

# Taylor, James (1948-) Encyclopedia Article

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## Taylor, James (1948—)

Blending folk, country, and blues to create his own distinctive musical sound, James Taylor spearheaded the singer-songwriter movement in the 1970s. Born in Boston in 1948, Taylor began playing guitar at twelve and soon was performing at small folk gigs. But having struggled with depression at boarding school, at sixteen, Taylor checked himself into a mental hospital, where he graduated from high school. After moving to London in 1968, Taylor was the first outside artist signed to the Beatles' Apple Records. Following the release of his first album, he returned to the United States in 1969, where his first single, "Carolina In My Mind" climbed the charts. In 1971, Taylor was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine as the "originator of the singer-songwriter era." Described in *Time* as "a blend of Heathcliffian inner fire with a melancholy sorrows-of-young-Werther look," Taylor was romantically linked to Joni Mitchell, but married singer Carly Simon in 1972, the same year he won his first Grammy. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Taylor continued to release critically and commercially successful albums, refining his style while maintaining his superb musical craftsmanship. Still touring to packed houses in the 1990s, Taylor's 1997 album, *Hourglass*, rose to Number 9 on the Billboard chart and went platinum. Now in his fifties, James Taylor may be the granddaddy of singer-songwriters, but he remains a thoroughly contemporary musician and an ever-popular star.

### Further Reading:

Herbst, Peter. "James Taylor: The *Rolling Stone* Interview." *Rolling Stone*. September 6, 1979.

"James Taylor: One Man's Family of Rock." *Time*. March 1, 1971. <http://www.james-taylor.com/> September 1998.

"James Taylor Unofficial Home." <http://www.james-taylor.com/> September 1998.