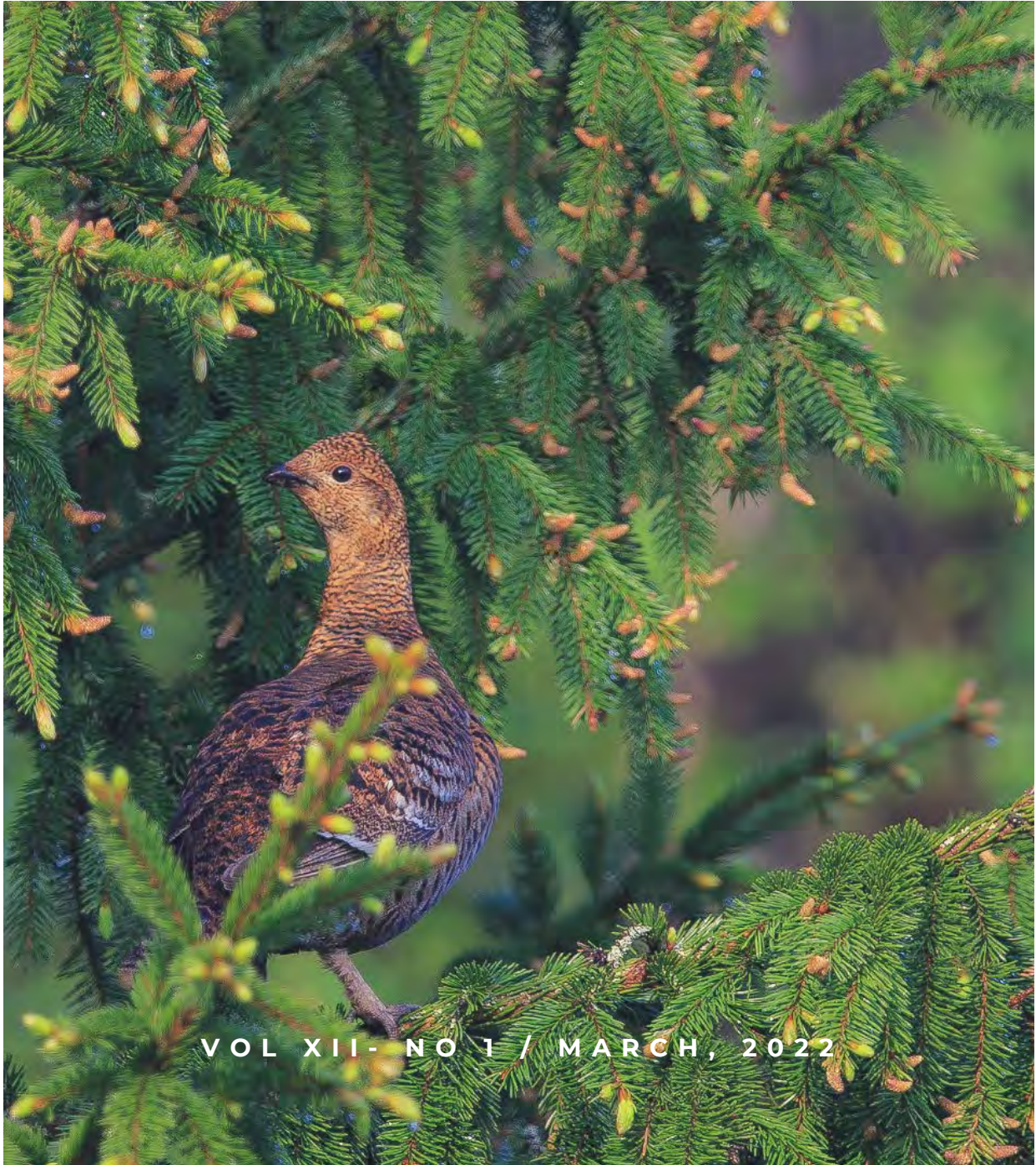


FINLANDIA FOUNDATION
SUOMI CHAPTER

FINNOVATIONS

PROMOTING FINNISH HERITAGE FROM THE
EVERGREEN STATE TO THE GOLDEN STATE



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In This Issue:

Editor's Column - Pg. 2
Kari Kriikku, Clarinetist
Extraordinaire - Pg. 3-5
Membership Form - Pg. 5
Cooking Corner: Rosolli - Pg. 6
Aleksis Kivi - Pg. 7
Olavinlinna Castle - Pg. 8-9
The Kven People - Pg. 9
Fabulous Finland Quiz - Pg. 10
Finland's Female Government Faces
Sexual Harassment - Pg. 11
Final Resting Place: Nuclear Waste
Disposal in Finland - Pg. 12-13
Finnish Youth Speak Out - Pg. 14
Russians Seek Refuge
in Finland - Pg. 15
"I Greet You Ukraine," A Poem by
Eino Leino - Pg. 16

Cover Photo: A black grouse feeding in a tree.
Lapträsk, Finland. Photo by Henrik Lund.

Below Photo: Spring tulips in Western
Washington. Photo by Tapio Holma.



Editor's Column

Happy, happy, happy, happier, happiest!

For the fifth in a row, the people of Finland have been rated as the happiest people in the world. The education and welfare of folks in general is up to the highest standards compared to any other nation in Western civilization. It is also funny that Denmark has been constantly rated as second best.

It is amazing that some 5.7 million people in Finland, another half a million or so outside of the country (Sweden having the highest minority), and 12 political parties (of which seven are in the government) can function in a civilized society very well. Even those in the opposition get along with the majority.

President Niinistö constantly tells everyone that The Finns do not fear anything, particularly now in the turmoil of world happenings. Despite having The Big Bear as a neighbor, Russia seems to get along with its Suomi Neito (The Finn Maid) regardless of our nation's desire to evaluate the possibility of joining NATO. Also Finland has a well trained army with 300K men in reserves.

Finland's foreign trade is in slow motion at the moment. EU sanctions against our eastern neighbor has resulted in a backlog at Finnish Ports, with goods waiting to be exported to Russia. Some two hundred Finnish companies are trying to figure out what the future holds for them regarding trade with Moscow. The situation is somewhat grave at the moment. Hopefully, peace will soon be reached.

The folks in Finland above the 60th latitude, however, seem to be relaxed, enjoying their well deserved happiness.

Tapio

Pioneers: Kari Kriikku, Clarinetist Extraordinaire

Music Finland's 10-year-anniversary article series honors and celebrates the PIONEERS of Finnish music export. These are the bands, artists and musicians who went out to the world with little help and knowledge of how the international music business works - and still managed to find audiences for their magnificent art. In the 5th chapter of the series, we put the spotlight on clarinetist Kari Kriikku and the Avanti! chamber orchestra, co-founded by him nearly four decades ago.

Lively and charismatic onstage, Kari Kriikku is one of Europe's top clarinetists in the contemporary classical field. Yet he's equally at home - and as captivating - playing klezmer, tango, folk, rock and Arabic music.

Clarinetist Kari Kriikku has premiered works written expressly for him by contemporary composers such as Kaija Saariaho, Michel van der Aa, Unsuk Chin and Magnus Lindberg.

If the number of new compositions dedicated to a classical soloist is a sign of the respect in which they are held, Kriikku is surely near the top of his field. Yet he doesn't seem to take himself too seriously.

Called "a physically flamboyant player of Olympian virtuosity" by The New York Times, he is known to dance or even tap-dance onstage, smilingly impishly as he plays, and has been spotted juggling backstage at the Summer Sounds festival. The annual event is hosted by the Avanti! chamber orchestra, which Kriikku co-founded in 1983 and has led as artistic director since 1998.

Many of the composers with whom he works have also been associated with Avanti!, including Saariaho and Lindberg, as well as celebrated conductors like Esa-Pekka Salonen and Jukka-Pekka Saraste.

"I've been so lucky that so many amazing



clarinet concertos have been written for me to premiere," he says. "I'm so happy to go places anywhere in the world with a great concerto score under my arm. The audience's reaction is always overwhelming."

With a reputation for fearless, enthralling interpretations of even the most challenging new music, he has earned rave reviews for introducing new works with top orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, as well as the Seoul Philharmonic and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

He has frequently recorded with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra (FRSO), including a recording of Lindberg's Clarinet Concerto that scooped up awards from the BBC Music Magazine and Gramophone. Soon after, Kriikku also won the Nordic Council Music Prize.

Now 61, Kriikku has appeared on more than 200 recordings over more than four decades. His recording career began in 1980 with a country-gospel group called Scopus, with whom he played clarinet, banjo, drums and percussion, and sang - including his own lyrics for Coal Loadin' Johnny by American bluegrass legend Lester Flatt.

At the time, Kriikku was also playing avant-garde contemporary art music with fellow students at the Sibelius Academy, many of whom would go on to become world-famous conductors and composers.

His path to joining their ranks began as part of a musical family in western Finland.

His first public performance was a four-handed piano piece with his father at a school end-of-term event. At home, his father usually played the trumpet, while his mother and sisters played piano and guitar.

Kriikku recalls a Saturday evening ritual of taking a sauna and listening to a pop-rock programme on the radio with his sisters. “We recorded everything onto a Vox cassette recorder with a microphone,” he remembers. “I started to play clarinet at around 10 or 11. As a teenager, I admired those older musicians who had a relaxed vibe and could also play lighter music,” says Kriikku.

Kriikku was born and raised near Seinäjoki, where his parents took him once a week for clarinet and piano lessons, and where he joined a local wind ensemble. At the age of 16, on the recommendation of his music teacher, he made the “radical decision” to quit school and join the venerable Helsinki Garrison Band. After his initial shock at moving into an Army barracks, he soon began to blossom during lessons with Sven Lavela, a former soloist with the FRSO, with which Kriikku later frequently recorded. While in the Garrison Band, he also learned to play drums as well as jazz and pop on keyboards.

With one teacher, he recalls, “we’d first go for a coffee at the canteen, put coins in the jukebox and listen to some pop tune. Then we’d analyse its chords in class.”

He was then accepted to the Sibelius Academy, later studying with Alan Hacker in Britain, and with Leon Russianoff and Charles Neidich in the US.

Kriikku is closely associated with Bernhard Henrik Crusell (1775-1838), one of the most important early Finnish composers, himself a clarinetist who wrote many works for the instrument. Kriikku has recorded two albums devoted to Crusell’s clarinet concertos and quartets, and was artistic director of the Crusell Weeks festival for five years. Yet he still enjoys ranging further afield musically.

“An extra hobby over the past decade has been tap dancing,” he says, “which I sometimes do as part of my Bizarre Bazaar show” – in which he presents more exotic, lesser-known repertoire for clarinet, including klezmer, fado and tango as well as Arabic, Hungarian and Romanian music, all of which he included in an album with the Tapiola Sinfonietta.

“The show also includes a string orchestra, two percussionists and an oud and 12-string guitar player. I love doing that show every now and then,” he says. He has also played folk improv with accordionist Markku Lepistö and guested on an album with Finnish rock legend Ismo Alanko. He also played electric organ in the rock band Matala Profiili (“Low Profile”) for a few years in the mid-80s. He still plays banjo “as a hobby,” along with occasional drums.

Yet he is best known as part of the groundbreaking “Avanti! generation,” which brought fresh breezes into Finnish classical scene in the early 1980s.

“I was just damn lucky that there were all these fine composers and conductors studying at the Sibelius Academy at the same time,” he says.

Besides Salonen, Saraste, Saariaho and Lindberg, they also included Kimmo Hakola, Eero Hämeenniemi, Otto Romanowski and many others with whom Kriikku has later worked.

In early 1980, Kriikku, Lindberg, Salonen and Romanowski and others formed Toimii!, an experimental laboratory that became a free-form performing ensemble in 1982.

“The idea was to play the ‘newest of the new’ music from Finland and abroad. At first we performed mainly in Helsinki. Gradually, Central European musicians discovered the group and we made many trips to Central European contemporary music festivals,” he recalls.

“Part of Toimii!’s mission was that at the end of a hard day’s work you always had to go eat and drink well. That suited us young men! It was like an old-fashioned gentlemen’s club that was also creating an avant-garde music culture at the same time.”

“All of this was immensely valuable to learn. If need be, the composing musicians in the group quickly wrote new little pieces, which we had to learn on the fly.”

Alongside Toimii!, many of the same people formed Avanti!, which Kriikku says “was established to shake up the accustomed practices.”

While Toimii! reunited occasionally until 2003, Avanti! has earned its place in the Finnish musical establishment.



It hosts the 37th Avanti! Summer Sounds festival in Porvoo June 29-July 3, 2022.

By Wif Stenger
Music Finland



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Cooking Corner: Rosolli

Ingredients:

Rosolli

- 3-4 Carrots
- 3-4 Beets
- 2-3 Potatoes
- 1 Small Onion
- 2 Brined Pickles (cut to small pieces)

Dressing

- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 Tbsp mayonnaise
- 1-2 Tbsp pickle brine
- 1 Tbsp white vinegar
- Salt and freshly ground white pepper

Directions:

On the range, boil the potatoes, beets and carrots until cooked through. Peel the skins from veggies and cut into 1/4 inch cubes. Arrange in bowl.

Combine all dressing ingredients and blend until smooth. Toss with vegetables to blend flavors. Adjust salt and pepper to taste.

When serving, whip some whipping cream with one teaspoon sugar, some rice vinegar and some beet liquid (*for color) for the sauce.

Enjoy!

By Tapio Holma



Aleksis Kivi

Aleksis Kivi, born Alexis Stenvall on October 10th 1834, was a Finnish author who wrote the first significant novel in the Finnish language, "Seitsemän Veljestä" (Seven Brothers).

Although Kivi was among the very earliest authors of prose and lyrics in Finnish, he is still considered one of the greatest. It took him ten years to write "Seven Brothers." Romanticism was at its height at the time and there were some critics who did not like the language of his work. The prominent August Ahlqvist disapproved of the book nominally because of its rudeness.

Although Kivi wrote his greatest works specifically as a description of his own time, or let his birth dates, he always has background in the past, imagined in the Seven Brothers and created by the historical literature of his time. Above all, Lönnrot had drawn ancient paganism and mixed Christian legends from folk poetry in the Kalevala and Kanteletar. This is not what the Pietists liked.

In its own way, "Seven Brothers" is Kivi's counterpart to the "Kalevala." In both epics, folk faith and Christianity are mixed in the same worldview. The "Kalevala" is an image of the past romanticized mainly from Eastern, Karelian materials, a fairly realistic worldview of Western folk culture, stories and beliefs. Knights and maidens. Pious men were a Western legend.

The boy's explanation of the world is, for example, the concept of thunder. According to the teachings of his blind uncle, thunder was a ratchet lifted into the sky by dry sand between the clouds. According to Juha, God drives the streets of heaven as the reinforcement of the wheels strikes fire. Timo, on the other hand, said when he was little, he imagined that God was rolling his field and slipping sweet blows with his bull faced whip.



Chapter V is about Impivaara. In the words of Juha, the boys feel that they are "lost sheep in the wilderness". That's how we threw our neighbors and Christian neighbors. "The boys planned to stay in Impivaara as long as there is fresh meat in the woods". After escaping into the womb of the forest, the brothers live in a magical world, which is already told in the "Story of Calvary Imme" associated with the name of Impivaara.

"Seitsemän Veljestä" has been translated into several languages and is the novel which is studied at the schools of Finland throughout various grades.

Kivi is regarded as a national writer of Finland and his birthday, 10 October, is celebrated as Finnish Literature Day.

By Tapio Holma

Olavinlinna Castle

Olavinlinna (Swedish: "Olofsborg"; literally "Olaf's Castle") is a 15th-century three-tower castle located in the city of Savonlinna, Finland. It is the northern-most medieval stone fortress in Finland that is still standing.

The fortress was founded by Erik Axelsson Tott in 1475 under the name Sankt Olofsborg in an effort to profit from the political turmoil following Grand Prince of Moscow Ivan III's conquest of the Novgorod Republic. The purpose was to lay claim to the Russian side of the border established by the Treaty of Nöteborg. The castle was built on an island in the Kyrönsalmi strait that connects the lakes Haukivesi and Pihlajavesi. Previously, only the Viipuri Castle (1293) existed to protecting the Swedish realm's eastern border.



It was the first Swedish castle provided with a set of thickset circular towers that could withstand cannon fire. It is not by accident that a network of lakes and waterways forms the setting for the castle, for these would seriously impede a prospective Russian attack.

The three-towered keep was completed in 1485, and the construction of the outer curtain walls with two towers was initiated immediately. They were completed in 1495. The castle is roughly a truncated rhomboid with a keep on the western side of the island and the curtain walls and outer bailey to the

east. One of the towers of the keep, St. Erik's Tower, has since collapsed. Another structure, the Thick Tower, exploded in the 18th century. A bastion has been built on its place. The castle was converted into a Vaubanesque fort in the late 18th century with bastions.

Olavinlinna withstood several sieges by the Russians during the First and Second Russian-Swedish wars (1555-57 and 1570-1595). A brisk trade developed under the umbrella of the castle towards the end of the 16th century, giving birth to the town of Savonlinna, chartered in 1639.

During the Great Nordic War (1700-1721), Swedish king Charles XII was defeated by tsar Peter I (Russians call him the Great) at the battle of Poltava (in Ukraine) in 1709. On 28 July 1714, the garrison of Olavinlinna capitulated to the invading Russians. In 1714 Russia occupied Finland.

The occupation lasted until the Treaty of Nystad in 1721. The Russians terrorized the population, murdering and torturing, burning homes, capturing women and children and selling them as slaves in Russia. People fled to Sweden, peasants hid in the forest under harsh conditions. The total losses of the population due to atrocities has been estimated to between 50,000 to 60,000, 10% of the then population of 400,000. Hence this period in Finnish history is called "Isoviha," the "Great Wrath."

In the Treaty of Nystad, Sweden lost its provinces of Ingria, Estonia and Livonia. The new border between Sweden and Russia has later been called Peter the Great's border, which is almost the same as the present eastern border of Finland. The Finns' experience of the Great Wrath, the threat from the east, still lingers to some extent 300 years later. Recent events in Ukraine seem familiar to what our parents and grandparents, and even some of our generation who might have been too young to remember, experienced in 1939.

The last war, in which Olavinlinna was involved was in the so called War of the Hats, which was initiated by Sweden in 1742-3. The Treaty of Turku in 1743 moved the Swedish border westward to the Kymijoki river and west of Saimaa lake. Olavinlinna was now on the Russian side of the border. Thus ended the military history of Olavinlinna.

There was still one war in 1789-1790, also initiated by Gustav III, King of Sweden against Russia which was ruled by Tsarina Catherine the Great, originally a German Princess, a first cousin of Gustav III. She had married the Russian Crown Prince Paul, who later ascended the throne as Tsar Paul I. She conspired with his life guards who strangled him. She then declared herself ruler of Russia. The war ended 0-0, and no border changes were made.

The next war, the so-called Finnish war between Russia and Sweden in 1808-9, resulted in Russian occupation of Finland, until then the eastern part (1/3) of the Swedish Realm. At the Porvoo Diet in March 1809, while fighting against the Russians was still ongoing in the north, the estates of occupied Finland (nobility, burghers, clergy, and peasants) swore allegiance to Tsar Alexander I.

For the next 112 years, Finland became part of the Russian imperium as an autonomous Grand Principality with the Russian tsar as its Grand Prince.

Olavinlinna Today

The castle forms a spectacular stage for the Savonlinna Opera Festival, held annually in the summer since 1912. The castle hosts several small exhibitions, including the Castle Museum which displays artifacts found in the castle or related to it, and the Orthodox Museum which displays icons and other religious artifacts both from Finland and Russia.

By Kaj Rekola
Adapted from Wikipedia

The Kven People

Kvens are a Balto-Finnic ethnic minority in Norway. They descended from Finnish peasants and fishermen who emigrated from the northern parts of Finland and Sweden to Northern Norway in the 18th and 19th centuries.



In 1996, the Kvens were granted minority status in Norway, and in 2005 the Kven language was recognized as a minority language in Norway. People speaking Kven in Norway is estimated to be between 2,000 and 8,000.

Kvens are often grouped together with the Sami people, who are the indigenous people of Central and Northern Norway. Sami people always have been recognized by the Norwegian Government as indigenous. The same status and discussions for Kvens was only started in 2018 by the Storting (Norwegian government) to commission The Truth and Reconciliation Commission to lay the foundation for the recognition of the experiences of the Kven subject to Norwegianization and subsequent consequences.

The flag of Kvenland was hoisted at the Kiruna City Hall in Sweden on the 16th of March in celebration and honor of the first annual Day of the Kvens. Hereafter, that date is meant to be recognized wider in the Kven communities of the north and by others as well.

By Tapio Holma
Adapted from Wikipedia

Fabulous Finland - A Quiz

1. Let's start with an easy one: What are the two official languages of Finland?

- A. Finnish and Swedish
- B. Finnish and English
- C. Finnish and Russian
- D. Finnish and Italian

2. What does the Finnish flag look like?

- A. A blue cross on a white background
- B. Union Jack
- C. Three sections, two red, one white, with a red maple leaf
- D. Stars and Stripes

3. What is considered to be Finland's national instrument?

- A. Sousaphone
- B. Pipe organ
- C. Harpsichord
- D. Kantele

4. What is Finland's largest lake?

- A. Alanda
- B. Etela
- C. Oulun
- D. Saimaa

5. From the 12th to the 19th centuries, Finland belonged to a different country. Which country was it?

- A. Russia
- B. Spain
- C. England
- D. Sweden

6. How many Regional State Administrative Agencies of Finland are there?

- A. 11
- B. 9
- C. 6
- D. 16

7. What day is the Finnish Independence Day?

- A. June 6
- B. August 6
- C. May 6
- D. December 6

8. In what year did Finland's capital hold the Olympics?

- A. 1968
- B. 1952
- C. 1944
- D. 1988

9. When translated into English, what is the title of the Finnish national anthem?

- A. Our Home
- B. Our Beautiful Land
- C. Our Hearts Belong to You
- D. Our Land

10. Over 70% of Finland is covered by forests and woodland areas.

- A. True
- B. False

See below for answers!

Submitted by Brend "Lahja" Holma



Answers:

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. A | 6. C |
| 2. A | 7. D |
| 3. D | 8. B |
| 4. D | 9. D |
| 5. D | 10. A |

Finland's PM Says Young Female Government Has Been Target of Hate Speech

Prime Minister Sanna Marin of Finland says she and her fellow young female ministers have been targeted with extensive hate speech for their gender and appearance while in office.

"We can see that when you are young and female the hate speech that we are facing is often sexualized," Marin told Reuters in an interview on Wednesday, a little more than two years into her term as Finland's state leader.

Marin, 36, became the world's youngest serving government leader in December 2019 when she was sworn in as prime minister and originally all five party leaders in her centre-left coalition government were female.



Marin, who has more than 540,000 followers on Instagram around the world, said she doesn't allow the hate speech to affect her decisions but she is concerned about social media becoming more hurtful.

"I worry about so many others and this is why we want to make sure that we are not tolerating this kind of behaviour."

Marin made national and international headlines in December when she decided not to cut her night out short after finding out she had been exposed to COVID-19 the day before.

Four days later Marin apologised saying she should have acted differently.

Finland's young prime minister clubbing during a pandemic became the topic of memes around the world, some of which were humorous and others insulting.

Some opponents have attacked her for appearing on the covers of some of the world's largest fashion magazines and for being often spotted out with popsingers and social media influencers in Helsinki.

"I am who I am, a 36-year-old mother and a young person who has friends and a social life," she said.

Marin, who enjoys cleaning her own premises and going for 20-km (12-mile) runs outdoors, said she wants to bring a human side to high-level political leadership and show other young adults that young people can lead too. In December, the minister in charge of Finland's COVID response, Krista Kiuru, announced she is expecting a baby due in March, making her the fifth minister in Marin's government to have a child and take parental leave while in office.

"Globally the image of a leader is still very masculine..., and there are few decision-makers from a younger generation," Marin said, stressing she wanted to change that.

A report by the NATO Strategic Communications Centre last February found that female Finnish politicians are subject to gendered abuse on Twitter, much of which came from clusters of right-wing accounts and did not seem highly coordinated.

By Essi Lehto and Anne Kauranen
Reuters
Submitted by Asko Hämäläinen

Final Resting Place

Finland is set to open the world's first permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste. How did it succeed when other countries stumbled?

After passing through a security gate, the van descends into a tunnel that burrows under the forests of Olkiluoto, an island off Finland's west coast. The wheels crunch on crushed stone as a gray, wet October day gives way to darkness. "Welcome to Onkalo," deadpans Antti Mustonen, a geologist here. Onkalo—"cavity" or "pit" in Finnish—will be the world's first permanent disposal site for high-level nuclear waste, and a triumph for Finland.

Safety lights guide the van down through switchback turns that lead to a cavernous chamber, its walls reinforced with spray-on concrete. In just a few years, spent reactor fuel rods, encased in giant copper casks as tall as giraffes, will arrive here via elevator before robotic vehicles take them to one of the dozens of dead-end disposal tunnels that will form an ant's nest in the bedrock. In a freshly excavated disposal tunnel, Mustonen explains over the roar of ventilator fans that the peculiar smell comes from rock dust mixed with a trace of explosives. It is muddy underfoot—not what you want to see in a place that shouldn't have leaks, but Mustonen says the water is only from the excavation effort.

In the blackness, bare bedrock glints in the meager light from the van. After 30 to 40 of the copper casks are buried in the tunnel floor, the holes will be plugged with bentonite, a water-absorbing clay. Each tunnel will be back-filled with more bentonite and sealed with concrete. The casks will then begin their long vigil. They must remain undisturbed for 100,000 years, even as the warming climate of coming centuries gives way to the next ice age. "It's final disposal," Mustonen says. "Right here, in stable Finnish bedrock, 430 meters below ground, 420 meters below sea level."

Although nuclear power is declining in many nations, Finland has embraced the carbon-free energy source, lobbying the European Union to label it as sustainable. Two of the country's four reactors are on Olkiluoto. After a new Olkiluoto reactor is connected to the grid later this year, nuclear power will account for more than 40% of Finland's electricity.



The emissions-free electricity comes with a downside: hot and highly radioactive spent uranium fuel rods. In Finland, the rods cool for decades in pools of water; other nations park them in concrete and steel "dry storage" casks. Either way, surface storage is vulnerable to accidents, leaks, or neglect during the thousands of years the waste remains dangerous, says Budhi Sagar, a nuclear expert formerly at the Southwest Research Institute. "It's not safe—some disaster will occur," he says, citing the groundwater contaminated by leaky waste tanks at the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Hanford Site in Washington state, where reactors produced plutonium for the first nuclear weapons.

Without a long-term solution, the waste is piling up. Finland had about 2300 tons of waste in 2019, and about 263,000 tons of spent fuel sit in interim storage facilities worldwide, a report this year from the International Atomic Energy Agency estimates. "In my view, that's an unacceptable legacy to leave to future

generations,” says Tom Isaacs, a strategic adviser for Canada’s Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) and Southern California Edison. “We generated this electricity. We benefited from that.”

Many experts view permanent deep repositories like Onkalo as the best solution, but getting community buy-in is often a deal breaker. Street protests have slowed down plans for a disposal site in France, and in 2009, after years of debate, then-President Barack Obama’s administration gave up on plans to develop Nevada’s Yucca Mountain as the U.S. national repository. “The U.S. approach didn’t pay sufficient attention to community acceptance or engagement,” says Isaacs, who was the lead adviser on a 2012 blue-ribbon report commissioned by DOE to chart a way forward. “The original approach led to conflict rather than cooperation.”

Finland, however, has run into remarkably few problems with Onkalo, which the government approved as a site in 2000. It helped that the residents of Eurajoki, the town closest to Onkalo and the nearby reactors, were comfortable with nuclear power. “Almost everyone in Eurajoki has a friend or relative who has worked in the nuclear power plants, so they know how we operate,” says Janne Mokka, CEO of Posiva, the nuclear waste company set up by two nuclear power utilities to develop and manage Onkalo.

But experts say the success of Onkalo also reflects unique cultural and political conditions in Finland: high trust in institutions, community engagement, a lack of state-level power centers, and a balance of power between industry and stakeholders. “If you tried to implement the same thing in a country with much lower levels of trust, it would probably fail,” says Matti Kojo, a political science researcher at Tampere University in Finland.

“The Finns have been able to articulate a consistent message about what they’re doing, why they believe this facility will be safe, and why it will be a major benefit to the wellbeing of certain communities,” Isaacs says.

This approach—continual engagement with potential host communities—is rare in many other countries, including the United States. Even in Finland it is new. In the mid-1980s, Finland had a technical, top-down approach with no public participation that experts like Kojo and Isaacs call “decide-announce-defend.” In 1986, TVO announced it would investigate the municipality of Ikaalinen as a final disposal site. However, local resistance, particularly in the wake of the catastrophic nuclear accident at Chernobyl in the former Soviet Union, foiled the plans. The company realized it would have to engage more and build local political support using an approach Kojo calls “mitigate-understand-mediate.”

Once an agreement was reached, Eurajoki residents were largely willing to leave technical matters and safety questions to expert bodies. “In Finland, there is a very high level of trust in science and in the authorities,” Kojo says. “If the national authority says the repository is safe, they don’t need to worry about it.”

Not everyone’s concerns have been allayed. The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC) says it is worried about long-term ecotoxicity and bioaccumulation of the radioisotopes. It also cites concerns raised by retired geologist Matti Saarnisto, former director of research for the Geological Survey of Finland. In 2010, Saarnisto told Finland’s national broadcaster that as the next ice age arrives, freezing soil and rock could create pressures that would damage the repository. In any case, Saarnisto argued, it is impossible to make predictions on the scale of 100,000 years.

“What we are doing really has meaning and is really important,” Mustonen says. “For me, this is the reasonable thing to do with nuclear waste, and we need to make it as good as possible. The sense of responsibility to the next generation doesn’t keep me awake at night, but it’s there. It just is.”

By Sedeer El-Showk
Science Magazine

Talkin 'bout My Generation: Helsinki Kids are Putting an End to Famous Finnish Silence

When Finland was ranked as the world's happiest country, many were quick to express their surprise. Why? When it comes to keeping a stiff upper lip, the Finns are at the top of the charts.

But Finland has a lot to shout about. The small Nordic nation ranks top tier in education, quality of life, and even boasts the cleanest air in the world. Luckily for the rest of the world, future generations of Finns are being encouraged to make their voices heard through a game-changing workshop.

On November 5th, the 'Making Young Voices Heard' workshop took place in Helsinki Central Library. There, schoolchildren and students were taught skills in communication and public speaking through exercises and hands-on interaction.

As part of Helsinki Education Week, the workshop was based around the event's theme, which this year was 'student voice.' And when it comes to developing voices, workshop leader and founder of Public Speaking Pro, Dr Anna Nikina- Ruohonen is an expert in her field. Dr Nikina-Ruohonen wants to take the fear away from public speaking. So she's spreading the message to kids and adults that communication is both fun and engaging.

"Give the children the right tools, and they will shine," Dr Nikina- Ruohonen explains.

Founder of Public Speaking Pro, Dr Anna Nikina- Ruohonen Indeed, the workshop proved Dr Nikina- Ruohonen's theory right. Kids like Daniel, who took part in the workshop, were taken out of their comfort zones when speaking in front of a live audience. But Daniel wasn't nervous at all. In fact, he relished the experience.

"This was a good opportunity to learn to improvise, as opposed to having it all planned out. It's exciting to speak in front of a live audience," Daniel says.

Of course, public speaking isn't just about stating a point; it's an effective way to transcend cultures and boundaries. Now, at a time when Helsinki becomes ever more international, communication is critical.

This is just one reason why Ben Thrash, Deputy Head of School at the International School of Helsinki, is keen to encourage kids to express themselves. "The school runs a debate club, as well as a Model United Nations and lots of other curricular experiences," Thrash says. Some of his students attended the workshop, which, according to Thrash, was a great way to get students in touch with the real world.

Another educator who praised the workshop was Dr Kevin Gore of Haaga-Helia University of Applied sciences. As a senior lecturer, Gore has seen Helsinki turn into a truly international environment. He was pleased to see how the course strengthened confidence and communication among participants and witnessed students gaining a deep understanding of various perspectives.

Sebastian, aged 14, also enjoyed the social aspect of the workshop, where he was able to share opinions, use his creativity and have fun. "The best part is when people listen to you and are interested in what you have to say," Sebastian says.

Clearly, the course was popular with all who were brought together for an engaging learning experience. So, could this be the start of the end for the famous Finnish silence? Perhaps. And as Finland continues to inspire the world, many are eager to hear what this small Nordic nation has to say.

By Joe Konderla
Ink Tank, Finland
Submitted by Brend "Lahja" Holma

War in Ukraine: The Russians leaving Russia for Finland

At Vaalimaa, Finland's border crossing with Russia - 120 miles east of Helsinki - buses and cars stop for passport and customs checks. These aren't Ukrainians, they're Russians, and although the flow isn't heavy, it is constant.

Some people are anxious to get out of Russia because there has been a persistent rumour that President Vladimir Putin's government might soon introduce martial law to deal with demonstrations against the invasion of Ukraine. With flights to Europe halted, the only way out of the country is by car - crossing this border - or by train.

We spoke to one young Russian woman who was leaving for the West - one of the lucky ones who had an EU visa before the sanctions were announced. She was in despair at what has been happening.

"People in Ukraine are our people - our family," she said. "We shouldn't be killing them." Would she think of going back, I asked? "Not while our dreadful government is there. It is so, so sad." She said most Russians don't want this war, but they risk going to jail if they try to stand up to Putin.

In Finland, there's immense sympathy for people like her - just as there is for Ukraine and its inhabitants.



This sympathy, and the fear that Russia might lash out at other neighbours such as Finland itself, is changing attitudes to Finland's traditional leanings toward neutrality. According to the latest opinion polls, a growing majority of Finns believe that it's time for their country to join NATO and access the protection that membership of the alliance would bring.

Another woman who has left Russia, this time for Istanbul, told us by phone she had been terrified of a return to life as it was under the Soviet Union.

"I'm 30, I haven't seen the worst... the repressions, the secret police," she said. "I had a very clear fear that if I'm not going to fly out right now, I will not be able to fly out ever. On the one hand, it seems this is the moment to get out. On the other, there is a legitimate fear that you will not be able to see your friends and family for God knows how long, if ever."

If martial law were introduced, Mr. Putin would be free to do what he wanted, without having to worry about damaging protests in the streets. He has already made it clear to French President Emmanuel Macron that he won't stop until he has occupied the whole of Ukraine - and a French official who listened in on their phone call said, afterwards, that things could get a great deal worse. How? Well, the nuclear option could be getting decidedly closer. It's a frightening prospect.

No wonder Russians who don't want any part of the invasion or the trouble it's creating inside Russian towns and cities are desperate to get out of the country - and make a living for themselves outside.

By John Simpson
BBC News

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"I Greet You Ukraine"

By Eino Leino, 1917

I greet you Ukraine. Let your glory tower
as a cry of next morning's light!
May a lighting of your love and power
demand and make your country free from
blight.

Brave Ukraine! Do not stumble today!
One will come your nation's dawn.
Calm, strong repel your enemies away,
or if need be, then fire with brawn.

Translated by Jopi Nyman



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