

Ed Taylor Bio

"I want to play and write creative music that can uplift the lives of everyday people," says guitarist-vocalist Ed Taylor. Throughout his career, Taylor has performed a wide variety of music that consistently pleases both himself and his audience. His accessible guitar and vocals are distinctive and memorable, as can be heard on his second CD, which is named after his group, *TaylorMade*.

Born in Yuma, Arizona, Ed Taylor remembers, "In Yuma we lived near military bases. I had an aunt who often dated servicemen and they would bring over jazz records. I loved listening to them. In Arizona at the time there was a lot of blues, funk and country. I also gravitated towards the British invasion rock bands, so I was well rounded musically." Among the musicians who made the biggest impression on him were George Benson, Chuck Berry, the Beatles, Stevie Wonder, James Brown and Wes Montgomery.

When Ed Taylor was 13, a part-time employer gave him a guitar as his pay. After making a demo at a local record store, Taylor began to play professionally as a young teenager. Mostly self-taught, he had an open-minded style from the start, influenced by jazz and blues, but also open to soul, r&b and rock music. "I played at a lot of fun little clubs in Arizona and Los Angeles, the chitlin circuit that was in the Southwest. It was exciting and we mostly performed fun funk and rock.."

After moving to Washington State, he attended Tacoma Community College and the University of Washington, taking classes in acting, business management and music theory. After he graduated, he worked his way down south with trombonist Dan Daglow, eventually landing in Los Angeles where he worked as a session musician. "I lived in Los Angeles for 12 years and did a lot of background work for Motown, often recording arrangements by Kim Richman with a rehearsal band. The stars would record over what we had played. After a time I realized that I wasn't going to become one of the Marvin Gayes or Michael Jacksons, but I did learn a lot on the technical side during that period, which has helped me produce my own CDs. I also developed as a singer/songwriter and I learned a lot about jazz and life from players such as Ray Brown and Jack Sheldon."

During his Los Angeles years, Ed Taylor played everything from rock to polka, country to rhythm and blues, and jazz, both in the studios and in clubs.

By 1983, Taylor had tired of the Los Angeles lifestyle and he moved back to Tacoma, Washington where he still lives today. "After a period outside of music, around 1990 my wife persuaded me to return to performing since I used to sing and play the acoustic guitar around the house. So I took a chance, performed at a local bar, and the people went wild. I went out and bought some gear, started working as a solo guitarist and different people were attracted to what I was doing. Musicians started sitting in with me and that's how the TaylorMade band was formed."

Originally TaylorMade band was a trio. Their debut recording, *Good Is Good* (made for Chinook Wind Records), has Taylor, keyboardist Dennis Blackmon and drummer Sirrah Noel mostly performing standards plus one original. "I like *Good Is Good*, particularly the way that the CD flows from song-to-song."

Since that time, the group has expanded and is sometimes as large as a septet, teaming Taylor with Blackmon, trumpeter Kevin Englund, Tom Harmon on saxophones and flute, saxophonist Troy Christensen, bassist John Roberts and drummer Willie Fisher. They can be heard in top form on their 2005 release *TaylorMade*, a CD that consists of

Ed Taylor's original compositions. The music, some of which can be heard on his website www.edtaylormusic.com, is grooving, melodic, full of joy, and sure to put listeners in a happy mood.

Taylor/Made works an average of four or five nights a week in the Tacoma area. "We segue between jazz, R&B, smooth jazz, funk, rock and blues. If you don't know the blues, you can't play anything else. My band knows the blues!" The group concluded working on a CD entitled *Songs From A Taylor*, which is a collection of the band's favorite songs including tributes to other artists (like Ed's love of Wes Montgomery).

One of the biggest changes musically for Ed came from *Songs from a Taylor* and a cross-country trip to a Smooth Jazz festival in Massachusetts where he headlined. Joining Ed on the CD was Peter White. The trip to the east coast gave Ed time to think about his future. Just after he arrived back in the Pacific Northwest he was selected as a Gibson Recording Star. Ed plays a Gibson ES-175.

Ed returned to Tacoma with a desire to perform more with his current friends whose styles blend with Ed's view of music and life. That is how The Smooth Operators was formed, which is based on the Three Tenors model. The hub of the group is Ed, with friends stepping in to fill out the other two "tenor" roles.

The first "official" performance of The Smooth Operators will be November 22, 2008 at the Emerald Queen Casino in Tacoma. The EQC provides seating for nearly twelve hundred people. Joining Ed for the show will be Greg Adams and Paul Brown. The mutual admiration society of those three should provide a nice melding of styles, instruments, and stage presence.

The first "unofficial" performance of The Smooth Operators was a series of three concerts called Tall Ships and Smooth Jazz held in Tacoma celebrating the Tall Ships, which sailed into Tacoma's Commencement Bay for the Fourth of July weekend. Joining Ed were Patrick Lamb (currently traveling with Bobby Caldwell) and Darren Motamedy (currently riding the waves of a hit record). Ed's guitar and vocals teamed well with the saxophone work of Patrick and Darren. The concerts were a hit. Whether styling with two musicians at the top of their game, or pulling up a local performer from the audience to join him, the joy was felt and enjoyed by everyone.

Ed Taylor is enthusiastic about the future. "It took me time to realize that audiences love to see me have fun playing songs that I really enjoy as opposed to me playing songs that I think they might want to hear. With The Smooth Operators I get to enjoy my music and have fun playing the music of my friends, too. What a fantastic world we live in!"