

UNDERRATED SPIRIT OF THE BEEHIVE

A journey through the discography of psych-rock trio Spirit of the Beehive (SOTB) feels like falling in and out of sleep while lying on the TV remote. The faint glare of the screen and unintelligible voices flicker and flip as bits and pieces of each channel morph together to put the mind on a journey through discomfiting dreams. Every moment is different from the next, and it is all shrouded by a haze of confusion. The lines between dreams and reality blur, and the desire to sharpen them after waking up grows along with the aggravation of knowing that it cannot be done. Every SOTB song morphs constantly and blends into all the others — one moment gentle vocals sing excitedly over a slow uplifting melody and the next everything slows, and the vocals distort before being consumed by feedback.

The group masterfully elicits equal responses of discomfort and intrigue in their sound, a dichotomy which enthralls those that give them a chance. Thoughts are unformed, sentences are interrupted, and random statements are whispered in the background. "THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN'T DO" is a prime example of SOTB's elusive nature. At its core a song about the pain of rejection after being led on, the lyrics navigate through blood inside a cup, losing all sense of time, and the repeated screams of "I'll be your friend." With no clear thread between the lyrics and the ultimate message, everything feels grounded in uncertainty. The listener is pushed to draw their own conclusions which are often more muddled than the songs themselves. The constant alteration, though confusing, is always clearly intentional.

The musicality that SOTB generates produces a strangley comforting atmosphere. The prevalence of minor chords and unresolved melodies builds the tension that is at the base of their sound. A rapid drum pattern falls over itself at the beginning of "WAKE UP (IN ROTATION)" and from there every sound warps and layers against all the others, coming and going so fast that it feels like falling. Ending with a distorted screech that blends with similar sounding guitars at the beginning of "I SUCK THE DEVIL'S COCK," SOTB holds the listener in their grasp and only lets them go right before the pressure builds to be too much. There is always a message somewhere in the swirling daze, but it is in no rush to be found. Akin

to astrology or tarot cards, it is best to let intuition lead rather than reason. The more that the hypnosis of SOTB's sound takes over, the easier it is to discover the depth in their work.

Further supporting the atmosphere of their work are the vocal stylings of Zack Schwartz and Rivka Ravede. They open their mouths and the floor melts, transporting anyone in the path of their voices to another dimension where feelings flow easy. The delivery of most lines contradict what they say, allowing the listener to let their guard down while asking "is the hole we make devouring us?" just as casually as one would ask a friend how their day was. Even while distorted or haunting behind the ever-changing tracks, Schwartz and Ravede refuse to be overshadowed by their production. Their voices are instruments that shift with the dynamic sounds, elevating simple repeated lines like "it might take some time" from bleak statements to touching poetry where nothing could be more meaningful.

Through all the convoluted metaphors and distorted sounds, SOTB occasionally flows out of the darkness to prove they have appeal beyond their eerie front. The song "fell asleep with a vision" is one of their shortest and most effective. Beginning as an 8D audio experience, a quick drum pattern emerges as Schwartz' distorted voice gets layered with a tight, nostalgic riff. The essence of their sound is perfectly captured within a minute, and as quickly as it appears, the calming tones that began the song return and drown everything out. While "fell asleep with a vision" is a toe dip into the sound of SOTB, "THE SERVER IS IMMERSED" dives full force into it without compromising accessibility. The opening riff is backed by airy synths, and while the song climaxes with guitars that compete for attention layered with intense feedback, SOTB ropes it back in while "dozed on Ativan," and Schwartz casually lulls any fears of the dark away as the synths return and the song closes.

Across their four albums, SOTB transformed from a run of the mill noise-rock band to a more complex and disturbed group with an energy that is uniquely their own. A step through the door of their sound is uncertain, and their mystery is addictive — the journey is always dark and twisted, but anyone that has a taste would give anything to go on it again.

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