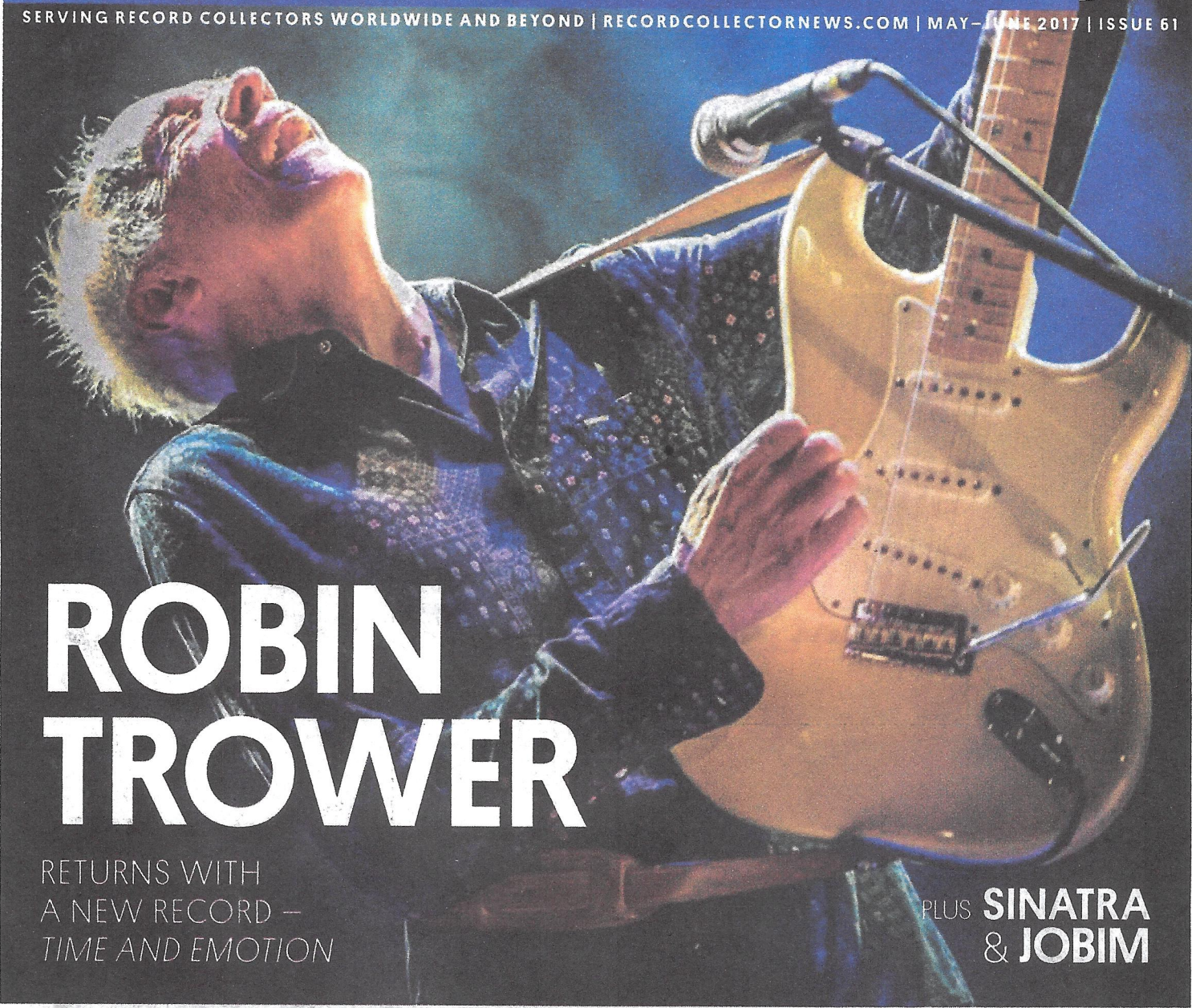


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## ROBIN TROWER

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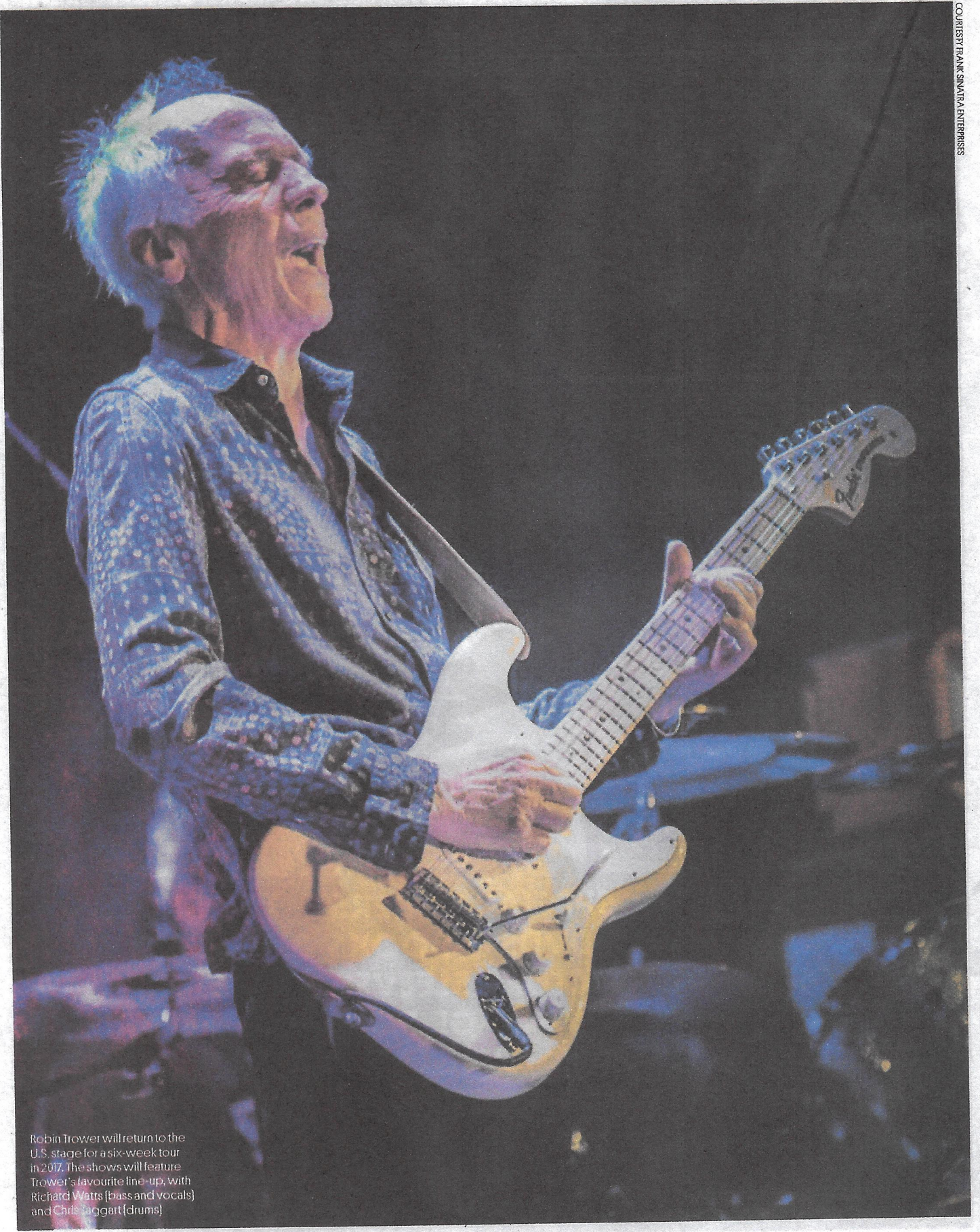
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Robin Trower will return to the U.S. stage for a six-week tour in 2017. The shows will feature Trower's favourite line-up, with Richard Watts (bass and vocals) and Chris Beggart (drums)

# ROBIN TROWER

## TIME AND EMOTION

Robin Trower's new 11-song album, *time and emotion* is out and he's on tour in the Central and Western U.S. in May and June

BY HARVEY KUBERNIK

**B**RITISH BLUES ROCK GUITAR STATESMAN ROBIN Trower first achieved commercial and critical success with Procol Harum during the late 1960s before emerging as the bandleader of his own trio in 1974.

Singer and songwriter Trower has just released an 11 song collection *time and emotion* on his own V12 label coinciding with a tour of the United States during May and June.

The album features Trower (vocals, guitar, bass); Livingstone Brown (bass, keyboards); Chris Taggart (drums)

"The great joy of having my own label [owned with manager Derek Sutton] is that you haven't got to make music to please some guy behind a desk," Trower told me in an interview on the eve of his U.S. trek. "You can please yourself and make the music you want. It's the best way to make music. On my own schedule.

"I play guitar every day. Quite often ideas come out. I'll spend 2-3 days on a lyric. Eventually 10 or 11 songs are ready for an album. Sequencing was very important and 'the land of plenty' had to be the opener and 'time and emotion' the last track. I did the artwork for the cover of *time and emotion*. I wanted as

much of myself involved with the album as possible."

FROM HIS SOLO DEBUT IN 1973 WITH *TWICE REMOVED FROM Yesterday*, to 2017's *time and emotion*, Robin has been creating and constantly developing a sound that has been cross-pollinating the blues, R&B, and elements of psychedelia in a sonic brew distinctly his own.

Althea Wright in *Classic Rock Revisited* reviewed *time and emotion* proclaiming "Robin Trower is back with perhaps his best solo album since he was in his 40s... considering Robin is 72, that is saying a lot! It is not that Trower's recent efforts are not worthy, but rather that his latest release *time and emotion* is so damn good. 'the land of plenty' opens the album with that distorted, loud and wah-wah soaked Fender guitar that has made Robin a god among men amongst guitar nerds. 'what was I really worth to you' follows the opening track up and proves right away this is not one of those albums by older dudes with one song that is killer followed by 'filler'. Nope... this offering is solid from beginning to end."

"I BOUGHT 'WHITER SHADE OF Pale' in Lichtenstein when I was 13," remembered guitarist David Kessel, owner of [www.cave-hollywood.com](http://www.cave-hollywood.com). "I loved the classical music bent in a rock/pop

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song. Procol Harum has always had a lofty vibe to their music.

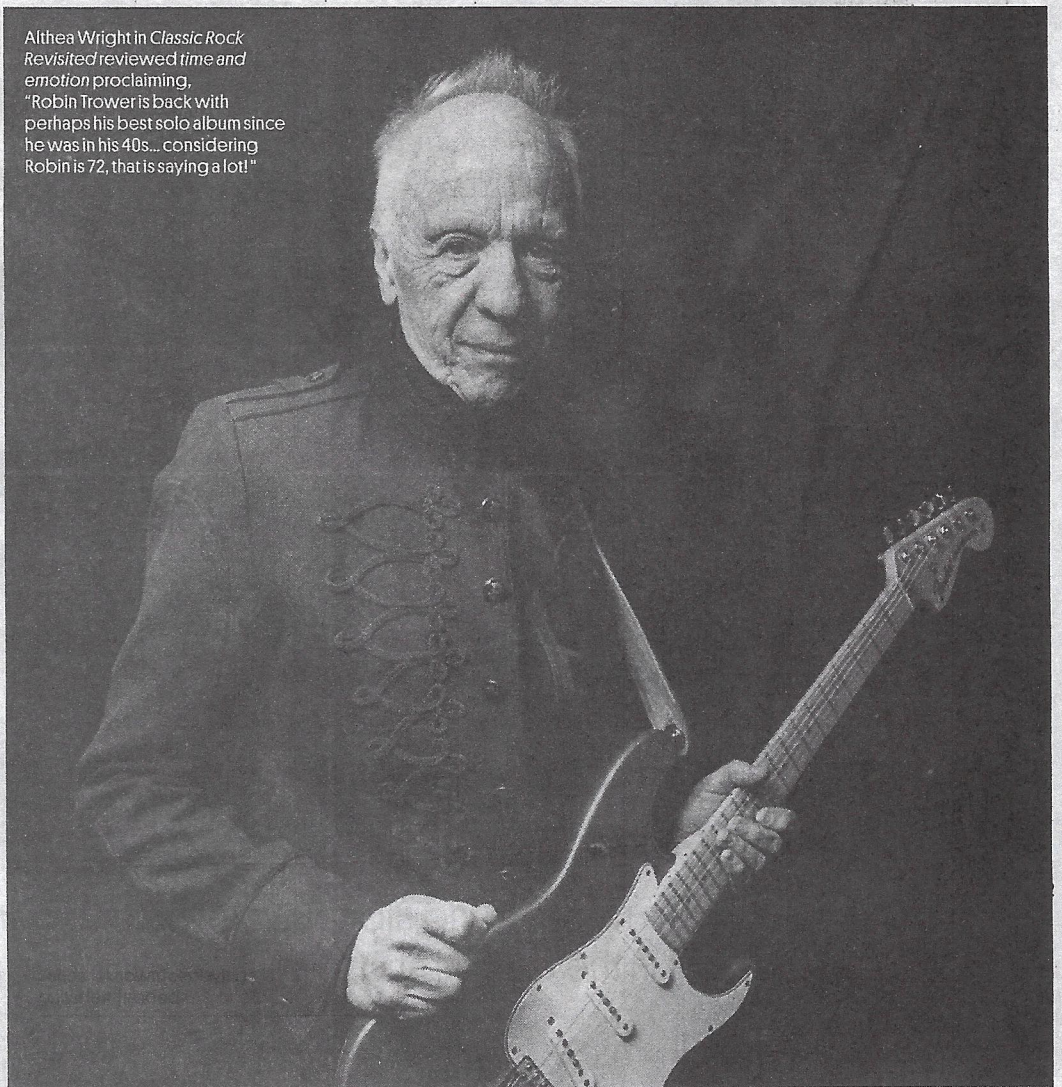
"It really grooved for me when Robin Trower was added to the mix. Robin's rock/blues guitar sound (sounds like a Gibson Les Paul guitar through a Marshall amp to me) infused in to the classical music structure of Procol Harum's songs and performance really bring it on home for me. George Harrison is one of my very favorite 'parts' guitar players. I'm talking about well thought out guitar parts and arrangements. Robin did that in his way for Procol Harum. Trower's guitar playing is very controlled and precise. Check out Robin on 'The Devil Came From Kansas' on *A Salty Dog* and 'Whiskey Train' on *Home*. It's an art to know what to play and what not to play.

"As a power trio guitarist, Robin really stretched out," underscored Kessel. "He took the Hendrix and Cream thing on and delivered big time. I know about power trios. My dad, jazz guitarist Barney Kessel, was the first guy to ever put guitar, bass, and drums together as a band. Before then it was usually piano, bass, and guitar if you had a trio jazz group.

"On *Bridge Of Sighs* Robin leaves his mark as a guitar gunslinger. Robin has proven that he can integrate with a band or step up for a guitar showdown. It's interesting that during this period, he switched from a Les Paul guitar to a Fender Stratocaster. The Strat has a more biting sound ala Albert King, then the Les Paul which has deeper tones. Throw in Ernie Ball strings and you're in business. I've always enjoyed Robin's taste and vision in his guitar playing."

DURING HIS STINT WITH PROCOL Harum Trower typically played Gibson guitars. When he launched his own solo career, Robin switched over to a Fender Stratocaster. The cause of this decision can be traced to a fateful encounter during a tour when Trower was opening for Jethro Tull. He arrived early for a sound check and discovered Jethro Tull guitarist Martin Barre's

Althea Wright in *Classic Rock Revisited* reviewed time and emotion proclaiming, "Robin Trower is back with perhaps his best solo album since he was in his 40s... considering Robin is 72, that is saying a lot!"



"I switched to Fender because I felt it had a human voice quality to it. The Gibson had a more brutal sound. I use Ernie Ball strings. They always seem to ring really well and are suited to the Stratocaster."

— ROBIN TROWER

Stratocaster leaning against an amplifier. He picked it up and fell in love with it.

"I switched to Fender because I felt it had a human voice quality to it. The Gibson had a more brutal sound. I use Ernie Ball strings. They always seem to ring really well and suited to the Stratocaster," reinforced Trower.

Robin continues as an ongoing proponent of the Fender Stratocaster. He has a custom

built guitar along with Fulltone pedals and effects. Marshall amplifiers transport the sonic performance.

"Trower took the trio format as popularized by Hendrix and Cream and softened the edges a bit by bringing a more lyrical, albeit radio friendly appeal to the music," offered music journalist Steven Rosen, who sells guitar picks on eBay under the name Spirit Nation.

"The music was melodic hard rock driven by his gloriously fluid Strat playing over an abundance of some of the coolest guitar tunes ever written.

"They say you can really judge the merit of a guitarist by his finger vibrato. When you think of the apex players — Eric Clapton, Paul Kossoff, David Gilmour — they are instantly recognizable in their playing by simply pushing a string up and down. However, it is an insanely difficult technique to develop and very few instrumentalists ever cultivate a decent much less an iconic style. But Trower has managed to do just that, producing a sound that falls somewhere between Clapton's fluid legato and Kossoff's more staccato-like pulls.

"A true master."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

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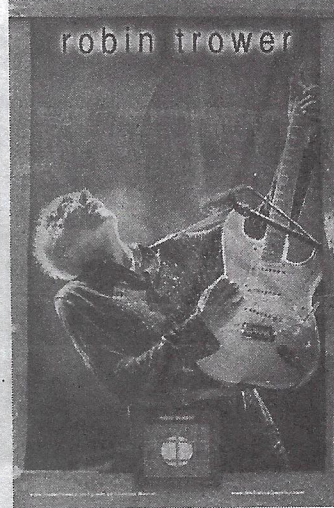
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WHEN ROBIN TROWER COMES TO town always remember there is an acclaimed guitar soloist on stage. Which is why it is often difficult to get tickets to one of his gigs.

"The band trio has been with me for four or five years. We're buddies. Drummer Chris Taggart is a monster. Powerful and precise. And Livingstone Brown on bass. Which on the live shows allows me to cover all the bases. The live repertoire is drawn from a cross section of my catalog," Robin explained.

"We're playing theaters. My audience are fans who go back to Procul Harum and many who come after hearing *Bridge of Sighs*. We do numbers from my solo work. Over the years I will say there's a bit more women at the gigs. The theaters are seated venues. I have very devoted fans."

Robin Trower May and June concerts include multiple dates in various venues in Arizona, California, Nevada and Oregon.

Visit [www.robintrower.com](http://www.robintrower.com) for information on shows and time and emotion.

Harvey Kubernik has been a music journalist for over 44 years and is the author of 10 books. In 2014 and 2015, BackBeat Books in the U.S. and Omnibus in the U.K. published Harvey Kubernik's books on Leonard Cohen, Everybody Knows and Neil Young, Heart of Gold. In April of 2017, Sterling published Kubernik's 1967 *A Complete Rock Music History of the Summer of Love*.

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