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JAMES TAYLOR “ONE MAN BAND”

“Performing these songs in their original, stripped-down form in small halls is like going to the well for water,” says Taylor. “It reconnects me to the music and puts me back in touch with the audience.”

Iconic singer/songwriter James Taylor’s latest CD/DVD set is more than just the live version of the some of the most treasured recordings in the history of American music. “One Man Band” tells the story of Taylor’s songs through exclusive interviews and rare multi-media footage, including home movies and photographs from Taylor’s personal archives. The result is an extraordinary, one-of-a-kind portrait of an artist, his renowned repertoire and the personal stories behind the songs. The set list is drawn from Taylor’s recent concerts at the Colonial Theatre in the Berkshires and features new performances from some of the singer/songwriter’s most beloved recordings interspersed with Taylor’s insightful and humorous anecdotes on the inspiration for the songs.

“The whole thing has been working in my mind for years,” said Taylor. “The stage set itself: half warm and homey, half empty and stark; the projected slides and film pieces; the drum machine; the illustrated introductions... all of it.”

In a way, it feels as if James Taylor’s entire career has been leading up to “One Man Band.” His music embodies the art of songwriting in its most fundamental form. He has been at it for decades: transforming introspective meditations into lyrics, melodies and harmonies that comfort and reassure the listener with the sense that these sometimes painful, sometimes celebratory moments are a part of life, shared by us all.

Over the course of his long career, James Taylor has earned 40 gold, platinum and multi-platinum awards and five GRAMMY® Awards for a catalog running from 1970’s “Sweet Baby James” to his GRAMMY® Award-winning efforts “Hourglass” (1997) and “October Road” (2002). Taylor’s first greatest hits album earned him the RIAA’s elite Diamond Award, given for sales in excess of 10 million units in the United States. For his accomplishments, James was honored with the 1998 Century Award, Billboard magazine’s highest accolade, bestowed for distinguished creative achievement. The year 2000 saw his induction into both the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the prestigious Songwriter’s Hall of Fame. In February 2006, The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences selected James its MUSICARES Person of the Year.

Raised in North Carolina, Taylor now lives in The Berkshires with his wife, Caroline, and their sons Henry and Rufus. He has sold some 40 million albums throughout his career, which began back in 1968 when he was signed by Paul McCartney to the Beatles’ Apple Records. The album “James Taylor” was his first and only solo effort for Apple. It was only a matter of time before he would make his mark, and what a mark he would make.

Page 2 – James Taylor “One Man Band”

In 1970, Taylor released “Sweet Baby James.” It went triple-platinum and spawned his first Top 10 hit, the intensely personal “Fire and Rain.” The following year saw the release of another million-seller, “Mud Slide Slim and the Blue Horizon” and the #1 single, “You’ve Got a Friend,” written by long time friend Carole King. The recording won a GRAMMY® Award in 1971 for Best Pop Male Vocal. In 1972, Taylor scored another Gold album with “One Man Dog,” which was followed up in 1973 with “Walking Man.”

The album “Gorilla” (1975) included two more major chart entries: “How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved By You)” and “Mexico.” Following his final Warner Brothers recording, “In The Pocket,” James moved on to Columbia Records and released a string of critically praised and commercially successful albums: “JT,” his 1977 double-platinum debut, including a Top 10 cover of Jimmy Jones’ “Handy Man,” a song that gave Taylor another GRAMMY® for Best Pop Male Vocal. “Flag” (1979), “Dad Loves His Work” (1981), “That’s Why I’m Here” (1985), “Never Die Young” (1988), “New Moon Shine” (1991) and the double-disc “Live” album (1993), show Taylor’s consistency: all were certified platinum. “Hourglass” (1998), which garnered James’ first GRAMMY® Award for Best Pop Album, and “October Road” (2002), another GRAMMY® winner, also enjoyed platinum sales.

Above all, there are the songs: “Fire and Rain,” “Country Road,” “Something in The Way She Moves,” “Mexico,” “Shower The People,” “Your Smiling Face,” “Carolina In My Mind,” “Sweet Baby James,” “Don’t Let Me Be Lonely Tonight,” “You Can Close Your Eyes,” “Walking Man,” “Never Die Young,” “Shed A Little Light,” “Copperline” and many more. Taylor’s songs have had a profound influence on both songwriters and music lovers of all generations and from all walks of life.

In 1971, James was featured on the cover of Time magazine, who heralded him as the harbinger of “the singer/songwriter era.” Today, this quintessential singer/songwriter has seen that era crossover into the 21st century. As a touring artist, Taylor blazed a path to which countless numbers of young musicians have since aspired.

“I feel like we could take this evening around the world,” Taylor says of his latest work. As his unmistakable warm baritone moves into a few bars of “Something in the Way She Moves,” once again the world is drawn to him.

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