

Bazar Blå – Growing up

The start,

Johan and Björn met in 1994. Soon after, they found themselves touring all over the USA with singer-songwriter, model - later *Fifth Element* and *Million Dollar Hotel* actress - Milla Jovovich. In dressing rooms, lobbies, hotel rooms, airports and tour-busses across more than 40 states, Johan and Björn spent every free minute creating a never before heard repertoire for nyckelharpa and electric bass. Back in Sweden they met Fredrik - the perfect percussion partner - and formed Bazar Blå.

In 1997 – electricity was finally installed in a small cottage belonging to Björn’s family. Located just outside a tiny village, by a lake in the middle of the Swedish woods, it turned out to be the perfect setting for music. Bazar Blå packed a van full with instruments and recording equipment and turned the place into a very unlikely studio. One week and thousands of mosquito bites later they had recorded “NORDIC CITY”.



The album and their very colorful live performances became instant classics that made critics write things like:

"Probably the coolest Swedes right now!"

Many years later tourists were found, amongst moose and other creatures, searching for the studio where “NORDIC CITY” was recorded..

The early years,

During the first years of regular touring in Scandinavia, Bazar Blå became experts in the game of “finding space for yet another instrument”. At first it only applied to whichever car they happened to get but soon also applied to the stages they played! The percussion set-up boomed, an acoustic bass-guitar and a second nyckelharpa – the crocodile – was added and the music developed.

The second CD “TRIPFOLK” was recorded under similar conditions as the first but with even more extravagant ideas about production possibilities. The result was a lot of sonic and stylistic experiments. Half of it was recorded – thanks to quite a lot of meringue, cream, vanilla ice and chocolate sauce - in a cottage belonging to Johan’s family. To finish, they went back to the first “studio” .. and the mosquitoes.



TRIPFOLK opened doors to even more international settings and in 2003 Bazar Blå were selected to perform at WOMEX in Seville. They used the occasion to release “LIVE”, and their showcase resulted in a notable invitation to performances in Iran spring 2004. Truly some of the most remarkable concerts Bazar Blå ever played, they were also the start of a personal friendship and professional collaboration that has grown stronger ever since. Two live tracks later appeared on the Hermes Records release “SPRING IN NIAVARAN”



International touring automatically meant scaling down instrumentation to comply with ever changing baggage-rules of airlines. Triggered by such limitations, but more importantly by an interest to

get closer to the Swedish roots, the music developed in a more acoustic - yet typically Bazar Blå'ish way. "NYSCH" became the title track of a repertoire closely related to tradition but with at least one foot half way out the door towards new adventures.

Lost,

Around what should have been Bazar Blå's tenth anniversary the members were scattered all over Europe. Björn lived in Switzerland, Fredrik in Spain/ Italy and Johan in the countryside of Sweden. At the same time there were many things beside the trio demanding attention as well as much insecurity about management and how to develop.



Some things remained unquestioned. The strong personal and musical ties between them and the joy of making music together - every time there was still magic. This slowly materialised into a new repertoire and again a car full of instruments and equipment was packed. This time the recordings took place in a lovely backyard shed outside Stockholm but some surprises were on the way.



Just before Björn wanted to start the final mixing of the album thieves broke in to his home and stole all the recorded material – originals as well as backups. For a while this seemed to be the end of

Bazar Blå. Time, energy, budget and even the music was .. lost ..

However, left in the car of a friend, there was a single, forgotten copy of the rough mixes they made each night during the recordings. Luckily these mixes turned out to be very close to ideal and could be saved with a bit of quite creative mastering. "LOST" was finally released and was nominated for the main Folk/Worldmusic award in Sweden - *Release of the year* and *Group of the year* at Folk och Världsmusikgalan 2009. A great honour after such adventures!



Life...

Recent years have seen Fredrik more or less constantly on tour with a flamenco dance-company all over Switzerland and Germany but also performing with Algerian singer Karima Nayt. Johan has been playing extensively with folk music legend Pelle Björnliert and Esbjörn Hazelius and has settled down in a village with 70 inhabitants, where he has built a beautiful studio. Björn has been on many roads with ECM recording artists Anouar Brahem and Nik Bärtsch RONIN, helped create a cultural centre in Bern and done many productions with *bazaarpool*, the label and musicians network he started together with his wife and harp-player Asita Hamidi. Needless to say time has been limited and the end of Bazar Blå has been discussed many times.

However, not so long ago Bazar Blå had some very important live experiences that once again proved that the original musical magic is still alive and highly addictive. Touched and inspired by these events the three have decided to start yet another chapter.

2016 will be their 20 year anniversary and this time they will definitely celebrate - with a new album and a fully new repertoire!!

