



Newsletter May 2006

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1) IB at the library

On Saturday, April 22, Isildurs Bane crowned a day celebrating the inauguration of a brand new library in Halmstad. And what a beautiful library it is! A perfect place for reading, listening to music and browsing amongst the treasures that can be found in a good library such as this. As it turned out, it was also an excellent place to play music. Speaking of turnouts, we were pleased to see a big crowd with many new faces enjoying the music!

The IB line-up of the day was Jonas, Mariette, "Gicken", Mats, Linnea and Kjell. Klas was busy elsewhere (see below). The setlist included some first live performances, including "Without Grace" and a brand new composition by Mariette called "I Wish I Could" as well as reliable crowd pleasers such as "Open" and "Celestial Vessel", the latter featuring our good friend Fredrik Davidsson on trumpet. A segment of the show was an improvisation accompanying Ulla Montan's photos of literary heavyweights. This created a nice contrast and showed the dynamics of the band really well while also being very tasty in its understated expressive moods.



From our point of view, it was obvious that the new library in Halmstad is a wonderful place for concerts. The acoustics are great, the backdrop of the river Nissan is lovely and the atmosphere is simply adorable. This simply must be a place for music in the future!

Here's a message from Mats:

A brand new fantastic library! Halmstad as a city is growing, and the council of Halmstad were so right when they decided to build a library in the centre of town stretching over the river Nissan with an amazing environment. Obviously, it was a great honour for IB to join in the celebrations and actually end the celebrations with a concert followed by fireworks. For our performance, we tried to adjust to a different audience and singular architecture.

Someone told me "You are becoming commercial", considering we have a fairly static setlist. What can I say, haven't we always been static? The idea for this concert was to show our musical width, just like a library has by its nature: different kinds of books, records, films, newspapers, magazines etc.

I can only second the chairman of the board of culture in Halmstad, Bjorn Lind, when he said "A library for the people of Halmstad, built by people from Halmstad!" He could have added that this can be a music venue for intimate concerts, at least that was on our minds when we chose to do the inauguration. We wanted to play in the heart of the library.

Our sound engineer, Jan Severinsson, was exuberant about the acoustics for electric music, so maybe we are on to something here?

During the seventies, there was lots of music in the old library (built in 1953). I recall hearing Samla Mamma's Manna, Flasket Brinner, Trad, Gras & Stenar and many more. I got some of my concert education from hearing bands play at the library. This is not only nostalgia talking; it is a fact that different art forms go together really well.

To paraphrase guitarist Robert Fripp: We start with the beginning (the library in Halmstad), then we do the end (the exhibition hall in Halmstad), and then we take care of the middle bit (Halmstad's 700th anniversary). There certainly are things to look forward to. Congratulations Halmstad!

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2) Klas in percussive world record

As I mentioned above, Klas unfortunately unable to join us at the library inauguration. He was playing in his hometown Varberg, where he performed on orchestral percussion on some interesting works, for instance his good friend Jerry Johansson's concert for sitar and orchestra.

Being a busy percussionist, Klas got up early on Sunday morning to get his equipment to go to Gothenburg to join 119 other percussionists in a performance of Jerker Johansson's Dances for Poseidon. The aim was not only to perform this work, but also to set a percussive world record. Yes, I kid you not. Here's Klas' report:

- It was really great to see Jerker again, it was a while ago. We toured together in Australia (and other places) with the Gothenburg Brass Band in 1988, and we were crowned world champions of brass band music. Trombone player Nils Landgren was the featured soloist on that tour.

Anyway, when we had set up all the percussion instruments at Gotaplatsen (outdoors, fittingly enough by the Poseidon statue in the centre of Gothenburg), it started raining! All the marimbas, vibraphones, glockenspiels, xylophones, bells, chimes, toms, drum kits, bass drums, snare drums, cymbals, tambourines, djembes and congas were soaked, but we hadn't come to Gothenburg to cancel the concert, so we went on and played despite the rain. Luckily, the rain staid away during the first half of the piece, after which some rain fell.

The gig was brilliant and it was really a gas to play in the middle of a percussive ocean. The level of intensity was huge and I was very proud with my percussive students who performed really well.

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3) The Voyage on the radio

Quality never goes out of fashion. This was proved by Swedish national radio on Wednesday, April 26 when channel two let loose the complete The Voyage: A Trip to Elsewhere. Yes, all the Picassiettes, the four Sagrada Familia pieces, "Nimis", "Das Junkerhaus" and, of course, the four works of the suite makes up "The Voyage". To lead the listeners into this musical journey, Mats was asked about this milestone in IB's history. Since the radio show was simultaneously broadcast on the Internet, the music was available to a whole world of listeners.

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4) Two nights of culture in Halmstad

IB will perform in Halmstad in September at the annual "Night of Culture". Only thing is, this year, there will be two nights: Friday, September 8 and Saturday, September 9. As of this writing, we have no idea which date IB will play, we have no idea which music will be performed, no idea where the performance will take place and no idea who will be in the line-up. But it will be a special night, as always.

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5) Back in Gouveia

For the third year running, IB have been represented at the wonderful Gouveia Art Rock festival in Portugal. Isildurs Bane played there in 2004, a magic concert that was released on DVD (still available through www.justforkicks.de, www.recordheaven.net and www.progcds.com if you haven't got it already). Last year, yours truly went to Gouveia to promote IB and lecture on the state of progressive rock today. This year, my lecture from 2005 was printed and sold to the audience. I also chaired a lively panel discussion on prog which was very appreciated according to reliable sources.



Even if I hadn't participated actively, I would have applauded this initiative. All too frequently, discussions on music aren't taken seriously or aren't even considered, but at this forward-thinking festival, the organizers are not interested in fetishizing the music or the artists, they are really into the music itself, the musicians' ideas and what makes them tick. For this, I salute you!

There was some great music at the festival too, of course: headliner Peter Hammill delivered a moving solo set; Matthew Parmenter also played a solo set which was a pleasant surprise for me not having heard any of his music before; Finnish world music act Alamaailman Vasarat were most entertaining and energetic with their Balkan-punk and positive attitude; and finally Present who steam-rolled the audience with their incredibly intense, dissonant and explorative exercises in music.

Apart from the music, the organizers have really understood the importance of the general feeling of the festival, the good-naturedness and the positive attitude that comes with the festival. I took great pleasure in meeting Peter Hammill, of course, but I also had a swell time speaking to IB newsletter subscriber Matthew Parmenter, Fix Sadler, Fred & his lovely family, Ze, Noca, Mario and last but certainly not least the wonderful people who make this festival work: Luis, Eduardo and Carlos. I can whole-heartedly recommend any true IB enthusiast to go to Gouveia in 2007. You will easily get your money's worth, trust me on this one small thing!

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6) Linnea and Mariette rewarded

Congratulations to Linnea and Mariette, who have both been awarded recently. Linnea received the Olof von Dalin-prize in April. This prize is given to a young person within the field of fine arts, and anyone who has heard Linnea play cello doesn't need any further explanations. Linnea told me she will reinvest the money into her music making one way or another.

Mariette applied for and received one of several grants awarded by the Swedish performance rights organization STIM. The money bought Mariette a lovely Fender Telecaster, clearly visible onstage at the library inauguration.

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7) IB Expo 2006

The planning for IB Expo 2006 is underway. We are looking at October for the concert, but details are yet to be finalized. For this year, we have decided to let people from abroad book tickets via e-mail, so start planning your trip to Halmstad, Sweden very soon. I can tell you that we are negotiating with some excellent names, and we will let you know more about IB Expo in our forthcoming newsletters. Stay tuned!

By the way, if you have suggestions for interesting musicians you would like to hear at forthcoming IB Expos, do drop me a line at thomas@isildursbane.se

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8) Christian Saggese learns a new instrument!

The other day, Christian Saggese (Metamorfosi Trio, super nice guy, monster guitarist and frequent IB collaborator) sent me an e-mail informing me that he will take up a new instrument in December: the double bass.

Why?

- I want to learn an orchestral instrument, and I don't like violin, viol, cello etc. The bass is the only instrument that I don't hate. In the future, I think it's very important to be able to play various instruments. Since I have perfect pitch, I think it will be possible for me to play the double bass well.

Guess who Christian's teacher will be? That's right, Franco Feruglio of Metamorfosi Trio! Who else?

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9) Otto is here!

And last but not least, my firstborn son, Otto, was born on April 27. Although being born seven weeks early, he is doing fine. Incidentally, the last thing I listened to before going to hospital was The Voyage: A Trip to Elsewhere. The other fathers of IB have told me parenthood will be a voyage indeed. I am looking forward to the trip!

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And Jonas' website: www.jonaschristophs.com

And my blog: thomasmusicology.blogspot.com/

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