

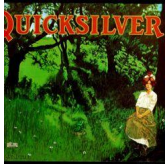
## Quicksilver Messenger Service - Shady Grove (1969)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 19 August 2012 16:13 - Last Updated Tuesday, 20 November 2018 19:56

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### Quicksilver Messenger Service - Shady Grove (1969)



1. "Shady Grove" (P. O. Wands) 2:59 2. "Flute Song" (Denise Jewkes) 5:17 3. "Three or Four Feet from Home" (Cipollina) 2:58 4. "Too Far" (Freiberg) 4:23 5. "Holy Moly" (Gravenites) 4:20 6. "Joseph's Coat" (Cipollina/Gravenites) 4:36 7. "Flashing Lonesome" (Freiberg/Gravenites) 5:21 8. "Words Can't Say" (Freiberg/Jewkes) 3:17 9. "Edward, the Mad Shirt Grinder" (Hopkins) 9:10 Personnel John Cipollina - guitar, vocals Nicky Hopkins - organ, piano, celeste, cello, harpsichord, keyboards Greg Elmore - drums, percussion David Freiberg - viola, bass, guitar, vocals

The third long-player from San Francisco psychedelic icons Quicksilver Messenger Service (QMS) is a direct contrast from their previous discs. *Shady Grove* (1969) is comprised mostly of shorter and self-contained pieces as opposed to the long and extended jams that were so prevalent on their self-titled debut (1967) and *Happy Trails* (1969). Ironically, the one stretched-out instrumental is courtesy of their latest acquisition -- Brit recording session guru Nicky Hopkins (keyboards). Another possible reason for the shift in style as well as personnel is the conspicuous absence of Gary Duncan (guitar) -- who is rumored to have been a "guest" of Bay Area law enforcement at the time. The band incorporate a number of different styles on the album. Kicking off the disc is an up-tempo rocking version of the traditional Appalachian folk song "Shady Grove." The QMS reading is highlighted by John Cipollina's trademark fluid fretwork and a familiar "Bo Diddley" backbeat -- reminiscent of both "Who Do You Love" and "Mona" from the live ensemble LP *Happy Trails*. The slow and dark "Flute Song" is a trippy minor chord masterpiece that is augmented by the shimmering effect of Hopkins' airy piano lines which mingle throughout the light orchestration. Additionally, QMS try their hand at the same country & western-flavored sound that was making the rounds with their San Fran contemporaries the Jefferson Airplane ("The Farm") and the Grateful Dead ("Dire Wolf"). However, the down-home cowboy waltz "Word's Can't Say" never gets out of the stable, unfortunately. This somewhat uneven effort would sadly foreshadow QMS's journey from psychedelia and into a much more pop-oriented sound on their follow-up, *Just for Love* (1970). However, enthusiasts of those albums will find much more to revisit on *Shady Grove* than those who favored the first two records. --- Lindsay Planer, allmusic.com

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