

Suomen Harmonikkaliitto (SHL)

32nd Annual Sata-Häme Soi - Accordion Festival:
The 32nd Annual International Sata-Häme Soi - Accordion Festival held in Ikaalinen, Finland during the first week of July, 2004.

Amidst the beautiful parks and wooden houses of Ikaalinen, Finland which is nestled on the banks of Lake Kyrösjärvi, capacity audiences gathered to enjoy non-stop accordion music featuring everything from Cajun to Rock, from Classical to Folk and Tex Mex with soloists, duos, bands and orchestras all held in a variety of settings including Concert Halls, Churches, Pubs, Outdoor Parks and Schools.

Among the impressive lineup were the Finnish Tango Orchestra-Milonga, Zoltán Orosz Duo from Hungary, the Veli-Matti Järvenpää TexMex Trio, The Bryac Quartet from the Ukraine, the Accordion Orchestra from St. Petersburg, and the First and Second place winners of the 2003 CIA Coupe Mondiale competition - Nikolai Sivchuk and Aleksei Peresidly from Russia.

Nineteen year old Kaisa Kujanpää from Lapua won the prized Golden Accordion Award scoring perfect 10's from each of the judges in the final round.

The Silver Accordion Award was won by 10 year old accordionist Juuso Vesterinen from Taipalsaari. Juuso played an energetic version of Baby Elephant Walk by Henry Mancini, arranged by Virve Jääskeläinen.

Preliminary rounds were held onboard the Silja Europa cruise from Finland to Sweden and back that was held in March.

The entire competition is presented as a live National TV show that is broadcast as part of the 32nd Annual Sata-Häme Soi Accordion Festival in Ikaalinen.



A highlight of the festival was a concert by Finland's own Dr. Mika Väyrynen who presented a solo concert featuring the complete Goldberg Variations by J. S. Bach in the Ikaalinen Church.

The festival speaker at the closing ceremony was the Prime Minister of Finland - Matti Vanhanen.

A special congratulations to Festival Director - Minna Kulmala, Public Relations Manager - Minna Plihtari and Musical Director - Kimmo Mattila who worked together over many months to ensure the smooth running of the festival. Plans are already underway for the 2005 Sata-Häme Soi - Accordion Festival to be held in Ikaalinen from June 28 - July 3rd, 2005.

For a festival review in English, or more information on the 2005 festival, please visit: www.accordions.com/finland or contact: juhlat@satahamesoi.fi

The Accordion in Ikaalinen, Finland: A large part of the accordion life in Finland is centered in Ikaalinen and is formed into three groups mentioned earlier, the Sata-Häme Soi Accordion Festival, the Finnish Accordion Association and the Finnish Accordion Institute.

(1) The Sata-Häme Soi Ikaalinen Accordion Festival offers performances and concerts covering a broad range of styles as you can see from these pages which review the 2003 Festival. The Sata-Häme Soi also has a March winter cruise which attracts thousands.

(2) The Finnish Accordion Institute caters to academic accordion activities with the archives of accordion activities, publishing new and past accordion works, CD's and other important accordion projects, including a museum which houses over 100 instruments and offering support for the summer festival and cruise.

(3) The Finnish Accordion Association, member of the Confédération Internationale des Accordionistes (CIA) IMC-UNESCO which has some 5,000 plus members. This gives accordionists an opportunity to belong to a central accordion family, and an important part of this association is the regular publication of their news, a 60 page high quality magazine entitled "Hanuri."

It should also be mentioned that in addition to these three groups promoting the accordion, many conservatories also accept the accordion for studies, the most famous being the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki which has both Classical and Folk Departments.

Veikko Ahvenainen Celebrates 75th Birthday: Finnish Accordionist Veikko Ahvenainen celebrated his 75th Birthday with a gala concert in Helsinki's famed Finlandia Hall. The sold out Concert featured a gala finale with an accordion orchestra of over 300 members.

New Book Released: A new book about the accordion class at the Sibelius Academy (1977-2002) has been written by Helka Kymäläinen.

This newly published book is available from the Finnish Accordion Institute by contacting Kimmo Mattila at: kimmo.mattila@harmonikkaliitto.net