



Pop-punk really isn't the most refined form of music in the world, as most purveyors of the style would admit in their more honest moments. Truthfully, the majority of the genre's adherents aren't concerned with technical compositional complexities or polished lyrical wordplay; they want big guitars, bit attitudes, thundering drums, upbeat melodies, and choruses that crowds can sing at the top of their collective lungs. And while there isn't really thing wrong with creating crowd-friendly, accessible pop ditties, it can become really tired after awhile. Thankfully, there are bands like Portland, OR resident Broadway Calls, bands who have taken all of those familiar elements and ramped up the talent level to craft their eponymous debut record. What sets the band apart from most of their peers is that, while their music is chock-full of the necessary quantities of youthful energy, their lyrics are brimming with a level of sociopolitical awareness that is typically found in weepy folk singers. The album is filled with topics ranging from ruminations on ruined relationships ("Bad Intentions" and "Classless Reunion"), national and international policy ("Suffer The Kids" and "Escape From Capitol Hill"), and heartfelt friendships ("Daniel My Brother" and "Save Our Ships"). The group then tosses in an ode to returning to their hometown after being on the road ("Back To Oregon") alongside a great cover of The Smiths ("A Rush And A Push And The Land Is Ours"). Forget the whiny, sad-sack, faux-angry love poetry that has plagued the genre for over a decade now: Broadway Calls should serve as a model for what pop-punk should really sound like.

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