

# Finnish Tango Culture

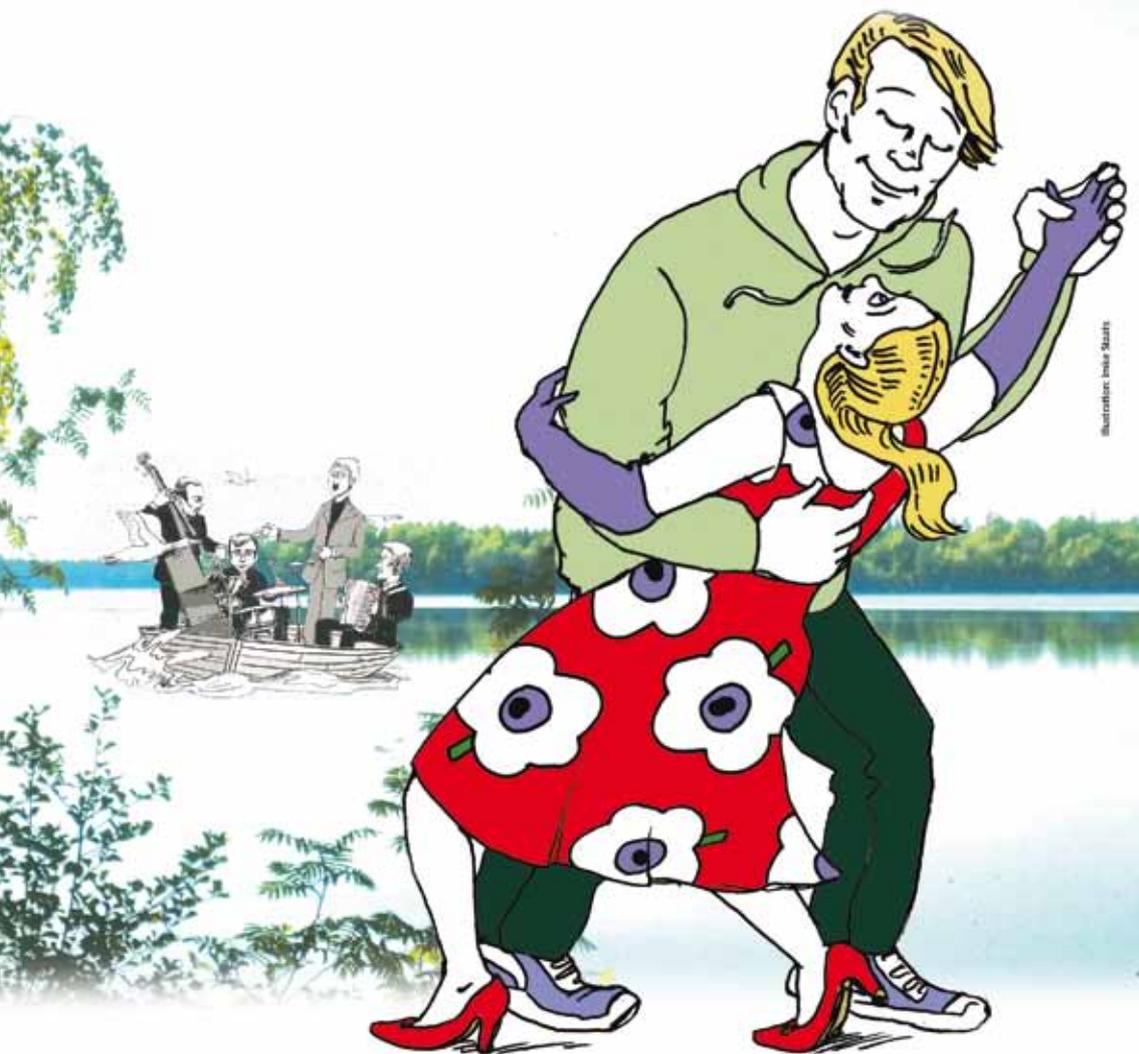


Illustration: Ines Szalts

## FINtango Festivals

under the patronage of Aki Kaurismäki

FINtango is an association to represent and promote the Finnish tango culture, supported by the Ministry of Culture. We offer a platform for bands, festivals, associations and the art of Finnish tango dance - and we organize FINtango festivals and events abroad.



„Tango was invented in Finland“  
Aki Kaurismäki has taken patronage of FINtango since 2013

# FINtango Festivals

FINtango Festivals offer a unique celebration of Finnish culture. The laid-back flair of a Finnish village party, combined with top-notch musical entertainment: Made up of **live acts**, **DJing** and **dance classes**, combined with a mobile **sauna**, an **exhibition** of historic photographs or some **Finnish cuisine**, it is an experience for all senses.

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Unbeknown to most, in Finland Tango is very much part of everyday culture. The Tango stars are household names. As by inhabitants, Finland actually is the world's no.1 Tango nation!

This unique cultural heritage deserves so much more attention.

We started the first and only festival of Finnish Tango and Culture outside Finland 2013 in Hamburg and have since toured many cities in Germany and beyond.

Our aim is to bring the most exciting developments of Finnish Tango to the continent, presented in an authentic Finnish setting.



Over more than 100 years, Tango grew to be the Finns' favourite music, obviously sung in Finnish. It has influences of Finnish folk song, latin american sensualism and slavic or even balkan harmonies and atmosphere, is powerful, round and played in a minor key. The lyrics tell stories of wistful love and a romantic connection to nature. This tradition is held dearly by our bands.

The dance, reminding of a slowfox, is simpler than its Argentinian counterpart; it is known to be an ideal ballroom dance for beginners. Our dance teachers Leena&Mika from Kuopio have already communicated this easy-going groove in over one hundred courses abroad.



**FINtango gives time to listen  
to your emotions, to the heartbeat of nature,  
time to just be yourself.**



A particular highlight is the mobile sauna. Sauna may be the best-known element of Finnish culture and creates an open and relaxed atmosphere. Outside of Finland, a sauna at a public event is seen as quaint, brave and inventive. We supply changing facilities, showers and towels.



An exhibition of historic photographs by Reijo Porkka accompanied by a text by Maarit Niiniluoto offers an insight into the history of Finnish Tango.

Flamed salmon or fish soup, savoury Voileipäkakku (sandwich cake) or sweet Korvapuusti (cinnamon rolls), there are many mouth-watering delicacies in Finland.

### booking

Don't hesitate to contact us with your ideas: all FINtango Festivals are tailor-made for the occasion.

Be it simple concerts, standalone events, or part of bigger festivals: different bands, DJs and dancers are available and can be combined with other elements of Finnish culture: sauna, art, cuisine, movies by Aki Kaurismäki, or whatever else comes to mind...

**for Festival bookings or any questions  
[kontakt@fintango.de](mailto:kontakt@fintango.de)**





Foto\_ Reijo Porkka

## A brief history of Finnish Tango

Tango arrived in Finland as in all of Europe in the early 20th century, via Paris, Berlin and Kopenhagen. The first Tango shows were given in Helsinki in 1913, creating quite a buzz with its sensual exoticism. A movie followed suit. It was the hip new urban fashion in town.



In the 1930s, Finnish composers started writing own tangos and introduced more nordic imagery into the lyrics (like „Lumihualeita“ or Snow Flake, 1936). The music, shifting into minor key, was enhanced by touches of slavic or gipsy sounds and a Finnish beat. In the 2nd world war, the dance was totally forbidden. Still, by the 1940s about half of the entries on the popular music charts were Tangos, with



Foto\_ Reijo Porkka

lyrics full of longing and symbolic images. As legendary composer Toivo Kärki put it: „the sadder the Tango, the happier the people seem to be“. In the post-war period Tangos matured from a popular urban phenomenon to the enthusiastic

adoption by the countryside: The Tanssilava, a communally constructed open-air wooden dancefloor, came to be the central point of rural life.

In the 1960s Finnish Tangos famously competed with the Beatles for Nr 1 hit singles. The second essential composer, Unto Mononen captured the mood with „Satumaa“ (fairy land), which became the most influential Finnish Tango and a national institution. Star singers also came from the Roma minority and Tango music turned out to be the accepted outlet for emotionality, for romance, for opening the heart.





# Tango in Finland today

Although it could not hold the epic heights of 1960s fame, Finnish Tango still is very much present in

Finnish popular culture: over 600 rural dance pavilions or „Tanssilavat“ remain active, mainly in summer, all across Finland. Usually located on some romantic lakeshore, providing large dancefloors and stages for live orchestras, they are popular destinations for the summer weekends. They count with a dedicated following and cultivate an atmosphere of bygone rural happiness. Many dancers are nowadays organized in clubs or associations.

The most famous Tango Festival is Seinäjoki Tangomarkkinat. Over 100,000 people from all over Finland and the world come to see and feel the atmosphere of the Festival. This is a huge number of people for a country of only 5.5 million people. It hosts the country’s most popular singing competition, the election of Tango Queen and Tango King, which has led to the emergence of countless new stars. The Tango songwriting contest, the Championship of Finnish Dance Orchestras and of Tango Dancing complete the aura of a world cup in Finnish Tango.

Smaller but growing, Maailmantango Festival in Tampere sets out to bring traditional Finnish Tango into a world perspective by presenting it next to Argentinian tango and other world music with related minor keys and melancholic undertones.

In Karelia, the innovative holiday week FINTangoFI



combines Finnish tango with sauna culture, natural experience and historic rural traditions.

But it is not only the Traditionalists who keep the Finnish Tango alive: Inspired by the use of Tango in Aki Kaurismäki's hugely popular movies (he is an outspoken fan of Tango and is famously quoted for saying „Tango was invented in Finland“) and the global success of Argentinian Tango, young artists with all kinds of musical backgrounds return to the roots of Finnish Tango, and develop it in all directions: They do scientific research, dig up unpublished tangos of the 30s, or take the Tango into the electronic age. They smuggle it into avant-garde DJ sets and they write exciting new compositions.

Tango from Finland, very much alive, is now aiming for recognition on the world music stage.



# Tango contacts

## 1. bands/artists



**Markus Allan**

Tango legend. Started his Tango career in 1963 as one of the first Roma Tango stars. Planning to celebrate his 75 years 2020 with a concert tour.

contact: MA-Musiikkituotanto  
ma.musiikkituotanto@gmail.com +358 40 5577199  
www.facebook.com/markusallanofficial



**Bändi - Finnish Tango**

The ensemble Bändi from Germany, honored by a „creole“ worldmusic-award, plays newly arranged Finnish Tango in a joyful and timeless way.

contact: Thomas Salzmänn/Kristina Debelius www.bändi.com  
info@bändi.com +49 69770 62367



**Beltango**

German-Finnish ensemble from Greifswald and Helsinki, clarinet, cello and accordion, plays in milongas to dance as well as in classical concert series or cultural festivals.

contact: Annette Fischer, www.beltango.de  
info@beltango.de +4915773949048



**Guardia Nueva**

Finnish Top Orchestra performing Tango classics from Argentinian to Finnish, Tango Nuevo to electrotango, in very unique arrangements.

contact: Raimo Vertainen www.guardianueva.net  
raimo.vertainen@gmail.com +358 50 5118387



**Harri Kaitila**

Performing as Tango Tenor all over Europe for the past 15 years, he confronts and combines Finnish and Argentinian Tango.

contact: Harri Kaitila www.harri-kaitila.com  
harri.kaitila@umuko.fi



**Jaakko Laitinen**

Famous for Balkan music project Väärä Raha, his Tango project LEHTOJÄRVEN HIRVENPÄÄ makes headlines with new compositions and interesting arrangements.

contact: www.harrikuusijarvi.com/lehtojarvenhirvenpaa  
jaakko.laitinen@gmail.com harri.kuusijarvi@gmail.com



**Johanna Juhola**

Leading innovator in accordion music, an undisciplined visionary in Tango and a colourful, charismatic live performer.

contact: Johanna Juhola www.johannajuhola.net  
johanna.juhola@gmail.com +358 50 5478272  
Finnish agent: Art Prevolution www.artprevolution.com  
German agent: Laviola Music www.laviola.de



**Kyösti Mäkimattila**

Finnish Tango King with orchestra Varjokuva. Performs with Finnish popstar Yona among others.

contact: www.kyostimakimattila.fi  
kyosti.makimattila@gmail.com +358 40 527 2876



**M.A. Numminen**

Artist, writer and musician. Performs with Uusrahvaanomaisen Jatsiorkesteri („Neo-Vulgar Jazz Orchestra“) led by virtuoso legend Pedro Hietanen and Sanna Pietäinen.

contact: Pasi Kuusjärvi,  
pasi.kuusjarvi@dexviihde.fi +358 440 647907



**Nuevo Quinteto Otra Vez**

NQOV is an acclaimed new wave Tango quintet, devoted to continuing the legacy of Astor Piazzolla by composing, arranging and exploring the potential of Tango Nuevo Finlandes.

contact: www.bmusicfinland.com  
bmusicfinland@gmail.com +358 40 5448855



**Pieni Orkesteri**

Young multicultural ensemble who met in Berlin, sharing the passion for Finnish Tango.

contact: Miriam Siebenstädt misieben@yahoo.de



**Satumaa**

Play the classics from the far North as well as new and own Tangos, since 2001. „Far away from Argentina Finnish Tango is alive and kicking ...“

contact: Martin Welp www.satumaa.de  
band@satumaa.de +49 179 2038792



**Tango Finlandés**

Quintet of Berlin symphonic and philharmonic orchestra musicians with deep love for Finnish Tango.

contact: Taneli Turunen [www.tangofinlandes.com](http://www.tangofinlandes.com)  
kontakt@tangofinlandes.com



**Tango-orkesteri Unto**

Supergroup formed of the cream of Finnish folk music. Takes a fresh look at classic material and creates bold new Tango music inspired by Finnish poetry.

contact: Pirjo Aittomäki [tangoorkesteriunto.com](http://tangoorkesteriunto.com)  
tangoorchestraunto@gmail.com + 358 40 5073031  
facebook.com/tangoorkesteriunto



**Tango Primo**

Johanna Debreczeni and Jouni Keronen are Tango royals playing fusion tango, accompanied by guitar and accordion.

contact: magnumlive [www.magnumlive.fi](http://www.magnumlive.fi)  
liisa.marjomaki@magnumlive.fi + 358 50 525 4109



**Tangon Taikaa**

The first and still most popular Finnish Tango band in Germany, fronted by singer Timo Valtonen and Berlin philharmonics accordeonist Valentin Butt.

contact: Timo Valtonen [www.tangontaikaa.de](http://www.tangontaikaa.de)  
tangontaikaa@hotmail.com +49-176-22223349



**Tuija Komi**

A radiant artist and song-writer with a versatile and beautiful voice from the North.

contact: Tuija Komi [www.tuijakomi.de](http://www.tuijakomi.de)  
info@tuijakomi.de +49 173 5186076



**Ulla Maria & Eero**

Powerful Tango duo project by guitarist and composer Eero Lehtinen (Nikolai Blad) and singer Ulla Maria, playing own tango versions between Finnish and Argentinian style.

contact: Eero Lehtinen [www.luomatuotanto.fi](http://www.luomatuotanto.fi)  
eerolehtinen@hotmail.com +358445332110



**Uusikuu**

A homage to Finnish dance music from 1930s to 1960s: melancholy Tangos, dreamy Swings, raucous Humppas, cheeky Jenkkas, and romantic Waltzes.

contact: [www.uusikuu.com](http://www.uusikuu.com)  
info@uusikuu.com +49 173 5186076



**Vallilan Tango**

Founded 2005 in Helsinki, Finland, Vallilan Tango performs popular, unknown and unreleased Finnish dance music from the 1930's and 40's.

contact: [www.vallilantango.net](http://www.vallilantango.net)  
vallilantango@gmail.com [www.facebook.com/vallilantango](http://www.facebook.com/vallilantango)

## 2. DJs



**DJ Vilunki**

Tango DJ at radio Helsinki, avant-garde electro musician (Op:l Bastards), award-winning graphic designer, famous for his wild eclecticism.

contact: [vilunki30000@gmail.com](mailto:vilunki30000@gmail.com)



**DJ Tixa**

Tango DJ at radio Helsinki and unique character, known to intervene in his sets with flute, speech or singing.

contact: [tixa1112@gmail.com](mailto:tixa1112@gmail.com)



**DJ Benjamin Wild**

DJ and producer based in Hamburg. He is resident DJ for the monthly Lavatanssit nights and has released first Fintango-electro-tracks as early as 2004.

contact: [dj@benjaminwild.com](mailto:dj@benjaminwild.com)

## 3. dance



**Leena & Mika**

From Kuopio to the world: skilfull to provide not only the dances (Tango, Jenkka, Humppa and others), but the cultural background as well. Finnish, English, German

contact: Leena Erholz [leena.erholtz@gmail.com](mailto:leena.erholtz@gmail.com)



**Pasi y Maria Lauren**

Dance teachers and dancers for Finnish Tango, Argentine Tango, social dance, Finnish „lavatanssi“.

Finnish, English, Swedish, French, Spanish, easy German  
contact: [www.pasiymaria.net](http://www.pasiymaria.net), [info@pasiymaria.net](mailto:info@pasiymaria.net),  
fb:Pasi y Maria Tango Argentino +358405262182



**STOL ry**

Association of Finnish dance instructors.

contact: [www.stol-ry.fi](http://www.stol-ry.fi) [stol@stol-ry.fi](mailto:stol@stol-ry.fi) +358 400 888 227



National society to promote the dance culture.  
 contact: [www.susel.fi](http://www.susel.fi)                      [sihteeri@susel.fi](mailto:sihteeri@susel.fi)

## 4. Festivals



One-week festival dedicated to the variety of Tangos around the world, staged in Berlin Central Train station.  
 Location: Berlin (D)                      Time: August  
 contact: [www.facebook.com/contemporarytangofestival](https://www.facebook.com/contemporarytangofestival)  
[info@kadmos-produktion.de](mailto:info@kadmos-produktion.de)



Festival specializing in the combination of Finnish Tango, sauna and nature, in a very idyllic setting.  
 Location: Uukuniemi (Fi)                      Time: August  
 contact: [www.fintango.fi](http://www.fintango.fi)



„World Tango festival“ with a mix of Argentinian Tango, Finnish Tango and world music.  
 Location: Tampere (Fi)                      Time: September  
 contact: [www.maailmantango.net](http://www.maailmantango.net)  
[anna.toivonen@maailmantango.net](mailto:anna.toivonen@maailmantango.net)                      +358 44 063 3335



German festival specializing in Nordic arts and music.  
 Location: Schleswig (D)                      Time: September  
 contact: [www.norden-festival.com](http://www.norden-festival.com)  
[mp@pakusius.de](mailto:mp@pakusius.de)                      +40 40 41469606



Biggest Tango Festival in Finland, draws 100.000 visitors. Hosts the competition for Tango king and queen.  
 Location: Seinäjoki (Fi)                      Time: July  
 contact: [www.tangomarkkinat.fi](http://www.tangomarkkinat.fi)  
[info@tangomarkkinat.fi](mailto:info@tangomarkkinat.fi)                      +358 6 420 1111

## 5. researchers /associations



**Alfonso Padilla**                      contact: [alfonso.padilla@helsinki.fi](mailto:alfonso.padilla@helsinki.fi)                      +358 456485840

Ph.D. Musicologist from Helsinki University, writing „History of Finnish Tango: style, development, signification“.



**Maarit Niiniluoto**                      contact: [mniiniluo@gmail.com](mailto:mniiniluo@gmail.com)

Grande dame of Finnish tango research, writer of Finnish popular culture books and the golden voice of Finnish public radio.



**Timo Kalevi Fors**                      contact: [t.k.forss@gmail.com](mailto:t.k.forss@gmail.com)

Finnish writer and researcher. Published a book on Finnish Tango: „Tähdet meren yllä - suomalaisen tangon tarina“, 2019.



**Satumaa ry**                      contact: Ilmari Ylä-Autio [www.suomalaisentangonsatunmaa.fi](http://www.suomalaisentangonsatunmaa.fi)  
[info@satunmaa.fi](mailto:info@satunmaa.fi)                      +358 40 5504463

Association to promote the cultural standing of Finnish Tango in Finland and abroad. Organizes senior and junior singing competitions.



**Toivo Kärki**                      contact: [www.toivokarki.net](http://www.toivokarki.net)                      [kalervo@karki.me](mailto:kalervo@karki.me)

Society to honour the heritage of Toivo Kärki (1915-1992).



**Unto Mononen ry**                      contact: [www.facebook.com/pg/untomononenyhdistys](https://www.facebook.com/pg/untomononenyhdistys)

Association to honour the heritage of Unto Mononen (1930-1968).

**Tangokuninkaaliset ry**                      Association of the Tango Royals (being established). Royals who performed at FINtango include Maria Tyyster, Marita Taavitsainen, Amadeus Lundberg.

**Trikont**                      German record label, has produced the Finnish Tango Compilations „Tule Tanssimaan 1“ and „Tule Tanssimaan 2“.  
 contact: [www.trikont.de](http://www.trikont.de)                      [eva@trikont.de](mailto:eva@trikont.de)

[www.fintango.de](http://www.fintango.de)  
[facebook.com/fintango](https://facebook.com/fintango)  
[kontakt@fintango.de](mailto:kontakt@fintango.de)

