

Isildurs Bane Newsletter April 2004

In this month's newsletter, you'll find:

- A report from Isildurs Bane's first appearance in Portugal
- Isildurs Bane's music available in Portugal
- Luca Calabrese on new Cecil Taylor release (again!)
- Profile of the month: Linnea Olsson
- Your questions
- If you like IB, you'll probably like...

N. B. You can choose to read the newsletter on your screen or you can print the attached PDF file. The attached file is designed purposely for printing.

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For the first time ever, Isildurs Bane performed in Portugal at the Gouveia Art Rock festival on Sunday, April 25th. None of us had been to Portugal before, and we were all very excited about coming to Gouveia. Shortly before our voyage to Portugal, Jonas found out through the travel agency that there would be no food for the vegetarians in the band (Jonas and myself). I was certain that this was just a misunderstanding, but no, it wasn't. After corresponding with Lufthansa, I was told that "special meals" were only served on flights with an airtime of 185 minutes or more. The flight between Frankfurt and Oporto lasted 160 minutes. As luck would have it, a vegetarian mini-pizza was served on this particular flight, but this was not the case on the way back. We were hungry indeed! Needless to say, we will avoid using Lufthansa in future, and we advise anyone to do so too.

Having landed in Oporto, things started going better. We were very kindly greeted by Nelda, a terrific representative of Gouveia, and shared a bus ride with our colleagues and soon-to-be friends Periferia del Mondo and Richard Sinclair's group of merry musicians. A splendid time was had by all on our three-hour trip to Gouveia. And what a nice little town Gouveia is! Incredibly picturesque, with a scenic panorama that is just astounding. During our weekend in Gouveia, we walked around the little town and enjoyed the beautiful weather and – so I am told – the good coffee.

The festival was very well arranged and we are very grateful to Carlos, Eduardo and Luis for going to such lengths for us to feel welcome. We really did! We got to taste the local food and wine, and were immediately helped when we needed to have a problem solved. A big hug especially to Carlos, for helping us solve the problem with our weight problem. Well, it wasn't us that were overweight, but our equipment, and Carlos stepped in as the true hero he is and solved what could have been a huge problem for us.

The gig itself went really well. It was obvious that everyone was on top of their game, perhaps because of the hard work involved when recording the forthcoming DVD a month earlier. There was a lot of intensity and electricity in the air and generally, the songs were played faster than usual. During the first songs, Jonas and Christoph really made an impact with their

fine performances. Top notch! The band were very happy with the audience reactions to “Cage” and the applause following the announcement that songs from *MIND Vol. 1* and *The Voyage* were to follow. This was the first gig with Joachim since June last year, but apart from a minor technical mishap with Joachim’s wireless, everything went according to plan. Joachim’s violin – from 1850 – really cut through and sounded great in the mix, thanks in part, of course, to Janne. I must stress how important this wonderful sound engineer is to the band. Not many are better, trust me on this one small thing.

Kjell and Gicken were as tight as usual. With a rhythm section like that, you can’t go wrong. Gicken also got to prove himself as the fine soloist that he is on several songs from *MIND Vol. 4* and his lyrical fretless playing is a joy to listen to. Klas, a man of consistently high standards – this concert being no exception, was especially happy to play on the big Premier Grand Cassia and the fine Musser vibraphone that the organizers had provided. As usual, Klas’ and Kjell’s complementary playing was something that the concert-goers discussed after the outstanding performance.

All of us were pleased with the response and the kinds words. I know many of you signed up for this newsletter, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for making us feel so good while in Portugal. A heartfelt thank you from all of us!

For more information on the festival and on Gouveia, go to <http://www.gaudela.net/gar/index-e.html>

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One of several useful contacts we made in Portugal was Mário Ferreira, the General Manager of ProgCDs, an Internet CD-retailer. He has stocked up on our releases and can take care of orders from Portuguese music lovers. Check out the website at www.progcds.com

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As I mentioned in our March newsletter, our good friend Luca Calabrese, the fine trumpet player from Metamorfosi Trio plays on a new release by legendary free jazz pianist Cecil Taylor. The CD is called *The Owner of the River Bank* and is out now on the Enja label, catalogue number ENJ-9465. Luca is a member of the Italian Instabile Orchestra, a group originally formed in 1990; they started their collaboration with Cecil Taylor in 2000.

Luca very kindly sent me the CD, and if you are into weird, intense and wonderful improvisation, you’ll love this! Those of you aware of Taylor’s work know that he takes his music very seriously, but at the same time offers the listener some humorous passages too, and this CD is no exception. Parts of it are chaotic, but never out of control, only very powerful. There are a couple of film clips included on the CD too, a very nice gesture from Enja. Can we please have some more of this?

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This month's IB-profile is Linnea Olsson, one of the vocalists featured on *MIND Vol. 4: Pass*. This recording was the first time Linnea worked with IB, but certainly not the last. She will be heard and seen on the DVD, which should be out later this year.

Name: Linnea Olsson

Hometown: Halmstad, Sweden

Instruments: Cello, vocals, bass

– Please tell us something about your musical background.

"I began taking cello lessons when I was six years old, first in Halmstad, and currently at a college outside of Helsingborg. My family has always supported me and my music, all of us are – or have been – active musicians." [N.B. Linnea's brother Povel, who is a fine drummer, is featured on backing vocals on *MIND Vol. 4: Pass*]

– Could you mention some of your musical heroes?

"My teacher, Hege Waldeland, is my cello role model. It's wonderful to take lessons from someone playing that well. Bass players... I don't really consider any bass players to be heroes to me, but I always enjoy listening to Jaco Pastorius. Joni Mitchell, Sheryl Crow and Björk are vocalists that sing brilliantly, but I think you sing the way you do. I am inspired by their music, but also by contemporary art music like Arvo Pärt. Beethoven is wicked too. I'd like to think that artists and composers inspire me to keep on doing what I do, rather than being role models to me."

– Apart from Isildurs Bane, what other bands and projects have you been a part of?

"I have sung in various temporary bands, for example a jazz band called Harbour Night Expedition, and a soul band called Pass the Peas. Then there's Ethan Xiphias, a cover band that features me on bass and vocals. We still play a lot in pubs and clubs around Halmstad. We have a great time together. Our drummer is on maternity leave at the moment, and I really miss her."

– How did you get involved with Isildurs Bane?

"If I remember correctly, Jonas [Christophs] phoned me up and asked if I would like to play cello on *MIND Vol. 4*. Of course I did! Following that, I was part of the DVD-sessions, which was a very agreeable experience."

Would you like to develop your relationship with Isildurs Bane?

"Of course! I want to go on tour with them and play my cello on a riser!"

– You are also a composer. Could you describe your music?

"I suppose you could say I write cello-based pop. It's hard to say, most of what I do is a background of different cello lines, and my vocals on top of it. I hope to be able to get it out to more people some day. My brother Povel and myself also have a project, which should be well wicked if we only get down to it."

– What equipment do you use?

“I play on a cello from approximately 1890. It was made in Germany, but nobody knows who built it. Nevertheless, it is a superb instrument. My bass is a Fender Jazz Bass from 1972, I think. It used to belong to my dad, but I nicked it from him. I play this through a small black Hartke amp.”

– Could you recommend five vocalists who have influenced you?

“Joni Mitchell. She writes her own material, plays guitar, sings wonderfully strange and creates astonishing melodies. I suggest you listen to *Blue* or *Songs to a Seagull*, a lovely album.

Björk. She is a major hero to me. She is just brilliant, period. Her latest album, *Vespertine*, is incredible!

Chet Baker. He sings like ice cream in a soft way that you wish you could do yourself sometimes. I only own a copy of a compilation album where he sings ballads, it's called *Chet goes Romantic* or something, but it's truly dazzling!

Thom Yorke of Radiohead is awesome. *Amnesiac* is probably my favourite of theirs.

Ella Fitzgerald. Who scats like Ella? It doesn't really matter which recordings of her you listen to, she's always the best.”

– What does the future have in store for you?

“I have applied for several music colleges in Sweden, and I have been granted a place in Gothenburg, but I am also on the shortlist in Stockholm, so I am not sure yet. I was also accepted into the jazz class at the college in Skurup, but I hope for a place in Stockholm, that would make crazy with happiness.”

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And now to the questions from the readers. The first question this month comes from a very nice gentleman whose name I do not know unfortunately, but his question is: “Where does the quote from Susan Sontag in the *MIND Vol. 4* booklet come from?”

This is the quote we are talking about: “Victims suggest innocence. And innocence, by the inexorable logic that governs all relational terms, suggests guilt.”

The quote is taken from *AIDS and Its Metaphors*, chapter 1, 1989.

The second comes from several people who have asked assorted questions regarding the forthcoming DVD.

At the moment, we cannot say when it will be released, but we aim to have it finished later this year. A lot of post-production is still to be done and there are still lots of decisions to be made. You will find out in this very newsletter.

Keep your questions coming! Send them to thomas@isildursbane.se

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If you like Isildurs Bane, you'll probably like... Damien Rice. Certainly one of the most astonishing contemporary singer-songwriters to come on the music scene during the last years. This Irishman's debut album *O* features delicate songs along with ambitious – some would say pompous – arrangements that are really really good. The songs are beautiful, moving and feature Rice's intimate vocals along with Lisa Hannigan's stunning vocals – believe me, her larynx is truly something else, Vyvienne Long's inspired cello playing and David Arnold's production expertise. The piece de resistance is the final track, "Eskimo", which will leave you wanting more of this marvellous composer/singer/guitarist. If he plays anywhere near you, go and listen to the man!

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Best wishes from Isildurs Bane!

Thomas Olsson
Newsletter editor

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