



*Hat der Musiker Dieter Geike einen größten Wunsch? Möchte er vielleicht einmal mit einem bestimmten Musiker zusammen spielen, mit ihm aufnehmen oder ihn produzieren? Oder vielleicht eine Welttournee...?*

...oder ein Open-Air-Festival auf dem Mond! Nein, nichts von alledem. Mein größter Wunsch ist es, so weiter zu arbeiten wie bisher, immer optimale Möglichkeiten zum Arbeiten zu finden, und Gelegenheit zu haben, meine Alben zu veröffentlichen.

*Und der Privatmann?*

Privat möchte ich noch weiter aufs Land hinausziehen. Ich möchte im Kontakt mit der Natur die Harmonie finden, die ich brauche, um meine Musik spielen zu können.



## Questions And Answers

*Dieter, 1977 saw the release of the first Blonker album "Die Zeit steht still". Was it the beginning?*

In a certain sense it was more an end than a beginning. The beginning of Blonker dates back to the year of 1970, when I founded a band of that name together with a couple of friends.

*After the LP had flopped, Blonker as a group disbanded, though you had what is called a radio-hit with "Indigo"!*

Yes, actually, what happened was that our record company at the time decided to release the instrumental "Indigo" as a single despite the fact that we took our lyrics very seriously and saw ourselves as anything rather than producers of instrumental hits. When "Indigo" finally became one of the most frequently played instrumentals on the air, the band broke up as I was the only one who was prepared to progress in that new direction.

*How does a musician of your standing get around to trying his luck in the difficult field of guitar instrumentals? Were you perhaps one of those kids who would frantically rehearse "Apache" by the Shadows while they were young?*

Not necessarily (laughs). Although I was a great admirer of the "Shadows", and "Apache" really isn't one of the worst guitar exercises. No, in the beginning I used to play Skiffle with some class-mates and listened to „Oldtime“ and even Modern Jazz. And then, of course, came the Beatles who knocked me out, and then the first wave of Soul music which has established a certain feeling in me. Consequently, I have recorded an instrumental version of that all-time Percy-Sledge-favourite "When A Man Loves A Woman" for my new album. And, to round things off, there is also a beautiful Beatles-ballad on it, "Here, There and Everywhere".

*Surprisingly, your trade is self-taught in your case. As an autodidact doesn't one sometimes get the feeling of reaching certain limits?*

Not at all. On the contrary: From earlier futile attempts to improve my guitar playing by tuition I have come to the conclusion that academic training may narrow the scope tremendously in a musician if he wants to play the kind of music I have in mind. Blonker wouldn't be Blonker if I weren't able to keep on opening new doors, unhampered by the strict rules of the "classic school". As an autodidact I may possibly have retained a kind of playful curiosity.

*Any song on an instrumental album lives on the lead melody of the guitar. When you compose, is the melody line the first thing you lay down?*

Very seldom. Most of time, the harmonic sequence comes first and I write a suitable melody line over it. Many compositions also come from experimenting with new sound effects.

*You not only play a variety of different acoustic, semiacoustic and electric guitars, not counting the custom-made instruments, such as your "slide" and the "fretless". You also use quite a number of standard as well as unusual studio effects. Isn't that frequently some kind of temptation?*

Yes, I know, there's a great danger of using effects for their own sake. To me, the decisive factor for using the sound of a certain gadget is its adequacy. A good song can be spoiled by the inadequate use of a sound effect. On the other hand, I do not believe, a weak song can be saved by the clever application of an effect. The most beautiful example for brilliant use of the Roland guitar synthesizer, which I have played on my new album in "Morning Breeze" and "Homeland", was given by Pat Metheny on "When Wichita Falls...". That's the only way to do it, I feel.

*On the present album, there are again a number of cover versions. What does a song have to have for you to record it on your album?*

Actually, there is no rational criterion. In fact, emotion plays a decisive role here. "Maria Elena", for instance, or "Sleepwalk", those are tunes that I have been carrying around with me for so long that sometimes I almost believe they are mine. Rehearsing them evokes a kind of feeling which pleases me. "Aranjuez" on my first solo album was for me a rather risky trip into the realm of classical guitar music. That the result has turned out pretty satisfactory, as I feel, is not least due to the fact that the feeling for the song was there from the start.

*When you include a vocal number, such as "Here, There and Everywhere", in your repertoire, how do you go about it? Is the voice itself the model to be transposed onto the guitar?*

Less so. Naturally, I try to adopt characteristic phrasing in order not to change the melody too drastically. When I have established these phrasings I let the instrument have its way.

*Since the release of your first solo album "Fantasia" your trend towards using less and less studio-musicians has become apparent, now, on "Homeland", you are your own producer. What are the reasons?*

Here, two things were important. On the one hand, there is definitely some truth in the fact that after some time – and "Homeland" is indeed already my third guitar album – one has gained a lot of self-assurance, and also learned a thing or two, so that one does no longer have to depend upon other people's help to such a degree, at least, if you know what you want to do. And in addition to that, progress in today's studio technology puts me in a position where I can do many things myself for which I had to rely on the ability of others not so long ago. With a computer for drums and percussion and various programmable keyboard instruments you can carry your autarky pretty far.

*Is this form of independence one of your immediate goals?*

Yes, in a way I have already reached this independence by having built my own studio.

*The ideal home-workshop for Dieter Geike, the sound-freak, is it that?*

Sure, I have more freedom to experiment, to try things out, to venture without immediately coming under certain pressures of time and money, as would be the case in a commercial studio. But I do not believe I could completely do without the assistance of others. For crucial drum and keyboard functions I have again referred to my old friends Helge Tillmann and Frank Hieber. Moreover, I believe, this is the place to state that I owe a lot to Jochen Petersen who has produced "Fantasia" and "Windmills".

*Could you imagine Blonker concerts?*

Oh yes, that's imaginable, but it takes a number of essential provisions to make it happen. It is evident that, after two guitar albums, I can't step down from the position I have reached. In factual terms, this means that I mustn't be prepared to accept compromises regarding sound-fidelity in a "live" situation. That is why I would need 4 to 5 guitarists, including myself, in order to have as many guitar-parts available live. I would need a bass player, 2 keyboarders, a drummer plus an experienced percussion player. The stage sound would have to go directly into the mixing console. The equipment would have to be stereophonic with stereo monitors for each musician on stage. Technical service in

concert would have to meet strict studio standards. In order to add atmosphere to the concert apart from the music a high-calibre light-show and a first-class stage decoration would be necessary.

*What an expense...!*

...but a sensible one, because the audience would be getting the same quality as on my records. And that is what counts.

*"Blonker" may well stand as a synonym of quality pop-guitar music. Is there a possibility of thus making a breakthrough to a wider audience?*

This may not be the easiest way but the one with the highest amount of credibility. I am against following trends just to make the hitparades. I believe in being true to yourself; if you thereby set a trend, so much the better.

*The name of Pat Metheny was mentioned. Could you picture yourself emerging as one of the avantgarde of guitar players?*

I don't think so, as I do not think in extremes. But here the principle is the same as mentioned earlier on: I do not chase trends. In spite of that, as a musician I always see myself on the road to new possibilities.

*Is it proper to classify Blonker's music as music in the tradition of the Shadows with the technological possibilities of the 80's?*

Yes, I guess, that is how you might sum up the Blonker philosophy.

*"Fantasia" reached almost gold status in Canada, you get quite a number of foreign releases regularly. Is international success a factor you have to take into consideration for a production?*

No. Irrespective of the fact that international acceptance of Blonker's music is still in its early stages of development – proceeding rather pleasantly, by the way – I do not make considerations concerning certain markets. Blonker will be able to succeed there only if each album sounds like pure, unadulterated Blonker.



*The album covers of "Fantasia", "Windmills" and now "Homeland" were all designed by the same man. An outer indication of continuity?*

Most certainly. Ulrich Schütt, my friend and neighbour, is a highly talented painter who, like me, has a pronounced inclination to balance and harmony, and therefore, he is the right person to design my covers.

*Does the red balloon which appears everywhere have a deeper significance?*

Not really. But sometimes I think that perhaps the balloon, like my music, is a means of transport helping us to gain a certain distance from things. I would feel very happy if the audience would interpret Blonker's music that way.

*Does Blonker, the musician, have one greatest wish? Would he like to play with a certain musician, go on stage with him or produce him? Or a world tour, perhaps...?*

...or an open-air festival on the moon! No, nothing of the kind. My greatest wish is to keep on working the way I do, to always have optimum working conditions, and to be able to get my albums released.

*And what about the private person?*

Personally, I'd like to disappear even deeper into the countryside. In contact with nature I hope to find the kind of harmony I need in order to play my music.