



## Sväng Svängo Nuevo

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|---------------------|------------------------|
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| <b>Style</b>        | World Music / Finnland |

## Svängo Nuevo

Under the motto "Svängo Nuevo", the Finnish harmonica quartet Sväng is entering its third decade of band history! The 10th album is being released in time for the band's 20th anniversary and is also the first with Tapani Varis on bass harmonica.

In 2004, the ensemble made its debut with this unusual line-up. The self-titled debut album contained an irresistible musical mixture with a wide stylistic range. The unique ensemble sound quickly attracted international interest, followed by a WOMEX showcase in 2007 and hundreds of concerts around the world, various awards and, in recent years, collaborations with symphony orchestras.

In 2022, Pasi Leino passed on the bass harmonica to Tapani Varis - on "Svängo Nuevo", the "2nd incarnation" of the band can be heard on record for the first time! And Tapani Varis is not only a worthy successor on the bass harmonica, but also works as a composer for Sväng.

While the last four albums were each dedicated to a musical theme (Jean Sibelius, Best of Sväng, Finnish Tango, Finnish Trad), "Svängo Nuevo" brings together ten new compositions by the four band members. The pieces of music are rooted in folk, but are wide open in their musical perspectives and reflect the individual personalities. Over the last two decades, Sväng have consistently developed their sound vision further and so the ensemble sound on "Svängo Nuevo" is more personal and recognisable than ever before.

Sväng are in a league of their own - they have matured as an ensemble over the past twenty years and yet have remained fresh and innovative!

The album's opening title track was penned by Eero Grundström and has its roots in his fascination with Argentinian vocal styles, particularly that of Melingo, whose rough, speech-like rhythmic flow inspired this piece. The result is a kind of dance - neither tango, nor milonga, but svängo!

Dance melodies are a recurring element on "Svängo Nuevo". Eero Turkka's "Dai Pet" (track 2) is inspired by the Bulgarian folk dance "Paidusko" - a line dance in 5/8 time. Eero Turkka's great love for and knowledge of Balkan music can also be heard in "Shirtolainen" (track 7) - also based on a folk dance in 7/8 time.

Finnish folk dance traditions in turn have influenced "Liukas Luikko" (track 6) and "Kanteleen kisavirsi" (track 9).

The catchy "Nälkämaan lokari" (track 4) is a homage to Finnish-American music and combines American old-time music with traditional Finnish music in its composition and playing technique. "Svänging the blues" (track 8) combines Eero Turkka's two great musical passions: Blues and Balkan music. A lure is needed to seduce the three band mates to a blues - in this case the Bulgarian Rachenitsa rhythm serves as an aphrodisiac.

"Markku ukolle" (track 5) is a memorial march dedicated to the deceased father-in-law, whose lively middle section is a reminder of a happy life.

Tapani Varis has contributed two compositions for "Svängo Nuevo": "Vaaran takana" (track 3) refers to Varis' profound knowledge of folk wind instruments and is reminiscent of the music of the shepherds in Karelia's forests played with various archaic woodwind instruments. Both soloists imitate the sound of the shepherds' woodwind instruments with blues harmonicas.

The album closes with "Marrasvalssi" (track 10), a waltz that reminds the listener of November (Finnish: marras) with atmospheric soundscapes ranging from bright morning moods to increasing darkness.

#### **Sväng are:**

Eero Turkka – chromatic & diatonic harmonicas

Eero Grundström - chromatic & diatonic harmonicas

Jouko Kyhälä – harmonetta, diatonic harmonica

Tapani Varis – bass harmonica

Recording studio: Jouko Kyhälä, Studio Kyhättö, Kirkkonummi autumn 2023

Mix: Eero Grundström (1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10) & Jouko Kyhälä (3, 5, 6, 8)

Mastering: Pauli Saastamoinen, Finnvox

Cover Artwork: Jimmy Träskelin

#### **1. Svängo Nuevo (Eero Grundström)**

EG: The title song of the album "Svängo nuevo" has its roots in my fascination of Argentine singing styles, particularly Melingo, whose rough, speech-like rhythm flow gave inspiration to this one. Most Finnish tangos are very melancholy. I love that, but it's nice to have something different every now and then. Finnish tango dancing is more like cross country skiing but with these fresh milonga rhythms we try to get also hips moving. Maybe the result is not tango, not milonga but svängo.

In the first section of Svängo nuevo both soloists play E chromatic harmonica, and in the melody I have also some influences from great harmonica style of Hugo Diaz. When tempo increases Eero Turkka switches to G blues harp and takes the lead. His melody also contains a memory of classic Finnish song going “through a thousand taverns”.

## **2. Dai pet! (Gimme five!) (Eero Turkka)**

ET: Dai pet means “gimme five” in Bulgarian and the starting point for the composition is the number five itself. The rhythmic measure of song is 5/8 and there's 5 bars in every repeated parts of the melody.

Melody is composed by playing with two different two-sided echo harps (am/C and em/G) using the different modal possibilities of the harmonica rarely used in western music but common in balkans.

## **3. Vaaran takana (Behind the hill) (Tapani Varis)**

TV: I was noodling with a fretless electric bass when the phrases reminding of some kind of shepherd music started to happen. In the old times shepherds used wind-instruments, often made of horn or wood, in order to keep the sheep and cows together, to scare the bear and wolf as well as entertain themselves. This composition is a homage to that music, as well as the still existing remains of the ancient forests of Finland, more specifically the ones in Northern Carelia.

Both soloists use blues harmonicas here but sound more like shepherd instruments.

## **4. Nälkämaan lokari (Lumberjack from Hungerland) (Eero Grundström)**

EG: The years between 1870 and 1930 are sometimes referred to as the Great Migration of Finns to North America. Almost half a million people left in the hope of better life overseas, to escape hunger, repression and poor conditions of life. I hope Finnish people today could identify and relate more with current immigrants from current hungerlands.

Lumberjack was common occupation among Finnish Americans. They also had their own language, Finglish.

Nälkämaan lokari (meaning “Lumberjack from Hungerland”) is a homage to Finnish American music. It contains quotes from famous Finnish song “Nälkämaan laulu” and Finnish-American “Lännen lokari” and combines American old time music with Karelian spices and Finnish Ostrobothnian style folk singing style. I dedicate this song to Perttu Hemminki and Aija

Puurtinen & Brooklynin satu for giving inspiration and experience in this great immigrant music.

“Nälkämaan lokari” uses old time harmonica style with Finnish flavour. I use low F blues harp with mixolydian (low 7:th) tuning but play in cross position, producing nice dorian minor scale. Eero Turkka plays chromatic harmonica in lower register addin totally different color .

#### **5. Markku-ukolle (The old man Markku) (Jouko Kyhälä)**

JK: Markku-ukolle is a funeral march I composed to honor the memory of my father in law, Markku. I specially wanted to include the joy of life and happiness though it is a funeral march. We should rather memorize the lives and achievements of people than emphasize the sorrow when they leave this world. That’s why the melancholy parts are surrounding the lively middle part in this tune.

Soundwise this is the first song ever to use the new extra low tuned chromatic harmonica by Suzuki. The manufacturer calls this amazing instrument “chromatic bass”, but we named it immediately “Cello harp” because it locates between bass harmonica and normal harmonicas in the sense of musical range. It is like a cello in string quartet. I especially enjoyed arranging parts together the bass and cello harmonicas. A new sound color for Sväng was found.

#### **6. Liukas Luikku (Slippery Slim Slope) (Jouko Kyhälä)**

JK: The song Liukas luikku / Slippery Slim Slope is my version of a great traditional Finnish folk dance, Enkeliska. It is all about the joy of dancing together and the song is also tribute to folk musicians and folk dancers of Finland. Together we create a unique community of people who share a passion of our traditions.

Enkeliska is a driving and joyful folk dance. One turn of the dance includes people zigzagging each other very fast and close to each other. Name of the song describes how I am feeling during this hazardous dance.

#### **7. Shirtolainen (Eero Turkka)**

ET: Shirto is a common bulgarian dance in 7/8 rhythm which inspired me to compose this tune. Siirtolainen is finnish word meaning immigrant and since I've been for years travelling between Finland and Bulgaria I made up this new word meaning "shirto - loving travelling musician".

#### **8. Svänging the blues (Eero Turkka)**

ET: The blues has been a huge influence on me, a language that I had to learn and it became a part of my musical self together with gypsy music or finnish folk music.

But sometimes a standard blues can be a bit boring. To make the blues more appealing for my band mates I needed to "sväng it" a bit by adding a new twist. This twist is the balkan rachenitsa rhythm (7/8) giving a nice svänging groove to the blues and making it more hopeful, almost happy.

#### **9. Kanteleen kisavirsi (Eero Grundström)**

EG: I live in a village called Kantele, named after Finland's national instrument. Kantele tradition of playing long form dance music with endless variations of short phrases is probably my favourite folk tradition. The song title's literal translation would be "game hymn from Kantele" but "game hymn" traditionally meant "dance song". Kisavirsi is carrying the Karelian tradition of dance and music.

This tune is literally made by dancing, moving and walking while playing harmonica. In Sväng version melody players represent kantele tradition while bass and chord harmonica give accents from the dance floor.

I dedicate this song to Emilia Lajunen who had led me to wonderful world of simultaneous playing and dancing.

Eero Turkka plays ordinary blues harp in key of G, cross position as in blues tradition. I have low D blues harp, but with mixolydian (low 7:th) tuning in straight position, so we share the scale but play in different positions, producing broad heterophonic music. I call this style "Karelian old time music" since it combines Karelian music tradition with American old time harmonica playing techniques.

#### **10. Marrasvalssi (Tapani Varis)**

TV: When I was asked to play in Sväng as Pasi's successor, I was also given an opportunity to take part in writing new repertoire for upcoming album. I was thrilled. First attempt to do so was so contemporary that my ability to explain it even to myself failed, so I chose more accessible approach. November has fascinated me for a long time, for a reason unknown to me so when the first phrases of a waltz started to ring in my head, I knew that this is going to be my first composition ever for Sväng.

Eero Turkka plays C blues harp in key of B minor, with lots of chromatic bends and overbends, giving melody distinct character while Eero Grundström is making use of full range of E chromatic harmonicas notes.

### **Biographie**

The quartet with the exclusive instrumentation has created its own unique sound and delighted world music, folk, jazz and classical music fans alike with repertoire that is as demanding as it is entertaining. In Sväng's hands, the possibilities of the small harmonicas are unlimited. Multi-award winning and ennobled by the UK's songlines magazine as the "harmonica equivalent of the Kronos Quartet", Sväng has toured Europe, Japan and China and visited some of the world's most prestigious festivals and concert halls.

#### At a glance:

- ... founded end of 2003 at Sibelius Academy, Helsinki
- ... 10 albums (actual release: "Svängo nuevo", 26.04.2024 - galileomusic)
- ... concerts/tours in 28 countries, including 5 tours to Japan & 2 to China
- ... official showcases at womex (2007); Babel Med Marseille (2014); Kulturbörse Freiburg (2017); howcase Scotland (2020)
- ... 5 Top of the worlds by songlines magazine UK;
- ... In Trad we trust – Best Album 2020 by songlines magazine & nominated for Finnish Etno Emma
- ... awarded to "Artist of the Year" (held at Finnish Etnogaala in Helsinki January 2019)
- ... nominated to Nordic Council Music Prize 2019 – [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org)
- ... numerous appearances at radio & TV, including Jools Holland's legendary New Years Show on BBC 2
- ... Helsinki Festival, Førde Festival, Malmö Festival, Konzerthaus Vienna, glatt & verkehrt Festival, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Dranouter Festival, RASA Utrecht, Trad It! Groningen, Rudolstadt Festival, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, La folle journée Nantes, Palace of Arts Budapest, Bath Music Festival, songlines encounters Festival London, Celtic Connections Glasgow, Pau Casals International Music Festival El Vendrell, Musica dei Popoli Firenze, Folkest Spilimbergo etc etc

#### Band member

|                        |                                       |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Jouko Kyhälä</b>    | Harmonetta, diatonische Harmonika     |
| <b>Tapani Varis</b>    | Bassharmonika                         |
| <b>Eero Grundström</b> | chromatische & diatonische Harmonikas |
| <b>Eero Turkka</b>     | chromatische & diatonische Harmonikas |

#### Mixer

**Eero Grundström (1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10) & Jouko Kyhälä (3, 5, 6, 8)**

#### aufnahmestudio

Galileo Music Communication GmbH - Dachauer Str. 5-7 - 82256 Fürstenfeldbruck

**Jouko Kyhälä, Studio Kyhättö,  
Kirkkonummi autumn 2023**

## Mastering

Pauli Saastamoinen, Finnvox

## Cover Artwork

Jimmy Träskelin

## Tracklist

- |     |   |       |
|-----|---|-------|
| 1.  | Svängo nuevo<br>M: Eero Grundström                                  | 04:08 |
| 2.  | Dai pet!<br>M: Eero Turkka  | 03:47 |
| 3.  | Vaaran takana / Behind the Forested Hill<br>M: Tapani Varis         | 04:07 |
| 4.  | Nälkämaan lokari / Lumberjack from Hungerland<br>M: Eero Grundström | 05:06 |
| 5.  | Markku-ukolle / To Old Man Markku<br>M: KYHAELAE, JOUKO ANTERO      | 04:13 |
| 6.  | Liukas Luikku / Slippery Slim Slope<br>M: KYHAELAE, JOUKO ANTERO    | 04:02 |
| 7.  | Shirtolainen / Shimmigrant<br>M: Eero Turkka                        | 05:15 |
| 8.  | Svänging the blues<br>M: Eero Turkka                                | 04:24 |
| 9.  | Kanteleen kisavirsi / Game Hymn from Kantele<br>M: Eero Grundström  | 05:04 |
| 10. | Marrasvalssi / October Waltz<br>M: Tapani Varis                     | 03:34 |

## Konzerte

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|-------------------|---|
| <b>02.05.2024</b> | Schleswig (DE) – folkbaltica Festival                                 |
| <b>03.05.2024</b> | Eckernförde (DE) – folkbaltica Festival                               |
| <b>21.05.2024</b> | Pori (FI) – Validi Karkia Klubi                                       |
| <b>22.05.2024</b> | Espoo (FI) – Kulttuurikeskus  |
| <b>10.07.2024</b> | Kaustinen (FI) – Kaustinen Folk Festival                              |
| <b>11.07.2024</b> | Kaustinen (FI) – Kaustinen Folk Festival                              |
| <b>02.10.2024</b> | Langenau (DE) – Pflughof  |
| <b>07.11.2024</b> | Reutlingen (DE) – „Svängfonia“ mit der Württembergischen Philharmonie |
| <b>20.11.2024</b> | Wien (AT) - Konzerthaus   |