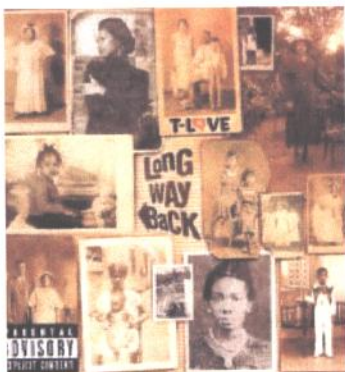




T-Love
Long Way Back
 Astralwerks/
 Pickininy
 Recordings



By Daniel Q.
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 College Times



With T-Loves' full-length debut, we see the return of a soul sister that not only discovered fellow

South Central L.A. sensation Jurassic 5, but also released their debut EP (self-titled) on her own Pickininy Recordings. Since moving to London, writing articles for URB and rapping for a host of producers from Easy E to Egyptian Lover, Love has found her voice in hip-hop in the jazzy width of Jill Scott, Nina Simone and Erykah Badu.

The album effortlessly combines hip-hop with mellowed out jazz rhythms of yesteryear in the guise of Badu's live projects, but with such a deep rapper background in South Central, it grasps enough self-productive elements to create her own style. The opening track – the light and sultry "Swing Malindy" – wraps you in airy warmth, then suddenly switches gears into French, blending the lyrical content to and fro.

The song "When You're Older" points to early influences with name checks, "I remember Cole Porter used to play wit merengue/pops liked guanguancos/mom liked Marvin Gaye," but the real message shoots through in the chorusing, "Baby, when you're older/ you will understand/ To feel with black hands."

Exchanging quainter jazz melodies with lyrically tight rhythms on "Fortress (of a Prophet)" and "Who Smoked Sunshine," T-Love recruits Canadian hip-hoper Frankenstein (Choclaire, Saukrates) and Jay-Dee (Slum Village, D'Angelo, Q-Tip) for great beats and production. Although Jay-Dee's production on "Who Smoked Sunshine" is tight, T-Love's description of a childhood friend turned hooker outshines her accompaniment with blunt lyrics like, "Hey it's her butt, now she too corrupt/to know what she could do with her legs shut."

Continuing on female liberation, T-Love attacks hip-hop's long-winded history of treating women like mindless objects on "Which-Bitch." Winding around an old love that didn't know what he had until Virgin came calling, T exerts maximum tongue splitting lyrics showing "women need more to feel than cash and a meal."

Then, like a cool wind flowing through a window on a hot Brooklyn day, T-Love pulls out "Oh-Suite" blending all of her efforts and soul to the nine-minute opus. Using alternate versions of "Malindy Sings," "OG B-Girl," and "What's My Name?" (in 3/4 and 5/4 timings), T revisits earlier EP work, but smoothes out the edges for maximum flow. It's obvious that T-Love has mastered the double meanings and word play needed to become successful in the biz, but with some of hip-hop's best producers and her own jazzed-up style – she's sure to capture many ears outside of the *Source* readers poll.



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