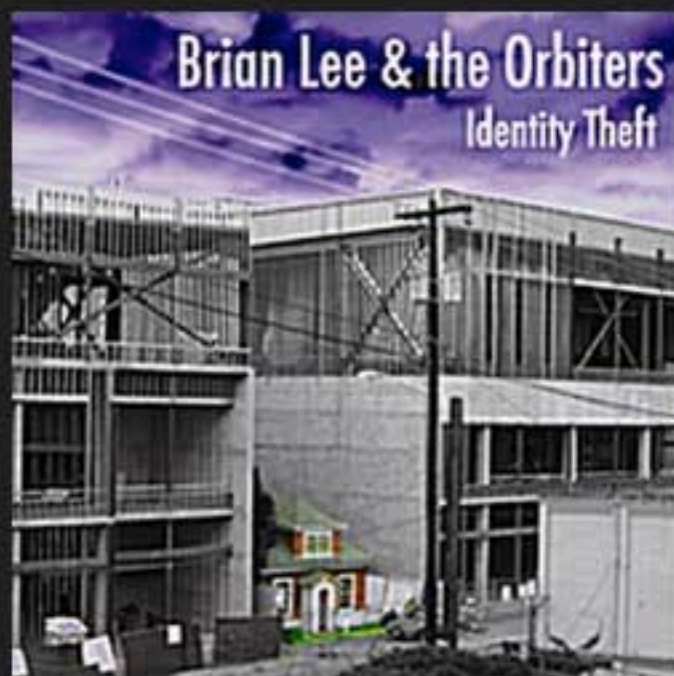


The Blues Report

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Featured Blues CD Review - Brian Lee & The Orbiters "Identity Theft"



Brian Lee & The Orbiters are a blues band based out of Seattle, Washington and have been making quite a name for themselves with each new release, with their newest, "Identity Theft" being their 3rd album, of which it is the first since changing their name from The Blues Orbiters to simply, The Orbiters. Formed in 1999, Brian Lee & The Orbiters have become one of Washington's Blues gems, receiving numerous accolades, such as, "Best of the Blues" nominations by the Washington Blues Society. For 2011, Brian has been nominated for "Best Slide Guitar". In 2010, Brian was nominated for "Best Male Vocalist", and the band was

nominated for "Best Blues Act", and "Best Traditional Blues Act". The Orbiters were also nominated for "Best Band" in 2008 and 2003, as well as for "Best Recording" in 2006." Brian Lee & The Orbiters consist of 4 members which include Brian Lee (Vocals/Guitar/Blues Harp), Steve Yonck (Guitar), Russ Kammerer (Drums), and Hank Yanda (Bass). 3 of the 4 members also play a scaled backed version of their band, which they call The Brian Lee Trio, and consists of Brian, Russ, and Hank.

"Identity Theft" consists of 11 Tracks, of which all were written by Brain Lee. Brian also showed off even more of his talents via Producer/Engineer/Art Design and some Photography, as well. In addition to the regular band lineup, also joining them on this album, on various Track were Conrad Ormsby (Drums), Tim Sherman (Guitars), and Guy Quintino (Upright Bass).

When I first started listening to "Identity Theft" I was really impressed with the smoothness that seemed to emanate from Brian Lee & The Orbiters music. There wasn't anything overly fancy about it, their a unique band and that is how they sound, with no one drowning out any of the other members, trying to show off. I also felt like they would be the perfect band to see live, especially in a smaller venue, where you could get up and dance, because their music sure gets your feet a feeling for the dance floor.

"Identity Theft" starts off with a great dose of Harp, Vocals, and Guitar with "Fine Line". Done in a Swing style, it was just the perfect opener for this album. The next Track "So Lucky", slows it down a bit and in doing so lets Guitarist Steve Yonck, really shine. Also loved the Bass beat on this one. Track 3 "Identity Theft" starts off a little mysteriously and is really about our loss of identity. "Life Today Is So Hard, I'm Just A Face On A Plastic Card". Track 5 "Anything It Takes", again shows us the simplicity that is Brian Lee & The Orbiters, and yet at the same time it shows us how wonderfully sounding and refreshing, simplicity can be. Track 8 "Fourth And Miles", is the one instrumental on "Identity Theft". It comes off brilliantly with great Harmonica and Lead Guitar throughout, courtesy of Brian Lee. It's has a little tinge of a Jazz feel to it also, which I really liked. Another Track that had that little Jazzy feel, was the next Track "Sideways". Wonderfully seductive Harmonica playing by Brian, of the sort I really like, but just don't get enough of on a lot of Blues albums out there nowadays. The last Track "Blast Off" certainly lives up to it's name. This one is a nice tune with a great Swinging/Jump feel to it. Loved that Bass via Hank Yanda.

For me, "Identity Theft" was really a refreshing break from a few to many Blues/Rock head bangers. Brian Lee & The Orbiters get their message across by showing us great lyrics, wonderfully sang and wonderfully accompanied with the band and their instrumental prowess. Everyone in the band shone on each song as this group showed us how really fine musicians sound when they are playing as a team.

Brian Lee & The Orbiters, are yet another mighty fine Band, with "Identity Theft", being a mighty fine album.

Review by John Vermilyea (Blues Underground Network)