

Shrewsbury native chases dream with EP release



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Andrew Thebeau, left, performing at the College Club of Boston.

By Henry Schwan CORRESPONDENT

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SHREWSBURY — Vickie Thebeau likes to tell a story about her son, Andrew.

When he was 2 years old, she took him to a friend's house for a play date. Off in another room came the sounds of "Mary Had A Little Lamb" on a toy piano. Vickie's friend thought it was recorded music, and was shocked to learn that it was Andrew playing the keys.

Jump ahead 20 years and Andrew Thebeau, (pronounced Tee-Bo), is about to embark on a path that is challenging, but the rewards are potentially immense.

The native of Shrewsbury is determined to hit the big time as a singer. His style is part soul, rhythm and blues, with a dash of pop and he's heading to Los Angeles to make a name for himself.

"It's all I want to do," the 22-year-old Thebeau said by phone.

Thebeau is a performer. It runs through his veins, and signs point to what could be a bright future after last month's performance in Boston, where he released several songs from his upcoming debut album.

Thebeau has come a long way from the days when he "was afraid to sing."

His journey started when his mom played Billy Joel and Elton John songs to channel her love of music to her unborn son.

"He was listening in utero," Vickie Thebeau said.

At the age of 5, Thebeau remembers wanting to play the guitar, but the strings hurt his fingers, so he switched to the keyboard.

Classical piano lessons followed at the age of 6.

"He was a diligent, hard-working student," Inna Muravnik said.

Muravnik taught Thebeau classical piano for 12 years at the Packachoag Community Music School in Auburn, and although she saw promise in her student, she advised him to take a different vocational path.

"I told him to go to the Ivy League for college, but he had a passion for music," Muravnik said.

The passion continued when Thebeau was in middle school. He started writing songs and despite reservations about performing, his friends pushed him into it, and he found that he "loved it."

Currently, he is on the verge of finishing his first album, "Tourist Attraction," which is a mix of soul, pop and rhythm and blues.

Marvin Gaye, Whitney Houston, Frank Ocean and Amy Winehouse are some of Thebeau's musical influences. A press release announcing last month's release party described his songs as "dark, but not overly tragic."

When asked why his songs carry a somber tone, he mentions life experiences, like a summer internship in California.

"I was lonely," Thebeau said. "I missed Boston, my family and friends, so I focused on music."

If Thebeau still had lingering doubts about his abilities, they disappeared after attending a Sam Smith concert in September. He had his picture taken with the English singer-songwriter and immediately felt "this is possible. I want to perform."

Thebeau needs \$10,000 to finish his debut album. He's already banked \$1,000 and is hoping to raise the rest through the online fundraising tool Kickstarter.

After he graduates in May from Boston's Berklee College of Music with a degree in Film Scoring, Thebeau will head west, with a plan of getting a "day job" in L.A., and performing at night.

His talent isn't genetic, because "no one in my immediate family is musical," but the desire is there to see it through to the end.

"Music is all I think about," Thebeau said. "I really want this, and I'm not going to give up."

"L.A. is extremely competitive," Vickie Thebeau said. "He has the talent and motivation, but our theory is try everything out in the universe and see what comes back."

What comes back could be an off-the-charts singing career.