

The Musical Works of Shawn Mendes

By Shannah Rudiger

Canadian born singer/songwriter Shawn Mendes is one of the biggest rising artist in the industry today. Shawn signed on with Island Records in 2013 after being recruited by artist manager Andrew Gertler, who found him through his videos on the platforms Vine and YouTube. At just 19 years old Mendes has already had 2 major successful albums with Island Records, titled *Handwritten* (2015) and *Illuminate* (2016). Along with his two albums, he has also released his Extended Play (EP) (2014) and special albums, *MTV Unplugged* (2017) and *Live at Madison Square Garden* (2016).

Shawn Mendes started his musical career with his self-titled EP. Even with just four songs on the album, you still get a full impact of how much soul Shawn put into each song. Take one of his very popular songs, *Life of the Party*. You can hear the passion he has for what he is doing with lines like “We don’t have to be ordinary/Make your best mistakes”. When you hear him sing you feel the full passion and can really understand that he sings is for what he truly believes; Shawn puts all he has into every song and album he writes.

The album, *Handwritten*, can be described as a passionate album with songs that make you want to dance along as well as songs that make you want to cry a river. The entire album can be used for any situation that you might be going through. Just went

through a breakup? You can listen to *The Weight* and *A Little Too Much*. Want a song that can describe falling in love? Listen to *Crazy*, *Kid in Love*, or *Air*.

Illuminate takes in a slightly different tone from *Handwritten*. Shawn takes on a more mature approach with the album, showing that he is growing with his music. The album is still as passionate as the last albums and more personal than ever. Shawn wanted his fans to really connect with his music and did that by writing the song *Understand*, where he connects with his audience by talking to them, not just singing. A line from *Understand* says, “But at the end of the day, you know/You're the same person/And, and where your heart is/That doesn't change.” The style of the song really allows the audience to know how he cares not just about the music, but the people that are listening as well. He adds passion and emotion into every song and even allows his fans to see inside his own life, through his very personal song *Hold On*. There is such raw emotion in that song that you can't help but also get emotional, especially knowing this song is about his dad and how much his father has helped him through hard times. (“And my dad says, Shawn, stay with me/Everything will be alright/I know I haven't seen you lately/But you're always on my mind”) Shawn Mendes will continue to put everything and more into his music, continuing his rise to fame.