

CHRISTIAN
MUSIC ★ REVIEW
MESSAGE. FIRST.
ALBUM REVIEW FORM

Album Title: Closer
Artist Name: Shawn McDonald
Release Date: March 22, 2011
Reviewer Name: Stacey Papanikos
Reviewer E-Mail: stacey.papanikos@christianmusicreview.org
Date Review Written: March 13, 2011
Record Label: Sparrow Records

RATING

Message: 4.0 of 4.0
Music: 2.7 of 3.0
Production: 2.0 of 2.0
Creativity: 1.0 of 1.0
Overall Points: 9.7 of 10.0 **SCORE/LETTER GRADE:** 97% (A+)

REVIEW

Being a personal Shawn McDonald fan, I was and am so inspired and so proud of Shawn! This album holds a story. Shawn's story. A story of personal, real life tragedy and a story of how God can and has used a broken person. A real person who faces the same trials and tribulations as the everyday person, you and I. I found myself relating to every lyric this album holds. Having faced the same trials as Shawn, I found myself weeping through these songs and yet, rejoicing at the very thought that God wants to use us even though we fail and fall.

My #1 favorite song on this album, "The Space Between Us" ...*Try to sleep but my mind keeps going. Am I awake cause You're trying to speak to me? Lying here with my ears wide open. Can You fix what I know I have broken? There's a whole in my heart where I need You to be. But I'm right here and You're right there will You take this wall I've built and tear it down? Never really meant to be so distant. Should've known that it made no difference. You were holding my hand when I walked away. You were there in the middle of the night. You were there when I lost my sight and You're STILL here with me today"*

These lyrics hit so deep a place in my heart! Sometimes we feel like we have ruined our lives and we are just so sure that it can't be fixed that we're too far gone. Sometimes, God allows us to be broken so we will go to Him and rely on His promises. He's always the same no matter what we go through (Hebrews 13:8). Christ never leaves our side even when we walk away from Him. He always stands ready, willing and waiting to welcome us back. We just have to make that decision.

Shawn also encourages us with songs like "Eyes forward" which sends the listener the message to keep pressing on no matter what we face. People will try to attack us and may even succeed but we need to keep our eyes fixed on the mission and the prize. Don't look behind at what has already happend. Looking back will keep us stagnant. We can't grow when we are so fixated on things we cannot change but instead, look ahead at what God has set before us and be ready to overcome.

Please Note: This review is the written and stated opinion of the above mentioned writer and all credit, mention and/or quotes taken from this review need to be credited to the writer and ChristianMusicReview.org.

"Rise" is an amazing, catchy tune that also tells the story of getting up from the ashes and holding fast to the One who is greater and The Fixer and Renewer of our mistakes. When we know Christ, we know love and we can stand firm that He will lift us up and we can *rise* again!

"Don't Give Up" pretty much speaks for itself. *Sometimes it is hard to go on. It's hard to see the reasons for breathing, living but you must hold on. Sometimes we fall down. We get ourselves in trouble but it's ok cause we still have another chance to get it right, to get it right...Don't give up, don't give up, hold on for one more day.*

CLOSING THOUGHTS (or Quote)

With confidence, I can say this is the best album I have ever heard! And, this is definitely the BEST of the six other Shawn McDonald albums. Leaving Shawn's last album, *Roots* a very high second place in my book. I could seriously go on and on about every song on this album but I wouldn't want to spoil the surprise that *Closer* has for you. Be ready to receive Shawn's story and I pray that every listener would be as blessed and as encouraged as I was.

Please Note: This review is the written and stated opinion of the above mentioned writer and all credit, mention and/or quotes taken from this review need to be credited to the writer and ChristianMusicReview.org.