

EMBARGOED UNTIL DECEMBER 6TH 2024

Finland Debuts the World's First National Soundscape

Finland is the **first** country in the world to commission a composer to **create an official national soundscape**. *Ääniä* is an original musical work by Lauri Porra, one of the country's most celebrated composers. It takes the listener on a journey through the impressions, seasons and serene beauty of the happiest country in the world.

Can you capture the essence of a country in a piece of music? Finland wanted to find out. On December 6, 2024, Finland's 107th Independence Day, the country is unveiling the musical work *Ääniä* – Finland's very own, official soundscape.

Ääniä, meaning "sounds" or "voices" in Finnish, consists of 15 compositions, a total of one hour of music, by Lauri Porra, one of Finland's most acclaimed contemporary composers. Porra, whose great-grandfather was the iconic Finnish composer Jean Sibelius, has collaborated with prestigious orchestras around the world, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. His collaborations, together with his role as the bassist in the power metal band Stratovarius, have taken him to more than 50 countries.

"The more I travelled, the more I got in contact with my Finnishness, and understood the personality and mentality of Finland," says Porra. "I missed the four seasons, the way light and colour work there, and the calmness and space. I started to create musical snapshots of Finland that I could listen to on my trips, in order to relax and create a little Finnish bubble around me."

Those snapshots evolved into Finland's official soundscape. As far as we know, it is the first of its kind in the world.

"This understated, minimalist music is meant to create a certain atmosphere," says Porra. "What's being depicted is space. There's space to think, feel and live in Finland – not only in nature, but also in the Finnish way of life."

More and more people are becoming curious about Finland's way of living, whose key ingredients include a sense of freedom; close proximity to nature, even in urban areas; a laid-back mentality; and sustainability. For seven consecutive years, the UN's World Happiness Report has ranked Finland the happiest country in the world.

With *Ääniä*, aspects of the Finnish mentality can be transported anywhere in the world for people to create their own Finnish moments.

“Finns have always been deeply connected to their natural surroundings and cultural heritage,” says Paula Parviainen, Finland’s Ambassador for Culture and Creative Industries. “We wanted to bring these to a wider audience in a way that transcends languages and borders. We envision the soundscape providing a moment of peace and calm in people’s daily lives. Individuals can use it to create an opportunity to relax and reflect.”

Ääniä: Finland’s Official Soundscape is available free of charge at finland.fi/soundscape.

Ääniä: Finland’s Official Soundscape

Composer: Lauri Porra

Musicians: Kasmir Uusitupa, violin; Maija Linkola, violin; Vuokko Lahtinen, viola; Petja Kainulainen, cello; Antti Kujanpää, piano; Aili Järvelä, pump organ; Eija Kankaanranta, kantele; Verner Pohjola, trumpet; Miika Jämsä, tuba; Claire Chase, contrabass flute; Pekka Niskanen, bass clarinet; Áron Mojzer, bassoon; Sampo Kuusisto, marimba; Samuli Kosminen, percussion; Pete Korpela, percussion; Timo Kämäräinen, acoustic guitar; Lauri Porra, bass, guitar and additional instruments

Media contact

Composer Lauri Porra and Finland’s Ambassador for Culture and Creative Industries Paula Parviainen are both available for interviews.

Listen to *Ääniä: Finland’s Official Soundscape*: finland.fi/soundscape

Pictures of Finnish composer Lauri Porra for media use: finland.fi/soundscape/#media (Photo credit: Markku Pajunen)