



**Otherworld Ensemble** is a unique multi-cultural project lead by Finnish Jazz Legend Heikki "Mike" Koskinen and Finnish-American saxophonist and composer Rent Romus. Their music is inspired by Finno-Ugric mythopoetic structures, and traditional forms featuring some of the most creative musicians in the Finnish music scene. The spark of inspiration came after Romus toured Denmark in the mid-nineties working with musicians who were integrating their cultural traditions with African-American music. Romus realized the music he grew up with could serve as a platform and research tool into his own lost heritage. The "Other World" theme references heritage found deep in the "Body of Memory" embedded in the ensemble's musical psyche refracted through the lens of improvisation, folk, and composition.

The music consists of original melody and improvised transitions inspired by the epic rune poems of the Kalevala, northern regional folk songs, traditional healing arts, animistic elements, and jazz. Their arrangements range from small to large ensembles augmented by traditional instruments such as kantele, bells, handmade reed instruments, and overtone flutes. The music utilizes these elements while embedded structurally in ways that abstractly reference a Finnish and American aesthetic.

### **Otherworld Soul Bird Tour 2025 ~ A musical odyssey of mythic birds**

In 2025 The Otherworld Ensemble will weave an epic, unique musical journey, SOUL BIRD, composed by Heikki Koskinen and Rent Romus about birds and the myths they inspire, whose roots go back to the ancient tales of the Kalevala. Birds have played an important role in human history in stories and myths that describe the creation of the world, the birth of life, the creation of fire, the changing of the seasons, and the messengers of omens. The spark for Soul Bird Suite originally came from the stories of the Siberian Jay, which is found throughout the Arctic regions of the world. Finno-Ugric myths considered this small, brave and charismatic bird to be the carrier of human souls to the afterlife of Manala (the underworld) and back. The music in the Soul Bird series can be performed by ensembles of various sizes. However, the main characters are a variety of flutes and other wind instruments, supported by percussion, bells, and keyboards. There are also various bird whistles and recorded bird sounds.

[http://romus.net/Otherworld\\_Ensemble.html](http://romus.net/Otherworld_Ensemble.html)

#### **Booking:**

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