

VIKING LINE

KAJ fever on the Baltic Sea – an extra concert on Viking Grace September 19 can now be booked

The Dialect Cruise on Viking Grace on September 18, where KAJ – Sweden’s entry for the Eurovision Song Contest – will perform, sold out in record time. Since the group is enormously popular, KAJ will also perform on the same vessel on September 19, and tickets for this cruise are now on sale. Music and special cruises draw tens of thousands of people to Viking Line’s vessels each year – from beyond Finland and Sweden as well. Along with concerts by top stars, people who sail with Viking Line can experience techno, heavy metal, jazz and retro music as well as dancing to traditional *schlager* music, of course.

KAJ was originally booked as the main act on Viking Grace for its Dialect Cruise, which showcases the Swedish dialects of Finland’s Ostrobothnian region. When the trio from Vöörå won Sweden’s Melodifestivalen and was chosen to represent the country at the Eurovision Song Contest, the September 18 cruise sold out immediately. Since the group is so popular, Viking Line is arranging an additional concert the following day, September 19, and tickets for the evening departure with Viking Grace will be released today, Tuesday. The vessel has capacity for 2,800 passengers.

"In order to develop new ideas for special and theme cruises, you always have to have your eyes and ears open: we listen to our customers’ requests, throw ideas around with our different partners and keep tabs on social media trends. When KAJ’s first concert sold out immediately, we booked them right away for the next day’s departure. You can already predict that the atmosphere will be really special in Club Vogue, with a ship full of KAJ fans," says **Jaakko Ahti**, Head of Special Cruises and Cruise Concepts at Viking Line.

This year, Viking Line is arranging more than a hundred special cruises, 70 of which are based on different music themes. The special cruises draw up to 60,000 passengers each year, attracting people who would otherwise not take a cruise.

"On our special and theme cruises, it’s often the most expensive cabin classes that are booked first, and passengers spend more money than average both in the restaurants and on shopping. The theme cruises also attract international passengers, and their share on our special cruises has increased significantly. On our Nordic Metal Cruise, heavy metal fans travelled in particular from Poland and Germany, while our Roots and Beatles Cruises drew passengers from other Nordic and Baltic countries. For the Ville Valo and HIM concert on Viking Grace, HIM fans flew from Poland straight to Turku."

An upswing in *schlager* and dance cruises

Cruises based on a given music genre have been the cornerstone of Viking Line’s special cruises since the 1990s. Over the past year, the Rockabilly Cruise has been a particular draw, and the Beatles Cruise, which was held for the third time, brought together three generations of fans. The popularity of Viking Line’s dance and *schlager* cruises has varied over the years, but right now they are back on top.

"Traditional *schlager* and dance music seem to have engaged an increasingly younger audience – a new generation is clearly growing up with this dance genre. In February, the dance cruise arranged together with the Iskelmä Festival Week in North Savo drew busloads of people from Kajana, Kuopio and Idensalmi, and that included many thirty- and forty-year-olds,"

says Jaakko Ahti.

Among young people, hip-hop and rap are the dominant genres. These genres are available, for instance, on Viking Grace's Märkää Party Cruise this autumn.

"Hip-hop and rap have been favourites with twenty- and thirty-year-olds for many years. It will be interesting to see if they still like rap when they're fifty. People who were young in the 1990s still like 90s pop and Eurodance at least," notes Jaakko Ahti.

Nearly 70 music cruises – which to choose?

New on the Baltic Sea:

- The Märkää Party Cruise from Turku with Viking Grace, September 9.
- I'm on a Boat, a cruise with electronic dance music from Turku with Viking Grace, September 20.
- Country Music trip in partnership with Roll FM on Viking XPRS, November 15.

These have been classics:

- Roots Cruise from Helsinki with Gabriella, September 5.
- Twist & Twang Rockabilly Cruise from Turku with Viking Grace, September 6.
- Beatles Cruise from Helsinki with Viking Cinderella, September 26.

On these cruises, peak atmosphere is guaranteed:

- Radio Nova's Retro Cruise from Helsinki with Viking Cinderella, September 12.
- Flame Jazz Cruise from Turku with Viking Grace, October 4.
- El Party Loco Halloween Edition from Helsinki with Viking XPRS, November 1.

Jaakko Ahti, Head of Special Cruises and Cruise Concepts at Viking Line, provided the suggestions.

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