

# PRESS RELEASE

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**“Yes, I am a dreamer. For a dreamer is one who can find his way by moonlight, and see the dawn before the rest of the world.” - Oscar Wilde**

Among the throngs of musicians in the folk world, few have elevated “dreaming” to such a high artform as Michael Johnathon.

From composing the *Woody Guthrie Opera* to writing the *Walden play*, creating the national SongFarmers movement to producing the wildly successful broadcast of the *WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour*, solo concert tours of coffeehouses to the upcoming tour of symphony orchestras with his “*Songs of Rural America*” performances, his accomplishments can easily overshadow a very important point:

Michael Johnathon is an excellent musician.

His 14th album release, **MoonFire**, comes on the heels of “**Mousie HiWay: The Adventures of Banjo Mouse in Appalachia,**” his fully illustrated book that introduces bluegrass music to kids. The MoonFire CD is a 23-song album in honor of the instrument he loves best: the banjo.

The banjo came to us from Africa, the musical instrument of black slaves ... and soon became the instrument of white men wearing black face. Eventually a fifth string was added and it became the instrument of white people playing bluegrass music. The point is the banjo is an instrument of all people, born from pain and struggle and then ended up on the front porches of working people, relaxing in the evening as the sun went down.

**“I love the banjo, I love where it came from and I love what it represents,”** says Johnathon from his log cabin home near Lexington, KY. **“Most of all, I love the way it sounds. To me the banjo is more than just a bluegrass or folk instrument, it is a songwriter’s tool and one of the most adventurous musical colors possible. This is an album of songs that I enjoy picking on my front porch ... perhaps presented in an unexpected musical canvas, but that’s the way we roll ‘round here.”**

What is striking about the MoonFire album is that most of the songs are Johnathon originals, and flow seamlessly alongside musical gems like *Summertime*, *East Virginia Blues* and the Uncle Dave Macon chestnut *Over the Mountain*. Musicians on board include founding member of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band John McEuen who helps validate Johnathon’s complete re-write of the story of Mr. Bojangles, plus Sam Bush, John Cowan, JP Pennington of EXILE fame, multi award winner Rob Ickes on dobro and others.

From the plaintive opening title song to the rocked out ending of Cosmic Banjo, the passionate lyrics of Heritage (based on a James Still poem) to the humor of Ban-JOKES, the MoonFire is an album rich in musical textures and more surprises than one CD should be allowed to present. Johnathon’s rendition of Darlin Corey alone should be an award winner.



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