

Lucy Kruger's debut: a down-home debutante?

 By [Johann M. Smith](#)

17 Oct 2012

Please follow these instructions step-by-step: listen to the first track (Little Puppet) from Lucy Kruger's debut album "Cut Those Strings". Stop the song at 25 seconds. Now listen to Robbie Wessel's Aan Jou Van My. Hold on, we're not done. Go back to Lucy and skip to track 7 (Heaven) - notice the laid-back funk vibe and melodic minors (the sad notes, in case you didn't know)? Now pretend if you will, that it was made 20 years ago and, for a moment, feast your heart strings on Anneli van Rooyen's Nagliedjie. Yes, there are noticeable differences; but there's a whole lot more in common here.



Basically, this album is more proudly South African than the package suggests. A magical feat few dare to attempt, never mind succeed at. It would be a crime to associate Lucy with anything American, though she no doubt will be. Lyrically, especially, it's pop but it's also poetry. There's an extreme difficulty to find the appropriate destitute statement that can newly define the classic case of experienced woman seeking an elusive heart that can fix life and all the troubles it comes with. Mixed metaphors are a man's only resort when it comes to explaining things of this nature. Otherwise, "She's internash, bru!" will suffice.

A generation gap being closed

Ultimately, "Cut Those Strings" represents everything that a good Afrikaanse mamma wishes for her children - and possibly also the music she grew up with. It's the sound of a generation gap being closed. Lucy is both coy and smart, sugar and spice. Born and bred in Johannesburg, she's the perfect girl next door: the kind who was wise enough to take the advice that fathers give their beloved daughters (and by doing so, possibly procuring the ironic moment Alanis Morissette experienced a decade ago). But she's had her heart broken and, like most young girls, she didn't deserve it. In this day and age, she's a rare find. A rough diamond who actually sounds better with a polish. A pity, because when recently have you really tried one on? Mmm, it's been far too long friends.

Don't be mistaken, she could show her fellow overseas voyeuristic diva counterparts a thing or two about life and the role assigned to the soul. And she can do it without jamming with her clam out, or holding a provocative meaty fire-red guitar, or renting a tattered flat with wooden floors above a shop in Brooklyn. Just wholesome and honest tunes from the heartland. Yes gentleman, this is chick-flick art at its finest, most feminine and proudly South African. Approach with caution, there are lessons that have to be learnt here. Open your heart, listen and let her in.

First drum beat to last breath

Speaking of polishing, let's tally up kudos and award brownie points where necessary: "Cut Those Strings" was produced by the eminent Schalk Joubert of Voëlvry fame and engineered by multifaceted Dave Langemann; familiar faces like Inge Beckmann, Kevin Gibson and Melissa van der Spuy also make a welcome appearance; and, thus far, Lucy been featured on nearly every known University radio station, 5Fm is soon to follow, no doubt. Louise Carver, better watch out ...

From the first drum beat to the last breath, there are the obvious influences deeply rooted in the philosophy and that school of the 1990s' that graduated countless fed-up females needing to shed some emotional baggage and tell it like it is with heavy hidden sentiments. To understand it all would be like trying to stop the ocean with your two bare hands.

Luckily, she's not hoity-toity like Adele, or tries hard like an early Alicia Keys; words like honesty and modesty keep coming to mind throughout - two nouns that have been exhausted to zero effect in press releases and reviews in the short timespan of two months. The album name and overall content suggest a modern update on the lessons offered by K's Choice circa '99. But she's just really local and lekka, like the wisdom that only ageing overweight tannies with hearts of gold can claim ownership of.

I'm not even going to try to go into anything further; I can't speak for the lady with a man's heart. She's good and she'll make it worth your every while, just like good 'ol Anneli in the 80s - perhaps even a bit better. But let's not tempt fate. After all, hell hath no fury like a woman's scorn. A fine debutante affair indeed, that promises so much more. Thank you for reminding me, Lucy, that authentic SA music harking back to our classics isn't cool, *dis brandende gees vriendin*.

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ABOUT JOHANN M. SMITH

Johann M Smith 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."
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