

LEM SHEPPARD

LEMSHEP@YAHOO.COM

PROGRAM NOTES

When you hear Lem perform traditional music you are reminded that this is music we once danced, clapped and sang along to. It doesn't take long after he launches into The Crawdad Song or John Henry that a four or five year old is seen dancing around in front of the stage. His bluesy rendition of a Spiritual brings out the humming and swaying from anyone who knows them.

His voice trained by Dr. Eva Jessey- *The Grand Dame of American Music*, can move seamlessly from a baritone with its full richness while singing a Spiritual or a Folk holler, to juke joint bluesy tenor.

Sometimes while discussing the origins of the St. Louis Blues lem picks up the tenor banjo and gives the audience a chance to hear what W.C. Handy might have heard in that train station in Mississippi that made *him* the father of the blues. Lem not only plays bottle neck guitar but he takes you on a journey through history to teach you why the Delta Bluesmen called it "Spanish Tuning" when they tuned their guitars this special way.

You can tell that Lem hasn't forgotten his Kansas City jazz roots when he plays music from the Harlem Renaissance or something from Gershwin's Porgy and

Bess that he learned from Eva Jessey, the folk opera's original choral director. To share with the audience where it all came from, Lem likes to end many of his concerts with a crowd favorite, his arrangement of the West African folk song Take Time.

