

# Polska Travels: Finland

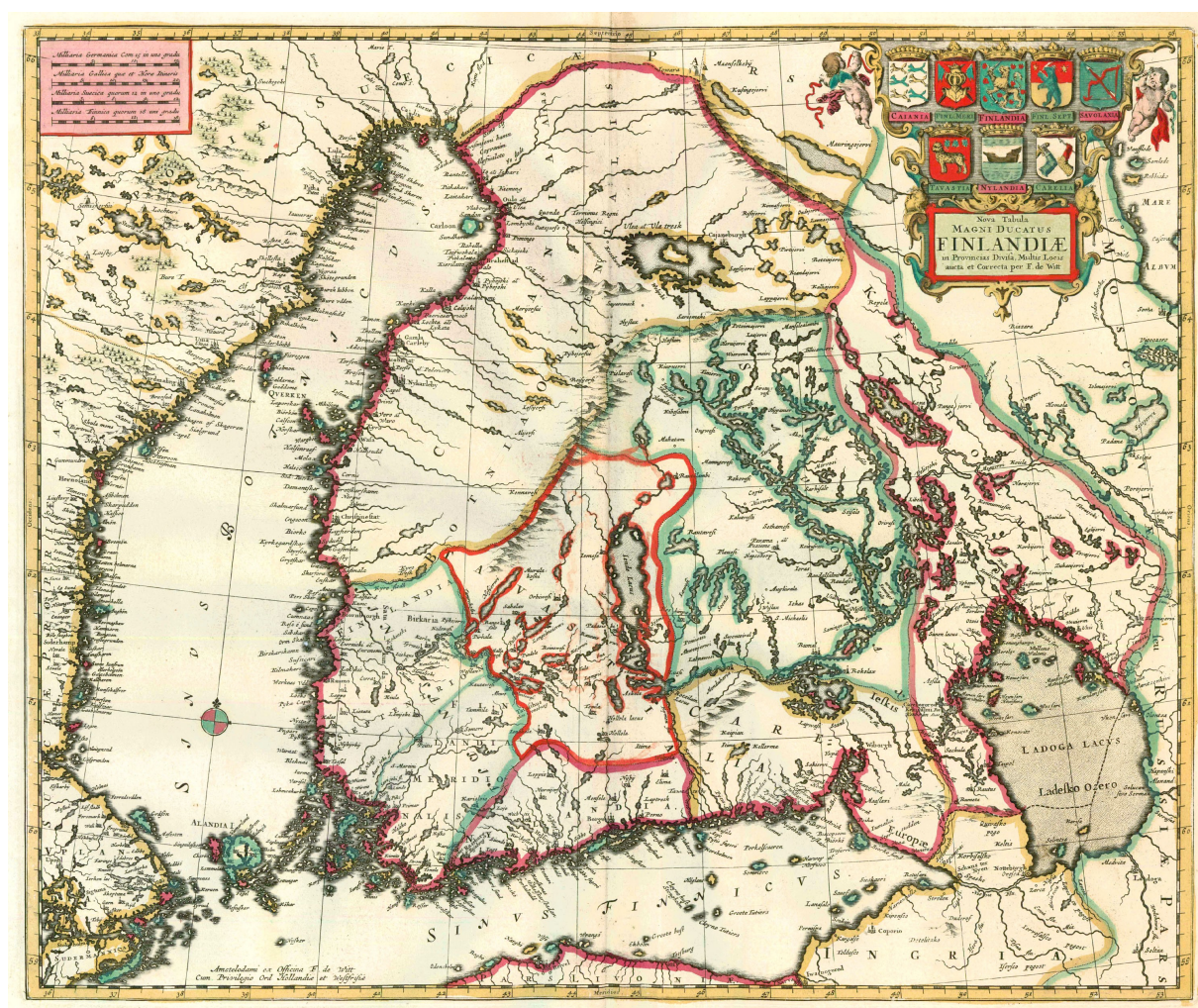
## *Finnish Folk music for a Baroque Orchestra*

19.1.2017, h. 19:00

Camerata, Musiikkitalo, Helsinki

*SibA FolkBaroque string orchestra, on period instruments*

*feat. Peter Spissky, James Kahane, Arto Järvelä, Ilkka Heinonen*



*Polska travels* is a journey on the wings of the most popular Nordic folk dance tune, a programme that explores its arrival on Finnish shores in baroque times and attempts its reinvention. The eloquence of baroque period strings meets the groove of foot-tapping dances, blended and transformed into arrangements and compositions which pay a tribute to the giant stature of Baroque composers on one side and the inextinguishable repertoire of the distinctive Finnish folklore on the other, the fruit of Krishna Nagaraja's first year of doctoral research.

## PROGRAMME

### A German suite

Georg Muffat (1653-1704) "Splendidae Nuptiae" from *Florilegium Secundum* (1698)

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) Overture/Suites TWV 55

- I. Muffat: Overture
- II. Muffat: Les Païsans
- III. Telemann: Polonoise TWV 55:g1
- IV. Muffat: Les Cavalliers
- V. Muffat: Menuet 1
- VI. Telemann: Polonoise TWV 55:D13

### A Finnish suite (2016)

Trad. Finnish/arr. Krishna Nagaraja (1975)

- I. Overture-Fugue-Lentement
- II. Polonesses
- III. Minuet from Oravais: Gammel Torsin
- IV. Polonesses
- V. Minuet from Jeppo: Gästbåds annandagsmenuett
- VI. Karhunkulma: Karhunpeijaispolska/Bear dance at Kengis
- VII. Dantz/Polonesse/Double/Polonesse

*Interval*

### Lappfjärd set (2016)

Trad. Finnish/arr. Krishna Nagaraja (1975)

### The 2½ Seasons - Concerto for Jouhikko and (possibly Baroque) string orchestra (2017)

Krishna Nagaraja (1975)

- I. Syksy
- II. Talvi
- III. Kevät
- IV. Kesä

### EastWest

Improvisation on two Finnish folk tunes

## Programme Notes

How did the polska dance (or "polonesse") arrive to Finland? One theory suggests that it undertook a direct travel from Poland to Finland through the court musicians that followed the Swedish Duke John of Finland and his Polish wife Katarina Jagellonica when they settled in Turku castle (1562-1563). Another theory proposes an indirect route from Poland to Sweden during the joint Polish-Swedish reign of Sigismund III Vasa (1592-1599) and from Sweden to Finland during the seventeenth century or later. The first part of the programme focuses on the historical period when the migration may have happened, namely the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and juxtaposes two examples of orchestral dance suites.

The German suite is a collection of dances freely taken from the works of two crucial German composers in the history of orchestral dance music: Muffat and Telemann. Georg Muffat was an important link in establishing the French style in Germany: the French-German axis was an element of contrast to the contemporary Polish dance taste that spread across Scandinavia from Poland, both directly and through the Dresden court. A noted figure in the Dresdner Hofkapelle, Georg Philipp Telemann had spent many years working in Poland, where he gained copious first-hand experience of the Polish rhythms that he later suggested as "a healthy countermeasure to the prevailing French and Italian style". As a consequence, we can find eight *polonoises* within the number of his Orchestral Suites or Overtures, two of which are presented here.

No such work as an orchestral suite seems to have been composed during the Baroque period in the land we now call Finland: the Finnish suite, arranged in the Baroque style especially for this concert, is a collection of dances where each movement is based on one or more traditional Finnish tunes selected from old sources or from the common traditional repertoire. In the opening number, the *Mäkelääsen Tulomarssi* becomes a French overture followed by a fugue constructed on *Kahman Anti Polska*. Next, the two famous songs *Kalliolle kukkulalle* and *Läksin minä kesäyönä käymään* are presented in their old polonesse form, as reported in some of the oldest available Finnish tunebooks. A noble and poised minuet from Oravais, Ostrobothnia, is then presented featuring solo and consort-like episodes, followed by another set of old-fashioned polonesses in a contrasting major key. The suite continues with a series of peculiar dances, starting with a minuet from the Ostrobothnian area of Jeppo that displays suprisingly uneven rhythms and leads to the "Bear corner": *Karhunpeijaispolska* is a tune connected with the traditional celebrations after a successful bear hunt, whereas *Bear dance at Kengis* is borrowed directly from Giuseppe Acerbi's accounts of his Northern travels ("Travels through Sweden, Finland and Lapland to the North Cape", vol. I, London 1802). The suite ends with one of the oldest notated polonesses known in Finland (Öhrbom collection, 1759): the *Dantz* that opens the movement has been derived from the Öhrbom polonesse, in order to reproduce the old model where a duple-time dance was followed by a triple-time dance on the same melodic material ("proportio").

Western and Eastern Finnish musical traditions are the protagonists of the second half of the programme, each one represented by a distinguished soloist. Arto Järvelä lends his fiddling to the *Lappfjärd set*, based on two minuets and a polska he learnt from the great master Torsten Pärus, in a combination that is commonly heard at weddings in the Western regions of Ostrobothnia. Ilkka Heinonen premieres a concerto for jouhikko that attempts at depicting the cycle of seasons. The duration of each movement is proportioned to the Finnish seasons' length as experienced by a southerner throughout his four-year stay in Finland, so that the canonical four seasons amount in his perception to only two-and-a-half...Flowing seamlessly into each other, a romantic *Autumn* rapidly deteriorates into a long, dark and hallucinated *Winter*, where the musical material is inspired by Fenno-Ugric motives. The end of winter is marked by the obsessive desire for *Spring* and new life: the short and soundscape-like third movement leads to the explosion of *Summer*, energetic and boisterous, in the form of a fast and slightly delirious jouhikko tune.

As a final, intimate synthesis of the apparent dicotomy between the two traditions, *EastWest* bridges a Western polonesse from the Spoof collection and an Eastern *Vanha Runo* through an improvised dialogue woven by the violin and the jouhikko, facilitated by the presence of the viola as the third and "exotic" element that brings them together.

## Performers

### **SibA FolkBaroque string orchestra, on period instruments**

Peter Spissky, concertmaster

James Kahane, conductor (*The 2½ Seasons*)

Christine Cooper, Inka Eerola, Marina García Magdaleno, Alina Järvelä, Mirva Laine, Marianne Mieskolainen, Anna Pohjola, Kaisa Ruotsalainen: violins

Valerie Albrecht, Maria Bocelli, Krishna Nagaraja, Anna Pohjola: violas

Pieta Mattila, Norah O'Leary: cellos

Aapo Kyyhkynen: double bass

Marianne Henriksson: harpsichord

### **Soloists**

Arto Järvelä: solo violin

Ilkka Heinonen: solo jouhikko

## **Peter Spissky**

Peter Spissky studied violin at the Music Academy in native Slovakia and Sweden. From 1988, he devoted himself to the historical performance practice research and in 1999 was appointed concertmaster of the leading baroque orchestra Concerto Copenhagen. Peter is also the musical director of Camerata Øresund, a young group from Copenhagen/Malmö.

As a guest concertmaster/conductor he appears regularly with Barokkanerne in Oslo, Baroque Aros in Aarhus, Skalholt Bach Consort in Iceland, Finnish Baroque Orchestra, Jönköping Sinfonietta, Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra, and Tallinn Chamber Orchestra. As a violinist he collaborates with Barokksolistene (Oslo), Solamente naturali (Bratislava), Festspiel Orchester Göttingen and Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra.

Peter teaches baroque violin at the Musikhögskolan i Malmö, Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium in Copenhagen and gives master classes all around Scandinavia.

In September 2010 he was accepted at the Lund University for an artistic research program, leading to a doctorate investigating the Baroque violin bowing in relation to speech, acting and dance.

## **Arto Järvelä**

One of Finland's premier fiddlers, Arto Järvelä (b. 1964) has, over the past three decades, been a member of more than ten folk music groups. He's primarily known as founder, second fiddler, composer and arranger of Kaustinen fiddle legends JPP, in action since 1982. Throughout the JPP history, Arto has demonstrated profound talents as a remarkably skilled player and as a gifted composer and multi-instrumentalist. His other groups along the years include Niekku, Tallari, Salamakannel, Ampron Prunni, Koinurit, Pinnin Pojat, the Helsinki Mandoliners, Erik Hokkanen & Lumisudet, Nordik Tree, Maria Kalaniemi & Vilda Rosor, Trio Nor, Arto & Antti Järvelä and Black Diamond String Band. Lately he has been joining forces with Duo Vitare (FIN/POL), Jonathan Rundman (USA) and Kaustinen based singer Anssi Käsälä. As one of the Finland's most talented folk musicians, Arto has been representing Finnish culture in more than forty countries. Concert appearances have taken him as far afield as Cuba, Peru, Australia, Pakistan, Thailand, Egypt, USA, Taiwan, Venezuela, Japan, with more destinations yet to come. Lately Arto has been focusing on solo gigs where he plays his fiddle, singöfela, esseharpa (the ancient Finnish keyfiddle), nyckelharpa and sings.

## **Ilkka Heinonen**

Ilkka Heinonen is a Helsinki based musician and a composer playing jouhikko (finnish bowed lyre), double bass and G-violone. He's known as a remarkably versatile musician specialized in traditional music, but also working with early music, contemporary music and dance projects. Ilkka has been pushing the limits of jouhikko playing and has acted as a soloist with many orchestras and ensembles. After successful showcase in WOMEX 2014, Ilkka Heinonen Trio has been collecting praising reviews with their boundary-breaking debut album "Savu". He's a member of jouhikko trio Jouhiorkesteri (Showcase in WOMEX 2008) and performs in duos with Karoliina Kantelinen (Värttinä), Pekko Käppi and flamenco guitarist Joonas Widenius. As a double bass player Ilkka has been a member of Scandinavian music influenced ensembles Ruuti, Ánnámáret Ensemble and Kirjava lintu, Eastern European folk music influenced bands Freilach mit Kneidlach and Teija Niku & Grupa Balkan, to name a few. In recent years Ilkka has also explored the possibilities of G-violone (double bass viol) in world music and started his artistic PhD studies at Sibelius Academy MuTri Doctoral School in 2015.

## **James Kahane**

Described as a conductor with clear gestures and a genuine passion for music, James Salomon Kahane has already been, at the age of 21, led to conduct many professional orchestras, among which the Finnish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Gstaad Festival Orchestra and the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra. During this season, James has been the youngest selected conductor for the Gstaad Menuhin Festival (out of more than 100 candidates), where he has later been chosen by Neeme Järvi to conduct the GFO in an official festival concert. Along that, James benefited from the teaching of many prominent conductors such as David Zinman, Susanna Mälkki, Sir Roger Norrington, John Storgårds, Mikko Franck, Yoav Talmi, Colin Metters and Jorma Panula. During spring, James will be conducting the Pori Sinfonietta and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, within the framework of his studies. James is currently studying in the Orchestral Conducting class at the Sibelius Academy, with Hannu Lintu and Atso Almila. He has been accepted there at the age of 19, after studying conducting and composition for two years at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music, under the guidance of Yi An Xu and Yoav Talmi.

## **Krishna Nagaraja**

Violinist, violist, singer, composer, arranger, beatboxer, Krishna Nagaraja has always approached music from many different directions. Unmistakeably italo-indian, his path has guided him over the years to baroque violin and then to baroque viola, playing with groups like Europa Galante, Accademia Bizantina, Il Tempio Armonico, Il Complesso Barocco, Al Ayre Español, Helsinki Baroque Orchestra, Finnish Baroque Orchestra. His passion for traditional music has steered him to Irish, Scottish, Breton and Nordic music, and brought him to Finland in order to attend the Master's Degree in Global Music (GLOMAS) at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. Krishna also composes and arranges music of various genres: he has written music for vocal groups like Maybe6ix (Italy), for instrumental ensembles such as O/Modernt (Sweden) and his own projects like the folk-baroque group Brú and the viola duo Biviola. In 2015 he was awarded a working grant from the Finnish Cultural Foundation for the first phase of his PhD studies at the Sibelius Academy.