

Foreign Issues: The National and International in 1960s Finnish Popular Music Discourse

Harici Meseleler: 1960'lardaki Fin Popüler Müzik Söyleminde Ulusal ve Uluslararası

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Abstract. The 1950s and early 1960s are often understood as a golden era of popular music in Finland. Forms of light entertainment music that dominated the charts have been considered as cultural expressions deeply reflecting local and national identities. At the same time, new styles invaded Finland, such as rock'n'roll, Latin rhythms, Italian entertainment music and somewhat later pop and rock, influencing music production and indicating a new kind of mass appeal for non-domestic music styles and cultures. Instead of retelling the triumph of Finnish light entertainment music, *iskelmä* (*schlager*), or mapping the foreign influences - tasks that have been typical of Finnish music historians during the past twenty years - this paper deals with how the notions of national and international were construed in popular music and the discussions surrounding it. Using interdisciplinary methods of cultural history, this is approached from two angles. First, what were the discourses of musical appropriation and syncreticism, like the adoption of US country music and its imageries by Finnish performers? The second angle focuses on the competence of Finnish popular music to function across cultural divides. As the transnational flow of music styles and star images became evident, the world also seemed more open to Finnish artists and music to enter. The article argues that the internationalisation of Finnish pop music meant a new modern sense and construction of a national popular music.

Keywords: National identity, international success, Finland, early 1960s, popular music, media discussion

Özet. 1950'ler ve 1960'ların başı, çoğunlukla, Finlandiya'da popüler müziğin altın çağı olarak düşünülür. Listelere egemen olan hafif eğlence müziği yerel ve ulusal kimlikleri yoğun biçimde yansıtan kültürel ifadeler olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Aynı zamanda rock'n'roll, Latin ritimleri, İtalyan eğlence müziği ve sonraki dönemlerde de belirli düzeyde pop ve rock gibi yeni biçimler müzik üretimini etkileyip ülke dışı müzik biçim ve kültürlerine karşı yeni tür bir kitlesel talebin göstergesi olarak Finlandiya'yı istila etmiştir. Bu makale, son yirmi yıl boyunca Finli müzik tarihçilerinin tipik olarak yaptığı gibi Fin hafif eğlence müziği *iskelmä*'nin (*schlager*) zafesinin yeniden anlatılması ya da yabancı etkilerin bir haritasının çıkarılmasından ziyade ulusal ve uluslararası nosyonlarının popüler müzik ve onu çevreleyen tartışmalarda nasıl anlamlandırıldığı ile ilgilenir. Disiplinlerarası kültürel tarih yöntemleri kullanılarak konuya iki açıdan yaklaşılır. Birincisi, ABD country müziği ve imgelerini Finli icracıların benimsemesi gibi, müziksel temellükün ve senkretizmin söylemleri neydi? İkinci açı ise Fin popüler müziğinin kültürel ayrımlar üzerinde işleme yeteneği üzerine odaklanır. Ulusötesi müzik biçimleri ve star imgelerinin akışı nedeniyle dünya, Fin pop sanatçı ve müziğine daha açık gibi görünmüştür. Bu çalışma Fin pop müziğinin uluslararasılaşmasının ulusal popüler müziğin yeni bir modern anlam ve inşası anlamına geldiğini öne sürer.

Anahtar kelimeler: Ulusal kimlik, uluslararası başarı, Finlandiya, 1960 başları, popüler müzik, medya tartışmaları

1 Introduction

What is Finnish music? What is international music? If origins of music are practically impossible to trace and if a nation is an imagined community, a discursive construct whose identity consists in its difference from others (see e.g. Anderson 2003), it is then reasonable to suggest that there is no music that could be labelled as, say, innately Finnish. There is no 'natural' Finnish music. Everything is in flux or, as often stated, music knows no boundaries. All music is, potentially, international by nature. However, as the notions of place and originality arguably form one of the most influential elements of popular music ideology in the Western world, musical appropriations may face discourses of valuation that aim to downplay this 'flow'. These discourses tend to construct meanings that emphasise national sentiments. Even though music may often not have clear sonic references to what is understood as 'national', it still may be considered as something that represents a sense of community and nationality. Music is never 'just' music but is an important vehicle for the construction of the objective reality of the external social world. Music can, in its various forms of reproduction and mass-mediation, represent the constructed national or ethnic collectivities. This not only applies to traditional forms of music such as folk songs but also to modern popular forms such as pop, rock, and hip hop (Stokes 1994: 10-15; Connell & Gibson 2003: 117-143; Regev & Seroussi 2004: 5-6).

Given the alliance of social and cultural forces as well as technological and commercial structures that have defined modern popular music since the early 20th century, there is not much left which could not become national popular music. From the Slavic romances in the early 20th century to the tango boom of the 1960s and, consequently, to the vitality of contemporary heavy metal music scene, distinctive representations of national collectivities have been prevalent also in Finland.

On the other hand, the same reasons that have enabled national sentiments have also contributed to the global distribution of music. One of the most striking developments of popular music during the past hundred years has been the internationalisation of its sound. Regarding the significance of rock'n'roll, rock, soul, funk, disco, rap, hiphop, the position of the United States as a global trendsetter has been evident. Yet American music is no longer as dominant as it used to be. Simon Frith (2004: 52; see also Rutten 1991) writes that the globalisation of the contemporary music industry "means neither a one-way nor an even flow in the circulation of sounds, but rather the recurring impact of particular sounds (Latin rhythms, punk, rap) on particular music cultures which continue to follow their own ways of doing things." New communication technologies and processes of globalisation have made it possible for non-American artists and record companies to become more popular in international markets.

This article argues that in Finland notions of national and international already played important roles in popular music in the 1950s and 1960s. It could of course be stated that the combination of the national and the international has been a main marker of modern societies for a much longer time. In the Finnish context, this bond has been characterised by cultural and political tensions at least for two centuries. Having been occupied by Russia (1809-1917) and, prior to that, by Sweden (from the 16th century to 1809), Finnish culture life can, from an historical perspective, be seen

as a mediator between two traditions, the East and the West. In popular music, the balance between these traditions has in recent times been in favour of the West. Jazz, rock'n'roll, beat, punk, hiphop, metal and other modern styles came to Finland mainly from America and Britain (although in their early stages often via Scandinavia). This development reflects the general development in which the Anglo-American popular culture has been established as the international preferred culture of the young in many countries.

In fact, when we refer to 'international pop music' we often implicitly mean popular music styles and stars that come from the United States. International in popular music is often used as a synonym for American popular music. Yet from the point of view of the term itself, international, this is only a half the story. The term refers to something that is active, known, or reaching beyond national boundaries. International is about affecting two or more countries and extending across or transcending national boundaries. Thus, international as a term neither refers to only one particular country nor accepts the one-way flow of affects and influences. Potentially, it is as much about giving back as about receiving.

The crucial point here is that the dialectics of the national and international (or local and global) have been powerful in nation-building processes. National cultures are very much products of transnational integration. In fact, nationalism is an international ideology which has materialised in different nations often in similar ways (Anttonen 1996). Popular music is, as already argued above, a telling example of how transnational forms of culture may play significant role in national identity-making. To understand this process, we need to investigate not only the social but also the temporal fabric of the given dialectics.

My point of departure is to look at the national-international relationship in 1960s Finnish popular music culture by utilising interdisciplinary approaches and methods of cultural history. I have elsewhere (Mäkelä 2004: 11-15) explained how cultural history has grown out of traditions of cultural studies and social history. Cultural history refers back to Raymond Williams's famous idea of culture as 'the study of the whole way of live' as well as to French annalist Fernand Braudel and his arguments about overlapping synchronicities and diachronicities which are present at given times. It has been defined as a study of those ideas, actions, plans, emotion, or mental equipment through which people of the past were in interaction with each other and with their environment. Cultural history seeks to explore the ways in which culture is imagined, represented and received, how it interacts with social processes, how it contributes to individual and collective ideas and worldviews, to stability and change, to social, political and economic activities and programs. In sum, cultural history defines culture as interaction and communication and emphasises that history can be analysed as living traditions.

This is to say that the dialogue with its own history is essential part of popular music. One starting point here is the argument that popular music becomes meaningful through the relationship between continuity and change. New music is never really new but it is always made within the context of existing social relations, technological means and aesthetic conventions (Negus 1996: 138). Within the limits of this paper, I am of course not able to present the overall social and temporal fabric of the case. Yet I wish to propose reasoned arguments on how certain sounds in a certain time con-

nected the national to the international and were involved in creating a sense of the modern world.

2 Historical Background

Finnish popular music arose from the merging of the traditions of art music, folk music and Afro-American music. During the 19th century, when Finland was an autonomous part of the Russian Empire, the political climate favoured internationalism and contributed to the appropriation of different styles and genres in arts, entertainment, and culture life, including music. Musical contacts with the continental entertainment business on one hand and Russian music life on the other were active. As a result of this development, Finland gradually adopted a relatively coherent German-Russian conception of music. This was challenged by the taste for Afro-American music in the late 1920s. Jazz and dance music invaded Finland yet they also became key issues in a development in which a bitter antagonism between old and new, Finnish-European and Afro-American, art music and popular music was established (Jalkanen 1996: 206-213).

The rich cultural interaction declined during the 1930s and 1940s, when Finnish cultural life became characterised by Russophobia. Finnish cultural development during this time was explicitly political. The hatred of Russians and the belief in Greater Finland were intrinsic to as how the Finns understood their national and cultural role. However, not only the East became problematic. The fear of the Soviet Union and Russians was accompanied by the growing suspiciousness towards Anglo-American mass culture. This dualism resulted in the withdrawal into a nationalist shell and conservative culture policy. As a newly formed independent nation, the Finnish government took a number of actions such as custom restrictions for sound recordings to prevent influences from abroad. The state radio barely broadcast foreign popular music. Instead, it emphasised serious art works and national repertoire in its music policy. The music industry took somewhat an opposite view and produced music that was commercial and, in terms of cultural taste hierarchies, 'low'. Yet also in this field nationalist sentiments were strongly emphasised. A year prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, somewhat 88% of the records released by the music industry in Finland were domestic by origin. The majority of them belonged to the categories of light entertainment and dance music. These styles and forms were often grouped under one umbrella-like term, *iskelmä*, which had its linguistic roots in German term *schlager* (hit-tune) but which then in the 1950s became to mean all kinds of modern popular music (Gronow 1995: 35; Jalkanen & Kurkela 2003: 298).

Things took another route in the 1950s when Afro-American music influences and the overall process of Americanisation could no longer be subdued. In addition to jazz and rock'n'roll, the late 1950s witnessed a flow of other styles such as Latin rhythms and Italian entertainment music. In terms of culture policy, the most telling watershed was 1955 when the Finnish government finally repealed those over-priced customs duties that had restricted importation of "luxury products", including music records.

Late 1950s and early 1960s Finnish popular music was marked by the orientation towards new styles and the preparedness to engage with others, and competence to

function across cultural divides. Finnish musicians and entertainers had been rather active in European, Russian and Scandinavian music circuits in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and this tradition was now revitalised. What happened in the late 1950s was that after a 30 year break, a certain kind of cosmopolitanism returned to Finnish music culture. In terms of cultural identities and interaction, this meant a reconfiguration of the relationship between the national and international.

3 Musical Appropriation: West

The birth of modern Finnish popular music in the early 20th century, the meeting of entertainment music and jazz in the late 1920s, the success of Latin rhythms and rock'n'roll in the 1950s and, actually, the overall history of Finnish popular music, can be seen as a history of appropriations. This history involves the adoption and transformation of non-Finnish music into successful popular configurations by local musicians. The concept of musical appropriation here refers to a constant flow of appropriations in which origins, and notions of originality, are often difficult, if not impossible, to trace (Mitchell 1996: 8).

In academic discussion, transformation of music styles has been approached from several angles of theoretisation, including cultural hybridisation and syncretisation. Whatever the terms are, the basic idea of them has been to draw attention to intercultural exchange and the incorporation of cultural elements from a variety of times, places and contexts within particular cultural practices. The central idea has been that hybrid social practices combine cultural elements from a range of sources.

The adoption of US country music and its imageries by Finnish performers in the 1950s and the 1960s is a telling example of musical appropriation and syncreticism. The so-called singing cowboy tradition, which has its roots in American films, variety tours, radio shows, and other forms of show business, rather than roots in the real 'Wild West' (Peterson 1997), occupied a set of variations in European countries and elsewhere. The American popular culture industry, that took care of selling the imaginary Wild West first to the domestic audience and then to spectators overseas, made it clear that the cowboy was the symbol of America and at the same time a significant export product. Yet in many cases products of cowboy themes were domesticated in European versions. By 1960 German-language cowboy novels, mostly written by local authors who had never been to America, were selling at the rate of 91 million a year in West Germany (Judt 2007, 353).

Certainly the cowboy fever hit Finland. Tapio Rautavaara and Olavi Virta, the two most famous Finnish male singers of the time, recorded several cowboy-themed songs while Reino Helismaa, one of the leading songwriters of the era, produced dozens of serenades, ballads and other songs about the Wild West. Cowboy themes were also abundantly exploited in films and television revues.

Dai Griffiths (2002) argues that cover versions of popular songs illustrate identities in motion. Covers can be renditions, straightforwardly faithful versions on the original, or transformations, which are more determined claims on the original. As to the latter form, it is sometimes better to speak of an appropriation of the original. Griffiths mentions that not only the type of cover version, but also the historical and

cultural context of the performance can influence understanding of the song. Crossings of places and languages usually bring changes to the meaning of the song even though the rendition itself may be ‘straight’. These kinds of covers typically present metaphors for the movement of people under modernity.

Finnish cowboy songs included both renditional and transformational cover versions. Yet the majority of recorded songs were not covers of American cowboy songs but original pieces written by Finnish tunesmiths. As these songs carried similar imageries and storylines as American cowboy songs, it can be argued that in fact it was the whole genre that was covered. Performers adopted the same visual cowboy look as American singers. The songs were delivered using instruments and sound typical to American cowboy songs. Apart from the use of Finnish as the songs’ language, the rendition of the genre was relatively straightforward.

Cowboy songs never became a major musical genre in Finland but they clearly found a certain sounding board in Finnish audiences. The reason for this was obviously related to modernisation and urbanisation and their tendencies to bring out ideas of authentic ways of living that according to many were threatened with extinction. As in America, cowboy songs in Finland represented masculine heroism, down-to-earth attitudes, carefree life styles and, particularly, the nostalgia for pre-industrial times. In contrast to American form, Finnish cowboy songs also encompassed interest in other cultures and places, those of America, even though it was in this case disguised in exoticism.

It has become a customary to re-tell the story of how American mass culture conquered the rest of the world in the 1950s. The adoption of cowboy imageries is just one example which shows that this development is something that cannot be neglected in Finnish history. When dealing with ‘international’ issues of 1950 and 1960s popular music in Finland, we should, however, bear in mind that openness towards ‘other’ cultures also meant accepting influences from the East.

4 Musical Appropriation: East

The notion of Finland as a nation between the East and the West was as audible in music as it was visible in the general rhetoric of Finnish national identity. In political terms, this notion was to produce certain demarcations in Finnish foreign policy as the Finns developed an understanding of themselves as bridge-builders facilitating ways of reducing tensions of power politics. From the perspective of the dominant Finnish narrative of the time, an important essence of Western identity was understood as being anti-East, and more specifically as anti-Russian. In Finnish narratives, the East was depicted differently. Whereas in Western narratives the West was depicted in opposition to the evil expansionist Eastern empire and as such stood as the upholders of humanity’s freedom and morality, in Finnish narratives the East was portrayed more favourably, not as an enemy but as a potential friend. This Finnish conception of the East, the Soviet Union and Russians, and hence also of Finnish identity in the world, itself rested on the emergence of a new dominant narrative of the Finnish self and of Finnish history at the end of the Second World War. Such a view of Soviet identity, as distinct from that held in the West, facilitated the construction of a ‘be-

tween-East-and-West' identity for the Finns, and enabled president Urho Kekkonen to promote an international image of Finland as a 'physician', a healer of rifts and a mediator in the prevailing ideological conflict (Browning 2002: 50-53).

Can we find such a view of bridge-building in the musical sounds of the time? Finnish popular music did not play any role in the political East-and-West-narrative but certainly there appeared new audible influences. In the 1950s, the East European heritage returned to Finnish popular music. In some cases, it resulted in mixings with Afro-American styles. The first major example of such a tendency was Annikki Tähti's 1955 hit record, '*Muistatko Monrepos'n*' (Do You Remember Monrepos?), a melancholy song about bittersweet memories of the Karelian mansion and its beautiful park that were lost to the Soviet Union during the war. A musicological analysis by Juha Henriksson (2004: 196) shows that the song carries the sentiment of Russian romances and Gypsy tunes while keeping the 3/4 beat and thus following the long line of popular waltz songs in Finnish music history. Yet these traditional elements are somewhat dissolved by melody lines, chord structures and rhythmic patterns which refer to American jazz, swing and blues influences.

Another example includes the instrumental music groups such as *The Sounds* and *The Strangers* which in the early 1960s enjoyed a short period of fame in Finland. It is possible to regard them as imitators of *The Shadows* and other popular British and American guitar groups of the time. What is interesting with these Finnish 'iron wire' groups, especially with *The Sounds*, was their leanings on Russian-influenced folk songs and romances which then were given a modern treatment with amplified instruments and twist beats. After *The Sounds*' first hit record, '*Emma*' (1963), an electrified 4/4 beat version of an old Russian-influenced waltz song, it became a trend for groups to record popular folk tunes and Slavic *schlagers*.

Some music historians (e.g. Jalkanen & Kurkela 2003: 208) have alleged that the popularity of these guitar groups in Finland clearly reflected the unique position of Finnish music life between the East and the West, the old style and the modern Western world. The reasons behind this style may as much lay in musicians' interests to combine different traditions as in music industry's appetite for recycling already established hit repertoire. In any event, the fact remains that this music articulated a meeting place of the East and the West, the past and the future.

5 Inversed Appropriation

Dutch scholar Paul Rutten (1996: 68) has proposed that prior to the so-called British Invasion and the emergence of Anglo-American rock as market leader, national styles dominated European markets. What Rutten leaves unnoticed is the fact that genres, styles and star names were often not restricted to any particular country or region. For example, Edith Piaf from France or Caterina Valente from Italy/Germany enjoyed success also outside their home countries. Despite the growing presence of American rock'n'roll and pop, Europeans also had access to the range of music products and styles that were imported and exported within the continent. It could be argued that this development was a cultural reflection of the economic integration that was taking place at the time. Apart from Great Britain, European states were increasingly trading

mainly with one another and thus creating integrated networks long before the institutional expression of the process, the European Economic Community, was established (Judt 2007: 325-326).

In Finland, the French *chanson*, German *schlager* and, especially, Italian entertainment music regularly topped hit charts in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It was also typical for many popular singers to publish the same records in several languages. Danish singer Gitte, for example, released a song '*Tämä maa*' (This Land) (1962) in Finnish even though she did not have the skill to speak that language. Furthermore, from the late 1950s onwards there appeared a well-oiled industry of covering foreign hit songs, that is, translating them into Finnish and giving them to local performers. Even though for the Finnish music industry cover versions continued to be their bread-and-butter, a group of European star names did not lose any of their fame in Finland. In the mid-1960s, the Italian singer Umberto Marcato (who actually was not famous in his home country) reached higher sales figures in Finland than the king of rock'n'roll himself, Elvis Presley.

Generally, the status of continental music decreased towards the end of the 1960s. Developments in the Finnish popular charts show that the advent of British beat and American rock from the mid-1960s on grew at the expense of popular genres from other European countries. At the same time, however, beat, pop and rock became a basic for a new development in the local music scenes. Reflecting a wider trend in Europe (Rutten 1996: 68), new genres of beat and rock were taken up by local musicians and developed into distinct local and national styles. New processes of fusion and mixing of musical styles from different sources thus indicated the staying power of musical syncreticism and appropriation.

After the British invasion and the emergence of English as *lingua franca* of popular music, "Euro *schlager*" disappeared from popular interest. Yet something was arguably left from it: the impulse for conquering foreign concert stages and markets. It was a few years prior to the British invasion that Finnish singers and musicians began seriously to seek opportunities to bring their talents outside Finland. Thus, what had started as an appropriation of music styles was now taken to a new level of an inversion of national-international relationships – at least in theory. Historically, Finnish popular music can be regarded as a typical example of a country with an unimportant role within the international music market. Having been in the receiving side of the popular music flow, the national-international relationship in Finland has been heavily unbalanced.

Interests in international markets have not been absent, though. This was first seen in the attempts to elevate female singers to the category of international Euro *schlager* performers. Laila Kinnunen, Pirkko Mannola and a number of other female singers such as Seija Lampila and Marion Rung became active in continental music life, receiving some popularity especially in early 1960s West Germany. Around the time of the fading of female singer boom, two instrumental rock groups managed to make a reputation outside Finland. *The Sounds* gained interest in Japan while *The Strangers* had a brief cult following in France. Not only performers but also tunes won some fame. Written by Rauno Lehtinen and originally published two years earlier, a *jenka* song '*Letkis*' created a short dance craze in 1965 and became a target of dozens of cover versions around the world. In addition to covers, music markets were flooded with joyful pastiches, one of them being the Joe Loss's British Top 40 hit, '*March of*

the Mods' which was marketed as an example of the *Finnjenka* line dance style¹. How did these success stories affect the notions of national and international?

6 Music Export as Public Issue

Aiming at young readers, *Suosikki* (Favourite) and *Iskelmä* (Schlager) represented the new pop media that was a target of discussion on artists' possibilities to reach fame that was awaiting beyond Finnish boundaries. This discourse started with how Finnish female singers were given attributes such as 'internationally capable' or 'continental top quality'. The artists' capabilities to speak and sing in different languages were often noted in the music magazines as well as in the mainstream press. Language skills earned the artists, especially Laila Kinnunen, a status of 'singing *schlager* ambassador' (*Iskelmä* 2/1965).

Even though the female singer boom soon abated, the rhetoric of international success did not disappear. One might think that the most fertile ground for export speculations would have been the sudden bloom of guitar groups as this was the phenomenon that was truly born out of international influences. This was not the case. Despite the successes of *The Sounds* in Japan and *The Strangers* in France, the groups did not receive high-profile export celebration outside the music media. One reason for this might have been the fact that the music style of the 'iron wire' groups was too modern. Even though the groups re-recorded old *schlager* numbers, the phenomenon of electric guitar groups was not regarded as an extension of Finnish music tradition but as an example of international and somewhat questionable pop style. Another reason might be that the groups lacked singing in their performances and, thus, did not engage Finnish language in delivering songs (in fact, many groups, including *The Sounds*, came from Swedish-speaking minorities). The instrumental guitar groups did not earn the mandate for national music.

Such an ambivalence was not imposed upon the case of *Finnjenka*. This seemed incongruous in relation to the fact that, similar to 'iron wire' groups, *Finnjenka* mainly represented non-vocal music style. Furthermore, its roots were as much in American-based dance styles such as the hula hoop and conga as in European brass band tradition and Finnish folk songs. It was perhaps *Finnjenka's* status as a non-modern, old-fashioned music style that elevated it to the category of the national. In any event, the music press saw the rising popularity of Rauno Lehtinen's '*Letkis*' as an indicator of Finnish entertainment reaching a new international level. The mainstream press followed with a similar celebration. Finnish record companies, which in many cases (e.g. Pirkko Mannola, *The Strangers*) had restricted artists' foreign record deals in fear of losing domestic profits, did their best to jump on *jenka* bandwagon. Fazer, the biggest recording company in Finland at the time, produced an album '*Original*

¹ Originating from the 19th century, *jenka* is actually the same dance style as the German low-tempo polka called *schottische* or *rheinländer*. It is characterised by three quick steps and a hop and is danced to music in 2/4 time. *Finnjenka*, also known as *letkajenkka* and *letkis*, is one of the many variations of *jenka*. Typical to it is that all the people dancing form a line and hold on to the one in front by the waist.

Letkiss Comes from Finland’ which was filled with examples of *jenka* style. The badly written sleeve note of this early effort to a pop export stated cryptically:

We can be - and are - very much of different meanings about to whom the choreography of the dance actually belongs, and many say, that it is an American dance. Anyhow, one thing is trustworthy: As of Finnish origin goes, JENKA - LETKAJENKA - LETKISSJENKA - LET’S KISS, or whatever it may be called, reaps well deserved laurels all around the world. Only very seldom light Finnish music has gained foothold on the continent - to make no mention of America, why: VIVAT Letkis! (*‘Original Letkiss Comes from Finland’*, Sleeve note. 1965.)

Written by the producer Jaakko Borg under the pseudonyme Hj. Tähtinen, the main argument of the note was that *Finnjenka* “must be hold in honour in Finland!” and not to approve it “as a novelty from abroad”. Such an argument was also declared in the discussion on the 1965 Eurovision Song Contest which, quite typically, was scandalised by the Finnish music magazines and mainstream press. In the national final, the jury voted for Viktor Klimentko’s gloomy *‘Aurinko laskee länteen’* (The Sun Sets in the West) which then was sent to Eurovision final that was held in Naples, Italy. Receiving the last place and nil points, the choice caused a fury in Finland. This was fuelled by the fact that the jury had rejected another candidate, the *Finnjenka*-style *‘Minne tuuli kuljettaa’* (Where the Wind Brings), which was performed by Katri Helena and then became a top-seller in domestic charts. Furthermore, the winning song of the European final came from Luxembourg and sounded to many as a typical *Finnjenka* pastiche.

Finnish people put a lot of expectations on the *Finnjenka* craze and its potentiality to take the world by the storm. Noting the emerging popularity of *‘Letkis’* in foreign markets, *Suosikki* (3/1964) wrote that it is “worthwhile to export favourite tunes” along with more traditional products such as cellulose which was one of the chief exports of the country. Some writers were bold enough to call for official legitimisation, support and export investments for popular music. Such appeals had already been formulated in the late 1950s, although more implicitly. Finnish design products had become relatively famous and, according to the editor of *Musiikkiviesti* magazine (1/1959, Music News), the same could happen to forms of ‘operational music’ such as *schlager* if policy-makers only understood them worth nurturing. In another issue of the magazine (5/1960), the similar comparison was made between performers of serious music and light entertainment.

Referring to Finnish female singers’ international careers as well as to success stories of local instrumental guitar groups and the *Finnjenka* boom, *Iskelmä* (8/1964) magazine insisted that light music should be given a fair opportunity to head towards the ‘international top’. In order to reach that goal, the state and tourist organisations should cooperate with recording companies. Given that there were neither organised forms of support for popular music nor actually any will to do that, this was a radical plea. Whereas the mid-1960s faced a heated debate about the ‘popular’ in Finnish culture policy and music (Rautiainen 2001), hardly anyone dared to propose organised forms of music export. It could, however, be argued that even though voices for export policy did not become audible until the 1980s and 1990s, there clearly ap-

peared a new kind of understanding on the role of popular music. In the discussion around the national and international, forms of popular music were potentially seen as instruments that might be useful for attaching Finland to the modern world.

7 Coda

One of the starting points of this article has been the idea that in the 1950s and 1960s, in Finnish popular music culture, the national and international increasingly defined each other. In Finnish music discourses, the international became a term that was used to refer to certain cultural supremacy, higher standards of entertainment, and, concretely, artists' capability to reach fame outside Finland. When the media discussed 'internationally-ranking performers', the reference point usually was the West. It could be said that in music export discourse the East gradually disappeared although in appropriation of musical sounds and styles it remained significant. In dreaming of international fame, it was success in the West that over the years became a defining goal in Finnish music life. My argument is that through sounds, images and discourses of popular music as well as in relation to the new understanding of the West as a primary site of the international, the national were given new meanings.

It should be remembered that up until the mid-1950s Finnish culture politics towards popular music was based on restrictions: there were custom restrictions, a number of taxes put upon music activities, censorship, and so on. The era of restrictions did not end, it continued well up to the 1990s, but in any event something happened in the 1960s. Because of the opening of the markets, the flow of new influences and, consequently, the liberating promise of pop and rock, Finnish popular music slowly began to obtain new cultural status and legitimisation. At the same time musicians began to reach beyond national boundaries.

These two developments - incoming influences and attempts to win wider fame - were intertwined. The internationalisation of Finnish pop music meant a new modern sense and construction of a national popular music. However, this marriage did not come to its fulfillment until very recently. For various reasons, the taking of the world remained merely dreams and desires for almost 40 years. It has only been after year 2000 that Finnish performers such as *HIM*, *Nightwish*, *The Rasmus*, *Apocalyptica*, and *Lordi* have reached notable attraction in international markets. And when this finally happened, popular music seemed to gain a firm foothold in Finnish culture politics, business world, the public media, and in the nation's collective imagination.

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