

# Mp3 Joel Mabus - The Banjo Monologues



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This is a unique album of old time banjo (clawhammer 5-string) with traditional songs and tunes wedded with storytelling. The monologues tell of 1930's radio and my family's career as professional "hillbilly" musicians. 18 MP3 Songs FOLK: Traditional Folk, COUNTRY: Bluegrass Details: Joel Mabus has split his 30-year career in folk music between the traditional and the original. Split is perhaps not the proper word, because the old and the new intertwine in his music, whether he is singing an old ballad with a new interpretive twist or writing a new song with a 21st century perspective that sounds like it has been handed down from generations past. Where is he from? He was born and raised in a modest Southern Illinois town, about 105 miles southeast of Mark Twain, 190 miles northwest of Bill Monroe, 110 miles southwest of Burl Ives and just over the river and up the hill from Scott Joplin. His great-grandfather Louis Charles Lee was an Illinois farmhouse fiddler of the 19th century. Most of the following generations were farmhouse musicians too. When Joels mother and father came of age in the Great Depression, they took their old-time music on the road as professional entertainers, barnstorming the Midwest with road shows for Prairie Farmer, the parent company of the WLS Barn Dance, the progenitor of the Grand Ole Opry. This pedigree was not lost on Joel as a child. When his schoolmates were grooving to the Beach Boys and the Monkeys, he was learning the tunes of the Carter Family, Bill Monroe and Jimmie Rodgers. He also absorbed some of the blues and spiritual music that is thick in his native Southern Illinois along the Mississippi River. Despite the poverty his family was thrown into after his fathers untimely death, Joel attended university in Michigan (on a national merit scholarship), where he studied anthropology by day and learned the business of being a professional musician by night. Interests grew beyond bluegrass old time stringband music, and Joel studied older blues, western swing, and even Celtic dance music long before it was the fad. He also began to write songs. After journeymans work in several local bluegrass

and string bands, Joel made his first record for a Michigan label in 1977 with mandolin legend Frank Wakefield guesting. Three years later he signed with Flying Fish Records for a two-record deal. In 1986 he was one of the first established folksingers to start his own independent label, even before the advent of the home studio and compact disc, which make the practice so common today. While he is known to many as a songwriter, having penned several songs familiar to the folk crowd (Touch a Name On the Wall and The Duct Tape Blues are two that have been covered by many and published in the pages of Singout Magazine), he is also a fixture on the traditional scene as a guitarist, old-time banjoist, singer and fiddler. He has taught at Augusta Heritage, Puget Sound Guitar Workshop, and fiddled at countless dance camps. Joel was also among the first wave to join the Folk Alliance in 1990, and showcased officially at the 1991 international conference in Chicago, where he was given standing ovations. He has made 18 solo albums in his 30 -year recording career most of them still available. His latest is The Banjo Monologues in 2007, a unique wedding of oldtime banjo and storytelling. Joel Mabus has toured widely and makes his living at music, though he is like most professional folk musicians in the 21st century enjoying relative obscurity. At his extensive and user-friendly website, you can find his discography, all his lyrics, promotional materials and his other writings.

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