



CALL FOR PAPERS: *PopMatters* seeks feature essays about any aspect of popular culture, present or past.



## Shawn Mullins

### Live at the Variety Playhouse

(Vanguard)  
US release date: 24 November 2008

by [Joseph Carver](#)

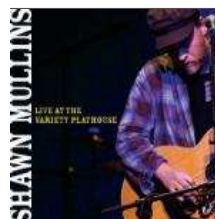
[Share](#) [Print](#) [Write to the editor](#) [Feeds](#)

#### 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.



[AMAZON](#)

[LALA](#)

[OFFICIAL SITE](#)

### PopMatters Feeds

#### PopMatters

All PM content, except news

#### Think

Features, columns and essays

#### Blogs

All PM blog posts

#### Listen

Music reviews/news

#### Watch

Film, TV and DVD reviews/news

#### Read

Book and comic reviews/news

#### Play

Video game reviews

#### In Person

Live event articles

#### News

PopWire news/commentary

[twitter](#) Follow us on Twitter

RATING: 

— 22 January 2009

Tagged as: [live at the variety playhouse](#) | [shawn mullins](#)

#### Shawn Mullins

Find more sources/options for Shawn Mullins  
[www.webcrawler.com](http://www.webcrawler.com)

#### Waylon Jennings Music

Shop now for country music by Waylon Jennings on CD & DVD!

### TODAY ON POPMATTERS

#### FEATURES | [recent](#)

- The New Golden Age of British TV Comedy
- 20 QUESTIONS: Max & Jason

#### COLUMNS | [recent](#)

PICKIN' DOWN THE LINE: [Hank's Other Side: Religion, Radio, and the Roots of Country Music](#)  
FIELD STUDIES: [Art Imitates Death](#)

#### BLOGS | [recent](#)

MEDIA CENTER: [Anthony and the Johnsons - "Epilepsy Is Dacing" \(video\)](#)  
SOUND AFFECTS: [Communicating Music Heart to Heart: An Interview with Yo-Yo Ma](#)  
MOVING PIXELS: [TWIG 2009-02-02: In Drought, We Look to Parody](#)  
PERIPATETIC POSTCARDS: [PopBlogging the Super Bowl, II](#)  
SHORT ENDS AND LEADER: [Kevin Smith: Not Quite Mainstream \(Zack and Miri Make a Porno/ Sold Out!: A Threening with...\)](#)

#### MUSIC | [recent](#) | [short takes](#) | [archive](#)

- Phosphorescent: [To Willie](#)
- Zion I: [The Take Over](#)
- Marykate O'Neil: [Underground](#)
- Cut Off Your Hands: [You and I](#)
- Brett Dennen: [Hope for the Hopeless](#)
- Madlib the Beat Konducta: [WLIB AM: King of the Wigflip](#)

#### EVENTS | [recent](#) | [archive](#)

- Gogol Bordello + West Philadelphia Orchestra — 31.December.08: [Philadelphia, PA](#)

#### TELEVISION | [recent](#) | [archive](#)

- The Trials of Ted Haggard
- House: [100th Episode](#)

#### DVDS | [recent](#) | [archive](#)

- Mannix: [The Second Season](#)
- Calexico: [Live from Austin TX](#)
- The Mummy: [Tomb of the Dragon Emperor](#)

#### BOOKS | [recent](#) | [archive](#)

- [Future Missionaries of America](#) by Matthew Vollmer
- [Little Bee](#) by Chris Cleave

#### MULTIMEDIA | [recent](#) | [archive](#)

- [Tom Clancy's EndWar](#)

#### NEWS | [recent](#)

- INTERVIEW: [Simon Baker is looking good, and so is 'The Mentalist'](#)
- [The Boss and his band Steel the show](#)
- [A year after Microsoft buyout offer made, Yahoo struggles to define itself](#)
- [Switch to digital TV may be delayed, but you should be ready anyway](#)



## POPULAR ON POPMATTERS

**Read   Emailed   Commented**

1. [Part 1: AmpLive to Damien Jurado \(Features\)](#)
2. [John Frusciante: The Empyrean \(Reviews\)](#)
3. [Eugene O'Neill's Zona de Guerra \(In the Zone\) \(Reviews\)](#)
4. [Bruce Springsteen: Working on a Dream \(Reviews\)](#)
5. [Part 2: Katzenjammer to Xiu Xiu \(Features\)](#)
6. [Robert Pollard: The Crawling Distance \(Reviews\)](#)
7. [A.C. Newman: Get Guilty \(Reviews\)](#)
8. [Street Art's Day in the Sun \(Features\)](#)
9. [Franz Ferdinand: Tonight: Franz Ferdinand \(Reviews\)](#)
10. [Waltz with Bashir \(Vals Im Bashir\) \(Reviews\)](#)
11. [Lie to Me: Series Premiere \(Reviews\)](#)
12. [Antony and the Johnsons: The Crying Light \(Reviews\)](#)
13. [Needles in the Haystack \(Features\)](#)
14. [Dancing in the Street: Our 25 Favorite Motown Singles \(Features\)](#)
15. [PPP: Abundance \(Reviews\)](#)
16. [Visions of the World \(Columns\)](#)
17. [Bon Iver: Blood Bank \(Columns\)](#)
18. [50 years later, Buddy Holly remains frozen in time \(PopWire\)](#)
19. [Jason Isbell \(Features\)](#)
20. [Where the Frak is All My Money? \(Columns\)](#)
21. [Nickel Eye: The Time of the Assassins \(Reviews\)](#)
22. [The Bird & the Bee: Ray Guns Are Not Just the Future \(Reviews\)](#)
23. [Various Artists: Johnny Cash Remixed \(Reviews\)](#)
24. [Joseph Arthur & the Lonely Astronauts: Temporary People \(Reviews\)](#)
25. [Art Imitates Death \(Columns\)](#)

## RECENT MUSIC

*In bold are PopMatters Picks, the best in new music.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>CD REVIEWS</b>  | <b>PPP</b>                             |
| <a href="#">Acid Mothers Temple and the Cosmic Inferno</a> | <a href="#">Phosphorescent</a>         |
| <a href="#">Actress</a>                                    | <a href="#">Charlie Pickett</a>        |
| <b>Dave Alvin</b>  | <b>Robert Pollard</b>                  |
| <a href="#">Antony and the Johnsons</a>                    | <a href="#">Tom Russell</a>            |
| <a href="#">Joseph Arthur &amp; the Lonely Astronauts</a>  | <a href="#">The Secret History</a>     |
| <a href="#">Asylum Street Spankers</a>                     | <a href="#">Senses Fail</a>            |
| <b>Awake My Soul/Help Me to Sing</b>                       | <a href="#">Duncan Sheik</a>           |
| <a href="#">Chet Baker</a>                                 | <b>The Matthew Shipp Trio</b>          |
| <a href="#">Jon Black</a>                                  | <b>Sinden</b>                          |
|  | <a href="#">Soulja Boy Tell 'Em</a>    |
|  | <a href="#">Bruce Springsteen</a>      |
|  | <a href="#">The Bird &amp; the Bee</a> |
|  | <a href="#">Rafael Toral</a>           |

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. <a href="#">Bon Iver</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Johnny Cash</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Kasey Chambers and Shane Nicholson</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Vic Chesnutt, Elf Power, &amp; the Amorphous Strums</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Cut Off Your Hands</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Dälek</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Brett Dennen</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Emerald Park</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Franz Ferdinand</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">John Frusciante</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Kenny Garrett</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">José González</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Heltah Skeltah</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">The Jacksons: Destiny / Triumph</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Axton Kincaid</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">The Knux</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Lady GaGa</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Lotus</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Luminescent Orchestrii</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">M83</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">MV &amp; EE With the Golden Road</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Madlib the Beat Konducta</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Taj Mahal</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Marykate O'Neil</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Matt &amp; Kim</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">The Music Lovers</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">National Eye</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">A.C. Newman</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Nickel Eye</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. <a href="#">Two Cow Garage</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Unearth</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Various Artists: Titan: It's All Pop! / Eccentric Soul: The Young Disciples</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Warship</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Zion I</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. <a href="#">Living Colour: <i>The Paris Concert</i></a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Sonny Rollins: <i>Saxophone Colossus</i></a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Paul Simon: <i>Paul Simon: Live from Philadelphia</i></a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Wu-Tang Clan: <i>Wu: The Story of the Wu-Tang Clan</i></a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Calexico: <i>Live from Austin TX</i></a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Christoph Dreher: <i>House of the Rising Punk</i></a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Waylon Jennings: <i>Waylon Jennings Live from Austin, TX '84</i></a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Alison Krauss: <i>A Hundred Miles or More: Live From the Tracking Room</i></a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers: <i>Runnin' Down a Dream</i></a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">The Yardbirds: <i>The Story of the Yardbirds</i></a></li> </ul>	<p><b>EVENT REVIEWS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. <a href="#">Eugene O'Neill's <i>Zona de Guerra (In the Zone)</i></a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">George Clinton and Parliament/Funkadelic Versus The Greyboy Allstars</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Gogol Bordello + West Philadelphia Orchestra</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Ida Maria</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Kathleen Edwards</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Oasis</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Q-Tip + The Cool Kids</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">The Meat Puppets</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Wild Light + Birdfeeder</a></li> <li>.. <a href="#">Wu-Tang Clan</a></li> </ul>

[advertising](#) | [about](#) | [contributors](#) | [submissions](#)  
 © 1999-2008 PopMatters.com. All rights reserved.  
 PopMatters.com™ and PopMatters™ are trademarks of PopMatters Media, Inc. and PopMatters Magazine.