**Music Review**

**Title:** *Tear Down the Walls*

**Artist:** Johnny Crescendo

**Produced:** 2005

**Cost:** $18.00 USD

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**Reviewer:** Steven E. Brown

This is a compilation of earlier releases by British folk rocker, Johnny Crescendo, who now makes his home in Philadelphia. Johnny learned so well from ADAPT, the American street activist, disability rights group, that he helped found DAN (the Disabled People’s Direct Action Network) in England, which shut down the national telethon. This mentality is evident throughout Johnny’s songs. This CD includes about 80 minutes of songs. It is organized into Anthems; Love Songs; and Folk Blues. While I like all of Johnny’s songs, my favorite remains, “The Ballad of Josie Evans,” the story of a neglected woman in an institution:

Josie was a wheelchair user

She spent eleven years inside

A short stay institution

Where she was banged up without trial

Eleven years the white coats met

And talked & analysed

Dispensed the drugs politely

Until one day Josie died

 The compilation’s title song, in keeping with this theme, begins:

 This song is for all the people dying in a nursing home

 This song is for all the people who are going to die in a nursing home

 Tear down the walls

 Tear down the walls of a nursing home.

The song continues to discuss the need for people to be able to choose where they live. In a similar vein, the song “Not Dead Yet” addressing physician-assisted suicide, states:

 I’m lying at the gates of heaven

 I’m not dead yet…

 I was kind of amazed to see St. Peter roll up in a wheelchair

 I said, “hey Pete, I want to go back.”

 He said “go and give shit to Dr. Quack.”

 On a more autobiographical note, “I Love My Body,” offers the refrain that it’s the only one he’s going to get. And in the tender “Jasia’s Song” Johnny offers this tribute to his daughter:

 My heart is aching for you my little child

 For you my little child

My heart aches for you my little child

My little child

Go to sleep now

 Shhh

 Hold daddy’s hand

 Go to sleep

 If you are not familiar with Johnny’s work this is a great place to start. If you know it and do not have this compilation, you may well want to add it to your library.

For the desperate and the damned?

And which people vote?

For injustice in the land?

Is it you or your mother?

Is it you? Is it you?

Josie left a letter

Which I found amongst her things

It said I am and I survive

& my heart still has wings

They can take away my freedom

They can drug me with their lies

But they don't have my permission

& I hang on to my pride