Editorial ........................................................................................................ 4
Our Most Fundamental Means of Communication
Elina Manninen

NEW FACES ................................................................................................. 5
Sonya Lindfors: Breaking Boundaries
Mikko Hyvönen: The Ignorant Schoolmaster
Anna Mustonen: Free to Experience Things Differently
Jonna Halonen: A Tingle in the Brain, a Wriggle in the Body

Tomi Paasonen: A Maximalist with All My Heart .................................. 10
Maija Karhunen

Johanna Tiukkanen: A Life Lived .............................................................. 13
Raisa Rauhamaa

“A Feeling of Being Alive” ........................................................................ 16
Hannele Jyrkkä
Choreographic Ideas for Senior Citizens ................................................ 23
Hannele Jyrkkä

Päivi Aura: Under the Gaze of Children
Elina Manninen

Language Is Reflected in the Body .......................................................... 28
Päivi Ahonen

Nordic Features in Contemporary Dance? ............................................ 31
Päivi Ahonen

Jemina - Act as you’d know her ................................................................. 32
Elina Manninen

ZOOM ............................................................................................................ 34
Catalogue ...................................................................................................... 38

On the cover:
Our Social Democratic Bodies
Choreographer: Maija Hirvanen, Dancer: Eeva Muilu

Cover photography: Aada Niilola

Printed by: Painotalo Miktor

With Gratitude: The Ministry of Education and Culture
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
ISSN-1795-9837

Dance Info Finland is a gateway to Finnish dance. It works as an active information office and expert organisation with a mission to develop the art of dance in Finland and strengthen the position of dance in Finnish society.

Founded in 1980, Dance Info Finland’s main activities include communications, promotion, advocacy, gathering statistics and facilitating international projects. It has eleven member organisations that represent the variety of dance styles and dance organisations in Finland.

Dance Info Finland’s website www.danceinfo.fi includes e.g. performance calendar, dance database TANKA and the latest news about Finnish dance. Finnish Dance in Focus, which represents the Finnish dance field to an international readership, is published once a year.
Dance art is living art conveyed through movement of the human body. The pleasure that dance art brings is fundamentally the pleasure of being in the here and now, and of the physicality shared between performers and audience.

The course of human life, from childhood and adolescence through middle age and into old age, is also reflected in dance art. In recent years, Finnish dance has been generating discussion about age and its significance for dancers as well as viewers.

How are choreographers’ and dancers’ own ageing processes evident in their works and their expression and movement? What ages are represented in dance pieces, and who is granted access to the stage? What ages of audiences are pieces created for, and who does the dance world want to see sitting in the stalls – or indeed taking part in the creative process?

Commentaries and opportunities for discussion have been presented through the means of dance as well: older dancers have appeared on stage, choreographers are addressing the theme of age in their works, and dance professionals are holding workshops designed for senior amateur dancers and even bringing dance into nursing homes.

On pages 16–23 of this issue, Finnish dance artists address the topic of age and ageing. Meanwhile, choreographer Päivi Aura, a trailblazer in her own career particularly in the field of children’s dance art, shares her thoughts on pages 24–27.

Aura, who has worked closely with children as well as elderly people, believes that movement is the most fundamental way for a human being to communicate. People are generally at their most sensitive to non-verbal bodily contact and the messages conveyed by movement at the very beginning and end of their lives.

While our relationship to movement and physicality often becomes more monotonous with the pressures of adulthood, they are still ever-present deep within us.

Commentaries and opportunities for discussion have been presented through the means of dance as well: older dancers have appeared on stage, choreographers are addressing the theme of age in their works, and dance professionals are holding workshops designed for senior amateur dancers and even bringing dance into nursing homes.

On pages 16–23 of this issue, Finnish dance artists address the topic of age and ageing. Meanwhile, choreographer Päivi Aura, a trailblazer in her own career particularly in the field of children’s dance art, shares her thoughts on pages 24–27.

Aura, who has worked closely with children as well as elderly people, believes that movement is the most fundamental way for a human being to communicate. People are generally at their most sensitive to non-verbal bodily contact and the messages conveyed by movement at the very beginning and end of their lives.

While our relationship to movement and physicality often becomes more monotonous with the pressures of adulthood, they are still ever-present deep within us. For this reason, dance art is uniquely placed to move people and speak to them – at every stage of life.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Finnish Dance in Focus! ☑

Elina Manninen
Editor
MEET THE NEW FACES!

Forces for social change, breaking boundaries, interaction between concrete and abstract phenomena ... intense language of movement, daring to appear bare and fragile, the freedom to experience things differently. Four rising Finnish choreographers – Sonya Lindfors, Mikko Hyvönen, Anna Mustonen and Joona Halonen – tell about their sources of inspiration and their work as artists.

By Elina Manninen   Photo Uupi Tirronen
“I do what needs to be done, whenever,” said Sonya Lindfors, who is a choreographer, dancer, dance instructor, performer, and co-founder and co-artistic director of the UrbanApa art collective. With over ten years’ experience in the fields of artistic dance, urban dance and show dance, she refers to herself as an “all-rounder” — and for good reason.

Lindfors says she has undergone some major changes in the last couple of years, both as a person and an artist. That’s why her most recent works feel particularly significant.

In QUEST! (2012), her final-year project in the choreography training programme at the Theatre Academy Helsinki, Lindfors boldly inhabits the interface between pop culture and art contexts.

In the spring of 2013 she worked on Chorus Line 2013, a piece for the 40th anniversary celebration of the Helsinki Dance Company, in which dancers with extensive experience of this major theatre got a chance to try out Lindfors’ palette of movements. In November 2013 her new work, entitled NOIR, will have its premiere in Helsinki.

“For a long time, I thought I didn’t know how to do ‘contemporary dance pieces’. Finally I broke free from attempting to do contemporary dance and began to create works in which I could utilise my own skills and versatility,” she explained.

This experimental choreographer is motivated by the courage associated with uncertainty and the unknown.

“I think my worst enemy as an artist is fear. When I start to fear failure, poor reviews, poor work or exposing myself, I start to employ solutions for the wrong reasons. So it’s always motivating to see courage in others — it touches me and empowers me,” she explained.

To Sonya Lindfors, who confesses she is an idealist, another major aspect of creating art is as a means of reacting to the surrounding community and society.

“I think there’s huge potential in art! Artists are ideally placed to be a force for social change, revealing hidden meanings, breaking boundaries, questioning, building communities and sparking ideas,” she said. “It’s the job of an artist to imagine a utopia that can be transformed into a strategy for a better world.”
The Ignorant Schoolmaster

“I create dance because I don’t know what else I could do,” said Mikko Hyvönen, a choreographer and performer who trained at P.A.R.T.S (Performing Arts Research and Training Studios) in Belgium. “It’s possible to communicate via dance and performing arts in ways that would be impossible otherwise,” he added.

In the course of his work, Hyvönen moves seamlessly from small Finnish towns to Helsinki and from Helsinki to Brussels, Düsseldorf, Lisbon and other cities around the world.

The challenging piece On the Threshold (2011), which Hyvönen created with choreographer Veli Lehtovaara and the Off/Balance dance ensemble, has already been performed at several international events and venues. His piece From routes untraveled (2012) had its premiere in the bustling small city of Kajaani in northern Finland, not far from Mikko Hyvönen’s boyhood hometown.

Trash Talk (2010), by Hyvönen and his Swedish colleague Salka Ardal Rosengren, plays around with conventional performance settings, while Houdini’s Hit (2011), created with Saara Töyrylä, gives a cheeky take on magic and conjuring. Hyvönen, who has devised a number of works collaboratively, says he draws his inspiration from people.

What else has moved him recently?

Hyvönen reeled off a list: “The absurdity and madness of the world. The (M)IMOSA performance. Steve Paxton and Lisa Nelson’s workshop. The parks in Brussels, as well as the city itself. Tai chi classes, sci-fi books and author Antti Nylén’s essays on hatred, resentment, desire and distrust.”

Mikko Hyvönen is currently working on a new solo piece. The same sense of curiosity and surprise evident in his works is reflected in his preferred working method.

“I’m excited by working in the style of the ‘Ignorant Schoolmaster’: not knowing anything when I start out, then asking questions and trying to figure things out in the shape of a performance,” he explained.

“But I don’t think there is a readily identifiable style in my works. Each piece is bound up with its own processes, its own terms,” he continued. “What emerges from them is exactly what needs to come out.”
Free to Experience
Things Differently

A continuum of love songs and duets... the relationship between Baroque music to the body and soul... romantic ballet imagery combined with a trash aesthetic – the themes chosen by Anna Mustonen provoke the mind, imagination and emotions.

For Mustonen, who trained as a dancer at Amsterdam School of the Arts and studied choreography at Theatre Academy Helsinki, creating performances is a way of understanding the world around her.

“I create performances in order to see and comprehend what already is or what has been, as well as to gain experiences of what else could be,” she explained. “When I create my works, I don’t want to inspect the world from outside, but rather immerse myself in it: to be impressed, confused and amazed.”

In her latest piece for the stage, Di anima et di corpo (2012), a work for one dancer and two musicians, Mustonen investigated how 17th-century music for voice and harpsichord combines with contemporary dance – how music can influence the bodies and “movements of the soul” of its listeners.

Her revealing work Thank You For Your Love (2011), co-created with Masi Tiitta, places itself in an endless stream of love song duets. The performance material consists of pop songs with lyrics about longing, bodies containing memories of love and the audience, who are designated as lovers.

To Anna Mustonen, a performance – when one party is on display and the other watches – is always a unique event.

“My aim is to find a tone for my performances where there is space to experience shame and confusion. It places demands on the performers to have the courage to present themselves as fragile, bare and not in control,” she explained.

At the same time, she tries to “deconstruct” her own work as a choreographer: to become conscious of her own assumptions and to get a peek at the other side.

“Maybe the viewers will have similar experiences as well. Things they take for granted may no longer appear self-evident, giving rise to a freedom to experience things differently,” she explained. “That way, things that are usually hidden away and forgotten can emerge.”
A Tingle in the Brain, a Wriggle in the Body

Joona Halonen has performed in many works by prominent Finnish contemporary choreographers since the 1990s. In recent years, audiences have seen his dance skills percolate into his own works as well.

“To me, choreography is an opportunity to communicate. It’s giving birth to logical and illogical form, problem-solving as well as a dialogue between the concrete and the abstract, and a way of organising them. In the best moments, it creates a tingle in your brain,” he explained.

Halonen, a graduate of the Theatre Academy Helsinki, describes himself as “a bouncy, doubting, challenging, mischievous yet sympathetic choreographer”.

“I try to be unfiltered. It’s so terribly difficult to talk about one’s own work and style; it’s more typical for me to create a work and bring it to fruition through action,” he said.

In his works such as Whispering Cosmos (2009), Moral P (2010), Worry Doll (2011) and Second half (2012), Halonen has presented an acrobatic, intense, highly physical language of movement.

A key recurring theme in his works is the reflection of the mind in the body and vice versa.

Spring 2013 saw the premiere in Helsinki of Straight, a piece for five male dancers in which Joona Halonen places men on the stage as objects. It is a hymn to the male gender and individuals within groups.

“I want to use dance to communicate the smallness and greatness within human beings. Even in all its inexplicability, the human body is the most interesting, the most concrete of all our tools. Movement is direct action – there’s no written language intermediating,” he explained.

What has been inspiring this choreographer of the mind and body recently?

“An absurd fear of death and stopping breathing; the intolerability of incompleteness and yet the mercy that incompleteness brings,” he replied. “The paradoxical nature of things forces me to think in different ways, and those contradictions cause a wriggling in my body.”

A MAXIMALIST WITH ALL MY HEART

Tomi Paasonen is an artist who’s generous to audiences

By Maija Karhunen
Photo Ivo Serra

In his works, choreographer Tomi Paasonen has documented individual lives and the personalities of the performers he engages, playing in the realm between authenticity and artistic formalism. In his video piece 4 Solos for 4 Tattoos, which had its premiere in the summer of 2013, Paasonen placed himself before the camera lens for the first time and recounted his own life up to that point. The piece was produced in collaboration with the Finnish photographer and video artist Elina Brotherus.

While Paasonen has no fear of bringing documentary elements onto the stage, he said this first solo piece for himself was a fairly major undertaking.

“The impetus for the piece came from Elina. I hadn’t created a dance piece for myself since my days at the ballet academy. I set about working intuitively, without questioning too much,” he explained.

In 4 Solos for 4 Tattoos Tomi Paasonen goes through the stages of life that are commemorated in four tattoos on his body. One of the solos deals with an accident that happened during a rehearsal in 1997, in which he sustained a neck injury. That injury put an end to his career as a dancer, which had started with John Neumeier’s renowned Hamburg Ballet and taken him via San Francisco to the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago.

“The day before my first rehearsal, my neck suddenly went into spasm. I cursed my body, wondering why it always had to be so damn clever. Anyway, I realised this was an authentic way to express the experience of the accident and I figured out how to dance with restricted movement due to the pain. Little by little, I got moving again and was reminded of the healing effect of movement,” he explained.

The three other tattooed memories relate to relationships, from his first young love to stormy relationships full of jealousy and instability. Through movement, Paasonen attempts to examine the emotional landscapes and events from each of those relationships.

In addition to a relationship, the third solo also depicts a chaotic period in Paasonen’s life as an artist. After his accident, he began working as a freelance choreographer – first in the United States, where he co-founded the KUNST-STOFF group, a dance and multimedia ensemble.

In 2001 Tomi Paasonen moved to Berlin. There he began working under the name Public Artistic Affairs. Dictated by his work schedule, he was constantly travelling from one country to another. The varying locations made for a disjointed, fragmented existence. 4 Solos for 4 Tattoos also conveys the concepts of movement which have influenced Paasonen’s work: everything from the aesthetics of ballet to dance inspired by neuroscience. Although the solos reference different periods in the choreographer’s life, the work itself is timeless.

“To me, creating art is a sort of filter through which all the experiences, memories, dreams, hopes and influences I’ve absorbed all pass. My past experiences take on a different appearance when viewed through different phases of life. Art is like a spiritual form of digestion,” he explained.

HUMANITY SHINES THROUGH

Paasonen has worked with many different minority groups and non-professionals. He has created works with prisoners, LGBT groups and people with physical and mental disabilities.

State of Being (’Olotila’, 2000), a work created with the Finnish Rajat’on ensemble, which has both disabled and non-disabled performers, toured for nine years and resulted in Paasonen’s winning the Theatre Event of the Year Award in Finland.

He spent the spring of 2013 working in Tokyo, where he directed the ensemble piece YUME NO MINATO (’Harbour of Dreams’). The nearly 70-strong ensemble included both professional and non-professional dancers, from children to the elderly. Participants were drawn by lot from among the residents of the area around Minato Harbour, and the performers included people from all walks of life, from secretaries to sociologists and retired people.

“On previous visits to Japan, I had perceived Japanese society as oppressive and homogenising – after childhood, it’s like everyone puts on a mask and goes to stand in straight rows. At least childhood is a time when everyone can still have dreams,” Paasonen explained.

The process of creating the work unleashed the participants’ childhood dreams. As he got to know people better during the project, Paasonen’s impressions began to change. Their humanity shone through.

“The challenge was how to deal with individual experiences, which have always been at the core of my work, in a mass performance with 70 people. Surprisingly, it worked, and when these life
experiences were multiplied, together they resulted in a powerfully emotional work. It was also an important experience for me as a choreographer. The creative process suddenly gave a large group of people the space to be themselves, to deal with different experiences and to feel the emotions triggered by those experiences,” he summarised.

BREAKING FREE FROM STRICT GENRE BOUNDARIES

At the moment, Tomi Paasonen hopes to return to studying the aesthetics and techniques of ballet to see how his dream at the age of seven of being a ballet dancer feels now, from the perspective of his subsequent life experiences and career.

He plans to utilise pointe shoes and other prosthetics, and to work with professionals as well as people with no experience of ballet. Paasonen wants to find out what ballet might look like if the usual roles allocated to professionals and newcomers were mixed up.

Right after his own career in ballet had come to an abrupt end, Paasonen reacted strongly against the ideal body image dictated by ballet. However, from his current perspective he no longer wishes to pit ballet and contemporary dance against one another, or even to squeeze himself inside any strict genre boundaries.

“The are some bodies that are tailor-made for ballet. Other forms of dance could be compared to speaking different languages. A more interesting question is to what extent our image of the body is tied to a technique,” he said.

It is also increasingly clear to Paasonen that he does not want to latch onto movement alone in his works.

“I’m interested in creating worlds, the materiality of things, incorporating the total aesthetics of works, which I’d prefer to create myself from scratch, from costumes and staging,” he explained.

The KUNST-STOFF group is commemorating its 15th anniversary this year with a retrospective. Tomi Paasonen has created dozens of dance works over this period – and not just choreography, but also video, photography and multimedia pieces as well as set design and costume design... and even dramatising and co-writing the libretto for a contemporary opera.

“I’ve produced a lot of expressions and ideas. I see myself as a generous artist, and that includes being generous towards audiences. Rather than a minimalist, I consider myself a maximalist: I don’t want to hide behind a stripped-down next-to-nothingness,” he said.

In the performing arts it is a challenge to be able to reawaken the spirit of a work every time. As a choreographer, one has to grasp the moment in the here and now. Material recorded on film will last and can be replayed, but a moment on stage changes constantly: it is in flux and ultimately vanishes.

“For me, there’s no use in worrying about failure; I want to try different things and continue to learn new things,” Tomi Paasonen summarised. “What’s most important is to see and notice things, to be extremely honest and to create works with all your heart.”

The writer is a dance student and a journalist specialising in the performing arts.

In June 2013 Tomi Paasonen was appointed as the new artistic coordinator of the Regional Dance Center of Eastern Finland. Paasonen will take up the position in the beginning of autumn 2013.
“I haven’t dared to phone up the other Johanna Tuukkanen – I’ve only collected details about her,” said choreographer Johanna Tuukkanen. She discovered her namesake by chance when a travel agency gave her the wrong plane tickets that were under the right name.

“Then, when I was enrolling at the University of Jyväskylä, there were already details under my name in their computer system,” she continued.

“I’m interested in an autobiographical approach that emerges from our own lives: how our identity is formed and what aspects create a person’s image. Can we consciously create a self? How big a role does random chance play in constructing our lives?” Tuukkanen the choreographer pondered.

For her new work, Meet Johanna Tuukkanen, she has collected a lot of information about her doppelgänger. The other Johanna is about ten years older, a doctor and mother of three who is involved in local politics and whose hobby is ballet. There are a number of similarities between the two women.

“I never really longed for children, but now my partner and I have six kids altogether. I’ve also thought about going into politics. If I’d made only a few slightly different choices, I could be living my double’s life!” she laughed.

This work aims to show the choreographer Johanna Tuukkanen at home in the midst of an artistic family’s life. As a venue, her own home is a new territory for the choreographer. The space where she encounters the audience is an important artistic consideration for her. Besides the black box of the theatre, Tuukkanen would like to bring her art out into real life.

POINTS OF CONTACT WITH REAL LIFE

In the performing-arts landscape, Johanna Tuukkanen performs the new and questions the old. She has an impressive ability to artistically integrate individual, everyday details from a woman’s life into a high-quality, multi-dimensional creation.

She once wrote: “I’ve sat in a tub containing over 50 litres of milk. I’ve crawled around on stage. I’ve greased up my legs in performances, lain on top of peas, run on a treadmill, changed my clothes, screamed and told my life story on a catwalk prompted by items of clothing. I’ve made sushi, gave a list of how I spend my time, collected make-up containers and danced a lot in high heels.”

Her latest work, Map of Scars (2012), marks a departure for her: it is a stage-based piece for three female dancers. In this successful work, the almost-naked performers use black paint to trace along every scar and bruise on their bodies. As they do this, they explain how they came to have the scars, thus revealing significant moments from their lives.

It is the female performers’ authentic presence on stage that creates the unique aspect of the work. Instead of performing or interpreting, when they are on stage they are doing and being. The performers’ autobiographical honesty and openness provide a liberating and moving experience for the audience, sharing feelings and insights.

“Scars are an excellent subject because we’ve all got emotional as well as physical scars. Scars are a sign of a life lived and the passage
of time. But we can also think of them as openings. When we get a cut or a wound, the scar tissue is not as strong as the skin; a scar is like glue, a third material. Skin is also a fascinating organ: it is a renewable organ and a great deal of meaning is attached to skin in relation to femininity,” Tuukkanen explained.

“I’m interested in lives that have been lived, and for Map of Scars I originally wanted to find performers in their 40s, 50s and 60s, since dancers in their twenties are still really children,” she said. “I don’t go to rehearsals with ready-prepared movement material; instead, I give them tasks and spend a lot of time on being together. That’s when I seek out information and knowledge from their own experiences and their pasts. This is linked to my aesthetic values: when you do things rather than just performing them, you create real meaning and content for the world.”

“I don’t want these works to remain within the realm of art. It’s essential to have a two-way exchange of aesthetic references with the audience,” she said. “Instead of elitism, I’m looking for points of contact with real life and audience participation.”

In Twirling World (2010) audiences participated in painting Johanna Tuukkanen’s naked body. Thus she transferred the performer’s power to the viewers. While it sounds easy, Tuukkanen said the situation was extremely nerve-wracking.

She wrote: “People painted hearts on my breasts, decorated my hands and feet, put cave-like shapes on my lower abdomen and a sun on my thigh... One woman was sobbing so uncontrollably, I wasn’t sure whether she would make it or whether I’d end up in tears myself.”

ART COMES TO THE CITY

Johanna Tuukkanen hails from Hailuoto, an island in the Gulf of Bothnia with a population of 900. “I hated that island. I couldn’t get away from it for weeks at a time because of the weather conditions,” she recalled.

These days, Tuukkanen is a choreographer with international connections. She is the founder and artistic director of the ANTI – Contemporary Art Festival in Kuopio, Eastern Finland. Since graduating with a BA in dance and choreography from the Hogeschool voor de Kunsten in Arnhem in the Netherlands in 1997, she has worked as a dancer, choreographer and live art producer. She is currently finishing up her master’s degree in cultural policy at the University of Jyväskylä.

“Studying art theory provides inspiration and a grounding for artistic work,” she explained. “Theory helps me to analyse the directions art is going in, so my own work doesn’t appear to be just some strange whim, but is part of a wider context.”

In emphasising the collaborative nature of her art, Tuukkanen underscores the meaning of art as a primarily social event. The ANTI – Contemporary Art Festival, now in its twelfth year, has brought key figures such as Rebecca French, Annie Sprinkle & Beth Stephens and Guillermo Gomez-Pena to Kuopio audiences. The festival has gained an international reputation and over 400 applications are received each year in the open call for participants.

Johanna Tuukkanen thinks of the festival as a gift to the city. Thanks to the festival, Kuopio residents who may not be likely to visit a cultural venue can encounter art in the tax office, at the railway station, in lifts and at the barber’s. Similarly, the art investigates and reveals city spaces to the residents in a totally new way.

“Can you be credible as a mother, a dancer and a single parent and female dancer in those days, I experienced discrimination. Can you be credible as a mother, a dancer and a young woman?” she asked.

With her works such as Milk (‘Maito’, 2004) and Huippusuoritus – Outstanding performance (2009), Tuukkanen examined the stereotyped roles and pressures of motherhood and womanhood with irony but also affection.

“Although age brings credibility, I still have to be aware of what concept of people and image of women I convey in my work,” she explained. “We are gendered bodies: femininity, equality and freedom are quite contradictory terms. Often these terms conceal discriminatory unspoken agreements. I have set out to investigate these in my work, to make them visible and hopefully to break them.”

The writer is a producer and a culture journalist specializing in contemporary dance.

术有時。但我們也可認為它們是開端。當我們受到傷口時，疤痕組織不像皮膚那麼強固；疤痕就像膠水，第三種材料。皮膚也是一個令人著迷的器官：它是一個可再生的器官，並且與女性的意義緊密相連。”Tuukkanen解釋道。

“我對已經生活過的生活感興趣，對於Map of Scars，我原本想要找到四十多歲、五十多歲和六十多歲的舞者，因為二十多歲的舞者仍然年輕。”她說。“我不會去排練室準備運動材料；相反，我給他們任務，花很多時間在一起。那是我尋求知識和信息的時候，他們的經歷和過去。這與我的美感觀念有關：當你做事情而不是只是表演時，你創造了真正的意義和世界。”

“我不想讓這些工作在藝術的範圍內保持。雙向交流對美的參考很有必要與觀眾，”她說。“而不是精英主義，我正在尋找與現實生活和觀眾參與的接觸點。”

在Twirling World（2010）中，觀眾們參與了塗鴉Tuukkanen的裸體。因此，她將表演者的權力轉移給了觀眾。雖然聽起來很容易，但Tuukkanen說這情況非常令人神經緊繃。

她寫道：“人們在我胸前塗鴉，在我腳上畫洞穴，我下腹部畫太陽。一個女人失控地哭泣，我不確定她會不會哭出來，還是我自己會哭。”

ART COMES TO THE CITY

Johanna Tuukkanen出身於Hailuoto，芬蘭波羅的海的一個島嶼，人口為900人。“我討厭那個島嶼。因為天氣條件，我不能從那裡出去一個星期。”她回憶道。

當今，Tuukkanen是一位與國際有聯繫的舞者。她是庫波爾的ANTI – 現代藝術節的創始人和藝術總監。自1997年以舞蹈和舞蹈學士學位從荷爾斯霍夫voor de Kunsten在阿姆斯特丹的荷蘭畢業後，她就以舞者、舞蹈家和生動藝術製片人的身份工作。她目前正在完成她在Jyväskylä的碩士學位，在文化政策。

“研究藝術理論提供了靈感和為藝術工作的基礎，”她解釋說。“理論幫助我分析藝術的發展方向，因此我的工作不會只是某些奇怪的隨機事件，而是包含在更廣泛的背景下。”

在強調合作性質的藝術中，Tuukkanen強調了藝術作為主要社會事件的意義。十二歲的ANTI – 現代藝術節，每年都收到400多個來自全球各地的申請。

Tuukkanen認為這個節日對城市來說是一份禮物。由於這個節日，庫波爾的居民們可能不會喜歡去藝術場所，在鐵路站，電梯和理髮店，也能夠看到藝術。同樣地，藝術調查和揭示城市空間給居民們在一個全新的方式。

“我們不能再把藝術留在精英文化的機構內；它正在被散播給所有人。然後，當你在當地的報紙上看到‘這是藝術嗎？’時，‘它是在稅務官的責任！’這時就會產生新的討論，”Tuukkanen說。

MAKING GENDER ROLES VISIBLE

Dressed in a carefully chosen, feminine black outfit, Tuukkanen, 39, gives the impression of being someone who knows what she wants and is capable of achieving it.

“I’m no longer as angry as I was at the start of my career. As a single parent and female dancer in those days, I experienced discrimination. Can you be credible as a mother, a dancer and a young woman?” she asked.

With her works such as Milk (‘Maito’, 2004) and Huippusuoritus – Outstanding performance (2009), Tuukkanen examined the stereotyped roles and pressures of motherhood and womanhood with irony but also affection.

“Although age brings credibility, I still have to be aware of what concept of people and image of women I convey in my work,” she explained. “We are gendered bodies: femininity, equality and freedom are quite contradictory terms. Often these terms conceal discriminatory unspoken agreements. I have set out to investigate these in my work, to make them visible and hopefully to break them.”

The writer is a producer and a culture journalist specializing in contemporary dance.

引用材料取自：
Twirling World, choreographer Johanna Tuukkanen, dancers Sonja Jokiniemi and Johanna Tuukkanen.
In recent times, Finnish dance audiences have seen a great deal of dancing with real emotional impact by dancer-choreographers who have decades of professional experience under their belts. There have even been performances by retired professional performers, young-at-heart senior amateurs, and long-time collaborators with the Helsinki Dance Company who have been thinking about how they can meet the many demands on them as professional contemporary dancers.

Age is no longer a taboo on the dance stage. Nevertheless, it is interesting to stop and consider the sources from which the theme of age is currently flowing into Finnish dance and its significance in the works of dance artists.

WHAT MOVES AND WHY

In February 2013, Marjo Kuusela, a respected choreographer, dancer and academic who began her career in the 1970s, performed Whose Hands (’Kenen kädet’) with fluid movements. Her eyes glowed with the same fire they’d possessed decades ago.

Before the run of performances, Kuusela jokingly advised me to come to the premiere, when she would still be able to crouch down. In fact, the 66-year-old Kuusela seemed to be completely at ease moving on stage – even in the hip-hop solo at the end.

“Everything got going when I looked at my hands and was amazed to see my mother’s hands on the table. I became interested in hands, lungs and even our backside – the way some movements resonate in the core of our body.”

Kuusela recalled that at the start of her career, it was the undiluted joy of all-embracing movement which carried everything along. Soon, though, that joy faded when dance became her profession.

“Now I’m beginning to find what moves and why. It’s easier to analyse movements when you’re better acquainted with your body from the inside. But there’s also this feeling that some things no longer move. If a movement goes from the pelvis into your hands, there’s around 30 cm of territory under your shoulder blades you’ll no longer locate,” she explained.

Undiluted joy was followed by the Graham Technique, and movement was shifted inside the body.

“Then came the most wonderful stage when I discovered the loose Horton/Ailey movement – the feeling that you’re larger than life, and movement continues into its own kinesphere,” Kuusela continued.

“These days it feels like the analytical movements I’m using are more of a matter of nerves. When your elbow moves first, then your knee and your belly, that’s your nervous system at work. I discovered this very late, but all of these approaches are different ways of engaging with the world.”
It’s easier to analyse movements when you’re better acquainted with your body from the inside. But there’s also this feeling that some things no longer move.

Marjo Kuusela
A more brittle person’s physicality forces a dialogue, counterbalancing a young, fleshly body. You get a counterforce, a respondent.

Arja Raatikainen
Kuusela maintains that *Whose Hands*, the piece she created with Panu Varstala, is the polar opposite of younger choreographers’ recent works for senior amateur groups.

“Performances done for seniors are nice, but alongside the dignity that age brings, there can also be a shared sense of embarrassment,” she noted. “I’m interested in what that feeling is – openness and transparency, but also shared embarrassment.”

Just before her premiere, Marjo Kuusela was working in dramatic theatre, and she has new dance pieces being produced and performed all over Finland. The last time this former professor of choreography at the Theatre Academy Helsinki had been on stage as a dancer was in 2002.

“Nowadays dancing is marvellous when I can improvise. I used to have to know things so precisely... Sure, I’ve got aches and pains now; I’ve had rheumatoid arthritis for many years,” she said.

Kuusela also said she might as well focus on gardening these days if it didn’t hurt her back. “I don’t miss dancing; it’s the world of dance. And the chance to put all those ideas into practice!”

YOU’VE GOT TO SHOW MERCY

Another person with plenty of unrealised ideas is Reijo Kela, an award-winning dancer-choreographer whose career also stretches back four decades. He returned to the traditional stage in a performance to mark his 60th birthday in October 2012.

Over the decades, he has danced in his own dance gallery and in large performance spaces, but increasingly in forests, on water, in streets and homes as well.

Kela admits that while ideas still bubble up in his mind with ease, putting them into practice is another matter. His mind is currently occupied by a strong take on a particular social issue.

“In the 1980s it was fun to do things like *Mannequin in Frame* (‘Taulumannekiini’, 1982) and *Average Man* (‘Keskiverto’, 1986), making strong statements. I no longer have the same desire to prove anything. Then again, when things get me down, I think about how many of my colleagues have already been pensioned off. This is a long journey,” he mused.

His 60 Years With KELA gala performance included extracts from well-known works, as well as grand jeté leaps from the 60-year-old dancer moving at a good pace.

“The idea to use a heartbeat monitor through the whole performance was fun and unexpected. I’ve got aches and pains due to a long-term recurring illness, but my motivation helps. The gala performance happened to fall on a good day. And performing always gets my adrenaline levels up so I can dance,” Kela said in a serious voice, immediately followed by a hearty laugh.

He gave this interview while out cross-country skiing and, while leaning against the side of a tumbledown barn, suddenly ended up flat on his back.

“The phone’s the wrong way up now. Draw your own conclusions from that!” he laughed. “Seriously, though, you’ve got to show your body some mercy. When I was younger I got things done as circumstances dictated. Seldom have I cancelled a gig.”

He has done some gigs lying down or with his knee in a brace. Sometimes, though, you’ve got to spur your body along. To Reijo Kela, training these days means exercises to keep his muscles in condition, interval training and even chopping wood. He used to clock up 100–200 gigs a year. Nowadays a crunch of 10 to 20 larger events annually is a better rhythm.
Does Kela think there are any age-related pressures in the 21st century?

“It takes time to battle against physical decline and accepting it if you carry on as a performer,” he replied. “Dancing still tends to be regarded in terms of physical and technical virtuosity. I represent the era of the 1970s and ‘80s, when we trained in a defined technique in order to become a virtuoso at it.”

This artist who has pursued his own path has always created the concepts for his works himself. “That’s different from acting as a filter for another choreographer’s steps and ideas. It’s easier when you’re conveying your own thoughts – or rather, the work is harder as a whole, but it’s easier on your body,” Kela explained.

CARRIED AWAY WITH LIFE

Arja Raatikainen is a much-lauded dancer-choreographer with over 40 works to her name. For her, age works as a bringer of contrasts to the stage. When she began work on her piece entitled Wakescape (‘Heräämö’) in 2012, she knew straight away that she wanted to include dancers from a broad age spectrum – such as retired performance artist Heikki Mäntymaa and dancer Tuula Hyyryläinen.

“A more brittle person’s physicality forces a dialogue, counter-balancing a young, fleshly body. You get a counterforce, a respondent. The result is greater than the sum of its parts,” Raatikainen said during a break from rehearsing her new work, called Chorus Girl (‘Tanssityttö’), in March 2013. As she spoke, she emphasised her words with almost unconscious movements in the middle of the floor.

Wakescape is meant to make audiences think about whether we hold the reins in our own lives. This piece follows on from Raatikainen’s previous works Asylum (‘Lataamo’, 2009) and Reactor (‘Reaktori’, 2011) to form a coherent statement of her thoughts as a choreographer. Ruminations on humanity and existence have been evident in her works for a long time.

“At the age of 54, I realise that life can easily carry you along. It’s so easy for people to become detached from themselves. Wakescape was an exhortation: Stop and search for your own thoughts. Don’t let other people keep feeding you ready-made answers. Otherwise we’re not much more than marionettes being manipulated. I’m constantly dealing with these issues myself,” she explained.

Arja Raatikainen believes that once we have aged and passed through the turbulent phase of life, a sort of fissure begins to appear in us.

“It’s only then that our core self gradually begins to emerge. People are driven from a small pond towards the vast ocean. Our perspective widens, and our fragility is revealed. There’s something touching and beautiful about that. It’s empowering to look at an old person,” she explained.

There is a fissure evident in the field of Finnish dance as well.

“Many barriers have already been broken in dance – for example, age is no longer a taboo. It’s fine now to talk honestly about what physicality and a broad awareness of it can give people,” Raatikainen pointed out.

Alpo Aaltokoski is a well-known dancer-choreographer and has long been a dynamic presence in the dance world. It was when he was working as a professor of arts that he began to dream of founding a multi-age dance ensemble.
Issues of how we use the stage are still always political questions. What sorts of people and actions are being shown on stage? What kind of physicality do we value?

Eeva Muilu
It could include dancers of all ages – not just over-50s. The guiding principle, though, would be age and experience on the stage,” explained Aaltokoski, who is 54 himself.

HOW ARE WE GOING TO USE THE STAGE?

Eeva Muilu is a distinguished 32-year-old dancer-choreographer who has created two works for groups including non-professional older dancers. The performances followed dance workshops that were held for seniors in 2008 and 2009.

“The workshops were primarily places for bodily encounters, sharing and exploration,” she explained.

The social aim of the workshops was to create opportunities for encounters and exploring the notion of embodiment. Eeva Muilu also had an artistic interest in seeing older people plunge into movement on stage. For example, during the workshops the question emerged of whether older people are included as active members of society.

“If you look at the world only in terms of what is missing, you might not see what’s actually there.

“Ageing doesn’t mean people have less of a need to be seen or less interest in the world,” she pointed out.

Working with older non-professionals helped Muilu to view the significance of dance from a new perspective. “We started slow with movement exploration. I understood how revealing and personal our own movements can be,” she recalled.

In the wide spectrum of dance art nowadays, there are plenty of other types of physicality besides the youthful and the virtuosic. “Issues of how we use the stage are still always political questions. What sorts of people and actions are being shown on stage? What kind of physicality do we value?” Muilu continued.

These projects have also made her think about how non-professionals and older people are viewed on stage.

“If a work is based on movement and physical, embodied presence, like my piece entitled Something is Somewhere (‘Jossain on jotain’, 2008), how important is it for the audience to know how they can assess what they are seeing? If a movement is ordinary or questioning, what are the different ways it should be read if coming from a professional or non-professional? Can a performer even show insecurity, or does that make it a ‘bad performance’?” she elaborated.

These are the issues Eeva Muilu has encountered with her works. “If you look at the world only in terms of what is missing, you might not see what’s actually there,” she remarked.

Once she started working with professional dancers, Muilu still encountered comments that the performers were not fully utilising their skills. “There is a strongly held desire to see a certain sort of ‘impressive’ bodily culture,” she explained.

To Eeva Muilu, working with non-professionals does not mean she doesn’t appreciate professional dancers’ supreme skill: their precise bodily awareness, their multidimensional understanding of movement, their sensitivity and bravery...

“It was also nice to work with five professional dancers in Quintet (‘Kvintetto’, 2012). And they, too, possess something far greater and more astonishing than the sum of their skills.”

ANTENNAE ON THE ALERT

So, how do these hard-bitten pros with decades of experience remain so fired up about their work from one piece – and one decade – to the next?

“I have retained some deep-seated faith in dance, though the surrounding conditions continue to vary,” said Arja Raatikainen.

“At this point I can look back a bit. I think I’ve been tenacious. My work supports itself; the projects I’ve done have been stimulating journeys into new territory – my antennae always stay alert. I can confirm that life is still interesting!” she said.

For Raatikainen, the anchor point for what she does is grounded very deep. Her interest in dealing with human nature arises from her own experience of being an outsider. “This core internal feeling inevitably leads you to track down a dark place in people,” she said.

In response to the same question, Reijo Kela exclaimed, “Bloody hell, I’ve just been thinking about that.”

“Enthusiasm is incredible, even though I suppose you don’t need to be enthusiastic all the time. When I get on stage, I always get a buzz. There’s no sensible explanation for where everything surges from when I work by feeling rather than thinking,” he said.

For Kela, things unspool from his subconscious and his emotions during the performance. “Maybe the emotions and the intelligence join together. Could it even be a bit narcissistic to have this desire to perform? And the desire to say something,” he added.

Marjo Kuusela’s passion comes from deep inside, from the feeling that working with dance is life.

“There are such interesting possibilities in choreography – they create a feeling of being alive,” she said. “And as long as there are possibilities, there will be continuity.”

The writer is a journalist, dance critic, and an author specialising in contemporary dance.
In April 2013 some twenty older amateur dancers gathered in Helsinki under the leadership of dancer and choreographer Gabriela Aldana-Kekoni. A great many senior dancers have learned to express themselves through dance in the courses held at the Zodiak – Centre for New Dance since 2008. For many of the participants, dance has become their lifeblood.

“Ask your right hand what you need to do. Then just do it. Be conscious of every movement. Believe in what you’re doing. It will always be right,” Aldana-Kekoni encouraged them.

“The audience doesn’t need to understand what you are experiencing. Break loose from attempting to achieve that. The viewers might see something they need to see right at that moment,” she continued. Aldana-Kekoni has four years’ experience in leading these workshops.

What are the most exciting things about this work?

“I’m interested in giving people the tools to enable them to discover their own inner world and to express that world through movement,” she explains.

“I’ve been using my Spirals method for the past ten years. In Finland, I’ve worked more as a dancer than as a choreographer. So I thought I’d set out to explore my choreographic ideas with older people. They’re not professional dancers, but their bodies and selves are present. That’s all you need. That’s been important to the participants as well,” she added.

Aldana-Kekoni, who originally hails from Chile, was surprised at how open the course participants were to trying out new things.

“As a result of their life experiences, seniors no longer need to be afraid of anything. If they decide they’re going to dance, then that’s exactly what they do,” she said.

IMMERSING YOURSELF IN THE MOMENT

The method does not differ from professional practice in the sense that participants engage in deep, open observations of themselves and investigate their bodies. Immersing oneself and focusing on demanding tasks are challenging for professional dancers as well.

“When I set a task, I tell them there’s no time for doubt – just immerse yourself like a child. At first, you might think you’re too old and look ridiculous. That’s not true. Seniors quickly realise they don’t need that sort of shell,” Gabriela Aldana-Kekoni pointed out.

In her work as a body therapist, Aldana-Kekoni encounters feelings of inadequacy in people of all ages.

Last year, workshop participants collaborated to produce a performance dealing with stories from their own lives. There will be more in September 2013, when current participants will bring their narrative to the stage.

Choreographers from the younger generation who have created works for seniors include Hanna Brotherus, who works with groups of different ages and from diverse backgrounds, as well as Eeva Muilu, Jenni Koistinen and Virva Talonen.

In the first session of the April workshop, the instructor asked the dancers if they were interested in taking part in a performance. One reply was particularly memorable. “If I’m alive, I’ll be there,” said the oldest member of the group.

These dancers who are playing around with physicality really are immersing themselves in the moment.

With the new piece, Gabriela Aldana-Kekoni hopes that people of all ages will come to see the performance – and perhaps think about the beauty of ageing and life itself.

HANNELE JYRKKÄ
Under the Gaze of Children

A little girl in a frilly dress does a few dance steps next to an old wood-burning stove. The setting is Äänekoski, a factory town of a few thousand residents in central Finland in the late 1950s. The dancer is Päivi Aura, whose long, multifaceted career in Finnish dance began back in the 1970s.

“I’ve been dancing all my life – I’ve never been able to sit still for long. It’s just innate. I don’t know where I got my dancing know-how from as a little girl, but that memory is very strong. I flitted around like a butterfly,” she recalled.

In her early twenties, she moved to Jyväskylä to study physical education, even though it was never her intention to become a PE teacher.

“It was the early ’70s and there just weren’t any other educational opportunities in Finland then,” Aura explained. She did her master’s thesis in the late ’70s in the faculty of physical education – on the subject of pedagogical dance, prophetically enough.

“For my thesis, I did an interpretation of the creative, aesthetic side of dance. The way dance could be part of children’s creative education. I’m sure that even back then, I was already forming my own concept of which aspects of dance are important to me,” she mused.

FINDING FREEDOM WITH CHILDREN

Päivi Aura’s career path has been a journey of many years through – and between – roles as a dancer and dance educator, student and teacher. Later, since her move to Helsinki, her choreography work has “flowed onwards” from one task to the next.

In the mid-’90s, though, it looked as if Aura’s dancing career might come to a difficult end. She sustained several leg injuries, and a broken ankle was treated badly.

“I ended up immobile for a whole year. The doctors said I’d never dance again and advised me to change career. That was the critical point where I had to think very hard about whether I could still dance or do anything dance-related,” she recalled.

Aura decided not to listen to the doctors and instead began a tough exercise regime on her legs with a simple elastic band technique. Three years of hard work paid off: nearly twenty years later, Aura is still dancing. Her artistic career also zoomed off in a new direction towards children’s dance.

“I had a sense that even though I was a bit banged up and couldn’t dance as much as I used to, I could still work with children. And by doing that sort of creative activity, I found a completely new way to engage with dance!” she smiled.

Aura dived into the world of children’s dance in 1998, and soon her work had taken on an international dimension. Today she is one of Finland’s best-known dance artists on the international scene.

Päivi Aura’s magical dance works such as Moon Maiden (‘Kuu-neiti’, 2007), Me-Me (2009) and Petit Câlin (2012) have toured extensively around European stages and festivals, and she has collaborated with people in Asia and Middle America. She is currently working on a new dance piece.

Her dance works, as well as her workshops on related themes, have always been created together with children and parents as well as professionals from the fields of dance and performing arts. Aura has two children of her own, so it was not a stretch to begin working with children.

“I didn’t give it a second thought. I actually felt a freedom, both inside and out, to create dance and to work in my own way. Being around children comes naturally to me. I’ve never really tried to set down rules for children; I’ve let the interaction progress freely so that we achieve our shared goal,” she explained.

Later, that method infused her choreography work with professionals as well. Choreography that used to be done one step at a time...
Me-Me, choreographer and dancer Päivi Aura.
has been transformed into a dancer-oriented approach in which performers are very involved in the creation of works.

“When the performer’s presence is a strong element of a work, it also opens up a different kind of approach to the audience than with a work that was conceived entirely externally. But I am careful who I choose to do this sort of work with. We have to have an excellent working relationship so my idea will get across,” Aura emphasised.

SENSITIVE PRESENCE

Päivi Aura has tackled some major themes in her works, such as the relationship between people and nature, as well as bodily encounters. *Petit Câlin*, meaning “little hug”, was premiered in 2012. In creating that work, Aura investigated intimate emotions: *joie de vivre*, happiness, anxiety and pain, around which the dance piece was structured.

“*Petit Câlin* means the first embrace a child receives after birth. We thought it was quite like sitting in someone’s lap, where you can do anything with no need to fear. A free, secure arena,” Aura explained.

That piece is also an example of Aura’s way of choreographing. The dancer Takako Matsuda performs the work within a loose structure as an instant composition, together with the musician and lighting designer.

“We’ve trained a lot together, and it’s partly set out which action follows another. But I’ve left a lot of space for the performer’s feelings at that moment, for good and bad days. And that freedom applies to all three performers on stage,” she said.

“It creates a certain fragility in the piece. It can break very quickly, and that’s something I can see touches people. It makes the whole audience – children as well as adults – concentrate,” she added.

Aura has performed *Me-Me* (which means “We-We” in English), her “baby piece” for children under age three, with dancers including Lieve Hermans from Belgium and her own daughter Kati Lehtola. *Me-Me* was created as a charming solution to a common problem with works for small children.

“I’ve seen a vast number of pieces where at some stage a child is taken out of the performance space. They want to be part of the activity, too, and then there’s wailing and gnashing of teeth – terribly restless! I wondered if there was a solution,” Aura explained.

As she held workshops all over Europe, the idea for a new way of working with children gradually began to take shape. This was the basis for *Me-Me*, which means “we” the performers and “we” the audience, both together.

In the piece, the performers – three dancers and a musician – are on the same level as the children and adults in the audience.

Aura described the piece: “We just go out to sit and wait. We see who is there and what starts to happen. When we see someone in the audience moving around, that’s the impetus for us to start moving.”

She continued: “We ask the adults to refrain from speaking, while the children can just be themselves. We even let the children come onto the floor with us. The moment is where it all happens. If I’m not 100% present, it just fizzles out. And this works for children under three: children over three start to have such models of social behaviour that they need a different kind of performance.”

“But those babies! They’re just there, observing, until they’ve finished. Some remain sitting in one spot; others come along with us. Sometimes we don’t get very far before some little person comes and sits on our lap. A random child, in a completely strange situation! They decide for themselves that they can go up there,” she remarked.

Aura explained that the unpretentious, active participation of their young audiences delights and challenges the performers. That uncompromising presence is the core lesson she has learnt through creating dance and performing for children.

All of us are physical; we have movement within us. While our movement often gets stiffer with age, it doesn’t disappear. If we give it permission to emerge, then it will have an effect on us.
You can’t fake it with them. Experienced adult viewers can sit silently and politely through a performance, whatever they might think of it. Things don’t go like that with children. They are more prepared to respond to anything at all, and you can get all kinds of feedback from that. It’s simply fantastic,” Aura smiled.

MOVEMENT IN ALL OF US

While the pieces developed by the Auraco dance theatre, founded in 2006, are termed works for children, Päivi Aura said they are just as much for adults.

“There are often tight-lipped adults sitting in the audience, but during the performance their expressions gradually change and soften. I’ve seen it happen many times. Somehow, stopping and being silent opens people up in a way that can sometimes be a bit confusing,” Aura said.

“The way a dance piece is presented can affect people of any age. All of us are physical; we have movement within us. While our movement often gets stiffer with age, it doesn’t disappear. If we give it permission to emerge, then it will have an effect on us,” she pointed out.

In Päivi Aura’s view, dance can give children cognitive knowledge as well as a fundamental understanding of their own existence.

“For small children, movement is their natural mode of self-expression: they’re very good at it. I believe that movement can strengthen children’s self-image and their whole being in every way – when the child moves herself, but also when she sees movement,” she noted.

Aura worries that adults do not always devote time to children’s mode of communication. In her view, interaction between adults and children is “an incredibly important thing,” and in her most recent workshops she has focused on non-verbal communication between children and parents.

“The adults merely pause and look at their child for a brief while: that’s something that doesn’t happen very often. Taking time to watch, and remaining in the child’s gaze for as long as she needs, without starting to entertain her or deciding for her what the next step is to be. Letting the child decide when and how she is ready to proceed. That’s my current mission,” Aura explained.

Having become a grandmother herself in 2011, Päivi Aura has expanded her repertoire in recent years to include working with elderly people in performances in care homes. All of those experiences have led her to believe that movement is our most fundamental means of communication at both ends of life.

She concluded: “When I’m in those situations, in front of or alongside people of different ages, I forget all about my everyday worries. I think, wow, I’ve got a purpose in life! If I can show someone else just a tiny sliver of their potential, then my own work becomes quite meaningful.”

The writer is the editor for Finnish Dance in Focus magazine.
Thoughts on the influence of language on dance art

Contemporary dance is one of the most global of art forms. Dancers and choreographers regularly move from one country to another, particularly in Europe, and improving international mobility has long been one of the EU’s favoured projects.

This has led to a situation where contemporary dance works are increasingly being created by groups of people from multiple countries using a lingua franca that is a foreign language to many of them. How does this fact affect the art form? Does a foreign language give rise to different dance art than our mother tongue does?

Choreographer Maija Hirvanen notes that there are two dimensions to the issue: the possible effect of the working language on the piece, and the effect of the language used in the performance of the piece itself.

“My work Our Social Democratic Bodies was originally created in Finnish, and the performers spoke Finnish in the piece. When we began to perform it in English, the dancers’ performance style changed: the piece acquired a faster tempo, becoming lighter and more precise. The performers’ way of inhabiting their bodies also changed with the language,” she recalled.

“The influences of a foreign language are also apparent when people are working with the concept of a ‘performance self’. That’s when you’re meant to be half yourself and half the character during a performance,” Hirvanen explained. “When we’ve worked that way in Finnish, the performers have asked how to do it in practical terms. When we work in English, the concept somehow occurs naturally as a result of the foreign language.”

BY PIIA AHONEN
PHOTO ESKO KOIVISTO
Does your heart weight more if it is filled with "rakkaus" instead of "love"?
The Weight of My Heart, choreographer and dancer Liisa Pentti.
Choreographer Liisa Pentti has also found that the language she uses in her daily work and in her dance pieces has an influence.

“I think languages have different temperaments and different hues. For example, English is a very light language, compared to something like the complex sentences of Russian,” she said. “If you speak different languages, you can express different sides of yourself. You don’t just speak in different ways, but about different things. Language is always tied to a particular culture, though.”

Liisa Pentti agreed with Maija Hirvanen’s view that the language we speak also manifests itself in our bodies.

“It’s clear that language, together with culture, shapes people’s habitus. For example, Ayara Herdandez is a dancer originally from Uruguay who speaks Spanish. She has a special fluidity in her movement and her speech which I think Finnish dancers would be unable to achieve,” Pentti said.

THE RHYTHM OF LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT

In Finland, as in many other countries located on the edges of Europe, people still create and perform contemporary dance in their mother tongue. Multinational ensembles are not all that common here. Could this be somehow related to the fact that Finnish dance pieces often seem to have a certain structural similarity?

Maija Hirvanen considered the influence of language on the structure of her latest work, For Those Who Have Time (2012).

“If the work had been created in Finnish instead of English, I probably would have made the scenes shorter. Thinking intuitively, it feels as if English as a language is lighter, so it allows you to deal with the same material for a longer time. In Finnish, the same material would have started to feel heavy sooner,” she explained.

Liisa Pentti, who has taught dance several times in Russia, finds that language and culture are also reflected in teaching. She finds teaching in Russia a fascinating experience because the students seem very open and they soak up new instruction very quickly.

“In Finland on the other hand, it feels as if people become aware of things at a calmer pace. This might also be tied to the structures of thought and the language used. And that’s entirely logical, because the language is reflected in how a person assigns a rhythm to things and what kind of tempo they have,” she said.

LIGHT, SIMPLE ENGLISH

Both Maija Hirvanen and Liisa Pentti expressed the notion of English, the current global lingua franca, as a “light” language. Pentti also said that many Russians like English because they can express things simply, in short sentences.

Rather than asking how working in a foreign language influences contemporary dance, should we therefore ask about the fact that the language used most often is “light, simple” English?

Maija Hirvanen noted how she became aware of Europeanness in a new way while working in Burma as part of an international project called The Flying Circus.

“When I was there I realised how well organised, articulated and rational most European contemporary art is. Outside the hub of Western culture, artists seem to be working much more spontaneously and intuitively. Of course, there are many reasons for this, such as the major lack of resources,” she pointed out.

THE MANY LANGUAGES OF DANCE

It may be obvious that dance art conceived and performed in one’s mother tongue will be different from that created in a foreign language. After all, the language in which the choreographer thinks while creating choreographic structures is also the tool she uses to analyse the world.

Then again, it’s easier to inhabit roles in a foreign language – to be someone else, to express slightly different things. So it’s natural to think that English-speaking international ensembles will create different kinds of works than groups that speak a language like Finnish.

On a deeper level, a change in language also affects the entire nature of a performance. As Liisa Pentti pointed out, Anna Karenina is a completely different work in English and in Russian, even though the basic story is the same.

International mobility and communication are the lifeblood of artistic development, but so is cultural richness. The future of dance might benefit most if it can find a balance between these two influences. Dance will continue to need many different languages in the future.

The writer is a Communications Officer for Dance Info Finland and a freelance dance critic.
In December 2012 the world of contemporary dance turned its eyes towards the North – towards the ICE HOT Nordic Dance Platform in Helsinki, to be precise.

Over 300 dance professionals from all over the world gathered in Helsinki to look at Nordic contemporary dance. Some of them said they saw certain aesthetic similarities among the 21 full works presented in the programme.

What are those shared traits?

“That’s my first reaction when hearing a comment like that – to ask what they mean exactly,” said André Thériault. “Are they referring to objective characteristics, or is this an intuitive statement? Personally I don’t find that a useful way of looking at works, especially if I’m trying to see if it might interest my own audience,” he continued.

Thériault, who had served as the Artistic Director of the Tanz im August Festival in Berlin up to 2012, was part of the programme committee for ICE HOT Helsinki along with Aesoon Ahn and Eduardo Bonito. He said that during the selection process it became quite clear that there were more aesthetic trends in Nordic dance than one might think.

“Not only works reflecting the overwhelming sound of silence, for example,” Thériault laughed. “But of course our culture, language and surroundings, the way we see and structure the world in general most likely affect the way we construct a dance piece. Dramaturgy stems from our minds and thoughts.”

Roberto Casarotto, the director of dance projects at the Opera-Estate Festival Veneto, had a clear answer to the question about aesthetic similarities.

“I thought I detected in many works a certain kind of approach to the visual aspects of the works that invited me to think of nature or mythology, which are not familiar to someone from the south of Europe,” he said. “I was particularly moved by those works that managed to evoke some kind of magic and talk clearly and universally, even though the starting points had been very personal or connected to specifically Nordic culture.”

Casarotto said this was even more impressive because cultural isolation, or a lack of cultural exchange, can often have the opposite effect.

“Often, works created in culturally more isolated circumstances don’t communicate with larger audiences. But of course nowadays the mobility of artists means that influences travel across borders. It is therefore more and more difficult to detect national traits or to place works,” he concluded.

Nowadays the mobility of artists means that influences travel across borders.
“Mum loves Jemina!
Bye-bye!
There’s lard in the cellar!”

“Guess what I’m celebrating right now? It’s something beautiful yet so very simple!”

“An orgasm is not that difficult, girls. It’s technik. Kunst!”

“First-generation feminists: OUT!”
Jyrki Karttunen’s *Jemina – Act as you’d know her* unpacks the popular pornographic imagery of women and examines drag as an opportunity for social clowning. Jemina juxtaposes male and female, adult and child, real and fake, glamour and mundane. The performance is based on structured improvisation and takes its inspiration from trash culture, stand-up comedy and contemporary dance. The piece was premiered in Helsinki in November 2012.

The Finnish Theatre Centre awarded the creative team behind this performance its prestigious Theatre Work of the Year prize for 2012. The Theatre Centre’s panel praised this work by saying: “Jemina brings the best traditions in dance, theatre, stand-up and performance art up to date. Its image of femininity is smart, off-kilter and carnal. The creative team combines the touching with the grotesque and manipulation with full-on ecstasy.

The stories in this performance are just as absurd as life itself, and that’s why they cross all genders. Everyone longs for the same things: to be seen and to be able to realise our full potential. As Jemina puts it: ‘Because we’re half-finished, incomplete and totally anatomically incorrect, we are not alone.”

**Cast:**
Choreographer, performer: Jyrki Karttunen
Sound designer, performer: Tuomas Fränti
Director: Heidi Räsänen
Lighting and stage designer: Tiiti Hynninen
Costume designer: Karoliina Koiso-Kanttila
Make-up: Tuija Luukkainen
Scripts: Jyrki Karttunen, Heidi Räsänen

“If only we could always
live in dreams / If only we
could make of life /
What, in dreams, it seems”

(From Roy Orbison’s song “In the Real World”)
One of Finland’s largest contemporary dance ensembles, the Helsinki Dance Company, turns 40 in 2013. The group, which works within the framework of Helsinki City Theatre, will mark its anniversary year with a number of premieres and a gala celebration.

Two new works were premiered in the ensemble’s spring season: Chorus Line 2013 by choreographer Sonya Lindfors and To love (‘Rakkaus’) by choreographer Ari Numminen. Lindfors’ piece is a tribute to dancers who have had long careers in the business, and it brought a number of the group’s veteran performers back onto the stage after long absences. Numminen’s piece, on the other hand, was aimed particularly at a young audience.

The October gala promises to feature highlights from HDC’s previous performances, glancing back through the history of modern and contemporary dance in Finland.

A number of prominent choreographers have held the post of Artistic Director with the group over the years, including Jorma Uotinen, Carolyn Carlson, Marjo Kuusela, Ari Tenhula, Nigel Charnock, Ville Sormunen, Kenneth Kvarnström and – from 2013 – Jyrki Karttunen.

In addition to their participation in dance performances, HDC’s dancers have appeared in musicals and dramas at the Helsinki City Theatre as dancers, singers, actors and choreographers. The group has toured since 1981, clocking up a total of around 150 guest performances abroad.
The keđja project, a major Nordic-Baltic collaboration, has been bringing dance people from the region together since 2008. Over the years, professionals including dancers and choreographers as well as dance producers, researchers and journalists have gathered under the keđja umbrella in cities including Vilnius, Copenhagen, Kuopio, Oslo, Umeå, Reykjavík and Tallinn.

In the summer of 2013 it was the turn of Klaipėda in Lithuania to host the gathering, and from 6–9 August 2014 the dance community will meet in Mariehamn, the capital of the Åland Islands located between Sweden and Finland. The event will also provide a unique opportunity to bring contemporary dance performances to new audiences in this island province with under 30,000 residents.

“We’re expecting some 200 Nordic and Baltic dance artists and others from the field of dance. The main venues will be in Mariehamn, but events will extend throughout Åland to make use of the province’s brilliant summer island atmosphere,” explained Katarina Lindholm, Project Manager for Dance Info Finland.

KeđjaMariehamn will be the last meeting of the 2012–2015 project period and an opportunity to take stock of what has happened over the years. The programme will include Writing Movement workshops focusing on dance writing, as well as a presentation on the results of the Think Tank on sustainable development and performances created during the Wilderness residency programme.

“The event will also turn its attentions to the future, aiming to open doors to new ideas and new territories,” Lindholm said. The event is being organised by Dance Info Finland in cooperation with other keđja partners and several Finnish dance organisations and other professionals.

Find out more: www.kedja.net

“Lighting illuminates the performance space for dance and provides a temporal space for the action. This gives rise to a particular mental landscape for the work in which the lighting and the dramaturgy of the piece reinforce one another,” explained Tomi Humalisto, who holds a Doctor of Arts in lighting design.

Humalisto, who is known in the dance world especially for his work with choreographer Mammu Rankanen, has been working as a lighting designer for contemporary dance and theatre as well as performance art since the 1990s.

At the start of the 21st century, his experiences from Belgian contemporary theatre and freelance productions in Finland prompted him to consider questions about the relationship between new performance concepts and established practices. For his doctoral thesis, Humalisto investigated the needs for change in relation to lighting design practices.

What does Humalisto expect to see in the future of lighting design?

“Enthusiasm and boredom are both part of human nature. Performers and audiences often get tired of the same old solutions and go in search of new ones. Video projections have suffered from inflation, and the daylight minimalism’ which is convenient in touring productions sometimes shrinks to become an external signifier of street cred,” he commented.

“The traditional relationship between movement and dance has been dissolved for some time, so people are investigating the possibilities of movement once again. The same applies to audiovisual techniques, in which frugality and overabundance can feed into one another,” he added.

Tomi Humalisto’s 2012 thesis, entitled Done differently, seen differently – on changes in lighting design in the performing arts, which he completed at the Theatre Academy Helsinki, is the first-ever doctoral thesis completed in this field in Finland.
In the spring of 2013, the master’s degree programmes in the department of dance at the Theatre Academy Helsinki began accepting applications from English-speaking applicants. The master’s programmes in the department train dancers as well as choreographers. “We are targeting gifted, aware and focused students who already have some experience of the field when they apply,” summarised Professor of Choreography Kirsi Monni.

There is plenty on offer to students at the Theatre Academy: more courses than average master’s programmes offer, as well as opportunities to create works in well-equipped performance spaces with students from other disciplines and high-quality opportunities for post-graduate study at the Performing Arts Research Centre.

There are other signs of the department’s international focus, such as the increasing number of student exchanges and visiting instructors. Prof. Monni says that there are instructors in composition, improvisation, dance history and ontology, artist-community relations as well as professional dance practices who hail from abroad.

Special exchange programmes with other institutions, such as the Erasmus Intensive programme which was initiated in 2011, create wider networks of dance arts students and instructors. Another contribution to furthering international theoretical discourse came with the department’s own Kinesis publication series, launched in 2012.

Prof. Monni sees closer cooperation as an opportunity for young artists in particular. “Dance and the performing arts are international in nature, and in countries the size of Finland it’s difficult to offer sufficient professional opportunities and ways to make a living for the younger generation. We hope it will be more natural for young artists to think about working in a territory at least as big as Europe,” she said.

Even so, she has given some thought to the significance of the increase in English as a language of instruction and collaboration. “It’s not without its problems. In theoretical studies in particular, but also in other instruction the level of discussion might decrease with the change in language. Finland is still a very homogeneous country in terms of language. Foreign languages are not used on a daily basis to the same extent as in other European MA programmes. This is clearly a major challenge for us,” she said.

Theatre Academy Helsinki is one of the constituent academies of the University of the Arts Helsinki, formed in 2013 by the merger of three Finnish arts academies with their own proud histories in the fields of dance and theatre, music, and visual arts.

Find out more: www.uniarts.fi/en/
Australia-Finland Dance Exchange

An extensive artist-in-residence exchange programme has been launched for Australian and Finnish dance artists in 2013–2014. The aim of this programme is to provide an opportunity for dance artists in both countries to develop their work via residencies in Finland and Australia.

Artists selected for three- to four-week residencies will get to conduct artistic research and make contacts with local professionals. The first artists embarked on their residency projects in the spring of 2013.

According to the programme organisers, the primary results are not expected to be in the form of new pieces; rather, the aim of the programme is to encourage artists to exchange knowledge. It is hoped that participants will get involved in the local community and environment, perhaps via community or artistic collaborations.

Finnish organisations involved in the collaborative project include Zodiak – Centre for New Dance in Helsinki, JoJo – Oulu Dance Centre, the Regional Dance Centre of Eastern Finland located in Kuopio, and the Routa Company in Kajaani. Other people and organisations from the field of dance have also expressed interest in taking part.

Australian participants include the Campbelltown Arts Center and Critical Path from the Sydney area, Moriarty’s Project in Melbourne, choreographer Michelle Heaven’s residence in Castlemaine and STRUT in Perth.

The programme has been jointly co-ordinated and partially funded by Dance Info Finland and the Australia Council of the Arts. The organisers say there is scope to expand the project into a larger, longerterm international exchange of dance skills and knowledge.

Dancing Moominvalley (‘Tanssiva Muumilaakso’), a family-friendly work by choreographer Samuli Roininen and Dance Theatre MD in Tampere, celebrated its 100th performance in February 2013.

The action-packed dance piece, based on the books by Finnish author Tove Jansson, features the adventures of the Moomin family as well as characters such as the bohemian Snufkin, stubborn Little My and the Invisible Child.

The Moominvalley dances have been seen by audiences of grown-ups and children in Finland, Sweden, Germany, Japan, China and the USA. Roininen first brought Jansson’s wise, humorous Moomins to the stage in 2010. The music for the Moomins in this work was composed by Heikki Mäenpää.

Roininen first brought Jansson’s wise, humorous Moomins to the stage in 2010.
This catalogue, specially compiled for Finnish Dance in Focus, offers an overview of the Finnish dance field. It lists dance companies, production centers and regional dance centers. It also includes festivals, venues and schools providing professional dance education. Discover more Finnish choreographers, organisations and events at www.danceinfo.fi/finnish-dance-scene!

Dance Companies

Dance companies are listed under three categories according to their funding structure.

Dance Companies within Art Institutions

There are two dance companies operating within a larger art institution.

Finnish National Ballet / Suomen Kansallisbaletti

Contact:
Artistic Administrator Sampo Kivelä
Tel. +358 (0)50 5993 568, sampo.kivel@opera.fi
Press Manager Heidi Almi
Tel. +358 (0)9 4030 2321, +358 (0)40 5114 348
heidi.almi@opera.fi
PO Box 176, FI-00251 Helsinki
www.opera.fi

The Finnish National Ballet was founded in 1922 and currently employs 71 dancers representing 18 nationalities. It offers 3–5 premieres and about 80 performances per season, both traditional works of classical ballet as well as works by contemporary choreographers, such as Tero Saarinen, Jorma Elo, Jiri Kylian, John Neumeier, Alexei Ratmansky and Ohad Naharin. Artistic director of the company is Kenneth Greve.

Genre: Contemporary dance, classical ballet, contemporary ballet, performances for young audiences

Helsinki Dance Company

Contact:
Artistic Director Jyrki Karttunen
Tel. +358 (0)9 3940 319, jyrki.karttunen@hdc.fi
Producer Marinella Jaskari
Tel. +358 (0)9 3940 318, +358 (0)50 5671 814
marinella.jaskari@hdc.fi
Ensi linja 2, FI-00321 Helsinki
www.hdc.fi

Helsinki Dance Company (HDC) operates in conjunction with a large drama theater, the Helsinki City Theatre, and is the biggest contemporary dance company in Finland with its 12 dancers. HDC performers are known for their versatile skills in performing physically demanding contemporary dance as well as expressive dance theater. The repertoire consists of a variety of productions of different length and entourage size.

Genre: Contemporary dance, dance theater

Government Funded Dance Companies

There are nine dance companies and two other dance organizations that receive a yearly subsidy under the Theater and Orchestras Act.

AB Dance Company / Aurinkobaletti

Contact:
Artistic Director Urmas Poolamets
Managing Director Katja Lehmussaari
Manila, Itäinen Rantakatu 64, FI-20810 Turku
Tel. +358 (0)2 2840 100, info@aurinkobaletti.com
www.aurinkobaletti.com

AB is a constantly evolving, high-quality contemporary dance group, which is not afraid to venture over the limits of its own genre. The repertoire includes productions for both adults and children. Besides its own choreographers, the company has also offered a stage for many appreciated Finnish names and several international choreographers.
AB’s regular guest is Russian choreographer Sashia Pepel-yaer. AB tours both in Finland and abroad.

Genre: Contemporary dance, dance theater, performances for young audiences

**Dance Theater ERI / Tanssiteatteri ERI**

Contact: Ylipistenkatu 7, FI-20100 Turku
Tel. +358 (0)2 2501 032, info@eri.fi

Dancer-choreographers Tiina Lindfors, Lassi Sairela and Eeva Soini are the founding members of Dance Theater ERI, which has been touring with its unique and innovative dance performances both in Finland and abroad since 1989. During the past 24 years ERI has built up a repertoire that now includes more than 300 works. Every year the group produces about 130 performances, of which four or five are premières. ERI, which has been touring with its unique and innovative dance performances both in Finland and abroad since 1989, produces about 130 performances, of which four or five are premières. Every year the group now includes more than 300 works. Every year the group produces about 130 performances, of which four or five are premières.

Genre: Contemporary dance, dance theater

**Dance Theater Hurjaruuth / Tanssiteatteri Hurjaruuth**

Contact: Director Arja Pettersson
Tallberginkatu 1 A/117, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)9 5657 250, fax +358 (0)9 6931 299
info@hurjaruuth.fi

www.hurjaruuth.fi

The dynamic Dance Theater Hurjaruuth has produced over 100 works in the past 30 years that have inspired young audiences in Finland and abroad. Hurjaruuth’s aim is to break down the barriers of contemporary dance by collaborating with circus artists, musicians, writers and visual artists. Each year Hurjaruuth presents its signature work, Winter Circus, which thrills audiences with its aerial stunts, juggling, magic and eye-boggling entertainment.

Genre: Dance theater, performances for young audiences

**Dance Theatre Rimpparemmi / Tanssiteatteri Rimpparemmi**

Contact: Managing director Anniina Kumpuniemi
Tel. +358 (0)50 5837 012, +358 (0)9 8732 306
rimpparemmi@rimpparemmi.fi

www.rimpparemmi.fi

Dance Current -festival introducing topical Finnish contemporary dance pieces and choreographers.

Genre: Contemporary dance, dance theater, performances for children

**Dance Theatre Raatikko / Tanssiteatteri Raatikko**

Contact: Artistic Director Marja Korhola
Vertonankuja 4 B, FI-01300 Vantaa
Tel +358 (0)50 354 5936, +358 (0)40 570 1129
raatikko@raatikko.fi
www.raatikko.fi

Dance Theater Raatikko was founded in 1972. Raatikko has its own space in Vantaa and it also tours. Raatikko makes dance pieces for children, young people and adults. Combining dance, theater and circus is typical for Raatikko’s works. Raatikko has over 400 performances annually, 2-4 premières, over 140 audience events and over 30 000 spectators. Raatikko is being supported by the city of Vantaa and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Genre: Dance theater, performances for young audiences

**Dance Theatre Minimi / Tanssiteatteri Minimi**

Contact: Producer Jupe Pohjolainen
Tel. +358 (0)50 5816 300, jupe.pohjolainen@minimi.fi
Sotku, Sukkula 43/2, FI-70110 Kuopio
www.minimi.fi

Dance Theatre Minimi is a professional dance theater in the heart of Tampere city. MD’s annual program consists of 2–3 premières of beautiful and versatile contemporary dance choreographies and dance theater pieces for children and adults. The pieces are also seen all over the world from Shanghai to Sweden. MD organizes annually the Tampere Dance Current festival introducing topical Finnish contemporary dance pieces and choreographers.

Genre: Contemporary dance, dance theater, performances for children

**Glims & Gloms Dance Company**

Contact: General Manager Riitta Aittokallio
Tel. +358 (0)50 354 5936
riitta.aittokallio@glimsgloms.com

Artistic Director Simo Heiskanen
Tel. +358 (0)40 570 1129
simo.heiskanen@glimsgloms.com

Glims & Gloms dance company was founded in 1999 by Simo Heiskanen and Tuomo Riallo. Since then G & G has fascinated its audience with mythical, symbolic and fantastic subjects. Its works are characterized by stylish and inventive visuals, multi-layered themes, and visual harmony. The theater directs its performances to a wide public – children, the youth and adults.

Genre: Contemporary dance, dance theater, performances for young audiences
Tero Saarinen Company
Bulevardi 23–27, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)9 6813 1881
info@terosaarinen.com
www.terosaarinen.com
www.facebook.com/terosaarinencompany

Artistic Director Tero Saarinen
Managing Director Iiris Autio
Technical Director Ville Konttinen
Dancer / Rehearsing Director Henrikki Heikkilä
Dancer / Teacher / Choreographer’s Assistant Sini Länsivuori
Marketing and Communications Manager Terhi Mikkonen
Head of International Sales Johanna Rajamäki
Company Manager Maiju Lempinen

Local Agents:
FRANCE, ASIA AND OCEANIA:
DLB Spectacles Performing Arts
Mr. Didier Le Besque, didier@dlbdance.com
Tel. +33 (0)1 4251 7363
www.dlbdance.com

ITALY:
A.T.E.R. - Associazione Teatrale Emilia Romagna
Ms. Francesca Zitoli, danza@ater.emr.it
tel. +39 059 340 221
www.ater.emr.it

GERMANY:
Ecotopia Dance Productions
Mr. Meinrad Huber
meinrad.huber@ecotopiadance.com
Tel. +49 7141 9033 83
www.ecotopiadance.com

Tero Saarinen Company, in residence at Helsinki’s Alexander Theatre, has toured in nearly 40 countries and runs an international teaching programme. Past venues incl. Maison de la Danse, Châtelet and Chaillot in France; Kennedy Center, Joyce and BAM in the US; Movementa, Tanz in August and Kampnagel in Germany; 3Dance in South Korea and PIAF and NZIAF in Oceania. Saarinen also collaborates with other prominent dance companies; e.g. NDT1, Batsheva and Lyon Opéra Ballet have featured Saarinen’s works in their repertoires.

Independent Dance Companies

In addition to the state-subsidized dance theaters, in 2013 there are nearly 20 dance organizations that receive state funding, so called operational subsidies for communities (OSC). These are granted for one year at a time. The other dance companies listed here operate with production grants from various sources, both from the state and from private foundations.

Aho & Lundén Company
Contact:
Emilia Aho and Katja Lundén
Tel. +358 (0)50 5226 758, +358 (0)40 746 2099

Aho & Lundén Company is a contemporary flamenco group founded by Emilia Aho and Katja Lundén. It combines Finnish and Spanish culture and views in interesting combinations. The group has adapted flamenco also to the music for Finnish folk poetry. The group sees flamenco both as an experimental and a tradition-based art form that gets new dimensions from different art fields’ worlds of ideas.

Genre: Contemporary flamenco, live music performance

As2Wrists Dance Company (OSC)
Contact:
Choreographers Minna Tuovinen & Martin Heslop
Itämerenkatu 26 B 38, FI-00180 Helsinki, info@as2wrists.fi
www.as2wrists.fi

As2wrists Dance Company’s choreographers Minna Tuovinen and Martin Heslop have been combining tango with contemporary dance. Their work is unique, dynamic and richly complex combining strong emotional themes and original movement material. Most of their works have been commissioned by national and international festivals. They have toured Argentina, Brazil and Cuba as well as Europe.

Genre: Contemporary dance

Canela
Contact:
Dancer-choreographer Anna Palmio
Tel. + 358 (0)40 7478 979
Dancer-choreographer Annatuuli Saine
Tel. + 358 (0)40 5168 705
www.canela.fi

Canela, founded in 2001, is one of the pioneers in Finnish new flamenco. In addition to flamenco, Canela’s repertoire consists of works that combine contemporary dance and other art forms. Their works include solo pieces by the group’s members, as well as commissioned pieces by top new flamenco and contemporary dance choreographers from Spain and Finland. With the new production, Cabaret, Canela is taking flamenco and gipsy dance back to their origins, small taverns and clubs, creating a unique atmosphere full of dance and music.

Genre: Contemporary dance, flamenco, performance/live art, performances for young audiences
Dance Company Off/Balance / Tanssiryhmä Off/Balance (OSC)

Contact:
Artistic directors Elina Häyrynen and Terhi Kuokkanen
Tel. +358 (0)350 546 2520, info@auraco.fi
www.cra-company.com

The Raven
CHOR. KAARI MARTIN, PHOTO KIM LAINE

Dance Theater Auraco

Contact:
Artistic Director Päivi Aura
Peninlinna 1-3 D 26, FI-00740 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)40 546 2520, info@auraco.fi
www.auraco.fi
www.facebook.com/DanceTheatreAuraco

Dance Theater Auraco, founded in 2006, is a unique and visual dance theater. Its performances combine different art forms with silence, warm humour and peaceful atmosphere. Auraco performs on theater stages and in art galleries, kindergartens, resthomes and gardens, both nationally and internationally. Auraco has performed in many European children’s theater festivals. Auraco is maintained by Kuukulkun, a multi-artistic association in Helsinki.

Carl Knif Company

Contact:
Artistic Director Carl Knif
Managing Director Laura Karén
Tel. +358 (0)40 5080 670, laura.karen@ppinet.fi

In an age of throwaway art and sleek production thinking we find something that stands out. Dancer and choreographer Carl Knif is more than personal, he is singular, almost rapher and artists.

The Compañía Kaari & Roni Martin (OSC)

Contact:
Artistic directors Kaari and Roni Martin
Luokatu 2, FI-00160 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)50 5630 144, info@companiakaarimartin.fi
www.companiakaarimartin.fi

The Compañía Kaari & Roni Martin is an independent dance group formed in 2002. The company’s primary focus is to incorporate flamenco and its Nordic dimension into the field of international contemporary art. In December 2012 their work The Raven won first prize in three categories in the prestigous Certamen de Coreografia de Flamenco y Danza Española choreography competition. In 2008 their work Tell me rain won third prize for choreography – the first time ever that a foreign company received an award in this competition.

Genre: Contemporary dance, new dance

Dance Theater Dis Tanz

Contact: Managing Director Anna Othman
Tikkurilantie 44, FI-01300 Vantaa
Tel. +358 (0)40 360 167
anna.jouhtinen@gmail.com
www.dis-tanz.com

Dance Theater Dis Tanz is focused on contemporary dance. By combining skilful dance with different art forms and bringing dance out from the theatres, Dis Tanz presents a playful and humorous repertoire to audiences of all ages. The members are dancer-choreographers Anna Othman, Suvi Pohjonen and Oonosofia Saukkonen.

Dance Theatre Kaie / Tanssiteatteri Kaie

Contact: Anne Jouhtinen
Tuohitie 1, FI-04260 Kerava
Tel. +358 (0)45 1350 545
www.cra-company.com

Dance Theatre Kaie, founded in 1987 and based in Kerava, is known for its diverse and multi-artistic productions for adult and young audiences. Traditional stages as well as streets, market squares, parks, shop windows and kindergartens function as stages. The audience is invited to

Genre:
Contemporary dance, dance theater

Dance Box / TanssiBoxi

Contact:
Katrina Kantola, Terhi Pinomäki-Lenick
Tel. +358 (0)40 7532 468, +358 (0)40 9316 812
katrinakantola@gmail.com, terhipinlen@yahoo.com
Hirvijantie 172, FI-34110 Lalila

www.tanssiboxi.com

Dance Box is an independent contemporary dance group from Tampere founded in 1998. It performs both in Finland and abroad. One of the main focuses is to perform for a wide range of audience, young and old, in theaters, but also at schools and outside on the streets and markets.

Genre: Contemporary dance, dance theater

Dance Company Gruppen Fyra (G4) (OSC)

Contact: Pia Liski
Vylätatu 8 B 11, FI-00160 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)40 7373235, pia.liski@kolumbus.fi
www.gruppenfyra.com

The dance company Gruppen Fyra (1998) produces 1–2 premiers per year. Apart from theater, the company has also performed at business events and has made improvisation-based pieces, for example in parks, streets and trains. Their trademark is an easily approachable form of contemporary dance and intelligent humour. The company currently consists of Jenni Nikolajeff, Pia Tavela, Tommi Haapaniemi, Virpi Junnti and Kaisu Hilttä.

Genre: Contemporary dance, dance theater
participate through interactivity. Collaborating with other art forms is an integral part of the group’s work. The Finnish-Ugrian roots inspire with their mysticism.

**Genre:** Contemporary dance, dance theater, multi-artistic performances

**Ehkä-production / Ehkä-tuotanto (OSC)**

**Contact:**
Kalastajankatu 1 B, FI-20100 Turku
ehkatuotanto@gmail.com
www.ehka.net

Turku based Ehkä-production produces works of independent dance and performance artists, groups and collectives, and hosts the contemporary art space Kutomo. The activity consists of dance productions, collective projects, performances for children, workshops, the annual XS Festival etc. Ehkä was founded in 2004 by dance artist Anna Torkkel and performance artist Tashi Iwaoka. Since 2009 Torkkel has been curating Ehkä-production together with dance artist Maija Reeta Raumanni.

**Genre:** New dance, contemporary dance, performance art, live art

**Flow Productions (OSC)**

**Contact:**
Choreographer Pirjo Yli-Maunula
PB 42, FI-90015 Oulun kaupunki
Tel. +358 (0)400 938 164, pirjo@flowprod.fi
Choreographer Maria Littow
Tel. +358 (0)40 583 4796, maria@flowprod.fi
www.flowprod.fi

Flow Productions is a dance production company based in Oulu. The company creates 3-4 new productions per year, has a large repertoire, and tours both nationally and internationally. The heart and soul of the company are two renowned dance artists, Maria Littow and Pirjo Yli-Maunula, who collaborate with artists ranging from choreographers to circus artists, actors, writers, musicians, new media and visual artists.

**Genre:** Contemporary dance, multidisciplinary productions

**Ismo Dance Company**

**Contact:**
Artistic Director Ismo-Pekka Heikinheimo
Kalastajankatu 1 D 80, FIN-00560 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)41 5248 884, ismo@ismodance.fi
www.ismodance.fi

Ismo Dance Company is created by Ismo-Pekka Heikinheimo, one of the top choreographers in Finland, known for inventive, ground-breaking and sexually provocative performances and festivals. Electronic interaction and intimate encounters between audience and performers. Each show is a masterwork of cutting-edge talent; design, music and art in a kaleidoscope of visual culture. International commissions with thousands of shows across 15 countries.

**Genre:** Contemporary dance, dance theater, site specific, community dance

**Jenni Kivelä & Kind People**

**Contact:**
Jenni Kivelä
Tel. +358 (0)50 5951 229, jennikivela@iki.fi
Producer Laura Norppa
www.jennikivela.com

Jenni Kivelä has worked as a choreographer since 2002. Apart from working with her own group Kind People, Kivelä has collaborated with Helsinki Dance Company, Transitions Laban and Nordans among others. Her works have toured extensively in Finland and abroad. Kivelä has a strong and recognisable style, which has altered during the years from humorous and naive to darker shades. Her works, which combine features from dance and theater, move between the conceptual and the concrete. Lately Kivelä has explored what can be recycled in dance context.

**K&C Kekäläinen & Company (OSC)**

**Contact:**
Artistic Director, Choreographer Sanna Kekäläinen
Managing Director Lilja Lehmuskalio
Tallberginkatu 1 E 64, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)9 6941 201
kc@kekalainencompany.net
www.kekalainencompany.net

The mission of K&C is to promote dance as an intellectual art form with strong emotional and political potential. Dancer-choreographer Sanna Kekäläinen’s work expands the experience of a dance performance combining poetical and conceptual thinking, philosophy and strongly physical and original movement language. The international dialogue in dance is and has been essential to K&C – since its birth in 1996 the company has toured extensively.

**Genre:** Contemporary dance

**KATVE [blind spot]**

**Contact:**
Artistic leaders Heidi Masalin and Virva Talonen
Tel. +358 (0)50 3279 231, +358 (0)40 7488 539
heidimasalin@hotmail.com, vtalonen@gmail.com
info.katve@gmail.com
www.katve.info

KATVE [blind spot] is founded by two independent dance artists Heidi Masalin and Virva Talonen in 2012. The group works in the field of contemporary dance and performance. It produces works of Masalin and Talonen collaborating widely with artists from different art forms. The repertoire of the group arises from Masalin’s visual, physical and imaginative work inspired by humanity and nature, as well as Talonen’s perceptive, humorous and profound work dealing with the themes such as recycling, time, kinship and habitation. Katve is a journey for reaching the blind spot with movement!

**Genre:** Contemporary dance and performance, site-specific work, performances for young audiences
Kinetic Orchestra

Contact: Artistic director Jarkko Mandelin
Tel. +358 (0)44 575 1969, jarkko@apinatarha.fi
www.kineticorchestra.fi

Kinetic Orchestra exists to develop and cherish kinetic knowledge, skills and understanding. The young group has in a short time created a strong and recognisable style and at the same time become one of the serious Finnish contemporary dance groups. Even though its works are part of the new wave of dance theater, their movement-based content and philosophy is a combination of dance art techniques, street dance attitudes and circus-like agility.

The Little Ballet of Finland / PSB

Contact: Kari Castrén
Tel. +358 (0)400 212 351
sihteeri@pienisuomalainenbalettiseurue.fi
www.pienisuomalainenbalettiseurue.fi

An independent troupe of classically trained dancers and choreographers seeking for new forms of classical and contemporary ballet, tradition and thinking. The company was founded in 2009 and has since then been performing successfully in different venues and theaters in Finland. Artistic director Sami Salkkonen.

MAD Productions / MAD Tuotanto

Contact: Bulevardi 23–27, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)50 5421 210
Sari Palmgren, sari@loikka.fi
Loikka Dance film festival: info@loikka.fi
www.loikka.fi

MAD Productions is a freelance-based contemporary dance organisation stationed in Helsinki, Finland. At the moment MAD Productions concentrates on dance films and organises a yearly dance film festival called LOIKKA. MAD also holds lectures and workshops on dance film. Next dance film festival: April 3–6, 2014.
Genre: Dance films, site specific, contemporary dance

Malviniemi Company

Contact: Artistic director, choreographer Mia Malviniemi
Orenkatu 20, FI-65300 Vaasa
Tel. +358 (0)50 3832 486, company@malviniemi.fi
www.malviniemi.fi

Malviniemi Company is producing choreographer Mia Malviniemi’s contemporary dance works. The company was established in 2011 and its hometown is Vaasa. In her choreographies Malviniemi is connecting abstract movement with everyday movement. Dance is flowing and organic. Works are often dealing with human emotions and relationships, but also literature has inspired Malviniemi’s pieces. Malviniemi is doing intensive co-operation with musicians. During the past years every production has been based on live music composed especially for the work.
Genre: Contemporary dance, site-specific

Mikko Kallinen & The Company

Contact: Choreographer/Art director Mikko Kallinen
Agricolankatu 7 B 39, FI-00530 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)41 522 3228
mikkokallinen.thecompany@suomi24.fi

The company is a production-based artistic team founded in 1992. Kallinen’s choreographies have been performed in Finland as well as abroad. The company’s works are choreographic co-creations including animation, computer art, design, videodance and interactive art.
Genre: Contemporary dance

Nomadi Productions

Contact:Managing director Helmi Saksala
 helmi.saksala@nomadi.fi
Bulevardi 23–27, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)404 3233 509
www.nomadi.fi

Nomadi Productions promotes and produces performances and tours by Finnish dance companies Alpo Aaltokoski Company and Ata Raatikainen & Co.
Alpo Aaltokoski Company (OSC)

Alpo Aaltokoski has created dozens of highly acclaimed choreographies. These include Tuox (2013), Whirls (2011), Together (2010), Labile Mobile (2009),labile Mobile (2003), and Promises (2000). In addition to his undeniable talent as the artistic director and leader of his company, Aaltokoski has had varied and multiple roles in the field of dance; for example, as a pedagogue in influential cultural institutions both in Finland and abroad.

www.aaltokoskicompany.fi
Genre: Contemporary dance

Arja Raatikainen & Co. (OSC)

Arja Raatikainen has produced numerous highly praised works, including pieces for Finnish dance festivals, Helsinki Dance Company, the Finnish National Ballet and her own company. Her path has embraced nuclear issues and movement in time and space, but also the treatment of new elements and the search for a balance between disparate elements. This has given birth to exquisite works such as Reacton (2011), Asylum (2009) and Labile Mobile (2002).

www.arjaraatikainen-co.fi
Genre: Contemporary dance

PDC Pori Dance Company (OSC)

Contact: Artistic director, producer Liisa Nojonen
Pohjasraita 11 1st Floor, FI-28100 Pori
Tel: +358 (0)40 7420332, +358 (0)400 590 392
pdc@poridancecompany.com
www.poridancecompany.com

PDC has established itself among professional dance groups in Finland. Its dancers have been recognized for their skillful technique and the varied repertoire for its high artistic level. This has guaranteed international tours and a broad national and international collaboration network. PDC has regularly participated in festivals in Europe, USA, and Asia. Well-known choreographers such as Jorma Uotinen and Tero Saarinen have worked with PDC.

www.poridancecompany.com
Genre: Contemporary dance, dance theater, performance/live art, contemporary/classical ballet

Petri Kekoni Company (OSC)

Contact: Petri Kekoni
Maria Jotunintie 10 E 51, FI-00400 Helsinki
Tel: +358 (0)50 571 7579, petri@kekonico.fi
Producer: Tuja Lindholm
Tel: +358 (0)46 886 5340, tuja@kekonico.fi
www.kekonico.fi

The company was founded in 2007. Its repertoire consists of choreographer Petri Kekoni’s works from 1998 onwards, including Miniatures – Humans in small scale (2013), Thes of the Dead (2011), Green Armchair (2010) and Falling Earth (2010). The company is a collective of ca 20 artists, including dancers, composers and designers. Kekoni’s works are known of their personal movement language and strong visual thinking. Company’s next piece, Non-Linear, will premiere in March 2014.

Genre: Contemporary dance

Routa Company / Routa-ryhmä (OSC)

Contact: Artistic director Kirsi Riikonen
Producer: Maria Tolonen
Kuopiapakatu 36, FI-87100 Kajaani
Tel: +358 (0)44 055 6977, routa@routacompany.fi
www.routacompany.fi

The 10-year-old Routa is an open contemporary dance production company from Kajaani. Its artistic policy is defined as free and migratory, supporting its creators’ interests. Routa produces personal dance art of high quality that derives from the ground of Kainuu. Routa belongs to the Regional Dance Center in Northern Finland and employs both dance artists and audiovisual artists. The Generator Stage is the homestage of its spiritual power.

Genre: Contemporary dance, applied dance

Satu Tuomisto +Comp

Contact:
Choreographer Satu Tuomisto
Producer Leena Erilhalme
Tel: +358 (0)40 7320 942
satu@satutuomistocom, leena@satutuomistocom
www.satutuomistocom
www.facebook.com/SatuTuomistoComp

Satu Tuomisto +Comp loves sweaty physicality, explicit emotions and experimental choreographic challenges. TIMPOn Voima ("Power") won the jury’s first prize in Essen in Germany in 2012, and is now touring Asia and Europe. Tuomisto bravely marries contemporary dance with unusual partners and provides audiences with emotional and kinetic experiences.

Genre: Contemporary dance, dance theater

Susanna Leinonen Company (SLC) (OSC)

Contact:
Artistic Director Susanna Leinonen
Bulevardi 23-27, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel: +358 (0)44 1380 336, info@susannaleinonen.com
www.susannaleinonen.com

Susanna Leinonen is one of the most internationally acclaimed Finnish choreographers. With her unique and articulate choreographic style, Leinonen combines classical know-how with contemporary movement thinking. Her works produce surrealistic visions creating a total and uncompromising dance experience. SLC has been appointed as one of the Key Projects in Finnish Cultural Export. SLC is available for touring with several works for 1–7 dancers.

Genre: Contemporary dance

The Tempest Group / Myrskyryhma

The Tempest Group was founded by Elli Isokoski and Paulina Tyini in 2002. The group takes dance into the community, to people who wouldn’t normally get to see contemporary dance. Their works tackle issues that all kinds of audiences can easily relate to. The Tempest Group has over 180 dance performances for seniors and long-term patients in assisted living facilities around Finland.

Genre: Contemporary dance, dance theater, dance film, performances for senior audiences

Tsuumi Dance Theatre / Tanssiteatteri Tsuumi (OSC)

Contact: Managing Director Salla Korja-Paloniemi
Bulevardi 23-27, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel: +358 (0)44 745 4454
salla.korja-paloniemi@tsuumi.com, info@tsuumi.com
www.tsuumi.com

Helsinki-based Tsuumi Dance Theatre provides an outlet for Finnish folk dance and musical tradition, observes the boundaries of these fields and finds ways of overcoming them. Tsuumi brings dance traditions and old tonal world
Willman Dance Company brings together artists who share a passion for dance and stage art. Company creates visually interesting contemporary dance pieces choreographed by dancer-choreographer Marjaterttu Willman. In Willman’s choreography the central focus is on the movement of dance. Around the movement the personality of each dancer, strength of the music, individuality of the costume and lighting design shape the atmosphere of each piece.

Genre: contemporary dance

Production Centers

JoJo – Oulu Dance Center

Contact: Artistic Director Satu Tuomisto
PO Box 42, FI-90015 Oulu, kaupunki
Tel. +358 (0)45 8793 779
satu.tuomisto@jojo.fi
www.jojo.fi

JoJo – Oulu Dance Center is a dance production house in Northern Finland. JoJo produces dance, runs an annual international OuDance Festival and a year round programme of dance performances as well as hosts an Artist’s Residency with an active International exchange programme. JoJo, together with three other organisations, form the Regional Dance Center in Northern Finland.

Zodiak – Center for New Dance

Contact: Artistic Director Harri Kuorelahti
Managing Director Raija Ojala
Producer Maija Eränen
Communications: Kaisa Rissanen
Education and Outreach: Katja Kirsu
Tallberginkatu 1 B/154, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)9 6944 948
zodiak@zodiak.fi
www.zodiak.fi

Zodiak – Center for New Dance is a progressive dance organization and the main venue for freelance contemporary dance in Finland. It is a discursive platform for production, performance, community work and education, and the Regional Center for Dance in Helsinki. Zodiak provides a joint and collegial production forum for dance groups and artists. It co-produces and hosts 15–20 new dance productions each year. Zodiak is a member of several international networks and works with international partners in production, teaching and artist exchange as well as touring.

Genre: Contemporary dance

Regional Centers for Dance

Central Finland Regional Dance Center / Sisä-Suomen tanssins aluekeskus

Contact: Pirkanmaa and Häme Managing Director Piia Kulin
Tel. +358 (0)50 5521 138, piia.kulin@sisasuomentanssi.fi
www.sisasuomentanssi.fi/pirkanmaa/english/

The Central Finland Regional Dance Center is run by the Pirkanmaa Regional Dance Center and Keski-Suomi Regional Dance Center. The regional center operates in Pirkanmaa, Central Finland, and Häme with the aim of strengthening dance art and its availability, supporting the development of versatile skills, promoting collaboration, and enhancing job opportunities and the professionalization of dance in the region.

Regional Dance Center of Eastern Finland / Itäinen tanssins aluekeskus

Contact: Producer Jupe Pohjolainen
Suokatu 42/2, FI-70110 Kuopio
Tel. +358 (0)50 5816 300, itak@itak.fi
www.itak.fi

The Regional Dance Center of Eastern Finland operates in Eastern Finland with the aim of promoting dance, creating work opportunities for professionals, offering education, and supporting dance productions in the area. The center organizes dance festivals, such as Paikalliskiikki every June (in collaboration with Kuopio Dance Festival), and Lonely in the rain? festival in November. Regional Dance Center of Eastern Finland also runs cultural centre Sorku at Kuopio.
Regional Dance Center in Northern Finland / Pohjoinen tanssin aluekeskus


The Regional Dance Center in Northern Finland consists of Jojo – Oulu Dance Centre in Oulu, Routa Company in Kaaja, Rimpparemm Folk Ensemble in Roniemi and Pyhäsalmen Dance Association / Full Moon Dance Festival in Pyhäjärvi. The aim of the Regional Dance Center in Northern Finland is to promote dance as an art form and increase the availability of dance in the region by producing and organizing dance performances and tours.

Regional Dance Center of Ostrobothnia / Pohjamaan tanssin aluekeskus

Contact: Manager Annika Sillander
Tel. +358 (0)40 1364 312, annika.sillander@watt.fi
Producers: Mari Olatans, mari.olata@watt.fi and Mia Wilik, mia.wili@watt.fi
www.watt.fi

The Regional Dance Center of Ostrobothnia in Western Finland operates in the three Ostrobothnian regions. The Center creates and enables employment opportunities for dance artists, promotes dance, makes dance accessible, engages in planning and marketing of dance events, maintains and builds networks and enables collaborations between artists, cultural associations and local councils. The Center works to extend and strengthen Nordic and international networks and collaborations.

Regional Dance Center of Western Finland / Läntinen tanssin aluekeskus

Contact: Managing Director Lotta Skaffari
Linnankatu 24, FI-20100 Turku
Tel. +358 (0)2 2314 212, info@l-tanssi.fi
www.l-tanssi.fi

The Western Finland Regional Dance Center has the goal of enhancing job opportunities for dance artists, developing general awareness of contemporary dance, and increasing the availability of dance art in the region. It covers Southwest Finland and the province of Satakunta. The center aims to develop collaboration between different agents in the dance field and gain more public recognition for contemporary dance. One of its main challenges is supporting freelance dance artists.

Zodiak – Center for New Dance / Regional Dance Center in Helsinki

www.zodiak.fi
Zodiak – Center for New Dance functions as a regional center for dance in Helsinki.

Organisations

Dance Arena / Tanssiareena ry
www.tanssiareena.fi

Dance Arena is a support organization for international exchange focused on the import of contemporary dance.

Theater Center / Teatterikeskus

Contact: Maaria Kuukorento
Mentullikatu 33 A, FI-00170 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)40 7313 655, info@teatterikeskus.fi
www.teatterikeskus.fi

Theater Center is a co-operative organization for professional theater and dance companies in Finland. Its goal is to promote the activities of the individual theaters and companies and strengthen their position in Finland. Theater Center is also a network of 34 member theaters.

Union of Dance and Circus Artists of Finland

Contact: Chairperson Outi Kallinen
ovi@venusvial.net
Teatterikulma, Menntullikatu 33 A, FI-00170 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (09) 2511 2147, fax +358 (09) 2511 2191
sami.hiltunen@teme.fi
www.teme.fi/sti

Union of Dance and Circus Artists of Finland is the field’s oldest and largest union in Finland. It was founded in 1917 and has about 940 members, including dancers, choreographers, circus artists and dance and circus pedagogues. The organization’s main role is to look after its members’ contractual rights, working conditions, employment and copyright issues. It influences policy issues in Finland, organizes professional development opportunities for dance and circus artists and increases the visibility of dance and circus.

Festivals and Events

ANTI – Contemporary Art Festival

International contemporary arts festival presenting site-specific works made for public spaces.
Contact:
Minna Canthi Katu 4, 4th Floor, FI-70100 Kuopio
Tel. +358 (0)50 3052 005, info@antifestival.com
www.antifestival.com

Baltic Circle Festival

Baltic Circle is an international contemporary theater festival that takes place every November in Helsinki, both in theater venues and on different sites in the city. Baltic Circle functions in the context of European contemporary performing arts, and is a platform for developing new trends and ideas.
Contact:
Festival Director Eva Neklyayeva
evaneklyayeva@q-teatteri.fi
Tel. +358 (0)41 5242 871
c/o Q-Teatteri, Tunturikatu 16, FI-00100 Helsinki
www.balticcircle.fi

BRAVO!

BRAVO! is an international theater festival for children and young audiences organized every second year in Helsinki capital city area. Organizer: ASITTEJ Finland. ASITTEJ invites outstanding international performances for children and youth. Visual, multi-art forms. Performers are also asked to give workshops. Next festival: March 23–30, 2014.
Contact:
Assitej Finland, Mentullikatu 33, FI-00170 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)40 8666 355, info@assitejfi.org
www.assitejfi.org

FACTORY FESTIVAL MANIFESTI

Annual festival with wide-ranging programme from contemporary dance and new circus to exhibitions. The festival is held in a beautifully restored unique old factory milieu, the Manilla quarters, by the Aura river in the heart of Turku.
Contact:
Producer, programme director Katja Lehmissaari
Pro Manilla Foundation
Manilla, Hämeentie 64, FI-20810 Turku
Tel. +358 (0)8 2840 100
Kokkolans Talvitanssit / Vinterdans i Karleby / Winter Dance in Kokkola

A four-day event, full of contemporary dance and dance theatre, takes place annually in the beginning of February in the city of Kokkola, Finland.

Artistic directors: Jorma Úotinen (until 2015)
Juhani Teräsvuori

Contact: taiteellisetjohtajat@kokkolantalvitanssit.fi
General information: info@kokkolantalvitanssit.fi
www.kokkolantalvitanssit.fi

Kuopio Dance Festival

Diverse international program, ranging from contemporary dance to classical ballet, workshops for amateurs and professional dancers, as well as lots of off-program activities. Annually some 100 dance events during the festival week.


General Manager: Anna Pitkänen
Artistic Director: Jorma Úotinen (until 2015)

Contact:
Regional Dance Center of Eastern Finland
Tallberginkatu 1/117, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)400 805 438, info@loikka.fi
www.loikka.fi

LOIKKA Dance Film Festival

The international and annual LOIKKA Dance Film Festival presents high quality dance film – both new and classics – as well as lectures, workshops and events. The next festival will be held in April 2014 in Helsinki, with the open call for film entries beginning in August 2013.

Artistic directors: Thomas Freundlich and Valtteri Raekallio
NAD Productions, Bulevardi 23-27, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)400 905 458, info@loikka.fi
www.loikka.fi

Lonely in the Rain?

Festival for contemporary dance, new dance and improvisation, takes place in Joensuu in November.

Contact:
Regional Dance Center of Eastern Finland
Sotku, Suokatu 42/2, FI-70110 Kuopio
Tel. +358 (0)44 055 3009, itak@itak.fi
www.itak.fi

Moving in November

This annual festival introduces recent dance innovations and new approaches to choreography. Moving in November presents both international and Finnish performances.

Organization: Dance Arena
Artistic Directors: Ari Tenhula
ari.tenhula@movinginnovember.fi
Mikael Aaltolen
mikael.aaltonen@movinginnovember.fi
Production: Arts Management Helsinki
helsinki@artsmangement.fi
www.movinginnovember.fi

OuDance Festival

An annual dance festival in Oulu every September, organised by Jolo – Oulu Dance Centre. International and local performances, mainly contemporary dance.

Contact:
Jolo – Oulu Dance Centre
Artistic Director: Satu Tuomisto
PO Box 42, FI-90015 Oulu
Tel. +358 (0)45 8793 779, satu.tuomisto@jolof.fi
www.jolo.fi

Pispala Schottische Dance Mania

Concert and training event for new folk music and dance. In addition to the courses, there will be performances of the latest Finnish folk dance productions. Next festival: September 26–29, 2013.

Contact:
Monitomitalo 13, Satakunnankatu 13, FI-33100 Tampere
Tel. +358 (0)3 2122 147, info@sottiisi.net
www.sottiisi.net

Pispala Schottische International Folklore Festival

The international folk dance and music festival Pispala Schottische will be arranged in Tampere in June 11–15, 2014. Dancers, musicians and singers from Finland and other European countries are attending the festival.

Contact:
Monitomitalo 13, Satakunnankatu 13, FI-33100 Tampere
Tel. +358 (0)3 2122 147, info@sottiisi.net
www.sottiisi.net

Rutuia!

International dance festival for children and young audiences. Takes place annually in April. Contemporary dance, dance theater, performances for young audiences. Producer: Nina Iola
Dance Theatre Hurjaruuth
Tallberginkatu 1/117, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)9 5657 250, fax +358 (0)9 6931 299
info@hurjaruuth.fi
www.hurjaruuth.fi

Savcor Ballet festival

Autumn season 2013: Concert Hall Mikkeli, Mikkeli, October 18-20, 2013; Slovenian National Theatre Ballet, Don Quijote, starring Anastasia and Denis Matveienka
Producer: Ulla Savisalo
Dance Theatre Hurjaruuth
Tallberginkatu 1 B/154, FI-00180 Mikkeli
Tel. +358 (0)20 774 7755, sales@savcorballet.com
www.savcorballet.com
www.facebook.com/SavcorBallet

Side Step Festival

Contemporary dance festival organized every February by Zodiac – Center for New Dance. Side Step consists of cutting-edge international performances, lectures, artist dialogues and workshops. Helsinki-based festival aims to deepen the interaction between artists and audiences, and stands out from other festivals owing to the awareness, relevance and openness of its spirit.

Artistic director: Harri Kuorelahdi
harri.kuorelahdi@zodiak.fi
Zodiac – Center for New Dance
Tallberginkatu 1 B/154, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)9 644 948, zodiak@zodiak.fi
www.zodiak.fi

Tampere Dance Current

Annual festival of contemporary Finnish dance
Dance Theatre WD, Hämeenkatu 25, FI-32300 Tampere
Tel. +358 (0)50 5153 846, annina@tanssivirtaa.net
www.tanssivirtaa.net
Tampere Flamenco Week

An international flamenco festival each year at the end of July featuring various flamenco performances, and courses in flamenco dance, guitar and singing.

Contact: Anu Silvennoinen
Tel. +358 (0)400 597738, flamenco.anu@gmail.com
www.tampereflamenco.com

Tampere Theatre Festival

Magnificent dance performances together with the best Finnish and international theatre. Dance theater.

Executive Director: Hanna Rosendahl
Tullikamarin aukio 2, FI-33100 Tampere
Tel. +358 (0)3 2140 992, (0)3 222 8536
fax +358 (0)3 2230 121, info@teatterikesa.fi
www.teatterikesa.fi

Time of Dance


Contact: Artistic director Teemu Kyytinen
Tel. +358 (0)9 3140 3140, info@teatterikesa.fi
www.timeofdance.fi

URB – Urban Festival

Urban dance and urban theater.

Contact: Jonna Strandberg
Kiasma – Museum of Contemporary Art
Mannerheimintie 2, FI-00100 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)9 1733 6649, jonna.strandberg@kiasma.fi

Venues

Alexander Theatre

Contact: Director of International Affairs Saija Nisula
Bulevardi 23–27, FI-00180 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)400 353 079
saija.nisula@aleksanterinteatteri.fi
www.aleksanterinteatteri.fi

Capacity: 473. All forms of performing arts.

Barker Theatre, stage for independent art in Turku

Contact: Jesper Dolgov
Virkkulaankatu 65, FI-20000 Turku
Tel. +358 (0)2 2383 903, info@barkerteatteri.fi
Contemporary dance and circus performances, training facilities, dance residency.

Espoo Cultural Center

Contact: Tiina Kasvi, Mari Rissanen
PO Box 3263, FI-02070 City of Espoo
Tel. +358 (0)10 8165 7508
Tiina.Kasvi@espoo.fi, mari.rissanen@espoo.fi
www.espoo.fi/kulttuurikeskus

Kiasma Theater – Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art

Contact: Jonna Strandberg
Mannerheimintie 2, FI-00100 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)9 1733 6649, jonna.strandberg@kiasma.fi
www.kiasma.fi

Capacity: 200. Contemporary dance, performance/live art, site specific, performances for young audiences, contemporary theater, urban art.

Savoy Theater

Contact: Producer Anna-Liisa Tasapuro
Tel. +358 (0)9 3108 8436, anna-liisa.tasapuro@hel.fi
www.savoyteatteri.fi


Stoa the Cultural Center of Eastern Helsinki

Contact:
PO Box 4721, FI-00099 City of Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)3 2108 8436, +358 (0)9 3108 8443
stoainfo@hel.fi
www.stoa.fi


Tampere Hall

Contact: Head of the Concert Department Marko Stenström
Yliopistonkatu 55, PO Box 16, FI-33101 Tampere
Tel. +358 (0)3 2434 111, fax +358 (0)3 2434 197
marko.stenstrom@tampere-talo.fi
www.tampere-talo.fi


Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki

Haapaniemenkatu 6, PL 163, FI-00531 Helsinki

Department of Dance
Head of Department: Professor Ari Tenhula
Professor Kirsi Monni
Planning officer: Jan-Peter Kaiku
Tel. +358 (0)400 792 041, +358 (0)9 4313 6200
www.tampereenkonservatorio.fi

Department of Dance and Theatre Pedagogy
Head of Department: Lecturer Riku Saastamoisnen
Professor Eva Anttila
Planning officer: Justiina Westerinen
Justiina.westerinen@teak.fi
Tel. +358 (0)400 792 037, fax +358 (0)9 4313 6200
www.teak.fi

Arts Academy at Turku University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Performing Arts / Dance

Contact: Tarja Yoken, tarja.yoken@turkuamk.fi
Dance Teacher Education
Linnankatu 54, FI-20100 Turku, Finland
Tel. +358 (0)2 2507 623
Contemporary dance, jazz dance, improvisation, dance education, jazz dance.

Turku Conservatoire, Vocational Qualification in Dance
FE. Sillanpää katu 9, FI-33230 Tampere
Head of Degree Program: Miika Riekkinen
Tel. +358 (0)50 311 9580, fax +358 (0)3 225 5859
toimisto@tampereenkonservatorio.fi
Contemporary dance, classical ballet, contemporary ballet, dance theater, folk dance, performance/live art, performances for young audiences.

www.tampereenkonservatorio.fi

Finnish National Opera Ballet School
Kaiakatu 4 A, FI-00530 Helsinki
Tel. +358 (0)9 4030 2417, +358 (0)9 4030 2274
balettiopilat@ooppera.fi, www.ooppera.fi

Movement&Performance Research Outokumpu – professional dance education
North Karelia College Outokumpu
Head of Dance Education: Ulla Mäkinen
Lammernkatu 18, FI-85500 Outokumpu
Tel. +358 (0)50 3657 149, ulla.makinen@pkky.fi
Contemporary dance.
www.pkky.fi/amo/outokumpu

Oulu University of Applied Sciences, School of Music, Dance and Media

Degree Program in Dance Teacher Education
Head of Degree Program: Niina Susa Vahtola
Kankaantie 1, FI-03200 Oulu
Tel. +358 (0)10 272 3362, fax +358 (0)10 272 1220
niina.susa.vahtola@ouamk.fi, niina.vahtola@ouamk.fi

Classical ballet, folk dance, couple dance, show dance.

www.ouamk.fi

Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Kuopio Academy of Music and Dance

Degree Program in Dance, Dance Teacher (BA)
Head of Degree Program: Eeri Pihlajakari
Kuopionlahdenkatu 23 C, FI-70100 Kuopio
Tel. +358 (0)44 785 7411, 49
Jan-Peter Kaiku/Teak.fi

Contemporary dance, classical ballet, jazz dance

www.turunkonservatorio.fi