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Artist

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Album

Sholi

Rating

★★★★☆

Release Date

Feb 17, 2009

Label

Quarterstick

Genre

Pop/Rock

Styles

Post-Rock/
 Experimental
 Neo-Psychedelia

Moods

Hypnotic
 Cerebral
 Trippy
 Theatrical
 Druggy
 Dramatic
 Sophisticated
 Reflective
 Quirky
 Detached
 Complex
 Brooding
 Atmospheric

Themes

Late Night
 The Creative Side
 Reflection
 Introspection

Review

by Heather Phares

With influences ranging from jazz and prog rock to qawwali, Sholi's self-titled debut album is a uniquely free-flowing study in contrasts. All three of the band's members -- songwriter/guitarist **Payam Bavafa**, bassist **Eric Ruud**, and especially drummer **Jonathon Bafus** -- are fluent players and often play intricate parts, but they never feel showy; likewise, **Bavafa's** tenor is a perfect foil for the instrumentation, with a coolness that mirrors the band's prowess and emotionality that complements it. Sholi's songs rarely end the way they started; instead, they shape-shift at will, reflecting the band's mercurial moods: "Tourniquet" goes from dissonant rock to melodic almost-pop and back again almost imperceptibly, with **Bafus'** busy but purposeful rhythms leading the way. "Spy in the House of Memories" begins with darkly twinkling, loungy jazz with a melody that could be stolen from a torch song, then melts into sunny harmonies and guitars as **Bavafa** sings, fittingly, "We decide what we cherish and what we forget/What we leave at the other end." These quick changes can shake listeners, especially at first, when songs like "Out of Orbit" and "Dance for Hours" feel too subtle and too insular to reveal themselves fully without close attention; fortunately, *Sholi* has more immediate moments, such as the opening track, "All That We Can See," which, despite its flurries of drums and guitars and stop-start structure, has a melody that remains constant and infectious, and "Any Other God," which, with its martial drumbeats and subtly insistent guitars and vibes, is *Sholi's* most instantly catchy song. Fortunately, even the album's least obvious moments are well worth deciphering, and the emotional connection Sholi make on almost every track raises the band from merely impressive to very promising.

Tracks

	Title	Composer	Time
1	All That We Can See	Bavafa, Sholi	5:59
2	Tourniquet	Bavafa, Sholi	3:41
3	November Through June	Bavafa, Sholi	5:08
4	Spy in the House of Memories	Bavafa, Sholi	6:10
5	Any Other God	Bavafa, Sholi	4:19
6	Dance for Hours	Bavafa, Sholi	4:27
7	Out of Orbit	Bavafa, Sholi	6:52
8	Contortionist	Bavafa, Sholi	7:10

indicates Track Pick

Releases

Year	Type	Label	Catalog #
2009	LP	Quarterstick	20115
2009	CD	Quarterstick	20115

AMG Album ID

R 1466872

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