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## **OTIS TAYLOR WRITES HIS OWN HISTORY ON NEW TELARC RECORDING**

### **New album, *Clovis People, Vol. 3* set for release on May 11, 2010**

BOULDER, Colo. — Otis Taylor digs the past. Whether it's the songs he wrote a decade ago, or ancient civilizations that lived more than 10,000 years ago, he's drawn to stories from another time, and he's compelled to retell them in a way that's relevant in the modern day. On *Clovis People, Vol. 3* set for release May 11, 2010, on Telarc International, a division of Concord Music Group, Taylor writes his own history.

It's the ideal project for the architect of a sparse and hypnotic style that has come to be known as "trance blues." Taylor has spent his career crafting songs that are wide open to interpretation — thematically as well as structurally. "I give people a starting point, and then they can take it where they want to take it," he explains. "That's true for the people playing my music as well as the people listening to it. That's how art should be. A person looking at a painting should be able to interpret it in whatever way he wants. The more words you put into a song, the less freedom the listener has to decide what it means."

The album title is inspired by a recent scientific discovery very close to Taylor's home in Boulder, Colorado. Barely 100 yards from the edge of his property, archeologists dug up a cache of tools and other implements belonging to a civilization known as the Clovis people, who walked the earth briefly about 13,000 years ago and then mysteriously disappeared.

"I just thought it was a cool title," says Taylor. "I went back to my musical past with these songs. That's why I called it Volume 3. There really is no Volume 1 or 2. My music only goes back about ten years, but there's something about reaching back to an earlier time and revisiting the stories of the past from a new perspective that I find compelling."

Helping to shape that new perspective is a crew of players who lend a variety of shades and voices to the mix. Among them is guitarist Gary Moore, a guest musician on two of Taylor's previous recordings (*Definition of a Circle* in 2007 and *Pentatonic Wars and Love Songs* in 2009), who moves in and out of the tracks with a hard riff here, a subtle accent there, and just the right atmospheric wherever he appears. Also on hand for nine of the twelve tracks is pedal steel guitarist Chuck Campbell — a member of the Campbell Brothers, the African-American gospel group that has developed a sound commonly known as "sacred steel." In addition, *Clovis People, Vol. 3* features cornetist Ron Miles and bassist Cassie Taylor (Otis' 22-year-old daughter).

The set gets under way with the haunting "Rain So Hard," a bluesy number that employs an intriguing mix of pedal steel, cornet and theremin as the backdrop to Taylor's unsettling lyrics about a hard rain turning to snow and falling on a scene of betrayal and deceit.

"Little Willy" and "Lee and Arnez" are two previously unreleased songs. The former is a fictional tale of a school shooting — a song Taylor wrote in 1990s, but then shelved in the aftermath of the Columbine shooting of 1999. "Lee and Arnez" tells the story of a couple that Taylor remembers from the neighborhood where he grew up. "They were my parents' best friends, and they had a boxer dog that I really loved," says Taylor. "This

would have been the 1950s, which were still a difficult time for black people, but I have great memories of this couple and their beautiful dog.”

“It’s Done Happened Again” is built on an urgent rhythm that plays like a frantic heartbeat. “The song is about that moment when someone who got his heart broken hears about someone else who got his heart broken,” says Taylor. “It’s that moment when pain and empathy converge, and you say, ‘Oh yeah, I know where he’s coming from.’”

“Harry Turn the Music Up” recalls Taylor’s memories of the Denver Folklore Center, a place he frequented when he was a boy in the early ‘60s. “The song follows a groove that’s deep in the pocket, and it’s really powerful,” says Taylor. “The Denver Folklore Center was a place where nobody cared if you were black or white, skinny or fat. It was a place where everyone was accepted.”

“Babies Don’t Lie” rides on a single chord and speaks to the profound vulnerability of innocents. But somewhere underneath the simple and recurring lyrical line is the question of how and when dark forces take hold and turn some innocents into monsters.

“Think I Won’t” is a showdown-flavored track that captures the moment when a mother confronts a drug dealer in a schoolyard. “There are some badass moms out there,” says Taylor. “Sometimes people don’t realize how tough black women can be. It’s a matriarchal culture, and there are some moms who’ll kick your ass in a half-second if you threaten their children.”

Indeed, some instincts are eternal, whether the frame of reference is 2010, 1950 or some time before recorded history. *Clovis People, Vol. 3* is in some respects a vehicle for Taylor — an archeologist of a different kind — to re-examine some of the truths he’s uncovered in his own era and preserve them for listeners in some future time.

“I went back to my musical past with these songs — all the way back to my first album,” says Taylor. “I like finding different ways to retell the old stories. They continue to mean something — to me, to the people who hear them, to the musicians who play with me — many years after I first told them.”

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