



## Newsletter March 2005

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### 1) **MIND Vol. 5: The Observatory finally out!**

We are very happy to announce that Isildurs Bane's first DVD will hit the streets on March 9<sup>th</sup>.

Filled to the brims with a concert, documentary footage, animations and four new, previously unreleased songs, this DVD is a must for all discerning music fans, not only fans of IB.

The concert was filmed on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2004 with twelve cameras. It presents Isildurs Bane in front of an enthusiastic crowd with perhaps the bands strongest and most versatile line-up so far featuring a twin-guitar team, cello, and three vocalists in addition to the regular team.

The documentary footage features unique clips from the band's past and present. From the late 80's until January 2005, from Sweden via Europe to North America, from Adolf Wölfli's cell at the mental hospital Waldau in Switzerland to NEARfest in the USA, from a hot and sweaty stage in Budapest to a chilly beach in Halmstad. It's all here.

As if that wasn't enough, *MIND Vol. 5: The Observatory* includes four brand new songs recorded exclusively for this DVD, expertly produced by Mats "MP" Persson.

You can buy the DVD from our usual outlets:

**Belgium:** <http://www.musearecords.com/>

**France:** <http://www.musearecords.com/>

**Germany:** <http://www.justforkicks.de>

**Italy:** <http://www.eventyr-records.it/>

**Japan:** <http://www.marquee.co.jp>

**Luxembourg:** <http://www.musearecords.com/>

**Portugal:** <http://www.progcds.com>

**Spain:** <http://www.musearecords.com/>

**Sweden:**

Any record shop really, since we have national distribution through Border Music.

But do check out:

<http://www.mellotronen.com/>

<http://www.missingpiece.net/>

<http://www.progressrec.com/>

<http://www.recordheaven.net/>

**USA** <http://www.waysidemusic.com/>

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## **2) Muse-wrapped Records sell IB downloads**

Isildurs Bane have signed a deal with innovatory download distribution label Muse-wrapped Records.

This is how the company present itself:

– Our mission is to become a magnet for the world's most accomplished musicians and producers. Our slogan, "First The Music" says everything about our philosophy. We have digital distribution deals with bands like Kansas, Jeff Tamelier (Tower Of Power), Pat Mastelotto (King Crimson), Robert Berry and others. We seek to create an environment that attracts the world's best artists and producers by giving them options they will find no where else!

As of this writing, Good from MIND Vol. 4: Pass is on Muse-wrapped's list of top downloads, placed before acts such as Kansas, Pat Mastelotto and Trey Gunn.

To buy downloads from Muse-wrapped, go to <http://downloads.muse-wrapped.com/>

For more information on the company, go to <http://www.muse-wrapped.com/>

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## **3) Workshops at Falkenberg**

On February 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, Isildurs Bane did two workshops at Falkenberg. The audiences consisted of art school students and local bands.

Not surprisingly, the workshops were stimulating for us, and according to the participators, very much so. Since these two workshops were for active musicians, we tailored our program to suit them.

Kjell and Klas demonstrated the intricate interplay they have developed over the years by playing examples from MIND Vol. 1 and The Voyage. Mats very ably demonstrated his array of keyboards and electronic devices to the interested audiences and Jonas, Gicken, Christof and yours truly each demonstrated and talked about various aspects of IB's music.

The art school students proved they have chops by performing Cage in various combinations, taught by the members of IB. A great bunch of students they were too!



Gicken showing Karin the Cage bass parts. Karin plays bass in Fall of Angels. Check out their website: <http://fallofangels.com>

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#### **4) Sid Smith writes about IB**

Sid Smith, who wrote a great book on King Crimson, In the Court of King Crimson, posts a diary at <http://www.krimson-news.com/kcnndiaries/SidSmith.shtml> Go to Monday 21st February 2005 and read what Sid has to say about IB. Here's a taste of what he has to say:

"Sweden's absurdly talented multi-instrumentalist Mats Johansson is however an eclectic and versatile composer and well used to integrating rock ensembles with piano trios and large-scale orchestras via his group, **Isildurs Bane**."

and

“For those who like their prog rock full on with guitars, drums, symphonic gestures and the whole retinue of studio effects, then it’s worth checking out The Voyage where you’ll find some racy arrangements, impressively diverse structures and more than a few surprisingly catchy themes.”

But you knew that already didn’t you?

For more information on Sid’s activities, his book on King Crimson and lots more, go to <http://www.inthecourtofkingcrimson.com/>

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### **5) Mariette’s music in Swedish blockbuster movie**

IB’s Mariette Hansson can now add film music composer to her calling card after composing a song for the Swedish blockbuster movie Sandor slash Ida. How on earth did this come about Mariette?

- I have been working for a publishing company in Stockholm called Murlyn Music. While working there, I met two talented songwriters, Peter Ågren and Anders Lennartsson. Last summer, we wrote songs together, one of the songs was We’re not holding Hands. We wrote the music and the lyrics together, using three acoustic guitars, in a cosy little studio in Bergshamra, just outside of Stockholm.

As it turned out, the boss at Anders’ publishing company heard the song and played it to his friend, the director of Sandor slash Ida. He loved it and said that he wanted to use the song in his film. Even if the song was recorded very simply, it still made it to the screen. Mariette again:

- The song is basically a demo recording, although a good demo, so nothing needed to be fixed for it to be used in the film. I am very happy about it!

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### **6) Profile of the month: Fredrik Timour**

With the release of our DVD just around the corner, we thought it would only be fair to introduce you to Fredrik Timour, the director of MIND Vol. 5: The Observatory.



Name: Fredrik Timour

Living in: Halmstad, Sweden

Who are you?

- I suppose I can call myself an artist. I went to art school, doing sketches and so on. Lately, I have been working with a web based art project with a colleague – Mikael Ericsson. You can find more information at [www.drumdrum.com](http://www.drumdrum.com)  
I have also worked with video art and commercials.

Please describe your work with MIND Vol. 5: The Observatory.

- The idea was to create a concert DVD that would be fun to watch many times. I have tried to create interesting images, based on the actual concert, which can enhance IB's music. The work has been very similar to working with video art. I have worked from a rhythmic and dynamic point of view. During the whole project I have been working closely with the band.

Do you have a favourite IB-song?

- Rage, especially the live version, since it has so much energy.

What are you up to?

- I am doing lots of things. Everything from architectural visualizations in 3D to art exhibitions. At the moment, I am preparing a video installation that will be exhibited later this year in Gothenburg.

You also play and compose music. What does it sound like?

- I think it sounds like electro pop with a twist. Every song is like a minimalist installation. You can listen to some songs at [www.neue.se](http://www.neue.se)

Who are your musical heroes?

- Among others: Ol' Dirty Bastard, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Edward Vesala, ABBA and Erasure.

Which filmmakers inspire you?

- Tarkovskij (Solaris), Harmony Korine (Gummo, Julian Donkey Boy), Fritz Lang (Metropolis), Catherine Breillat (Romance), David Lynch (Lost Highway) and Verner Herzog (Nosferatu).

Could you recommend a film everybody should watch?

- Everyone should watch Stalker by Andrej Tarkovskij. It is fantastically beautiful and poetic.

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## **7) The story behind the song: "Ove P"**

Title: Ove P

From: Sagan om den irländska älgen

Composer: Mats Johansson

One day in November 1983 IB were out on a short tour on the west coast of Sweden when they suddenly felt the urge to add something to their forthcoming debut LP Sagan om den irländska älgen. They went to Vivaldi Studios in Gothenburg because they knew that there was a Mellotron in good condition in that very studio. The owner offered to sell it to Mats for 25 000 Swedish Kronor (€ 2 700/\$ 3 500). Mats offered 5 000 Kronor. There was no deal. The owner claimed that the shipping alone would cost 5 000. He was probably right. A Mellotron weighs a lot. Says Mats today of the experience:

- I had great expectations of the Mellotron, but it was hard to play and reminded me more of finger choreography or petting than keyboard or piano playing.

The engineer at Vivaldi Studios was Bernhard Löhr, who is a top notch engineer today, working with the rich and famous, but in 1983 he wasn't a household name in the music business. Mats had his mind set on recording the piano part first and then overdubbing it with an identical organ part.

- Bernhard Löhr and my bandmates thought it was a bit to over the top. I hung in there and did it the way I wanted to even though sounds of objection were accompanying my playing. Today, I would've added a couple of synthesizers too. In those days you weren't allowed to be creative or have differing views about how to

record. Not only would the result be overkill, but also it would take time, cost money and so on.

Things have changed, as has the technology.

- Today, music making feels liberating. I can record sparkle, hum, noise, shouts, screams and roars and make rhythms of it. But the same people are mumbling a bit and think they hear digital pops, but they accept it because it's established now and you hear it in the most commercial productions. What was an experiment within electro-acoustic music in the 60's has been normalized today. To dub piano and organ, sure, no problem!

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## **8) Regarding Genesis**

Regarding Genesis

By Mats Johansson, composer and keyboard player

Genesis. It's funny, but I think that name is a four-letter word in some circles. IB obviously have a strong relationship to progressive music from the 70's. We were a part of it in Sweden, even though this style of music was on its way downhill when IB started touring.

During the last month, I have listened to Genesis a lot during my daily walks and I have to admit finding it hard to listen to Genesis today. Strong feelings come up, because this was the music that IB and myself grew up listening to – completely naturally – and you are transported through a time warp to your younger days with all its pros and cons.

When I listen to the music today, I can hear the varying qualities in the compositions and the different forces that certainly existed within the band. I think I realize who did what with the compositions in a way I didn't comprehend when I was a young listener. The warmth in their sound makes them unique for their era. I really liked the mixed forms that were typical for Genesis' live performances. Was it film? Was it theatre? It was more than just a concert in any case. Some sort of performance. On that level, IB most certainly used to be very influenced by Genesis. They were born ten years before us and were musically mature, which we rated highly. IB did performances, not concerts.

The influences are clearly audible of course. When I listen to Genesis on my iPod I realize that Phil Collins was an absolutely brilliant drummer. Peter Gabriel is obviously still a great singer and composer, and Steve Hackett was and still is an individual guitarist. Nowadays I just adore Tony Banks' ARP 2600. You can hear how reliable the oscillators are compared to those in the Mini-moog. The weakness of the ARP is the filters, but the nasal tone is quite charming. Mike Rutherford's Moog bass-pedals gave Genesis a pastoral sound, particularly when he added his 12-stringed guitar.

Even if I still like a lot of what Genesis did, I consider *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* and *Selling England by the Pound* to be their best efforts, just like I did back in the 70's. *The Lamia* is the best Genesis song ever and the end of *The Musical Box* is a good example of the bad aspects of this style of music. I console myself with the thought that it had something to do with the performance or that it was an English joke. Maybe I am not distanced enough, I was young and had problems handling all the music that was seemed to come to you from everywhere.

Isildurs Bane liked Genesis, not least the sound. We finally managed to find a Mellotron in a studio at Mölndal. I thought it sounded disastrous and haven't really thought about that particular sound too much since being confronted with this strange instrument. I used to like the harmonies Tony Banks employed. Today, I am not so sure. There's something sacred about it and I miss the experimentation. This is the same feeling I have when listening to IB's recordings from the 70's.

I tried to supplement my listening with Henry Cow for instance, but that didn't go down too well in IB, on the contrary. Another four-letter word.

For me, Genesis released their final album, *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, in 1974. Peter Gabriel quit, and you recognize what a good singer and frontman means to a band. IB didn't find a frontman, which had a lot to do with the difficulties of adding vocals to our – at the time – pretentious music. And having people like Gabriel, Jon Anderson and Ian Anderson as your heroes didn't make things easier.

I know Genesis were asked loads of questions about Peter Gabriel, which was probably very hard on the remaining members and their music. IB got some heavy flak from the press and record companies too. I am convinced Genesis were a part of that, he he. This type of progressive music never caught on in Sweden. On the contrary.

IB had the fortune to share the stage with former Genesis guitarist Steve Hackett in the US and in Canada in 2002. Mr Hackett was a kind and reserved man who apologized for not ending his soundcheck on time, which meant that we had 15 minutes less for our soundcheck. Between concerts we chatted to each other and smoked a cigarillo. He congratulated us on a good performance. I sneaked out and walked down the main street in Quebec, had something to eat and a glass of wine, listening to Steve Hackett play from a distance. I can't remember the song, but it was damn good! Whenever he played a Genesis song, the audience – approximately 5000 people – really got on their feet. Suddenly, I understood what Hackett's contributions to Genesis were, through his choice of material in his medleys.

Perhaps Steve Hackett was the most symphonic rocker of Genesis. Considering Phil Collins' activities with Brand X and his later commercial success as a singer and songwriter, you see what a motley crowd of musicians Genesis were. I don't understand the

bitterness Mike Rutherford has expressed. He seems upset for some reason. Lack of success perhaps, because Genesis have always been at the wrong end of the stick according to the press.

I am always suspicious of music critics that write off Genesis. But just by browsing through their writings, I can tell their lack of competence. Simply put: they can't analyze properly. It's easier for me to understand that record companies hated prog rock. Pop music must have been something of liberation to them. The opportunity to sell records increased drastically. Genesis simply became too much. Could it be that Peter Gabriel thought the same when he quit?

For me, Genesis also meant that my interest in music for theatre began. Genesis is always there for me.

By Kjell Severinsson, drummer

My foremost memory of Genesis is my first concert experience in an arena. Scandinavium, Gothenburg in 1976. Peter Gabriel had just left the band and they toured the Trick of the Tail album. Bill Bruford was the new drummer playing together with Phil Collins. I thought it was way cool. But I can imagine it being even more awesome with Gabriel as frontman with his masks and all the tricks he was up to.

At the time all the old heroes stood in line to the stages, which spoilt you a bit, but also made you go for your heroes live and on record. Gentle Giant are still one of my biggest live experiences as is Pink Floyd's performance of The Wall at Earl's Court in London (ha ha Gicken!!!). Jethro Tull were also big heroes of mine.

Regarding Genesis, I have always felt that they were a bit dull and humdrum on record. Sure, there are some nuggets. Supper's Ready, which I think contains everything and even some drama. Apocalypse in 9/8 is my favourite and also parts of Lamb Lies Down on Broadway.

Not too long ago, I listened to the Archives box set and noticed with dread and horror how time had taken its toll. What struck me the most was the fact that the sound was so good. I feel that recordings by bands like Gentle Giant and King Crimson have aged better.

By Thomas Olsson, musicologist

Being some years younger than Kjell and Mats, my first impressions of Genesis were the post-Gabriel years. I remember seeing some footage from the Abacab period on Swedish TV at the time of the album's release. I was not impressed. It sounded very wimpy and lacked direction. I would say the same thing about Abacab today.

My second impression of Genesis was while studying at Sussex University, Brighton. A friend of mine kindly lent me some tapes, Angel Station by Manfred Mann's Earth Band and Seconds Out by Genesis. I liked both, but quickly sought out the double-LP in one of Brighton's second hand stores. This certainly was not Abacab. This was music that impressed me with its beautiful keyboard sounds, lyrical themes, dramatic drumming and slightly odd guitar playing.

I quickly bought the old stuff from Trespass to The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway. Only later did I discover that Genesis were OK even after Gabriel left the band. Imagine my surprise when I found out that 1983's Genesis album contained some fine moments. Different from the early years, but good in its own right. Seeing Genesis do a sleepwalking performance on the We Can't Dance tour made it crystal clear that I really prefer the Hackett years. Why?

Between 1971 – 1977, Genesis managed to carve out a unique niche within the progressive rock scene. The main players were Tony Banks, Peter Gabriel and Steve Hackett. At least that's what I think, based on listening to the music, interviews and the later work of the individual members.

There were several things that set Genesis apart from their contemporaries. Their public school backgrounds are often mentioned, but this wasn't true in the case of Hackett and Phil Collins. Nevertheless, I am sure the musical experiences at public school (choir, a knowledge of art music, an after school love of The Beatles etc) did matter.

One thing that made Genesis special was that they were very clean, pure and organized musically. What do I mean by that? Well, their use of chords and harmony was traditional and close to the classical period rather than the romantic period often favoured by progressive bands. You won't find as many dissonances in the music of Genesis as in the music by King Crimson, ELP or Gentle Giant.

The cleanliness is also evident in the sounds. The frequently orchestral keyboard playing of Tony Banks is light years away from the aggressiveness of Keith Emerson or Rick Wakeman's rapid passages. I suspect Banks is also the man responsible for some of the clever key changes in some compositions, like Firth of Fifth for instance. In the piano introduction to this song, Banks' key changes correspond in a cunning way to the many time changes. Within the first minute or so, we hear no less than seven different time signatures: 6/8, 7/8, 5/8, 4/8, 4/4, 3/8 and 2/4. These changes are grouped to correspond to key changes from Eb via F# to Bb. And following that, most of the rest of Firth of Fifth stays in a regular time signature. Very cleverly done and with a beautiful result.

During his days with Genesis, Steve Hackett's guitar sound was very clean even when his fuzzbox was engaged. His interplay with Banks was always polite, rather like two gentlemen having a conversation. When Banks played a solo or a keyboard passage,

Hackett never got in the way. During a Hackett solo or composed passage, Banks never interfered. They backed each other up by taking an accompanying back seat position. Interestingly, this changed a bit on Hackett's solo work. He is certainly more intense nowadays than he was 30 years ago. Hearing him perform live in 2002 surprised me because of the sheer intensity, dissonance and occasional free playing he indulged in. I liked it.

In a way, Hackett can be seen as a mirror image of Gabriel. Both are still interested in progression, but in very different ways. Bear in mind that Steve Hackett was using the tapping technique (two hands on the guitar neck) on Nursery Cryme, several years before Eddie van Halen. His classical guitar playing is a welcome addition to his electric guitar playing even if they aren't progressing the guitar playing in general in any way, but his acoustic albums are well-worth checking out.

Mats commented on early IB being influenced by Genesis. Do I hear any Genesis in IB today? I think there is a tiny bit of Tony Banks still left in Mats' compositions. I am thinking of the pivoting key changes and the fanfare-like themes sometimes used by both Banks and Johansson. IB as a band share Genesis' avoidance of extended solos, concentrating instead on collective music making. Apart from these superficial similarities, I don't hear much Genesis in IB anymore. Neither do I hear any Musical Boxes in Mike & The Mechanics or Giant Hogweeds in Phil Collins' solo albums. But I still like parts of The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway, Supper's Ready, Firth of Fifth and Selling England by the Pound. And Seconds Out.

For all of you DIYers, here's Isildurs Bane's guide to Genesis, all made to fit on a single CD:

Dancing with the Moonlight Knight  
Firth of Fifth  
After the Ordeal  
Fly on a Windshield  
In the Cage  
Hairless Heart  
Carpet Crawlers  
The Lamia  
Horizons  
Supper's Ready

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Best wishes from Isildurs Bane!

Thomas Olsson  
Newsletter editor

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