



JOHN SHANNON

= Biography =

No one has lived in this world, has thought and felt, who has not considered music as the most sacred of all arts...For those who follow the path of the inner cult, music is most essential for their spiritual development. The reason is that the soul who is seeking for truth is in search of the formless God...It is music only which has beauty, power, charm, and at the same time can raise the soul beyond form."

– Hazrat Inayat Khan, from "The Mysticism of Sound and Music" (Shambhala).

Modern folk guitarist, vocalist, and song crafter **John Shannon** believes in the power of music to enlighten the mind. After touring globally with some of the brightest rising stars in indie rock, folk, and jazz, including **Sonya Kitchell**, **Haale** and **Hiromi**, John now takes a journey into his own soul and beyond with his solo debut. Starting with an exploratory meditation trip in the southwestern desert, John discovered his unique, tender voice, inspired by the openness of American landscapes, and translated it into his debut solo album, a subtle masterpiece called *American Mystic*.

"I believe in the awakening power of song," says Shannon, whose musical vision came to the forefront a few years ago in the Arizona desert, after he spent four days and nights sitting in a circle without food, only drinking water. On this vision quest, communing with the elements according to Native American cultural traditions, Shannon found a sense of clarity. "There's a point in the circle in those four days when you realize you have always been there, and there's a point in the moment of the music - which is very much like being in a circle to me when it's right - when you realize you have always been there. After the vision quest, my music and my life path became more clear to me. They're one and the same, really."

Born in 1980, Shannon's musical foundations began with guitar lessons at age six. After years of Led Zeppelin and Jimmy Page-inspired musical exploration, Shannon studied harmony and improvisation with a local pipe organist. His teacher brought him to a church for lessons around midnight, with lights dimmed except on the altar, so the pair could improvise on the organ and electric guitar. At the same time, Shannon studied straight-ahead and avant-garde jazz with renowned saxophonist Eric Kloss. The lessons left Shannon with a focus on performing with heart and spiritual awareness. Shannon later went on to graduate from the Berklee College of Music, where he began a series of organic musical explorations in the evolutionary instrumental trio **Waking Vision** together with friends **Mitch Cohn** (aka Catalyst, bassist for Lauryn Hill, Ashanti, Destiny's Child) and **Martin Valihora** (drummer for Hiromi).

In addition to his solo work, Shannon has spent the past several years performing and touring with an eclectic group of break-out stars. He's recorded three albums as leader of Waking Vision, and toured as electric guitarist for psychedelic Sufi trance rocker **Haale**, jazz fusion piano phenomenon **Hiromi**, avant-jazz singer **Pyeng Threadgill**, and played guitar for **Sonya Kitchell**'s ground-breaking folk album *Words Came Back to Me* (Velour/Starbucks Hear Music) and her subsequent national tour. Shannon continues to play with Waking Vision, whose fourth album is slated for release on ObliqSound in fall 2008. He recently collaborated on British pop rocker **Gary Go**'s debut album *Say Less* (Decca). Shannon also still tours with Hiromi's Sonicbloom and in duo with Sonya Kitchell.

John Shannon's solo debut album *American Mystic* (OS 105) will be released in the USA and Canada on **April 29, 2008**, followed by European distribution. His tour in support of *American Mystic* begins this February.