

## Will Taylor – Bio

Will Taylor was born circa 1970, and raised in Austin, Texas by music loving parents. As a youngster Will spent countless hours, with his parents, listening to music at the long gone, but still legendary Armadillo World Headquarters concert venue. Rock and country music may have been the mainstays at the Armadillo, but folk, blues and jazz shows also sat comfortably alongside ballets and spoken word performances. Exposed to such a diverse range of music and entertainment forms, it's little wonder that Taylor has pursued a career as a professional musician.

By the late 1980's Taylor was an accomplished viola player, whose musical world lay, mainly, in the fields of jazz and classical music. In 1991 an original piece composed by Taylor, for string quartet and jazz orchestra, was premiered by Austin's Creative Opportunity Orchestra. The same year James Oliver and Taylor founded and produced the first annual Austin Acoustic Music Festival. The event was held annually during November until 1999, and since 2000 it has been held each April. During 1992 Will was recruited by the Turtle Island String Quartet, for tours of Alaska, California and the Midwest. He also appeared with the quartet at New York's Town Hall, in a performance was later broadcast by NPR. Back in Texas, the following year Taylor's debut solo recording "**Reel Life**" was released by the now defunct Austin based imprint, Amazing Records, and two years later "**Simple Gifts**" was an Igmod release. Taylor's 1996 recording "**Live From Austin**" was issued by the Cymekob Inc. label. During late 1996 Taylor wrote and performed the string arrangements on Austin musician David Rice's album "**Green Electric**" [1998]. Sessions for Rice's debut album, on Columbia Records, were overseen by David Bottrill, and took place at Peter Gabriel's Real World Studio in Wiltshire, England although only four tracks from those sessions appeared on the final recording.

In 1997 the Massachusetts based Quincy and Melrose symphony orchestras performed Taylor's specially commissioned programme of music for jazz quartet and orchestra, and also for jazz viola soloist and orchestra. The Melrose, established in 1918, is the oldest continuously performing volunteer orchestra in the United States. Toward the close of last century Taylor developed the concept of Strings Attached, an aggregation of acoustic "chamber orchestra" instruments that initially featured cello, violin, viola, trumpet and hand drums. Early Strings Attached players included Steve Zirkel [bass/trumpet], Jason McKenzie [tabla/drums] and Charles Prewitt [cello]. Between the years 1999 – 2001 Will Taylor and Strings Attached, in association with Austin's One World Theatre, presented the educational outreach piece "American Roots" – a practical history of American music forms - in nearly two-dozen Austin public schools.

Moving on, Taylor's approached a number of the town's finest acoustic musicians with the idea to perform a concert of specially arranged and rehearsed material "with Strings Attached." Taylor's arrangements of the featured artists songs, may include jazz or classical musical interludes within a particular song. The first "with Strings Attached" concert took place in early 2001 and featured jazz singer Beth Ullman. Now established as an annual concert series, it takes place in the sanctuary of St. David's Episcopal Church, one of the oldest churches in Austin. A few early shows took place at Hyde Park Methodist Church. In the ensuing years Taylor has performed "with Strings Attached" shows with local players such as Shawn Colvin, Ian Moore [now Seattle based], Eliza Gilkyson, Slaid Cleaves, Sara Hickman, Patrice Pike, Michael Fracasso, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Tish Hinojosa and Darden Smith. In more recent times, "out of town" performers such as New York based Dar Williams have performed with Taylor & Co. at St. David's.

The self-titled debut CD by Strings Attached, produced by Taylor and released in late 2000, featured collaborations with Ian Moore, Sara Hickman and Barbara K. Sara Hickman's 2002 release, "**Faithful Heart**" featured string arrangements by Taylor which were performed by Strings Attached. Will was also string arranger on Sara's albums "**Newborn**" [1999] and "**Spiritual Appliances**" [2000]. Subsequent "with Strings Attached" releases "**Live Vol. 1**" [2003] and "**Collaborations**" [2005] have featured "captured in concert" appearances by Eliza Gilkyson, Shawn Colvin, Jimmy LaFave, Libby Kirkpatrick and more. These days Taylor is equally accomplished on violin, piano and guitar, as he is on viola. When not working "with Strings Attached," or pursuing a recording project, Will Taylor is a viola player with the Austin Lyric Opera Orchestra, and has been an orchestra member for well over a decade.

Discography :

Solo - "**Reel Life**" [1993] ; "**Simple Gifts**" [1995] ; "**Live From Austin**" [1996] :

Will Taylor with Strings Attached - **“Will Taylor With Strings Attached”** [2000] ; **“Strings Attached Live Vol. 1”** [2003] ; **“Collaborations”** [2005] :

Will Taylor & Lonnie Dean – **“Texas Honky Tonk Shuffles”** CD EP [2005] :

**Arthur Wood**

Kerrville Kronikles 08/05

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