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Next to Adam's Place Restaurant

TOBY KOENIGSBERG TRIO

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KRM

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music



CD Review

T Bone Burnett, *The True False Identity*

Released: 2006, Columbia Records

Genre: Little bit of this, little bit of that

Since he last sat in a recording studio in 1992, T Bone Burnett has scored movies and plays, produced albums, helped steer the course for dozens of artists and assiduously avoided stepping back behind the mic.

Now, 14 years later, the drought has been ended in spectacular fashion with *The True False Identity*, an epic journey through a twisted musical landscape that seems frighteningly close to reality and yet strangely ephemeral. "This version of the world won't be here for long / it is already gone, it is already gone," he sings in the song "Palestine, Texas."

In turns loopy, lyrical, thought provoking and mystifying, the album has Burnett unveiling a new sound and cryptic lyrics, all flavored with Burnett's sly brand of sidelong humor. Consider this take on the illusion of control in "Zombieland": *Machines always do just what you tell them to do / As long as you do what they say.*

Burnett's lyrics are poetic in the way I find most interesting. Read them on the page and they make no sense, and yet hear them in their musical context, and you just know, or at least think you know, exactly what the song is about. Of his new sound Burnett explains: "All instruments are drums really ... they are all resonating chambers that you attack in some way." The sound on *TTFI* is oversized and percussive. The musicians slap guitar or bass strings or thump the piano just half again heavier than is deemed normal. Thus even melodic lines seem to serve double duty as a rhythm section. The technique and mixing helps create the illusion that the musicians are in the room with you.

The album is released as a CD disc or as a dual layer disc with the CD on one side and a DVD on the other. The DVD contains enhanced versions of the audio CD. In the video portion, Burnett plays three extra songs linked by more of his poetic musings. This is definitely going to be one of the year's best albums. — John Ginn

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