



The celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Estonian- and Latvian-language book has now officially come to an end, but the positive energy generated during this festive year will certainly last for a long time to come. It was a great pleasure to represent Estonians abroad at the closing conference of the Estonian Year of the Book, held in Tallinn in March, and to experience the enthusiasm and love that printed works in one's native language inspire in people. We strive to sustain this in the diaspora as well—even beyond the Year of the Book. Wherever you live, be sure to read in the language of your parents and grandparents! Let us honor the achievements of those who came before us, which have required perseverance, ingenuity, and dedication.

The spring sun is shining and summer is not far away. With it comes the next BaltHerNet Summer School, which will take place from June 30 to July 3, this time not only in Tallinn but also in Narva, located on the border between Estonia and Russia—the theme appropriately being “Border State.” Official registration for the summer school will begin in April. Stay tuned for updates!

Piret Noorhani

Tõnu Kaljuste and Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir visit Canada

Soundstreams' 43rd season paid tribute to Arvo Pärt's 90th birthday with a powerful performance at Yorkminster Baptist Church, featuring Tõnu Kaljuste and the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir. The first half focused entirely on Pärt's works, including Magnificat, Which Was the Son of..., and The Deer's Cry, showcasing the choir's remarkable clarity, balance, and dynamic range. Pärt's signature interplay of dissonance and unity, along with expressive text setting, created moments that were both meditative and dramatic. The half concluded with Kanon Pokajainen, highlighting layered textures, including haunting humming and shifting vocal groupings.

The second half broadened the program's scope with works by Veljo Tormis, Luciano Berio, and a striking world premiere by Estonian Canadian composer Riho Esko Maimets. His Inglise ää ja pasunad (“Angel's Voice and Trumpets”) delivered an intense, apocalyptic atmosphere, demanding full vocal power and precision. Pieces by Evelin Seppar and Philip Glass further explored themes of mortality, with Father Death Blues offering a deeply moving, almost serene reflection on death. The concert closed with encores including a Danish love song and a gentle Greenlandic lullaby, leaving the audience with a sense of quiet peace after a spiritually expansive musical journey.

A bustling reception, organized by VEMU Estonian Museum Canada and the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa, followed the concert. An exhibit detailing Pärt's life and achievements, in celebration of his 90th birthday, was on display, courtesy of the Embassy. Speakers included conductor Tõnu Kaljuste himself, Soundstreams artistic director Lawrence Cherney, Tiina Tarkus on behalf of the Embassy, and Tiit Romet on behalf of VEMU. The reception was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended and was a fitting end to a great evening. The concert was sponsored (in part) by Northern Birch Credit Union and Estonian Foundation of Canada.

For a full length review of the concert, read Vincent Teetsov's article [here](#).

Kati Kiilaspea

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The next deadline for submissions is **June 15th, 2026.**

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Estonia Worldwide: An exhibition about Estonian migration and the Estonian diaspora in the past 150 years

In January, Vabamu Museum of Occupations and Freedom in Tallinn opened a new exhibition: Estonia Worldwide. The exhibition deals with the history of Estonian migration in the past 150 years, and the diaspora that have been established as a result, highlighting the bonds that unite communities, identity, and a global Estonia, that exists across the globe.

Divided into three parts, it begins with telling the story of Estonian migration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, to places such as Crimea and the Far East, but also to the West in the independence period. Curated by Martin Vaino, the first wave of migration is viewed partly through the lens of colonialism, and how Estonian settlers within the Russian empire took active part in colonising other parts of the empire. Part of this section is also an installation by Lisa Trei which highlights the story of her family's migration to the US in the early 20th century.

Ede Schank Tamkivi curated the second section of the exhibition, which deals with the next large-scale wave of migration, largely forced, as Estonians were deported to other parts of the Soviet Union, or fled the oncoming Red Army to the West. Scout camps, student organisations, and World Estonian Culture Days (ESTO) all feature as examples of how Estonians abroad came together in the Cold War period, and beyond.

The last part of the exhibition, curated by Terje Toomistu, focuses on contemporary migration, after the restitution of Estonian independence, and how our modern society affect the experience of migration today.

The exhibition also features an interactive map, showing where Estonians have lived over time. Estonians across the world are invited to [share their own photo and story](#) to be part of the exhibition.



Vabamu warmly welcomes all interested to come visit our exhibition and attend the related events. You can also read more about the exhibition in [this article](#) by the ERR.

Events programme related to the exhibition

- ♦ **19 March:** Baltic University 80 years
- ♦ **7 April:** Food as a symbol of national identity (in Estonian)
- ♦ **1 May deadline:** My Estonia – Writing competition for youth

On 19 March, we will commemorate 80 years since the establishment of the Baltic University in exile in Hamburg, Germany. The anniversary will be commemorated through a screening of Helga Merits' film The Story of the Baltic University, as well as a panel discussion. More information can be found on our [website](#).

7 April we turn our focus towards how food has played an important role for Estonians abroad. At the event we will be screening the film Toidutoojad (Makers of Food), created by VEMU. The film will be followed by a panel discussion with scholars having dealt with the topic of food in Estonian diasporic





communities both East and West. The event will be in Estonian.

1 May is the deadline for a writing competition for youth ages 15–25, on the theme “My Estonia”. Entries are accepted in both English and Estonian. The winner will be invited to present their work in Estonia. [More information.](#)

Opening of the Photo Exhibition “Unissued Diplomas” on a Blustery Afternoon

“War stories are harsh, but we must not turn our backs on them,” said VEMU Chief Archivist Piret Noorhani at the opening of the exhibition Unissued Diplomas. Never Graduated, Eternally Honoured on January 25 at Tartu College, held during a heavy snowstorm. Despite difficult conditions, over twenty people gathered, including Estonians and Ukrainians, on a day that also marked President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s 48th birthday.

The travelling exhibition commemorates 40 Ukrainian students whose lives and studies were cut short by Russia’s full-scale invasion in 2022. Through photographs and personal stories, it highlights their ambitions, achievements, and the circumstances of their deaths, reminding viewers of the ongoing war and its human cost.

Speakers emphasized both the severity of conditions in Ukraine and the resilience of its people. Petro Shturyn of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress noted that millions live daily with hardship, including



limited electricity and extreme winter conditions, while also finding moments of normalcy. He stressed that many cannot leave, particularly from Kyiv, as defending the country remains essential.

Disinformation expert Marcus Kolga warned that the war, which began in 2014, reflects ongoing Russian imperialism and requires continued vigilance even abroad. He highlighted local examples of misinformation and pro-Kremlin activity, underscoring the importance of confronting false narratives. According to Kolga, ignoring the situation would be a moral failure; exhibitions like this serve not only as remembrance, but also as warnings.

Olena Voznesenska, speaking on behalf of the Ukrainian Canadian Museum, described the global scope of the project since its launch in 2023. The exhibition has been shown over 250 times in

more than 30 countries, and efforts are underway to establish a scholarship fund in memory of the students. Continued awareness and support remain crucial.

The exhibition at Tartu College runs until May 15, encouraging visitors to reflect on lives interrupted by war. The event concluded with a small gesture of warmth—Ukrainian pastries prepared by refugee women who work at Tartu College—while attendees made their way home through deep snow, a stark but distant echo of the far greater hardships faced in Ukraine. The event was possible thanks to collaboration with the Ukrainian Museum of Canada – Ontario Branch.

Shortened and translated by Kati Kiilaspea.

You can read the full length version of the article by Riina Kindlam [here](#) (in Estonian).



All of these wonderful people work at the National Archives of Estonia and have been to Toronto to organize the VEMU Estonian Museum Canada archives. In fact, there are more of them, but there were so many people at the opening party of the archive's new home in Tallinn on Endla Street that it was not possible for the chief Archivist of VEMU, Piret Noorhani to gather everyone. Anyway: VEMU says thank you! And good luck in their new home!

Inspiring Stories at EstoFem and VEMU's Career Days

VEMU hosted career days from January 30 to February 8. The series of events were launched on January 30 by a film screening of 2026 Oscar nominated film Rolling Papers about the lives of contemporary Estonian youth and their search for their own path. Before the screening, Kaisa Kasekamp held a conversation with the film's director, Meel Paliale via Zoom. After the film, we were able to exchange thoughts with DJ music in the background.

The first workshop on Saturday, January 31st was aimed at helping youth navigate career-related issues and situations in an uncertain world led by career coach Merit Luik from Estonia. Merit is a career coach, supervisor, and trainer who works as a development partner for individuals and organizations, helping to create clarity, confidence, and meaningful working lives. She supports youth and adults in making informed choices and assists organizations in increasing sustainable performance and employee well-being. As a former teacher and long-time developer of career education, she contributes to the advancement of career services by combining a systemic perspective with a deep, human-centric practice.

The film screening and youth workshop was supported by the Estonian Central Council in Canada and organized in collaboration with the Global Estonian Youth Network (ÜENV).

Riding on the same wave of stimulating career-related topics, an event during which Estonian women in Canada shared their inspirational career stories took place on Sunday, February 8th. VEMU hopes to document the achievements of remarkable women for its archives, as well as hear about the challenges they have faced along the way. The event was the first in the series EstoFem: Stories of Professional Women, which aims to highlight women who have been successful as entrepreneurs or in their respective fields.

How did this idea come about? Many stories about the contributions of Estonian Canadian men, both to the community and to Canada as a whole, can be found in the VEMU archives,



Merit Luik workshop

but far less often have women's voices been heard. For this reason, VEMU has been planning to correct this imbalance for several years. In 2025, a pilot project was launched, during which the topic was approached by VEMU team member Monika Siim Kiviloo, who, with the help of a student scholarship from Tartu College, interviewed a number of accomplished professional women. **These interviews can be viewed on VEMU's YouTube [channel](#).**

The eventful day began with a meeting with Estonian Canadian Alissa (Puhm) North, Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Toronto. Alissa has completed a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture, with Honour Standing, at the University of Toronto (1998), and a Masters, With Distinction, at Harvard's Graduate School of Design (2003); her career has been accompanied by peer recognition and professional prestige. For her talent and ability Alissa has gained recognition through numerous other awards. She has won: in 2003, the prestigious Jacob Weidenman Prize for outstanding design ability at Harvard; in 2002, the Janet Darling Weber Prize, special achievement in design; in 1998, the Lieutenant Governor's Silver Medal, outstanding graduating student; in 1998, the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, high academic record,

school contribution, ingenuity in design; in 1997, the University of Toronto Scholar designation; etc. Along with her husband Peter, they founded North Design Office in 2005.

The rest of the afternoon was dedicated to a workshop titled "From Doubt to Change: Navigating the Impostor Experience," led by Merit Luik. The engaging and interactive workshop fostered a greater awareness of the impostor phenomenon and how to manage it, tools to recognize and challenge your own thought patterns, and strategies to reduce negative impact and achieve your goals with greater confidence.

Merit Luik also gave a public lecture in Estonian at Tartu College titled "Work as a Blessing or a Burden: How to Create a Healthy Work Life That Promotes Wellbeing in Today's Hectic World" on Wednesday, February 4th. During the first week of February, she also hosted a workshop for students living at the Tartu College student residence and another for the TC staff.

All of the events included in VEMU's general Career Days program were received well and were a success, both in the eyes of the organizers and participants.

Kati Kiillaspea



Kadi Sikka

Deputy Director of the Film Archive of the National Archives, Kadi Sikka, spent two weeks in Toronto to assist the Estonian Museum Canada VEMU in organizing the collection of film collector Elmo Luuk (1919–1991).

As a result of her work, nearly 800 film reels were prepared for shipment to Tallinn—amounting to over 920 kg of material on three Euro pallets.

Luuk's collection includes both films related to Estonia and the Soviet era. Many of the reels lack labels or even containers, meaning their precise contents will only become clear at the film archive during rewinding and inspection on specialized viewing tables.

A joint exhibition by the Estonian Literary Museum and VEMU Estonian Museum Canada brought the childhood memories of Estonian Canadians to Tartu

On March 16, the exhibition “Growing Up in Canada: Childhood and Youth in the Memories of Estonian Canadians” was opened at the Annelinn branch of the Tartu Public Library.

The exhibition provides an overview of the lives and activities of children and young people in the Estonian Canadian community, from the early years of exile to the present day. It highlights the many important factors that have helped keep Estonian identity alive in Canada for more than 80 years after the Great Escape of 1944. A range of significant themes are explored, including the journey to Canada and the beginning of a new life, the meaning of family and home in exile, the everyday world of childhood with its games, jokes, fears, beliefs, and celebrations, as well as life with an Estonian name in a multicultural society, among others.

The exhibition is largely based on two collection campaigns. In 2021, a school folklore collection campaign was organized as a collaboration between VEMU Estonian Museum Canada in Toronto and the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu. Contributions and interviews were provided by both current students and individuals who have studied or worked in Estonian schools in Canada. The collected stories give the exhibition a personal and human dimension. Additional materials were gathered during VEMU’s 2025 collection campaign “Play is a Small Person’s Work”.

The exhibition features stories and memories from many Estonian Canadians, including Mihkel Jürima, Andres and Kaisa Kasekamp, Erika Kessa, Kati Kiilaspea, Ingrid Kütt, Aino Lokk, Elle and Mart Rosenberg, Reet Marten Sehr, Marianne Melrose, Emma and Laura Nipernaado, Lilian Puust, Ene Timmusk, Vello Tõu, Silvi Verder, and Hille Viires. Sincere thanks to Estonians in Canada for sharing their valuable knowledge and memories!

The collection campaigns and the exhibition are dedicated to the memory of Edgar Marten (1920–2020), the long-time leader of the Toronto Estonian Society’s Supplementary School.

The exhibition is curated by Piret Noorhani (VEMU), Liisa Nurme, Astrid Tuisk, and Piret Voolaid (Estonian Literary Museum).

Assistants: Kati Kiilaspea, Keila Kopvillem, Maiki Mürsepp, Laani Heinar (VEMU).

Language editor: Asta Niinemets.

Designer: Martin Mileiko (Profimeedia).

Printing and production: Priit Pajusalu (Seri Disain).

The exhibition has been supported by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research through project funding in the field of Estonian diaspora archives under the Estonian Diaspora Action Plan 2022–2025.

The exhibition will open in June at the Estonian Museum Canada in Toronto.

Piret Noorhani

Canadian Estonian artist Arne Roosman was commemorated in Toronto



Rebecca and Arne Roosmann

Estonian Museum Canada (VEMU) held a memorial event for Arne Roosman on Wednesday, March 4, at Tartu College. Arne Roosman was a vibrant personality and an artist who retained a youthful spirit and vision until the very end. Torontonians have encountered his work while walking along Bloor Street through his murals at Tartu College, which have adorned this hub of Estonian culture since 2016 and tell the story of our cultural heritage to passersby.

In 2014, Arne shared stories from his life in the book *A Touch of Arsenic: Sketching the Past*. True to an artist's nature, his narratives took shape not only as texts but also as drawings.

Late last autumn, a new memoir about Arne was published — *'Twas a Sunny Day*. Its author is Nate Smelle, a journalist from Bancroft, who spent hundreds of hours over the past five years with Arne, documenting not only his rich and remarkable life story but also his perspectives

on our turbulent world. This is the book we presented on March 4.

Nate recalls his first encounter with Arne's art as follows:

"When I focused on his works during a studio tour, it became clear that Arne was much more than just a prolific and talented artist. Of course, meaning can be found in any work of art, but in Arne's work I saw a depth unlike anything I had experienced before. Each piece not only told a story but also inspired an endless chain of questions."

On the evening of March 4, we experienced Arne's unique creative world, the depth of his soul, and the breadth of his thinking. One of the brightest talents of our community was remembered by the artist's daughter, Rebecca Macay, and the book's author, Nate Smelle.

Piret Noorhani

More than just Cheerful Melodies from the Garmoshka

At a February 18th Seto culture workshop at Tartu College, members of the band Kiiora were the first to sign VEMU's guestbook as members of fraternity Sakala after spotting their crest on the wall. The energetic trio—Matis and Laurits Leima, and Mihkel Sildoja—brought a lively and engaging presence, combining music with storytelling and cultural insight. What initially seemed like a simple music-and-dance workshop quickly expanded into a much deeper exploration of Seto life.

Matis Leima explained that of the roughly 12,500 Setos, many now live outside Setomaa, making cities like Tartu and Tallinn important cultural hubs. The Seto community has long lived between borders, and today many are separated by a closed control line, unable to visit ancestral homes or graves. This ongoing division has created a profound emotional and cultural strain, reflected in recent writings and community discussions.

The workshop also explored key aspects of Seto identity, including their strong Orthodox faith, which exists alongside older traditions connected to the deity Peko. Matis highlighted the richness of Seto language and customs, as well as the symbolic meaning embedded in traditional clothing—women’s silver jewelry marking life stages and wealth, and men’s belts indicating marital status. He also introduced the unique institution of the ülemsootska (Seto “king”), a lifelong role that maintains a spiritual link to Peko.

The evening concluded with lively participation from the audience. Attendees joined in singing regilaulud (traditional songs) with the musicians, learned a few Seto dances, and listened to the Seto anthem, whose lyrics reflect the region’s history and identity. Altogether, the event offered both an enjoyable cultural experience and a meaningful introduction to the resilience and distinctiveness of Seto heritage.

Shortened and translated by Kati Kiillaspea. Read the full article by Riina Kindlam [here](#).



A Retro-Flavoured Afternoon with Haldi and the Lindau Sisters

VEMU’s event “Spotlight on Women in Music” brought together two generations of Estonian musical voices in Toronto on March 8th, International Women’s Day. Held at Tartu College, the afternoon began with a conversation led by VEMU’s chief archivist Piret Noorhani, featuring Estonian singer Haldi Välimäe alongside well-known local Estonian Canadian vocal group the Lindau Sisters—Reet Lindau Voksepp, Rosemarie Lindau, and Ellen Lindau. The discussion explored their musical journeys, influences, and memorable performances among other topics, offering insight into both local and international Estonian musical experiences.

The Lindau sisters contributed not only through conversation but also through their longstanding presence in Toronto’s Estonian cultural scene,

bridging community traditions with evolving artistic expression. Musical excerpts, from both Haldi and the Lindaus', woven into the discussion enriched the experience, allowing the audience to hear the stories behind the songs.

The second half of the event shifted into performance, with Haldi taking the stage accompanied by guitarist Mattias Tirmaste. Together, they presented a mix of original compositions and classics associated with legendary Estonian musicians, among them Marju Kuut (one of Haldi's main musical influences), blending soulful nostalgia with contemporary expression. The programme created a warm, intimate atmosphere that highlighted both Haldi's distinctive voice and her connection to Estonia's musical heritage.

Overall, the event offered a thoughtful and engaging celebration of women in music, combining dialogue and performance. It underscored the continuity of Estonian musical culture across generations and borders, while creating a meaningful shared moment for the Toronto Estonian community. The event was organized in partnership with the Ehatare Foundation and the Estonian Relief Committee in Canada, the latter of which recently celebrated their 75th anniversary.

Kati Kiilaspea



Marju Kõivupuu

EstoCast in 2026: A Growing Voice for Global Estonian Stories

Since its launch in 2022, EstoCast has steadily evolved into an engaging English/Estonian language podcast dedicated to Estonian culture, identity, and diaspora life. Now, with more than 85 episodes released and a consistent biweekly schedule, the podcast continues to expand both its thematic scope and its audience, offering a rich archive of conversations that bridge Estonia and its global communities. The podcast is produced as a collaboration between Eesti Elu/Estonian Life newspaper, VEMU Estonian Museum Canada, and Estonian Music Week.

The most recent run of episodes in 2026 highlights EstoCast's signature strength: thoughtful, in-depth interviews with cultural figures, academics, and community voices. The latest episode, "Süvenedes kirjandusmaailma Marju Kõivupuuga" ("Delving into the World of Literature with Marju Kõivupuu," March 11, 2026), features folklorist and cultural historian Marju Kõivupuu. The discussion moves fluidly between literature, heritage, and lived experience, illustrating how traditional narratives continue to shape modern Estonian identity.

Other recent episodes include a discussion with young Estonian musician Haldi Välimäe, which focuses on creativity, identity, and the role of music in both personal expression and cultural preservation—particularly within diaspora communities. Shifting into science, another interesting talk featured Estonian Canadian Dr. Kaia Tombak exploring evolutionary biology through her work.

As well as continuing with the theme of the Estonian Book 500 year (which officially ended in the middle of March), we have addressed topics such as diaspora and identity, arts and culture, science and society, and personal narratives and experiences.

With a catalogue now exceeding 80 episodes, EstoCast demonstrates steady and sustainable growth. Its consistent release schedule and diverse content have helped it build a loyal listenership, particularly within Estonian diaspora communities in Canada and beyond, such as in South America, Europe, and even Asia. This thematic diversity is one of the podcast's defining features. It allows EstoCast to appeal to a wide audience—ranging from diaspora Estonians to international listeners

curious about Baltic culture.

Ultimately, EstoCast's latest episodes reinforce its main mission: to connect people through stories. Whether exploring folklore, contemporary art, or lived experiences in the diaspora, the podcast offers a space where Estonian identity can be examined, celebrated, and reimagined.

As it continues to grow, EstoCast stands out not just for its subject matter, but for its approach—thoughtful, inclusive, and deeply rooted in the idea that culture is best understood through conversation. Stay tuned, we have much more in store before the summer break!

Kati Kiilaspea



In the Spotlight of the National Library of Lithuania: Lithuanian Heritage and Identity Preservation Abroad

The newly signed cooperation with Italy continues the 2022–2024 Reading Promotion Program. Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania

On January 22, 2026, Aušrinė Žilinskienė, Director General of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, and Gilles Pécout, President of one of the world's largest French national libraries, Bibliotheque nationale de France, signed a memorandum of cooperation. Among other things, both institutions agreed to develop cultural ties between Lithuania and France.

On February 3, 2026, the National Library of Lithuania and the Salaborsa Library of Bologna began a new stage of cooperation. On that day, Aušrinė Žilinskienė and Veronica Ceruti, Head of the Salaborsa Library, also serving as a Director of the Cultural Welfare and Libraries Sector of the Municipality of Bologna, signed a cooperation agreement. It includes promoting professional exchanges, sharing good practices in the areas of historical memory research, civic education and reading promotion.

The French National Library, which stores more than 40 million documents, also contains a significant part of Lithuania's cultural heritage: seventeenth-century maps of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania,



The national libraries of Lithuania and France agreed to develop cultural ties between the countries. Photo by Gintarė Grigėnaitė.

publications by Adam Mickiewicz, booksmugglers' press and interwar photographs. The manuscripts and correspondence of Oskaras Milašius (Oscar Vladislav de Lubicz Milosz), a poet, diplomat and the first representative of independent Lithuania in France, occupies a special place. He is one of the most prominent personalities connecting Lithuania with France. The majority of his work was written and published in France. In 2027, we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of Milašius's birth.

The newly signed cooperation with Italy continues the 2022–2024 Reading Promotion Program, funded by the Ministry of Culture of Lithuania and implemented by the National Library of Lithuania, aimed at strengthening Lithuanian-speaking communities abroad. The

program was implemented in five countries: Poland, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France and Italy. During it, many successful initiatives were carried out.

In 2022, the Reading Promotion Program was launched in Poland, bringing Lithuanian community members together to discuss the latest Lithuanian literature and in cooperation with the Warsaw Lithuanian Book Club. In 2023, program representatives visited the Central Library of Peterborough in the United Kingdom, where an event dedicated to Lithuanian culture was held. During the event, Lithuanian books were donated to the local library.

Entire Issue about the Lithuanian Diaspora

At the beginning of this year, the latest issue of the English-language journal *Lituanus* (Winter 2025 vol.71:4) has reached its readers. This time, all the articles (with one exception) published in the issue are on the theme of Lithuanian diaspora.

In the article “Reception and Dissemination of the Music of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis in the US in 1911–1975,” Danutė Petrauskaitė writes about the most famous Lithuanian composer and the pioneer of the Lithuanian piano sonata, string quartet, and symphonic poem. Čiurlionis first gained recognition as a unique artist for his pictures painted to the principles of musical composition; however, his own musical works remained unknown for a long time, both in Lithuania and abroad. This fact sparked Petrauskaitė's interest in discovering when his music began to be performed in the US, how it was received by Lithuanian émigrés, and what place it occupied in their cultural activities.



The cover of the latest *Lituanus* issue.

Žydronė Kolevinskienė analyzes three literary works written by female authors and published in Chicago: Nelė Mazalaitė's (1907–1993) novel *The Harvest Time* (1956), Birutė Pūkelevičiūtė's (1923–2007) novel *Eight Leaves* (1956), and her poem in prose *The Autumn of Revelation* (1990). The texts selected for analysis are among the few narratives of memory that thoroughly and unflinchingly present the full range of Lithuanian women's war and migration experiences from a female perspective. The works, discussed in the article, stand out for their distinctive portrayal of female experience and its artistic expression during particularly difficult circumstances of political, social and cultural upheaval.

Saulius Pivoras, using a systematic analysis of the Danish periodical press, deals with Danish impressions of Lithuania and the image of Kaunas as reflected in the Danish press between 1921 and 1925. Particularly detailed impressions of the city were published in a seven-part series in 1924 in the Næstved municipality newspaper, which was one of the municipalities that developed trade relations with Lithuania. The Danish press commented that Kaunas looked like Copenhagen did more than a hundred years ago. However, the efforts of the country and of the city's authorities to undertake comprehensive changes and modernize the city were received very positively. The Kaunas city development plan, prepared by Danish engineer M. Frandsen in the spring of 1923, contributed to those efforts.

The article on a creation of a searchable archive of Lithuanian emigrant newspapers by John

T. Daugirdas outlines the community-driven project that preserves a century of diaspora voices—communist, socialist, catholic, and secular—across the United States, Canada, Europe, South America and beyond. Addressing gaps in institutional archives, Daugirdas developed a searchable platform using a customized version of the elastic search program and two-layer PDF files, consolidating individual pages into issues for enhanced access. Supported by the Lithuanian Foundation, Inc. and global libraries, the project has digitized over 100 titles from 1880 to 2020. The article details the methodology, collaborations and challenges of the project.

The *Lituanus* winter issue also features the art by Monika Plioplyte. The artist was born in Kaunas and immigrated to the USA as a teenager in 2001. She was introduced to printmaking early in life and continued with her formal studies in Lithuania. In the US, she earned a BFA at the Massachusetts College of Art & Design in Boston, and a MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Plioplyte has exhibited nationally at venues including the Hyde Park Art Center, Northern Illinois art Museum, Columbia College Chicago, and Mana Contemporary in Illinois; Rare Visions in Colorado; Harvard Davis Center, Area Gallery and Gallery Kayafas in Boston. The artist lives and works in Chicago.

A Farewell to Australia's Oldest Lithuanian Newspaper

On December 17, 2025, the last issue of the weekly *Mūsų pastogė* landed in subscribers' mailboxes. After almost 77 years of continuous publication, the oldest Australian Lithuanian newspaper stopped running. The last issue was special. It was twice as thick—sixteen pages, and all in color. It contained farewell letters, memories, historical photos and Christmas greetings.

Although the news of the closure of *Mūsų pastogė* was made public in July 2025, the decision took much longer. According to Dr. Luda Popenhagen, President of the Australian Lithuanian Press Association, the main reasons for closure were a drastic decrease in the number of subscribers and contributors and a lack of

financial sponsors. The number of subscribers began to decline around the 1980s, and the costs of publishing the newspaper were constantly increasing. For many years, *Mūsų Pastogė* was saved by generous sponsors, whose donations allowed the newspaper to survive, despite declining income. The Australian Lithuanian Press Association tried to seek support in Lithuania, but the publication did not meet the criteria.

A large part of the newspaper's readers and, until recently, contributors have been older people: DPs or their older descendants. Once the newspaper had more than 2,000 subscribers, today there are only 176 left. According to Rasa Mauragis, the Chair of the Australian Lithuanian Community National Board, the digital version had also been unpopular—older readers, who make up the majority, wanted to receive a paper newspaper. On the other hand, the format preferred by current subscribers was not relevant to young people.

Another problem has been that historically the newspaper's content was contributed by community members with journalistic skills; however, many of them are no longer with us. For the past few years, the majority of the content had been created by its editor Dalia Doniela, who prepared an 8–12–page publication every week.

Although the closure of print publications is not uncommon these days, the end of *Mūsų pastogė* means much more to the Australian Lithuanian community, which has been an integral part of Lithuanian life in Australia for decades.

Popenhagen is pleased that all issues of the newspaper printed to date—from 1949 to the last—are archived. Digital and paper copies



Elina nuo 1949 Australian Lithuanian Weekly Post Print Approved 100022641 Kaina – Price \$4.00 2023.12.17 Nr. 47 + 48 (4048 + 4046)

Lithuanian in Australia Weekly, giedrius nuotalkos mūsų savaitraščio skaitytojams ir visiems mieloms tautiečiams plačiame pasaulyje linki "Mūsų Pastogė" Redaktori ir Administracija. Tegu kiekviena Naujųjų 2024-ųjų Metų diena Jums būs laiminga, prasminga ir kėrybinga.

"Mūsų Pastogė" atsiveikina su skaitytojais ir verčia paskutinį puslapį



Šių metų lapkričio 29 dieną Lietuvos Respublikos Spaudos Sąjunga Vokietijos šalininkų Rikšdingoje Atstovėlikaime su "Mūsų Pastogė" kolektyvu, šventėje dalyvavę Spaudos Sąjungos nariai, "M.Š." žurnalistai, rašytojai, literatūriniai svečiai ir choro nariai. Apie tai – šiame "M.Š." puslapyje. Nuotraukos – L.R. Spaudos Sąjungos Vokietijos nariai. Tama Stigaitis nuotrauka.

Sudiev, "Pastogė", sudiev...

Romas Čibas
Lietuvos Respublikos
Spaudos Sąjunga
Pirmainikas 2013-2024



Ar ir tikrąja prasme... "Mūsų Pastogė"? Ar tai gali būti "Pastogė" po keturiasdešimt? Širdis visada... mirtinam. Poetas visada... ir tikrąja prasme... "Pastogė" daug... nebeatitinka.

Atsimenu, kai pirmą kartą išleistas "Mūsų Pastogė" vardas. Tai buvo 1949 metais, birželio mėnesio 22 d., kai mūsų laivas... Amerikos vėliavė... Europos... Pasivikė keli... vadovaujant Antanui Raubek. Jis... vieno... širdis... Mūsų buvo... pasiliko žinoti... draugai... Mūsų... vienu... "Mūsų Pastogė"... "Mūsų Pastogė"... "Mūsų Pastogė"...

Australiijoje, suprantu, kad tie... laikas ir... kaip... "Mūsų Pastogė"... "Mūsų Pastogė"... "Mūsų Pastogė"... "Mūsų Pastogė"...

The cover page of the last issue of *Mūsų pastogė*. Archive of the National Library of Lithuania

reached the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, the National Library of Australia and the State Library of New South Wales.

Lithuanians in Australia will not be left without information at all: regional communities and other organizations publish newsletters, information bulletins and post news on social networks, especially Facebook; however, after the closure of *Mūsų pastogė*, there is no media outlet that unites all of Australia.

Adapted from Pasauliolietuvis.lt

A Tribute to a Nurturer of Lithuanian Choral Music in Australia

The Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art has prepared a new virtual exhibition dedicated to Australian Lithuanian musician, choirmaster and conductor Birutė Morta Prašmutaitė.

Prašmutaitė was born in 1956 to a Lithuanian emigrant family in Melbourne. Her father, Karolis Prašmutas, arrived in Australia in 1947, and her mother, Morta Stakaitytė, came to Australia in 1950. The couple did not know each other before arriving in Australia. Their acquaintance began when Karolis Prašmutas, realizing that he was ready to start a family, advertised in a Australian Lithuanian newspaper that he was looking for a wife. Encouraged by friends, Morta answered the ad, and after three months of friendship, they got married.

Birutė was the second child of Karolis and Morta. Birutė's love of music was instilled in her by her mother, who sang in the Melbourne Lithuanian Parish Choir. Her maternal uncle Telesforas Mažeika, who emigrated to Brazil and sang in the Rio de Janeiro Opera House Choir for thirty-five years, also had a significant influence. From the age of seven, Birutė studied piano privately with Vera Porter, and later studied singing at the Smith Melba Conservatory for four years with Doug Ashton. She attended St. Mary's Primary School and St. Heart of Jesus Girls' Gymnasium. In 1982, she graduated from La Trobe University in Melbourne, receiving a BA in mathematics and psychology.



A poster of the exhibition, featuring Birutė Morta Prašmutaitė.

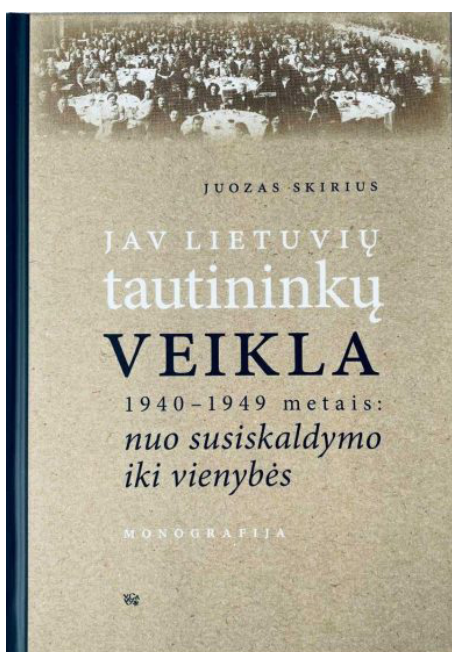
Choral music has accompanied Birutė's life since school. She sang in the Melbourne Lithuanian parish choir Dainos Samburis, the university choir, the girls' sextet Dainava and the Melbourne folk group, The Melbourne Village Singers.

Her longest and most meaningful friendship was with the Dainos Samburis. She began singing there in 1974, conducting in 1978. Since 1991, Birutė has been the choir's artistic director and conductor. Together with the choir, she organizes annual concerts every year, participates in Lithuanian community events in Australia, as well as Australian Lithuanian song festivals. She has also participated in song festivals held in Lithuania with the choir on several occasions.

The exhibition invites to get to know Birutė Morta Prašmutaitė and her activities in the Dainos Samburis.

The exhibition is available [here](#).

A Book on Lithuanian Nationalists in the USA



At the end of 2025, the Lithuanian Emigration Institute of the Vytautas Magnus University published a book of the Institute's researcher, historian Prof. Juozas Skirius. The Lithuanian monograph, entitled *The Activities of Lithuanian Nationalists in the USA in 1940-1949: From Division to Unity*, sheds light on the activities of the Lithuanian Nationalist Union in the USA in the 1940s. The political situation in Lithuania and the arrival of President Antanas Smetona to America led to the fact that the most divided political group of the diaspora, the nationalists, began to unite and carry out independent activities—liberating Lithuania and supporting Lithuanian war refugees in Europe.

The monograph examines the reasons for the division and unity of the diaspora, the long and difficult path taken by Lithuanian nationalists in the USA, uniting their forces, and the activities of nationalist organizations during the Second World War.

Juozas Skirius is a Professor of Vytautas Magnus University, Senior Researcher and Chair of the Council of the Lithuanian Emigration Institute of VMU. He has interned at the Swedish Institute of International Relations in Stockholm, the National Archives in Washington, the Center for Lithuanian Studies and Research in Chicago, the University of Wroclaw in Poland, Great Britain, Russia and Israel. He researches the political and economic activities of Lithuanians in the USA in the twentieth century and the foreign policy and international relations of Lithuania in 1918-1940.

[Prof. Skirius' book sheds light on the Lithuanian Nationalist Union in the USA.](#)