

## Mark Dvorak – Bio

Mark Dvorak was born in Chicago, Illinois circa the early 1960's, the third of four sons. His great-grandfather was born and raised in Prague, Czechoslovakia and later immigrated to the United States. A more than adequate baseball player, fresh out of high school, Mark tried out for a scouting division of the St. Louis Cardinals. Music was however, already exerting its pull on the teenager. Mark had mastered playing the harmonica by the time he turned sixteen, so his older brother Steve, nowadays a successful luthier, suggested he try something more challenging, like playing guitar. Circa 1978, after working for a time in the shipping department of a xylophone factory, Mark was able to purchase his first guitar, a Harmony. The job also financed a 14,000 mile motorcycle trip around the States. Dvorak went on to take guitar lessons at the Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music, and these days is a guitar and banjo teacher at his alma mater. Dvorak has toured and performed as a professional musician for the last quarter of a century. He has performed/taught at the Old Quarter Coffee House in Brookfield, Illinois and The Acorn Coffee House in Warrenville, Illinois, and is a co-founder of the Plank Road Folk Music Society. For a time Mark ran a venue at the Old Town School called "Mr. Coffeeshouse."

Released by the Kaneville, Illinois based label Depot Records, Dvorak's debut album, "**No Lonesome Tune**" [1988], a cassette only release, featured cover songs, and was followed by "**Use It Up, Wear It Out**" [1992]. Also a Depot release "**Old Songs & New People**" [1995] was a folk music collection for children as well as adults. Mark subsequently put together a concert series of the same title and continues to perform it in libraries and concert halls. "**When Steam Was Kind**" [1992] was released on the Cookie Man Music label.

On the Depot Records release "**Just Something My Grandma Used To Sing**" [1996] Dvorak recalls songs he heard as a youngster growing up, and the titles included "Sippin' Cider Through A Straw," "A Porter's Love Song To A Chambermaid," "Dream A Little Dream Of Me," "Irene Goodnight," "Blue Skies," "Tumbling Tumbleweeds," and "Side By Side." Since late last century Mark has worked with Michael Smith and his wife Barbara Barrow in the tribute group Weavermania. Tom Dundee featured in the original line-up, and was later replaced by Chris Walz. Michael sings Lee Hays parts, Barbara sings Ronnie Gilbert's, Chris sings Fred Hellerman and Mark sings Pete Seeger. To date Weavermania, the line-up that featured Dundee, has recorded one "in concert" album "**Live!**" [2001].

Released by Depot Records "**The Streets Of Old Chicago**" [1998] opened with the Howard Armstrong penned album title song, and the disc mostly featured traditional songs plus a few contemporary numbers, including Steve Goodman's "City Of New Orleans." The collection was a tribute to the folk musicians who had cut their teeth in the folk clubs of the Windy City during the latter half of last century. Mark's latest recording "**Every Step Of The Way**" [2005], released by the Glen Ellyn, Illinois based Waterbug imprint, mostly features Dvorak penned originals plus a trio of cover songs. The collection includes "One Couldn't Run, One Couldn't See." In 1994 Dvorak visited the late Brownie McGhee [d. 1996] in his Oakland, California home and the latter song is a tribute to McGhee and his long time musical partner, Sonny Terry [d. 1986].

Discography :

with Weavermania – "**Live!**" [2001] :

with The Dixie Volunteers – "**Pickin' At The Home Place**" [2005] :

Solo – "**No Lonesome Tune**" cassette only release [1988] ; "**Use It Up, Wear It Out**" [1992] ; "**When Steam Was Kind**" [1992] ; "**Old Songs & New People**" [1995] ; "**Just Something My Grandma Used To Sing**" [1996] ; "**The Streets Of Old Chicago**" [1998] ; "**Every Step Of The Way**" [2006] :

**Arthur Wood**

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