Kaustinen Fiddle Playing
and related practices and expressions
10.5.2022 Lauri Oino/Finnish Folk Music Institute
Unesco ICH Convention in Finland

- Finland ratified Unesco ICH Convention 2013
- National Heritage Agency responsible for implementation
- First elements in Unesco ICH representative list:
  - Sauna tradition 2020
  - Kaustinen Fiddle Playing 2021
  - Nordic Clinker Boat Tradition 2021 (5 Nordic countries)
- First accredited NGO’s:
  - Finnish Folk Music Institute 2018
  - Finnish Crafts Organization Taito 2020
"Unesco-route” in Finland

- Living heritage Wiki inventory, 200+ elements currently
- National inventory, application process every 2 years for elements in Wiki inventory, currently 64 elements
- application process for elements in National inventory for Finnish nomination for Unesco list: first time 2018, next time?
Kaustinen Fiddle Playing history in one slide

• part of Scandinavian fiddle-led traditions since 18th century
• partly originates in central European court dance tunes, which peasants modified into their own
• Kaustinen famous for its music and players already in 19th century
• much of the music was wedding music
• in 20th century folk music traditions were vanishing, Kaustinen as an exception
• Konsta Jylhä’s popularity and Kaustinen Folk Music Festival 1968 started a revival
Elements of Kaustinen Fiddle Playing

- the (living!) repertoire of tunes
- typical instrumentation
- typical stylistic and technical traits

= recognizable ”Kaustinen music”

- kantele tradition
- dance tradition
- costumes, instrument building
Kaustinen Fiddle Playing today

- 200-? players and 200-? dancers in a municipality of 4300 and the neighbouring municipalities; dozens of groups, hundreds participating in organising events etc.

- tradition as a part of everyday life: private and public festivities and celebrations, concerts, group rehearsals, playing privately, playing at public at a café or a restaurant...

“Our own Kaustinen boys came to play us lunch time live music”. A video clip on local gas station Facebook feed.
Key factors in keeping Kaustinen tradition viable

- early awareness of changing contexts of the tradition, safeguarding "before it is too late"
- Kaustinen Folk Music Festival
- establishing Kaustinen as the "capital of Finnish Folk Music", creating institutions in 1970’s-1990’s
- Näppäri pedagogy since 1980’s
- flexible attitudes towards renewal, change and crossing genre borders; a balance between conserving old and creating new

The great "Näppäri" concert with 200-400 children on stage together is one of Kaustinen Folk Music Festival’s yearly highlights
Additional information

- basic information: www.kaustinenfiddleplaying.fi
- Wiki inventory presentation: https://wiki.aineetonkulttuuriperinto.fi/wiki/Kaustinen_fiddle_playing
- Unesco nomination video: https://youtu.be/Jpg2MBKZjqs

Thank you!