

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LISTEN TO THE LANDSCAPE OF FINLAND;
FINNISH-AMERICAN PIANIST MARJA KAISLA PLAYS IN PORTLAND MAY 17**

Portland, Oregon, April 19, 2013 – Finnish-American pianist, Marja Kaisla, will play music written by four Finnish composers on Friday, May 17 from 7:30-9pm at Classic Pianos of Portland (www.classicportland.com/), 3003 SE Milwaukie Ave, Portland 97202. Tickets are \$10, available at the door.

Sponsored by the Finlandia Foundation National, as well as the local Columbia-Pacific Chapter of the Finlandia Foundation, the program includes compositions by Leevi Madetoja, Selim Palmgren, Jean Sibelius and Einar Englund. “You can hear the melancholy and loneliness of the Finnish landscape in their music,” explains Kaisla.

The performer

Kaisla was selected as Performer of the Year by Finlandia Foundation to encourage appreciation of Finnish and Finnish-American talent, culture and traditions.

Born in Finland, Kaisla began playing piano at the age of three. She studied at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, the St. Petersburg Conservatory in Russia, with György Sebök in Switzerland, and Susan Starr in Philadelphia, where Kaisla has lived since 1987. She has performed extensively in the U.S., most often with Trio Excelsior, as well as a soloist with orchestras and in chamber ensembles, notably in *Piano 4*, a unique ensemble of four pianos.

Music creates understanding

Kaisla is also the co-founder of the Philadelphia Foundation for World Music and Arts, an advocacy organization promoting the arts and social harmony. “Music is unique among forms of expression in that it allows people of different backgrounds and cultures to become truly interested in and accept and respect one another,” she said. “That is ultimately why I perform, teach and talk about music.”

Kaisla is currently developing a documentary film exploring the reasons why the Chinese are now so interested in classical Western music. She is also leading the planning of many cultural and educational events in Philadelphia and Wilmington to celebrate the 375th anniversary of the

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Finnish and Swedish settlement of the Delaware Valley.

Featured composers

While classical music-loving Americans are generally familiar with Jean Sibelius, the other composers are less well known. Kaisla will play Sibelius' own piano transcriptions of *Valse Triste* and *Finlandia*, both of which were originally orchestral "tone poems".

In contrast to Sibelius, who was a master of large-scale works for the symphony orchestra, Madetoja's compositions were written specifically for the piano. Dubbed the "Finnish Chopin", Selim Palmgren was an impressionistic composer, who taught in the U.S. for several years at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Einar Englund studied with Aaron Copeland, whose influence Kaisla hears in Englund's *Introduzione e Toccata* (1950).

For more information about Marja Kaisla's performance on May 17, contact Elisa Boynton, Cultural Director of Finlandia Foundation Columbia-Pacific Chapter <http://www.ffcpc.info/> at 503-880-4880, e-mail: tokeo@msn.com.

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NOTE ON PARKING:

Allow extra time for parking. Classic Piano has a small parking lot on the corner of 11th Ave and Powell Blvd. There is street parking on 11th Ave (the street directly behind Classic Piano's main entrance), on 10th Ave and on the cross streets/neighborhood parking. There is also shared parking with Brooklyn Pharmacy down on Milwaukie Ave (some parking spots restricted but all are open after 7:00 PM).