

Mp3 Shannon Mier - On The Failure Of Science To Understand My Spirit



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Shannon's songs sound like a collaboration between Weezer and Bob Dylan with sugary melodies and big guitars. 10 MP3 Songs ROCK: Modern Rock, POP: Power Pop Details: I started writing songs because I had no choice. I had to find a way to deal with heartache and frustration. To try and find some hope in the middle of darkness. It was a way for me to deal with negative situations, for me to be able to understand things and try to turn them into something positive. When I write songs, I want people to be able to relate to them, and to understand what I was feeling. That's the most important thing about music to me, the sincere expression of emotion and ideas. I write about some dark topics, but I always find some sort of light, even if it's just a faint glimmer. Because if everything is dark and hopeless, then what's the point? My goal in music is to be able to make a living doing what I love doing. I'm not saying I don't want to be a big rich rock star, but I would be happy just paying the bills. I would also like to make a difference to someone, in the same way that my favorite musicians have made such a difference in my life. Guns N' Roses, Bob Dylan, the Red Hot Chili Peppers and many other artists have had an impact on my life. I would like to reach people and make a difference in their lives, even if it's just a small one. I began playing guitar in 1991, due to what turned out to be a fortuitous random drawing. I got a keyboard for my birthday that year, and signed up to take a guitar/keyboard class in middle school. I wanted to learn to play my keyboard, but more people were interested in keyboard than guitar. I was one of two "losers" in a drawing and ended up being "stuck" playing guitar. Because I had played violin for 5 years prior to that I was able to make quick progress learning the guitar. I was able to practice at home on my Dad's acoustic guitar, and I tried to learn music outside of the class. I bought the guitar transcription book for Use Your Illusion I by Guns N' Roses, a ridiculously hard album for a beginner to play on an acoustic

guitar. I also began buying Guitar World magazine and I gradually improved. In August of 1993, I finally got my own electric guitar, a Peavey Predator. For a few years, I was happy to play guitar, but gradually I wanted to sing. To me the melody has always been the most important part of a song, and the singer the most important member of the band. Axl Rose was my hero for years. I knew I wasn't a great singer, but I was encouraged by the success of Kurt Cobain, who was technically lacking, but was undoubtedly an amazingly expressive singer. I practiced singing quietly in my room, hoping my family couldn't hear me. The next step in my musical progression was songwriting. I tried for several years to write songs, and began to question whether I would ever have the ability. I was set to concede that perhaps some people have it and some don't, when I finally began writing songs I was happy with in January of 1997. The songs came slowly at first, but gradually I became able to write when I needed to. By the spring of 2000, I had at least 20 songs written, and I decided to do what I had always wanted to do: record a CD. I learned from one of my music professors at UVA that a new recording studio was opening on the downtown mall in Charlottesville, Virginia. Owned by Rick Diamond, the now defunct Gerbils Nest Studio offered artists the chance to record for free, on the condition that sales of the CD were split between the artist and the studio. This sounded like a great opportunity, and by October, I had finished my first album, Not Too Late featuring 15 original songs. Rick played the bass and Michael Wright played drums. I played my first ever live show that November at a sorority function. After another gig in January I decided I wanted to revamp the band, and I added Keegan Verburg on guitar, and Gerry DeRose on drums. Their addition led to a considerably more exciting and rocked out sound. We played several gigs at the Outback Lodge opening for the band Buzby. Everything seemed to be going fine, until, out of the blue, my album was dismissed by Cripsy Duck, a music reviewer for a local arts and entertainment magazine, the C-Ville Weekly, as not even worth giving a bad review to. I was upset, and I knew I needed to take action. I wrote an obscenity-ridden letter to the editor, questioning Cripsy's talent as a critic, and challenged him to a songwriting duel. In his column he had said that he had "written all these songs in 7th grade," so I invited him to play his material, I could play mine, and the audience could decide who was better. Needless to say, he didn't accept the challenge. My letter was printed in the paper, and two issues later, the paper ran letters written by many of my fans. It was around this time that the Dave Matthews Band played a show at Scott Stadium in Charlottesville, with Neil Young as the opening act. My friends lived right across the stadium and decided that they would have a party and that my band should play. We publicized it and

invited everyone to stop by. I was actually disappointed with how we played that day, but when I returned to the party later that night my roommate told me that Neil Young had told the sold out audience at Scott Stadium about the big party at 1912 Stadium Road and mentioned that "there was a very good band playing on the porch." I was thrilled, and I think it was the final shot in the Shannon vs. Cripsy war. Around this time, I began to become frustrated with the fact that my live band sounded so much better than my CD. I was happy that we sounded good, but at the same time it was disappointing to have a CD that I didn't feel really captured my best work. I decided to record another album and in May of 2001, I met with a producer named Chris Kress. We had a meeting, and I was very impressed with him and asked him to record my album. That turned out to be one of the best decisions I have ever made. I wanted to have an album that I could be proud of, that really represented what I was trying to do. Chris had the same vision, but knew how to go about achieving it. I took into account every bit of criticism (and praise) that I had gotten from my first album, and used it to ensure that this one would be better. I think the biggest mistakes I made was trying to control things too much on the first album. This time, I realized that Chris knew what he was doing and I put my trust in his decisions. The first decision we made was to hire studio musicians to play instead of using my own band. This was a tough decision, and it was difficult for me to reconcile loyalty with professionalism. Ultimately, I feel that we made the right choice, but I still feel bad about excluding the band who played with me live. I also allowed Chris to play most of the guitars instead of playing them myself as I did on "Not too Late." Chris is a great guitarist, and he did a much better job than I could have done. We got Andy Waldeck to play bass and sing backing vocals, and Nate Brown of the band Everything to play drums. I couldn't be happier with the way these guys played and with the ideas they came up with. While I was working on the CD, I continued to play live with my band, known as Shannon. We were given a weekly gig at the Outback Lodge which we had from September through December of 2001. In the spring of 2002, we played several fraternity gigs, and then never played together again. I was burned out on music, and I lost a lot of enthusiasm. I went through periods of excitement after good studio sessions, but this excitement was short lived. I began to question whether I really loved music, and whether that was what I wanted to do with my life. I had also not written a song that I was happy with since the spring of 2001. This began to wear on me. The more I thought about it, the harder I tried to write songs and the more elusive they became. I was frustrated, and began to think that perhaps the well had run dry. In the summer of 2003, as we were putting the finishing touches on my

CD, Chris began working on a project with another singer/songwriter. The two of them decided that her songs need some polishing, and asked me among several other artists to work on some of them. Using her lyrics and ideas as a starting point, I was able to come up with ideas that I am really happy with. Working on these songs was a huge turning point in my battle with writers block. I have regained my confidence and my love of music In the fall of 2003 I moved to Tucson with my fianc Sarah. I am currently in the process of putting a band together, and I am excited to get out and start playing again.

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