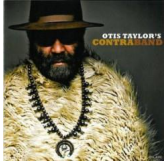


Otis Taylor - Otis Taylor's Contraband (2012)

Written by bluesever

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1 *The Devil's Gonna Lie* 3:57 2 *Yell Your Name* 3:31 3 *Look To The Side* 4:42 4
Romans Had Their Way 4:11 5 *Blind Piano Teacher* 3:33 6 *Banjo Boogie Blues* 4:33 7 2
Or 3 Times 3:40 8 *Contraband Blues* 4:29 9 *Lay On My Delta Bed* 2:33 10 *You 10 Dollar*
Bill 3:55 11 *Open These Bars* 6:30 12 *Yellow Car, Yellow Dog* 4:01 13 *Never Been To*
Africa 3:46 14 *I Can See You'Re Lying* 4:47 Bass – Cassie Taylor, Todd Edmunds Choir,
Vocals – Sheryl Renee Cornet – Ron Miles Djembe – Fara Tolno Drums – Larry Thompson
Fiddle – Anne Harris Guitar [Steel Pedal] – Charles Campbell Lead Guitar, Guitar – Jon Paul
Johnson Organ – Brian Juan Vocals, Acoustic Guitar, Banjo – Otis Taylor

Anyone who has paid attention to Otis Taylor's career understands that he is not a conventional bluesman, yet his diverse music, for all of its ambitious instrumentation, odd rhythmic meters, minor pentatonic scales, and textural strangeness embodies the spirit of the blues authentically and unmistakably. His is an iconic -- and some would argue iconoclastic -- vision. *Contraband* is nearly an hour long and contains 14 songs. Taylor plays guitar as well as banjo, and he uses a familiar slate of players: cornetist Ron Miles, keyboardist Brian Juan, fiddler Anne Harris, guitarist Jon Paul Johnson, with Chuck Campbell on pedal steel, djembe player Fara Tolno, and two bassists: daughter Cassie Taylor and Todd Edmunds; Larry Thompson plays drums. The album's hinge piece, "Contraband Blues," elucidates the use of human beings being used as actual contraband. The track, with its layered strings, spooky pedal steel, skittering snare, and open-toned, droning blues details the plight of slaves during the Civil War. They were freed by law, but weren't free -- they were used by the Union Army as captured property. Opener "Devil's Gonna Lie" is a circular two-chord blues riff, accentuated by djembe and multi-tracked cornet, B-3, pedal steel and electric guitars, and the Wendy Rene Choir. Taylor sings in old gospel style about the "devil," but refers to him not so much as a person but as the persuasive power of evil. Punchy, funky, and gritty, evil is portrayed as any form of exploitation. Taylor examines race, class, and interpersonal relationships in unusual ways. "Blind Piano Teacher" is a soulful ballad that explores the relationship between a younger blind piano teacher of mixed racial heritage and an older man of no racial distinction. Miles' cornet playing is like another singing voice, answering Taylor's narrative. "Banjo Boogie Blues" is a strutting shuffle with screaming guitars, banjo, and drums, with the choir underscoring Taylor's call for universal and personal

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compassion. 12-bar blues are the basis of the tracks "Your Ten Dollar Bill," "Yellow Car, Yellow Dog," "Romans Had Their Way," "Lay On My Delta Bed," and closing burner "I Can See You're Lying," but Taylor and his band stretch them to the limit rhythmically with odd instrumental and vocal cadences, only the drum kit keeping them on the rails. Still, it's the nearly acoustic Delta blues-inspired "2 or 3 Times," the Mexican corrido "Yell Your Name," the Americana-inspired "Never Been to Africa" (detailing the plight of a black soldier who has fought all over the world during WWI, yet never visits his homeland), and the shimmering acoustic/electric folk-blues of "Look to the Side" that lend mystery on this deeply focused set. By reining in the freedom that made Clovis People, Vol. 3 such a puzzling wonder, Taylor manages to up the ante musically and lyrically on Contraband. All killer, no filler. ---Thom Jurek, AllMusic Review

Otis Taylor urodził się 69 lat temu w Chicago. Zaliczany jest przez słuchaczy do najwybitniejszych a zarazem najoryginalniejszych współczesnych muzyków bluesowych na świecie. Jego pozycję na współczesnej scenie bluesowej potwierdzają liczne nagrody, m.in. dwie statuetki Blues Music Awards, do których w sumie był nominowany 19 razy, nominowany był również do prestiżowej Grammy Awards. Wśród muzyków ceniony jest przede wszystkim za nowatorskie i prowokacyjne podejście do muzyki bluesowej. Słuchając jego muzyki ma się od razu wrażenie, że to artysta unikalny i jedyny w swoim rodzaju.

Muzykę jaką gra często nazywa się "Trance Bluesem", ze względu na hipnotyzujący rytm połączony z charakterystycznym głębokim dominującym głosem nad instrumentami. Słuchając jego kompozycji wpada się w trans, a noga sama tupie bezwiednie. Otis prócz śpiewu jest również utalentowanym muzykiem, po wirtuozersku posługuje się gitarą akustyczną, gitarą elektryczną i banjo. Nagrał dotychczas 14 płyt i stale koncertuje, przyciągając niesamowitą muzyką tłumy na festiwalach i mniejszych koncertach na całym świecie. Artysta kilkakrotnie odwiedzał również Polskę.

Album "Contraband", który prezentujemy jest trzecim od końca w dorobku artysty.

Wszystkie 14 utworów na "Contraband" to połączenie tradycji, świeżego podejścia do bluesa i

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pokrewnych gatunków. Słuchając całości czuje się, że to prawdziwa, żywa muzyka, pełna unikatowej osobowości, barwna i różnorodna, niepozbawiona radosnych jak i smutnych momentów, tak samo jak w prawdziwym codziennym życiu. ---Jakub (OvO) Sowa, radiobiper.info

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