

**“Spring starts  
the motion.”**

**RED NOSE  
COMPANY**

**Tsuumi**  
tanssiteatteri - dance theatre

**Helsinki**




Taiteen edistämiskeskus  
Centret för konstfrämjande  
Arts Promotion Centre Finland



Suomen  
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# ABOUT THE KEVÄTUHRI

BY RED NOSE COMPANY



## WORKING GROUP

**Käsikirjoitus ja koreografia**  
Script & choreography

Työryhmä  
Working Group

**Ohjaus** | Director

Niina Sillanpää

**Näyttämöllä** | On stage

Johanna Keinänen, Kaisa Niemi,  
Minna Puolanto, Hanna Seppä

**Sävellys ja äänisuunnittelu**  
Music and sound design

Tommi Lindell

**Valosuunnittelu**  
Light design

Juha Tuisku

**Puku- ja lavastussuunnittelu**  
Costume and set design

Paula Koivunen

**Koreografinen konsultaatio**  
Choreographic consultation

Sanni Kriikku

**Yhteistuotanto** | Production

Red Nose Company (Liisa Ruuskanen,  
Minna Puolanto, Inka Virtanen, Hille  
Auvinen), Tanssiteatteri Tsuumi, Stoa  
(Sara Hirn)

**Kuvat klovneista**  
Photos of the clowns

Jolle Onnismaa

**Muut kuvat ja käsiohjelma**  
Other photos and programme

Hille Auvinen

**Innoittajina** | As inspiration

Igor Stravisky, Nikolai Roerich, Vatslav  
Nižinski, Sergei Djagilev, Maurice Béjart,  
Pina Bausch...

**Esityksen alussa kuultu  
musiikki** | Music at the  
beginning

Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring / London  
Symphony Orchestra, Simon Rattle



### RED NOSE COMPANY

was founded in Helsinki in 2005, and is a touring theatre and pioneer of clown theatre in Finland.

*Red Nose Company is committed to following principles for a safer space.*

### TANSSITEATTERI TSUUMI

is a Helsinki-based professional dance company rooted in folk tradition.

### SANNI KRIIKKU

is a choreographer, performer and dancer, as well as the artistic director of Dance Theatre Tsuumi. She is also a great friend of dogs, an art theorist, and a student at the Finnish Witch Academy.

“Working on About the Kevätuhri during the awakening of spring has felt especially good. It is wonderful to watch the life and buzzing energy of the clowns.”





## HOENANEN

Johanna Keinänen is a dance artist and comedian who also directs dance theatre and music theatre pieces. Her best known character is the social satirist Tyyne Kettunen, who has been adventuring on stage for over 30 years. Johanna studies guidance counselling and is deeply inspired by that too.

“I really enjoy clowning in this dance and movement context. We can fully dive into the world of contemporary dance, we can go far and be silly with full sincerity, dancing with our red noses. I’ve come to realise that this style suits me best as dance artist!”

## EX-MAYHEM

Kaisa Niemi is a dance artist, actor, choreographer and clown. She dreams of a garden where she can tenderly talk to all the flowers.

“There is something wild and uncontrollable about spring. First the bareness revealed after the snow, the merciless light, then nature bursting with force. There is an incredible energy hidden in the buds of spring, and all of that affects you in a strangely personal way.”

## BABYLON

Minna Puolanto is an actor, dancer, clown and writer. She has often worked as a the gatherer of working groups and as producer. Her ideal recovery activities include ice swimming and sauna, adventures, knitting, canoeing, flea markets and science podcasts.

“For this show, I restored and adapted the Härmä folk costume I received from my aunt. Even if my roots are not in Ostrobothnia, the dress felt good. The repairing became a lovely evening ritual, and I felt it brought me closer to my grandmother again. From her I learned the secrets of handicrafts. Over 100-year-old wool is humbling.

## RÉ

Hanna Seppä is an actor, clown and theatre pedagogue. She especially enjoys lounging on the rocks in Porkkalanniemi and Kökar.

“In Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring, I am fascinated by the historical aspect – what the world was like when the piece premiered in Paris in 1913, and what kind of world we live in now. I love The Rite of Spring. Listening to it is like floating in a forest pond while being trapped inside a washing machine’s spin cycle.”



## TOMMI LINDELL

Tommi Lindell's musical career includes composing, arranging, songwriting, performing and playing. Bands, films, TV programmes and theatre productions, as well as numerous electronic instruments, sounds, devices and transport boxes.

"The first time I listened to The Rite of Spring was as a teenager, when I realised that my big idol, Frank Zappa, liked Igor Stravinsky. Only later did I notice that the vinyl I had bought had been playing at the wrong speed. Now, 40 years later, I got to compose the music for this About the Kevätuhri performance. It spins at exactly the right speed!"



## NIINA SILLANPÄÄ

Niina Sillanpää is an actor, somatic studies student and clown. About the Kevätuhri is her seventh directing work.

"One of my Sunday rituals is to drink another cup of coffee and solve newspaper crosswords. Completing the crossword brings me a sense of satisfaction and control, but I'm also impatient and want solutions quickly. That's why I use the website [ratkojat.fi](http://ratkojat.fi), where I can find answer propositions."



## PAULA KOIVUNEN

Paula Koivunen is an experienced set and costume designer and freelance artist. She has designed both site-specific works and traditional stage productions. Her designs are an organic part of the performance. Paula seeks to use the qualities of the space and build additional elements in balanced proportions. She is also likes to compose, dance and sing in the shower.

"While working on About the Kevätuhri I wondered what kind of national feeling could be peaceful, and wanted to find an aesthetic that wouldn't be created by capitalism but would instead be more arcaic and remain connected to our ancestors. I wanted to be wild and bold."



## JUHA TUISKU

Juha Tuisku is an experienced sound designer who creates red-nosed light designs for Red Nose Company. He has worked for both big stages and independent theatre groups. In sound design he mixes artistic melodies and raw soundscapes. In lighting design he follows the surreal world of the clowns.

"In About the Kevätuhri I pursue natural light, which, according to all the laws of theatre, is something else entirely. The moon becomes the sun."

# RITUAALI - THE RITUAL

Sections of The Rite of Spring / Sections of the ritual of the clowns

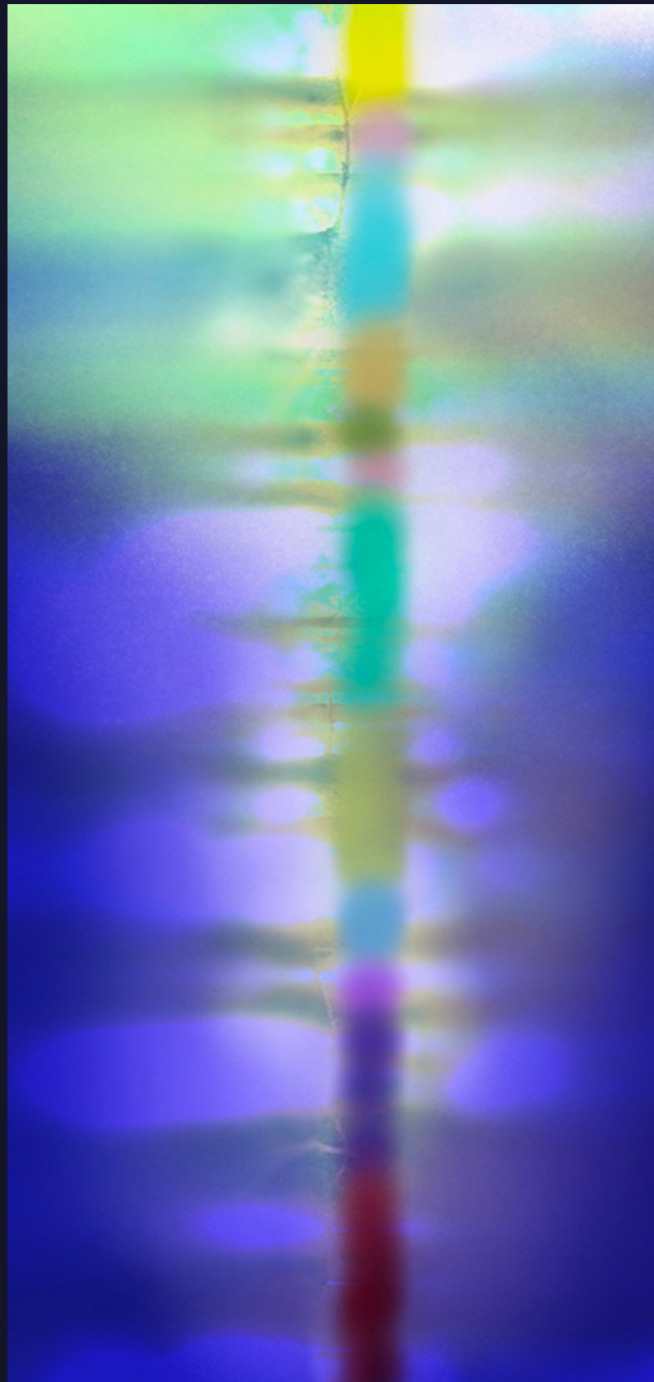
## I ADORATION OF THE EARTH / MAAN PALVONTA

- 1) Introduction / Intro
- 2) Auguries of Spring / Kevään ennusmerkit
- 3) Game of Capture / Jahti
- 4) Round Dances of Spring / Kevään piiritanssit
- 5) Games of Rival Tribes / Kisailevien heimojen kisat
- 6) Procession of the Sage / Tietäjä saapuu
- 7) Dance of the Earth / Maahan yhtyminen

## II THE SACRIFICE / UHRI

- 8) Introduction / Intro
- 9) Mysterious Circles (Lines) of Young Girls / Nuorten neitojen mystiset linjat
- 10) Glorification of the Chosen One / Valitun Pyöritys
- 11) Evocation of the Ancestors / Esivanhempien esiinkutsu
- 12) Ritual Actions of the Ancestors / Ré-birth, Uudestisyntyminen
- 13) Sacrificial Dance / Celebration of Life - Feel it in your body, Elämän juhla - Keho tietää

Illustration: Tommi Lindell's "mind map"



Text from the programme of the original Rite of Spring

### PART I – Adoration of the Earth

Spring. The earth is covered with flowers.  
The earth is covered with grass.  
Great joy reigns on Earth.  
Men join in dances according to ritual traditions.  
The old wise men participate in honoring spring.  
All are united with fertile, rich earth.  
All bow down to the earth in reverence.

### PART II – The Sacrifice

After the day: after midnight.  
Sacred stones stand on the hills.  
Young maidens play mysterious games seeking the Great Path.  
They glorify and worship the chosen one.  
They summon the ancestors, revered witnesses.  
The wise elders observe the sacrifice.  
Thus they sacrifice to Jarilo, the mighty and flourishing god.

Source:  
programme of the reconstruction of The Rite of Spring  
premiering at the Finnish National Ballet on 11.3.1994  
(Translated from Finnish)

## UHRISTA, MYYTISTÄ JA STRAVINSKYSTÄ

In the story of The Rite of Spring, a village gathers to celebrate spring and worship Jarilo. From among the young maidens, one girl is chosen to dance herself to death for the prosperity of the community. In Slavic tradition, there has indeed been a celebration dedicated to the god of fertility and spring, Jarilo. However, there is no clear evidence that human sacrifices were made for Jarilo. Some historical sources suggest such sacrifices in connection with Perun, Jarilo's father, the god of thunder in Slavic mythology. Or are these claims exaggerated, and a result of Slavic traditions having been stigmatised as barbaric during Christian missionary work, where Slavs were portrayed by missionary workers as bloodthirsty pagans?

Unlike with Greek mythology, for example, there are very few written sources of Slavic myths. These stories have been passed down orally from generation to generation. Reconstructing ancient Slavic myths is therefore nearly impossible. Sources are fragmented, and traditions have blended with later influences, especially Christianity.

So was the sacrifice of the young girl real, folklore, or the invention of Stravinsky and his collaborators? And what does the birth of The Rite of Spring, at the brink of World War I, reveal about its time?

About the Kevätuhri is inspired by The Rite of Spring and choreographies based on it. Ré, Ex-Mayhem, Babylon and Hoenanen explore their relationship to the original work and create their own ritual. The clowns' ritual required its own music and has therefore detached itself from the original composition.

In this ritual, no young girls are harmed — nor middle-aged women.



### SPECIAL THANKS

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