

## On Terese Taylor

*Village Voice Jazz & Pop Ballot 2006, JNeo Marvin*

Good Luck Investigationship (Bombsniffingdog)

"Terese Taylor can veer from lonely backwoods laments to precise, grinding Mission Of Burma-like instrumentals and back. Her music is intuitive and mysterious, filled with personal in-jokes and painful memories, a puzzle that is meant to be felt and experienced, not solved. At times, her songs remind me of Neil Young in his youth, writing lyrics in his sick bed while suffering from a high fever and coming up with stuff that was troubling and moving, but impossible to understand on a literal level, even by himself. The details in her songs tend to be small, but you can feel powerful, unspoken undercurrents beneath the prosaic details of songs that are ostensibly about such things as watching refrigerator defrost or washing a puppy's feet. You get a clear picture of her personality from her music: a strong yet hyper-sensitive character who's been through some serious struggle and come out of it looking at the world with wry humor and amazement. Her voice is an expressive moan, her guitar playing is slashing, gut-level stuff on the rockier tracks and woozy, cracked shards of country-western on the slower ones. (Once again, the Neil Young parallels apply.) She deserves to be huge."

*Whisperinandhollerin.com*

It would be too easy to plant singer/songwriter Terese Taylor (<http://www.teresetaylor.com>) in the garden of Polly Jean Harvey, especially in her early hell raiser years. Certainly the influence is there, especially on the stinging "Doesn't Shine" and the buzzing "Noose for Reason," but Taylor is no copycat. In fact, Taylor owes more to American roots rock than PJ's punk bloodline.

Anybody remember the group Come from the '90s? Taylor's blend of Velvet Underground gloom and bluesy Americana actually recalls them more than PJ. However, Come fell off the face of the planet so none too many will namedrop them in a review of "Good Luck Investigationship." Furthermore, Taylor has probably never even

heard of Come. If anything, they have a mutual affinity for Neil Young, whose spiritual fingerprints are all over "Dirty" and in Taylor's well-soiled guitar riffs.

Taylor thankfully provides a lyric sheet, which is helpful because there is some enigmatic songwriting here. "Doesn't Shine," "By My Grave," and "Prodigal Son" have a Biblical bent to them. No, not in the Christian music sense but more like the songs of Nick Cave, God-fearing folk tales with an Old World feel. You can almost imagine Cave singing, "Bury my love next to me/Bury the one I love the most," in "By My Grave."

"Good Luck Investigationship" is a compelling, dimly-lit effort from a new talent that just might propel to the atmospheric heights of her idols.

*Dave Madden of*

<http://www.splendidezine.com/review.html?reviewid=10921320883407>

Every now and then I encounter an artist whose work I enjoy, but have a difficult time deciding exactly why. After a few weeks of listening to Terese Taylor, I was still no closer to understanding why I'm drawn to her work, so I played the disc for a few friends to help me out. The unanimous response was, "I like it. She sounds like...hmm", which led me to the following thesis: Terese Taylor's music inspires a universal pleasant feeling of *déjà vu*. You've *almost* heard it before, but can't put your finger on when, where or any of the other particulars. Taylor's influences never surface enough to allow direct comparison, though ghosts of PJ (in the music) and Liz (in the vocals) haunt her work. If anything, her work music follows the innocent aesthetic of early '90s College Radio artists -- acts that pioneered simple-but-clever ideas without any hope of mainstream success (think Pixies or Throwing Muses).

"Goats for Daddy" is of many examples of Taylor's ability to craft something interesting from a naïve concept. It's structured around a three-bar-chord gesture, sliding up the guitar neck as Taylor spins a Biblical tale of climbing a mountain path with a "billy mountain goat / red ribbon 'round his neck, a present for my dad". The orchestration is almost too simple, stripped down to guitar and a subtle bass-

drum/com figure (by Taylor's right-hand man, Rob Johnson) during the verse, then expanded with distorted guitars and full-on bashing drum kit during the chorus. "Your Hand" uses a similar technique, vamping over a simple guitar lick that Taylor could have come up with in twenty seconds. A straightforward backbeat and a wandering bassline provide a complement and a backdrop to the stalker-inspired lyrics ("take a look in my window, open all night / I shut your hand in it / don't you worry about a thing, love"). "Sweet" tries to find home somewhere between Delta blues, country-western, psychedelic rock and the Middle East, but settles for all of the above, like something you might hear on Led Zeppelin's *III*. Taylor shows her range, both musically and vocally, on "Ghost", strumming her acoustic and singing in a falsetto. The song rises from a whisper to a scream, pulling in something that sounds like field recordings of subway stations combined with ebow feedback, as Taylor's clever words reveal her ghost to be merely a sheet, a façade that's "tired of white sheets / these holes that are my eyes watch as you pass out of sight". The band decides to end with a bang on "Candy", pulling out the stomps as Taylor sings her ambiguous request: "candy, I really want some candy". It seems innocent on paper, but the traces of Kim Gordon that have suddenly seeped into Taylor's tone suggest something a bit more devious.

Taylor's no-nonsense approach to her ensemble is accentuated by the naked but well-crafted mix, and will only be further revered when you learn that the entire disc was recorded to two-inch tape by student engineers in two five hour sessions, using "scratch vocals, no overdubs". The "no time to mess around" attitude may be the secret ingredient that gives *The Cryingness...* its charm and grace; there is a spirit and a depth here that would be lost if Taylor and her performers took a "we'll fix it in the mix" (read: ProTools) approach.

When I'm prompted to explain why this disc holds a special place in my heart, I think about Taylor's musical approach (which I thought was exhausted), the melodies that I can't ignore and the words I can't escape -- and I'm still left with questions. Thank heavens.

Taylor waited five years to release this sophomore outing. I hope she won't be so stingy with her art in the future.