



# Auri-Helena Nikkinen

## COMPOSER

### PROFILE

Auri-Helena Nikkinen (BMus) is a Finnish composer and professional musician, currently based in Helsinki, Finland. Nikkinen has worked as a composer since 2015 and her music has been performed by, f. ex. Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra, Helsinki Police Symphonic Band, Norwegian Naval Forces Band, Joensuu Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra, Avanti!, Zagros Ensemble and Arctos Ensemble. Nikkinen takes a lot of inspiration from nature, and her music has stylistic elements relating to impressionism, national romanticism and folk music. Nikkinen's latest work, a two-hour opera for six soloists, mixed choir, string orchestra and piano, *Onnenvirta*, got its premiere in Kuusankoski in August 2026. Nikkinen has studied music composition in the Composition Department of Sibelius Academy, under the tutorage of DMus Matthew Whittall and lecturer Lauri Kilpiö. Before academic studies, Nikkinen has also studied composition with DMus Ville Raasakka, Inga Grigorieva and Jukka Koistinen, and violin playing with DMus Tapani Yrjölä in Joensuu Conservatoire.

### EDUCATION

#### Bachelor of Music, Composition

Sibelius-Academy, Helsinki 2019 – 2024

Bachelor studies in the Sibelius-Academy included studies in both the Department of Composition (3,5 years) and the Department of Music pedagogy (2 years), allowing Nikkinen to acquire a deep understanding of both music composition and music pedagogy, with extended instrument skills.

#### Musician degree

Joensuu Conservatoire, Joensuu 2017 – 2019

Studies in Joensuu Conservatoire focused on violin playing and composition. Playing in multiple orchestras and ensembles was also an essential part of the curriculum.

#### Matriculation Examination

Tohmajärvi high school, Tohmajärvi 2013 – 2017

Nikkinen took the Finnish Matriculation examination in 2017, graduating with the overall grade of Eximia cum laude approbatur.

### CONTACT

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### FESTIVALS

Oulu October of New Music

Ung Nordisk Musik

Joensuu Winter of Music

Klang concert series Helsinki

### ORCHESTRAS

Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra (KPKO)

Helsinki Police Symphonic Band

The Guards Band

Norwegian Naval Forces' Band

Joensuu Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra

### ENSEMBLES

Avanti!

Zagros Ensemble

Arctos Ensemble

### PERFORMERS

Singers: Helena Juntunen, Marika Hölttä,  
Jussi Vanttinen

Pianists: Jukka Nykänen, Ilmo Ranta, Esa  
Ylönen

Wind Players: Clarinetist Mikko Raasakka

## PREMIERS (selected)

### Onnenvirta (Stream of happiness)

Onnenvirta String Orchestra, Marika Hölttä, Jussi Väänttinen, Eini-Annukka Perälä, Janne Erkkilä, Matilda Nikkinen, Matti Skyttä, Onnenvirta Choir  
August 2026

*Onnenvirta* is a two-hour opera, written for **six main soloists, mixed choir, string orchestra and piano**. The topic of the opera tackles Finnish civil war, love, death, reconciliation, and shared believe in a better future. The libretto is written by Eini Annukka Perälä. *Onnenvirta* got its premiere in August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 in Kuusaa Hall, Kuusankoski, conducted by Heidi Hämäläinen. There are a total of eight performances during August and September of 2026 taking place in Kuusankoski and Kotka.

2'10'

### Sumun syvimmästä sopukasta (From the Secret Depths of the Mist)

Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra. March 2025  
Piece for **string orchestra**. Premiered in the *Uuden uutukaista* ("Brand New") concert in the Fordell Hall of Snellmann Music Center, Kokkola. Premiere was conducted by Mikael Lopenen. *Sumun syvimmästä sopukasta* tells a story about a creature that is born from the mist of a swamp and ventures into the surrounding world. The creature experiences many things, but in the end never quite finds what it's looking for, and in its disappointment towards the world finally returns to the swamp and vanishes into the fog.

14'

### Globi et lineae

Marja Kari, Ilmo Ranta February 2025  
Piece for **mezzo-soprano and piano**. Premiered in the "Valokeilassa Auri-Helena Nikkinen" profile concert organized by *Laulumusiikin ystävät* society, in the main hall of Kamppi service centre. The Latin text of *Globi et lineae* describes how important musicians are to composers, and to the very essence of music itself.

7'

### Sadepisaroiita (Droplets of rain)

Assi Penttilä, Jonna Hänninen November 2024  
Piece for **young voice and piano**. Premiered in the final concert of L.I.E.D composition competition in the Helsinki Conservatoire main hall. Sadepisaroiita was awarded a special prize in the competition.

2'

### Muistoja kesästä (Memories of Summer)

Kamun nuorisodiskanttikuoro November 2024  
An a cappella choral work for **descant choir (SSA)** consisting of three movements: Pilvet (Clouds), Sumussa (In the mist) and Tuuli (Wind). Premiered in Kaarina-talo (Kaarina house) in Kaarina, Turku. Concert was conducted by Iida Aarnio.

8'

### Regards from Montes de Toledo

Tuule-Helin Krigul, Teuvo Taimioja, Otto Nuoranne June 2024  
A trio for **flute, guitar and cello**. Premiered in the main hall of Sibelius Academy R building, Helsinki.

6'

### Your Music

Matilda Nikkinen, Olli Mikkonen June 2024  
Short song for **soprano and piano**, praising the healing kindness experienced when listening to music that manages to touch the listener's soul. Dedicated to guitarist and composer Jouko Nikkinen. Premiered in the main hall of Sibelius-Academy R building, Helsinki.

2'

### Tyhjiä hönkäyksiä (Empty Breaths) – Hohe

Heidi Hämäläinen June 2024  
For **soprano and a paper accordion**. A powerful piece growing out of frustration, with slight undertones of criticism for the current state of contemporary art. Premiered in the main hall of Sibelius-Academy R building, Helsinki.

5'

### An Urban Tiger

Elina Rautiainen June 2024  
A **solo piano** piece contemplating the not-always-so-harmonious relationship between man and nature. Premiered in the main hall of Sibelius-Academy R building, Helsinki.

5'

## Humoresque pour Maxim – Memoir of a Drunken Toucan

Aaro Lehtovaara, Tanja Niiranen June 2024

A humoristic piece for **bassoon and piano**, with some tragicomic remarks on alcohol consumption. Premiered in the main hall of Sibelius-Academy R-Building.

5'

## The Forest Within Me

Helsinki Police Symphonic Band May 2024

Piece for **wind orchestra**, premiere conducted by Kyösti Vesterinen in Tempeliaukio church, Helsinki. "The Forest Within Me is a musical reconstruction of what happens inside my mind and soul, when I am in a forest. I aim to grasp the aspects of forest that I find truly healing for the mind and soul. This piece is a tribute to nature's beauty, but also a depiction of how in a truly peaceful environment one's inner turmoil has a space to come out and become recognized. To be in a forest is at its best a state, where one's deepest inner thoughts and feelings are clearly visible against the nature's beautiful blank canvas."

10'

## From Cluelessness to Clarity

Zagros ensemble May 2024

Composed for a chamber ensemble consisting of **string quintet, flute, oboe, clarinet, piano and percussions**. Premiere conducted by Petri Komulainen in the Camerata hall of Helsinki Music Centre.

8'

## Hunnuton (Unveiled)

Helena Juntunen, Jukka Nykänen May 2023

For **soprano and piano**, set to Aila Meriluoto's poem *Hunnuton*. Commissioned by Hämeenlinna Sibelius Society. Premiered in Kutomo's concert hall, Hämeenlinna.

5'

## Lagoon

Matilda Nikkinen, Kemal Achourbekov May 2023

Piece for **soprano and piano**, describing the peaceful but mysteriously enchanting atmosphere of a warm, magical lagoon, with possible mermaids or sirens present. Premiered in the main hall of Joensuu Conservatoire.

4'

## Medieval Adventure

Joensuu Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra

Dec. 2022

Piece for **symphony orchestra**, describing the journey of a young adventurer in a fictional medieval kingdom. The piece conveys a message of courage and *sisu* being the best tools for combating challenges and hardships in life. Premiered in the main hall of Joensuu Conservatoire, conducted by Sakari Tervo.

9'

## Trio for Flute, Guitar and Violoncello

Arctos Ensemble

Oct. 2020

A trio for **flute, guitar and cello**, featuring several landscapes and atmospheres in a short time. Premiered in Utra church, Oulu, as a part of Oulu October of New Music Festival.

6'

## Maisemat (Scenery)

Piritta Gröhn, Helena Nikkinen

Feb. 2017

A piece for **viola and piano**, describing the magical scenery of Finnish summer night. Premiered in Carelicum center, as a part of Joensuu Winter of Music Festival (Joensuun musiikkitalvi).

4'

## Lempeys tuo valon (Gentleness Brings the Light)

Eini Perälä, Helena Nikkinen

Sep. 2015

Song for **soprano and piano**, inspired by themes of gentleness, self-acceptance, faith and love. Commissioned by Tohmajärvi congregation for the Night of Faith Festival. Premiered in the Tohmajärvi church.

4'

## Aamu Joella (Morning by the river)

Helena Nikkinen

May. 2014

Solo work for **piano**, depicting a lovely morning by a river flowing through a traditional Finnish coniferous forest. Premiered in the congregation hall of Tohmajärvi.

5'

## Andalusialaisessa majatalossa (Andalusian Inn)

Helena Nikkinen, Henna Hirvikangas

Oct. 2013

Piece for **violin and piano**, recalling the joyfully lively atmosphere of a Spanish inn. Premiered in the congregation hall of Tohmajärvi.

5'

### **Lähde (Fountain)**

Helena Nikkinen 2013

**Piano** etude inspired by gushing water of a fountain. Premiered in the congregation hall of Tohmajärvi.

2'

### **Suivalssi (Summer Waltz)**

Helena Nikkinen 2010

Solo work for **piano**, inspired by Finnish summer nights. Premiered in the congregation hall of Elimäki.

3'

### **Lohikäärmetaistelu (Fighting the Dragon)**

Helena Nikkinen 2005

Music for a play, accompanying a scene of two knights fighting a dragon. Solo work for **piano**. Premiered in Peippola School, Elimäki.

1'

## **STIPENDS AND GRANTS (selected)**

Martin Wegelius Foundation grant 2025, Helsinki

Joensuu Conservatoire stipend 2019, Joensuu

Crumbs of Joy Society Stipend, 2014, Kitee

Kouvola music school *Kouvolan musiikkikoulu – Satukielen iloiset sävelet*, Kouvola

North Kymi Music Institute Stipend, Kouvola

US Embassy, CIMO and VAISALA: Young Ambassadors Program 2014 grant, Helsinki

## **PRICES**

Special Prize in L.I.E.D. composition competition, 2025, Helsinki