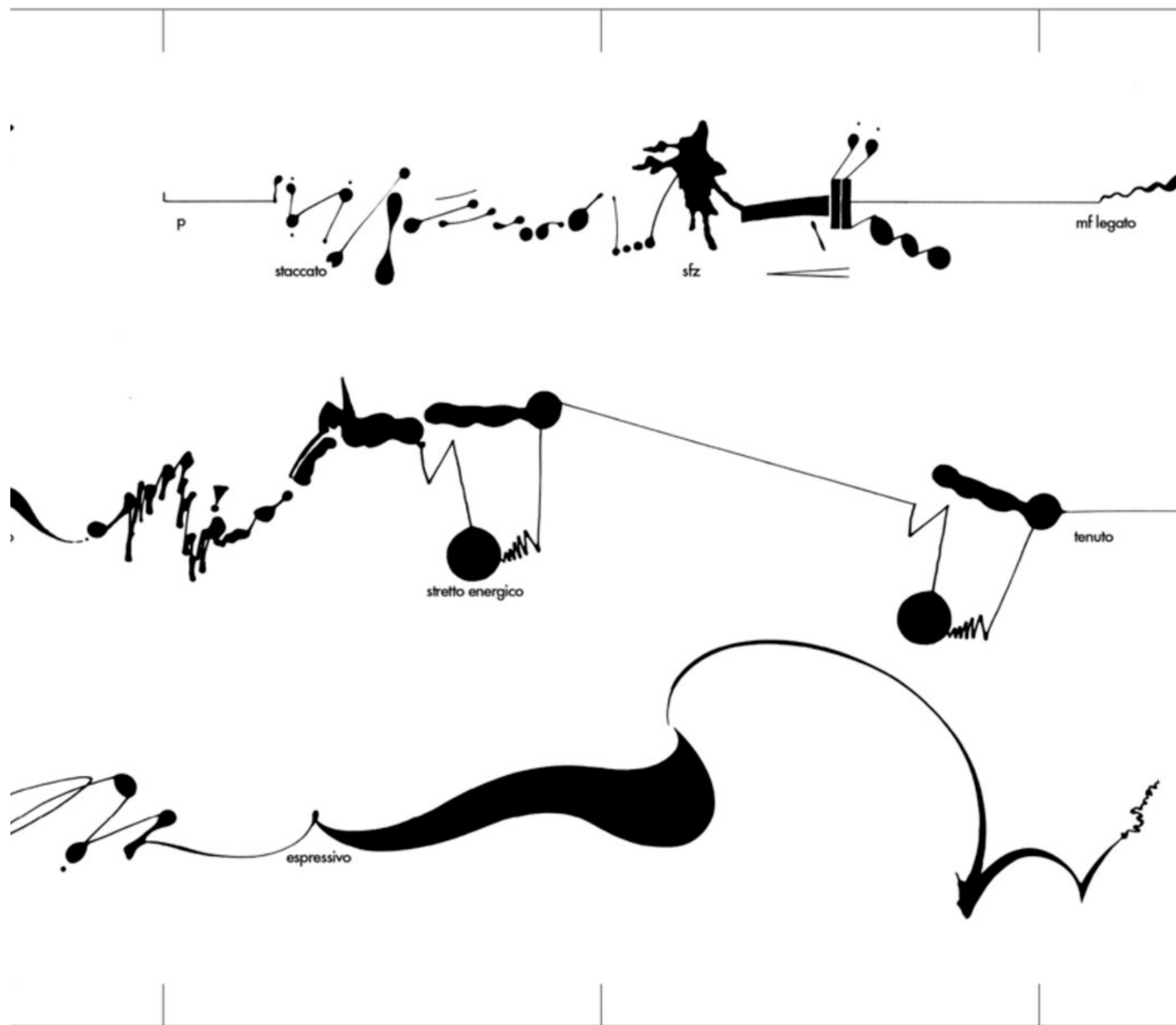




Signs of presence.

SIGNS OF PRESENCE is a Nordic tour of graphic scores. In autumn 2027 the electroacoustic quintet People In Orbit and visual artist Jonas Johansson perform in Stockholm, Helsinki, Reykjavík and Copenhagen. Scores are projected in their original form and drawn into live, in dialogue with the music. In each city a local musician and a local visual artist join the ensemble as co-creators. An open catalogue of Nordic graphic scores follows in winter 2027/28.



Leo Nilsson & Al Eklund, untitled graphic score, 1978, page 1



Page 2

THE SCORE

In 1978 the composer Leo Nilsson and the graphic artist Al Eklund made a score with no notes in it. Ink on paper, a horizontal field of marks that a musician reads as sound rather than as pitch: weight, speed, density, silence. It was drawn to be played, and then it was mostly not played.

In February 2026 the electroacoustic quintet People In Orbit performed it at Barnens Scen in Malmö, with Leo Nilsson's permission and support from Sten K Johnsons Stiftelse. The score was projected at full width behind the band, and Jonas Johansson drew into it live, so the room could follow the reading as it happened.

That evening is the origin of this project. SIGNS OF PRESENCE takes the same method – a historical graphic score, projected, read by an ensemble, drawn into in real time – and carries it across the Nordic region.

THE PREMISE

The Nordic countries hold a large body of graphic and experimental notation from the 1950s to the 1980s. Else Marie Pade in Denmark, Arne Nordheim in Norway, the Fylkingen circle in Stockholm, the electronic studios in Helsinki. Much of it sits in archives, publishers' catalogues and private estates, filed as documents rather than as repertoire.

SIGNS OF PRESENCE commissions nothing. It plays what already exists. Every work on the tour is an existing score, cleared with its rights holder and performed as written – which is to say, performed as drawn.

That is the project's method and also its ecology. The most sustainable new work is often the one that was already made and never heard.

THE PERFORMANCE

Each concert runs about sixty minutes, continuous, without an interval. Two or three scores are read in sequence.

The score is projected at architectural scale, the full width of the room where the room allows it. It is the set. There is no separate scenography.

Jonas Johansson works live inside the projection – masking, revealing, drawing, following the ensemble's reading with light. The audience sees what the musicians are reading at the moment they read it, which is unusual: in a conventional concert the score faces away from the room.

The sound is electroacoustic. Trumpet, saxophone, piano, bass, drums and flute, each routed through electronics, so the ensemble can meet a room's own acoustics instead of fighting them.

THE ROOMS

The rooms are chosen for their acoustics and for the fact that none of them was built for concerts.

Reaktorhallen (R1) in Stockholm is a decommissioned nuclear reactor hall twenty-five metres below Drottning Kristinas väg, with a reverberation no room built for music would be allowed to have. It has lift access.

Silo 468 in Helsinki is a former oil silo in Kruunuvuorenranta, its shell perforated with 2,012 holes – one for the year Helsinki was World Design Capital – and its interior painted deep red.

Cisternerne in Copenhagen is a disused underground water reservoir beneath Søndermarken, where the reverberation runs past fifteen seconds. The Reykjavík room is being confirmed with our Icelandic partners.

A room like this is not a neutral container. It is another instrument in the ensemble, and the programme is adapted to each one.

A HISTORY OF GRAPHIC SCORES

Western notation is very good at pitch and duration, and very bad at almost everything else. From the 1950s onward a generation of composers stopped trying to fix that and started drawing instead.

Earle Brown's December 1952 is a page of black rectangles. Cornelius Cardew's Treatise runs to 193 pages with no performance instructions at all. Anestis Logothetis, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati and Sylvano Bussotti built notations that behave like maps, weather charts and handwriting.

The point was never vagueness. A graphic score is often more precise than a stave about the things it cares about – gesture, texture, energy, the shape of an attack – and deliberately silent about the rest. It delegates. It assumes the performer is a co-author rather than an executant.

In the Nordic region this work ran alongside the electronic music studios: Fylkingen and EMS in Stockholm, the Danish radio studio where Else Marie Pade worked, the studios in Helsinki and Oslo. Composers already drawing sound as tape splices and oscillator settings found it natural to draw it on paper too.

WHY NOW

Three things have changed.

The scores are reaching the point where they are either read or lost. Paper from the 1960s and 1970s is now in the hands of second and third generations of rights holders, and the people who could still explain a mark are becoming few.

The tools have caught up with the ambition. A score drawn to be seen at eight metres was drawn for a room that did not exist in 1978. It exists now, and it is cheap.

And the audience is there. Ambient, drone and experimental electronic music have built a listenership comfortable with sixty continuous minutes and no melody – the listenership these scores were written for, before it existed.

SIGNS OF PRESENCE is not a heritage project. The works are treated as living repertoire that has been waiting for the right room.

WHAT A READING IS

A graphic score does not tell an ensemble what to play. It tells them what to agree on.

Before each concert the ensemble rehearses a reading: which marks are events and which are fields, where the score is read left to right and where it is read as a whole, who takes which line, how long a centimetre lasts. The reading is written down. It is a document of the performance, not of the work.

This is why the same score sounds different in Stockholm and in Copenhagen, and why the guest co-creators matter. A local musician joining for one night does not learn a part. They join a set of agreements and change them.

Each reading is recorded and published in the catalogue alongside the score, so that the next ensemble to pick the work up starts from something rather than nothing.

GUEST CO-CREATORS

In every city a local musician and a local visual artist join the ensemble as co-creators, paid on the same terms as the ensemble.

They are not support acts and they are not guests in the courtesy sense. They rehearse the reading, they are in the score, and they have the standing to argue with it.

This is how the tour avoids being a Swedish ensemble on tour with a Swedish score. Eight local artists across four cities, chosen with our partners in each country rather than by us.

It is also how the project builds something that outlasts it. After the tour there are four cities with people in them who have read these scores and know where the archives are.

THE PROJECTION

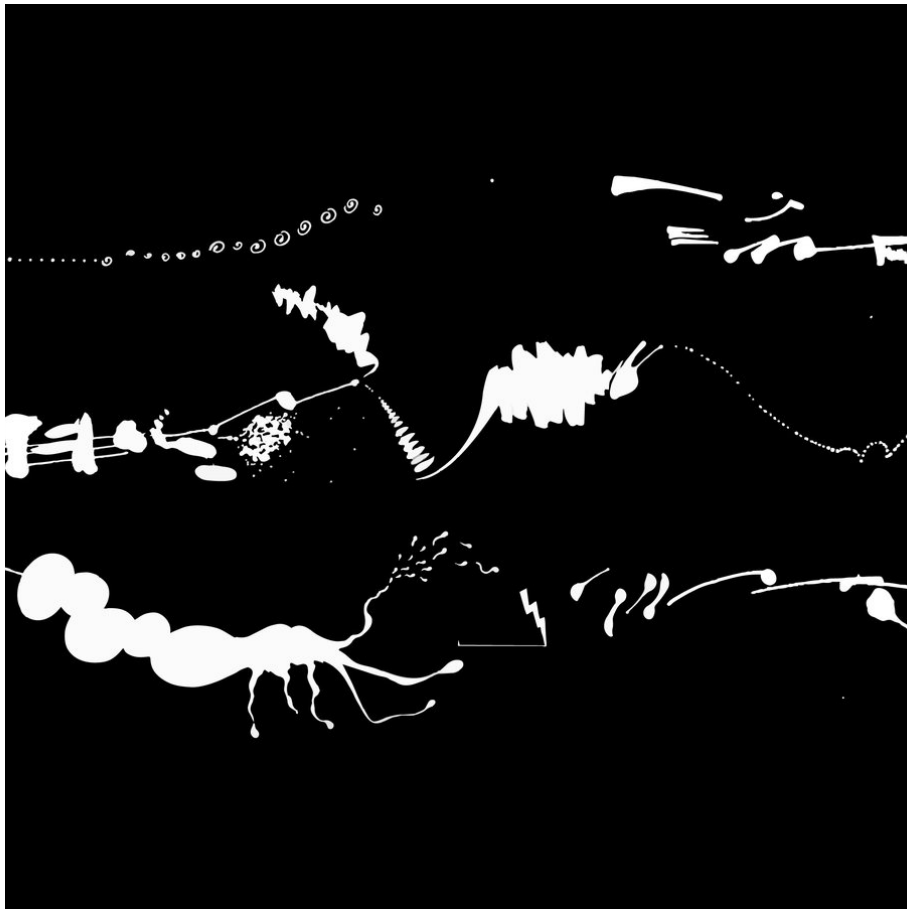
The score is the image. It is projected at the largest scale the room allows, and Jonas Johansson works inside it live – masking regions so the ensemble reads one passage at a time, revealing what comes next, and drawing new marks into the score in dialogue with what he hears.

The images here are from the February 2026 performance in Malmö: the score as projected, and the annotated readings the ensemble worked from.

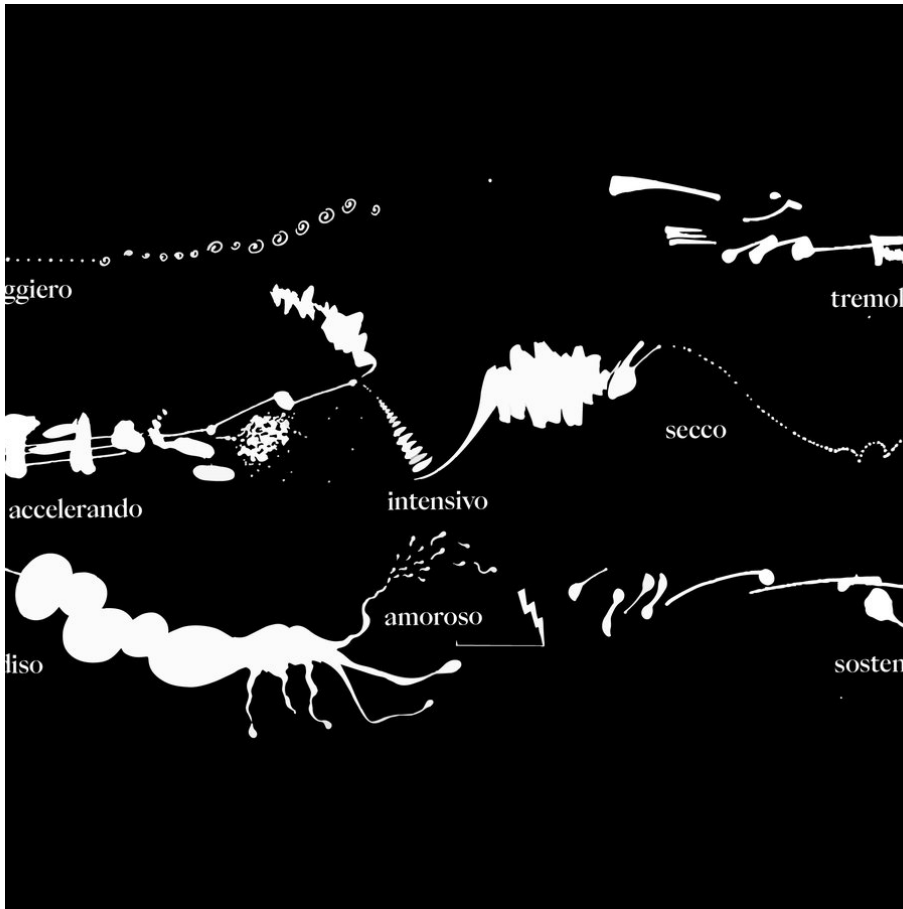
LIGHT AS NOTATION

Light does the work a conductor would otherwise do. It sets the tempo of the reading by deciding what is legible and when.

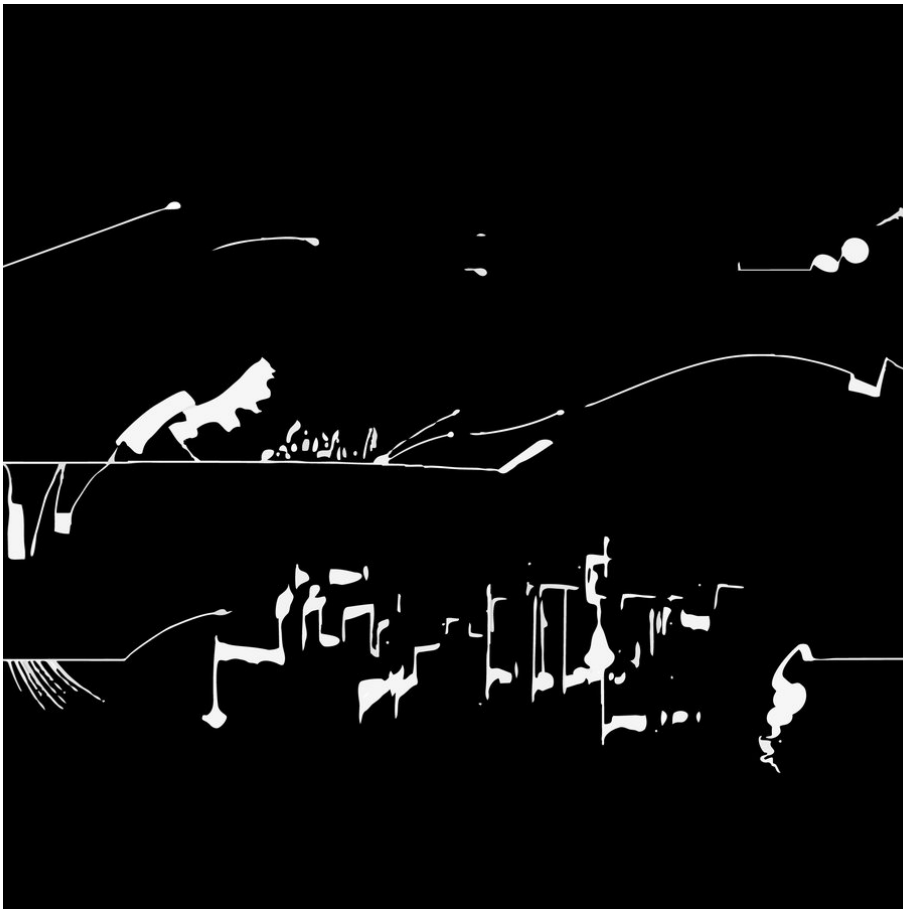
Because the projection is the only scenography, the rig travels small: projector, media server, control surface, and a set of drawings. This keeps the freight for a four-country tour to a single consolidated shipment.



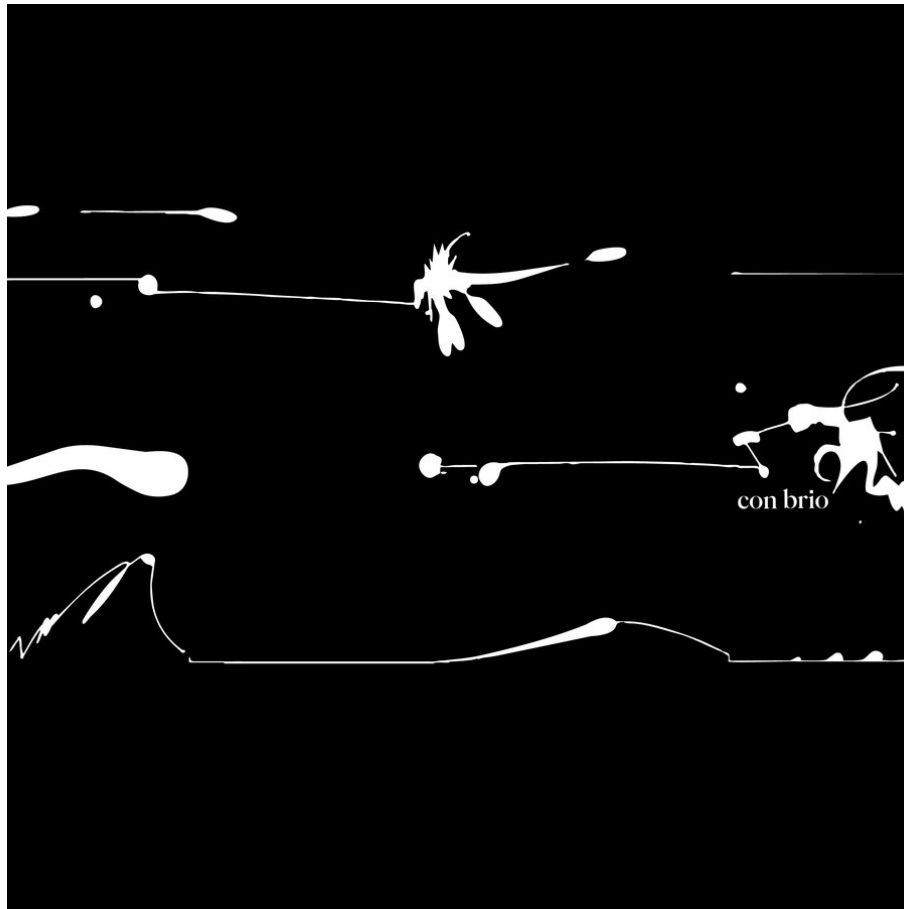
Signs of Presence, Barnens Scen, Malmö, February 2026



Annotated reading, section 3

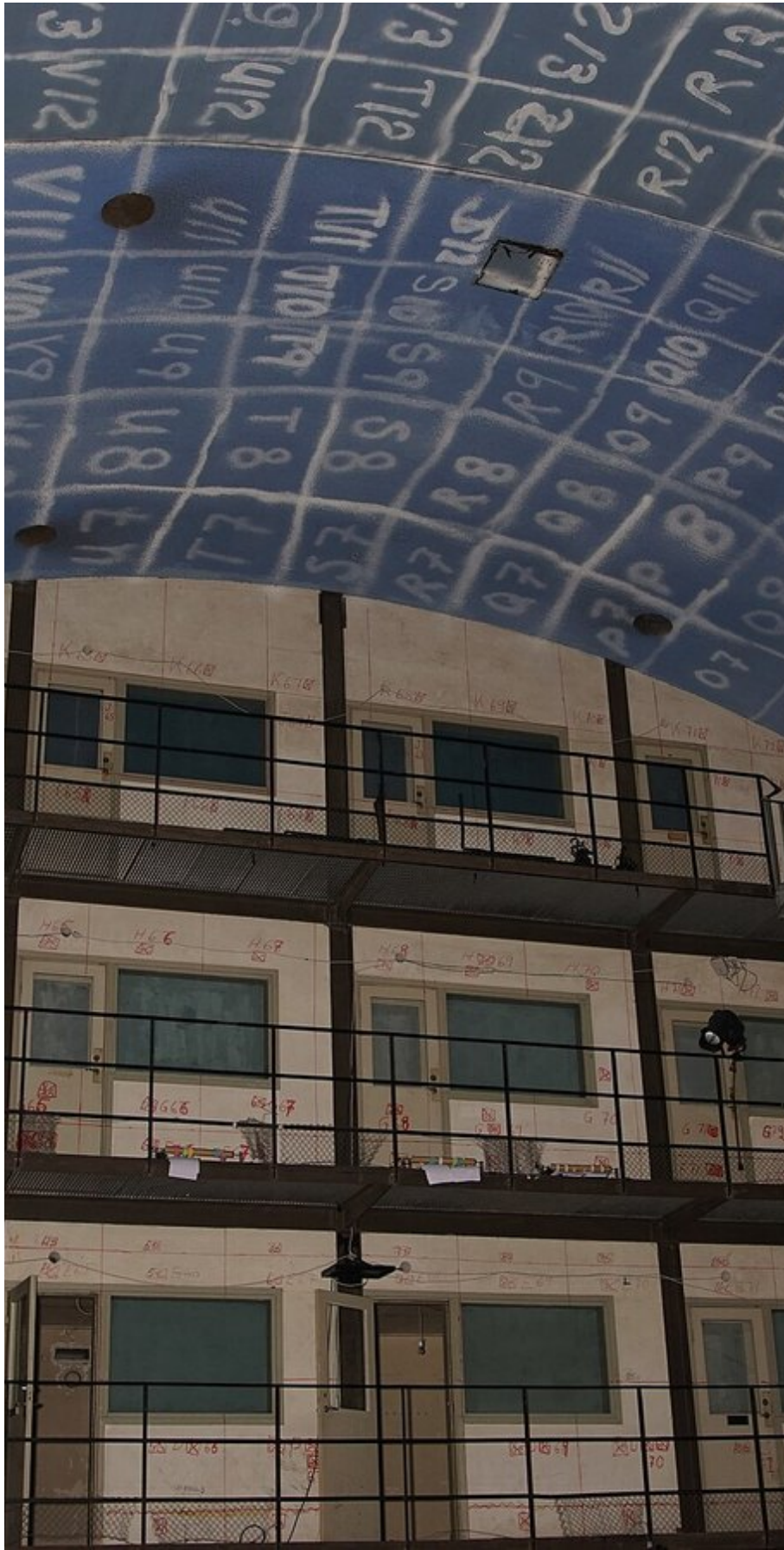


Signs of Presence, Barnens Scen, Malmö, February 2026

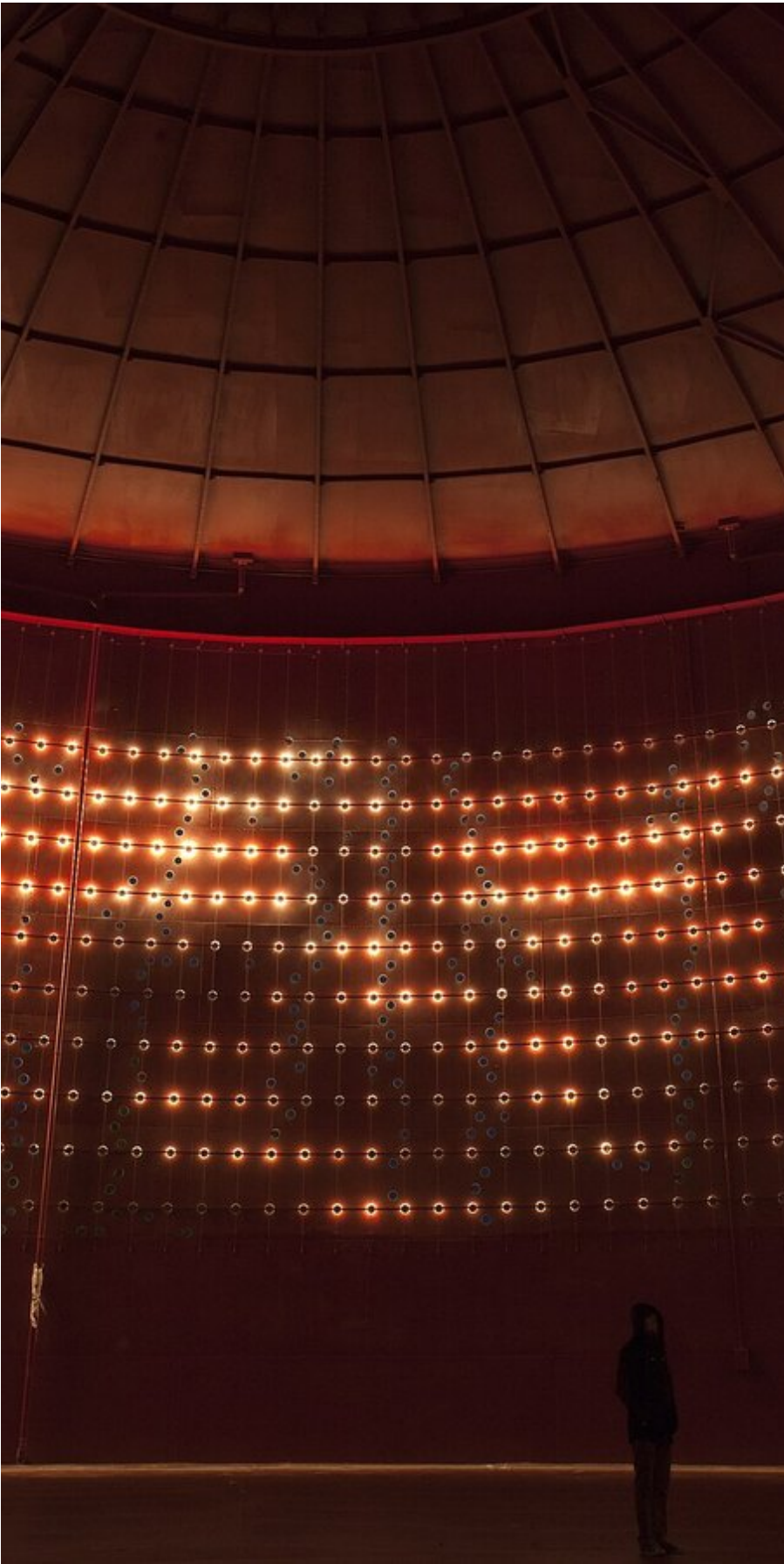


Annotated reading, section 5

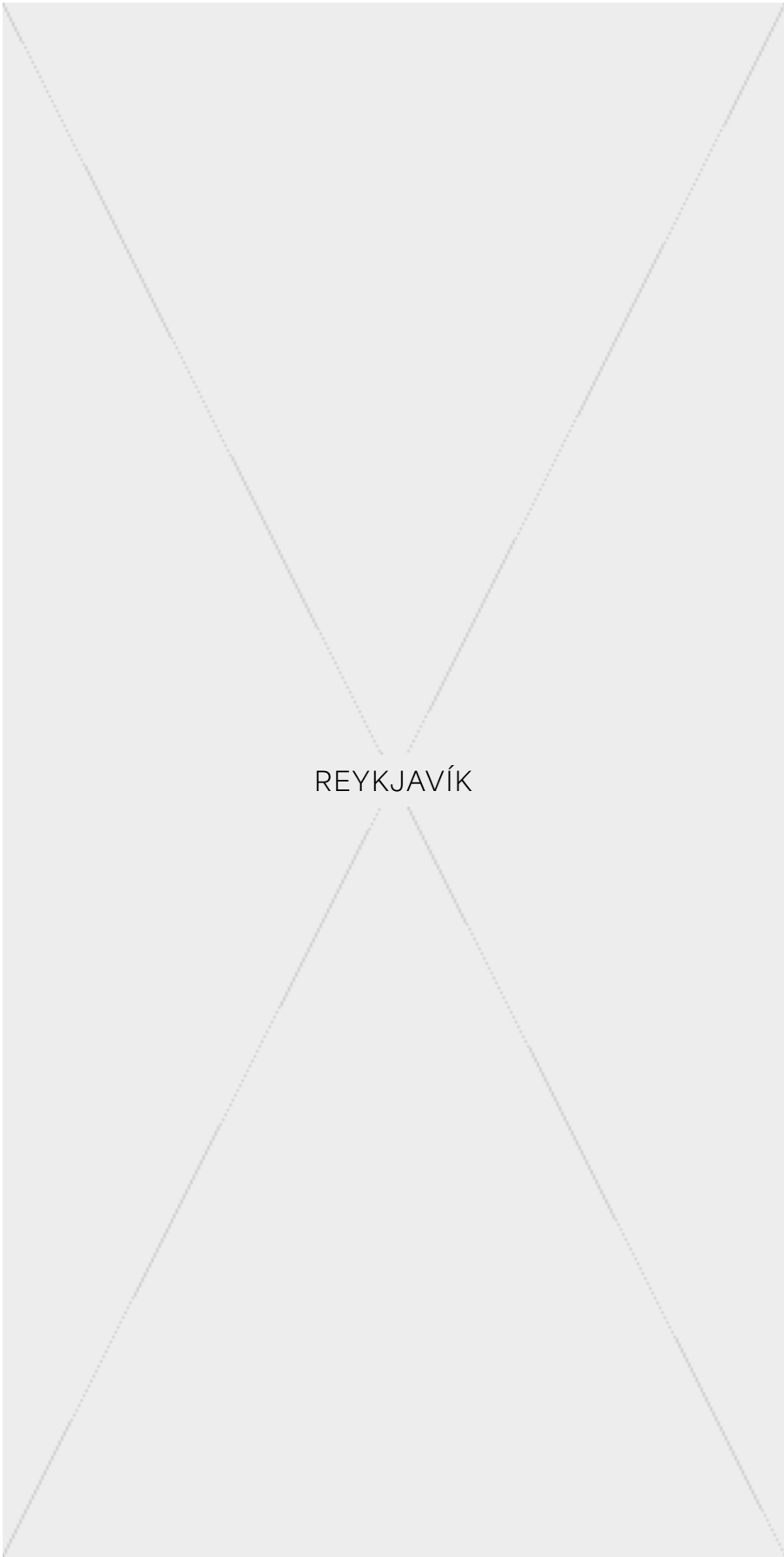
Four concerts, four countries,
four rooms that were built for
something else. Stockholm,
Helsinki, Reykjavík, Copenhagen,
autumn 2027.



Reaktorhallen (R1), Stockholm. Photo Alexandar Vujadinovic, CC BY-SA 4.0



Silo 468, Kruunuvuorenranta, Helsinki. Photo Lighting Design Data, CC BY-SA 4.0



Reykjavík, venue in confirmation



Cisternerne, Søndermarken, Copenhagen. Photo Hjärt, CC BY-SA 4.0

STOCKHOLM

Reaktorhallen (R1) · in discussion

A decommissioned research reactor hall twenty-five metres under the KTH campus, in use as a performance space since 2010.

Long reverberation, raw concrete, and a floor plan that puts the audience around the reactor pit rather than in rows. Lift access to the hall.

Stockholm opens the tour. It is also where the ensemble's reading of the tour repertoire is finalised, in a room whose acoustics are the most extreme of the four.

HELSINKI

Silo 468 · confirmed

A former oil silo on the Kruunuvuorenranta waterfront, thirty-six metres across and seventeen high, its steel shell perforated with 2,012 openings and its interior painted deep red. A permanent light work by Lighting Design Collective, and a public event space.

The venue is provided without hire cost. In exchange it does not permit ticket sales, so the Helsinki concert is free to attend – which suits a programme most of its audience has never heard of.

Three-phase power is available on site. Access is arranged per visit with the venue.

Our Helsinki partners are Merle Karp, Petri Kuljuntausta and Leija Lautamaja.

REYKJAVÍK

Venue in confirmation

Iceland is where the project's score research reaches furthest beyond Sweden, and where the largest share of new material is expected to come from.

The room is being confirmed with our Icelandic partners, Katerina Blahutova and Iris Thorarins, both of whom work in Reykjavík across scenography, lighting and composition.

People In Orbit toured Iceland in 2025 and the ensemble already has a working relationship with the Reykjavík scene.

COPENHAGEN

Cisternerne · in discussion

A disused underground water reservoir beneath Søndermarken, dripping, unheated, with a reverberation of more than fifteen seconds.

It is the hardest room on the tour, acoustically and practically, and the only one of the four that cannot be made fully accessible to wheelchair users. Where the room's own access is the limit, the concert is filmed and the reading published in the catalogue.

Copenhagen is also the tour's research anchor. Edition·S holds much of the Danish graphic repertoire, including Else Marie Pade, and the catalogue work runs through them.

Our Danish partner is Freya Sif Hestnes.

SIGNS OF PRESENCE is made by an ensemble and seven primary partners across Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Denmark – musicians, composers, scenographers and visual artists who co-produce in their own cities.

JONAS JOHANSSON
Producer · Scenography, light and live visuals
Sweden

Jonas Johansson is an artist, educator and designer from Glommen, Halland, working with light, projection and interactive systems. In 2016 he co-founded Nordic Audiovisual Artists, in 2017 the lighting collective Svartljus, in 2022 the artist residency Visualia, and in 2026 the fulldome festival Dome Dreaming.

His professional work includes KRAM/WEISSHAAR (SE/DE), FIELD (UK) and Moment Factory (CA). He taught Visual Communication at Beckmans (2017–2025) and was Industry Leader at Hyper Island (2014–2022).

On SIGNS OF PRESENCE he is responsible for scenography, projection and live visuals, and is the project's producer.

ADAM SASS
Musical direction · Trumpet and electronics
People In Orbit · Sweden

Adam Sass is a trumpet player and composer based in Malmö. He leads the electroacoustic group People In Orbit, for which he writes all the music, and co-writes in floats, a seven-piece Swedish-Norwegian collective, since 2017.

He plays with BEQ, Vidar Orchestra and Spontaneity Quartet, and has recorded with You Thant, Isildurs Bane and Per Gessle. He also writes for larger ensembles, including the big band piece Is There A Garden In My Head? and the suite Sunrise, Meeting, Remembrance.

In 2025 he took second prize in Blåsmusikpriset Jazz and played 82 concerts across five countries. He directs the ensemble's reading of the scores.

MERLE KARP
Visual artist and VJ · Helsinki production
Aavistus Festival · Finland

Merle Karp is a Helsinki-based visual designer, video artist and VJ, working as Folded Visuals. She is festival director and co-founder of Aavistus, Finland's festival of audiovisual art and VJ culture, which she has run since 2019.

Her work draws on nature – mosses, ferns, rippling water – and on the tension between people and technology. She has shown at Flow Festival, the Reflektor light art festival and the Finnish Pavilion in Venice.

She co-founded the Nordic Lights residency programme with Jonas Johansson, and was an invited artist at the Visualia residency in 2024. She connects the project to the Helsinki audiovisual scene.

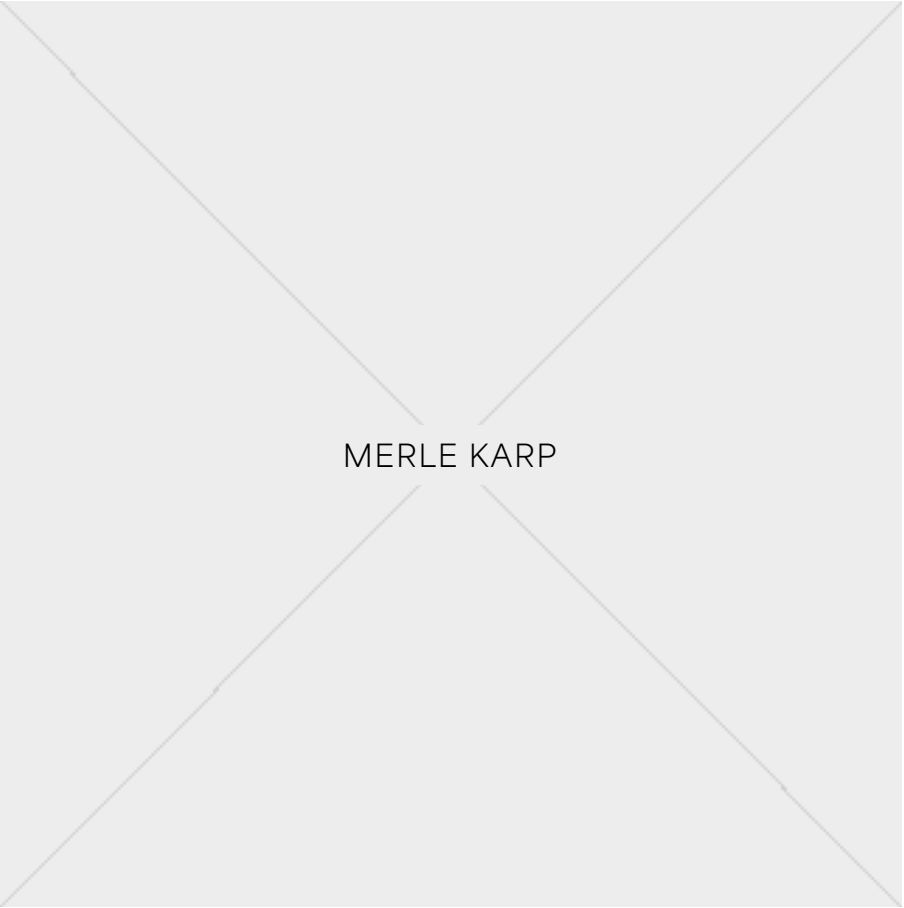
PETRI KULJUNTAUSTA
Composer and sound artist · Helsinki
Finland

Petri Kuljuntausta is a composer, sound artist and author based in Helsinki, working in experimental and electronic music since the early 1990s.

He composes with sound most people never hear: whale calls, hydrophone recordings from under water, the northern lights. He has released more than a hundred recordings, and in 2011 founded Akusmata, Finland's only gallery devoted to sound art.

He has written three books on the history of Finnish electronic music and sound art, and received the Finnish State Prize for Art in 2005.

On SIGNS OF PRESENCE he connects the project to Finnish composers, archives and rights holders.



Portrait

Adam Sass

Portrait

Petri Kuljuntausta. Photo Jani Laukkanen, CC BY-SA 3.0

LEIJA LAUTAMAJA
Folk musician · Helsinki production
Finland

Leija Lautamaja is a Finnish folk musician, songwriter and composer. She performs as a solo artist on diatonic accordion and reed organ, and plays across several bands and projects.

On SIGNS OF PRESENCE she is a primary partner for Finland: co-producing the Helsinki concert and acting as liaison for Silo 468, connecting the project to local musicians and visual artists as guest co-creators, and contributing a Finnish perspective to the open catalogue.



Leija Lautamaja

KATERINA BLAHUTOVA
Scenography and lighting · Reykjavík production
Iceland

Katerina Blahutova is a multidisciplinary artist from the Czech Republic, based in Iceland. Her practice spans scenography, lighting, audiovisual art and interactive installation, focused on the relationship between the products of human civilisation and nature.

Her work is rooted in ecoscenography and zero-waste production, turning discarded material into new spatial experience. She has three Gríman nominations.

Her lighting and interactive installations have been shown at Reykjavík Arts Festival, Vetrarhátíð and List í Ljósi, and her architectural lighting for Hallgrímskirkja and Freyjugarður has won IES, Mondo DR, LIT and German Design Awards. She was previously part of Prague's Lunchmeat Studio.



Portrait

IRIS THORARINS
Composer and musician · Reykjavík production
Iceland

Íris Hrund Þórarinsdóttir is a composer, vocalist and electronic artist working in Reykjavík. Her work integrates organic instrumentation – guzheng, violin, harp, voice – with atmospheric synthesis and contemporary sound design.

She began on the violin and went on to formal studies in vocal performance and music production, and also holds degrees in project management, art management and marketing. She has released several albums as a solo artist and within collaborative projects.

She writes for virtual reality, video games, theatre, audio poetry, art installations and short film, and works across music, dance and technology.



Íris Hrund Þórarinsdóttir

FREYA SIF HESTNES
Scenography and video · Copenhagen production
Denmark

Freya Sif Hestnes is a visual and performing artist based in Copenhagen, artistic director of Hestnes / Popović and house artist at TOASTER. She trained in scenography at the Norwegian Theatre Academy and in photography at Valand Academy.

Her scenography and video design has been seen at the Royal Danish Theatre Playhouse, Republique, Aalborg Teater and Husets Teater. Notes from Underground was nominated for a Danish Reumert, and she received the Reumert for Best Musical Theatre Performance in 2020.

Her fine art work – multi-channel video, photography and sculpture – has been shown at Röda Sten Konsthall, Kristiansand Kunsthall and Nikolaj Kunsthal.



Freya Sif Hestnes. Photo Åsmund Sollighøgda

PEOPLE IN ORBIT

An electroacoustic quintet from Malmö, led by Adam Sass. Adam Sass – trumpet and electronics. Edvin Ekman – saxophone and electronics. Niklas Bergström – piano and electronics. Edvin Elmersson – bass. Frank William Reis – drums, electronics and flute.

The band has played Stockholm Jazz Festival, Copenhagen Winter Jazz, Jazz i Halmstad, Malmö Live, Kungliga Operan, Babel, Soho House Stockholm and Donau 115 in Berlin, and toured the Faroe Islands, Sweden and Iceland in 2025.

Their debut album Close/Away came out on Prophone / Naxos in October 2023, and a second album on the Danish label April Records in April 2026. Edvin Ekman won Blåsmusikpriset Jazz in 2025; Adam Sass placed second. Lira has called the group one of Sweden's best young bands.

SIGNS OF PRESENCE (2026)

On 18 February 2026 at Barnens Scen in Malmö, People In Orbit performed Leo Nilsson and Al Eklund's 1978 graphic score with Jonas Johansson on scenography and live visuals, supported by Sten K Johnsons Stiftelse.

It was the first performance of the work in decades, given with Leo Nilsson's permission. Leo Nilsson received the Royal Swedish Academy of Music's composer prize in 2025.

The concert established the format this tour extends: score at full width, read by the ensemble, drawn into live. It also established what was missing – the score was one of very few we could locate, clear and read within a single season.

NORDIC LIGHTS · ARCTIC LIGHTS

Nordic Lights (2022) united three emerging audiovisual festivals – Aavistus in Helsinki, Nonagon in Sweden and Monument in Norway – pairing twelve artists into six new acts through an open call. Supported by Nordic Culture Point and the Nordic Culture Fund.

Arctic Lights (2023) took Jonas Johansson, Annie Tådne and Merle Karp to Sisimiut, Greenland, for a three-week residency with artists at the Arctic Sounds festival, running workshops on audiovisual production. Supported by NAPA, the Nordic Culture Fund and Nordic Culture Point.

Both projects are the working precedent for how SIGNS OF PRESENCE is organised: local partners with real authority in their own cities, and a budget that pays guest artists rather than flying a finished show in.

VISUALIA (2021-)

Visualia began as a collaborative festival in Reaktorhallen, Stockholm – the same room that opens this tour – and has since become an artist residency in Glommen, Halland.

The residency gives artists a quiet setting for experimental work that merges art, nature and technology. In 2024 it collaborated with the Into the Woods festival, bringing together more than twelve artists for an experimental stage.

Supported by Region Halland and a member of the Swedish Artist Residency Network (SWAN).

THE CODEX

Alongside the tour, SIGNS OF PRESENCE publishes an open online catalogue of Nordic graphic scores in winter 2027/28.

It has three layers. The first is catalogue fact: composer, title, year, the archive or publisher holding the work, the rights position, and how to ask. The second is the score itself, reproduced wherever the rights holder permits it. The third is our own reading – what the ensemble did with the work, on what date, in which room.

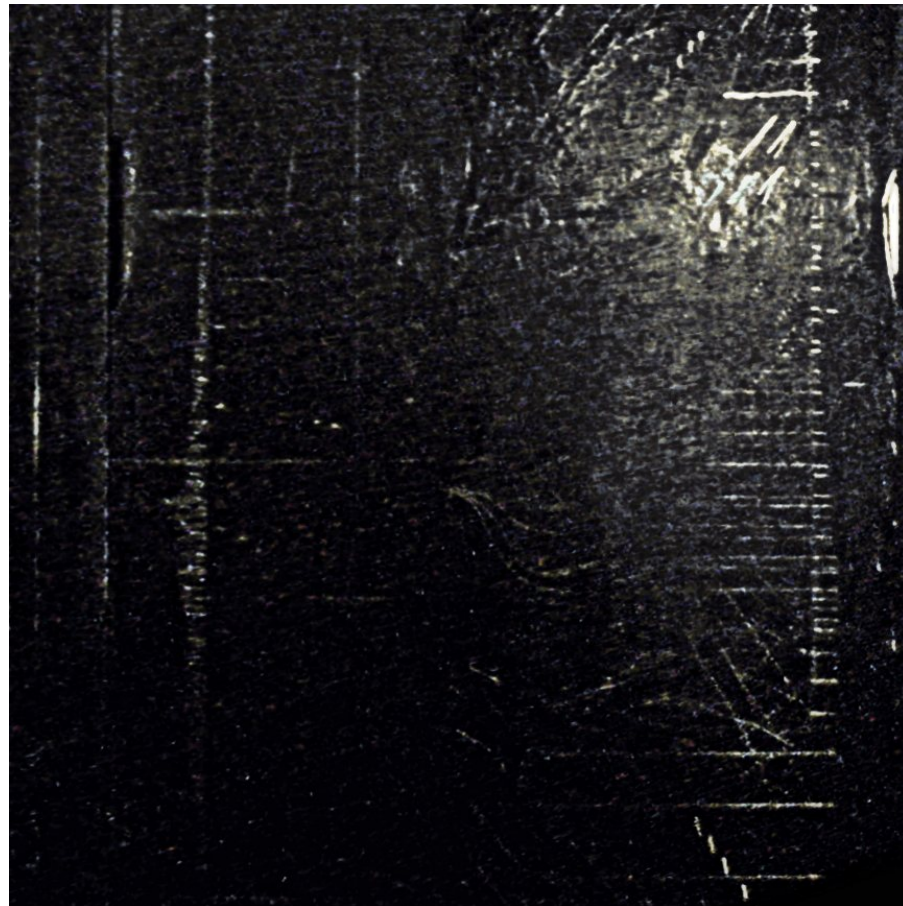
Thirty to fifty works are the target. The research is already under way with Edition·S in Copenhagen, with Finnish archives, and with Swedish estates, and the rights position of every candidate is tracked before it is programmed.

HOW IT IS BUILT

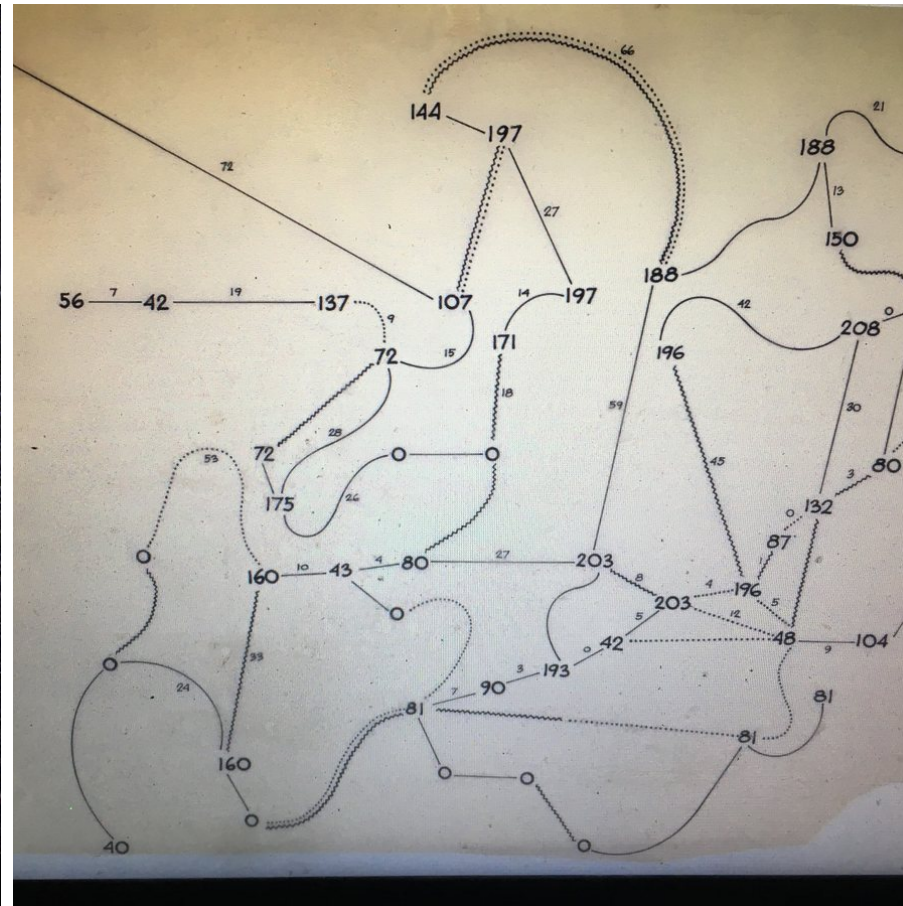
The catalogue is a static site: flat files, no database, no framework, no login. That is a preservation decision more than a technical one. A static site can be handed to an archive, mirrored, or printed, and it will still resolve in ten years. It is also close to the least energy-intensive way to publish something meant to last.

Everything is published under a clear licence. Where a rights holder permits reproduction, the entry carries the score. Where they do not, it carries the catalogue record and the route to the holder – which is still more than most of these works have now.

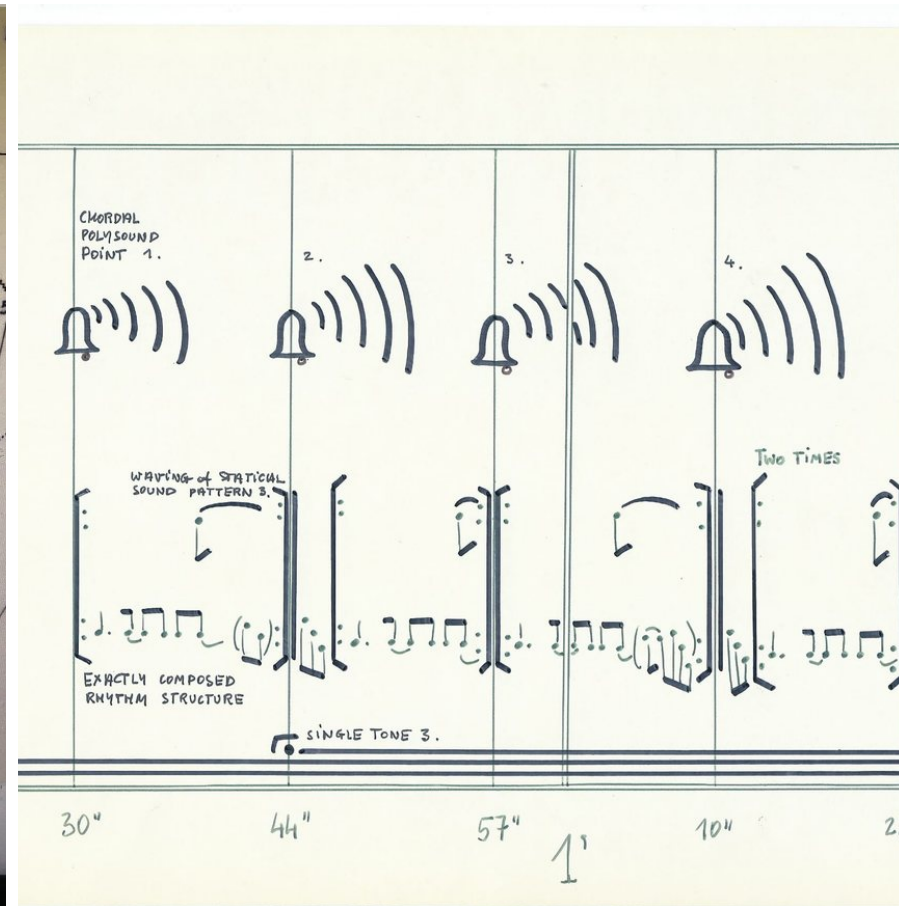
Nothing about the catalogue depends on the tour continuing.



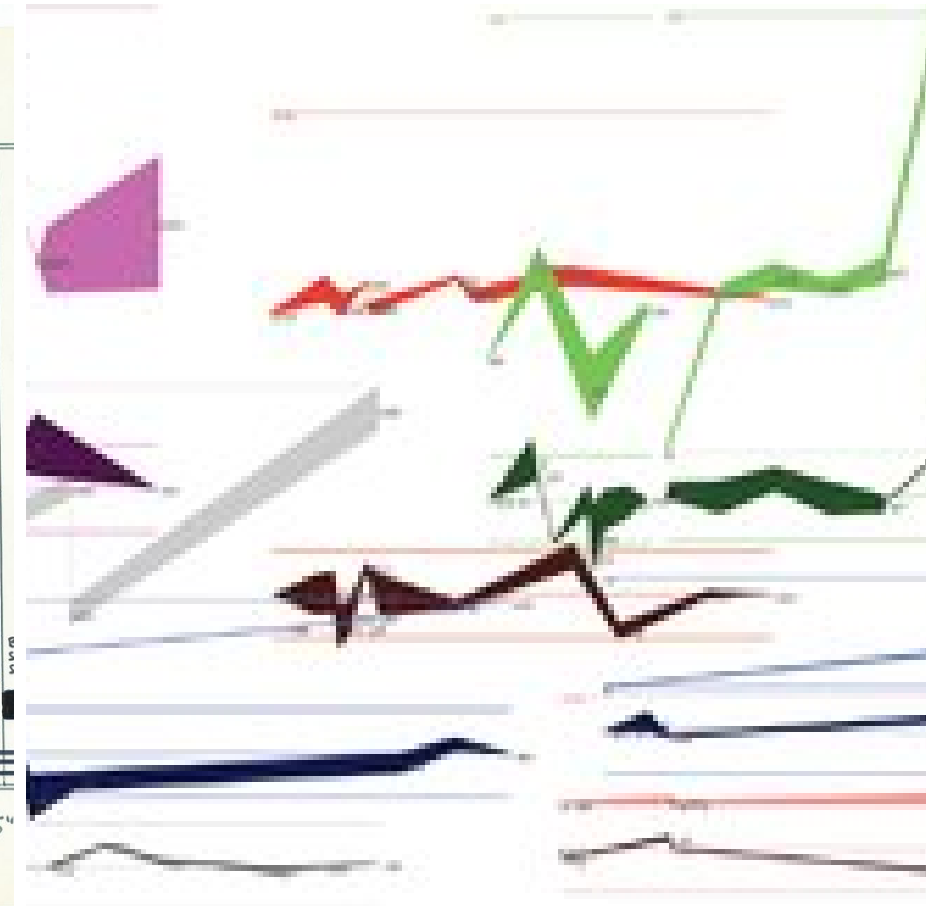
ANS synthesiser optical score (CC BY-SA 3.0)



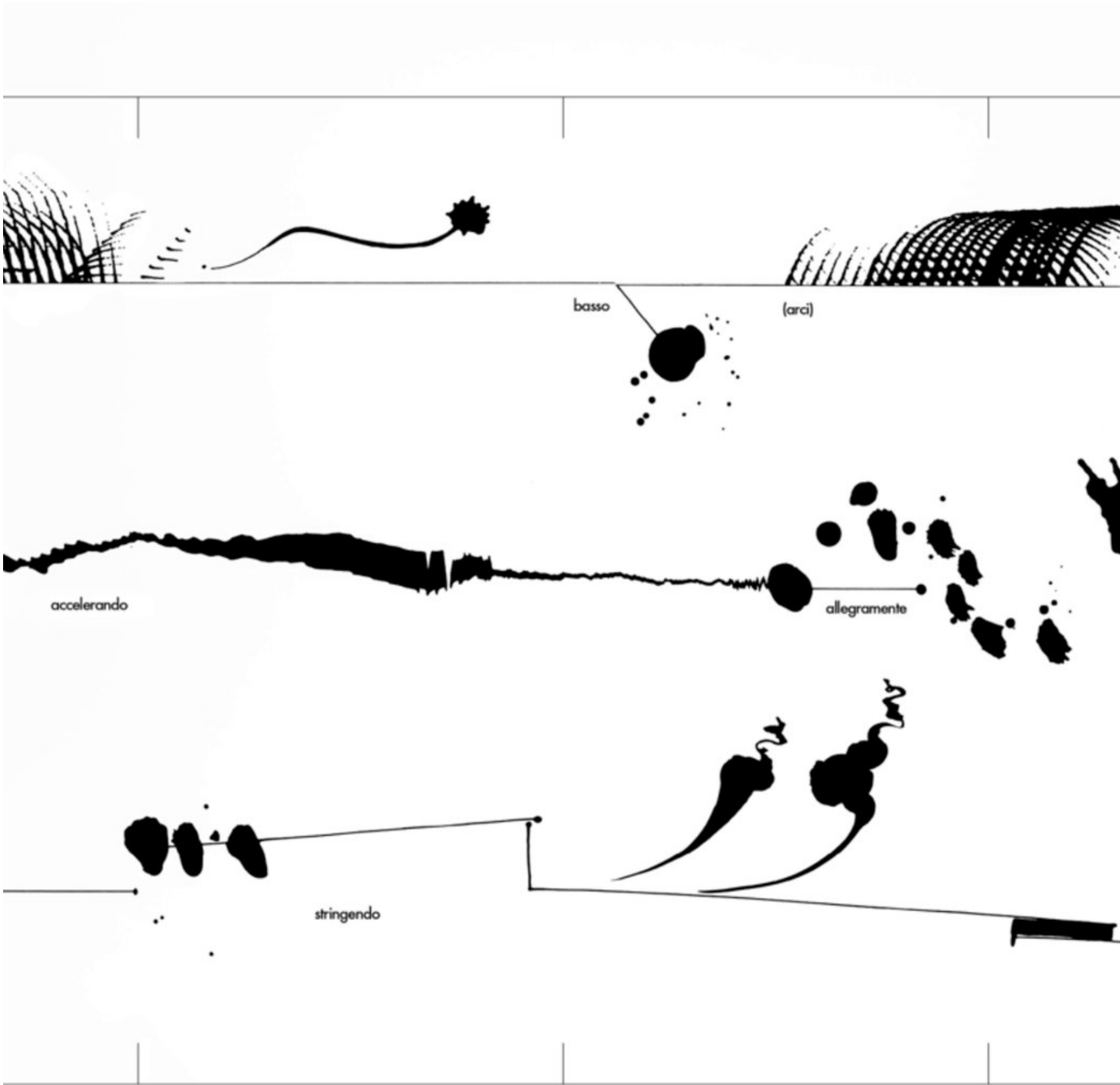
Toshi Ichinyanagi, Music for Electric Metronomes, 1960 (CC BY-SA 4.0)



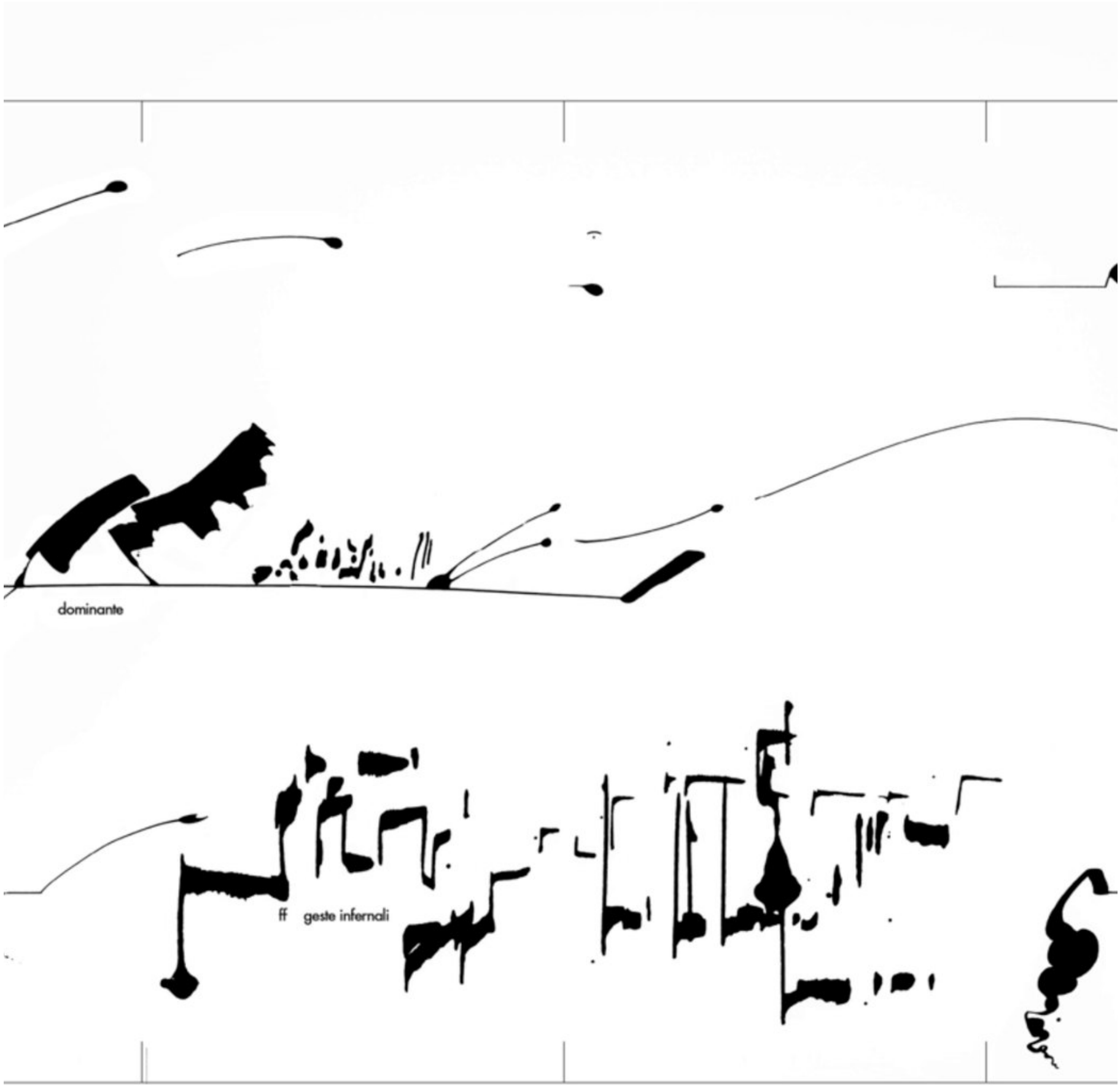
POINTS, graphic score, 1981 (CC BY-SA 4.0)



Steiner, Solitude, Pd patch as score (GPLv2)



Leo Nilsson & Al Eklund, untitled graphic score, 1978, page 3



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SIGNS OF PRESENCE tours Stockholm, Helsinki,
Reykjavík and Copenhagen in autumn 2027.

For partnership, programming and press,
reach out to

jns.johansson@gmail.com