

# Taylor's play on emotions; Grimes, on guitar

## Guitarist got late start Husband, wife play at Basement

**By RUSTY CAWLEY**  
Battalion Assignments Editor

In a field saturated with child prodigies, classical guitarist David Grimes is somewhat of a phenomenon.

He started playing guitar at age 20.

Bored with mathematics his junior year at California Tech and heading in no particular direction with his life, Grimes was exposed to classical music.

A friend invited Grimes to his apartment to hear some records by Andres Segovia, the great Spanish classical guitarist.

It was, as Grimes says, "a reawakening."

He had never studied a musical instrument. His musical education consisted of singing choral music in high school.

But he was obsessed.

"I just got some music and a guitar and started playing," he says.

Fifteen years later, through sheer diligence, determination, and talent, David Grimes has emerged as one of America's finest classical musicians.

His tours have taken his music to colleges and universities in Texas, Louisiana, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, California, and parts of Mexico.

He heads the guitar department of California State University at Fullerton.

He is in demand throughout the United States as both a performer and a teacher.

He has come a long way from being the bored mathematics major from Cal Tech.

Fifteen years ago.

Now, on a chilly Thursday night, Jan. 27, 1977, general panic has set in among the stage management at the Rudder Theatre.

It is 7:30 p.m. and Grimes has not appeared for his concert at Texas A&M University.

He was to have been escorted from his tiny guest room in the Memorial Student Center at 7:15.

The program is to begin at eight.

Workers test and retest the microphones, the lights, and the sound system, and every "one-two-three testing" is followed by someone saying, "Where is he?"

7:37 p.m.

David Grimes and his escort arrive.

The stage manager gives them that where-the-hell-have-you-been look that stage managers have been giving performers since curtains first started to rise.

"We had trouble finding him," is the escort's explanation.

Grimes looks at the escort, then at the crew, then back at the escort.

He shakes his head, smiles, and says, "No."

The subject is dropped.

Grimes is dressed in a black tuxedo. He carries a huge black guitar case in his right hand. An iron footstool with a red, cushioned top is tucked under his left arm.

He is led to the stage of the empty theater. The guitar case is placed on the floor and opened.

He pulls out his guitar, which is much smaller than the case that seems to swallow it. The case is so large because of the amount of protective padding that lines its interior.

He sits on a black cushioned piano stool, places the footstool under his left foot and cradles the guitar in his lap.

He warms up slowly, beginning with scales and arpeggios. He plays the same exercise over and over, gradually gaining speed until his fingers travel confidently along the frets.

"How's the sound back there?" he yells to a crew man in the back of the theatre.

"Fine," comes the answer.

Unsatisfied, Grimes sends three attendants to the top of the theatre in different directions.

"How does this sound?" he says.

He plucks the strings and produces a barely audible, pianissimo note.

Fine. Great. Super.

"How about this?" he asks and forces a metallic twang from the guitar.

Fine. Great. Super.

It is obvious from his face that he would like something more than "fine, great and super."

"Okay," he says, and gives up.

He adjusts the tuning once more, puts the guitar back into its case and goes to his dressing room to wait.

When he returns, the doors have been opened and his audience has filtered in.

He is led by an attendant with a flashlight through the dark and dreary cavern behind the curtain to the other side of the stage.

He swings his arms back and forth, breathing deeply.

"Deep-breathing exercises help me relax before a concert," he says.

He insists he is not a nervous performer.

"I'm not like some opera singers, who's regular routine is to eat a big steak dinner and then go throw it all up."

"I do get butterflies in the stomach, but not enough to make me sick," Grimes says. "Besides, if I'm not a little nervous, I might as well not show up."

He pulls the guitar from the case and waits patiently for a signal from the stage manager. Receiving it, he wanders onto the stage, takes his seat and, without a word to the audience, begins to play.

The first set is a neat, compact but grueling program of 18th and 19th century guitar pieces. Forty-five minutes of almost nonstop playing.

He rocks gently on his stool. His head moves from side to side as he watches his right hand pick the strings and his left guide the music.

After each number, he stands and bows from the waist. His guitar dangles from his right hand.

Intermission.

Grimes stands backstage. Beads of sweat have formed along his hairline. He wipes them with his hand and tosses them off.

He bites his nails, then holds them away to look at them disgustingly.

"My biggest handicap right now is really lousy nails," he says.

He considers his nails too thin to achieve the wide variety of sounds demanded by his music.

"I'll be playing and hear a 'click' from my nails. It throws my timing off and I spend the rest of the piece trying to catch up," he says.

Despite his fatigue, Grimes



Battalion photo by Steve Reis

stands during the 12-minute intermission.

"I sit to practice, I sit to play, I sit to travel, I end up sitting most of my life," Grimes says. "I find standing up to be relaxing."

A music critic from the local paper comes backstage. She asks Grimes the standard questions: How old are you? How long have you played the guitar?

Blah, blah, blah.

Grimes must have been asked these questions over and over again as he has toured the United States.

Still, he answers them with the same polite tone he uses for all questions.

He seems absolutely delighted that someone cares.

"Two minutes," the attendant tells him.

As the critic leaves, he calls to her, "If you have anymore questions, be sure to come back after the show."

He reopens the guitar case. He takes a sheet of fine-grain sandpaper and rubs his calloused fingertips. He dips some handcream from a jar and spreads it over his hands.

Taking the guitar in one hand and blowing into the other, he again steps onto the stage.

The second half of the program is shorter than the first: about 30 minutes, including an encore.

Three curtain calls, and it's over.

Grimes stands backstage, surrounded by members of the audience who bear compliments and adoration.

A few ask for his autograph.

He chats with them for about fifteen minutes, smiling and rocking on the balls of his feet.

"After a concert is when I'm really up," he says. "I rarely sleep well afterward. I keep replaying the concert over and over in my mind. No concert is like the last."

A student asks Grimes to autograph his program.

"I'm a guitar player, but I can't decide if I've got the talent to dedicate myself like you have," the student says.

Grimes looks the student in the eyes. He uses his fist to accent his words by hitting his open palm.

"You have to tell yourself, 'DAMN IT, I'm going to do it and let nothing stop me.'"

"If you don't do that..."

He shrugs and lets the words die off.

The masters say it takes 30 years to become a great classical guitarist. David Grimes has done it in fifteen.

So much for the masters.

**By JOHN TYNES**  
Battalion Staff

James Michael Taylor is not very glamorous for a musician. He's not especially handsome. He's not rich. He doesn't possess an overdose of sex appeal.

He's just plain Jim Taylor, and that's more than enough.

Taylor, a guitar player/singer/songwriter, is popular at clubs and college campuses around Texas but he rarely performs in public.

His recent appearance at Texas A&M last weekend was his first public show in more than a year and, although Taylor seemed a bit rusty and stumbled over a few lines, he was certainly not a disappointment.

With his wife Barbara harmonizing, Taylor played an amazing assortment of songs that ranged all over the scale of emotions and provided a rare look at the intricacies of human relations.

"My music is a natural outgrowth of my life," Taylor said in a conversation before the performance. "I'm convinced that the source of what I write is some kind of a peaceful existence."

His peaceful existence consists of living on a 36-acre farm near Mansfield, Tex. and working at jobs unrelated to music so he can support his wife and four children. Most recently, he has been helping a friend build houses.

Taylor said he changes jobs frequently and avoids demanding positions so that he will not develop obligations that would force him to neglect the music.

The thought of becoming a music superstar, however, does not appeal to him.

"I wouldn't want to sing every night. I don't like singing that much," he said. "I don't have the urge to be known on the street."

Taylor's attitude toward his talent may be the secret of his popularity. His audience feels at ease when he is onstage because he lets them know that he is just like them, not a remote or different type of person at all.

"Music isn't a one-way thing," he said. "You don't do something at an audience or to an audience. You do it with them."

"I'm there to interact with people in a conscious and constructive manner," he added. "That's one thing I don't like about a lot of

entertainers. They are really condescending to their audience."

Taylor said he prefers to act completely natural onstage.

"It's a real temptation in performing to bullshit," he said. "You tend to fantasize."

Taylor's musical exposure began when he took violin lessons in the third grade. He played trombone in high school and picked up the banjo a short time later. Eventually he learned to play guitar and today he plays a custom-built guitar valued at more than \$2500.

His skill with the instrument is obvious from the first chord he strikes. He has developed an appealing style of changing beats and alternating soft, finger-picked notes with crashing strums.

Taylor's wide range of guitar techniques are only slightly larger than the wide range of his voice. Although a little rough around the edges, it is very smooth and perfectly complemented by the crystal clear vocal accompaniment of his wife. His songs betray a wide exposure to feelings and ideals of the people he has met. They do not all fall into any one category of music. He said he has made an effort to

avoid being stereotyped as a type of musician.

He added that a performer constantly adjust his style to different audiences.

"If you're singing to drunks, it's different than singing to drunk longhairs," he said.

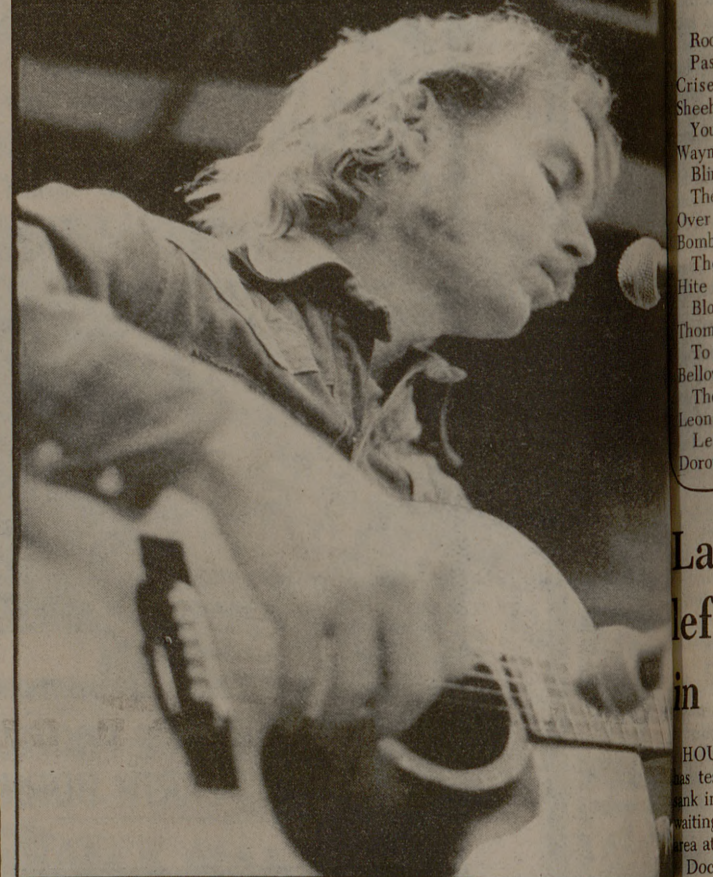
Taylor has written four hundred songs but he does perform many of them any time he continually changes repertoire as he changes venues and, as a result, most of what Barbara perform now was written within the past two or three years.

The Taylors spent last year in an album with help from a friend named Michael Taylor is financing the album himself, but he said he plans to promote it heavily.

Taylor has a rather unusual of his own role in society.

"Whatever I am hasn't been invented yet," he said. "I'm looking for an effective way to reach across to other people."

"We're all different," he said, "and if we'd all do our things right, all the gaps would be filled."



Battalion photo by Steve Reis

## 'Best of' albums reviewed

### Ronstadt, Taylor, Kotk

**By PAUL MUELLER**

Many performers, after recording several albums' worth of original material, eventually put together a package of previously released songs and re-release them in the form of a "best of" album.

Such a collection, if properly assembled and packaged, serves two purposes: 1) it allows fans to obtain a recording of many of the performer's well-known songs, without having to buy several previous albums; and 2) it lets the performer keep his (her) name before the public while new material is being prepared. "Best of" albums often come out toward the end of the year, and last year was no exception; today I'll look at those released by Linda Ronstadt, James Taylor, and Leo Kottke.

Linda Ronstadt's *Greatest Hits* is a good collection of the music that made her famous. The album represents her entire solo career, and the songs are well chosen to illustrate the variety of musical styles she uses. These include the sad ballads that first brought her recognition,

such as "Long Long Time, Has No Pride," "It Doesn't Any More," and "Desperado" shown by "Heat Wave," "You're So Good," and "Tracks of My Rock 'n' Roll," as in "That'll Be the Day" and "When Will I Be Free." The album is a country, represented by "Through and Golden Needle" a couple of cuts that don't fit these categories but are Linda Ronstadt's "Love Is a Bunch of Different Drum." What do you need to say?

*Greatest Hits* by James Taylor is a good cross-section of his career. Like Ronstadt's album, it covers Taylor's solo career from the beginning. From his early come such songs as "Fire and Rain," "Sweet Baby James," "You've Got a Friend," and "The Way We Move," "Somewhere in My Mind," "Walking In Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight," "Steamroller," "Mexico." Taylor's recent are represented by "How Sweet Is" and "Shower The People," which illustrate his shift more elaborate arrangements and instrumentation. Again, most of these songs are well known that no further explanation needed.

If no explanation is needed, last two albums, then perhaps it is possible for Leo Kottke's *Did You Hear Me?* Kottke's acoustic guitar, often with vocals, and his style is difficult to describe. His music spans a variety of categories, from rock to bluegrass to almost anything.

Although Kottke's music is in his playing and not in the vocal songs on the album are quite good. The best is "Pamela Brown," which is a way of looking at disappointment; Kottke describes losing a girl, only to find that she's freedom anyway. "Me Why" is another song same vein, this time asking questions of all the traditions he hears when his breaks up.

There really isn't much to describe the instrumental album, except to say that it's a lot of fine acoustic guitar, either alone or accompanied by piano, bass, and drums. It hasn't discovered Leo Kottke's album is a good place to

## KANM album playlist

- HITS**
  - Stephen Stills
  - Genesis *Wind and Wuthering*
  - Burton Cummings *Burton Cummings*
  - Streisand-Kristofferson *A Star is Born*
  - Foghat *Night Shift*
  - Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band *Night Moves*
  - Kiss *Rock and Roll Over*
  - The Exile *In the Region of the Summer Stars*
  - Gary Wright *The Light of Smiles*
- FADERS**
  - Frank Zappa *Zoot Allures*
  - Stanley Clarke *School Days*
  - Lynyrd Skynyrd *One More from the Road*
  - Linda Ronstadt *Hasten Doin the Wind*
  - Peter Frampton *Frampton Comes Alive*
  - Boyz n the City *Silk Degrees*
  - Dave Mason *Certified Live*
  - Gordon Lightfoot *Summertime Dream*
- RISERS**
  - Tomita *The Planets*
  - ZZ Top *Tejas*
  - Saturday Night Live *Saturday Night Live*
  - Stephen Stills *Still Stills-The Best of*
- NEW ALBUMS**
  - Elvin Jones *The Prime Element*
  - Kim Carnes *Sailin'*
  - The Don Harrison Band *Red Hot*
  - Tom Chaplin *Life is Like That*
  - David Laflamme *White Bird*
  - Nuggets: *Original Artifacts from the Psychedelic Era - 1965-1968*
  - Mark Ashton *Mark Ashton*
  - New Riders of the Purple Sage *Who are those Guys?*
  - Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Keith Jarrett, and McCoy Tyner *Corea, Hancock, Jarrett, and Tyner*
  - Gap Mangione *Gap Mangione*
  - Groundhogs *Black Diamond*

## A&M sponsors Warcon III

# War games create fantasy world

**By MICHELLE SMITH**

Where can you slay a seven-headed dragon, sink the entire Spanish fleet or conquer Rome in one exciting evening?

The Gromets war gaming society sponsored the third Warcon convention at Texas A&M this past weekend. More than 150 men came from Bryan, Houston, and as far away as Iowa to meet for active participation in fantasy. From 6 p.m. Friday until 2 p.m. Sunday, bombs exploded and swarms of Panzer tanks converged on Bulgaria on the second floor of the Memorial Student Center.

"War games are really more history simulation than actual games," said Jess Fillman, a competitor from Houston. "You can reenact any battle in history from the standpoint of one of the leaders, but you have enough latitude to decide what you would have done differently," Fillman explained.

"The player comes to a point in history, like the Battle of Gettysburg, where he has read a lot and knows the mistakes that Lee and the Union made. He can make the decision about whether or not to make Pickett's charge and weigh the effects. Just because Lee lost in reality does not mean the player has to lose in war games," Fillman added.

Tournaments for ten games were arranged and competition was based on point accumulation. Among the games, one called *Dungeons and Dragons* had the most participants. *Dungeons and Dragons* is a role-playing fantasy game in which players fight monsters and search their way through an underground complex where they find treasure, magical power and romance.

"The extent of your imagination

allows great scope and the range of possible encounters is unlimited," said Douglas Ferguson, a graduate student in theology at Texas Christian University.

"A friend of mine used the computer at school to build his dungeon," Ferguson said as he thumbed through a stack of computer cards five inches thick.

War gaming is not restricted to any age group. Allen King, a lawyer from Houston said, "I gave my 3-year-old son his first war game on his birthday. It was a game about the fall of Rome. He promptly cut up the map and, of course, made sure that Rome fell immediately."

King has come to the Warcon at Texas A&M for the last two years. He has been playing war games for the past 15 years and wants to go to the national convention in New York City this year.

"My favorite game is U.S. Navy. It's a complex game in the Pacific Theater of World War II. I like it because production, politics and diplomacy are all involved and it is very realistic," King said.

The Warcon is an opportunity for people with a common interest to get together and play, said Keith Gross, chairman of the program.

Also, war games are sometimes hard to find in local stores and the convention is a great place for people to buy new games and sell the ones they are tired of, said Glenn Spicer, a Gromets member.

War games can be an expensive hobby.

"The largest game, War in Europe, retails at \$40.00 and has a 49 square foot map," King said.

"However, most games cost around \$8.00."

Across the room from the official competition, men played with naval

miniatures. Fifty scale models of World War II battleships waited in formation for attack. The French, American and British were fighting the Japanese, German, and Italian fleets. Men crawled around the wooden floor, scuffing their Florsheim shoes and wearing holes in their sports slacks, while they calculated the exact degree of angle propulsion for their torpedoes and depth charges.

The naval miniatures division could not be included with the official competition because of technical problems in determining actual winners. The main attraction for it and war games in general is the fantasy fulfillment simulation offers.

"The players remember that it is only a game," King emphasized. "One of the most accurate things

I've ever heard about war was in Gen. Sherman's letter to Gen. John Bell Hood during the Battle of Atlanta.

"Gen. Sherman said, 'War is cruelty, it cannot be refined.' It is not a fascination with war that interests war gamers, but rather an interest in history and enjoyment in competition that keeps them playing," King said.

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such as "Long Long Time, Has No Pride," "It Doesn't Any More," and "Desperado" shown by "Heat Wave," "You're So Good," and "Tracks of My Rock 'n' Roll," as in "That'll Be the Day" and "When Will I Be Free." The album is a country, represented by "Through and Golden Needle" a couple of cuts that don't fit these categories but are Linda Ronstadt's "Love Is a Bunch of Different Drum." What do you need to say?

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## 'Cuckoo's Nest' producer says movie changed society's views

**By DEBBIE PARSONS**  
Battalion Staff

A change in the attitudes of society had a great deal to do with the success of the movie, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," producer Michael Douglas said Friday night.

Aggie Cinema and the Great Issues Committee sponsored a live twenty-minute telephone interview with Douglas after the showing of the movie in Rudder Theatre at Texas A&M. The conversation was hooked up to the sound system so the audience could listen.

Freeman Fisher, vice-chairman of Aggie Cinema, interviewed Douglas by calling him in Washington from the theatre.

Douglas answered questions given to Fisher by people in the audience, as well as questions that Fisher already had. He talked about the movie as well as his personal life as an actor.

"Attitudes about craziness (insanity) have changed a lot," Douglas said. "It was something that was in

the closet in the '60s and sort of got out in the open in the '70s.

"I think we all realize there's a little bit of craziness in all of us. The humor and the movie itself was much more acceptable in the '70s, whereas in the '60s much more people found it in bad taste."

The book, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," was written by Ken Kesey and has sold more than three million copies in soft-cover. While action in the book is seen through Chief Bromden's eyes, the movie adapts a more general point of view.

"In a two-hour movie, you're going to lose certain elements from the book, and it is always hard to decide what you are going to lose," Douglas said. "We decided that the story as a whole was more important than telling it from one person's point of view."

Ken Kesey was initially hired to write the screenplay for the movie, but they ran into problems because Kesey had never written a screen-

play before. Kesey wanted to tell the story from Chief Bromden's point of view, and he wanted to incorporate some of the hallucinatory effects that are expressed in the book.

"I don't think I'd hire an author to write a screenplay again because he can't help but be hurt or offended when you change things," Douglas said.

Kesey was taken off the screenwriting and was given a percentage of the picture. He didn't like the percentage, and sued the film. He then realized that he didn't have sufficient grounds, Douglas said, and he took the percentage, which totaled \$1.5 million.

Two thousand actors auditioned for the parts of the inmates of the mental hospital. Eighteen were chosen; nine from New York, and nine from Los Angeles. No inmates from the hospital were in the movie, everybody in the movie was an actor or actress.

"After we picked the right

people, we just let them get at it," Douglas said. "It was a real pleasure on the first day at the hospital, when we couldn't tell the players without a program."

Douglas said that everybody working on the film got along extremely well.

"It's very rare that people get along as well as we did, and then on top of it, have a big success," he said.

Douglas appears on television with Karl Malden on "The Streets of San Francisco." He said that he would like to try many different types of work.

"Acting is difficult because you always have to rely on someone," he said. "I'm going to get into directing and all different kinds of work."

The telephone interview with Douglas was the first of its kind at Texas A&M University. The total cost of doing the interview was almost \$30. Douglas did not charge anything to be interviewed.