

Bonga's Beats - Fine Soul

By [Bonga Percy Vilakazi](#)

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This week, Bonga Percy Vilakazi looks at some of soul music's finest releases



Leela James - "My Soul"

I, for one, was very glad when I learned that Leela was releasing another album. I wasn't too crazy about her last album ("Let's Do It Again"), which featured cover songs. Leela is an intense woman and I've always felt that she sounds better when she sings something she wrote. Her new album, "My Soul" is full of soul, to say the very least. Her first single, Tell Me You Love Me, (which was written by Andrea Martin, who also wrote for Melanie Fiona) has been receiving great airplay, further solidifying Leela's stand as a soul singer. Songs like Fact Is, It's Over and the Raheem De

Vaughn duet Mr. Incredible make Leela shine. This is a must-have album.



Seal - "Commitment"

I had to listen to this album a couple of times before really getting into it. The past two Seal albums have been covers ("Soul" and "Soul Live"), and he had begun working with super-producer David Foster. This move got everyone excited and Seal's last two albums were critically acclaimed. In his brand new studio album (the first since 2007), Seal has once again exclusively worked with David Foster and I'm not sure if that was a great move. Most of his hits were done with Trevor

Horn and I believe that when something is not broken, don't fix it. David Foster has a Midas touch, but I'm not crazy about what he did on this album. While it is very solid, the album doesn't match up to his works with Trevor Horn. Songs that fans might enjoy are: If I'm Any Closer, Secret, and I Know What You Did.



Trey Songz - "Passion, Pleasure, Pain"

Even though this is Trey's fourth album, only one album ("Ready", released in 2009) has been a hit. And, by the looks of things, this one might be a hit too. Trey has found his niche and he knows what his people love to hear. Everyone wants to sing with Trey - from Toni Braxton to Mary J Blige, because he's one of the most happening guys in R&B music. As far as his singing is concerned, I've always thought that Trey was limited vocally. But fortunately for him, he has just the right songs and radio-friendly tracks. Songs like Bottoms Up featuring Nicki Minaj, Love

Faces, and Unfortunate should be immediate favourites. This is a solid album that most R&B lovers will like.



Bholoja - "Swazi Soul"

Wow! After listening to this CD, I made it a point to find out everything I could about this man. Bholoja (born Mbongeni Ngubane) is currently the biggest and most acclaimed artist in Swaziland. He is fast making a significant impact in South Africa, the African territory and France - indeed the world! Bholoja won a competition in which he was afforded the opportunity to record in France with some of the greatest musicians. He recently won the SATMA for Best SiSwati Artist. From the opening track Indzawo Yami to the last track, Bholoja captures your mind and soul with his

enchanting voice, accompanied by his perfectly crafted music.

Raheem Devaughn - "The Love & War Masterpiece"



to spread the message about love. Love for oneself and for other people. Raheem is one of the people who has always done what he wants to do, especially where his music and sound are concerned. Pure, beautiful R&B and neo-soul. The album has 16 songs, most of which are worthy of being in it. Of course, one of the many highlights in the CD is Nobody Wins The War, on which he's featured the who's who of soul music; like Jill Scott, Bilal Anthony Hamilton, Chrisette Michelle and others. Great CD.

ABOUT BONGA PERCY VILAKAZI

Bonga Percy Vilakazi is currently the Music Supervisor for the daily hit youth drama on etv, Rhythm City; where he is also one of the story liners. He is also a monthly contributor for Soul Magazine where he was the Senior Writer; and also frequently writes for True Love and Drum; where he has interviewed a host of local and international celebrities including Tyler Perry, Toni Braxton, Deborah Cox, India Arie, Maxwell and Kenny Lattimore.

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