

THE WAY OF EXILE OF OLAFS ILZIŅŠ
AND OTHER LATVIAN VIOLINISTS

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Summary

During WWII several outstanding Jewish violinists of Latvia perished in ghettos, but in fear of the red terror, almost two thirds of Latvia violinists – pedagogues of Latvia Conservatoire, orchestral musicians and recognized soloists, who were at the peak of their art, left Latvia at the end of WWII (1944). On their arrival in refugee camps in Germany etc., they became part of artists' groups and started large-scale concert activity, and some chamber ensembles even became popular with foreigners, as many of them gave concerts to German public, too, and to representatives of allied forces. Such groups were, for example, The Latvian String Quartet (founded in 1945 in Lübeck; Arvids Norītis, Voldemārs Rušēvics, Eduards Vīnerts and Atis Teihmanis), The Latvian Trio (founded 1946 in Augsburg; violinist Viktors Ziedonis, cello player Dzidris Treimanis and pianist Eižens Freimanis) and others. One of the brightest prewar Latvian performing arts young stars, violinist Olafs Ilziņš (1923) chose Venezuela to become his land of settlement and therefore we knew so little about his activities. Work of Olafs Ilziņš did not come into the eye of emigration press, his name is not found in *Latvju enciklopēdija 1962–1982* created by Edgars Andersons, though this musician was still mentioned in 1951 *Latvju enciklopēdija* edited by Arveds Švābe [8, 790]. The article emphasizes the most important moments in O. Ilziņš creative career; first concerts, that he gave as a child prodigy living in Latvia at the end of 30-ies; concerts after the graduation of Latvia Conservatoire (1940, with honours) at the beginning of 40-ies, receiving many enthusiastic references among foreigners (G. Kulenkampff on Berlin radio said after playing L. von Beethoven's Violin concerto together with Hamburg Radio Orchestra: this musician is *the greatest violin talent in last twenty years* [15]); performances at the beginning of exile in Germany (1944–47), settling in Venezuela (since 1947); tours in Canada (see George Kidd review in the newspaper *The Telegram* 1954, Sept. 9.); work in Orquestra *Sinfonica Venezuela* in the post of concert master (1964–1989), that was entrusted upon O. Ilziņš after brilliantly performed Violin concerto by P. Chaikovsky; first performance of K. Penderecki's Capriccio for violin and orchestra, with the author conducting (1976). Performance of O. Ilziņš and other violinists in exile, and their ability to take important place in cultures of foreign countries, clearly show what a loss was suffered by Latvian violin art, the development of which was to be started after the WWII anew on absolutely different principles.