



TAMULEVICH
ARTIST MANAGEMENT
— *We Build Careers* —

WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTATIONS

Offered by Rev. Robert Jones

Robert Jones has been a student of traditional African American music for nearly his entire life. As a performer for over 30 years and as a preacher for nearly 40 years, he has acquired knowledge and expertise in a number of areas pertaining to American Roots Music and its culture. Consequently, Robert is happy to share his knowledge in workshops and presentations.

PERFORMANCE WORKSHOPS

“All Of This Is The Blues”

A Survey of Traditional American Blues

This is an approximately one-hour long presentation that showcases seminal figures in blues music. Robert also demonstrates the nuances of various regional styles of blues including Piedmont, Delta, Texas, and early urban styles. This program is designed to appeal to long time blues fans as well as to those who are new to blues.

“American History Through Music”

This is a approximately a one-hour long program that describes how American Roots music has chronicled and helped to bring about change in American society. Beginning with the slave spiritual, working up through Rock and Roll, and continuing through Rap music, this program shows that American music has always been at the forefront of American life and has much to teach us about our history and our culture.

“Before The Blues”

It would probably be fair say that blues music was the dominant popular music style of the 20th Century, but what came before the blues? Even though the quilt of early authentic African American music is largely gone, there are still threads that can give us insight to the music that existed during American slavery and that gave rise to the popular music of the day. In this workshop we will explore such subjects as the “field holler”, work songs, lullabies, traditional banjo, fiddle, quills and guitar music, spirituals and dance music.

“Songs Of Praise And Protest”

This is an assembly program that focuses on music of social change. This program showcases the music of such giants as Woody Guthrie, Lead Belly, and Pete Seeger along with lesser known singers and original material to paint a portrait of how songs effected societal change in American History. Music still can bring about change since it often bypasses the brain and goes straight to the heart.

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

Robert has taught for a number of educational institutions (including over five years as an Adjunct Professor at Wayne State University), and he feels quite comfortable in a classroom setting. Consequently, he offers a number of upper level (high school and college) presentations in addition to his basic school presentations.

“The Blues, America’s Music”

This is a program that showcases the history and aesthetic of the Blues music from its start, just before the 20th Century, right up until the present. We will explore various regional styles of blues music (including Mississippi Delta blues, Texas blues, Blues in the Carolinas, and both pre war and post war urban blues styles). We will also talk about seminal and influential figures in blues history such as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Charley Patton, Son House, Rev. Gary Davis, Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, Bessie Smith, and others. Program also includes a select discography of the artists who have helped to shape the history American Blues music.

“The Blues And Improvisation”

The blues form underpins much of American popular music. In fact, most popular music styles have a blues component within the style. Blues is found in jazz, rock, rhythm and blues, country, bluegrass, gospel and hip-hop, just to name a few. So those who want to learn to improvise within any of those styles would be well served to learn about the blues form. This workshop includes demonstrations and explanations of 8, 12, and 16 bar blues, the pentatonic scale, call and response, the flattened third, modal music and more. This is a workshop that is recommended for instrumental music and choir students.

“Creativity and the Art of Songwriting”

Robert is a skilled songwriter and a student of the craft. Therefore he is able to talk and to share with students who are interested in the use of many of strategies that great songwriters have utilized throughout history. Among issues addressed is—The importance and use of vocabulary when writing in verse--The use of imagery, metaphor, simile and allusion in songwriting and in poetry--The purpose and the use of rhyme--How to use existing and familiar melodies as a bridge to new songs--Songwriters that everyone should know but that many people don’t--How the folk process helps to edit songs and verse—The various aesthetics of blues, gospel, country and folk music, and more.

STORYTELLING WORKSHOPS

“The Art of Storytelling”

Storytelling is one of the oldest and most treasured skills in the world. In spite of all of wonderful technology available to us, we still rely on the ancient techniques of storytelling to explore and explain some of the most complex questions of life. Every community, family and person has a story worth telling, but how do we learn to fashion and present a story? Well, Robert Jones is one of the premier storytellers in the nation. He has been featured a number of times at storytelling venues and festivals, including the prestigious National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, TN.

Robert teaches workshop participants skills such as—Framing a story, learning how to tell a story within a context that will make it compelling and interesting--Learning how to structure a story for dramatic or humorous effect. --Learning how to make a traditional story personal--Learning how to build a family story into one that is appealing to a general audience. --The effective use of music and sound effects in storytelling--How to tell stories for children and adults, and more

“Telling Your Family Story”

A good deal of Robert Jones’ storytelling comes from the history of his own family. He draws on roots that run from Alabama and other parts of the Deep South to Detroit where he was born and raised. If you would love to share some of the legacies and humor that comes from you own family background, this is a workshop that you don’t want to miss. Robert discusses how to find “the way into” your family’s stories. He discusses how to keep your stories concise and yet how to identify themes that are universal and relevant to both the teller and the listener.

“Incorporating Music Into Your Storytelling”

If you play an instrument or even if you just sing, you have a great tool that can enhance your ability to tell stories. Music can create a mood, act as a sound effect or even tell a story through a song. Learn how a guitar, a harmonica or a mandolin can make a story more interesting. You don’t have to be a master musician either, in storytelling rhythm is often more important than melody. Bring your instrument and your imagination.

“In The Beginning Was The Word”

Telling Stories From A Biblical Perspective

The Bible is a great source for stories of wisdom and perspective, and those who go to church are often called upon to expound on those stories, but how does one approach Biblical storytelling in a way that can be both profound and humorous? Well, it can be done. Robert Jones calls upon over 20 years of experience as a preacher and a teacher to show folks who are interested that stories from the Bible need not be dull, and that these stories can speak with great relevance to today’s world.

MUSICAL WORKSHOPS

These are workshops designed for those who play music and are interested in learning the nuances of traditional blues and other forms of Roots music. Depending on time and resources these workshops can be taught at either an introductory, middle or advanced level and can be adjusted to fit time constraints.

“Blues Fingerpicking 101”

This class concentrates on providing a solid introduction and foundation to the aspiring blues fingerpicker. We'll concentrate on techniques for developing monotonic, alternating and walking bass lines. We'll explore how blues players move first position chord shapes up the neck in order to add variety to your playing as well as to play in different keys. We'll also explore how the “CAGED” system of chords can be applied to traditional styles of country blues. We will do all this while learning some key tunes of seminal blues guitarists of the past. All tunes will be in standard tuning. While everyone is welcome to come to the class, a solid knowledge of basic first position guitar chords would be most helpful. Also, since this is a fingerpicking class, the use of a thumb and fingerpicks and a steel string guitar is recommended.

“Blues Slide Guitar”

If you have ever wanted to tune your guitar to an open chord, pick up a slide and explore the sounds of bottleneck blues this class is for you. We will be learning the music of such slide guitar giants as Elmore James, Robert Johnson, Son House, Blind Willie Johnson, Tampa Red, Blind Willie Johnson and Mississippi Fred McDowell. We'll explore many aspects of guitar playing such as the use of alternate tunings, with and without slides; slide selection, regional styles, essential artists and recordings, and more. Players of all levels of guitar proficiency are welcome, but a steel string guitar and a slide (either metal, glass or ceramic) will be needed.

“Blues Harmonica 101”

The harmonica is a great little instrument. It can be played melodically and rhythmically, solo or with others, and it works with just about any style of music. This class is designed to introduce you to the harmonica. Its price, portability and versatility make the harmonica an ideal instrument to add to a folk musician's arsenal.

This class is intended to introduce basic techniques, styles and approaches to the use of the harmonica in blues and folk music. Topics covered include holding the harmonica, playing in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd positions, and harmonica maintenance. We will also explore special effects like bends, trills, fanning, tremolo, and throat pops. We will also address things like accompanying yourself on harmonica with other instruments, etc. Students are required to bring at least one diatonic (10 hole) harmonica in the key of C.

“The Guitar According To Rev. Gary Davis”

Rev. Gary Davis was one of the most accomplished and influential guitarists of the 20th Century. His style was both complex and powerful. This class will focus on his sacred material and will introduce two of his classic songs, “Twelve Gates To The City” in the key of A, and “Samson and Delilah” in the key of G. Not only were these two songs staples of Rev. Davis’ repertoire, they give insights into his approach to playing the guitar. We will begin each song with simple first position chords, and then we will gradually move up the neck to chord voicings that were the hallmark of his style. We will also explore concepts like utilizing the “CAGED” system, alternating and syncopated bass, improvisation, call and response, and right-hand technique. In addition, we will explore other Davis songs and their relationship to artists that Rev. Davis has influenced. All are welcome but knowledge of basic guitar and first position chords are highly recommended. Handouts and lyric sheets will be made available.

“The Guitar According To Son House”

Eddie James “Son” House was one of the most influential singers and guitarists in the American blues tradition. A Mississippi Delta bluesman, he was a direct influence to Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, and by extension, the whole of Rock and Roll. Son House’s playing style was simple but extremely powerful. In this workshop we will explore House’s use of tunings, his rhythmic devices, his use of the slide or bottleneck and we will look at several of his songs including “Jinx Blues”, “Pony Blues” and the seminal “Death Letter Blues”. Bring a steel string guitar and a slide.

“The Guitar According To Lightnin’ Hopkins”

Sam “Lightnin’” Hopkins, was a Texas blues singer and guitarist and he remains one of the most prolifically recorded blues singers of all time. His style was highly improvisational and featured phrasing that tended to defy the standard 12 bar blues pattern. Nevertheless, his guitar playing is influential generation of guitarists who may not even know his name. In this workshop we will showcase a number of “Lightninisms” that help to characterize his styles. We will talk about his phrasing and his use of chord shapes and movement within the I-IV-V pattern of the blues. Specifically, we will look at his “Penitentiary Blues” and his version of “Baby, Please Don’t Go” for insights into his guitar style.

“The Blues According To Mississippi Fred McDowell”

Fred McDowell was from Como, Mississippi and his guitar style reflected a blues aesthetic that was unique to the hill country of Mississippi. McDowell played a slide style that was rhythmic, driving and totally improvisational. Akin to African drumming, McDowell’s guitar style is from the same school as Robert “Wolfman” Balfour, and the late Junior Kimbrough, and R.L. Burnside. In this workshop we will explore Fred McDowell’s tunings, his use of the slide, and his way of building poly-rhythmic patterns within a given song. Specifically, we will look at his songs “Gravel Road” and “You Done Told Everybody” for insights into his style. Bring a steel string guitar and a slide.

PREACHING

As an ordained minister for over close to 40 years and a Baptist pastor for nearly 12 years, Robert is often called upon to deliver a gospel message. He has been privileged to deliver chapel messages and sermons in a variety of places including the Stinson Chapel at Kalamazoo College, at Elkins and Davis College, Manchester College, and for churches of various denominations. If are looking to a speaker who is humorous, thoughtful and ecumenical in his preaching, please consider Rev. Robert Jones, Sr.

CUSTOMIZED WORKSHOPS

Sometimes we are called upon to work for the design of a workshop that is unconventional. Drawing on his experiences in the classroom, the stage, the pulpit and the field of protest and politics, Robert can sometimes help to design and execute a program that is both eclectic and fulfilling. Robert Jones is a singer, a songwriter, multi instrumentalist, a teacher, a preacher, a historian and a graphic artist. If there is a unique program or curricula that calls for a variety of skills, please consider calling so that we can talk about designing a workshop that can meet your needs.