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M. K. ČIURLIONIS AND ST. PETERSBURG: NEW FACTS CONCERNING HIS PAINTING *BLACK SUN*

Summary. It is a well-known fact among Lithuanian scholars of studies on Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911) that Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) once owned Čiurlionis' painting *Black Sun* (or *Ballad*). However, it is known only by a reproduction printed in a Russian art magazine *Аполлон* [*Apollon*]¹, with a title *Conte fantastique* and *Сказка* [*Fairy Tale*] and Stravinsky was specified as an owner of the painting and other details have not been well-researched. Even though some researchers visited St. Petersburg to find the painting several years ago, yet no trace was ever found. In this article, first we would like to look back at Čiurlionis' visits to St. Petersburg and then, reveal new facts on concerts in which Čiurlionis' music was performed and more over concerning Čiurlionis' painting *Black Sun* how Stravinsky became interested in the painting by introducing letters exchanged between Stravinsky, Alexandre Benois and Andrey Rimsky-Korsakov.

Keywords: Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, Igor Stravinsky, St. Petersburg, Čiurlionis' music, Čiurlionis' painting.

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”². Even though Čiurlionis did not mention the name of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908), Vytautas Landsbergis (1932–) 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”³. 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”)⁴. 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 booklet of the programme, there are remarks supposed to be written by Rimsky-Korsakov with pencil on compositions of Čiurlionis⁵. 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 Daunoravičienė⁶. Čiurlionis arrived to 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, since then in his mind he had hoped to achieve major recognition as a painter and a 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 a Russian-Lithuanian painter 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 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.⁷

Also, it was Dobuzhinsky who visited Čiurlionis’ rented room where he actually saw his paintings *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, distinguished painters of *Mir Iskusstva* [World of Art] group, 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 it, 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.⁸

The exhibition at the “Salon” was held in St. Petersburg from January 4th to March 8th, 1909. Six of Čiurlionis’ paintings were displayed; “Allegro” and “Finale” from *Sonata No. 5* (1908), “Andante” from *Sonata No. 6* (1908), *Fugue* (1908), “Finale” from *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, Ostrumova-Lebedeva, Petrov-Vodkin, Sapunov, Sudeikin, Verevkina, Vrubel and Yakulov.⁹ 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.¹⁰

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.¹¹

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 aesthetic 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 Belyavev's (1836–1903) "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"¹².

Čiurlionis was given a chance to perform 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 horrifically; 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.¹³

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"¹⁴.

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 follows¹⁵:

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's poem)
 - b) Bunch of willow (based on Alexander Blok's poem)
 - c) My steppe (based on Fyodor Sologub's 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.
 - a) Allegro deciso. Slow movement.
 - b) 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 1909.¹⁶

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. Krizhanovsky, V. Pogozev, V. Senilov, A. Chesnokov, I. Stravinsky, M. Shteinberg, M. Gnesin, V. Karatigin, A. Medem, B. Yanovsky, N. Čurlianis [*sic*] and I. Prokrovsky ([died] 1906).¹⁷

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 of 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. Pogozhev, 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.¹⁸

From these articles, we can see that Čiurlionis' works were performed along 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 premiere of *Scherzo fantastique*, one of his early important works. His *Pastorale* and the *Gorodetsky songs* were also given in 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 Zhrebtsova and Mikhail Bikhter on February 24th¹⁹, it is not certain if Stravinsky attended the concert or not, however it is highly possible that Stravinsky listened to Čiurlionis' music too. 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 the new facts from his letters.

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* (Fig. 1).

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 musical works were 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 during that period at the "Salon".

Early in 1912 when Stravinsky stayed in Clarens, Switzerland, he had a 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.²⁰ 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 *Apollon*, must have been purchased. For selecting among the rest of the

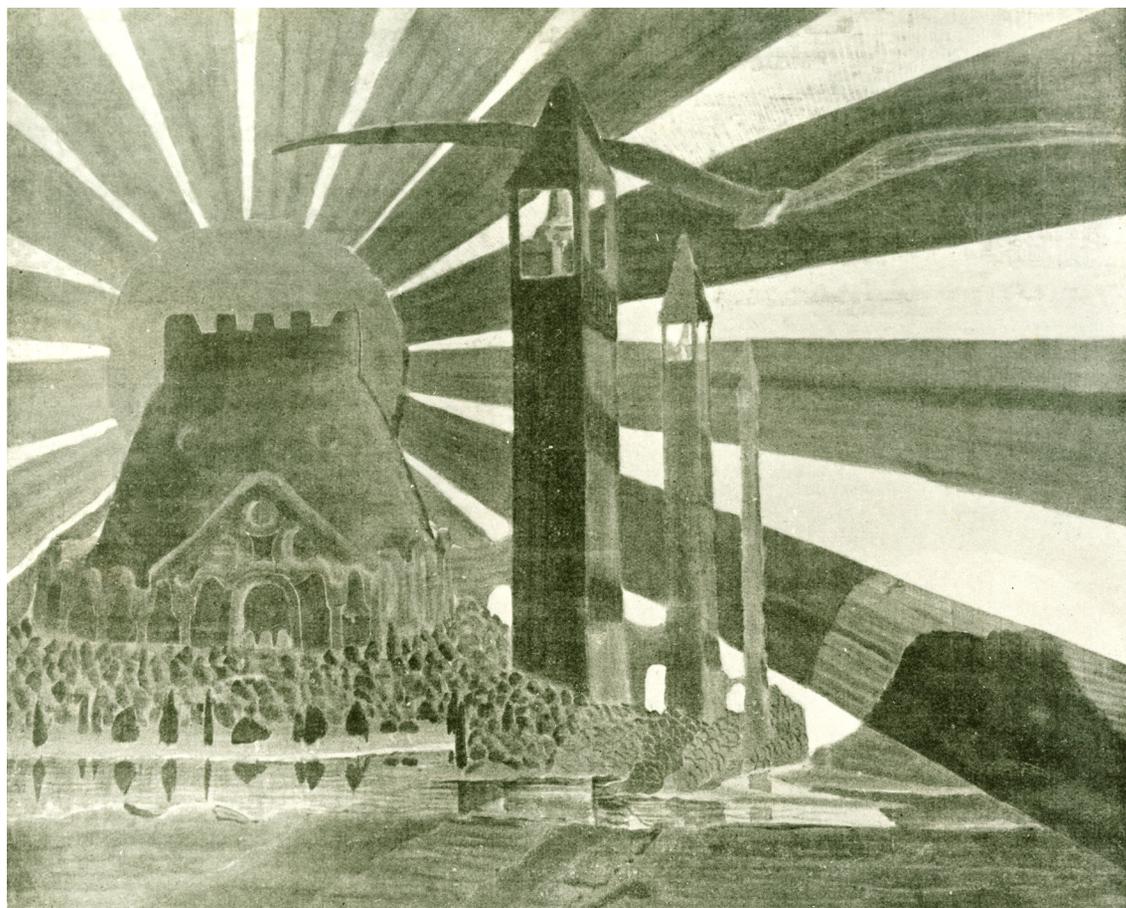


Fig. 1. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. *Black Sun* (or *Ballad*). 1909

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 him.²¹

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" from *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 emphasised 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, Karenyi road No. 4 (if I'm not mistaken, this is at Stanislavsky's place).²²

In the letter above, we could see that Benois had 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):²³

I'm only writing several lines, dear friend, to thank you sincerely for willingly fulfilling my request.²⁴ 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 *Black Sun*. Its price suited us, and it's a great work, as long as my memory is not deceiving me.²⁵

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 *Ballad* [or *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 already 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.²⁶

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.²⁷

Letter V: from Stravinsky to Alexandre

Benois (Clarens, 4 April 1912):

We are impatiently waiting for the moment when we set our eyes to *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 Kar-savina 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.²⁸ We bought two pieces these days: one is a drawing – I am attaching a photo 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!²⁹

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*³⁰, with a title *Conte fantastique* 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.³¹

**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 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"³². 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, 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.³³ Furthermore, Robert Craft³⁴ 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*³⁵ (Fig. 2):

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*).

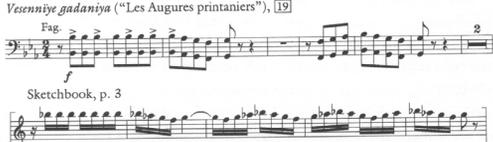
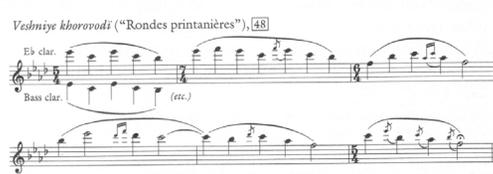
<p>No. 157</p>  <p>Tu, ma-nu se-sc-rė-lė žė-le! Kad no-ri var-gā varg-ti te-kek už bau-džiau-nin-ka.</p>	<p>Introduction to Part I</p>  <p>Fag. solo ad lib.</p>
<p>No. 787</p>  <p>Kad aš ė-jau par dva-rą, aš ti-ju-nuj "la-ba diė-na" ma-ti ju-nas ko-ka.</p>	<p>Vesenniye gadaniya ("Les Augures printaniers"), [19]</p>  <p>Fag. solo</p> <p>Sketchbook, p. 3</p>
<p>No. 142</p>  <p>Tė-vu-žė-li ma-nu! Sen-gal-vė-li ma-nu! Lejs k ma-nė, tė-ve-li ė dva-rą stu-žy-ti.</p>	<p>Igra umikaniya ("Jeu du rapt"), 3 after [37]</p>  <p>Tromba piccola in 3/4</p> <p>Sketchbook, p. 7</p> <p>cf. 1 after [46]</p>
<p>No. 249</p>  <p>O kad aš bu-vau jau-nas ne-ve-dės, aį! aį! aį! aį! vis mcr-ge-les my-lė-jau.</p>	<p>Vesniye khorovadi ("Rondes printanières"), [48]</p>  <p>Eb clar. Bass clar. (rit.)</p> <p>Sketchbook, p. 7 (zapevaniye khorovodnoye [Khorovod incantation])</p>
<p>No. 271</p>  <p>O kad aš gė-riau, pa-si-gė-riau; ė sta-kles sė-dau, pa-svi-rė-jau.</p>	<p>No. 409 (model for leaping grace notes)</p>  <p>Pa-si-sė-jau a-vi-žu pīl-nā tė-vu dir-ve-lė;</p>

Fig. 2. Lithuanian folk songs from Juška's anthology corresponding with Stravinsky's melodies in *The Rite of Spring* identified by Taruskin in 1996

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*).

Since three of the melodies were found in the sketch book of Stravinsky³⁶, 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"³⁷. 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*.³⁸

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*³⁹. 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"⁴⁰. 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 traditional 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.

CONCLUSIONS

Since Čiurlionis life in St. Petersburg has not been researched in detail for a long time, this article could show some important new evidences for the unresearched area. 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.⁴¹. Moreover, it is not certain if Stravinsky attended the concert on 24 February or not, however, it is highly possible that Stravinsky listened to Čiurlionis' music and saw 6 paintings of him which were exhibited in the same hall as the concert.

New facts concerning Čiurlionis' *Black Sun* were discovered 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.

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 *The Rite of Spring* however, influence of Lithuanian image of Čiurlionis' painting *Black Sun* and usages of other Lithuanian folk songs from the song anthology of Juška became clearer after comparing correspondences of Stravinsky and Benois.

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- ⁸ *Ibid.* p. 161.
- ⁹ Donald E. Gordon. *Modern art exhibitions: 1900–1916: Selected catalogue documentation*, Vol.1. (München: Prestel, 1974), 297.
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- ¹¹ *Ibid.* 161.
- ¹² Richard Taruskin. *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through Mavra*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1996), 174.
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- ¹⁶ Mstislav Dobuzhinsky. "Čiurlionis in St. Petersburg (1908–1909)" In *Čiurlionis: Painter and Composer*,

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¹⁷ *Zolotoe Runo* No. 4, 1909, 86.

¹⁸ *RMG [Russian Musical Gazette]* 16 No. 10 [8 March 1909], col. 273.

¹⁹ Taruskin, 1996, 411.

²⁰ 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 (Alexandre Benois. Čiurlionis [speech] // *Речь*. 10 February 1912).

²¹ Igor Stravinsky & Viktor P. Varunts. *Perepiska s russkimi korrespondentami: Materialy k biografii [Talks with Russian reporters: Materials for the biography]*. (Moscow: Kompozitor, 1998), 311. 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.

²² *Ibid.* 312. It is true that Konstantin Stanislavsky, who had close, friendly and creative bonds with Dobuzhinsky, was living in this address in 1903–1920.

²³ The year 1912 was a leap year. The letter dated 12 March new calendar corresponds to 29 February old calendar.

²⁴ Benois made arrangements for the purchase of Čiurlionis painting, which Stravinsky earlier requested (letter I), although Benois’ letter, informing the composer about the news, is unknown.

²⁵ Igor Stravinsky & Viktor P. Varunts, 317.

²⁶ Igor Stravinsky. *Expositions and Developments*, 127–128: “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”.

²⁷ Igor Stravinsky & Viktor P. Varunts, 322.

²⁸ Stravinsky’s passion was collecting artworks. For this, Benois was of course the best consultant.

²⁹ Igor Stravinsky & Viktor P. Varunts, 326.

³⁰ *Apollon* No 3, 1914, 40–41.

³¹ Much later Stravinsky remembered and described this painting [*Black Sun*] more like one painting from *Sonata of Pyramids* (see: *Lituanus*, No 2. 1961, 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.

³² Stravinsky 1959, p. 98.

³³ Taruskin, 1996, 900.

³⁴ Robert Craft. *Stravinsky: Discoveries and Memories* [Kindle Version]. 2013.

³⁵ Taruskin, 1996, 898–899.

³⁶ Taruskin, 1996, 3, 7, 895 and 897.

³⁷ Danuser, Zimmermann & Sacher Stiftung, 2013, 447.

³⁸ Igor Stravinsky & Viktor P. Varunts, 315–316.

³⁹ Donald E. Gordon, 542-3; Landsbergis, 1976, 342–9.

⁴⁰ Craft, 2013 from an online article from *The Times Literary Supplement*.

⁴¹ *Zolotoe Runo* No. 4, 1909, 86.

⁴² *Apollon* No 3, 1914, 40–41.

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M. K. ČIURLIONIS IR SANKT PETERBURGAS: NAUJI FAKTAI LIEČIANTYS JO PAVEIKSLĄ JUODOJI SAULĖ

Santrauka

Mikalojaus Konstantino Čiurlionio (1875–1911) tyrėjams Lietuvoje gerai žinomas faktas, kad Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) turėjo Čiurlionio paveikslą *Juodoji saulė* (arba *Baladė*). Tačiau tai buvo žinoma tik iš reprodukcijos, 1914 m. išspausdintos žurnale *Apollon*⁴². Reprodukcija buvo pavadinta *Conte fantastique* ir *Сказка [Pasaka – Y. N.]*, Stravinsky nurodytas kaip tapybos kūrinio savininkas, daugiau jokios informacijos nepateikta. Nors kai kurie mokslininkai prieš keletą metų apsilankė Sankt Peterburge, norėdami rasti paveikslą, tačiau jokio pėdsako nerasta. Šiame straipsnyje vėl atsigręžiama į Čiurlionio gyvenimą Sankt Peterburge.

Šiame straipsnyje pirmiausia norėtume atkreipti dėmesį į šio lietuvių menininko gyvenimą Sankt Peterburge, atskleisti naujus faktus apie koncertus, kuriuose buvo atlikta Čiurlionio muzika, įtraukiant Čiurlionio laikų meno žurnalų straipsnius ir dar daugiau duomenų, liečiančių Čiurlionio kūrybą, tapant *Juodąją saulę*. Straipsnyje

nagrinėjama, kaip Stravinskis susidomėjo Čiurlionio tapyba ir pristatomi Stravinskio, Aleksandro Benoio ir Andrejus Rimskio-Korsakovo laišakai, kuriuose kalbama apie Čiurlionio kūrybą.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, Igoris Stravinskis, Sankt Peterburgas, Čiurlionio muzika, Čiurlionio tapyba.

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17

M. K. ČIURLIONIS AND ST. PETERSBURG:
NEW FACTS CONCERNING HIS PAINTING "BLACK SUN"

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