



endless december recordings
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'down to sleep' is shalloboi's fifth record. while it sounds heavily processed and overdubbed to death a lot of the effects that are heard on it were achieved in a relatively straightforward way mainly with the use of natural room sounds, mic placement and pure volume. all of the vocal effects were achieved through the use of natural reverbs courtesy of an abandoned stairwell in the apartment building where the band lives and several spaces in the congress theater. the process took about two and a half years and the tracklist was whittled down from a set of 25 songs that were recorded, some songs going through several different versions. three of the songs were written when tyler ritter (guitar, vocals, piano, loops, etc.) was only 18 years old. this album also saw the band expanding the drum sound more and using more fully developed string arrangements and glockenspiel melodies juxtaposed against the droning fullness of the guitar sound and hazy feel of the vocals.

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The Secret of Shalloboi

This husband-and-wife duo's self-produced, self-released bedroom bombast is worth seeking out.



Stefanie Goodwin and Tyler Ritter

Jason Creps

By Miles Raymer

December 27, 2007

By Shalloboi's reckoning, 2007 was a banner year even if they barely made a ripple in the world outside their apartment. The husband-and-wife team of Tyler Ritter and Stefanie Goodwin—plus a loose cast of supporting players—released two CDs, recorded enough material to fill up at least two more, and even made a couple videos. And they've done it all under their own power, handcrafting their own CD covers, for instance, and recording at home on a machine that's ancient tech even for bedroom musicians.

"I'm not too into the digital recording thing," says Ritter, 28, who plays guitar and writes most of the music. (Goodwin, also 28, plays bass and a little drums.) "It's a lot easier to work with the eight-track cassette machine: you plug it in, plug some microphones into it, you put them in front of it, and you push 'play' and 'record.' I'll usually write a song in like ten minutes and start recording immediately."

The most recent CD, *Wish*, is Shalloboi's seventh album in seven years; they've all been released on the couple's label, Endless December. Each one is a refinement on a formula that should appeal to undercover goths and indie saps with an ear for the weird: take the elegiac melody and hissy intimacy of Elliott Smith's early releases and wrap them in layers of psychedelic effects lifted from the playbooks of the Cure and My Bloody Valentine. For a good example of how it works, check out the title song on *Wish*. Two notes on a cello are run through enough effects pedals to make it sound like a synthesizer. On top of that goes a dense heap of embellishments: a Spacemen 3-ish vocal line,

delay-saturated guitar squawks, and finally the white noise of feedback recorded at analog tape's max capacity. The song is simplistic in structure, probably a couple minutes too long, and amateurish in execution, especially when compared to stuff by bands who've ditched analog for the increasingly affordable sheen of digital. And it's fucking great. It has the bombastic sound of Ritter's psychedelic heroes but still seems somehow small and accessible.

Almost everything Shalloboi's put to disc can be downloaded for free from their Web site, where you can also get a taste of their other art, mostly abstract collages and photos. Based on some of the album covers—classic typewriter font over atmospheric black-and-white images—the band takes some cues from the DIY emo-hardcore scene of ten years ago. Ritter says album art for Joy Division and the Cure also influenced his designs, but Goodwin jokes that the typeface was chosen for practical reasons: "People can't read his handwriting. It looks like a serial killer's."

Ritter and Goodwin came up around the hardcore scene in Kansas City. "There were a lot of very enthusiastic kids with not a lot to do," Goodwin says. In high school Ritter joined a poppy group called the Short Bus Kids that eventually evolved into a hardcore band. Though he was best friends with two of the other band members, he says he wasn't "real, real involved in that scene." He'll still listen to the Get Up Kids and the Anniversary, but he's always been more into the Cure than anything else. (You need to get your hands on a copy of *Shallowful*, a zine documenting his time following the band's 2000 tour, to understand the level of his devotion.)

Shalloboi hasn't quite found a scene either. Ritter and Goodwin are more devoted to their music than most musicians I know: Goodwin works two jobs, as a massage therapist and hand-dyeing yarn for a local maker, so that Ritter can take "mindless jobs, like where your brain doesn't really get occupied so it's a lot easier to write songs." But though those songs tend to wander from the basic pop structure, they're still melodic enough to turn off a serious experimental music fan. Booking shows has been a problem. "I'll go to the experimental music scene in a particular town, but we're not really left of center enough for them usually," Ritter says. "But also it's not like we can go to a rock club because we're a little too left of center for them." Their problem is that they're unpretentious innocents straddling two different scenes where, frankly, well-employed pretentiousness can be an asset—where doing things like making a zine about the Cure, without a trace of irony, would freak a lot of people out.

But just ask Steve Albini:
midwestern music dorks don't
care what you think, because they
play music for their own
satisfaction. In the new year
Goodwin plans to put her bass
aside ("I wasn't very good to be
perfectly honest," she says) to
concentrate on drumming. Ritter's
already at work on a new album.
These days he's been putting
Goodwin or another collaborator
in front of a mike and recording
as they play along to a new song
for the first time. "I like to capture
a moment," he says.



Album Sat Aug 30 2008

You are such a...

I am always amazed by duos that can create massive sounds with just two instruments. Examples that come to mind are The Black Key's and the full on roar of Daniel Auerbach or the room shaking sound of Matt & Kim or The Dodos. If I had just one word to describe the sound of *Shalloboi* it would be reverb; room filling, ever-growing and growling reverb. This Chicago duo, consisting of Tyler Ritter and Stefanie Goodwin, has figured out a way to capture their impressive sound without too much processing. Recorded through utilizing natural room sounds, mic placement, doubling and pure volume, Tyler is able to use this as an additional instrument. The huge drone makes for an unsettling, but always interesting platform for the hazy and wondering vocals of Stefanie Goodwin. All of the vocal effects were achieved through the use of natural reverbs courtesy of an abandoned stairwell in the apartment building where the band lives and several spaces in the congress theater. I'm not sure if I would want to live in their building, but I love how their latest album turned out.

Down To Sleep is actually their fifth record, and it took about two and half years to record. The opening track, "The Sun is so Bright" begins like a sunrise, slowly moving and illuminating the edges of the sky. It is clear and clean with faint electronics, tambourine, and whispered vocals.

However, at the 4:37 mark the song filled with a forceful and heavy drone. The sound is powerful and unexpected, and it can be followed through the rest of album. Shalloboi is a member is c1ct.com so this release and all five of their albums can be downloaded for free.

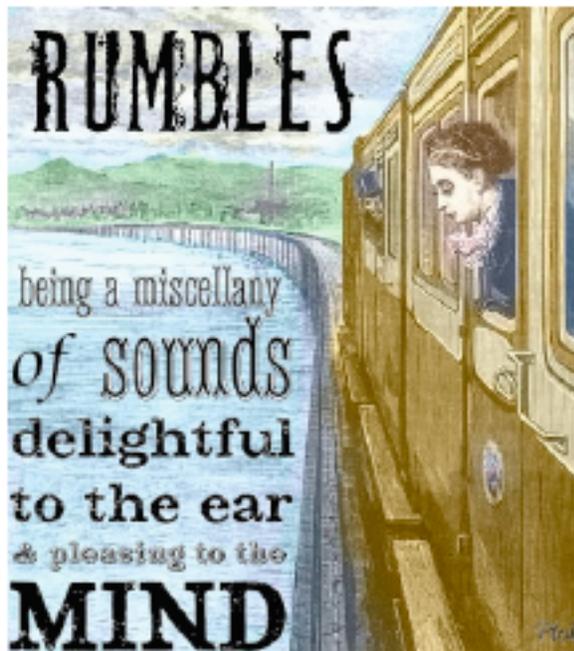
[MP3] Shalloboi - [The Sun is so Bright](#)

Shalloboi will be performing at [The Empty Bottle](#) on Wednesday Sept 3rd at 9:00pm with [A Tundra](#), [Ceiling Stars](#), and [Umbra & The Vulcan Sisters](#). This show will be the release show for *Down To*

Sleep, and [tickets are \\$7](#).

- Jason Behrends

Terrascope Rumbles August 2008



With the ambience of a fading twilight “The Sun is so Bright”, the opening track on “Down To Sleep” the new album from Shalloboi, is a beautiful introduction to the disc, welcoming the listener in with majesty. Having settled you in however, the music takes on a darker hue, the fractured tones of “To the Sky”, creating a paranoiac ripple that eats into the music. In the middle of the album, the heavenly sounds of “Angels Floating on the Head of a Pin” soothes away the uncertainty, before the flickering lights of “So Goodbye...” finally shows us the way home, a gentle drone with rippling bells and a warm heart. (www.shalloboi.com)- Simon Lewis, terrascope fanzine

Shalloboi – Down To Sleep



Released on Endless December early August 2008

www.shalloboi.com

From the first second upon playing you get locked into this dark brooding ambience. Similar to “My Bloody Valentine” and even “Cocteau Twins”, the group and ideas have really transformed from their early days. Their promo landed in my hands and I was quite taken back by all of it. Listening to it after a couple times, my curiosity and words finally flowed. I had early on thought of a lot of the sounds had been sampled when in fact this is all about analog means. With Cello, real Drums, toy xylophone, glockenspiel and guitar along with deep vocals the group has a polished sound. After viewing their video it became more apparent who and what these artist’s are doing. This release is somber and melts away becoming more than just static background noise. It filters into your body slowly like molasses leaving a very thick taste in your mouth. *Reviewed by Radionic*

Shalloboi

"Down To Sleep"

Endless December

More like Only Shalloboi, amirite?

Actually, it's not really fair to peg Shalloboi as another MBV clone type band. I mean, sure, obviously their music is heavily influenced by the whole shoegazer thing, and there's no shortage of bands today mining that same territory. This band definitely nails the whole "Loveless" noisy drony guitar bliss sound, though, plus they add strings and glockenspiels and other instruments to gorgeous effect, especially on tracks like "You Turn Down". The press release claims that a lot of the effects were achieved through natural room sounds, mic placement, doubling, and pure volume, and that all of the vocal effects were achieved through natural reverb. I kind of wish a little bit of processing was applied to the vocals on some of the tracks, but it's a minor complaint. Overall, this is a really well done album that doesn't just repeat a tired formula, but adds up to something new.

8/10

-- [Paul Simpson](#) (22 October, 2008)