

## MEDIA CONTACT

Anne Q. Ulseth, AQUA Public Relations  
612-272-0588 | [anne@aquamn.com](mailto:anne@aquamn.com)

For immediate release: September 7, 2017

## FINN FEST USA 2017 RETURNS TO MINNESOTA IN CELEBRATION OF FINLAND 100 – SEPT. 21-24

*President of the Republic of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, will be part of the festivities*

(Minneapolis; September 7, 2017) – The nation's annual [FinnFest USA](#) celebration, to be held in Minneapolis September 21-24, has two noteworthy highlights this year: Commemorating 100 years of Finland as a nation state and a visit by the President of the Republic of Finland, **Sauli Niinistö**, and **First Lady Jenni Haukio**.

To kick off FinnFest USA 2017 on Thursday, September 21 at 3pm, there will be a public ceremony at the only public monument in America to recognize both Finland's unique identity and its effort to create a separate nation state stands – at Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis. Finnish Ambassador to the United States **Kirsti Kauppi** will participate.

Minneapolis has the distinction of being the only Finnish American community that the President of the Republic will visit this year to celebrate Finland 100. On Friday, September 21 from noon-1:30pm, His Excellency will be the guest speaker at the inaugural luncheon of [Economic Club of Minnesota's](#) 10th Season. The program will be held at the Hilton Hotel in downtown Minneapolis.

At 3pm on Friday, Finland 100 will be recognized in a special convocation with President Niinistö and the First Lady that acknowledges the Finnish North American Diaspora. Ceremonial greetings and honors will be highlighted by music performed by the University of Minnesota Wind Ensemble, Suomi Finland 100 Chorus, Ameriikan Poijat and the Singing Strings, and the singing of the national anthems at Orchestra Hall.

On Friday evening, the Minnesota Orchestra marks Finland's centennial with music and musicians from this extraordinary Nordic nation. Maestro **Osmo Vänskä**, Honorary Chair of FinnFest USA and Minnesota's most renowned Finn, will conduct the concert.

On Saturday morning, the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota and the College of Liberal Arts will present President Niinistö with a UM Honorary Doctorate of Laws. The Award Ceremony takes place at Orchestra Hall at 9:30am and President Niinistö will give a speech in the context of Finland's 100th anniversary.

As host site for FinnFest 2017, Orchestra Hall will feature a beautiful Finnish Expo and *tori* (marketplace) in its lobby. Finnish and Finnish American arts and crafts will be the centerpiece of this year's *tori*, and a different musical group will be featured every hour. Information booths and vendors selling Finnish-related products will also be part of the experience.

The American Swedish Institute welcomes the final FinnFest Celebration and Family Day on Sunday, September 24, which will combine many Finnish-related activities from crafts and music, to books and dancing. The afternoon will feature a special visit from *Joulupukki* (Finnish Santa Claus) direct from his home in Rovaniemi, Lapland, and two all-Finnish [Finlandia Forever](#) choral music concerts featuring the **VocalEssence** singers with **Osmo Vänskä** (clarinet) and **Sara Pajunen** (fiddle).

FinnFest USA invites the public to join the celebration. A full schedule is available [online](#). Registration is \$100 for full Fest offerings or \$50 per day, which includes discounted rates to many of the events. Community members can attend events on a walk-up basis as space allows. Tickets and admission fees vary by event.

Marianne Wargelin, Honorary Consul of Finland, “Since 1983, FinnFest USA has brought Americans together around the subject of Finland and Finnish America. Traveling each year to a different site, these gatherings – part festival, part forum – enable the generally invisible culture of Finland to become something easy for Americans to see and experience, to taste and to know, to learn from and to connect with.

“We’re very honored that the President of Finland will come to Minnesota. We hope the community will join us in welcoming him to the only state in the nation where Nordic people make up as much as one third of the population!”

FinnFest USA 2017 event highlights in the Twin Cities include:

## **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21**

### **3-3:30 PM**

#### **Public Ceremony at the Finnish monument**

[Theodore Wirth Regional Park](#), Minneapolis

This granite monument features, on one side, a map of Finland, marking also the lands lost in Finland’s mid-twentieth century wars, and, on the other side, a map of Minnesota, honoring the 1864 start of Modern Finnish Immigration to North America.

### **6-8 PM**

#### **Euro Cocktail with** Ambassador of Finland, Kirsti Kauppi

[Guthrie Theater](#), 818 S. Second St., Minneapolis

Twin Cities-area European Chamber of Commerce groups commemorate the 100th anniversary of Finland’s Independence with a reception at Guthrie Theater. Registration begins at 5.30.

### **5-9 PM**

Finnish style Thursday dining

[Danish American Center](#), 3030 West River Parkway, Minneapolis

“Traditional Thursday menu: Finnish pea soup & pancakes.” Live Music by Finn Hall; group singing led by Margaret Vainio & friends. St. Urho presentation.

### **7 PM**

**TUOMO & MARKUS** with Eric Koskinen (Twin Cities musician) opening.

#### **Contemporary Finnish and Finnish American pop/rock concert**

[Cedar Cultural Center](#), 416 Cedar Ave. So., Minneapolis

Tuomo & Markus is a new musical project from acclaimed Finnish soul artist Tuomo Prättälä and singer/songwriter Markus Nordenstreng of The Latebirds.

### **7-9 PM**

“Tale of a Lake” documentary film with filmmakers [Marko Röhr](#) and [Kim Saarniluoto](#)

[The Film Society of Minneapolis/St. Paul](#)

[St. Anthony Main Theatre](#), 115 Main St. SE, Minneapolis

A documentary about Finnish lakes, the nature around them, circulation of water and ancient Finnish mythology.

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

**10 AM**

### Theatre Fiasko

#### “The Reading Room” by Ann Toumi

*Performed in Finnish* (performed in English at 11 AM on Saturday, September 23)

[Orchestra Hall](#) Atrium, 1111 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis

**12-1:30 PM**

[Economic Club of Minnesota](#) luncheon with His Excellency special guest Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland

[Hilton Hotel](#), 1001 S. Marquette Ave., Minneapolis

**3-4:30 PM**

FinnFest USA 2017 Convocation

[Orchestra Hall](#), 1111 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis

President Niinistö will also participate in the FinnFest USA 2017 Convocation, directed by Wendy Knox, Artistic Director of Frank Theatre. Ceremonial greetings and honors will be highlighted by music performed by the University of Minnesota Wind Ensemble, Suomi Finland 100 Chorus, Ameriikan Poijat and the Singing Strings, and the singing of the national anthems.

**8-10 PM**

Minnesota Orchestra Concert

[Orchestra Hall](#), 1111 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis

Minnesota Orchestra Music Director Osmo Vänskä conducts an all-Finnish program, including Kalevi Aho *Minea*; Jaakko Kuusisto, *Violin Concerto* (soloist Elina Vähälä); and Jean Sibelius, *Symphony #2*.

## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

**11 AM**

### Theatre Fiasko

#### “The Reading Room” by Ann Toumi

*Performed in English*

[Orchestra Hall](#) Atrium, 1111 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis

**2-4:30 PM**

### Finnish Choral Music

[Plymouth Congregational Church](#), 1900 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis.

This overview of Finnish choral music will include choral works from the 16th century *Piae cantiones* through the flowering of the Romantic Period (Sibelius, Madetoja, Palmgren, Kuula) to the new generations (Rautavaara, Mäntyjärvi, Kortekangas).

**7:30 PM**

### *Vahvat Naiset: Women of FinnFest Concert*

[The O'Shaughnessy](#) at St. Catherine University, 2004 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul

Featuring [Maija Kauhanen](#), who specializes in Finnish Saarijärvi kantele (Finnish folk harp) and the old and rare technique of playing kantele using a tiny wooden stick as a plectrum; [Sara Pajunen](#) (violin) & [Teija Niku](#) (accordion) who comprise the duo [Aallotar](#), a transatlantic collaboration that uses Finnish and Finnish-American music as a starting point for an original 'chamber-folk' style; and the Minnesotan [Satakieli](#) (the Minnesota Nightingale), [Diane Jarvi](#), a singer, songwriter, guitarist and kantele player.

**8-10 PM**

Minnesota Orchestra Concert - Repeat of Friday night concert.

[Orchestra Hall](#), 1111 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis

## **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2017**

**12-5 PM**

### **AN AFTERNOON AT THE AMERICAN SWEDISH INSTITUTE**

[American Swedish Institute](#), 2600 Park Ave. So., Minneapolis

This Twin Cities Nordic Cultural Center welcomes FinnFest to its campus for an afternoon devoted to Finnish Art, Sports and Popular Culture. Famous and not-so-famous Finns will come together to create an afternoon that serves as the capstone for FinnFest USA 2017.

In addition to the FinnFest USA events taking place in the Twin Cities metro area, Finland 100 offers several opportunities to celebrate the Centennial in Greater Minnesota, including:

## **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

**10 AM-4 PM**

Wirtanen Farm Fall Festival in Markham

**2-7 PM**

**Finnish Celebration**, Crown Ballroom, 214 E. Howard St., Hibbing  
featuring Arlene and Aimo Tervekoski, Sheila Packa, Oscar Forman.

## **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10**

**4-7 PM**

Community Night Out, Embarrass  
featuring Bill Maxwell and Cowboy Angel Blue; Seitaniemi Housebarn,

## **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29**

**7 PM**

Concert, Weber Music Hall, University of Minnesota-Duluth, 1151 University Drive, Duluth  
Runeberg Male Chorus from Porvoo, Finland

## **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3**

**2 PM**

Finns and Friends meeting, Crown Ballroom, 214 E. Howard St., Hibbing  
with program by Kardemimmit Kantele Ensemble

Partners include: the Minnesota Orchestra, the American Swedish Institute, Vocal Essence, Cedar Cultural Center, The O'Shaughnessy, Norway House, the Danish American Center, the Film Society of Minneapolis/St. Paul, Christ Church Lutheran, Meet Minneapolis, the Minnesota Trade Office, Global Minnesota and the University of Minnesota.

With additional support from: Finlandia Foundation National, Suomi Seura, Finnish American Cultural Activities, Finn Source, and friends of Finland.

For more information, visit [finnfest.us/festival-2017](http://finnfest.us/festival-2017)