



# Lee Murdock

*“... a fine job of recreating history  
and holding it up to a poet’s light.”*

*—Sing Out! Magazine*

*“History, mood, wonderful arranging.  
Murdock’s intelligence and detail are  
a joy to listen to”*

*—WCVE Radio, Richmond, VA*



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**Broadly acknowledged** as “the premier interpreter of songs and tales about the Great Lakes,” Lee Murdock has uncovered a boundless body of music and stories in his home region. There is an amazing timelessness to this music. Great Lakes songs are made of hard work, hard living, ships that go down and ships that come in. The music is grounded in the work song tradition, from the rugged days of lumberjacks and wooden sailing schooners, Murdock comes alongside with original ballads of contemporary commerce and revelry in the grand folk style.

Noted as a fluent instrumentalist on the six and twelve-string guitars, Lee Murdock's musical influences span fifteen generations, from 17th century Irish harp music, to Scott Joplin guitar rags, and embracing the blues, freshwater shanties, original songs and ballads.

Bringing a deeper understanding of the folk process, Lee's repertoire combines historical research with contemporary insights. Making folk music for the modern era, Lee Murdock's work is an anthem to the people who live, work, learn and play along the freshwater highways of North America, and beyond.



**ARTISTS OF NOTE**

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"I'm interested in trying to find the life in these songs; in making music that's exciting to people today. I am looking for the songs and the interesting stories, not only for the people who already enjoy folk music, but for those who think they don't like folk music."

—Lee Murdock

## Folk Songs of the Great Lakes Region

This 50 minute educational presentation can be adapted for adults/community events or for school assembly programs at the elementary or middle school levels. The concert traces the development of the Great Lakes region, including both maritime and songs and stories about the people who settled on the Great Lakes shores. The new CD and E-book, *Lake Rhymes, Folk Songs of the Great Lakes Region*, was created as the study guide to accompany this performance in schools, and is donated to schools with assembly performances. Shanty-Singing Workshops: Shanties were work songs. In this workshop, students or adults are invited to sing together—and to feel the work that went with the songs.

## Themed Events

In addition to regular concerts and festival performances, Lee Murdock suggests a few special program themes.

### Lighthouse Legends

Like the Great Castles of Europe, there is an aura of mystery and romance surrounding the lighthouses on the inland seas. Lee's songs and stories share the tragedy and the heroics, the isolation and the beauty of lighthouse lore and of the lifesaving service.

### Great Lakes Ghosts

A narrated concert featuring songs of supernatural legends and spooky tales of ghost ships and haunted lighthouses. The perfect fall program for libraries and museums.

### The Christmas Tree Ship Concerts

A holiday concert commemorating the turn-of-the-century tradition of carrying Christmas trees to southern ports on the Great Lakes. This was the final cargo of the season during the lumber schooner days, after the last of the logs from the northern forests were hauled south to build the cities of the Midwest. The *Rouse Simmons* was but one of many ships hauling this cargo, though perhaps the most famous and beloved ship of her day.

### From Auld (Old) Sod to New Prairie: The Irish in America (Emerald Isle Immigrants)

Be ready to join in the boisterous chorus of a popular Irish pub song, share the sly joke in classic old ballad, follow along to a soft instrumental air or vigorous dance tune from the Emerald Isle. Follow the Irish across "The Big Pond" with songs of Irish immigrants, as Lee celebrates with an anthem honoring those who labored to build the Illinois and Michigan Canal, or traditional tunes from the Beaver Island settlers, and more.



### The War of 1812: The Struggle That Forged Two Nations

In the summer of 1812, war was declared with England by President James Madison. Why? Cargo and crews of the US merchant fleet were being seized or impressed on the high seas by the British Navy. Native people were encouraged by British agents to rise up in rebellion against American settlers. American interests coveted the vast expanse of the Canadian frontier. The Star Spangled Banner (and defense of Baltimore at Fort McHenry), the Burlington Races and the Battle of Lake Erie, Tecumseh (Our Vanquished Hero), and more songs tell the story of British, Canadian, Native People, and America.

### Thunder in the Distance: Midwestern Perspectives on the Civil War

Much has been written about the southern battlefields of this bloody War Between the States, but Murdock's program takes a look at the role of the Civil War from a Midwesterner's perspective in the 1860s era. A few traditional songs, but primarily new originals that sometimes sound like a contemporary letter to the editor.

Represented by: Joann Murdock



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