

For Fact Hunters

1 Adamčikas Progymnasium Laisvės al. 96

“There’s no need – I understand it myself! It’s a fairy tale,” exclaimed a visitor at the first Lithuanian Art Exhibition in Kaunas in 1908, held at Adamčikas Progymnasium, when the guide, Tadas Daugirdas, was about to explain Čiurlionis’ paintings. This reaction, coming from a simple countryman, is said to have moved the artist to tears. The school no longer exists; the Kaunas City Municipality now stands approximately on that spot, where you’ll find a commemorative plaque dedicated to the exhibition. Notably, a posthumous Čiurlionis exhibition was also held here in 1911.

2 Kaunas State Musical Theatre Laisvės al. 91

Although Čiurlionis’ time in Kaunas was brief and not extensively documented, we do know he performed at what is now the Kaunas State Musical Theatre. In 1908, during the opening of the aforementioned art exhibition, he played the piano while the renowned tenor Kipras Petrauskas sang the solo part. At that time, the theatre was known as the Kaunas City Theatre. In 1921, it hosted the 10th-anniversary commemoration of the artist’s death.

3 Historic Building Maironio g. 11

Built in 1860, this is one of the oldest buildings in Kaunas’ New Town. Over the years, it has been home to the Citizens’ Club, the Soldiers’ Club, the J. Naujalis Music School, and the legendary Vilkolakis Theatre. In the early 20th century, while the idea of a permanent Čiurlionis gallery was still in development, some of his works – which had been safeguarded in Russia during World War I – were exhibited here. The building also hosted Marc Chagall’s exhibition in 1922. Today, it is privately owned.

4 Temporary M. K. Čiurlionis Gallery A. Mackevičiaus g. 27

Pelėdų (Owls) Hill, named after Vincas Grybas’ sculptures scattered across the art school’s grounds, has long been a hub of creativity. The first gallery dedicated to Čiurlionis was established here in 1921, a decade after his death, when the Ministry of Education purchased 193 of his paintings from Sofija Čiurlionienė for 65,000 marks. The gallery was built using bricks from a demolished Kaunas Fortress battery. Though the building was incomplete at the time of the artist’s 50th anniversary, it opened temporarily for the occasion. Interestingly, the space proved too small to accommodate all the paintings. Today, the building, an example of modernized historicism designed by Vladimir Dubeneckis, is part of Kaunas University of Applied Sciences, with plans to house an analogue photography centre.

5 Aleksotas Viewing Platform V. Čepinskio g.

Now, here’s a romantic scenario: In 1908, after transporting the Second Lithuanian Art Exhibition from Vilnius to Kaunas and displaying it, Čiurlionis and Sofija seized a quiet moment together. Hand in hand, they escaped the attention of the crowd and climbed to Aleksotas Viewing Platform to enjoy a panoramic view of the city. The platform remains a popular spot today, yet its sentimental charm endures. You can reach it via funicular or stairs – an ideal setting for both a first date and a hundredth.

6 National M. K. Čiurlionis Museum of Art V. Putvinskio g. 55

Like a crown atop Kaunas’ network of modernist architecture, this museum (alongside the Vytautas the Great War Museum, located opposite) is a must-see for anyone with limited time in the city. The museum’s design draws direct inspiration from Čiurlionis’ paintings. Its annex houses the Čiurlionis gallery and a concert hall, while the main building hosts rotating exhibitions. With its timeless interiors and captivating displays, the museum rewards repeat visits – there’s always something new to discover.

7 Sofija Čiurlionienė House-Museum Žemaičių g. 10

The modernist house where Sofija Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė lived was designed by Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis and built in 1932. Sofija, a writer, teacher, public figure, and translator, was taught Lithuanian by the famous priest Vaižgantas. Later, after meeting Čiurlionis, she taught him Lithuanian as well. Čiurlionis’ daughter Danutė and her husband, Vladimiras Zubovas, also lived here. Together with Sofija, they were recognized as Righteous Among the Nations for rescuing and hiding Jews during the Nazi occupation. The house remains in the family to this day.

8 Galaunė House-Museum Vydūno al. 2

Art historian and graphic artist Paulius Galaunė studied museology at the Louvre School in Paris. It’s no surprise that he later became the head of the Čiurlionis Gallery and subsequently the Čiurlionis Museum. His wife, Adelė, was a renowned opera singer. The family moved into this modernist house, designed by Edmundas Frykas, on the edge of Ažuolynas (Oak) Park. Today, the museum welcomes visitors interested in architecture, art, museology, and Kaunas’ rich cultural heritage.

9 Bank of Lithuania, Kaunas Branch Maironio g. 25

The monumental structure and opulent interior of this building reflect the ambitious spirit of the First Republic. However, the Bank of Lithuania also holds a hidden chapter of Čiurlionis’ legacy. During the Nazi occupation, Paulius Galaunė hid Čiurlionis’ paintings in the bank’s vault for



Echoes of Čiurlionis

safekeeping. When the Germans withdrew, they destroyed the power plant in nearby Vienybės (Unity) Square, damaging the building. In 1946, flooding from the Nemunas River caused water to seep into the vault, endangering the paintings. Some, including pieces from the Zodiac cycle, were irreparably damaged.

10 Petrašiūnai Cemetery M. Gimbutienės g. 28

Petrašiūnai Cemetery, one of Lithuania’s most significant burial grounds, is the final resting place of Sofija Čiurlionienė. The monument on her grave was designed by her granddaughter, Dalia Palukaitienė. Nearby lie the graves of museum directors Paulius Galaunė (and his wife Adelė), Petras Stauskas, and Osvaldas Daugelis, all of whom contributed significantly to preserving Čiurlionis’ legacy.

11 Eiguliai Cemetery Jonavos g. 296A

Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis had four brothers and four sisters, each with unique life paths. His sister Valerija, for example, was a cultural figure and museum worker. In 1915, she was entrusted by the Lithuanian Art Society to accompany Čiurlionis’ paintings to Moscow for safekeeping during World War I. In 1919, she oversaw their return to Lithuania and continued working for the museum alongside her sister Jadvyga. Valerija is buried in Eiguliai Cemetery, along with her brothers Stasys, a politician, and Povilas, a musician and architect.

For Inspiration Seekers

12 Oak Grove Library Radastų g. 2

Did you know there’s a ‘third Čiurlionis’? Beyond his music and art, Čiurlionis was also a writer who crafted words with the same plasticity and musicality found in his other works. As Vytautas Landsbergis notes, “The literary pages written by him, in turn, both comment on and essentially complement the portrait of the artist-composer.” His collection, *M. K. Čiurlionis. The Creation of the Word*, is available at Kaunas libraries, including this cozy, vibrant library known for its exhibitions, book presentations, discussions, and concerts.

13 Kaunas Vincas Kudirka Public Library, Art and Music Department A. Mapu g. 18

After wandering the narrow streets of the Old Town, stop by this charming red-brick building. Inside, you’ll find a book of Čiurlionis’ letters to Sofija alongside an eclectic collection of music records. Imagine settling into a quiet corner, reading *Letters to Sofija*, and letting the sounds of classical music take you away. The romantic atmosphere makes it easy to picture yourself as the protagonist of an old-world film – a perfect setting for an intimate encounter with the artist’s legacy.

14 Osvaldas Daugelis Library V. Putvinskio g. 55

Even if you are a regular visitor to Kaunas libraries, this one, already a century old, might be new to you. The art publications library was established in the museum in 1921, but it has only recently become open to the public and received a new name in honor of the institution’s long-time director. You can find the Osvaldas Daugelis Library and Reading Room, surrounded by display windows, after descending to the temporary exhibition space in the museum’s annex.

15 VR Films: Trail of Angels and Creation of the Worlds V. Putvinskio g. 55

Descending the same stairs in the museum, you will find not only exhibitions and a library but also a hall dedicated to virtual reality experiences created by director Kristina Buožytė and producer Vitalijus Žukas. Having premiered at the legendary Venice Film Festival, the film *Trail of Angels* has delighted art enthusiasts from many countries. *Creation of the Worlds* is a new film created for Čiurlionis’ 150th anniversary, inviting you to explore creative powers – one of the artist’s most relevant and recurring themes. P.S. Book your session time in advance!

16 Kaunas State Philharmonic L. Sapiegos g. 5

If you want to hear Čiurlionis’ music performed live, your best chance is here, in the philharmonic, which, by the way, is located in the former courthouse. This concert hall is home to the Kaunas State Choir and the Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra. We hope to soon welcome you to the M. K. Čiurlionis Concert Centre on the other side of the Nemunas, where the work of this genius, his contemporaries, and other talents will resonate even more profoundly.

Hello,

Welcome to Kaunas! Although the painter and composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911) never lived in our city and only visited a handful of times, we remain captivated by his symbolism and deeply connected to his synthesis of the arts. His beloved Sofija, who settled permanently in Kaunas after his death, greatly contributed to this bond, along with the artist’s colleagues and admirers, who did everything possible to ensure that Čiurlionis’ art remained here. After Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, Kaunas became the hub for introducing this genius to the world – a legacy we honor as we celebrate his 150th anniversary in 2025.

Let’s agree that meaningful commemoration involves more than simply marking sites; it requires creativity and imagination. Therefore, not all the landmarks on this route are visible to the naked eye or physically accessible. We invite you to slow down and equip yourselves with headphones, sunglasses, an umbrella, a blanket, a thermos – whatever you might need to explore the echoes of Čiurlionis in Kaunas.

Published in 2025



Playlist for
Your Stroll
„Čiurlenantis
Kaunas“
(Echoes of
Čiurlionis)



We would like to
thank the following
institutions for their
help in creating this
route:

National M. K. Čiurlionis
Museum of Art
Kaunas Oak Grove Library,
Kaunas Studies Reading Room

Useful Links

visit.kaunas.lt
ciurlionis.lt
ciurlionis.eu
ciurlioniui150.lt
ciurlioniokelias.lt
angelutakais.lt

Tourism Information



Laisvės al. 36 | +370 616 50991
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17 National Kaunas Drama Theatre

Laisvės al. 71

One of the newest additions to the repertoire of one of Lithuania's oldest theatres is dedicated to Čiurlionis' 150th birthday. Čiurlionis Landscapes: Sea, directed by Milda Mčiulytė, is an interactive, sensory performance featuring Čiurlionis' musical works and texts written by him and S. Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė.

18 Kaunas City Chamber Theatre

Kęstučio g. 74A

When he wrote his music, Čiurlionis was considered a modern composer of his time. What if today's creators thought like him? Mantvydas Pranulis, the recipient of the first M. K. Čiurlionis scholarship, experimented with this approach. The result is S'Anatomia, a 12-part cosmic opera of drone music, where archaism intertwines with modern musical and philosophical archetypes. You will experience this opera barefoot in the intimate chamber theatre hall.

Playlist for
Your Stroll
„Čiurlenatis
kaunas“
(Echoes of
Čiurlionis)



Walking Playlist

Sea

In Kaunas, we have lagoons, rivers, and lakes; the playlist includes Sea by Čiurlionis, and all you have to decide is whether you will float on the water or embark on an expedition along the banks of the Nemunas and Neris rivers or even explore Lampėdis Lake or Kaunas Lagoon.

In the Forest

The famous symphonic poem, preludes, and other pieces in the playlist will deepen your connection with nature as you explore Oak Park, admire the architecture of Pažaislis Monastery, wander through Panemunė or Kleboniškis forests, or enjoy the Juniper Valley.

For Symbolists and Interpreters

Scherzo. Sonata I (Sonata of the Sun)

Like the M. K. Čiurlionis Bridge floating out of the Scherzo painting from the Sonata I (Sonata of the Sun) cycle, its construction began in 1991 and, much like the temporary Čiurlionis Gallery, took quite some time to complete, as the newly restored independent country lacked the necessary funds. The bridge's name is no coincidence – it extends M. K. Čiurlionis Street and, gliding gracefully over the Nemunas, connects the city centre with Freda and Aleksotas. Beneath the bridge, you'll also find a constantly changing street art gallery – a modern tribute to the genius.

Serenity

So, you say you can't find peace in a city that never stops buzzing? Let's change that. Take a walk to the Confluence, where the Nemunas and Neris rivers embrace. Climb the hills of Aleksotas, Žaliakalnis, and Šilainiai to admire panoramic views of Kaunas. Slip into the Courtyard Gallery, discover the sacred silence of churches, and when a summer rain falls, seek shelter beneath a centuries-old oak. That's it – the search is over. Serenity prevails.

Creation of the World

Press "play" and listen to the symphonic poem of the same name as you stroll through the VMU Kaunas Botanical Garden, Marvelė Waterfall, or the Lithuanian Zoological Garden. If time allows, visit the outskirts of Kaunas, where the Dubrava Arboretum and the Tadas Ivanauskas Obelynė Homestead-Memorial Museum await. These places are beautiful year-round – but which season is your favourite?

The City

Even the city in Čiurlionis' work is phantasmagorical and mysterious, as if described by Italo Calvino. Looking at the sketches from this cycle, your thoughts may begin to wander freely. Could this be what the panorama of Kaunas from Owls Hill looks like? Or perhaps it resembles the grain mill seen from Nemunas Island? Maybe it's the old buildings on Mutinės Street as viewed from the Aleksotas Viewing Platform?

Zodiac

Although Čiurlionis is primarily known as an artist, science – especially astronomy – was close to his heart. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the works of astronomer Camille Flammarion were especially popular. Čiurlionis, who loved to gaze at the sky, once wrote in a letter to B. Volmanienė: "At such moments, it is good to forget where you come from and where you are going, what your name is, and to look with the eyes of a newborn. [...] If only it were possible to live like that, with eyes constantly wide open to everything that is beautiful, never waking up, never returning to oneself." There's no doubt he would have appreciated Lithuania's only planetarium, which now operates in the Science Island.

Winter

We hope climate change won't completely erase winter from our region. It would be a shame if frost, snowstorms, and icicles existed only in Čiurlionis' paintings, preserving the memory of winter's beauty. If we're lucky, let's meet when temperatures drop below zero – whether in Kleboniškis, Panemunė Pine Forest, the slopes of Žaliakalnis, or even the gardens of Šilainiai. Of course, these places are equally wonderful in summer.

