

Bill Bruford to Erk Willemsen - Slagwerkkran  
e-mail Feb. 4, 2009

Dear Erk,

Thanks for the note, It's all true, I have my feet up on the table and no air tickets on my desk, so I know there is a God in heaven!

Incidentally, my health is perfect, and I have not gone mad. Nobody - it seems - has ever heard of a musician retiring before. Once again, I break new ground!

I have retired from live performance, but I have a new CD in the summer (recorded last year) 'Skin and Wire: PianoCircus featuring Bill Bruford plays the music of Colin Riley' but essentially, I stopped at the beginning of this year.

I have just written 130,000 words as an autobiography which gives the best explanations as to why I thought it was a good time, so it is hard to summarise that in a few words, but here are the top nine reasons:

- 1) 41 years of me is enough for anyone, certainly enough for me!
- 2) The garden needs mowing.
- 3) It's a very self-obsessed sort of existence that causes heavy wear and tear on one's nearest and dearest, who's patience is rightly wearing thin. I need to redress the balance between public and private.
- 4) It's time to move over and let other have a go. Every stage I'm on is one a younger player is not on.
- 5) I'm more interested in hearing what the kids can do, rather than what I can't do.
- 6) I'd rather stop *before* I've become irrelevant rather than after, because, surely as night follows day, irrelevant we all become.
- 7) Some make music easily, some find it rather harder. I'm in the latter group, and I envy the former. If I don't put it down now, it'll kill me sooner rather than later.
- 8) If you play every gig as your last, as you should do, after a while it's going to wipe you out, and I don't want to die in a hotel room.
- 9) I can afford not to!

I've had a very close association with the Dutch public over many years as you know, with Yes, the King Crimson midnight concerts at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Gong at the Milkweg, countless gigs at Paradiso, festivals at Rotterdam Worldport and Nijmegen, associations with the New Percussion Group of Amsterdam, World Drummers Ensemble and Michiel Borstlap etc, and I must say thank you to you and Slagwerkkran for always being there in full support. It has been hugely appreciated. Please put that in the magazine!

Best to you,

Bill