

## VÄRTTINÄ

*"An unbeatable "world-beat" combination: traditional music, given a contemporary twist and a post-modern point of view." - Rolling Stone*

Värttinä is Finland's most successful contemporary folk music group. Värttinä's roots are in the Karelia region of Finland, specifically women's vocal traditions and ancient poems known as runos. The band begun as a children's project in the village of Rääkkylä in 1983. Their international breakthrough followed the release of album "Oi Dai" in 1991. Since then, Värttinä has toured internationally and built a solid reputation as one the most inventive and uncompromising ensembles in the contemporary world music arena.

Värttinä's trademark has always been razor-sharp harmonies sung by powerful leading ladies, currently the founding member Mari Kaasinen with Susan Aho & Karoliina Kantelinen. Värttinä composes most of their music and lyrics, based on traditional Karelian and other Finno-Ugric styles but with modern and thoroughly distinctive and original arrangements.

Fiona Talkington, BBC3 Late Junction, said of the group; *"Värttinä has seemingly unstoppable creative energy. They thrill, surprise and amaze audiences all over the world."* New York's Newsday described their music as *"a gale-force musical attack...beautifully poignant tunes...exotic but accessible, complex but exciting"* and from Billboard magazine; *"exquisite beauty...groundbreaking yet steeped in tradition, definitely Finnish, yet worldly."*

Värttinä's albums have regularly peaked The World Music Charts and they were given the established Womex World Music Award in 2012. Songlines Magazine (UK) voted their tenth album "iki" one of the "Top 50 World Music Albums You Should Own". Värttinä's other high-profile achievement is the role of co-composer for the stage adaptation of The Lord of the Rings, with the Toronto World Premiere in 2006 and the London West End premiere in 2007.

Värttinä's latest studio album "Viena" was inspired by the trip the group made to the Viena Karelian folklore villages in Russia, where they had unique encounters with the last surviving "runo singers" in the region. These singers are the last living connection to a culture that is thousands of years old, and out of which for instance the Kalevala folk poetry tradition was born. During their journey, Värttinä enjoyed remarkable nature experiences, which have also inspired the album. The "Viena" album is a tribute to Värttinä's Viena Karelian musical roots.

Värttinä are:

Susan Aho – vocals

Mari Kaasinen – vocals

Karoliina Kantelinen – vocals

With:

Lassi Logren – violin, jouhikko

Mikko Hassinen – percussion

Matti Laitinen – guitar, mandoline

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