

AN  
NMExclusive  
interview

WITH

# A VERY PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL —

**JAMES TAYLOR** is a tall, lanky, loping, likeable kind of fellow. But nevertheless, a very private individual. Not the kind of guy you can do a regular kind of interview with.

Not that he's offensively off-putting or nasty. Quite the opposite. It's just that he confesses to have nothing to say when it comes to telling people about himself.

I met him for the first time on Sunday morning, when he flew into London from Vancouver with his good friend Joni Mitchell, with whom he'd just done a concert, and his manager, Peter Asher.

James was pretty tired, and explained: "I've been doing so much travelling recently. Like, last night we were in Vancouver, which is on the West Coast, and before that I was at home in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, which is in the East. Before that I was shooting the movie 'Two Lane Blacktop', in which James plays the driver of a cross-country dragster) and that took us all over the Midwest — Macon, Georgia; Little Rock, Arkansas; Boswell, Oklahoma, and everywhere like that.

"The movie took about two months and involved working around 13 hours a day, at least."

All of which was enough to convince me that he sure was tired, so I let him be for Sunday, and joined up with him again on Monday at the BBC-TV Centre, where he was shooting an "In Concert" programme for Stanley Dorfmann on BBC-2.

While James was attempting to

LISTEN TO  
**OCEAN**

By Allan  
McDougall

unwind between rehearsals and the actual filming ("Television makes me real nervous — all those cameras bug the hell out of me"), we talked for a few minutes more. I asked him if he had enjoyed filming "Two Lane Blacktop".

"Yeah, but it was hard work. Especially doing things over and over, and all the hanging around. Just waiting is also tiring."

Why had he done the movie? Was it a vehicle for getting his music across to a larger audience?

"No, I don't sing in the film at all. And it wasn't anything to do with getting James Taylor across, because I don't play myself."

"It's just that everybody thought it was a good idea to do the film. I didn't know the people involved with it, but I got to know them and they're good dudes."

What really makes James Taylor happy?

"Oh, I like working on my house in Martha's Vineyard, I like being away from cities altogether, although Boston is okay, and so is San Francisco, I guess. I was born in Boston, but we all moved to Carolina when I was three and I lived there until I was 14, when I went to school in New York."

"And I like singing and playing, although sometimes that runs out. I have to play in cities, and

colleges in cities, but that's where the people are, so . . ."

Then James went into the TV studio to sing James Taylor, except that he commenced his concert with his own version of: "Messrs. Lennon & McCartney's 'With A Little Help From M' Good Friends' which I always open with."

Wearing an old pair of baggy, faded-blue jeans and a shawl-cum-cardigan thing, J.T. continued with his single from the "Sweet Baby James" album—"Fire And Rain."

"I wrote it m'self, mostly here and mostly in the States."

Then came a very funny take-off of Ray Charles' "Things Go Better With Coca-Cola" advert, and a humorous reference to Ray Charles and Coke, which may have to be edited out of the film when it gets screened.

Actually, Taylor opens up more about his music when he has a guitar or a piano under his fingers. He told us that "Sweet Baby James" is a lullaby for his older brother's son, and J.T.'s nephew, James.

And "Steamroller" was written when he was with a New York group, the Flying Machine, in 1966, and all the suburban kids in other groups were trying to be real bluesy with the guitars and amps their parents bought them.

## JAMES TAYLOR

who appears at  
the Palladium  
this Sunday

Those kids were writing the heaviest lyric they could think of — like "I'm The Queen Mary, Baby" or "I'm A Ton Of Bricks" — so he had to send that scene up with this song in which he is a Steamroller and a Cement-Mixer and a Napalm Bomb.

After singing for almost an hour, including "Carolina In My Mind" and "Sunny Skies" and other goodies, James asked if he's been on, for thirty minutes yet. Obviously he, and the audience, had enjoyed themselves a lot.

After the show it was all down to dinner on the Warner Brothers, James' record label, and James told me that sometime he'd like to go up to Scotland.

"My great-great-great-grandparents come from Marykirk, which is in County Moray. Up near Aberdeen, I guess. I'd really like to get up there for a time and see where it all began."

In the meantime, James Taylor is looking forward to playing a concert in London on Sunday at the Palladium.



JONI MITCHELL and JAMES TAYLOR pictured on their arrival at London Airport on Sunday.

## Kes Wyndham



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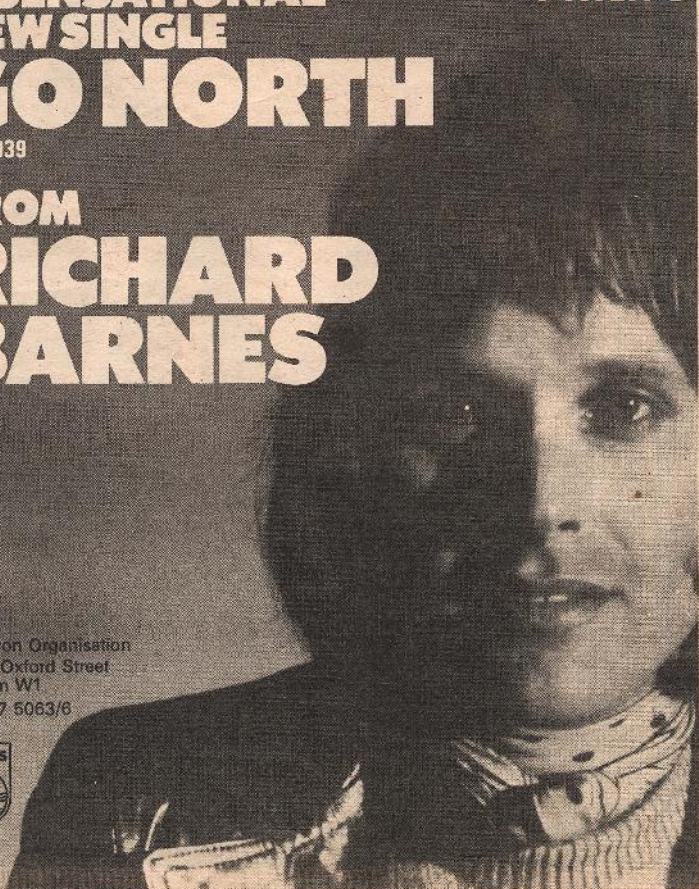
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FROM  
**RICHARD BARNES**

The Iron Organisation  
29/31 Oxford Street  
London W1  
01-437 5063/6



PHILIPS







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