

Micah Sheveloff, *Exhibitionist*

Published on August 30th, 2012 in: [Current Faves](#), [Music](#), [Music Reviews](#), [Reviews](#) |

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Listening to [Micah Sheveloff](#)'s solo debut brings to mind a variant on everyone's favorite movie trailer voiceover: "IN A WORLD. Where smug, solipsistic bros have taken over the airwaves. ONE MAN. Can save the 'singer/songwriter' genre from navel-gazing boredom."

While Micah Sheveloff easily fits into this niche, his work lacks the snoozy self-absorption that has given it a bad name. His music, with its rich melodies, rolling bar chords, quotable lyrics, and that lived-in marvel of a voice, elevates his material from the closing credits of *Grey's Anatomy* to something more transporting and

otherworldly.

As befits a musician who takes pride in his words and melodies, Sheveloff's distinctive vocals anchor the songs. At times, his craggy baritone brings to mind early Bruce Springsteen's, and his speak/singing gives the songs a more rocking quality. On other tracks—like the poignant, witty "Too Many Times"—he sings in a supple mezzo-tenor that would not sound out of place in a Broadway musical.

Lyrically, Sheveloff writes in a straightforward, painstaking manner about love and failure. In his lyrics he looks at his experiences in a forthright manner that contrasts with the camp aesthetic of many of his contemporaries. "Too Many Times" in particular portrays the push/pull between desire and the fear of acting on it. He captures those feelings with such immediacy that the listener can't not empathize. Likewise, he speaks eloquently to the experiences of being an artist, particularly of being a perennially underrated artist of a certain age. The regrets that drive the contemplative ballad "Barren Man" invest in it a sense of urgency and melancholy.

Sheveloff self-produced his album. Instead of indulging in studio frippery, he gives it a no frills feel. His vocals are at the front of the mix, which allows listeners to focus on his lyrical abilities. The rock band arrangements have an economical quality. I loved the precise, well-enunciated female backup vocals that come in on "Fallen at My Feet"—the way their polished exclamations complement Sheveloff's more weathered vocals reminded me of Jennifer Warnes' background vocals on Leonard Cohen's 1970s albums. His ace playing emphasizes the unresolved-sounding melodies through canny pauses and insistent runs.

Sheveloff's accessible melodies, engaging lyrics, and no-bullshit demeanor will appeal to fans of Boston singer/songwriters like Robin Lane and Rick Berlin. (Incidentally, the former Orchestra Luna frontman joins Sheveloff for a late-album Cheap Trick cover, "Heaven Tonight.")

While his material might be too real for prime time, Micah Sheveloff's work is as ingratiating and as worthy of attention as your favorite indie sleeper.

Exhibitionist was released on August 27 and is available to order directly from Micah's [website](#).