

RETUNE YOUR EARS

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Presenting new, interesting or alternative musicians from the acoustic world. With Joel McIver.

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RACHEL TAYLOR-BEALES

Guitar, banjor or sax, Rachel can turn her hand to anything



'I'm playing two guitars at present. One is an Australian Maton EM225C with a solid spruce top and Queensland maple back and sides, which I bought from the Maton factory in Melbourne back in 1998.

It's a lovely guitar, unlacquered, with a beautiful light yet bright ringing tone. In 2006 I purchased an Avalon spruce and rosewood Legacy A32C. I had a wonderful experience when buying the

Avalon: I'd been in touch with the Belfast factory and made a date to go and visit them to choose my guitar. I hadn't realised that the particular date I'd chosen was a public holiday in Northern Ireland, and it turned out that they kindly opened the factory up just for me. It was difficult at first to choose a guitar as I sat there with the whole workshop of gorgeous instruments at my disposal. Eventually I chose the Legacy model and have been thrilled with it and am still learning and finding out all that it can do. Both the Maton and the Avalon guitars are cutaways. When performing live I use a preamp designed by Orchid Electronics. I first discovered the Orchid preamp when on tour with Martyn Joseph back in 2006, and became an instant convert to it. I'm self-taught,

and somehow along the way I've developed a fingerpicking technique that primarily uses thumb and index finger. I've since discovered that I'm not alone on this self-taught avenue, as the likes of Paul Simon and Martyn Joseph also play like this. My fingerpicking style was catalysed when I discovered the joys of open tuning a few years ago. Now my finger and thumb move in rapid succession, while my left hand finds curious and suspended chords on the fretboard. The secret of good playing is a secret I'm always trying to uncover, but I guess it would be heart and soul, imagination and creativity. Find a way to work with and unlock an instrument's unique voice, and then practise till your fingers fall off!

www.racheltaylor-beales.com