



## HYBRID FESTIVAL 2021



**TARTU**

ESTONIAN STUDIES CENTRE  
VEMU: MUSEUM OF ESTONIANS ABROAD

Estonian Music Week acknowledges and thanks the original caretakers and knowledge keepers of this territory: the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Chippewa and the Anishinaabeg, The Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat Confederacy, and all Indigenous peoples. We honour Treaty 13 and Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant and take seriously our responsibility to peaceably share and care for the resources that surround us. We are honoured to work, create and be inspired in this meeting place called Tkaronto, together with the many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people from across Turtle Island.



Music is as old as culture itself and universal across human societies. In Estonia, musical traditions date back to at least the 12th century. Since 1869, the beginning of the Estonian national awakening, the song festival "Laulupidu" has been the bearer of Estonian national identity. It is a tradition that has stood the test of time and attested to the strength and determination of the Estonian people.

Music played an important role during the restoration of Estonian independence too, helping to bring down Soviet tyranny. The sense of purpose and togetherness that comes with music and song has played an instrumental in Estonia's path to freedom and democracy. The Singing Revolution demonstrated Estonia's ability to show resistance with grace, a unique gift that Estonians should be proud of.

People, customs, and culture change over time. So does music, whose particular styles are redefined year after year and decade after decade. Yet the musical language unites different sounds, and the way musical vibrations make us feel, are one and the same, giving music a timeless quality and an ability to convey meaning throughout time and space. It is no wonder music accompanies people through all of life's major events, all across the world.

Due to the pandemic, the last 18 months have been very difficult for everyone, Estonians and Canadians alike. In difficult times, something that helps is the feeling of mutual support and togetherness that Estonians call the "elbow feeling" (küünarnukitunne). When it is impossible to stand together, shoulder to shoulder or elbow to elbow, music in its different styles and forms still has the ability to create this "elbow feeling." When human touch is out of reach, music can still touch us in profound ways, driving away despair and confusion, bringing joy, and changing our sense of the world.

I am very pleased to acknowledge that EMW will once again take place this year, at a time when COVID-19 has made us more worried than usual about what the future holds for us and our loved ones. It is heartening to see that despite COVID-19 induced limitations, organizers and musicians have been able to come together and find a way to bring Estonian music to global audiences. EMW 2021 is an impressive and inspiring team effort.

This year's EMW reflects a diverse Estonian music landscape, where traditional Estonian sounds are played alongside numerous contemporary genres like Pop and R&B. It is sure to be a great show. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to all organizers and musicians of EMW 2021 on this achievement and wish the audiences, whether attending concerts online or in person, a great musical experience.

Please follow the COVID-19 protocols and take care of yourselves and other guests! Stay healthy! Enjoy the EMW 2021!

**Toomas Lukk**  
Estonian Ambassador to Canada

Estonian Music Week, the seed that germinated during the 100th anniversary year of the Republic of Estonia in 2018, has grown into a viable plant. In the autumn of 2019, the second festival took place, this time together with the IT conference Latitude 44. And as we'd hoped, a rich offering of EMW concerts took place between festivals.

COVID-19 first confused our plans, but then inspired the use of new formats. EMW's online concerts have crossed national borders and broken spectator records. The new era has also brought new players: digitally competent young people with fresh ideas and great love for music have joined the team. The awareness of the festival and the number of friends is growing thanks to professional marketing and active networking.

With our third festival we are building on our digital learning and taking on new challenges. Our concerts are split between two stages more than 6700 kilometers apart, live audiences in both and the whole thing live-streamed around the world. While international travel is still difficult we are able to stay true to our mission of connecting Canadian and Estonian musicians. We are particularly excited about what is in store for you. The venues are legendary, the musicians are talented, and this festival is sure to be filled with memorable performances. And what a treat it is to connect the Estonian diaspora and share this moment together. The phrase "it takes a village" most certainly applies to this festival. We could not have done it without our partner, team, volunteers, donors, sponsors and supporters.

Thank you so much for making EMW 2021 possible!

**Piret Noorhani**

Festival Director, EMW, and Chief Archivist, VEMU



**Sebastian Buccioni**

Executive and Artistic Director, EMW



Tervitame!

I am excited about this unique musical event featuring outstanding Estonian, Canadian and Indigenous musicians playing in famous musical locales on two continents. Philly Joe's Jazz Club from Tallinn's Freedom Square, Toronto's Paradise Theatre on Bloor Street West and the legendary El Mocambo on Spadina. Musical fans will be able to enjoy these events live in person or experience them remotely via Facebook and YouTube. This is a not-to-be-missed musical experience that combines technology, fabulous musicians and music lovers locally and everywhere around the world - that is Estonian Music Week (EMW).

There will be music for everyone's tastes - including R&B, Indie Rock, Soul, Folk, Regilaul and Inuindie that will provide avenues to new cultures, new communities and we hope to attract many new musical fans. Music is an universal language and EMW is showcasing the power of music with this selection of musical genres, diversified musicians and a global outreach to its listeners.

I hope everyone involved will share my excitement, attend these events in person or remotely, and continue to support the EMW for future events that promise to be just as distinctive and enjoyable. Enjoy!

**Jaan Meri**

President, Estonian Studies Centre



# NIGHT ONE: NEW VOICES IN R&B

October 22 | 6PM EDT

**LIVE AT PARADISE THEATRE IN TORONTO, CANADA  
& PHILLY JOE'S IN TALLINN, ESTONIA**

**STREAMING & ON-DEMAND AT [WWW.EMW2021.CA](http://WWW.EMW2021.CA)**

R&B music hits you deep down in the soul. Packed with emotion and impossible not to dance to. Over its 80 year history those have been the constants, yet R&B is ever evolving. Night One brings you to the forefront of that evolution as three unique female artists forge their identity in this world of R&B. They show us that there are still more possibilities both sonically and lyrically. As writers and performers they explore important themes such as gender identity, mental health, and sexuality as they reclaim a genre that has historically favoured a male perspective.



## RITA RAY Estonia

**Estonia's femme fatale. That classic soul sound backed by a 4-piece of power players.**

Soul, classic R&B and old-school disco as her forté, Rita Ray is a young singer and composer from Estonia. Known for her powerful, yet touching voice, and lyrics that carry an unusual dose of honesty, she is yet to leave a heart unmelted. While seemingly a gentle small-town girl, Miss Ray is actually the femme fatale singing from life experience. Her solid musical foundation becomes evident from the way that she composes, writes and co-produces her tracks together with the close-knit band and Solid Gold Sound production team. The young artist's growing confidence as a composer has guided her newer music towards larger cinematic and symphonic soundscapes. For Rita Ray's soul-stirring live performances she is joined by her 4-piece band.



***Artist Sponsor: Humphrey Miles Newbigging Funeral Home***



# KAILI KINNON Toronto

**Estonian Roots, Toronto born and raised. Smoky alt-pop by rare and splendid voice.**

With a "rare and splendid voice" (L'Express), Kaili Kinnon is a 'smoky alt-pop' artist from Toronto. A life-long musician, Kaili has made her home in pop since 2016. In 2018, Kinnon toured Europe and released four singles and an EP. In 2019, while recovering from a brain injury, Kinnon released 'Tenderness' and toured Estonia. She started 2020 with a sold-out show at the Drake Underground. With travel and touring put on hold, she has been working on new songs and doing regular livestreams in self-isolation. Kinnon's latest single 'Bone Alien' marks her evolution into an alt-pop sound which rises to the occasion of her lush and powerful voice.



*Made possible by Koger Valuations Inc*

# ESTYR Toronto

**Alt-R&B and Indie Rock. Lush vocals telling lyrical stories of femininity, heartbreak, liminality, and Toronto's suburbs.**

Estyr weaves stories of femininity, heartbreak, liminality, and Toronto's suburbs into songs layered with lush vocals and warm acoustic guitar. Her songs move between indie rock and alt R&B styles while remaining firmly rooted in lyrical storytelling. Whether performing solo, with upright bassist Brandon Davis, or with experimental band Tiger Balme, she's noted for her dynamic and down-to-earth stage presence, engaging audiences to laugh, reflect, and heal.



# NIGHT TWO: PERSEVERING LANGUAGES

October 23 | 5PM EDT

**LIVE AT THE EL MOCAMBO IN TORONTO, CANADA  
& PHILLY JOE'S IN TALLINN, ESTONIA**

**STREAMING & ON-DEMAND AT [WWW.EMW2021.CA](http://WWW.EMW2021.CA) UNTIL NOVEMBER 5**

Languages are only alive as long as they are spoken. Through colonization, oppression and globalization, languages run the risk of disappearing altogether. And with them the culture, knowledge, and history they hold. Music emerges as a unique way to preserve these languages, folklore, and stories. From four unique perspectives, four innovative musicians explore their own heritage: including a two thousand year old regilaul (runo song) shared by Baltic Finnic peoples, some glimpses into singing traditions of other Finno-Ugric peoples and recitative-like singing of Inuit peoples with intricate vocal technique and complex rhythmic structure. This eclectic group of musicians vary in their approach from authentic covering to creative weaving of nearly lost and familiar languages into their music.



FESTIVAL PARTNER

ESTONIAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA  
EESTI SIHTKAPITAL KANADAS

## BEATRICE DEER BAND

**Montreal**

**Pioneer of Inuindie. Inuit folk tales, legends, and the search for understanding and meaning within yourself.**

Canadian Aboriginal Music Award-winning singer-songwriter Beatrice Deer hails from Nunavik. Half-Inuk and half-Mohawk, Deer left her small hometown of Quaqtaq, Quebec in 2007 for three life-changing reasons: deepening her trademark blend of traditional Inuit throat singing with contemporary indie rock, growth and spiritual depth and reconciliation with self. Deer's themes range from classical Inuit folk tales and legends to the importance of finding understanding and the search for meaning within personal growth.



# DUO RUUT Estonia

**Two good friends joined around one instrument: the zither, kannel. Ancestral traditions breathe new life into minimalist creations.**

Duo Ruut (Duo Square) is an intersection between two friends, but musicians of a fairly different background and taste. After getting new inspiration from the folklore of their ancestors, in 2017, Katariina Kivi and Ann-Lisett Rebane found themselves sitting together, holding one Estonian zither. In a short period of time Duo Ruut has already travelled around the world, including a tour in Japan or performance at prestigious Celtic Connections in Glasgow. Their debut album "Tuule sõnad" (Words of the Wind) was awarded the Debut Album of the Year by Estonian Ethno Music Awards 2020.



# ERIK LAAR Toronto

**Turntablist and time traveller.**

**Weaving tradition into big bad beats.**

Toronto born, raised, and home with Estonian heritage. Experimental multi genre producer, turntablist, vocalist, and instrumentalist. Organic analog with a digital filter. Big bad beats with a soft side. Owner, director, and instructor at Off Centre DJ School. Erik's diverse musical interests led him to dig into the VEMU sound collection and found inspiration for his new works in Estonian folk music, including the regilaul tradition.



# VÄIKE HELLERO & FRIENDS Estonia

**Collectors and keepers of folklorian soundscapes. Sung in its original form, a fresh perspective to the modern listener.**

Väike Hellero has been singing together for 20 years. They have gathered songs from Estonia and its region Setoland, from Izhorians and Votians that date back many centuries. Sourced from the collections of Estonian Folklore Archives, the songs are sung as they were sung originally. The crackling wax rolls and gramophone records echo a different soundscape, lost for the most part, strange and exotic for the modern listener. All the bigger will be the joy of getting acquainted with this world that refuses to fade away.





# STORYTELLING AND KIDS' CONCERT

October 23 | 12PM EDT

## EXPLORE THE MAGICAL WORLD OF **PUMPKIN AND STRETCH** WITH WRITER AND MUSICIAN VINCENT TEETSOV

Pumpkin and Stretch, created by Vincent Teetsov and illustrator Laani Heinar, is a children's picture book about friendship, growth, and learning to help one another shine through the darkness.

Through a lively book reading and songs based on the adventures of Pumpkin and Stretch, Vincent will be your guide through their colourful world, into a mysterious cave and a forest abounding with silly, jazzy, and cultural creatures. There to bring the many danceable rhythms to life will be Vincent's friend and drummer Stefan Loebus.

**LIVE AT TARTU COLLEGE  
& STREAMING AND ON-DEMAND AT [WWW.EMW2021.CA](http://WWW.EMW2021.CA)**



## **VINCENT TEETSOV**

Vincent is a musician and writer who makes songs with a focus on storytelling and steady grooves. Through his many independent music releases, stories, and writing about culture, he communicates from a perspective of sincerity and curiosity about the world.

## **STEFAN LOEBUS**

After falling in love with the drums in his early teens, Stefan was gigging in local venues and being hired for recording sessions before he graduated high school. Over the last decade Stefan has been injecting his signature sound into a wide variety of Canadian artists' recordings and live performances.





# EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

## Screening + Talk

### **UNUSTATUD RAHVASTE JÄLGEDES/IN THE STEPS OF FORGOTTEN PEOPLES**

Streaming and on-demand at [www.emw2021.ca](http://www.emw2021.ca)  
until November 1

ERR 2021, 88 min, Director: Erle Veber, Camera: Meelis Mäekivi,  
Editor: Ruth Alaküla

The film is followed by a discussion with conductor Endrik Üksvärav. Finno-Ugrist Taisto Raudalainen and folklorist and ethnomusicologist Taive Särg.



## Museum Tour

### **EXPLORING THE FINNO-UGRIC WORLD**

Streaming and on-demand at [www.emw2021.ca](http://www.emw2021.ca)

A virtual tour of the Estonian National Museum exhibition Echo of the Urals  
by Museum Educator Anti Lillak

## UPCOMING VEMU EVENTS

### Lecture

#### **DWIGHT STORRING ON MAKING THE DOCUMENTARY "ANNA KALJAS: THE UNTOLD STORY".**

October 27th at 7 pm EDT, In English, on Zoom, more info at [vemu.ca](http://vemu.ca)

Documentary filmmaker Dwight Storrington will be giving a lecture about his experience making the documentary "Anna Kaljas: The Untold Story".

### Lecture + Screening

#### **LAUR VALLIKIVI LECTURE "NENETS REINDEER NOMADS IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY". LIIVO NIGLAS' DOCUMENTARY "THE BRIGADE"**

November 14 at 2 pm EDT on VEMU YouTube channel, in English

Associate professor of Ethnology at the Institute of Cultural Research, Tartu University Laur Vallikivi and his colleague at Tartu University, ethnologist and filmmaker Liivo Niglas will give an insight into the life and struggles of the Nenets people today. Followed by a Q&A with Laur Vallikivi and Liivo Niglas.

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## PROJECT



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## CORPORATE SPONSORS



# IN MEMORIAM: 5 PILLARS OF THE ESTONIAN-CANADIAN MUSICAL COMMUNITY

Article sponsored by Humphrey Miles Newbigging Funeral Home  
in celebration of Estonian Music Week 2021 - Written by Kati Kiillaspea

Originally published in *Estonian Life* October 22, 2021

Now that Estonian Music Week is almost upon us and live music is making a slow but sure comeback after an almost two year hiatus, it's a good time to remember and reflect upon poignant composers and musicians who have made a lasting impact on our Estonian-Canadian community here but are no longer with us. Take a walk down memory lane with EMW and think back on the contribution of these pillars of Estonian culture and arts in Toronto and their legacies.

Among the first to begin paving a path for the future generations of musicians was conductor, organist, and composer **Roman Toi (1916-2018)**. He came to Canada in 1949 and first settled in Montreal, soon after moving to Toronto where he began conducting the Toronto Estonian Male Choir in the following year. That was the beginning of his decades long involvement with choirs in our community, he conducted the Estonian Mixed Choir for a long while as well as the "Estonia" Mixed Choir (of which he was also the founder) among others. Many remember Toi sitting behind the organ at St. Peter's and St. Andrew's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Churches during services well into his 90's, a position he held very near and dear for years. He was directly involved with the Ontario Choral Federation in the 70's and served as president in 1973-74 in a time where he was at the height of his involvement with our choirs. Roman also brought some Estonian influence into the Royal Conservatory of Music, teaching courses in theory, conducting and composition from 1972 onwards. He also had a great influence in keeping our spirit alive through the Soviet times by organizing several culturally significant festivals such as Men's Music Days, diaspora Song Festivals and ESTO's internationally. Let's not forget that he was also guest and honorary conductor at Song Festivals in Estonia from 1990 onwards, something that is still a big source of pride for our community. Among his compositional works are nine cantatas, nine symphonies, and over 80 choral works. Many describe him as someone who was one of the main torchbearers, so to speak, of our culture and made a truly great impact not only here but back in Estonia where he is still honoured through concerts at which his pieces are performed frequently.

Around the same time as Toi was beginning to be active, **Udo Kasemets (1919-2014)** was also starting to make an impact on the Canadian community on a larger scale. He can be credited with putting Estonia on the map musically in the Toronto and Hamilton areas, at a time where experimentalist music was just blossoming. Kasemets was most notably one of the first who adopted the methods of famed avant-garde composer John Cage and introduced his ideas and techniques to Canadians. He was a jack of many trades, working as a conductor, lecturer, pianist, organist, teacher, and writer over the years. While also being relatively active in the Estonian community, he was more responsible for introducing Estonia to Canadians in general, through his musical teachings, compositions and articles, at a time when it was most crucial to showcase the importance of a small but strong country actively resisting its occupiers. Throughout the decades, Kasemets was a respected music critic at the Toronto Daily Star, organized Toronto's first new music series "Men, Minds and Music" ('62-'63), and directed the first Toronto Festival of Arts and Technology titled "SightSoundSystems." While his music is just now beginning to be played and presented on a wider scale in Estonia, he is respected and remembered in our community as someone who brought our little country into the limelight at a time when it was most necessary.



Lembit Avesson



Kaljo Raid, Asta Kaups, Peeter Kaups, Charles Kipper





Kaljo Raid, Lembit Avesson, Arvo Sõmer, Udo Kasemets

Much in the same way that Kasemets played a part in introducing new musical concepts, **Kaljo Raid (1921-2005)** brought his stellar musical background with him when he emigrated to Canada in the early 50's and begun to enrich young, budding musicians in Toronto as well as paving a path for them in the future. His studies under famed Estonian composer Heino Eller fueled his passion for music and the want to share that with others when he arrived here. As of 1954, Raid was the pastor of the Estonian Baptist Church and his chosen spiritual path was a new way for him to spread his love of music to young Baptist congregation members at the time.

He started several musical groups within the congregation, among them a unique mandolin orchestra which even had performances on TV over the years! He founded the local, weekly Estonian language radio broadcasts and kept close contact with Estonians around the world consistently. Being a cellist, Raid involved himself in the community on a larger scale by performing at several cultural functions and events over the years with violinist Valdeko Kangro. Over the years, he wrote around 500 works, among them symphonies, chamber music, cantatas and choral pieces. Working with such internationally famed conductors such as Neeme Järvi, Raid's compositions made a definite mark on the musical world at large as well. He is a respected performer and composer that definitely made a lasting impact on our diaspora community and helped in keeping our culture alive.

On the topic of religion and music, **Lembit Avesson (1925-2008)** was an organist, choral conductor, and composer who, much like Raid, expressed his spiritualism through his many solo organ works, choral compositions, and vocal-symphonic pieces. Notably, he is fondly remembered as the long-time organist for the St. Andrew's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and as a choral conductor at St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Avesson performed as a solo organist nationally and founded quite well-known mixed choir Musica Divina who presented several of his own works and introduced them to the wider public. Within the past 10 years or so, his music is becoming more of a focal point in Estonia and finally gaining the notoriety it deserves. While focusing more on the spiritual side of music and composition, he is remembered as an important choir conductor and contributor to our cultural heritage.

A couple of prominent themes amongst the musicians we're remembering have been choral conducting and composition and you would be hard pressed to find a conductor who is more fondly remembered within the Estonian community than **Charles**

**Kipper (1951-2018)**. "Charlie," as everyone warmly called him, was a true pillar of our cultural heritage not only through his musical contributions but also through his general involvement and participation in several aspects of the community. Kipper conducted several choirs, among them Academic Mixed Choir "Õöbik" and the Toronto Estonian Men's Choir for years. He was a pianist, composer and educator as well, often a sought after accompanist for solo, group or choral performances at events and functions. After retiring from teaching Vocal Music and Musical Theatre at Rosedale Heights School of the Arts, he spent nights as an accompanist for the National Ballet School of Canada. His own compositions include choral and instrumental works, several of which were performed by the Men's Choir and various other mixed choirs. Like Kaljo Raid, Charlie was also strongly involved with the Toronto Estonian Baptist Church and was choral conductor and organist within the congregation for years. He is remembered as kind and poignant member of our community.



Charles Kipper and Roman Toi

These torchbearers of Estonian culture were crucial in keeping the spirit alive throughout oppressive times, when it was needed the most, and our community is that much better for all of the contributions they have made.

# WHY DONATE TO EMW?

First and foremost, your gift to EMW allows us to carry out our mission:

- To showcase the high caliber and creative diversity of Estonian and Estonian-Canadian artists.
- To create a space for collaboration between Estonian and Canadian artists.

Your support is vital to Estonian culture to evolve and to be preserved for future generations. But don't just take our word for it - here is what some of the people connected to the festival have to say:



"Culture, especially music, thrives on the inspiration rising from the cross-pollination of cultural exchange of ideas and collaboration. This has never been clearer than in the past year when we've been cut out of most of it, at least in the physical social interaction. Estonian Music Week was created and offers a valuable platform for such exchange - of music, but also of ideas and experiences. It is important to continue this new initiative to make sure that some of the best new talents from both Estonia and Canada keep meeting each other creatively and offering the enthusiastic audiences the next best thing from the new generation!"

**Virgo Sillamaa**

(EMW 2018 Artistic Director, Music Estonia Founding Director)



"Thanks to EMW, I could focus on a live performance and also writing new music for the performance. It gave strength, courage and hope to keep my creative work flowing and gave the possibility to be active internationally. I wish that more festivals would consider going digital or hybrid during the challenging times but also when life goes back to somewhat normal conditions. This kind of working gives the artist more possibilities to share the creative work and make new international contacts."

**Tuulikki Bartosik** (Artist, Estonia)



"Estonian Music Week has been an incredible experience for me as an artist. I've loved being introduced to so many remarkable Estonian artists and culture-makers, first on stage and then off stage. Touring in Estonia was made possible for me thanks to relationships built at EMW."

**Kaili Kinnon** (Artist, Toronto)



"Being able to participate in Estonian Music Week as a former committee member and in the current live-stream team has enabled me to not only forge new connections within our community but also to do my small part in helping introduce Estonian music to a wider audience. EMW is an important vessel for further bridging the gap between generations in our own diaspora and promoting Estonian culture and talent within a larger context; music is a universal language after all!"

**Kati Kiilaspea** (EMW Volunteer and former Committee Member, Toronto)

# We'd love to talk more about donating to EMW.

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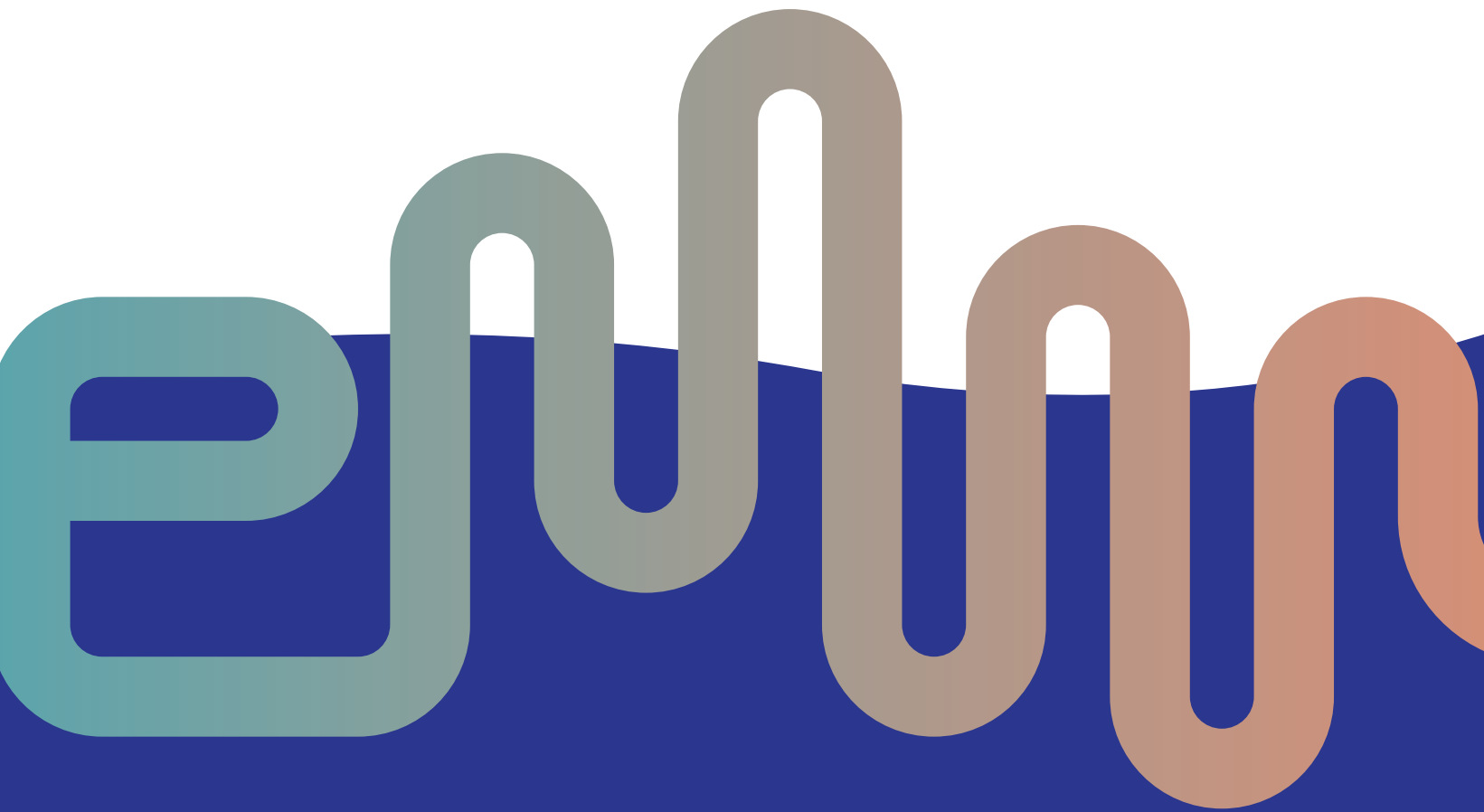
The Estonian Studies Centre is designated as a Charitable Organization effective June 8, 2010.  
The registered charity number is 80412 0020 RR0001.

## Our statement about COVID-readiness

Estonian music week is committed to keeping it's artists, audience members, volunteers and staff safe. By keeping informed about changing guidelines, working closely with our artists and investing in digital technology we are ready to:

- Offer low-capacity, socially distanced concerts
- Deliver digital/live hybrid concerts
- Postpone concerts if need be

We are committed to keeping our donors informed about changes in our programming and being transparent about where your money is going.



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