



TaikaBox ry

CREATING NEW WAYS TO EXPERIENCE DANCE Action plan 2019



TaikaBox ry is a not-for-profit dance and technology organization based in Oulu. The organization was founded by choreographer/dancer Tanja Råman and digital artist/designer John Collingswood in Wales in 2010 to enhance the symbiosis between dance and technology. The organization was registered as an association in Finland in Summer 2015.

TaikaBox ry's values

Collaboration and research: integration of dance and technology, creative solutions and new ideas are born when differently-thinking people are brought together to work in the same space at the same time.

High quality art and community: we are aiming for high quality through deep artistic process which includes working with the community as an integral part of the process. Through interaction with communities we aim to provide them with meaningful artistic experiences and to enhance the artistic process.

Mission

TaikaBox ry supports and enhances the symbiosis between physical expression and technology; researches new performance and production channels, working methods and processes, which can lead new people to dance and create new ways for people to experience dance.

TaikaBox ry:

- 1) explores, produces, presents and organises high quality projects that combine physical expression and technology - locally, nationally and internationally;
- 2) actively opens up its creative processes and offers residences, intensives and workshops to different community groups;
- 3) develops diverse partnership networks, new operational models and working methods.

Vision

The Association is a dynamic organization, which is able to work flexibly within the arts sector and with technology businesses. At the heart of the work is the moving body and increasing the awareness and access of dance through technology. TaikaBox ry aims to boldly integrate specialists from different fields and encourage innovation and artistic risk-taking.

TaikaBox ry's longer-term vision is to create a unique and internationally-recognised dance/technology hub, which aims to enhance and facilitate the development of dance/tech locally,

nationally and internationally through innovative partnerships with businesses and through developing new working models and infrastructures for the arts.

The association researches and creates high quality projects and events that combine dance and technology and which inspire new, young professionals to work within the dance/tech context. TaikaBox's operations complement already existing infrastructure in Oulu. It aims to support the professional development and employment of local artists in a new context and hence strengthen and contribute to the more sustainable development of the dance sector in Northern Finland.

Content and aims for 2019

The association will continue establishing and developing its local activities in Oulu and connect its projects more closely with the Cultural Climate Change headline of Oulu City's European Capital of Culture 2026 project and with its themes: 1) Hinterland – Bravely on the Peripheral Edge; 2) Contrasts – Power of Opposites and 3) Wild City – Urban Attraction Factors. TaikaBox ry will also continue reaching farther afield, especially with workshops and new collaborative projects. Its local and international work will become increasingly integrated. In 2018, TaikaBox ry joined Barents Dance Council and worked closely with the smARTplaces and Fridaymilk networks, expanding its activities to the Barents region, Mid-Europe and globally. TaikaBox ry develops its international partnerships by teaching workshops, creating new collaborative projects and connecting already existing events with their partners' activities.

TaikaBox ry is an agile organization that can quickly respond to new opportunities and challenges. Underneath this can be found strategic planning for building a solid base for the organization and for steering its long-term development with a clear emphasis on dance/tech. The aim of the operations is to create a strong base in Oulu, grow a large audience and a community around the organization that connects through geographical, cultural and language barriers.

The main challenge for the organization in 2019 is still raising the awareness of its profile amongst Finnish funders. TaikaBox ry has systematically worked to raise its profile within the dance sector and has gained a place in it. Funders, however, still seem careful towards the organization and it is seen as an outsider. Nevertheless, there is a possibility within the challenge and it is pushing the organization to explore increasingly varied partnerships with other organizations and technology businesses which it is developing through workshops and other projects. In 2019, the main products are DigiDance workshops and Born Old, which is an interdisciplinary performance for children. TaikaBox ry is planning to create new versions out of the original work in different languages. The association already created a Norwegian version in November 2018.

Operational Focal Points and Activities

The operation of the association is guided by the ethos that 'dance belongs to everybody'. The operations have different focal points, each with short and long-term targets. The focal points for 2019 are:

- a) to develop the structures, capacity and funding;
- b) to connect more closely with Oulu2026;
- c) to lay the base for the development of internationally recognized Oulu dance/tech Hub;
- d) to widen the access to dance/tech in Finland;
- e) to develop international activities.

The main aim of the association in the past few years has been to initiate new projects in Oulu in partnership with different organizations. In 2019, TaikaBox ry will continue consolidating its projects and partnerships and, through these, establishing its place in the local and national dance scenes. It has been important for the association to establish good relations with different sections of the society in order to grow deep roots in its new home of Oulu. TaikaBox ry will continue developing its operations through working with community groups and linking its local activities more closely with the Oulu City's ECoC2026 campaign. Nationwide operations of the association are introduced through a variety of activities that include 1) artistic research and work, 2) performance, 3)

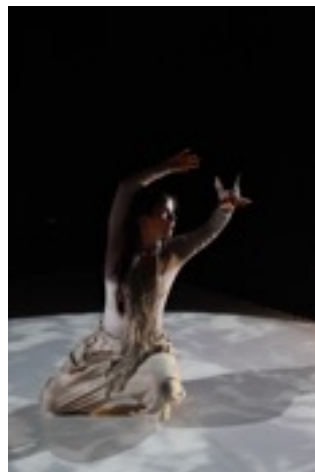
residencies, 4) workshops, 5) mentoring and 6) audience development. It is important for TaikaBox ry that it is seen as the Oulu-based organization that actively supports and contributes to the development of the infrastructure of dance sector in Northern Finland. In 2019 TaikaBox ry is planning to develop its managerial structures, build capacity and create new operating models alongside the development of its artistic activities.

ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND PRODUCTIONS

Research is an important part of the development of new productions and other activities. TaikaBox ry is planning to continue developing a flexible and ecological touring model, with which it contributes to the sustainable development of local dance sector in each location, creates deeper and more long-term connections with its international partners and their surrounding community.

Born Old – Tietäjä länikuinen

Over the last few years, TaikaBox ry produced a new work for children called Born Old – Tietäjä länikuinen - based on the Finnish epic story, Kalevala, together with JoJo – Oulu Dance Centre. In 2019, TaikaBox ry will market the work to venues in Finland and abroad. The production features dance, storytelling, old Kalevala-style songs, live looping and interactive floor projections. In 2018, TaikaBox ry created a Norwegian version of the performance which was performed as part of DanseFestival Barents in Hammerfest. The performance concept was introduced to international delegates during the biggest Nordic dance platform: ICE HOT in Reykjavik in December 2018. As a result, the association is now planning to create a Swedish version and tour the piece in Swedish-speaking areas of Finland in partnership with the regional dance centre and with the children's culture network BARK in Ostrobothnia. Finnish and Swedish versions will enable TaikaBox ry to provide children in Finland more equal access to the work. The piece is also planned to be translated to Danish, English and Welsh for performances in Faroe Islands, Switzerland and the UK. In new versions, TaikaBox ry works in partnership with a local venue/cultural organization and one local performer who is integrated into the show as a storyteller.



photos: TaikaBox ry

Warjakan tarinat – augmented reality experience and gallery

In 2018 TaikaBox ry started a new research project that utilises augmented reality. The association is exploring the creation of a new ecosystem combining arts, history, local community and new technology. The aim is to virtually re-build the early 20th century sawmill workers' housing estate in Varjakka, Oulunsalo, and to create a new platform for making and experiencing art. The project is developed in partnership with Oulu University (cultural anthropology and archeology) Museum and Science Centre Luuppi, Culture House Valve, BusinessOulu, Oulu City and local village association. The aim is to collect local stories and develop a large scale augmented reality experience and gallery based on these. In 2019, TaikaBox ry continues developing the project by piloting the first two buildings and collecting more stories. Due to the unique nature of the project it will be connected more closely with the Oulu2026 project.

PERFORMANCES

TaikaBox ry's productions include works for stage, public spaces and screen. The works of the association are increasingly more immersive and interactive. The association has currently two touring works: ***Please Switch On*** for young audiences and ***Born Old – Tietäjä länikuinen*** for children aged 4 to 10 years old. TaikaBox ry has also other shorter/lighter works that it can present in various contexts. New performances are being planned for these shows locally and internationally for 2019-2020.



photo: Christoph Schumacher

RESIDENCIES

Oulu Dance Hack

In 2019, TaikaBox ry - together with Oulu University of Applied Sciences (OAMK) - organizes their fourth annual international dance/tech event: Oulu Dance Hack. This four-day event brings together dance and media artists, students from OAMK and local technology businesses to explore integration of dance and technology, develop new networks and become inspired by working in an interdisciplinary environment. The event brings participants from all over the world, such as USA, Canada, Russia, Turkey, Italy, Spain, Portugal, UK, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland as well as from Finland. In 2018, TaikaBox ry worked for the first time with new partners, such as Oulu Museum of Art, smARTplaces network and Spanish art and technology centre eTOPIA. The event is being developed further by organizing a day-long mini hackathons throughout the year in the premises of technology businesses. Mini hacks aim to help prepare the companies to work within an arts context, raise awareness of the event amongst local businesses and prepare the products offered by the businesses for the use of artists. The plan is to organize 3-5 mini hacks during the year and mentor two young artists to work within dance/tech alongside Tanja and John. In 2019, Oulu Dance Hack will also be shifted from August to November and be connected with Oulu City's Lumo festival and potentially as part of Luci City Under the Microscope event. The aim is to connect local light technology companies and artists. TaikaBox ry is also working in partnership with Citydance for the first time. Citydance is providing the event with working space during the daytime. The public sharing at the end of the event will take place at Oulu Museum of Art.



photo: TaikaBox ry

Warjakan artist residency

TaikaBox ry organises an annual artist residency in the beautiful and historically-rich harbour of Varjakka in partnership with the local village association. The residency provides artists time and space for research and process-led artistic work for two weeks. The residency also aims to enhance artistic activity in the area and to create dialogue between the artists and the local community. The residency culminates in a sharing of the artistic discoveries during an event called Illallinen Konttorilla, which combines arts and a community picnic. This evening event is organized by the local village association. The first residency in 2017 featured Canadian visual artist Luke Fair. In 2018, eight female dance/circus/performance artists from Keho group attended the residency. In 2019, TaikaBox ry is looking for three artists from different disciplines to join the residency for two weeks to explore collaborative work. One place is offered to a local artist, one for a Welsh artists (depending on funding from Wales) and one place is offered to an artists from another European country.



photo: TaikaBox ry

WORKSHOPS

DigiDance workshops

For several years TaikaBox ry has offered DigiDance workshops to various groups of community, such as children, young people, people with disabilities, immigrants, as well as professional dancers and media artists. DigiDance workshops combine creative movement and interactive projection. The workshops for community groups encourage people to move and try dance. These are 'feel-good' workshops that build participants' confidence and positive self-image, as well as encourage moving in imaginative ways. The positive impact of the workshops derives from: 1) the fact that participants gain instant visual feedback for their movement; 2) the focus of the participants is mainly on the projection, not on the mover and 3) all movements create beautiful visuals. The workshops for the professionals, on the other hand, aims to provide participants with new creative tools for their own choreographic practice. TaikaBox ry also provides DigiDance open space sessions for festivals and other events, where people can come in and out as they please. DigiDance workshops are unique and the association is using it to develop new partnerships locally, nationally and internationally. The workshops gain around 1500 participants annually. In 2019, TaikaBox ry aims to widen the access to its workshops nationwide and train two artists (one dance artist and one media artist) to lead the sessions. TaikaBox ry's long-term aim is to develop regular DigiDance classes in Oulu.

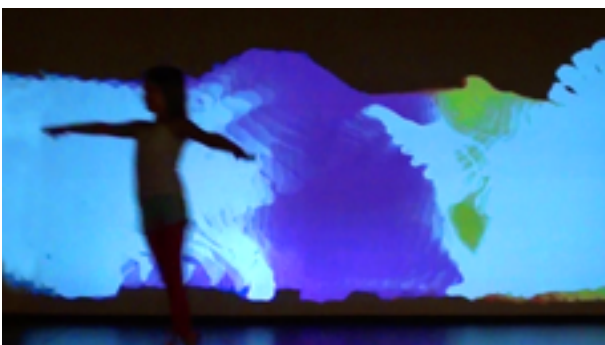


photo: TaikaBox ry

MENTORING

A lot of TaikaBox ry's activities relies on the skills and knowledge of its artistic directors: choreographer/dancer Tanja Râman and video artist/designer John Collingswood. Together they have developed the DigiDance workshop concept since 2009 and at the moment they are the only ones able to lead the sessions. In 2019, the organization is aiming to train two young artists to lead the sessions in order to improve access to the workshops nationwide. Training new leaders will

also help develop more work opportunities for young artists in Northern Ostrobothnia. Sharing knowledge and, through that, expanding the capacity of the organization is one of TaikaBox ry's operational focal points for the next few years. The association is also aiming to increase capacity and mentor new artists to work within dance/tech context through its annual Oulu Dance Hack. Through training and mentoring TaikaBox ry is paving the way for its big vision – the development of internationally recognised dance/tech hub in Oulu.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Developing new audiences for dance is an important and integral part of the association's artistic work. TaikaBox ry creates opportunities for audiences to explore the artistic work through open creative process. The idea behind TaikaBox ry's audience development practice is to activate people and create multi-directional dialogue. It has to be equally useful for artists and audiences. Equipped with these principles the association aims to build long-term connections with people on a deep personal level.

Staff

TaikaBox ry is governed by a board of directors selected during the Annual General Meeting. The chair person of the board is choreographer/dancer Tanja Råman. The vice chair is video artist/designer John Collingswood. Another member of the board is Tomi Knuutila lecturer in digital media at the University of Lapland and vice member Simon Harris is a theatre director. A new board will be elected in March 2019. In 2019, the association is aiming to increase the board by 1-2 members. The board meets twice a year: once in Spring and once in Autumn, as well as from the chair person's invitation. Meetings take place also online.

TaikaBox ry has two artistic directors: Tanja Råman and John Collingswood who work part time. They both are responsible for the artistic planning, development and production of projects and events. Tanja Råman is also responsible for TaikaBox ry's finances, overall co-ordination and development. John Collingswood looks after the technical planning, development and co-ordination, TaikaBox ry's branding, marketing and overall communications.

Members

The aim of TaikaBox ry's operations is to create new ways for people to experience dance. It actively explores new tools, platforms and channels that can lead more people to dance.

TaikaBox established its online membership scheme as part of its website: taikabox.com in 2016. The aim of the membership scheme is to connect members across geographical, cultural and artistic boundaries and to create a community around itself. TaikaBox ry has members in Finland, the UK, Turkey, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Austria, Brasil, USA and Ireland. In 2019, the association plans to develop the membership scheme towards achieving its aims and providing unique artistic experiences for its members in return. Therefore the membership scheme is developed alongside TaikaBox ry's artistic projects and members are actively encouraged to take part in creative processes.

Communications

TaikaBox ry has a webpage and social media networks (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) at its disposal. The aim of communications is to create multi-directional dialogue with its audiences. The website includes blog posts of artistic projects. TaikaBox ry publishes a newsletter four to six times a year depending on the volume of projects. The association utilizes joint marketing with its partners whenever possible, as well as communicates through its partners' networks. TaikaBox ry promotes sharing networks for communications as part of collaborations with its partners.

TaikaBox ry has created separate websites for some of its projects, such as Wajakan tarinat: warjakka.com and Please Switch On: <https://taikabox.com/pleaseswitchon/>

From time to time the association also streams live from its events and performances via Skype, FaceTime, Facebook and YouTube Live.

Monitoring and evaluation

TaikaBox ry monitors its activities on a regular basis and evaluates the breadth and quality of its projects and events in different ways. The organisation evaluates how successful it has been in achieving its aims, for example expanding its networks, developing partnerships, creating projects, increasing audience figures and members, as well as gaining funds.

It collates information about the audience and participant figures in its workshops, performances and events. It also records the viewers in its live stream events. It monitors its newsletters and social media campaigns. TaikaBox ry however doesn't only rely on figures but also in qualitative feedback which it collects through questionnaires and direct discussions with audience members. With the help of monitoring and audience feedback TaikaBox ry develops its operations and projects.

