

National Newswire 5 / 30 /07

PENNING ' *CAST IRON LETTERS* ' THAT STAND THE TEST OF TIME: SINGER SONGWRITER ADAM ZWIG KEEPS THE LEGACY OF MUSICALLY TRANSPORTING, CONSCIOUSNESS LIBERATING FOLK- ROCK ALIVE ON HIS FOURTH RELEASE FOR CONSCIOUS RECORDS

Currently Being Promoted To Adult Contemporary, Top 40 and College Radio, The Spiritually Powerful, Socially Incisive Collection Was Co-Produced—Like Zwig's Three Previous Solo Recordings— By Veteran Producer and Engineer Jon Plum (Pearl Jam, Alice In Chains, Melissa Etheridge, Blind Melon)

Prior To Rediscovering His Blues/Folk Roots, the Oregon-Based Zwig Was The Guitarist For The Popular Rock Band Shapeshifter, Which Released Four Albums On Pinch Hit Records

Adam Zwig may be a working psychotherapist when he's not recording or touring the U.S. and Europe, but like most brilliant, socially conscious blues and folk driven singer-songwriters, he prefers to let his songs and their titles speak for themselves. The title of *Cast Iron Letters* , his forth release on Conscious Records, however, is a perfect metaphor for his creative metamorphosis since launching his solo career in 2002 after four years with the popular commercial rock band Shapeshifter.

“Cast iron is something that's solid and will stand the test of time, while letters are about communication,” says Zwig, the originator, songwriter and lead guitarist for the group, which toured the country, produced an award winning video, released four albums on Pinch Hit Records and scored the national hit single “My Enemy,” at one point the most

downloaded song on Napster.

“With the songs on this album, I'm trying to bring something into this complicated world that's eternal and solid. When I got back to my roots playing blues and folk, I wanted to make more serious music that had more depth and spiritual meaning. Rock gives you a catchy phrase or driving rhythm, but often doesn't reflect life realistically. It provides an escape from life's burdens and makes you feel good, and that's great. But I believe that the surest and quickest way through the burdens is to look straight at them and process them. Blues and folk are genres that say yes to these issues and are unafraid to go deep with them.”

Cast Iron Letters , which mines deeply perennial human themes through laid back raw roots rock, continues the direction Zwig began heading with his earthy Dylan- and Neil Young-esque 2004 collection *Koan* . Previously, he had released *Pictures Of A Gone America* , which blended folk style lyrics with a genuine original sound he called “blue hop.” Zwig's discography also includes a blues hip-hop party album called *Live and Unplugged* . All of his projects have been co-produced by veteran producer and engineer Jon Plum, whose resume includes everyone from Pearl Jam and Alice In Chains to Melissa Etheridge and Blind Melon.

While a national radio campaign promoting the optimistic, dreamlike single “Castaways” to adult contemporary and pop radio is currently underway — in addition to a college radio campaign for the whole disc — the press has been raving about it since advance copies were sent out earlier in the year. Seattle Musician calls it Zwig's “masterpiece, a compelling combination of pedal steel guitar influenced country folk rock and the lyrical politics of love and social justice.” New York Folk adds that it's “a beautiful, mellow pedal steel folk rock CD...

Through his raw singing style and socially insightful lyrics, Zwig shows maturity and wisdom about the relationship between the individual and this crazy world we live in.” Trax compared *Cast Iron Letters* favorably to Young's *Harvest*, “but in a kind of updated way.”

“For me,” the Oregon based artist says, “playing blues and folk reflects the way I've always been drawn to old time styles, from dusty music of the earth to sea shanties and songs of lament. Blues and folk songs make you question the things you've always accepted as truth. There's a power of spirit behind them. I like to say that they can litter the landscape with broken hearts, but the music also transports you to a liberated consciousness. Blues and folk can show you how to live. I started out as a bluesman and am glad I returned to this emotional and spiritual source of life.”

Though Zwig felt that the music he made with Shapeshifter had depth, ultimately he felt he was being swallowed up in the “entertainer syndrome,” singing the same old songs night after night. “People were digging me more than I was digging myself,” he says, “and I started feeling like a hypocrite. I was saying all along to myself that music was a spiritual undertaking, but I wasn't living up to it. I felt like an actor in a play I no longer wanted to be in, so eventually I made my retreat from music.”

During a time of intense and serious meditation, the self-professed “Buddhist rock and roll psychologist” says that he intended to stop writing or playing altogether until songs just popped up out of nowhere; he'd get up from meditating and lay down simple recordings on his eight track recorder.

“These were exactly the kinds of songs I was interested in,” he says. “And at some point, my mind and heart caught fire with them. My imagination was ablaze. I'd had

a revelation. Almost all the spiritual teachings of all time and everywhere are contained in folk and blues songs. I already knew this about blues but folk was an awakening for me. And it's spoken in a plain-talking and direct way - nothing esoteric or high-fallutin' or intellectual about it. And it champions the common person and the disenfranchised, marginalized, forgotten and kicked to the curb, the poor and the oppressed. And it speaks spirituality in a homespun, down to earth, shared, common way, and has a socially minded awareness. Maybe the blues is a bit more physical and folk a bit more social, but they both deal with life, death, God, love, freedom, ecstasy, the universe - the whole shebang. It's all right there with all the real life nuances."

Zwig runs the gamut of emotions on *Cast Iron Letters*, from the sweet, wistful romantic reflection "Once a True Love" (about a woman he loved in another country) to the liberating vibe of "Castaways" (about the dream of us driving away free from our collective troubles) and "It's All Gonna Fall," which declares optimistically that someday, all the pain and trouble will come crashing down. Until then, of course, we have heart-wrenching things to deal with like the senseless death of a friend or son in war, which Zwig addresses poignantly in "Who killed Michael Vaughn?" "He was someone who was killed in Iraq," says the singer. "I was basically asking who takes responsibility when someone dies in war, the people he was fighting together with, his parents, the government, the person who shot him. Does someone take responsibility?"

In addition to his ongoing work as a psychotherapist, Zwig is currently completing a book on personal development titled "Power Source." He believes that music and psychotherapy are different aspects of the same practice, and offers workshops that explore the relationship between the two.

“In therapy,” Zwig says, “the idea is to resolve issues by actualizing the feeling and yearning we have to connect with something beyond ourselves. There's a universal awareness and freedom you get when you die, fall in love, feel free in life or feel you are contributing to the world, where you sense a connection to the gods, or something that will carry you through hard times. Music can give you this experience, and psychology and spiritual practice offer the concrete tools to integrate the experience. Often, when the music stops, the meditation ceases or the psychotherapy wears off, you go back to who you were before. So you need tools to integrate these experiences. The therapy allows for the possibility that you can actually live in this free state all the time, you know, become the music.”