

# Bonga's Beats - 12 albums you should get this December

By [Bonga Percy Vilakazi](#)

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December is always an exciting time in the music industry. From new artists to the usual players, this period is only for the strong. Our music expert, Bonga Percy Vilakazi, has compiled a list of 12 CDs you must buy this December. From R&B to Gospel.



## 12. P!nk: "Greatest Hits ... So Far!" - Sony Music

Putting together a "greatest hits" CD can be a very daunting task, particularly if the artist is personally involved in selecting the final track list. It's simply hard to satisfy all your fans. What I liked about this CD is that there is a little bit of everything from her five albums. The only album that is not sufficiently represented is the 2003 "Try This", which was P!nk's lowest-selling album, but who cares, I'm sure most people won't notice. P!nk has blessed her fans with new pictures, liner notes, as well as two brand new songs: "Raise Your Glass" and "F\*\*\*\* Perfect". This album is a perfect summary of how P!nk has evolved and remained relevant in showbiz.



## 11. Various Artists: "Tribute To A Reggae Legend" - Putumayo World Music

Few people have made the kind of lasting, universal impact that Bob Marley has made with his music. In his short 36 years, Marley managed to introduce hundreds of millions to reggae and spread messages of peace, love, human rights and acceptance. It's no surprise that almost 30 years after his death, one can travel to any part of the globe and witness his far-reaching musical legacy.

This album features a number of Marley's most loved songs, recorded by some of the world's greatest singers, like Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars, on No Woman, No Cry; South Africa's own Freshlyground on Africa Unite; Could You Be Loved by Québécois singer Caracol (formerly of the group Dobracaracol); Natural Mystic by California reggae/rock band Rebelution; and Sun is Shining by Ghanaian reggae artist RockyDawuni and many more. The cool thing about this album is that all the artists don't try to imitate Marley, they add their own interpretation without losing the meaning of the songs.



## 10. Mariah Carey: "Merry Christmas II You" - Universal Music Group

There's not a lot of artists who have more than one Christmas album; only the brave and the fearless. After her super-successful 1994 "Merry Christmas", which yielded the hit All I Want For Christmas Is You, MC didn't try to create the same sound in this new album. From the first single, Oh Santa, which is an original composition, to Oh Come All Ye Faithful, which she sings with her mother, Mariah is belting it out on every song. The great thing about Mariah is that she's a songwriter as well, so you won't get the same old Christmas carols that have been covered by

every other artist. Five of the 13 songs are original compositions, with One Child being the highlight of the CD. For those who had lost faith in Mariah's singing, get yourself this CD, which I'm certain you won't only play in December, but all year round.

## 9. Jazmine Sullivan: "Love Me Back" - Sony Music

Her first album "Fearless", which she released in 2008, was critically acclaimed. The song Bust Your Windows was played all over radio and Jazmine made her mark. Two years later, she is back with "Love Me Back" and it's hard not to "love her back", especially with such a solid follow up. The girl can sing and she knows what's perfect for her voice (which is reminiscent of Mary J Blige and Faith Evans). If you are a fan of true R&B/soul, this will be one of your treasured CDs.



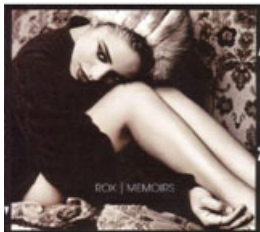
Unlike many artists, Jazmine has relied on her sole talent to carry her through, featuring only one duet with Ne-Yo. Songs like 10 Seconds, Good Enough, and Stuttering is where Jazmine truly shines, showcasing her husky voice. The duet with Ne-Yo (U Get On My Nerves) is a sure hit.



## 8. William Seake: "Yekubuhle" - HM Entertainments

After recording five albums with Joyous Celebration, William got enough skills to go solo and, really, his fans had been waiting for him to make this move. Fortunately for him, he knows what the gospel fans want to hear and he's given them exactly that. Listening to "Yekubuhle", one can tell that the album was carefully planned and the right songs (mostly

hymns) were selected. If truth be told, his kind of music is what's popular in this country, it's a tried-and-tested method. That being said, I would have really liked to hear more originally penned songs. I strongly feel that SA gospel artists need to get into the habit of writing more of their own songs, which will be sung for generations to come. Popular songs like We Bathandwa, Yek' Ubuhle and Uthando Luka Baba have been beautifully arranged, showing us William's versatility as a singer. Not only is the music very solid, it's exactly what you need to uplift your spirit.



## 7. Rox: "Memoirs" - Just Music

From the moment I pressed play on my CD player, I knew I liked this girl. Her voice is soulful, her sound is fresh and her lyrics are honest, simple and just beautiful. This half-Jamaican and half-Iranian girl has been singing since she was a little girl, and "Memoirs" is her first album, which is a great effort. The tracks flow seamlessly and the songs are catchy. If you like artists like Laura Izibor, Joss Stone and Joy Denelane, you will definitely enjoy this album. I can honestly say this is one of my favourite albums.



## 6. Oskido Church Grooves: "The Tenth Commandment" - Kalawa Jazmee Records

You can never go wrong with Oskido's Church Grooves. Ten commandments later (I'm not sure what he's going to title his next album as there are only 10 commandments), Oskido's still at it, giving us some of the greatest dance tunes that SA has to offer. With a wide variety of vocalists, ranging from Winnie Khumalo to DJ Sbu, you can rest assured that there will not be a single moment when you won't be on your feet. Songs that I'm certain will be getting a lot of attention are: We Baba, featuring Winnie Khumalo, KB's Re Buswa Ke Lerato and Hey Yah by Professa & Bruce Dope. Oskido takes you right back to church with this one.



## 5. Nicki Minaj: "Pink Friday" - Universal Music Group

This has to be one of 2010's most anticipated releases. After four mix tapes, Nicki has finally released her first commercial album, under Lil' Wayne's label. Before releasing "Pink Friday", she featured in songs by Drake, Mya, Rihanna, Robin Thicke and Usher, creating so much hype that kept fans begging. So everyone has been looking forward to this album, to see exactly if Nicki can hold it down on her own. If you're expecting hard core hip hop, like Foxy Brown or Lil' Kim, then this album is not for you. It has strong pop influences with Nicki singing on a couple of tracks. Is this album worth all the hype that it's been getting? No. But it is a very solid album and has mass appeal. Eminem, Rihanna, Drake, Will.I.Am, Kanye West and Natasha Bedingfield have been enlisted to add their touches to this debut.

## 4. Asanda Bam: "Fragile" - Sheer Sound

This might be her first album, but Asanda has been honing her talent in the industry for some time now. Having worked with giants like Thandiswa Mazwai, Corinne Bailey Rae, Tsepo Tshola and many others, it came as no surprise when Asanda



which was recently nominated at the 2010 Metro FM Awards. That alone should tell you that Asanda means business. It's very hard to box Asanda's sound because it comes from many influences, but Afro-soul might be the best description for now. It's such a pity that great talents like hers aren't getting the airplay that they deserve, because with fair exposure she could easily be in the league of the Simphiwe Danas. Look out for Hamb 'Uzubuye, Mjojo, and Brand New Day.



### 3. Bruno Mars: "Doo-Wops & Hooligans" - Gallo Record Company

It's been some time since I got so excited about a new artist the way I'm excited about Bruno Mars. Having appeared on Travie McCoy's hit single Billionaire, as well as helping produce the Cee-Lo Green single F\*\*\* You, Bruno has finally dropped his much anticipated album. His

voice is smooth, accompanied by a beautiful tone, sometimes with obvious Michael Jackson's influence. A lot of the songs, like Grenade, Just The Way You Are, Marry You, and Talking to the Moon are all potential singles with spectacular melodies. It's quite clear that Bruno set out to create a classic album in an industry where true talent is often overlooked. This is an outstanding album and I look forward to hearing more from him. How he didn't get the nod in the Grammys for Best newcomer is beyond me, but at least he's been nominated for Best Male Pop Vocal Performance.



### 2. Simphiwe Dana: "Kulture Noir" - Gallo Record Company

I never thought I would be so obsessed about an artist the way I am with Simphiwe. I have all her albums, but, for the first time, I've made it my mission to learn the lyrics of every song in this new album. I think it's safe to say that this is by far her best album to date. She just keeps getting better and better. Dame Dana has never been one to conform to industry expectations - she has always done what feels right to her. And, really, thank God for that. "Kulture Noir" has to be the richest and most musical album that she has done. From the soundtrack-like Mayine and the

bitter-sweet Inkwenkwezi, to the haunting Undishiyile, this album is consistent from track one to 12. Without a doubt, Simphiwe is SA's greatest export.



### 1. R Kelly: "Love Letter" - Sony Music

R Kelly is back, people! If you ever doubted that the King of R&B had lost his touch, this album will prove you wrong. His 2009 album ("Untitled") failed to make an impact, mostly because Kelz had been trying out too many things, probably forgetting what his fans loved. Most felt that he was trying to compete with the younger generation. Basically, "Untitled" just wasn't a good album. But with the new album, "Love Letter", Kelz redeems himself as one of the world's greatest musicians.

From the first single, hit ballad When A Woman Loves, Robert sets the tone of the album - good, pure R&B. And that is the sound of the ballads in this new album - a reminiscent of his 1998 hit If I Could Turn Back The Hands of Time. The ballads are big and rich in production. Of course, it wouldn't be an R Kelly album if there were no steppin' songs. There is also a hidden bonus track (Track 15), in which he pays homage to Michael Jackson, singing the song that Kelly penned for the late King of Pop, You Are Not Alone. Great album from a great singer. All these kids should watch and learn.

## 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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