



Shine On: the Universe of John Lennon is a spectacular group performing music by John Lennon and the Beatles uniquely arranged by 8-time JUNO nominee Michael Occhipinti. The all-star lineup collectively boasts over 20 JUNO Award nominations, and includes the unique voices of Elizabeth Shepherd, Yvette Tollar, and Dominic Mancuso, paired with the instrumental talents of Mark Kelso (drums/vocals), Roberto Occhipinti (bass), Kevin Turcotte (trumpet), and Michael Occhipinti (guitar/vocals). Shine On came together in December of 2010 for a concert to mark the 30th Anniversary of John Lennon's passing. Taking utter delight in the audience's enthusiasm and the chance to work together performing an iconic repertoire, the musicians recorded and released the album *The Universe of John Lennon* in the summer of 2012, and have since appeared at festivals and venues from St. John's to Victoria to New York.

Michael Occhipinti is no stranger to reinventing popular music, having received JUNO nominations for his albums *Creation Dream - The Songs of Bruce Cockburn* and *The Sicilian Jazz Project*, and he's also arranged Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* for his 5-time JUNO nominated big band NOJO (Neufeld-Occhipinti Jazz Orchestra).

With John Lennon's music so deeply engrained in our cultural fabric, Occhipinti took a huge risk re-imagining songs that are so familiar. Michael, however, felt that too many artists miss the opportunity to do something new with Lennon's material.

"Our familiarity with Lennon and the Beatles is kind of liberating from an arranger's point of view. It allows us to alter the songs in imaginative ways that make them new for the audience, but at the same time they still recognize the songs and feel the emotions Lennon wove into the music" he explains. "For me it's never been about recreating songs the way so many tribute bands do, but rather trying be creative and personal, while still expressing an honest admiration for John Lennon's music"

That sentiment is beautifully expressed throughout the album. From the inventive takes on "I Am The Walrus" and "Working Class Hero" featuring Elizabeth Shepherd's cool vocals, to Yvette Tollar's surprising version of "I'm Only Sleeping," Dominic Mancuso's earthy "Instant Karma," and Michael's own creative palette of guitar sounds, *The Universe of John Lennon* uniquely makes the familiar new. Tracing an arc from Lennon's best work from Beatles' albums such as *Revolver* and *Rubber Soul* to his last solo work, Shine On is a genre-crossing group that is a tribute like no other.