

## The Finland 100 Worldwide Concert

The Suomi 100 Maailmalla – Finland 100 Worldwide concert is a unique opportunity to listen to outstanding Finnish expatriate musicians in Finland.

Suomi 100 Maailmalla – Finland 100 Worldwide concert offers a versatile selection of Finnish expatriate talent when the stage of Helsinki Music Centre is occupied by legendary singer Eino Grön (USA/Finland), violinist Marielle Iivonen and accordionist Tony Iivonen (Sweden), jazz pianist Karri Luhtala (Italy), soprano Maria Männistö (USA) and director Benjamin Mosse (USA), flutist Ulla Suokko (Peru), the band Uusikuu (Great Britain, Germany) and Justice in Motion dance theatre (Great Britain). The concert's host is journalist – tv host Ella Kanninen (Italy/Finland). The concert is organized by Suomi-Seura ry/The Finland Society, and it is held in celebration of Suomi-Seura's 90th anniversary. It belongs to the official Finland 100 program.

### **Eino Grön and Marian Petrescu**

Legendary singer **Eino Grön** is one of the most beloved Finnish singers. During his over 50-years-long successful music career he has received numerous awards and acknowledgments. Eino Grön's repertoire is versatile and extensive, reaching from tango, which expresses Finnish emotions, to jazz and from Christmas concerts to spiritual songs. Furthermore, he has recorded with Argentinian musicians.

Eino Grön lives in Florida from autumn till spring, and he has both Finnish and U.S. citizenships. Eino Grön is accompanied by Romanian-born jazzpianist **Marian Petrescu**. He began to play the piano at the age of four. In 1985 he performed at Pori Jazz and released his first album in Finland in 1986. Petrescu has studied the piano in Romania, Sweden and at Sibelius Academy in Finland. He has performed all over the world, in Australia and South America, for instance.

Petrescu moved to Sweden in 1983, and since 1988 he has lived in Jyväskylä.

Marian Petrescu received the esteemed Grammy award for the album *Resonance Big Band Pays Tribute to Oscar Peterson* in 2009.

### **Marielle and Tony Iivonen**

Third-generation Swedish-Finnish siblings **Marielle** (violin) and **Tony Iivonen** (accordion) have been music enthusiasts their whole life. Duo Iivonen has performed in numerous concerts both in their home country Sweden as elsewhere.

Marielle studies at Sibelius Academy in the master's programme with **Päivyt Meller** as her teacher. She has a master's degree also from Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo where her teacher was **Peter Herresthal**. Marielle is particularly interested in chamber music, and she has played chamber music concerts with members of Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. Playing in an orchestra is also important for Marielle, and she has worked as the concertmaster of Stockholm Youth Symphony Orchestra and as assistant in professional orchestras. Currently Marielle plays the Joseph Odoardi (1786) violin lent to her by Risto Vainio Oy. Tony studies at Sibelius Academy in the master's degree programme with **Mika Väyrynen** as his

teacher. Tony has performed as soloist with Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra on the Baltic Sea Festival and as orchestra musician in numerous premieres. He has competed in many international accordion competitions around the world.

Besides classical music, the repertoire of Duo Iivonen includes many other styles, and they especially love Argentinian tango.

### **Karri Luhtala**

**Karri Luhtala** has performed all over Europe and published two albums, *Her Blame* (2010) and *Terranova* (2012). In Belgium Karri has played with Pieter Claus and Finnish Belgian Jazz Collision at the jazz club Music Village in Brussels, for example. In Italy Karri has worked as jazz and free lance musician in different bands, theatre and on television's RAI 2 channel. He has organized a jazz festival in Contigliano, located in Italy's Rieti province, in 2010 and 2011. With his trio Karri has achieved top positions in international jazz competitions in Italy. He has also performed at Italy's oldest and most famous jazz club, Alexanderplatz in Rome as well as at the Atina Winter jazz festival.

Karri has developed the tour concept Il Mondo di Karri, and since 2007 he has frequently toured Finland with international jazz musicians.

The jazz pianist, native of Hyvinkää, has graduated from Conservatorio di musica Licinio Refice di Frosione and lived in Italy for almost ten years.

### **Maria Männistö and Benjamin Mosse**

Finnish-American soprano **Maria Männistö**, "one of the most hauntingly beautiful voices I have heard in years" (**Paul de Barros**, *Seattle Times*), moves comfortably among a wide range of musical styles to international acclaim. Her recent solo engagements include Ligeti's *Mysteries of the Macabre* with the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra, Feldman's *Rothko Chapel* and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with the Seattle Symphony, Orff's *Carmina Burana* with Pacific Northwest Ballet, and Garrett Fisher's *Kakitsubata* and *Passion of Saint Thomas More* with EOS Kammeroper Köln. She has performed over 30 solo recitals in the US, Finland, Belgium, and Germany.

Born in America to Finnish parents who immigrated to the Seattle area in the 1970s, Maria grew up speaking Swedish and Finnish, her mother's and father's mother tongues respectively. She spent her childhood summers at the family summerhouse in Molpe, her mother's hometown. A dedicated member of the Seattle area Finnish community, she serves as the primary organist at the Finnish Lutheran Church, and performs regularly at Nordic festivals and events.

**Benjamin Mosse** has directed over 55 pieces internationally and is artistic director of Richard Schechner's East Coast Artists. For the last 8 years, Benjamin has traveled extensively to over 85 countries, exploring the different artistic practices of other cultures as well as working with artists from around the world.

*Hämärä* (Twilight) a Monodrama for Soprano is performed by Maria Männistö and directed by Benjamin Mosse. The piece, authored and developed by Männistö and Mosse over two years, provides a crucial and approachable opportunity for diverse audiences to come together in meaningful conversation about identity and belonging. Selected as a part of the international Finland 100 programme. *Hämärä* will premiere in Seattle during 2017-2018 season.

### **Ulla Suokko**

Concert artist **Ulla Suokko**, a virtuoso flutist, is a spokesperson for creativity and also an expressive

storyteller in many languages. Ulla has a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from The Juilliard School in New York, and she is known as an inspiring artist and an ambassador of light, joy and humanity. "Her flute recital was not a recital in the traditional sense: it was a theatrical presentation, a scientific study, an essay of meditation, a frolic, a history lesson, an exploration of the unexplored..." (*New York Concert Review*).

Ulla has lived away from Finland for over 20 years, first in Manhattan, New York and now already a few years in the Peruvian Andes.

## **Uusikuu and Justice in Motion**

**Uusikuu**, led by Finnish vocalist **Laura Ryhänen**, is based in Germany and the United Kingdom. The band is one of the best known expatriate ambassadors of the Finnish tango. They revisit and renew the haunting and melancholy Finnish rhythms and melodies from the 1930s to 1960s. **Justice in Motion** is a physical theatre company based in Oxford, UK. The company presents a variety of engaging, thought-provoking performances using a dynamic fusion of physical theatre, dance, music, multi-media and spoken word.

*Kaiho*, the state in between, is a collaboration between Justice in Motion and Uusikuu. It looks into the lives and experiences of Finnish expatriate women over the past century. *Kaiho* combines contemporary dance with live vintage music, to explore reasons for leaving home for another country, challenges of settling into a new culture, and how parallel cultural identities evolve over time.

Uusikuu:

**Laura Ryhänen**, vocals

**Mikko Kuisma**, violin and vocals

**Norbert Bremes**, accordion

**Christoph Neuhaus**, guitar

**Jari Matti Riiheläinen**, double bass

Justice in Motion:

**Anja Meinhardt**, choreography and dance

**Roosa Leimu-Brown**, choreography and dance

## **Ella Kanninen**

The host of the Suomi 100 Maailmalla - Finland 100 Worldwide concert is journalist and TV host **Ella Kanninen**. She has divided her life between Finland and Italy for almost 15 years. Although her home is now in a small village in Tuscany, her work often brings her to Finland.

Kanninen has already a long career in the Finnish television. She is known, for instance, from the tv programs Puoli Seitsemän, Tanssii tähtien kanssa, Tangomarkkinat, Tie Roomaan and Talo Italiassa. Ella Kanninen's book *Ellan Toscana – Kyläelämää Italiassa* (Tammi) was published in 2016. In the book she tells about her life in Fiano, a village of 600 inhabitants. Currently Kanninen works on a new book, in which Italian food is also featured.

