

## DUSTY STREETS by Jon Spear

Award-winning singer-songwriter Jon Spear has built a strong reputation as a bluesman with his namesake group, the Jon Spear Band. In recent years, they've released three critically acclaimed CDs of original music, all of which charted in the USA, UK, France, Australia and other countries.

But Spear's songwriting energy isn't confined to blues and over the years, he's penned songs in a number of genres including country, folk, rock and Americana. Those songs have never been recorded – until now.

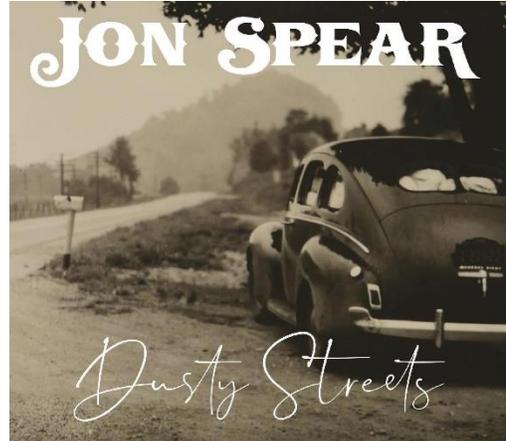
In his new solo EP *Dusty Streets*, Spear teamed up with some of Central Virginia's finest musicians to record six original songs reflecting his Americana roots. Singer Jennifer Dodge joins Spear for a duet on the EP's title track, *Dusty Streets*, a haunting country-tinged ballad where a ghost town serves as a metaphor for lost love. Dodge is a popular Richmond-area vocal talent with a voice big enough to successfully lead an Etta James tribute band. Pedal steel guitarist Jay Jessup adds to the song's atmosphere with licks that will remind listeners of Lloyd Green's contributions to the classic Byrds Country Rock album *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*. The rest of the backing is provided by members of Spear's band – Andy Burdetsky on bass and John Stubblefield on drums. Another special "guest" on this song is Spear's century-old Gibson A3 mandolin that originally belonged to his grandfather.

*Americana Highways* described *Dusty Streets* as "layer after layer of haunting discovery" noting that "the mandolin and pedal steel punctuate the flow perfectly." Additional original songs on the EP include: (2) "Forever Home" – a critter's-eye view of pet adoption; (3) "Mr. Bankerman" – an old-fashioned jump blues tune about being broke, featuring the boogie-woogie piano work of Matty Metcalfe, harmonica by Dara James and electric guitar by Spear; (4) "Rollin' On" – A song about living on the run in which Spear sings all the vocals and plays both the 12-string guitar and baritone, while Dara James plays dobro and John Stubblefield lays down a steady groove on the snare; (5) "Cremation of Sam McGee" – the dark humor of Robert W. Service's 1909 poem is put to music by Spear in this old school folk-style song, perfect for listening around a campfire with friends on a chilly night; and (6) "Time Machine Weed" – The title tells it all and Spear's backing musicians – the Surreal Banditos – provide the song with a perfect hillbilly vibe.

Spear's journey to musical maturity started in the early 1950s singing in his church choir and sharing evenings with his family around an old tube radio listening to big band music and radio serials. That was soon followed by rockabilly, rock 'n' roll, doo-wop, blues and R&B. Spear got his first guitar when he was 11 and had the thrill of a young boy's life when his precocious high school band opened for the Isley Brothers at Port Chester NY's famed Capitol Theatre back when "Twist & Shout" was a nationwide hit. During the social upheaval of the 1960s, Spear pursued his talent for songwriting and discovered the power of music to foment change and address important social issues.

Graham Clarke of *Blues Bytes* described Spear as having "a highly unique songwriting approach that includes entertaining party songs, interesting story songs, and other thought-provoking fare." Bill Wilson of *Reflections in Blue* said Spear is "developing into one of the finest storytellers I've encountered...straight to the point, these stories are absolutely believable and incredibly powerful . . . ." Of Spear's songwriting, Dave Bluz N Da Blood Harrison said: "It's not easy to write lyrics that are of this quality... These songs take you places. You can relate to them."

*Dusty Streets* was recorded at Ravensworth Studios in Scottsville, Virginia and was produced, recorded, mixed and mastered by Andrew Fritz Waldeck



1. Dusty Streets (3:31)
2. Forever Home (2:47)
3. Mr. Bankerman (3:33)
4. Rollin' On (3:34)
5. Cremation of Sam McGee (4:57)
6. Time Machine Weed (4:47)

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