

## TALLINN

→ SOUNDING OUT

Tallinn, the European Capital of Culture in 2011, has plenty to offer the musically-minded visitor. Local resident Mart Niineste gives a flavour of this Baltic nation's cultural scene

For most music fans, Estonia is probably synonymous with the contemporary classical composer Arvo Pärt, but there's plenty more to this tiny nation on the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland, at the east end of the Baltic Sea.

Historically Tallinn has always been at the crossroads between East and West, which makes for a vibrant music scene. With its well-preserved, medieval Old Town, surrounded by a belt of parks, Tallinn is the ideal city break destination.

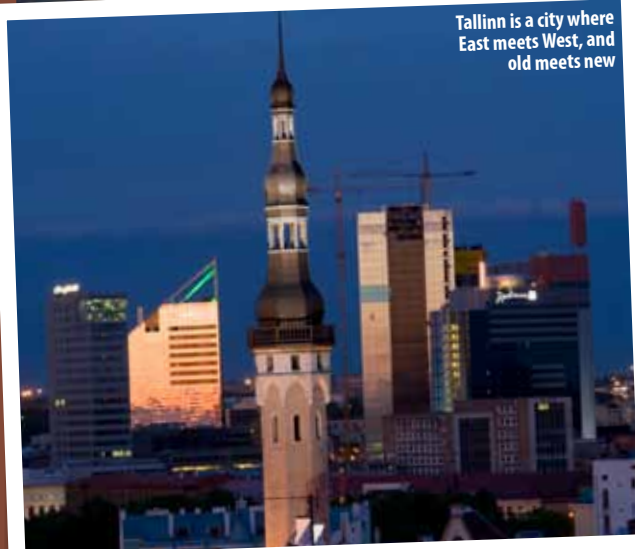
There is a wide range of live music

venues, from cozy clubs for sweet-sounding jazz singers to dusty basements for rockers and ravers – and there's surely no other city in the world that has a Depeche Mode tribute bar! With a population of under half a million, what sets Tallinn apart from any other capital is its compact size. Most of Tallinn's live music venues are gathered in a relatively small area of the Old Town with the surrounding downtown area less than a 15-minute walk away. So it's ideal for an all-night concert crawl.

Few of the music venues are dedicated

exclusively to a particular genre. The music scene revolves around events, bands, movers and shakers rather than venues dedicated to particular styles. Don't be surprised if the place hosting a lovely folk concert on Thursday follows it on Friday with a disco dedicated to rare grooves. There are mainstream nightclubs if you want to check out the Estonian pop and rock scene. Whatever your tastes, there's always something going on. And if you're looking for the ultimate Estonian folk, roots and world music Mecca, then head to Viljandi, 160km south of Tallinn.

Tallinn's picturesque UNESCO-recognised Old Town



Tallinn is a city where East meets West, and old meets new



The winding cobbled streets of the Old Town

## FESTIVALS

### Maailmaküla

The only world and folk music festival held in Tallinn. From Balkan brass to Touareg guitars, Maailmaküla brings the world to Tallinn, turning our great blue planet into a small village for a few days every year.

**Every May, Gonsiori 21-302, 10147, +372 5025700, [www.maailmakyla.ee](http://www.maailmakyla.ee)**

### Tallinn Music Week

When it comes to one big festival for all kinds of Estonian music, then this is without a doubt Tallinn Music Week, with its club nights dedicated to almost every genre of music. A showcase festival



Estonian folk artist Mari Kalkun playing during Tallinn Music Week

HETI KRUUSMAA

## VENUES

### Kloostri Ait

Despite being a tourist-trap type of restaurant during the day, Kloostri Ait is probably as close as it gets to a pure folk, roots and world music venue in Tallinn.

**Vene Street 14, 10123, + 372 644 6887, [www.kloostriait.ee](http://www.kloostriait.ee)**

### Von Krahl

Von Krahl is part theatre and part live music venue. A cult place running since 1993, it has always kept up with new and interesting artists. It's the must-play venue for emerging artists of almost every genre; a rite of passage before hitting the big time.

**Rataskaevu 10, 10123, + 372 626 9090, [www.vonkrahl.ee](http://www.vonkrahl.ee)**

### NO99

NO99 is another example of a theatre and a live music venue. This small and cozy basement is dedicated to jazz music in all its diverse forms: from tuneful standards to improvised acts of destruction.

**Sakala 3, 10141, + 372 668 8792, [www.no99.ee/eng](http://www.no99.ee/eng)**

### Amigo

This nightclub is located right under the historic Viru Hotel. If you feel like watching Estonian bands playing their greatest hits, Amigo is the place to go. The manager is involved with Maailmaküla festival (see above) which ensures that the occasional

COSKARIVÄRA

running since 2009, Tallinn Music Week is a platform for new music emerging in the Baltic region. Its first success stories are artists such as Svjata Vatra, Ewert & The Two Dragons, Iris and Mari Kalkun who come from the folk and independent music scene.

**March 29-31, various venues, [www.tallinnmusicweek.ee](http://www.tallinnmusicweek.ee)**

### Jazzkaar

Running since 1990, this festival has become an institution in its own right. With at least four seasonal sub-festivals, Jazzkaar is the axis of the Estonian jazz scene and a big dot on the map of European music festivals of this kind. Despite its small size, Jazzkaar remains a festival fulfilling the needs for all jazz audiences with some spice from world, folk and roots artists.

**April 20-28, Pärnu Maantee 30-5, Tallinn 10141, +372 666 0030, [www.jazzkaar.ee](http://www.jazzkaar.ee)**

### Estonian Song Celebration

A national institution, the Estonian Song Celebration (Laulupidu) takes place every five years and was first held in 1869. It's an extraordinary experience to witness 25,000 people onstage in the specially-built festival ground, singing to an audience of over 50,000, many of them in national costume.

**Next edition July 4-6 2014**



Von Krahl - part theatre, part must-play live venue

world music act pops up on the bill.

**Viru Väljak 4, + 372 680 9380, [www.amigo.ee](http://www.amigo.ee)**

### Teatri Puhvet

A small café across the street from the Estonian National Opera which is known for its nocturnal jam sessions. These nights are predominantly jazz-led, however world music does occasionally appear on the billing.

**Teatri Väljak 3, 10143, +372 699 0590, [www.puhvet.ee](http://www.puhvet.ee)**

### Pärimusmuusika Ait

Opened in 2008 as a concert and cultural centre, Pärimusmuusika Ait (the Folk Music Barn) is closely related to other folk music initiatives in Estonia. It is the sole venue which programmes folk, roots and world music exclusively. It also houses the August Pulst School of Folk Music and the Traditional Music Center Library.

**Tasuja pst 6, 71011 Viljandi, +372 434 2050, [www.folk.ee/en/Traditional-Music-Center](http://www.folk.ee/en/Traditional-Music-Center)**



Viljandi Folk Festival

### Viljandi Folk Music Festival

True, this festival is not in Tallinn, but Viljandi is just three hours away and has become the unofficial synonym for 'folk music' in Estonia since the mid-90s. Every year Folk, as the event is commonly known, is dedicated to a different aspect of folk music. This small and sleepy southern Estonian town is taken over by performers from all over the world and hoards of visitors during four days in late July.

**July 26-29, Tasuja pst 6, 71011 Viljandi, +372 434 2050, [www.folk.ee](http://www.folk.ee)**

### Pärimusmuusika Keskus

Based in Viljandi, Pärimusmuusika Keskus (Estonian Traditional Music Center) is the heart of the Estonian folk and traditional music scene. Having a close relationship with the Viljandi Culture Academy's folk music department and Viljandi Folk festival (see above), Pärimusmuusika Keskus spreads and popularises every aspect of folk music. Read more about the Centre in #52.

**[www.folk.ee/en](http://www.folk.ee/en)**

### Tallinna Filharmonia

The Filharmonia is known for its classical music and choir concerts and they play host to a first-rate chamber choir. They also put on an occasional event dedicated to a particular genre of music, such as Jewish or Italian.

**[www.filharmonia.ee](http://www.filharmonia.ee)**

## USEFUL LINKS

**[www.rada7.ee/yritused](http://www.rada7.ee/yritused)**

Probably the best database of independent and underground music concerts in Estonia.

**[www.festivals.ee](http://www.festivals.ee)**

The complete guide to all of Estonia's classical music festivals.

**[www.tourism.tallinn.ee/eng](http://www.tourism.tallinn.ee/eng)**

A more general website for what's on offer in the capital.

URMAS VOLMER