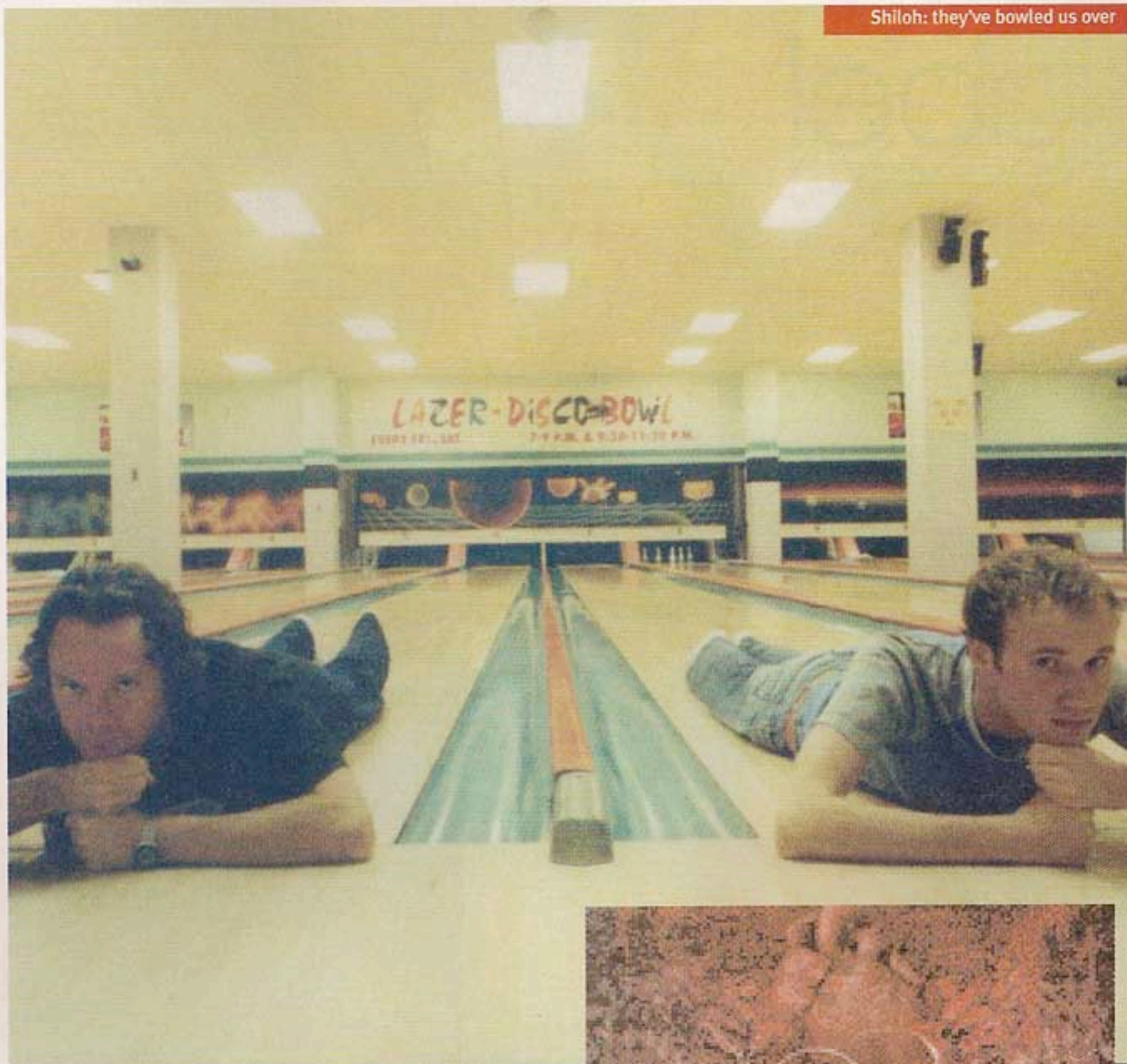


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ESSENTIAL GUIDE

NO. 16 / VOL 4

Shiloh: they've bowled us over



LEADING PLAYER

SHILOH
BLEED *Baroque*

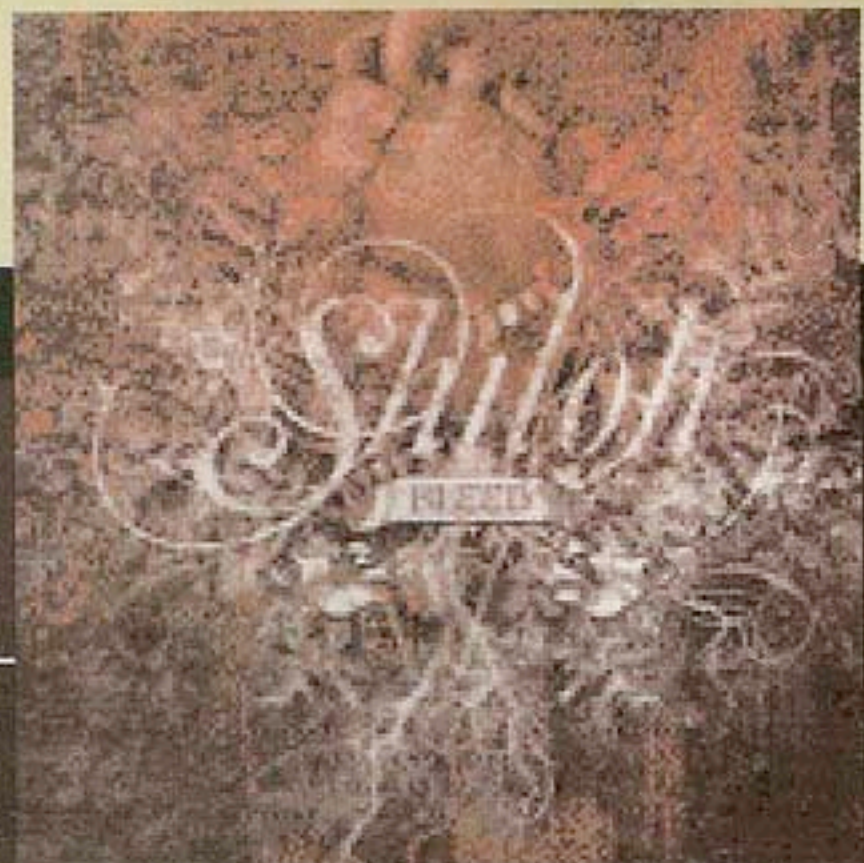
★★★★★

IT'S funny how things work out sometimes. Four years back, little known Vancouver siblings Colin and Justin Moreh stuck out a nine-track demo to their top 20 wish-list of labels. No biography, no tracklist, just a carefully scribbled phone number and the hypnotic products of an intense two week studio session. Nearly all came back, most with glowing praise or initial offers, but Baroque owner Keith McDonnell matched his mouth with his money and steamed straight in and snapped up the prized pickings for vinyl release.

Result, you might think, and you'd be right given Baroque's pedigree at the deeper, credible end of post-prog electronics. But what really curled the Moreh brothers' eyebrows were the tracks in question. Not the dreamy 4/4 soundscapes that the ardent prog-heads spent hours meticulously refining, but the three breakbeat experiments that they'd tagged on at the end.

Within months, 'Baby' surfaced on Baroque's breaks outlet Electrofly and a year later the pair are being name-checked by everyone from Adam Freeland to James Zabiela. As this impressive debut LP drops, a certain Sasha is sounding them out as 'breaks men of the moment'. And after just one listen to 'Bleed's' seeping, organic textures it's not hard to fathom why.

In fact, it's on full absorption of the first track 'Will You Ever Come Back Round' alone that shows you where Shiloh are heading. Not the restrictive confines of a throbbing 3am dancefloor, but a blissful enclave of lulling contemplation and creative freedom. Built on lazy funk grooves, gentle melodies and hazy vocodered vocals, the track's arrangement embarks on a blissful non-linear meander yet somehow never feels directionless.



Title track 'Bleed' offers a warm, funky downtempo number that alludes to Massive Attack at their most uplifting. 'Face' toughens things up with insistent bleeps and edgy stuttering breaks rhythms, while 'Dream On' glides through a slowly soaring breaks-trance voyage. As well as the second CD of more club focused remixes and collabs (Luke Chable and LP both feature), there are nods to their prog past on 'Reaction', a twisted bass-driven prog workout draped in washing pads and subtle trance synths. Meanwhile 'Melt' feels like electronica legends Orbital on a psychedelic chill-out tip. You'll do just that.

It's a fitting reference, too. Beyond possibly Hybrid's two offerings, it's a struggle to recall an album that married electronic breakbeats with a sense of wonder and melody quite so effectively as the Hartnoll's halcyon-era LP 'In Sides'.

By contrast, breakbeat-driven artist LPs of recent years have promised much but so seldom delivered. Either it's a disparate collection of half-hearted vocal efforts, token high-profile collaborations and bass-led dancefloor numbers, or a throwaway selection of second-rate house hybrids. Without any aspirations towards the status quo, Shiloh have instead straddled the horizontal lines of ambient, prog, breakbeat and house and conjured a work that is at once epic and subtle, uplifting and atmospheric, melodic and measured and grained by an organic worming funk groove throughout. To be blunt, it's little short of magical.

Not bad considering they quite literally stumbled into their breaks mantle but then, like we say, it's funny how things work out sometimes.

(Allan McGarth)