

College Montage Punk

 By [Johann M. Smith](#)

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What distortion and grunge is to Seattle, emotional poppy punk is to Potchefstroom. The student town's latest offering, the fourth album by three-piece-outfit Glaskas, entitled "Verganklik En Afhanklik", patriotically fits the bill. And what can best be described as an ambitious attempt to reach for that all-time pop-punk sound - a delightful injection of youthful energy, undying optimism, and an unobtainable girl - is ultimately imitative, but nonetheless instantly satisfying.

As their name suggests, this breed of band is easy to judge and dismiss. Self-described as "Popcorn Rock", the sound is exactly what you'd expect during the opening credits of an American Pie flick, with added indie hooks and licks. The lyrics, mostly romantic notions and vulnerable stabs at a better tomorrow, tell tales of sadness and attempts at seeking a solution. The outcome always glows with hope, or an accepting embrace of the truth.



A jumpy hip hop beat and rapping rhymes

However, unlike their previous three albums, here they come into their own - seemingly more at terms with being see-through and vulnerable. The opening track, Wegbreek, starts confidently with plodding drums, vocal harmonies and gliding guitars. The upbeat tempo corresponds with what the lyrics pose: "Will you breakaway with me?/we should go on." A trademark bridge solo is replaced with a jumpy hip hop beat and rapping rhymes, courtesy of HemelBesem. What could have been a cruel reminder of nu-metal, somehow appears more in tune with early tweak coated in zef.

As a whole, the band has evidently grown, and the 12 tracks are well arranged in order of appearance. The result is not so much an experience of wallowing in teenybopper emotions seeking sympathy, but actual feel-good entertainment - with the added benefit of having the option to listen to the lyrics or not.

Revolusie revived

Towards the end, the journey slows down to reveal a cover of departed legend Johannes Kerkorrel. Revolusie is one of those timeless South African classics, sadly remembered by few. Glaskas veer a wee bit away from the original, but pay their respects through keeping the song's whimsical touch. And through making it their own, manage to grab new attention beyond the grave.

Wisely, Glaskas drive the point home, ending of with a forlorn acoustic Soos 'N Gebed, executed theatrically with tiled room reverb, instead of quality production values - nodding at the D-I-Y punk methodology, and with the a noticeable lack of violence and profanity, staying true to the straight edge school of thought.

"Verganglik En Afhanklik" means "Perishable And Dependent" and is perhaps a more rational alternative of punk's old adage "Live Fast Die Young". It's a pity that Glaskas have found a sound they can express themselves with a few decades too late of the reoccurring fad.

I doubt that any English speakers would buy into their growing 70 000+ numbers on Facebook. But hey, as anyone said way back when in the 90s, keep doing what you love and everything will be okay. In any case, the best punk always comes from the darkest most underground of times, when no one's watching. And so the story goes, and so the music gets played - as long as Potch exists anyway.

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Johann MSmith is a music journalist turned content hacker. Known as the IDMMAG launch designer, Johann specialises in entertainment, travel and social commentary. Or as he puts it: "I speak as and for companies through social and design."

▀ *Rolling Stone South Africa*: the first in-depth interview - 14 Oct 2011

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