

CD REVIEW: 'Jason Shannon' can't help but grab your attention

Jason Shannon is a bona fide storyteller, with vivid songs that sound old and new simultaneously. This first disc under his own name will grab you with its diversity and his natural form of expression.

By: **John Ziegler**, Duluth News Tribune
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His lyrical phrases seem to burrow into your cerebral cortex while his musicality leaves you humming his melodic lines.

Jason Shannon is a bona fide storyteller, with vivid songs that sound old and new simultaneously.

His mix of folk, blues, country, pop and rock that he calls “American Soul” music had its start in his previous band, Dear Machine, but really blossomed when he assumed full control. It’s come to fruition

with this first disc under his own name that will grab you with its diversity and his natural form of expression.

“Sons & Daughters” has a gilded melodic quality as Shannon gives avuncular advice to the next generation: “Guard your life with your life ... though it may mean nothing in the end.”

“Maybe Mexico” sounds like a “Blood on the Tracks”-inspired story-song with images of “flowers on a hillside waving’ in the wind” with a lonely scorned lover heading south to Mexico.

“Slip Away” has that Eddie Hinton strut of a classic R&B singer complete with Steve Cropper-like rhythm guitar and exuberant Stax horn lines.

“Mighty Mighty River” is straight-up rockin’ blues with guts and lyrical references to “the killin’ floor” and “a hammer and a nail” that peg Shannon as someone who isn’t just paying lip service to the genre, but rolls up his sleeves and throws it down for real.

Born in Paris, Texas, and raised in Lake Charles, La., Shannon took 100 songs he has written, whittled them down to 30 and put the 12 that seemed right for this project together in a self-titled package. He shot the cover photo on the beach last July at Park Point, looking like Charlie Chaplin with a top hat and umbrella, standing on a 12-foot ladder peering into the heart of Lake Superior.

All of the dozen tracks on “Jason Shannon” have a distinct character in their text and musical components, and the disc covers a lot of ground with passion and propulsive energy. Best of all, Shannon demonstrates throughout the entire affair that he definitely has some soul in his throat.