

Music Review

Title: *Lend Us Your Ears*

Author: Various Artists

Publisher: Angryfish Records, 2007.

Cost: Send £10 or \$20 (inclusive of postage) via PayPal to angryfish@angryfish.co.uk

Reviewer: Steven E. Brown

Robin Surgeoner, or Angryfish, is an artist-entrepreneur. He is the force behind the compilation of 17 songs on *Lend Us Your Ears* by 10 diverse artists, all of whom focus on themes of disability. I have been carrying the CD with me for months now and listening to it on my computer and iPod as well. The first song that caught my attention was Lindsey Carter's "Useless Eaters." I've already used it several times in presentations. One thing I quickly learned is my audiences did not know the derivation of the term. So, if only for that reason, it has been a learning experience. Carter's lyrics some of which are re-printed below may seem crude unless you know "useless eater" was a Nazi term applied to those with disabilities:

As soon as the sperm hits the egg
The hunt's on you're after us
If just one gene's out of wack
You're looking to abort us
The politicians and the scientists
Don't want us in the way
They call us useless eaters
With fucked up DNA

Carter's chorus is the determined phrase, "We're not going to let you wipe us out." Another of her songs on the compilation, "Sweet Family," also addresses how we fit in, or don't, with the families we are born into.

Many of the songs have similar to themes to that of the above, including Clair Lewis's "Terri Schiavo" and Julie McNamara's "Fly Like an Eagle." All of these songs are sung in folk style. Very different in style are contributions from Casa Jay and Parafenalia. The latter's "Weekend Anarchist," demands:

Got a wasp in my head, buzzing like a school reunion
Got to get me to the Doctor.
Give me Prozac, give me Vodka.
Don't be selfish, bloody selfish.
Just want our own space, want our own space

Where we can live out our adventures.
Not the ones told by the presenters.

The transition song in the midst of the CD is Jon Turner's "Fences" which plaintively asks why we need so many de-fenses? It is a hauntingly beautiful rendition. Different still is Jack Fletcher's "Schoolboy Politics" which states:

Don't want the world to be a playground
World leaders chasing childhood dreams
Don't want them playing with our livelihood
But they're not listening to our screams.

This collection has something for everyone and would be an excellent addition to any disability studies or disability culture collection. Angryfish, who like the rest of us, has many roles gets the last word in a plea for his son:

There has got to be a time when everybody smiled
There has got to be a year when terrorists take a break from promoting fear
I've got to believe that there will be a place, a place for my son to be safe.