

# With Shapiro, southern rock goes pop

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In the never-ending competition to have more indie cred than your friends, it's sometimes necessary to go beyond the world of normal commercial music and reach beyond the surface, down to the murky, unexplored waters of bands without a label. Naturally, this is tricky territory, as every group of kids playing instruments together who have managed to crank out a CD by themselves is technically a band without a label.

But sometimes you stumble upon a gem in the world of non-label bands, a band that should have been noticed by now, especially considering the state of much contemporary music, but has somehow avoided it so far. Such a find is Shapiro, a four-person band from central Virginia.

The quickest comparison to draw with this band is to Ben Folds Five, especially in the songs "Jesse's Song" and "If I'd Known," but this comparison, as with most reductive musical comparisons, holds only so far. Seen live, Shapiro does have the piano-pounding vocal-bellowing energy Ben Folds puts out, but heard more carefully Shapiro has a jazzy sort of feel that Ben Folds Five does not.

Lead singer Jeremy Teter has an energetic, often breathy voice, driving the songs with its unique sound. He is supported by John Granofsky, Carl Shapiro, and the amazing-to-watch Nathan Granofsky, who is just a little guy but goes crazy on



PHOTO BY BRYAN WUEST

**Jeremy Teter, of up-and-coming, unsigned band Shapiro, leads off the recent performance.**

electric guitar at live shows.

Currently Shapiro only has one album available, the "You Are Alone" EP. This five song CD provides a nice variety of sounds, ranging from the slow melancholy track "I Do" to the upbeat, smooth "If I'd Know n."

The EP's standout track is "You Can't Talk to Me," sometimes driven by dynamic piano-rock anthem, sometimes allowing a more gentle piano part to shine through.

You can listen to the entire EP on their Web site ([www.shapiropeople.com](http://www.shapiropeople.com)), or you can go to their MySpace pro-

file ([www.myspace.com/shapiro](http://www.myspace.com/shapiro)) to hear the new unreleased song "Leaving." Arguably their best song so far, this track attains a skillful combination of the piano and guitar better than any other Shapiro song does.

For an unsigned band, this group of guys has musical talent to spare. They also put on exciting live shows, and are generally nice guys. And that's the way it should be.

Here's hoping that, even when Shapiro gets some more attention from the recording industry, they keep their unsigned-band charm.