

British blues player set to rock Sisters

By Ceili Cornelius
Correspondent

British blues player Joanne Shaw Taylor is set to play the Sisters Rhythm & Brews Festival July 26-27. This will be Taylor's first time playing Central Oregon and one of her few shows on the West Coast.

Taylor, born in the Black Country of western Birmingham in England, always knew she wanted to have music as her career. She had a passion for it from a young age.

"I grew up in a musical household; my dad played blues guitar and my mother was passionate about soul music," Taylor said.

She also grew up in the era of British rock and blues at its height, especially in the Birmingham area. Her father gave her brother a classical guitar and he didn't really develop a passion for it, whereas Taylor did.

"I learned guitar at eight and never really looked back," she said.

By 12 years old, Taylor was locking herself in her room with her electric guitar and record player listening to blues records over and over to learn the ways of the blues and finding her own unique blues sound. From a time she was old enough to be thinking about a career, she knew that music is where she wanted to be.

"I knew from a young age that I wanted to do music based on my childhood influence, and I can't really think of a time in my life where music wasn't present," she said.

At 16, she got a band together in Birmingham and played local gigs, and then began gigging on her own with her own material. She was discovered at a gig by Eurhythmics co-founder Dave Stewart. At one of her shows, he asked her to go on the road with him.

"At 16, I left home and moved to London and went on the road," she said.

After the record label he

was with went caput, she continued to tour on her own until she was 21 and got signed with another record label.

As her career in the United States began to take off, she moved to Detroit, Michigan.

"I have lived there for 10 years now, I guess that makes me a Michigander," she said.

When she visited on tour, she fell in love with the area and has been there ever since. On her first day there, she met veteran producer Al Sutton, and the two became instant friends. Ever since then, they've tried to work together, but it didn't happen until her most recent album, "Reckless Heart."

Taylor has put out six albums in 10 years since moving to Detroit and getting her start in the industry.

"Living in Detroit became kind of a happy accident in the people that I met and all I was able to get out into the world," she said.

Taylor said she enjoys visiting the northern Michigan town of Charlevoix for Thanksgiving holidays.

"Reckless Heart came at a really good time for her, she said. She had hit a bump in the road in the relationship she was in.

"Writing this album was sort of free therapy; I was able to get out all of my frustration and love for this person, I was going for stuff I didn't know how to communicate other than music," she said.

It is sort of a makeup and a breakup album written in two parts, she said. Working with producer Al Sutton, she was able to record her album at a studio five miles from her Detroit home, sleeping in her own bed every night. The influence of the album is blues, as well as the soul from her early days of listening to music from her mother.

"I grew up in England with the Adeles and Amy Winehouses, where they just get their feelings out on pen and paper and that's what I did," she said.

Reckless Heart was released in the U.S. in May, with success here and in the U.K.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Joanne Shaw Taylor will be featured at the Sisters Rhythm & Brews Festival July 26-27 in Sisters.

Taylor doesn't really get over to the West Coast much, but looks forward to coming to the Pacific Northwest.

"The climate in that area seems a little more similar to London," she said.

She is leaving home in Detroit to go visit family in

London and then is going on a U.K. tour as well as shows in Norway. She will be touring some shows with Rod Stewart once she arrives in the U.K.

Tickets for the weekend as well as single-day passes are available for purchase at: bit.ly/SistersRhythmBrews.

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