

Romanas Armonas

Chairman

(Lithuania)

One of the longest-serving cello teachers in Lithuania who has nurtured possibly the largest number of Lithuanian cellists, Romanas Armonas (b. 1940) began musical education rather late in his life. In 1954, at the age of fourteen, he entered the Šiauliai Vocational School of Music where he started cello lessons with Stanislovas Jautakas. He moved on to study at the Lithuanian State Conservatory (present Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre) where he was trained by Levas Seidelis, Povilas Berkavičius, Ernestas Bertovskis and Domas Svirskis. Around the same time he launched his teaching career at the then Vilnius Music School and was invited to join the newly formed Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, with which he had worked for three years until graduation (1961–4). After an intense period of testing his ability to combine his budding career as a performer and a vocation of a cello teacher, he made a choice in favour of the latter and has remained on faculty at the M. K. Čiurlionis National School of Arts up to this day. Always looking for possibilities to improve his teaching practices, he has participated in master classes given by prominent cellists, including Mstislav Rostropovich, Natalia Shakhovskaya, Stepan Kalianov, Yo-Yo Ma, Māris Vīlleriūšs, Eleonora Testelets and David Geringas.

During his teaching career, now spanning almost six decades, Armonas's pupils have been awarded numerous prizes in national and international competitions. Several dozens of them have pursued careers as professional musicians and became accomplished performers and teachers, previously or currently active as principal cellists with international orchestras, founders and artistic leaders of their own ensembles and orchestras. Romanas Armonas is also happy and proud to collaborate with his former pupils Prof. Rimantas Armonas, Ramutė Kalnėnaitė, Vytautas Sondeckis and Mindaugas Bačkus, founder and organizer of the International Klaipėda Cello Festival and Competition, as member of the jury from the very first cello competition held in Klaipėda, in 2017.