

SNAPSHOT

by Lynn Pribus

Ellis Paul



This past March, Parents' Choice selected Ellis Paul's new family music CD, "The Hero in You," for its top honor — the Gold Award — citing its "vivid musical profiles of men and women who...made a profound difference to countless lives." Long known for his socially conscious songwriting, Paul chose 13 individuals who, he says, "had interesting stories to build a song around." Some, like Benjamin Franklin, are familiar while others, such as artist Georgia O'Keeffe, are less well known. "These people did amazing things," Paul declares. "They can inspire young people today to go out and become the heroes of their own lives." Paul lives near Charlottesville with his wife and two daughters. Visit ellispaul.com.



What are your current projects?

I'm beginning the songwriting process for my next adult album, though that should take about a year to bring to fruition.

What was your favorite book as a child?

Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are." The drawings are so alive and grow in size with every page. The words are fearless and un-self-conscious.

What's the best advice your parents ever gave you?

Quit music. They were being honest and expressing concern that I wouldn't make enough money to live, but it actually had the opposite effect. I recommitted myself to my career and worked that much harder.

Who are your heroes?

Sebastian Coe. Woody Guthrie. Nelly Bly. Stephen Foster. Ben Franklin. Ray Charles. Thomas Jefferson.

How did you select the very diverse heroes on your CD?

I picked men and women who had interesting stories to build a song around — people who really committed their lives to something bigger than themselves. My wife had great suggestions with Chief Joseph and Rachel Carson. They'd all make for an interesting dinner party.

Why are heroes important?

Heroes guide our culture and inspire us to raise our own heroic impulses. Our children need to be reminded of heroes now especially, because of the wars, the political infighting and corruption in the financial world. It's good to be reminded that our country was shaped by the ideals of brave individuals, not by reality TV "stars." It gives me hope to think of Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson and Thomas Edison.

How can parents help children become involved in music?

Sing with them. Make music a constant in the home. Music lessons are important but if you want an adult child who plays for life, focus on the enjoyment of creating beautiful sound when they are young and don't be task masters about the technicalities and details. Have them listen with their ears instead of with their eyes when practicing.

What would you title your memoirs?

"Oops."

What 21st century technology could you not live without?

My cell phone is miraculous. It's like a whole universe held within your palm. But my Honda has over 350,000 miles on it and that amazes me.

If you could have a superpower, what would it be?

I do have superpowers. They breakdown daily, they don't always fire on all cylinders, but I'm amazed by what I can accomplish when focused and supported by family and friends. That said, time travel would be awesome, though I can't seem to get it to work for me.

What do you like best about living here?

There are so many things. Charlottesville is temperate, smart, scenic, warm, kid-friendly, music-celebrating, good-food-eating, healthy and vibrant.



Lynn Pribus sings with the Charlottesville Women's Choir, the Charlottesville Threshold Choir and plays guitar for her own little singing group called Lulu & Friends, which entertains at local nursing homes.

