

RED NOSE COMPANY  
META4

VOICES

SISÄISIÄ ÄÄNIÄ  
INTIMATE VOICES

KUHMO  
CHAMBER  
MUSIC  
13.7.2025



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# Red Nose Company & Meta4

## Voces — Intimate Voices

A concert performance for two clowns and a string quartet

**Voces – Intimate Voices** is built around Jean Sibelius's string quartet in D minor, *Voces intimae*. While composing this quartet, Sibelius was diagnosed with a throat tumor, which deeply influenced his writing. Death — and the fears associated with it— form the thematic core of this performance. Throughout history, esotericism and the secret sciences have inspired artists reaching out to the beyond.

### **Premiere**

**Red Nose Company & Meta4**

**13.7.2025 Kuhmo Chamber Music**

### **Second Premiere**

**Red Nose Company & Kamus**

**29.7.2025 Our Festival**

Length approx. two hours (incl. intermission)

# CREATIVE TEAM

## Artistic concept and music choices

Timo Ruuskanen and Tuukka Vasama (Red Nose Company),  
Terhi Paldanius (Kamus) and Minna Pensola (Meta4)

## Script, music dramaturgy, directed by

Timo Ruuskanen and Tuukka Vasama

## Actors

Timo Ruuskanen and Tuukka Vasama

## Meta4

Antti Tikkanen (violin), Minna Pensola (violin),  
Atte Kilpeläinen (viola), Tomas Djupsjöbacka (cello)

## Costume planning

Erika Turunen

## Wreaths

Henna Tanskanen



KUHMON  
KAMARIMUSIIKKI  
KUHMO  
CHAMBER  
MUSIC

Meidän Festivaali  
*Our Festival*

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## Photography and graphic design

Tero Ahonen

## Program

Timo Ruuskanen and Tuukka Vasama (texts), Inka Virtanen (layout)

## Production

Red Nose Company

Meta4, Kamus, Kuhmo Chamber Music and Our Festival

## Sponsored by

Niilo Helander Foundation, Alfred Kordelin Foundation

City of Helsinki, Ministry of Education and Culture

The show has been rehearsed in the residency of  
Tero Saarinen Company. Thank you for the cooperation!



NIILO HELANDERIN  
SÄÄTIÖ

OPETUS- JA  
KULTTUURIMINISTERIÖ

# MUSIC

**Sibelius: Voces intimae, I**

**Wennäkoski: Flickereth, II**

**Sibelius: Voces intimae, II and III**

**Pärt: Summa**

**Moberg: Anonymous**

**Dessner: Song for Ainola**

**Sibelius: Voces intimae, III, IV and V**

## INTERMISSION

**Richter: On the Nature of Daylight**

**Saariaho: Terra memoria (excerpt)**

**Beethoven: Heiliger Dankgesang**

**Nagaraja: Stringar**

# I FIRST HALF

**Jean Sibelius (1865—1957):**

**String quartet in D minor op. 56 "Voces intimae" (1909)**

*I: Andante – Allegro molto moderato*

In his youth, Jean Sibelius composed extensively for small ensembles, but after the age of 25, he virtually stopped writing chamber music – with the exception of *Voces intimae*, which was composed some twenty years later.

*Voces intimae* is Sibelius's most well-known chamber work and part of the core repertoire of both Meta4 and Kamus.

**Lotta Wennäkoski (1970—):**

**String quartet Flickereth (2023)**

*II: "...fluttered loose from the mast, risen in tatters into the clouds and yearned"*

*Flickereth* was composed for the Kamus Quartet, and its title refers to the fluttering of sails, the trembling of the heart, or the shimmer of light. This movement is dedicated to the Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho, and its title is a quotation from Pentti Saarikoski's poem *Song of Longing at Sea (Laulu ikävästä merellä, 1958)*.

# FIRST HALF (continues)

**Jean Sibelius: "Voces intimae"**

*II: Vivace*

*III: Adagio di molto*

In the third movement of the string quartet, Sibelius wrote 'Voces intimae' between the staves. These chords reappear later in the same movement.

**Arvo Pärt (1935—):**

**Summa for string quartet (1977)**

The Estonian composer Arvo Pärt is one of the most renowned contemporary composers, and his style is often described as 'mystical minimalism.' During the Soviet era, Pärt was criticized both for his use of serialism in composition and for incorporating spiritual themes. In 1972, he converted from Lutheranism to Orthodox Christianity and reinvented himself as an artist. Summa is an example of this new compositional approach. The piece was originally written for an a cappella vocal ensemble, with the text of the Credo in Latin.

**Ida Moberg (1859—1947):**

**Anonymous (2025)**

Ida Moberg is considered Finland's first female composer. At the time, works by women were rarely published, which is why very little of her music has been preserved. For this reason, we seek to connect with Moberg and channel her music through the string quartet in the live situation.

**Bryce Dessner (1976—):  
Song for Ainola (2024)**

Bryce Dessner, guitarist of the American band The National, also composes classical music. He first visited Finland in 2015 as a guest artist at Our Festival. *Song for Ainola* was composed on the shores of Lake Tuusula, where Sibelius's home, Ainola, is located.

**Jean Sibelius: "Voces intimae"**

*III: Adagio di molto*

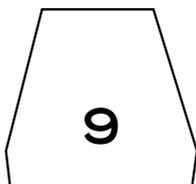
*IV: Allegretto (ma pesante)*

*V: Allegro*

"I haven't written for 4 days, as I decided to first finish the quartet. It will happen soon. I'm in such a rush, and I want to make it a true masterpiece. Then it will be worth about ten thousand."

– Jean Sibelius, in a letter to his wife Aino (March 15, 1909)

After *Voces intimae*, Sibelius's compositional style gradually became more complex and introspective. On May 21, 1909, he wrote a prophetic question in his diary: 'A change of style?!' Two years later, the Fourth Symphony was completed — enigmatic and fragile, filled with melancholy and dark reflection. Its slow movement was performed at the composer's funeral, in accordance with his wishes.



# SECOND HALF

**Max Richter (1966—):**

**On the Nature of Daylight (2004)**

Arrangement for string quartet by B. K. Lindgren

Max Richter is a British contemporary composer with an extensive body of work. While he can be classified as a post-minimalist, many of his compositions also incorporate elements of popular music. His music has been widely featured in television and film productions. *On the Nature of Daylight* was originally composed for string quintet. It was released on the album *The Blue Notebooks*, which the composer has described as an exploration of the chasm between lived experience and imagination.

**Kaija Saariaho (1952—2023):**

**Excerpt of the string quartet Terra Memoria (2007)**

Kaija Saariaho's second string quartet is dedicated 'to those who have departed.' Meta4 performed the quartet at the funeral of violinist Eriikka Maalismaa in January 2025. She was a wonderful violinist and a good friend, and she left us too early, at the age of 44. Eriikka, you are with us in spirit!

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770—1827):  
String quartet 15 A Minor op. 132 (1825)**

*III: Molto adagio, “Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der Lydischen Tonart”*

Beethoven began to lose his hearing already in his early thirties. In 1802, he wrote what is known as the Heiligenstadt Testament — a letter in which he resolved to devote the rest of his life to composition, despite his deafness. He wrote: ‘Only art holds me back. It seems impossible to leave the world before I bring forth everything my soul longs to release.’

This quartet was composed after Beethoven’s recovery from a serious illness. We perform the slow movement he titled *Holy Song of Thanksgiving to the Deity*.

**Krishna Nagaraja (1975—):  
Stringar (2020)**

*I: Udelt Takt*

Italian-Indian composer Krishna Nagaraja combines folk, classical, and contemporary music in his compositions. He completed his artistic doctorate at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki with a project titled *Polska Travels: Composing (at) the Crossroads. Tales from Norway*, recorded by Meta4, was nominated for Best Classical Album in Finland in 2023.

# INITIAL INSPIRATIONS

The idea for this concert performance was born when Terhi and Minna were playing in Timo and Tuukka's *Aleksis Kivi* production at the Finnish National Theatre. We began to meet and plan a performance. The artistic concept would be created collaboratively by the four of us, and the final production would be realized with Meta4 at the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival and with Kamus at Our Festival.

*Voces – Intimate Voices* is a concert performance for two clowns and a string quartet. The piece brings together two old art forms — clowning and chamber music — striving for a balanced and equal dialogue between them. Musically and thematically, it opens a conversation between the world of a hundred years ago and our present day.

The storyline of this piece is anchored in the year 1909, when *Voces intimae* was completed. Our process began with Jean Sibelius, but his string quartet ultimately led us more broadly to the theme of death. Perhaps it's something that comes with middle age, but death feels like a particularly relevant subject to us right now. Sibelius himself was 43 years old when composing *Voces*, plagued by fear of death—blissfully unaware that his life was not yet even halfway through.

As we plunged deeper into the theme of ‘the beyond’, we soon found ourselves drawn to esotericism. It offered us an inspiring context in which the present moment resonates with eternity, and bodily reality opens up ‘ad astra’.

The time when *Voces* was composed also marked the golden age of esotericism in Finland. The painter Axel Gallen-Kallela practiced clairvoyance on his nature walks. The writer Minna Canth hosted spiritualist séances in her salon. Helmi Krohn wrote under the guidance of a spirit guide.

Esotericism refers to hidden or secret knowledge accessible only to those who have been initiated. As a concept, it has roots in antiquity, but interest in it deepened in the 19th century, and by the turn of the 20th century this fashionable current spread even to Finland.

The Finnish Theosophical Society was founded in 1907. Rudolf Steiner established his Anthroposophical movement in 1913 and frequently toured Finland giving lectures.

Many musicians and composers have also had connections to esotericism. For example, Ida Moberg based her compositional work on theosophical and anthroposophical thinking. According to this view, ‘earthly music is an echo and reflection of the music of the heavenly realms—a kind of cosmic harmony,’ as described by researcher Maarit Leskelä-Kärki.

# INSPIRATIONS

(continues)

It's easy to understand why artists have been drawn to esoteric thought — for isn't art, at its core, a pursuit of the inexplicable? Or at least, that's how we see it. For us, art — both as creators and as audience — can be a journey toward 'the Other'. It can evoke a sense of meaning that feels real and true, regardless of whether it rests on factual knowledge.

Many people with experience in 'channeling'—that is, receiving messages from another reality — describe it not so much as an active act, but rather as a kind of attunement that allows something to be received. We don't have such experiences ourselves, but we believe that a curious approach to life carries something similar. When we become genuinely interested in the world around us, we create the conditions for something new to happen.

We warmly welcome you to this concert performance — regardless of your spiritual, or spiritualistic, views. We invite you to open your senses and breathe — in and out. We do not make claims; we ask questions. With a gentle smile — just as clowns tend to do.

Oh, and then there was the question of inspiration. You'll find it in this image: <https://karsh.org/jean-sibelius/>

*Timo and Tuukka*

# ROSEMARY BROWN

(1916 – 2001)

Rosemary Brown was a British spiritualist who, according to her own testimony, communicated with numerous deceased composers and received music from them. She first met Franz Liszt at the age of seven, and some forty years later, Liszt began visiting her regularly — accompanied by other composers.

Brown 'received' music — or rather, 'composed automatically' — works that she attributed to Debussy, Grieg, Schubert, Chopin, Stravinsky, Bach, Brahms, Beethoven, Schumann, and Rachmaninoff. She transcribed a new 40-page sonata that Schubert allegedly dictated to her, as well as Beethoven's 10th and 11th symphonies.

Brown rose to fame in the 1970s, and some of her channeled compositions were published and even performed. Since then, however, she has largely faded into obscurity. While preparing for this performance, we read two of the books she wrote. Here's how Brown herself describes her experience:

"For a long time, Beethoven was a true mystery to me. At first, he only wanted to communicate telepathically. I could see him, yes, but neither of us spoke. Often, I would quietly absorb his thoughts, even though he never named a single note. Somehow, I just knew what he wished to convey. Beethoven wants his music to flow to us as a source of compassion. I believe he deeply wishes to reach out to humankind—and to embrace us in wonderful love." - *Immortals at my Elbow* (1976)

# ABOUT US

## **Meta4**

is one of the most internationally successful Finnish string quartets and is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The ensemble unites individual and collective strength and artistry, and is known for its virtuosic, intense performances. The quartet is a sought-after guest on concert stages across Europe and North America. Meta4 is: Antti Tikkanen (violin), Minna Pensola (violin), Atte Kilpeläinen (viola), and Tomas Djupsjöbacka (cello).

## **Kamus**

holds a prominent place at the forefront of Finland's musical life and celebrated its 20th anniversary three years ago. The quartet is known for its strong and distinctive playing style, versatile programming, open-minded approach, and broad stylistic range. Since 2019, Kamus has also served as the artistic director of Our Festival, an uncompromising and internationally acclaimed event. The members of Kamus Quartet are: Terhi Paldanius (violin), Jukka Untamala (violin), Jussi Tuhkanen (viola), and Petja Kainulainen (cello).

## **Erika Turunen**

Erika Turunen is one of Finland's most renowned costume designers. She has had a long career at the Finnish National Opera, both as a designer and as head of the costume department. Her costumes have been featured in numerous contemporary dance productions, including works by Tero Saarinen Company, Compañía Kaari Martin, Johanna Nuutinen, Kenneth Kvarnström, Jorma Uotinen, and several international choreographers. Turunen's recent works include costume design for the *Ring cycle* and *CircOpera 2.0* at the Finnish National Opera.

**The actor duo Timo Ruuskanen and Tuukka Vasama** are known for their witty and musically rich interpretations of classics. *Voces* is their seventh collaboration. Their theatre production *Aleksis Kivi* was awarded both the Finnish State Award for Public Information and the Helsinki Cultural Prize. The duo has toured for over a decade, performing in Finland and abroad. In the realm of classical music, they have worked with the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra. In autumn 2025, they will collaborate with the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra on a narrative concert titled *The Philharmonic History of Finland*.

### **Red Nose Company**

celebrates its 20th anniversary this year as a pioneer of clown theatre in Finland. It has grown from the margins into a major nationally touring company, collaborating with the country's leading cultural institutions. In 2024, the company gave 185 performances and reached over 29,000 spectators. Red Nose Company performs in Finnish, Swedish, and English. In 2023, it was awarded Theatre of the Year in Finland.

# THANK YOU

Our families and loved ones, Red Nose Company production team (Liisa Ruuskanen, Milla Hilke, Noomi Forslund and Inka Virtanen); Taru Hahle and Kirsi Unkuri (tailors), Hanna Vuorela (manufacturing the headpieces), Julia Donner (Ainola), The estate of Aino and Jean Sibelius, Kuhmo Chamber Music folks (Anniina Ahlström, Seija Kähkönen, Sari Rusanen), Kuhmotalo staff.



*Tuukka, Terhi, Minna and Timo on the doorsteps of Ainola*



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