



Read today's paper · Jobs

Search: Go
Guardian Unlimited Web

GuardianUnlimited The Guardian

- Home
- UK
- Business
- Audio
- World dispatch
- The Wrap
- Newsblog
- Talk
- Search
- The Guardian
- World
- News guide
- Arts
- Special reports
- Columnists
- Technology
- Help
- Quiz



We'd like to make a complaint in E major

Andrew Brown
Tuesday December 5, 2006
[The Guardian](#)

Search this site

Go

In this section

[My week in the whitest place in Britain](#)

[Found in translation](#)

[Call that a knife?](#)

[Farewell Max, the pig who came between George and his women](#)

[Make a date with the stars of French rugby](#)

[The ultimate for those who dine on the move](#)

[Does class size matter?](#)

[Law and foreign orders](#)

['I'll make it but I'm not eating it'](#)

The Complaints Choir of Helsinki is not the only complaints choir on the internet, but it is incomparably the best. A Finnish-German artist couple, Tellervo Kalleinen and her husband Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, asked visitors to an arts festival to submit their complaints about life, and then set the idea to music. They started in Birmingham, a promising city if you're looking for whinges. But the Birmingham Complaints Choir is small, and sadly pedestrian. "Birmingham has changed so much. I liked it more before," they start.

[Article continues](#)

.....
.....
In Helsinki, the whole city seems to have entered into the spirit of the occasion; 100,000 people have already watched it on YouTube (Birmingham's performance has attracted only 12,000, which gives them something else to grumble about, I suppose). The Helsinki choir was made up of almost 100 people (most of them women) and their complaints, chosen from a field of 2,000, made a sad, delightful poetry.

"Why is the cord of the vacuum cleaner always too short?" they sang. "Like summer ... You can't get rich by working, and love doesn't last for ever ... Bullshitters get on too well in life ... going to work every morning, and coming home every night, eventually you lose your mind ... the employment agency only needs Java programmers ... tramline three smells of pee ..." and finally, in a rousing chorus of irresistible cheerfulness: "It's not fair! It's not fair!" as the sunlight blasts off the snow-covered harbour.

[The G2 weekly recipe](#)

['Everything in my life has crumbled'](#)

[Sidelines](#)

['I'm sure they were thinking it was time a woman won'](#)

[Now you see her ...](#)

[Where are all the lesbians?](#)

[Catherine Tate makes plea for populism as she takes up key Royal Court role](#)

[Another view](#)

[Permablog](#)

Later, the experiment was tried in Hamburg and St Petersburg. Those performances are not online, though they seem to have been improperly grim. The only complaint recorded from the Russian performance on the Kochta-Kalleinen's website is: "I complain about existential horror." This is not in the spirit of a proper complaint. Far better the Finns cheerfully belting out their problems. "Our ancestors could have chosen a sunnier place to live," the choir sings on a frozen stretch of Helsinki harbour. They even address the grimmest problem of modern life for which Finland is responsible: those five seconds of anti-music that we have all heard far too often, thanks to Nokia. "Why must ringtones be so irritating?" they sing, to a descending fragment of a well-known melody.

Advertiser links

Buy a a New Mazda Car Info Online

Take a closer look at Mazda. Test drive new and used models...
mazda.co.uk

New Hyundai's from £6995 on the Road

Check out the deals on new Hyundai cars from 4x4's to...
hyundai.co.uk

Official Subaru Web Site

View the impressive Subaru range and choose your ideal car...
subaru.co.uk

[hosting web](#) | [activity holiday](#) | [insurance travel](#) | [buy car](#) | [health](#)

[Printable version](#) | [Send it to a friend](#) | [Save story](#)

[Daily sections](#)

[Weekly sections](#)



[Privacy policy](#) | [Terms & conditions](#) | [Advertising guide](#) | [A-Z index](#) | [About this site](#)