

The second of Allen's latest recordings out of Bellingham (that she is still funding on Go Fund Me), is more political and social justice in approach than the healing and comfort of the CD we reviewed in the March Spring Quarter issue. This is a celebration of "Fifty Years Singing the News", and she wrote most of the songs!

There are twenty songs here and a whole host of *Ancient Victorys* folks: Janet Stecher, Tom Rawson, and Susan Lewis join four others in vocal assistance along with Cary Black on bass among the eleven other instrumentalists. Lyrics are on her website along with guitar chords and the inspiration for the songs. Go to her web page (www.lindasongs.com) when listening and play and then sing along. A gutsy drive covers the body choice rights "I Choose," while a swirling "The Caregivers" addresses thousands who take care of our children and the absurdity we face today. Solo calls out with a chorus to tell the way in "Bent-Over Woman" rally strong, such a solid drive.

Slow guitar has Allen in her traditional folk voice on "Everybody's Gotta Be Somewhere" with a warm Julian Smedley violin. Each song has a different musical backing and vocal approach crossing all her many years with the music Allen embraced and created. "Mama's Gotta Tattoo" is a folk rag, a fun dancing tune, while "When He Fell" is a celebration of the loss of a friend, with piano and violin moving the somber lyrics. Violin helps waltz in "Cheap" reciting the real meaning of cheap when the bill comes due. This is a strong weaving of music and vocals and chorus. A banjo makes the lilt of "Honey Don't You Want This Tryke?", a warm loving look at the inability to get rid of stuff like youngsters toys and books, (I have a garage full of this stuff from my whole life.)

We waltz under "The Glass Ceiling" with snappy accents and a vocal chorus trying to bring it down from above. Allen celebrates in "Bless My Breasts" how they stick out, sag, suckle, and please the partner, and all in emphatic vocals.

Next we gather the evidence and unite in "Me Too", with a socking rocking bass-driven call-out of all the folks who violate women and children. Then there is the rocking disgust in the violations of all violations, America's "Mother of All Bombs" that killed almost 100 in America's wonderful war-mongering as we equal all the dictatorships' killing fields with our own.

Today's politics will talk a lot about the income disparity addressed in "You Are Robbing Us Blind," drumming and reading lines. The loving fiddle and banjo surround "Impossible Things", celebrating and written for her partner, Scott Slaba. At the same time, we walk in the dreadful devastation of the exploding "Pipeline" where the children die in our State. Old-time guitar and fiddle walk us into the lilting old-time folk "Nobody Came." This is very effective. "We are the Rainbow Sign" is a celebration of activism with a chorus affirmation.

Allen addresses the forcing out of Chinese in "The Last Chinaman" with ginger guitar and fiddle, her folk voice telling the story. I loved his celebratory gesture as the last Chinaman. Allen with full folk voice, the generations singing all stand together to say, "Never Again" to the litany of ills in our lives today. She then closes with "Til Our Beauty Saves the world," with guitar picking on the verse and a chorus singing "Saving the World."

Allen's life work uncovers the injustice, focuses on that and brings song to help mend and move through our life cycles. Congrats to Allen on fifty years. Been watching her ride since 1970 in Tacoma after she came up from California. She tried to find me in Palo Alto and came to my office and found a note stating I had moved to Washington in the Fall of 1969. We met a year or so later in Tillicum after she moved to Olympia. And that story lives on.

Packaging is a four-panel fold over with a slide in for the CD. There are great marching pictures on the cover, some historic shots with her in Berkeley with Baez in 1971; and in Denver at the 1986 Equal Rights March, along with some recent shots at the suffrage movement and with her daughters. Full list of all the musicians and singers and credits and contact info is included. On the back is a delightful fun photo of her reading the news she sings about, a list of tunes and times and contact info. CD had same pic and a list of songs, times and contact info. Back binding has artist and title for easy shelf retrieval. Great. And remember lyrics, chords, and background info for all songs on her website. Congrats Linda, wonderful to see you journey and have this zippy snapshot of the journey that continues on today. A dozen or more books and records are available her website also.