



T BONE BURNETT

**The True False Identity**

T Bone's the guy that soundtracked *Oh Brother Where Art Thou* and *Cold Mountain*, but if you're looking for washboards and banjos, you won't find them here. *The True False Identity* is a rocker of an album, dark and brooding, rumbling along like some kind of weird circus caravan. The music might be placed somewhere between a classic Tom Waits, a dirtier Chris Isaac and an aging Pixies. Lyrically it's a poetic and humorous poke at modern American life. Listen to 'Palestine Texas' and 'Zombieland' and tell me I'm wrong. It's an accomplished and mature take on 'dark and outthere'. (LW)

70%



FOKOPOLISTEKAR

**Swanesang**

The boys from Belville have come full circle. They've made a totally unexpected album, and it's fantastic. *Swanesang* is more intricate than their last album – although it's possible that this time round we can just hear the intricacies that were lost in the volume last time. They've also managed to distil the best elements of their last two albums (the acoustic stillness of *Monoloog...* and *Lugsteuring's* huge rock melodies, as well as the intelligent anger of *Brand Suid Afrika*) and yet, *Swanesang* is entirely unique. The final track 'Vasbeslote Korporasie (deel 2)' is, I think, the best song written in South Africa this year. (RK)

90%

PIC COURTESY OF RHYTHM RECORDS

THE VEILS

**Nux Vomica**

This is the second album from New Zealand's Finn Andrews and his Veils. Their debut was epic indie, soaked in melancholia – and was instantly compared to Starsailor/Doves/Snow Patrol. This one, recorded with a new band in LA, is even starker, with orchestral arrangements and theatrical flourishes that are reminiscent of The Bad Seeds and fellow antipodeans, The Triffids. Finn's voice goes effortlessly from rasping to squealing to crooning. It's not an easy record because it's so darn self-absorbed. Nevertheless, these poetic tales of romance, yearning and desperation do have a beguiling intensity – and they don't sound like Coldplay. Yay! (JB)

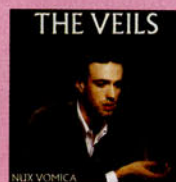
65%

FARRYL PURKISS

**Farryl Purkiss**

A lazy reviewer might try and convince you that this album is Jack Johnson gone local. Don't fall for it. There's much more to Farryl Purkiss than that. The Durban-based singer-songwriter has made a lovely bluesy-folky album, that's perfect for a lazy summer afternoon. Purkiss is an extremely talented guitarist, and there is enough complexity throughout the album to keep you engaged. And he's not all sweet sunshine lyrics either. Check out 'Before You Go' to see just how truthful he can be. This is an album that gets better the more you listen to it, it's a real treat. (RK)

80%



PERNICE BROTHERS

**Live a Little**

The Pernice Brothers were formed after the break-up of Joe Pernice's alt-country band, The Scud Mountain Boys. The Brothers have already released 4 albums of folky chamber pop, showcasing a knack for songcraft. This album in particular sounds like a return to the sound of 70s FM rock. All of it is pretty, sometimes bordering on cute. The sheer sweetness, neatness and musicality of it makes it all feel a little bloodless, though. While big hooks and any form of urgency wouldn't suit them, the album ends up washing over you without leaving any impression. File under pleasant. (JB)

40%

THE STILLS

**Without Feathers**

Montreal's Stills had a fantastic debut – an intoxicating slab of pure indie art-school melodrama. This second album sees a strange change of direction – as well as a few changes to their line-up. The drummer now plays guitar and sings on most tracks. So, no more swoony vocals – and the layers of indie guitars have been replaced by straighter rock riffs. It's not a bad thing to change your tune, but on this album they left all the tunes behind. Almost every song is unremarkable and flat. Most of it comes across as a passionless plod. What a disappointment. (JB)

35%

NIKS VAN DER SPUY

**Beautiful Feet**

This album, by one of the stalwarts of the Durban acoustic scene, has been re-released on Sheer Music's new 2 Feet label. As many people need to fall in love with this album, and give it to their friends for Christmas, as possible. Nibs has been making his unique brand of acoustic guitar music for years, and *Beautiful Feet* is a showcase of his skills as a musician and a lyricist. Some songs will give you goose bumps and make you want to cry – others will warm your blood with their subtle Latin rhythms. Do yourself a favour, but this album. It really is special. (RK)

90%