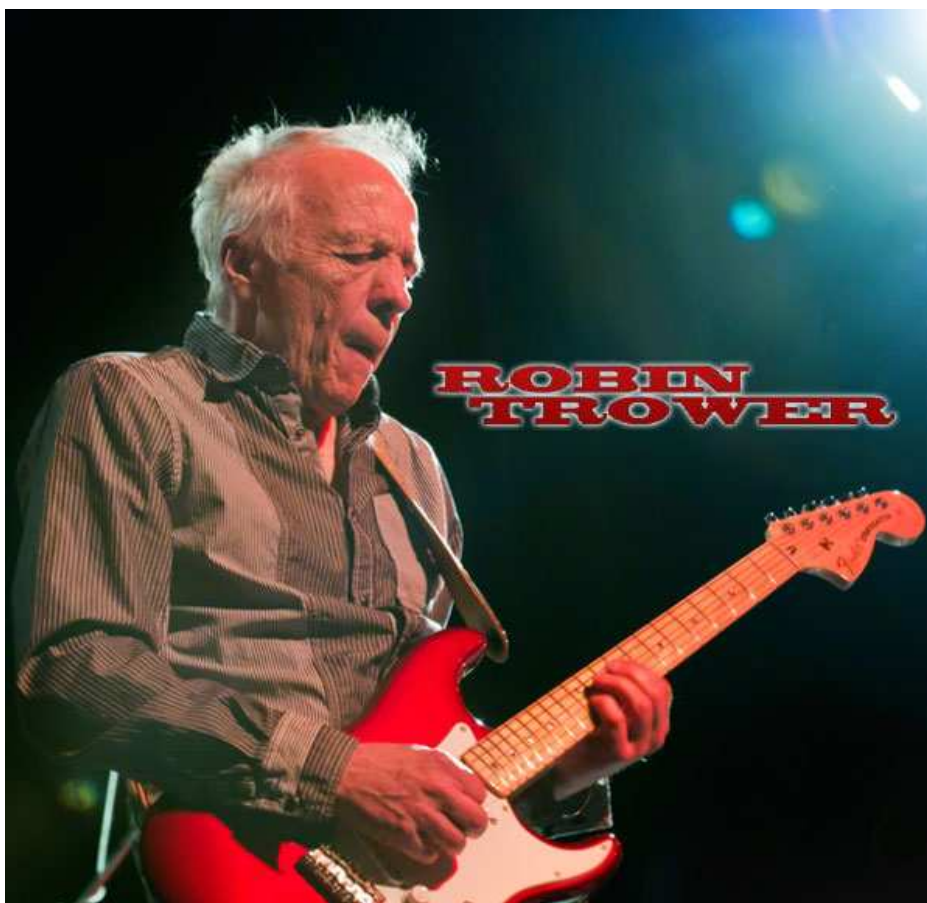


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by Mark Kadzielawa

Robin Trower is one of the premiere British guitar players. Trower first came on the scene with Procol Harum, with whom he released 5 albums from 1967 to 1972. Once he left Procol Harum, Trower began a very successful solo career. Since 1973, he released 25 records, the latest being "The Playful Heart." Trower re-joined Procol Harum in 1991 for the "Prodigal Stranger" album, and enjoyed great collaborations with Jack Bruce in the early 80s, and even lent his talents to Bryan Ferry for a few solo records. But it was his solo output that made Robin Trower the respected and accomplished artist he is today.

Robin Trower shows no signs of slowing down. He reunited with his former singer, Davey Pattison, back in 2003, and continues to release quality material on regular basis. His new album, "The Playful Heart," is fantastic, and truly shows what Robin Trower is all about. He is a classic guitar player with an unforgivable tone, and a forward thinking attitude.

Robin Trower talks about the incredible amount of creative energy in the last few years, and his unstoppable will to always better himself as a player and a songwriter.

Since you've released "Another Day Blues" back in 2003, you've become very consistent as far as touring and making records. What caused this sudden change?

Robin Trower: I think I had a quite a burst of creativity happen because I started to get into a habit of playing every day at home. I started coming out with a lot more ideas because of that.

How motivating was the return of vocalist, Davey Pattison, to play with you again?

I don't know if it's motivating, but it's obviously great to have a great singer to sing some of your own songs.

How would you describe the chemistry between the two of you?

I think he is very good at picking up what I want. He's got a real sense of what I'm after.

Did you miss his presence in the band over the years?

I wouldn't say that. I've had some very good singers I've worked with apart from Davey.

If "Another Day Blues" was an indication of what's to come, I felt you truly materialized on "What Lies Beneath." How do you view that album?

That album was little bit experimental on my part. In so much as I didn't work with a particular

unit. I just used different people, like different drummers. It was a little bit experimental, but I was very keen on the material I had. And I worked for a long time with Livingston Brown, who was the producer. He and I really put it together.

As far as describing that album experimental, which new musical areas were you exploring at that time?

For one thing, I was trying to work out my vocals up a bit more. And find the areas in which I was comfortable singing in. So that was quite experimental. I had to cut songs more than once in different keys to get that right. And a couple of good instrumentals, which I enjoyed very much. In fact, I'm thinking about doing an instrumental album. It opened some doors, and there is no doubt about it.

This feel is definitely continued on the new album, "The Playful Heart." I mean even the title indicates you were having a great time writing and recording the new music.

Well, that's right. I mean I'm still managing to come up with material that I find exciting, and want to record, which is pretty wonderful. Considering how many albums I've done.



That's right, your catalog is quite enormous, we're talking about 25 solo releases here.

Yeah, there is a lot of albums there. I think I'm happier now with what I'm doing than perhaps I've ever been. As far as the guitar playing goes.

The last few records sound very fresh, what's your recipe?

I think you have to call it creativity. Obviously you've got to have the physical energy. You got to have the strength and the physical energy to perform it. But I think the source is definitely the creativity.

Yeah, and if you take into an account how many records you've already done, that's very impressive.

I know, I'm very lucky. I feel blessed, there is no doubt about it. To be still coming out with stuff and still enjoying it so much.

Are you already thinking ahead? You've mentioned an instrumental album earlier.

I've got three projects in the back of my mind at the moment. I've got half the amount of the songs I need for another rock'n'roll album. I've got the idea of doing an instrumental album. For which I've written some things for. But I'm also thinking about doing a covers album. Covers of my very favorite R & B stuff.

It seems a lot of musicians are doing cover albums nowadays.

Yeah, I think there's a lot of thing I've left unsaid by not doing my versions of some of those songs.

Being as influential player as yourself, do you find music or musicians you consider inspiring?

I mean there are some very good guitar players around, there is no doubt about that. But I tend to still listen to people like Albert King, and Howling Wolf. As far as my rock'n'roll stuff goes, I think those guys are still influencing me. They still have a fascination for me that I would say is inspiring.

Recently you've managed to reunite with Jack Bruce for another record after about 20 years of not playing together. How did this reunion come about?

Jack and I were talking about putting together a "Best of" album of the two albums that we made in the 80s. Jack had the idea of writing a couple new tracks and record them for the project. Once we started writing, we turned up so many songs. We spoke, and decided to do a new album. And it turned out great. It was wonderful working with him again.

Do you foresee any future plans with Jack Bruce?

Yeah, never say never. It's very possible.

It seems like you've re-connected with Davey Pattison, and Jack Bruce in the recent years.

Is there anybody else from your past you would like to play with again?

The people I would most like to play with are unfortunately most gone. My ultimate hero is James Brown, and obviously I never got to play with him. And I don't suppose I would've ever done that, no matter how long he would've lived. That would have been the crème of the top of the cake really. At this point, there are a lot of ideas I have, but I have to do them by myself, without thinking about working with other people at the moment. But, you could never say what will happen in the future.

There is a new release titled "A Tale Untold: The Chrysalis Years." Which is like a three CD set. Were you involved in getting it out?

It's a best of from the first five album. I think that's basically what it is. I agreed to the tracks they were putting on that set. It's a good collection, and obviously it's nice to have it all in one set like that.

When it comes to your old catalog, do you have control over it? They way it's being re-released and often repackaged?

It all belongs to EMI Records, and I don't really have much control over it. They do get in touch with me before they decide to release something. They always let me know about that. For instance, they are putting out the BBC live sessions from the 70s. Those were the sessions we did for the BBC where we went in and recorded tracks for them. And also, a show we did for the BBC, which I think is part of that as well.

When you strap the guitar on, and get on stage, what does it mean to you at this point?

Well, the whole thing about playing live now is that you're reaching. You're reaching for the performance, and that's the challenge every night. That's also the excitement of it that you might achieve.



Challenge is a really good word to use here, considering the quality of your last few

records. I mean, you're still making records where as many classic artist gave up on releasing new albums, and strictly rely on their former glories.

Well, the thing is, I'm never really happy with what I've done. It's always the next collection of music, songs, that's gonna be the best. You know what I mean? I enjoy reaching forward with my music.

You certainly still posses that artistic hunger in your music.

Well, I think I do have that artistic hunger to achieve, and do my very best work. As I've mentioned before I'm still reaching.

Recently your former band, Procol Harm, toured U.S. for the first time in many years. When you hear that name being mentioned, what contributions come to mind?

I think fondly of my time with Procol Harum. It was a good schooling for me to go on and do what I eventually did do.

You have a very specific guitar tone, how do you go about to achieve that Robin Trower sound?

Well, a lot of it is because I use a lot of overdrive. Quite a lot of distortion. But I try to make that as sweet sounding as possible. So I'm going for a lucky combination of sweet musicality, and really aggressive sound.

And you probably already have very specific equipment in order to do it, correct?

Oh yeah. There is stuff that I use all the time.

If you were to pick up any guitar at random, would you be able to achieve that sound?

As long as it's a Fender Strat, no other guitar would give me that tone. I can pick up any Fender Strat off the wall at the music shop, and get that sound, but it only has to be a Strat.

Links:

www.trowerpower.com

