Drummer Gjert Hermansen talking about the Norwegian band Trojka



»Mix classic prog with modern pop, dreamy jazz and add Norwegian vocals – then you have an idea about what Trojka is«

"I speilvendthet" is another good example for a typical, unpredictable Norwegian release from Apollon Records – so we needed to know more about this band. Drummer *Hermansen* provided some interesting information.

Zur deutschen Übersetzung des Interviews
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**Would you please provide some key information on TROJKA?
Is it a band or a short-time project?**

Trojka is a prog-pop trio consisting of *Simon Kverneng* (bass guitar & vocals), *August Riise* (keyboards/synths & vocals) and *Gjert Hermansen* (drums/percussion & vocals).
The three of us have been playing together for more than 10 years (since pre high school), but released our debut album as

Trojka, “I speilvendthet”, in February 2017.

Which bands or musicians had most influence on your music?

Our greatest heroes are the prog rock legends who paved the way in the late 60’s/early 70’s: YES, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, King Crimson, Rush, Genesis, Pink Floyd and others – but we are often equally inspired by more contemporary pop/rock, jazz, alternative, fusion, electronica etc.

How would you describe your music in just one sentence?

Combine the adventurousness and power of classic prog rock with the catchiness of modern pop, mix in a decent dose of dreamy jazz and top it up with poetic, sometimes quirky, lyrics in Norwegian – and you have Trojka!

Is Trojka a studio-only project or do you also play live? If yes, any chances to see you live in Germany/Netherlands/Belgium one day?

We play quite a lot live! We’ve probably played 30+ gigs in our hometown Bergen, as well as in Oslo, Trondheim, Copenhagen and a festival in Southern Norway. There are no concrete plans for concerts in the countries you mention at the moment, but we would definitely love to come one day!!

Is there a well-interconnected Norwegian scene or is it more of a status of lone fighters?
Is there a fruitful connection with the Swedish or Finnish prog scene?

In Bergen there have been a blooming prog scene for quite some time, there are many links between different groups and we often play concerts together, support and promote each other etc. (Seven Impale, Shaman Elephant, Knekklectric, Kongle, Det Skandaløse Orkester, Himmellegeme, *Katarina Lunde*, to mention some). We don’t have that much contact with prog bands from other parts of Norway, but we have the impression there are

numerous prog bands cooperating at least also in Oslo. Now in December we're playing together for the first time with one of the coolest prog bands in Norway, Wobbler (who are Oslo based), that'll be great fun! It's a mini Christmas edition of the Bergen prog festival Close To The Rain that started the summer of 2017, and that is a superb initiative exactly when it comes to uniting and connecting the Norwegian prog scene. As far as Sweden and Finland goes, we don't have much knowledge about, or any contact at all with, prog bands there – unfortunately! Hopefully this too will change one day

There are so many excellent bands in the current Norwegian prog scene – what do you think are the reasons for this? Any Norwegian-specific aspects that might lead to this?

Good question … Maybe our beautiful nature inspires epic, complex compositions?! Hehe. No, it is probably mostly a coincidence … at least in Bergen there is a very varied scene with all sorts of bands and genres. But it's definitely fantastic to see that there are so many bands reviving prog music today, and using progressive elements in other genres/styles, both in Norway and other places!

How did you get into contact with Apollon Records?

We released "I speilvendthet" on vinyl first on Tik Records, who made a deal with Apollon Records about pressing and distribution. Then Apollon Records released it on CD in the summer of 2017, gaining us more international attention. They have a really great network for progressive music. And we've recently decided to release our next album on Apollon Records, something we are very excited about! It will hopefully be released in the autumn of 2018.

Where do you see the band in let's say five years? Do you think you will still release music on CD or will CD disappear and all your music will only be available through downloads or platforms like Spotify/iTunes? Where do you position vinyl?

Hopefully we will still release music on both vinyl and CD (as well as digitally) in 5 years. We really love vinyl, especially since the cover art has always been central in prog/art rock. Really cool covers look so much better in the big vinyl format! And vinyl has increased quite a lot in popularity in Norway and many other places over the last 5-10 years. Of course, the digital market is by far the biggest now (although less lucrative for most artists …), but we've also come to understand that the CD market is still going strong many places, maybe especially when it comes to prog rock and genres with slightly older and maybe more dedicated fans/audiences. And who knows, maybe one day the CD will get a similar "nostalgic renaissance" as the vinyl is experiencing many places now?



Trojka (Foto: Gry Dahl)

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