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Shawn Mullins

Live at the Variety Playhouse

(Vanguard)
US release date: 24 November 2008

by [Joseph Carver](#)

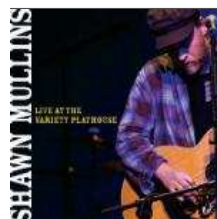
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Shawn Mullins Charges Ahead

Few people went on record so repeatedly or as convincingly at the end of the last century claiming that "everything was gonna be alright" and only one of them became famous coupling that insight with the term "rockabye". The years that followed have not all been kind, and few have been commercially kind to Shawn Mullins. Nonetheless, his singer songwriter reputation—combined with his singular radio hit—is enough to still draw audiences. If his live effort, *Live at the Variety Playhouse* is any indication, he takes that very seriously.

Divided into sets, the album touches on all of the elements of his eventful career. Evenly split between the singer songwriter guitar plucking tracks and the full band filling out the Playhouse, Mullins is as sure of himself as ever. He does not shy away from the songs written in his radio heyday, performing three songs off of his multi platinum *Soul's Core*. Nor does he shy away from the white boy blues tag either, choosing to include a cover of "House of the Rising Sun".

In those selections, a lot can be learned about Mullins. Artists don't choose radio or fame. They choose music. And those who keep that in mind, weather those storms better than others. Shawn Mullins is what he always thought he was. It is labels and press that may have a hard time excepting that. His command of the stage and the band he records with on *Live at the Variety Playhouse* are both indications that he is well aware of what he is and what his fans like. In that sense, the record is very fulfilling.



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