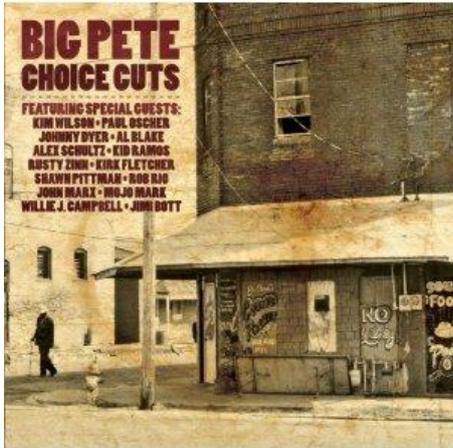


'Big Pete' Pluijm's "Choice Cuts" -- Even Dutchmen get the blues

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You might think that BlueNotes is struggling to find material when he recommends a Dutch blues harp player. That's what I thought -- until I put the CD in the player and gave it a listen. And a few more listens. It's fine stuff. Pieter "Big Pete" van der Pluijm is a player from the Netherlands, who sounds more like he grew up in Chicago 50 years ago than a 33-year-old Dutchman.

He's making his American solo debut on "Choice Cuts" (Delta Groove Music), surrounded by a cast of fine musicians that include Alex Schultz (stinging guitar), Kim Wilson (harp), Paul Oscher (melodica -- he was fabulous at Wheeling this year), Rusty Zinn and Kid Ramos (more stinging guitar) and Rob Rio (fantastic West Coast piano guy) -- and that's just a partial list.

Big Pete (I'm going to call him that, and not something like Magic Pluijm) has taken his harmonica inspiration from Lester Butler, an unheralded West Coast harp player and bandleader -- the Red Devils. And he takes his vocal style from somewhere in the deep blues roots, with a big, rolling voice that's a perfect complement to his greasy, swinging harp work.

This set of songs includes some choice cuts by some blues masters, including Butler's "Driftin'," Howlin' Wolf's "Rockin' Daddy," William Clarke's "Chromatic Crimbs," and Albert King's "Can't You See What You're Doin' To Me." The closer, Willie Dixon's "I'm a Business Man," with Malcolm Lukens driving a hard B3, is piece of Chicago work.

The entire set, in fact, oozes with tough blues authenticity. Which just goes to show that deep blues can seep up from the most unlikely of places. If Pete shows up at a club or festival near you, make it a point to check him out. You could even try this album.