

Mitä on Manserock?

What is Manserock?

Finland's pop and rock scene was initially concentrated in Helsinki, so the term Manserock, invented in the 1970s, was a parodic name for music made in Tampere, outside the capital region. "Manse" is a nickname for Tampere, the "Manchester of the North". When Manserock's popularity peaked in the 1980s, the name was even used as a synonym for Suomirock, or "Finnish rock".

In the fall of 1974, Manserock was mentioned in *Intro* magazine, when Alibi-klubi in Helsinki celebrated Manserock week. During that week, a band from Tampere performed at the club every night. The name Manserock came to the attention of the wider public in the spring of 1975, when Alwari Tuohitorvi and Juice Leskinen & Coitus Int joined forces on a large Manserock tour.

Over the decades, Manserock has become a concept. In this exhibition, it refers to pop and rock music made in Tampere and its surrounding areas, written in Finnish. The exhibition focuses on Manserock's heyday in the 1970s and 1980s, without forgetting the roots of the phenomenon in the 1960s or its heirs and like-minded successors from the 1990s to the present day.

Epe Helenius has characterized Manserock as dude-powered Finnish rock music. The local attitude toward making music hasn't been overly serious, even including its own kind of humor. Manserock has been characterized by a broad sense of community and the smooth transition of musicians from one band to another. In the 1970s, the Tampere region's musicians and other artists formed a wide circle of friends and a well-functioning music industry ecosystem. Instead of unnecessary competition, artists helped each other.

Juice Leskinen has defined the term in his song titled Manserock as follows:

Mutta Manserock on poikaa
Vaikka selkään roikaa
Se on kiukun patinoimaa
Reteetä ja roimaa
Räjähtävää voimaa
Tää rock'n roll!

Manserock is the shit
Even when the sleet hits
Seasoned with a snappy wit
Relaxed and infinite
Powerful and swift
This is rock'n'roll!

Rautalanka soi 1960-luvulla Sammonkadun kellareissa

Rautalanka plays in the basements of Sammonkatu in the 60s

In the early 1960s, rhythmic instrumental music arrived in Finland, performed by a four-man band consisting of two electric guitars, an electric bass, and drums. In Finland, the name of the musical style was inspired by the strings of the electric guitar and came to be called rautalanka, which literally translates to “iron wire”, but essentially refers to instrumental rock. Rock’n’roll, born at the end of the previous decade, had also gained popularity up north. However, rautalanka music became the first wider phenomenon in Finland, inspiring young people to spontaneously make and perform music for each other. Rautalanka clearly differed from previous general iskelmä (shlager) music. Foreign guitar bands such as The Shadows and The Ventures served as role models.

The rautalanka boom spread to Helsinki first and to Tampere soon after. Tampere’s secondary schools provided an important growth platform for band activities, as local bands performed at various school functions. Many emerging bands practiced in the basements of businesses at the beginning of Sammonkatu, where they could jam without disturbing other residents. The first local band was The Jessers, founded in 1961, and within a few years there were already 25 rautalanka bands in the Pirkanmaa region. The Comets (later Five Comets), The Sharks and The Sharpers competed with The Jessers for rautalanka supremacy. In Kangasala, a band called The Matthews was in their early stages.

The most popular phase of rautalanka music lasted for a few years, until around the mid-60s, when wider enthusiasm shifted to beat and pop music with leading vocalists. The most pivotal bands in the Tampere region were Kaj Martin Five, Brian Kottarainen’s Lepakkomiehet, and The Matthews’ new line-up with soloist Rauli Rale Koivisto. The hippie movement spread to Finland and Tampere with Popteatteri’s Hair musical, and Rale Koivisto became the first superstar from Tampere.

Suomenkielinen Manserock saa alkunsa: Juice ja Coitus Int

Finnish-language Manserock is born: Juice and Coitus Int

The initial impetus of Finnish-language rock music can be credited to Juhani "Juice" Leskinen, Mikko Alatalo and Harri Rinne, three students who met in Tampere in the early 1970s. Leskinen and Rinne's verbal prowess and Alatalo's musicality came together in Rinne's apartment on Otavalankatu. The band Los Coitus Interruptus was born, whose name was later shortened to Coitus Int. The group gained popularity especially in student circles and played its first gig at Yo-talo in Tampere in May 1973.

In the same spring, alternative music publisher Love Records from Helsinki became especially interested in Coitus Int's impressive texts in Finnish. The band's first album, *Juice Leskinen & Coitus Int* saw the light of day in November 1973. With the album, interest in the band's concerts grew, but their popularity was boosted even more by the single *Marilyn*, released the following spring. Their next LP, *Per Vers -runoilija* ("Per Vers poet"), which included several Juice classics, sold the equivalent of a gold record, i.e. more than 25,000 copies. Coitus Int broke up in the summer of 1975 after the last show of the Manserock tour, but the foundation for Manserock and Finnish-language rock music had nevertheless been laid.

Coitus Int's ensemble varied during its short existence. Harri Rinne quit the band after the first gig. The original guitarist Max Möller left and was replaced by Eetu Tuominen. Pentti "Pena" Penninkilampi played keyboards in the band, and Heikki Jokela was hired as drummer in the middle of the first record but was replaced by Juke Aronen the following year. Juuso Nordlund was the bassist.

Mikko Alatalo, who moved to Helsinki, embarked on a solo career in 1974 with his album *Maalaispoika oon* ("I'm a country boy"), but took part in the band whenever possible. Juice Leskinen and Mikko Alatalo returned for a joint tour to celebrate Coitus Int and made an album bearing their name for Love Records in 1975. Coitus Int 50 Revival, i.e. the surviving members of the original band reinforced by the Hauli Bros lineup, returned for a concert tour in autumn 2023.

1970-luvun monipuolinen Manserock

Versatile Manserock of the 1970s

In the 1970s, Manserock consisted of a wide variety of musical styles that reflected the trends of the time's international pop/rock music. Alwari Tuohitorven Lannanlevittäjät, a band from Ähtäri, became Tampere-based when original members Jukka Rautiainen and Seppo Tammilehto moved to the city. When future Manserock guitar legend Seppo "Kala" Alajoki, bassist Mika Sundqvist and drummer Rape Pikanen, all from The Matthews' lineup, joined the band, they started looking for a new musical direction. The name was eventually shortened from Alwari Tuohitorvi to Alwari T. The band adopted a trendy glam rock style, which included flashy outfits and a fast-paced stage show. The band reached its peak popularity from 1974 to 1976, after which they began to write music in English and their popularity declined, but so did appreciation for the musical style.

Tabula Rasa, a band made up of young men from Kangasala in 1972, played popular progressive rock. Its leader was guitar virtuoso Heikki Silvennoinen, who has since gained fame from many Manserock projects. The other members were Jarmo Sormunen, Asko Pakkanen and Jukka Leppilampi. The band made two albums for Love Records, and also served as Mikko Alatalo's accompanist after Coitus Int. The band broke up in 1977.

Two young men from Härmälä, Pertti "Veltto" Virtanen and Mauri "Moog" Konttinen, also brought their own flavor to Manserock in the 1970s. Their first band was Ferrum, which later became WolfGang, but the duo's most famous band was called Virtanen. The band recorded for Love Records, and the album *Hal-00* was released in the fall of 1974. Virtanen's violent and anarchic music has been characterized as punk before punk. Virtanen also broke up in 1977. Veltto continued with a solo career and in the bands HERU and Välikausitakki. Moog Konttinen's musical career continued in the band Kontravirtanen, the name of which was shortened to Kontra. Konttinen still continues to make music.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the growing number of Manserock bands was joined by Nolo & Rähjä, a group that still performs today. At the end of the decade, Kari Peitsamo from Nokia also began his long career. A heavy rock-style band called Tries sang in English and gained popularity in Finland in the late 70s and early 80s.

Kaseva – Suomen Beatles

Kaseva – Finland's Beatles

Kaseva, born in the Kaleva district of Tampere, was influenced by the rautalanka (instrumental rock) and guitar bands of the 60s. Its members, teenagers Mikko Jokela, Asko Raivio, Jouko Järvinen, Tapio Rauma and Nils "Nipa" Jokela began their musical careers here. Kaseva's music did not follow the trends of the time, although it was strongly influenced by The Beatles in particular. For years, the band, founded by five young manual workers, practiced songs carefully composed by Mikko Jokela and Asko Raivio in their training place in Kaleva. They were characterized by sensitivity, melodiousness, and skillful vocal harmony, which was rare in the Finnish music world.

Finally, the band sent a demo to Love Records, which Atte Blom was interested in. However, he insisted that completed English-language songs be translated into Finnish. The band complied and thus, without having played a single gig and without a name, signed a record deal. The Jokela brothers' sister Britta came up with the Kaleva-based band's name: Kaseva, which means handy. Their debut album *Silloin kun* ("When") came out in 1974. The album was well-received and sold more than 22,000 copies. Kaseva played its first gig at Helsinki's Kulttuuritalo in 1975. Kaseva often played in the capital later on as well and wasn't looked down upon when Manserockers in general were considered country bumpkins.

Kaseva's style only got better on the band's second album, *Kun maailma elää* ("When the World Lives"), produced by Otto Donner. Their third album, *Meidän huoneessa* ("In Our Room") came out in 1982, but the band quit after that. Founding member Asko Raivio started the band Karisma afterwards, but he passed away in 1989. After the turn of the millennium, Kaseva returned to the stage, and the 2003 collection *Monen vuoden jälkeen* ("After Many Years") has sold platinum. Nils Jokela and Jouko Järvinen from the original 1970s lineup still continue in Kaseva today. In 2024, the band celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Kaseva was a significant, but often forgotten part of Manserock's history, perhaps because its members didn't really participate in the local rock scene. They largely kept to themselves and continued their day jobs alongside performing. However, Kaseva's timeless music has lived on for decades and has gained new admirers.

Popeda – maailman tamperelaisin Manserock-bändi

Popeda – the most Manse of Manserock bands

Pauli “Pate” Mustajärvi and Ilari “Ilpo” Ainiala, young men from Ikuri, founded a band inspired by punk and new wave in 1977. The original lineup also included drummer Kari Holm and guitarists Ari “Jatsi” Puukka and Tapani “Arwo” Mikkonen. When the band was signed by Poko Records, it was named Pobeda, meaning victory, after the Soviet car brand. However, the band misspelled the name as Popeda. The band’s debut album *Popeda* was released in 1978, and it received mixed reviews. The following albums *Rasvaa koneeseen* (“Grease the machine”), *Hullut koirat* (“Mad dogs”), *Raakaa voimaa* (“Raw power”), and *Mustat enkelit* (“Black angels”) contained some hits but didn’t sell very well when they were first released. However, Popeda toured actively and became known especially for its strong live performances. The group started to build a reputation as Finland’s most epic band to witness live, which has lasted from decade to decade.

Popeda’s lineup has changed numerous times. The most dramatic change came in the form of the young Vesa-Pekka “Costello” Hautamäki, who previously played in the band Sensuuri, when he joined Popeda in 1982. Hautamäki became the band’s most prolific songwriter. Popeda experienced its most traumatic moments in February 1986, when the band’s guitarist Arwo Mikkonen died during the soundcheck of a show at Cabaret Oscar.

In 1983, Popeda broke into Finnish rock’s heavyweight series with the album *Kaasua...* (“Gas...”). The *Harasoo* (“Fine”) album that followed became the band’s first gold record. In perhaps Manserock’s biggest year of success, 1985 saw the release of the album *Pohjantähden alla* (“Under the North Star”), which featured Popeda’s biggest hit of all time, *Kuuma kesä* (“Hot summer”). The legendary hits *Matkalla Alabamaan* (“On the way to Alabama”) and *Kersantti Karoliina* (“Sergeant Caroline”) also helped raise Popeda to the peak of its popularity.

The special Popeda sound born in the 1980s has been heard throughout the decades in the music made by the band’s power duo Pate Mustajärvi and Costello Hautamäki. The style has changed from punk through new wave to a more melodic hard rock. Popeda’s lyrics are characterized by silly macho humor. For good reason, Popeda can be characterized as the most Manse of Manserock bands, and since the 1980s a real cornerstone of Finnish rock.

The band’s 20-year run was celebrated at Pakkahuone in 1997. After that, Popeda experienced highs and lows, success and internal conflicts caused by the rough rock’n’roll life, which led to changes in the lineup. In 2008, the band made a strong comeback with the album *Täydelliset miehet* (“Perfect Men”), which sold the equivalent of a gold record. In the 2010s, Popeda’s journey continued, especially with live shows, to the delight of both loyal fans and new admirers. In 2023, the last original member Pate Mustajärvi announced that he would leave the band and focus on a solo career. Pate and Popeda’s last concert together was at the Tampere Stadium in Ratina in September 2023. However, Popeda continues, and the band’s new vocal soloist Olli Herman was announced on January 1, 2024.

Manserokkarit keikalla

Manserockers on tour

Active touring across different parts of Finland elevated Manserock's reputation. As early as the 1960s, bands such as The Matthews performed quite a lot outside of Tampere, as far as Helsinki and Lapland. Around the same time, professional management and booking began under the leadership of Tapio "Tappi" Suojanen. Everything was strongly in local hands. Tapio Korjus started in the 1970s, and in the 1980s, all the shows of major bands were booked from Jouko Karppanen's or Harri Karvinen's office. Of course, there were also trusted roadies, drivers, and mixers, without whom Manserock's nationwide success probably wouldn't have been realized.

In the 1970s, pop/rock bands played in dance venues, workers' halls, and youth clubs, often for about an hour in between the dance orchestra's performances. School dances were also popular performance venues for young bands. It wasn't until the 1980s that rock bands and artists became main performers at dance venues. More and more rock festivals have been organized since the 1970s as well, bringing together many bands from different parts of the country. After the rise of Suomirock (Finnish rock), foreign performers weren't necessarily needed as main attractions.

Tampere's music club life started to liven up in the 1970s. Gorilla-klubi, run by students from the Technical University, operated in the Verkatehdas premises. Both Eppu Normaali and Popeda played their first gigs there in the late 1970s. The engineering students' I-klubi was also an important performance venue of the era. Bigger individual shows were also organized at the former Technical Institute, or Teku.

The most important venue for rock bands in Tampere was Yo-talo, even though for a long time one needed a student card to enter. At the beginning of the 1970s, Tapio Korjus, who was chosen as the venue's event organizer, threw out the traditional white tablecloths and dance bands and brought in rock'n'roll. However, it was Jukka Kulmala who turned the venue into an actual house of rock years later. Eventually, Yo-talo was too small of a venue for bigger bands. At the end of the 1980s, by the urging of musicians, Tullikamari came to be used for rock concerts.

Juice Leskinen: Manserockin kantaisä ja kummisetä

Juice Leskinen: Manserock's forefather

After the disbandment of Coitus Int, Juice Leskinen continued his musical career in the relatively short-lived band called Juice, that nevertheless released two albums. Musicians Eero "Safka" Pekkonen and Petteri Salminen from the band became long-term collaborators with Juice. Juice's next band was Juice Leskinen Slam, that stayed together until 1981. The band's most significant album was *Ajan Henki* ("The Spirit of the Time"), considered one of Leskinen's best works. The band's record label changed from Love Records to Johanna. The only album Leskinen and his band produced for the prominent Manserock label Poko Records was the Christmas album *Kuusessa ollaan* ("In a Pine-ch") in 1980.

Juice Leskinen's most noteworthy lineup of his career was Juice Leskinen Grand Slam, led by Anssi Tikanmäki, a graduate of the Sibelius Academy. The talented band's 1986 album *Yöleno* ("Night Flight"), composed by skillful musicians, is Leskinen's best-selling album. Only his compilation album *Kautta aikain* ("Through the Ages"), featuring his old hits, has sold more. In 1987, Juice had to stop performing due to health reasons. The following years were overshadowed by problems such as cirrhosis of the liver and an unfounded drug charge. However, Leskinen returned to the stage on his 40th birthday in February 1990. He released the album *Sinä* ("You") and had the honor of being the first performer at the new Tampere Hall.

Leskinen continued his career with Grand Slam for some time until the band became Juice ETC. However, in the 1990s, Juice focused more on writing. His literary production is extensive, ranging from cookbooks to children's books. In the early 2000s, he returned to collaborate with Mikko Alatalo on the album *Senaattori ja Boheemi* ("The Senator and the Bohemian"). Throughout his career, Juice Leskinen made a total of 28 albums with various bands. His last public performance was in the summer of 2006. Juice passed away in November 2006.

Juhani "Juice" Leskinen was a multitalented artist and a contradictory personality, remembered for decades simply by his nickname. His music lives on and thrives. One of Juice's greatest achievements was the development of Finnish-language rock lyrics. Leskinen was a masterful wordsmith who had the opportunity to create music with skilled musicians. He wrote lyrics not only for his own songs but also for numerous other Finnish artists and bands.

For Manserock, Juice Leskinen was a true forefather. The musician who began his career in the early 1970s shared a critical stance toward societal institutions with a generation influenced by punk, and a commitment to prioritizing the content of songs over their technical execution. Leskinen had a significant impact on the development of Finnish rock music and contributed to the acceptance of rock as an art form alongside high culture.

Eppu Normaali – Ylöjärven Takamaalta Manserockin ikoniksi

Eppu Normaali – From the backwoods of Ylöjärvi to the icon of Manserock

Eppu Normaali was formed in 1976 when the Syrjä brothers, Martti and Mikko “Pantse”, their cousin Aku Syrjä, and their schoolmates Juha Torvinen and Mikko Saarela combined their bands Heimo Hämähäkki and Fuzz Band. The future punklegend Ramones’ performance at the Technical Institute in May 1977 clarified the musical direction Eppu Normaali wanted to take. Their appearance at the Gorilla-klubi in the Rock SM (Finnish championship) preliminary competition in October 1977 did not bring success. However, after finding their own punk-inspired style, the band sent a demo tape to the new Tampere-based Poko Rekords record company.

Poko’s Epe Helenius was impressed, and Eppu Normaali got the chance to record. Their debut album *Aknepop* saw the light of day in 1978. *Maximum Jee & Jee*, which came out the following year, was lighter in mood compared to its predecessor. The album convinced both critics and the audience, solidifying Eppu Normaali’s popularity. Mikko Saarela left the band after the album’s release but continued as the main lyricist until 1981. After that, the primary responsibility for lyrics shifted to Martti Syrjä. Mikko Nevalainen from the band Kollaa Kestää became the new bassist.

The following album, *Akun Tehdas* (“Aku’s Factory”), released in 1980, was musically more melodic than its predecessors, but it still carried a humor-infused, socially critical message in its lyrics. The album was well-received and can even be said to have saved Poko Rekords from bankruptcy. In the early 1980s, albums such as *Cocktail Bar, Tie vie* (“The road leads”), and *Aku ja köyhät pojat* (“Aku and the poor boys”) were also released. Their reception was not as favorable as that of earlier albums. However, the albums released between 1984 and 1986, based in guitar-heavy pop-rock—*Rupisia riimejä, karmeita tarinoita* (“Coarse rhymes and grim stories”), *Kahdeksas ihme* (“The eighth wonder”), and *Valkoinen kupla* (“The white bubble”)—ultimately exploded onto the Manserock scene. They permanently elevated the band into the heavyweight class of Finnish rock and solidified its status as a Manserock icon. Who among Finns doesn’t know how to sing or hum along to the catchy hits from these albums? A few include *Voi kuinka me sinua kaivataan* (“Oh how we miss you”), *Kitara, taivas ja tähdet* (The guitar, sky, and stars”), *Vuonna ’85* (“In the year ‘85”) and *Vihreän joen rannalla (kauan sitten)* (“On the banks of the green river (long ago)”).

In the late 1980s, Sami Ruusukallio became Eppu Normaali’s new bassist, and he continues in the band’s lineup to this day. The band’s breathtaking album release pace slowed as the new decade approached. After the release of *Studio Etana* in 1994, the band took a hiatus that lasted until 2003. During this break, the band members pursued several side projects. In the new millennium, Eppu Normaali dispelled rumors of disbandment. They released new albums, went on concert tours, performed at large stadium concerts, and even made a movie titled *Eput*. In the summer of 2024, Eppu Normaali hit the road again, this time with pianist Iiro Rantala.

While Eppu Normaali has never officially declared itself as a producer of Manserock, it has played a key role in elevating Manserock to the ranks of Finland’s most significant musical phenomena.

Kaikki soittavat Manserockia

Everyone plays Manserock

The early 1970s featured glam rock and progressive rock, which captivated the youth, but these fell out of favor as the end of the decade approached. In response, punk rock emerged, characterized by simplicity, speed, rawness, and often an anarchistic lifestyle. The ideology of punk and its slightly tidier and more commercialized version, the new wave, asserted that everyone had the right to play music, with musical skill being of little importance. In this atmosphere, Eppu Normaali and Popeda were born at the turn of the 1980s. In the wake of these bands, along with Juice Leskinen who had started earlier, numerous other bands emerged in the Tampere region, contributing to the nationwide phenomenon of Manserock.

With the rise of punk and new wave in 1978, Sensuuri, founded by teenagers Vesa-Pekka "Costello" Hautamäki and Petri "Pepe" Lempinen, gained prominence, along with Harri "Hate" Konttinen's band Karanteeni. Kollaa Kestää, led by Jyrki Siukonen, continued until 1980. As a counterbalance to the commercialized new wave, bands playing hardcore punk emerged in Tampere. Representing this genre were Kohu -63, Bastards, and Riistetyt. These bands have gained worldwide recognition. As a side project of Riistetyt, the cult-favorite, black-clad band Pyhät Nuket was formed, with its brief existence lasting only from 1984 to 1986.

The band Sidi ja Hermottomat, consisting of Hannu "Sidi" Mäki-Laurila, Tommi Kekoni, and Antti Vihinen, created music that blended the energy of new wave with traditional British pop-rock. The Tampere-based band released two albums in the early 1980s, receiving particularly positive feedback from rock journalists. However, the musical paths of the band members diverged, leading Mäki-Laurila to establish a lighter pop music group called Kairo. Meanwhile, Kekoni joined the grandiose American-style rock band Salmela Komitea. Jukka Salmela, previously the vocalist of Tabula Rasa, became the lead singer.

In the 1980s, Manserock was primarily written in Finnish, but there were exceptions. Guitarist Heikki Silvennoinen assembled a new band to replace the Frenz group, and thus Catwalk was formed. The lineup included Mikko Löytty, Heikki Vihinen, and Matti Takala. Catwalk's musical style was blues rock, which was not particularly trendy at that time. Despite the band's skilled musicians, it never reached the pinnacle of success. After Catwalk, Silvennoinen continued his solo career and gained nationwide fame through the Kummeli project, which, according to Silvennoinen, was clearly Manserock.

Horsepower, formed in 1986, can also be included within the genre of Manserock, even though their music was English-language hard rock. The band gained popularity especially due to their energetic live performances. The band's activity dwindled in 1994, but it made a comeback in 2018.

Manserockin harvinaiset naiset

Manserock's rare women

In the 1970s, aside from iskelmä pop singers, women were rare among Finnish popular musicians, let alone in the world of rock music. Individual vocalists such as Muska Babitzin, Maarit Hurmerinta, and Vicky Rosti paved the way, but the role of women was still quite limited. This was also the case in the early stages of Manserock. The situation changed significantly in the 1980s when women actively began to form their own bands, play different instruments, and create their own music. Successful foreign female bands and artists served as role models, as Manserock, riding the wave of Finnish rock success, now also highlighted women.

The most well-known female Manserock band was Ilona, founded in 1996. Its original lineup consisted of Tiina "Toni" Lähteenmäki, Sirpa Tamlander, Leena Heikkilä, Taru Huhtajärvi and Pauliina Hulkko. The band gained popularity after finishing third in the Rock SM (Finnish Championship) competition. No other female band has achieved a better standing in the competition. Ilona was signed to Poko Rekords, and the band released three albums. Ilona's journey came to an end in 1989, after which the lead singer Toni Lähteenmäki pursued a solo career, and the drummer Taru Huhtajärvi continued in Juice Leskinen's ETC lineup.

In 1989, Kikka Laitinen, along with her friends Kaija Kurki-Suonio and Minna Kuivasmäki, formed the band Gasoline Girls & Petrol Boys, which actively performed until 1992. Kikka Laitinen has continued her musical career to the present day. Another notable female musician who played Manserock is the violinist Pirkko "Pike" Kontkanen, known from the band Kumma Heppu & Lopunajan Voidellut, as well as from Juice Leskinen's albums *Sinä* ("You") and *Minä* ("Me").

Punk also provided women with a new field of action. The Tampere-based band Punk Lurex Ok was formed in 1993, with Tiina Wesslin and Riitta Suojanen as its leading figures. In the new millennium, women from Tampere have increasingly emerged as active musicians and music creators. Representing more recent female energy in Manserock are acts like Maria Mattila's Mara Balls, as well as Heli Alku and Pike Kontkanen's Darlingbee.

Manserockin sukupuu

Manserock's family tree

In the 1960s, a large circle of musicians in Tampere got to know each other, moved from one band to another, and formed new lineups. The family tree, compiled by Jukka Junttila and realized by Kari Lahtinen, illustrates the different phases of central Manserock bands and their members. More detailed information about the individual bands and musicians can be found on the screens on the wall.

Manserockin hengessä

In the spirit of Manserock

Manserock's triumph made Tampere attractive to musicians from other cities as well. They engaged in diverse collaborations with the local musicians, but strictly speaking, these artists and bands are not directly associated with Manserock. For this reason, artists such as Dave Lindholm, Pauli Hanhiniemi, Heikki Salo, and the band Yö are not presented in this exhibition, even though they have all later become associated with Tampere. Of course, opinions on this matter may vary!

Manserock has also produced successful acts who have ventured successfully onto the international stage. The most prominent example is the global success of the band Negative in the early 2000s. Formed in 1997 by boys in junior high, this emotionally charged rock'n'roll group gained international acclaim between 2006 and 2012. Performing in English, Negative did not see itself as part of the Manserock scene. However, Jonne Aaron, who embarked on a solo career in 2013 and sings in Finnish, strongly carries on the legacy of Manserock in his music. Another well-known Manserock musician who has made a mark internationally is the rock-jazz fusion guitarist Jartse Tuominen. His first band was the Nokia-based Outburst in the 1980s, and his career continued in the bands Takala Project, Travel Bros, and Indiana. In the 1990s, Tuominen moved to Texas and has collaborated with numerous renowned international musicians over the decades. In the 2000s, he has returned to Finland during the GTR tour, which extensively showcases guitar legends, touring again in the spring of 2024.

Manserock's spirit is strongly carried on by the Pispala-based Hauli Bros, formed in 1996, as well as the Selkä & Issias ensemble. Generations of Manserock united in the fall of 2023 when Hauli Bros played on the Coitus Int 50 Revival album and toured alongside the surviving original members of Coitus Int. The band Kormus, founded in 2013 by Anton Äikkää and Kari Luomaharju, got its name from Popeda's debut album and also holds the Manserock flag high. While actively touring, Kormus has released three albums. Meanwhile, drawing from Kaseva's melodic pop music is the indie band Amuri, formed in the 2020s.

Literally representing the second generation of Manserockers, those who have embarked on a musical career following in their fathers' footsteps include Matthau Mikojan (Matti Mikkonen), Jimi and Alex Hautamäki, Jenni Mustajärvi, as well as Kalle, Eero, and Aaro Alatalo.

Manserock ja media

Manserock and the media

Especially during a time when youth music was heard little on radio or television, the influence of the press on the exposure of bands was significant. Therefore, Manserock was particularly promoted by local music magazines, especially in the early days. Of course, Manserock bands were later covered by youth magazines from Helsinki as well, such as *Intro*, *Suosikki*, and *OK*.

The *Musa* magazine was founded in 1972 by young blues enthusiasts from Valkeakoski, Jukka "Waldemar" Wallenius and Kari Kantalainen. The editorial team also included Pekka Markkula, Timo Kanerva, Jussi Niemi, Tapio Korjus, and Mikko Montonen, forming the core group of Finnish rock journalism. The central goals of *Musa* magazine were to showcase good music and distribute accurate information. However, the editorial team grew tired of the treatment received from the publishing company, leading to their departure and the founding of a new music magazine, *Soundi*. Its first issue was published in January 1975. The new magazine aimed to showcase good and successful Finnish-language rock music, especially from outside the Helsinki metropolitan area. Musicians from Tampere provided just that. *Soundi* succeeded in its mission, and as the magazine spread across the country, Manserock gained recognition. *Musa* and *Soundi* played a crucial role in the flourishing of Epe Helenius's record store business, Epe's Music Shop, which was established around the same time. Advertisements and mail-order services from Epe's Music Shop gained widespread national visibility in the magazines.

Yleisradio persuaded the already distant youth back to the radio waves with Rockradio, whose broadcasts began in the summer of 1980. With the introduction of local radio stations in 1985, one of the pioneers was Radio 957 in Tampere. Despite featuring a broad and diverse musical program, Manserock and its creators were a significant part of the radio's activities. Radio 957 broadcast live shows from Yo-talo, which was located across the street, and musicians easily found their way to radio interviews. Juice Leskinen, among others, had warm ties to the station and also assisted in its operations. Manserock group Alivaltiosihtööri, founded in 1985, started its humor and parody program on Radio 957.

Popular music on television was even rarer than on the radio, but TV 2 operating in Tampere brought Manserock to the forefront, for example, through Mikko Alatalo's programs *Iltatähti* in the 1970s and *Hittimittari* in the following decade. One of Finland's first female rock journalists was Heli Nevakare from Tampere, whose unique program *Rockstop* in the late 1980s and early 1990s focused on more international trends, without forgetting Manserock. In the 1990s, the program *Jyrki* started, and its young reporters were quite Manserock-positive.

Epen levykauppa tuo rockin koko Suomeen

Epe's Music Shop brings rock to the whole of Finland

In the 1960s and 1970s, Yleisradio rarely played rock music, so the only way to get the hits heard on Radio Luxembourg was to acquire the records. In Finland, the record market was almost exclusively dominated by Musiikki-Fazer, keeping prices high. Speed was not a strong suit for record stores either. A young entrepreneur from Tampere, Kari "Epe" Helenius stepped into this market gap. He began ordering records from England with his friends and came up with the idea of bringing them into the country to sell at lower prices than other retailers.

Epe's Music Shop was opened on Kuninkaankatu in September 1972. The idea behind the record store was to maintain a complete selection of LP records so that customers wouldn't need to order them from abroad. The store became a popular meeting and hangout spot, where the salespeople sometimes assertively intervened in customers' purchase intentions and musical tastes. Epe's Music Shop's advantage over traditional record stores was its speed and lower prices. This didn't sit well with the stores that adhered to cartel pricing, leading Epe's to face several unsuccessful lawsuits over the years.

In the late 1970s, Epe's moved to Kyttälänkatu, and had by then become the largest and most significant record store in the country. Mail-order sales were a part of operations from almost the very beginning. This allowed young people all over Finland to acquire records, contributing significantly to the emergence of bands throughout the country, not just in Helsinki. The impact of Epe's on an entire generation was so significant that Tampere was often chosen as a school trip destination because of it. Särkänniemi amusement park was a close second reason.

In the late 1980s, business continued to grow and Mega Epe's stores were opened in Tampere, Helsinki, Turku, and Lahti. The stores initially thrived, but the devaluation at the beginning of the 1990s skyrocketed the prices of foreign currency loans, which ran the record store into financial difficulties. Simultaneously, the shift from LP to CD formats reduced the need for large retail spaces. The story of Mega Epe's ended in bankruptcy, but Epe's Music Shop on Kyttälänkatu continued until 2014.

Poko Records luo tamperelaisen hittitehtaan

Poko Rekords creates a hit factory in Tampere

Helsinki-based Love Records was the most important record company for Manserockers in the 1970s, but getting a record deal wasn't easy for Tampere-based bands. Love Records went bankrupt at the end of the decade. In 1977, Epe Helenius decided to establish his own record label in Tampere. He was already familiar with the music business and consumer preferences through record sales. Poko Rekords was born, which got its name from the dance associated with punk music, i.e. pogo. The Manse version was written with the letter k.

Even though Epe Helenius had a special affinity for punk music, Poko Rekords' first artist was the rockabilly band Teddy & The Tigers from Kerava, which became very popular. This immediate success gave the new record label credibility, and it was taken seriously in the future as well. Epe Helenius's next discovery and future goldmine turned out to be Eppu Normaali, which became the most significant and best-selling artist for Poko Rekords for decades. The demo tape sent by the young men from Ylöjärvi immediately convinced Helenius, and their debut album *Aknepop* was released in 1978. Their close collaboration continued until the release of the album *Sadan vuoden päästäkin* ("A hundred years from now") in 2004.

The third band that Poko decided to invest in during the early stages was Popeda. The band's demo tape didn't initially excite Epe Helenius, but a private gig arranged in a garage in Ikuri convinced him that the Finnish Rolling Stones had been born. Despite knowing that the band would only find its audience through extensive touring, a record deal was signed. Tours were made possible by Jouko Karppanen, the trusted confidant of Poko's bands and Epe Helenius, and the country's best-known tour manager, who took Popeda under his wing for decades to come.

Epe Helenius became Finland's most prominent record mogul, and Poko Rekords' reputation grew. Many other notable Finnish rock bands joined its ranks, including Yö, J. Karjalainen with various line-ups, Hassisen Kone, Sielun Veljet, Ismo Alanko, The 69 Eyes, Juliet Jonesin Sydän, and Aknestik.

Manserockin fanit

Manserock fans

In the early days of Manserock, young people actively attended concerts, and the records of Manserock bands sold well. However, actual fan culture was still relatively modest. Some homemade fan magazines were published, and t-shirts were printed. The demand for fan merchandise increased with the rising popularity of Manserock, however.

The Tampere-based clothing store X-Dreams was the first to respond to the Manserock boom of the 1980s. It sold products that were difficult to find elsewhere in Finland. Some of the items were ordered from England, but X-Dreams introduced fan merchandise for Finnish bands for the first time, which were designed and printed by hand. Licensing issues weren't a major concern – bands were just happy that someone came up with the idea of printing their images on fan shirts. Popular items also included products that fans had seen artists wearing, especially pants. X-Dreams' store became a highly popular tourist destination in Tampere, and mail-order business ensured lively commerce throughout Finland. The store eventually went bankrupt, but its traditions have been continued by both Rockpaidat.com and Backstage Rock Shop.

A huge phenomenon in Manserock fan culture was also the musical *Vuonna 1985* (“In 1985”), which ran at the Tampere Workers' Theatre from 2006 to 2012. The story built around the lyrics of popular Manserock songs was seen and heard by almost 300,000 viewers. This most-watched Finnish musical of all time is still performed in other theatres. The musical has also been adapted into a film, a summer theatre show, a board game, and a book.

Manserock fandom has become a cross-generational experience. The decades-long careers of Eppu Normaali and Popeda have culminated in stadium concerts in the 2000s. Fans from two or even three generations have come to see these bands. Eppu Normaali performed at the Tampere Stadium in Ratina with the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra in the summer of 2016 and at the opening of Nokia Arena in December 2021. Popeda and Pate Mustajärvi concluded their 46-year journey with a grand concert in September 2023.

Manserockin studiot

Manserock studios

For young bands, making a record was a dream and goal that would get them on the radio, resulting in a wider performance market, fame, and popularity. One hurdle was getting into a recording studio, as studios were mostly located in Helsinki, and it wasn't easy for Tampere-based bands to make an impression. The only studio outside the capital was Microvox in Lahti, run by Pekka Nurmikallio from 1968 to 1982. Many legendary Manserock albums from the 1970s were recorded at Microvox.

An essential prerequisite for the rise and flourishing of Manserock was the establishment of recording studios in the vicinity of Tampere. The first to take on the project was Mika Sundqvist, who worked at Tampereen Musiikki. He and his friend Simo Luukkainen founded the MSL-studio in Mettistö, Ylöjärvi, in 1973. Epe Helenius encouraged the project, as he was interested in the possibility of recording Poko Rekords' albums for a reasonable cost near Tampere. MSL's first Poko recording was Popeda's *Erkki ja Leena*. Sundqvist relocated his MSL Studio to Moisio, Lempäälä, in 1980, and to Kihniö in 1993. The studio's operations came to an end in 2016. Thanks to MSL-studio, Mika Sundqvist became one of Finland's most significant music producers. He can rightfully be called the godfather of Manserock, as the most successful albums of Eppu Normaali, Popeda, Juice Leskinen's bands, and many other artists were made at his studio. Additionally, numerous other notable Finnish bands, such as Yö, Hassisen Kone, and Juliet Jonesin Sydän, recorded their albums at MSL-studio.

Another central studio for Manserock has been the JJ studio, founded in 1980. Juuso Nordlund, a bassist who played in various Juice Leskinen lineups and Mikko Alatalo's backing bands, became enthusiastic about studio work together with drummer Juke Aronen. They purchased the equipment of Seppo Lindell's 8-track studio, whose focus was on spiritual music, located on Kyttälänkatu, and established their own studio. Nordlund learned the ins and outs of recording work from Heikki Silvennoinen, who worked in the studio. JJ-studio moved to its current location along Hämeenpuisto in 1985. Numerous Manserockers collaborated in creating the space. Artists who have recorded in the studio include Pate Mustajärvi, Juice Leskinen, Kari Peitsamo, Horsepower, and Anssi Tikanmäki Film Orchestra. Still operational, JJ is one of the oldest analog studios in the country.

Tampere has also been home to smaller studios connected to Manserock, such as Harasoo, founded by Costello Hautamäki in the late 1980s, Eppu Normaali's Tajukankaalla, Jani Viitanen's Headline Studio, and the Akun Tehdas studios.