

**PREVIOUS PERFORMERS
OF THE YEAR, CONTINUED:**

2002 Ulla Suokko, flutist from
New York City

2001 Vicki Gornick, organist
from Chisholm, Minnesota

2000 Diane Jarvi, singer, song-
writer and poet from Minneapolis

1999 Craig Randal Johnson,
pianist, string bassist and
conductor from Minneapolis

1998 Bernhard Hillila,
comedic lecturer and author
from Valparaiso, Indiana

1997 Koivun Kaiku, kantele
ensemble from Minneapolis

1996 Merja Soria, kantele
artist and vocalist from San
Diego, California

Find more information on past
POY programs at
www.FinlandiaFoundation.org

The Performer of the Year term
begins September 1 and runs
through August 31.

To book the POY program please
contact POY Coordinator Satu
Mikkola at satum@aol.com.



**Finlandia
Foundation®
National**

POY application deadline is
February 15 of each year.
For information:
www.FinlandiaFoundation.org

Finlandia Foundation
National, founded in
Pasadena, California in 1953,
administers grants, scholarships
and programs supporting and
celebrating Finnish heritage and
Finnish-American culture and
traditions.

FFN is a 501(c)(3) organization.
For more information:
www.FinlandiaFoundation.org

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**Finlandia Foundation® National
PERFORMER OF THE YEAR**



OLLI HIRVONEN 2014 - 2015

Performer Of The Year

Finlandia Foundation National (FFN), the premier network of Finnish-American organizations in the United States, proudly presents jazz guitarist Olli Hirvonen as Performer of the Year (POY) for 2014-15. It is the first time since the program was founded in 1996 that a jazz musician has been selected as POY.

As POY, Olli appears at events organized by FFN chapters across the country to encourage appreciation of Finnish and Finnish-American culture and traditions.

Olli, who currently resides in New York City, was born in Lappeenranta in southeast Finland. He began studying classical guitar and piano at the age of nine.

He earned his bachelor of Music degree in 2011 at Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, where he studied with Tim Hagans, Raoul Björkenheim and Teemu Viinikainen.

In 2013 Olli received his Master's from the Manhattan School of Music in New York. There he studied with Rodney Jones, Dave Liebman, Jim McNeely, John Riley and Phil Markowitz. His curriculum included classical and electro-acoustic music composition.

Finland's premier jazz event, the Pori Jazz Festival, named Olli its Artist of the Year for 2011.

The accomplished performer has appeared at more than a dozen festivals and major events in Finland, Europe and the U.S., including Nordic Cool at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. in 2013.

He performs across the U.S. with his own trio and has appeared with other jazz and big bands, as well. Olli released his debut album *Detachment* in early 2014.

For more information on Olli: www.ollihirvonen.com

The Performer of the Year (POY) program has become one of the most popular and successful vehicles for Finlandia Foundation National's ongoing support of Finnish and Finnish-American culture in the U.S.

The program debuted in 1996 to assist undiscovered talent in promoting Finnish and Finnish-American culture to wider audiences. Most of the artists selected to date have been singers or musicians. Often the performers not only give concerts but teach, as well.

FFN funds a travel grant for POY performances at a minimum of six chapter events during the 12-month schedule, which begins September 1 and concludes August 31 of the following year.

For additional information or to book the POY program please contact POY Coordinator Satu Mikkola at satum@aol.com.

PREVIOUS PERFORMERS OF THE YEAR:

2013 Marja Kaisla, classical pianist, Philadelphia

2012 Maria Kizirian, singer and songwriter, Los Angeles

2011 Wilho Saari, tradition bearer of the Finnish kantele, Naselle, Washington

2010 Finn Hall, band from Oakdale, Minnesota

2009 Terhi Miikki-Broersma, multi-instrumentalist from Lyndon, Washington

2008 Brent Buswell and Bert Stromholm, accordion duo from Donegal, Pennsylvania and Pompton Plains, New Jersey

2007 Maria Männistö, soprano from Seattle

2006 Kaiku, female vocal duo from New York City

2005 Richard Koski, two-row diatonic button accordionist from Trumansburg, New York

2003-04 Maarit Vaga, soprano from Albion, New York