

# Bonga's Beats - Come in Houston

 By [Bonga Percy Vilakazi](#)

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This month, Bonga Percy Vilakazi looks at one of the most anticipated albums of the decade, Whitney Houston and other ladies who have been influenced by this legend. Also, Pleasure P finally releases his debut album.



## WHITNEY HOUSTON - I LOOK TO YOU

Whitney is back, everyone! It's been 11 long years since she's had a full length studio album. And of course there are a lot of questions about her voice and whether she still has a place in the industry: this album will answer your questions. She's still the Whitney that everyone fell in love with in 1984. Of course the voice is not as strong as it used to be (for obvious reasons) but it has matured beautifully and I believe it is sounding exactly as it should. When I first heard some of the up tempo songs, I wasn't that impressed but then they grew on me. Very infectious. It's been said that her slow-to-fast cover version of A Song For You (which has been sung by Christina Aguilera, Betty Wright, Natalie Cole and made very popular by Donny Hathaway) could do for her what Let's Stay Together did for Tina Turner. As great as the two ballads are; the Diane Warren-written Didn't Know My Own Strength and the R Kelly penned I Look To You, they sound like songs that could have been in her 90s albums. But that's just classic Whitney and it's what her fans want to hear. I Got You, Worth It, Call You Tonight, Salute are just some of the highlights. This is a very solid comeback and it will put Whitney right back on the charts. Very biographical, the album contains songs that have a very youthful yet mature sound. I fully endorse this one.



## MELANIE FIONA - THE BRIDGE

From the very first Retro Soul/Pop song "Give It To Me Right", I was hooked. And when I realised that most of the songs had been produced by one of my favourites Andrea Martin, I knew that Melanie was someone to look out for. As a friend said, her style is a fusion of Lauryn Hill, Amy Winehouse and Leela James. Her voice is very powerful and no one has her sound at the moment and I guess that makes her a winner. Mostly dance music and mid tempos, this new neo-soul singer is definitely out to make a statement. Ballads like "It Kills Me" and "Teach Him"; and catchy tunes like "Priceless" and "Ay Yo" showcase Melanie's versatility and talent and at the same time bridges the gap between different genres and musical styles. Look out for this one - she's going far.



## CHRISETTE MICHELLE - EPIPHANY

It's about time they released this album locally, months later after the international release. Many have the impression that this is Chrisette's first album, but it's her second offering. Perhaps this one has gotten so much attention because all the songs have received Ne-Yo's personal stamp of approval, if not his personal touch. The first album had a more jazzy feel and this one is pure R&B, nothing diluted and no hip hop artists featured. What's rare about this album is that all the songs have the potential of being singles. But the two songs that everyone has been raving about are the title track "Epiphany" and "Blame It On Me", a break up song. Like any typical R&B album, the songs are mostly about heartache, falling in love and the frustrations (and the joys) of being in a relationship. This album shot straight to number one upon its release so that should give you an indication of her talent.



## LETOYA - LADY LOVE

For those who might not be aware, LeToya is one of the two former members of Destiny's Child that were kicked out of the group. And it wasn't because they couldn't sing. Whilst LaTavia disappeared, LeToya made an impression as a solid solo artist when she released her debut album back in 2006.

After a number of delays, her sophomore album is finally out. It's very hard to do a follow up on a critically acclaimed album but LeToya has gone all out. Those that didn't give her a chance the first time round will be swallowing their words. LeToya has grown musically and vocally, and her music accommodates a broader audience. With people like Ryan Leslie and Ne-Yo on production, Ms Luckett was in good hands. I expect songs like "Drained", "Lazy" and "Not Anymore" to be some of 2009's most love R&B songs.



## PLEASURE P - THE INTRODUCTION OF MARUC COOPER

Many have said that this is the new Usher because of his looks, sex appeal and talent. In every group, there will always be one person who stands out and shines above the rest. In R&B group Pretty Ricky, it was always clear that Pleasure P was the unofficial leader. He then decided to pursue a solo career and this album is the result. While this is a great album, it's nothing that we haven't heard before. But it should be mentioned that Pleasure P has a stunning tenor voice and he has songs that stand out; like "Your Love", "Under" and "I'm A Beast" featuring southern rapper Young Joc.

## ABOUT BONGA PERCY VILAKAZI

Bonga Percy Vilakazi is currently the Music Supervisor for the daily hit youth drama on etv, RhythmCity; 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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