

Mp3 Gary Taylor - Retro Blackness

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Soulful R&B 12 MP3 Songs URBAN/R&B: Soul, JAZZ: Smooth Jazz Details: Gary Taylor Bio / Retro Blackness Retro: Imitative of a style, fashion or design from the recent past. Blackness: The state of being black, as in an American of African heritage Retro Blackness: Gary Taylor's soulful musical celebration and heartfelt contemplation of a culture This time, he's singing about a different kind of love. During his latest Morning Crew CD, celebrated vocalist, songwriter and producer Gary Taylor makes his most ambitious declaration of love yet: RETRO BLACKNESS is the soulful musical celebration and heartfelt contemplation of a people and a culture. Both the modern remembrance of a prideful era gone by and an ambitious, reflective hope for the future, these are songs about the love of SELF. "Anyone who knows me personally knows I'm opinionated," Taylor says, speaking on his inspiration for this project. "I just hadn't voiced these particular thoughts in my music before. But today, you only have to look around to see what is happening to black America, and I wanted to write about it--about us. You don't have to be a revolutionary to tell it like it is." No, you simply have to be willing to tell it. During RETRO BLACKNESS, Taylor is persuasive as he spans the gamut of emotions of a culture. Among the tracks: the funky, feel-good anthem, "Loving My People" is a snapshot of community pride and love that feels like a plate of soul-soothing comfort food. Taylor affectionately paints a vivid portrait of a time gone by but still fresh in the hearts and minds of those who lived it. Accordingly, "My Blackness" is a proud, chordy celebration of heritage that you simply don't hear in black music anymore. Who sings about being black--and of wearing that skin with honor? Likewise, "Love Like No Other," is an affection-filled ode to family, from the grandparents down to the young kids. "As If," on the other hand, is a ballad prolific in its somber address of the emotional/physical dysfunction that has plagued a people from, it seems, the beginning of time. Meanwhile, during the bold, prowling "Ghetto People," Taylor speaks directly to the black community, daring to ask the big questions, but offering a remedy worth pondering. Of course, no Taylor song collection would be complete without his insightful take on romantic affairs of the heart. During RETRO BLACKNESS, Taylor artfully illustrates the undeniable thread between cultural love and the personal relationship. "Old School" is a sentimental sway that lyrically captures a more innocent romantic time,

while musically exhibiting the songwriter's knack for crafting a great, soulful ditty. That song's emotional counterpart is the dark and treacherous "Soul Murder," a pointed look at the empty, lonely act of infidelity. The track could be the cousin to the insistent, mid-tempo, "Knew You Better," the kind of tell-it-like-it-'tis rant that's bound to spew when a wronged lover has had enough. And then there is "W.O.C. (Restated)," a sultry, expansive reprise of the Taylor classic, "Woman of Color," from his 2003 CD, ECLECTIC BOHEMIAN. For this version, Taylor stretches the tune out Isaac Hayes style, indulging in spoken monologue while his stalwarts, the legendary Whispers, take care of the singing before Taylor vocally joins the group in soulful crescendo. "It's all connected," Taylor says, commenting on the love of self and personal romance. "How you feel about yourself as a human being--how you're raised and how you see yourself as a citizen of the world--that's what you're going to bring to a relationship. We're people forever struggling with all aspects of this thing called love. This is what I wanted to capture with RETRO BLACKNESS." Stepping out on his convictions isn't anything new for the Los Angeles-based Taylor, who officially launched his recording career in 1983 with the A&M album, G.T. His second album, 1988's COMPASSION, was originally released on Virgin, yet another major label, before Taylor realized that, for a variety of reasons, the major label concept isn't the place for every artist. Thus Taylor's Morning Crew label was born. Founded in 1991--named in honor of the employee work shift Taylor used to manage at a supermarket chain before quitting to pursue his musical career--Morning Crew was fiercely independent long before going "indy" became the politically rebellious or trendy, Internet-inspired thing to do. Taylor developed as an artist, but he also became a prolific songwriter and producer, creating seminal music for artists as disparate as Anita Baker ("Good Love"), The Whispers ("Just Gets Better With Time," "My Heart, Your Heart") and Lalah Hathaway ("I'm Coming Back"), producing actress/singer Vanessa L. Williams and having his songs covered by everyone from Grover Washington, Jr., George Clinton and a Tribe Called Quest, among many others. While the phone continues to ring for Taylor the tunesmith and producer, Taylor prefers nurturing the artistic freedom and integrity he enjoys as an artist. The result is more than a decade of music--thoughtful, intelligent and impassioned soul music--that has garnered Taylor a devout international fan base. Recordings such as TAKE CONTROL, SQUARE ONE, THE MOOD OF MIDNIGHT and UNDER THE NIGHTLIGHT, among others, speak to and for the hearts of women and men regarding love, romance and the almighty Relationship. It's no fluke that the heart of Taylor's music--the haunting melodies, the sexy, intoxicating chords, insightful lyrics, and ever soulful

vocals--remind listeners some of popular soul's most influential artists, such as Stevie Wonder, Donny Hathaway and Curtis Mayfield. "Stevie, Donny, Marvin Gaye, Gamble and Huff--these are the classic R&B songwriters I love the most," says Taylor. "Much of what they wrote about in the '60s and '70s still speak to the social issues we battle (as a culture) today. I wanted that kind of spirit on this CD. " While he succeeded, RETRO BLACKNESS is pure Gary Taylor, in a way he's never been heard before. This is his musical mother lode, his defining moment and arguably, his most important work to date as an artist. Once upon a time, before the wholesale forsaking of a people's pride; before the blatant, rampant misogyny and the squandering of an artistic legacy, there was self-respect, fellowship and imagination, unbridled and inspired. Listen to RETRO BLACKNESS and know that in the heart and soul of at least one man, these things still exist.

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