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Emilia Lajunen's concert tour is an ecological return to the roots - by bicycle

In summer 2015 Finnish violinist and fiddler Emilia Lajunen will make a CO2-free concert tour in Finland. It is possible by bicycle, even though there is more than twenty concerts to play and more than two thousand kilometres to ride. The tour's purpose is to return to the vagabond roots of Finnish traditional folk music - but also to save the world.

"The idea was very well received by festivals", says Lajunen. "Clearly there is a big demand for greenwash and for heroic stories!"

For years Lajunen has planned combining her profession and her hobby. Previously she has ridden from her home door to Croatia, commuted by bike every day through the Finnish winter, and raced a bit. For her cycling is both a way of transport and an ecological choice, but one inspiration for the tour comes from family:

"My great great grandfather Herman Saxberg, 'The Pipe-Herman' was a vagabond musician", says Lajunen. "I am an urban, modern fiddler, but it is important to remember the roots - previously musicians were in direct contact with people, because they travelled slowly through the community."

That's why Lajunen's tour is not limited to Finland's most important music festivals: She will also play at camping sites and market places. "If I am cycling nearby, you can always ask me to play a concert!", she says.

Lajunen hauls everything she needs by bike: Violin, nyckelharpa, office, clothing, kitchenware and tent. Finland is a big country, so there will be some long and busy days in the saddle between festivals.

"Once I have ridden over four hundred kilometres a day, but on a concert day one hundred will be enough", Lajunen says. "And on other days I can't just rest after riding, I must also practice."

That is a must because the tour includes folk music festivals, classical music festivals and village parties and they all demand hugely different things. However, Lajunen's concerts will be based on her usual repertoire of Finnish and Scandinavian fiddle tradition, archaic kantele melodies and ancient ballads, all mixed with her own, contemporary touch.

Lajunen rides the tour with her partner, music journalist Kare Eskola. He takes care of the media contacts and logistics, announces some concerts and maybe even plays a little.

The tour started in May from Jyväskylä in the main event of the Finnish Cycling Week. The longest continuous journey begins in Midsummer, and takes Lajunen all over Finland and to all Finnish folk music festivals, for example Kaustinen, Haapavesi and Sommelo.

Details of the tour's concerts, a map and a blog can be found in emilialajunenbiketour.com. The tour is supported by Kone Foundation and Pelago Bicycles.

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Emilia Lajunen (born 1979 in Suolahti, Finland) is known for her personal, strong and modern style of playing the violin. Her playing claims its origins in archaic heritage and fiddler music. Lajunen's instruments are the violin and the keyed fiddle (nyckelharpa).

She graduated from Sibelius Academy in 2007 and from 2010 she has occupied the position of the Violin Teacher-in-charge in the folk music department. She is a member in such groups as Suo, Spontaani Vire and Juuri & Juuri. She also duets with Suvi Oskala and performs solo as well. Her solo album, *Turkoosi Polkupyörä* (Turquoise Bicycle), was released in 2012 and well received in Finland and abroad.