

# Latin motets for choir *a cappella* by Juozas Naujalis

Composer Juozas Naujalis (1869–1934) is undoubtedly one of the forefathers of professional Lithuanian music. Having completed studies in music at the Institute of Music in Warsaw and furthering his musical studies in Germany at the end of the 19th century, he brought his experience to Lithuania where he applied it in writing music, working as an organist and teaching. At this very early stage in professional Lithuanian music, his deeds helped lay the foundations for a number of fields in musical culture, which he later developed and strengthened.

In Lithuanian music history, Naujalis' activities have been widely researched and his significance has been suitably evaluated. Deservedly regarded as a patriarch in Lithuanian music and a forerunner in numerous fields, Naujalis has been valued most for nurturing national spirit – he founded the Daina Society, composed a Lithuanian choir repertoire (songs based on Maironis' poetry, harmonised folk songs), and as we know from the pages of the history of our music, he laid the foundations for culture in the independent Lithuanian state, forming the fundamental features of our national identity.

Naujalis significantly contributed to the creation of a higher school of music and taught at private and state music institutions, and remained associated with the Catholic Church for his entire life. His liturgical service at the Kaunas Cathedral for close to half a century, his teaching at the Samogitian Priest Seminary helping educate future priests, leadership of church choirs and teaching of church organists set out a very clear purpose to his life and activities. This was a field where he also set down a very firm base. Even though Naujalis' music has at times been considered as overly traditional or “not modern” (for example, when comparing him to his contemporary, Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis), his music created for the Church should not be assessed based on

the criteria usually applied to music from that time. The fact that in his works Naujalis conveyed traditional liturgical music forms and genres arising from the Church spirit, which is not subject to the passing of time, only serves to reflect his excellent liturgical competency and is testimony of the relevance of his work even today.



Juozas Naujalis was born in 1869 in Raudondvaris near Kaunas. His parents were peasants, his father also served as the sacristan at the church and at the manor of the local count Benedykt Henryk Tyszkiewicz. The local organist noticed the boy's aptitude for music and taught him to play this instrument, and when he was fifteen, Juozas was already playing the organ at the church. Count Tyszkiewicz noticed Naujalis' determination that year and decided to support his musical studies; he was allocated a scholarship and sent to Warsaw. Naujalis, aged fifteen, entered the Warsaw Institute of Music in 1884. In those times, this institution would probably have been the closest higher school of music to Lithuania, attended by a number of Lithuanians (Juozas Kalvaitis and Mykolas Račas-Racevičius had recently graduated from the organ class, and Čiurlionis arrived to pursue studies exactly ten years later). After five years (in 1889) of studying the organ with Jan Śliwiński, Naujalis returned to Lithuania and commenced his service – he played the organ at various churches in Lithuania (at his native Raudondvaris, Vabalninkas, Rietavas) until 1892, having earned acclaim as a promising musician, he was invited to take the prestigious position of organist at the Kaunas Cathedral. He worked there for 42 years until his death in 1934.

At the end of the 19th century, the Kaunas Cathedral of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul was an im-

portant location in the Samogitian diocese, acting as its centre and the seat of the bishop. The Samogitian bishop at the time, Mečislovas Leonardas Paliulionis, commenced renovation of the Cathedral in 1894. The bishop advised Naujalis to use the period during which the liturgy could not be celebrated to further his studies, and sent him to the Kirchenmusikschule Regensburg (College of Catholic Church Music). This German higher school of music had been established in 1874 by the founder of the Cecilian Movement in Germany, Franz Xaver Haberl, and it soon became the cradle of Church music in Europe. Even though Naujalis only spent one semester studying there (the first half of 1894), he returned with a course completion certificate bearing not just the signatures of the most famous professors at the school – its founders Haberl, Georg Jacob and Michael Haller – but also the highest honours in recognition of his achievements. It is likely that it was precisely these very high level studies (the most famous professors of the Liturgy, Church music history, Gregorian chant and organ music taught there) that provided Naujalis with specific professional knowledge. It is based on this knowledge that his church music works display an invaluable mark of liturgical quality.

Upon his return to Kaunas, Naujalis continued to work at the Cathedral, directing several choirs, holding organ music concerts and even improvising whilst playing the organ during mass. The Samogitian Priest Seminary Choir would join the other Cathedral choirs to sing at Sunday Mass and other celebrations. At the Seminary, Naujalis taught singing, Gregorian chant, liturgical studies, and also headed a seminarians' choir (even though at various periods other figures have been responsible for this choir). It was in such surroundings that Naujalis' church music was written, created for specific liturgical purposes.

While adding to the Latin choir repertoire necessary for the liturgy, Naujalis also paid a lot of attention to the promotion of Lithuanian hymn singing. In 1906 he compiled and released the Lithuanian Church Hymn Book, which presented many harmonised Lithuanian hymns adapted to Lithuanian parish choirs and organists. As he was well aware of the difficult situation concerning Lithuanian church music and the troubles organists faced when searching for notes suitable for singing hymns, he saw to their publication personally, selling them at a bookstore he opened and released the newspaper *Vargonininkas* (The Organist).

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It is worth looking at the history of the emergence of the publication *Juozas Naujalis. Motetta*. As we know, to mark the composer's 150th birthday, the Seimas

of the Republic of Lithuania declared 2019 Juozas Naujalis Year. The Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre was also part of the commemoration plans, promising to compile and publish a collection of Naujalis' motets for an *a cappella* mixed choir. The initial idea was to re-release Naujalis' motets for the Holy Week because the publication *Juozas Naujalis. Missa In honorem sacrorum vulnerum Christi. Motetta* (ed. L. Abarius) released in 1993 contains a number of inaccuracies. In order to put together a new compilation of motets, it was decided to present the text of the mentioned motets from manuscripts, or specifically, to release the *urtext* edition.

When the mentioned motets were prepared for publication from the handwritten copy made by Naujalis kept at the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, the idea was raised to check other manuscript collections in Lithuania, especially since lists of Naujalis' works mentioned more compositions for choir, some of them yet to be printed. As a result, visits were made to manuscript departments at the Kaunas Archdiocese Curia Archive, the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and the Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art.

However, the most important discovery awaited at the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Film Museum where, among documents kept in the Juozas Naujalis collection, a notebook was found with an additional 29 motets for a male choir by Naujalis whose existence was hitherto unknown. The release of the publication was halted on account of this new discovery and it did not come out during Naujalis' anniversary year as planned. But, now the collection of Naujalis' motets is being released as a significantly more valuable publication – the newly-discovered works that appear here for the first time not only reveal a new page in the research of works created by the patriarch of Lithuanian music, but also change and enrich our knowledge of certain episodes in the history of Lithuanian music.

The majority of Naujalis' religious music had hitherto only existed in manuscript form. Many of his masses had not been published, while only a few of his Latin chants had ever been printed. At the beginning of the 20th century (in around 1901), three Good Friday motets (*Caligaverunt, Popule meus* and *Vexilla regis*) were released in Warsaw (*Tres cantus sacri*) and in 1914 the hymns *Veni, creator Spiritus* and *O salutaris Hostia* were published as an appendix in *Vargonininkų kalendorius* (The Organists' Calendar). The collection of Naujalis' choir music released in 1969, *Vasaros naktys* (Summer Nights, dedicated to mark the 100th anniversary of the composer's

birth), included three motets (*In monte Oliveti, Tristis est anima mea* and *Ecce vidimus*). In 1993, the aforementioned publication with Naujalis' Mass *In honorem sacrorum vulnerum Christi* and 15 motets for the Holy Week appeared. Volume II of the Anthology of Lithuanian Choir Music (2013) re-released the same motets from the *Vargonininkų kalendorius* appendix and the *Vasaros naktys* collection.

This present collection contains 57 of Juozas Naujalis' works for choir – these are motets in Latin, their texts originating from Gregorian chant responsories, hymns, antiphons, psalms, and more. Regardless of whether the hymn text is written in prose or is versed, here they come under the general title of motets. Exclusively *a cappella* motets have been selected for the collection – with the exception of *Veni, creator Spiritus* (it was written with organ accompaniment *ad libitum*) and *Regina coeli* (the organ part has survived only as the draft version and is incomplete). In addition to the works published earlier, which are presented here either from manuscripts or from the sole surviving early publications (there are 19 such works in this release), a significant part features nine hitherto unpublished compositions, whose manuscripts were kept in archives (the titles of these works were mentioned in the lists of Naujalis' compositions compiled by Konradas Kaveckas and Ona Narbutienė). These include *Miserere*, other psalms in the *falsobordone* style and several motets, all being published here for the first time.

However, there had been no prior knowledge of the existence of more than half of the Latin motets by Naujalis presented in this collection. As mentioned earlier, when Naujalis' manuscript collection at the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Film Museum was being checked, a notebook with Naujalis' manuscripts was discovered whose existence had not entered musicologists' field of research before. Thus, at the end of 2019 – Naujalis' anniversary year – 29 of Naujalis' new motets saw the light of day.

The newly discovered hymns by Naujalis were bound in a notebook with hard covers (inv. no. Am 10.095/1). The notebook used to be kept in the Rev. Petras Marcinkus collection (this is the reason why it had not been noticed by researchers before); only much later, upon noticing music manuscripts with Naujalis' surname, museum staff transferred the document to Juozas Naujalis' collection.

The notebook contains 36 handwritten chants of which 29 are by Naujalis (the remaining seven are either by other recognised authors or are not yet able to be confirmed as being written by Naujalis).

All the compositions have been created for a male choir (four or three voices), so it could be assumed that they were meant for the Samogitian Priest Seminary choir. They are grouped according to the liturgical time of the year – Advent and Lent procession responsories, chants meant to be sung on Candlemas and alike. Most of them are signed with Naujalis' initials (J. N.), the dates of creation rarely appear (among those that do, we see 1912 and 1919). These are not merely creative drafts (as there are hardly any corrections) but neat, handwritten autographs. It is likely that another several musicians contributed to writing down the motets in the notebook besides Naujalis – the name Apolinaras Likerauskas sometimes appears at the bottom of a page of rewritten chants in a second style of handwriting (at one point Likerauskas led the choir at the Seminary), and there are also examples of a third style of handwriting. Motets by Tomás Luis de Victoria, Franz Xaver Witt and Józef Surzyński have also been bound in the notebook alongside those by Naujalis, so it is likely that these were all part of the Seminary choir repertoire. The notebook is not uniform in appearance – separate pages of sheet music of different sizes or folios were bound together in the hard cover notebook. Further research could reveal more aspects about how these chants appeared and were written down.

The collection *Juozas Naujalis. Motetta* is first of all intended for performers – the compositions are suitable for both the liturgy and concerts; mixed choirs and male choirs can use them to enhance their classical repertoire. When compiling this publication, the primary focus was on the *urtext* of the notes, however both performers and music historians shall also be able to use this publication as source material – the commentary at the end gives a thorough account of the origins of the motets and their liturgical purpose in Lithuanian and English, their archive reference number and a list of the places where all the currently known versions of the manuscripts are kept.

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*The Editor*