



PLACES

This part of the route invites you to discover the buildings of Kaunas, where the history of theatre and performing arts once began or continues today. Some of the buildings with their fascinating architecture have changed their purpose many times, and in others, theatre is only part of the cultural activity. Perhaps as we enter the new century of the theatre, new spaces adapted to the needs of the contemporary performing arts will appear.

- 1

VILKOLAKIS THEATRE
Maironio g. 11
- 2

KAUNAS STATE MUSICAL THEATRE
Laisvės al. 91

The State Theatre founded in this building in 1920 was the first professional Lithuanian theatre, consisting of opera and drama troupes, and later a ballet troupe. The history of Lithuanian theatre begins with the first premiere – Hermann Sudermann's *St. John's fire* (the troupe rehearsed it in the nearby apartment on Kėstučio Street), which took place on December 9, 1920. And after a few weeks, on December 31, *La Traviata* was shown here for the first time. However, the history of the building dates back to 1890, when the construction started on the site, based on Kaunas province architect Ustinas Golinevičius' project. The grand opening of the theatre took place on January 9, 1892, but it didn't have a permanent troupe, the performances were shown only by touring artists.

The building is also important in the wider historical context. On May 15, 1920, when Kaunas became the temporary capital, the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania started its work there. Paradoxically, it was in this building that Lithuania was declared the Soviet Socialist Republic by the occupants. The building finally became a musical theatre on November 27 of the same year, when the Kaunas State Musical Theatre was established instead of the State Theatre. The first play was Boris Aleksandrov's *Wedding in Malinovka*. Presently, Kaunas Musical Theatre shows almost 250 operettas, operas, and musicals during the season, with 3 to 4 premieres.



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NATIONAL KAUNAS DRAMA THEATRE
Laisvės al. 71
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KAUNAS CITY CHAMBER THEATRE
Kėstučio g. 74A

The founder of the theatre and long-term artistic director Stanislovas Rubinas (1930–2013) has said that the appearance of the Chamber Theatre – Youth Music Studio back then – in Kaunas was prompted by the booming theatre experiments across the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, as well as the cultural vacuum that appeared in Kaunas after the departure of Modris Tenisons. So, this centre of culture dates back to 1976, although it did not have its own premises until 1991. It spent more than a decade touring and even performed for the liquidators of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident. Today, located in a small white building next to the City garden, the classical theatre is friendly with innovative solutions, the youth's creative work for the young, performance dedicated to the little ones, and the progress of dance. This is how a unique, always hungry but peaceful beast of the Chamber Theatre is raised.

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CIRKO SAPIENS CENTROPORARY CIRCUS CENTRE
Veiverių g. 134
- 6

KTU THEATRE STUDIO
Laisvės al. 3
- 7

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY THEATRE
S. Daukanto g. 27
- 8

VU FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION RED CARPET THEATRE
Muitinės g. 8

The theatre was established at the Kaunas Faculty of Vilnius University in the fall of 2013. Its first director is actor and director Andrius Žiurauskas. Currently, the theatre is managed by Indrė Endriukaitė, an actor of Kaunas State Puppet Theatre.

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THEATRE CLUB
Vilniaus g. 22
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KAUNAS STATE PUPPET THEATRE
Laisvės al. 87A

The Puppet Theatre, which was founded in 1958 in the Odeon cinema built in the interwar period, has brought up thousands of Kaunas residents who are already taking their own children to their favourite performances. And if they are no longer on the program, you'll meet your beloved characters at the museum located right there, in the theatre.

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AURA DANCE THEATRE
M. Daukšos g. 30A
- 12

KAUNAS CULTURE CENTRE
Vytauto pr. 79

Kaunas Culture Centre, which started its 81st season in the fall of 2020, has changed its site several times but the purpose of the institution was always the same – a space that provides the best opportunities for amateur creative work, where professional performances or other events are always welcome as well. It was here – Kaunas Trade Union Palace at the time – that Kira Daujotaitė's free dance studio Sonata found refuge. And there are many stories to tell. For example, Kazys Binkis Theatre operating in Kaunas Culture Centre was founded back in 1936, later, it was briefly headed by Juozas Milnitis himself. Sigutis Jačėnas, Elyra Žebertavičienė, Vytautas Grigolis, and many others, who later became professionals, started their careers at this amateur theatre. And it is impossible to avoid coincidences and links: the theatre is headed by Rimantas Štaras, the legendary administrator of the National Kaunas Drama Theatre!

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KAUNAS ARTISTS' HOUSE
V. Putvinskio g. 36

Kaunas Artists' House is a villa of exceptional interwar architecture open to all muses. Although today's repertoire consists more of performances than traditional plays, the imprint of drama is very prominent in this story. One of the most productive Lithuanian directors, Gytis Padegimas, has said that he had established a chamber theatre here during the occupation, frequented by such bohemians like Kęstutis Navakas. One play could only be shown in winter because it needed snow, on which the actors poured wine...

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VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY'S GREAT HALL
S. Daukanto g. 28
- 15

GIRSTUTIS
Kava Il-asios g. 26
- 16

SMALL THEATRE AND PANTOMIME THEATRE (NOW TEMPO ACADEMY)
M. Daukšos g. 34

One house – several different stories! As an alternative to the academic theatre, the Small Theatre – an extravagant statement in a cosy space of the Old Town – was born in 1992. It accommodated not only a variety of experiments and boldest personalities but also one of the most popular bohemian cafes at the time – Sufferio būdė! A several-decades old Kaunas Pantomime Theatre founded by Kęstutis Adomaitis moved in there in 2010. Mimes not only toured extensively abroad but also migrated in Kaunas. They were based at the Drama Theatre, the Philharmonic, E. Ožekienės St., Girstutis, and finally – Daukšos Street. In 2017 Kaunas Small Theatre was officially connected to Kaunas City Chamber Theatre, the curtain was closed, and the premises were not used. Currently, it accommodates a Tempo space of Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022, where ideas for the future are generated by youth and communities.

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KAUNAS CASTLE
Dilies g. 17
- 18

KAUNAS TOWN HALL
Rotušės a. 15
- 19

HOUSE OF PERKŪNAS
Aleksoto g. 6
- 20

PEOPLE'S HOUSE (DID NOT SURVIVE)
Corner of Sv. Gertūdės and A. Mapu g.
- 21

TILLMANS THEATRE
Kaunakiemio g. 9

One of the oldest buildings in Kaunas is an impressive monument of Gothic architecture, erected in the second half of the 15th century, which has had its own theatrical phase. The nobility of the time lived here, and later a chapel was founded in the building. In 1843, when Kaunas became the centre of the province, a theatre was established here. After World War I, in 1928 the building was transferred to Jesuits who turned it into school rooms. And nowadays, you can take part in a theatrical tour of Perkūnas' House, which takes you back to the past.

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MIKAS AND KIPRAS PETRAUSKAS HOUSE
K. Petrausko g. 31
- 23

A. AND P. GALAUNĖ HOUSE
Vydo g. 2
- 24

HOUSE OF L. TRUKYS AND M. RAKAUSKAITĖ
E. Fryko g. 14
- 25

JUOZAS VAIČKUS
Aukštaičių g. 15

Cultural life was in full swing in Kaunas, as the centre of the province, even before the proclamation of the Republic of Lithuania. The Tillmans family of Kaunas industrialists cared not only for profits but also for their workers' free time. The workers' canteen was built near the factory, close to the Carmelite Church, at the end of the 19th century, which featured concerts and theatre plays. In 1909 an annex was built with the entire Tillmans Theatre, which was solemnly opened with Anton Chekhov's play *The Bear*.

PERSONALITIES

There are much more theatre and its buildings in Kaunas than it might seem at first glance, right? It is time to meet the personalities without whom the last century would have been much bleaker. As you take the second part of the route, you will notice interesting interrelationships that reveal the tightly knit life of the theatre community. Of course, it is impossible to “visit” all the theatricals' homes, some of them can only be found on memorial plaques in Kaunas. The first stop of this route contains the stories of dozens of inspiring personalities.

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PETRAS KUBERTAVIČIUS AND ANTANINA VAINIŪNAITĖ-KUBERTAVIČIENĖ
I. Kanto g. 21
- 27

ANTANAS SUTKUS
S. Daukanto g. 13
- 28

STASYS UŠINSKAS
S. Daukanto g. 15
- 29

KAZYS BINKIS
Vydo g. 45
- 30

PETRAS VAIČIŪNAS
Gedimino g. 31

Petras Kubertavičius (1879–1964) came to Kaunas in 1919 with J. Vaičkus' Flying Theatre and played the leading roles in it. His wife Antanina (1896–1973) worked there as well and had a part in the legendary *St. John's Fire*. Kubertavičius was one of the main actors of the Kaunas Drama Theatre. In 1929 he played a legendary role in V. Krėvė's play *Šarūnas*, skillfully conveyed the characters of villagers in A. Vieniulis' *Twilight*, V. Krėvė's *Son-in-law*, J. Baltušis' *Roosters are Crowing*, etc. During his entire career, he portrayed about 200 roles and also did pedagogical and directorial work. Meanwhile, Antanina Vaičiūnienė performed about 300 roles in 50 years: Desdemona and Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Macbeth*, a queen in Schiller's *Don Carlo*, Anna Andreyevna in Gogol's *Government Inspector*, and others. She played Lady Milford from Schiller's *Intrigue and Love* for 30 years. The whole family lived in this house from 1925 till 1940 and Antanina – until 1973.

Antanas Sutkus (1892–1968) studied acting in Moscow. When he returned, he founded the National Theater, and later the satire theatre Vilkolakis and an acting school. In 1925 he became the head of the acting studio located in Kaunas Jewish Habima Theatre, taught acting theory and improvisation. At the State Theatre, he staged such works as M. Petrauskas' *Birutė*, A. Rubinstein's *Demon*, etc. as well as dramas: J. Zemaitė and G. Petkevičaitė-Bitė's *Litvomanai* (1919), V. Krėvė-Mickevičius' *Šarūnas* (1924), K. Inčičius' *Vincas Kudirkas* (1934), Friedrich Schiller's *William Tell* (1935) and many others. With the advent of the radio and the public's demand for radio plays, he took this task upon himself. After the war, he contributed a lot to the restoration of theatre in Kaunas. Antanas Sutkus lived in this house after the war from 1958 till 1968.

Stasys Ušinskas (1905–1874), who returned to Lithuania after his studies in Paris, had organised a couple of exhibitions. Andrius Oleka-Zilinskas, the State Theatre director at the time (by the way, he was the first to apply the Stanislavsky method in Lithuanian theatre) soon became interested in the young artist's work and invited him to work in the theatre, where the set designer created scenography for drama, opera, and ballet performances. He also taught monumental painting (stained glass and scenography) at Kaunas Art School. In 1936 he founded a professional puppet theatre, and in 1938 presented the first sound puppet film in Lithuania *The Fatty's Dream*, which was awarded a gold medal and a diploma for scenographic sketches and dolls at the Paris Exhibition. The artist lived in this Art Deco house from 1961 till 1967. A memorial stone to Ušinskas was unveiled in Akmenėliai manor, near his native Pakruojis.

Kazys Binkis (1893–1942), who went down in the history of Lithuanian dramaturgy with his play *Young Forest* (1937) about the life of school students, was a member of Ketuvėjininkai (a group of Lithuanian avant-garde writers) with an eternal spring in his heart. Binkis didn't live long in Vydošius Avenue. Nevertheless, not only his works went down in history but also the fact that he with his wife Sofija Binkienė (1902–1984) rescued Jewish people and were recognised as the Righteous Among the Nations.

Petras Vaičiūnas (1905–1959), who started publishing his poems during his studies in St. Petersburg did not limit himself to this creative field. In Kaunas, he worked as an administrator and treasurer of the Drama Theatre and was a playwright and a member of the repertoire commission. He wrote about 20 plays. One of the – *Patriots* – was staged in 1926, 1954, and even in 2008. The memorial museum of this creator was established in his native Piliakalnis (Jonava district); he lived in this house from 1930 till 1940.

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MISTISLAVAS DOBUŽINSKIS
Maironio g. 13
- 32

UNĖ BABICKAITĖ-GRAIČIŪNIENĖ
Vaizganto g. 14

Unė Babickaitė-Graičiūnienė (1897–1961) was one of the most famous Lithuanian actors of the interwar period, as well as one of the first female directors, who worked in Kaunas at Song and Stage Society after World War I as the head of the drama group. Her nickname Unė Baye is international for a reason. The actor gained a lot of experience and made contacts in the US, where, in the 1920s he acted in silent movies. She and her husband Vytautas Andrius Graičiūnas settled in Europe in 1928; the actor performed in the theatres of London and Paris and critics there called her a prima donna. When she returned to Kaunas, she became the head of the Riffemen's Union Theatre. The actor lived in this house with her husband until the exile in 1951. After that, when she returned on her own, she had to stay somewhere else in Žaliakalnis. By the way, Unė Babickaitė-Graičiūnienė collected many exhibits for the Balys Sruoga Museum.

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PETRAŠIŪNAI CEMETERY

The cemetery that was established just before World War II is an eternal resting place for many deserving Lithuanians. Personalities of various theatre eras are buried here: Konstantinas Gliniskis, Kazys Binkis, Adelė Nezabitauskaitė-Galaunienė, Algimantas Masiulis, Mikas Petrauskas, Gražina Balandytė, Robertas Vaidotas, Antanina Vainiūnaitė-Kubertavičienė, Antanas Sutkus, Leonardas Zelčius, Danutė Juronytė. On special occasions, tours are organised in the cemetery, during which, the tombs of legends and monuments created by the most famous sculptors are visited. Visitors also pay tribute to the memory of representatives of the theatre and other fields of art on the occasion of personal anniversaries. This cemetery is the Kaunas version of the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris.

EIGULIAI CEMETERY

Eiguliai village cemetery was established around 1890. It is a pantheon of Lithuanian circus artists (Francas Čemiasius, Pranas Gudauskas, Massimiliano Truzzi, Konstantinas Feroni, Mykolas Vilenčikas, Antanas Dilkauskas, Jonas Ramanauskas, Vladislava Variakojienė (Stankutė), Jadvyga Ramanauskienė (Stankutė) and others are buried here), as well as Juozas Vaičkus, the pioneer of Lithuanian theatre.

Hello,

The curtain rises, the audience quiets down, all the spotlights and eyes are directed at it – the stage of a professional theatre in Kaunas, celebrating its 100th anniversary. It has enveloped the whole city with its stories, colourful personalities, and modern experiments inspired by classical muses. From the City garden, where the State Theatre emerged back in the 19th-century and where the drama and opera made their debut, the first stars of the Lithuanian stage lit up, ballet and even modern dance schools were formed, to Zanavykai market in Žaliakalnis or Dainava, Šilainiai, Vilijampolė microdistricts, where the new forms of performing arts involve the entire communities. And then back to the Drama Theatre stage that withstands even the most complex directorial statements or to the “black box” of the Chamber Theatre, open to the most youthful visions. Kaunas streets, squares, buildings, and everything in between are one big stage, and this route that invites you to enjoy everything that fills it all year round is perfect proof of that. Partners: National Kaunas Drama Theatre

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EVENTS

- ★ Lithuanian Theatre Spring Festival
SPRING
- ★ Theatre Week and Fortūnos Awards
MARCH
- ★ Educational festival for children and youth
Dive into the Theatre
MAY
- ★ International Puppet Theatre
Festival Smiling Dolls and Children
MAY
- ★ International Circus Festival Cirkuliacija
JUNE
- ★ Operetta in Kaunas Castle Festival
JULY
- ★ International Performing Arts Festival
ConTempo
AUGUST
- ★ Youth Theatre Festival Starting Point
SEPTEMBER
- ★ Theatre festival House no. X
SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER
- ★ AURA International Dance Festival
SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER
- ★ International Theatre Festival Stage 10×10



MORE KAUNASTIC ROUTES

Wondering what to do next? Great news – we've been publishing illustrated maps since 2015. Here are some of the themed routes available in English:

Welcome to Kaunas	The City of Champions
Modernist's Guide	Culture Shock
Wallographer's Notes	Double Weekend
The Litvak Landscape	A Hanseatic Merchant's story
The Litvaks of Slobodka	Kaunas in Film
The Sugihara Route	
Gastro Guide	
The Ethnic Trail	
Kid-Sized Kaunas	

For free publications, visit the Kaunas IN tourist information center (Rotušės a. 15, Kaunas), or locations labeled with the "Tourism Information Friendly" or visit.kaunas.lt

USEFUL HASHTAGS

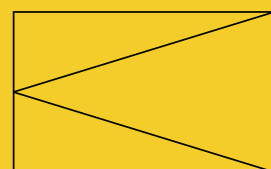
#kaunastic #visitkaunas #kaunas2022

TOURISM INFORMATION



"KAUNAS IN"

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Kaunas 2022
European Capital of Culture

Jewish Theatre

During the interwar period and before that, Kaunas was a multicultural city. Many talented people of various nationalities lived, created, and worked here. Jewish Theatre is an important section in the development of Lithuanian theatre, but so far it has been a little-studied part of our cultural history. Suppose you want to look into it and get to know the personalities better. In that case, we recommend a monograph *Jewish Theatre in Interwar Lithuania* (Žydų teatras tarpukario Lietuvoje, VDU, 2017) by theatre scholar Ina Pukelytė. And while walking, notice the location of the People's House marked on this map. Around 1920, the troupe of the Kaunas Jewish Theatre formed based on the Vilnius Jewish Folk Theatre, which left the occupied capital, and started to perform here, in the hall of 400 seats. Another romantic stop, alive only in written stories and press archives, is a luxurious Miramaras hall opened on E. Ožėškienės Street in the 1920s, which later served as a Jewish minority theatre. In general, around 1937, there were as many as four Jewish troupes in Kaunas, two of which were professional. By the way, the personality of Gabrielius Lanas, a printer and culture supporter, is very interesting. His printing house operated in Maironio St. next to where the archive is currently located. It printed posters not only for the Jewish Theatre but also for many other events for free! In addition, he was the owner of the Kaunas City Summer Theatre. He even brought Enrico Caruso, among other world-famous performers, to Kaunas. Maybe a commemorative sign should appear for this theatre entrepreneur in Kaunas as well?

Art for the Centenary

On the occasion of the anniversary, the courtyard of the National Kaunas Drama Theatre – more precisely, the labyrinth of courtyards between Laisvės Avenue and Kęstučio Street – is bustling with new art. Various creators unleashed their imagination to present the history of Lithuanian theatre. Start your tour from the gate between Laisvės Avenue 65 and 67, where you will find artwork by street art legend Vytenis Jakas. After entering, give a nod to the sculpture *Embodiment* by sculptor Tadas Vosylius. Then there's a portrait exhibition of the theatre collective by photographer Dainius Ščiuka. And do you see, there, a little bit further, the faces of Sofija Čiurlionienė, Juozas Vaičkus, and Petras Kubertavičius showing on the wall? It is a work of vegetation and street art that will never be finished but was started by Tadas Vincaitis. Those wandering between the buildings will be entertained by the caricatures of theatre legends and fascinated by sand, glass, and ceramics installations. The theatre is alive! It is fun to visit the exhibition during different times of the day or time of the year.

More about the artworks: dramosteatras.lt

