

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **DESIGN CONTEST LAUNCHED FOR €30M CONCERT CENTRE IN KAUNAS, LITHUANIA**



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- **Anonymous, one-stage competition – with entries judged on concept designs**
- **New circa 11,750 square metre M.K. Čiurlionis Concert Centre to provide much-needed world-class performance venue for Lithuania**
- **Project will act as a catalyst for regeneration of Kaunas, creating a new public park and revitalising a central area close to the historic Old Town**
- **Concert Centre anticipated to open by 2022, Kaunas' year as European Capital of Culture**
- **Deadline for entries is 6 September 2017**

Kaunas City Municipality and Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) today [23 June 2017] launched the Kaunas M.K. Čiurlionis Concert Centre International Design Contest. This anonymous, one-stage competition is inviting architects from across the world to produce concept designs for an emblematic new building of national and international significance.

The city of Kaunas is rapidly creating an identity for itself as one of the Baltics' key knowledge and cultural hubs. With no fewer than twelve universities and colleges, it has a youthful population and a vibrant atmosphere.

Selected as European Capital of Culture 2022, Kaunas is known for its lively arts and music scene, but the city – and Lithuania in general – does not have a first-rank concert hall with the acoustic quality that leading orchestras and ensembles expect today. Indeed, Kaunas lacks a substantial venue for all large public events, as well as a place for its growing business and academic communities to meet.

The Kaunas M.K. Čiurlionis Concert Centre International Design Contest is seeking concept designs for a landmark building of circa 11,750 square metres, on a site close to the city's heart and with memorable panoramas to its Old and New Towns. For full details of the competition, please see the dedicated competition website:

<https://competitions.malcolmreading.co.uk/kaunasconcertcentre/>

The Concert Centre will comprise: a 1,500-seat Concert Hall of exceptional acoustic quality; a smaller, secondary hall; conferencing facilities; a restaurant, café and bar; back-of-house and office spaces; and underground parking. The new building will sit within a public park, signalling that this is a place for everyone.

The site for the project is on the south bank of the River Nemunas, and the Concert Centre will help to revitalise this under-developed area of Kaunas, acting as a catalyst for further regeneration and re-orientating the city towards the riverbank.

**Visvaldas Matijošaitis, Mayor of Kaunas, said:**

“*The city of Kaunas is delighted to be launching this design contest, and we invite architects from across the world to participate. Our new Concert Centre will be a beacon for music, culture and the arts; a symbol of Kaunas' confidence and ambition; and an integral part of our city's commercial and creative renaissance.*

*The people of Kaunas chose to name our new Concert Centre after the Lithuanian painter and composer M.K. Čiurlionis, a gifted polymath: this will be a space for different disciplines – art, music, business and academia – to meet and interact, in a genuine 'theatre of ideas'.*”

International architectural practices are invited to make anonymous submissions to this one-stage contest, with a deadline of 6 September 2017.

The competition jury, which will meet in autumn 2017 to assess the schemes, comprises: **Jonas Audėjaitis**, Kaunas Faculty Dean, Vilnius Academy of Arts, and Member of Kaunas City Council; **Gražina Janulytė-Bernotienė**, Architect, Gražinos Janulytės Bernotienės studija; **Ingela Larsson**, Partner, Architect, Henning Larsen Architects; **Povilas Mačiulis**, Vice Mayor, Kaunas City Municipality; **Edgaras Neniškis**, Architect, Arches; **Modestas Pitrenas**, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra; **Daniel Rosbottom**, Co-Director, DRDH Architects; and **Neill Woodger**, Acoustics and Theatre Designer. The jury will be chaired by **Malcolm Reading**, Architect and Chairman, Malcolm Reading Consultants.

The jury will select three winners, each of whom will receive an honorarium of €25,000. It is anticipated that these three practices will enter into a Negotiated Procedure without Publication of a Contract Notice with Kaunas City Municipality, with one ultimately selected as the successful bidder.

**Malcolm Reading, MRC Chairman and Competition Jury Chair, said:**

“ *This project has a number of compelling ingredients: a vibrant, developing city; a receptive and forward-thinking client; a population that values culture, design and the arts; and an ambitious brief that calls for the very best.*

*Designers should pay great attention to using culture and the arts to foster a sense of shared experience, as well as integrating different parts of the city, reviving adjacent neighbourhoods, and attracting citizens and visitors closer to the river.* ”

The competition is open to all qualified architects and is being run to the Design Contest procedure.

The project’s total allotted building-related cost is €30m, including taxes. Construction is anticipated to begin in early 2019, with the new Concert Centre scheduled to open in time for Kaunas’ year as European Capital of Culture in 2022.

**Ends**



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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**The Kaunas M.K. Čiurlionis Concert Centre International Design Contest**

The Kaunas M.K. Čiurlionis Concert Centre International Design Contest launched on 23 June 2017 and closes on 6 September 2017. This is a one-stage contest, open to all qualified architects, and has been advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

For full details of the process and submission requirements, please visit the [competition microsite](#).

**The city of Kaunas**

The second-largest city in Lithuania, Kaunas is strategically positioned at the geographical centre of the country, circa 100 kilometres from the capital Vilnius – the majority of Lithuania’s over two million residents live within an hour’s drive.

Kaunas is undergoing a transformation from a former industrial centre to a diverse academic and business city: already recognised as one of UNESCO’s global creative cities, and now announced as the European Capital of Culture 2022, the city has the largest concentration of museums (29) in Lithuania, no fewer than twelve universities and colleges, and plays host to a number of international art events. This network of cultural organisations, coupled with a thriving technology sector, has created a strong knowledge-based economy, with the fastest and most robust IT and digital infrastructure in the EU.

The city’s delightful topography is complemented by an exceptional architectural heritage: Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque buildings in the Old Town sit alongside an extraordinary ensemble of Modernist architecture that dates from the interwar period, when Kaunas was the temporary capital of the newly-independent Lithuania.

Today, the city is prized by its residents for its energy, vibrancy and quality of life, and welcomes over 200,000 visitors each year.

## **Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis**

The Lithuanian artist and composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875-1911) had a short but prolific career, in which he produced over 300 paintings and a similar number of musical compositions before his life was tragically cut short by illness at the age of just 35. He played an important role in the development of Lithuania's emerging national identity, and provided a unique contribution to European art and culture. The breadth of his interests and the extent of his output – generated in a career of merely a decade – show that he was a polymath of unusual versatility and skill: an authentic 'Renaissance Man' of the early 20th century.

Today, Čiurlionis is celebrated as an artistic and cultural pioneer in Lithuania, and the majority of his paintings reside in the National Museum of Art in Kaunas that bears his name. His compositional development traces the familiar path from Romanticism to Modernism, atonality and abstraction; and his varied artistic output incorporates elements of Symbolism, Neo-Romanticism, Art Nouveau and Modernism. Particularly of note are his 'musical paintings' that take their titles from musical forms – such as the seven pictorial sonatas – which represent a unique attempt to use musical techniques in visual art.

Čiurlionis – a great artistic innovator and interdisciplinary pioneer – is a charismatic figure, fittingly lending his name to Kaunas' new Concert Centre, which will play host to a wide variety of cultural activities and help foster the city's 21st-century revival.

The M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art in Kaunas contains further information about Čiurlionis' life and works. The Museum's website can be found at the following address:

<http://www.ciurlionis.lt/en>

## **Malcolm Reading Consultants**

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) is a strategic consultancy specialising in the selection of contemporary designers. MRC believes in the power of design to create new perceptions and act as an inspiration – either at the local level, or internationally.

MRC is the leading specialist in design competitions in Europe. Recent work includes competitions for the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation; the National Trust; the Illuminated River Foundation; the Art Mill gallery in Doha; Homerton College, Cambridge; the Museum of London; the gold medal-winning UK Pavilion at Milan Expo 2015; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation; Tintagel Castle Bridge; Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Culture & Education Quarter; Mumbai City Museum; the Natural History Museum; and New College, Oxford.

<https://malcolmreading.co.uk>