



# IDYLLISTÄ KATASTROFIIN

**AVANTI!**  
József Hárs, conductor

Merikaapelihalli  
8.11.2022 klo 19



## PROGRAM

Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179): O Viridissima Virga

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809): The Creation, Overture,  
Tommi Hakala baritone

Raphael's recitative: Und Gott schuf grosse Walfische

Raphael's recitative and aria: Hleich öffnet sich der Erde  
Schoss - Nun scheint in vollem Glanze der Himmel

Albert W. Ketelbey (1875–1959): In a Monastery Garden,  
"Mieskuoro Otaniemen Kaiku"

Speech: Mikael Fortelius

Giacinto Scelsi (1905–1988): Natura Renovatur

## Intermission

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957): The Tempest, Overture

John Adams (1947–): El Dorado

Part I: The Machine in the Garden (A Dream of Gold)

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900): Das Grundton  
der Natur ist Schmerz

Alexandr Scriabin (1872–1915): Vers la Flamme,  
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The climate has always been changing, but the current global warming is very different from previous natural cycles. Music, too, has always changed, and for at least 30,000 years, it has reflected our relationship with nature. During this period, we have seen larger and smaller ice ages as well as warmer periods, such as the global warming in the late Stone Age, around 6000 to 3000 BCE.

## **THE FINNISH ASSOCIATION FOR NATURE CONSERVATION**

The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC) is the largest non-governmental organization for environmental protection and nature conservation in Finland. The purpose of FANC is to protect the Finnish natural environment, promote nature conservation, preserve cultural heritage and spark up active citizenship and strong environmental awareness.

The effects of global warming on nature and humanity are becoming increasingly severe. Last summer was the hottest in recorded history in Europe. In Pakistan, temperatures rose to deadly heights, and record-breaking floods covered up to a third of the country. We in the north are at the forefront of global warming because the Arctic region is warming up four times faster than the Earth on average.



## PROGRAMME NOTES (Antti Häyrynen)

### HILDEGARD VON BINGEN (1098–1179): *O Viridissima Virga*

For millennia, music has approached nature with respect and positive expectations, hoping for grace, harvest, or prey. The compositions of **Hildegard von Bingen** originate from the dawn of notated music. Hildegard began her religious journey when she was eight. Later, she worked as a Benedictine nun and founded and led monasteries in Rupertsberg and Eibingen.

Hildegard's music is not the usual medieval spiritual chant. Her mostly monophonic works have an intense sensual charge, with surprising rhapsodic forms and elaborate motifs. "*O viridissima virga*" ("Oh greenest branch") derives from the double meaning of the word *virga*–*virgo*, branch–virgin.

In the song, the Holy Virgin appears as a creature similar to the ancient mother goddesses. Through her grace, nature flourishes and provides food for people. This idyllic image of nature is destroyed by Eve at the end of the song. Abbess Hildegard did not likely want to blame woman-kind in general—after all, the entire poem is a praise of feminine fertility—but instead, she wanted to remind her students to respect nature and sacred works.

### JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809): *The Creation*

**Joseph Haydn** received the text during his visit to London in 1791, from which Gottfried van Swieten, director of the Vienna Court Library, edited the libretto for the oratorio *The Creation*, which was completed in 1799. The piece, which combines hierarchy with harmony, became a declaration of the worldview of the Enlightenment. The old world

had just become complete at the dawn of the Industrial Age, and the sequence and cycle were thought to be eternal. But the global warming humankind initiated in the 19th century began disturbing the newfound order.

The oratorio's first part presents the world before its creation. After the opening chord, strings (*con sordino*) and winds form hesitant fractal patterns, representing great chaos. Gradually, a tonal focal point (C minor) emerges from the floating pieces of melody. Still, the discords and surprising modulations maintain a sense of emptiness and disorder until the first vocal part.

*Archangel Raphael* (bass-baritone) is a narrator in the stages of Genesis (1:20–31), when life first appears in the sea, in the air, and on land. God said, “*Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.*” Humans thought it meant only themselves.

The many species inspires Haydn's inventive orchestrations and cheerfully individualized descriptions of animals. Haydn's creation includes everything from whales and tigers to insects and worms. Sadly, some animals mentioned by Haydn have now become endangered.

### **ALBERT W. KETÉLBÉY (1875–1959):** ***In a Monastery Garden***

**Albert Ketèlbey** became a hit composer of light orchestral music at the beginning of the 20th century. His recording of *In a Monastery Garden* (1915) sold millions of copies. Ketèlbey had studied the subject by exploring an Augustinian monastery in Surrey, and the outcome is sweetly harmonious or purely kitsch, depending on the perspective.

With its whistling birds, the idyllic garden does not seek realism. The view of paradise is deliberately nostalgic and escapist, proven by the monks' choir singing *Kyrie Eleison* at the end of the song, which the meticulous publishers wanted to remove. Perhaps this combination of divine nature and spirituality was seen only as entertainment, even at the beginning of the 20th century.

### **GIACINTO SCELSI (1905-1988):**

#### ***Natura Renovatur***

**Giacinto Scelsi**, Count of Ayala Valva, experienced a mental breakdown in the late 1940s. He is said to have recovered by playing the same note on his piano for four years. Studying that one note became the basis of his future works, and Scelsi, who had turned his ivory tower into a bastion of progression, became a legendary recluse.

Scelsi wrote, *“Reiterating a note for a long time, it grows large—so large that you can even hear harmony growing inside it. The note wraps you up, and you’ll discover a whole universe of overtones from it, which you wouldn’t hear otherwise.”* The note is constantly changing and developing, but it does so gradually, almost at an evolutionary rate.

*Natura renovatur* (“Nature renewing”) (1967), is a version of *Scelsi’s String Quartet IV* rearranged for eleven strings. The title seems to be related to the following Latin phrase used by alchemists in the past and alt-rock bands today: *igne natura renovatur integra*—Nature renews itself through fire. In the piece, you hear the note fluttering and expanding with vibrato, tremolo, and trills until, in the end, it brightens again.

## **JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957):**

### ***The Tempest: Overture***

In 1925, **Jean Sibelius** composed the music for a production of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Two years later, he assembled the *Overture* and two orchestral suites from the score for concert. In the Danish director Poulsen's interpretation of the play, the *Overture* replaced the opening scene. Sibelius was assigned to compose a piece illustrating the storm leading to the shipwreck. He knew how to view nature as a separate phenomenon from humankind and its desires. In the *Overture*, nature works regardless of humans, following its own path, which Sibelius explored further in his tone poem, "Tapiola."

In the chromatic orchestral torrent of the *Overture*, the brasses howl and the woodwinds whine. The strings' heavy, alarming waves reach a massive climax (*ffff*) portraying Shakespeare's text: *Hell is empty, and all the devils are here!* Here, nature and the human mind are in chaos, and Sibelius is at his most modernist. Finally, everything withers into mysterious tritone formations (*pppp*).

## **JOHN ADAMS (1947-):**

### ***El Dorado, The Machine in the Garden (A Dream of Gold)***

**John Adams**, a former counterculturist, has become post-modern music's oracle. Whether he likes it or not, Adams is a standard-setter and the most-performed living contemporary classical composer in the USA. His orchestral diptych *El Dorado* was completed in 1991 as a critique of The Columbus Quincentenary. Although the piece stemmed from the Spanish conquistadors' lust for gold and brutal subjugation, it became a general portrayal of greed, consumption, and exploiting natural resources.

The piece's opening part, originally titled *A Dream of Gold*, is, in Adams' words, "*a musical embodiment of aggressive growth in form of one long ramp, beginning in pre-dawn forest of threatening premonitions and culminating thirteen minutes later in vast crescendo of brutal force that ultimately consumes itself in the manner of a sonic chain reaction—Ravel's Bolero, only without seduction. The image of growth is what binds this idea. Man and his malignant energy have been inserted in the garden like a virus, and the growth is suddenly like that of a tumor.*"

### **FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1844-1900):** ***Das Grundton der Natur ist Schmerz***

**Friedrich Nietzsche** said, "*without music, life would be a mistake.*" He is better known for his work as a philosopher but started as a composer despite receiving critical reviews. *Schmerz ist der Grundton der Natur* ("Pain is the keynote of nature") is a piece composed for two pianos. It's one of his earliest works, published in *Germania*, the newspaper, in 1861 when he was only 16. He wrote the unpredictable piece, knowing life's transience. Shortly after, he wrote about the long history of humankind's destructive relationship with nature. He used the Ancient Greeks, who felled most of their forests, for example.

Nietzsche's name often arises when environmental ethics are discussed. Humans have always made nature a part of their agenda, whether to exploit or save it. According to Nietzsche, nature operates outside morals' boundaries. Nature is "*boundlessly extravagant, boundlessly indifferent, without purpose or consideration, without pity or justice, at once fruitful and barren and uncertain: imagine to yourselves indifference as a power*" (*Beyond Good and*

Evil, 1886, trans. Helen Zimmern). “The total character of the world, by contrast, is for all eternity chaos, not in the sense of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, organization, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever else our aesthetic anthropomorphisms are called” (The Gay Science, 1882, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff).

## **ALEXANDR SCRIBIN (1872–1915):** ***Vers la Flamme***

*Vers la Flamme* (“Toward the Flame”) Op. 72 from 1914 is one of the last pieces **Alexandr Scriabin** composed. Fire, as an element, fascinated Scriabin in many of his works due to its destructive and purifying powers. In this piece, fire also symbolized modernism breaking tonal boundaries. The piece opens with a “mystic chord” dormant in the perfect fourths. The theme smoldering in the semitones gets surrounded by fluttering trills, tremolos, and harmonic flares building up to a soaring crescendo.

Everything is highlighted in Arkady Leytush’s orchestration, inspired by Scriabin’s orchestral pieces *The Poem of Ecstasy* and *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire*. The approaching Great War provoked many early 20th-century artists to a concept of a “cleansing fire” that would burn away the old world order. The finale of Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung*, where the failed gods’ Valhalla is burned to the ground, played in the back of their minds.

Scriabin did not live to see the devastation Russia suffered after the war. Still, you’d think that the destruction of humanity would be the salvation of the biosphere. In *Vers la Flamme*, the fire spreads in mesmerizing waves until reaching the point of no return. As the torrents of chords break out into arpeggios, Scriabin marks the sheet music

with *avec une émotion de naissante*, “with a feeling of birth,” which hints at the appearance of something new.

## **HELMUT LACHENMANN (1935-):** *Marche Fatale*

**Helmut Lachenmann** was Avanti’s guest composer in 2002 and made quite an impression as a determined torchbearer of modernism. Lachenmann has been a ruthless deconstructor of contemporary music, rattling the listening habits of his audiences. In *Marche Fatale* (“A Fatal March”), a piece completed in 2018, the style is entirely different. As inspiration for his march, he has mentioned Mozart’s *A Musical Joke* and Mauricio Kagel’s *Marches to Miss the Victory*, among others. “The keyword here is *banality*,” states Lachenmann. He continues:

*“Isn’t a march with its compelling claim to a collectively martial or festive mood absurd, a priori? Is it even ‘music’ at all? Eventually, I resolved to take the ‘absurd’ seriously as a debunking emblem of our civilization that is standing on the brink. The way—seemingly unstoppable—into the black hole of all debilitating demons: ‘that can become serene.’ My old request of myself and my music-creating surroundings is to write a ‘non-music,’ whence the familiar concept of music is repeatedly re-defined anew and differently so that the concert hall becomes the place of mind-opening adventures instead of a refuge in illusory security.”*

In this case, Lachenmann’s music is easier to follow than his text.

The march, in its carefree trot, seems to demonstrate humanity advancing in dissonant polyphony and getting stuck in various tangents and interpellations on its way to the fatal sound of a gong.




**HILDEGARD VON BINGEN:**

*O Viridissima Virga*

*English translation: Nathaniel M. Campbell*

O branch of freshest green,  
O hail! Within the windy gusts of saints  
upon a quest you swayed and sprouted forth.

When it was time, you blossomed in your boughs  
“Hail, hail!” you heard, for in you seeped the sunlight’s warmth  
like balsam’s sweet perfume.

For in you bloomed  
so beautiful a flow’r, whose fragrance wakened  
all the spices from their dried-out stupor.  
And they all appeared in full viridity.

Then rained the heavens dew upon the grass  
and all the earth was cheered,  
for from her womb she brought forth fruit  
and for the birds up in the sky have nests in her.

Then was prepared that food for humankind,  
the greatest joy of feasts!  
O Virgin sweet, in you can ne’er fail any joy.  
All this Eve chose to scorn.  
But now, let praise ring forth unto the Highest!

**JOSEPH HAYDN:**

***The Creation***

*English translation: Robert Shaw and Alice Parker*

Archangel Raphael

17. Recitative

And God created great whales,  
and ev'ry living creature that moveth.  
And God blessed them, saying:  
Be fruitful all, and multiply!  
Ye winged tribes,  
be multiply'd and sing on ev'ry tree!  
Multiply, ye finny tribes,  
and fill each wat'ry deep!  
Be fruitful, grow, and multiply!  
And in your God and Lord rejoice!

20. Recitative

And God said: Let earth bring forth  
the living creature after his kind; cattle  
and creeping thing, and beasts of the earth  
after their kind.



## 21. Recitative

Strait opening her fertile womb,  
the earth obey'd the word,  
and teem'd creatures numberless,  
in perfect forms and fully grown.  
Cheerful, roaring, stands the tawny lion.  
In sudden leaps the flexible tyger appears.  
The nimble stag bears up his branching head.  
With flying mane and fiery look,  
impatient neighs the sprightly steed.  
The cattle in herds already seeks  
his food on fields and meadows green.  
And o'er the ground, as plants,  
are spread the fleecy, meek  
and bleating flock.  
Unnumber'd as the sands in whirl  
arose the host of insects.  
In long dimension creeps  
with sinuous trace the worm.

## 22. Aria

Now heav'n in fullest glory shone;  
earth smiles in all her rich attire.  
The room of air with fowl is fill'd;  
the water swell'd by shoals of fish;  
by heavy beasts the ground is trod.  
But all the work was not complete.  
There wanted yet that wond'rous being,  
that grateful should God's pow'r admire,  
with heart and voice his goodness praise



Photo: Vuokko Salo

## **JÓZSEF HÁRS**, conductor

József Hárs was born in Sümeg, Hungary 1976. He started taking French horn and piano lessons at the age of 8. After his professional studies in French horn in Germany, he has been working as a French horn player as well as a conductor with many orchestras and musical ensembles. Hárs moved to Finland in 2006 and started working as a French horn player in the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra. He has served as the principal French horn player there since January 2010. He acquired Finnish citizenship in 2016. Hárs took private lessons on conducting from Edgar Seipenbusch in Innsbruck and studied conducting at the Sibelius Academy during the years 2011–2015 under Leif Segerstam's and Atso Almila's guidance. He enjoyed being supervised by teachers like Jorma Panula, Hannu Lintu, Mikko Franck, Sakari Oramo, Susanna Mälkki and John Storgårds. He has conducted many of Finland's professional orchestras, such as the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Pori Sinfonietta, Oulu Symphony Orchestra and Uusinta Ensemble. Hárs has been a trusted partner of Avanti! Chamber Orchestra for many years as a conductor as well as a musician.



Photo: Timo Mokka

## **TOMMI HAKALA**, baritone

Tommi Hakala graduated from the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki with special distinction 1998. In receiving the renowned “BBC Singer of the World 2003 in Cardiff” award at the International Singing Competition, Finnish baritone Tommi Hakala made an important step towards a truly promising international career. He has received the first Matti Salminen Grant in 1997 and was awarded the 1st prize at the national Merikanto Singing Competition in 2001.

From 1998 to 2001 the young artist performed numerous leading roles in the ensemble of the Nuremberg Opera. His years at the Leipzig Opera 2001-2004 won him increasing renown for such parts as Wolfram, Posa, Germont, Ford, Conte / Le nozze di Figaro, Chorèbe / Les Troyens and during the engagement in the Finnish National Opera 2008-2013 he expanded his repertoire to the roles like Amfortas, Kurwenal, Escamillo, Onegin and Renato. Guest engagements have included further performances in the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Staatsoper Dresden, Strasbourg, Royal Danish Opera, De Vlaamse Opera, Teatro Real Madrid, San Francisco & Atlanta, Savonlinna

Opera Festival, De nederlandse Opera Amsterdam, Essen, Budapest, Montpellier, Geneve and Teatro Regio Torino.

In addition to all the most important Finnish orchestras Hakala has been singing with, includes Boston Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Concertgebouw Orchestra, among several others.

Engagements during Finland 100-Jahre festivities in 2017 included several World Premieres, like Keihäitä by Paavo Korpijaakko with Tampere Philharmonie, Linna Vedessä by Aulis Sallinen at the Savonlinna Opera Festival and Viktor in Höstsonaten by Sebastian Fagerlund at the Finnish National Opera.

The upcoming Season 2022-23 is bringing Aida / Amonasro in the Savonlinna Opera Festival, Schubert's Winterreise with Kristian Attila in the Naantali Music Festival, Kullervo-Symphony with the KBS Symphony Orchestra & Pietari Inkinen in Seoul, the title role of Der fliegende Holländer in Tampere Opera as well as Die Walküre / Wotan & Siegfried / Wanderer in the new Ring-production of the Finnish National Opera, which will be conducted by Hannu Lintu.



Photo: Marja Väinänen

## **TAPANI LÄNSIÖ (b. 1953), conductor**

Composer and conductor Tapani Länsiö has studied piano and music composition and theory at Sibelius Academy since 1966. He began teaching at Sibelius Academy in the 1970s (1985–2019 as a university lecturer). Länsiö's subjects included composition, the history of 20th-century music, and “*satsioppi*” (stylistic composition). Länsiö led the Polytech Choir (Finnish: *Polyteknikojen Kuoro; PK*) from 1985–2004. He has led Otaniemmen Kaiku, the alumni choir of PK, since its foundation in 2002. Länsiö has composed lots of vocal and chamber music, one opera, one symphony, and half a dozen other large orchestral pieces. His latest extensive work, *Konsertto vasemmalle kädelle ja orkesterille* (“A Concerto for the Left Hand and an Orchestra”), premiered in Mänttä in the summer of 2021 (Henri Sigfridsson, Avanti!, conductor Lauri Ahokas).



Photo: Otaniemen Kaiku

## OTANIEMEN KAIKU

The male choir Otaniemen Kaiku (OK) was founded on February 20th, 2002, at the Polytechnic Students' Union. The choir started operating actively in the fall of 2005 after the artistic director, Tapani Länsiö, left the Polytech Choir (PK). OK is the alumni choir of PK and has around 30 singers. In addition to traditional choral music, OK seeks new perspectives through Tatar folk songs, contemporary music, and even orchestral pieces. OK has performed with Avanti, the Finnish Chamber Orchestra, the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, and the WDR Symphony Orchestra. In addition to regular concerts of their own, the choir members sing in quartets. Greetings performed by the quartets and the entire choir have been ordered for various occasions.



Photo: Daniel Burgas

## **MIKAEL FORTELIUS**, speech

Mikael Fortelius is an emeritus professor of evolutionary paleontology at the University of Helsinki. He specializes in mammalian adaptation to climate change over millions of years. His research particularly focuses on the fossil teeth of herbivorous mammals. He has developed computational methods for evaluating the development of the climate and vegetation in the deep past on a global scale. These methods and their related materials have been used to research the evolutionary mechanisms of mammals and their communities. Furthermore, Fortelius has long been interested in end-of-the-world scenarios and our relationship with them. Besides having worked in Helsinki, he has worked at universities and museums in New York, Oslo, Berlin, and Granada.



## AVANTI! CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The Avanti! Chamber Orchestra was founded in 1983 by Esa-Pekka Salonen, Olli Pohjola and Jukka-Pekka Saraste, the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra operates with ease across different eras and genres. As the founders saw it, the focus should be not on the orchestra but on the works to be performed, and the Avanti! line up accordingly varies from one concert to another.

Many of the main new trends in classical music have found their way to Finland via Avanti!, and it continues to subscribe to its original ideology under its clarinetist Artistic Director Kari Kriikku. Avanti! faces its listeners with bold choices: the familiar sounds new, and the new soon sounds familiar.



**AVANTI!**  
**MUSICIANS AT THE CONCERT ON NOVEMBER 8**

**Flute**

*Kaisa Kortelainen*  
*Heljä Rätty*  
*Livia Schweitzer*

**Oboe**

*Jussi Jaatinen*  
*Sole Terästö*  
*Anna-Kaisa Pippuri*

**Clarinet**

*Giuseppe Gentile*  
*Helmi Malmgren*  
*Marko Portin (also*  
*bass clarinet and*  
*alto saxophone)*

**Bassoon**

*Jussi Särkkä*  
*Otto Virtanen*  
*Tuukka Vihtkari*  
*(Contrabassoon)*

**French horn**

*Jaakko Välimäki*  
*Matias Nässi*  
*Heidi Savikuja*  
*Tero Toivonen*

**Trumpet**

*Tomas Gricius*  
*Scott Natzke*  
*Matti Rajjas*

**Trombone**

*Miika Törmä*  
*Jesus Moreno*

**Tuba**

*Ari-Pekka Kujala*

**Percussion**

*Juha Lauronen*  
*Tiia Toivanen*  
*Tuomo Lassila*  
*I-Han Fu*

**Harp**

*Maaria Pulakka*

**Piano**

*Emil Holmström*  
*Aleksei Zaitsev*

**Cembalo**

*Matias Häkkinen*

**I Violin**

*Jukka Rantamäki km*  
*Emilia Karjunen*  
*Krista Jäänsola*  
*Mikk Murdvee*  
*Leena Jaakkola*  
*Ville Koponen*  
*Elina Päckilä*  
*Viivi Hakkarainen*

**II Violin**

*Anna Angervo  
Kaisa Kallinen  
Harry Rayner  
Julia Musakova  
Sanna Kokko  
Pia Sundroos  
Miina Järvi*

**Viola**

*Ezra Wu  
Carmen Moggach  
Valerie Lassfolk  
Tuula Saari  
Max Savikangas*

**Cello**

*Tuija Rantamäki  
Pinja Nunez  
Liina-Mari Raivola  
Jukka Kaukola*

**Double bass**

*Eero Ignatius  
Timo Ahtinen  
Anna Rinta-Rahko*

**Viola da arco**

*Jukka Rautasalo*

**Audio technic**

*Anders Pohjola*

**Light technic**

*Janne Teivainen*

**Stage Managers**

*Antti Niemi & Lauri Telkki*

**Otaniemen Kaiku****Choir conductor:**

*Tapani Länsiö*

*Ali Akif*

*Ebeling Petri*

*Enberg Jari*

*Grönberg Sami*

*Hakala Jaakko*

*Heikinheimo Juha*

*Heimsch Juhani*

*Heinonen V-P*

*Helander Kalle*

*Hoppania Antti*

*Isotalo Antti*

*Jaakola Timo*

*Jouppi Juha*

*Kangas Aimo*

*Karaharju Erkki*

*Kivinen Juha*

*Klemetti Petri*

*Kujala Kauppi*

*Leskelä Markku*

*Löfroos Mikko*

*Mattila Jani*

*Nevalainen Joni*

*Oikarinen Rauli*

*Raitio Juha*

*Riski Keijo*

*Tarkela Pekka*

*Tervo Timo*

*Tuomainen Jaakko*

*Tähtinen Kari*

*Väisänen Jussi*

*Ylä-Jarkko Kalle*

*Äikäs Juuso*

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### **Project producer**

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*Venla Poskela*

### **Programme notes**

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### **Translations**

*Tove Djupsjöbacka (sve) & Paavo Leppäkoski (eng)*

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### **Thanks!**

*The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, Pågå,  
Cable Factory, Helsingin konservatorio, Ravintola (t)raba*

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