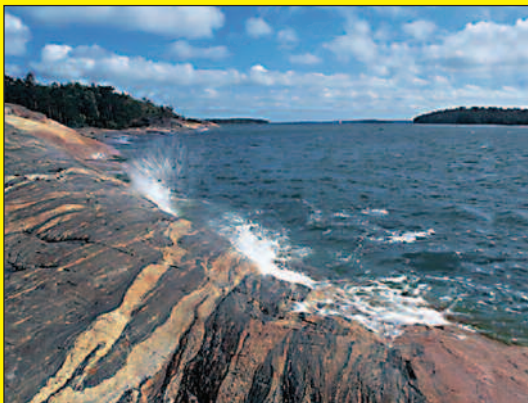


Finland is an advanced industrial economy



Limpid Lake Päijänne is Finland's deepest inland body of water



Bedrock honed by glaciers is part of the coastline at Dragsfjärd, Southern Finland



Helsinki was founded in 1550 and became the nation's capital in 1812



Lingonberries in a Finnish forest

FINLAND

Finland is a republic which became a member of the European Union in 1995. Its population is 5.2 million. The capital of Finland is Helsinki.

Finland is situated in northern Europe between the 60th and 70th parallels of latitude. A quarter of its total area lies north of the Arctic Circle. Finland's neighbouring countries are Sweden, Norway and Russia, which have land borders with Finland, and Estonia across the Gulf of Finland. Forest covers about 75 per cent of Finland, while bodies of water – mainly lakes – cover almost 10 per cent. Finland is the most heavily forested country in Europe, with 23 million hectares under forest cover. There are approximately 190,000 lakes and about 180,000 islands. Europe's largest archipelago, which includes the self-governing province of the Åland Islands, lies off the south-west coast.

Finland is an advanced industrial economy; the metal, engineering and electronics industries account for 50% of export revenues, the forest products industry for 30%. Finland is one of the leading countries in Internet use, there are more mobile phone than fixed network subscriptions.

Finnish Music

On the world map, Finland is a tiny country; but on the world map of contemporary music, Finland is a superpower. Thanks to Jean Sibelius, music occupies a central position in Finnish society. Over the past 30 years Finnish music has enjoyed a unique boom. New operas, orchestral works and chamber music works are being commissioned and performed continuously.

The top names in Finnish contemporary music are also major international figures. In the 1990s, Finnish contemporary music established a powerful presence in the international music industry. The music of Kaija Saariaho, Magnus Lindberg, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Kalevi Aho is being published and recorded all the time, and their works are also being performed regularly at major centres of music around the world.