



OOPPERA
BALETTI

Award-winning Finnish novel *Ice* is adapted into an opera

In January 2019 the Finnish National Opera will host the world premiere of a new opera from Finland based on **Ulla-Lena Lundberg's** bestselling novel *Ice*. The novel was awarded the Finlandia prize, Finland's most prestigious literary award, in 2012. The opera will be composed by **Jaakko Kuusisto** and the libretto in Finnish will be written by **Juhani Koivisto**. The director of the production will be **Anna Kelo**.

Season 2017–2018 at the Finnish National Opera and Ballet also presents impressive Finnish world premieres, with both [Höstsonaten – Autumn Sonata](#) composed by **Sebastian Fagerlund** and the ballet spectacle [The Land of Kalevala](#) directed by **Kenneth Greve** in the repertoire.

The novel *Ice* was published simultaneously in Swedish and Finnish in 2012. It has so far sold a total of nearly 150 000 copies in the two languages. There has been widespread interest in adapting the novel for the stage, but the National Opera was the first to get Ulla-Lena Lundberg's blessing.

The story of the opera is about a young pastor and his family who settle on a remote Finnish island. The war is over and supplies are scarce, but life on the island is wonderful and everyone loves the new priest. The inauguration party is held by the glistening sea, but soon the bleak, stormy winter arrives. The priest knows nothing about ice, nor the way it gives in when you least expect.

Jaakko Kuusisto has lived and composed in the outer archipelago of Finland. Having experienced the harsh setting first hand, he says he couldn't imagine a more appealing task as a composer. "What matters most to me is that the music creates an overriding ambience, describing the beautiful yet merciless sea and ice, which have a tremendous power over us and make us feel so small."

A new Principal Guest Conductor at the Finnish National Opera and Ballet

Conductor **Patrick Fournillier** will start as the Finnish National Opera and Ballet's Principal Guest Conductor in the coming season. Fournillier will conduct Verdi's [Il trovatore](#) (The Troubadour) in spring 2018. His previous appearances at the FNOB have been in *Thais* 2015 and 2016 as well as *Carmen* in 2017. The French conductor is particularly well-known for his renditions of Italian and French operas. He regularly performs at major opera houses around the world, such as Bayerische Staatsoper, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, La Fenice in Venice and the Semperoper in Dresden. In addition to conducting the season's repertoire, Fournillier will oversee the musical quality of the orchestra.

Il trovatore will be performed as a fresh version produced by the famed opera house of Barcelona, the Gran Teatre del Liceu. The director and set designer **Joan Anton Rechi** has made artist **Francisco de Goya** a part of his production. Goya's series of etchings "The Disasters of War" depicts the brutal war fought in the setting of *Il trovatore*. "I want to transform the opera house into a gigantic artist's canvas," Rechi says, describing the projections of Goya's art. "Goya is like the narrator, the troubadour who tells us the tragedy of love, revenge, war and death with his brush, showing us the destruction brought on by war." The conflict between the beauty of the music and the violent images of war lends a new perspective to Verdi's immortal opera.

Verdi's classics abound in the season's repertoire, as the reworked *Il trovatore* will be accompanied by returning productions of [Rigoletto](#) (22.9.) and [La Traviata](#) (20.12.). The second premiere of the spring will be a new version of **Puccini's** *Madama Butterfly*, directed by **Yoshi Oida** of Japanese origin. The 2017-2018 season at the National Opera will also feature [The Cunning Little Vixen](#) (14.10.) [The Magic Flute](#) (17.11.), [Cosi fan tutte](#) (14.4.2018) and [Parsifal](#) (16.5.2018).

[The Land of Kalevala](#) challenges the boundaries of different art forms, as it explores the very essence of Finland and the Finns through dance. The world premiere of ballet spectacle *The Land of Kalevala* in autumn 2017 is an epic work about Finland's history – and its future. To celebrate Finland's centenary of independence, Kenneth Greve's final full-length production as the Artistic Director of the FNB delivers a ravishing yet entertaining vision of Finnish history, cultural turning points and the quintessentially Finnish combination of guts and endurance, *sisu*. The world premiere of *The Land of Kalevala* is on the 3rd of November. Greve has constructed a holistic experience, which includes a mood-enhancing behind the scenes tour of the opera house before the performance. The carefully selected team behind the production features the FNO Chorus, the folk music band Värttinä, accordion virtuoso **Kimmo Pohjonen** and many more.

The autumn season of the National Ballet opens on August the 25th with American choreographer **Val Caniparoli's** version of Dumas's story [Lady of the Camellias](#). Critically acclaimed for its dramatic expression, it has previously been seen at Boston Ballet, for instance. Caniparoli's production of classical beauty is performed to Chopin's romantic music.

The premieres will be complemented with beloved returning productions: **Jorma Elo's** ballet [A Midsummer Night's Dream](#) (6.10.), the Christmas classic [The Nutcracker](#) (1.12.) and the ever-popular [Don Quixote](#) (24.3.2018). The premiers in spring 2018 will be [Moomin and the Magician's Hat](#) (23.1.2018), which premiered on the FNB's tour of Japan, the ballet classic [Giselle](#) (23.2.2018) and the critically celebrated dance production [Les Nuits – The Nights](#) (4.5.2018). Kenneth Greve will end his 10-year tenure as the Artistic Director of the FNB with the [Yours with Gratitude, Kenneth](#) gala performance on May the 26th, 2018.

The entire repertoire, information about the soloists, and performance dates can be found on our website at opera.fi/season17-18.

Tickets for spring 2018 will be on sale from October the 4th.

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