

international stars, like John Scofield, Mike Stern, and Robben Ford. Basically, I practiced a lot, played a lot, and listened to all kinds of music.

3. Please let me know about the jazz scene in Norway.(now and then)

I don't really know how to give a brief history of Norwegian jazz. In general, I think Norwegian jazz has always been more focused on originality and personal expression, rather than equilibristic playing within an established style. In that sense, for instance Sweden or Denmark has had larger communities, and better trained musicians in traditional american jazz music. I will try to give a short impression, based on my own experience: Before I had any first-hand experience, there had been a golden age in the '70's, with Jan Garbarek, Karin Krog, and other great musicians. When I started going to jam sessions, and playing at clubs, the fusion craze had completely taken over the bigger stages. In the mid '80's, we still had a few smaller, traditional jazz clubs, with great musicians playing over standards and originals. In the mid/late 1990's, several Norwegian artists had great success combining improvisation and electronics/DJ-ing. The most famous of these were Bugge Wesseltoft and Nils Petter Molvær. A little later, we had a vital environment around the club BLÅ, with free improvised music, often very inspired by 60's John Coltrane or 70's Miles Davis. This gave great opportunities for many young artists and bands, like Jaga Jazzist, Paal Nilssen-Love, Ingebrigt Flaten a.o. Jazz education in Norway has been the starting point for many bands. For many years, the only place to receive an education in jazz performing was the conservatory in Trondheim. Many norwegian bands have started their careers from this institution, some of the more famous are Farmer's Market, and Come Shine. The Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, where I work, has also educated some very successful musicians, like Solveig Slettahjell, and the band Shining. After 2000, the whole scene has become more professional, and much more commercial. I think the term "jazz" has lost much of it's ability to describe a musical genre. In Norway, anything from pop music to contemporary classical is now labelled jazz. I can easily live with this, but dividing music into categories in terms of genre has definitely become more difficult. I think the impro scene in Norway is quite special. After great pioneers like Per Jørgensen, Frode Gjerstad, and Sidsel Endresen cleared the way, free improvisation is now something that is a natural part of education for any young musician, even to a greater extent than the American songbook tradition. Like most countries, Norway also has many musicians who studied in the US, in institutions like Berklee, and who has become very skillfull players. Saxophone players Bendik Hofseth and Petter Wettre, or guitarists like Lage Lund or Jacob Young all studied in the US, and has enjoyed some level of international recognition. These four also succeeded in creating highly personal musical expressions.

4. Please let me know about your activities these years.

After high school I started studies in Copenhagen, back in 1987. The Rhythmic Conservatory was a brand new institution at the time, and there was nothing like it in Norway. Here, I received lessons from great musicians like Atilla Engin, Ole Koch Hansen, Butch Lacy, and Alex Riel. Guitar teachers were Karsten Houmark, Bjarne Roupé and Mikkel Nordsø. I also took guitar lessons from Staffan William-Olsson, who is a fantastic guitarist, and probably the best teacher I ever had.

During my education, I played in several bands in many different styles. In addition to all kinds of jazz music, I played in cover bands, and also hard rock bands. This allowed me to develop my

technique, and I regard it as a very important influence to me. Of, course, I practiced a lot by myself.

After my education ended, I moved back to Norway in 1992. Here, I started playing with a large number of ever changing session bands, but I also worked with more regular trio and duo settings, playing at small cafés and clubs.

I also participated in new wave rock projects, like DePress, and avantgarde jazz projects, like Søyrr and Fourth Pole.

For quite some time, I mixed freelance playing, composing/arranging and teaching. Composing has always been important to me, and arranging can also be crucial, even in music that is mainly improvised. In the 1990's I worked a lot with big band music, mostly with my own compositions in fairly traditional formats. I also worked with more avant-garde stuff, both composed, and improvised.

In retrospect, I can see that I never really participated fully in ongoing movements. For instance, when fusion was big, I played mostly avantgarde and free jazz. After free improvised music became the new mainstream, I experimented with alternative structure in my own music. This has not been out of a wish to protest or oppose to any contemporary movement, I just enjoy more to do something that has a potential to surprise, or stick out.

In addition to my activities in Norway, I have played a lot in Holland, in various settings with bass player Thomas Winther Andersen. His band Line Up included American saxophone player Jimmy Halperin, who is one of the more prominent performers from the Tristano school. For our first release, we also had Dutch drummer legend John Engels, who you might have heard on Chet Baker's record "Live in Tokyo".

I still do projects with Thomas. Our main cooperation project right now is the band Winther-Storm. In this quartet, we mix a lot of different styles and influences, and try to develop it into something new. Our release "Patchwork" from 2010 has had some success in Europe, and we are releasing the follow-up "Spinnaker" in Europe, October 2012.

Lately, I have worked with solo projects. In addition to the acoustic work you can hear on Zinober, I experiment with effects and noise music. It's amazing how many new great sounding, and affordable, effects you can find now, compared to two decades ago.

5. Who are your favorite musicians?

I always liked to listen to music that is completely different from what I do myself. For a while, I was very into ethnic music, checking out pygmé chant, gamelan music and such. I like singers a lot, like Joni Mitchell, Björk, and Chet Baker. Also, I have been very interested in rhythm, and West African and Caribbean music was important to me for some time. I used to like Irakere and Chucho Valdez.

As an instrumentalist, I guess I have pretty much the same influences as most other jazz guitarists. Of course, I listened a lot to Wes Montgomery, John Scofield, John McLaughlin, Pat Metheny etc. A major influence from my early playing was Andy Summers from The Police, and different rock/funk players. I also tried to play like Eddie Van Halen and Steve Vai, but I was never really able to play that smooth.

Other major jazz influences are Lennie Tristano, Bill Evans, and Keith Jarrett. These piano players have the great ability to make their instrument sing, in very different ways.

My role models in the 1980's, and also later, were mainly teachers, rock musicians, and historical figures, more than performing jazz artists. I have found a lot of interesting concepts and ideas in classical music, as well.

6. How many times have you been in Japan? (I think 3 times and this autumn) and what your Japan tours were and your impression.

My first Japan tour was in 2003. I played with several big bands, including Akira Nonomura's Global Jazz Orchestra in Osaka. I played with various combo formats, including a gig at Tokyo TUC with Yoshihiko Katori, Akira Omori, and other fantastic players. The tour was something like 8 concerts in 10 days, every day with a new group. Sometimes the schedule had a clinic or workshop in the day time, so it was a pretty busy week. When I had some time off, I went sightseeing to Kyoto. One of the clinics was at the Kunitachi Academy. This was my first time in Japan, and I was totally amazed by all the different impressions. The tour was organized by Mr. Yosuke Kurosaka, who also followed me around as a tour manager. He has organized my other Japan tours, as well.

In 2008, I played 3 gigs in Japan. Among other things, I played a duo gig with piano player Ken'ichiro Shinzawa, and I was very impressed by his unique sensitivity and touch, as well as his great compositions.

My last visit to Japan was in 2009. On this tour, I especially remember the "guitar battle" gig with Japanese guitarist Yoshiaki Miyanoue. He is a great player with his own special style. His style is quite different from mine, but I think we made a good match. I also did a cosy gig with pianist Akane Noguchi, who I will play with again this time. This is the first time I play more than once with a Japanese musician, and it will be interesting to see if our interaction has developed.

Japan has always been a very pleasant experience to me, and so far I have only nice memories from my visits to Japan. I played with some world-class musicians, as well as student bands. Japanese hospitality and kindness is very easy to like, and I also enjoy Japanese food very much. One interesting thing is the extremely modern, almost futuristic, environment, in combination with the highly present tradition. Japan has so many people, and such a unique history. There is nothing similar anywhere else in the world.

7. Pls. let me know the characteristic of each album which you released as a leader ever.

*My 2004 album "**canned second**" is a trio/quartet album. It contains 7 of my own compositions, and 4 standards/covers. It represents some of the music I was into at that time. Some of the originals were meant to be performed by a singer. At that time I had worked with singers Solveig Sletthjell and Beate Lech, and none of them could make the session. I am quite happy with the result, though. This album is the most straight forward of my releases, more or less within a mainstream American jazz idiom.*

*My 2006 release "**Matsukaze**" is a big band album. I play a couple of solos, but my main role is composer/conductor. This album is an example of my more experimental/modern big band work, and it didn't sell much. It consists of two long form compositions. The first, *Ourobouros*, is in mirror format. The eleven pieces, or movements, are alternately composed/improvised. #1 is #11 backwards, #2 and #10 are improvised, #3 is #9 backwards, and so forth. The second piece, "*Matsukaze*" is based on a sequel of numbers, all adding up to 11. These numbers is the fundament for both rhythm, harmony, and melody for the whole piece, which consists of four movements. These techniques contribute to a very consistent form, but you might argue that the method is a quite theoretical way of composing. The title for "*Matsukaze*" is inspired by the Japanese Noh play of the same title, but also by one of several poetic interpretations of the word, which I was told could be understood as the sound of water boiling during a traditional Japanese tea ceremony, or "wind in the pine trees".*

My 2010 album "**Patchwork**" is with the band Winther-Storm, which I already mentioned. Jokingly we call this project a fusion band, but it is really a mix of acoustic and electric improvised music, with influences from the whole history of jazz. Every tune has its own identity, and focus is very much on band energy.

My 2012 album "**Zinober**" is part of my solo project. It's only me and my guitars, playing some of my own compositions, as well as some free improvisation.

Also, I release the brand new album "**Spinnaker**" these days. This is the follow-up of the "Patchwork" album, and maybe the only follow-up I will ever make. The Winther-Storm project has developed through extensive playing during the last couple of years, and we are very proud of this new album.

8. About "Zinober". this is "Solo". You express very beautiful world of music.

What inspired you to make this excellent recording? (very different style than other recordings)

Thank you. This was an experiment for me, since I have never done an entire solo project before. Of course, I have played solo pieces, intros, and cadenzas, but normally as a variation in an ensemble setting. A whole concert or recording with only guitar is a totally different concept. My focus as a performer has often been very much on timing, and interaction with other band members. When you play totally alone these parameters change, allowing other musical elements to come through with greater clarity. I learned a lot working with this project, and I still do. On this album, I play seven different guitars. Most pieces are one acoustic guitar only. On four of the 15 tracks I use overdubs. I can do the same thing live with a loop recorder. On a couple of tracks I use effects, like E-bow, talkbox, and the Vibesware Guitar resonator. All these effects work well on acoustic guitars. Many guitar players could probably find interest in the various playing techniques and guitars I use. My reason for these choices are all musically motivated. Emphasis on this album is very much on sound quality and sound variation, a topic I usually have not given much attention. The recording was made in only one day at famous Rainbow Studio in Oslo, with legendary sound engineer Jan Erik Kongshaug.

9. Those songs in Zinober are improvisations?

Some of the tracks are totally improvised on the spot. Some are thoroughly composed, but all tracks contain improvisation, and all compositions are composed with improvisation as the main tool. I did not write down one single note on paper during the work with this project. To me, improvisation is the most natural method to approach an instrument or a piece of music. The concept of improvisation has lately become institutionalized, and something very academic. I feel that the rhetorics around improvisation in jazz, at least in Norway, sometimes completely loses contact with reality. Not long ago I heard a statement by a music professional that Charlie Parker hardly improvised, and among young players it seems to be a common understanding that improvised music is "free" from every framework or concept whatsoever. To me, this is a complete misunderstanding, and it often results in some pretty uninteresting music.

10. Pls. let me know the way to enjoy "Zinober" more!

Well, I guess the best way is to sit back and try to enjoy the music. More than once, if you can find the time. When I was a teenager, I had LP's and cassettes that were literally worn out after hundreds of repeated playings. This is something I rarely do anymore, but I still think some types of music require to be repeated to get the full listening experience. Play it through proper equipment, and get rid of any disturbances.

11. you play many kind of guitars in this CD according to your website.

I introduce them in this interview. which one is your main guitar?

All the guitars on this album, and several others, have been main guitars of mine for long or short periods of time. When I travel, I usually bring my Gibson ES-335 Custom. It's a 2008 model, so it could easily be replaced, should anything bad happen to it. Set up with .011 strings, this guitar is also very versatile. It sounds great for all styles of jazz, and you can easily pull off some rock or blues licks, if necessary.

12. Do you think what will happen in your Japan tour this time?

Mr. Kurosaka has set me up with seven or eight different gigs this time, with probably six different groups. I play a few concerts in Osaka with guitarist Jesse Forest. I think we will play some duo, and trio with a bass player at the Minami Jazz Walk. After that, I'm off to Hakodate, to do a clinic and gig at the Hakodate Mirai Daigaku. I have never been to Hokkaido before, so that will be exciting. After one day off/travel, I play at Tokyo TUC jazz club with Koichi Osamu on bass, and Kazumi Ikenaga on drums. I heard some of their work on the internet, and I was really impressed. The next gig will be at Kamome Jazz Club in Yokohama, with pianist Akane Noguchi and her trio. I played with them in 2009, so for this gig I feel quite confident. The last concert will be at Rakuya, with yourself and me playing guitar together, in a quartet without a bass. That will be a challenge, and definitely something new to me.

For most of these events, I don't know much of what will happen beforehand. Maybe we will exchange some originals or arrangements up front, play some standards, or just jam. I try to keep an open mind, and welcome anything that comes along. For this kind of work, it's important to not get too much into definite ideas before the actual gig, to be able to relate to anything that might happen on the spot. Still, it's always nice to make appropriate preparations. If you are going to play standards, it's a good idea to exchange a few titles before the gig, so you have a chance to play tunes a little outside the jamsession repertoire. This is my fourth tour with this kind of scheme, and I was never dissapointed yet. I feel that I can trust Yosuke Kurosaka to find musicians that make a good match, and a good challenge, to me.

13. What is the indentity of the guitarist "Hakon Storm"?

Now, that is something I would like to know. I used to think that I could express my personality and emotions through music, but usually I ended up feeling misunderstood. I think one of the characteristics of music as an art form, is that it is abstract by nature. Other art forms, like literature, sculpture, or even dance, require interpretation and understanding from the audience in a way that is quite different from music. My experience is that a lot of people will understand what I tell them when I play, but they will all understand it differently. That is one of the magic aspects of music. It could also be a spell if you don't accept it, trying to communicate a very specific message.

However, the music I grew up with was rock, folk songs, and funk music. In a way that is my backbone. As a performing guitarist, the style I have played at the largest number of concerts, is definitely american main stream jazz and bebop. So that is a very important part of my background. For most of my own projects, I have tried to find something unique, and frankly, I often enjoy the process just as much as the result. So, I guess my answer is that my identity as a guitarist is a mixture of my different experiences, combined with what I am trying to achieve at the moment. The variation in musical styles carries a value in itself. In that sense, the journey itself is often more important than the destination, to me personally.