

Jesse Marchant - Illusion of Love (2018)

Written by bluesever

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1 *All These Kids I Never Knew* 2:32 2 *Heart Of Mine* 3:42 3 *Distance Is The Only Measure* 3:41 4 *Sister, I* 4:05 5 *6&5* 3:41 6 *I've Got Friends* 2:59 7 *In This Short Time* 3:01 8 *Frame For One* 5:23 9 *Burning Red* 4:06 10 *Nightships* 3:53 11 *Owl In The Dark* 4:06 12 *Illusion Of Love* 3:52
Jesse Marchant - Vocals, Guitar, Piano Anthony LaMarca - Guitar, Piano, Pedal Steel, Synths Logan Coale - Bass Jason Lawrence - Drums Danny Bensi - Strings

Illusion Of Love opens up with the plaintive *All These Kids I Never Knew*, a tune that see Marchant sitting alone at a piano recalling the recent atrocities. It is a heavy tune and a beautiful tune. Also a bold choice on how to open the album but it works.

Marchant's voice reminds me of Jim James on the track and another reserved track, *I've Got Friends*. The track has a tasty understated guitar lick and is surrounded by synths and strings as Marchant examines our need to share every last facet of our lives on social media.

That's not to say that the album doesn't get the blood flowing. Tunes like *6&5*, *Nightships* and the lead single all boogie with guitar riffs that range in inspiration from Petty to Radiohead to MMJ.

Illusion Of Love is Marchant's 4th album, yet his whole catalog is new to me. This album's genesis was a nasty bike accident in Brooklyn, that Marchant termed as an awakening. As someone new to his catalog, I am glad he "woke up." ---woody, hearya.com

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Illusion of Love marks the end of an era. It's the sound of awakening and emergence – from crises both personal and political. Though the opening track, “All These Kids I Never Knew,” starts the record off with Marchant recalling a year of social atrocities alone at the piano “shot in the back / while running away”, leading the first-time listener to believe that he might be setting the table for a collection of lonely ruminations, the opposite holds true. It's a farewell to isolation, ushering in an album of buoyant, triumphant anthems. “Heart of Mine,” one of the album's lead singles, which Marchant and his band tear through with an urgency unhinged, channels the essence of Neil Young with the spirit of Jim James, relating from the soul of a troubled youth as it comes to learn defiance.

Ever the patient observer, Marchant watches on at those around him who have suffered, decidedly more than he, with an openness to understand and ability to empathize that brings gravity to his lyrics. Layers of lyrical context can be peeled away and sifted through as Marchant runs the thematic gamut from the social commentary of “I've Got Friends” (“nowadays you can make a show of your life / to convince yourself of its worth / what do you think of my private vacation?”) to the tender, plaintive “Burning Red” which was written for an old love but never completed (“We could drive into the night / I'd play the songs you like / And let you sleep when you get tired”). Perhaps the definitive lyric from the album comes in the final song (and its title track) when Marchant asks twice, in a flurry of swelling synths and strings, “who do you love?”. A fitting moment, for an artist who's grappled with so many difficult choices, to ironically find the ultimate answer in the form of a question. ---RJ Frometa, ventsmagazine.com

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