Nelly Furtado - The Spirit Indestructible (2012)

01. Spirit Indestructible (3:58) 02. Big Hoops (Bigger the Better) (3:46) 03. High Life (featuring Ace Primo) (4:19) 04. Parking Lot (5:25) 05. Something (featuring Nas)(3:35) 06. Bucket List (4:22) 07. The Most Beautiful Thing (featuring Sara Tavares) (3:59) 08. Waiting for the Night (4:28) 09. Miracles (3:26) 10. Circles (3:51) 11. Enemy (4:18) 12. Believers (Arab Spring) (4:06) + 13. End Game 14. Play 15. Big Hoops (Bigger the Better) [Demolition Crew)

Nelly Furtado followed her 10m-selling 2006 album, Loose, with a Spanish-language record, Mi Plan, creating a vacancy in the pop charts that was quickly filled by Rihanna and Katy Perry. Back, finally, with Loose's "proper" followup, Furtado no longer fits into the landscape – this album's first two singles flopped – and is taking a critical pasting for a record that's actually imbued with the same spanking pop savvy as Loose. "Want another banger?" she asks at the end of High Life, a question she answers by delivering an album containing half a dozen effervescent club tracks. What's not to like about Big Hoops – one of those singles – and its staccato, hip-hoppy celebration of huge earrings (naturally, she likes them "the bigger the better")? But it's the more contemplative, headphones-on tracks that make the greatest impression: Something is a cool, easy Salaam Remi production that's warmed by a Nas rap, and The Most Beautiful Thing is an ambient, heavenly chorale piece. There's a fair bit of "positivity" gloop, such as Believers (Arab Spring), but not enough to ruin a decent album. --- Caroline Sullivan, guardian.co.uk

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