



## Newsletter October 2004

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

- 1) DVD update
- 2) Nilla Nielsen releases her debut album
- 3) Mats Johansson's music performed in London
- 4) Profile of the month: Bengt Jonsson
- 5) Regarding Guitarists
- 6) Happy Birthday Björn J:son Lindh

\* \* \*

### 1) DVD update

Isildurs Bane's DVD was to be released this year, but will be released early next year instead. There are several reasons for this. First of all, this is our first DVD-production, and I suppose we were overly optimistic about the amount of time such a production takes.

Secondly, our goal was – and still is – to produce a DVD according to our way of making things. Had we decided to do nothing but a concert DVD, it would have been released already. We want to provide you with something more than a concert DVD. You'll see what we mean when you see the finished result.

Thirdly, we don't want to restrict ourselves to shots from just one tour. We want to welcome the viewer into the world of Isildurs Bane, looking backwards and forwards. Some of the ideas on the forthcoming DVD may be expanded and released on forthcoming DVDs (yes, that's the plural form!) in the future.

\* \* \*

### 2) Nilla Nielsen releases her debut album

Swedish singer/songwriter Nilla Nielsen from Helsingborg collaborated with Isildurs Bane at one of the concerts to be featured on our forthcoming DVD. On November 5<sup>th</sup>, her debut album, called *Redemption Sky* will be released. More info, pictures and sound clips are available at <http://www.nillamusic.com>

\* \* \*

### 3) Mats Johansson's music performed in London

The music of Isildurs Bane's composer Mats Johansson leads a life of its own. Earlier this month, percussionist Teddy Bergström performed Mats' pieces, for instance the new work "Amorph" and

some of the Picassiettes, originally composed for The Zorn Trio. The concert was a part of a series of family concerts that regularly take place at The Swedish Church in London. Here's the whole program, and as you can see for yourself, Mats is in good company:

Sunday 17th October, 4.30-6pm

INTERACTIVE FAMILY CONCERT

Audience participation is encouraged! Discover the trout, the love-lorn Don Quixote, the circus mice, and other animals, and experience the amazing sounds of the Marimba. Songs, duets and pieces by composers such as Beethoven, Schubert, Ravel, Bizet, Copland, and Johansson. Performers are singers: Ruth Peel, Thomas Guthrie, Teddy Bergström and Marimba with Richard Pearce, piano.

More info at: <http://www.swedenabroad.com>

\* \* \*

#### **4) Profile of the month: Bengt Jonsson**

This month, I am very pleased to take a walk down memory lane with Isildurs Bane's first keyboard player, Bengt Jonsson. He was a founder member of the band and open-heartedly discusses his life and times with IB and what happened afterwards. After leaving the province of Halland for Stockholm, Bengt spent 15 enjoyable years working in the restaurant business as bar and restaurant manager. Today, he works within the IT world as a system consultant. Enjoy Bengt's company!



Bengt Jonsson 2004

Living in: Stockholm

*How did you first get involved with music?*

I grew up with 60's pop music. My first record was probably a 7-inch single with either The Monkees or Swedish group Ola & the Janglers, who were my favourites at the time. I started playing piano when I was about ten years old. When I was 15, I was taking classical lessons for different teachers and practised for three hours a day while still going to school.

Via Creedence Clearwater Revival I discovered bands like Deep Purple, Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin. One of my first LP's within that style of music was Led Zeppelin's *IV*. Following that, bands such as Genesis, ELP, Gentle Giant and Yes were close at hand. The triple album *Yessongs* was a milestone. It was my first Yes album and I had never heard anything like it before. Just listening to a record repeatedly and constantly discovering new things was fascinating.

#### *How did Isildurs Bane get started?*

In my mid-teens, I was classmates and friends with a guitarist called Dan Andersson. We shared the same musical tastes and a big interest in music. He introduced me to a lot of music that was new to me. Dan had a band of his own, but wasn't happy with the organist, so he began trying to talk me into joining his group. My mind was firmly set on playing classical music and I didn't want to ruin my delicate piano touch with rigid electronic instruments. After a while, the temptation was too much and we formed a band with a bassist and a drummer and called ourselves Amsaga.

Eventually the interest from the rhythm section waned so Dan and myself went scouting for new talent. Through my childhood friend Jan Severinsson (who had made an attempt to sing in Amsaga) we came into contact with "Lingon", who played bass, and then guitarist Mats Nilsson. In addition to that, Jan's kid brother Kjell played drums and Jan himself had started to play the flute.

At that point we changed our name to Isildurs Bane. As I recall, Jan and myself read the Lord of the Rings-trilogy at the same time and were very inspired by it. I remember it being my idea to begin with and I suggested it to Jan, but I was hesitant to suggest it to the band, so Jan – who liked the name – ended up suggesting it to the others.

#### *How was IB run at the time?*

I'm afraid Dan and myself were rather ruthless leaders. We were incredibly forward and aimed high with our music. Both of us had classical training and had acquired good technique that we worked very hard on improving. We demanded the same level of commitment and musicianship from the other members and our amount of patience wasn't always great.

Especially Kjell, who was a couple of years younger and obviously hadn't played as long as we had, was frequently the victim of our frustrations when the music wasn't as tight as it was supposed to. I still feel bad about that. Sorry Kjell! Luckily, he is strong mentally and despite of it all, I think he developed quite a bit since he had to play at his best and sometimes more than that.

Later on, when we had more composers in the group, democracy came to Isildurs Bane. Just like Gentle Giant, we wanted to play as many instruments as possible. In my case, apart from keyboards, I played the recorder. Dan played guitar and oboe and Jan played

flute, violin, assorted percussion instruments and later xylophone and metallophone.

*You composed music for IB. What do these compositions sound like to you today?*

I suppose there were some good ideas, but my ambitions sometimes exceeded the bands abilities I guess. I was rather calculating when composing. Here's one example: I composed a long piece, which started with me deciding to compose a 20-minute piece (one side of a LP).

After that, I wrote several short parts and tried fitting them together and finding a connecting thought through it all. It turned out so-so, but I'm still astounded at the imagination we had. At the start of this long piece for instance, I played a few bars in a baroque style with a cembalo sound on my electric piano, and I am really happy with that.

*Which were your influences when you were playing with IB?*

Rick Wakeman. He was my major influence, both musically and on stage. His playing is so pianistic, in the sense that the parts come easily to your hands and they often sound harder than they really are, in contrast to Keith Emerson for example, who also was a big hero of mine, but Emerson was technically harder to copy.

In addition to that, Rick Wakeman was so cool on stage with his long blond hair, his cape and all the mirrors surrounding him, not mentioning his myriad of keyboard instruments! If needed, I can still muster up a Wakeman-solo!

*When and why did you quit the band?*

When Dan left, Mats Johansson started playing with us (before that Mats had done the lights for us). Mats contributed with his compositions and his playing, which differed quite a lot from my playing, and that breathed new life into the group. In due course, the influences started moving in a jazzier direction (at least that's what I thought at the time) and me, being raised on pop, rock and classical music, wanted strong melodies and romantic grandeur. I also wanted to try a slightly rockier direction.

On top of that, I was getting tired of spending so much time in the rehearsal room when the result was that we didn't play that many gigs, and the few gigs we played weren't well attended. I also wanted to take a break and go travelling, and during the spring of 1981 we decided to part ways.

I was in agony before deciding to leave, but afterwards I think both the band and myself were relieved that it was over and they could move on. Perhaps I wanted to quit before I was fired, which I probably would have been anyway. But even today I don't know the thoughts that went through the other guys' minds.

*What equipment did you use with IB?*

When I left I had a Hammond T 100 with a Leslie cabinet, a Wurlitzer electric piano, a Roland synthesizer and a Roland string synthesizer.

*Did you play with other artists or bands after quitting IB?*

During the summer of 1981, I worked as a lighting technician with Swedish pop group Beauty. During the autumn of the same year, I started playing keyboards with them and stayed with them for a couple of years. It was fun, because it was nothing like playing with Isildurs Bane, even if we rehearsed a lot and thoroughly with Beauty too. The best part was that I got to play with a really good vocalist, Sven Bertilsson, and we toured all over Sweden in the amusement parks occasionally for big crowds. We also released some recordings.

In the mid 80's, I was through with my musical career and haven't played since. That may sound strange, but I have always done things that way: working very intensely with something until I am fed up with it and am prepared to move onto something else. There are lots of interesting things to do...

*Have you kept up with IB's work since you left the band?*

Oh yes, I have all the records thanks to Kjell, who sends me a copy of every new CD. I keep in touch with Kjell and with Jan, his brother, too. I've only met Mats at concerts and "Lingon" and Mats Nilsson I've only met once or twice. I meet Dan when we have school reunions. What's funny is that even if you meet infrequently, it's like time is standing still. You use the jargon you used to use and crack the same jokes. We were very tightly knit during our IB years and it's always good to get together. I sincerely wish it would happen more often.

As I mentioned previously, I didn't appreciate the direction the music took when I left the band, and to be honest I like the most recent CD *MIND Vol. 4* best. I've always preferred vocal music to instrumental music. On the other hand, I've always enjoyed IB's concerts, from *Sagan om ringen* with its incomparable dance routine; via the concert with the square heads and the "Pontus Ströbaek-concert" to the anniversary concert at the advertising agency Byrån 1 & 2 in Halmstad.

One thing I've always mentioned as critique or perhaps a wish is for Mats Johansson to perform more solos. He has a strong sense of melody and I recall him being able to deliver really good moog solos back in the days. I think Mats is too modest, but it would be fantastic to hear him set up a fat mini-moog sound and really let go!

*What is your relationship with music like today?*

I have started listening to contemporary bands influenced by the old masters Yes, Pink Floyd, Genesis etc. My favourite band is Pendragon. IQ, Jadis and Iluvatar are other really good groups. Unfortunately no bands can match the classic groups from the 70's, but that's fine with me.

*Could you tell us an anecdote from your days with IB?*

We used to have a sound engineer who was a bit odd. He was very enthusiastic but occasionally drifted into a world of his own. On our way to a gig he was sitting quietly looking out the window. All of a sudden he said:

- Look! All the cows are looking in the same direction!

We looked, of course, and saw a field with cows, but the cows were looking in all sorts of directions. You wondered which colour the sky had in his world.

On another occasion we were to play an outdoor concert in the province of Scania. Our sound engineer sat on the grass behind the mixing desk and we were concerned with sounding as good as possible. Some minutes into the concert someone looked towards the mixing desk and stricken with horror he saw our sound engineer very occupied not with mixing, but convincing a girl about his greatness.

He had completely forgotten where he was and why he was there. We were furious, of course, and in the turmoil that followed we forgot a very expensive cable for the mixing desk.

Interested in Bengt's listening habits? Go to [www.isildursbane.se](http://www.isildursbane.se) and look up Bengt under Bio/Band members.

When I interviewed Bengt, he mentioned that he would be interested in the other band members' recollections from the early days of Isildurs Bane. Here are some thoughts from Mats, Jan and Kjell.

Kjell Severinsson:

I would just like to mention that there were no bad vibes between Bengt and IB when he left. The result was that we stopped playing our old repertoire and started working on *Sagan om ringen*, and that has a place of its own in IB's history.

Jan Severinsson:

If my memory serves me right Bengt was a man with strong opinions, which meant that you could tell that something was about to happen just before he quit. I remember a feeling of hopelessness when he made his plans known to us. Bengt was Isildurs Bane with his musicality and his strong intent.

He composed, was in charge of our finances, dealt with payments, he was our bookkeeper etc. Not least of all, he was the most technical musician of us all, and I think I was rather sad when he left. I thought IB was over, but I was wrong.

Mats Johansson:

First of all, I would like to mention that it's great to see Bengt discuss IB in such detail after all these years!

I can't say I can recall why Bengt quit. I seem to remember us coming to a crossroads, but I was still surprised. When he quit it felt like a provocation, which means there was something that wasn't quite right. Pop music was moving forwards and progressive rock had crashed in turgid soundscapes with distastefulness on stage consisting of glitter and glamour that was never a part of the scene to begin with. It was a piece of cake for punk and pop to take charge. Perhaps that affected Bengt too.

I think Bengt's and Dan's musical ideas are programmed into IB's music even today. Bengt really was a role model as a keyboardist. You have to remember that there were many who could play classical music like Bengt, but he had a knack for synthesizers – particularly live – that very few had at the time. He had the ability to do lots of things simultaneously that I thought was wasted when he quit.

I couldn't understand why he wanted to throw away his talent with a pop group when his development as a composer could go in the exact opposite direction. At the time it felt meaningless. Maybe that's symptomatic for talents. It doesn't really matter what they do, they still succeed.

His compositions were phenomenal and he is right when he mentions that maybe IB weren't the best interpreters of his music, but what were his alternatives? You could forget about institutions for music (we saw several lousy results of that during the 70's and 80's, and unfortunately even today).

I still wonder what would have happened if Bengt had decided to compose art music, with electronics. Not that I would want to initiate any panic attacks, but I would be surprised if Bengt hasn't given this some thought. He was fairly conservative, but we all were in different ways. We had no mentors, apart from being interested in music and very ambitious. Maybe the ambitiousness is still with IB today?

A mini-moog solo? Ha ha ha! He knows very well that I can't play a mini-moog solo! What was strange when we played together was that I had a mini-moog in my rig and he had a squeaky Roland in his. If there had been any justice in the world, it would be the other way around.

It is a pity that we don't see each other more frequently, but we'll see what happens when IB celebrate 30 years as a group in 2006. Perhaps we should try to get Bengt up on stage once more!

\* \* \*

## **5) Regarding Guitarists**

By Mats Johansson, composer

All of a sudden guitarist/vocalist Mariette Hansson (featured on MIND Vol. 4) says that it's not strange to have a strong relationship to your guitar.

- It's just hanging there waiting to be hugged!

Sure, it's a known fact that instruments that you interact with physically are something special. Now there are guitars specifically designed for women. These instruments have lighter bodies and thinner necks. About time too, but let's hope we won't see a scenario where the women do all the work with their guitars on stage while the men take a step back and take the profits and the rights.

There are reasons for worrying when men organize the way things are run when big money is involved. The music business has been organized and run by men since the beginning and still is, of course. But all suggestions to change this are most welcome.

My relationship with the electric guitar is closely related to a great deal of love. No other instrument has given me musical experiences on the same level. It is surprising that the instrument hasn't got an obvious place in – for instance – a large orchestra. The electric guitar has superior dynamics and can easily feature in the background (Steve Hackett or Janne Schaffer with a volume pedal) or explode with shimmering diamonds (Jeff Beck or Jonas Christophs).

I can't recall meeting a guitarist who hasn't informed me that they are considering changing amps, buying a new guitar or replacing old effects with new ones. It wasn't until I started using distortion pedals in conjunction with my synthesizers that I understood the situation. Small changes made big differences and sensitivity became a natural part of the soundscape that appeared.

I've read somewhere that Robert Fripp kisses his guitar before performing and that he thinks the way you hang your guitar around your neck is important with regard to the performance. When playing, Fripp claims that the way you hold your pick is the way you organize your life. Another Fripp quote is: "First, be careful about the beginning. Then, be careful about the end. Then, be careful about the middle." How can you not love a guy with qualities like that? Because it's the details that make the guitar and the guitarist interesting.

While Mariette Hansson is hugging her instrument with great love, others seem to enjoy banging their instruments, abusing them, setting fire to them and so on. To me, it would look pathetic to see a trumpet player setting fire to his or her instrument in public. This deed is reserved for the electric guitarist – the king or queen of the rock stage – who make absurd actions look completely natural within its context.

People are generally upset when electric guitarists smash their instruments to pieces, but in most cases the instrument is only a copy. The real culprits can be found elsewhere. I'm talking about the mail, airlines and shipping companies that lose or wreck valuable instruments without batting an eye. As a keyboard player, my closest encounter with the ugly art of sabotaging instruments was when the Dutch airline KLM completely unromantically managed to crack one of my synths in two during a flight between Gothenburg and New York.

Just as unromantically, but fortunately for me, the insurance company solved the problem. Meanwhile, the barbarians can continue without any interference. The fact that some insurance companies and airlines share the same owner doesn't help, of course.

These thoughts pass through my head when I hear about another guitar abuser. But there are more considerate guitarists out there. Jeff Beck supposedly rarely bends his strings simply because he thinks it hurts! Is he referring to the guitar or his fingers? Not that it matters, the guitarist and the guitar mostly live in symbiosis with each other and it follows that any possible pain is mutual.

The electric guitar is a relatively young instrument and I am completely convinced that we have only seen the beginning of the instruments development of what is possible to achieve within product development and musical inventions in music of the future. A while ago I saw an electric guitar with 48 strings! A prototype, of course, but nevertheless...

### **A response**

By Thomas Olsson, guitarist and musicologist

When I was four years old, I wanted a guitar for Christmas (my mother still has my incorrectly spelled wish list). I had to wait seven years until I eventually got a cheap acoustic that I treasured. That was the beginning of my ongoing love affair with the guitar.

Through the years, I have noticed and later studied the behaviour of my fellow guitar players. There are two major traits that I think most guitarists have. The first trait is very well known amongst musicians, in fact, there are jokes about it. For instance: How many guitarists does it take to change a light bulb? The answer is: One hundred. One to change the light bulb and 99 watching with their arms crossed saying: I could have done it better myself. The – true? – point of this story is, of course, that guitarists are egocentric and quick to criticize other musicians, particularly other guitarists. I have seen this happen too often to deny it, and I have to admit to having said things like that myself.

The strong ego of many guitarists comes a long way to explaining the long, some would say overly long, guitar solos that are so prominent within certain types of music. When I was between 15 and 25 years old, many of my favourite guitarists played

loooooooooong solos. Want names? OK. Gary Moore, Robert Fripp, Jeff Beck, Ritchie Blackmore, Michael Schenker, Steve Morse, Brian May, Jimmy Page, Tony Iommi, Frank Zappa, Allan Holdsworth, Mike Stern, John Scofield and Steve Vai spring to mind.

I still enjoy a good guitar solo tremendously, but from my later 20's onwards, I begun to value other things when listening to guitar players. I admired dynamics, inventiveness and the ability to decide when not to play. Some of my old favourites still fit and became even bigger favourites (Fripp, Beck and Holdsworth for instance), others didn't. New ones came along, like Derek Bailey, Bill Frisell, Steve Topping and Christian Saggese.

The other thing I have observed is that many guitarists seem to be closer to their instruments than many other musicians. Many players give names to their instruments, Eric Clapton's Blackie and B. B. King's Lucille for example. How many drummers name their instruments?

The affections for the guitar frequently result in pictures where a fondness for the guitar is obvious, like Mats mentions. There are countless pictures of guitarists hugging their guitars. On occasion, you even see them kissing their instruments, sleeping with them or buying them a ticket when travelling by plane.

The attitude of closeness is also reflected in the way the guitar is referred to and used. You will hear guitarists talk about the guitar being an extension of their body, voice, heart or brain. Going even further, some blues guitar players used to put the tail of a rattlesnake inside their instruments as a good luck charm. Try putting a rattlesnake tail inside a synthesizer and see what happens! Having said that, some guitarists are considerably more down to earth, like Joe Satriani who came close to sacrilege when he stated that "a guitar is just a piece of wood with strings attached".

Since guitarists are so fond of their instruments, we tend to commit ourselves and make it into a lifestyle. In Sweden, there are several magazines for musicians in general, but only one major magazine for a particular instrument. Guess which instrument! That's right, the guitar. The magazine is called Fuzz, which inevitably leads me to another of Mats' points, that of constantly tampering with the set up.

For all but the hardcore conservatives among guitarists, checking out new equipment is second nature. For me, it's effects. I am very happy with my guitar (a Paul Reed Smith Classic) and have amplifiers to suit every occasion. But I can't seem to get enough effect pedals. For some years now, I have been looking for a really great loop device, like Lexicon's deleted JamMan or the Boomerang, but to no avail. So far. Guitar synthesizers are also a field that I would like to investigate in future.

\* \* \*

## **6) Happy Birthday Björn J:son Lindh**

Swedish composer, flutist, pianist and IB-collaborator Björn J:son Lindh turned 60 on October 25<sup>th</sup>.



Björn J:son Lindh on the stairs outside IB's studio

Needless to say, we sent him our very best, and we would like to take the opportunity to reminisce a bit about Björn, a very dear friend of Isildurs Bane whose friendship we truly treasure. Here are some stories about Björn and his music.

Mats Johansson:

It's very easy to say nice things about Björn. He is the most complete musician I have ever shared a stage with. He has a command of everything from improvisation to written music with a personality that represents a Nordic sound to my ears. His compositions are a part of Swedish music history already. A giant!

I first met Björn 15 years ago in a studio in Lund, where IB were recording Cheval. Janne Schaffer, who produced the album, brought Björn in for several reasons, I'm sure. Meeting him was an overwhelming experience. The improvisations between Janne and Björn were always first takes. If we had to do takes, it was due to the engineer not being fast enough or that Schaffer and J:son change playing styles completely. I mentioned to Björn that I liked a minimalistic flute phrase of his on *The Aged*.

- Oh yes, that one, well, I nicked that from Java.

On top of everything else, he is humble too.

Playing with Björn is a hoot. I remember when we were to play the song *Härifrån till evigheten*, one of Björn's best-known songs, for the first time. Obviously, we wanted to do it well and we really felt we had the means to do it, with two percussionists. We asked Björn at which tempo we should perform the piece, an appropriate question in this context. The answer, a typical Björn J:son Lindh answer:

- Any tempo.

Afterwards, we asked Björn if he liked our version of the song. He answered calmly:

- Great, it's just a pity that the tempo was wrong. Now I'm up for some Roquefort cheese!

I have to mention two examples of Björn's music that I think are fantastic. My first favourite is a suite called "Musik från en storstad" from his record *Från storstad till grodspann*, recorded in 1971. Secondly, I have to mention the three albums J:son made

together with concert pianist Staffan Scheja that make up the *Europa* trilogy.

Kjell Severinsson:

There is no doubt that Björn is a truly astounding musician. When we recorded *MIND Vol. 1*, all his parts were first takes. And he was solving crosswords during his session! Amazing. When we toured together in 1994, we played "Häri från till evigheten" amongst other songs. Goosebumps for the audience, and us obviously. That song is definitely one of my J:son favourites.

Jonas Christophs:

Björn described my guitar playing after a rehearsal like this:  
- It feels like a hot Mexican tin roof that comes hurtling towards me and goes straight through.  
I'm not sure how to interpret that, but he claimed it was a compliment.

It's hard to choose a favourite record, but *Feather Nights* was the first album I got by Björn, but the first thing I heard from him was the song "Brusa högre lilla å", which I love. I also think the album *In the Air* is good, particularly the track "Over the Edge", which I play on.

Jan Severinsson:

I have worked with Björn J:son Lindh for 15 years and we know each other well. That wasn't the case when I was asked to go on tour with Janne Schaffer, J:son and organist Gunnar Idenstam. I wanted to pinch myself. Two of my all-time heroes and sources of inspiration. And myself!

To begin with, I was a roadie, not a sound engineer. I drove the bus, carried stuff and set up the PA, and that was very enjoyable. Already on the first night, in Kalmar, Björn and me sat in my room, discussed music and had some beers. At that point, I pinched myself! Björn turned out to be an incredibly nice and intelligent guy who has seen it all on the Swedish music scene.

This year, I was on the road with Schaffer, J:son and keyboardist Stefan Blomquist and I can report that Björn's flutes sound better than ever (except when they played in Steninge, where it was too cold). Björn has played on most of our records since Cheval, and there's always magic in the air when it comes to him adding his parts. Talk about being musical and a true professional! I know that J:son and Schaffer add musical value to our productions.

One of Björn's curiosities is his little bag. He always carries it, and it contains assorted objects. I have never had a look inside it, but I know it contains his flutes and – always – crossword magazines. Björn loves solving crosswords. Here's an example:

Janne Schaffer had been asked, and naturally accepted, to play at the funeral of a famous Swedish person, and Björn was to perform

with Schaffer. I was there to do the sound. We were at the church with time to spare and set up the equipment near the altar.

The vicar came and explained what was going to happen. When the time came to play, we were told not to come in until the first song and after that we were to stay until the second song was to be performed. After the first song, Björn opened his bag, got out a brand new crossword magazine and started solving crosswords while waiting to perform the next song. Meanwhile, the service continued.

Imagine the situation: us standing at the very front of the church, clearly visible to everybody present! A funeral to remember, indeed! That's Björn J:son Lindh for you. A man with a great sense of humour, unpredictable and able to deliver a brilliant solo or a curious whim on or off stage.

My favourite album by Björn is *Våta vingar*, in agreement with the composer. I talked with Björn about his back catalogue this summer, and he reckons this album to be his best.

Thomas Olsson:

I have only met Björn J:son Lindh once. This was towards the end of the recording sessions for MIND Vol. 4, and Björn was in Halmstad to add recorder and flute parts. Between the takes, I had the opportunity to chat to him and he was a very amicable gentleman who was eager to discuss art and music.

I was very impressed with his humbleness when he asked me to recommend one of Swedish composer Allan Pettersson's symphonies. I suggested he start with the seventh symphony and mentioned the high quality recordings of Pettersson's symphonies made by the German label CPO.

I have heard J:son live a number of times and have most of his albums. There are several things that impress me, but mainly two: his improvisational skills and his compositional skills. Björn J:son Lindh can really combine beautiful memorable themes with surprising and interesting twists. I suppose this stems from him having a genuine knowledge about composers from the field of art music.

As an improviser, he is on the highest international level. He can muster up sounds from his recorders and flutes that leave you breathless, and his note choices reveal a longstanding interest in improvising cultures from outside the western music sphere. Based on these comments, here are my favourite Björn J:son Lindh albums (like Jan and Mats, I couldn't restrict myself to single songs):

*Från storstad till grodspad*  
*Atlantis*  
*Svensk rapsodi*  
*Europa Opus I, II and III*

\* \* \*

Best wishes from Isildurs Bane!

Thomas Olsson  
Newsletter editor

Do you know anyone who may be interested in receiving newsletters from Isildurs Bane? Send an e-mail to [thomas@isildursbane.se](mailto:thomas@isildursbane.se) and we will put you on our list.

If you want to unsubscribe, send a message to the same address and you will be taken off our list immediately.