

## **Interview [Robben Ford](#) by [bluesfeeling.com](#)**

**Robben, you've been voted one of the hundred most famous guitarist and have a long successful career. What is your inspiration for the music?**

Robben Ford: Well, I'm a musician, I've always been a musician and it doesn't take a lot for me to be inspired to make music. It's kind of a natural thing for me – it's a constant desire to express something through music.

**It's a mission by heart?**

Oh, I think so! It's a passion...

**What are the idols you are influenced by? And when you first got in contact with the Blues?**

Oh, it was a very decisive moment for me: the first record was the Paul Butterfield Blues Band and Mike Bloomfield was the guitarist for the band. And it was the first time – I think not only myself, but anyone had heard – anyone played the electric guitar like that. Prior to that we had heard with the Rolling Stones and The Beatles music of this kind. They were okay – they were playing loud electrical blues guitar, so it was a mind stopping moment and basically gave me a direction for my guitar playing. It's what inspired me to play the guitar!

**Further inspirations?**

Probably the next person who really impressed me is Eric Clapton on the first record he did with John Mayall and The Bluesbreakers. And then I started hearing B. B. King, Albert Collins and Albert King. I was seeing them playing live in San Francisco. And of course Hendrix came along and just created a whole new world on the guitar.

**Robben, you have a special jazzy blues-style and a unique voice. How would you describe your music?**

My style is a combination of the Blues guitar players that I'd admired and jazz/saxophone players. I think it's really important in terms of developing a style of your own. But you have to listen

to different instrumentalists. Because you sound like what you are listen to. You listen to other people and you play something exactly like or something that sounds like that – that’s what you do! So it’s a terrible thing if you are a guitarist and only listen to guitar players – you can’t do that. It’s a bad idea. (laughs).

### **What would you suggest?**

I personally have a great love for jazz and in particular my ear was really tuned to saxophone players. And beyond that on Miles Davies’ trumpet – I love Miles Davies. A trumpet is never that attractive instrument for me in jazz. I prefer the sound of saxophone, I prefer even piano. But jazz guitar for me was for most parts kind of boring – great players, but monotonous for me. Tonally it was one sound. Every kind of the sound is the same, even if they play differently. So it left me a little cold. The blues guitar players: All these different tones, all these different kinds of playing blues. I put the saxophone and the blues guitar together and there you have a special mixture.

### **You have about 30 releases, albums, ...**

...Really? Whoow! ...

### **...your latest release, what was the intention in this? When I hear your guitar play together with the trombone, it’s great...**

Well, the desire was to do something that was kind of an inviting, warm and inviting, relaxed, feel good. That’s what I wanted to do. And it had a lot to do with just how I wanted to play the guitar. I wanted to play the guitar in a more effortless way. I wanted everything to feel and sound effortless, be effortless. Originally I was planning on using guitar, acoustic bass and drums. It always was meant to be like a small drum kit and two saxophones – that was the original idea. And I meant to be a kind of more like Lonny Johnson, but kind of old school swing blues.

But I got a little nervous being the only chordal instrument in the room, because I wanna to able to relax. So I hired Larry Goldis on B3 organ – and boy: What a great job, he’s just the best!

So the idea ‘trombone’ then came to mind, ‘cause I wanted another instrument, another ‘voice’ ...

### **... a very special timbre...**

Yeah, and I thought 'trombone'! I've always liked the trombone. I wanted to use the trombone. I'd never thought I just use one trombone without another horn, but with Larry here, there wasn't the harmonic aspect of two horns. And a tender saxophone was just too protectable of a sound. So I thought: O.K.

### **It's a surprising tune on the CD...**

... I totally agree. The CD is relaxing...and grooving!!!

### **I've got some favorites on your new album and that's "Fair Child" and "Oh Virginia" - what's your favorite track?**

Well, for me it's "Oh Virginia". It's the one original composition. The second one is the song "Traveler's Waltz" which is track three. My wife Anne Ford wrote the lyric and Mike Mc Donald, the singer, wrote the music to that. I think the fact that there are original songs, new songs makes me kinda like them, they stand up for me. But "Oh Virginia", "Everything I Do Gonna Be Funky" and "Fool's Paradise" - I think those are my three really top favorites. I love that kind of music - "Fool's Paradise", you know. On the "Talk To Your Daughter" album I did "Ain't Nothing Like The Blues" - I always liked those slow blues with some chord changes to play on.

### **How long did your recording last, in what time did you manage your new album? Was it an easy job for you?**

It was! It was a beautiful thing. The right band was chosen and we were very comfortable to make music with each other. It felt we were all 'on the same page'. So we cut four songs a day for three days, we cut twelve pieces of music. I think there are ten songs on the record. It was amazingly easy to work with this group of guys. And after that the time, the extra-time was spent was mainly on vocals and I re-sang everything of course. But that was done in two or three days. I did maybe two days on guitar overdubbing and we wound up everything using from the original recording.

### **Great job done... I really like your music!**

Thank you. I don't know if you would feel the same way. But to me this record is kind of a full circle back to the "Talk To Your Daughter" album. Even on that album is a lot more aggressive, you know, or a kind of rock blues. I pretty much use one sound. The rhythm guitar is relatively in-significant, it's not in the foreground like most of my records since that time. But in this case it's more that kind of B.B. King approach – not necessarily lot of chords. A lot of just playing and singing! The band does all the rhythm section work and also that record has two original songs on it, the rest were covers. In order to make a record like that it has to be covers. You can't just write those songs now. (laughing) It just doesn't happen, nobody can write those songs now.

### **I fully agree....**

...Yes, finding such songs is difficult, takes some time anyway – but writing those songs is impossible. (laughters again)

### **Robben, you are for a long time in the music bizz, you'll have your 61<sup>st</sup> birthday – how do you manage to stay fit, to relax when you're on tour?**

Well, I do yoga and meditate... I drink (laughing loud)... these three things, that's the combination.

### **When will the German audience have the favor to see Robben Ford in 2013?**

We'll come over in April with my brand new band and with kind of a new style and presentation this music.

### **Where do you start the tour?**

At April, 10<sup>th</sup> in Bochum, then Cologne, Munich, Berlin and the last concert at Hamburg – all together with Eric Johnson. Additionally there will be the guitar festival in Wegberg and the Gaildorf Bluesfestival in July.

