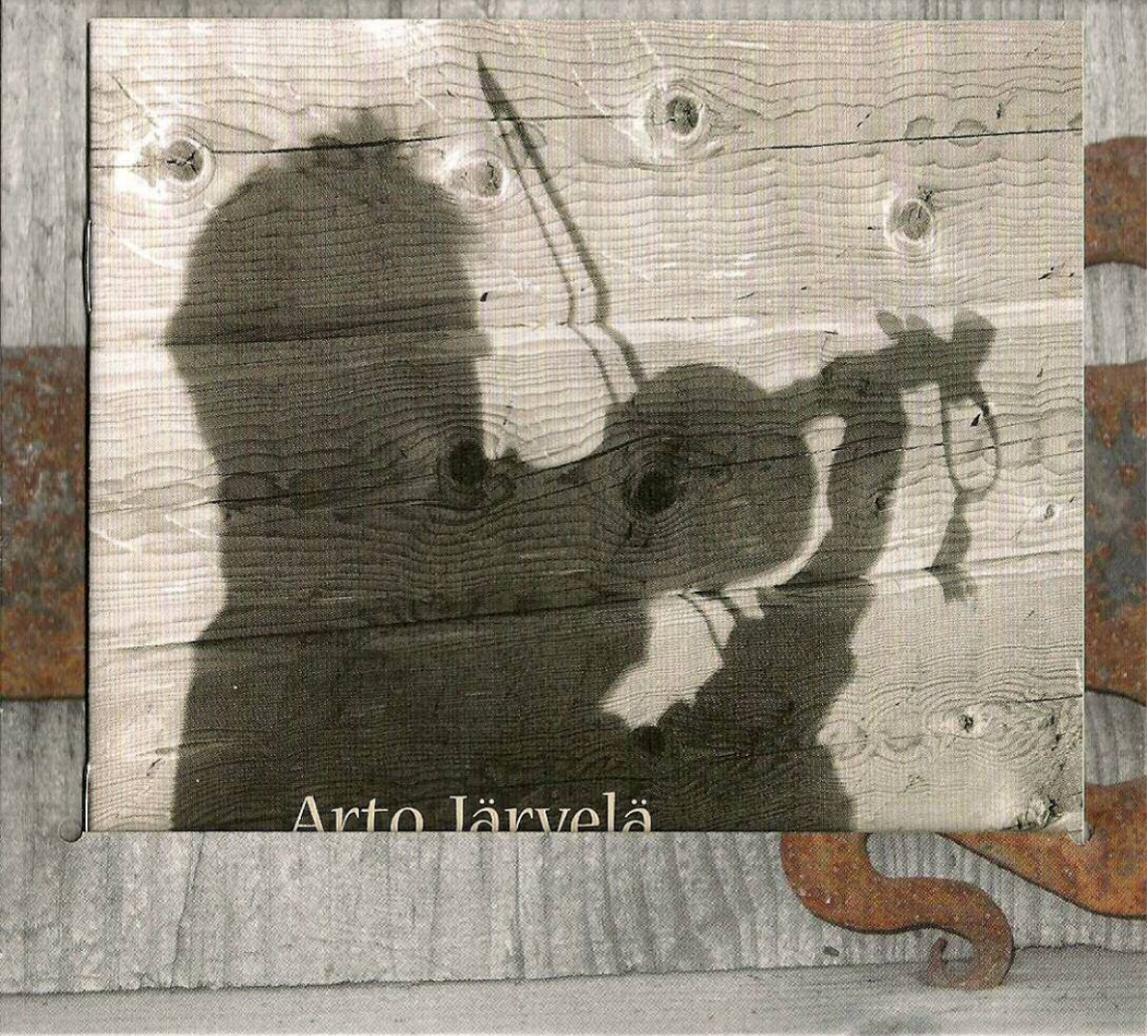




Arto Järvelä

plays fiddle Vol.2

Avovireessä

A shadow of a person's face is cast onto a background of horizontal wooden planks. The shadow is dark and occupies the left and center portions of the frame. The wooden planks are light-colored with visible grain and several knots. The shadow appears to be of a person with a mustache and glasses. The overall composition is simple and artistic.

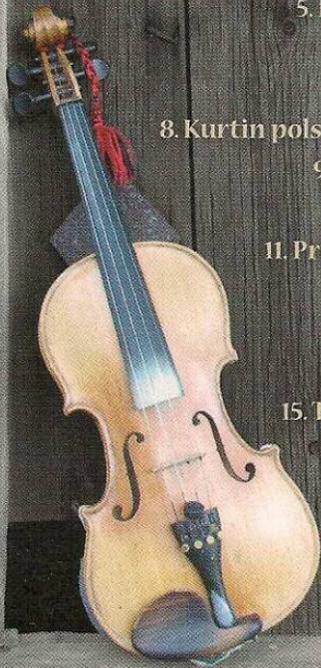
Arto Järvelä

Arto Järvelä Cross-tuned is a treat for the ears, as well as a captivating invitation to trace the pathways of traditional fiddling. The practice of re-tuning is most often labeled *scordatura*, which literally translates as mis-tuning. Before 1750, alternate tunings were applied to viols and lutes to ease the fingering of passages unduly difficult or unreachable in standard tuning. The practice spread across the northern reaches of Europe as the violin became a favored instrument among both art musicians and village fiddlers. In Scotland, one mid-eighteenth century publisher used the more accurate label *accordatura*, which captures the essential reasons why a fiddler retunes his instrument, to open it up to its own resonance. Open strings are more easily droned with the bow in concord with the fingered melody. However, even while the bow is not drawing across a string, all the strings vibrate sympathetically with the natural tonality of the piece.

Cross-tuning, also called open tuning, enhances the innate resonance of the fiddle while also offering up an enticing array of double-stops and drones. Cross-tuning the fiddle was once a widespread and common practice among folk or traditional fiddlers. The three most common tunings—ADAE (lowest to highest), AEAE and AEAC#—are useful for tunes fingered in the keys of D and A. Their use is documented in Norway, the Shetlands, Scotland, Maritime Canada, Quebec, the United States and now in Finland. Commentators have remarked that in some places the practice has all but disappeared, for instance, in Ireland and among the Irish diaspora. In other traditions, cross-tuning is making a comeback with the current generation who have learned both from elderly masters and from historical sources. Such is the case in the Scottish tradition of Cape Breton in Eastern Canada, as well as in some districts of the United States, such as my own home state of Illinois. In a few select places, the tradition has flourished without ceasing: the Southeast and Southwest of the United States and most notably in Norway.

In those sections of Norway, where the flat fiddle is preferred to the *Hardingfele*, cross-tuning is perhaps more common than even the conventional GDAE. Besides the three most common cross-tunings named above, a recent collection of Norwegian fiddle music included DDAE, DDAD, FDAE, and FCAE. Such a variety is found in two American collections representing Oklahoma—adding GDAD, EEAE, EEBE, BEBE, AEF#C# and GDBD to our list—and Kentucky. On this wonderful collection of cross-tuned pieces found and composed in the Finnish tradition, Arto Järvelä offers up nine different cross-tunings. Each is wed to a distinctive melody that opens the fiddle up to the inborn resonance of his instrument, his clear and creative use of fingering patterns, and his considerable mastery of the bow.

Paul Tyler, Chicago USA



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