

## Texas Coast always beckons musician

By DAVE THOMAS

News Editor

Take a guy who grew up in Brownwood, has traveled across the globe and is living near Stephenville and ask him "Where do you wish you were right now?"

And if that guy is Larry Joe Taylor, he'll have an answer for you pretty quickly.

"If I could be anywhere, I'd probably be down in Port Aransas right now, maybe sitting on the back deck at Shorty's," he said in a telephone interview on Tuesday. "It's pretty nice weather."

Taylor, who will be performing his "Coastal & Western" style of music at Blaine's Pub on Friday and Saturday, said growing up in Brownwood was "pretty typical West Texas."

"There was a lot of football and, uh, that's about it," he said.

But the Texas coast is different.

"Well, the coast is kinda like the mountains... there's something kinda magical and scary about both of them," he said. "I like going to the ocean. It's huge, you know, there's just a magic there."

A couple of Taylor's songs about magical days on the coast are the Gary P. Nunn hits "Why Don't You Meet Me Down in Corpus" and "My Kind of Day on Padre." (In fact he wrote or co-wrote another three songs - "Roadtrip," "Corona Con Lima" and "Terlingua Sky" - that also appeared on Nunn's greatest hits album.)

After hearing Taylor's odes to the ocean life, you might think he hasn't ever had a bad day on the coast. And you'd be right.

"The worst day on the coast is the day you gotta leave," he laughed. "I don't think I've ever really had a bad day down there."

To balance out the coastal living, Taylor takes to the mountains as well. It could be the sheer size and beauty of the Rockies, or the desolation of the Chisos Mountains in Big Bend.

"We used to go out and do the world championship chili cookoff (in Terlingua) in November and play around the campfires late at night and camp out there," he said. "I don't know if you've been out there, but in the Big Bend area there's probably more stars in the sky than anywhere else."

The splendor of the big Big Bend sky was behind the ballad "Terlingua Sky" but the song became an ode to something more fleeting.

"I started out writing about the stars but it ended up being about having good friends and enjoying it while you got it," he said.

Taylor counts Guy Clark, Billy Joe Shaver and Townes Van Zandt as his major influences and says his secret to good songwriting is "having good experiences to write from."

The song he says he's most proud of is "Third Coast," from his fourth album, "First Row, Third Coast."

*"But I said if I ain't sinking well I must be swimming/*

*If I ain't dead I must be living/  
And living is the thing that scares me the most/  
And if I ain't sleeping well I better be fishing/  
If I ain't anchored I will be drifting/  
But all in all I'm doing pretty good/  
Since I hit my third coast."*

Taylor will release his fifth album, "Heart of the Matter," on Feb. 25. The Lloyd Maines-produced effort took Taylor about two years to write and features friends Rusty Weir and Terri Hendrix.

"This is kinda the one I've always wanted to do," Taylor said. "The flavor is pretty well the same - a lot of songs with some coastal flavor and some reggae stuff. "I'm excited about it, I think it's the best one we've ever done."

And he's excited about getting back on the road and playing in San Angelo this weekend.

"We took about two weeks off and the band, everybody's going crazy," he said. "I don't know, maybe we've (been playing) so long it's all we can do."