## Mp3 Edward James Richard - Jimmy Brown The Newsboy

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Bluegrass and old-time favorites and a few original tunes featuring cross-picking guitar, banjo, fiddle, mandolin and harmony singing. 13 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Bluegrass, FOLK: Traditional Folk Details: Ed Richard's "bayou bluegrass" style is never far from his Cajun roots and Southern gospel traditions. "My father was 100 percent Cajun," says Ed, who pronounces his last name Re-shard, in the French style. "Cajuns have a positive, upbeat attitude about life," said Richard. "I think a big part of that attitude is their faith," he added. "They are hard workers, but when it comes time to play, they know how to party. "They're not somber people," he added. "I grew up listening to music and visiting friends and relatives where music was always present. I can't remember a time when I didn't play an instrument," he added. Ed's mother is a guitar player and she encouraged him, giving him a guitar and later sending him for guitar lessons. Instead of picking up Cajun-style music Ed enjoyed the 'Smoky Mountain' music popularized by Bill Monroe and Ralph Stanley. This recording showcases Ed's claw-hammer picking style, which he learned from Ralph Stanley. The style incorporates a rhythm action that plays rhythm and lead at the same time. Although his main instrument is the banjo, Ed is also a talented flat-top guitar player. The old traditional, "Spinning Wheel" showcases his dynamic cross-picking style on the acoustic guitar. Like his banjo repertoire, Ed's professional credentials are impressive, including a doctorate degree in moral theology that he earned from the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. He received his undergraduate degree from McNeese State University in 1978 and his law degree from Louisiana State University School of Law. He practiced business law in Lake Charles, LA for two years, but finally acknowledged a call to the priesthood that he had been feeling for years. In addition to his picking skills Ed is a talented songwriter. "Hills of Rome," which he wrote during his three year stay in Italy, is an instrumental with a great melody. Like a free-running brook, the banjo tumbles delightfully, taking the listener through unexpected turns and rhythms. In addition to Ed on banjo, this piece shows off the talents of Missourian Frank Ray on mandolin and Louisiana State Champion Fiddler Ron Yule. A French melody from the 18th Century served as inspiration for Richard's thoughtful 'a capella' banjo arrangement which he has titled "Father We Thank Thee." "1,000 Miles South" another original composition, reflects his

wistful feelings for his family's country home in DeQuincy, Louisiana. For Ed, music is a common link, an evangelical tool, opening much-needed paths of communication between divergent religious groups. Through his music, he's enjoyed meeting and mingling with people from many backgrounds. "Somebody Touched Me" and "Over in the Glory Land," both great old gospel tunes led by vocalist Guy Stevenson, are a couple of Ed's favorite 'ecumenical' songs. No matter where you go to church you can't help tapping your toes and singing along. Joining Ed on "I'll Wear a White Robe" and "In that City" are Clifford and Sue Blackmon, Ed's longtime friends from Junction, Louisiana. "Clifford and Sue have been very influential in my music," says Ed. "They constitute a wonderful husband and wife team when it comes to good, straightforward bluegrass picking and harmony singing." Jimmy Orchard of Eminence MO, head of the Ozark Bluegrass Boys, plays the fiddle on some of the cuts (A thousand miles, Somebody Touched Me, Over in the Gloryland) and adds a good, old time sound to them "For the most part, the songs on the CD are songs that I have been playing for a long time and have enjoyed a lot. I think a lot of others will like them too," says Ed. For him, the listener's enjoyment and involvement are among the most important qualities of his music. "I have always liked listening to music that somehow suggested that it needed me," says Ed. "When a person talks about what a song is like or why he or she likes it, I guess that's what they mean. That's the defining element of every piece of music I have ever liked and I thinks it's also what makes our kind of music what it is meant to be. It's not complete until it's enjoyed. I'm hoping that my music captures some of that element," he added. As he shares his musical gifts with others, Ed thanks and remembers not only the bluegrass and gospel legends that inspired his work, but also he honors the countless, nameless musicians who contributed to the richness of bluegrass music today. "I have the sense of having received something from them," says Ed. Like himself, they were inspired to lift their voices for the Lord.

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