



Al di Meola plays The Beatles and more at Tampere Guitar Festival.

Can you festival?

On the map of Finland, the Pirkanmaa region is the pocket on the Finnish maid's dress. In this pocket, you will find a treasury of festivals: poetry, music, art, playfulness and natural beauty. Summertime by the lake or hot spices in the city – it is all there for you to choose from. And in the autumn, when the evenings get dark, it is time to get indoors, get together and just enjoy.

By Taina Värri | Press Photos

STRINGS ATTACHED

Al Di Meola plays The Beatles & more, 31 May – 8 June

Acoustic guitar music lovers will have a great start of the summer during the first week of June at Tampere Guitar Festival. The happening will sport guitar classes, workshops and church concerts along with networking, camps and sales

events in seven municipalities across Tampere.

Tampere Guitar Show is a two-day sales show at the Tampere Hall, which is also the venue for the Momentous Concerts. Guitar Camp in Ylöjärvi offers professionally-guided lessons to amateur guitarists and chamber orchestras, for both adults and children over 11 years.

The acoustic guitar music includes a wide range of styles: from classical to flamenco, fado, Argentinean tango and Brazilian choro. The festival concerts are designed for different tastes and the performers represent the top of their league. Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the festival's live stage will be taken by one of the most prominent fusion guitarists, Al di Meola, and his trio, together with a string quartet. This guitar master has an illustrious history with the likes of Paco de Lucia, John McLaughlin, Stanley Clarke and Chick Corea. The *Al Di Meola plays Beatles & more* project is the maestro's lifelong dream coming true.

www.tgf.fi

Also available

Guitar Train from Helsinki €119; package for four €109/person; with buffet, €149, for four €139/person.

Hotel packages from €188.

A 10th Anniversary Buffet will be served before the concert in Tampere Hall.

PLAYTIME

Annikki OFF, 4-6 June

Annikki Poetry Festival, 7 June

Annikki Poetry Festival in Tampere takes fresh views on poetry and puts together surprising combinations of performers, redefining the boundaries of poetry events. It is a non-profit event, run by volunteers, and takes place in a quarter of old wooden residential buildings in Annikinkatu (Annikki Street). The 100-year-old houses were in bad shape, but the tenants loved the place and the community feel, took initiative and after some hair-raising turns managed to save them from the bulldozers. The houses and homes are fine now and the Poetry Festival, the foremost in Finland, now celebrates 10 years.

Jenni Haukio, the First Lady of Finland, was the patron of the festival in 2013 with Earth as the main theme. This year, the theme is Playtime: joy, humour and experimentation. The pre-festival, Annikki OFF, sprawls around the city offering dozens of cultural events put together by independent event organisers.

The Annikki festival's focus is still on poetry, but it has expanded to include prose, music and visual arts. This year, Finnish performers alongside visiting international guests such as Hasso Krull (Estonia), Ron Whitehead (USA), Gerður Kristný (Iceland) and Henry Bowers (Sweden) provide a rich combination. There will also be a lot of special events for children.

www.annikinkatu.net/runofestivaali

JUST A MOMENT!

Mänttä Art Festival, 15 June – 31 August

The festival started with volunteers in 1993 and has since grown to an event with 10,000 visitors. Known for its bold and

brave selection of contemporary art, Mänttä is seen as a beacon for the state of the contemporary art scene in Finland. A new curator every year keeps the festival alive and surprising. There are no compromises – only one personal vision.

The main focus at this summer's Mänttä Art Festival is in seizing the moment, and one way of doing the carpe diem thing is to go travelling. In and around the Pekilo Art Center, artists will observe moments, create and immortalise them. Performances and poetry collide with visual arts; the visitor will be taken from the Antarctica to Burma and from the rhythms of Jamaica to the coolness of Norway's Lofoten archipelago. Mysterious trips to the land of coffee and the borders of death are also on the itinerary.

A boat, made from recycled materials, will be sailing between Tampere and Vilppula.



LEFT: A live performance at the Annikki Poetry Festival in Tampere (Photo: Ville Koivisto). TOP RIGHT: Sata-Häme Soi Accordion Festival (Photo: Minna Plihtari). BOTTOM RIGHT: Visitors will be taken on a journey from the Antarctica to Burma at the Mantta Art Festival (Photo: Pekka Niskanen).

Through this work, three environmentally-conscious artists explore life as lake district nomads and comment on the state of the Baltic Sea. Kaarina Kaikkonen, a Finnish artist who creates touching installations using old clothes, will collect shirts and coats from the people of Mänttä and use the old church wall as her canvas.

www.mantankuvataideviikot.fi

NINO ROTA MEETS THE ACCORDION

Sata-Häme Soi Accordion Festival, Ikaalinen 1-6 July

The accordion reflects the Finnish soul, creating happiness, joy, and good ambience. Founded in 1972, the annual Sata-Häme Soi International Accordion Festival embraces the art of the instrument. Think hip hop, pop, jazz and rock, classical, modern and world music. Did we miss something? If so, it will probably be cov-





from this year onwards. Due to the new location, this year the festival is held in August instead of July.

The five-day festival hosts ten concerts. The last one will present Paul Lewis (UK), who as a top performer follows earlier years' guest stars Cyprien Katsaris and Marc-André Hamelin. Opening the festival are Anna Vinnitskaya (Russia), the winner of the 2007 Queen Elisabeth piano competition, Laura Mikkola (Finland), and Sławomir Zubrzycki (Poland). The latter plays the viola organista, inspired by the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci.

Mänttä Music Festival brings several international masters to the stage, but there is also a strong emphasis on promoting and supporting young, talented Finnish pianists. After all, these gifted musicians were the ones who founded the festival in 1999.

www.mantanmusiikkijuhlat.fi
www.serlachius.fi/en



TOP: Paul Lewis (UK) will headline the Mänttä Music Festival (Photo: Josep Molina/Harmonia Mundi). BELOW LEFT: The youngest and hottest festival of the Pirkanmaa region is Chilifest Finland. RIGHT: Anna Vinnitskaya (Russia), winner of the 2007 Queen Elisabeth piano competition (Photo: Gela Megrelidze).

RED HOT AUGUSTO Chilifest Finland, 15-17 August

The youngest and hottest festival of the Pirkanmaa region is Chilifest Finland, dedicated to, well, chilli peppers. The festival is free and suitable for the whole family, from babies to grannies. This one and only Finnish chilli festival was born in 2010 and gathered 8,000 visitors in its first year.

Now situated in the very heart of Tampere, it has grown into a fiesta of nearly 28,000 visitors, many of who wish to see and taste new hot stuff and test their limits with chilli foods and other chilli pepper products, from seeds to ice cream and cider.

It will come as no surprise that the land of competitive sauna bathing is also home to the Naga Morich Chili Eating World Championships. It has already become a tradition, fulfilling the expectations of suspense and drama, fire and pain associated with chilli peppers.

There are, however, thousands of different chillies: some that will make smoke come

ered in Ikaalinen. Add summer, add lake and there you go: a perfect festival.

The happening takes place during the first week of July in the town of Ikaalinen, just one hour's bus ride from Tampere and three hours from Helsinki. The major highlights of the festival will be the Golden Accordion Award (held since 1983), the Silver Accordion Award for children (since 1986) and the Primus Ikaalinen International Accordion Competition (since 2005), as well as dancing and getting together with like-minded people – usually around 30,000 of them.

Every year, individuals, whole families and sport club members serve the festival in capacity of volunteers for the joy of hearing music and meeting friends, old and new. You never know: you could end up jamming with a lively Romani band during the bus ride from the airport...

The highlight this year will be world-famous French-Italian Richard Galliano with his orchestra playing Nino Rota's soulful movie themes.

www.satahamesoi.fi

BLACK AND WHITE KEYS TO YOUR HEART

Mänttä Music Festival, 6-10 August

The only international annual piano music festival in Finland brings together top names in the realm of piano music as well as domestic stars and young talents. In addition to piano concerts, the programme includes a children's concert, an entertainment evening at Klubi with surprise artists, and a free-admission programme.

The brand new Gösta's Pavilion, designed by Spanish MX_SI architecture studio, will serve as the main venue of the festival

out of your ears, yes, but also milder, mel-low types. Garlic is also invited to join the party, so there will be quite a rush of sensual experiences among the BBQ stands.

The most recent addition to Chilifest Finland's programme is Chilirock, introducing young talents along with well-known Finnish artists. Outdoor concerts combined with a picnic? Not a bad idea.

Chilifest Finland 2014 will be sizzling all over Keskustori, Tampere. Since the square is located in the very heart of Tampere, it is easy to access from everywhere.

www.chilifest.fi

SOLIDARITY THROUGH DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY

Backlight Photo Festival,
5 Sep 2014 – 4 Jan 2015

September 2014 will see the international triennial in photography for the tenth time in Tampere and Valkeakoski. The theme of Backlight 2014 explores the tensions between individuals, communities and societies and the forces that both unite and separate us: trust, love, fear, addiction, hope, suspicion, values, isolation, religion, poverty, shared history, self-indulgence, sense of safety, money, desperation... Themes focus on the phenomena of people's solidarity (and the lack thereof), incorporating individual as well as collective responsibility. How do we picture trust and confidence in a world that mainly seems to value money and power? How are these issues represented through contemporary photography?

Photographic Centre Nykyaika started the festival in 1987, and in 1999 the event was given the name Backlight. Backlight has exhibited more than 200 artists of at least 30 different nationalities in the Tampere region and internationally. The festival is rooted in documentary photography and open to innovative concepts and approaches extending and updating culturally-rooted perspectives on reality. Themes about migration, laughter, childhood and identities have been in the spotlight at earlier festivals. Each Backlight

forms a new, unique entity, with social themes, a new, innovative structure, and challenging content.

This year, five photographers from the Middle East have been invited to exhibit their work as part of Backlight's theme at the Tampere Art Museum. Curated exhibitions from nearly 700 submissions from over 60 countries will be shown in galleries and public spaces around the Tampere region. On the jury judging the open-call submissions are Tuula Alajoki (Finland), Miha Colner (Slovenia), Anahita Ghabaian Etehadieh (Iran) and Issa Touma (Syria).

During the festival, Backlight 2014 organises a symposium, workshops, seminars and a portfolio review in collaboration with Backlight's local and international partners. The main language of the festival is English.

www.backlight.fi

WELCOME TO THE JAZZ CLUB. NICE! Tampere Jazz Happening, 30 Oct – 2 Nov

The international programme of Tampere Jazz Happening, known for its warm atmosphere and open-minded approach to modern jazz, brings together the top names and future trend-setters of modern jazz. The most current Finnish performers and international top artists play and improvise in the festival's concert halls as



TOP LEFT: The theme of Backlight 2014 explores the tensions between individuals, communities and societies (Photo: Gohar Dashti/Iran). BELOW AND RIGHT: Tampere Jazz Happening brings together the top names and future trend-setters of modern jazz (Photos: Photo Maarit Kytöharju).

well as intimate club sessions until the small hours of the night. The main venue, the Old Custom's House at the heart of the city, plays its part in creating the warm atmosphere with its red brick walls.

The festival started in 1982 and has grown significantly since. The uncompromising focus on the selection of music has created a trust in the quality of the programme and keeps people coming back year after year, even if they are not familiar with the artists beforehand. The late club concerts are now also tempting younger audiences.

Tampere Jazz Happening provides a convenient and hospitable melting pot for musicians, producers, event organisers and journalists in the backstage area, where discussions flow and new connections are made.

The complete festival programme will be published in September. Once again, the festival promises a crowd of international stars, promising new talents and the most interesting performers of the Finnish jazz scene.

www.tamperejazzfestivals.fi/jazz

For more information, please visit:
www.pirfest.fi

