

Shannon Ramsey "Manifest"

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Interview by Jay Wright

Cognizance Magazine caught up with Shannon Ramsey to discuss her new EP "Manifest," her extensive career in the music business, how she balances music and personal life, and more in our exclusive interview.

Shannon, congratulations on the release of your new EP "Manifest."

Thank you.

How did this EP come together?

On 10/07/2020, I woke up from a dream where God said I would finally record my very first album called "Manifest." Then on 10/09/21, He gave me all the participants who would be part of this project, from producers to hair & makeup. God also made it possible for "Manifest" to be released on my own label, Sundar Music LLC.

Who is Shannon Ramsey?

I'm a wife and mother of three. I'm also a singer/songwriter/actress. I was an extremely shy kid, born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. I graduated from Morgan State University, where I majored in Liberal Arts. While attending Morgan, I became a member of MSU Choir & Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity, Inc for Women.

I've traveled the world singing and performing, which has led to amazing opportunities, such as being one of four finalists from Maryland to star on the CW's HIT show "THE NEXT," where I was mentored by the legendary and iconic Gloria Estefan. I've done multiple facets of media, from theatre to television to radio. Also, I'm a host of a talk show called "Let's Talk" w/Incisive Films on YouTube.

What role did music play in the early years of your life?

I was 10 years old, singing all the R&B greats in the back seat of my father's car, such as Pattie Labelle, Phyllis Hyman, Anita Baker, Freddie Jackson, Luther Vandross, New Edition, etc. As I mentioned earlier, I was a shy kid, but I knew how to sing every riff & run.

How would you describe your music?

Inspirational R&B. I wanted to figure out a way to merge my first love of music with my love for GOD. Hence: "Manifest." It exceeded my expectations, and it's a perfect marriage of the two.

What is your creative process when deciding to record a song?

If I don't come into the studio with a melody or lyrics, I listen to music, and if it provokes a thought, theme, or vision, then I'll go with it. If it doesn't then, I'll move on.

What is the meaning of “Manifest?”

After years of feelings—feeling fearful of what could go wrong; feelings of self-doubt; feeling confused instead of a courageous willingness to be different (me)—I decided to do something pretty frightening & uncomfortable and that’s stand on my belief. This album is the evidence of how good God has been to me. How He has never let me go too far away from Him or the music. This album is my evidence that I have learned to believe and put feeling in its place. So, the least I can do is release His unique glory within me, on purpose, to help somebody. I prayed, I worked, and with His help, we manifested this!

1 Corinthians 12:7

“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

Were there any obstacles you faced while recording “Manifest?”

Yes, it’s called COVID-19! However, I continued to be responsible. I went to the studio every night until “Manifest” was complete.

How do you feel about the rapid changes in the music industry?

I feel great about them. The artist has more control and really doesn’t need a label anymore. No creator wants to be told they’re shelved because some people in the office don’t believe in them anymore, or they’re shifting focus to another talent.

If you could change one thing in the music industry, what would it be?

I don’t need to—social media has done it for me! It has removed the middleman.

What do you enjoy most about being a musician?

The life I feel when I’m recording or performing—it’s so euphoric! It’s so fulfilling to share love, joy, happiness, and peace with your audience through music. It’s also the most comfortable way for me to express myself in the most uncomfortable situations.

Did your style evolve since the beginning of your career? If so, could you elaborate?

Yes, I was only doing R&B for a long time until I grew in my spirituality. I then realized, "Wouldn't it be amazing if I could bring my loving relationship with God in on my love for R&B." God loved it, so I ran with it.

Do you have plans to collaborate with any artist?

Sure! I love working with other inventive minds, especially when there is good chemistry while creating. Plus, I love to collaborate with a team of talented people.

If you could collaborate with any artist, who would it be and why?

Multiple answers here. I would like to collaborate with Brandy, Dave Foster, Kirk Franklin, Joe, Kandi Burrus, DJ Khalid, Mary-Mary, Patti Labelle, Anita Baker. This list of artists and producers embodies everything that I strive for in music.

How do you balance music with your other obligations?

I have an amazing, supportive husband. Although he is an entrepreneur and runs his own business, he helps me with managing my time. Especially and more importantly, when it comes to our three kids and their schedules. This affords me the opportunity to focus on my career.

Lastly, what advice would you give someone just starting a career in music?

My album "Manifest" was realized through faith, prayer, blood, sweat, and tears! Remember: giving up isn't something great people do. Don't allow others to project their fears in you. You got this, and God's got you! If you want it all, manifest it!