**Ben Harper Fan Page**

Welcome to my little rest stop on the web dedicated to one of my favorite musicians, Ben Harper.

A person wearing a hat and holding a guitar

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Ben Harper is an American singer-songwriter from Southern California who plays an eclectic mix of blues, folk, soul, reggae and rock. As described by Acoustic Guitar contributor Ben Elder, Harper’s music “defies easy categorization because of its diverse sources: the Carter family, Woody Guthrie, Jimi Hendrix, and a melting pot of acoustic blues, reggae, country, hip-hop, rock, and classical styles.” Ben Harper is best known for his guitar-playing skills, unique vocals, memorable live performances, and activism. I like him for his soulful ballads, bluesy riffs and social justice messages.

A person sitting on a stage

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**Notable Facts**

* Harper built an unusually large and loyal following through live performances, word of mouth, and airplay on college stations, rather than through the typical promotion machine involving hit singles played repetitively on mainstream radio stations.
* He is a three-time Grammy Award winner and seven-time nominee, with diverse awards for Best Pop Instrumental Performance and Best Traditional Soul Gospel Album in 2004 and Best Blues Album in 2013.
* Harper has managed to build a solo career while concurrently performing with his main band, The Innocent Criminals, and releasing successful albums with two other bands, Fistful of Mercy and Relentless7.
* Harper has made 13 studio albums, has contributed or played on over 30 televisions shows.
* In 2019, Harper's joint composition with blues icon Charlie Musselwhite, "No Mercy In This Land", was named 'Song of the Year' at the prestigious 40th Blues Music Awards ceremony.
* Harper played an instrumental role in the discovery of musician Jack Johnson. After meeting Johnson at the Santa Barbara Bowl, Harper sent Johnson's demo tape to his own producer, who then took on Johnson and produced his first album, Brushfire Fairytales. Jack Johnson then became the opening act for much of Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals’ 2001 tour.
* His success, critical acclaim and airplay reaches well beyond the U.S. to numerous countries including Australia, New Zealand, France, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland. He was French Rolling Stone magazine's Artist of the Year (Artiste De L'Année) in 2003.

A couple of people posing for the camera

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**Some Favorite Tunes**

* [Say You Will](https://youtu.be/k5QHc1kahkA)
* [Another Lonely Day](https://youtu.be/zr5mCBFejIE)
* [Show Me A Little Shame](https://youtu.be/KsZAl1nBj5c)

**Live Performance on Steel Guitar**

[Call It What It Is – Live Performance Video](https://youtu.be/3yi3tLwigo0)

<video embedded>

**Social Activism**

Many of Harper’s songs express a moral urgency and passionate racial and socioeconomic consciousness, and his appearances frequently benefit marginalized or disadvantaged people. Harper’s musical style and strong social conscience are reflective of his ethnic background, sharing African-American and Cherokee ancestry from his father, and Russian-Lithuanian Jewish roots from his mother.

Expressing his apprehension about America’s spiritual direction, Harper has said “Everything is so out of control, I want our mothers to be able to walk the streets and be safe. Instead of learning from history, whether it’s slavery or the Holocaust, we’re allowing history to repeat itself.”

"If you have 20 black people, it's a riot,'' Harper said. "If you have 20 women in a room, it's a feminist meeting. And if you have 20 whites in a room, it's a Klan rally.''

Only when all of us can stop thinking in those terms and think instead of ourselves as a human species will we make the next step in our evolution, he said.

**Discography**

He has released thirteen studio albums, mostly through Virgin Records and has toured internationally.

* Welcome to the Cruel World (1994)
* Fight for Your Mind (1995)
* The Will to Live (1997)
* Burn to Shine (with The Innocent Criminals) (1999)
* Diamonds on the Inside (2003)
* There Will Be a Light (with The Blind Boys of Alabama) (2004)
* Both Sides of the Gun (2006)
* Lifeline (with The Innocent Criminals) (2007)
* White Lies for Dark Times (with Relentless7) (2009)
* Give Till It's Gone (2011)
* Get Up! (with Charlie Musselwhite) (2013)
* Childhood Home (with Ellen Harper) (2014)
* Call It What It Is (with The Innocent Criminals) (2016)
* No Mercy in This Land (with Charlie Musselwhite) (2018)

**Biography**

Benjamin Chase Harper was born October 28, 1969 in Pomona, California, just outside Los Angeles. His diverse musical stylings and activism are reflective of his ethnic background, sharing African-American and Cherokee ancestry from his father, and Russian-Lithuanian Jewish roots from his mother. Among his musical influences, he cites growing up around his grandparents' music store, The Folk Music Center and Museum, which was supported by regular patrons like Leonard Cohen and Taj Mahal, and watching a live performance by Bob Marley and Peter Tosh at the age of 9. He began playing guitar around age 9 and took up the slide guitar in his teen years, mimicking the style of Robert Johnson. Harper played his first gig at age 12, and got his first big break with an invitation to tour with Taj Mahal in 1992, at the age of 23. Shortly after, he released a limited edition record with seasoned musician Tom Freund, which helped Harper secure a lifetime record deal with Virgin Records. He released his debut album, Welcome to the Cruel World, two years later at the age of 25.

­­A group of people holding wine glasses

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