

Mp3 The White Tornado - Seek Shelter



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The White Tornado's keyboard playing and songwriting skills take center stage on this debut album of infectious, funky piano pop tunes, alternately puckish and self-analytic, with amusing lyrics that reward if you dig for the deeper meaning. 10 MP3 Songs in this album (50:49) ! Related styles: POP: Piano, ROCK: Comedy Rock People who are interested in Joe Jackson They Might Be Giants Ben Folds should consider this download. Details: The White Tornado is Iowa City keyboardist and songwriter Bill Peterson, who honed his playing skills in the fertile blues and jazz jam scene of Eastern Iowa. Peterson is joined on this album by bassist Kevin Dawson and drummer Steve Bennet, as well as a host of other skilled area musicians on horns and percussion for a number of tracks. The White Tornado's debut album, Seek Shelter, consists of 10 original tracks written and arranged by Peterson. They encompass a variety of styles, from infectious piano-pop tunes to funky, beat-driven songs with almost hip-hop style delivery. All the songs benefit from Peterson's quirky sense of humor, while striving to maintain deeper, often personal meaning. Peterson grew up in Marshalltown, Iowa, where he began taking piano lessons at the age of 10. Managing to remain only subconsciously aware of the 80s and 90s music of his youth, he found himself much more intrigued by the jazz records in his parents' collection and the geek rock listened to by his Dungeons Dragons-playing peers. Upon moving to Iowa City to attend the University in 1995 - where he has remained since - he was drawn into the multitude of blues, jazz and funk jams in the area, garnering the nickname The White Tornado and over the years obtaining a hands-on education in musical theory and stage performance that perhaps delayed obtaining his degrees in Physics, Mathematics, Astronomy and Philosophy. Peterson has played with a number of groups in the Iowa City area, including the Blue Tunas, the Johnny Kilowatt Band, and Public Property. An avid writer of stories, poems and songs since youth, it was inevitable that Peterson's music would spawn its own project eventually. From 2004-2005

Peterson fronted the drums, bass and piano trio Band for Life, performing in the Iowa City and surrounding areas, playing much of the original music that would form the basis of the album Seek Shelter. The band dissolved when drummer Dave Hoy and bassist Mike McWilliams left Iowa City, and Peterson took time off from music to pursue a PhD in Physics at the University of Iowa. Continuing to write songs, Peterson eventually found enough time outside graduate study to gather musicians around him and begin performing again, this time under his moniker The White Tornado, with the band playing as The White Tornado Outbreak. Fueled by the success of local shows, he recorded and released his debut solo album, "Seek Shelter", in May of 2009. Peterson continues to produce music, striving to write songs that are musically intricate and enjoyable to listen to, while containing lyrics that at least hint at emotionally meaningful topics with a dark yet hopeful tone. Already planning the release of a second album and an EP in addition to Seek Shelter, The White Tornado should continue to carve an ever-expanding path of destruction across the Iowa and Midwest music scene for some time to come.

REVIEWS OF SEEK SHELTER: The White Tornado is keyboardist Bill Peterson, who's been playing shows around Iowa City for some time. Seek Shelter, his debut record, showcases his facility with the piano and organ, not to mention his puckish sense of humor. Stylistically he's not stuck in any one genre for long, but two styles dominate the CD - more funk-tinged on tracks like "Cop Show," featuring his horn section The Horns of The Apocalypse, and talky, rolling pop songs. I'd compare him to Ben Folds if I was qualified to do so, but I've avoided listening to Ben Folds this long, why start now? A more apt comparison might be to Billy Joel, in that his piano dominates the arrangements, and he's got a knack for writing songs whose accessibility belies their underlying rhythmic and harmonic complexity. But he stays away from the bathos and irritating cheesiness that mars Joel's worst (and naturally, most popular) songs. "Lost Planet" stands out for me, a Space Operetta in waltz time about a marooned astronaut. From its intricate, wistful melody to the bombastic chorus, it keeps enough whimsy in the mix to save it from going over the top. Or rather, it goes over the top and makes you like it. What with the fluid, appealing keyboard skill and first rate horn arrangements, the weak leg of the tripod is Peterson's singing. Mostly he sounds fine, but from time to time he seems to struggle to stay on top of difficult melodic turns. But that's something he can get past with practice, and tuning his songwriting to the peculiarities of his voice. At least he's musically ambitious - I'd rather hear musicians try something risky and wipe out than play it safe. --Kent Williams, Little Village ****1/2 out of *****

The White Tornado Outbreak is an Iowa City-based trio that

consists of UI graduate student Bill Peterson on piano and lead vocals, UI law student Kevin Dawson on bass, and Steve Bennett on drums. Seek Shelter is the group's debut album. There is no question about the three musicians' musical integrity, and the addition of a talented horn section on a few of the tracks only enhances the band's sound. Peterson's sometimes rap-like vocal delivery gives the Outbreak an edge over its contemporaries. Seek Shelter's opening track "Bigger Pond" establishes the group's sound right away with Peterson's heavy style of piano playing. "Bigger Pond" also showcases Peterson's offbeat sense of humor with such lines as "our fans are saying that we've sold out, and they're probably right / we just can't seem to catch on no matter how hard we try." Peterson uses an organ effect on his keyboard for "Cop Show" giving the track a jam band-like feel. This track also features Dawson's bass skills, made more impressive considering he has only played the instrument for a few years. The album closes with the 8 1/2 minute jam "Bicycle." By far one of the album's most colorful tracks, "Bicycle" ends Seek Shelter on a strong note. Peterson's accented playing and Bennett's steady rhythm gives the Outbreak an overall upbeat sound. The only thing keeping Seek Shelter from earning five stars is that it would be disappointing to think the Outbreak won't improve on its next album. --Nick Fetty, The Daily Iowan

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