
LAWO
CLASSICS
KNUT VAAGE
RØTER
BERGEN BIG BAND
FRODE GRYTTEN

If you have to ask what jazz is, you'll never know. So said Louis Armstrong when he was asked if he could define jazz. No artist likes to define what they do. To define is often to reduce and degrade. Nor are there many jazz musicians who like the word jazz. What does it mean? Is it an abbreviation of 'jasmine', is it the scent of perfume and the taste of tea? Or does it refer to James, a mythical instrumentalist from an early phase of the form?

Regardless, jazz was born of the blues in New Orleans, of the descendants of enslaved Americans. Jazz came of age in Chicago and along the banks of the Mississippi, jazz travelled from hot Chicago to the cool West Coast, sprinted down New York's avenues, ended up in Paris in April, wandered through Tunisian nights, flew into Norwegian forests, landed atop mountain plateaus. Jazz was shot into outer space, found its way to inner spaces. Jazz is the music of the traveller —jazz moves, shifts, floats around, rises up, sinks down, finds paths and detours.

It’s possible to call jazz America’s classical music. Simple as that. But it isn’t actually all that simple. Jazz is music that changed the art, a sound and a rhythm that changed the tradition, which changed the language and the world — yes, *changed the world*. Jazz isn’t just a people’s music, it’s the narrative of an entire century. Jazz expresses not just the bloody history of Black America, but the story of modern humanity. No less than that.

Jazz tells a story. The trumpeter tells a story. The drummer shares a lifetime. The saxophonist cooks up a towering skyscraper. The bassist composes an entire city. The band creates an entire civilisation. Jazz developed in a unique way, through a collaboration between musicians and their audiences, through a dialogue between younger and older performers. Up-and-coming musicians were the apprentices of established ones. In this sense, jazz has always been aware of the power in its roots. The new generation quotes the old, and the younger musicians



are acutely aware of the tradition that has been laid at their feet.

At the same time, having your own sound and unique style is crucial in making a name for yourself within jazz. It’s one of the paradoxes of the form, that you attain the original and unique by imitating others, by absorbing and incorporating the history of jazz into yourself. You’re indebted to those who came before, but you have to use that debt to reach yourself. The music is your own experiences, your own thoughts, your own wisdom, your own stupidity. If you don’t live it, nor will it emerge from your horn or your strings or your keys or your drumheads.

Dizzy Gillespie said that sooner or later, a performer has to push himself into the music. Dizzy Gillespie wanted to be Roy Eldridge, to play like Roy Eldridge, sound like Roy Eldridge. At some point, he became Dizzy Gillespie. That’s how it is. Miles Davis wanted to be Dizzy Gillespie, to play like Dizzy, sound like Dizzy, but he

couldn’t do it, he lacked the ability to hit the high notes like Dizzy, so he conjured up his own cool, beautiful, solitary sound. He became Miles Davis. Jon Hassell wanted to be Miles Davis, to be Miles Davis at his most electric, play like him, sound like him. At some point, Hassell went beyond his hero, he created a landscape free of borders and the trumpet’s rules, he painted the whole world with his instrument. He became Jon Hassell.

And after Jon Hassell? Well, here come Nils Petter Molvær and Arve Henriksen and Sam Gendel. And after them? Well, they’ll come, they’re on their way, they’re already here. Jazz runs in both directions, back to the source, back to the beginning, but also towards the mouth of the river and out into the sea. The old masters are immensely present in the music’s development and evolution, jazz has a sense of both past and present, it unfolds in an endless commute, an eternal shuttling between heaven and earth, between roots and spaceflight. And here we stand, Bergen



Big Band and Knut Vaage and Anne Marthe Dyvi and I, the artists who have created this work. We who are indebted to the very best, the artists who made jazz such a vital form, a wild genre full of atonality and disharmony and noise, but jazz can take it, jazz can incorporate darkness, because jazz is also everything else — the warmth and harmony and rhythm. Jazz is freedom and joy, explosion and tradition, risk and roots.

Ask the members of Bergen Big Band, and maybe they won’t want to define jazz, but they’ll talk about Basie and Buddy, about Miles and Mingus and Monk, about Thad Jones and Donny McCaslin, about Art Tatum and Billie Holiday and Carla Bley. Ask Knut Vaage, and maybe he won’t want to define jazz, but he’ll talk about roots, about back when he ran Husnes Jazz Club and wrote jazz reviews for the local newspaper under a pseudonym. This is where he came from, from jazz, the man who would become a pianist and contemporary composer. Ask Anne Marthe Dyvi, and she’ll tell you about

the female artists who came before and
opened doors, the ones who spoke up, who
took up space, who paved the way so that
she could work and explore and create,
and so continue to hold the door open
for those who come after.

Ask me, and I can't define jazz, but I
can talk about beat poetry and Gregory
Corso and Frank O'Hara and Amiri Baraka
and Diane di Prima and Frank London Brown.
I stand on their shoulders, gazing out-
wards, listening, taking it all in. The
beat of the band, the beat of the street,
the beat of the night train and the pinball
machines, the warm breeze that comes across
the sea, the laughter and the sound of
traffic running through my body. The work
and the joy. The sound of a music that
refuses to be defined. As the poet Ted Joans
put it: Hallelujah I dig JAZZ so
Yeah JAZZ IS MY RELIGION.

Frode Grytten

Translated from the Norwegian
by Alison McCullough

Note: *Røter* was originally commissioned by Bergen Big Band and premiered at the Bergen International Festival in 2022. The work includes text and recitation by Frode Grytten and video art by Anne Marthe Dyvi.





## RØTER

by Frode Grytten

jo, det tar til med ein gut
ein gut som er eldre enn han burde vere
ein gut som veks raskare enn han burde vekse
ein gut som er briljant lenge før han burde
ein gut som står åleine i dette rommet

jo, det tar til med ein gut
ein gut som er eldre enn han burde vere
ein gut som veks raskare enn han burde
ein gut som er briljant lenge før han burde
ein gut som står åleine i dette rommet

som leitar etter ein tone som ikkje finst
som oppdagar ein tone ingen har hørt før
som leitar etter ein tone som ikkje finst
som oppdagar ein tone ingen har hørt før

bli lyd, bli låt, bli jazz
og politiet som dundrar på døra hans:
kva skjer der inne?
      kva i helvete driv du på med der inne?
jo, eg kokar bare opp ein skyskrapar
jo, eg kokar bare opp ein skyskrapar



## ROOTS

Translated from the Norwegian by Alison McCullough

yeah, it begins with a boy
a boy who's older than he should be
a boy who's growing faster than he should grow
a boy who's brilliant long before he should be
a boy who stands alone in this room

yeah, it begins with a boy
a boy who's older than he should be
a boy who's growing faster than he should
a boy who's brilliant long before he should be
a boy who stands alone in this room

who's searching for a note that doesn't exist
who discovers a note no one has ever heard before
who's searching for a note that doesn't exist
who discovers a note no one has ever heard before

become sound, become song, become jazz
and the police pounding on his door:
what's going on in there?
      what in the hell are you doing in there?
yeah, I'm just cooking up a skyscraper
yeah, I'm just cooking up a skyscraper

jo, eg skapar bare himmel og jord og rytme
jo, eg skapar bare himmel og jord og rytme
jo, eg skapar bare himmel og jord
jo, eg føder bare ein sommar og ein heil generasjon
jo, eg fyller bare lungene mine med gud og flagget
og song og blå auge og raselovar og nervetrådar
og underkjolar og mytologi og elver og vegetasjon
bli lyd, bli låt, bli jazz

åpne opp, seier politiet, kom ut med hendene
over hovudet
og guten som pustar inn og blåser ut ein tyfon
tenkande, syngande, svingande hammerslag
tenkande, syngande, svingande hammerslag

blåser ut og blåser fridom inn i ansikta
blåser overmot blåser autonomi blåser perfeksjon
inn i natta
blåser overmot autonomi perfeksjon inn i natta
blåser opprør, blåser motstand inn i natta
bli lyd, bli låt, bli jazz

dette er gata vi bur i, dette er huset vi flytta inn i
her er trappene dette bandet klatra opp i



yeah, I'm just creating heaven and earth and rhythm
yeah, I'm just creating heaven and earth and rhythm
yeah, I'm just creating heaven and earth
yeah, I'm just delivering a summer and a whole generation
yeah, I'm just filling my lungs with god and the flag
and song and blue eyes and racial laws and nerve fibres
and petticoats and mythology and rivers and vegetation
become sound, become song, become jazz

open up, say the police, come out with your hands
above your head
and the boy takes a breath and blows out a typhoon
thinking, singing, swinging hammer strikes
thinking, singing, swinging hammer strikes

blows out and blows freedom into their faces
blows swagger blows autonomy blows perfection
into the night
blows swagger autonomy perfection into the night
blows rebellion, blows resistance into the night
become sound, become song, become jazz

this is the street we live on, the house we moved into
here are the stairs that this band climbed

bær inn inspirasjonen, bær inn trommene og trompeten
bær inn new orleans og chicago og paris i april
bær inn heile empire state og birdland og blue note
bær inn alle kassettane, alle platene, alle plakatane
bær inn bird og basie, bær inn buddy og billie
bær inn monk og miles, fitzgerald og carter
jones, rollins, ellington, coltrane, armstrong
dei som heldt mikrofonen tett mot leppene
dei som heldt mikrofonen tett mot hjartet

hør, hør, korleis regnet rører seg
hør, hør, korleis vinden rører seg
hør, hør, korleis dette huset skjelv
bli lyd, bli låt, bli jazz

kven seier at amerika ikkje har ei historie
kven seier at amerika ikkje har røter
åpne opp, seier politiet, kom ut med sjela di
      over hovudet
i mistankens tid har guten ingenting å skjule
han kjem ut, han går ut i lause lufta,
      blir lagt i bakken

fortida er skyene som flyt over dette huset
raseriet, profetiane, ideologiane, melodiane



carry in the inspiration, carry in the trumpet and the drums
carry in new orleans and chicago and april in paris
carry in the whole empire state and birdland and blue note
carry in all the tapes, all the records, all the posters
carry in bird and basie, carry in buddy and billie
carry in monk and miles, fitzgerald and carter
jones, rollins, ellington, coltrane, armstrong
those who held the microphone close to their lips
those who held the microphone close to their heart

listen, hear how the rain moves
listen, hear how the wind stirs
listen, feel how this house shakes
become sound, become song, become jazz

who says america doesn’t have a history
who says america doesn’t have roots
open up, say the police, come out with your soul
      above your head
in this time of suspicion the boy has nothing to hide
he comes out, steps out into mid-air,
      is tackled to the ground

the past is the clouds that float above this house
the rage, the prophecies, ideologies and melodies

eg får ikkje puste, seier guten, men pustar likevel
pustar og løftar hornet i protest, pustar vidare

og dette bandet og alle band pustar vidare
spelar ein einaste høg svolten tone
pustar dei første tonane, dei første drinkane
dei første slåstkampane, dei første dagane
dei første taktane, dei første motorvegane
rasande tonar, klagande tonar, tapte tonar
fars tonar, mors tonar, våre tonar
bli lyd, bli låt, bli jazz



i can't breathe, says the boy, but breathes all the same
breathes and lifts his horn in protest, keeps on breathing

and this band and all bands keep on breathing
playing one single high and hungry note
breathing the first notes, the first drinks
the first fist-fights, the first days
the first tempos, the first highways
furious notes, plaintive notes, lost notes
father's notes, mother's notes, our notes
become sound, become song, become jazz

The roots of this text can be traced back to
Robert Creeley, Ted Berrigan and Frank London Brown


PASSPORTS
PHOTOS
RENEW



Knut Vaage



## KNUT VAAGE

Knut Vaage (b. 1961) is a full-time composer living in Bergen, Norway, where he studied piano and composition at the Grieg Academy. He has worked with multiple styles of music, but primarily with improvisational and contemporary music, and in several projects he has explored the boundaries between improvisation and composition. Developing a hybrid acoustic/electronic sound is another important aspect of his music, and he has participated in several collaborations that combine contrasting art forms.

Vaage's output ranges from large-scale works to solo pieces, and his music is frequently performed at concerts and festivals both in Norway and internationally. These include the Bergen International Festival, Ultima, Borealis, Ilios, Grec Festival (Barcelona), Prague Spring Festival, Nordic Music Days in Stockholm and Reykjavik, and Carnegie Hall. He has composed several full-scale operas, which have been performed at the



Bergen National Opera, Norwegian National Opera & Ballet, the Ultima Festival, Bergen National Theatre, and NOSO in Tromsø, as well as internationally at Pfalztheater, Stadttheater Giessen, Théâtre National du Luxembourg (TNL), Porgy & Bess in Vienna, and the Armel Opera Festival in Hungary. Vaage was nominated for the Nordic Council Music Prize in 2022 for his work Hybrid Spectacle and was awarded the Lindeman Prize in 2024.

## FRODE GRYTTEN

Frode Grytten (b. 1960) was born in Bergen and raised in Odda, and is widely regarded as one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary Norwegian literature. Since his debut with the poetry collection Start in 1983, he has written novels, short stories, poetry, essays and children's books, establishing a unique body of work characterized by musicality, warmth and a keen eye for the people and communities he portrays.

His major breakthrough came with *Bikubesong* (*Beehive Song*) in 1999, which won the Brage Prize and was nominated for the Nordic Council Literature Prize. Since then, Grytten has received numerous literary awards, including the Riverton Prize for *Flytande bjørn* (*Floating Bear*), and both the New Norwegian Literature Prize and the Melsom Prize for *Rom ved havet, rom i byen* (‘*Rooms by the sea, Rooms in the city*’). In 2023, Grytten published his first novel in ten years, *Den dagen Nils Vik døde* (‘The day that Nils Vik died’), which was widely acclaimed by critics and awarded the Brage Prize.

Alongside his literary career, Grytten has also worked as a journalist and essayist, and over the years has collaborated closely with musicians and performing artists on a wide range of literary and musical projects.







Anne Marthe Dyvi



## ANNE MARTHE DYVI

Anne Marthe Dyvi (b. 1979) is an artist and film maker based in Bergen, Norway. She was educated at The Bergen Academy of Art and Design. Her work can be described as interdisciplinary, site-specific and process-orientated, and with a special interest in technology and time, and the existence, survival and behaviour of nature and humanity. She works with time-based media, sculpture and two-dimensional works. Dyvi has exhibited in the Nordic countries, as well as in Italy, Slovakia, England, Germany, Estonia and Lithuania. Several of her works are included in the collections of KODE (Bergen Art Museum), Stavanger Art Museum, Bergen City Council, Vestland County and KORO. In 2008 she was part of founding Ytter/ ytter.no, originally an artist group and online magazine, now a digital archive. In addition to her own practice as an artist she worked as artistic developer at the Bergen Centre for Electronic Art from 2010 to 2019, and was constituted director for one year. She was part of the resource group



Bergen Big Band



developing a national archive for video arts in Norway for Arts Council Norway. From 2019 to 2021 she worked in an advisory role for KORO (Public Art Norway), and headed the board of Atelier Nord in Oslo from 2020 to 2026. Since 2021 she has worked on developing the public libraries in Bergen into sustainable, aesthetic, and functional spaces for everyone.

## BERGEN BIG BAND

Bergen Big Band (BBB) is one of Norway's leading and most active big bands and has, over the past 35 years, established itself as a key force in Norwegian jazz. Based in Bergen and with roots dating back to the 1970s, the band is today regarded as a jazz flagship for Western Norway. The ensemble consists of some of the region's foremost jazz musicians and is known for its high artistic standards, versatility, and innovative approach to the big band format.

BBB combines a deep respect for the big band tradition with a strong commitment to new music and artistic development. The band regularly commissions works from leading composers and collaborates with international soloists and bandleaders. Over the years, BBB has performed at major international festivals across Europe and North America and shared the stage with some of the world's leading jazz musicians, including Diana Krall, Chris Potter and Marius Neset.

The band's debut album, *Seagull* (2005), featuring Karin Krog and John Surman, was nominated for a Spellemann Award. *Røter* is the band's ninth release and continues BBB's work of advancing big band jazz through innovative commissioned works and exciting collaborations. Under the musical direction of Michael Barnes, BBB continues to be a driving force in Norwegian jazz.





## MUSICIANS

BERGEN BIG BAND
CONDUCTOR: REID GILJE

SAXOPHONES:
MICHAEL BARNES — ALTO SAX, SOPRANO SAX, CLARINET AND BASS CLARINET (SOLO TRACK 28)
ELISABETH LID TRØEN — ALTO SAX, FLUTE AND ALTO FLUTE (SOLO TRACK 12)
OLE JACOB HYSTAD — TENOR (SOLO TRACK 25)
KJETIL MØSTER — TENOR SAX, SOPRANO SAX AND CLARINET (SOLO TRACKS 3 AND 5)
THOMAS NØKLING — BARITONE (SOLO TRACK 28)

TRUMPETS | FLUGELHORNS:
SVEIN H. GISKE
HANS MARIUS ANDERSEN
ARE OVESEN (SOLO TRACK 24)
WILLIAM GRØV SKRAMSETT

TROMBONES:
SINDRE DALHAUG
GRETHE TONHEIM
PÅL ROSETH
HÅVARD S. BRUSTAD — BASS TROMBONE

RHYTHM SECTION:
RASMUS VIK LAGERBERG — VIBRAPHONE/MARIMBA/PERCUSSION (VIBRAPHONE SOLO TRACK 23)
DAG S. ARNESEN — PIANO (SOLO TRACK 15)
PETER SØREIDE — GUITAR (SOLO TRACK 5)
MAGNE THORMODSÆTER — DOUBLE BASS (SOLO TRACK 19)
AMUND NORDSTRØM — DRUMS (SOLO TRACK 29)

## CREDITS

RECORDED IN KULTURSALEN KIPO, ASKØY, 9–11 SEPTEMBER 2024
PRODUCER: VEGARD LANDAAS
BALANCE ENGINEER: THOMAS WOLDEN
EDITING: VEGARD LANDAAS
MASTERING: THOMAS WOLDEN
BOOKLET NOTES: FRODE GRYTTEN
BOOKLET TRANSLATION: ALISON McCULLOUGH
BOOKLET EDITOR: ALISON BULLOCK AARSTEN
COVER ART: ANNE MARTHE DYVI
COVER DESIGN: ANETTE L'ORANGE / BLUNDERBUSS
BOOKLET ART: ANNE MARTHE DYVI
COMPOSER PHOTO: ANNA-JULIA GRANBERG
ARTIST PHOTO (FRODE GRYTTEN): HELGE SKODVIN
ARTIST PHOTO (BERGEN BIG BAND): SISSEL GRØNLUND

KNUT VAAGE, composer and conductor
FRODE GRYTTEN, text and narration
VIDEO ART by ANNE MARTHE DYVI

THIS RECORDING HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE WITH SUPPORT FROM
FUND FOR PERFORMING ARTISTS and
THE NORWEGIAN SOCIETY OF COMPOSERS

LAWO CLASSICS
LWC 1434
℗ 2026 LAWO | © 2026 LAWO Classics
www.lawo.no

KNUT VAAGE: RØTER 2

Part I


1. Introduction 1 and 2 00:42
2. Roots I and Introduction 3 00:41
3. Tenor solo I and Interlude 1 02:09
4. Text Part Ia 01:18
5. Interlude 2 and Guitar solo 02:43
6. Text part Ib and Interlude 3 01:17
7. Text part Ic and Interlude 4 00:51
8. Text Part Id and Interlude 5 (Soprano saxophone solo) 02:15
9. Pling plong impro 02:54
10. Text Part Ie and Interlude 6 00:51
11. Text Part If, Interlude 7 and Text Part Ig 01:39
12. Interlude 8a (Flute solo) 01:47
13. Interlude 8b 01:01
14. Text Part Ih, Guitar Fragments and Text Part Ii 01:13
15. Interlude 9a (Free jazz piano solo) 02:43
16. Interlude 9b and Text Part Ij 00:37
17. Interlude 10, Text Part Ik and Interlude 11 00:32
18. Text Part Il 00:39
19. Interlude 12 (Bass solo) 02:00
20. Text Part Im and Interlude 13 01:13

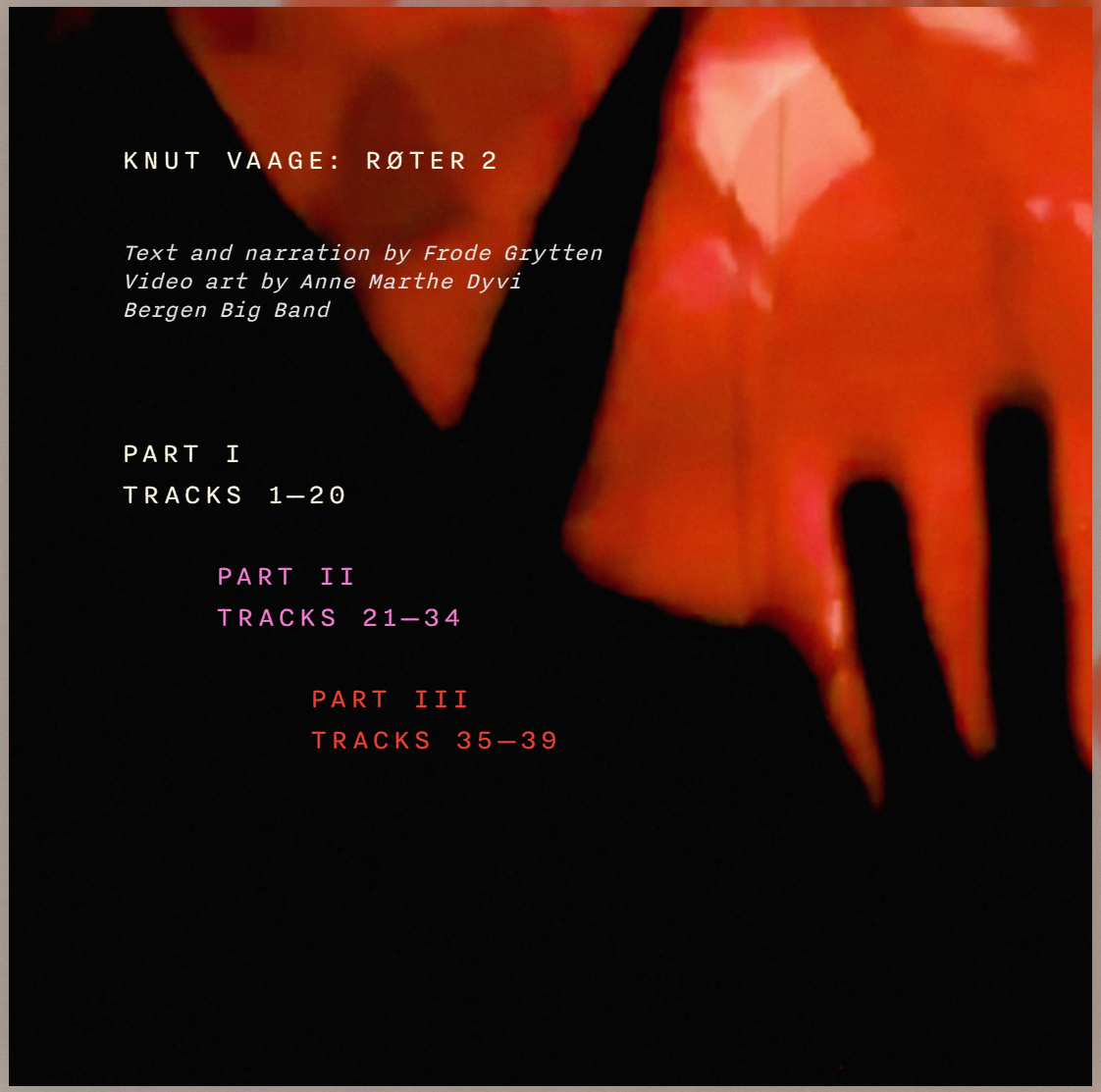



Part II


21. Roots II and Interlude 14 00:43
22. Roots III and Interlude 15a 00:34
23. Interlude 15b (Vibraphone solo) 02:11
24. Interlude 15c, 15d and Text Part IIa 00:44
25. Interlude 16 00:50
26. Text Part IIb 00:38
27. Interlude 17a 00:37
28. Interlude 17b (Alto saxophone solo) 01:32
29. Text Part IIc, Interlude 18a (Flugelhorn solo) and Interlude 18b 02:29
30. Interlude 18c (Tenor solo II) 01:16
31. Interlude 18d 00:44
32. Interlude 18e Ping pong impro and Text part IId 01:52
33. Interlude 19a (Baritone Saxophone solo) 01:47
34. Interlude 19b (Drum solo) 01:49


Part III


35. Text Part IIIa, Text Part IIIb and Interlude 20 00:41
36. Text Part IIIc and Interlude 21 00:38
37. Text Part IIId and Interlude 22 00:36
38. Text Part IIIe and Interlude 23 00:35
39. Text Part IIIf, Interlude 24 and Coda 01:38


KNUT VAAGE: RØTER 2
*Text and narration by Frode Grytten*
*Video art by Anne Marthe Dyvi*
*Bergen Big Band*
PART I
TRACKS 1–20
PART II
TRACKS 21–34
PART III
TRACKS 35–39