



Newsletter January 2006

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First of all, let us wish you a happy new year! We hope to see as many of you as possible in 2006!

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1) **Comments and reflections on IB Expo 2005**

IB Expo 2005 was by all accounts a great success. There are two elements to IB Expo, one being the concert and one being the preparatory bits leading up to the concert. For those of you who couldn't make it to the concert, I can tell you it was a once in a lifetime experience. We had people coming from Halmstad, Halland, the rest of Sweden, Denmark and even from as far away as Portugal!

For those of us who were lucky to be there for rehearsals, we were even luckier. There was just so much brilliant music and musicianship around, and on top of that, the whole vibe was one of good-spirited friendliness. I could go on and on about this truly extraordinary week, but instead, I will let everybody else involved get a word in.



The participants of IB Expo 2005

Back row, left to right: Luca Calbrese, Thomas Olsson, Mick Karn, Kjell Severinsson, Christian Saggese, Fredrik "Gicken" Johansson, Jerry Marotta, Tom Griesgraber, Povel Ohlsson

Front row, left to right: Fredrik Davidsson, Jonas Christophs, Linnea Olsson (with camera), Klas Assarsson, Conrad Boqvist, Jan Severinsson, Mariette Hansson, Mats Johansson

Mats Johansson:

IB Expo, a new project for Isildurs Bane. IB have existed for 30 years this year without any interruptions. This has required constant challenges, developments and corporations. I have often asked myself if we should do another tour and if we should make another CD. Many times a side project has interfered, but IB Expo is really something new!

When IB have acted as ambassadors on behalf of Sweden abroad, we have taken a plane to Mexico, USA, Canada, Portugal, Italy or some other country. We have played our concert, sold CDs, met people... and gone home again. This is fine in itself, but could we take it further? Doing something different? Giving something back? This is where the idea of IB Expo stems from and what it's all about. Meeting people during a week to work together and make friends. Hopefully some exciting music will come out of it too. The first IB Expo turned out to be a success from our perspective. A week to remember, which I hope any ticket buyer would agree with. For us, the active participants of the project, it has been amazing. I should be fantastic for the audience too, since they got to hear musicians who focus on the music, which really is not a given anymore. We have been lucky to have sponsors that have been good enough to follow the project, support us and even promised to put IB Expo 2006 on their agendas during the spring. 16 musicians meet. A disaster? Absolutely not, on the contrary. Humbleness, understanding, respect, experimentation and quick decisions are keywords when describing the project.

Mick Karn was the first to arrive. He made me understand what an incredible composer and musician he is. I already knew this, but not the extent of his abilities. Openness and artistic freedom in the true meaning were Mick's characteristics. His minimalistic thinking and way to put the bass right in the centre of things were new to me. The only thing that worried me was that Mick looked like he was freezing between during the breaks. I tried to compensate by turning the heating in my car to full whenever he rode with me. I wanted him to feel that he was still in Cyprus, at least mentally. By the way, we're coming for a dive when the appropriate time comes.

Wonderful Jerry Marotta and Tom Griesgraber were fascinating to meet and work with. It was very interesting to see Tom play the Stick in a very different way to Tony Levin, which goes to show the potential of the instrument. Jerry's approach to percussion combined with his natural ways and creativity explains his greatness. Unfortunately you can't fly Concord to the US anymore, but I will have to find another way to go to Woodstock.

Metamorfosi Trio very suddenly became a duo (Franco, we really miss you!). I am always stunned by their complete control when improvising. Our Italian friends have promised us a haven in Piemonte whenever we feel like coming. A vineyard would be nice, Luca! Christian (who came straight from performances in Japan) and Luca (who went straight to performances in Italy) are a musical axis in this kind of project. Their interaction is a gift from outer space!

We hear a lot about Linnea and Mariette being a great asset to IB. How did we manage without them for 28 years? Do they know the answer themselves? Answers on a postcard, please.

Sounds of Eternity really should have been part of the working week, but due to their commitments at the college of music in Stockholm and Fredrik's teaching duties, they simply couldn't. Rumour has it there will be a CD release soon. Many of us are looking forward to it!

Thomas – IB's agent, Janne and Christian (engineer) are the foundations on which we rest! Thanks to the council of Halmstad, Region Halland, Musikalen, Folkuniversitetet and Norre Park hotel. Some people have been wondering what my role was in all of this. Let me think... I will soon find out... here's a clue: how did the plastic cups get to the wastebasket? [Jonas threw them away Mats, you didn't! (Editor's note)]

Kjell Severinsson:

A week of total euphoria, I think. I have rarely been so inspired and I feel a great amount of humbleness towards these musicians. The way I see it, Luca and Christian have never played better. I think everybody involved gave it their best musically and personally.

[Jonas Christophs:](#)

A great week filled with good people, great music and fantastic energy. A beginning of many exiting things to come and hopefully a forthcoming event.

Fredrik "Gicken" Johansson:

The IB Expo was a very successful, something you are happy to have been a part of. All our invited guests contributed generously, not only musically, but also with their knowledge and experiences. The excellent mix of personalities created a very good environment for playing music and socializing. It was joyful and inspiring to work out such a varied concept in such a relatively short time, and then performing it live in front of an audience. I hope we will be able to do something like this again.

Klas Assarsson:

The IB Expo week was fantastic in a number of ways. It was creative, relaxed and rewarding. It felt so good to play such amazing music without anyone pointing fingers or telling you what to do. Everything was done in a communal spirit where everyone did their best for the music being played.

It was a pleasure playing with one of my favourite bass players, Mick Karn. It was a dream come true! To play drums on songs like Honey Sweating and Thundergirl Mutation was incredibly gratifying, and adding to that Mick was one of the nicest people I have ever met doesn't make things any worse.

Jerry Marotta is a legend. He plays with a groove that ends all grooves! Tom Griesgraber is a whiz-kid on his instrument, the Chapman Stick. Working with these two gentlemen has been an amazing experience.

I also must mention that it was great to finally get around to playing with our Italian friends.

An unforgettable December week in Halmstad!

[Luca Calabrese:](#)

A few lines to summarize such an intense week is not much. So I confine myself to remembering Mick's sense of humour, the availability of Jerry, the musical elegance of Tom but, above all, the hospitality of Mats and all the bad boys of Isildurs Bane. A pleasant surprise has been the set of Sounds Of Eternity, with my friends Fredrik Davidsson and "Gicken". I would like to thank Jan, the best sound engineer I work with, but, above all, Thomas, who has made everything easy, also my return trip.

[Christian Saggese:](#)

I had a fantastic week in Sweden during IB Expo 2005!! To work with Jerry, Mick, Tom and the others... it was an incredible occasion for me to learn many musical things. I am looking forward to IB Expo 2006!!! I'm ready to play!
I love you IB!

[Mick Karn:](#)

I was expecting more snow, more stress and indecision, more learning of parts, and instead found warmth, calm professionalism, and a friendly environment from fourteen other musicians, along with the necessary freedom and trust to interpret music in one's own style.

I now find myself wanting more of the same, more experimentation with each other's work, more lively conversation stretching from as far west as the Pacific coast, south to the Mediterranean sea, and back again to our meeting point, in the Swedish town of Halmstad. Some more pepparkakor would also have been nice. I thoroughly enjoyed every moment.



Mick & Tom working out and bas(s)ically having a good time

[Jerry Marotta:](#)

IB Expo 2005. Well, so many things come to mind for me. First of all they're going to have to rethink all major events from now on like the World Cup, The Super Bowl...and maybe even Christmas! Isildurs Bane has raised the bar so high that nothing compares any more. Send this multi-national "Task" force into any situation, like Iraq for instance, and you'll find ALL weapons of mass destruction at the foot of Mariette's pedal board never to be fired again!! Obliterate the HIV epidemic in Africa with the sound of Mats's loops, voicings, soundscapes and compositions. Watching Kjell

basically lead from behind will inspire all. Jonas will blow down the walls of hate and injustice with his Strat and transport the World, Three By Three to a land of utter Peace and Harmony. All this with a Jaguar at his feet! "Gicken" will cool the hottest climate and heat the coldest, bringing the entire world to a constant temperature of 72 degrees Farenheit year round. We'll all dance to his wonderful "Bottom" Barefoot and never get splinters. Never again will cars bomb or Kneecaps break when Klas aims his mighty arsenal of good "Vibes" towards Belfast. Add to this Luca Calabrese's Trumpet and Christians Saggese's Nylon guitar and you've got a Spaghetti sauce that sounds as good as it tastes. Along with Mick Karn's flowing Bass melodies, soft voice and Tom Griesgraber's Stick that all will be begging to be Beaten with and I, Jerry Marotta, helping everyone set their gear up. The entire Planet will only need to close their eyes and open their ears to be transported to Halmstad, Sweden on the night of December 16th 2005. Courtesy of Isildurs Bane and of course, Thomas Olsson. All making up what will go down in History as "IB EXPO 2005"

And last but certainly not least, [Tom Griesgraber](http://www.thossounds.com/mgeuro3.html). He has kindly given me permission to quote from his road diary. Go to <http://www.thossounds.com/mgeuro3.html> to read his full report and look at some of Tom's pics. Here are some excerpts from Tom's diary:

What an amazing group of people and an amazing concept! I have to confess I wasn't really familiar with any of the other musicians before we arrived, but was very quickly blown away by the level of talent present. One highlight for me was doing my piece "Jungle" and on the second half, suddenly having the normal Stick and drum arrangement grow to incorporate electric guitar, classical guitar, fretless bass, electronic drums, percussion, ambient vocals, synth textures and flugelhorn. Wow! On paper it may read like overkill, but in reality everyone was careful to not be too greedy musically and the result was just amazing. Something like a rock orchestra!

One highlight for me was getting to join in on one of Mick Karn's pieces called Twitchy Hand Mover. He has a wildly original style on fretless bass. On his own pieces the bass parts at once seem to work as both the bass line (grounding things) and the main melodic line. Definitely unique. I really enjoyed hearing Mats Johansson (IB keys), Jonas Christophs (IB guitar) and Christian Saggese (Metamorphasi classical guitar). Christian is a frightening musician.

I could go on and on about everyone that was involved.. but hopefully the pictures [on Tom's website] will fill in a bit more of the story. But my thanks to Mats, Thomas, Klas, Jonas, Mariette, Gicken, Kjell, Linnea, Christof, Christian, Mick, Jerry, Luca and anyone else I'm forgetting for such a memorable week! Hope we can do it again!

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2) IB Expo 05 set list

This is what was performed during the evening:

Isildurs Bane

Heal II
Good
Open
Dark II
Voyage III

Mick Karn

Plaster the Magic Tongue
(with KA, LC, JC, MH, MJ, JM, LO, CS & KS)
Honey Sweating
(with KA, LC, JC, FJ, MJ, JM, CS & KS)
Thundergirl Mutation
(with KA, LC, JC, FJ, MJ, JM, CS & KS)
Twitchy Hand Mover
(with KA, TG, MJ, JM & KS)

Jerry Marotta & Tom Griesgraber

Waking the Day
In a Step
77 Times
(with KA, LC, FJ, MJ & CS)
El Prado
Jungle
(with everyone)

Metamorfosi Duo

Agua y vino
(CS solo)
Sonata Op. 47
(CS solo)
Improvisation
(CS +TG +LC +MK +FJ +JM -TG -MK - FJ -JM)

Sounds of Eternity

Part One
Part Two
Novembertango
Fondue
Crème Brûlée
Tårar av snö
Part Five

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3) A review of IB Expo 05

Luís Loureiro and Nuno Lourenço came all the way from Portugal just to experience IB Expo 2005. Apparently they had a good time. Find their reports and reviews at <http://www.prognosis.com/ProgEssay.asp?theEssay=30>

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4) New review of MIND Vol. 1

Speaking of reviews, and speaking of the busy man Nuno Lourenço, the very nice Mr. Lourenço informed me that he has just written a review of MIND Vol. 1. Read it at http://www.prognosis.com/MUSIC_DBCDInfo.asp?txtCDID=3602

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5) Get these CDs!

Let me recommend some of my CD favourites of 2005.

Italian jazz group [Actis Furioso](#) with their brand new CD Avanti Popolo! It is a brilliantly high energy-packed world jazz album performed with an outstanding sense of humour! Some very fine musicians play on this, amongst them our personal favourite Luca Calabrese. If you like the Art Ensemble of Chicago, you will LOVE Avanti Popolo! It's wild, it's crazy, it's fun and it's chock-full of music that will make you laugh, dance, shout, do cartwheels on the floor and push the repeat button on your CD player.

Mick Karn also happened to release one of my favourite records of last year, an EP called Love's Glove. Even though I know Mick's work quite well, I was impressed. This EP grooves, moves, interacts and lays back. As is expected, Mick's bass playing is unique and, as always, extraordinary. The music is very moody, suggestive and imaginative with a filmic quality to it. It comes very highly recommended indeed!

You should also get Tom Griesgraber's A Whisper in the Thunder, which many attendees at IB Expo did. This is a beautiful CD which features Tom's compositions and his top notch playing along with guesting drummers Jerry Marotta and Pat Mastelotto. Lyrical, at times haunting, always enjoyable!

Finally, get Marotta & Griesgraber's Waking the Day. Along with Tom's CD, this was selling like hot cakes at IB Expo. No wonder, since this is also a release of the very highest quality with great tunes, a fine production and some wonderful playing by Jerry, Tom and guests Harvey Jones and Tony Levin.

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6) 2006: IB's 30th anniversary

As many of you know very well, Isildurs Bane celebrate our 30th anniversary this year. We will celebrate this in several ways, some of which are still unfamiliar even to ourselves. We will all have to wait and see, won't we?

As a subscriber of this very newsletter, you will see interviews with current and former members of the band as well as some competitions, the first of which will go ahead next month. In our February newsletter, you will get the opportunity to win... ah, I am not telling you until next month.

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Go visit our website regularly! www.isildursbane.se
And Jonas' website: www.jonaschristophs.com
And my blog: thomasmusicology.blogspot.com/

Thomas Olsson
Newsletter editor

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