



Dan Berglund & Magnus Öström: Artistry In Rhythm, by Arturo Mora and Sergio Cabanillas

Six years after their first appearance in Vitoria's Jazz Festival, E.S.T. (Esbjörn Svensson Trio) reconquered the stage of Teatro Principal. Just after the concert finished Arturo Mora and Sergio Cabanillas talked to the band's rhythm section: bassist Dan Berglund and drummer Magnus Öström. The tour, Vitoria, technology and other bands were discussed among lots of laughs.



*Magnus Öström, Arturo Mora,
Dan Berglund*

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ARTURO MORA: How is the current tour going?

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: It's great, it's fantastic. A lot of people showing up.

ARTURO MORA: How do you feel about playing in Vitoria again?

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: It's fantastic. I remember the first time especially, when we played before Pat [Metheny]...

SERGIO CABANILLAS: Actually, you played here the first time, in this theater, the second time you played in the big auditorium before Pat.

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: Oh, yes. Anyway it's fantastic to come back.

ARTURO MORA: You have a lot of percussion elements in your drum kit. What makes you choose a certain element to join your set?

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: I don't know, I like different sounds, and if I like something I just put it in there. Maybe sometimes something sounds in your head that you want to have in a certain song, then you try to find it. That's the way it is.



Dan Berglund

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ARTURO MORA: Dan, why do you play sitting down? Is it to use the effect pedals?

DAN BERGLUND: Just to be in the same level as Magnus and Esbjörn, and because pedals are easier to use that way.

ARTURO MORA: How did you start incorporating these effects into your sound?

DAN BERGLUND: I don't know, I've been playing bass since I was

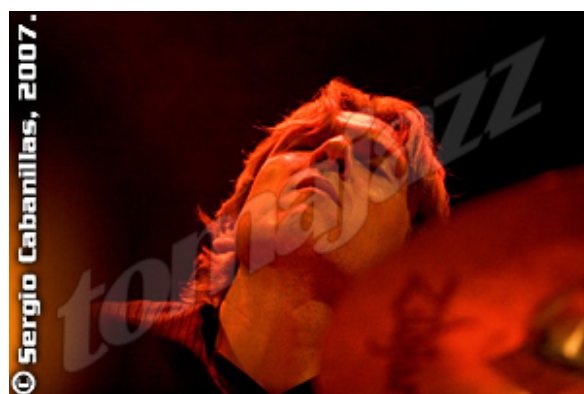
young, I used some effects at the electric bass. I tried some distortion, fuzz pedal, and it works with other effects as delay, and I started using this Pod. At first I had a red one, like Esbjörn.

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: So the only thing you changed was the bass [laughs].

DAN BERGLUND: It took some while until I dared to use that on a jazz... on the double bass, you know, [sarcastically] “on a jazz band”.

ARTURO MORA: I’ve seen you play with a Hartke 4-speaker amp, with an EBS combo and with a Gallien-Krueger combo. Do you have a favourite amplifier?

DAN BERGLUND: I like Eden, great sound.



Magnus Öström

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ARTURO MORA: You both are players with a very distinctive, easy-to-recognize sound. Did this sound evolve personally or was it because of the evolution of E.S.T. as a band?

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: I don’t know. In a way I think, I have to speak for myself, but maybe it’s the same for both, that it came from the beginning, because we did always sound like we do now, but I think we got braver and braver to express ourselves in music. When you start playing you try to play like someone

else that you like, you try to fit in, until you just say: "I'm just playing, this is who I am". Then you're doing the personal thing that you already had.

Of course it develops in certain situations like E.S.T., this band that really can develop it. It's not easy to use distortion if you play ballads with a vocalist.

SERGIO CABANILLAS: Does Ake Linton have something to do with that evolution in the sound, in finding your own resources?

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: I don't know, no, I don't think so, in a way...

SERGIO CABANILLAS: It's a tricky question. [laughs]

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: No, no, it's a good question [laughs]. In a way he has, I think he is the best sound engineer in the world, especially live, I've never heard that sound. In every concert his sound is magic, I don't know how he does it, so in a way he has, because he can get a high level, so we can put out more energy and more sounds, so he has allowed us to do it. He's extremely important for the group and for each of us to hear each other in the way we do, so we can express ourselves in that environment.



Magnus Öström & Dan Berglund
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ARTURO MORA: Dan, you recorded for the band Koop...

DAN BERGLUND: [doubts] Yeah, I just played some bass [laughs].

ARTURO MORA: Do you have plans for playing more in that style of music?

DAN BERGLUND: I did one tune on their latest album, but I don't do that kind of music myself.

ARTURO MORA: What part do you play in E.S.T.'s compositional process?

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: It starts with Esbjörn, he writes the tune and then we together start to develop it. Sometimes we do nothing, because the tune is great, sometimes we propose some points: "we should shorten the bridge", "maybe we should do that", of course the grooves, maybe he [Dan Berglund] picks up the bass line, you know, we start to arrange it.

ARTURO MORA: In terms of form, riffs, ...

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: ...and groove, yeah.

ARTURO MORA: ...more than in melody and harmony.

DAN BERGLUND: Yeah.



Magnus Öström

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ARTURO MORA: I've noticed that your position on the stage never changes: Esbjörn on the left, Dan in the middle and Magnus on the right.

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: It looks good on the picture [laughs]. The main thing we look for is being very tight together, this is very important.

ARTURO MORA: Being able to see each other...

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: Yeah, but we don't look at each other, maybe sometimes. But it's a feeling, an energy, we are one.

DAN BERGLUND: You can hear the instruments much better, of course.

SERGIO CABANILLAS: Is it sort of a club feeling?

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: Yes, it's like being in a living room while we are on a stage.

ARTURO MORA: E.S.T. is now one of the top bands in the European jazz scene, and it's starting to be a reference for upcoming bands. Does this imply a higher responsibility for you?

DAN BERGLUND: No.

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: I think it's just amazing that it is like that, because I'm still in the position that I'm 13 or 14 and I'm still looking at the old guys, Jack DeJohnette, whoever, so many great guys. So of course it's extremely flattering that people look at this band like that, because I can't see myself in that position, I'm still in the beginning just inside myself.

ARTURO MORA: Dan, do you agree with that?

DAN BERGLUND: Yes, of course, I'm still fourteen years old [laughs].

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: Yeah, but it's really amazing that people looks at us this way.

SERGIO CABANILLAS: Even in the USA, many people read the Down

Beat cover (1).

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: That was fantastic, but we'll see.



Dan Berglund

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ARTURO MORA: What kind of music do you usually listen to? Mainly jazz or any other things?

DAN BERGLUND: I almost never listen to jazz [laughs]. I listen to hard rock music, old stuff like Black Sabbath and Deep Purple, and newer like Nine Inch Nails. I listen a lot to different music, I listened the new album from Björk, and I liked it.

SERGIO CABANILLAS: Do you like progressive rock, bands like Dream Theater?

DAN BERGLUND: No, not really. My brother's son is kind of into that.

ARTURO MORA: Magnus, do you listen to rock too?

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: Yes, I think I listen to every kind of music actually. I'm really happy I'm still open to all these different styles. I listen a lot to a guy called Smog from the US, and Wilco. In the jazz field I listen to Bill Frisell.

ARTURO MORA: After the tour ends, which are the next plans for E.S.T.? Is there a new recording?

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: Well, it might be official, we don't really know, but we'll tell you, you can say that you heard it somewhere [laughs]: we're gonna release a live album.

ARTURO MORA: New tunes?

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: No, from this tour.

ARTURO MORA: Will you record a specific date or the material will be chosen from various concerts?

MAGNUS ÖSTRÖM: No, it's already recorded, it's just one day, one concert, no editing.

(1) E.S.T were featured in Down Beat's cover on May 2006. It was the first time an European jazz band appeared on Down Beat's cover ever.



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