

## Audio Review

**Title:** *Rollover*

**Authors:** Andy Morgan and Johnny Crescendo

**Publisher:** Email [adaptan@yahoo.com](mailto:adaptan@yahoo.com) or write to Johnny at 3607 Windsor Dr, Bensalem PA, 19020. Make checks payable to Alan Holdsworth.

**Format:** CD

**Cost:** \$14 USD including postage. Contact by email for additional postage costs if you live outside US.

**Reviewer:** Steven E. Brown

*She'll hum these words forever until her dying day  
They've taken my baby away*

I am a longtime Johnny Crescendo fan, so I was not surprised this CD, featuring longtime Crescendo collaborator Andy Morgan, spoke to me. In the growing assemblage of music by individuals with disabilities addressing the disability experience, Johnny's music is generally the loudest, the most influenced by rock'n'roll. Still, his ballads most move me. His earlier song, *The Ballad of Josie Evans*, is one I have written about in numerous publications, including an earlier *RDS* review (Brown, 2007). The first song that grabbed my attention on *Rollover* was the "Ballad of Roy and Julie," from which the lines at the beginning of this review are taken.

This long ballad, over eight minutes, is not upbeat. It is the true story of a couple with developmental disabilities who met, fell in love, and Julie (the names have been changed) became pregnant. As soon as Julie's parents learned of this development (Roy was an orphan), they forbade the couple from ever seeing one another again. Shortly after the baby was born, Julie's parents put the baby up for adoption. Roy, with the assistance of his social worker, succeeded in obtaining visiting rights to see his son. Julie, unhappily, was placed by her parents in a psychiatric institution. The song ends painting a picture of Julie, alone in her room, sitting in a rocking chair, and endlessly repeating the words, "they've taken my baby away."

One reason the "Ballad of Roy and Julie," strikes a chord is these abominable situations still happen, despite our continued work and emphasis that people with all disabilities are just like all people – we have value. *Rollover's* eight songs are dedicated to proving this point.

The CD begins with "Bad Day in a Bad Town," the tale of a wheelchair user finding himself in an access and attitude unfriendly city. The hero of the story calls in his army of revolutionaries to change this town's climate. At the end of the song, he moves on to the next bad town.

This song is followed by a disability rights, anti-institution version of an old Cole Porter song, "Don't Lock Me In." It is a rollicking folk song with a simple theme: let us live our own lives as we choose.

"Poppy," an anti-war song, is based on Johnny's conversations with his grandfather, a World War I veteran. "You Don't Need Sympathy If You've Got Soul," was originally written for a deaf performer, and updated for this CD. Liberty, is a tribute to Liberty Resources, the Philadelphia Center for Independent Living, and others like it, and liberty, in general. "Inglis House," condemns institutions everywhere, in an updated version of Johnny Cash's "San Quentin." The CD concludes with "Wheelchair Waltz," an older song whose lyrics have undergone their third revision and may be the most lyrically upbeat song with the words, "I wanna dance with you, I wanna chance for you, I wanna romance with you, I wanna dance with you."

This CD is my favorite one from Crescendo because it is the most sophisticated, to my amateur ears, musically and lyrically, and yet simple enough to be accessible to all. Like all of Johnny's music, I highly recommend this for any disability rights, history, or culture library.

#### Reference

Brown, S. E. (2007). Review of *Tear down the walls*, by Johnny Crescendo. *Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal*, 2(4), 93-94.