

Lietuviais esame mes gimę We Are Born Lithuanians

Music: Stasys Šimkus

Lyrics: Jurgis Zauerveinas

Composer and conductor Stasys Šimkus first published this song in St. Petersburg in 1912. It was dedicated to Vydūnas, a poet, philosopher, and leader of the Prussian-Lithuanian national movement in Lithuania Minor.

The lyrics are taken from a poem by Georg Sauerwein, first published in the "Aušra" calendar for 1884. The poem became the unofficial anthem of Lithuania Minor. It was originally sung according to the melody of an evangelical hymn.

In 1912 the text was somewhat modified and shortened, and choral music for four voices was composed by Stasys Šimkus. The song quickly became a popular Lithuanian patriotic song. The melody also rang out as the introduction to the Lithuanian Radio program for many years, until the forcible incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union in 1944.

Georg Julius Justus Sauerwein (1831 – 1904)

Born in Germany, was a publisher, poet, linguist, tutor, translator, pacifist, and world traveler. He was a prodigious polyglot, who could write or speak approximately 60 languages. As a Lithuanian author he used a number of pseudonyms: Girėnas, Pilėnas, Rukštinaitis, Silvatikus, and others. He worked for many years as a translator for the British Bible Society. His first acquaintance with the Lithuanian language was during his high school years, when he met Lithuanian immigrants working in factories in Gronau, Germany. Later on he lived in Lithuania Minor, learned to speak the language well, and was fascinated by it. He came to love the Lithuanian people, and sympathized with their concerns. He associated with leaders of the Lithuanian national movement and participated in their undertakings.

Stasys Šimkus (1887 – 1943)

He was an organist, conductor, composer, and teacher. He studied organ music at the Warsaw music institute (1906 – 1908). He continued his studies in organ music and composition at the St. Petersburg conservatory (1908 – 1914), where he received a diploma. S. Šimkus lived and worked in the United States from 1915 to 1920. He returned to study composition in Leipzig and Berlin (1921 – 1922). The composer moved to Klaipėda and founded a private school for music in 1923. While living in Klaipėda he assisted with the publishing of the magazine "Muzika". S. Šimkus also prepared the music of M. K. Čiurlionis for publishing, which occurred in 1925. He was one of the senior conductors of the Lithuanian National Song Festivals (1925 and 1928). S. Šimkus moved to Kaunas in 1930 and was the conductor of the state opera theatre (1931 – 1933). The composer collected and documented approximately 1200 folk songs.

Sources: Various Internet articles