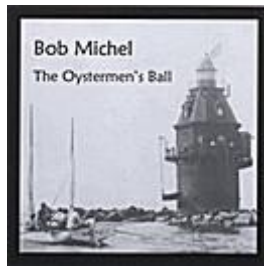


## Mp3 Bob Michel - The Oystermen's Ball



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Spare, strong melodies and beautifully wrought lyrics from a seasoned neotraditional singer, multi-instrumentalist, and bayshore poet based in rural southwestern New Jersey. 11 MP3 Songs

COUNTRY: Country Folk, FOLK: Gentle Details: I started playing music in 1965, at the tail end of the Great Folk Scare. My father had an old mandolin in the garage, and one fateful night I strung it up and began to teach myself to play. A few months later I learned how to tune it properly, and began to teach myself to play again. It seemed innocent enough at the time, but it quickly led to the harder stuff: guitar, banjo, fiddle, tinwhistle, Irish flute, Anglo concertina and button accordion, more or less in that relentless, downward-spiraling order. Before long I was singing in folkie duos and trios, playing in rock bands (even the drums, once!), busking as an old-timey banjo player, leading traditional Irish sessions. Show me an economically marginal instrument, style or genre and I was willing to give it a try. I listened to Woody Guthrie and Phil Ochs, Mississippi John Hurt and Mississippi Fred McDowell, the Skillet Lickers and Uncle Dave, Willie Clancy and Martin Carthy, the Delmore Brothers and the Stanley Brothers and the Balfa Brothers, and almost everything else that eventually became known as "roots music." I like to think that, sometimes at least, some of those many motley threads get woven together in my own music in a pattern that you wouldn't find elsewhere. But you decide. I did a lot of writing in my teens; it was, I think, a legal requirement in those remote days. Then thirty years of stone-cold songwriter's block, which may sound dreadful but actually permitted some modest real-world productivity for a while. All that is over, though. I spend my time now on the shore of the Delaware Bay in Cumberland County, New Jersey, a remote, marshy and magical place where--and relatively few people know this--the Muse herself resides. Her place isn't much to look at--more of a shack, really--and you'd probably drive right by it. But as a desperate realtor once said, it's "Much Bigger Inside!" The point of all this being: the songs that matter, to

me, are the ones that, on first hearing, erase all memory of a time when they weren't in your head. Once or twice before I go I'd like to write one like that.

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