

Library of Congress National Recording Registry Nomination of Viola Turpeinen's "Kauhavan Polkka"

In Three Easy Steps

Please help support the nomination of Viola Turpeinen's "Kauhavan Polkka" to the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry for 2024. Each year the Library of Congress chooses 10 songs to be preserved in perpetuity.

At FinnFest, Jim Leary, Emeritus Professor of Folklore and Scandinavian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, reported that the Folk/Ethnic subcommittee on which he serves had nominated this recording. Here is the info on the song and a link to the recording:

"Kauhavan Polkka" (single) – Viola Turpeinen and John Rosendahl (1928) Victor 80587

At YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1MT0WdOycl>

Please submit your nomination by November 1.

It's a very simple 3-step process:

Go to <https://www.loc.gov/programs/national-recording-preservation-board/recording-registry/nominate/>

Under "Submission" on the right, click "National Recording Registry Nomination Form"

1. provide your email; mail list opt in or not; how you heard about the registry
2. hit Next and fill in: Title: Kauhavan Polkka / Artist's Name: Viola Turpeinen / Year: 1928
3. hit Submit

If you would like to send more support, email: recregistry@loc.gov

Here is a sample email of support:

I just nominated Viola Turpeinen's "Kauhavan Polkka" for inclusion in the National Recording Registry.

Viola Turpeinen (1909-1958) was a prolific performer on the accordion. Her "Kauhavan Polkka" deserves to be included in the National Recording Registry because:

1. Viola Turpeinen was a virtuoso accordion player.
2. She was one of the most well-known Finnish-American musicians of her time, and the first American woman to record accordion solos.^[2]
3. Her music was central to communities of working-class Finnish immigrants in the first part of the 20th century, and their US-born children. These immigrants labored in logging of the Pacific Northwest, iron ore and copper mines of the Northern Midwest; granite quarries and woolen mills of Massachusetts; and more.
4. A Michigan native, she was posthumously inducted into the Michigan State Music Hall of Fame.

This particular song is representative of the legacy of works she performed and recorded.

Thank you.

ABOUT VIOLA TURPEINEN

Provided by Jim Leary, Emeritus Professor of Folklore and Scandinavian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison:

Viola Turpeinen (1909-1958), the first American woman to record accordion solos, cut 40 tracks for Victor from 1928-1938. The daughter of a Finnish immigrant miner in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Turpeinen performed dance music through the early 1950s for working class Italians, Slavs, and especially Finns across a northern circuit extending from New York City through the western Great Lakes region and western mining towns to logging and fishing territory in the Pacific Northwest. Her best-known tune, "Kauhavan Polkka," invoking a Finnish village famed for distinctive *puukko* knives, is a breakneck polka medley featuring intertwining accordion and fiddle that persists as a dancehall standard.

Lauded by historian Victor Greene as a significant "crossover" musician contributing to the emergence of America's international folk dance scene in the 1930s (*A Passion for Polka: Old-Time Ethnic Music in America*), Turpeinen also toured Finland, where her recordings have been reissued with extensive notes and she remains revered as **the Hanuri-Prinsessa** (Accordion Princess).