



Newsletter October 2005

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1) **Reviews of MIND Vol. 5: The Observatory**

Another day, another positive review of MIND Vol. 5: The Observatory. Here are some excerpts from a review at Prog-PT. Read the full review at

http://whale.fe.up.pt/~asantos/mambo/index.php?option=com_reviews&task=newrev&review=376&Itemid=27

"I must be clear: if there are bands that deserve a special room in today's progressive world one of those is surely Isildurs Bane. Their consistent and ever evolving career is leaving a strong mark in contemporary music. [...]

Their albums, especially those made after 1989's masterpiece "Cheval: Volonté de Rocher", show a wider perspective on every art form and how it can be entwined and blended into something unique and adventurous. [...]

Mats Johansson is also a great music man because of that: he always allows enough room to the other band members to express themselves within his own peculiar framework. That's why Isildurs Bane never sound like a "one-man band", but as a cohesive musical project. Undoubtedly, one of the best of our times."

Reviewed by Luis Loureiro

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2) **... and of Gouveia Art Rock 2004**

As the act dominating the Gouveia Artrock 2004 DVD, we are pleased to see very positive reviews for this DVD too. It is available from www.justforkicks.de www.progcds.com and www.recordheaven.net

“the main focus goes to Swedish prog act Isildurs Bane. To them is reserved the bigger part of this DVD and they well deserve it. The show was demolishing, ending with the huge THE VOYAGE which took the audience to ecstasy.

It is, in fact, a joy to see and listen to this band playing live and what is showed on this DVD is not only all the technical ability of these classical-trained musicians but also all the dedication and emotion each one displays on stage.

To all Progressive fans: do not hesitate! This is a must-have DVD not just because of its artistic contents but also for its very professional production.”

The full review by Spulit can be found at http://whale.fe.up.pt/~asantos/mambo/index.php?option=com_reviews&task=rev&band=214&Itemid=27#381

In a review at <http://www.progressia.net/index.php4?rub=chroniques&idchronik=748> Jean-Daniel Kleisl writes that it is Isildurs Bane that make the Gouveia DVD indispensable and that IB are one of the bands that enriches the current progressive rock scene.

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3) IB event in December

Get your calendars out! IB plan to arrange an IB festival in mid-December. The exact circumstances and bands are still to be confirmed, but I can assure you it will be something to look forward to indeed. More news in our forthcoming newsletters.

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4) Jonas launches his own website

Jonas will launch a website of his own, soon to be followed by other IB-related sites. Go to www.jonaschristophs.com

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5) Thomas blogs

Yours truly has caught the flu that is currently grazing the Internet: The Blog. If you want to read my thoughts on music, musicology, life as an inexperienced house-owner or whatever else happens to cross my path, go to <http://thomasmusicology.blogspot.com/>

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6) Metamorfofi Trio perform in Italy

Christian, Franco and Luca, the three wonderful guys that make up the astonishing Metamorfofi Trio is of course well-known to all IB fans. Should you happen to be in Milan or Venice in mid-November, you should go and check them out. Absolutely!

They perform in Milan at the Atelier XX secolo Secondo Maggio on November 12th, and in Venice on November 16th. More detail in our next newsletter.

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7) Janne Schaffer turns 60!

Swedish guitarist, composer and legend Janne Schaffer just turned 60 (on September 24th). Besides performing live and on record with IB on many occasions (Cheval, The Voyage, MIND Vol. 1 and MIND Vol. 2), Schaffer is truly a living legend. He has performed with such luminaries as ABBA, Bob Marley, the Porcaro brothers (of Toto), Carla Bley, Art Farmer, Tony Williams, Stan Getz, George Duke, Billy Cobham and – of course – Björn J:son Lindh.

Coinciding with Schaffer's birthday, the guitarist was awarded a gold medal – Illis quorum meruere – by the Swedish government for his ability to entice a generation-spanning audience with his guitar playing and life-long music making.



Janne Schaffer is a one-of-a-kind guitarist. When you hear him play, you know it's him. A true original with tons of experience under his belt, Schaffer's association with IB started when he agreed to co-produce Cheval. From then on, Janne Schaffer has been a part of the IB family.

Which songs from Schaffer's vast repertoire do the members of IB prefer?

Klas: "I could pick several songs, but if I were to chose just one, I would pick 'Banankontakt av tredje graden' with Electric Banana Band. The reason for my choice being that there is a child in every man, believe it or not!"

Jonas: "My favourite song, or my first memory of Schaffer's playing is Björn J:son Lindh's 'Brusa högre lilla å'. Apart from that, I would choose the first album by Electric Banana Band."

Gicken: "My favourite Schaffer tune is 'Kulan växer'. His second album was my first encounter with his music."

Kjell: "'Halkans affär' is definitely my favourite Schaffer song. It was re-recorded in 1992 on Ögonblick with a new hot arrangement including a horn section and a faster tempo. IB played that version with Schaffer and J:son at Göteborgskalaset in August 1993, Bosse Roth's last gig with us. There is a bad videotape of this around somewhere by the way. Perhaps something for a forthcoming IB DVD?"

Mats: "15-20 years of friendship with Janne has affected IB's music in many ways. Janne's rhythmic precision is something that I have taken on myself and his clean guitar sound is legendary in Swedish music.

Janne Schaffer was the person who helped IB to integrate art music and rock music at a time that was fairly complicated. The click track had just become obligatory in the 80's and Janne was calmness personified in the studio as we were about to synchronize 30 acoustic and electric instruments. When he produced Cheval, he also legitimized us, which has been a big help for many years.

I can't imagine Frank Zappa without a lighted cigarette, Ingemar Bergman without anxiety and Janne Schaffer without his red Larrivée.

One of the oddest tours we have ever done was with Schaffer, Björn J:son Lindh and the fakir Ali Ben Hassan. I remember standing backstage, we were under stress and we were going to explain to Janne how we were going to kick off the concert. There were lots of misunderstandings and everything seemed extremely complicated and grand, but eventually Janne broke out in laughter. He had realized that the concert started very simply in his case. Kjell counted everybody in: one, two, three, four PLAY!

Play in this context meant that Janne Severinsson – our engineer – would start our backtrack. We weren't supposed to play anything. What an introduction!

Janne Schaffer's best songs are the ones where his personality shines through. 'Berzelii Park' for instance where he plays the electric sitar, or the album where Alphonso Johnson plays bass [Blå passager och röda vågor, editors note].

J:son has meant a lot to Janne's sound compositionally and their ongoing collaboration is an example of a collaboration that provides Sweden with a unique musical feeling. A superior harmonic feeling with a personal sense of melody makes Janne a great musician and composer.

His interest in promoting new Swedish guitarists should not be underestimated. I know that Janne has been interested in placing the guitar within a large orchestra, and he is right of course. Such a dynamic instrument works excellently in such a context."

Myself, I grew up with the omnipresent Schaffer on the radio, on TV and in the papers. I recall getting a tape of Schaffer's first album at the library and really getting off on "Halkans affär", which was the first track on it. At that point, I didn't really care for the other tracks, they were too jazzy for young kid not even ten years old. Later, a band I played with covered "Halkans affär" with a three-part harmony played by guitar, marimba and vibraphone.

Not too long ago, I had the fortune of stumbling across a radio recording from 1980 with Schaffer and J:son. What a brilliant session that was! Very intense, almost fierce at times and lots of shredding. Even though I enjoy later Schaffer too – I will never forget hearing Schaffer perform "Rot mousse" with another fine guitarist, Lasse Wellander, at Brottet in Halmstad.

What epitomises Janne Schaffer is, I think, a consciousness about melodies and how to phrase a good melody. Not too far removed from some romantic composers of the early 20th century.

Visit Janne Schaffer's website (only in Swedish):
www.janneschaffer.se

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8) Hooray for Elis!

We all cheer for Kjell and Jenny who became proud parents to Elis on Sunday September 25th at 10.25 in the morning.



Elis was 54 centimetres tall and weighed 3890 grams when he was born at the hospital in Halmstad.

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That's it for this month. Thanks for reading this far!

Thomas Olsson
Newsletter editor

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