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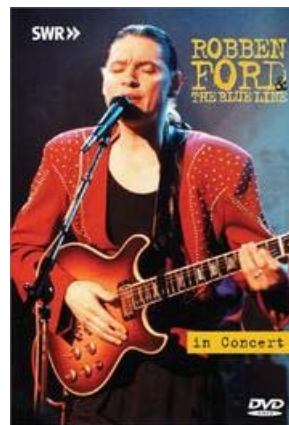
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## Robben Ford & The Blue Line (Ohne Filter)

Picture: C+    Sound: B-    Extras: C+    Concert: B-



Originally playing with George Harrison and Joni Mitchell in the 1970s, blues guitarist Robben Ford formed the popular Yellowjackets in the 1980s. His combination of Jazz, Pop and Blues helped propel the band to some success, as well as his solo projects. In 1992, he formed a trio called **Robben Ford & The Blue Line** with Bassist Roscoe Beck & drummer Tom Brechtlein, which lasted several years and a few albums. With that, they were soon after booked on the German music television series **Ohne Filter** and on April 7<sup>th</sup> 1993, taped one of its best shows.

In one way, their Blues are like a new step without fusion, the kind of step that makes an underrated talent like Johnny Lang make even more sense. If we were not bombarded with neo-bubblegum music and this was not a time of post-modern music genres like Rap, Hip-Hop, Electronica and remixing, you would think Blues would make a comeback, especially with the decline of Rock. Between Corporate Rock, watered down Rock, the death of Classic Rock, the fizzle of Grunge, the irony of "Christian" Rock and the slacker movement that brought us post-Rock, something beside Country that sounds like a bad version of early 1970s Country Pop Rock should have surfaced by now. Add to that the great music from England and overseas American radio stations and record labels seem to be avoiding on purpose for some reason and you have got a sad situation.

The fine performances here with Ford's fine vocals, include:

- 1) *The Brother*
- 2) *You Cut Me To The Bone*
- 3) *Worried Life Blues*
- 4) *Start It Up*
- 5) *Step On It*
- 6) *Prison Of Love*
- 7) *Tell Me I'm Your Man*
- 8) *Talk To Your Daughter*

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I had never heard any of these songs, except maybe one, and I really liked the nearly hour-long show. The Blues are more diverse than people often think of them and this is a really strong entry in the series that is among many Blues installments already taped and released. This one seems especially of the moment and Ford's vocal phrasings are especially convincing. He can sing. Why he has not seen more commercial success is inexcusable, but I can see why some of the top names in all of music want to work with him and his partners in the band are just as strong. This is the kind of show that can make new fans for all of them.

The full frame PAL color video is about what would expect for a taping of the time, having the usual limits in its otherwise good color and limited definition. The sound is available in the usual PCM CD-type 2.0 16bit/48kHz Stereo, as well as a slightly better Dolby Digital 5.1 AC-3, which both sound decent. The PCM is one of the better such tracks we have heard in this DVD series and the Dolby is up there with the 5.1 here heard in the Mark King, Tony Joe White and the band America's DVDs from the series, all reviewed elsewhere on this site. I bet this will be one of the top candidates for the SACD series version of these shows now being issued. Besides repeating the same stereo cords ad placement, other DVDs in the series, and **Ohne Filter** producer interview, it has a biography of Ford, the brief history of the band and other interesting items about the various music scenes Ford's multi-talents and multi-genre reach cover. This is one of the best installments in the series in its fidelity, the quality of the music and the quality of the performances. If you still have not tried out this series, this is a great disc to being with.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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