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Finnish Music Quarterly

# FMQ

Spring 2016

*Reaching*



*across*

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# Editorial

BY ANU AHOLA

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## Singing with our neighbours

Now that borders and their control are a burning issue in Europe, it is more important than ever to try to see across them – not just to lands afar, but also to neighbours just round the corner. This *FMQ* looks both east and south, to see how music in its manifold genres has, at different times in the past, been a factor in moulding Finland's relationship with Russia and Estonia.

Finnish-Russian relations are coloured by a long and complex collective history. The significance of Russia is widely recognised in Finland, and at the moment, particularly, its everyday culture seems to be interesting Finns more than ever. Amid the political and economic tensions, however, it is not always easy to remember that times change, and that a parallel, complex reality packed with potential exists alongside the official cultural policy.

Finland also has a long, shared history with Estonia. The ties were already close in centuries past, and since Estonia became independent, our mutual relationship might be described as a close kinship with all the accompanying ups and downs. But as Managing Director of the Estonian PLMF association **Leelo Lehtla** put it, blinded by the need for something exotic, we often forget that there are a lot of interesting things going on right across the border (p. 44).

It is, however, good to reflect on not only geographical borders but also the nature of borders in general, and to spot them even when they appear to be invisible obstacles or unspoken prejudices. How much do we know about the culture or music of our various minorities? And how about music education, which should be available to all in Finland? Does it also apply to people in the margins of society?

Whatever the geopolitical or economic situation, music remains one of the best tools for fostering understanding between peoples. It is the first step across all manner of borders – to the alien, the other. This issue of the *FMQ* offers some examples, in articles about music and ambassadors who are all, in their own fantastic way, reaching across.



Jussi Puikkonen

## Spring and summer festival tips

**FESTIVALS** The theme of the **Avanti! Chamber Orchestra's** Summer Sounds (29 June–7 July) is “Just be”. The artistic planner of this festival now being held in Porvoo for the 31st time is **Dima Slobodeniouk**, and the soloists include clarinetist **Jörg Widmann**, the **Wiener Glas-harmonika Duo**, the **Camerata Flamenco Project** and violinist **Chloë Hanslip**.

Time of Music, focusing on contemporary music, runs this year from 5 to 10 July at Viitasaari. The festival also puts on courses, which this summer include a masterclass in composition given by **Mauricio Sotelo**, a course in performance and improvisation by **David Moss**, and a chamber music course given by the **Trio Accanto**. The programme for the festival will be announced in May.

Held on 6 July, concurrent with Time of Music, will be the final concert of the Second International Einojuhani Rautavaara Chamber Choir Composition Competition. The five finalists are **Eugene Birman** (USA), **Patiparn Jaikampant** (Thailand), **Raphaël Languillat** (France/Germany), **Matilda Seppälä** (Finland) and **Diana Soh** (Singapore/France). The competition, founded by conductor and Artistic Director **Nils Schweckendiek**, is organised by the **Helsinki**



Markku Pihlaja

Helsinki Chamber Choir



Perttu Kivilaakso

soloist in **Virtaperko's** concerto for amplified cello and orchestra is **Perttu Kivilaakso**, and the **Turku Philharmonic Orchestra** will be conducted by the festival's Artistic Director **Ville Matvejeff**. (See also pp. 10–15.) The international guest orchestra at this year's **Turku Music Festival** is that of the **Mariinsky Theatre** from St Petersburg under conductor **Valery Gergiev**.

The **Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra** and soloists have also been appearing annually at the **Mikkeli Music Festival** for over 20 years. This year the **Mikkeli festival** runs from 27 June to 1 July.

**Chamber Choir** and **Time of Music** in association with **Tenso Network Europe**.

A new work by **Olli Virtaperko** is to be premiered at the opening concert, “**Urban Dances**”, of the **Turku Music Festival** (11–20 August). The

[musiikinaika.org](http://musiikinaika.org)  
[helsinkichamberchoir.fi/rautavaara](http://helsinkichamberchoir.fi/rautavaara)  
[turkumusicfestival.fi](http://turkumusicfestival.fi)  
[avantimusic.fi](http://avantimusic.fi)  
[mikkelinmusiikkijuhlat.fi](http://mikkelinmusiikkijuhlat.fi)

## defunensemble & Ensemble Adapter join in concert

**COLLABORATION** The Finnish **defunensemble** and the Berlin-based German-Icelandic **Ensemble Adapter** are to give a concert together in spring 2016 and have jointly commissioned works for it from **Kimmo Kuokkala** and **Sergej Maingardt**.

Their first joint concert, at the Tampere Biennale on April 15, will feature the premiere of Kuokkala's *Avaruusrauniot (Space Ruins)*, Jarkko Hartikainen's *Studies on Empathy*, and a performance of Mikołaj Laszkowski's *Atlantis & \*\*\*\**. There are plans for premiering Maingardt's work in Berlin in autumn 2016.

See also the column by **Sami Klemola**, Artistic Director of **defunensemble**, on pp. 46–47, record reviews on p. 58 and the article on the Tampere Biennale (13–17 April) on the FMQ website.

defunensemble.fi  
tamperemusicfestivals.fi/biennale



Ensemble Adapter

## Guitar collaboration between Finland and Russia

**FESTIVALS** The Tampere Guitar Festival is taking part in a new Finnish-Russian cooperation project. The project's first event will be held at the end of April in St Petersburg, when Finnish guitarists **Petri Kumela**, **Joonas Widenius**, **Janne Malinen** and **Aleksi Rajala** will perform contemporary, classical, flamenco and jazz music at the Elena Obraztsova Cultural Center. In the summer, Russian guitarists will visit the Tampere Guitar Festival scheduled for 4–12 June.

tgf.fi/finrus

## Sebastian Fagerlund at the Concertgebouw



**APPOINTMENTS** Sebastian **Fagerlund** has been chosen as the composer-in-residence at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw for the 2016–17 season. During his residency, he will play a prominent role in the city's musical life. He will also write a new work to be premiered in 2018. Music by Fagerlund can already be heard in Amsterdam in May 2016, when

his orchestral work *Ignite* (2010) will be performed there by the **Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra**.

At the moment, Fagerlund is finishing *Autumn Sonata*, a work commissioned by the Finnish National Opera and based on **Ingmar Bergman's** film of that name. The production will be conducted by **John Storgårds**, and **Anne Sofie von Otter** will sing the leading role of Charlotte.

## Three-orchestra commission from Outi Tarkiainen

**COMMISSIONS** The Lapland Chamber Orchestra, the Arctic Philharmonic Orchestra and the Norrbotten Chamber Orchestra have co-commissioned a song cycle *Eanan, gida nieida (The Earth, Spring's Daughter)* from composer **Outi Tarkiainen**. Scored for mezzo-soprano and chamber orchestra, it draws on a vast collage of Sami poetry.

*Eanan, gida nieida* will be given its world premiere performance in Lapland in autumn 2016, by the Lapland Chamber Orchestra. The Norwegian premiere will be in Tromsø and the Swedish premiere in Piteå, both in spring 2017.

Outi Tarkiainen (b. 1985) lives in Rovaniemi, Lapland, and is said to have one foot in the jazz camp and one in the contemporary classical camp; hence she has been dubbed the **Kaija Saariaho** of jazz.

outitarkiainen.fi



# Jouni Kaipainen in memoriam

BY KIMMO KORHONEN

Jouni Kaipainen's fine career as a composer was cut short by a prolonged illness that finally took its toll on 23 November, 2015. Born on 24 November 1956, so he would have been 59 the following day. Among the unfinished works he left behind him were his Fifth Symphony, commissioned by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and a marimba concerto for the Philharmonic Orchestra of his home city, Tampere.

A frontline composer in his native Finland, Kaipainen was a prolific writer of orchestral, chamber and vocal music. The fact that his Trombone Concerto, premiered in summer 2015, bore the opus number 100 was evidence of his industriousness, especially since he was also a highly respected teacher of composition at the Tampere Music Academy.

Kaipainen the man bore the edgy mark of a creative artist, but more than anything he was driven by a curiosity for various facets of the arts and life. He was a keen conversationalist, expounding his own views yet also making room for others. His literary knowledge was unusually wide, which possibly reflects the influence of his authoress mother, and he himself was an accomplished writer; his essays and programme notes displayed an unusually erudite knowledge of music.

First making a name for himself in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Jouni Kaipainen was a member of the Korvat auki (Ears Open) group that took Finnish music by storm at the time, both verbally and in their music. His early works were in the spirit of Modernism, the dominant trend at the time, but he then gradu-

ally adopted more traditional ideals. One manifestation of this change of direction was his Second Symphony (1994). He would eventually go on to compose two more symphonies, the last of which is the mighty oratorio-like *Commedia* (2012), inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

As time went by, Jouni Kaipainen began more and more to express his admiration of the classics. A defender of the traditional large-scale genres, he boldly – and successfully – placed himself on their centuries-old continuum. Along with his four symphonies, his core output included many concertos and seven string

quartets. He once recalled how, as a young man, he first awoke to classical music on hearing Beethoven's *Eroica*. Later, he gained sustenance from listening to a Bartók quartet every morning.

The works of Kaipainen reflect a faith in lasting musical values and a certain classicism that transcends generic borders. At the same time they also have an expressionist incisiveness and emotional force, and often a delicacy of timbre associated with the music of France. Kaipainen the composer was a builder of synthesis.



Maarit Kröönari / Fimic

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## Ulf Söderblom and Markus Poussa RIP

Conductor **Ulf Söderblom** died on 4 February 2016 at the age of 85. He is regarded as the conductor who most influenced the development of Finnish opera. During his career – lasting 44 years – at the Finnish National Opera he conducted nearly 2,000 performances of opera and ballet, and served as Chief Conductor from 1973 to 1993. He was involved with the Savonlinna Opera Festival right from its revival in the 1960s, and he also conducted several choirs.

Percussionist **Markus “Zarkus” Poussa** (b. 1975) died on 24 January 2016. A versatile artist, he played in a number of bands, among them **Hemma Beast**, **Giant Robot**, **RinneRadio**, the **Anna-Mari Kähärä Orchestra** and **Jukka Poika’s Kuules Crew**, in addition to his solo career.

## Record awards

**NOMINATIONS & AWARDS** IFPI Finland held its annual Emma awards on 11 March, 2016. The Classical Album award went to the disc by the **Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra** and conductor **Hannu Lintu** of **Sibelius's Lemminkäinen Legends** and **Pohjola's Daughter**. The Jazz Album was **Bullhorn** by the **Verner Pohjola Quartet** and the Ethno Album was **Kimmo Pohjonen's Sensitive Skin** – a disc that has also been topping the World Music Charts Europe for a long time. Other winners included vocalist **Antti Tuisku**, who came away with three awards, and solo female artist **Sanni**, rap artist **Cheek** and Newcomer of the Year, rap artist **Paperi T (Henri Pulkkinen)**, who all received two.

As best record of 2015 the classical music department of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle) chose *Different Voices* by the **Kamus Quartet**. *Lakkautettu kylä* by **Anne-Mari Kivimäki** and *Liki* by **Freija** were singled out as Best Folk Album of 2015 in a competition held by *kansanmusiikki.fi* (a folk music website) and the magazine *Kansanmusiikki (Folk Music)*. (See record reviews on pages 58–65.)

*BBC Music Magazine's* nominations for the best classical album in 2015 include two recordings conducted by **Sakari Oramo**. The first is **C.P.E. Bach's Hamburg Symphonies** (German title *Hamburger Sinfonien*) performed by the **Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra**, and the second **Nielsen's Symphonies Nos 1 & 3** by the **Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra**. The winners will be announced on April 5.



Sanni



Verner Pohjola

Aga Tomaszek

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EMO :: SPRING 2016

## Svart Records to release 70s gems

**RECORDINGS** In 2016–17, Svart Records, a label with a strong focus on vinyl, is releasing 24 albums of live recordings made by the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle) in the 1970s. Among them will be such big rock and jazz acts as **Tasavalan Presidentti**, **Jukka Tolonen**, **Eero Koivistoinen** and **Edward Vesala**. Half of the concerts, to be released on both vinyl and CD, were broadcast in a series of programmes called *Popstudio* and half in *Jazzstudio*, and they were recorded in 1972–1977 at Yle's big Helsinki studio on Liisankatu. Many of the recorded songs have never been released before.

svartrecords.com



## Teosto Prize

**AWARDS** The Teosto Prize of the Finnish copyright organisation for composers, lyricists, arrangers and music publishers is one of the biggest arts awards in the Nordic countries. Four albums and one opera have been shortlisted for this year's prize: **Pekko Käppi & K:H:H:L's Sanguis Meus, Mama!**, **Laura Moisio's Ikuinen valo**, **Paperi T's Malarian pelko** and **Verner Pohjola's Bullhorn**, plus the opera *Autuus (Bliss)* by **Antti Auvinen**. The winners of the Teosto Prize will be announced on 14 April.



Paperi T

Andrei Kipariti

From now on, the *FMQ* will be regularly publishing information and articles about the latest Finnish music research both in its print edition and on its website. Music research has a page of its own at [fmq.fi](http://fmq.fi) → Articles → Music Research.

## ArtsEqual – research and interventions to ensure equality in the arts



One of the largest arts research projects in the history of Finland got under way in autumn 2015. Entitled “The Arts as Public Service: Strategic Steps towards Equality (ArtsEqual)” and scheduled to run until 2020, it is a multidisciplinary project coordinated by the University of the Arts Helsinki involving the Foundation for Cultural Policy Research (Cupore), Lappeenranta University of Technology, the University of Turku and the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health.

According to the ArtsEqual ideology, the arts should be a basic public service accessible to all, its primary mission being to promote social

equality and well-being. There is great emphasis on the practical perspective, and some of the project studies are thus taking the form of interventions in collaboration with arts organisations and actors. In addition to research reports, ArtsEqual is organising lectures, seminars and educational jam sessions, and making recommendations in support of political decision-making. The project is funded by the Strategic Research Council of the Academy of Finland.

See also the article “Factors of democracy in the music education of the future” by **Tuulikki Laes** on pp. 54–57.

[artsequal.fi](http://artsequal.fi)



## Music history and cosmopolitanism

The Fourth Sibelius Academy Symposium on Music History is to be held in Helsinki on 1–3 June. Under the heading “Music history and cosmopolitanism”, it will examine social structures, synergies and cultural transfer and exchange throughout the history of music.

The keynote speakers at the symposium will be **Brigid Cohen**, New York University, USA, **Mark Everist**, University of Southampton, GB, and **Franco Fabbri**, University of Turin, IT.

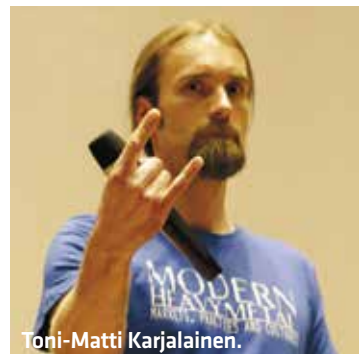
[uniarts.fi/en/cosmopol2016](http://uniarts.fi/en/cosmopol2016)

## Modern Heavy Metal Conference 2016

An international Modern Heavy Metal Conference (MHMC 2016) is to be held in conjunction with the Tuska metal music festival in Helsinki from 30 June to 3 July. The organiser is the Aalto University School of Business in collaboration with the Tuska Festival, Music Finland and the Academy of Finland.

The conference will look at the research into heavy metal being carried out around the world, holding a panel discussion about the metal music business and arranging meetings with artists. The keynote speakers will be **Andy R. Brown** and **Kimi Kärki**.

[modernheavymetal.net](http://modernheavymetal.net)



Toni-Matti Karjalainen.



# More great reads at fmq.fi

The following articles are available only on the FMQ website.

## RECENT ARTICLES

### Hanna Isolammi: Sounds of shadow and light

“Kaija Saariaho’s new opera, *Only the Sound Remains*, was premiered in March. One of the leading roles is assigned to the kantele, an instrument never before used by Saariaho in her music.”

### Aarne Toivonen: Tampere Biennale 2016

“Tampere Biennale, the leading forum for contemporary Finnish music, is 30 this year. The programme is not, however, a memorial or résumé of the festival’s history. This year’s edition addresses music and sound more widely than ever before. The common denominator may be ‘contemporary’, but the growths, collisions and creative friction within the concept may come as a surprise to all.”



### Susanna Välimäki: Chamber Music, Communitality and Eco-Social Justice: The Case of Our Festival

“Among Finland’s music festivals, Our Festival has been leading the way towards a new 21st-century concert culture. The unconventional festival updates our notions of the meaning of chamber music in today’s society and world.”

### Petri Silas: Curiosity cannot be outsourced

“Progress is all about trying out new things, as every forward-thinking artist intrinsically knows. Nevertheless, a case could be made that it is not enough for only the vanguard to embrace the unknown.”

### Johan Tallgren: Losing idealism in translation?

“In 2015 we heard more Sibelius than ever before. However, the opportunities to curate something that is original and offers historical insights into Sibelius’s time were mainly missed.”

## ARTICLES FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Antti Häyrynen: In Estonia, music is celebration

“Since last century, the song festivals organised in Tallinn have been a demonstration of Estonian culture and national spirit the power of which has been strongest at crucial turning points in the nation’s history.” (FMQ4/1998)

### Pekka Suutari: The national character of Soviet Karelian music

“Karelia straddles the border area between Finland and Russia, and it was an area of immense and diverse influence right up to the Russian revolution. The birth of the Soviet Union and the Cold War prevented normal cross-border contact for almost 80 years.” (FMQ3/2005)

### Kalevi Aho: New winds in Estonian music

(FMQ4/1998)

### Antti Häyrynen: The road to St Petersburg

(FMQ4/1999)

**NEWSWIRE** :: Finnish percussionist **Tatu Rönkkö** (*Elifantree*, *Auteur Jazz*) and Danish indie rock trio *Efterklang* have formed a new band together called **Liima**. :: Mouth Organ and Harmonica Quartet *Sväng* to visit Austria 19–22 April 2016.

:: Pianist and composer **Iiro Rantala** received a German Jazz Gold award after his 2011 album *Lost Heroes* sold 10,000 copies.

:: **Värttinä** to tour Germany and Switzerland from 30 April to 13 May 2016. :: Music Finland granted the first-ever Finnish Music Export Award to **Comusic Productions Ltd**, the company behind *Sunrise Avenue*’s success. :: **Okra Playground** at the Nordsjøfestivalen in Norway 26–27 August 2016.



Liima

Thomas Maximilian Jauk



**“I think that in order to work with music you need many kinds of tools, but the foundation for it all – the fundamental inspiration – is the music itself.”**

Ville Matvejeff is one of the most successful classical musicians in Finland today. He performs as a conductor and pianist around the world, he is artistic director or musical advisor at festivals, and he has composition commissions lined up for several years to come. His career is exceptionally diverse and wide-ranging.

BY HANNA ISOLAMMI  
PHOTOS AJ SAVOLAINEN

# Der Wanderer

**Being hailed as a polymath is getting old for Ville Matvejeff.** “I think that in order to work with music you need many kinds of tools, but the foundation for it all – the fundamental inspiration – is the music itself. Any given channel can open up new opportunities that are interesting to explore. I developed my broad job profile in quite an organic way.”

Matvejeff’s first instrument was the piano. He made his debut as soloist with the **Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra** under **Susanna Mälkki** at the age of 18, and his ambition was to become a concert pianist. He also wrote music and was engaged in choral singing. It was through choral music that he found his way into opera and into conducting. The latter activities now take up the majority of his time.

## **Swept away by opera**

Opera has been Ville Matvejeff’s favourite kind of music for a decade, which is intriguing given that he sort of wandered into the genre by accident. “Some ten years ago I was aiming for a concert pianist’s career, and to finance my studies I needed to have a part-time job. I found myself in various opera gigs as a rehearsal pianist, a conductor’s assistant and a chorusmaster’s assistant.”

Matvejeff continued to accumulate experience in opera, and his first proper job in this field was as a rehearsal

pianist at the Finnish National Opera, which led to similar appointments at the opera houses of Stockholm and Malmö in Sweden. “I never imagined that opera would turn out to be my favourite job, but once I had entered that world, it swept me off my feet,” he says.

Matvejeff’s choral background gave him an intimate relationship with the human voice, which is one of the reasons why opera was such a good fit for him. But there are other enchantments too: “I have always been deeply inspired by how an opera is more than the sum of its parts and by what a huge amount of stuff goes into a performance. The additional dimension lent to the music by the text is extremely fascinating for me.”

Asked to name his favourite opera, Matvejeff mentions *Króľ Roger (King Roger)* by **Karol Szymanowski**. “I am very fond of it and consider it one of the best operas of the 20th century. Vocally and in sonority it is an incredibly wonderful thing, and it is a shame that it is performed so rarely,” he says.

Since 2014, Matvejeff has been the principal guest conductor and artistic advisor of the Croatian National Theatre HNK Zajc. He made the unlikely leap to the opera house in Rijeka after a tip given to Croatian headhunters by someone in Sweden. The Croatian National Theatre does not have a chief conductor or music director, but Matvejeff advises its management in artistic matters. He also conducts a considerable number of op-

era performances and concerts in Rijeka each year.

Matvejeff is pleased with the ensemble at the Croatian National Theatre. He describes its vocal range as so broad that almost any opera can be cast using only in-house soloists. “Croatia is a great place to work in general. It is a dynamic opera community that is evolving rapidly and enjoys a central location in Europe. Vienna, Milan and Munich are within easy reach, and performers are easier to move around than, say, in Finland.”

### The adventurous Jyväskylä Sinfonia

Apart from his job in Croatia, Matvejeff is regularly employed in Finland. He has been chief conductor of the *Jyväskylä Sinfonia* since 2014, and he has a couple of years left in that post. “The Jyväskylä orchestra is a wonderful place to work,” Matvejeff says excitedly. “Its sound and technical skills have improved hugely over the past two years, and the musicians have an incredible energy.” He also praises Jyväskylä audiences, and with good reason: last autumn, orchestra concerts scored an astounding 100% capacity rate, and even the season as a whole set a new national record at 98%.

For audiences to be eager to hear and support the orchestra of their home town is a huge motivational boost for the orchestra, compensating for the fact that Jyväskylä still does not have a hall suitable for orchestral rehearsals or performances. Matvejeff describes how a visit to the excellent acoustics of Sibelius Hall in Lahti had the musicians of the *Jyväskylä Sinfonia* marvelling at just how good their orchestra sounded – back home they could not really tell. “Perhaps the improvement in the orchestra’s sound is partly rooted in the fact that we need to work really hard to make a good sound and play a good performance,” Matvejeff theorises. That Jyväskylä does not have a proper concert hall is one of the most notorious disgraces in the domain of Finnish classical music, but in January the project took a tiny step forwards as a project plan for building a hall was presented. The greatest challenge of all – finding the money – lies ahead, but at the moment it looks as if there may be a concert hall in Jyväskylä’s future after all.

In recent years, the *Jyväskylä Sinfonia* has performed a lot of 20th-century music and Romantic rarities for small orchestra. Next, Matvejeff plans to dive deep into the music of Mozart. “Focusing on the Classical era seems like a refreshing change just now,” says Matvejeff. There are also recording projects in the pipeline. Last year, the orchestra released two very different albums: *Aulis Sallinen’s Chamber Music I–VIII* on the Ondine label and a selection of classical and popular music with baritone *Walteri Torikka*, who has become popular as a crossover performer. Matvejeff notes that these two approaches will continue to govern the discography of the *Jyväskylä Sinfonia*.

### Composing in the summer

Ville Matvejeff is also a talented and successful compos-

er. He began to attract attention in Finnish musical circles in the 2009–10 concert season with the premieres of a number of major works: *Il principe dei dolori* for two vocal quintets (SSATB), violin, clarinet and lute at the Helsinki Festival, the cello concerto *Crossroads* in Lappeenranta, and the orchestral work *Ad Astra* commissioned by the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle) and premiered by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Helsinki. The Violin Concerto that Yle likewise commissioned from Matvejeff became the first orchestral work to be given its premiere at the new Musiikkitalo in Helsinki. A disc containing *Crossroads* and *Ad Astra* (Alba ABCD364) was released in 2013; its merits include being named “Q2 Album of the Week” by radio station WQXR in New York City. Matvejeff’s background in choral singing can be seen in his catalogue, as a considerable percentage of his output is vocal music, particularly choral music.

Matvejeff the composer is in the fortunate position of being offered more commissions than he can accept. Conducting currently takes up about 80% of his time, which means cutting down on composing and other work. A schedule that is too tight allows no leeway for the unexpected, and Matvejeff does not like to miss deadlines. “I prefer to keep my schedule comfortable, but I have learnt to be strict with my deadlines. My goal is to complete one extensive work each year,” he says.

In Mahlerian fashion, Matvejeff tends to write music in the summer, when there are fewer concerts and opera performances. “I need to have an uninterrupted length of time to write music so that I can get the process under way properly and do not immediately have to leave the world and mood of the piece at hand to do something else,” he says. During the concert season, he plans out his compositions while travelling: “Thinking things out is the longest and most arduous part of the process; it requires time and space and contrasting impulses. Through this rumination I discover the architectural blocking of the music.” Having worked out the music in his head, Matvejeff actually writes rather quickly, since through his conducting work he is thoroughly familiar with scoring, playing techniques and notation.

Matvejeff feels that the working environment and performance opportunities of a Finnish composer are quite good by international standards. “Contemporary music is well received in Finland, and there is a gratifying number of premieres every year. Also, composers are appreciated in Finland, because we have a lot of intelligent people who not only write good music but are good at writing about their thoughts,” he says. On the other hand, he regrets that earning a living by writing classical music in Finland is precarious: few works get a second performance after the premiere. He is trying to do his part to change this in his own programming as a conductor. “I try as much as I can to provide opportunities for young composers to have their works



performed, and more than once at that. This represents a challenge in programming, but I feel that it is really valuable.”

### **New Generation Opera**

“Finnish composers seem to be enormously interested in writing operas, even though the potential for getting new operas performed is infinitesimal,” says Matvejeff. There are only a couple of large opera companies in Finland, and, with economic hardships mounting, they are obliged to take financial considerations into account in their programming. A new production of a new work is always a gigantic financial risk. “For a contemporary work, it is essential to have an extramusical hook of some kind to get audiences to come,” says Matvejeff. He has himself been involved in revitalising opera performance practices.

In 2013, Matvejeff conceived and established New Generation Opera (see also FMQ3/2013), intended as a forum for new works and emerging vocal talent. “It was my ‘vision project’. I wanted to see whether it would be feasible to produce opera in an unconventional way,” he explains.

New Generation Opera’s first production was Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, performed at the Helsinki Festival in 2013. This production propelled the classic opera into the modern age, incorporating real-time video and jump cuts. The performances excited audiences and critics alike, and among further plans was the staging of **Juhani Nuorvala’s** opera *Flash Flash*. “The follow-up for New Generation Opera was supposed to be showcasing new operas and above all young singers. Unfortunately, the funding was pulled, and NGO had to be shelved,” says Matvejeff.

While the pioneering work of New Generation Opera in Finland ended before it had barely begun, the idea lives on. The *Don Giovanni* production is still touring Europe a couple of years after its premiere. It was recently voted the best opera production in Croatia, and it was nominated for the Classical:NEXT innovation prize. “I am happy that people are still very interested in it. Even though NGO crashed and burned, new ideas never go away; they get implemented in some other way by some other people,” says Matvejeff.



## Influences and inroads

Matvejeff is in a position to showcase new performers and composers both through the Jyväskylä Sinfonia and at the Turku Music Festival, of which he has been artistic director since the beginning of this year. Having previously been involved in various ways with the Turku festival for six years, he was already familiar with the lie of the land and the working practices of the festival.

“It is a great opportunity and a great responsibility to continue the tradition of the Turku Music Festival in bringing classical music trends and star performers to Finland. I also want to give young, talented performers major performing opportunities as early in their careers as possible, to introduce them to the public at large and to allow them to grow artistically. Performers usually improve at a rapid pace if given the opportunity to do so. Giving major performance opportunities to emerging performers is a way to boost this development,” he says, describing his plans for the festival.

Matvejeff notes that he himself had inspiring early experiences of working with major artists, and this fostered his own artistic development. He mentions his Lieder recital tours as pianist with **Karita Mattila** among his most memorable experiences. “Five years earlier, I could not have even dreamt of one day playing at Wigmore Hall in London – something that every pianist and chamber musician aspires to. The recital I played there with Karita was an evening I will never forget.”

Matvejeff also names **Leif Segerstam** and **Esa-Pekka Salonen** as major influences; working as their assistant gave him access to challenging major productions. “One of my long-standing dreams came true last November when I had the opportunity to do **Sibelius’s Kullervo** with **Jorma Hynninen**. Jorma is the iconic singer for *Kullervo*. No one is better.”

The future and its challenges are something to be met with patience and humility. “The main thing is to do the work at hand as well as possible. If you do things well, something good usually comes out of it,” he says.

## Home is an abstract concept

A conductor’s job is physically demanding, and a healthy lifestyle is essential for Matvejeff: “You have to ensure that you get enough sleep and have a healthy diet.” While the work itself serves as a workout, he also exercises when possible. He particularly enjoys skiing. Apart from physical fitness, a conductor must have considerable social skills, as in any given day he may have to communicate with hundreds of people.

Although Matvejeff is a social person, he has found it increasingly important to have quiet time to balance the communicative requirements of his work. In his spare time, he prefers to retreat to the peace and quiet of his cottage in North Karelia. “It’s a great contrast to be able to be come from a busy metropolis to complete silence. But there is an intriguing similarity too, since it’s possible to be anonymous and alone both in a big city and in the middle of nowhere.”

Not that Matvejeff has all that much spare time, as he is on the road around Europe for nearly 300 days in a year. His parents are in the tourism industry, and he thus became accustomed to living out of a suitcase at an early age. Unlike many other musicians who are constantly on the road, he does not get homesick.

“It has been exciting to discover that constant travelling has made ‘home’ an abstract concept that has somehow lost part of its meaning. In this job, it helps if you are a wanderer at heart.”

Hanna Isolammi is the editor of *FMQ* and a freelance writer who is working on a doctoral dissertation in musicology.

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

## Ville Matvejeff

- :: Born in 1986
- :: Studied at the Sibelius Academy and the Espoo Music Institute
- :: Solo pianist debut with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Susanna Mälkki at the age of 18; toured worldwide as Karita Mattila’s Lieder pianist
- :: Chief conductor of the Jyväskylä Sinfonia since 2014, principal guest conductor and artistic advisor of the Croatian National Theater HNK Zajc since 2014
- :: Artistic director of the Turku Music Festival since 2016
- :: Several composition commissions e.g. from the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle)
- :: Compositions recorded on the Alba label, including orchestral works (ABCD364, 2013) and choral works
- :: Founder of New Generation Opera
- :: matvejeff.com



Finns have long had a deep affinity for music of Russian origin. Perhaps that says something about the Finnish mental landscape or “national psyche”. But it should also be noted that the status of Russian music in Finland has fluctuated over time and according to political circumstances – musical trends echoing trends in society at large.

BY TERO HEINÄNEN

# Finland’s love affair with melancholy Russian melodies

When Finland was detached from the Kingdom of Sweden and incorporated into the Russian Empire in the early 19th century, the change was not huge as far as ordinary Finns were concerned. Yet in cultural matters and in music in particular, new winds soon began to blow: the traditionally melancholy Finnish folk songs were joined by melodies of nostalgia, yearning and longing from Russia. This musical stock was readily welcomed and assimilated into Finland’s musical culture, unlike the happier Swedish major-key tunes, which never really caught on over here.

In terms of musical theory, the falling fifth – a characteristic interval in Finnish folk songs – was joined by the rising sixth – ditto in Russian melodies. St Petersburg became a conduit for new cultural influences and international trends, and in the process the Slavic minor-key melancholy firmly established itself on the Finnish musical scene.

## Waltzes, romances, marches

It was through St Petersburg that Finland received European-style salon music, waltzes, brass bands and military music in general, and of course the Russian ro-

mance. New restaurants in Helsinki featured fine dining and the latest music, and Russian military bands provided outdoor entertainment in parks in the summer. Sheet music sold briskly, and music-making at home was all the rage.

At the turn of the 20th century, Finland enjoyed an influx of magnificently pompous waltzes – the swell of *Autumn Dreams* (*Osenniy son*) and *The Amur Waves* (*Amurskie volny*), the lilt of *Beryozka* and the memorable melodies of *The Danube Waves* (*Dunaiskie volny*) and *Carmen Sylva* by Romanian composer **Josif Ivanovici** became perennial favourites. Originally embraced by high society, the new fashions soon trickled down through all social classes.

Russian romances were an offshoot of the European popular song tradition. *White Acacias* (*Belye akaatsii*), *The Chrysanthemums* (*Otsveli khrisantemy*) and *Have pity on me* (*Pozhalei*) were major hits. The emerging labour movement, on the other hand, began to recycle military marches from the Imperial era: *Farewell of Slavianka* (*Prozhanie slavyanki*) became *Free Russia*, and *Longing for Home* (*Toska po rodine*) became the *Barri- cades March*.





The Helsinki Balalaika Orchestra (founded in 1910, photo from 1915) is still actively performing Russian music.

### Independence had little musical impact

Finland declared independence in 1917, and almost immediately the Civil War broke out between the labour movement and the bourgeoisie, the Reds and the Whites. The latter, backed by Imperial Germany, emerged victorious, and hence the identity of the new sovereign nation was staked out through nationalism and anti-Russian sentiments. Meanwhile, some 20,000 “White” Russian refugees fleeing the new regime arrived in Finland.

Some of these refugees stayed, and because many of them were culturally inclined – musicians, dancers, visual artists – a Russian subculture emerged in Finland that would have an impact for decades to come. This subculture was tolerated, even though Finland’s mainstream culture was firmly orientated towards Germany and preferred to have as little as possible to do with anything across the eastern border. This was nothing new: Finland has always had a dualist attitude towards Russian culture, at once embracing and shunning it.

That the fledgling nation turned towards the West was not readily apparent on the musical scene. Of course, new fashions such as jazz and the foxtrot did arrive from Western Europe, but the public at large still liked their Russian-tinted minor-key tunes. Indeed, in the 1920s and 1930s the nascent record industry in Finland depended wholly on the Russian romance genre, recycling many of the salon favourites from the Imperial era – waltzes, marches, romances – into schlagers

of the day. *Dark Eyes (Tshornye glaza)*, *Two Guitars (Dve gitary)* and a handful of other tunes established a canon of Russian numbers in Finnish popular music.

### From foe to friend

In the Second World War, Finland allied with Germany against the Soviet Union. One of the most evocative Finnish hits of the war years was *Life in the Trenches*, which was a strange paradox considering that the tune was originally a Russian waltz from the days of the Tsar’s Army. Germany lost, but Finland retained her independence, although relations with the Soviet Union had to be immediately and completely overhauled. Almost as soon as hostilities had ceased, in January 1945, the **Red Army Chorus** gave a concert in Finland to great success, charming their audience with *Kalinka* and *Evening in the Harbour (Vecher na reide)*.

Foe had become friend; that which had been prohibited was suddenly permitted. The Red Army Chorus even made a recording in Finland, but a new Russian music boom was yet to come.

Russian tunes enjoyed a new vogue in Finland at the turn of the 1960s. This was perhaps partly due to a change in the general mood of the country, to the active policy of close relations with the Soviet Union pursued by President **Urho Kekkonen** and to the huge surge in Soviet trade, but the prime mover in promoting Russian music was a new record label, Scandia.

## Soviet hits in Finnish

The production manager of the Scandia record label was **Harry Orvomaa**, a jazz musician and an immigrant with roots in Russian Jewish culture. He profiled folk songs and klezmer tunes from Odessa that he recalled from his youth (including *Katinka*, *Boys*, *Josef*), jazzily arranged by **Jaakko Salo** into melancholy schlagers. Finnish superstars of the day such as **Brita Koivunen**, **Laila Kinnunen**, **Annikki Tähti** and others recorded them, hit after hit. Old favourites such as *Troika*, *Katyusha* and *White Acacias* also made a comeback.

It is perhaps indicative of the spirit of the day that the top slot on the charts was held in turn by *I Love You, Life* (*Ya lyublyu tebya, zhizhn*), a new Soviet schlager recorded in Finnish by **Kauko Käyhkö**, and *Twist and Shout* by **The Beatles**. We should note that all Russian tunes played in Finland were performed with Finnish lyrics; the original Russian recordings were never heard.

A new phenomenon emerged in the late 1960s with descendants of post-Revolution Russian immigrants hitting the popular music scene. Yet the best-known of these, siblings **Kirka** and **Muska Babitsin**, no longer sang romances but rock'n'roll. **Tamara Lund** and **Viktor Klimenko** upheld the old romance tradition, while **Marion Rung** and **Johnny Liebkind** focused on schlagers. All of the above had Russian roots.

## Another boom

Russian songs were translated into Finnish and recorded all through the 1970s, but the next massive Soviet boom in Finnish music did not come until the next decade. By the 1980s, the ground had become exceptionally fertile: all key political parties swore by the doctrine of upholding close relations with the Soviet Union, and nearly half a million Finnish tourists visited Moscow, Leningrad, Yalta and Sochi every year. Lada was the best-selling make of car in Finland, and the Finnish Broadcasting Company had a weekly radio programme named *Tunes from the Soviet Union*, originally deliberately created as a vehicle for balancing the dominance of Anglo-American pop music. The programme reached a respectable audience of half a million listeners every week. Having a national monopoly in radio broadcasting, as the Finnish Broadcasting Company did at the time, certainly helped in being a trendsetter.

It was also fortunate that Soviet popular music at the time relied on grand, melodic schlagers. Songwriters such as **Raimond Pauls**, **Igor Nikolayev** and **Vladimir Matetsky** wrote tunes that were eminently



Muska Babitsin



Annikki Tähti



Alla Pugachova and Vera Telenius

marketable in Finland too. In the mid-1980s, a collection of the greatest hits of singer **Alla Pugachova** sold 40,000 copies, which meant platinum at the time, and when **Vera Telenius** from Tampere recorded a cover in Finnish of one of Pugachova's greatest hits, *A Million Roses* (*Million alikh roz*), it sold more than 70,000 copies. Although Finnish versions of Soviet schlagers were the really big sellers, original recordings in Russian were also released in Finland, and all the major stars toured Finland too: Pugachova, **Yuri Antonov**, **Sofia Rotaru** and **Zhanna Bichevskaya**. This was the first time that recordings in Russian became popular in Finland.

And number-one hits for Finnish artists with Russian songs kept on coming: *Ships* (*Parokhody*) by **Rauli Badding Somerjoki**, *Come Swimming, Boy* (*Bylo no proshlo*) by **Anna Hanski**, *O Moon* (*Luna luna*) by **Rainer Friman**, *Without You* (*Bez menya*) by **Paula Koivuniemi** and many, many others. This hit parade lasted until the end of the 1980s.

Small wonder, then, that the production manager of



### The Leningrad Cowboys and the Red Army Chorus performed together in the Total Balalaika Show in Helsinki Senate Square in 1993.

the Musiikki-Fazer record label at the time, songwriter **Toivo Kärki**, told his employees to listen to *Tunes from the Soviet Union* if they wanted to find hit songs!

Melancholy yet hopeful, Russian minor-key melodies continued to tug at Finnish heartstrings more than six decades after our nation parted ways with Russia. Eventually, even the works of intelligent troubadours such as **Bulat Okudzhava** and **Vladimir Vysotsky** began to find their way to Finnish turntables. Okudzhava performed in Helsinki in the early 1980s.

#### Finland turns West

The last edition of *Tunes from the Soviet Union* was broadcast in spring 1990. Time seemed to have passed it by, although no one could have anticipated at the time what a major historical upheaval was just around the corner. Once the Soviet Union had collapsed, the Finnish media changed its tune quickly about our easterly neighbour: now it was all just poverty, crime and environmental problems over there. Russia came to be seen as a threat. At the same time, Finland's interest in Russian culture and music subsided for many years. Finland turned towards the West and soon joined the European Union.

The only major proponent of Russian music left on the Finnish music scene was the tongue-firmly-in-cheek rock band **Leningrad Cowboys**, whose grotesque, humorous performances – including concerts with the actual Red Army Chorus! – were a smash hit.

The more serious kind of Russian music was now upheld almost exclusively by newly arrived Russian immigrants, among whom there were very proficient musicians. They also began to bring in Russian performers to appear at events they organised. These efforts, however, failed to reach the mainstream audiences and media. Genuine Russian music in Finland had again become an immigrant subculture, as it had been in the 1920s and 1930s.

Today's Russian popular music is virtually unknown in Finland, being almost completely unavailable other than via sources such as YouTube. The Tusovka festival (See article, pp. 20–21) continues to fly the flag of Russian rock music, and a friendship society occasionally imports performers – folk music, church choirs and rock musicians, including the legendary band DDT. Scarcely any Russian songs have been recorded in Finnish translation for the past twenty years.

For the moment, then, Russian melancholy melodies are biding their time somewhere in the wings, awaiting their next moment in the sun.

Tero Heinänen M.Sc.(Soc.) was with the Finnish Broadcasting Company for a long time as a music producer and head of music programming. He specialises in Finnish and Russian popular music; in the 1980s, he produced the *Tunes from the Soviet Union* programme referred to in the article. Today, he lectures on Russian music at workers' institutes, libraries and civic organisations.

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

From the 1950s through to the 1980s, Russian songs in Finnish translation made their way into Finnish ears through record players and radio waves. Today, it is possible to dance to live Russian-language music in Finland, partly thanks to the Tusovka Association, established in 1998.

BY RIIKKA HILTUNEN

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# Helsinki—St Petersburg, Allegro con spirito

Jenia Lubich will perform at the next  
Tusovka Rock Festival on 4–5 May, 2016.

The **Tusovka Association** was founded in the late 1990s in order to promote Russian popular culture in Finland. In the beginning, the association was a pioneer in the scene, joined only by the Oranssi Association's Sputnik Club in importing some of the more marginal Russian artists. Now, in 2016, there are several other organisers who bring Russian popular music to Finland, and Russian bands and artists have become more active in terms of promoting their own gigs in Finland.

**Oskar Rajewsky**, the current chairman of Tusovka, has been involved with the association for a decade. He states that both imports and exports of popular music between Finland and Russia have experienced growth in the past ten years – with the exception of the past year, since the economic sanctions against Russia have inevitably changed the situation. According to Rajewsky, a major reason for this increasing mobility is the fact that the internet has made the world smaller.

“Twenty years ago, if you wanted to bring a Russian band here to play a gig, you had to make a phone call to a personal acquaintance, or to go and hear them in Russia in order to organise them a gig in Finland. Now, if you find an interesting band on YouTube, it makes no difference where they are based, it only takes a moment to organise them to come here.”

## Music from the world heard as world music

Tusovka strives to bring unknown and interesting Russian and especially Russian-language artists to Finland. In recent times, audiences have particularly liked rhythmic, world music-esque content imported from Russia. And even if the music does not have a specific world music feel, it is still often perceived as world music.

“The fact that bands travel across borders more and more, not just between Finland and Russia, is partially due to the general rise of the world music scene. Music

that is considered to be closer to rock or pop music in one country can be exported to another country and to a different language area, and it suddenly transforms into exotic world music. You do not have to understand the words in order to dig the music.”

World music-centred festivals offer another important forum for promoting Russian music in Finland. For many years, Tusovka has collaborated with the Etnosoi! Festival in November, and the World Village Festival in Helsinki is another event that has featured Russian artists.

In Finland, Helsinki offers the best chance to hear Russian popular music live, but you can catch the occasional gig in cities such as Lahti, Tampere and Turku as well. Of the Finnish rock festivals, the Ilosaarirock Festival in Joensuu, close to the Russian border, has proved to be the most active in booking Russian artists. Merja Jokela, Culture Secretary of the Finland-Russia Society, estimates that 90% of Russian artists’ gigs take place in the Helsinki region. The Finland-Russia Society organises concerts to some extent. The City of Helsinki Cultural Office presents some Russian music in its cultural centres, for instance at the Russian festival Harasoo, which is based at the Kanneltalo cultural centre, but which also branches out to other cultural centres as well.

### Different audiences

In addition to the more marginal Russian rhythm and world music, some of the more mainstream Russian artists are seen in Finland as well. In the past twelve months, Goldenzwaig Creative Solutions consulting company (see pp. 22–23) brought the cult rock band **Aquarium** and its frontman **Boris Grebenshikov** to Finland in May 2015, and presented the first Finnish appearance of the legendary **Andrey Makarevich** in October 2015.

Rajewsky reckons that compared to gigs by these bigger artists, audience demographics are somewhat different at Tusovka’s events.

“These big names certainly attract the majority of the Russians based in our area, whereas more obscure artists do not pull a Russian audience simply because they are Russian, perhaps with the exception of bands coming from the city of Petrozavodsk. This is because after St Petersburg, the second-largest Russian diaspora in Finland comes from Petrozavodsk, and they come to hear bands from their home region.”

Tusovka’s evening events also attract a large number of Finns who are interested in Russian or otherwise marginal music. The events often also feature a Finnish group who may increase the audience numbers through their own fan base.

“Different metal music festivals have also presented

Sattuma at the  
Tusovka Club in 2011.



Ari Keinänen

Russian artists. I am sure there are Russian electronic music artists and DJs around as well, and they definitely attract listeners who are into those specific genres.”

### Tusovka in St Petersburg

Tusovka organises a festival in Helsinki each spring and another in St Petersburg in the autumn. Over the past couple of years, the Finnish ensembles featured at the St Petersburg festival have had a strong folk and world music leaning. In the 2010s, Finnish artists who have performed in St Petersburg include groups such as **Pekko Käppi & K:H:H:L**, **Joose Keskitalo**, **Jaakko Laitinen ja Väärä Raha**, **Tundramatikks**, **St Rasta** and **Yona & Liikkuvat Pilvet**.

It is often easier to organise gigs at short notice in St Petersburg rather than coming to Finland to do so. Russian ensembles often contact Tusovka with a couple of weeks’ warning, asking for performance opportunities in Finland while en route to Central Europe. There are, however, very few clubs in Helsinki that can react that quickly. In St Petersburg, the club scene is bigger and the financial realities of the clubs are very different.

Riikka Hiltunen is Research Manager at Music Finland, and has recently bid a fond farewell to her old job as Editor of *Finnish Music Quarterly*.

The next Tusovkarock event takes place on May 4–5 in Helsinki.

Further reading: Sami Hyrskylähti’s article “New underground; The rebirth of the Helsinki – St Petersburg connection”, published in FMQ 4/1999.

Translation: Hanna-Mari Latham

The word “tusovka” comes from St Petersburg slang. Tusovka happens when people come together at a concert, restaurant, festival or simply around a vodka bottle in the kitchen. Film director Sasha Bashirov visited a Tusovka Association meeting in autumn 1999 and gave the word his own definition: “Tusovka is creative interaction between free people.”

Concert promoter, journalist and music export researcher Dr Greg Goldenzwaig takes a look at the import-export of rock and pop music between Finland and Russia. Some things have changed for sure in the past ten years.

BY GREG GOLDENZWAIG

# Picture this!



“Hyvää yötä” [good night], actor **Markku Peltola** greets the camera: “Hyvää yötä!”

The year is 2005. The hall is packed and his Moscow festival appearance was a success. Peltola is happy. He is smiling ear to ear and slightly swaying in the wind: no one is too sober in the travel party of 50 Finnish musicians. The camera is swinging together with Peltola. The ultramodern Nokia model catches the signboard of the trendiest club in Moscow, the blue and white flag over the door, the decisive grimace of **Petri Sirviö** counting his shouting choristers, the hipsterish checked jacket of **Iisa Pykäri** (electro pop band **Regina**’s premiere abroad) – and the fluffy ears of a clockwork hare, sticking out of **Merja Kokkonen** aka **Islaja**’s suitcase. The hare plays drums in **Islaja: Moscow** fans will discussing these crazy Finnish ideas for another week.

Cut. Browse through the camera memory.

Eight hours earlier it captured a middle-aged suited gentleman on stage with a mike. Rising over a sea of sweaty T-shirts and hoodies. Holding a festival flyer in his hand. “The Finns are not what they seem,” he reads off the flyer and adds ironically: “The Finns are actually much better. Let me welcome you to the Finnish music festival in Moscow.”

The crowd explodes and greets the Finnish ambassador with a yell. Tough guy, got a sense of humour, not your boring suit.

Everyone in the crowd got the same flyer. Under the festival slogan (“The Finns are not what they seem” – Hello *Twin Peaks!*), there stands a figure of a tiny, bent **Sami Sanpääkilä**, the founder of **Fonal**, a label hyped by *The Wire* and virally popular among the Moscow music critics.

It’s the mid-2000s, and Finland is viral.

Russian legislators of good taste rush to discover Finnish talent and share it with their fellow countrymen. Legendary promoter **Alexander Cheparukhin** opens Pandora’s box and brings the accordionist-on-fire **Kimmo Pohjonen**. Media guru **Artem Troitsky** books **Cleaning Women**, a weird young gang of fake cross-dressers from the planet Cleanus. **Kaurismäki**’s muse **Kirsi Tykkyläinen** steps in as a cultural attaché for the Finnish Embassy; an unsurpassed bohemian figure, she becomes the synonym of a trendy Western diplomat in the Russian capital. Eccentric pensioners’ hump band **Eläkeläiset** once entered the country for a club tour – and ended up returning for remunerative Russian corporate parties. No wonder: Finland is fun and cool.

Things are developing quickly. A young band called **Poets of the Fall** come to play the Finnish festival in Moscow – and are astonished to be greeted by hundreds of fans. They will return to play at venues ten times bigger, and Russia will forever become their main touring destination.

**Magyar Posse**, a humble post-rock formation from Pori, start with a chamber-size show, return to Moscow’s biggest open-air venue within the year – and in another year, by the time the band mutates into **Elea-noora Rosenholm**, they already are on the radar of the main music media. Russian trendsetters learn to pronounce “ambulanssikuskitar” – and shit over the language barrier.



Dmitrii

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These times are in the past. It's 2016, and I have no idea where the memory card of the supertrendy Nokia phone is now.

And no regrets: the years of Finnish music hype are well remembered by the generation of the 2000s. It somehow ran through our fingers. Finnish music is now business as usual for the Russians – and business it definitely is.

Search for Finnish music on the Russian national social network VKontakte – and the search results will tell you that the heavy genres are standing strong. That constellations of Finnish hard rock fans are alive and kicking. That Russian travel guides to Finland still mention places related to **Ville Valo** and **Lauri Ylönen**. That **Tarja Turunen**'s Christmas concert easily sells out the Moscow Conservatory, while **Amorphis** and **Lordi** can tour Russia whenever they'd like and as much as they'd like.

Equally unsinkable is actor **Ville Haapasalo** – an all-embracing encapsulation of Finland for your average Ivan. Here he is, singing on Channel Russia One on a New Year's Eve national holiday, shortly after the President's greetings to the nation. Haapasalo is dressed as Santa Claus and reveals that he was raised with the reindeers. Of course.

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You may wonder if the cultural stereotypes make Finland a good or a bad service in Russia – but, due to them, Finland is clearly on the map.

Several years ago at a showcase in Tampere **Jori Hulkkonen** asked: "Will someone understand that this country is actually more than a bunch of rockers?" I do not think most of the Russian audience would understand it today. The stereotype of Finnish music is clearly lopsided – positively lopsided: a new band bearing the name of a Russian town and excelling in heavy riffs would be bound for success.

Has the national cultural marker been helpful for, say, one-man synthetic funk orchestra **Eero Johannes** or electro-pop band **LCMDF**? Is there any other mu-

sic from Finland that would cause the same sort of engagement? I'm afraid not. This is where Finland fell out of the limelight. So, is the nuanced, diverse, non-conformist image that Finnish music once enjoyed in Russia a lost conquest?

It is naturally not only about the audience. One may also question the stereotypes of the Finnish music industry and cultural diplomacy regarding Russia: Finland's own strategies and policies are a subject for a separate study. There are still brilliant cases, such as the Flow festival, which against all odds managed to become the #1 music event for St Petersburg audiences and significantly raised attendance from Russia. This does inspire hope.

What feels even more promising is that music export between Finland and Russia is no longer a one-way street. **DDT**, **Aquarium**, **Andrey Makarevich**, **Zemfira** – the crème de la crème of the Russian music scene – gather packed crowds at Finland's top venues. This has nothing to do with the Russian cultural authorities: they are exactly as hopeless at music export as before. Instead, there is a growing audience for music from across the Eastern border, and – touch wood! – not only due to the Russian-Inkerinmaan diaspora.



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Rock icon **Andrey Makarevich** studies his own interview in *Helsingin Sanomat* sitting in his lodge before the show. For the first time in his 55-year career the father of Russian rock is playing in Helsinki – in spite of the diplomatic turbulence, the economic crisis and growing political concerns.

At the same moment they ring from the main gate and I rush to the entrance. A group of well-dressed gentlemen needs an escort; the expensive seated area sold out weeks ago. They do not speak a word of Russian: we communicate in Finnish. A Russian concert is no longer a concert for the diaspora.

Year by year, I meet more Finnish audiences at the Russian shows in Helsinki. In a street by the club's backstage entrance, I turn on the iPhone 6 camera and take a picture of **Andrey Makarevich** with his Finnish fans.

I'll save the pic. I cherish the hope they come to stay.

Cooperation between contemporary music operators in Finland and Russia depends on networks of personal connections built up over a long time. Although there are surprisingly few joint projects, existing relationships continually foster new interaction between the two neighbouring countries, which in turn makes it easier for other contemporary musicians to cross the border.

BY MERJA HOTTINEN

# A map of personal relations

While Finland and Russia share a geographical border, in contemporary music they might as well be on different continents. Recent Russian music is rarely heard in Finland, and performances of new Finnish works in Russia are not exactly common either.

The geography of contemporary classical music is not something you can read on a map. Influences do not trickle through national borders; they travel from one metropolis to another. The strong contemporary music institutions in central Europe attract both Finns and Russians, confining direct interaction in contemporary music between Finland and Russia largely to sporadic projects.

## Building a network

The Moscow Forum, the Sound Ways festival, the St Petersburg Philharmonic, the Moscow Conservatory... the list could go on. Composer **Tapio Tuomela** must be one of the best-networked people in Finnish contemporary music as far as Russia is concerned, considering the list of his Russian contacts. In addition to having his music performed in Russia, he has given lectures and composition workshops, conducted orches-

tras and acquainted himself thoroughly with the contemporary music scene in St Petersburg and Moscow.

“I began to explore Russia as soon as I became artistic director of the Time of Music festival in 2000,” he says. “The first cooperation project was organising the visit of the **Pokrovsky** ensemble in 2002. Since then, there has been a cooperation project almost on a yearly basis.”

This networking bore fruit in the programmes of the Time of Music festival in the 2000s. Guest artists at Viitasaari included the **Studio for New Music Ensemble** from Moscow (2001), the avant-garde ensemble **Zvukovje puti** (2004) and the **Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble** (2006). Composers such as **Boris Filanovsky** and **Vladimir Tarnopolsky** were featured. In 2006, Russia was the overall theme for the festival.

This interaction worked both ways. “As in our Soviet trade once upon a time, people prefer to repay favours with favours rather than with money. You can be sure that if you invite someone from Russia to perform here, you will be invited there in turn. So it promotes exports too,” says Tuomela.





**The Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble is one of the most active Russian groups performing Finnish contemporary music.**

### **Finnish music to over 30 Russian cities**

One of the most important partners in Russia not only for Tuomela but for Finnish composers more generally is the Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble, the MCME. Founded by composer **Yuri Kasparov** in 1990, it specialises in performing music by young composers.

The ongoing collaboration between the MCME and Finnish musicians began in the early 2000s when the MCME's General Manager **Victoria Korshunova** met the then director of the Finnish Music Information Centre, **Kai Amberla**, in Moscow.

"Cooperation had already been established between Finland and St Petersburg. But our meeting led to Finnish contemporary music spreading to Moscow and to almost all Russian regions, including the Ugrian regions," Korshunova recalls.

Since 2004, Finnish composers have been included in a dozen MCME tours to more than 30 cities in Russia. The guest composer is invited to select Finnish works suitable for the ensemble, and Finnish musicians have also been invited along. Tapio Tuomela has been on these tours several times and is one of Korshunova's trusted contacts. In recent years, Russian audiences

have also been introduced, for instance, to **Olli Virtaperko** (2011) and **Sebastian Fagerlund** (2013).

Victoria Korshunova likes to keep Finnish music in the repertoire. "After all," she notes, "we are neighbours and our cultures have many features in common."

A new tour is being planned, and advance information indicates that its theme will have something to do with documentaries. The MCME is also planning a Finnish-Russian multimedia project for the Sound 59 festival in Perm together with the Finnish Embassy.

One of the MCME's own projects is giving an international course for young composers in the town of Tchaikovsky in the Perm region. "Each September, more than 80 participants including 15 to 20 foreign musicians come to this small town to collaborate and to write new works that are then performed by the MCME," says Korshunova. In 2014, there was a Finnish participant, **Timo Tuhkanen**.

### **Bilateral opportunities**

Tapio Tuomela cites meagre funding as a permanent challenge on the Russian contemporary music scene. After the active years in the 1990s, funding has largely



Tapio Tuomela

depended on private and foreign sources. Indeed, judging by the scattering of logos in concert programmes, foreign funding is important for the entire sector, including the MCME – which, on the other hand, is one of the few contemporary music operators to receive funding from the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

Korshunova explains that many projects can only happen with support from foreign cultural institutions such as the Goethe Institute or the Finnish Music Foundation (MES). “It is wonderful that the MES continues to support the promotion of Finnish contemporary music abroad,” she says. “It is very important for cultural collaboration and development. Unfortunately, here in Russia we have no organisation to support the performing of Russian contemporary music abroad, except for the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.”

Festival concert programmes indicate that cultural exchange with countries in central Europe is alive and well even since the economic sanctions imposed on Russia, and there are many foreign ensembles and soloists on the programmes.



Pasi Lyytikäinen

### Personal relations between musicians

Composer Pasi Lyytikäinen was impressed with Moscow when he visited the Moscow Autumn festival in 2012. “It was an amazing cultural experience. Not just the music, the museums too,” he says of his first visit to the Russian capital. “I noticed that there are many cultures overlapping. The music produced during the Soviet era still maintains a strong presence on the contemporary music scene. The repertoire is very diverse.”

Three works by Lyytikäinen were performed at the festival, one of them a world premiere: *Chamber Vocalise*, dedicated to freedom of speech. He was invited to the festival by composer **Anton Safranov**, whom Lyytikäinen had previously met when Safranov was lecturing in Helsinki. They also had a common acquaintance, **Keijo Aho**, who at the time was a lecturer in chamber music at the Metropolia University of Applied Arts in Helsinki; his **Ajassa!** ensemble was also a guest at the festival.

Lyytikäinen does not speak Russian, so it was important for him to have someone in Moscow meet him, interpret for him and explain differences in operating practices. It was a surprise that there were so many cultural differences, starting with concert practices, says Lyytikäinen.

Language barrier notwithstanding, he managed to establish direct relations with musicians and composers. Lyytikäinen notes that many Russian musicians and composers travel between central Europe and Russia a lot, building international careers. He has since maintained contact with the **GAM Ensemble**, which performed his works at the festival, and accordionist **Sergej Tchirkov**. Lyytikäinen invited Tchirkov to be the headline performer at his own festival, Pasimusic, in 2014.

And what about the political circumstances? Do they influence relationships with Russians? Lyytikäinen says that he was prompted to think about this as his visit coincided with the **Pussy Riot** trial, and many people were boycotting performing in Russia. “My contacts with musicians are direct and personal, and politics plays no role in them”, says Lyytikäinen. “If anything, it has been interesting to hear about things from their perspective. Besides, music has always had the capacity to transcend conflicts.”

### So close yet so far

Despite individual efforts, Russian contemporary music remains an oddity in Finland, rarely found on concert programmes. Although Finland has a large Russian minority, Russian composers or composition students are not much tempted to come here. Why not?

“St Petersburg is close to us, but very few composition students in that city are sufficiently modernist in orientation to be interested in what is going on here,” says Tuomela. “The St Petersburg Conservatory still has quite a few teachers left over from the old regime. In Moscow, on the other hand, there is also a fine tradition of modernism that was inaugurated by **Edison Denisov** and well represented even today thanks to Professor Vladimir Tarnopolsky.”

That Russian music is so unfamiliar in Finland is compounded by the fact that very few recordings are available. And, as Tapio Tuomela notes, establishing personal contacts between Finns and Russians has always been hampered by the language barrier.

So what does the contemporary music scene in Moscow and St Petersburg look like from the Finnish perspective? There are certainly a lot of musicians, composers, events and institutions. “But relative to the size of the place, contemporary music is much more passive than in Finland,” Tuomela notes.

### To small places and new audiences

The field of contemporary music in Russia – as elsewhere – is in a state of flux, orientating itself towards new audiences, according to Korshunova. “Interest in international contemporary art is high particularly among young people, and many clubs and unusual venues for contemporary music have emerged.”

Smaller cities are making a mark on the contemporary music scene; new initiatives may be found in Nizh-



Pasi Lyytikäinen

Sergej Tchirkov

ny Novgorod, Perm, Yekaterinburg, Tomsk and Rostov, according to Korshunova.

The MCME tours have taken Tapio Tuomela to communities even smaller than that, and he has fond memories of those visits. “For instance, accordionist **Niko Kumpuvaara** and myself were once in a tiny village 200km east of Perm. Many of the people in the audience had never been to a concert of contemporary music in their life. They were enormously interested and curious. We were met by the town manager and given gifts. We were incredibly cordially received,” he says.

“All this has helped establish direct contact with people there. When you speak Russian, you can talk to people directly about their views for instance on political events,” says Tuomela. “Having seen all the receptions and been received like a celebrity, it seems all the more incredible that the situation at the level of national politics should be the way it is now. And because of that, it is increasingly important to maintain the personal contacts that we have.”

Merja Hottinen is writing a doctoral dissertation on the sociocultural significance of Finnish contemporary music events. She is the R&D Manager of Music Finland, currently on research leave.

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

# Taking Note

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## Borderland riches and explorers' instincts

BY ELINA KAHLA

Europe is in a state of flux, and Finland, though far on its northern periphery, is not unaffected. Global crises and threats govern our thoughts, and cuts to public spending are eroding our cultural capital with unforeseeable consequences. And in this state of flux, what is the state of cultural cooperation between Finland and Russia, a traditional and perennially important tool for managing neighbourly relations? I write about the issue from the perspective of the Finnish Institute in St Petersburg.

In times of transition, cultural institutes all over the world are like tall trees rustling in the wind. The function of those of us operating these cultural institutes is to bring together scientists and artists, to foster dialogue and to create new things together.

For Finns, St Petersburg is an environment unlike anywhere else in the world. Russians, on the other hand, see Finland as a place that is close at hand, reliable, smoothly run, safe, exotic and easily accessible. Finnishness is regarded as a positive thing by Russians, who don't see this former Grand Duchy on their western border as any kind of threat or challenge.

Not that Russia has any shortage of threats. Our Russian partners regularly comment: "Russia is muddling through difficult times." Collaboration with foreign partners like us should not include any provocation. On the other hand, our partners in St Petersburg are seasoned veterans who can remember when things were much, much worse.

The City of St Petersburg makes huge investments in high culture, and the range of events is stunning. Given

the number of violin-case toters, long-legged ballerinas, trend-conscious hipsters and subculture minions of all kinds thronging the streets of the historical city centre, one could be forgiven for imagining that half of the population must be involved in the creative sector. Finnish cultural operators in St Petersburg may be broadly divided into young, unprejudiced explorers and experienced old hands.

For young Finnish artistic types, a genuine interest in local affairs usually serves as a key to professional development and opportunities for collaboration. Actor **Ville Haapasalo**, who studied in St Petersburg, is a case in point. He made his breakthrough in the Russian film *Peculiarities of the National Hunt* (1995), and to this day Russians recognise him from that role.

Old hands are adept at leveraging their contacts under changing conditions. In the film industry, for instance, collaboration is alive and well. The creative sector can manage to get away with what might be impossible to achieve in the business world because of the sanctions currently in place.

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In Russia, success is often summarised by the maxim "bigger, together". Our recent high-profile exhibition of modern Finnish architecture and design was commissioned and largely paid for by the Hermitage Museum, and it has drawn huge crowds. A similar "wow" effect resulting from a major effort was the featuring of Russia as the theme country at the Helsinki Book Fair

“Cultural exchange is a win-win proposition,  
and there are plenty of paths to explore  
for newcomers and old hands alike.”



in autumn 2015, with personal appearances by more than 30 of Russia's most exciting contemporary authors. Russia is politically distancing itself from the West but generates highly interesting literature; exceptionally many titles have been translated into Finnish in recent years.

Another natural framework for the “bigger, together” approach is the Nordic context. The Finnish Institute joined forces with the Danish Institute and the **Klassika Orchestra** for a joint celebration of the 150th anniversary of Danish composer **Carl Nielsen** and Finnish composer **Jean Sibelius**.

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From the perspective of St Petersburg, the question of European identity is never far away. Local residents are very much aware of the special status of their city; after all, the city was founded specifically for the purpose of creating a gateway to Europe. The city still embraces this mission: it manages contacts with the cultural heritage of Europe and safeguards the potential for future well-being.

In the European context, it is only natural that the Finnish Institute in St Petersburg, the Finnish Institute in Madrid and the Russian Art Museum in Málaga should collaborate to produce an exhibition entitled *Border Identities*, telling the people of Andalucía about Karelia, the borderland between Finland and Russia. The involvement of a third party, Andalucía, brings a new dimension and new questions to the project. How can a peaceful border be established in a borderland that is historically a theatre of conflict between civilisations? How can Europe, overwhelmed by a new wave of migration, introduce the newcomers to the values and character of their new homeland? These questions are too important to be left to decision-makers outside the realm of culture.

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The Finnish Institutes around the world are currently preparing for the centenary year of Finland's independence, 2017, under the theme “A Century Together”. In Russia, the theme is geared towards the cultural and economic history shared by Finland and Russia in the century during which Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire (1809–1917).

At the time of writing this, funding for events in the centenary year has not been confirmed. But uncertainty in practicalities does not prevent us from setting our sights high. At the core of all cultural exchange lies an interest in encountering something different. Cultural exchange is a win-win proposition, and there are plenty of paths to explore for newcomers and old hands alike.

Elina Kahla PhD is a cultural scholar and Director of the Finnish Institute in St Petersburg. Her past appointments include the Finnish Centre of Excellence in Russian Studies – Choices of Russian Modernisation, coordinated by the Aleksanteri Institute of the University of Helsinki and funded by the Academy of Finland.

instfin.ru

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

In the academic world, Finland boasts a high level of expertise in all things Russian. Over the past decade, musicologists too have begun to show an increasing interest in our eastern neighbour and above all in its history.

BY ANU AHOLA & JAANI LÄNSIÖ

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# Music research looks east

Finland has a large number of scholars in Russian matters in both relative and absolute terms, and there is an increasing demand for knowledge about Russia in various areas of society. However, many experts caution that because of a shortage of Russian language skills in Finland there are not enough Russian-speakers to cover all disciplines.

Musicological research in Finland has always had a strong national slant, and for good reason, because Finland is such a small language area that it would otherwise be completely neglected. On the other hand, Finnish scholars have largely neglected the musical superpower of global significance just across the border. This, too, is probably due to the shortage of Russian language skills.

Now that Finnish musicologists are developing an interest in Russian history, we are gaining a more accurate picture of the cultural apparatus of the Soviet Union and of cultural exchange between East and West during the Cold War. There are several studies under way on folk music in the borderlands between Finland and Russia and on folk instruments of the Russian and Baltic-Finnic peoples. Ethnicities in the region are also being studied. In the following pages, we will be surveying this fascinating field of scholarship.



Charles Munch leads the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Leningrad, 1956.

## Back to the USSR (and the USA)

Meri Herrala is one of the musicologists who in the 2000s have actively both revised and reinforced earlier conceptions of the severity of the cultural machine of the Soviet Union and how it affected musicians. Her doctoral dissertation, *Socialist Realism Instead of Formalism: The Formation and Development of the Soviet Music Control System 1932–1948*, was published in 2009.

The research method adopted by Herrala for her doctorate was to look at the disciplined cultural scene through official documents, through the eyes of the establishment. Although the state imposed harsh restrictions on what artists were allowed to do, there were people who went on making “the wrong kind of music”.

“There was no way they could have completely rooted it out. People were still writing operas that were con-

demned as being Formalist, partly because no one really knew what Socialist Realism was supposed to be. Composers also wrote a lot of music that they never published at the time. It is true, however, that the development of modernist music was drastically inhibited as of 1948,” says Herralá. (See also the interview with **Heli Reimann** on pp. 32–33.)

### Between the official and the unofficial

Interview-based research is in favour today, but for the purposes of the present topic time is growing short. Not many musicians from the Stalin era are alive today to recount their experiences, and written statements by such people are difficult to find. A scholar relying on official documents may encounter obstacles even today. “You have always needed a permit to access the Soviet state archives, and to get a permit you need a letter of recommendation.

It is also important to be able to explain to the officials, in Russian, exactly what is going on. Besides, in the early 2000s certain personal archives were closed to the public for a while, probably because of the tightening political atmosphere,” says Herralá.

Herralá approached her subject both from the perspective of the government and through interviews, exploring the official sources produced by the Soviet cultural policy machine describing how the system operated. Reading between the lines of official sources offers glimpses of an unofficial stratum of Soviet music, through the criticism and self-criticism exercised for instance in the writing and staging of operas.

“There is much to explore in the official activities of the Soviet system, and there is a lot of research being done outside Russia that is looking at the government system. And we must remember that through the documentation of the workings of the system it is possible to gain an impression of unofficial processes at the grassroots level,” Herralá points out.

### Dialogue yesterday and today

Meri Herralá is currently studying cultural exchange between the Soviet Union and the United States on funding from the Academy of Finland. She is looking for material in the archives of both the former Soviet Union and the USA. Herralá has also written about a concert tour by **Sviatoslav Richter** to the USA in the book *Music, Arts and Diplomacy* (more about the book on p. 33).

As a historian, Herralá wishes that there were more



Pianist Sviatoslav Richter, 1978.

appreciation of painstaking, long-term cultural research; competition for funding against more immediate research topics is stiff.

How does a scholar see the significance of musical dialogue, or more generally cultural dialogue, in this day and age? “Today, knowledge of the culture of the neighbouring country and cultural exchange remain important, especially in promoting dialogue between governments and their citizens and in fostering mutual understanding.”

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

## Aleksanteri Institute

The Aleksanteri Institute, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, is Finland’s national centre of research, study and expertise pertaining to Russia and Eastern Europe, particularly in the social sciences and humanities. A large percentage of the Institute’s 50 experts work on project funding. In addition, the Institute is regularly visited by other researchers, both Finnish and foreign.

“Choices of Russian Modernisation”, coordinated by the Aleksanteri Institute, is one of the centres of excellence of the Academy of Finland. The “Finnish school” evolving there offers a new multidisciplinary research paradigm for studying modernisation in Russia.

## Thirteen examples of the latest music research on Russian and Baltic-Finnic music, history and culture.

## Kindred of Kantele | По струнам гуслей

Timo Väänänen DMus, documentary director Leena Häkkinen, music producer Matti Kontio and kantele scholar Kari Dahlblom have collected information on instruments resembling the kantele among 16 peoples in their research project 'Kanteleen kielin' [On the strings of the kantele, or On the languages of the kantele]. Begun in 2008, the project has resulted in the books *Baltian kantelekansat* (*Kantele peoples of the Baltics*) and *Volgan kantelekansat* (*Kantele peoples of the Volga*), a series of radio programmes and two CDs. There are three further books to come: *Slaavilaiset kantelekansat* (*Slavic kantele peoples*), *Pohjoiset kantelekansat* (*Kantele peoples of the North*) and a summary in English, *Kindred of Kantele*.

timo.maanite.fi/tag/kanteleen-kielin/

## Russian gusli and Finnish kantele

Like the Finnish kantele, its Russian relative gusli has always been known as a national symbol. Olga Shishkina MMus focuses in her research on both the chromatic gusli and the kantele – their playing techniques being very similar. The study is based on materials found in the archives of the Russian National Library and experiences as a performing kantele and gusli musician both in Russia and in Finland. Shishkina will also publish a comprehensive book about the history and practices of chromatic gusli playing.

## Boris Asafyev – the problem of modern and tradition

Elina Viljanen MA, in her dissertation *The Problem of Modern and Tradition. The Formation of Soviet Musicology and Music Criticism through the Aesthetic Theory of Boris Asafiev (1884–1949)*, analyses the theory development of the celebrated Russian/Soviet critic, composer and musicologist from 1914 to 1948 from the perspective of the general history of philosophy on the one hand and Russian cultural history on the other. The study discusses the philosophy of Soviet music and music teaching, which Asafiev's output influenced.

## The bowed lyre

Rauno Nieminen DMus focused on the jouhikko and related instruments in the areas of present-day Finland, Russian Karelia and Estonia in his doctoral dissertation (2008). His research has so far produced a sheet music collection, *Jouhikko – The Bowed Lyre*, a CD with historical jouhikko recordings, and a book detailing the history of the jouhikko with instructions on its tuning, playing and maintenance, *Soitinten tutkiminen rakentamalla, esimerkkinä jouhikko* (*Studying instruments through building, case study jouhikko*). In the practical dimension of his research, he has so far produced 19 copies of instruments held by museums and developed a method for copying instruments.

## Alma Fohström, an international prima donna

The doctoral dissertation of Svetlana Toivakka PhD reconstructs the life work of Finnish coloratura soprano and prima donna Alma Fohström (1856–1936) by examining it as an interaction at the micro and macro levels viewed from different perspectives, i.e. micro-historical views. The study is largely based on Russian-language sources discovered by Toivakka at the Conservatory of St Petersburg, at the Theatre Museum and in national literature and arts archives, previously unknown in Finland.

## Flexible ethnicity

The project 'Joustavat etnisyydet' [Flexible ethnicities], funded by the Academy of Finland, concluded in 2015. The project was implemented jointly with the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences and involved the exploration of national identities in the Republic of Karelia from the perspective of cultural functions and political control. The focus was on how people orientate themselves in a multi-identity environment. The project was led by Professor Pekka Suutari from the Karelian Institute of the University of Eastern Finland. (Also see Pekka Suutari's article *The national character of Soviet Karelian music* on the FMQ website.)



## Runo singing academy

Runolaulu-Akatemia [Runo singing academy] is based on the song lands of eastern Finland. It is an independent research unit that studies runo singing and other forms of folk music, including recording and pedagogical development. Engaging in both domestic and international cooperation, the academy regularly organises seminars for folk music scholars and publishes scientific studies. The academy director is Pekka Huttu-Hiltunen DMus.

runolaulu.fi

## Music, art and diplomacy

The book *Music, Art and Diplomacy: East-West Cultural Interactions and the Cold War* edited by Simo Mikkonen and Pekka Suutari and just published by Ashgate shows there was vibrant cultural exchange between East and West during the Cold War. The contributors explore the interaction of arts and politics, the role of the arts in diplomacy and the part played by the arts in shaping the course of the Cold War.

## Suistamo – Laboratory of Tradition

Read more about Anne-Mari Kivimäki's doctorate on pages 37–38.

## From mood to music – the unaccompanied singing of Northern peoples as a basis for new music

Tuomas Rounakari MMus, in his artistically orientated doctorate, explores the musical traditions of Northern peoples from the perspective of a violinist and composer. In his genre-crossing doctoral recitals, he combines the aesthetic and philosophical precepts of the music of peoples distantly related to the Finns with the means of folk music, jazz and contemporary music. The written portion of his doctorate consists of essays, travelogues and music analyses exploring how the world view of Northern peoples manifests itself in their music.

## Kalevala-metre runo singing in modern folk music

Heidi Haapoja MMus explores in her dissertation the discussions related to Kalevala-metre runo singing in the context of modern folk music in the 2000s. Based on ethnographic data, her study examines concrete and symbolic transnational efforts aimed at the domain of Finno-Ugric peoples, which are what justify and define runo singing today. In this data, the runo singing tradition is seen as an element of the cultural landscape of Russian Karelia, perceived as idyllic, mythical and ancient. (Also see Amanda Kauranne's article *By the Metre*, FMQ 3–4/2014.)

## Clarinet music from Russia and the Soviet Union 1917–1991. Discovering an unexplored side of the clarinet repertoire

Clarinet compositions from the former Soviet Union are now rarely performed. The doctoral research project of clarinetist Anne Elisabeth Piirainen (DocMus, Sibelius Academy) aims to collate information raising the profile of the high artistic value of this unexplored music. The artistic research project, including five recitals, will increase access to relevant information and enable a broader perception of clarinet music within this field.

## White tie and a balalaika – Russian folk instruments in Finland and elsewhere

Kari Dahlblom's unpublished study on Russian folk instruments explores how simple rustic instruments have been developed into academically acceptable ones and what structural changes the instruments have undergone in the process. The manuscript includes chapters on the genesis of academic folk instruments, on Russian folk instruments in Finland and on Finnish, Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainian balalaika and domra orchestras.

Estonian musicologist Heli Reimann has come a long way, from a country village in Soviet Estonia via Florida to the University of Helsinki. As a musician and a scholar, she immersed herself in Estonian jazz culture in the Stalin era, delving into the reminiscences of musicians of the time and their underground jazz parties.

BY JAANI LÄNSIÖ

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# Passion against rule(r)s

The Soviet Union was a society of strict discipline and rationing, with an outward appearance of a homogeneous culture and Communist harmony. In reality, both the people and its leaders were fragmented into several layers, and – ubiquitous official surveillance notwithstanding – the culture thriving in this context was far more pluralist than anyone dared admit.

“As always in the Soviet Union, you had to distinguish between the official version of events and aspirations and what was really going on. What people said on the record never had any bearing on real life,” says Heli Reimann. She has focused on this phenomenon in her doctoral research, and she also has personal experience of it in her life history.

Reimann grew up in a tiny country village near the market town of Tapa, 80 kilometres from Tallinn. Entertainment was scarce in the backwoods. Instead of playing and games there was the family piano, which Heli at five years old was getting very familiar with on a daily basis. At the age of 15, she relocated to Tallinn, alone, to study at the Conservatory.

Reimann never did become a star pianist. She had pretended to be a disciplined musician to please her mother, but inside her was a free, improvisational soul – though not a jazz musician. Reimann does not like to use that term because it is too genre-bound, but considering how she describes her approach to music it is difficult to describe her as anything else. In the late 1980s, Reimann made a bold move, abandoning the piano for her true passion, the saxophone. She became the first woman sax player in the history of the Tallinn Music Academy.

Reimann came to Finland and the Sibelius Academy in 1997, and in 2002 she went to study at Florida State University on a scholarship. She was inspired to study jazz and managed to get admitted to the only university in the world with a master’s degree programme in

jazz studies, Rutgers University. Seven years ago, she embarked on her doctorate at the University of Helsinki, titling it *Jazz in Soviet Estonia 1944 to 1953: Meanings, Spaces and Paradoxes*.

## From friends to fiends

Inspected last autumn, Reimann’s doctorate covers a period beginning in 1944, a time when the superpowers USA and the Soviet Union stood shoulder to shoulder, poised to crush the Axis powers. In the elation of winning the Second World War, jazz came to symbolise transatlantic friendship and the joint effort to rid the world of Fascism, the freedom of the music echoing the freedom of the people. Or so it was thought. The friendship proved to be temporary.

In 1946, the free world was shut out as the political and cultural life of the Soviet Union was shaken up by Central Committee secretary Andrei Zhdanov, who in his notorious Zhdanov Doctrine declared that the world was divided into two cultural camps that were opposed to one another. This immediately jeopardised the position of all artists perceived by the Central Committee to be practitioners of imperialistic culture. Jazz was tolerated for a while, in principle, because being the music of black people it also represented the culture of the working class.

Two years later, another bombshell fell. The opera *Velikaya druzhba* (*The Great Friendship*) by Vano Muradeli (1948) was seen as a threat to the pure culture of the Soviet Union, and an even tougher decree was issued, casting a deeper shadow over Soviet artists. Jazz orchestras were now recast as entertainment orchestras, sax players were dismissed, and even amateur orchestras were only allowed to play waltzes or pas d’Espagne for dancing.

In a further turn for the worse, in 1950 a boycott of



the entire genre of jazz ensued. For a three-year period, the word ‘jazz’ was never once mentioned in the print media. The former symbol of freedom was now *musica non grata*. However, out of sight did not mean out of mind, and reports of the demise of jazz were very premature indeed.

### Bubbling under

Although the official Soviet Union considered jazz dead and buried, musicians passionate about the genre would not take this lying down. They retreated from the dance pavilions and set up shop in secluded basements. Estonian musicians were in fact saved by the huge geographical size of the Soviet Union. Despite proclamations banning jazz, the Soviet authorities never managed to exert as firm a control in Tallinn as they could in Leningrad or Moscow. As far as is known, not a single Estonian was sent to Siberia or killed because of jazz.

Moreover, Estonian jazz musicians had pet moles in the government who espoused their cause and protected them from the more officious authorities. These people were known as ‘radishes’ – red on the outside but with a musician’s heart on the inside. They turned a blind eye to the underground enjoyment of Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman. When the first-ever jazz festival in Tallinn was held in 1949, there were two bands, publicity was by word of mouth, and the venue was – what else? – a basement.

Long-range radio was the only way of gaining access to Western music. No records of Western music were made, and the only place in Estonia where one could record music was the studio of the State radio, which naturally was off limits to jazz. There was nowhere to buy sheet music, so musicians wrote their own, sometimes with considerable ingenuity. Whenever someone picked up jazz on a radio, a phone ring sprang up imme-

diately: even with only a single radio picking up a transmission, the sound could be conveyed by phone to multiple listeners. There was always a colleague somewhere with music paper, a pen, a keen ear and a quick hand.

Thanks to these intense and intrepid musicians, jazz never became Sovietised. Remaining true to its roots, it assimilated some folk music influences and settled into local Estonian culture.

After the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, the culture sector began to revive slowly, and in 1957 the Moscow World’s Festival of Youth and Students brought jazz in from the cold. Ten years later came the Tallinn Jazz Festival, a four-day event with more than 120 musicians that was the largest jazz event in Soviet history up until then. An extended quieter period followed, and it was not until the 1980s that jazz could be said to have become completely free.

### Jazz is not greener on the other side

It may be surprising to realise that Reimann’s experiences in Communist Estonia and the capitalist USA are very similar.

“A big country always exerts a grip on the individual, and the mood is very patriotic. In the USA, everything revolves around money. It is just as much of a brain-washing culture as the Soviet Union used to be,” says Reimann. Not many people there knew anything about Estonia, and she often encountered bizarre prejudices. “You mean people play jazz in other countries?” was a common question posed when Reimann talked about her research. “I hope that my work can help correct these misapprehensions.”

Reimann has already begun a new study, extending her time perspective to 1968, the year of the Prague Spring and a new clampdown.

The nature of folk music has always included the shameless borrowing of refreshing material from elsewhere – right now Baltic Finnish influences are rising to the top in Finland.

BY AMANDA KAURANNE

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# Shared roots

Hanna Kalkkainen

At the recent EtnoEmma awards by IFPI Finland, accordion wizard **Kimmo Pohjonen**'s album *Sensitive Skin* was the only nominee that had no direct link to the Baltic Finnish tradition. The very essence of that tradition is present in the grooving voodoo of the album *Sanguis meus, Mama!* by the jouhikko shaman **Pekko Käppi** and his ensemble **K:H:H:L**, manifested through Käppi's instrument itself but also through runo song motifs. Accordionist **Anne-Mari Kivimäki**'s *Lakkautettu kylä* (*A closed-down village*) offers a mix of contemporary Karelian tunes and popular wartime iskelmä songs (Finnish schlagers). The album *Tii ilo*, by Estonian singer-songwriter **Mari Kalkun** and Finnish-Australian ensemble **Runorun**, draws from traditional Finno-Ug-

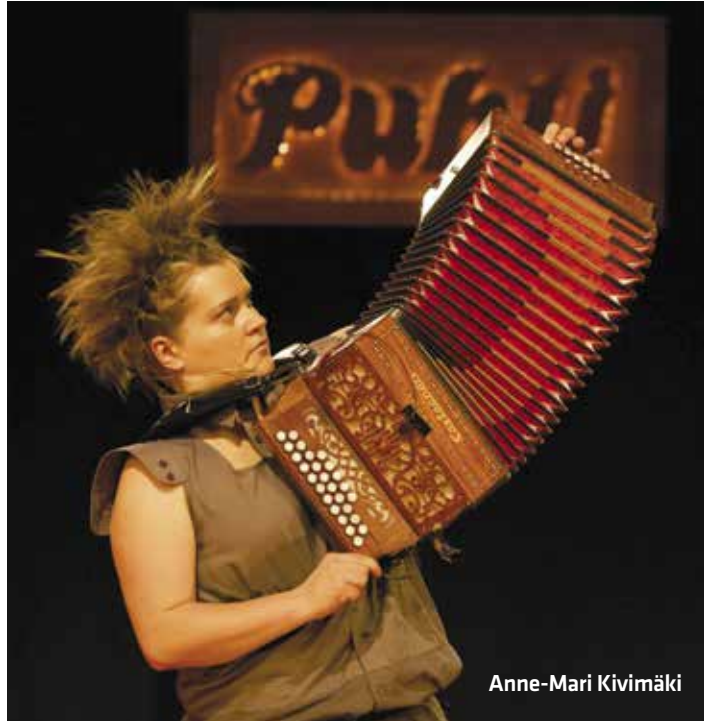
ric melodies. Even the harmonica quartet **Sväng**'s recent album *Sväng Plays Sibelius* has a direct link to Karelia, as our national composer was a true Karelianist who used folk music excerpts in his compositions. (Reviews of all these albums can be read on the FMQ website.)

There are several other recent folk music recordings that pay tribute to our neighbours: the originally North Karelian ensemble **Värttinä** found inspiration for their album *Viena* through a field trip to the Karelian runo singing regions on the other side of the Russian border, and the reckless debut album *Raitilla* by the duo **Pajolaine** explores the Karelian tradition through two female voices.

## Is Karelia the new black?

“Karelia is always in fashion,” grins Anne-Mari Kivimäki, who is working towards her artistic doctoral thesis on Karelian accordion playing, “but the overall perception of its music is now perhaps broader, with more musicians making use of it.” Kivimäki’s own **Suistamo Laboratory of Tradition** is rapidly increasing the variety of offerings: since 2012, her doctoral research at the Sibelius Academy Folk Music Department has resulted in four different concert projects, recordings of these concerts, a photographic exhibition with sound, a silent film with live accompaniment and an archival discovery.

The initial spark came from a 40-second archival recording in which accordionist **Ilja Kotikallio** (1894–1961) played some hypnotically repetitive folk tunes which are familiar from the kantele repertoire. The minimalistic music captured Kivimäki’s heart, both as a player and as a listener.



Anne-Mari Kivimäki

## Befriending the past

The new Suistamo music, the by-product of Kivimäki’s doctoral research, has been described as contemporary Karelian accordion trance, which Kivimäki plays on the nuanced, Russian-manufactured Notka accordions with a non-standard tuning. Her music is born out of the sounds of Karelian nature and the rhythm of travelling on bumpy roads, and is inspired by the playing and the tragic life story of Ilja Kotikallio, the “great word-smith of Suistamo”.

The Finnish Literature Society (SKS) recorded 25 hours of Kotikallio’s storytelling, but it was Kivimäki who found a reel-to-reel tape in an attic, containing Kotikallio’s playing. “Kotikallio was an accordionist but also a singer, harmonica player and songwriter. He was just like one of those folk musicians who today come through the Sibelius Academy,” Kivimäki gushes about the subject of her study, who converted her into a fan of Karelia. These days, she visits different regions in Karelia four or five times a year with her working groups.

## Hard work pays off

An archival recording collection featuring Kotikallio’s playing was published last summer under the title *Karmuuni laulaa* (*The accordion sings*). Last year was a productive one for Kivimäki on other fronts as well: her third doctoral concert – a photographic exhibition with sound entitled *Lakkautettu kylä* – was opened in January. The war evacuee-themed exhibition, produced in collaboration with photographer **Hanna Koikkalai-**

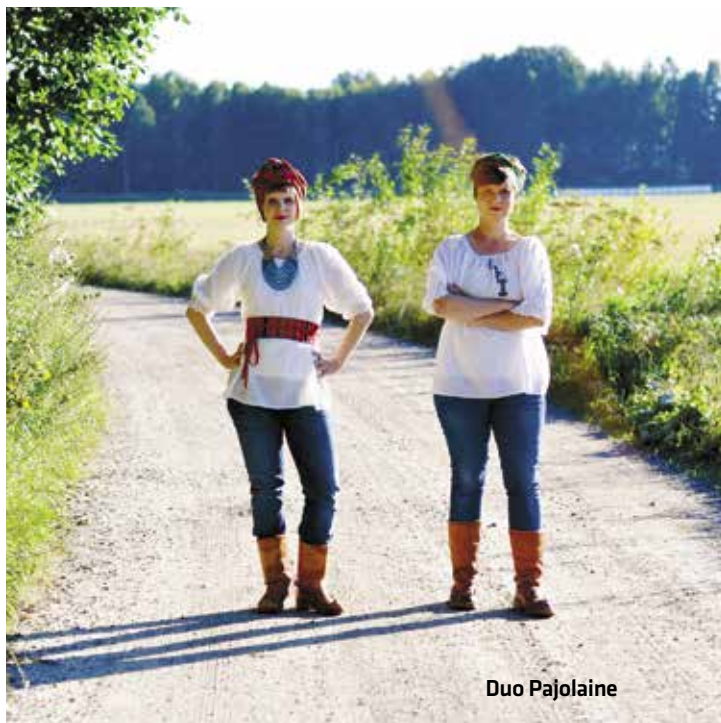
**nen**, has been touring in Finland and across the border in Karelia since then. “Without knowing it at the time, we produced a very topical exhibition. It already had its own poignancy from the viewpoint of history, but the current refugee crisis links it strongly to the present day.”

Released in September, Kivimäki’s album *Lakkautettu kylä* features her own compositions as well as wartime iskelmä songs in fresh arrangements. The album has stayed at the top of the world music charts from the very beginning. Together with the **Freija** ensemble’s album *Liki* (see review on p.64), it was the joint winner of the 2015 folk music album of the year voting contest, organised by the Finnish Folk Music Association.

## Electrifying groove

The silent film *Sijaton Sielu* (*The Lost Soul*), which was part of the exhibition, has also brought home a string of awards from across Europe. Directed and written by **Tommi Kainulainen**, the short film features the duo **Puhti** in multiple roles, in other words Kivimäki herself and folk singer-cum-dancer **Reetta-Kaisa Iles**, together with dancer **Timo Saari**.

In November, a new self-titled album by **Suistamon Sähkö** was released, described as folk electro music by Kivimäki and marking the fourth concert programme in her doctoral studies. “Ilja, too, played dance music, so we wanted people to be able to really sweat it out on



Duo Pajolaine

the dance floor.” She is joined by a familiar playing partner from her previous doctoral concerts, the folk music electronica wizard **Eero Grundström**. The dance moves and singing power are provided by Reetta-Kaisa Iles and dancer **Tuomas Juntunen**. “Our collaboration on electronics and the Notka accordion apparently sounds like a fascinating collaboration of crazy scientists!”

### Singing comrades in Karelia

Duo Pajolaine’s singers **Emmi Kuittinen** and **Minsku Tammela** learn folk songs from live sources as well. “We were performing in Karelia when an Ingrian grandma, **Impi**, wanted to teach us a song which reminded her of us young girls,” Kuittinen reminisces. The song ended up on the duo’s album *Raitilla*, released last autumn, on which traditional Karelian tunes get a tradition-conscious yet innovative treatment. “We work on these tunes by singing and by experimenting on how different aesthetics could be portrayed – how could just the two of us sound like a village choir?”

A love for the eastern tradition can awaken even if one has grown up elsewhere in Finland. Some of Kuittinen’s roots trace back to Karelia: her maternal grandmother was a war evacuee whose stories have always fascinated her, and her father comes from the Finnish side of North Karelia. Kuittinen studied at the North Karelia University of Applied Sciences and did student exchange at the Petrozavodsk Conservatory in Russia.

“That’s where my collaborations kicked off. I have since travelled to Karelia through the Sommele Music Festival and the Juminkeko Foundation, teaching a choir at Seesjärvi’s Paatene village, for instance.”

### A new life for laments

Kuittinen graduated from the Master of Global Music programme at the Sibelius Academy, delivering her final diploma work on lamentations as a global phenomenon. “My tutor suggested that I combine laments with Indian ragas. Laments really started to speak to me when I realised that I recognised those feelings that these beautiful and even mystical texts describe. I decided then to learn traditional laments and now they have completely captured my heart.”

Kuittinen has adapted the nearly forgotten Karelian lamentation language to the point that she is able to use it to improvise her own laments. “I proceed with small steps. I want

to make this feel natural to me, without being a puritan, as this metaphor-rich language is not generally understood by others,” she says. “I also try to discover my very own lamentation language which is based on Finnish. I want to keep using these two side by side in order to have a larger vocabulary to express myself with. I want to keep working closely with this subject.” Kuittinen has been revitalising the lamentation scene through her club night entitled *Ilon ja surun klubi* (Joy and sadness club), where she combines laments and stand-up comedy together with **Miska Kajanus**, as well as through a new work called *Ilo pitkästä murheesta* (Out of sadness comes joy), in which her ensemble **Rajamailla Company** combines Karelian and Persian laments with dance.

### Baltic Finnish friends

Offering a journey across the Baltic Finnish landscape, Estonian Mari Kalkun’s *Tii ilo* is the first album ever to have been nominated world music album of the year both in Finland and Estonia. Her ensemble Runorun was formed during her time at the Sibelius Academy Folk Music Department as an exchange student from the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre.

“I wanted to hear how traditional tunes would sound when played together with someone who is not from my own culture but who shares some similar foundations. In my previous cross-cultural projects, I have felt that the deepest essence of the music or culture often

fails to come through. With Finns, these obstacles have been lower and there is no need to always explain everything, simply because there are so many common elements in our cultures,” says Kalkun, who herself represents the South Estonian Võro language minority.

Kalkun invited percussionist **Tatu Viitala**, kantele player, singer and multi-instrumentalist **Maija Kauhanen** and Australian-born double bass player **Nathan Riki Thomson** to be part of her project. Another participant was visual artist **Tatjana Bergelt**, whose collage-like working method around similar themes formed a bond between the artists. A grant from the Kone Foundation enabled the participants to focus on their music project *Tii ilo*, which combines Baltic Finnish languages. The concert project has been in demand, and the ensemble is currently planning a record release tour to Japan.



Virgo Karp

Mari Kalkun & Runorun

**Powered by teamwork**

There could be even more collaboration between Finland and Estonia. So far it has been more or less a one-way street: “It’s mainly Estonians who have hosted Finnish folk musicians, but the situation is about to change,” says plucked string player **Jalmar Vabarna**. The latest album of his bluegrass-inspired ensemble **Curly Strings**, *Üle ilma*, has sold more copies in Estonia than any of his previous recordings. Festivals in Fin-

land are now also putting out the welcome mat to his other ensemble **Trad.Attack!**, which combines archival recordings with acoustic music. “Previously, Finnish folk musicians such as **Antti Järvelä** would come and teach a masterclass in Estonia. Now this new generation of Estonian folk musicians has a lot to offer in Finland as well.”

In Estonia, folk music enjoys far greater popularity than in Finland; it has a strong presence in mainstream media and at official state functions. “Perhaps Estonians have not grown accustomed to independence just yet,” reflects Mari Kalkun, “and folk music probably provides one way of connecting with one’s own roots. My view is that our cultural region is not defined simply by our national borders. Although many Baltic Finnish languages are becoming extinct in everyday life, I have found it is still possible to find common musical ground with Votian or Livonian cultures, for example. The further back we travel in time, the stronger the connections get – and not only between Baltic Finnish peoples but between any cultures. That archaic three- or four-note layer not only provides the best melodies, but the most interesting stories as well.”

Amanda Kauranne is a folk music journalist and folk singer, whose heart holds a special place for Finno-Ugric melodies.

Translation: Hanna-Mari Latham

Patrick Tamm



Jalmar Vabarna

# Guest Column

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FMQ :: SPRING 2016

## Similar but different

BY MÄRT-MATIS LILL

The Estonian and Finnish contemporary music scenes share many similarities but also have considerable differences. I can say this from my own first-hand experience as an Estonian composer who has lived and studied in Finland for a long time. The differences may come as quite a surprise, considering how close our two nations are culturally. But our recent history has shaped us in different ways. The period between the violent ending of the first Estonian republic in 1939 and gaining independence again in 1991 has left a big mark on the Estonian cultural consciousness.

The differences between Estonia and Finland are felt on many levels even today – I myself have observed this, in both my own and my colleagues' work, regardless of the generation we represent. From contemporary music's point of view, there are two things in particular which make Estonia and Finland quite different from each other. The first is the attitude towards aesthetics and the ideology of musical modernism, and the second is the relationship with the early layers of Western art music.

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There was a big gap in the development of 20th-century music in Estonia, especially in regards to the modernist movement. One could say that Estonian music history more or less lacks the era of modernism, and this is visible – indirectly – in the aesthetics and compositional strategies used by Estonian composers. The main reason behind the absence of such a crucial 20th-century music phenomenon is political. In the Soviet Union, the modernist approach was at some point strongly denounced and at other times openly discouraged.

One also has to bear in mind the fact that it was virtually impossible for composers in our country to follow the latest trends in post-war music. The Soviet Union was a closed state both mentally and physically, so access to information about new trends in contemporary music was very limited.

In this regard, Estonia was actually in a slightly better position compared to many other areas in the Soviet Union – people could listen to Finnish radio and watch Finnish TV (despite attempts by the authorities to block these channels). Channel 1 of Yle (Finnish Broadcasting Company) radio, in particular, provided a very important window to the free world of Western contemporary music. My own long-time professor of composition, **Lepo Sumera**, gave me many cassettes containing newer pieces from his Western colleagues, which he had recorded from Finnish radio. I remember, for instance, the impact of first hearing American minimalism. It was quite a blow – in a very positive sense.

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Because of our access to Finnish radio programmes, the minimalist school was quite well known and even imitated here. But the sophisticated methods used by **Stockhausen**, **Boulez** and **Cage** – let alone somebody like **Ferneyhough** – were much harder to get acquainted with just through listening, with no access to scores or knowledge about the precise methods behind the music. Therefore, music written in this musical language by the older generation of Estonian composers tends to be quite sound-orientated. Furthermore, these examples are quite rare.

Interestingly enough, some of the best examples of



attempts to emulate musical modernism in Estonia are the early works of **Arvo Pärt**. The paradox lies in the fact that Pärt – who has become the most-performed living composer today – made a radical stylistic change later in his life, and started to follow the aesthetics which are in many ways opposed to some of the basic assumptions of modernist music.

I actually think that the sound-based approach can still be sensed even in the younger composers' music – including that of my generation. A special sense of sonority and a stronger trust in intuitive solutions bring out quite a big difference in Estonian and Finnish contemporary music styles. The latter – at least the works of the generation who began their career in the '80s – is in my opinion generally much more engaged with the structure of music, as opposed to utilising merely sound-based ideas.

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Another interesting difference between Estonian and Finnish contemporary music cultures lies in the composers' relationship towards early music. In general, one can say that early music has been very crucial to many composers in Estonia. For instance, being exposed to Gregorian chant has been a formative experience for composers as different as Arvo Pärt, **Toivo Tulev** and **Helena Tulve**.

In Finland, I have not experienced a similar presence or interest towards such archaic layers of music. It might have something to do with the differences in our cityscapes. Many Estonian cities and towns still have fairly well-preserved historic centres. The historic centre of Tallinn is a good example of this. There are medieval and Renaissance buildings standing side by side with some fairly bold 20th-century buildings. This gives a sense of long continuity which I think has played an important role in our musical consciousness.

Also the early music revival movement was pursued in Estonia quite enthusiastically – especially by the group **Hortus Musicus**. It even included a distinct element of dissidence, and many intellectuals were thoroughly influenced and touched by it. The later period of the music of Arvo Pärt starts with several pieces written specifically for Hortus Musicus.

As for the historic buildings themselves, they provide many fantastic concert venues and are regularly used for concerts. We also have quite a number of early music groups, including three choirs specialising in Gregorian chant. Many composers write for these groups. I myself have written an extensive work for the Baroque



Taneli Harju

ensemble the Corelli Consort. The work was based on some of the more extravagant legends of the ghosts of Old Tallinn, reflected in its title *Rogues and Lovers*.

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As for the current situation, I feel that the differences have become less pronounced, but one can still detect a certain inclination towards rather different solutions in our two neighbouring spheres when it comes to musical creation. I feel that I myself have gained quite a lot from being at the border between the two countries and have thus somehow been able to combine characteristics of both countries' ways of musical thinking, which I find most fascinating and inspiring. I am definitely not the only one – for instance, in the works of **Andrus Kallastu** and **Jüri Reinvere** I can find traces of a similar kind of synthesis. I hope that in the future there will be even more composers who learn to look at both shores of the Gulf of Finland – it would be only natural considering our proximity and close relations.

Märt-Matis Lill is an Estonian composer and since 2014 the Chairman of the Estonian Composers' Union. His works have been performed regularly in concerts and festivals both in Estonia and around the world. Currently Lill is writing an opera about the First World War.

Even though a tunnel passing underneath the Gulf of Finland is but a distant dream, there already exists a strong spiritual link between the countries of Finland and Estonia. A bridge built on music started forming right after Estonia became an independent state.

BY JANNE FLINKKILÄ

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# Finland and Estonia – Brothers in Music

The keynote speaker of the Tallinn Music Week quotes the Dead Kennedys' Jello Biafra and regales the audience with anecdotes from the famous CBGB club in New York City. The room is filled with dozens of artists, journalists and other music professionals. At the end, they cheer and applaud as they would a rock star.

The speaker is **Toomas Hendrik Ilves**, the President of Estonia, who has been the patron of the event since its inception in 2009.

"We were once performing at the KUMU Art Museum of Estonia when I noticed our President really getting into it in the front row," reminisces **Ago Teppand**, guitarist for Estonian artist **Iiris**.

But even though popular music nowadays is favoured by the high-ups, this has not been the case for long. During the Soviet era Western youth culture was regarded as a threat to social order. It was a necessary evil barely tolerated, strictly controlled and sparsely rationed to the public by state-run record label Melodiya.

Nowadays Estonia has positioned herself at the other end of the spectrum. Ilves assimilates Estonian artists and bands with start-up businesses in the information technology sector. For him, they have become symbols of a small nation striving to find its place in the global community and reach out to the Western world.

Tallinn Music Week is the self-proclaimed "largest indoor festival of the Baltic-Nordic region" and the first logical step abroad for many Estonian artists is their north-western neighbour, Finland. But what kind of a

spiritual bond has been built up between the countries since the collapse of the Iron Curtain?

## Tere Perestroika

As President **Mikhail Gorbachev** pushed for progress in the stagnant Soviet Union of the 1980s, he launched a new concept of openness dubbed "glasnost" or "perestroika". Meanwhile, in the Soviet state of Estonia, endeavouring minds were working hard towards independence, which ultimately led to the so-called Singing Revolution where masses of up to 300,000 people gathered together at the Laululava outdoor stage to chant forbidden national songs and anthems (See also Antti Häyrynen's article *In Estonia, music is celebration*, FMQ 4/1998).

There was an underground revolution going on as well. One of the leaders was **Villu Tamme** (b. 1963), who recorded the track *Tere perestroika* with his punk rock group **J.M.K.E.** for the Helsinki-based record label Stupido Twins in 1989. In the April of the same year **J.M.K.E.** played their first two shows abroad. They took place in Helsinki, of course.

Simultaneously, Finnish bands were beginning to manoeuvre their way through the cracks that were beginning to show in the Iron Curtain. The bass player of Estonian group **Kosmiküd**, **Raivo Rätte** (b. 1970), recalls how Finnish rock music changed his life.

"When the Finnish rock band **Sielun Veljet** arrived in Tallinn to play a show I went to see them. A scared boy



Uilo Josing / ERR

Villu Tamme



Topias Hironen

Ismo Alanko

from the countryside in the middle of the masses stared at this weird-looking bunch of men playing noisy and wondrous music. It struck me that I was in the presence of something mystic I had never experienced before.”

The circle closed in December 2011 as Raivo Rätte became one of the organisers of the Sielun Veljet comeback show in the Tallinn Rock Café. Nowadays his band is one of the biggest in Estonia, with frequent shows in Finland as well.

### A small country with small cliques

Estonia has only 1.3 million inhabitants and the number has decreased rapidly in recent years, with young professionals using the freedom of movement in the European Union to follow their dreams by migrating to other countries.

The Estonian musical tradition is strong and the association PLMF was founded to support the professional endeavours and education of talented musicians in the classical discipline. However, the head of the association, **Leelo Lehtla**, says that some enduring facts simply have to be faced.

“Our talent pool is not that wide or deep. It is a miracle that such a small country has been able to produce so many successful composers and conductors.”

According to her, a big factor in the equation is the high quality of Estonian music education. In addition, there are ample opportunities to perform and hear live music. Lehtla helms the Estonian Music Festivals, an

umbrella organisation which lists close to 50 events that qualify as “art music” events.

“But the business side of things is an area where we still have plenty of work cut out for us. For instance, London has been setting up similar mechanisms and networks ever since the end of World War II. We just got started in the early 1990s.”

Raivo Rätte is no stranger to the limitations forced by a small population. His first-hand experience comes from producing the Naapurivisa club concert series in 2002–07 between Estonia and Finland.

The concept of this musical import-export scheme was simple: choose a band from Finland and a band from Estonia. Pick a weekend and book one show in Helsinki and another one in Tallinn. The bands will headline on their own turf and the visiting group will act as support.

“We got a good start at the Semifinal club in Helsinki and gradually Naapurivisa grew so big that we sold out Nosturi and the Tallinn Rock Café,” says Raivo now.

The Finnish bands that performed Naapurivisa shows include **CMX**, **Kotiteollisuus** and **Maj Karma**. Artists such as **Kauko Röyhkä** and **Ismo Alanko** (formerly of the Sielun Veljet) took part as well. From Estonia, Naapurivisa presented groups including **Kosmiküd**, **Metsatöll**, **J.M.K.E.** and **Röövel Ööbik**. Eventually the concept petered out.

“When we couldn’t find any more Estonian bands that were big enough, we had to call it quits.”



Iris

Iris



Mart Vares

Ewert and the Two Dragons

### Faced with borders

A total of one third of Estonians live in Tallinn, which makes the arranging of tours very challenging. Aside from Tallinn and Tartu, with its 100,000 inhabitants, there simply isn't enough audience in other places.

According to Raivo Rätte, the situation has only got worse in the last five years. He blames the demographic: smaller towns have lost a lot of their populace to Tallinn or foreign countries as people have a tendency to follow the jobs.

On the other hand, the facing of borders compels the operative to find new territories and spread out abroad. But as Leelo Lehtla says, sometimes the neighbouring country seems to be all too close.

"We are perhaps not the sexiest trading partners for one another. Whenever events are being set up, the gaze easily becomes fixated on countries far away. Blinded by the need for something exotic, we often forget that there is a lot that's interesting going on right across the border."

The same applies to a mental distance. Laughingly, Lehtla says that the Finns and Estonians are too similar.

"Both our nations are introverted, humble and modest by inclination. If two people with these characteristics set up a meeting to discuss possible future deals, it takes a lot for them to emerge from the session with a completed and mutually assured plan for cooperation."

When it comes to popular culture, collaboration and networking has been greatly boosted by the platform provided by the Tallinn Music Week. And in recent years Estonian bands have indeed found a new market in Finland.

Estonian-born folk music artist **Mari Kalkun** was nominated for the Emma Award (i.e. the Finnish equivalent of the Grammy) this year and Estonian groups and artists such as **Ewert and the Two Dragons** and

**Iris** have performed on Finnish festival stages, while up-and-coming bands ranging from **Odd Hugo** to the **Elephants From Neptune** have done club shows in Finland.

Nevertheless, Finland remains a challenging area for Estonian musicians. **Toomas Olljum**, manager of the most successful Estonian band, Ewert and the Two Dragons, says that only a few Estonian artists have really tasted success in Finland.

"Helsinki is close by geographically but far away in a business sense. A breakthrough in Finland requires the best possible associates in cooperation, brilliant music, patience and good luck."

### Two-way traffic

Finnish artists visit Estonia on a regular basis these days and Tallinn Music Week alone has hosted dozens of our best live acts, from **Rubik** to **Mirel Wagner** to **Amorphis** and beyond. But as the event is an international showcase festival, its main function from the Finnish bands' point of view is to be seen and heard by European festival promoters and other industry delegates. On the other hand, traditional live shows in Estonia have little to no economic importance for Finnish artists.

Raivo Rätte is nevertheless keen to underscore the psychological aspect and spiritual significance. In the tiny Finno-Ugric language family, Estonia is to all intents and purposes the only "foreign" country where an artist singing their songs in Finnish can perform in their mother tongue and be understood almost perfectly. And being faced with a new audience to win over can provide a healthy trial by fire even for the ones already road-worn and successful in Finland.

"Every band that has played here has told me that this breaking of the regular routines has been good for their mental health."

In recent years, the audiences in Finland and Estonia have mixed in a very tangible way as well. Such is the number of Estonian guest workers and other expats nowadays living in the area surrounding our capital that it might be said that Helsinki is the sixth largest city of Estonia. Rätte notes that this is clearly visible whenever Kosmiküd plays a show in the metropolitan Helsinki region.

“As we performed as support band for Viikate at the club Virgin Oil Co. in Helsinki, the audience very distinctly included a section of Estonians who had come to see only us. Whenever a Finnish band chooses to have

an Estonian band as their support in Helsinki, they can expect to sell an extra 100 tickets at the door. This is an opportunity both Finns and Estonians should not miss.”

Janne Flinkkilä is a Finnish freelance journalist and a co-founder of Cultural Management Creat Coop. He has been a regular guest of Tallinn Music Week since the beginning, and organised gigs for Estonian bands in Finland.

Translation: Petri Silas

This year the Tallinn Music Week takes place from 28 March to 3 April. [trmw.ee](http://trmw.ee)

# How rock broke through the Iron Curtain

A phone is ringing in a room at the Viru hotel. It is the summer of 1989. Singer and bass player **Janne Joutsenniemi** from the speed metal group **Stone** is jolted brutally from his nap by the sound. There is an agitated voice at the other end: the band should be taking to the main stage of the Rock Summer festival. “What time is it?” Joutsenniemi manages to utter. “Now. The time is now,” replies the stage manager calling from the concert site.

Rock Summer had been founded the previous year as a symbol for the opening of the Soviet Union to the West. Entitled “Glasnost Rock – Rock for Peace”, the inaugural three-day event managed to pull a crowd of 150,000 to the Laululava festival grounds in Tallinn, Estonia. So the abruptly awoken Joutsenniemi is well aware that his outfit will be facing their biggest audience so far.

The man rounds up his bandmates and soon they rush towards the festival area. “As we counted off the set opener, all I could hear from my monitor was the left bass drum. But to the best of my capabilities, I soldiered on,” he reminisces now, laughing.

And this is where the innumerable hours at the rehearsal studio and dozens of gigs pay off. Muscle memory kicks in and the band locks into a tight groove. No one out in the field notices a thing and the crowd, numbering in the tens of thousands, goes wild.

These people have never experienced anything like this. For them, Stone is bigger than **Metallica**. “The sheer sound pressure from the audience was absolutely staggering. It almost made me fall flat on my back,” Joutsenniemi says now.

Two years later, Finnish hard rock band **Havana**

**Black** performed at Rock Summer. Politically, the situation throughout the entire Baltic region was volatile but obviously no one knew that the Soviet Union would fall apart just a few months later. Even though the high council of Estonia had declared the nation a sovereign and independent state in November 1988, to all intents and purposes the country was still part of the Soviet Union.

As the band was shuttled towards the stage at Laululava, drummer **Anssi Nykänen** noticed posters advertising the event. According to them, Havana Black hailed from the USA. Not true, yet not entirely untrue: the group were signed to American label Hollywood Records so a few corners had been cut in marketing. And this was enough: As Havana Black stepped in front of the enthusiastic crowd, they were received like international superstars.

**Raivo Rätte** from the Estonian group **Kosmiküd** grew up during the Soviet era. He remembers the 1980s as a totally unique period in time. As the closed society began opening its windows to the outside world, the first ones to peer in were Western rock bands.

Travelling abroad was a concept his generation had grown to regard as mission impossible. Yet, all of a sudden, gigs and concerts provided a chance for Estonian youth to experience something available to all young people in the outside world. “The hunger was so ravenous that people rushed in to see all foreign groups. I recall packed ice halls and broken glass doors as folk burst in to see bands like **Miljoonasade**, who were maybe not that international in nature but actually very Finnish. I’m sure these must have been strange times for the bands as well.”

# Notes & Letters

In this column composers, songwriters and musicians write about music

BY SAMI KLEMOLA

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FMQ :: SPRING 2016

## Borderline sounds

“Music is sounds, sounds around us whether we’re in or out of concert halls: cf. Thoreau.” Thus responded **John Cage** in the 1960s when **R. Murray Schafer** asked him for a definition of music. This idea has been slow to take root in Finland, where the mainstream in classical music consists of the modernist tradition, with a strong academic streak. Fortunately, this is now slowly changing.

“It may be that he will not like all the tunes of this new music, and that too will be good,” Schafer said. Any new departures and new ways of looking at art prompt controversy. Cage’s idea, however, was to allow people to hear all sounds as being equal. What is important is understanding the difference between hearing and listening. A listener can be an active recipient of sound in any context. Sound is vibrations. It is a physical phenomenon in invisible matter that cannot be grasped but can touch the listener.

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Interesting things happen in the borderlands between music and sound art. Sub-genres of electronic music, field recordings, studies in improvisation and graphic notation and sound installations continue to open up new pathways for musicians in all genres. There are always conflicts, but the heat generated by friction generates energy, and energy propels movement towards new results, hopefully. “Without deviation from the norm progress is not possible,” said **Frank Zappa** once upon a time.

To me, energy implies intensity. The two concepts are related and are often found in the same contexts. Yet both are imprecise: intensity might not mean anything concrete that is measurable, but when it exists, it gives a reason for many artworks. That is why it is one of the most important parts of music, and it is found in all music regardless of genre. Music must, almost by definition, contain an absurd and surreal power.

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In my work as a composer, I aim to approach sound as diversely as possible and without prejudice. Instrumentation affects what the sound world of the piece will be like; it is good to have restrictions. In the case of, say, a work for a solo instrument, the soundscape is largely pre-determined. I like to explore sounds rather than harmony, melody or form. Those are secondary features that are derived from the phenomenon of sound. That is not to say that they are unimportant, though.

As an electronics programmer, I am interested in bugs and errors. Such surprising occurrences often take one’s thoughts in unintended directions. One must get lost in order to find. A good example of this is my piece *Feed*, recorded on the debut album of **defunensemble**, *define function*, last year. The tape part is almost completely coloured by the aesthetic of errors. The author **Cesar Aira** once wrote of his own work: “My style is irregular, sloppy, spasmodic, joking.” Well said!

:: Sami Klemola is a Helsinki-based composer who studied composition and electronic music at the Sibelius Academy, the Amsterdam Conservatory and IRCAM in Paris. His output includes solo pieces, chamber music, orchestral music, works combining electronic and acoustic sounds, and sound installations. He is currently the artistic director of defunensemble and of the Tampere Biennale.



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As artistic director of the Tampere Biennale, I wanted to bring in various aspects of sound art today, whether concert music, alternative rock, sound installations or the unpredictable but utterly familiar soundscape of the urban space. When you add surprising, incongruous sounds to a cityscape, the experience of space and sound may change completely. I am hoping that people will be confused, in a positive way, in Tampere this spring. And even those local people who never go to Tampere Biennale concerts (yes, there are such people!) will have an opportunity to be exposed to sound art.

The festival is celebrating its 30th anniversary yet has very little in it that could be described as retrospective. There are several premieres. The concerts will feature both traditional and very untraditional instruments, from balloons through a box-spring mattress to the good old piano. Some pianos will be destroyed, I'm afraid. But even that can be done in so many ways!

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

See also Aarne Toivonen's article on the Tampere Biennale at [fmq.fi](http://fmq.fi) and the review of defunensemble's new album on page 58.

Music is strongly associated with the Romani people. Singing was always a part of travelling with horse-drawn wagons or sleighs, or resting by the campfire. Music still occupies a large role in the lives of many Romani today, even as traditional lifestyles are being replaced by modern ones.

BY TOVE DJUPSJÖBACKA

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# Music of the Finnish Romani: roaming and singing

In many countries, Romani people have earned their living as professional musicians for centuries. According to researcher **Risto Blomster**, the Romani started gaining visibility as musicians in Finland as late as the turn of the 20th century. The massive changes in post-Second World War society virtually put an end to the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the Romani. After this, music began to emerge as a viable career option for an increasing number of Romani as well.

The traditional songs are still alive and strong, but the Romani are also active in the Finnish *iskelmä* (schlager) music scene, especially as tango singers. Christian music is another strong genre in the Romani community.

In the 1960s, Romani music became more visible in Finnish society through artists such as the band **Hortto Kaalo**, which also fought for better social conditions. The name of their first album *Miksi ovet ei aukene meille?* (*Why are the doors not opening for us?*) is a case in point. According to researcher **Kai Åberg**, bands such as Hortto Kaalo consciously strengthened their Romani identity by borrowing influences from Romani music from other countries.

Traditional Finnish dance music is a genre close to the Romani, and tango in particular. According to Kai

Åberg, the Romani prefer traditional styles and often shy away from overly creative or original interpretations. The legendary tango singer **Olavi Virta** was influenced by the Romani singing style, and, following him, the time was right for Romani singers to make their debuts. Some of the first of them, however, chose to “Finnishise” their names: **Allan Isberg** became **Markus Allan** and **Taisto Lundberg** became **Taisto Tammi**. *Iskelmä* and tango are male-dominated genres and not many female Romani singers have been in the public spotlight, with the notable exception of **Anneli Sari**.

Kai Åberg sees tango as a folk-style continuum for Romani songs. Tango lyrics often touch on similar subjects to traditional Romani songs (loss, loneliness, longing), and the restrained and modest words sit well with Romani singers. Romani musicians often lack a formal music education, a fact Åberg feels is overly emphasised in the media. Romani singers are seen as “natural” musicians, and their emotional and naturally strong interpretations are highlighted.

## Life's work preserving traditional songs

Traditional Romani songs can be found both in the Finnish and Romani languages. According to Risto



Blomster, the latter were originally intended to be sung only within one's own tribe. Even the Finnish-language songs may include hidden messages which only the Romani can decipher. In the 21st century, these songs have once again gained attention. Singer **Hilja Grönfors** has made her life's work preserving this singing tradition, and having been born in the 1950s, she has personally experienced these songs as a part of the old-time Romani culture.

"I have heard traditional songs since I was a small child, and started singing myself at the age of two," says Grönfors. "When I was a child, wherever grown-ups were singing, there I was, listening. Other children would play."

Singing used to have an important role in camp life as well.

"Women went around the neighbourhood houses selling their craft and getting some money and food, while others stayed behind at the camp. When the women returned with food and drink, the singing would begin. There was never any agreement how to do it – someone would simply begin, and the singing would go on and on."

Grönfors sees that singing provided an important escape for people. Throughout history, Romani people have lived in difficult circumstances.

"There has been a lot of discrimination, and acceptance was only experienced within one's own tribe. We would never have made it without singing! Our load has been made lighter through music and dance."

### A gift from past generations

Hilja Grönfors has been performing all her life. In 2005, she was awarded the title "Master Folk Singer" at the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival. Grönfors's ensemble **Latšo Džinta** is made up of five professional folk musicians. "Absolutely wonderful interpreters! They pour their souls into this music and have a respect for it."

Grönfors has also been collecting and document-



ing the Romani singing tradition. "I felt obliged to do this! The songs are a gift, passed on to us by past generations."

Her work is ongoing and a sheet music book is on its way, in collaboration with the Sibelius Academy.

The current situation of Romani music makes Grönfors concerned. "Our young people no longer know these songs. Our own culture, music traditions and language are essential to Romani identity. I want these songs to survive for the next generations. If the generation after me fails to get interested, maybe the following one will!"

Grönfors is very critical about making modifications to the songs. "Many people want to iron out all of those fine little details. It just sounds like a big mess and hasty note-bashing. Personally, I do not approve of the fact that these songs keep changing. They should have remained as they were originally, but this is of course impossible. In general, however, the language and customs of the Finnish Romani have remained very pure, due to our being here in the remote far North!"

Having said that, Grönfors has collaborated with



Suora Lähetys

other musicians such as the rapper **Paleface** and the **Avanti! Chamber Orchestra**. “I am not afraid to try new things or put my skills to the test. I like so many other music genres as well, not only Romani music. I would love to perform in a musical, for example!”

### Singing as medicine

According to Risto Blomster, most traditional Romani songs are closely related to the general Finnish song tradition, transformed through an elegant “Romanisation” process. The singing style includes heavy use of vibrato and glissandi. Instruments were not traditionally used, but in the 1960s they started to appear, especially the guitar. Popular song topics included love, horses and fairs, travelling and roaming, but also booze and prison.

“These songs portray our life, the way it has been,” explains Grönfors. “Instead of speaking directly of love, the songs describe it in a more subtle way. We also have songs that are used as a warning: for example, a fight can be avoided by singing a warning song. Mothers have used singing in order to teach various things to their children.”

Some fine samples of traditional songs can be found through the brand-new video series *Musiikin muisti* (*The memory of music*), which can be viewed at the [kansanmusiikki.fi](http://kansanmusiikki.fi) website. The series makes a clear distinction between the old modal singing, “rekilaulu” tunes and songs which use contemporary metres. It also provides information on which songs are meant for men

and which ones for women. The songs are interpreted by singers representing a wonderful range of age groups, including the first Romani student of folk music at the Sibelius Academy, young folk singer **Anette Åkerlund**.

For Hilja Grönfors it goes without saying that men’s and women’s songs need to be clearly separated. “If there is a big celebration and older men are present, it would be insulting if I started singing men’s songs. On the other hand, I have taken the liberty of performing all of the songs. I have to! If they remain a secret, they will disappear.”

Grönfors actively teaches the tradition to anyone who is interested. “Previously, teaching ‘outside’ of our culture was forbidden. But now the situation has changed and there has to be a way of making our songs available to the general public. But my main reason for doing all this is for my own people. I wish this music to stay alive.”

### Only a few cross the border

Many Romani musicians have a strong evangelical Christian background. This provided a way for many Romani to make their mark in the society even before the era of social activism began. From the 1970s onwards, Romani vocal ensembles such as the **Romanos** and **Freidiba Boodos** have been visible in the Christian music scene.

Christian and secular music circles have remained fairly separate. One of the few genre-crossers is the en-

semble **Suora Lähetys**, who have gained national visibility through talent contests such as Talent Suomi and Ourvision. The core of the group is a trio of harmonising Romani singers, but the group has ultimately grown into a tight eight-piece ensemble. Gospel music first led to iskelmä songs, and now their music has no limits.

Music still holds a strong place in Romani culture, says the ensemble's singer-guitarist **Mertsi Lindgren**, a graduate from the Helsinki Pop & Jazz Conservatory.

"There is a lot of music-making in Romani families, just like in Finnish families in general. I guess the Romani mentality is a bit more sociable and positive compared to mainstream Finns, so maybe it is easier for us to bring our music forwards."

Music is still an active part of everyday living. "In the old days, they used to harness a horse to let off some steam. Nowadays a car will do. I remember once riding in the car with my grandmother. She looked out of the window and started singing. She sang old Kale (Finnish Romani) songs for two or three hours straight, without a break."

It took relatively long for Lindgren to muster up the courage to perform traditional songs himself. Today, it no longer bothers him if a non-Romani sings these songs, or finds inspiration in Romani music. "Everyone borrows from everyone. Nobody can claim ownership of C major!"

### From gospel to no limits

When they were first starting out, Suora Lähetys only performed at gospel events. However, they gradually began to feel that their music deserved a larger audi-



Markus Allan

ence. Mertsi Lindgren thinks that people often have a certain preconception of Christian music, and of Christian musicians in general. Music and religion do not need to be in conflict – music is work and the church is a conviction.

"When we got to collaborate with the iskelmä music legend **Esa Nieminen**, we clearly stated our wish for the lyrics to remain within a certain framework that reflects our Christian values. We preferred profound material that talks about human life to raunchy or suggestive topics."

In time, their colour palette has expanded to include more joy alongside serious tones. The ensemble now write their own songs, partly as a result of encouragement from singer-songwriter **Tuure Kilpeläinen** – the "unofficial godfather of Suora Lähetys", as Lindgren describes him. Kilpeläinen has also contributed by writing music and lyrics for the ensemble.

Music has helped open doors on to completely new directions, Mertsi Lindgren states. "Musicians are the first group of people to have shown absolutely no discrimination towards us. Tuure Kilpeläinen is not afraid to speak his mind: why do you always view things through an ethnic lens, what is the relevance? Let's just get on and play this piece!"

Tove Djupsjöbacka is a music journalist and musicologist specialising in flamenco and folk music, but eagerly delves into all kinds of music from opera to hip hop.

Translation: Hanna-Mari Latham



Anette Åkerlund

Elinor Hillin

Music student Perttu Pölönen had an idea. There are 12 notes in the classical Western scale – what would happen if you placed those notes on a clock face? With this in mind, Pölönen created the Musiclock, which was later reworked into an app. And there is still more to come.

BY HEIDI HORILA

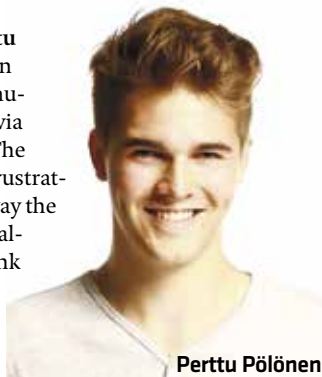
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# Learn music around the clock

Fifteen-year-old **Perttu Pölönen** was sitting in the library studying music theory, presented via mathematical grids. The young student grew frustrated with the difficult way the theory was being visualised, and began to think how to display it in a more practical way.

He came up with the idea of a music clock, inspired by



**Perttu Pölönen**

the clock face. Pölönen constructed a round clock out of cardboard, complete with the 12 notes of the octave superimposed on the numbers of the clock.

“When you rotate the disc on top of the Musiclock to point to any of the 12 notes, the clock shows you all of the notes in the major scale of that key. Minor scales and triads can be found on the flip side of the disc,” Pölönen explains.

Pölönen had been making music from a young age, learning the cello and piano, but had no deeper understanding of music theory. In his experience, many advanced high-school-age music students drop out of music theory classes due to the subject feeling like a chore.

“I was wondering how to present ideas in such a way

that they would be easier to ground in muscle memory. Do you really need staves to learn music theory, or pen and paper for that matter? The Musiclock combines visual imagery and muscle memory functions,” Pölönen explains.

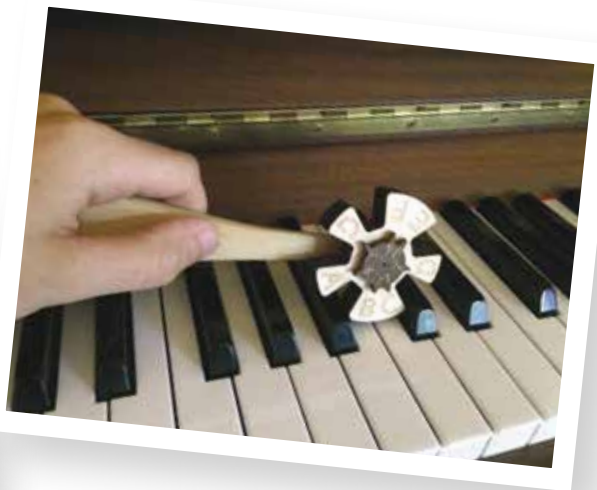
The young inventor tested the functionality of his innovation by teaching his young cousin. She learnt even the trickiest scales after just a few repetitions.

## **Competition and market success**

Currently a composition student at the Sibelius Academy, Pölönen entered his innovation into the 2013 European Union Contest for Young Scientists, among other competitions.

“There were all these chemistry, maths and biology prodigies, and there I was with my Musiclock, which I found a bit amusing. I competed in the Social Sciences category, which often includes contestants from the field of psychology, for example. But in the end I took home the trophy with my Musiclock,” he laughs.

The twenty-something Pölönen has brought home a string of other awards as well, starting with winning the 2012 Innolukio competition for upper secondary school students. Together with his brother, he started his own company in order to develop and promote the Musiclock. An app for mobile devices is also available in 100 countries, sold by the media giant Apple. Pölönen says that it has been the best-selling app in nine different countries.



### For teaching and jamming

The wooden Musiclock is being marketed in Finland for teaching and home learning purposes, and it has been piloted at the Espoo Music Institute as well as in several schools in the Helsinki region. The response has been enthusiastic, both from students and teachers. The mobile app and the original Musiclock have been created for slightly different purposes.

“The app is meant for jamming and improvising, whereas the Musiclock is best suited for teaching,” explains Pölönen.

He feels that playfulness and experimentation are important resources that should be exploited more in music education.

“In the pilot project, the app was tested with primary school students, and it offers activities such as different interval games. Students have also created their own versions of the games. This is how an app should work at its best,” Pölönen enthuses.

The mobile app is also suitable for adult music lovers. It includes backing tracks in many different genres, ranging from blues and rock to pop and bebop. By rotating the Musiclock, you can try making music in any

genre by choosing any key you want and then simply playing on top of the chord progressions.

### Working on a more extensive method

Pölönen has also developed a tiny Piano Scaler, which sits on top of the piano keys and shows the correct notes of the scale in any key, exactly like a Musiclock. The Piano Scaler is aimed directly at the international market and is being financed through a crowdfunding campaign. All three products are a part of a more extensive method that Pölönen intends to develop further in the future. These products will eventually be complemented by other learning materials, but the time is not right yet.

Pölönen is currently studying part-time to be able to advance his career. His dizzying pace includes studying, working on his easy-to-grasp innovations and running his business. What is the source of all of this business drive and innovation?

“My family has no business background, but I was the youngest of four siblings in a country family and I have always had an experimental and independent nature. Even as a young child I kept coming up with all kinds of projects,” he reminisces.

The young inventor thinks that decision-makers play a significant role in the future of different innovations. While there is no need to completely change or dismiss old teaching methods, new innovations and applications can offer a good supplement or alternative.

“It goes without saying how important it is that decision-makers have a good understanding of the field in question, for instance music, when it comes to innovations becoming successful or recognised. Let us hope that Musiclock will help to build this awareness,” Pölönen sums up.

[mymusiclock.com](http://mymusiclock.com) [pianoscaler.com](http://pianoscaler.com)

Heidi Horila is a Turku-based freelance journalist and critic who operates in the middle ground between art and culture.

Translation: Hanna-Mari Latham

What does democratic education look like from the perspective of music? In October, the ArtsEqual project was launched to survey equality in various branches of the arts. At its centre is Resonaari, a music institute leading by example to show what potential musicianship may be found in the margins of society.

BY TUULIKKI LAES

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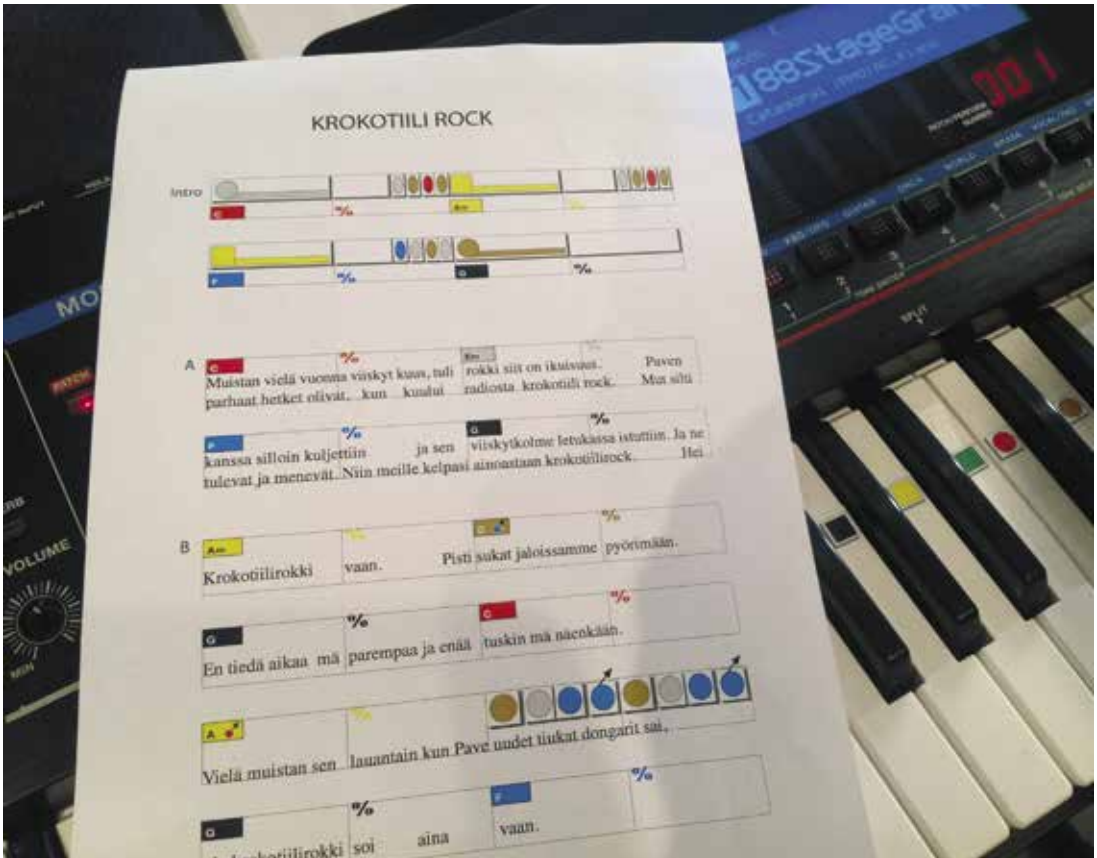
# Factors of democracy in the music education of the future

**Democratic education** has been a guideline in Finnish society for a long time. Educational planning today is governed by a conception of learners reflecting ideals of humanism and participation: every human being is respected as an individual and a full member of society. It is an accepted value in music education and in education policy applying to music that “music belongs to everyone”.

The democratic ideal has led to education in Finland being largely institutionalised in the interests of the common good, for the benefit of citizens. A significant milestone in this respect was attained with the establishment of the comprehensive school system in the 1970s. Democracy is easily equated with homogeneity: providing the same things to everyone in the same way, in the interests of equal distribution of the common good. Institutionalisation has to do with socialisation. The flip side of this is that structures may become ossified, leading to educational organisations becoming isolated and stagnated. This causes them to lose flexibility and the sensitivity to respond to changes in the

culture around them.

In music education, institutionalisation has manifested itself most conspicuously in the establishment of the music institute system in a “pyramid model” over recent decades. In this system, talented students can be effectively supported and nurtured from the beginning of their learning path. However, recent research in music education has criticised the music institute institution for upholding undemocratic and exclusive practices, such as measuring the aptitude of applicants in entrance examinations. The argument in such criticism is that the discourse emphasising talent often ignores the big picture of the entire population – the fact that music has value as a component of growth, humanity and well-being for every citizen. Although basic education in the arts is governed by the principle of equality enshrined in the Act on Basic Education, there are nevertheless restrictions on participation and on opportunities for musical growth imposed by age, health, learning problems and so on.



**Figurenotes is a system of notating music in a concrete way, by means of colours and shapes. It was developed in 1990 by Kaarlo Uusitalo, the then director of the Resonaari music institute.**

### How can art cope with democratisation?

So what exactly does democratic education mean in music education, and on whose terms should it be promoted? The historical approach shows that efforts to attain institutional democratic education have led both to participation and to marginalisation. It may be surprising to realise that practices we think of as democratic may actually categorise and marginalise.

In my doctoral dissertation in music education, I seek to identify such practices and structures and to encourage dissent: could a radical overhaul of the music education institution from the equality angle lead not only to democratic education but to improved quality at all levels of education? My study forms part of the multidisciplinary research project *The Arts as Public Service: Strategic Steps Towards Equality (ArtsEqual)* funded by the Strategic Research Council of the Academy of Finland and coordinated by the University of the Arts Helsinki. Its purpose is to identify and dismantle mechanisms of inequality in arts education and to make recommendations for policy actions to foster structural changes that promote the accessibility of arts education.

In order to better understand the inclusive and exclusive mechanisms of institutional music education, we must consider the perspective of social marginalisation. In the historical perspective, trends of change in society originate in the margins and migrate towards the mainstream, from small to large. Therefore in this study we consider learners in the margins and their teachers to be progressive activists whose activities will provide the impetus for reinforcing democracy in Finnish music education. By “marginal” I am here referring to those learner communities and population groups for whom the traditional Finnish music institute system is not an option for participation in musical activities. It is important to realise that in this sense these people are “marginal” only with respect to the music education institution, not with respect to their personal characteristics.

### Resonaari is blazing new trails

Founded in the 1990s and authorised by the National Board of Education to provide basic education in the arts in 2004, Resonaari is a music institute based in Hel-



Resonaarigroup is an ensemble of six professional musicians.

sinki that has brought an alternative approach to the Finnish music education system. It facilitates goal-orientated musical activities and vocational education in music for people excluded from ordinary music institutes.

Resonaari operates on the principle that persons in need of special support should not be offered music only as a form of therapy; everyone should be allowed to participate in goal-orientated music education according to the advanced syllabus in basic education in music. The idea is to respect every individual's learning potential and to support them as makers of music regardless of their baseline abilities or physical or cognitive capabilities. Resonaari offers students and their family members participation opportunities by supporting comprehensive learning and by creating social networks through musical activities.

### New musical stories

The unconventional and unprejudiced pedagogical operations of Resonaari have highlighted phenomena that reflect a change in our conception of humanity, the most recent such phenomenon being the punk band **Pertti Kurikan Nimipäivät**, which represented Finland at the Eurovision Song Contest in 2015. All the members of the band have developmental disabilities, and some are alumni of Resonaari who became musicians thanks to the teaching they received there. (See also FMQ 2/2013.)

In addition to running a music school, Resonaari launched the **Resonaarigroup** project a couple of years ago with the idea of providing vocational education in music. The purpose of the project is for developmentally disabled persons to receive vocational tuition and to find employment as musicians. Two young men in the project have led music workshops for music education students at the University of the Arts Helsinki. They are distinctly unconventional in their personality and other characteristics if compared to a “normal” teacher, but they bring new ways of learning, communicating and understanding musical activities to the interaction situation, as the student – traditionally the one requiring teaching and support – takes on the role of the teacher.

Resonaari also helped launch **Riskiryhmä**, a rock group for elderly women. The members of this group had never had a meaningful relationship with music in their extensive life history; indeed, some of them had had negative experiences of music. Amateur musicianship at an advanced age has brought them gratification in learning new skills and has also improved their social life. Playing in a band has challenged them to surpass themselves. This serves to open up new perspectives for life after employment. Becoming a rock musician is also for them a tool for processing their personal experiences of ageing and their roles in society.

The notion that it is impossible to learn to play music at an advanced age is a white elephant in music education. It is why traditional music institutes offer no in-



struction for the elderly. Goal-orientated music education for the elderly will hopefully become more common in the future, and not only because it represents a step towards music education that not only is democratic but also embraces lifelong learning.

### Towards the music education of the future

The examples given above illustrate a chain of events where musical interaction in the here and now triggers an attitude change in the individual that reflects a broader change in education policy and ultimately a change in society at large. Our conception of human beings is shifting, and there are many weak signals that our attitudes to groups of people living in the margins

of society, such as the elderly and the developmentally disabled, are changing. Old stereotypes give way to new musical stories. Music education is facing issues that are far too complicated to be resolved in the context of the discourse on “musicality”, skill or talent that has conventionally governed practices and educational goals. The punks of Pertti Kurikan Nimipäivät, the elderly rock musicians of Riskiryhmä and the professional musicians trained by Resonaarigroup point the way towards the music education of the future.

The author has a MMus degree, is in the doctoral programme at the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki and is a project researcher with the ArtsEqual project.

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi



## Resonaari

- :: A Special Music Centre in Kulosaari in Helsinki.
- :: The music school unit offers instrumental tuition and teaching in the basics of music in one-on-one lessons and group lessons. The music school currently has about 200 students attending weekly lessons.
- :: The teaching draws on the Figurenotes system developed by Kaarlo Uusitalo.
- :: The centre also produces teaching materials, supports pedagogical research and development and offers complementary education in the field.
- :: [resonaari.fi](http://resonaari.fi)

## ArtsEqual

- :: The ArtsEqual project is coordinated by the University of the Arts Helsinki. Its purpose is to examine how art as a public service could contribute to social equality and well-being in Finland in the 2020s.
- :: One of the largest research projects on arts and art pedagogics in the history of Finland.
- :: The project period is six years (2015 to 2020).
- :: Funded by the Strategic Research Council of the Academy of Finland.
- :: [artsequal.fi](http://artsequal.fi)

# Recordings

Reviews by Martin Anderson (MA), Tove Djupsjöbacka (TD), Jan-Erik Holmberg (JEH), Hanna Isolammi (HI), Amanda Kauranne (AK), Lauri Kilpiö (LK), Sini Mononen (SM), Pierre Ringwald (PR), Petri Silas (PS), Fiona Talkington (FT), Juha Torvinen (JT). \*Translations: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

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## A musical force to be reckoned with



**OKRA PLAYGROUND - Turmio**  
OKRAPG-001

With *Turmio Okra Playground* have swept on to Finland's folk music scene with a distinctive celebration of Finnish traditions and stories driven by captivating energy and passion and an obvious historical perspective.

Their sound finds a heritage in the great work of *Värttinä*: a deep sense of narrative led by exquisite vocal lines ranging from the gentlest whisper to scary directness. With their enormous sensitivity and creative approach to instrumentation they are a musical force to be reckoned with. Jouhikko, kantele and accordion sit alongside contemporary percussion, keyboard and pulsing bass in magical textures with an admirable sense of space, swirling harmonies and hypnotic rhythms.

Many bands smother traditional music with an uncomfortable explosion of drums, bass and over-production but Okra Playground have rewritten the rules of how to be at the forefront of contemporary world music while remaining true to their roots. This album alone makes them true ambassadors for Finnish music. FT

## One of a kind

**PROJECT VAINIOLLA - Animus**  
Record Union

It is impossible to pigeon-hole **Kalle Vainio's** compositions into any particular genre; they take in everything from classical minimalism to film music and Nordic folk music. The *Animus* solo disc is a flowing listening experience whose sonorous tracks were created using a grand piano, various other kinds of pianos and more experimental acoustic keyboard instruments. The music has space, power and just the right amount of edge and quirkiness. Deceptively simple motifs create complex aural and emotional tapestries that draw the listener in to meditate silently on the palette of sounds.

AK\*

## Around the world

**TEHO MAJAMÄKI - Travelogue**  
Udu Mood Music UMMCD-004

Multi-instrumentalist **Teho Majamäki** has spent the past fifteen years collecting musical influences, tunes and sounds on his travels around the world. *Travelogue* is a melting pot of musical styles, traditions, languages and soundscapes. Across its eleven tracks, we hear Japanese, Finnish and English, besides a combination of pop, rock and sounds from traditional music. Swinging guest artists include sax player **Linda Fredriksson**, rap artist **Paleface** and **Ville Valo**. SM\*



## Having some defun

### DEFUNENSEMBLE – Define Function

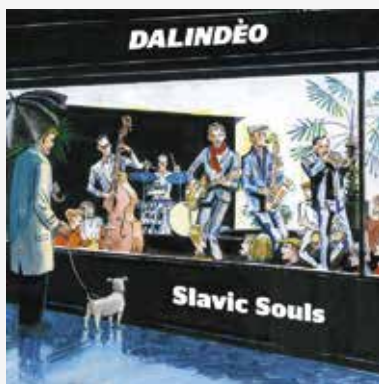
Jodlowski: Dialog/No Dialog; Pattar: Chaman; Poppe: Arbeit I-III; van der Aa: Oog; Barrett: Liquid Chrystal; Raasakka: Erinnerung; Page: Curl; Nuorvala: Boost; Puumala: Bassfortel; Klemola: Feed  
 Hanna Kinnunen (flute, alto flute), Mikko Raasakka (clarinet, bass clarinet), Lily-Marlene Puusepp (harp, electroacoustic harp), Emil Holmström (piano, keyboard), Markus Hohti (cello), Sami Klemola (electric guitar, crackle box), Anders Pohjola (electronics), Timo Kurkikangas (electronics), Marko Myöhänen (electronics)  
 SibaRecords SRCD-1014

**defunensemble** is a Finnish group specialising in electroacoustic music. This new double CD introduces the ensemble's versatility. One of the discs displays works for solo instruments and electronics, while the other is built around various ensemble configurations.

In **Jodlowski's** *Dialog/No Dialog*, **Hanna Kinnunen's** flute and electronic material form a seamless whole. After **Pattar's** harp patters, rendered sharply by **Lily-Marlene Puusepp**, **Emil Holmström** makes the best of **Poppe's** unwittingly humorous *Arbeit*. **Markus Hohti's** fierce cello dominates in **van der Aa's** *Oog* – a work with some really nice surprises.

On the second CD, **Nuorvala**, master of microtonality and out-of-the-box tunings, wipes away the dust with his *Boost*. **Klemola's** noise-music work *Feed* deploys the recording's largest ensemble configuration.

This is quite a lot for a listener to chew on. Buy this record if you want to know how the premier league of Finnish performers of contemporary music play. Sounds and overall production are of a top quality, especially on the first CD. **JT**



## Cinematic atmospherics and dance floor burners

### DALINDÈÒ – Slavic Souls

KHY Suomen Musiikki

On *Slavic Souls*, **Dalindèò** continue to experiment with the musical influences – jazz, '50s r&b and '60s surf in particular – which defined their award-winning album *Kallio*. Bandleader **Valtteri Pöyhönen's** reverberating guitar riffs weave their way through jazzy horn arrangements that are backed by a formidable rhythm section that struts, grooves, slinks and swings throughout.

This time round, however, **Dalindèò** have pushed the cinematic atmospherics into the foreground, resulting in an album that conjures up a 1950s slice of cloak-and-dagger cinema that never was. A notable addition to this album is soprano **Anna-Kristiina Kaappola**, whose voice adds a thrillingly eerie quality to album-opener *Avalanche* and *Tell Me*. Indeed, it isn't hard to imagine such tunes catching the ear of the music-loving film director **Quentin Tarantino**, who has often shown a particular affection for the genres **Dalindèò** draw upon so masterfully. And while it is easy to imagine the music of *Slavic Souls* as a soundtrack, there are a number of tunes which are bound to please those looking for dance floor burners, including *Johnny's Nightmare*, which features a bopping, growling saxophone solo from **Pope Puolitaival**, and *Tarantella Finlandese*, a tune that will have feet tapping from the get-go with its handclapping, bongo-driven groove.

With all that *Slavic Souls* has to offer, it seems destined to receive at least as many accolades as its predecessor – and deservedly so. **PR**



60

FMQ :: spring 2016

## Details and dramaturgy

**LINDBERG:** *Al largo*; Cello Concerto No. 2; Era Anssi Karttunen (cello), Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, cond. Hannu Lintu Ondine ODE 1281-5

**Magnus Lindberg** is like wine: he gets better with age. (Yes, there is *Kraft*, but there is beaujolais nouveau, too.) If the metaphor of organicity makes any sense with music, it does so in Lindberg. Tiny motifs, presented at the outset, are treated in such a way that you can really hear them growing and mutating.

Akin to wine, the intoxicating and sustaining effects come with a delay. The stunning dramatic arcs of *Al largo*, for example, take some four minutes to develop. These larger structures bind all the tiny but developing details together. Organicity can even exceed the boundaries of individual works. The Cello Concerto No. 2 draws on Lindberg's previous compositions, and *Era* takes the whole tradition of Romantic orchestral music as its starting point.

All in all, in Lindberg's music one can listen to either the richness of details, the refined dramaturgy or the allusions to musical culture and history. Isn't this almost a definition of great music? **Anssi Karttunen** performs impeccably, and **Hannu Lintu** never disappoints. JT

## A tribute to collaboration

**SAARIAHO:** *Let the wind speak*

Tocar; Mirrors I; Couleurs du vent; Sombre I–III; Dolce tormento; Mirrors III; Oi Kuu; Laconisme de l'aile; Mirrors II  
Camilla Hoitenga (flutes); Anssi Karttunen (cello 2, 8, 9, 11); Daniel Belcher (baritone 4–6); Héloïse Dautry (harp 1); Da Camera of Houston (4–6)  
Ondine ODE 1276-2

Compiled by the flutist **Camilla Hoitenga**, *Let the wind speak* is a disc with a balanced selection of some of **Kaija Saariaho's** most intimate compositions for flute, from piccolo to bass flute.

This could be described as a tribute to the collaboration of Hoitenga and Saariaho, as the flutist's touch is apparent in most of the works featured here. *Tocar* for flute and harp, an almost traditional virtuoso piece, was arranged by Hoitenga, as was *Oi Kuu* (*O moon*), technically the most diverse piece on this album, for bass flute and cello. The disc is framed by three versions of *Mirrors* – by Saariaho, by Hoitenga and by cellist **Anssi Karttunen**. At the core of the disc, we find *Sombre I–III* for bass flute, baritone and ensemble. There are also solo works written for Hoitenga and *Laconisme de l'aile*, the work that inaugurated this fruitful relationship.

The order of the pieces on the disc is particularly satisfying, its contrasts pointing up the surprisingly diverse range of colour. A special commendation should be given for the booklet, which contains an interesting interview with Camilla Hoitenga. HI

## A visionary disc for an anniversary year

**KAMUS QUARTET:** *Different Voices*

Sibelius: *Voces intimae*; Kaipainen: String Quartet no. 7 *Batsheba*; Tiensuu: *Rack*.  
Alba ABCD 383

The **Kamus Quartet** are on a roll, combining the enthusiasm and relaxed attitude of youth with the maturity of experience. The quartet made an invigorating contribution to the **Jean Sibelius** 150th anniversary year by releasing a disc juxtaposing Sibelius's string quartet *Voces intimae* with new Finnish works in the genre.

Enigmatic, introvert and sombre, *Voces intimae* (1908–09) is closely related to Sibelius's Fourth Symphony in date and in spirit. The Kamus Quartet give the work a lively, intense and soaring reading that is meticulously faithful to the score.

String Quartet no. 7 *Batsheba* (2013) by **Jouni Kaipainen** is a manifestation of Schoenbergian Expressionism skilfully written for string quartet, reflecting the moods of the eponymous novel by Finnish author **Volter Kilpi** passionately and expressively. *Rack* (2008) by **Jukka Tiensuu** is a clear, concise and energetic work in which the string quartet is used as a super-instrument to produce fogs of flageolets, spectral sounds, micro-intervals and glissandi. The Kamus Quartet are equally punchy and powerful in these contemporary works. LK\*



## Squeezebox stunners

### MIKA VÄYRYNEN: *Danse Macabre*

Galynin: Sonata in B minor; Sallinen: Adagio No. 1; Preludes and Fugues; Grieg: Lyric Pieces; Korpijaakko: Peer Gynt Fantasy; Väyrynen: Three Finnish Folksongs; Lyytikäinen: The Sound of Ice; Rachmaninov: Vocalise; Saint-Saëns: Danse macabre  
Mika Väyrynen (accordion)  
Finnish Accordion Institute FAICD-26

Mika Väyrynen intercalates some astonishing transcriptions with original accordion works in one of the most satisfying recital CDs to come my way in years. The erstwhile piano textures of Galynin, Grieg, Rachmaninov and Saint-Saëns acquire additional clarity and punch on the accordion, and Sallinen's understated but moving *Adagio* loses nothing of its organ dignity.

Paavo Korpijaakko's *Peer Gynt Fantasy* (Väyrynen's commission) might seem to occupy the middle ground between transcription and original music, but Korpijaakko so thoroughly reworks Grieg's themes that he makes them his own; Väyrynen's own *Three Finnish Folksongs* (2011) likewise move from simplicity to complexity. Of the other original works, the last section of Sallinen's *Preludes and Fugues* (2009) somehow mixes deep feeling with a taste of tango.

Pasi Lyytikäinen's *The Sound of Ice* (2013), a kind of tone-poem, seems too fascinated with the sound of the accordion to do much with it, but it's the only work here that didn't leave me slack-jawed with amazement at Väyrynen's blend of textual clarity and dazzling virtuosity.

MA

## Booze and politics

### HOFMANN: *Ahti Karjalainen – Elämä, Kekkonen ja teot*

Juha Hurme (libretto)  
Herman Wallen (baritone), Anu Korsi (soprano), Pia Korsi (soprano & cello), Annika Mylläri (soprano), Kakkola Opera Ensemble, cond. Erkki Lasonpalo  
Alba Records ABCD 381

Ahti Karjalainen was a Finnish politician famous for his complicated relationship with the long-term president of Finland, Urho Kekkonen, and for an equally complicated relationship with alcohol. No wonder, then, that Heinz-Juhani Hofmann's opera *Ahti Karjalainen – Life, Kekkonen and Works* is probably the first instance where booze is among the characters of an operatic work.

The premiere of the work in 2012 was received well both in Finland and abroad. Indeed, this recording shows how the work hardly leaves anyone untouched. It's effective, unique, irritating and fascinating.

Remarkably, there is almost no singing in the traditional sense of the word. Multiply Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* by five. Whether this is an opera, a form of music theatre, a happening or an extravaganza does not matter. What matters is that the radicalness of Hofmann's music and the social criticism of Juha Hurme's libretto create a whole that is, in the perspective of Finnish political history, analogous to the kind of shambles Karjalainen's life was between political left and right, the Soviets and the West, and Kekkonen and booze.

Anything can happen at any time.

JT

## Mozart mastery

### MOZART: *Piano Concertos 11–13*

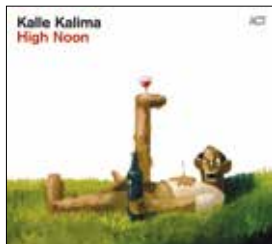
Kalle Randalu (piano), Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, cond. Juha Kangas  
Alba ABCD 378

It has taken a surprisingly long time for cross-Baltic recording projects to crop up in the lists. Ondine was in there in the early years of freedom, releasing Tubin's operas *The Parson of Reigi* in 1992 and *Barbara von Tisenhusen* soon afterwards; Kutavičius's opera *The Bear* followed a decade later; and there have been a number of less ambitious projects before and since. But though Baltic musicians often perform together in concert, they don't seem to share studio space very often.

This release confirms that odd fact: Kalle Randalu (one of Estonia's finest pianists) and Juha Kangas have been working together in public for many years but this is their first joint recording.

These three concertos were conceived as a set, in the order 12–11–13, which Randalu and Kangas invert, turning the series into a vast symphonic triptych with an internal logic of its own and an extraordinary sense of scale and grandeur. Mozart was only in his mid-twenties, but there's a calm authority here which these admirable readings – unhurried but dramatically alert – capture in all its easy dignity.

MA



## First-class Björkenheim

**RAOUL BJÖRKENHEIM ECSTASY – Out of the Blue**

Cuneiform Rune 413

As expected, the Finnish-American jazz guitar hero does not brake a whole lot on eCsTaSy's *Out of the Blue*. Raoul Björkenheim and his cohorts, Pauli Lyytinen (saxophones), Jori Huhtala (double bass) and Markku Ounaskari (drums), make sharp turns but never miss a corner.

The music is full of spirit and imagination, ranging stylistically from freefall to disciplined but personal, straight-ahead ensemble play. *Quintrille* swings hard, and yes, in five, with both Björkenheim and Lyytinen screaming out loud. Besides saxes of the usual sizes, Lyytinen also plays bass saxophone and ney (an ancient flute) on the album. *A Fly in the House of Love* is solemn and crepuscular in a slightly dusty way, while *Uptown* catches all the excitement of an unruly urban scene.

All friends of Björkenheim's vast catalogue should find this record very satisfactory and well up to his high standards.

JEH

## Western & Jazz

**KALLE KALIMA – High Noon**

ACT 9596-2

Berlin-resident guitarist Kalle Kalima goes west. Along with his associates Greg Cohen (double bass) and Max Andrzejewski (drums) he plays both kinds of music on *High Noon*. But it's not Country & Western; it's more like Western & Jazz.

Kalima is famed for his industrially rocking power trios and murky music with notes in between scales, sometimes inspired by films. Once again movies are a starting point, but now they play familiar themes from flicks like *The High and the Mighty* or *The Alamo*. Amid the ever-so-green melodies he explores Sibelius and Leonard Cohen. Strangely enough, they fit. The record is quite guitar-centric, with solos starting in classic fingerpickin' styles, but moving along towards experimental issues.

However, this record is nearer the mainstream than most of Kalima's albums. It has to be mentioned that bass man Cohen is something of a veteran, having worked with names such as John Zorn, Ornette Coleman, Woody Allen, Tom Waits and Elvis Costello.

JEH

## Nordic Cool

**TEDDY'S WEST COASTERS – Volume 2**

KHY Suomen Musiikki KHYCD070

Teddy's West Coasters' *Volume 2*, like its predecessor, pays homage to the West Coast Cool of the 1950s American jazz scene, an era which has clearly captured the imagination of bandleader/composer/arranger Teppo Mäkynen.

The album opens with the suitably restrained *The Mood is Mellow*, which charms with breathy solos from Jukka Eskola (trumpet) and Jukka Perko (clarinet). This cool restraint is maintained until the brass-driven crescendos of *Saviour* which, in turn, prepare the way for the irresistible groove of *Out of this World* – a product of Mäkynen's driving kit work, Antti Lötjönen's pulsing bass line and Kasper Sarikoski's insistent cowbell pattern.

However, the closing minutes of the track return the album to cooler territory, just in time for the laid-back, finger snap-inducing *Culver Loop (part 2)*, which includes some fantastic saxophone work from Ville Vannemaa. The album returns to up-tempo territory on *Neutra*, which provides Mäkynen with the opportunity to lay down the kind of driving, swinging performance that has made him an audience favourite.

By the album's end, Teddy's West Coasters have established beyond a doubt that Nordic Cool can generate heat just as well as its distant American relative.

PR



## A perfect balance between restraint and abandon

**JOONAS HAAVISTO TRIO** – *Oku*  
Fredriksson Music FRMCD016

Joonas Haavisto's latest album *Oku* is an outstanding trio recording. From the opening track *One For Jean*, Haavisto's compositions reveal a confident musical vision – there are no desperate-to-impress wild flourishes, idiosyncratic rhythmic departures or endless cascades of notes. Instead, from one tune to the next, Haavisto (accompanied by the always excellent Antti Lötjönen on bass and Joonas Riippa on drums) achieves a perfect balance between restraint and abandon.

From the gliding, melancholic lines of *Frozen* to the sharp rhythms of *Xibalba* (complemented by some taut, snappy drum work from Riippa), Haavisto's compositions neither underwhelm nor overpower the listener. This is perhaps most evident on *Singularity*, his first recorded solo composition, which achieves an almost contemplative quality at times and yet does so without resorting to a sterile sparseness. Equally impressive is *Band Wagon* – a tune that Riippa and Lötjönen build up into a rolling groove over which Haavisto delivers a joyous solo.

In a world that seems overpopulated by piano trios, Haavisto's trio has achieved a distinct voice on this recording.

PR

## Songs with thoughts

**VIRVA QUINTET** – *Fly*  
Eclipse ECD-201634

I cannot claim that this debut album by the young Finnish Estonian singer and composer Virva Immonen sounds that surprising or different. The difference to the plethora of Finnish vocal jazz records issued in the last years would rather reside in the lyrics than music. Some of the lyrics are topical and societal, though not very controversial. The music has a contemporary jazz sound, comprising pop and folk elements. The band of Estonian musicians sounds healthy. Especially notable is Keio Vutt's strong saxophone playing. Although a bit lacking in originality, this record still is a worthy first effort.

JEH

## For brain and heart

**AKI RISSANEN** – *Amorandom*  
Edition EDN1067

Pianist Aki Rissanen, bassist Antti Lötjönen and drummer Teppo Mäkynen are top-notch players, very much in demand. On *Amorandom*, Rissanen's canny music is rooted in the piano trio tradition but is nevertheless forward-looking. Part of the music began as an audiovisual concept combining live music with animations by Tuula Leinonen and Eero Peränne. The music certainly leads its own life now. It's a rich and rewarding sea of sounds that certainly activates the grey matter.

JEH

## Playfully seductive

**MIRJA MÄKELÄ TRIO** – *My Hidden Joys*  
Secret Music SMCD002

Mirja Mäkelä Trio's *My Hidden Joys* is a beautifully crafted album which showcases both Mäkelä's songwriting skills and her vocal prowess. Highlights include *Nautin Salaa* (*My Hidden Joys*), which Mäkelä renders playfully seductive without resorting to vocal affectations, and *Kevättalvi*, a scat performance which descends into ape-like chatter at one point. Bassist Juho Kivivuori and guitarist Teemu Viinikainen weave rhythms and melodies that neither overwhelm nor sit politely in the background.

PR

## Experimental solo project

**PAULI LYYTINEN MACHINERY**  
Eclipse Music

Pauli Lyytinen Machinery consists of eight solo saxophone performances involving effects played through vintage guitar amps. While the application of electronic effects to acoustic instruments can seem superfluous at best, Lyytinen's compositions never lose sight of the saxophone itself. Highlights include *Return of the Mosquito*, which recreates the maddening sounds of swarming mosquitos in an oddly compelling fashion, and *Machinery*, whose layered loops and live playing result in a twitching metallic funk.

PR



## A beguiling and compulsive musical journey

**SANNA KURKI-SUONION KUOLEMATON ERIKOISYSTEEMI**  
Rockadillo Records ZENCD2161

**Sanna Kurki-Suonio** is a singer who moves with elegance and authority between genres, always retaining her distinctive musical identity. Her highly respected work with the legendary *Hedningarna* in the 1990s gave her international recognition and since then she has forged a career spanning rock to folk.

This album, about love, takes its texts from the *Kanteletar*, from the poems of **Aulikki Oksanen** and, as she says, “from my own head”. She uses the power of her whole vocal range and exquisite articulation to show many facets of love: fiendish spells, heartbreaking goodbyes, sometimes sultry or sinister, sometimes mischievous and coquettish. *Häävalssi* is a distracted wedding waltz, heartbeats meeting eerie kantele. *Manan Matti* is a bubbling cauldron of subtle effects inhabiting a world of vipers and worms, and *Aspis-Saatana* is a deep-throated warning to anyone attracted to a travelling fiddler.

It’s enough to say “this is Sanna” because that means, as ever, a beguiling and compulsive musical journey. FT

## Feel the folk song

**FREIJA - Liki**  
Capo Records CRCD-315

The folk music quartet **Freija** celebrated ten years together last year and has clearly found its niche. There are surprisingly few bands out there exploring the field of newer folk songs in Finnish, some of them well known, some of them totally unknown. What’s a folk song? Freija’s answer is broad enough to include both songs in Kalevala metre and evergreens, and both fit the band very well. **Maija Karhinen-Ilo** has one of the subtlest and most beautiful voices in the field, being nicely present in the song without any unnecessary vocal acrobatics.

**Arto Anttila** (bass), **Matti Laitinen** (guitar) and **Lassi Logrén** (fiddle etc.) complete the whole with strong instrumental skills as well as great harmony singing. They all have a personal playing style on their instrument, Logrén for example specialising in very tight, rhythmic riffs. Laitinen uses his special guitar tuning to provide an intense and broad sound.

An elegant and well-balanced recording, though there are not as many arrangement treats as on their last, fantastic CD *Sydänjuurilla* (2011). TD

## Sunlight therapy straight into the heart

**JUHA KUJANPÄÄ - Kultasiipi (Goldwing)**  
Eclipse Music

Composer and keyboard player **Juha Kujanpää** and his six-member ensemble turn out a special blend of progressive rock, jazz and Nordic folk music. The catchy tunes on the *Kultasiipi* album vary from whimsical to solemn, from sensitive and profound tranquillity to the howl of guitars. The music is colourful and captivates the listener, because every sound on the album works – from three fiddlers breathing in unison to the grunge of the rock trio to rich keyboard timbres to the sampled sounds of a jetty squeaking in the waves. An energising experience. AK\*

## Sound blessing

**VILMA TIMONEN QUARTET - Drops**  
Bafe’s Factory MBA008

**Vilma Timonen** is one of the pioneers in bringing the kantele forwards as an amplified band instrument, equal to the others in her quartet, consisting of **Topi Korhonen** (guitar, mandolin, trumpet) as well as new members **Jaakko Kämäräinen** (bass) and **Tuomas Timonen** (drums). The sound they achieve together on their third album is quite a blessing, and Timonen offers both jazzy atmosphere as well as some traditional playing. She sings nicely as well, but the singing easily sounds somewhat frozen, instead of really telling a story. TD





## The conjuring of the end

**HEXVESSEL - When We Are Death**  
Century Media Records

Are we becoming death itself? **Hexvessel's** view on the matter involves no ifs, only whens. The message of the group's environmentalist-psychedelic folk is that it is only a matter of time before the human race makes its world an impossible place to live in. But, as they say, there is still magic in the world. We, being "drugged up on the universe", remain part of earth, cosmos, death and rebirth, eternal recurrence. And music is one way to reach the place and state where we are "pure and real".

*When We Are Death* continues along the path opened by their previous full album, *No Holier Temple*. Hexvessel's music echoes many popular musical influences and age-old nature mysticism, but with a distinctive musical tone and a burningly topical, albeit often disguised message. This time the rock influences are more prominent than the folk ones. We hear demonic riffs, unrefined guitar tones, psychedelic Farfisa organs, texts with flavours of mysticism, philosophy and sober hallucinations – added to an almost obsessive relationship with trees.

Sounds are lo-fi but subtle enough to make it difficult to say whether this is intentional or not. Anyway, the production suits the music. Hexvessel is undoubtedly one of the most praiseworthy acts of the Finnish contemporary folk/rock scene. **JT**

## Romantic drifting

**THE SCENES - Drugs, Sex and Modern Art**  
BB\*ISLAND

**The Scenes** comes from northern Finland and is in many respects a Romantic band. The guitarist and lyricist, **Miki Liukkonen**, is a young superstar in Finnish poetry, yet the band's lyrics are not like contemporary poetry. Instead, they have an affinity with avant-garde rock and the icons of alternative music: love, Calvin Klein aftershave and general drifting. Shades of 1970s New York and guitar-driven indie rock break up the melodic lines. **SM\***

## Electro takes flight

**RONYA - Tides**  
Cocoa Music

**Ronya's** second album is a feast of retro sounds. 1980s synthesiser pop shows its presence in the vocal parts, rhythms and melodic lines. An injection of modern indie updates the retro electro sound: the 21st century brings in bouncy, light rhythmic patterns. **Ronya** is at her best in classical, stylistically pure material where her voice can soar. She is an expressive singer, and her vocal chops are displayed to great effect for instance on the single *Work Harder*, a bubbly melody over steadily intensifying electro rhythms. **SM\***

## A sum much larger than its parts

**SWALLOW THE SUN - Songs from the North I, II & III**  
Century Media

At first it seemed like **Swallow the Sun** would get it all on a silver platter. The original metal band founded in 2000 garnered international praise with its early albums and high-class mix of death and doom metal and vintage progressive rock. After a rough patch of three albums and two disastrous US tours, guitarist, songwriter and bandleader **Juha Raivio** ushers the band back with a grandiose set of three albums. And the gamble pays off: the discs stand alone as separate entities, yet complement each other in a unique, unprecedented and unforgettable manner. **Juha Raivio** remains a metal auteur of the highest order. **PS**

## Productive underground

**HUGE L - Snuff Audio**  
Monsp MONSP373

Sometimes an artist is so productive that no record label can keep up. **Huge L** has been active in underground rap for a long time. Between 2008 and 2014, he released solo material and collaborative projects on the Monsp label. Today, he is back to self-publishing, and on *Snuff Audio* he raps in a relaxed way about the urban environment, suburbs and everyday life. His samples are jazzy fragments from a scratchy C cassette, cocktails of film music and schlagers. **SM\***

## Finnish opera is alive and well

Elke Albrecht & Eeva-Taina Forsius-Schibli (eds.): *Olemme oopperamaa*

In English: Finland – A Nation of Opera

In German: Finnland – Land der Oper

Kulttuuriosuuskunta Vehrä 2014. 227 pp.

Elke Albrecht and Eeva-Taina Forsius-Schibli have edited a compilation of essays from nineteen Finnish composers on their operas and their thoughts about opera, *Finland – A nation of opera*. Judging by this book, contemporary Finnish opera – referring here to the period between 1963 and 2014 – is alive and well. New operas are commissioned, written and performed quite regularly in Finland. Considerable production resources are available, and even major works can be staged. On the other hand, we also read here of operas remaining unperformed and production processes suffering from delays and difficulties. The nature of opera as a collaborative artwork is made clear: an opera composer can and must deal with a large number of performers and people from other branches of the arts. Creating an opera requires a crowd of people who have faith in the composer's vision. As the book demonstrates, such faith is in gratifyingly good supply in Finland.

The composers take different perspectives in their essays. Some describe the genesis of their operas, their subject matter or their musical decisions in detail, while others discuss opera in general. The literary quality of the texts varies considerably. The essays by Kalevi Aho, Mikko Heiniö, Veli-Matti Puumala and Kaija Saariaho, for instance, are excellent examples of music essays, interestingly entwining the personal with the universal. Some of the others are an unstructured, mind-numbing stream of consciousness. The editors gave the contributors considerable liberties and made a

conscious decision to edit the texts as little as possible.

No explanation for the selection of writers is offered in the introduction. Experience of writing operas for largish productions would seem to have been a criterion, since there are no composers here who have only written chamber operas. This is a pity, because contributions from, say, Perttu Haapanen, Juhani Nuorvala or Lotta Wennäkoski would have broadened the spectrum of Finnish contemporary opera as displayed in this book. As it is, the selection is largely rather conservative: there is little questioning of the criteria of a good opera; there is a firm belief in narratives and traditional drama; and historical and mythical subjects are favoured. It should be noted, though, that several writers call for modern audiovisual technology to be used more on the opera stage.

The book argues persuasively that opera, far from being an anachronism, is a blend of music, text, drama and image that can move people profoundly even in our day and age. The history of opera – also of Finnish opera – goes on.

Lauri Kilpiö is a composer and Lecturer in Composition at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki.

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi



# Music, philosophy, the flow of life

BY SINI MONONEN

**Susanna Välimäki: *Muutoksen musiikki. Pervoja ja ekologisia utopioita audiovisuaalisessa kulttuurissa.*** (In Finnish; *Music of Transformation: Queer and Ecological Utopias in Audiovisual Culture*) Tampere University Press 2015, 339 pp.

**Art is a way of thinking and of organising the world.** This is the starting point for *Muutoksen musiikki* by **Susanna Välimäki**, in which the author explores current philosophical and social issues through music and audiovisual art. The environmental crisis, the rights of people of other gender and movements of the mind are analysed here through the flow, harmony and dynamic of music, through the sound of moments and through the flexibility of sound.

Susanna Välimäki is a docent and lecturer in music who has previously written diversely on phenomena in the culture of sound. Her earlier work feeding into *Muutoksen musiikki* includes the psychoanalytical study of music, the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger, new audiovisual aesthetics and eco-musicological research. Heidegger's idea of art as the catalyst of thinking is particularly important. By examining art, we can discover how humanity has become alienated from nature – the first environment of its existence – and from itself.

The examples given in Välimäki's book are all well-known audiovisual works, mostly films and TV series but also including one theatre production. The book opens with a description of the depiction of homosexual themes in the HBO hit TV series *Angels in America*. The key concept is the “queer ear”, which guides interpretation of the series from the perspective of other gender. The book further includes a discussion of the journey of a trans person from one gender to another in the TV series *Transamerica*, the restrictive force of sexual norms in the film *The Hours* and how human beings relate to the world in the films *The Tree of Life* and *The New World* by **Terrence Malick**.

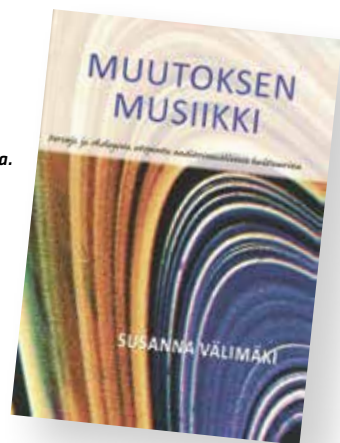
The acclaimed production of *Tuntematon sotilas* (*The Unknown Soldier*) directed by **Kristian Smeds** at the

Finnish National Theatre revealed the cultural foundation of Finnishness and Finnish nationalism. Välimäki discusses how the music and sound of that production reflect an individual's position in society and our role as builders of a (national) identity. She sees the production as a critical parody that sets up and shoots down the conventional symbols of Finnishness, one after the other. Sibelius's *Finlandia* takes on a completely new hue when juxtaposed with the sample-and-remix anthem *Ihanaa Leijonaa ihanaa* (Wonderful, lions, wonderful), created to celebrate Finland's historical victory in the World Ice Hockey Championships in 1995.

*Muutoksen musiikki* weaves together several themes from Susanna Välimäki's earlier research. The book is an approachable discussion of current philosophy and new themes in musicological research in Finland and abroad. The nation state, gender equality and the relationship of human beings to nature are themes that are very much of this day. Välimäki avoids pushing her topics into the margins. Her examples are works seen and heard by large audiences. She shows how culture shapes our view of the world and can thus challenge conventional thinking. Gender, nature, humanity's place in the world and how we comprehend life and its progress form a process that is in constant motion and constantly shifting shape. In *Muutoksen musiikki*, music, sound and the rhythm and flow of life merge into a thinking exploring new ways of living.

Sini Mononen is a musicologist and art critic.

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi



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## Finnish Music Quarterly

**Editor-in-Chief** Anu Ahola, [anu.ahola@fmq.fi](mailto:anu.ahola@fmq.fi) **Editor** Hanna Isolammi, [editor@fmq.fi](mailto:editor@fmq.fi) **Graphic Design** Saku Heinänen **Art Director** Timo Jaakola **Printing** Kirjapaino Uusimaa, Porvoo **Financial coordination** [talous@musicfinland.fi](mailto:talous@musicfinland.fi) **Editorial address** Finnish Music Quarterly (FMQ) c/o Music Finland, Urho Kekkosen katu 2C, FI-00100, Finland, [fmq@fmq.fi](mailto:fmq@fmq.fi), tel. +358 (0)20 730 2230, fax +358 (0)20 730 2231 [www.fmq.fi](http://www.fmq.fi) **ISSN** 0782-1069 **Publisher** Music Finland **Partners** Finnish Musicians' Union, the Sibelius Academy, The Society of Finnish Composers. **Editorial Board** Tove Djupsjöbacka, Kimmo Hakola (Chair), Lauri Kilpiö, Matti Nives, Taina Riikonen, Johanna Viksten. **Subscriptions** One year (2 issues) Finland € 24, EU € 30 (+ VAT. 24 %), other countries € 30, Subscriptions, inquiries and changes of address: Mia Lehtonen, [fmq@fmq.fi](mailto:fmq@fmq.fi) **Advertisements** Full page €500, Half page €300 **Publication schedule** Autumn:16: October 2016 **Cover illustration** Minna Luoma



# Arts Without Borders?

## Perspectives on Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity in and through the Arts October 19-22, 2016

An international conference hosted by the University of the Arts Helsinki, CERADA (Center for Educational Research and Academic Development in the Arts), ArtsEqual, Hollo Institute and The Finnish Society for Research in Art Education

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We are experiencing a renaissance in the power of the arts, even where political will is lacking. Artists increasingly make their own futures and work collaboratively across disciplines. Dimensions of creativity and innovation, empowered learning, distributed and ethical leadership, and entrepreneurship and activism, all of which are embedded within artistic practices, are being recognized as critical to contemporary societies in diverse ways.

This international conference will explore the potential and challenges of interdisciplinarity, and the full scope of the performing and visual arts in discovering new territories and evolving beyond existing paradigms.

### Conference themes:

- Collaborative processes, conflict and leadership: leveraging individual and collective expertise, empowering new knowledge and enabling the full potential of the arts
- Improvisation, creativity and innovation: exploring tensions between traditional and contemporary practices, notated repertoire and making new work.
- Connecting the arts beyond their own disciplines: new visions for breaking through professional silos and embracing diversity
- Rethinking paradigms of purpose in the arts: dimensions of quality, entrepreneurship, impact and activism

For more information go to: [www.uniarts.fi/arts-without-borders](http://www.uniarts.fi/arts-without-borders) · For further details please contact: [katja.thomson@uniarts.fi](mailto:katja.thomson@uniarts.fi)

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