

# Mp3 John Reese With Open Hearts - Three Chords & The Truth



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Folk Rock meets Jazz Country. Music written around thought provoking lyrics. 14 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, COUNTRY: Country Rock Details: Nearly a year in the making, this is our most recent studio album. It contains 14 songs, 9 with the full band and 5 of the "unplugged" acoustic trio. Here's a recent newspaper article about John Reese, featured in the Healdsburg Tribune: NEIGHBORS John Reese By Shonnie Brown The interview with John Reese was quite unexpected. But now, in getting to know John, that makes sense to me. A poster for his band, "Open Hearts", had caught my eye while I was busy being a fly on the wall at Mane Attraction. Lisa Reese picked up on my growing curiosity about her "mystery man" and offered to introduce us. A few minutes later, a very gentle looking bearded man in a brown plaid flannel shirt and jeans sat down next to me. His eyes and smile were warm and open. We shook hands and began talking easily. The conversation that unfolded wasn't so much about me getting to know John, but more about John's journey of getting to know himself. The lyrics of his song, Take Me Now, sum up my experience of him: Take me now, take me somewhere / I have never been / Not just a new destination / To this journey without an end / To a place in my heart and soul / My fear can be released / Where I can see clearly, once and for all / Just who all I can be. (John Reese 1999) As John tells me a bit of his own history, it seems certain that he didn't begin life with such a clear sense of the journey. John, like Lisa, grew up mostly in Cloverdale. His grandparents, who he called Boppa and Mimi, owned Pick's Drive Inn, right at the stoplight in the middle of town. John tells me that the hamburgers served there today are still adorned with Boppa's special relish. Though John has two sisters and two brothers, the siblings have different dads. John lived mostly with his grandparents, and Boppa, the strongest influence in his childhood, was his mainstay: "You just wanted to please Boppa. He was that

kind of guy. He was a terrific storyteller and kept us spellbound for hours," John reminisces. Not all of John's childhood was happy. But, when he was a young man a most remarkable thing happened: "The way I recall it, one day I was sitting in the park in Cloverdale. Lisa, who I didn't know, and who was seven years younger than me, saw me and told her sister that she was going to marry me. She knew we were supposed to be together and made it very clear in the way that Lisa does. It was quite a battle! I was nuts at that time! And here we are." And John has had other remarkable experiences: "About eight years ago we had a family epiphany of sorts. Lisa was on the road a lot working with a new product. I was spending a lot of time alone. My grandfather had died. He was someone who I never expected to not be there for me, and that was a big deal. "One day I had a very personal spiritual experience while driving down Highway One. It happened in a flash and I felt myself to be transformed. I came out of that trusting in my own experience. My focus went inward. I got clear that there was only work I could do on me to 'fix us'. I was no longer afraid and felt completely available. I could say what I really felt without the blame. The change in me had an impact on the entire family and our whole family dynamic changed. Lisa and I both came out more focused on our life purpose. I learned to be truly open to the process of life, and that's very exciting to me." John relinquished himself to a creative process that seemed to explode inside him through verse and music. In the past seven years he has written perhaps 200 songs, many of which have been recorded on CDs. He first tested the waters at an open mike and then formed a band called "Open Hearts". Having time for writing poetry and music, playing as a trio and as part of a six-piece group, being a husband and a father doesn't leave a whole lot of time for his day job in drywall construction. "My music is more about art than anything," he explains. "At first I wrote poetry in a journal and played a little guitar. Then I began writing music, but instead of writing poetry or lyrics to music, I wrote music to poetry. Often they were two separate but simultaneous processes and I'd try them together. More often than not the words and music meshed perfectly. It can be overwhelming emotionally to be so involved in something you never imagined being able to do. To do what you really love..." And, according to John, the ongoing creative process has swept up his entire family: "Lisa's more private than I am, especially around her art. But all of these paintings in Mane Attraction are hers as well as the beautiful designs on my CDs. She's also done amazing charcoals and masks. We really connect around 'the bottle's always more than half full' thing. She's got so much energy! Once she's decided about something, we're going to get there no matter what. She's like a force of nature! "And Cherry, our daughter who works in Healdsburg Hospital in

the lab, does beautiful beadwork. I'm putting her art up on my website and encouraging her to place it for sale. Then Callie, who's been in a wheelchair all her life, is a poet. I'm putting her poems on the website. She's even more positive and optimistic than Lisa! She goes to the JC full time, works as a teacher's aide and is involved in the Caregiver's Union. She's a total inspiration! Her boyfriend, who is her caregiver, is also amazing." John hands me two of his CDs to take with me. I feel a surprising intimacy both in reading his lyrics in their original poetic form and in knowing that the beautiful CD jacket is Lisa's creation. John is a man who is comfortable being seen and whose lyrics are very personal. I feel more open myself just talking with him. He then tells me a story of a trip he once took to Alaska: "I was in an airport in Alaska, not quite sure of what the trip was all about. I had written a poem for a friend, but I just wasn't sure what it was saying. Then I spotted a book in the gift shop entitled "An Open Heart" by the Dalai Lama. Now that was no accident ... I picked up the book and let the pages just fall open. The answer to my poem's meaning lay right there on that open page. That's what I got from my trip to Alaska." As John continues telling me of his quest to know life's meaning, my eyes simultaneously glance down at some lyrics on the CD jacket he is now holding open: I've come home to a place in my life / Where fear and pain aren't the same / The fear doesn't hurt and the pain doesn't either / In fact, I feel, I gain. (John Reese 1999) And I soon walk out of Mane Attraction lost in thought about the things of which we've spoken and the serendipitous nature of the entire meeting. I put on one of the CDs while I'm driving away. I feel inspired and somehow lighter, and that uplifting feeling continues with me. Reprinted courtesy of the Healdsburg Tribune

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