



## GLOBALISATION, HYBRIDISATION AND THE FINNISHNESS OF THE FINNISH TANGO

The tango arrived in Finland at the threshold of the First World War. Most accounts state that the year was 1913. Within a quarter of century, this originally indigenous genre from the Rio de la Plata area of South America was domesticated in Finland. Within another it had become a cultural institution. After a decline of two decades or so, it has, once again, played an important role in the cultural life of Finland.

The fascinating history of the tango in Finland is examined here in the framework of cultural globalisation and hybridisation or, as Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2009) has put it, globalisation as hybridisation. The complex relations of the tango to global flows and Finnishness are explored in relation to global waves of popular music, changes in thinking concerning Finnishness and the function of the tango in Finland at different times. As for hybridisation, the focus is on from which repertoires, foreign and domestic, tango in Finland has drawn, why has it done so and how is the impact of these traditions audible in Finnish tangos of different periods. These issues are explored both on a general level and through detailed musical analyses of selected examples representing different periods of the tango in Finland.

## Globalisation, hybridisation and Finnishness

Tensions between the global and the local have been addressed since the early 1990s in numerous books and articles representing various disciplines. By globalisation, I here mean the “multiple forms of global interconnectedness”, taking into account the history of globalisation from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present (Hopper 2007: 10). There has been much debate about the assumed effects of globalisation on particularistic (national, regional and local) identities. Stuart Hall (2001: 300) has reduced the basic stances into three hypothetical consequences, according to which particularistic identities

- are being *eroded* as a result of cultural homogenisation,
- are *strengthened* by resistance to globalisation, or
- may be declining, though *new hybrid* identities are taking their place.

The first hypothesis coincides with the so-called cultural imperialism thesis, which claims that “authentic, traditional and local culture in many parts of the world is being battered out of existence by the indiscriminate dumping of large quantities of slick commercial and media products, mainly from the United States” (Jeremy Tunstall, quoted in Tomlinson 2001: 8). The second hypothesis is in line with a contrasting thesis emphasizing the significance of various local, regional, national, international and transnational movements against globalisation. According to Mittelman & Chin (2005: 24–26), these can be declared and official (as in politics of cultural protectionism) or undeclared and unofficial (ranging from individual choices concerning what to wear, eat, buy, play or listen to to various forms of more or less direct action). The third hypothesis coincides with the cultural hybridisation thesis, which is defined by Rowe and Schelling (1991: 161) as a process “in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices.” These include examples like “Thai boxing by Moroccan girls in Amsterdam, Asian rap in London, Irish bagels”, and “Chinese tacos”, showing that cultural forms, “past or present, have not been simply moving in the direction of cultural uniformity and standardisation” (Nederveen Pieterse 1997: 53).

By Finnishness I refer here primarily to the national self-image of Finns as understood by the Finnish historian Matti Peltonen (2000). According to him, this self-image is related to Finland's position in the international community and, with respect to national and regional dynamics, to internal power relations (Peltonen 2000: 280). The main issue here is how national and sub-national (that is, local and regional) dynamics have been interrelated with global and international processes with respect to the tango in Finland. My assumption is that all three hypothetical consequences of globalisation mentioned by Stuart Hall have indeed become reality – with different emphases at different times – during the more-than-centennial history of the tango in Finland. For the purposes of this article, I divide this history into the following periods (cf. Kärjä 2012: 11–12; Gronow 2004; Padilla 2014: 328):

- arrival and early reception (1913–1929),
- domestication (1930s),
- emergence of Finnish tango (1939–1945),
- post-war tango (1945–1960),
- great tango boom (1960s),
- decline (1970–1985),
- revival (1985–2000), and
- tango today (2000–present).

In the following, I explore Stuart Hall's hypothetical consequences in relation to three related approaches. The first concerns four global waves of popular music derived from the writings of Gronow (1996) and Toynbee (2002). The second deals with models concerning the long-term reception of particular popular music genres in relation to the breakthrough of new rival genres; these include tango

(Åhlen 1987), jazz and rock (Holt 2007, Peterson 1990, Kamin 1975). The third relates these waves and patterns of reception to changes in thinking concerning Finnishness, particularly from the points of view of inward and outward looking culture (Peltonen 2000: 280; cf. Nederveen Pieterse 2009: 4; Åhlen 1987: 60).

In addition to globalisation and Finnishness, *hybridisation* is under scrutiny. Finnish tango in each of its periods is understood as a hybrid genre combining features from several parent traditions. The main task here is to show connections between specific features, forms and practices borrowed from particular traditions, global waves of popular music and changes in thinking concerning Finnishness. This is done both on a general level and through detailed musical analyses of selected examples.

The data used here can be roughly categorised as

- academic research,
- popular and semi-academic literature written by established researchers and journalists,
- sound recordings (CD re-issues, mostly available on Spotify),
- published sheet music and hand-written manuscripts of partbooks, and
- literature on record sales charts.

Two points should be kept in mind here (cf. Wall 2003: 7, 65). Firstly, academic research on tango in Finland is regarded here as data rather than as background literature or a collection of established facts. Secondly, popular and semi-academic literature is considered to be potentially valuable when related to other source types in the analysis (academic research, published sound recordings, sales charts). With this in mind, by combining data drawn from several types of sources and working through a structured analytical framework, I attempt to generate some new insights into the history and alleged Finnishness of the Finnish tango, with particular reference to globalisation and hybridisation.

## Arrival and early reception

The tango arrived in Finland in 1913 in the aftermath of the European tango craze that had swept over Paris, Berlin and London in 1911–1912. In itself, this craze was part of two interrelated global waves of popular culture. Firstly, it was part of the second global wave of popular music, that is, the introduction of new social dances (the foxtrot, the tango) on the one hand, and the American popular song style known as Tin Pan Alley on the other (Gronow 1996: 130; Toynbee 2003: 150). The tango, in itself, had emerged partly as a consequence of the first global wave of popular music, namely the spread of European dances such as the waltz and contredanse all over the world around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Gronow 1996: 130). Secondly, it was part of the apex of the *belle époque*, an era of glamour, pleasure and entertainment from the *fin de siècle* to the First World War (Gundle 1999: 273; Jullian 1982: 39–40). Paris was the self-evident capital city of the *belle époque*; alongside came other metropolises: Vienna, London, Berlin and St. Petersburg (Jullian 1982: 10–15).

In Finland, tangos were first played by salon orchestras at restaurants and brass bands in park concerts and at dances. They were also used in theatrical shows and as to accompany silent films. Indeed, the first known Finnish tango was commissioned from Emil Kauppi for a silent crime film called *Salainen perintömääräys* (*The Secret Directive*, 1914). In the film, Kauppi's *Tango* accompanied dancer Hilma Liiman's "Argentine salon tango" performance, which is to represent the city, the upper class and crime. (Salmi 2002: 242–248; Jalkanen & Kurkela 2003: 177.) Another early Finnish tango composition, also titled *Tango*, was composed by the bandleader Alexander Björk in spring 1914. The premiere was on 30 May, 1914 at the Grand Hotel of Hanko, a *belle époque* seashore resort in the southern coast of Finland (Dahlström 1976: 167). This tango has survived as a manuscript written for brass octet (National Library of Finland: MS.MUS.175.217–220), but it has not been referred to in previous research on the tango in Finland.

Björk's *Tango* is in AB trio form with a *da capo* A, consisting of three 16-bar sections in the style of Argentine *guardia vieja* tangos (cf. Link & Wendland 2016: 41). Both the A- and B-sections are in the tonic, while section C (Trio) is in the subdominant. The harmony centres on I, IV and V, the harmonic rhythm being one chord to a bar. Secondary dominants with appropriate resolutions can be heard

in both A (V/ii6, bars 13–14) and B (V7/vi, bars 21–22) sections. The main melody – quite a typical Argentine-like *rítmico* with its 16th-note runs, appoggiaturas, accentuated milonga rhythms, staccatos and neighbour-note triplet figures – is carried by the Eb cornet and Bb cornet I in a question-and-answer-like dialogue. The two alto horns, the tenor horn II and the bass provide the harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment in the habanera rhythm. The Bb cornet II and the tenor horn I fill the space between the melody and accompaniment. The Bb cornet II moves mostly in parallel thirds below the main melody, replacing the thirds with sixths, fourths, octaves and unisons every now and then, while the tenor horn I mostly doubles the main melody an octave below. (Example 1a.) In section B, however, the tenor horn joins the habanera rhythm of the accompaniment section by playing arpeggios of the underlying chords (example 1b). In the second phrase of section C the alto horn II doubles the main melody, leaving the tenor horn to double the Bb cornet II, both an octave below (example 1c). In all, Björk's *Tango* is a hybrid combination of melodic, harmonic and rhythmic features from the Argentine tango (cf. Link & Wendland 2016: 23–35) with a traditional Finnish brass band arrangement (cf. Jalkanen & Kurkela 2003: 145–152).

As in the cases of 1920s jazz and 1950s rock (Kamin 1978), the early reception of the tango consisted of resistance motivated by moral arguments, ridicule and defence. In 1915, Maila Talvio, one of the most outstanding female prosaists at the time, represented Helsinki, the capital city of Finland, in her novel *Niniven lapset* (*The Children of Nineveh*, 1915) as a corrupted city of “businessmen, journalists, and artists and their haunts, cafés, and restaurants, where a lascivious dance, the tango, has just become fashionable” (Ahokas 1998: 173). Her morally motivated argument was based on a contrast between “the purity of Finnish countryside” and “the corrupt city life” (Schoolfield 1998: 1170; Laitinen 1998: 123, respectively). In the same year, Iivari Kainulainen, one of the most popular performers of Finnish comic song *kupletti* (couplet) at the time, ridiculed the tango craze in his *Tanko-laulu* (roughly translatable as “Tango Song”). The defence came from Mika Waltari who, in his first novel *Suuri Illusioni* (*The Great Illusion*, 1928), praised the “veiled, soft” tango as “absolutely the most beautiful of all dances”, which is and will be danced “in places with chilled drinks, parquet floor, and an orchestra dressed in black suits”. Waltari belonged to the *Tulenkantajat* (“Torchbearers”) movement, which introduced several new European artistic trends – expression-

(a)

Eb cornet  
 Bb cornet I  
 Eb crt  
 Bb cornet II  
 Tenor horn I  
 Alto horns I & II,  
 Tenor horn II  
 Bass horn

(b)

Eb cornet  
 Bb cornet I  
 Alto horns I & II,  
 Tenor horn II  
 Bass horn

(c)

Eb cornet  
 Bb crt I  
 Alto hn I  
 Bb crt II  
 Tenor horn I  
 Alto horns I & II,  
 Tenor horn II  
 Bass horn

Example 1. *Tango* (Alexander Björk): (a) opening of section A; (b) opening of section B; (c) opening of section C. Source: Björk (n.d.) / National Library of Finland (MS.MUS.175.217–220).

ism, futurism, Dadaism, surrealism, and urban romanticism – into Finnish art and literature. The “Torchbearers” were also known from their slogan: “Open the windows to Europe”. (Riikonen 2016: 119, 128). Tango, then, was one issue in debates concerning whether Finnishness should be understood primarily in terms of rural, territorial and inward-looking values or, instead, according to a more urban, translocal and outward-looking view.

After gaining independence from Russia in 1917, Finland drifted into a short but extremely brutal Civil War between the Whites, representing the hegemonic middle class with right-wing inclinations, and the Reds, with a working-class or tenant background. The victory of the Whites was ensured with the help of German-trained Finnish jaegers who, in the final phase, were reinforced by an Imperial German Army squad. (Alapuro 2004: 88–89; Kivimäki & Tepora 2012: 235–238.) Finland found itself in a new geopolitical situation – also in regard to popular music. Before the First World War, most European influences had come to Finland through “the gate of St. Petersburg”. After seceding from Russia, this gate was closed and Finland was driven into the German sphere of influence. The new African-American dance music genres, jazz included, were now adopted in their German form. (Jalkanen 1996: 210–212; Jalkanen & Kurkela: 252–285.) The domestication of tango in Finland took place within this context.

## Domestication

The acceptance and domestication of the tango in Finland followed a pattern familiar from the reception of jazz and rock: the character of music was changed so as to be more acceptable both to the authorities and audiences (Kamin 1975: 284). This was all the more important since, in Finland as in many other countries, the 1930s were a conservative, even reactionary decade. Culturally, the conservatism meant the strengthening of “the national manner of feeling”, closing the windows to Europe and elsewhere, and, in art music, turning away from radical avant-gardism of the 1920s (Salmenhaara 1996: 409–410). Compared to the highly international music life of the *belle époque*, also the Finnish popular music of the 1930s was markedly conservative and nationalist in character (Jalkanen & Kurkela 2003: 295).



Politically, the decade was characterized by two contradictory trends. Firstly, the right-wing extremism, particularly the short-lived Lapua Movement (1929–1932), attempted to eradicate communists and left-wing socialists from the country (Alapuro 2004: 92; Tepora 2007: 159). Around the mid-1930s, the Academic Karelia Society (*Akateeminen Karjala-Seura*, founded in 1922) and the Patriotic People’s Movement (*Isänmaallinen kansanliike*, founded in 1933) aimed to achieve close cooperation in order to bring about “a strong, united Greater Finland that would be unilingual, Lutheran, and a true *Volksgemeinschaft* in the German National Socialist mould” (McRae 1997: 70). “True Finnishness” was the word. Secondly, a contrary trend sought for reconciliation between the opposing parties of the Civil War. This eventually led to the so-called red-earth coalition between the Agrarian Union and Social Democrats in 1937. (Alapuro 2004: 91–93; Tepora 2007: 159–161.)

The reconciliatory trend became prevailing in popular music. The basis of the success of the Dallapé, the most popular modern dance band of the decade, was a lucky fusion of European-national and African American musical ingredients, particularly a distinctive union of the accordion and jazz. Their music was ordinary, folksy and conservative enough to speak to the general public. The Dallapé managed to cross the strict class borders: starting as a leftist Helsinki-based youth union band, it became the darling of the entire nation, being at the same time urban and rural and reflecting both right- and left-wing populist sensibilities – without ending up as a target of negative attention from either side. (Jalkanen & Kurkela 2003: 283–292.)

In the mid-1930s, the Dallapé teamed up with Georg Malmstén, who is generally considered to be the most important Finnish popular singer and songwriter of the decade. *Valkea sisar* (“White Sister”), written by Martti Jäppilä, the founder of the Dallapé, and recorded by George Malmstén (vocals) backed by the Dallapé in 1934, is referred to as the first “Great Tango” that “began to make tango the dance music of all people up to ordinary rural folk” (Kukkonen 1980: 146). With its minor mode, typical of Russian music and Finnish folk song, modern dance band line-up, Tin Pan Alley-derived 32-bar AABA form and the mostly steady march-like *marcato* accompaniment, spiced up with some bars in habanera and milonga rhythms, it is a good representative of the Finnish tango in the mid-1930s.

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The large-scale form of the performance consists of a lengthy orchestral intro (8+16 bars), a vocal chorus (a 32-bar AABA), and the repetition of the chorus by the orchestra. Besides the vocals, the line-up involves solo violin, an accordion section, a reed section (clarinet and saxophones) and a rhythm section (piano, double bass, and drums). The melody of the A-section is basically triadic, consisting of the tones of the harmonic minor scale. Bars 1 and 3 of the melody are in the habanera rhythm, while bars 5–6 follow the milonga pattern. The harmonic vocabulary includes triads (i, iv), the dominant seventh (V7) and secondary dominants (V7/iv, V7/III); there are also appoggiatura ninths on iv and V7. The accompanying rhythm is mostly steady *marcato*, with the first three beats played staccato and the last one as an accentuated full-value quarter note. The milonga rhythm is used in the accompaniment of the penultimate bars of each eight-bar section but also in bars 5–6 of the A section where the milonga rhythm is heard in the melody as well. (Example 2.)

Luo sai - rai - den \_\_\_\_\_ käy si-sar hen-to val - koi - nen, \_\_\_\_\_ hän hy-my-ä-vän

kat-seen - sa luo - pi, loh - tu - a tuo - pi ain.

Example 2. *Valkea sisar* (music and lyrics by Martti Jäppilä): section A. Sources: Malmstén (1999); Kari & Airinen (2001).

The “white sister” (a nurse) is presented as a heroine of everyday life, as can be seen from the lyrics to the first A-section and the B-section (translation by author):

A1: To the sick ones / Goes the sister slender, white  
Giving her smiling glance / Always bringing comfort.  
B: Even though joyfully / She moves as she walks  
There are also sorrows / Although they don't show.

In general, the Finnish tango is said to be a homage to the archetypal Finnish woman who also represents mother earth to the men of the time (Kukkonen 1996: 150, 152). This particular tango can also be seen as homage to the vocation of nurses – practically an exclusively female profession at the time. In its original context, it was a blue-collar man's homage to pink-collar women, sung in Finnish by a classically trained Swedish-speaking white-collar male singer.

## The emergence of the Finnish tango

The Finnish tango is said to have got its “soul” during the Second World War. This “soul” is difficult to define exactly, but it can be considered a combination of fatalism, melancholy and wistfulness – features associated with the Finnish “national character” in general but having particular overtones during the war-time.

For Finland, the Second World War meant three separate wars: the two Russo-Finnish Wars (the Winter War from November 1939 to February 1940; the Continuation War from June 1941 to July 1944) and the Finnish-German Lapland War from September 1944 to April 1945. The “soul” of the Finnish tango appears to be a close relative of the “Spirit of the Winter War” on which successful defensive war strategies were (and still are) often thought to have been based. Finnish historian Timo Soikkanen (1999: 235) explores this phenomenon as follows (translation by author):

By “the Spirit of the Winter War” one means the unanimity and noncompliance by which Finns defended themselves. This quickly became a part of the defensive war. “The Spirit of the Winter War” emerged spontaneously – no propaganda was needed. Neither was any exploration or definition of the objectives of the war needed, as it is often the case as far as wars are concerned. Everything was clear from the very beginning.

New research on Finnish war history has suggested that, even though the perceived “oneness was a real, albeit brief phenomenon” (Kivimäki & Tepora 2009: 295), it was not as all-inclusive as implied, for example in the above quotation from Soikkanen, and “should not be idealized too far” (Kivimäki & Tepora 2012: 260–261). In any case, representing “the unmaking of the Civil War” at the time (Kivimäki & Tepora 2009: 295), the Winter War “can, in this regard, be treated almost as a symbolic gift to the nation” (Kivimäki & Tepora 2012: 244).

The Winter War was followed by 15 months of uneasy peace. In June 1941, immediately after Hitler’s Germany had invaded the Soviet Union, Finland was, once again, at war. During a short period lasting from June to September 1941, the Finnish Army conquered back the regions it had lost in the Winter War and forced its way even further into Russian Karelia. These front lines were kept until a massive attack by the Soviet Army in early summer of 1944. By September, Finland was forced to withdraw and cede once again the areas that were lost in the Winter War. One condition for peace was that the Finnish army should drive German troops out of Lapland.

The musical and lyrical foundation for wartime tango had already been laid during the 1930s. New features were now incorporated within this base. A rising minor sixth at the beginning of the melody became now an “arch-cliché” of the Finnish tango, while the Finnish natural environment, the course of seasons in particular, became a basic metaphor for human moods (Gronow 2009: 5). The former was borrowed from Russian romance, the waltz and the march (Jalkanen & Kurkela 2003: 412, 93–97); the latter from Finnish 19th century folk song (Gronow 2009: 5; Kukkonen 1996: 134–141). In addition, the “soul” of the Finnish tango owes much to the wartime tangos composed by Toivo Kärki during the static trench war phase on the battlefield and lyrics written by Kerttu Mustonen at the home front (Niiniluoto 1982: 99–105). What Kärki added to the already existing Finnish wartime tango was the “old” (an Tin Pan Alley–like) verse-chorus form, jazz-

like harmony including sevenths, added sixths and ninths, and lighter arrangements for smaller dance bands (Jalkanen & Kurkela 2003: 412, 421–422). Most of the above-mentioned features are well represented in Kärki & Mustonen's *Siks oon mä suruinen* ("That's Why I'm Sorrowful"), recorded by Olavi Virta in 1944, which is one of the tangos Kärki wrote on the battlefield.

Besides the vocals, the line-up consists of accordion, clarinet, solo violin, string section and rhythm section (piano, bass, and drums). The large-scale form of the performance consists of an instrumental intro (8 bars), vocal verse (12 bars), vocal chorus (a 32-bar AABA) and a repetition of the chorus (AAB played instrumentally, the last A played with vocals too) followed by two closing chords. The opening of the chorus (example 3a) is typical of Kärki's "jazzy" harmonisation: the opening harmony is Cm6 with appoggiatura ninth (D) in the melody. The accompanying rhythm is mostly a steady *marcato*. Variation is achieved for example by arranging the accompanying rhythm of the opening bars of the chorus differently in the introduction, in section A (vocal) and in the opening A of the instrumental repeat of the chorus (example 3b–c). The orchestral repetition of the AABA chorus underlines the wistful mood of the song. The solo parts of the first two A-sections are arranged in a call and response manner: the first halves of each section are played by a sinister clarinet in low register, accompanied by pizzicato strings, while the latter halves are played by the accordion. The entire B-section is played by the entire string section, the first half in a high register, the second in a lower one. The last A section is sung by Olavi Virta. The recording ends with a characteristic Argentine-like *chan-chan* cadence: a strongly accented dominant chord (here G7-9+5) followed by a unaccented tonic chord.

Pirjo Kukkonen (1996: 133) considers *Siks oon mä suruinen* "an archetypal wartime Finnish tango text". The lyrics to the first two A-sections go as follows (translation by author):

A1 That's why I'm sorrowful / As I'm remembering you  
So much went away with you / Which was beautiful.  
A2 That's why I'm sorrowful / As the day of tomorrow  
So different for me / could now be.

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(a)

Siks oon \_\_\_\_\_ mä su-rui - nen, kun sua \_\_\_\_\_ mä muis - te - len: niin

Cm6 Cm Cmadd9 Cm F9 Fm6

5 pal - jon me - ni kans - sas kau - nis - ta pois. \_\_\_\_\_ Siks

Dm7 G7 D7-5 G7-9+5 Fm6 Cm G7-9+5

(b)

Cm6 Cm F9 Fm

(c)

Cm6 Cm F9 Fm

Example 3. *Siks oon mä suruinen* (music by Toivo Kärki, lyrics by Kerttu Mustonen): (a) section A; (b) opening of the introduction; (c) opening of the instrumental interlude. Sources: Virta (1998); Kari & Airinen (2001).

Like the lyrics of many other wartime and post-war tangos, written by Mustonen

and others, *Siks oon mä suruinen* deals touchingly with parting and loss – topics that stroke a common chord in people who had just lost their loved ones in the war. Tellingly, quotations from tango lyrics were incorporated in obituaries. Examples include the lines “The sorrow I was given is beautiful to bear” from *Tuo suru jonka sain* (originally an Italian tango *Un giorno ti diro*) and “So much that was beautiful went away with you” from *Siks oon mä suruinen*, both written by Kerttu Mustonen (Niiniluoto 2016).

In this way, then, the Finnish wartime tango participated in a process in which the “meaningless death” of deceased war heroes was transformed, in the name of the “binding ethos of the Winter War”, into “regenerating sacrifices” (Kivimäki & Tepora 2012: 248); that is, sacrifices made for the collective. At the same time it offered emotional release and consolation for individuals at the moment of uttermost sacrifice. During wartime the Finnish tango became a national musical emblem of security in the sense referred to by Åhlén (1987).

## Post-war tango

After the war, the tango spread all over the country. In the summertime, it was performed in idyllic dance pavilions; in winters, it featured at restaurants but also the club houses of various societies. From the late 1940s through the 1960s, social pair dances were the usual way for young people to become acquainted with the opposite sex and begin courting. According to sociologist Jeja-Pekka Roos (1987: 54), “the usual story” went as follows (translation by author):

He or she has experienced war on the “home front” and remembers the want, its impact on family life and possible travel [from the lost Karelia] as an evacuee. Typically, he or she grew up in the countryside and moved to the city in the 1950s after acquiring some kind of vocational training. In the city he or she met someone similar at a dance, someone [who also was] from the countryside, fell in love and formed a family, possibly a child already heralding his or her coming.

Maarit Niiniluoto (2004: 68) has described the experience of a dance night at a dance pavilion as follows (translation by author):

In the dance pavilions, people felt moments of expectancy, wish, and disappointment. According to the rituals, men and women placed themselves at opposite sides of the dance floor. Two dances at a time told and still tell if the steps of two Finns also fit together on the parquets of life. In the pavilions, people were drunk with happiness in the light summer night, when one could, after long years of separation, clasp the other to one's breast and dream about a common future – eyes wide open.

Tango was the most intimate and intense of the Finnish social dances. It was danced in close contact with one's partner, using the steps of the slow foxtrot rather than those of the Argentinean or ballroom tango. Toivo Kärki continued to be the foremost Finnish tango composer but now Reino Helismaa took the place of Kerttu Mustonen as his primary lyricist, yet following in her footsteps (Jalkanen & Kurkela 2003: 419). Kärki and Helismaa also wrote tangos for numerous movies, mostly taking place in rural contexts. There was no remarkable change in the style except that the period of experimenting with more varied accompanying rhythms, particularly the beguine, begun in the mid-1940s, was over by the mid-1950s (Koivusalo 1994: 34). Henry Theel was the most popular tango singer of the 1940s, while Olavi Virta took the lead in the 1950s and nowadays is considered the undisputed Finnish "Tango King" of all times.

The end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s represented a crucial period of negotiating what Finnishness is or should be. According to Peltonen (2000: 277), it was during this period that the modern national self-image became established. On the one hand, Finland sought both internal and external reconciliation after the war – internally by eventually attempting to integrate the communists into society through toleration and cooperation; externally by re-establishing relations with the Soviet Union (Alapuro 2004: 95). On the other hand, Finland sought new ways of opening again windows to Europe and beyond. Both Gronow (1994: 43) and Peltonen (2000: 277) consider 1952 to be a turning point in this respect.

As Gronow (1994: 43) notes, this outward looking attitude was also apparent in the record sales charts. The number of European and American hits increased, and usually these hits were followed by respective Finnish-language cover versions (Nyman 2005: 87–99). In fact, the best sold "Finnish" tangos of the 1950s



were Olavi Virta's Finnish-language covers of international tangos *La cumparsita* (together with Metro-Tytöt), *El choclo* (*Tulisuudelma*) and *Avant de mourir* (*Ennen kuolemaa*) – all from the year 1953 and all selling 25,000–30,000 copies (IFPI Finland 2016). In the mid-1950s, Scandia Records, founded in 1953, broke through with the so-called *jazz-iskelmä*, or jazz pop hit tune, which featured arrangements of minor-key Russian, Romany or Jewish songs for young female vocalists accompanied by a studio band consisting of top Finnish jazz musicians.

All of this led to a turn in the popularity of the tango, which began to be considered old-fashioned, rural and parochial. 1958 was the first year since 1952 when no Finnish tango recording entered the TOP 10 of the singles charts (see Nyman 2005: 92–97). Reasons for the turn can be attributed at least partly to the following three factors (cf. Peterson 1972, quoted in Kamin 1978: 294; see also Holt 2007: 59–60): exhaustion of style (little stylistic renewal), the social ferment of the time (a more outward-looking view) and the breakdown of oligopolistic control of the music industry (the breakthrough of Scandia), all of which, in this case, worked in favour of the *jazz-iskelmä*.

## The great tango boom of the sixties

The 1960s tango boom emerged at the threshold of the arrival of global youth culture in Finland. The third global wave of popular music, rock 'n' roll – or, since the 1960s, simply rock – (Gronow 1996: 230; Toynbee 2003: 150) did not concern Finland so much in the 1950s, regardless of Bill Haley's chart success with *Rock Around the Clock* (number 3 in 1956) and Paul Anka's three TOP 10 hits (*You Are My Destiny*, *Jambalaya*, *Lonely Boy*) in 1958–1959 (Nyman 2005: 97–99). The instrumental rock played by bands like The Shadows, The Ventures and The Spotnicks inspired teenagers to form dozens of similar bands with an identical line-up: lead guitar, rhythm guitar, bass guitar and drums. And yet it was really with the "British Invasion", that global youth culture finally arrived in Finland.

The emerging tango boom was already foreshadowed by *Unhoita menneet* (Forget the Bygones), a number one tango in the late 1959 performed by Tuula-Anneli Rantanen. *Tulenliekki* (Flame of Fire) by Eila Pienimäki, number one in

1961, and *Musta ruusu* (Black Rose) by Veikko Tuomi, number two in 1962, further paved the way for the success of *Satumaa* ("Fairyland"), which topped the Finnish singles charts for several weeks in early 1963. (Nyman 2005: 99, 107–110.) *Satumaa* was written by Unto Mononen and performed by Reijo Taipale, both newcomers on the Finnish tango scene. Even though Toivo Kärki continued writing successful tangos in the 1960s, it was Mononen who became the key composer of the tango boom. His tangos were harmonically simpler than those of Kärki and made use of the "new" alternating verse-chorus form which Kärki also began to prefer in the 1960s. The individuality of Mononen's tangos was based, according to Jalkanen and Kurkela (2003: 478), mainly on catchy melodies and virtuosic accordion intros and interludes. Unlike Kärki, however, Mononen wrote the lyrics himself as well.

*Satumaa* is about desperate longing for an unattainable paradise, and is often called the "National Tango of Finland". The large-scale form of the performance consists of a 4-bar intro (accordion), verse 1 (vocals, 8+8 bars), chorus (vocals, 8+8 bars), interlude (accordion, 8 bars; strings 8 bars), verse 2 (vocal), chorus (vocal) and a 4-bar coda (accordion). In addition to the vocals, the line-up consists of accordion, clarinet, string section and rhythm section (piano, bass, and drums). The arrangement is remarkably traditional. Harmonically, *Satumaa* centres almost entirely on the tonic, dominant (V7), and subdominant chords, with the exception of tonicisation on III at the end of the first verse and a few secondary dominants (V7/IV, V7/III, #vii7/V7) here and there. A counter-melody played by the violin is heard between the vocal melody and the rhythm section; in bar 4 it is supplemented by an accordion flourish. Three different accompanying rhythms are used in the first half of the verse: *marcato* with a full-value quarter note on the fourth beat (bars 1-2), steady *marcato* (bar 3) and milonga (bar 4). (Example 4a.) The introduction (example 4b) and interlude (example 4c) feature rapid and crispy Argentine-inspired dactyl + trochee motives played by the accordion and set against the steady march-like *marcato* accompaniment. In the interlude their flow is repeatedly interrupted by "fiery" stabs of Spanish-influenced VI-V chords.

*Satumaa* is also considered a paradigmatic example of Finnish tango lyrics (Kukkonen 1996: 193). The lyrics to the chorus go as follows (English lyrics by Helena Kotkanen, quoted in Kukkonen 1996: 193):

Chorus Oh, if only I could find and reach that happy land,  
 Unlike a bird that flies away I'd never leave that sand.  
 But without wings I cannot fly, I am prisoner of the ground  
 And only through my heart and dreams to the Happy Land I'm bound.

To summarise, *Satumaa* is said to comprehend “the whole range of the Finnish mentality; longing, melancholy, nostalgia, dreams, sorrow and sadness described through nature” (Kukkonen 1996: 193). In regard to both music and lyrics, it looks nostalgically back on better times and better places.

(a)

Musical score for section (a) of 'Satumaa'. It features a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics, a piano accompaniment in bass clef, and a guitar part in treble clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "Aa - van me - ren tuol - la puo - len jos - sa - kin on maa,". The guitar part consists of a series of chords: Em, Am, Em, E7, and Am.

(b)

Musical score for section (b) of 'Satumaa', the introduction. It features a piano accompaniment in bass clef and a guitar part in treble clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The guitar part consists of a series of chords: Am, Em, B7, and Em B7 Em.

(c)

Musical score for section (c) of 'Satumaa', the opening of the instrumental interlude. It features a piano accompaniment in bass clef and a guitar part in treble clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The guitar part consists of a series of chords: Em, B7, C B, B7, and Em C B Em.

Example 4. *Satumaa* (music and lyrics by Unto Mononen): (a) section A; (b) introduction; (c) opening of the instrumental interlude. Sources: Taipale (2000); Kari & Airinen (2001).

In 1964, the Finnish singles charts were dominated by *iskelmä* and rock, Finnish tangos and the Beatles' hits in particular (Lassila 1990, 35). For a couple of years, the country was divided almost geographically into "Beatle-Finland" (southern regions) and "Tango-Finland" (central and northern regions). The imaginary border of this division was called the "Tango Line" in the parlance of jazz, pop or rock musicians living in Southern Finland, and accepting gigs outside of this region. The "Tango Line" is said to be drawn across Finland from Southern Ostrobothnia to Northern Kymenlaakso, and bands playing gigs in "Tango-Finland" had to include at least 30 tangos in their repertoire. (Gronow (1995: 28.)

The 1960s tango boom has been considered a reaction against the global wave of rock and a symptom of changes in both popular tastes and the Finnish recording industry in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Jalkanen & Kurkela 2003: 473–482; Gronow 2004: 26–27). In 1961, the sales of foreign records exceeded for the first time the sales of Finnish ones (Nyman 2005: 104). In addition, the tango boom might, at least partly, be considered a reaction against the almost all-female jazz-*iskelmä*. As Jalkanen and Kurkela (2003: 473–475) have pointed out, the new young tango singers were quite exclusively male, and the arrival of young male tango singers such as Reijo Taipale and Eino Grön certainly at least fuelled the boom. Towards the mid-1950s, the influence of the "Great Migration" from the countryside to Southern Finland and to Sweden also became one explanatory factor behind the tango boom.

## Decline

By the end of the 1960s, the tango had lost the battle. Dance pavilions began to be deserted. Tango recordings ceased to enter the charts. The suicide of Unto Mononen in 1968 left the scene without any specialised tango composer. Neither were there new singers specialising in tango. Towards the late 1960s, "traditional" dance bands had begun to include electric instruments in their line-ups. Since the mid-1960s, there had already been subtle interaction between the tango and other genres, resulting in "steel-wire" tangos (twangy guitar versions of tangos played by instrumental rock bands), tango parodies, and "tangos in disguise" (usually slow foxtrots or rock ballads).

New tangos were still written, performed and recorded. It is curious to note that arguably the most remarkable new Finnish tangos were now composed by Kaj Chydenius, classically trained composer who was one of the key figures of the political song movement of the new left of the late 1960s and the early 1970s. *Nuoruustango* (“The Youth Tango”) is a case in point. The lyrics of this tango tell quite outspokenly of the erotic wishes of a young girl at the threshold of her adulthood (Kaipainen 2016). The first stanza goes as follows (translation by Kukkonen 1996: 224):

My warmth, my love I will give you,  
Beautiful is my youth.  
I have nothing else to give you  
But this youth of mine.

Originally, *Nuoruustango* was used as a parody, first in a theatrical production called *Tangokuningas* (*The Tango King*, 1970), which was about the rise and fall of a Finnish tango singer (Chydenius 2009: 258), and then in Peter von Bagh’s film *Kreivi* (“The Duke”, 1971), which tells the story of the then famous womanizer and swindler Pertti “Duke” Lindgren. In this context, the erotic fantasies of a teenage girl turn into a parody playing with gender stereotypes.

The line-up used in the recording is traditional, involving vocals (Kiti Neuvonen), accordion, trumpet, clarinet and rhythm section (piano, bass, and drums). The large-scale form of the performance consists of an accordion intro (4 bars), the first vocal stanza (32 bars), the melody of the last 16 bars of the stanza played by trumpet (32 bars), the second vocal stanza (32 bars) and a brief coda. The melody of the 32-bar stanza is basically through-composed (as in a Schubertian lied), even though the symmetrical 8-bar structure (the first and third sections end on V, the second and the third section on vi) makes it sound like a popular song. As for tonal aspects, *Nuoruustango* clearly borrows several features from 1960s rock – wavering between a major and minor key, Beatles-esque (or doo wop-like) chord changes favouring minor chords (iii, vi, ii) in a major tonal setting, and a pentatonic opening line in the melody (example 5a). At the same time, the opening line sounds like a slightly re-harmonized melodic variation of that of the Finnish classical composer Oskar Merikanto’s through-composed choir song *Onnelliset* (*The Happy Ones*, ca. 1900), now arranged in 4/4 meter with markedly prolonged

first notes of each three-note figure (example 5b). The prominently stretched first syllables of each three- or two-syllable word can be seen as parodic exaggeration, particularly as Neuvonen strongly articulates the consonants ‘m’ and ‘n’ in the first three words. As far as instrumental parts are concerned, the markedly thudding march-like *marcato* rhythm with an eighth-note backbeat – a characteristic feature of the Finnish tango since the 1940s (Koivusalo 1994: 34) and called “a limping rhythmic cliché” of German origin by Åhlén (1987: 99) –, together with the “military” snare drum rolls at the end of each section, is perhaps the clearest sign of parody. In any case, *Nuoruustango* has belonged to the standard Finnish tango repertoire ever since.

(a)

Läm - pö-ni, lem - pe-ni an - nan,

5 kau - nis on nuo - ruu-u - tein.

Jo val - ke - nee kau - kai - nen ran - ta ja koil - li - sest au - rin - ko nou - see

Bb Eb Bb Gm Cm F  
[ Bb Eb F Bb Gm Ebmaj7 C F ]

Example 5. *Nuoruustango* (music by Kaj Chydenius, lyrics by Anu Kaipainen): (a) section A; (b) opening of *Onnelliset* by Oskar Merikanto. For comparison, common notes with *Nuoruustango* are shown in 5b (*Onnelliset*) by asterisks, while the chord progression of *Nuoruustango* is displayed within square brackets. Sources: Neuvonen (2004); Kari & Airinen (2001); Merikanto (n.d. [ca. 1900]).

From the mid-1970s to the late 1980s, the Finnish popular music scene was dominated by an indigenous rock style called Suomi-rock (“Finnish rock”). *Hump-pa* (oom-pah, a reincarnation of the 1930s “accordion jazz”) and the so-called FINNHITS-*iskelmä*, consisting largely of Finnish-language covers of international hits, which were the tango’s closest rivals. As far as record sales are concerned, 1980 was the last really good year for Finnish *iskelmä* (Lassila 1990: 53). The tango had already disappeared from the charts in the early 1970s. Peter von Bagh and Ilpo Hakasalo (1986) wrote in the preface of their *Iskelmän kultainen kirja* (“The Golden Book of the *Iskelmä*”), that

A cruel question is about to be asked: if *iskelmä* lacks the capacity to renew itself in these times, [the capacity] to be original in the sense rock is able to be, who cares about *iskelmä*? Maybe it has done its job? In other words, our homage is published during critical times – while *iskelmä* has penetrated our daily life in the jungle of modern communication more tenaciously than ever before, it, as such, is at the same time more seriously questioned as a thing than ever during its various stages. We have not collected this assemblage of facts and moods as an epitaph. We believe that Finnish *iskelmä* has, even in quite a traditional sense, still a long lifetime ahead. (Translation by author)

A year later, Pekka Gronow considered the launching of the Seinäjoki Tango Festival an indication of a possible revitalisation in the Finnish tango. He ended his article with the prophetic statement: “So perhaps a tango revival is just around the corner” (Gronow 1987: 31). As we know today, this prophecy turned out to be true and, once again, the tango was playing a crucial role in the cultural life of Finland.

## Revival

The revival of the Finnish tango took place in a context where Madonna, Michael Jackson and MTV dominated the global music market and *Suomi-rock* (Finnish rock) the Finnish popular music scene. In addition, a new wave of global popular music, consisting of a “postmodern” array of genres as varied as hip hop,

reggae, electronic dance music, world music and Asian pop, was already on its way (Toynbee 2002: 158–159). Yet it is safe to say that the Seinäjoki Tango Festival, launched in 1985, was mostly responsible for the revival. During the last three decades, the festival has become one of the biggest in Finland with some 100 000 visitors yearly and several hundred thousand spectators of live broadcasts of the Tango Singing Contest.

In the Tango Singing Contest, which is the main event of the festival, the singers are accompanied by a large tango orchestra. The vocal style is often closer to American popular song (crooning, torch singing) than that of traditional Finnish tango and the visual appearance (hair-do, dressing, body language) of the performers is as important as the vocal performance itself (Heinonen 2003). In spite of the success of the festival and the most popular Tango Royals (Arja Koriseva, Tango Queen in 1989; Jari Sillanpää, Tango King in 1995), tango records have failed to enter the charts. Moreover, even though the Seinäjoki Tango Composition and Lyrics Contest, has produced dozens of new tangos, only a few of them have earned their place in the standard repertoire of Finnish dance music. *Yön kuningatar* ("The Queen of the Night"), composed by Mika Toivanen and the lyrics by Jorma Toiviainen, is one of them.

The large-scale form of the recorded performance by Eija Kantola and the Seinäjoki Orchestra of *Yön kuningatar* follows a pattern familiar from numerous post-1960s pop and rock songs: intro, verse 1 (8+8 bars), pre-chorus 1 (8 bars), chorus (8+8 bars), verse 2, pre-chorus 2, chorus and an instrumental coda. To be sure, in most respects *Yön kuningatar* is certainly closer to Toivo Kärki's tangos than anything found in the 1990s pop or rock. The harmonic vocabulary is rich, again as in many Kärki's tangos, consisting of triads (i, bII, VI, IV), sevenths (ii7/3, V7, V7+5, V7/V7), and ninths (V7-9, bII9, i with an added 9). The melody is embellished with several appoggiaturas, markedly on i, iv, and bII. The Neapolitan 2nd degree (bII), sounded markedly in the second bar of the verse and in the opening of the pre-chorus (here as bII9), implies, together with the melody, a Phrygian modality. The verse is accompanied by a syncopated variation of the 3-3-2 rhythm, one of the basic Argentine tango rhythms and one particularly favoured by Astor Piazzolla (example 6a). After the rhythmically more varied pre-chorus, the chorus features a beguine-like rhythm, again characteristic of Toivo Kärki's 1940s tangos (example 6b).



(a)

Jos tuu - len tun - net sä jäi - sen sy - dä - meen hii - pi - vän

Gm Ab Cm6 D7 Gm

(b)

Yön ku - nin - ga - tar, yön ku - nin - ga - tar, kun puh - ke - aa kuk - kaan ker - ran, yön

Gm Cm D7 Gm

Example 6. *Yön kuningatar* (music by Mika Toivanen, lyrics by Jorma Toiviainen): (a) opening of the verse; (b) opening of the chorus. Sources: Kantola (2001); Kari & Airinen (2001).

Lyricaly, *Yön kuningatar* is a rare example in Finnish tango of the lyrical subject, the “I” of the lyrics singing about female desire, *Kotkan ruusu* (Helvi Mäkinen & Leo Anttila: *The Rose of Kotka*, 1941/1969) and *Nuoruustango* (*The Youth Tango*, discussed in the previous section) being two notable exceptions. In the chorus the protagonist, paradoxically, speaks of herself in the third person:

The Queen of the Night, the Queen of the Night  
 Is only blooming for a moment,  
 The Queen of the Night, the Queen of the Night,  
 Be sure to pick it up.

Literally, the title refers to the cactus species known as queen of the night (*Selenicereus grandiflorus*), which only blossoms one night a year (or several years) – just to wither away in hours. Metaphorically, *Yön kuningatar* is a new link in the chain of Finnish tango lyrics where different flowers stand, according to conventional gender stereotypes, for the different virtues of the female protagonists.

The singer Eija Kantola appropriately sings the song in a genuine *femme fatale* style. The lavish arrangement, with a brilliant piano part and extra percussion, incorporates elements from both Piazzolla-like *tango nuevo* and contemporary international concert tango. Yet the Seinäjoki “Pops” orchestra somehow manages to sound a little like the house orchestras used in the Eurovision Song Contest in the 1980s and early 1990s. In sum, *Yön kuningatar* sounds like an updated version of the Toivo Kärki’s tangos.

If the “soul” of the Finnish tango emerged during the wartime, reflecting wartime and post-war feelings, the new tango may be assumed to have gained its spirit at least partly from the expected consequences of undoing the status quo that emerged after the war. Landmarks include the end of President Urho Kekkonen’s era (from 1956 to 1981), the collapse of the Eastern Block (1989–1991) and the negotiations on Finland’s membership of the European Union (Finland finally joined in 1995). The deep economic depression of the early 1990s must be added as a fourth factor having impact on the sensibilities of 1900s *fin de siècle*. All of this, together with the seemingly ever-increasing pace of global change, led to debates where common national myths were called into question in public discussion. One of these was the aforementioned “Spirit of the Winter War”. In 1999, editor-in-chief Jaakko Lyytinen wrote in *Ylioppilaslehti* (‘The Student’s Magazine’; translated by author, original italics):

Everybody knows what politicians or ice hockey commentators appeal to when they only mention the magic words: *the spirit of the winter war*. It is national unity, integrity, and *readiness to sacrifice* what is in need. With these magic words[, an ice hockey player] is demanded to throw himself in the way of the puck as well as the trade union [is demanded] to cancel the claims for a salary increase. The essential thing is that everybody understands what is appealed to. It is the nation’s collective historical identity that is utilised.

Given the background that both the “Spirit of the Winter War” and the “soul” of the Finnish tango became strong articulations of a Finnish identity during the wartime, one is tempted to assume that the use of a rhetoric based on the “Spirit of the Winter War” at the time that there is a tango revival going on is no coincidence. As if to confirm this, Pekka Gronow (1995: 28) has made a passing note

that the dividing line between the “yes” and “no” votes in the referendum on Finland’s membership of the European Union in 1994 coincides roughly with the mythic “Tango Line” of the 1960s. For his part, Matti Peltonen (2000: 280), has interpreted the geographical division of the “yes” and “no” votes as standing for the juxtaposition of the inward looking “Forest-Finland” on the one hand, and the outward-looking “Euro-Finland” on the other.

## Tango today

Today tango in Finland is cultivated in various ways. Between and beyond the tango played and danced at the Seinäjoki Tango Street on the one hand, and that performed on the stage of the Helsinki Music Centre on the other, there exists a multiplicity of forms and values of tango in contemporary Finland (Kärjä 2012: 18–20; Kärjä & Åberg 2012: 218). Classically trained composers, ensembles and singers representing different generic, aesthetic and stylistic frameworks, have composed and/or performed tangos (Padilla 2014: 342–344). Contemporary folk musicians have approached the tango not only by using traditional Finnish folk instruments like the five-string *kantele* (Padilla 2009: 32) but also in a way comparable to culturally sensitive performances of other Latin genres such as the Spanish flamenco, Portuguese fado or Brazilian capoeira. Last but not least, tango is still an important popular music genre both in its traditional Finnish form and in terms of its recent flirtations with rock, jazz and hip hop.

The influence of the Argentine *tango nuevo* has been apparent since the mid-1980s and has become the prevailing inspiration during the 2000s (Padilla 2014: 346–347). This is audible, for example, in the Finnish female rap-artist Mariska’s *Sua kaipaam* (lyrics by Mariska, composition by Mariska and Rauli Eskolin), which won the Seinäjoki Tango Composition and Lyrics Contest in 2010. *Sua kaipaam* is a tango hybrid combining features from many different traditions that was in the air in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The large-scale form of the recorded performance consists of an intro (8+8 bars), sections A (8+8 bars), B (8+8 bars) and C (7 bars), an interlude (8 bars) based on the intro and the repetition of the entire ABC (A now with new lyrics). The first half of the A-section is in F# Phrygian, while the second closes in B mi-

nor. Section B, in turn, is in A major, the first half closing in E major and the second half in F# major, thus anticipating the B minor of section C. This structure resembles the contemporary verse-chorus form with an interpolated pre-chorus but is perhaps better understood as consisting of a verse (A) and two different choruses (B and C). Being a tango, it can also be interpreted in terms of the rounded AB trio form of the *guardia vieja* era, except that all sections instead of merely A are repeated after the instrumental interlude.

The reckless despair of the drunken woman is perfectly captured both in Mariska's grainy vocal performance and in the arrangement, which is heavily influenced by the Piazzolla-like *tango nuevo*. The opening figure of the introduction, also acting as a counter-melody in the second half of section A in the repetition, resembles that of Piazzolla's *Verano porteño* (example 7a–b). The heart-rending counter-melody played by the violin in bars 3–5 adds "Oriental" flavour to the Phrygian modality, meandering an octave downwards through the notes of the Arabic *maqam Hijaz*. The accompaniment combines common tango rhythms with rhythmic patterns not so obviously associated with tango: *marcato* with an eighth-note backbeat (bar 1), *marcato* pure and simple (bars 2–3), two half-notes (bar 4), dactyl-trochee (bars 5–6) and a Spanish-sounding triplet figure followed by a *chan-cha*-like ending (now a Phrygian VI–V instead of the standard V7–i). (Example 7c.)

The title *Sua kaipa*an ("I Miss You") stems from basic Finnish tango vocabulary but the topic is treated differently in comparison to traditional Finnish tangos. The lyrics are about a drunken woman who tries to forget her lost loved one at a local tavern. The first verse goes as follows:

I miss you,  
that's why I'm staggering drunken  
in the daytime at a local tavern,  
trying to forget.

Like in *Kotkan ruusu*, referred to in the previous section, love and place – in both cases a tavern – are here described by a woman. But while in *Kotkan ruusu*, written in 1941, the setting was considered openly "sinful" at the time (Kukkonen 1996: 221), Mariska's protagonist behaves in a manner quite common and even acceptable for a 21<sup>st</sup> century young Finnish urban woman who has just been jilted.

(a) *Sua kaipaam* (b) *Verano porteño*

(c)

Sua kai - paan, sen vuok-si hei-lun hu - ma - las - sa päi-väl - lä lä - hi-kup-pi -

violin

las - sa y - rit - tä - en - u - noh - taa.

5

5

5

Em C#7 F# F# A G F# G F#

Example 7. *Sua kaipaam* (music by Mariska & Rauli Eskolin, lyrics by Mariska): (a) opening of the introduction; (b) opening of Astor Piazzolla's *Verano porteño*; (c) section A. Sources: Mariska & Pahat Sudet (2010); Piazzolla (2016).

## Conclusion

The previous analysis suggests that all three hypothetical consequences of globalisation mentioned by Stuart Hall (2001) have indeed become reality, with different emphases at different times, during the more-than-centennial history of the tango in Finland. In its arrival, the tango in itself encountered resistance as being part of a global wave of African-American social dances (e.g., tango, foxtrot, one step). The domestication of tango in Finland in the 1930s and the emergence of a distinctive Finnish tango style during wartime involved considerable hybridisation of the genre in the context of the remarkably closed, territorial and inward looking atmosphere of the time. During wartime the tango became a national musical emblem of security in the sense referred to by Åhlén (1987), a function that also prevailed during the recovery from the war. Between the late 1960s and mid-1980s, the Finnish tango was in a state of eroding, largely as a consequence of the domination of both global and national rock culture. The tango booms of the 1960s and 1990s, in turn, were symptomatic of a strengthening of national and regional identities by resistance to the consequences of the global waves of popular music of the mid-1950s and mid-1980s, respectively. The present diversification of the tango in Finland at least partly reflects the increasing outward looking atmosphere of Finland in the era of EU membership.

The development of the Finnish tango from 1913 to the mid-1950s is, then, framed by two global waves of popular music: on the one hand the breakthrough of African-American social dances and Tin Pan Alley-style popular song in the 1910s, and the breakthrough of rock music and global youth culture in the mid-1950s on the other. While the global breakthrough of the tango was part of the former, the latter heralded its global decline. From the hybridisation point of view, the stylistic development from the arrival of the dance in 1913 to the emergence of the Finnish tango by the mid-1940s can be seen as a process of cumulative hybridisation where new forms and practices borrowed from different musical and cultural traditions were, during each new phase, incorporated into the already hybrid mix of the previous one. During the post-war period, the pace of hybridisation slowed down and the straightforwardly cumulative process came to an end.

The development from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s was, again, framed by two global waves of popular music: the breakthrough of rock music and global youth culture in the mid-1950s on the one hand, and the global spread of world music, hip hop, reggae and Asian pop since the mid-1980s on the other. The Finnish tango booms (1960s, 1990s) appear to have taken place slightly after a new global wave of popular music broke through at a time when there was also a debate going on concerning what Finnishness is or should be. With respect to hybridisation, the revivals (1960s, mid-1980s to 2000) tended to prefer the tango styles of earlier decades and, therefore, were not so willing to create new hybrids forms. Conversely, the more sedate periods (from late 1960s to mid-1980s, from 2000 to present) appear to be more “progressive” and/or represented a “Fine Art” approach, resulting in new hybrid forms.

To be sure, the picture I have drawn here underlines the canonised phases and the Finnishness of the Finnish tango (cf. Kärjä & Åberg 2012: 218). Competing practices have certainly existed and do still exist. In any case, the history of the Finnish tango shows, as Gronow (1996: 234) has noted, “how *Finnishness* is constantly reinvented and recreated” (original italics). In the mid-2010s, Finland, like many other EU member states, is going through a new phase of geopolitical uncertainty and economic depression – now complicated by an additional immigration crisis. It is in precisely this kind of politically and culturally restless *Zeitgeist* where the earlier tango booms emerged. While there are good reasons to believe that the tango will not cease to exist neither in Finland nor elsewhere in the near future it remains to be seen whether there will be yet another tango boom Finland.

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