

# CASSIE TAYLOR

## OUT OF MY MIND

### CASSIE TAYLOR DEFINES HER OWN ARTISTRY AND VISION WITH ADVENTUROUS YELLOW DOG RECORDS DEBUT

**Self-produced *Out of My Mind* blends deep blues tradition with youthful perspective  
and a cutting-edge sonic landscape**

At age 26, **Cassie Taylor** is already a veteran musician. She's spent a decade playing bass and singing on stage and in the studio with her father, modern-day blues innovator Otis Taylor. And now, with the May 7, 2013 release of her new album ***Out of My Mind*** on Yellow Dog Records, Cassie stakes her own claim as an artist of intelligence, power and soul.

The album finds Taylor defining her own creative identity within a dozen songs that balance passion, grace and humor with a broad embrace of sounds and musical styles consistently steeped in the blues. From Delta bedrock to the fringes of electronica to the driving spirit of rock 'n' roll, Taylor draws on all of her influences — which span centuries, continents and cultures — to create indelible stories like the edgy and compelling two-part drama “Ol’ Mama Dean” and the celebration of life and love “Forgiveness,” which struts over a blithe Crescent City beat. Organ, trumpet, tuba and even Theremin make cameo appearances in the mix alongside the core bass, drums and guitar sound of her trio, all supporting a voice that’s angelic, haunting, raw and full-blooded.

“I like to think I see things differently,” says Taylor, who will tour behind the album this spring. “The blues is the basis of all American music and of everything that I do. It’s a tradition, passed down from generation to generation. Some people say I’m not blues enough, but I’m a 26-year-old woman with very light skin living in the 21st century. Had Muddy Waters grown up when I did perhaps his music would sound a lot like mine. When Memphis Minnie was coming up they didn’t have electronic music or rock ‘n’ roll, and it was impossible to buy West African psychedelic rock records. I listen to everything from old blues to punk to drum ‘n’ bass to my father’s music, and it’s all become part of me.”

Comfortably at home on the runway — Taylor’s stunning looks have also earned her work as a model in magazine spreads and at fashion shows — and in the studio, she was at the helm for every step of *Out of My Mind*: producing, arranging, performing on vocals, bass, organ, piano and Theremin, and even financing the sessions. Taylor was joined at Immersive Sound in Boulder, Colorado by engineer Mike Yach, drummer Larry Thompson and guitarist Steve Mignano as she fashioned the huge-, bold-sounding disc according to her vision of the blues as a continuum connecting the past and the present.

Drums and Theremin open the album, the latter conjuring the sound of a prison siren on “Ol’ Mama Dean (Part 1).” It’s the story of a woman on death row, and rides a tide of grinding guitar paired to Taylor’s soaring voice. “Ol’ Mama Dean (Part 2)” follows, providing a backstory of harrowing domestic violence finally quelled by a bullet. Taylor’s effects-colored singing adds a grainy, grizzled texture to her voice that sets the story’s tone.

“This is the first song I wrote from my own conscience,” she explains. “It was inspired by a documentary about women in prison, and in particular about one woman who suffered at the hands of a violent husband until she killed him, accepting that she’d go to jail for life.”

“Spare Some Love,” a dark minor-key blues that hinges on the interplay of Taylor and Mignano as its first-person narrative of poverty unreels, follows. Taylor was inspired to write the song after playing 2012’s “Stomp the Blues Out of Homelessness” benefit in Springfield, Missouri.

Other songs, like the title track and “Forgiveness,” capture the vibrance of youth in buoyant arrangements and lyrics that embrace the joys of passion and friendship. And Taylor wrote “No Ring Blues” for her then-boyfriend and now-husband Chuck Haren. Haren, who doubles as Taylor’s road manager, heard the song live for several months before finally taking the hint.

There’s also a pair of musical love letters. The first is for her parents. “Lay Your Head On My Pillow”’s gentle acoustic guitar melody and sweet devotional lyrics were written for their twenty-third anniversary. “It’s about their commitment to each other. Lasting couples go through so much. Also, when you’re broke and don’t know what to get your parents for a present, but you can write a song like this... It’s going to last a lot longer than a toaster.”

And “New Orleans” blows a kiss to the Crescent City, conjuring its warmth and mystery with street-tour lyrics and a blend of horns, parade beat and amiably ambling guitars. *Out of My Mind* returns to a sober note for its conclusion, the beautifully impassioned piano ballad “Again.”

Overall, the album is a masterful testament to Taylor’s artistic evolution, which began at the tender age of 12 when she picked up a bass and played the iconic line of the blues-rock anthem “Hey Joe” perfectly after being shown the lick just once. Soon after that the young prodigy joined her father’s band as bassist and backing singer. Today she is an outspoken champion of other young budding artists as a member of the Blues Foundation’s Board of Directors. She leads the organization’s Generation Blues initiative, which provides performers under the age of 21 with musical scholarships.

During her decade in her father’s band Taylor built the unique vocabulary of technique, ideas and influences that’s realized in *Out of My Mind*. “My first album [2011’s *Blue*] was how that particular producer saw me then,” she explains, “but this album is my own vision of how I see myself now.”

Obviously her self-determination played a role in the new album’s creation as well. “When we started I didn’t have a record label. I believed in these 12 songs — that they had something valid and original to say and that they would mean something to people, so I was willing to scrape and sacrifice,” Taylor relates. So was her husband, who out-of-the-blue volunteered to sell his car — and *did* — so *Out of My Mind* could be completed.

“I’m drawn to interesting sounds,” Taylor continues. “I love melodies, but they have to have a strong backbone of music and lyrics to support. I’m really eclectic and can find the blues in all kinds of music.”

“In concert I’ll play Nine Inch Nails’ ‘Closer’ and segue into Muddy Waters’ ‘I Just Want To Make’ Love To You’ to make a point — they’re equally grounded in blues; they both have the same message and the same changes, and prove that this musical tradition is relevant today.”