

**TONY NOBLES INTERVIEW WITH GURF MORLIX - VINTAGE GUITAR  
MAGAZINE - UNEDITED VERSION**

> How did you get to be the one producing?

>

> I WAS PLAYING CLUB GIGS WITH LUCINDA WILLIAMS IN THE  
LATE 80S. WE WERE

> MAKING ABOUT \$2 EACH PER GIG, AND IT WASN'T LOOKING  
GOOD. I WAS TRYING TO

> FIGURE OUT A WAY TO QUIT WHEN SHE CALLED ONE DAY AND  
SAID "WE'VE GOT A RECORD

> DEAL. WHO CAN WE GET TO PRODUCE IT?" I SAID "I'LL  
HANDLE THAT", AND THEN I

> SLOWLY PULLED MY FOOT OUT OF MY MOUTH. I'D NEVER DONE  
MUCH OF THAT, BUT I

> HAD LAID THE GROUNDWORK AND KNEW I COULD DO IT.

>

> OUT OF THAT CAME MORE PROJECTS. I'VE BEEN PRETTY  
LUCKY.

>

> You answer a lot of questions with " because it sounds good."  
What makes

> things sound good? Is it a matter of perspective or  
understanding or any

> intangible concept at all?

>

> I THINK IT'S TOTALLY SUBJECTIVE, BUT TO ME IT HAS TO SOUND  
ORGANIC AND BE

> SONICALLY PLEASING. UNLESS WHAT I'M GOING FOR IS  
SOMETHING OTHER THAN

> SONICALLY PLEASING. IT JUST HAS TO SOUND COOL TO ME.

>

> What faculties give you the ability to know what is cool?

>

> I THINK EVERYBODY KNOWS WHAT THEY LIKE. IT'S JUST A  
MATTER OF TRANSLATING

> THAT.

>

> Does "the simpler the better" apply to recording, playing,  
writing? If so

> why?

>

> SOME PEOPLE LIKE DENSE SONIC LANDSCAPES AND FAST  
NOTES. MY BRAIN ISN'T WIRED

> TO HEAR ALL THAT STUFF. IF THE NOTES ARE FLYIN' TOO FAST I  
CAN'T EVEN FOCUS

> ON THEM. THE WRITERS I LIKE PARE DOWN THEIR WORDS TIL ONLY THE ONES THAT COUNT ARE LEFT. THINK JOHN PRINE, OR RAYMOND CARVER.

>

> where did you come from and how did you end up in Austin?

>

> I GREW UP IN WESTERN NEW YORK STATE, AND HAD TO GO SOMEWHERE WHERE IT WAS

> WARM AND WHERE THERE WAS A LOT OF GOOD MUSIC.

AUSTIN WAS THE LOGICAL CHOICE AT THE

> TIME.

>

> You were in a band with Buddy Miller?

>

> FOR ABOUT 6 MONTHS. I GOT A COMPLEX, CUZ BUDDY WAS SO GOOD. IT WAS A COUNTRY

> BAND, AND HE KNEW THE IDIOM WAY BETTER THAN I DID. MY PLAYING WAS GETTING

> PROGRESSIVELY WORSE AS TIME WENT ON. I HAD TO QUIT.

>

> THE SAME THING HAPPENED ABOUT 10 YEARS LATER WHEN I WAS IN A BAND WITH

> REDD VOLKAERT. THEY'D SAY "TAKE IT, REDD", AND HE'D PLAY SOME AMAZING SOLO, AND THEN THEY'D SAY "TAKE IT, GURF", AND I'D STILL BE THINKING ABOUT WHAT REDD HAD JUST PLAYED. HAD TO QUIT THAT BAND TOO.

>

> Any guitar players that you like to listen to? BUDDY MILLER AND REDD

> VOLKAERT. I LIKE DAVID GILMOUR. HUBERT SUMLIN. PAPA MALI. DANNY BARNES PLAYS

> EVERYTHING WELL. I THINK VISHWA MOHAN BHATT AND JERRY DOUGLAS ARE ABOUT THE

> 2 BEST MUSICIANS ON THE PLANET. DUKE LEVINE FROM BOSTON IS GREAT. OH YEAH, I CAN'T FORGET DANNY GATTON AND EVAN JOHNS.>

>

>

>

> If you took one artist out of the musical family tree who would it be and

> explain.

>

> MY THEORY IS IF WE COULD SOMEHOW REMOVE ROBERT PLANT FROM THE FABRIC OF

> TIME, IT WOULD THEREFORE REMOVE ALL THE HEAVY METAL

## **STUCK-PIG-SQUEALING**

- > VOCALS WE'VE BEEN SUBJECTED TO OVER THE YEARS. ROBERT PLANT WAS POSSIBLY THE
- > SINGLE MOST POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON HEAVY METAL. NOW, I ACTUALLY LIKE ROBERT.
- > I LOVED THE FIRST FEW LED ZEPPELIN ALBUMS A LOT. I THINK HE CURRENTLY MAKES GOOD
- > MUSIC. HE SINGS WELL, AND IS SO AT EASE ON STAGE. HE SEEMS VERY COMFORTABLE IN HIS BODY. I HAVE A LOT
- > OF RESPECT FOR ROBERT.

**WE ARE, OF COURSE, SPEAKING HYPOTHETICALLY, ABOUT CAUSE AND**

- > EFFECT. I DON'T THINK THE EFFECT WOULD BE ALL THAT GOOD FOR ROBERT.

>

>

- > Talk about Jerry Wexler Liking your record.

>

**> JERRY WEXLER IS THE PERSON WHO PRODUCED ARETHA FRANKLIN, RAY CHARLES, ERIC**

- > CLAPTON, THE ALLMAN BROTHERS AND MANY MORE. ARETHA! RAY CHARLES! HE MAYBE

**> THE BEST RECORD PRODUCER OF ALL TIME.**

>

**> HE HEARD RAY WYLIE HUBBARD'S "DELIRIUM TREMOLOS", AND SENT RAY A NOTE**

- > CONGRATULATING HIM ON A GREAT ALBUM. "DYNAMITE IN ALL RESPECTS: RHYTHM

**> SECTION, MATERIAL, VOCALS - PLUS A REALLY GREAT MIX."**

**GREAT MIX WAS UNDERLINED. THAT'S ALL I**

- > NEED TO SEE IF I'M FEELING ANY DOUBTS ABOUT WHAT I DO.

>

**> Can you explain the difference between a little out of tune as opposed to**

- > out of tune enough to fix?

>

**> I THINK THERE'S AN ART TO KNOWING HOW MUCH IN TUNE SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE.**

- > WHEN IT'S ALL PERFECTLY IN TUNE, IT SOUNDS TOO CORRECT, AND THEREFORE IS A

**> LITTLE UNINTERESTING TO ME. THINGS BEING A LITTLE WOBBLY CAN CREATE TENSION,**

- > SOMETIMES IN A REALLY GOOD WAY.

>

**> THERE ARE THINGS ON BEATLES ALBUMS THAT ARE PRETTY**

FAR OUT OF TUNE,  
> BUT NEVER FAR ENOUGH TO MAKE IT UNPALATABLE TO THE  
PUBLIC. I THINK  
> WHOEVER WAS IN CHARGE WAS A GENIUS AT KNOWING HOW  
FAR OUT IT COULD BE  
> AND STILL WORK.

>  
> How long with Lucinda and what records did you make with  
her?

>  
> 11 YEARS. I PRODUCED "LUCINDA WILLIAMS" AND "SWEET OLD  
WORLD".

>  
> What happened on Car Wheels that made you quit?

>  
> YOU KNOW, IF YOU'RE NOT GETTING ON WELL WITH SOMEONE,  
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW  
> GOOD THE MUSIC IS. IT'S NOT WORTH IT. LIFE'S TOO SHORT.  
MUSIC IS SUPPOSED TO  
> MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD.

>  
> What records are you working on.

>  
> I JUST FINISHED MY NEW ALBUM. IT'S CALLED DIAMONDS TO  
DUST. IT WILL BE  
> RELEASED IN JANUARY OF 2007, IF ALL GOES AS PLANNED.

>  
> I ALSO JUST FINISHED MASTERING AN ALBUM BY BLAZE FOLEY,  
CALLED "COLD  
> COLD WORLD". BLAZE WAS A SONGWRITER BUDDY THAT I MET  
BACK IN THE 70S.  
> HE WAS BOTH A TENDER SOUL, AND A CRAZED WILDMAN. HE  
WAS MURDERED IN  
> 1989. THIS ALBUM IS MADE UP OF SONGS WE RECORDED IN '79  
AND '80.

>  
> Who do you like musically today?

>  
> I USUALLY LOOK FOR GOOD SONGS. THERE ARE SOME GREAT  
SONGWRITERS AROUND  
> TODAY. I LIKE SAM BAKER, ELIZA GILKYSON, MARY GAUTHIER,  
RAY WYLIE HUBBARD,  
> BILLY JOE SHAVER, FRED EAGLESMITH.....BOB DYLAN AND  
NEIL YOUNG CAN BE  
> PRETTY GOOD SOME OF THE TIME.

>

> Can you point to some good recordings and give their significance.

>

> WELL, ALL THE CLASSIC RECORDINGS. ARETHA AND RAY CHARLES. HANK WILLIAMS, > MUDDY WATERS, THE BEATLES. ALL THOSE ARE SEMINAL.

>

> Can you say which records specifically are their benchmarks, for the young > and bewildered?

>

> YOU CAN HARDLY GO WRONG WITH ANY OF THESE PEOPLE'S RECORDINGS, BUT "I NEVER > LOVED A MAN THE WAY I LOVE YOU" BY ARETHA, AND "WHAT'D I SAY" BY RAY CHARLES ARE > AMAZING. THERE ARE NO BAD BEATLES RECORDINGS, BUT RUBBER SOUL IS WHEN THE > GREAT SONGWRITING STARTED. ALL OF HANK WILLIAMS' SINGLES ARE PERFECT

>

> What advice can you give regarding a good guitar sound?

>

> I DON'T THINK IT MATTERS WHICH GUITAR AND WHICH AMP YOU USE. GRAB A GUITAR, > PLUG IT IN, MIKE IT, AND PLAY IT WELL, AND IT'S GOING TO SOUND GOOD.

>

>

> Any new special goodies?

>

> I TRY HARD NOT TO GET SUCKED INTO THE GEAR ACQUISITION SYNDROME. I DO LIKE THE CARL MARTIN TREMOLO PEDAL I HAVE, AND I LOVE THE PORCHBOARD BASS. IT'S A WOODEN RAIL YOU STOMP YOUR FOOT ON AND IT SOUNDS JUST LIKE A KICK DRUM. YOU PLUG IT INTO AN AMP OR A MIXING BOARD.

>

> What is in your pedal-board?

>

> JUST SOME OLD PEDALS I'VE HAD LAYING AROUND FOR 20 YEARS. MXR MICRO AMP, MXR > DYNACOMP. A TUNER. I HAVE AN OLD BOSS MULTI-EFFECTS UNIT THAT HAS A > COMPRESSOR, A DISTORTION SECTION, A DELAY, AND A CHORUS. THAT'S ABOUT IT. A LOT OF DUST, AND A BEER BOTTLE FOR PLAYING SLIDE.

>

> Say that thing about "how did you get that sound?"  
>  
> ONCE AGAIN, YOU JUST PICK A GUITAR, PICK AN AMP, PICK A  
MIC, PICK A PREAMP  
> AND PLAY. I DO LOVE THE ROYER 121 RIBBON MIC. I'LL RUN  
THROUGH NEVE, API,  
> TELEFUNKEN, AVALON OR TELEFUNKEN PREAMPS.  
WHATEVER'S IN THE ROOM. JUST MAKE  
> SURE IT SOUNDS GOOD. IF IT DOESN'T, MOVE THE MIC  
AROUND.  
>  
> Talk about when Bare Jr had the Crate amp and you said "It  
could work one of  
> us dialed it in".  
>  
> I DO THINK THEY MAKE THINGS MUCH TOO COMPLICATED  
THESE DAYS. I DON'T WANT TO  
> SEE 22 KNOBS ON AN AMP, OR A 12 STRING BASS. HOW 'BOUT  
A 3 STRING BASS?  
> THAT'S ALL YOU NEED. A VOLUME AND A TONE CONTROL ON  
AN AMP.  
>  
> Any gear you wouldn't live without?  
>  
> I COULD LIVE WITHOUT ALL OF IT. THE LESS STUFF YOU HAVE  
AROUND, THE LESS  
> DECISIONS YOU HAVE TO MAKE. I ALWAYS THINK THAT THE  
SIMPLER YOU CAN MAKE IT,  
> THE BETTER IT IS.  
>  
> I remember some reviewer saying your mix was reverb  
drenched and you took  
> offense, sort of. Your recordings are really thick and meaty, I  
think  
> poeple mistake the textures and sounds as such. What about  
that. Does the  
> simplicity rule apply?  
>  
> I THINK THE SIMPLICITY RULE ALWAYS APPLIES, UNLESS  
YOU'RE NOT GOING FOR  
> SIMPLE. I DON'T MIND A DENSE BLUESY SQUALL, IF THAT'S  
WHAT'S CALLED FOR. I  
> DO MIND IT WHEN I HEAR TONS OF DIGITAL REVERB THAT  
DOESN'T SOUND REAL.  
> SWEETEN TO TASTE.  
>

> Diamonds and dust sounds different as do all your solo records. How do you  
> perceive the new record and also why do you think your cd's all have their  
> own personality throughout.

>  
> DIAMONDS TO DUST IS A SONGWRITER ALBUM. I WAS VERY INFLUENCED BY SOME OF MY  
> SONGWRITING FRIENDS TO TRY TO UP THE ANTE IN THE SONGWRITING DEPARTMENT, AND  
> I THINK IT WORKED.

EVERY PROJECT HAS IT'S OWN IDENTITY, I THINK.

>  
> On "WINDOWS OPEN, WINDOWS CLOSE" you reference people who have died. Can you briefly talk  
> about each person.

>  
> IT'S JUST ABOUT SOME PEOPLE I KNEW WHO DIED. IT'S PRETTY PERSONAL. BLAZE  
> FOLEY, A SONGWRITER I RAN WITH WHO GOT MURDERED IS IN THERE. IT'S JUST A  
> SONG ABOUT HOW SHORT THE MOVIE REALLY IS.

>  
> How do you choose projects, please explain the philosophy.

>  
> I'M REALLY PICKY ABOUT WHICH PROJECTS I TAKE ON. SOMETHING ABOUT IT HAS TO  
> REALLY APPEAL TO ME. I USUALLY SAY IT'S THE SONGS, BUT IT CAN BE THE OVERALL  
> TONE OF THE PROJECT, OR A PARTICULARLY GREAT SINGER OR GUITAR PLAYER. IT'S  
> DIFFERENT EVERY TIME. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR, BUT I KNOW IT WHEN  
> I HEAR IT.

>  
> Would you like to say anything about Warren Zevon?

>  
> I TOURED WITH WARREN IN 1990. HE WAS AN EXTREMELY FINE HUMAN BEING, IN MY  
> ESTIMATION, AND SOME OF HIS SONGS ARE AS GREAT AS A SONG CAN BE.  
> "CARMELITA", "BOOM BOOM MANCINI", "ACCIDENTALLY LIKE A MARTYR" - FLAT OUT  
> GREAT SONGS. I HAD THE UTMOST RESPECT FOR WARREN.

>

> I got to watch some of the recording of Snake Farm. Can you identify some of

> Guitar sounds by song and tell what was used to make them.

>

> I USUALLY TAKE NOTES ON WHICH EQUIPMENT WAS USED, BUT I DIDN'T ON

> SNAKEFARM. I PLAYED MY GRETSCHE DUOJET, AND MY 60'S HARMONY ACOUSTIC WITH A

> 60'S DEARMOND SOUNDHOLE PICKUP THROUGH WHATEVER OLD AMPS WERE AROUND FOR MOST OF THE ALBUM..

>

> You made Snake Farm and Diamonds to Dust quickly in that order. They sound

> different. Can you explain to us why that is?

>

> SNAKEFARM WAS RECORDED AT THE ZONE IN DRIPPING SPRINGS TEXAS, AND WAS CUT

> FAST, WITH NO THINKING. RAY WANTED TO GO FOR THE FEEL, AND IT WORKED GREAT.

>

> DIAMONDS TO DUST WAS DONE AT ROOTBALL, MY HOME STUDIO, AND THERE WAS A

> LOT MORE OVERDUBBING, AND THUS A LOT MORE THOUGHT PUT INTO THE PARTS.

> THOSE ALBUMS ARE 2 COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ANIMALS. AND I LOVE BOTH OF

> 'EM.