

## Crossover extravaganza by ballet director Kenneth Greve

**The year 2017 marks the centenary of Finland's independence. The Finnish National Opera and Ballet will be celebrating the year with a new ballet extravaganza, which is also the farewell production of Kenneth Greve, whose appointment as Artistic Director of the FNB expires in 2018.**

The Finnish National Opera and Ballet is making a huge investment in the Finland 100 celebrations with a blockbuster production focusing on Finland's history – and future. The [Land of Kalevala](#) ballet spectacle by **Kenneth Greve** will be premiered on 3 November 2017. Its story touches on milestone moments in Finnish history and culture with a bold combination of various art forms. The end result will be a playful, touching and slightly mad production that can only be the work of an outside observer.

Greve came from Denmark to Finland in 2008, and his appointment as Artistic Director of the FNB will expire in 2018. *Land of Kalevala* is at once a thank-you to, a celebration of and a wake-up call for the Finnish nation. It probes deep into the core of what it is to be Finnish. Do we understand our roots? Do we know where we are going? Do we still have the stamina to dig through grey rock, as the saying goes?

"Danes have *hygge*, but Finns have *sisu*. I admire the guts and power that you can find in this society and in Finnish history. I want to challenge Finns to rediscover their *sisu* for the next 100 years," says Greve.

The iconic moments of Finnish history will be underpinned by Finnish musical memories across genre boundaries. The music is being compiled by **Tuomas Kantelinen**, who will also be providing some original music. The performing ensemble will include internationally known Finnish modern folk musicians such as accordionist **Kimmo Pohjonen** and the band **Värttinä**. The Chorus and Orchestra of the FNO will also be there.

"Kenneth and I went through dozens of proposals," says composer Tuomas Kantelinen. "The main criteria for the music selections were that they should suit the story and movement language of the ballet, carry the narrative and support the dance. The story incorporates ancient mysticism, well-known heroes, new interpretations and an important look at the 100 years of independent Finland. Musically, the production will be a veritable bouquet featuring many colours and many composers – including some real surprises!"

The performances will be conducted by **Nick Davies**. The sets, lighting and back projections are by **Mikki Kunttu** and the costumes by **Erika Turunen**.

Unlike Kenneth Greve's previous ballets – *The Snow Queen* and *The Little Mermaid* – this production is not suitable for small children. The current recommended age limit for *Land of Kalevala* is 9 years.

Tickets go on sale to companies and groups next week, on Thursday 22 September 2016. The ticket price includes a mood-setting tour of the Opera House before the performance.

*Land of Kalevala* belongs to the official programme of the Finland 100 celebrations. The centenary year at the FNOB will also include the world premiere of the full-length opera *Syyssonaatti* [Autumn Sonata], an adaptation of the celebrated eponymous film by **Ingmar Bergman**. The music is by **Sebastian Fagerlund**, one of Finland's most widely acclaimed contemporary composers. The production will be directed and the sets designed by **Stéphane Braunschweig**, and **Anne Sofie von Otter** has been engaged to perform in the role of Charlotte. The performances will be conducted by **John Storgårds**.

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The Finnish National Opera and Ballet is an international-calibre opera and ballet company with a broad and varied repertoire. As a national arts institution, it serves the entire country: the Finnish National Opera is the only professional opera company in Finland, and the Finnish National Ballet is the only professional ballet company.

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