

MICHAEL**MASSIMO**

ALBUM REVIEWS

PRECIOUS SECONDS:

Performer's Unplugged Potential

Kelly-Jane Cotter, Asbury Park Press, October 16, 1999

There's a rock band in Michael Massimo, struggling to get out.

He may not know this yet, which is probably why he sticks to the solo circuit, but the music on Massimo's third self-released CD, "Precious Seconds", cries out for full rock treatment. The title track, for instance, would sound just as nice covered by Metallica as it does in the coffeehouses where Massimo usually plays.

Imagine these lyrics from "Precious Seconds" rendered in brooding Metallica fashion: "Endless waiting, quicksand register. Doing time, in line, at the five and dime. Needed aspirin for my cracking skull. You're killing time. It's mine, it's mine." Massimo has a knack for capturing everyday frustration and he's deft with more nuanced feelings as well.

The singer-songwriter from Edison writes music infused with tension. His sense of musical dynamics is well honed—he uses his guitar as well as his voice to express a broad range of emotions.

Other lyrics on the album seem destined for Billy Joel or James Taylor without the sentimentality that can weigh down a good story-song. For example, there's "Lucky": "Lucky Joe went down to the corner store, to buy his racing form, his cigarettes. Five will get you ten he's gambling again, on number three to win, ain't made him rich yet. He ain't no Secretariat or Man O' War and since he turned four they want to take him from the game. They say it's over, his day is done. He's too old to ride, and his running stride just ain't the same." The character Lucky Joe and the horse named Lucky have much in common. This bittersweet song explores the drudgery of aging and the way that a simple dream can be the key to transcendence. The elderly Lucky Joe sounds authentic, which is a credit to 29-year-old Massimo's imagination or his listening skills or both.

Fresh Buzz

Rene Bo, Rhythm And News Magazine, July 1999

"As a kid I recognized the power music has to change your mood. It's kind of like therapy." Twenty-three years after writing his first song, Michael Massimo sticks by that philosophy.

His music might be described by radio programmers as "modern alternative acoustic" but Massimo isn't singing folk songs. Though he does include 70's singer/songwriters like James Taylor and Carole King on his list of influences, progressive rock plays as big a role in the music he makes.

Massimo's music is more epic and grandiose than your average pop song. He seeks to forge new musical territory by combining complex chords and progressions underneath his often spiritual lyrics. "Touch The Sky", off his latest CD "Precious Seconds" is one such example, about a child losing his father to war and his desire to understand it.

"The first question I ask myself when writing a song is 'What am I trying to say?'. My goal is to say something in a way that has never been said before yet still relates to the listener. I think that's always been the role of the artist in any form."

Michael Massimo - Precious Seconds

Larry Davis, Rant 'N Rave July 20, 1999

Here is Edison, NJ and NYC mainstay singer/songwriter Michael Massimo with his full length studio album "Precious Seconds". It follows his acclaimed live album, "Live In NYC" and an EP, "Perspective". He usually performed solo acoustic in the past, but he has a full touring band together now. The studio recordings, this one and the EP, have full arrangements, while the live one is solo acoustic. This new CD is a long time coming, and from one listen, you can tell Massimo put his heart and soul into the songs, arrangements and their production. The sound is nice and crisp but subtle, full-fledged but not over blown. The songs themselves show a growth cycle in Massimo's songwriting craft, as well as his already impressive full, rich voice and great guitar playing. This guy has been playing live to no end for growing, rapturous audiences, yet being shunned by the local press for reasons I don't know.

His songs could work in three ways: as singer/songwriter material, pop songcraft, and pure unadulterated rock & roll. Maybe he doesn't fit a specific niche, but to me, that gives Michael even more options to choose from and in the end have his fans grow threefold. "Precious Seconds" is seriously worth the wait. One of the best records of recent months by a great, growing songwriter, killer singer. The songs run the gamut from the catchy power pop of "Touch The Sky", "Too Much Fun" and the title track to the jazzy "Asylum" and masterful "Something To Find". Nine great, powerful songs that will turn heads upon impact and get people wondering, "Who is this guy?". His name is Michael Massimo; remember it.

LINYC:

Demo Reviews

Geoff Wilbur, *The Renegade*, February 1997

Live In NYC is a studio-quality live recording of the singer/songwriter/acoustic guitarist. His insistent, emotional vocals are of the caliber of the defining acoustic artists from a generation earlier. At home in a coffee shop, at an outdoor festival, or performing for a black tie crowd at a classical venue, Michael's talent is real and his songs are convincingly heartfelt.

Demo Reviews

Francis Bell, *The Music Paper*, October 1996

Just as the title indicates, this collection was recorded live at a few New York City clubs. Massimo is an energetic performer. He accompanies himself with only an acoustic guitar, yet he manages to fill the air with great percussive playing. Massimo's material is quite good, with some fine chord changes and interesting melodies. The guitar work on the track "Love Is" is as beautiful as the song. Massimo has a real future as a performing artist and songwriter. *****

Indie Output

Jennifer Shields, *The Musician's Exchange*, June 1996

Folk rock. Sort of like a contemporary Dan Fogelberg, which is not a bad thing. Excellent live recording, acoustic guitar and vox. Very good package, includes lyrics.