

Isildurs Bane Newsletter March 2004

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

- Italian tour
- Reminder of festival gig in Portugal
- Mats Johansson composes for marimba
- Luca Calabrese on new Cecil Taylor release
- Profile of the month: Kjell Severinsson
- Your questions
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N. B. From this month's newsletter on, 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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Isildurs Bane have received a formal invitation to perform with Metamorfosi Trio in Italy. No dates are confirmed yet, but it looks likely that the tour will take place this summer, probably during the warm and sunny month of July. More about this exciting collaboration in coming newsletters.

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As mentioned in the February newsletter, Isildurs Bane will perform at the Gouveia Art Rock festival on Sunday, April 25th. For more information, go to <http://www.gaudela.net/gar/index-e.html>

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Mats Johansson is currently composing music for marimba. The compositions are specifically written for Swedish percussionist Teddy Bergström. The working title for the piece is "Amorphe".

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Our good friend Luca Calabrese 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. Performing with Cecil Taylor reminded the Italian group of their original ideas when originally coming together: “The idea of a musical rebirth during a performance, of reworking elements from the score live in concert, and of looking deep within oneself to loose a music whose freedom and energy is, as the listener can clearly perceive, no mere superficial patina”. (Quoted from www.enjarecords.com)

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This month’s IB-profile is Kjell Severinsson, drummer from the very start of Isildurs Bane in 1976. Needless to say, Kjell is a key figure in Isildurs Bane, he’s been the drummer of the band since day one, but he has also played an important part as an engineer and as a hard-working man behind the scenes. Below, Kjell talks about the early days, his drumming, his current work as an executive for a music competition and lots more. Attached to this newsletter, you will find a picture of Kjell in action.



Name: Kjell Severinsson

Hometown: Halmstad, Sweden

– What are you up to at the moment?

”I am currently working with ‘Musik Direkt’ (Music Direct). This is the largest music competition within all types of music for young people between 13-19 of age in Sweden. 700 acts applied for the competition this year. Every region in Sweden arranges qualifying competitions, which lead up to a final within that particular region. The finalists from every region then compete in the national competition, which takes place at the theatre in Halmstad this year.

– I understand Isildurs Bane have been involved in ”Musik Direkt” for some time. How?

”Several members of the band have worked with ‘Musik Direkt’ for many years. My brother Jan was involved with the competition for many years, but since he is now teaching, it is impossible for him to do it any more. I have worked with ‘Musik Direkt’ for 15 years, mainly

being in charge of the technology required to pull off such an event for the regional competitions in Halland. Since Halland is the host for the national finals this year, it seemed obvious to let me be responsible for the technical side of 'Musik Direkt' at this level too. Isildurs Bane will also be involved as a band this year by doing workshops during the finals, which take place during May 20th to May 22nd. Having worked for a long time within music, we feel that we really have a lot of information to pass on to coming generations."

– How did you become a drummer?

"When I was a child, my dad was a member of the local music corps, Getinge Musikkår, where he played the clarinet. As I recall, they mostly performed on the back of lorries on Labour Day. The drummer of the music corps was nicknamed 'Plåtis' ('Tinny'), and he was my first idol. I was ten years old at the time, and I just knew that drums were the coolest instrument on the planet and that I wanted to be a drummer. I started nagging my dad about it, and the eventually led to a phone call to 'Plåtis', whose drum set I was able to borrow, since the Getinge Musikkår were put on hold at that point. I was incredibly happy, even though it was a 50's kit consisting only of a bass drum, a snare, a hi-hat and one cymbal. Shortly thereafter, I had my first lessons, and as long as I live, I will never forget the utter joy I felt when I could play along to Credence Clearwater Revival for the first time."

– How did Isildurs Bane get started?

"The embryo of Isildurs Bane is really when Dan Andersson, Bengt Jonsson, Klas 'Dabben' Rydberg let Janne Severinsson and myself join them in a band called Amsaga. Bengt and Dan were in the same class and were good musicians. I can only remember us doing one gig. Janne, in turn, was in the same class as Mats Johansson, Mats Nilsson and Ingvar 'Lingon' Johansson. These guys had a band called Vidas Heber together with a drummer called Stefan Dernbrant. From the beginning, there was a strong bond between the bands. We played roughly the same type of music, listened to the same bands, had other interests in common and many unforgettable parties together! The members of Amsaga soon realised that 'Dabben' was a problem. His attitude to rehearsing was causing problems, and what really took the biscuit was when he said that he'd rather stay at home watching TV than rehearse. We persuaded 'Lingon' to replace 'Dabben', shortly after that, Mats Nilsson joined the band and Isildurs Bane started to take form. I think it was Janne who suggested the name, since he had just read the *Lord of the Rings*-trilogy.

– Can you recall any early gigs?

"At this point, we had changed rehearsal rooms, from the basement of Bengt's house to the civic hall at Getinge, which also housed a cinema. This meant that we could get more equipment in, which we did. It was here that we recorded 'Den fula ankungen' in 1976, a rehearsal recording featured on *Lost Eggs*. We were one of the first bands in Halland to own our own PA and lighting. Our first gig was at a disco at Tylösand, a bathing resort just outside of Halmstad. We asked Mats Johansson, who at that particular time wasn't a member of Isildurs Bane, if he could do the lighting and since he is a nice guy, he accepted. This gig was recorded and the tapes of it still exist. The concert ended in a slightly awkward way with the DJ thanking Isildurs Bane for 'their horrible music'."

– At which point did Mats Johansson join the band?

"Mats joined during the second half of 1977, replacing Dan Andersson. Dan was drifting away from the rest of us and differed with us on musical questions. On a snowy winter's evening, I carried his amp outside and we parted ways as friends. With Mats Johansson in the band, we decided to throw out all of our material and start anew. We had an exciting sound

with two keyboard players, and Mats Johansson was bursting with energy and commitment. From this point on, we became more professional. In 1978, we recorded three tracks at a local studio called Studio 38. These were 'Oktober', 'Sogsråjakten' and 'Unicorn'. The track 'Oktober' can be heard on *Lost Eggs*. In 1981, we recorded our first radio performance ('Attraktiva attityder' is featured on *Lost Eggs*) and went on tour for the first time."

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

"I have been playing in several cover bands. During the summer of 1991, for instance, I played in the cover band Big Talk with Jonas in Mallorca entertaining holidaymakers at a hotel. I substituted for the drummer of the Swedish hard rock band Spiritual Beggars while their drummer was in Japan performing with his side-project. I've also been performing a lot of scenic music in various contexts, 'The Ugly Duckling' being the most recent. Apart from that, I've done sound and lighting for loads of people over the years."

– Is there a particular performance with Isildurs Bane that you are especially proud of?

"I listened to *MIND Vol. 1* recently and was wondered how we managed to pull it all together. Your perspective of your own work really changes as time passes. Considering this was our first recording in our new studio, I think we did quite well. Janne and myself recorded and mixed the album. We recorded the album by recording Klas' marimba and vibraphone part first, with support from Mats' sequencer tracks. The album consists of some hard performance parts with some interesting 16th-note displacements that made our guest musicians sweat a bit in the studio and go from hope to despair. *MIND Vol. 1* was also characterized by a huge amount of enthusiasm and we tried some interesting things that turned out quite well, I think. One example would be when we recorded Jonas' solo on 'State of Comprehension' backwards in two different keys on two separate channels, which were then mixed together on one channel. Fredrik Emilson made a heroic effort and worked very hard on the sound collage that eventually became 'Holistic Medicine'. My drums on 'The Flight Onward' were recorded without any hi-hat or cymbals, which were added later. By the way, I nicked the drum pattern on the verse of 'The Flight Onward' from Richie Hayward's drum intro on Little Feat's live version of 'Time Loves a Hero' from *Waiting for Columbus*. All in all, I am very happy with *MIND Vol. 1*. As far as particular tracks go, I have always liked the live version of 'Top Secret' from *Lost Eggs*. We tended not to play that track very well, individually perhaps, but not as a band. On this occasion, however, everybody really nailed it."

– What equipment do you use?

"I use Pearl Maple Custom drums with Zildjian and Paiste cymbals. I also use a sampler triggered by a Roland Octapad. On *MIND Vol. 4*, I used Mats 'MP' Persson's DW drums on some tracks. When I can't bring my own drums, I rely on the organizers to provide me with a good kit."

– After so many years with Isildurs Bane, you must have lots of tour stories?

"A lot of things have happened over the years. I recall a Swedish tour many years ago, I think we were in Örebro, and we were relaxing in the sauna at the hotel. Interestingly, you had a view of the bar from the sauna, and Janne, who was sitting next to me, was watching someone very closely at the bar. After a while, he mentioned that he fancied 'that good-looking girl at the bar'. I informed him that no introduction was necessary, since it was Mats Nilsson who Janne – having taken his contact lenses out – had his eye on."

"Another incident was when we were on our way from Ulricehamn with our bus, and ran out of fuel while downhill. We managed to roll the bus into a farm we spotted. Luckily, this farm had a diesel tank, and believe it or not, but we managed to roll the bus right next to the diesel

tank. The farmer was incredibly helpful and provided us with diesel. Needless to say, we were extremely grateful, paid him and gave him a signed copy of *Sagan om den irländska älgen.*”

– Could you name five drummers who have influenced you?

“Apart from ‘Plåtis’, some of the drummers that have influenced me are:

John Bonham: A fabulous drummer with a completely unique way of playing and a wonderful sound. He’s incredible on *How the West was Won*.

Bill Bruford: Another drummer with a one of a kind way of playing drums and with a stunning control over his playing. I must say that I prefer his drumming on his solo albums and his albums with King Crimson to his recordings with Yes.

Richie Hayward: Swings and plays all styles with bravura. Not least on *Waiting for Columbus* and *Live from Neon Park*.

Several Zappa drummers. Hardly beginners. **Terry Bozzio** is in a class of his own.

Klas Assarsson: Since we have had so much fun playing together for more than ten years now, Klas must be on my list.

Butch Trucks and **Jay ‘Jamoe’ Johanson:** When the Allman Brothers’ steamroller starts, the band is absolutely unstoppable. Listen to ‘Hot ‘Lanta’ on *At Fillmore East*.

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The first question this month comes from Nick: ”I can’t seem to get hold of *MIND Vol. 3*. Has it been deleted?

MIND Vol. 3 has not been deleted. Isildurs Bane have a policy that every recording released by the band should be available at all times. At the moment, we are pressing a new batch. *MIND Vol. 3* should be available again within a month.

The second comes from Tom asking: “Can the members of Isildurs Bane really get by solely on their music?”

This is a big, good and very important question. I decided to forward it to Mats Johansson. He answered: “Unfortunately, this is not the case. For many years now, Isildurs Bane have made an effort to work consciously to place the focus on music within cultural politics. We feel that it is very important to make available an alternative to the commercialized music business of today. We work on several levels: locally, regionally, nationally and – to a lesser extent – internationally. The way we do this is by taking parts in projects we regard as important, for instance theatre for children and young people; or by doing workshops where we can give advice to up-and-coming musicians. We have been and in some cases still are involved in art exhibitions, musical installations, international collaborations, lecturing, dance- and choir performances, musicals for children, chess festivals et cetera. The list goes on... Isildurs Bane believe in the collective work process where the experiment plays a vital role. When it comes to exporting music from Sweden, we are a part of that, even though we are never mentioned. Neither are The Flower Kings, nor the many jazz groups or musicians from the classical realm that regularly perform throughout the world. Only recently has Esbjörn Svensson Trio been mentioned in association with Swedish music export. To top it all off, the city council of Halmstad, where we live, decided – without notice – to not only take away our financial support completely, but also to raise the rent for our office/rehearsal space with approximately

€ 6000. When we complained, the answer was: 'If you are not happy with this, you can move somewhere else.' What can you say?"

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

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If you like Isildurs Bane, you'll probably like... Little Feat! Yes, after talking to Kjell and revisiting their awe-inspiring live album *Waiting for Columbus*, I couldn't resist featuring Little Feat in this newsletter. Formed in 1969 by ex-Frank Zappa musicians Lowell George and Roy Estrada with Bill Payne and Richie Hayward, the band was unique yet typical at the same time. Typical, because you could work within several styles if you were a band during the late 60's and early 70's; unique for basically the same reason. Little Feat mixed blues, country, soul, jazz-rock and straight-ahead no-nonsense boogie, always with a superb groove, courtesy of Hayward. The extent of Little Feat's musical span can easily be judged by considering the artists the musicians have worked with as session musicians and sidemen from time to time. Just a few examples: Frank Zappa, Frank Sinatra, J. J. Cale, John Cale, Eric Clapton, Ry Cooder, Carly Simon, Robert Palmer, Harry Nilsson, Lightnin' Slim, Buddy Guy, The Grateful Dead, Robben Ford, Travis Tritt, Robert Plant, Tom Waits, Chico Hamilton, Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris, Pink Floyd, Bob Dylan, Richard Thompson, Curtis Mayfield, Ted Gärdestad, Toto, Fleetwood Mac, Julio Iglesias, Engelbert Humperdinck, Barbara Streisand and countless others.

The band's main focal point has always been on gutsy, groove-based rock music, frequently with a dose of bizarre lyrics during the Lowell George years. My recommendation would be to start with the 2-CD version of *Waiting for Columbus*, and then get some early records, like *Sailin' Shoes* or *Dixie Chicken*. The band split up in 1979, but reformed in 1988. Although many consider the reformed Feat's recordings to be below par, I can certainly recommend their comeback album *Let it Roll*. And live, they still cut it!

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Best wishes from Isildurs Bane!

Thomas Olsson
Newsletter editor

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