

NIKLAS WINTER

Guitarist & composer

Born 1969 Turku, Finland

"The result is an entirely successful run of fourteen very different tracks that hang together to provide an overall aesthetic that is both meditative and swinging." Phil Johnson on the *Graduale* album, London Jazz News, 2023 (UK)

Det gjør vi like godt med et høyst unikt musikalsk konsept der Winter fusjonerer sin egen musikk for jazzkvartett og solo med finsk middelalderkormusikk. Spesielt? Definitivt. Vakkert? Avgjort.

Tor Hammerø on the *Graduale* album / *Nettavisen* 2023 (Norway)

Nyt on vanha kunnan albumikokonaisuuden idea on kunniaasaan. Toki minkä tahansa kappaleen voi halutessaan irrottaa erilliskuunteluun, mutta parempi ratkaisu on kunnioittaa huolella laadittua kokonaisuutta, kuunnella musiikki juuri niin kuin on tarkoitettu, pienistä osasista yhtenäiseksi kasvavana taideteoksena. Pentti Ronkanen on *Graduale* album / *Suomijazz* 11/2023 (Finland)

'Missä hyvänsä Niklas Winter soittaa, hänen herkästi kaipailevan kitaransa tunnistaa. Winter tuntuu etsivän käsitteiksi taipumatonta, jotain vielä ja ehkä pysyvästi näkymätöntä. Soundi on ollut samanlainen vuosia. Kari Salminen / *Turun Sanomat* 2022 (Finland)

Niklas in a nutshell

Niklas Winter is a jazz guitarist and composer born in Turku, Finland. He has made nine albums as a leader and many more as a co-leader and sideman, having recorded with Kenny Wheeler, Lars Jansson, Henry Lowther, Severi Pyysalo and many others.

Winter studied classical guitar at the Turku Conservatory during 1985-1990 and later, at Berklee College of Music in the mid-'90s.

Collaborations include guitar duos with Jesse Van Ruller, Ulf Wakenius, John Stowell, Søren Lee, Libor Smoldas, Lorenzo Cominoli, Teemu Viinikainen and with vibraphonist Severi Pyysalo, flutist Mark Lotz, organist Franz Danksagmüller and with trumpeter Henry Lowther.

Band projects include Niklas Winter Quartet & Quintet, Winter's Jazz Workshop and a collaboration with Henry Lowther and the Utopia Chamber Choir in Winter's *Graduale* project.

Winter has played concerts with the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra in productions with Kiri Te Kanawa and in Mikko Heiniö's Opera, Erik XIV.

He has performed multiple times at the London Jazz Festival, The Union Chappell in London, Pori Jazz Festival, Tampere Jazz Festival, Copenhagen and Aarhus Jazz Festivals, Orta and Nuoro Jazz Festivals, Turku Jazz and Turku Music Festival, Viapori Jazz Festival, Katedraali Soi!, Sacred Music Festival, Yokohama Jazz Promenade, Juhla Tokyo Festival, Beijing Contemporary Music Festival and at the Bohemia Jazz Fest, to name a few.

Winter has also composed music for television documentaries for the Finnish Broadcasting Company, YLE.

Niklas has been a guitar instructor for some 25 years in Novia and Jyväskylä & Oulu Universities of Applied Sciences until spring 2023. Now he works as a freelancer musician doing concerts and workshops around the globe.

He has led workshops at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Hong Kong University in Shenzhen, the Chugye University for The Arts, Aarhus University and at the Beijing Central Conservatory. And naturally in many music schools in Finland.

In 2000, Winter received the Young Arts Award and in 2001 the Aboa Price by the city of Turku. In 2006 Winter received the Western Cultural Award by Svenska Kulturfonden.

Winter started his jazz record label, Abovoice in 2000. Today the catalog consists of 19 releases. The label received a Finnish Jazz Grammy in 2003.

Niklas Winter's newest album 'Graduale' was released in 2023. This album consists of original compositions and of arrangements for a jazz quartet and a choir. Melodies are used from the oldest written music in Finland, The *Graduale Aboense*, a hymnbook that was used in the medieval times at the Turku Cathedral.

In November 2023 Winter performed the music at the Yugenji Temple in Tokyo at the Juhla Tokyo Festival and at the London Jazz Festival in St. Paul's Church with the London based Eclectic Voices choir. He also gave lectures at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and performed at the famous Union Chappell venue as a part of Stockhausen's 'Long Tones For Peace' concert.

In August 2023 Niklas performed two world premiere's at the Paraisten Urkupäivät Festival with Austrian church organist Franz Danksagmüller. *Infernal Joys* by Danksagmüller and *Solstice* by Winter were presented for a live audience for the first time. In the fall of 2024 this duo will do more concerts together.

Starting in 2023 until January 2026 Winter has been working on his new album which will be released in the spring of 2026.

The year 2026 will be an active one for Winter, filled with concerts and new exciting projects and collaborations.

The press wrote even more:

Niklas Winterin musiikissa ei juuri ole sitä jazzin perinteisestä, seksuaalista draiviä. Se on ikään kuin jo noussut jonnekkin henkisen sfäärin tuntumaan. Kun tämä virta osuu yhteen hengellisen musiikin tradition kanssa, kummatkin voittavat. Kari Salminen 2022 / Turun Sanomat. (Finland)

Winter has a fresh, modern sound. This is original and very exciting music and Niklas Winter Quartet has surely been a great experience at many festivals. Tor Hammerø / Jazznyt (Norway)

Niklas Winter's poetic playing shows great knowledge of improvisational skills. Jörgen Östberg / Orkester Journalen (Sweden)

'In Winter's playing listener can hear plainness and intelligence. Winter's improvisations and harmonies look back to the history of jazz but also expresses the atmosphere of today.' Hiroki Sugita / Jazz Life (Japan)

Trust in fact, was key, as was a fundamental sense of good time. Without a drummer or a bassist, and with the two guitarists sometimes dissolving into spare sections where time was, at best, suggested, it became even more essential that the two could internalize that time and know where it was, without it being explicitly there. It's in the context of the duo that an artist is at his/her most exposed; not only are their abilities, instincts and improvisational élan laid bare, but their communication skills—or lack thereof—are impossible to disguise. Viinikainen and Winter needn't have worried, as it was clear, from their Tampere Jazz Happening performance, that this was a duo communicating at a very deep level, playing relatively quiet music that was, nevertheless, thoroughly captivating. John Kellman / All About Jazz (USA)

Selected discography

As leader:

2026 We Should've Known Better (release late spring 2026)

2023 Graduale

2021 The Lighthouse

2017 Another Way Home

2010 Eight Songs Seven Keys

2008 Beautopia

2006 Live in Stockholm

2002 Piae Cantiones

2001 Saknad

1999 Hypnosis

As co-leader:

2018 You

2000 Silent Knowledge

1997 A Night In Bilbao

1994 New Deal

As sideman:

2017 Valo by Max de Aloe Baltic Trio

2014 Ostrobothnian Tales by West Yard Jazz Quartet

2000 Answer by Jan Simons Band Feat. Kenny Wheeler

1995 Hägringar by Mecki Knif

1994 Nattfågel by Nilla Hansson, Niklas Winter, Lauri Antila

Homepages

www.niklaswinter.com

www.abovoice.com

Spotify artist page

<https://open.spotify.com/artist/7z8P55fksPikrpZIDkmqdo?si=AXcreciCThudxxTFvTaC1A>

Youtube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@abovoice/videos>

Jazz Guitar Today (USA) interview with Niklas in December 2023

<https://jazzguitartoday.com/2023/12/jazz-guitar-in-finland-and-beyond/>