

Mp3 Chris James - Medicated



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Intimate, emotional, hook-laden songs that will enter your head through your ears and stay there for a lifetime. 14 MP3 Songs ROCK: Acoustic, FOLK: Folk Pop Details: THE word entertainmentafrica.co.za by Diane Coetzer. August 4th, 2003 The long journey of the South African singer-songwriter: Maybe its got something to do with those many nights my beloved Dad used to drag my sister, Catherine, and me off to the Durban Folk Club when we were teenagers and the death to disco sticker that was proudly pasted on our cupboard door. Or perhaps it was the joy at having the likes of Pete and Syd Kitchen playing guitars in our lounge whilst my Dad fiddled with the reel-to-reel and we watched, entranced. The truth is, Im a true sucker for the singer-songwriter. Yup, thats right give me a beautifully wrought song, rendered on an acoustic guitar, accompanied by little more than emotional laden vocals and Im hooked, baby. Its probably why a great deal of my music of choice (well, when Im not belting out move your body like a snake with Mr R. Kelly see last weeks piece!) is centred around those genres that put the singer and the songwriter right up front. Im talking Americana and albums like the utterly brilliant Both Sides Now, a double CD (available on import on BMG) that will leave you weak at the knees with joy and believing in the fact that there are Americans out there whose lives are as far from that portrayed by President Bush and his media as you can get but lets leave that for another day. Whats important here, in this country at the tip of Africa, is the difficulty perhaps challenges is a better word that singer-songwriters working in this musical landscape face. Hands up those of you who have encountered the music of Chris James? For sure, its probably only a dozen or so who could answer yes to this and thats probably those of you who are regulars at the Linden Songwriters evenings in Johannesburg. But James (now working with a group of musicians going under the moniker The Chris James Band) is surely one of the most gifted songwriters currently working in South Africa. His debut album, Medicated (available at gigs since no

major record company has been clever enough to sign him) is an astonishing recording, full of lush and limpidly beautiful songs that will S well, also leave you weak at the knees. With all songs written by James, Medicated is up there with the current crop of singer-songwriters making waves on the global scene (check out Jack Johnsons On and On, Universal Music, and the more mainstream John Mayer, Sony SA). If you can get hold of this release (send a mail to rob@thecooler.co.za) then head directly to track four for a musical experience of the most sublime kind. Titled Eloise this is how songwriting should be a place where melodies, hooks and lyrics join together to create a memorable whole that you will have difficulty ejecting from your head. And there are another 13 musical delights to enchant you for years to come on Medicated. That the album was recorded at all is worth commenting on. Lets face it, here in South Africa, the market for indie music, especially of this kind, is not huge which means that major record companies are unlikely to release an album like Medicated in spite of its quality. In James case, he met Rob Luce (who runs The Cooler Recording Studio in Johannesburg) who produced, recorded and mixed Medicated on the teeniest of budgets and the two now face the challenge of getting the songs into the public consciousness through radio and television (which is just about as arduous and difficult a task as scaling Mount Everest, Michelle Constants efforts on SAFM aside). And so grassroots gigging and shifting units at shows is where the Chris James Band is right now which is great and admirable and necessary and all that. But its also wrong: a singer-songwriter as gifted as James should be celebrated, and brought into the public eye and revered on a platform alongside other greats, like Vusi Mahlasela and Baaba Maal even. But then again, maybe Im just an old folkie at heart. Band Bio Chris James sells books for a living. In his spare time he locks himself in a room and applies his musical genius to songwriting and the development of his vocal and guitar technique. Chris first exercised these skills as the frontman for Mantis Project, a professional touring band that split up in 1997. About a year ago Chris went to Rob's studio to record seven acoustic tracks which completed a personal project he was working on at the time. Chris was so impressed with the quality and professionalism he experienced at The Cooler that he asked Rob about forming a band to record some new material. Rob, a drummer/percussionist with experience in rock, jazz and classical music, liked the idea and asked his friend, Chevy if he would round out the trio with his bass. Chevy, who had already been playing with Rob in various groups for the past year, seized the opportunity. Chris James had his band. Several months later he had his album, Medicated. The band is now focused on promoting Medicated and has just procuded an EP called "On

Empty".

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