

# shawn smith

Perhaps it's maturity, perhaps it's something more, but singer/songwriter Shawn Smith has truly come into his own on his latest album *A Deeper Sense Of Soul* (Red Music/Sony). Inspired by the Buddhist idea of vipasyana, which translated from Sanskrit means "insight" and "looking deeply," *A Deeper Sense Of Soul* could have easily been titled 'A Deeper Sense Of Self.' On this recording, Smith has challenged himself both personally and artistically with poignant and emotive lyrics and soulful instrumentation.

*A Deeper Sense Of Soul* is a brilliant follow-up to Smith's debut *Finding My Way*, a collaborative venture with multi-platinum producer Manuel Seal Jr. (Mariah Carey, Usher, Aretha Franklin) which spawned the hit single "Running You Down," as well as subsequent singles "You Are My Lady" and "Take U Home," all of which were well-received at US college radio and featured in several film and television projects (*Cold Squad*, *Just Cause*, *Show Me Yours*).

Each of the 10 richly textured and stirring songs on the album have distinct personalities, yet are woven by a common thread of funk and soul. Skillfully produced by collaborator Chin Injeti (*Barenaked Ladies*, *Moka Only*, *Bass Is Base*), tracks like "Bleedin'" and "Searchin'" demonstrate Smith can rock with the best of them, while cuts like "Fly" and "Take Me Back" expose the raw emotions Smith explored when writing much of this material.

"It's a snapshot into who I am and why I do music. So many people in life, and particularly in the music industry, tell you what you should do, or who you should be. It's easy to get trapped – to lose sight of your purpose. But when you write, without compromise, from a place of honesty the songs take on a life of their own," offers Smith, adding that he also wanted to pay tribute to some of his musical influences from the last three decades, like *Tears For Fears*, *Lenny Kravitz*, *Level 42* and *Seal*.

Whether it's a song like "Take Me Back" which delves into reliving the best and worst parts of your childhood or "Changes" a song that is all about facing fear and coming through the other side a little older and a bit wiser, to the smooth, spiritual escape of "Fly" where Smith explores the idea of freeing oneself from life's obstacles and experiencing personal serenity, *A Deeper Sense Of Soul* offers plenty to contemplate.

"Music has been my one meditation throughout life. It's been my communicator and connection to a spiritual place. I think it's only natural that I would pick that medium to express these ideas. It's what feels right to me."

That sentiment is contagious.

Smith's *A Deeper Sense Of Soul* is the album you want to put on and relax at home to. It's definitely one to make you want to light some candles and curl up with the one you love. It's chalk full of intensity, longing, and passion, particularly on a track like "Deeper," a love song with grooves so deep you can't help but feel them.

"I wanted to create a chill vibe with this record. It's definitely an album that can make you reflect, but it's also the disc you want to throw on when you're staying in for the night with your sweetheart."

Let the sparks fly.