



Newsletter September 2005

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1) Reactions on Songs from the Observatory

The reviews of our EP, Songs from the Observatory have started to drift in. It's great to read all the enthusiastic reactions! Here's a selection of quotes:

"['People are Afraid'] could easily run on any radio station. [...] I felt the urge to play it over and over again. [...] Highly recommended."

www.burnyourears.de

"Isildurs Bane is one of the most truly adventurous groups around, and has consistently produced high quality work, in a surprisingly wide-ranging variety of styles [...] In fact, this four track EP is a perfectly formed unit, with all of the tracks being enjoyable. [...] It's thoughtful stuff which should grow on you with repeated listens. [...] there is a lot of emotional depth here, and [Mariette] Hansson is a very persuasive singer [...] I can't wait to see what they serve up next."

Dave Sissons, www.dprp.net

"'People are Afraid' is really radio compatible, a slow ballad in 3/4, beautiful vocals, soft velvety clean electric guitars. You can put it on when your heart is aching."

www.heavyhardes.de

"Beautiful music [...] for fans of well-produced and extraordinarily orchestrated and arranged Art Pop with a slightly folkish tinge."

www.homeofrock.de

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2) ... and another reaction on MIND Vol. 5: The Observatory

"the band, supplemented by new recruits Mariette Hansson (guitar, vocals) and Linnea Olsson (cello, vocals), deliver 10 out of 16 tracks from Pass with a passion, commitment and instrumental dexterity that most bands can only dream of.

The central performance of vocalist Christof Jeppsson is utterly fantastic, sounding much in the mould of Peter Gabriel; he delivers a similarly deep and passionate performance of jaw-dropping, chill inducing intensity. The new girls are no mere window dressing either, Mariette in particular, really shining on her vocal spotlights. The DVD is worth the price for this concert footage alone, being a terrific rendition of a superb album, a must have for all I B fans. Highlights include Heal, Dark II, Rage and Cage.

The DVD also features several sizeable chunks of The Voyage, from a different performance at another venue, highlighting the band's dexterity and instrumental complexity [...]

It's hard to find fault with the music contained on The Observatory, it really is something special, with a magical quality which is exceedingly rare to find. [...] the DVD is superb, and should belong in the collection of all astute prog fans. Don't hesitate, get it today!
Dave Sissons, www.dprp.net

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3) What we did and what we listened to on our vacation

We have come to the end what is generally known as the summer here in Sweden. Even though the quicksilver is still up in the enjoyable regions, it is time to look back on the summer of 2005 and summarize what has happened and tell you what IB have listened to lately.

Klas: I have listened to Philip Glass' Symphony No. 2 & Symphony No. 3 a lot this summer. Really cool music I think. Apart from listening to Glass, I have been doing everything from pub gigs to teaching orchestral music at a summer camp.

I also played in the house band of a talk show. My friend Lasse Beicher (an actor) was hosting the show which featured Swedish celebrities such as author Joakim Pirinen, singer Sara Löfgren and actress Frida Hallgren. At every show, we had a "tourist of the week" to act as a sidekick. Former IB bassist Fredrik Janacek was one of the tourists. We took of with Joe Zawinul's "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" featuring an extended bass solo from Mr. Janacek. A fun project which will be continued.



In between these gigs, I have found some time to lay down some tracks with Nica Group. We have found a musical direction which feels just right with a different sound compared to our debut CD. Less horns and more of a trio feeling.

Jonas: I have been recording and playing a lot during the summer. My listening pleasures have consisted of:

Donny Hathaway – Live '73
Edgard Varèse
Maceo Parker – Live '74
Frank Zappa – The Yellow Shark
Flip Top – The Best of

Kjell: I have moved to a new flat, which involves a lot of things, but not necessarily a lot of music. But I have a top five list to accompany painting:

Van Morrison – A Night in San Francisco
Stan Getz – Bossa Nova
Pink Floyd – Animals
Arvo Pärt – Fratres
Weather Report – Live and Unreleased

Mats: This is what my iPod has been playing a lot. Almost exclusively.

Ensemble Modern – Plays Frank Zappa: Greggery Peccary & Other Persuasions
Frank Zappa (with Ensemble Modern) – The Yellow Shark
Fred Frith (with Ensemble Modern) – The Traffic Continues
Fred Frith – The Eleventh Hour
Daniel Lanois – Belladonna
Prince – N. E. W. S.

Ensemble Modern are a treat to listen to. Their interpretations are fantastic on every level: musically, artistically and soundwise. A pride of Frankfurt and Germany. The ensemble must be a great asset to the city's goodwill through their productions and tours all over the world. Visit their website at <http://www.ensemblemodern.com>

Fred Frith plays guitar in such a singular and anti-way that it makes you happy. A mix between the acoustic, the electric, samplings and improvisations is soothing for the soul.

Towards the end of the summer, I came across two instrumental albums by Daniel Lanois and Prince respectively. Great artists who aren't afraid to challenge the obvious and rest in the music itself.

Parallel to the listening I have read Knut Ståhlberg's book on De Gaulle. There are great similarities to my listening. A resistance of sorts on behalf of quality, freedom and visions!

Myself, I have been moving house, just like Kjell. Here's some music to put up bookshelves to:

Fred Frith – The Eleventh Hour
Eric Johnson – Bloom
Gary Husband – The Things I See
Peter Veermersch – De Oplosbare Vis
Sidsel Endresen & Bugge Wesseltoft – Duplex Ride

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4) Goodbye Robert Moog

On Sunday August 21st, the great musical inventor Robert Moog passed away at the age of 71. He had suffered from an inoperable brain tumour detected in April this year. At the age of 14, he built his first electronic instrument, a Theremin. In 1954, he started the company RA Moog with his father. The company sold Theremin kits for \$ 50 by mail order from their home.

While still selling Theremins, Moog studied electrical engineering and ended up earning a doctorate in engineering physics at Cornell University.

Moog's great deed for music was producing and marketing a relatively small – compared to the huge synthesizers that existed at the time – keyboard synthesizer. This happened in 1964.

The instrument was brought to prominence with Wendy Carlos' 1968 Grammy-winning album Switched-on Bach, and exposed to many by Keith Emerson (the first musician to take the Moog synthesizer on the road). The Minimoog quickly became a mainstay of progressive keyboardists all over the world.

In 1970, the Minimoog came out, but all of a sudden the bottom fell out of the market and Robert Moog had to sell his company and the rights to the Moog Music name. After a lengthy battle,

Moog reclaimed the rights to the Moog brand name in 2002. In the meantime, he had been doing business under the Big Briar name.

Mats has been using Robert Moog's products for many years. Here are Mats' thoughts on the remarkable man and his instruments.

Well, Bob Moog is a symbol of the synthesizer. It is sad to see him pass away at such an early age as 71, and even more so at a time when new products, like the Moogerfooger, are being developed.

I have obviously tried many of Moog's synthesizers. I am convinced that I have been a part of a historic period as far as the development of synthesizers are concerned.

To push down a key on a Moog synthesizer is something completely different from the simulated analog synths that are produced today. I am the proud owner of two Minimoogs, some Moogerfooger pedals and a Theremin signed by Robert Moog himself. I am convinced that his name will live forever. Him receiving the Polar Music Prize in 2001 proves it, if nothing else.



I bought my first Minimoog (serial number 13xxx) in 1978. It cost me 13 900 kronor (€ 1470 or \$ 1800). I got my second Minimoog (serial number 8xxx) in a shop when everybody else was getting a Yamaha DX7 and selling their analog synthesizers. This time, I paid 3000 kronor (€ 320 or \$ 390).

Bob Moog claimed that there aren't any differences in sound between these Moogs, but I beg to differ. I use them for different things. The sawtooth sounds are better sounding on the '78, while the older Minimoog has a more rounded and "out" expression. The oscillators are more stable on the newer synth. It is hard using them live, because they go out of tune all the time. But when I hooked one of them up with a common guitar tuner I could tune it just before going on stage. I recommend turning the Minimoog on and never turning it off. That way, it is always nice and warm, but most importantly, the tuning is more reliable.

Using the pitch wheel can lead to any result nowadays. You can easily end up a quarter note off. I try to keep them in reasonable shape by servicing them and turning the pots so that they don't oxidize. You have to! They are thirty years old after all.

Mats "MP" Persson is currently the godfather for one of my Minimoogs, because I haven't got time for them both. With a bit of luck they may end up on one of his productions.

I have used the Minimoog since the late 70's and still uses the instrument. I was restrictive in using them for a while simply because the Moog is such a personal instrument. It's easy to get stuck in a 70's rut whatever you do with them. Lately I have been experimenting a bit more with them and I realize what amazing machines they are. Timeless really. It is in the way that you use them.

A Minimoog will always be a part of my productions as long as the red pilot light is glowing. Even if the oscillators break down you can still use it as a marvellous filter!

When the Moogerfoogers (filter, delay, ring modulator etc.) went into production, it meant that handmade quality products started making inroads on the market. Bob Moog always represented quality. There are two good filters, Mutator and Akai MFC 42. Both of them analog filters of high quality, no doubt about it, but they don't sound like a Moog, and why should they? Most of the time it's a matter of taste, but Moog is a name that will live on a long time after the last Minimoog has met its maker.

Thanks for all the fun I have had with your lifetime achievements Bob!

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5) New book on Viking Dahl

On October 8th, the very day that Swedish composer Viking Dahl would have celebrated his 110th birthday, a brand new book on his life will hit the shelves.

Written by Agneta Dahl, this book is long overdue. Ten years ago, when it would have been appropriate to celebrate Dahl's 100th birthday, nothing happened. No one noticed.

Let's hope it will be different this time. More news on this next month! In the meantime, go and dig out MIND Vol. 2 and listen to The Asylum!

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6) A new CD

A new CD featuring Mats' compositions for film and theatre productions will be released later this year. Everything is more or less done. It is still unclear under which name this CD will be released, but it will be well worth your wait!

The music is culled from stage performances, radio and TV work. Among the authors of the plays are August Strindberg, Kristina Lugn, Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt, Charles Dickens, H. C. Andersen and P-O Enquist.

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7) A new DVD?

IB will take a closer look at the archives with the possibility of relasing a DVD of older material (Live in Budapest from 1988 for instance). Maybe fragments from the Cheval project (from 1989) can make it onto such a DVD? Maybe parts of the concert with the Umeå Symphony Orchestra? We are currently reviewing the material. More information in forthcoming newsletters.

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8) A new work

To answer a very frequent question that many of you have asked, here's what we have planned for the future.

Mats has started working on a new work. Most likely, it will be a work for IB plus a chamber orchestra consisting of between 20 and 30 musicians. Since he has thought about it for some time, work is already underway. Naturally, it will be publicly released in time (perhaps as a combined CD/DVD). This is to be regarded as the main alternative. Mats adds that "it will not necessarily be released under the IB name. Only time will tell."

The work is believed to be premiered in 2007, but will be performed by different line-ups and smaller units before that. Just like the Cheval project. We hope to collaborate with different European orchestras. We aim high... and then we'll see what happens.

Any thoughts, ideas or contacts are appreciated, as always!

Mats has also composed six songs which may or may not be used in a forthcoming production. But these ideas have been put on hold. They could be a part of the orchestral work.

Oh, and parts of MIND Vol. 1 will be orchestrated.

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Thanks for reading!

Thomas Olsson
Newsletter editor

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