also as a congenial person standing on the same esthetic and artistic platform. It could be said that Čiurlionis' ambition began to be fulfilled at least in the field of painting.

At Benois' house, another chance for Čiurlionis as a composer emerged. He met the founders of the "Evenings of Contemporary Music" Society, Alfred Nurok (1863-1919) and Walter Nouvel (1871-1949), for whose consideration Čiurlionis submitted his music compositions. The Evenings of Contemporary Music were organised in 1901 in loose alliance with *Mir Iskusstva*. The society sponsored the series of concerts in St. Petersburg which went on until 1912. Its Moscow branch, organised in 1909 under the energetic leadership of Vladimir Derzhanovsky, gave concerts from 1910 to 1915. One of the founders, Nurok, was a highly cultivated musical dilettante and one of Diaghilev's early mentors as well as an impresario, and an art critic who regularly contributed reviews of concerts of Mitrofan Belyayev (1836-1903)'s "Russian Symphony Concerts" to the journal *Mir Iskusstva*. "Nouvel was a Sunday composer like Nurok, he worked by day as a procurator for the Office of the Ministry of the Course (under A. S. Taneyev, another dabbler in composition) and by night played the role of consummate musical snob, for which he achieved considerable local réclame" (Taruskin, 1996, p. 174).

Čiurlionis was given a chance to perform those works for them and he wrote about the audition in his letter:

The committee, consisting of four not so nice gentlemen, received my works more coldly; I played for them by myself, and played horribly; and got the impression that the performance of my works would be postponed. They praised them a great deal, of course, but not the things that deserved praise; what was really original and new they failed to understand. Such was the moral satisfaction I obtained. Sad, isn't it? For I want to be understood, yet I cannot compromise with myself (Letter to S. Kymantaitė, November 8-9, 1908).

The "four gentlemen" might have been Nurok, Nouvel, Vyacheslav Karatigin (1875-1925) and either Ivan Krizhanovsky (1867-1924) or Alexander Medem (1871-1927). Together with Karatigin, Mikhail Gnesin (1883-1957) characterises Nurok and Nouvel in their auditions of new music for the Evenings, as "people who had listened to a great deal of music (far more than I), who loved it fanatically, and who did a great deal to acquaint our public with Western novelties and to support our own young innovators; but they were capable of praising, alongside the work of genuinely gifted artists, all kinds of modernistic nonsense, especially if it came from the West" (Glezer (ed.), *Gnesin*, p. 140).

In spite of Čiurlionis' negative impression, he finally gained chances for his works to be performed in two concerts of "Evenings of Contemporary Music". Both were held at the "Salon" during the same period as the above mentioned exhibition in which Čiurlionis' paintings were also exhibited. The first concert was given on January 28th, 1909. The whole programme is as follows (Landsbergis (ed.), 2011, p. 208):

1. Čiurlionis' music works (pianist: M. E. Juvanovič)
 - a) Prelude B-moll
 - b) Prelude D-moll
 - c) The Sea. Cycle of Small Landscapes
2. Choral works composed by V. Senilov. Singer: A.G. Žerebcova-Andrejeva.
 - a) Spring (based on Alexander Blok poem)
 - b) Bunch of willow (based on Alexander Blok poem)
 - c) My steppe (based on Fyodor Sologub poem)
3. Works for violin composed by Pavel Chesnokov. Violinist: E. G. Boos-Mstečkina.
 - a) Adagio
 - b) Romanzetta
4. Sonata in D minor for piano composed by Benj. J. Dale. Pianist V. V. Pokrovsky.

Allegro deciso. Slow movement.

Variations and Finale.

Again, Dobuzhinsky recalled that Čiurlionis attended to the concert:

Here, too, Čiurlionis received recognition. His symphony (*The Sea* or *In the Forest*), I cannot recall which) was performed with virtuosity by the pianist Ploskaya-Yemtsova at one of the society's concerts. I attended that performance and saw Čiurlionis sitting quietly in a distant corner. This concert, I believe, took place in the spring of 1909 (Goštautas (ed.), 1994, p. 164).

Though Dobuzhinsky is not precise in his memoirs – what was performed was a cycle of piano pieces "The Sea" (DK 279/ VL 317) – the fact is that Čiurlionis' music was performed by professional pianist and Čiurlionis listened to this concert personally. As for the second concert held on February 24th, 1909, only names of composers have remained, but Čiurlionis was included: "On 24th February in the same place [exhibition hall of "Salon"] was held An Evening of Contemporary Music (Young Russian composers). Music performed were by A. Scriabin, S. Rachmaninov, N. Medtner, N. Cherepnin, F. Akimenko, I. Krížhanovsky, V. Pogozev, V. Senilov, A. Chesnokov, I. Stravinsky, M. Shteinberg, M. Gnesin, V. Karatigin, A. Medem, B. Yanovsky, N. Curlianis [*sic*] and I. Prokrovsky ([died] 1906)". (*Zolotoe Runo* 1909 No. 4, p. 86).

Moreover, there is another review of the concert from a different journal:

In the same evening [24th February] a circle who hold "Vechera sovremennoj muzyki" [Evenings of contemporary music] presented compositions of young Russian composers in an exhibition [hall] of "Salon". This was a strange concert: much too

motley, both from the point of view of performers and that of composers (10 performers, including a string quartet; around 15 composers), but more uniform when it came to the character of the works performed. Without listing all the works on this long-drawn-out programme, we will note that the greatest attention of the public was attracted by the quartet of Mr. Pogozev, already performed during this season twice, romances of Gnesin (Snowdrops), Senilov (Ballade “Red Horseman”) and Stravinsky. The audience was generally interested in the concert in “Salon” and didn’t spare applause (*RMG* 16 No. 10 (8 March 1909), col. 273).

From these articles, we can see that Čiurlionis’ works were performed with Russian rising stars; A. Scriabin, S. Rachmaninov, N. Medtner, N. Cherepnin, F. Akimenko, I. Krizhanovsky, V. Pogozev, V. Senilov, A. Chesnokov, I. Stravinsky, M. Shteinberg, M. Gnesin, V. Karatigin, A. Medem, B. Yanovsky, I. Prokrovsky. Though it is not certain that which work of Čiurlionis was performed and who performed the work for the second concert, it is evident that Čiurlionis was also recognised as a composer. Here we can deduce that several preludes were performed – there are fair copies of Prelude (DK 282/ VL 304) and Prelude in C major (DK 283/ VL 318) made by composer’s brother Jonas Čiurlionis and there are also fair copies of Prelude in C minor (DK 290/ VL 324), Prelude in D minor (DK 291/ VL 325) and Prelude in C major (DK 292/ VL 328) done by composer himself and dated in St. Petersburg.

Especially for Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), the concert was held exactly one month after the première of *Scherzo fantastique*, one of his early important works. His *Pastorale* and the *Gorodetsky songs* were also given by the Evenings of Contemporary Music, for a total of four performances within five weeks. Since his works were performed not by the composer but by Anna Zherebtsova and Mikhail Bikhter on February 24th (Taruskin 1996, p. 411), it is not certain if Stravinsky was in attendance in the concert or not, however it is highly possible that Stravinsky listened to Čiurlionis’ music. He surely saw six of Čiurlionis’ paintings which were exhibited in the same hall as the concert. Moreover, this encounter would have tempted Stravinsky into a purchase of Čiurlionis’ painting *Black Sun* in 1912.

Therefore, in the next section, we would like to see how Stravinsky developed his strong desire to obtain *Black Sun* by looking at new facts from his letters.

6.2. New facts concerning Čiurlionis’ painting *Black Sun* once owned by Stravinsky, and its link to his ballet *The Rite of Spring*

There is a well-known fact among Lithuanian scholars that Stravinsky once possessed a painting by Čiurlionis. However, it has not been researched exactly how he acquired it. Therefore, in this section, we would like to show how Stravinsky came to know Čiurlionis’ paintings and how he gained Čiurlionis’ *Black Sun* (pic. 79).

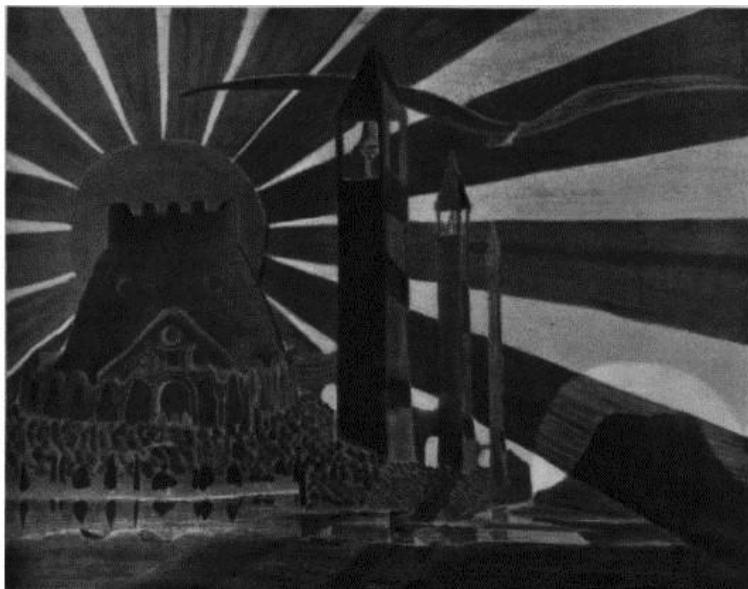


Fig. 79. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. Ballad (*The Black Sun*). 1909

Even though it has been thought that Stravinsky and Čiurlionis did not meet each other in their lifetimes, there is one possibility that they might have met in the evening on February 24th, 1909 at a concert of the Evenings of Contemporary Music held at “Salon” in St. Petersburg where their music was performed together. As mentioned above, at the same “Salon”, an exhibition of Russian painters was being held and Čiurlionis’ six paintings were displayed among them. Since Stravinsky’s music was performed four times within five weeks during January to February 1909 at concerts of the Evenings of Contemporary Music, it is highly possible that Stravinsky came to know Čiurlionis’ paintings (“Allegro”, *Sonata No. 5* (1908), “Finale”, *Sonata No. 5* (1908), “Andante”, *Sonata No. 6* (1908), *Fugue* (1908), “Finale”, *Sonata No. 3* (1908), and Diptych *Prelude and Fugue* (1908)) during that period at the “Salon”.

Early in 1912 when Stravinsky stayed in Clarens, Switzerland, he had notice from Alexandre Benois that Čiurlionis’ posthumous exhibition was being held in St. Petersburg. It seemed that Stravinsky remembered of his passion for Čiurlionis and readily tried to get one of his paintings. These processes could be read chronologically in the letters on Čiurlionis’ “Black Sun” written by Stravinsky and Benois in 1912 as follows:

Letter I: from Stravinsky to Alexandre Benois (Clarens, 28 February 1912):

I’ve just read your letter about Čiurlionis and got a burning desire to buy one of his works. Actually, I’ve had this wish for a while. Now, having read your article, I realized that that there are, in fact, such clever and sweet people (although you are not entirely right when you attack those who do not buy Čiurlionis) who provide an opportunity for

me to purchase something by him.²³ You have to agree that museums and academies behave generously. But the point is that those works by this wonderful artist (for whom I have had a long-term weakness) which are known to me, that is, all what I've seen before the year 1910 and as reproductions in "Apollo", must have been purchased. For selecting among the rest of the works, which are presented in his exhibition, I rely solely on you, my dear. Please forgive me for bothering you with such a request, but I do not know of any other way. As most I can offer up to 300 rubles. Dear Lord, I must not miss it and have a Čiurlionis. You won't believe how close he is to me and with what admiration I read your wonderful lines about him²⁴ (Stravinsky and Varunts (ed.), 1998, p. 311).

From this letter dated on February 28th, 1912, we could infer that Stravinsky surely saw Čiurlionis' paintings before 1910, presumably during the "Salon" exhibition in 1909 and read articles of art journal "Apollon" issues of Vol. 5 in 1910 and/ or Vol. 7 in 1911. Since Apollon Vol. 7 in 1911 showed four impressive paintings of Čiurlionis: "Andante", *Sonata No. 7* (1909), *Fortress* (Fortress Fairy Tale) (1909), *Prelude* (The Knight Prelude) (1909), *Angels* (Paradise) (1909), the impression of those paintings must have been drastically stood out in his memory, even though *Black Sun* was not shown.

Letter II: from Alexandre Benois to Stravinsky (St. Petersburg, 4 March 1912):

Still, Dobuzhinsky manages Čiurlionis-related things. Upon request in your letter, I telephoned him immediately, but it turned out that he was in Moscow. My advice to you – please write him everything you had written me (he will stay in Moscow for three weeks) and ask him to leave behind this or that work which impressed you or which you liked. I think the amount of money is sufficient. Just in case, name several objects, but in any case you do not risk to be rejected, since Čiurlionis has never sold anything, except for "The Rider" last year. Perhaps during my absence (I stayed one and a half week in Vienna) something was sold, but I still doubt it. The first name of Dobuzhinsky is Mstislav Valerianovich, he lives in Moscow, Karetnyi road No. 4 (if I'm not mistaken, this is at Stanislavsky's place)²⁵ (Stravinsky and Varunts (ed.), 1998, p. 312).

In the letter above, we could see that Benois suggested to Stravinsky to contact Dobuzhinsky directly and to send him request with several titles which he wanted to buy.

Letter III: from Stravinsky to Alexandre Benois (Clarens, 12 March 1912):²⁶

²³ The article by Benois, mentioned by Stravinsky, begins with these words: "A posthumous exhibition of Čiurlionis stays open for the third week, organized by *Mir Iskusstva*, and not a single institution and not a single private collector who would have acquired any of these amazing things (Benois A., Čiurlionis // Rech [speech], 10 February 1912).

²⁴ The first appearance of Čiurlionis' paintings at an exhibition titled 'Salon', which opened in Petersburg on 4 January 1909, appeared to be a real shock to the whole world of Russian painting. Presumably, Stravinsky attended this exhibition, where he got acquainted with the artist's works. He may have seen also *Sonata of Pyramids* there and the memories strongly affected wrongly in the future remembrance.

²⁵ It is true that Stanislavsky, who had close friendly and creative bonds with Dobuzhinsky, was living in this address in 1903-1920.

²⁶ The year 1912 was a leap year. The letter dated 12 March new calendar corresponds to 29 February old calendar.

I'm only writing several lines, dear friend, to thank you sincerely for willingly fulfilling my request.²⁷ My kisses to you.

Here is a cheque for you (in your name, so that nobody would be able to expropriate it). Katya and I have decided that if we are to buy one, we must buy something typical, and thus we chose *The Black Sun*. Its price suited us, and it's a great work, as long as my memory is not deceiving me (Stravinsky and Varunts (ed.), 1998, p. 317).

From above letter dated on March 12th, we could see that Stravinsky was the very person who chose *Black Sun*. Furthermore, his words "my memory is not deceiving me" make us believe that Stravinsky had surely seen *Black Sun*. The painting was displayed for the first time at the exhibition of "Seventh Exhibit" by the Union of Russian Artists held on December 26th, 1909 to February 7th, 1910 in Moscow and from February 20th to March 20th, 1910 in St. Petersburg. According to Čiurlionis' letter to Sofija dated November 30 (or 28), 1909, Čiurlionis' paintings exhibited in this exhibition were chosen with the advice of Dobuzhinsky. These are: *Little Angels*, *Angel*, *The Lithuanian Cemetery*, *Noah's Arch* and *A Ballad* [Black Sun]. From this letter, we could deduce that Stravinsky saw *Black Sun* seemingly at the exhibition. Even though the exhibition itself was huge, with about 500 paintings of various artists, the reason why Stravinsky could remember Čiurlionis' *Black Sun*, was that he had seen six Čiurlionis' paintings at the "Salon" exhibition in 1909 and took particular notice of his works. The exhibition of "Seventh Exhibit" was opened in February in 1910 just before Stravinsky moved to Paris. He was still in St. Petersburg until March 1910 and it was possible for him to see *Black Sun* at the exhibition.²⁸

Letter IV: from Stravinsky to Alexandre Benois (Clarens, 26 March 1912):

Dear!

So? Did you buy it? I still haven't received any news from you! I am sorry for bothering you. You will soon start cursing me for clinging to this (Stravinsky and Varunts (ed.), 1998, p. 322).

Letter V: from Stravinsky to Alexandre Benois (Clarens, 4 April 1912):

We are impatiently waiting for the moment when we set our eyes to *The Black Sun*, which we greatly appreciate. Thank you, my dear! It seems to be my fate to always bother you. First thing first, the "Old years"! I tremendously fear that I will get them for last year, 1911, since there are reports that not a single copy from last year has remained – all hopes on you, my dear! Secondly, it would be the best to give Čiurlionis to my mom, who lives at Kriukov canal, house No. 6 – 8 (where Karsavina lives, only one floor lower), and we will write her how to solve this. Would it be better to cover it with a glass or not? What do you think? Thirdly, my wife and I are slowly going bankrupt while buying paintings.²⁹ We bought two pieces these days: one is a drawing – I am attaching a photo

²⁷ Benois made arrangements for the purchase of Čiurlionis painting, which Stravinsky earlier requested (letter No. 259), although Benois' letter, informing the composer about the news, is unknown.

²⁸ Stravinsky, Igor. *Expositions and Developments*, pp. 127-28 "I returned to Saint Petersburg in December and remained there until, in March, I had finished the composition. The orchestra score was ready a month later, and the complete music mailed to Paris by mid-April".

²⁹ Stravinsky's passion was collecting artworks. For this, Benois was of course the best consultant.

with it to this letter in order to ask your opinion about the artist, whose signature stands on this drawing: “C. J. Törner...74”, probably 1874, but who's this Törner – God only knows! The second piece is a wonderful engraving by Dürer from 1565 - “Adam and Eve”, a fantastic work (very famous), and a good one, too. If we see each other in Paris, I'll show it to you there. I paid thirty francs for each of them. Later we bought an engraving by Hogarth from his painting “The Election. I-An entertainment” (Sir John Soane Museum, London) for five francs, and various small things. Here you go! (Stravinsky and Varunts (ed.), 1998, p. 326).

Therefore, from these five letters, we could confirm many of very important unrevealed facts:

1. Stravinsky surely saw Čiurlionis' paintings before 1910, presumably during the “Salon” exhibition in 1909 and read articles of art journal “Apollon” issues of Vol. 5 in 1910 and/ or Vol. 7 in 1911.

2. It was Benois who suggested to Stravinsky to contact Dobuzhinsky directly and to send him request with several titles which he wanted to buy.

3. It was Stravinsky himself who chose *Black Sun*.

4. His words “my memory is not deceiving me” make us believe that Stravinsky had surely seen *Black Sun*.

5. Stravinsky saw *Black Sun* seemingly at the exhibition of “Seventh Exhibit” by the Union of Russian Artists held from February 20th to March 20th, 1910 in St. Petersburg. According to Čiurlionis' letter to Sofija dated November 30 (or 28), 1909, Čiurlionis' paintings exhibited in this exhibition were chosen with the advice of Dobuzhinsky in which *A Ballad* [Black Sun]) was included. The exhibition was opened in February in 1910 just before Stravinsky moved to Paris. He was still in St. Petersburg until March 1910 and it was possible for him to see *Black Sun* at the exhibition.

6. Stravinsky with his wife were planning to give *Black Sun* to their mother, who lived at Kriukov canal, house No. 6 – 8 in St Petersburg.

The picture was sold to Stravinsky in 1912 and was presumably stored in his mother's house in St. Petersburg. Its reproduction was printed in “Apollon” No 3, 1914 (pp. 40-41), with a title *Conte phantastique* and *Сказка* [Fairy Tale] and Stravinsky was specified as an owner of painting. After that, it was sent to his *dacha* in Ustyluh, Ukraine and must have perished in the whirlwind of the revolution and civil war.³⁰

6.3. Lithuanian link to Stravinsky's ballet, *The Rite of Spring*

During this period when Benois and Stravinsky were exchanging these letters on Čiurlionis' painting *Black Sun* from February to April 1912, Stravinsky was in

³⁰ Much later Stravinsky remembered and described this painting [*Black Sun*] more like one painting from *Sonata of Pyramids* (see Lituanus, 1961, No 2, p. 61; Landsbergis 2008, p.371 and p. 371, n.3; Stravinsky and Craft 1981, p. 27n.; also quoted by Šarūnas Nakas 2009, p. 180. Therefore, two hypotheses could be considered: 1. Stravinsky separately purchased two paintings, *Black Sun* and another painting from *Sonata of Pyramids*. 2. Stravinsky's memory became uncertain after 50 years.

parallel composing the ballet *The Rite of Spring* (*Le Sacre du printemps*). It is a well-known fact that Stravinsky adopted Lithuanian folksong melodies in his ballet *The Rite of Spring*. Stravinsky recalls in his book *Memories and Commentaries* (1959) that “The opening bassoon melody in *Le Sacre du Printemps* is the only folk melody in that work. It came from an anthology of Lithuanian folk music I found in Warsaw, and not from Borodin or Cui as some critics have suggested; the anthology was a recent publication” (Stravinsky 1959, p. 98). Even though he confessed that “the opening bassoon melody is the only folk melody in that work”, some more Lithuanian folk melodies were discovered in the ballet by musicologists, Lawrence Morton (1924-2002) and Richard Taruskin (1945-) respectively in 1979 and 1996. It was André Schaeffner (1895-1980) who first mentioned the anthology which Stravinsky referred to *The Rite of Spring*, in his book *Stravinsky* (1931). However, only the above-mentioned melody was shown with a musical example in the book.

No composer before Stravinsky adopted an ancient ritual of pagan Russia. According to Taruskin (1996), it was Nicholas Roerich [Nikolai Rerikh] (1874-1947) who might have directed Stravinsky to Juška’s anthology, or at least advised him to find some Lithuanian songs (Taruskin 1996, p. 900). Furthermore, Robert Craft (2013) wrote that Stravinsky selected Roerich as his collaborator because he was the only painter with extensive knowledge of pagan Russia.

But here, let us return to Lithuanian folk song melodies from Juška’s anthology. As mentioned above, in 1979, Morton discovered some more Lithuanian melodies from Juška’s anthology in Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*. However, although Morton quoted more than 10 melodies from the anthology, Taruskin corrected Morton’s reference in 1996 and concluded only 5 melodies were adopted from Juška’s anthology into the ballet. Here are the musical examples of the 5 Lithuanian melodies together with corresponding melodies in *The Rite of Spring* (pic. 80) (Taruskin, 1996, pp. 898-899):

1. *Tu, mano seserėle* [You, my sister] (Melody No. 157 from Juška’s *Melodje ludowe litewskie*).

2. *Kad aš ėjau per dvarą* [When I walked across the yard] (Melody No. 787 from Juška’s *Melodje ludowe litewskie*).

3. *Tėvužėli mano* [Oh, my old father] (Melody No. 142 from Juška’s *Melodje ludowe litewskie*).

4. *O kad aš buvau jaunas nevedęs* [When I was young and not married] (Melody No. 249 from Juška’s *Melodje ludowe litewskie*).

5. *O kad aš gėriau, pasigėriau* [Oh I had drunk and get drunk] (Melody No. 271 from Juška’s *Melodje ludowe litewskie*).

6. As an example of leaping grace notes. *Pasisėjau avižų* [I had sowed oats] (Melody No. 409 from Juška’s *Melodje ludowe litewskie*).

No. 157

Tu, ma-nu se-se-rė-lė žė-le! Kad no-ri
Se-se-lė gul-bu
var-gė varg-ti te-kek už bau-džiau-nin-ką.

No. 787

Kad aš é-jau par dva-rį, aš ti-ju-nų
'ia-bą dié-ną' ma-ti ju-nas ko-ką.

No. 142

Tė-vu-žė-li ma-nu! Sen-gal-vė-li ma-nu!
Lejs k ma-ng, tė-ve-li į dva-rį stu-žy-ti.

No. 249

O kad aš bu-vau jau nas ne-ve-dės, —
aj! aj! aj! — vis mer-ge-les my-lė-jau.

No. 271

O kad aš gė-riau, pa-si-gė-riau;
į sta-kles sė-dau, pa-svi-rė-jau.

No. 409 (model for leaping grace notes)

Pa-si-sė-jau a-vi-žu — pūt-ną tė-vu dir-ve-leg;

Introduction to Part I

Fag.
solo ad lib.

Vesenniye gadaniya ("Les Augures printaniers"), [19]

Fag.
Sketchbook, p. 3

Igra umikaniya ("Jeu du rapt"), 3 after [37]

Tromba piccola in re
Sketchbook, p. 7
cf. 1 after [40]

Veshniye khorovodi ("Rondes printanières"), [48]

Bass clar.
(etc.)
Sketchbook, p. 7 (zapevaniye khorovodnoye [Khorovod incantation])

Pic. 80. Lithuanian folk songs from Juška's anthology corresponding with Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* melodies identified by Taruskin in 1996

Since three of the melodies were found in the sketch book of Stravinsky (pp. 3 and 7; cf. Taruskin 1996, pp. 895 and 897), it seems that these 5 melodies from Juška's anthology were surely arranged and adopted into *The Rite of Spring*. Unlike his previous two ballets, *Pétrouchka* and *The Firebird*, in which folk song melodies were directly borrowed, in *The Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky skilfully manipulated those Lithuanian folk song melodies in his own way and erased the trace of the source.

In a letter to Florent Schmitt (from Clarens) dated on February 12th, 1912, Stravinsky wrote: "As for myself, I have nearly finished the first part of the *Sacres* [*The Rite of Spring*], including the instrumentation" (Danuser, Zimmermann and Sacher Stiftung, 2013, p. 447). Moreover, he wrote a letter to Andrey Rimsky-Korsakov, the eldest son of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov:

Letter VI: from Stravinsky to Andrey Rimsky-Korsakov (Montreux, 7 March 1912):

You presumably know that I've been busy composing the piece I planned to write after *The Firebird*. Its Russian title is still undermined, but in French it's called (wonderfully) "*Le Sacre du printemps*." The first tableau is completely finished (with orchestration), and I'm working on the second. This season opens on 10 May (new style), and my new work will probably come out at the end of the season. My God, what a delight it will be to hear it. [...] It's as if not two but twenty years have passed since I wrote *The Firebird* (Stravinsky and Varunts (ed.), 1998, pp. 315-316).

Just before when Stravinsky was exchanging these letters with Benois, Čiurlionis' painting *Black Sun* was on display in a posthumous exhibition of works by Čiurlionis held in January to February in St. Petersburg 1912 by artist group *Mir Iskusstva* (cf. Gordon, 1974, p. 542-3; Landsbergis, 1976, p. 342-9). Even though Stravinsky had not received the painting *Black Sun* yet at that moment in 1912, as written in the letter from Stravinsky to Alexandre Benois (Clarens, March 12, 1912), it was certain that he saw Čiurlionis' *Black Sun*. Therefore, the title may have given an inspiration for the ballet. Indeed, the ballet *The Rite of Spring* is a story based on an ancient ritual in the time of Pagan Russia, starting with the Sun God and ending with human sacrifice, a chosen virgin dancing herself to death. Therefore, it may have had a possibility that Čiurlionis' paintings gave inspirations of Pagan Russia (or Lithuania) in *The Rite of Spring* together with Lithuanian folk song melodies from Juška's anthology. It was not entirely wrong that Craft (2013) wrote that "Certainly Čiurlionis's [*sic*] work influenced the *Rite*, and surely it is not mere chance that the first bars of the ballet are almost a note-for-note transcription of a popular Lithuanian folk song" (Craft, 2013). Therefore, the Čiurlionis' painting *Black Sun* may have added a Lithuanian inspiration to the sun at the opening of *The Rite of Spring*.

Even though, the melodies were quite manipulated and adopted fragmentally, it was a marvellous fact that Stravinsky included Lithuanian folk songs into *The Rite of Spring* which coincided roughly with longing for Čiurlionis' *Black Sun*. At that time, Stravinsky was looking for something different from Slavic images for his new ballet. This coincidence might have not been accidental and both were rooted in Lithuanian ethnic distinction which intriguing the non-Slavic and archaic pagan images.

Like Čiurlionis, Stravinsky was also enthralled by *Japonisme*. In the summer of 1912, when he was composing *The Rite of Spring*, in parallel he composed *Three Japanese Lyrics* (*Trois poésies de la lyrique Japonaise*), for voice and chamber ensemble based on Russian translations of old Japanese *Waka* poems written by Akahito (Yamabe no Akahito), Mazatsumi (Minamoto no Masazumi), and Tsaraŭuki (Ki no Tsurayuki). Therefore, one could presume that Stravinsky simultaneously regarded Lithuanian folk songs, Čiurlionis' paintings and Japanese poetry, altogether as something non-Slavic – ancient, archaic, and exotic at once.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Re-examination of the research on Čiurlionis' art carried out during the last century allowed the formation of a basic understanding of main factors which influenced his artistic language. Though most critics concentrated mainly on Čiurlionis' life, his creative art was also analysed in aspect of contextuality. The family where Čiurlionis grew up in his youth, his natural surroundings in Druskininkai, and the religious music which he knew directly via his father's duties (church organist), were indicated as the main factors (contexts) which formed the background for Čiurlionis' later style. This style was developed under the influence of esthetical and philosophical ideas of Nietzsche and conception of synthesis of the arts by Wagner. The places of his studies (Warsaw and Leipzig) also made a fundamental impact in the formation of the artistic language of Čiurlionis.
2. It is well-known that Čiurlionis had attached musically-related titles to his paintings in his early years since 1903 in Warsaw. The influence of musically-titled paintings by Whistler via *Młoda Polska* [Young Poland] artists was researched for the first time. Even though it is unclear that if Čiurlionis knew the paintings of Whistler or not, similar features were found in paintings of the both artists such as musically titled paintings and the frequent use of blue-green tints, also an influence from *Japonisme*. From this point of view, the decision was made that Čiurlionis may have known Whistler's paintings, probably under the same circumstances as Polish painters of *Młoda Polska*.
3. Thus, we could see that the artistic trend of *Japonisme* was quite decisive to such an extent that gave influence on Polish painters via Impressionists in an indirect way. It is natural to deduce that Čiurlionis also adopted the same setting *à la japonaise*, inspired directly by Japanese arts or indirectly through the examples of Polish artists.
4. Materials which Čiurlionis actually had opportunities to see in all probability were described for the first time. Three important factors for Čiurlionis to be influenced by *Japonisme* were: a) two exhibitions of Japanese art that Čiurlionis saw during his studies in Warsaw; b) acquaintance with members of *Młoda Polska* movement, who almost all studied in Paris, London, Munich or Vienna and absorbed the aesthetics of *Japonisme* in these cities; c) Čiurlionis' travel to Prague, Dresden, Nuremberg, Munich, and Vienna in 1906 where he directly discovered Oriental art.
5. Čiurlionis used Oriental art in three stages: a) the partial borrowing of exotic *japonaiserie* motifs; b) the application of *ukiyo-e*'s pictorial schemes or whole compositions into Čiurlionis' paintings; c) application and synthesis which appears in the elaborate assimilation of *ukiyo-e*'s expressions into Čiurlionis' sublime style.
6. In Leipzig, Čiurlionis was influenced by authentic West world-class music and art. The most obvious influence from European symbolist painting, Böcklin's *Isle of the Dead*, was analysed in detail for the first time. As a result, the clear influence from *Isle of the Dead* in Čiurlionis' paintings such as the series of *Serenity* (I 1903/ 04 and II 1904/ 05 respectively) and in his peculiar triptych of *Rex* (1904-05) was presented.

7. Regarding the influence of the concept of “death” on Čiurlionis’ music, derived from his interest in religious music, research showed how the theme of the ancient plainchant *Dies irae* influenced the music of his contemporaries. Moreover, philosophical thoughts on “death and life” by Nietzsche were explored and how these thoughts influenced the creative process of Čiurlionis’ symphonic poem *Dies irae* were considered, together with examples of symphonic poems of Richard Strauss (*Tod und Verklärung*, Op. 24 and *Ein Heldenleben*, Op. 40). Since Čiurlionis’ symphonic poem *Dies irae* had been left unresearched for a long time, all elements were made clear for the first time. Even though no trace was found that Čiurlionis adopted the well-known *Dies irae* melody from plain chant in his symphonic poem *Dies irae*, the concept of the work was clear and as if he made a retrospective review of his life by showing melodies he composed during his life.
8. In 1907, Čiurlionis finally decided to settle in Vilnius. Even though Čiurlionis had spent most of his life abroad, his mind was always thinking on his homeland Lithuania. As a result, it was discovered some features in usage of folk music by Čiurlionis: a) folk melodies serve as a main thematic material like a core of all the composition; b) folk melodies were used as short fragments (inlays) or there are used only separate elements of folk tunes (only melodic lines or only rhythmic patterns). The first group is represented by direct folk songs arrangements for piano. Čiurlionis composed those like another version of his arrangements for choir. And most of all there are cycles of variations (*Bėkit, bareliai; Oi giria giria*). The method of thematic transformation or variation is different from methods used in other cycles of variations by Čiurlionis. The folk tune here is not changed, only additional voices are modified in each new variation. In other two groups of piano pieces, one contains folk songs which are transformed and hidden in the texture of the composition and in another one Čiurlionis used the folk song as a very short quotation.
9. Lithuanian traditional music (folk song) was used by Čiurlionis very intensively in his late orchestral compositions. It was calculated that more than a dozen (13) folk songs used in symphonic poem *Creation of the World*, and 8 songs used in Symphony No. 2 (both are of 1910 year) but only 2 songs in symphonic poem *Dies irae* (1907). Thus, Čiurlionis’ patriotic feelings for Lithuania was strongly expressed in these symphonic poems and a symphony with Lithuanian folk song melodies.
10. A new fact in history of Čiurlionis life in St. Petersburg was discovered. Previously known fact of Čiurlionis’ music performance in an Evenings of Contemporary Music (28 January, 1909) was extended by a new fact that Čiurlionis’ music was also performed on 24 February, 1909 together with the names of young Stravinsky and Scriabin, Rachmaninov, and Medtner etc. (*Zolotoe Runo* 1909 No. 4, p. 86). Moreover, it is not certain if Stravinsky was in attendance in the concert on 24 February or not, however, it is highly possible that Stravinsky listened to Čiurlionis’ music and saw 6 of his paintings which were exhibited in the same hall as the concert.

11. New facts and links were discovered between Čiurlionis and Stravinsky from correspondences made between Stravinsky and Alexandre Benois: a) it was Stravinsky himself who chose a painting of Čiurlionis *Black Sun*; b) Stravinsky's words "my memory is not deceiving me" make us believe that Stravinsky had surely seen *Black Sun*; c) Stravinsky saw *Black Sun* seemingly at the exhibition of "Seventh Exhibit" by the Union of Russian Artists held from February 20th to March 20th, 1910 in St. Petersburg. It was just before Stravinsky moved to Paris and he was still in St. Petersburg until March 1910 and it was possible for him to see *Black Sun* at the exhibition; d) Stravinsky with his wife were planning to give *Black Sun* to their mother, who lived at Kriukov canal, house No. 6 – 8 in St Petersburg.
12. Čiurlionis' impact on Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring* was identified and reconsidered for the first time. Though it has been already a well-known fact that Lithuanian folksong melodies were adopted in Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring* however, influence of Čiurlionis' painting *Black Sun* and usages of other Lithuanian folk songs from the song anthology of Juška became clearer after comparing the correspondence of Stravinsky and Benois.

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