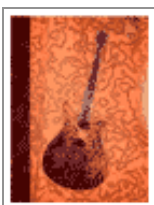


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## Frode goes Forte...



The "Bangkok Rock Report" column by Benny White

They say 'practice makes perfect' and I believe that most people would agree. I also believe few would argue when I say there are those who have been dealt a card with "that little extra". They don't come often but every once in a great while do we come across the ones who just simply sit a pinhole higher; naturally gifted artists who have the ability to stun an audience every time they go on stage.

Bangkok was just paid a visit by one of those rare musicians. I'm referring to Norwegian guitarist Frode Barth, an individual with a natural buzz and an aura of musical abilities that seem to bring him right to the centre of attention whenever he grabs his 'axe'.



Barth received his training at the renowned Barratt-Dues Music Conservatory and the Department of Musicology at the University of Oslo. He completed his post graduate studies in London under

guitarist/composer John W. Duarte and in Havana, Cuba under guitarist/composer Leo Brouwer. He has also studied in New York under bass-player/composer Reggie Workman as well as having played alongside and worked with such greats as Oscar Peterson and Chet Baker.

He was personally invited by Chet Baker to join him for a private jam session, a jam that ended up lasting four hours! "Playing with Baker totally changed my views. It was like he unlocked the door to an entire universe of music for me. I've always been inspired by Miles Davis and Beethoven but playing with Baker revolutionized everything - an unbelievable experience."

Barth has produced several commissioned works, released numerous CD-recordings, performed at international festivals, guest appeared on several TV and radio shows and composed an impressive catalogue of nearly 400 works ranging from stage-music, jazz compositions, pop/rock songs to movie sound tracks. He has been a member of NOPA (Association of Norwegian Composers and Librettists) since 1990 and now performs regularly internationally as a soloist.

His music has brought him international recognition and frequently brings him from one corner of the globe to another. If it isn't Asia, it's either Cuba, Brazil or the U.S.

He was recently in Indonesia where he, as a part of the Norwegian response to the anniversary of the Bali bomb attacks 2002, performed his newly written piece "The Circus Is in Town" (for more info. see [www.circus-against-terror.com](http://www.circus-against-terror.com)).

After a well received performance in Bali, an event covered by local as well as international media, Barth decided to pay the Land of Smiles a visit. "I was here nine years ago and have nothing but great memories so I really wanted to come back. Actually, I've wanted to come back here for a long time, I just haven't had the time. I've been too busy recording and touring."

To prove his claim to fame we decided to visit some nightclubs in the city hoping there would be musicians kind enough to let this "maestro" give it a go. As we popped from venue to venue (including Tokyo Joe's, The Music Café and Radio City), Barth had jaws drop, heads spin and people cheer when he showed them what a true master of his craft is capable of.

The manager of Radio City has had his share of visiting guitar players strap it on and try to bring the crowd onboard with limited success.

“I’ve got to tell you, for as long as I’ve been here, I have seen visiting musicians by hundreds coming in wanting to jam but I have never, ever seen anything like this guy. He’s one of those musicians you know that sometime in the future when he’s referred to you’re gonna say - I met that guy”.

“All I want to do is give people some good music and paint a smile on their faces,” says Barth with a grin.

He writes for performance arts too and tells us: “To me music and motion are irrevocably linked. When I compose or play I see pictures, colors and movement in more or less concrete situations, dependent on the musical context.

“I’ve always been interested in how music can influence and enhance movement in dance, theater and film. Because of this I find great satisfaction in working with musical drama.

“To me there is music in all kinds of movement, and it isn’t always appropriate to destroy the movement by smothering it with music that is not its own. Maybe that’s why silence is such a powerful sound. Precisely because there is music even in the silence of movement.”

See this artist’s web site [Frode Barth](#) and if you missed him this time, rest assured, he will be back to paint a smile on your face too...!

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