



Finlandia Foundation[®] National

Inspiring, celebrating and connecting the Finnish-American community since 1953

CENTENARY LECTURERS

Thomas A. DuBois:
“Finland and the
Kalevala”



(Clockwise) Sharon Franklin-Rahkonen: “The History of Finnish Independence”

K. Marianne Wargelin: “Beyond the Atlantic: Finland’s Independence Viewed from Across the Sea”

Börje Vähämäki: “Film, Literature and Finnish Identities”

Peter MacKeith: “A House of Finland”

A once-in-a-lifetime event like 100 years of Finnish independence deserves to be celebrated, but it should also spur reflection on a remarkable story. In recognition of the centennial of Finland’s declaration of independence, Finlandia Foundation National is pleased to present an expanded Lecturer of the Year program featuring scholars who are experts on topics related to Finland’s national independence and identity.

The Centenary Lecturers are available for FFN chapter programs between June 2016 and May 2018.

Finland and the *Kalevala*

It is arguable that Finland is a country created by a book.

In 1835, a young Finnish intellectual, Elias Lönnrot, published the *Kalevala*, the Finnish “national epic.” That book became the basis of a notion of Finnish national identity that developed in remarkable ways over the course of the 19th century. It was the focus of literary, folkloristic, symphonic, operatic, dramatic, artistic and political activities.

It helped Finnish nationalists resist Russian oppression and imagine a national independence that became a reality in 1917. Over the course of two wars against the Soviet Union, and through the tense era of the Cold War, the *Kalevala* remained an important implement in imagining and defending a sense of Finnishness in the world.

In more recent years, *Kalevala* and the musical traditions and ancient heritage it enshrines have helped Finns think through the implications of EU membership and imagine the place of Finnish identity in a global world. It is a world in which international authors like J.R.R. Tolkien could experience and borrow from Finnish culture, while Finns themselves adapted the styles and rhythms of Heavy Metal music to stories drawn from the epic.

My lecture begins with the Finnish and Karelian song traditions that Lönnrot used to create his epic, surveys the epic itself, and samples some of the myriad artistic products that have come since, both Finnish and international.

We’ll explore the many ways in which the ancient messages of the *Kalevala* become revealed and renewed in culture over time.

About Tom DuBois

Tom DuBois is the Halls-Bascom Professor of Scandinavian Studies and Folklore at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He holds a Ph.D. in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania. His research focuses on Finnish and Sámi culture, past and present.

His books include *Finnish Folk Poetry and the Kalevala*; *Lyric, Meaning and Audience*; *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age*; *Sanctity in the North: Saints, Lives and Cults in Medieval Scandinavia*; and the co-edited volumes *Finnish Folklore* and *The Nordic Storyteller*.



Tom is a member of the Kalevalaseura, is a past president of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study, and is a past co-editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*.

PAST LECTURERS OF THE YEAR:

2015 Taina Elg with Heli Sirviö

2014 Suzanne Jurva and Erin Smith, filmmakers of the documentary *Yoopera!*

2013 Yvonne Lockwood, “Traditional Material Culture in Modern Finnish America”

2012 Glenda Dawn Goss, “Sibelius: A Composer’s Life and the Awakening of Finland”

2011 Carl Rahkonen, “The Finnish-American Musical Journey”

2010 Arnold Alanen, “From Finland to North America: Buildings, Landscapes and Cultural Change”

2007-09 Mark Coir and Susan Saarinen, “The Saarinen Architectural Legacy”

2006 Ben Stout and *Fire and Ice*, a documentary about The Winter War between Finland and Russia

Find more information on their programs at FinlandiaFoundation.org

Finlandia Foundation National is the premier network of Finnish-American organizations in the United States.

Founded in Pasadena, California in 1953, FFN administers grants, scholarships and programs supporting and celebrating Finnish heritage and Finnish-American culture and traditions, and contemporary Finnish America.

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



Finlandia Foundation National
P.O. Box 92046
Pasadena, CA 91109-2046
Phone: 626.795.2081
Email: office@finlandiafoundation.org