

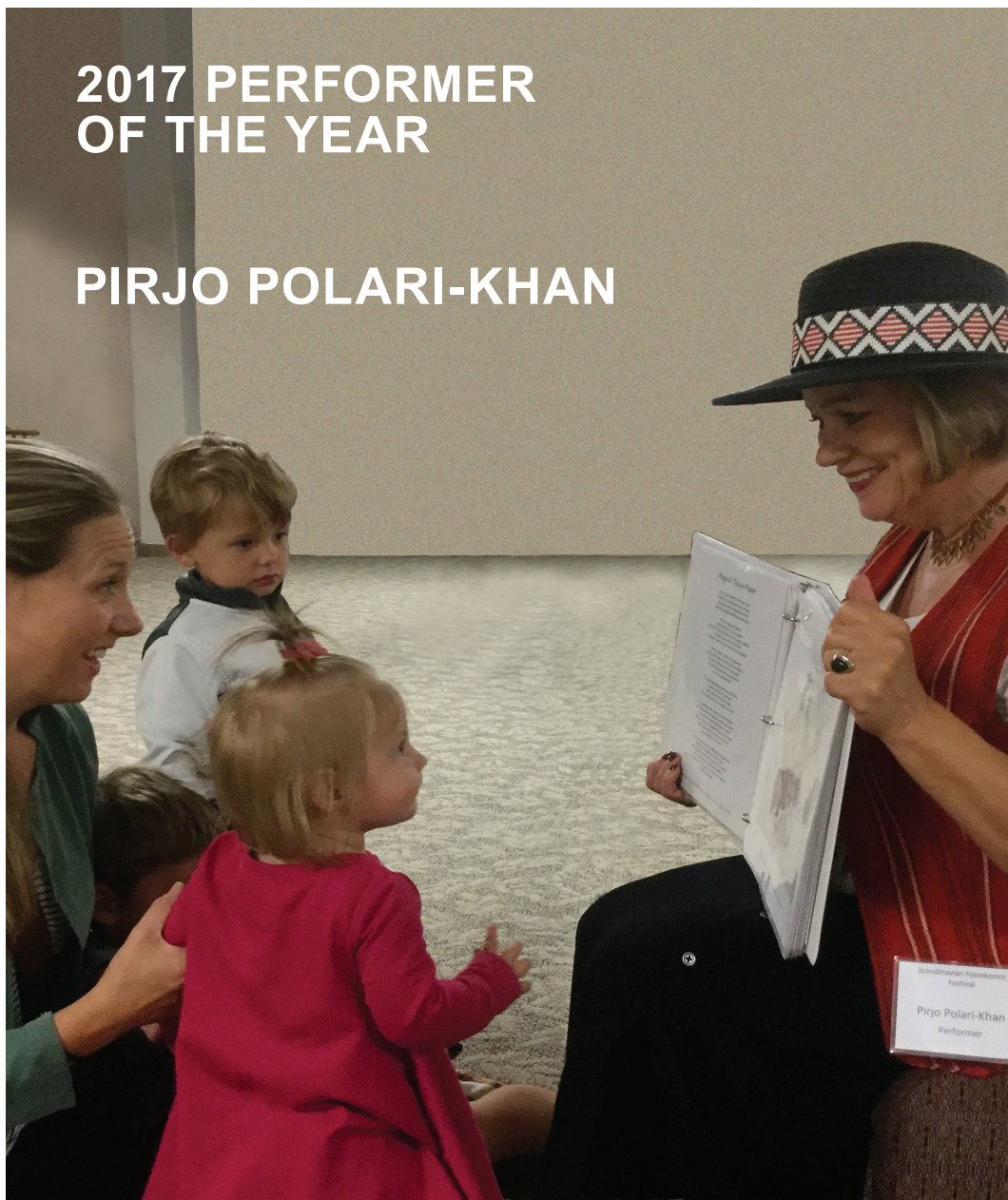


# Finlandia Foundation® National

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

## 2017 PERFORMER OF THE YEAR

## PIRJO POLARI-KHAN



Scandinavian Heritage Festival  
Pirjo Polari-Khan  
Performer

# 2017 Performer of the Year: Pirjo Polari-Khan

In 1996 Finlandia Foundation National (FFN), the premier network of Finnish-American organizations in the United States, inaugurated its Performer of the Year (POY) program to encourage appreciation of Finnish and Finnish-American culture, traditions and talent through live performances at FFN chapters across the U.S.

FFN is pleased to present the multi-talented Pirjo Polari-Khan as POY through August 31, 2018. Since the POY program's founding, the artists selected---with the exception of one comedic lecturer---have been musicians. This is the first time FFN has chosen a POY program designed to engage children. Through her poetry, songs and humor, the storyteller weaves themes of

Finnish culture, history and richness of the language into her presentation.

A native of Seinäjoki, Finland, Pirjo has lived in San Jose, California, for more than 30 years. Born into a family of artists, writers, musicians and storytellers, Pirjo trained as a ceramic artist at Wolverhampton Polytechnic in England, and has published short stories, poetry and a CD of her songs.

Her recent project, *The Etiquette Village*, is a book of poems---which she also illustrated---with manners and wisdom for children. While meeting characters such as “Harbo Cydrate,” “The Old Royale Pot” and “Double U & Double Me,” children learn about good behavior as well as other valuable life lessons. The content is directed at children ages seven and older, and adults also find it enjoyable.

Her POY program seeks to recreate the old storytelling times when people gathered together in villages to pass on daily news and knowledge, to sing and just have fun.

During 2017, as the centennial of Finland's independence is celebrated, Pirjo will include in her program thoughts and illustrations about the importance of the *Kalevala* and its poetic language in Finnish culture.

Pirjo hopes to encourage Finnish and Finnish-American audiences to develop a greater interest in their heritage and culture.

Finlandia Foundation offers a travel grant for POY appearances at a minimum of eight FFN chapter events. Local transportation, lodging and POY honorarium are the responsibility of the host chapter.

For additional information or to book the program please contact POY Coordinator Betsey Norgard at [norgard@paulbunyan.net](mailto:norgard@paulbunyan.net)

Find further information on Pirjo Polari-Khan, the Performer of the Year program and POY hosting information at the FFN website: [FinlandiaFoundation.org](http://FinlandiaFoundation.org).

## PREVIOUS PERFORMERS OF THE YEAR:

**2015** Sara Pajunen, violinist and composer, Minnesota

**2014** Olli Hirvonen, jazz guitarist, New York City

**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

*continued*

## **PREVIOUS POY, CONTINUED:**

**2010** Finn Hall, band from  
Oakdale, Minnesota

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

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

**2007** Maria Männistö, soprano,  
Seattle

**2006** Kaiku, female vocal duo  
from New York City

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

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

**2002** Ulla Suokko, flutist,  
New York City

**2001** Vicki Gornick, organist,  
Chisholm, Minnesota

**2000** Diane Jarvi, singer, poet  
and songwriter, Minneapolis

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

**1998** Bernhard Hillila, comedic  
lecturer, Valparaiso, Indiana

**1997** Koivun Kaiku, kantele  
ensemble from Minneapolis

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

Find more information on past  
POY programs at  
[FinlandiaFoundation.org](http://FinlandiaFoundation.org)

**T**he Performer of the Year  
term begins September 1  
and runs through August 31.

To book the POY program  
contact POY Coordinator  
Betsey Norgard at  
[norgard@paulbunyan.net](mailto:norgard@paulbunyan.net)

Interested in being a Performer  
of the Year? POY application  
deadline is in mid-February.  
For information:  
[FinlandiaFoundation.org](http://FinlandiaFoundation.org)

**F**inlandia 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:  
[FinlandiaFoundation.org](http://FinlandiaFoundation.org)



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