

Jazzy tunes and dreamy images in the cold war era

Launching Finnish jazziskelmä on-screen

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Modern jazz in cold war Finland

In the late 1950s jazz still swang the western world. Although younger audiences turned their ears to new genres such as rock 'n' roll, some audiences continued supporting modern jazz and its various manifestations. Often jazz was combined with other types of popular and dance music. Artists producing and performing these combinations remained loyal to some jazz elements (e.g. swing rhythm and jazz harmony) but abandoned others (e.g. challenging melodies and instrumental solos) for a simpler and lighter musical output. Such stylistic adaptation resulted in jazz-influenced popular music that was often more appealing and approachable to larger audiences than the original, progressive jazz styles (e.g. bebop and hard bop).

An original mixture of modern jazz, popular and dance music elements occurred in Finland in the late 1950s and early 1960s: *jazziskelmä*. This fresh musical expression was successful not only in record sales but also in giving a new image to the local popular music publicity. The image was predominantly jazzy and female. The stars associated with jazziskelmä were almost exclusively young female vocalists, and they frequently featured in audio-visual texts such as movies, musical entertainment television shows and advertising films. In this article, we discuss jazziskelmä and how it was launched and celebrated on the silver screen and on television. We focus on audio-visual performances that highlighted the peak of this musical subgenre in the latter half of the 1950s. Our text is based on the work and scholarly discussions that originated in the process of writing an anthology on jazziskelmä in Finnish in 2010–11 (Poutiainen and Kukkonen, 2011).

Some researchers have translated jazziskelmä as 'jazz schlager', but we find this translation problematic (for further discussion, see Poutiainen, 2010). A more precise translation of the word would be the somewhat impractical '(the Finnish) jazz-pop hit song'. In the following, we employ only the original Finnish term jazziskelmä. However, this term is a scholarly construction by researchers and popular music historians; the image of everyday life in Finland with their own work. it was not used by the contemporary musicians or music-industry actors during the heyday of the subgenre.

In the 1950s, that is in the early days of the cold war, many young urban Finns favoured North-American music trends and modern, cool and, especially, West-coast jazz (for definitions, see Gioia, 2011, pp. 252-257; Gridley, 2002; Poutiainen, 2009, p. 11). Jazz was seen as a dynamic alternative to the music of the past. Jazz was also effectively marketed in post-war Europe as an example of a democratic art form, for example via the U.S. State Department jazz tours (Crist, 2009). In Finland, dance musicians played jazz at their gigs for the first hour because of their own passion and ambition, even though the audience seemed uninterested and did not dance (Juva, 2008, p. 58). Rock 'n' roll did not at first gain the attention of the masses in Finland, but only attracted a relatively small urban audience. The young Finnish music consumers did not form a separate market segment before the early 1960s. In the 1950s, however, something that could be defined as a youth music fad already occurred along with the phenomenal success of jazziskelmä. For some years in the late 1950s, jazziskelmä was a trend keenly followed by the young music audience. This era is already relatively well researched and reported (in Finnish), for example in Jalkanen and Kurkela's book on Finnish popular music history (2003).

The heyday of jazziskelmä coincided with a transformational period on the Finnish audio-visual media scene. Halfway through the twentieth century, pop music and audio-visual media were already closely connected in this small country. Since the significance of cinema and television for the commercialisation of music was well understood, these media were employed in marketing artists and recordings. In what follows, we concentrate on performances of jazziskelmä in Finnish films and television content of the period. These performances reflect the reception and appropriation of jazz through jazziskelmä in Finland for purposes originating from the local media scene. We have left out a phenomenon which in itself is worthy of a separate article, namely the use of jazz as a strategic vehicle in the cold war via cultural diplomacy, as in the jazz ambassadors' tours through Europe (see Davenport, 2009; Von Eschen, 2004).¹

In this article we shed light on the process of integrating new cultural influences in the everyday experience and the media landscape. In the case of Finland in the 1950s and 1960s, the process was tightly linked to two matters: new media practices and technologies on one hand, and the geopolitical situation with its consequences and displays within Finnish culture on the other. We undertake a close reading of Finnish cultural texts from the 1950s and 1960s (sound recordings, fictional entertainment films, tele-

1 For further reading on the diverse aspects of jazz that we refer to, see for example Gridley's *Jazz styles* (2002), Crook's *Ready, aim, improvise!* (1999) and Levine's *The jazz theory book* (1995). Representative auditory examples of jazziskelmä can be found, for example, in the following CD collections: Kinnunen's *À la Laila* (2009); Koivunen's *20 suosikkia: suklaasydän* (1997); and Siltala's *Unohtumattomat* (1992). In the Finnish popular music history canon, Kinnunen is frequently referred to as the most talented and accomplished jazziskelmä vocalist (Poutiainen, 2010).

vision programmes and advertising films) with the aim of concluding how and why jazz – more or less in the form of jazziskelmä – was served to the Finnish audience. First, however, we will clarify what we regard as the characteristics of our central concept, jazziskelmä.

Framing the research: approaching jazziskelmä

The main part of the popular music consumed in Finland in the 1950s was *iskelmä*. Iskelmä escapes a narrow definition, but could be described as a post-world-war integration of swing and east-European elements into the Finnish popular music tradition. The main function of iskelmä was, at the time, dancing, and it consisted of styles such as waltz, tango and the Finnish foxtrot (Jalkanen and Kurkela, 2003, p. 409). Iskelmä of the 1950s is well documented and digitally available for example within the extensive *Unohtumattomat* and *20 suosikkia* CD compilation series by Fazer Finnlevy and Warner Music Finland. Today, also comprehensive CD collections are available for the most popular historical iskelmä artists.² While iskelmä reigned in the dance halls and topped the record sales, original contemporary Finnish jazz was released very narrowly. In 1953, however, a new record label, Scandia-Musiikki (henceforth Scandia), aimed to change this. The label was founded by a small group of jazz enthusiasts with an urge to produce and release original Finnish modern jazz records. Unfortunately, such albums hardly sold any copies, and the label struggled financially right from the beginning (Haavisto, 1991, p. 231). After a couple of releases, Scandia was already close to bankruptcy and had to adjust to commercial realities. It decided to adjust its focus more closely to better-selling idioms of popular music. Its fresh combination of iskelmä and jazz soon became a hit product. Scandia is often referred to as the innovator of jazziskelmä (Henriksson, 2004, pp. 193–194; Muikku, 2001, pp. 89–90).

Although jazziskelmä has been recognised as a genre and its representative artists have been identified relatively well in previous studies (see Kurkela and Jalkanen, 2003, pp. 438–461; Henriksson, 2004, pp. 193–204), we push for a more precise, encompassing and academically solid interpretation and description. When attempting to define jazziskelmä, we first familiarised ourselves well with the iskelmä tradition. Next, we carefully studied the popular jazziskelmä performances (by artists such as Laila Kinnunen, Brita Koivunen and Helena Siltala) but soon expanded our research to less well-known recordings and performers. In doing this, we made use of discographer and jazziskelmä special-

2 Representative auditory examples of iskelmä from the 1950s can be found in the following CD collections: Georg Malmstén's *Unohtumattomat 1* (1992) and *Unohtumattomat 2* (1993); Tapio Rautavaara's *Kulkurin taival 1946–1979* (2008); Henry Theel's *Unohtumattomat 1* (1993) and *Unohtumattomat 2* (1994); and Olavi Virta's *Laulaja: kaikki levytykset* (2013).

ist Harri Hirvi's list of approximately 400 well-known and more rare jazziskelmä recordings (Hirvi, 2011). By closely listening to a wide selection of recorded performances (that represented or could represent jazziskelmä) we were able to take an in-depth approach to the dissimilarities between iskelmä and jazziskelmä.

Jazziskelmä is marked by the application of certain modern jazz elements which announce the significant difference from traditional iskelmä. When comparing iskelmä and modern jazz, it is easy to detect certain differences in, for example, harmony, rhythm and instrumentation. Table 1 briefly articulates these differences:

| Iskelmä | Modern jazz and jazziskelmä |
|--|---|
| Triads are frequently applied in the harmony; four-note chords are employed mainly on dominant chords (in cadences). | Four-note chords are more often employed in the harmony, also elsewhere than on dominant chords (and cadences). |
| Syncopation is applied relatively little (e.g. in lead melody or instrumental accompaniment). | Syncopation is applied more frequently (e.g. in lead melody or instrumental accompaniment). |
| Swing phrasing is hardly employed. | Swing phrasing is regularly employed. |
| Accordion and violin are often applied in the instrumentation. | Accordion and violin are rarely applied in the instrumentation. |

Table 1. Some easily detectable differences between iskelmä and jazziskelmä.

In order to explain more carefully what jazziskelmä is, musically, we listened to our extended selection of performances in more detail. When we had internalised the selection, we could conclude that it was exhaustive since it merely complemented and slightly enhanced our earlier views based on the most popular jazziskelmä performances. We then also saw that when formalising an academic description of jazziskelmä, it was practical to keep a focus on the jazz characteristics.

The elements of jazziskelmä

Jazziskelmä was a creative combination of jazz, pop and the Finnish pop song style iskelmä. Due to the diversity of its musical roots, attempting a precise, short definition of the genre is doomed to fail. We find it more practical to identify jazziskelmä as *a musical*

dimension. This means that we list its essential characteristic elements below but do not indicate a precise hierarchy. In this we closely follow Gridley, Haxham and Hoff's (1989) example in designating jazz. Their contribution in defining such an ambiguous musical style as jazz has been widely acknowledged by jazz researchers. From our selection of performances we could derive twelve elements that we see as essential to jazziskelmä:

1. Vocals in Finnish (jazziskelmä songs typically had Finnish lyrics and title).
2. The date of the performance (jazziskelmä appeared in the second half of the 1950s and the early 1960s).
3. Swing rhythm (e.g. frequent employment of swing phrasing and swinging eighth notes).
4. The application of walking bass (i.e. string bass accompaniment typical of swing and modern jazz).
5. The use of brass and wind instruments and horn arrangements typical of the jazz tradition.
6. The application of aspects of modern jazz harmony (e.g. four-note and larger chords, altered chords, chord voicings and chord progressions such as II–V–I).
7. Influences of Latin–American popular music (e.g. bayon, beguine, bossa nova, cha-cha-cha, mambo, rumba and samba rhythms and rhythmical patterns).
8. A female lead vocalist with a jazz background (male vocalists were rare in jazziskelmä).
9. Relatively 'light' vocal interpretation (i.e. soft instead of loud singing, 'innocent', 'cheerful' and 'girlish' expression).
10. Short sections of improvisation in jazz style (longer instrumental solos were relatively rare).
11. The use of a modern expression typical of small jazz groups (e.g. drum beats that emphasise the regular use of ride cymbal, hi-hat and snare drum; the customary use of syncopation and off-beat accentuation on accompanying instruments; dialogical, improvised small alterations and embellishments of background harmony and rhythm by accompanying instruments).
12. Musical structures and repertoire drawn from the jazz tradition (e.g. 'easy-listening' versions of standard jazz repertoire).

Since jazziskelmä escapes a closed, precise definition, we treat it as a continuum, a musical dimension. When listeners wish to determine if a given performance is jazziskelmä or not, they may find the above list of elements helpful.

The audio-visual landscape

Trade circles were small in Finland. Only five companies produced more than two fiction films between 1959 and 1963 (Uusitalo, 1981, p. 346). The number of Finnish record companies of any significance was also five. Three commercial channels (Mainos-TV, Tesvisio, Tamvisio) and one public channel (Suomen Televisio, later Yleisradio, also known as YLE) formed the television scene. Jazz enthusiasts were actively involved on the media and advertising scene and also knew each other personally. In launching and marketing popular music recordings, personal contacts were crucial.

Box office ratings were falling in the late 1950s, after the success of the golden age of the Finnish film industry was eroded by competition from television and several other pastimes. Television sets were rapidly becoming common in Finland. At the time of the first public television broadcast in 1955, there were only about 20 receivers, but the following year the number had risen to 350. In 1958, when television licenses were introduced in Finland, 7757 sets were bought. By the time the public broadcasting company Yleisradio expanded its supply with a second channel in 1965, there were already more than 730000 licences. (Pantti, 1995, pp. 161-163; Uusitalo, 1981.)

These changes in Finland reflected preceding similar trends in the United States: Hollywood film was still going quite strong, in spite of a decline in motion-picture admissions from 1946 to 1960, when television replaced cinema as the most popular form of entertainment. Unlike radio programming, Finnish 'non-educational' television was not subject to demands of educational and cultural standards. Consequently, more than half of the music on Finnish public television was entertainment music. On the commercially funded Tes-TV, the share exceeded 75 %. (Taavitsainen, 2008, pp. 60, 65; Wiio, 2007, p. 410.)

At the turn of the decade, the domestic film industry made an effort to revive the Finns' interest in cinema. One remedy was to increase the amount of entertainment music productions. Music entertainment was nothing new to the Finnish film industry, but the frequency of music making within the films now temporarily became even more frequent. Cinemas screened a surge of *iskelmä* films featuring as many as 20–30 song acts of predominantly pre-recorded hits. The performances resembled television shows or music videos. For record companies, the promotion proved successful, more so than for the film industry (Juva, 2008, p. 60). As shown in Figure 1, the number of film viewers had decreased for some time whereas the record sales were growing steadily. The growth had started before the jazziskelmä films were made, but they may have contributed to its continuation. In the early 1960s the number of television licences was low, but it rose rapidly in the course of the decade. The record industry's media strategy was also extended to popular magazines such as *Ajan Sävel*, *Iskelmä* and *Musiikki-revy* (Juva, 2008, pp. 58–59).

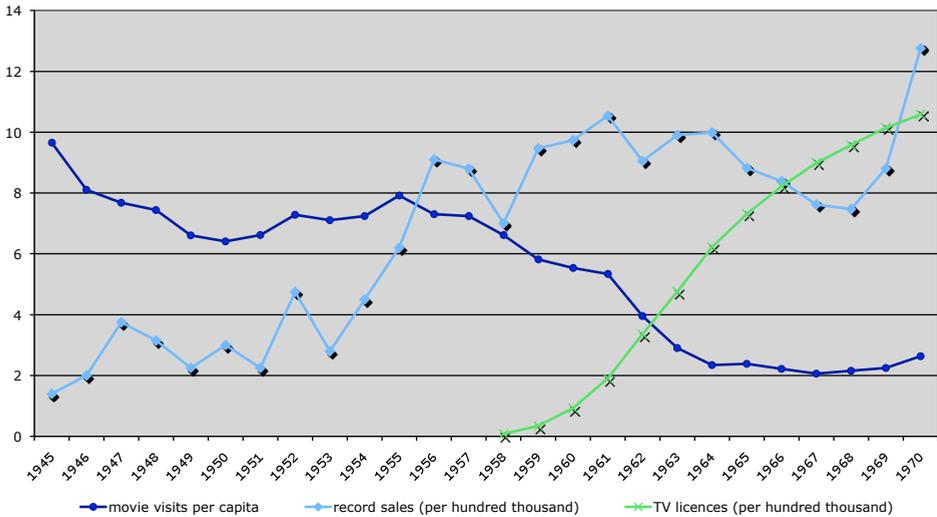


Figure 1. Box office ratings, record sales and the number of television licences in Finland in 1945–70 (Ilmonen, 1996, p. 192; Keto, 1974, p. 64; Muikku, 2001, pp. 69, 100, 133).

Visibility for artists on small and big screens

The term 'iskelmä film' refers to six to eight films made in the late 1950s and early 1960s. With no detailed justification, Kurkela and Jalkanen (2003, pp. 458–459) list six jazziskelmä films: *Suuri sävelparaati* (1959), *Iskelmäketju* (1959), *Iskelmäkaruselli pyörillä* (1960), *Tähtisumua* (1961), *Toivelauluja* (1961), and *Lauantaileikit* (1963). Juva (1995, pp. 163–164) and Gronow (1991) add *Topralli* (1966) to the list, whereas Pantti (1998, pp. 112–113) and Uusitalo (1981, p. 122) list one more, *Nuoruus vauhdissa* (1961), making the total number of films eight. In our examination of jazziskelmä on the screen, we chose to analyse only the six films that were made before 1963. This particular year has been employed as a demarcation, and it is often referred to as the turning point of an era in Finnish popular music history. At that time, the split between iskelmä and the new youth music was manifested in separate audiences. Until 1963, the new influences had been presented side by side with other popular music styles. Now they became more distinct, with genres such as instrumental rock and the rock of the 1960s led by The Beatles. The films made in, and after, 1963 represent the growing gulf between iskelmä and youth pop culture, and were thus left out of our film analysis. (Kurkela and Jalkanen, 2003, pp. 463–467; Rautiainen, 2001, pp. 92–102.)

The selected six films are mainly built on various iskelmä music performances. The plots are loose or even non-existent, and the events are situated within the entertainment industry where films, television programmes, concerts etcetera are made. The audience will thus get a peek 'inside' the film and recording studios and clubs in Helsinki and

surrounding areas. Many films reflect a dream that was shared by many viewers: that of becoming a star. There are also glimpses into the songwriting process, as in *Tähtisumua*, where two important figures, Toivo Kärki and Reino Helismaa, are working on the film's title song at an office of the Fazer music company (where Kärki actually worked as a production manager in real life).

Record companies played a significant role in the production of these films and several television programmes. The co-operation was based on personal contacts. The two main parties were Fazer and Scandia. While Fazer, the market-leading record company, produced over a hundred titles per year, Scandia published only about twenty (Jalkanen and Kurkela, 2003, p. 446). However, the initial idea for *iskelmä* films came from the film producer Veikko Itonen (Juva, 2008, p. 63). The main purpose of the *jazziskelmä* films was to promote the artists. In most films, they appeared under their own names and performed songs they had already recorded. Still, the films are clearly fictional (Gronow, 1991).

Television offered enticing prospects for record companies producing popular music. Being a country with rising living standards and a population eager to dance and listen to music, Finland looked like a promising market for pop music. Several record companies, with Fazer in front, started their own weekly or monthly programmes. A quick shift in the equilibrium of visibility and coverage happened soon after the newcomer Scandia started taking advantage of audio-visual media, with a youthful and exceptional style of its own. Their female vocalists featured prominently in several shows. Paavo Einiö, a dynamic figure on the Finnish jazz scene and one of Scandia's directors, produced his own show, called *Iskelmäkaruselli esittää* (Pop song carousel presents).

Scandia was by far the nippiest of the companies, and the most skilful in utilising the possibilities of the audio-visual media. With the help of *jazziskelmä* they even surpassed Fazer in record sales. The images created for Scandia's vocalists were as carefully considered as the repertoires of each artist. In addition to coverage in pop music press, television appearances had a significant role in constructing the public image of each artist.

Unfortunately for research, early television entertainment (apart from the shows that were sent abroad to compete for television awards) was not considered a form of expression worth saving for future generations. The commercial Finnish television channels – TES-TV, Tamvisio and Mainos-TV – mainly broadcast live, and their shows vanished the minute they went on the air. The public channel Yleisradio also produced a good deal of live material during its early years. Later on, tapes were often reused to save money, especially when the content of a tape happened to fall into the category of entertainment. As a consequence, our overall picture of music entertainment on Finnish television may be somewhat skewed, and viewers who actually saw Finnish television in the 1960s, and

who thus have had the chance to see a more diverse line of programming than we, may have a more correct mental image of the television entertainment of the time. However, cautious conclusions can be drawn from references to musical entertainment in contemporary texts: the Finnish equivalent of the British Juke Box Jury, *Levyraati*, undoubtedly rated the very popular recordings of jazziskelmä. And advertising trade magazines reviewed the shows of several advertisers, as well as the music in these shows (Kortti, 2007, pp. 554, 557).

Not surprisingly, audio-visual advertising was keen to capitalise on the popular and visually pleasing public figures of the jazziskelmä vocalists. Like television entertainment programmes, advertisements were also broadcast live – often the camera was simply turned from one corner of the studio to another for commercial breaks or messages from the sponsor. This requires us to repeat the proviso stated above: live advertising is unattainable for research and hence the Finnish advertising expression of the 1950s and 1960s that we are able to study today is slanted towards cinema advertising, although the same films were often used. Our selection of material, as well as our analysis and argumentation concerning music in advertising film, is based on Kaarina Kilpiö's doctoral thesis on the history of sound in Finnish advertising film (Kilpiö, 2005). The thesis includes a statistical study of music used in Finnish film and television advertising, interviews with advertising film makers and composers, as well as analyses of soundtracks chosen after close viewing several thousands of Finnish advertising spots from the 1950s to the 1970s.

On the silver screen: models, divas and depraved women

Jazziskelmä films included numerous Finnish tunes as well as songs covered in Finnish. Foreign songs have been translated into Finnish throughout recording history, but these covers, especially American and Italian tunes, became very popular in the mid-1950s. To suit the Finnish taste, they were often arranged according to the iskelmä tradition (Jalkanen and Kurkela, 2003, pp. 438–451). In jazziskelmä films, the songs resemble modern jazz and are often sung by female artists and accompanied by small groups. In these songs, 'jazz' refers mostly to musical qualities produced by the orchestra; the swing rhythm played by the drummer and the short instrumental solos put jazziskelmä apart from other iskelmä songs. Italian popular songs (canzone) and songs with influences from Latin America were typical of Finnish jazziskelmä. In addition, a few musical numbers were performed by big orchestras. In only a few songs, jazz standards mostly, the vocalist articulates jazz style.

In *Tähtisumua* and *Toivelauluja*, viewers are taken into smoky jazz cellars, where small jazz combos play standards and modern jazz, including bebop. 'Myyränpesä' (Mole's

nest) is a fictional club in *Toivelauluja*, but it was named after the real Old house jazz club, also known as 'Mäyränkolo' (Badger's burrow), which had operated in Helsinki since 1957. Musicians and audience for the scenes were recruited from the actual club. However, the music for the film soundtrack was recorded in a studio (Vesterinen, 2006, pp. 192-193).

We analysed the audio-visual contents of the six jazziskelmä films using close reading. We then categorised the representations of jazziskelmä songs in particular. The jazziskelmä performance styles are similar to the three music video types familiar from existing research: recorded performances, idea videos and so-called narrative videos (Modinos, 1999, p. 16; Shore, 1984, p. 99). These types are utilised in the analyses as three categories of performance style:

1. Pseudo-live performance (recorded performance): The vocalist is seen performing together with a band, in rehearsal or in a gig. Still, the real source of sound is a recording, and all audible instruments are often not to be seen on-screen.
- 2) Idea performance (idea video): The song is sung as part of the film's plot. The character is seen singing 'spontaneously' on the set (e.g. in an office where she works as a secretary). The lyrics are not visually illustrated. The accompaniment is non-diegetic.
- 3) Narrative performance (narrative videos): The representation is reminiscent of music videos, with illustrations that cohere thematically with the lyrics. Most often the band is not in sight, but there are some intermediate examples. Other performers (often dancers) may appear.

Pseudo-live is the most frequent way of presenting music in the films. Usually the 'live-like' performance takes place in a club or other concert venue. All instruments heard are not to be seen on-screen, and the musicians shown are also not the ones who perform in the recording. (*Toivelauluja* is an example of this.)

There is a clear gender divide in the jazziskelmä performances. Without exception, the instrumentalists are male. The majority of the vocalists are female, and they are placed in the centre of the performance. A few male singers appear in front of the camera, mainly performing iskelmä and teen pop songs influenced by rock 'n' roll, a genre which is not performed by women at all. There is a clear parallel to the so-called golden era of female jazz singers, reflected in the local expressions of popular song, such as jazziskelmä. However, the styles of the female vocalists are not consistent: both persona and singing style vary from childlike and clear to femme fatale with darker and stronger sound qualities.



Image 1. A 'model' performing in a pseudo-live performance (Irmeli Mäkelä in *Iskelmäketju*). Published with the permission of Yleisradio (YLE).

There are three main ways of presenting women in the films: modern fashionable model, diva and depraved woman. The most frequent performance style is the well-groomed fashionable appearance, a style feasible for women in the audience. (See Image 1.) This style is typical especially of the pseudo-live performances, but also of idea performances that are part of a film's plot. The diva-like women are dressed in fancy evening gowns and perform in nightclubs as vocalists with male bands, thus imitating Hollywood films (McGee, 2009, p. 170). They mostly sing in English, whereas the vast majority of jazz-iskelmä songs were written in, or translated into, Finnish.

Models and divas are most often presented in pseudo-live performances. The singer usually stands more or less in place, perhaps swaying her body to the rhythm of the music, nodding her head or snapping her fingers. In rare cases she takes steps or even dance steps. In two songs that include scat singing inspired by Ella Fitzgerald (in *Iskelmäkaruselli*), the singer communicates with the orchestra through gesturing. The vocalist then appears more as one of the instrumentalists. The depraved women are presented through narrative performances. The content is not necessarily denoted in the lyrics and the music can be of any style. These working-girl performances involve dancing and

other elements emphasising the nature of the scene, such as 'johns' or red light (*Toive-lauluja*).

Jazz and dance share deep common roots. The first truly American dance, tap dance, was accompanied with jazz, and many jazz styles have pertinent dance styles (quick step, swing, charleston etcetera; Stearns and Stearns, 1994). Dancing is thus particularly pertinent to songs that include features of jazz style from before the bebop era. As with most popular music in films at the time, jazziskelmä on the screen also involves dancing. In club sequences, jazziskelmä is listened to intently, and only some slight movements appear, such as head nodding and foot swinging. This is similar to real-life audience behaviour at the Old house jazz club (Vesterinen, 2006, p. 132). In narrative performances, some of the numbers resemble dance scenes typical of musicals, including spectacular scenes with professional dancers. These performances feature modern dancing combined with youth culture, such as boogie-woogie and jive. The 'jazziness', and the distinction from traditional iskelmä, is reinforced through the almost complete exclusion of partner dance among the audience.

Launching jazziskelmä in front of the TV camera

In the 1950s and early 1960s, television entertainment in Finland – as in the United States and many other countries – favoured compact ensembles that fitted easily into the studio and that produced music which looked and sounded good, even through tiny speakers. These ensembles also helped create an image and feeling of immediacy and closeness that kept them on air even after live broadcasts ceased to be the default way of making television. In making their medium entertaining and accessible, television programming pioneers in Finland borrowed from a variety of music hall traditions – while sucking the life out of the music hall itself. Musical acts alternated and sometimes merged with sketches, advertising (Tes-TV) and other programme content (see also Juva, 2008, pp. 59–61). The artist could be asked on stage for several sections of programming (e.g. for a prize draw provided by a sponsor).

It is not easy to estimate the amount of jazziskelmä performances in Finnish television in the early 1960s; the surviving material is too scarce and incoherent. But it is safe to say that the vocalists were abundantly exposed to publicity, especially with regard to the limited amount of Finnish television broadcasting in the 1950s and 1960s. Our analyses are based on close viewing of the surviving material. Television shows sent to international competitions are slightly over-represented, as are those magazine-type music programmes that involved careful planning, staging and larger musical ensembles. Such ensembles were presumably not as frequently present in music programming broadcast live.

Two music shows aimed directly at young Finns started in the early 1960s. Both were linked to record companies. Of these shows, *Nuorten tanssihetki* proved to be a long-standing marketing channel for youth-oriented popular music, and also featured jazz-iskelmä acts. Later in the 1960s, the show moved away from iskelmä and towards the trends of pop and rock.

Loosely thematised compilations of music acts featuring the popular jazzy songstress-es were also made for television. Some medley-style programmes were simply collages of clips from pop hit song films. Numerous live broadcasts with music numbers were aired, and were unattainable as soon as the show ended. Several shows were built around the versatile skills of the jazziskelmä vocalists. In the years 1960–66, Laila Kinnunen (1939–2000) had constant publicity through her show *Kuukauden suosittut*. This live show was based on each month's sales chart. Occasional performances have been saved, mainly through their inclusion in other magazine-type programmes. These performances convey the nature of the show as a platform for Kinnunen's talent as a musician and actor. Some performances were staged and dramatised more thoroughly (in the manner of the narrative type), others concentrated on the vocalist and the musicians performing the music (pseudo-live).

Arkipäivä is a good example of how, when sufficient resources were available, jazz-inflected popular music could be used as television entertainment. This 1961 show was made for distribution within the Nordvision network launched in 1959, as a showcase for the entertainment know-how of Finnish television. The jazzy tone of the production likely originated from a wish to abstain from forcing Finnish musical tastes (believed eccentric) on Scandinavian viewers. Lyrics in Swedish and English are heard throughout the show. The Finnish television entertainment professionals used the young, competent and presentable jazziskelmä ladies to present an urban, cosmopolitan and cheerful market economy. The music was recorded especially for this production and arranged for an orchestra with strings as well as with jazzy instrumentation.

In *Arkipäivä*, three roommates (played by vocalists Brita Koivunen, Laila Kinnunen and Vieno Kekkonen) spend a day mostly consisting of their actions and customer contacts in their respective workplaces (music shop, florist's and coffee shop). With theatrical plywood props and pedestrian crossings painted on the floor, the realisation is most reminiscent of a stage musical. Songs are initiated by products or customers encountered during the day; idea and narrative categories both fit these performances. Several dance acts take place along the way. One act portrays women as little girls, thus representing a streak of infantilisation that is often present in Finnish entertainment of the 1950s. This streak had a background in the war-time experiences and in the feeling of insecurity that arose from the contemporary geopolitical situation (Jalkanen and Kurkela, 2003, pp.

343–344). The association with playfulness could also be interpreted as emphasising the fresh and young nature of the music.

Soothing the serious

Routines of stage-musical style are abundant in television shows that are reminiscent of the pseudo-live or narrative performance styles presented above. They zoom in on a cute songstress, lip synching in plywood props and producing a very star-centered view of the music. But at the other end of the spectrum cute–serious, the same artist can be seen singing her heart out with closed eyes – as a musician equal to the members of the jazz combo she is surrounded by – in a club milieu with a focused audience.

Humoristic scenes are one of the most frequent types of jazziskelmä performance on television. This may have resulted from an attempt to smooth out an anticipated prejudice against jazz as supposedly 'difficult' music, against young women in the star role, or against both. Especially (though not exclusively) Kinnunen was regularly cast as a comedienne, and her success within the audio-visual media is likely to have stemmed partly from her self-reflective irony and her talent in this area. When the vocalists sang material that was already musically more familiar to viewers – like waltzes or other popular/dance songs – they were practically always set in wistful or romantic, not comic, settings, and they also performed accordingly. This suggests that it was indeed the 'difficulty' of jazz inflections that was considered as needing support from a humoristic approach to the visual realisation.

Not every jazziskelmä performance was carried out in a playful or childlike manner. The first effort of Finnish public television to make a concert recording, *Old house jazz* (1961), is dictated more by the terms of music making and by the aesthetics of televising jazz performances than by pop music publicity. A recording of an evening in the Mäyränkolo jazz club, this twentyfive-minute film features two top jazziskelmä vocalists, each presenting single vocal pieces. Apart from these numbers, all music on the recording is instrumental jazz. We interpret this decision as challenging the dominance of sung repertoire and as a willingness to make modern jazz more visible and audible. Moreover, the vocalists' conduct is far from their television show performances. Their contact with the audience is very matter-of-fact; they concentrate on delivering the music, eliminating all stage gestures and even smiles.

The middle ground between humoristic and music-centered performances consists of entertaining and sometimes glamorous performances that nevertheless focus more on the music than on the entertainer's persona or on visualising the story of the lyrics. Most of the lost live material probably represents this pseudo-live type, complying with the

aesthetics of recording a live act of music and portraying the vocalists interacting with other musicians.

Advertising with jazziskelmä

Jazz enthusiasm was common among Finnish admen of the 1960s, and was audible in much of their work (Kilpiö, 2005, pp. 115–116, 228, 314). Jazziskelmä vocalists were propitious personalities for advertising purposes: they were household names due to extensive media exposure, they were skilled performers and communicated musical authority to consumers.

Targeting with music was not very advanced, since early television advertising was made for the entire nation. Almost any kind of product could be advertised using jazz as a backdrop – often as a claim for a modern, western product personality. In the over-represented cinema advertising material, ads for sweets, soft drinks, cosmetics, cigarettes etcetera abound. Jazziskelmä vocalists were used extensively for the promotion of cosmetics and cigarettes. However, as a more affordable medium for durable goods, print advertising proves it was even possible to associate a campaign for washing machines or television sets with a jazz vocalist. Most artists did not consolidate an exclusive image as a glamorous diva or a nice girl next door, but could take on different roles and also hand over the lead role to the advertised product.

A cosmetics commercial for Cutex from the early 1960s provides a typical example of the utilisation of the image of a jazziskelmä artist. Kinnunen prepares for an evening on stage, humming gently, in a pink boudoir-like setting seen through a gilded mirror frame. She is approached and served Cutex products on silver plates by pink-clad (female) fantasy dancers. The dancers are then replaced by a (male) jazz quintet and the 'magic' of the product, marked by a short snare-drum intro and phrases on clarinet and saxophone, leading into the sound space of a Dixieland jazz ensemble. The vocalist, in a glamorous white dress, smiles at the musicians and snaps her fingers, ready to sing. The leaving of the intimate, fantasy-like feminine sphere and the entering of the public 'star-sphere' with the aid of the beautifying product is also audible in the soundtrack: a gentle humming accompanied by piano and strings is followed by the masculine, beat-driven sound of a sassy jazz combo. (On gendered conventions in television music, see Tagg and Clarida, 2003, pp. 699–670.)

Typically, many television advertisements imitated scenes from films or television shows, and even used the same lead characters. The more popular a film or a television show, the more numerous the miniaturised copies appearing in advertising.

Iskelmistä
kaunein
Pond's
Angel
Face

Laila Kinnunen on tiettänsä kaunein
suomalainen iskelmälaulaja, joka
valloittaa sekä esityksellään että
esintymisellänsä. Make upin valitsemisessa
hän on tehnyt onnistuneesti — hänen
merkkinsä on Pond's Angel Face.

Angel Face on yhdistetty puuteri ja
alustavoide, joka kätkee ihon pikku
virheet. Se pysyy iholla muuttu-
matonana tunnin toiseen ...
Valitkaa Tekin kahdeksasta
vivahteesta iskelmistä kaunein ...

— valitkaa
Tekin

Pond's
Angel Face

Muistathan että Pond'illa on myös ihana
raikas nestemäinen make up — Angel Touch!

Suomen Oy Trans-Meri Ab

Image 2. Print advertising could not utilise the sound of Laila Kinnunen's voice, but did their best, here in 1963 visualising the vocalist in action and repeating the word 'iskelmä' three times. (The women's magazine *Me Naiset*, 1963 [10], published with permission of The Finnish Museum of Photography.)

Young, western, modern

According to our study, jazziskelmä on the silver screen crystallises the adaptation of young, western and modern jazz into local music culture and representations of the popular. The audio-visual styles were multifaceted, varying from traditional iskelmä customs to the depiction of, especially, the female artists in ways that ranged from infantile to mannequin and to promiscuous styles. Furthermore, the great measure of jazz

enthusiasm on the professional Finnish media scene was a significant factor in paving the way for the almost ubiquitous role of jazz-related expression across the popular media. It can be said that the 'jazzier' the music, the more fashionable and boundary-breaking the performance. Yet *jazziskelmä* cannot in itself be called rebellious.

In the late 1950s, Finland, as many other countries, was in the domain of the strengthening media culture of the United States. The democracy and symbols (musically above all jazz) of the United States created interest in Europe, where the 'democracy deficit' had led to wars in the early twentieth century. The reception of jazz had varied in Europe. For example, in the Germanies on both sides of the iron curtain it had created opposition in the 1950s because of a perceived connection to youth rebellion, Americanisation and consumerism. However, towards the end of the decade, modern jazz was recognised as an authentic form of music and was accepted in West Germany (Poiger, 2000). In Finland, the specific significance of jazz emerged from the recent war against the neighbouring communist superpower.

Diplomacy of the United States used mass consumption as a weapon in the cold war struggles: the paradigm of 'consumer republic' combined economic abundance with democratic political freedom to form a striking opposition to the 'impoverishment' of the Soviet system (Cohen, 2003, pp. 125-127). In Finland of the 1950s, consumption began to diversify. Income levels rose and the relative share of income needed for food purchases diminished. Leisure consumption, including media use and popular culture, was growing, at least within the urban Finn's household budget.

Finnish professionals of the audio-visual scene took a keen interest in Hollywood films and prime-time television, which throughout the 1950s and most of the 1960s were dominated by the urban sound of swinging big bands and hot jazz combos (Stanbridge, 2008). Seen in connection with audio-visual expression, *jazziskelmä* emerges as a multifaceted phenomenon. *Jazziskelmä* was paralleled, however, with the modern and urban youth culture emerging in Finland. The visual imagery of *jazziskelmä* was diverse, and there were already signs indicating the upcoming audio-visual and strongly western form of the music video. Pseudo-live performances originated from a need to offer familiar forms of entertainment to an audience accustomed to *soirée* and variety acts. But they were also forerunners of live recordings and signs of the increasing value of live performance in the era of audio-visual representations of music (Modinos, 1999, p. 16; Shore, 1984, p. 99).

Audio-visual styles combined with *jazziskelmä* were manifold too. While existing *iskelmä* modes of presentation lingered in many implementations, modern jazz introduced fresh nuances. One novelty was the varied representations of femininity, due to the predominantly female ranks of vocalists. In the 1920s, cinema was thought to degenerate public

taste, and jazz, being an especially revisionary form of music, was associated with sexual promiscuity, rebellion and lower instincts (Greenslade, 1994, p. 242). In general, a woman could be portrayed on film either as a nurturing woman and mother type, or as a 'fallen' woman – a frequent character already in wartime films in Finland (Koivunen, 1995, p. 25). The decadent way of presenting women was also quintessential to jazziskelmä films. Television offered neither very radical nor challenging versions of femininity, unless ironic and humoristic performances of romantic or family-centered songs count as such. Recurrent features in the archived television material are humour, seductiveness and several elements that have conventionally been regarded as polar opposites to masculinity: infantilism, motherhood, fashion, shopping, dressing, makeup and playfulness. These features formed a departure towards a more popular mode of televising jazz performances.

Despite influences from American jazz and popular culture, jazziskelmä was not counterculture. Some middlebrow rebellion was involved, with sexual innuendo and with persons (also women) smoking and hanging out among the youth, but the context – jazziskelmä – was still a mainstream phenomenon. The lifestyle, with visits to restaurants and clubs, was distinctly urban – in stark contrast to the everyday experience of most viewers, for Finland was still mainly an agricultural country. Finnish audio-visual professionals strove to change the image of everyday life in Finland with their own work. A case in point is the Finnish tango. Despite its huge popularity in dance halls of the 1960s, especially outside the larger cities, tango was never utilised in advertising films. This peculiar omission was probably due to the melancholic character of the lyrics and to the genre's image as a whole (Kilpiö, 2005, p. 327).

The films were aimed to convey not reality but fantasy, daydreams and stardom. Magical, fantastic details and scenes abound in the entertainment films and commercials. In fantasy sequences, jazz is repeatedly attached to the moments when magic works or is displayed. In the film *Toivelauluja*, entering the Mäyränpesä jazz club requires the combination of young age and appreciation of jazz music. The young merely have to feel the rhythm and dance in through the club door that flies open by itself. Older people can open the door only with extreme physical effort, if at all. Also in advertising, magic often coincides with jazz and its virtuosity, its seamless collaboration and its western values.

On the basis of our material, it can be concluded that jazziskelmä played a slightly different, more intermediary role than 'pure' jazz. It was familiar and approachable enough, also for older viewers. The truly rebellious and westernising audio-visual messages were presented with unmixed jazz: swing with no iskelmä involved. We do not regard the film/television/advertising professionals who positioned their work musically closer to the western world as being intentionally engaged in political activity or propaganda. Many

of them certainly had a genuine appreciation of jazz, and part of the charm of this music stemmed from its western origins, its freshness and unforeseeable nature. Primarily, the integration of jazz into the local popular music culture demonstrated a mental tendency to lean towards the exotic, modern and exciting North America.

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Abstract

Jazzy tunes and dreamy images in the cold war era: launching Finnish jazziskelmä on-screen

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a highly original mixture of modern jazz, popular and dance music occurred in Finland: the *jazziskelmä*. It was successful in record sales and in giving a new image to local popular music publicity. Its image was predominantly jazzy and female: the stars associated with *jazziskelmä* were almost exclusively young vocalists who frequently featured in movies, television shows and advertising. In this article, we discuss *jazziskelmä* and its launch on the silver screen and on television, in the context of the cold war. Finland's geopolitical position and relation to the Soviet Union was complex. This was reflected in all areas of politics and culture. In the early days of the cold war, many young urban Finns favoured North American music trends, especially modern and cool West-coast jazz, effectively marketed in post-war Europe as an example of a democratic art form. The visual imagery was multifaceted, and there was already an intimation of the upcoming, strongly western audio-visual form of the music video. However, we do not regard the professionals who positioned their work musically closer to the western world as being intentionally engaged in political activity or propaganda. Many of them certainly had a genuine appreciation of jazz, and part of the charm of this music stemmed from its western origins, its freshness and unforeseeable nature. Primarily, the integration of jazz into the local popular music culture demonstrated a tendency to lean towards the exotic, modern and exciting North America.

Keywords

Film music; jazziskelmä; jazz-pop; modern jazz; music in advertising; television music.

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