

Be Political Not Polite!: A review

Michael Warner

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THANK YOU!

Political correctness, a buzz-phrase used to describe most people, places and things with a progressive agenda, jumps to mind when listening to Romanovsky & Phillips' latest release: *Be Political Not Polite*. While the media and various political constituencies may have the majority of America believing that "PC-ness" is a less-than-desirable quality, almost as nefarious as being labelled "Liberal" in the last presidential election, the correct politics espoused by Ron Romanovsky and Paul Phillips, sound anything but negative. Lyrics like "Right the wrongs of human rights... be political not polite," sound an anthem to stand up and be heard for causes which are right and just. As they state in the blurb before the title song on the lyric sheet: "Language is a barometer of hatred and prejudice. We must be vigilant in recognizing and discontinuing the use of words with which we oppress each other." And R&P use their lyrics to do just that.

As anyone familiar with their music would expect, this collection of songs is about more than just the current political situation in the g/l/b community. It is about personal empowerment and human strength, always celebrating "being gay." Approaching life with humor and wit, not bitterness or anger, using what may seem oppressive to strike back and turn the situation around, R & P sing out against prejudice and oppression, both individual and societal.

They sing about the everyday trials and tribulations of relationships with lovers, parents, children and even therapists. My favorite songs are the ones which poke fun at and debunk various myths of gay life. *I Met a Man* is full of the situational humor that the dating scene has to offer each of us, male or female. "Why is it when they are fun they are not the ones that you adore?" Posing the question: "Should you take what you can get or take the time to shop for what you're wanting?" their answer carries a note of

irony: "Maybe you should check your bait and take a look at what it is you're flaunting." *Oh No...I'm in Love* satirizes the love relationship which is available with that perfect other, one's therapist, for only \$75.00 an hour. In *Once Upon a Time* R&P draw comparisons to the gay community then and now, "It's getting hard to tell the boys from the girls... the women from the men... the faggots from the dykes..." to point out the dynamics of the ever evolving and maturing nature of our community as well as our changing sense of community and of self.

Of course there are serious and poignant songs too. *One of the Enemy*, *Love is all it Takes*, and *No False Hope* certainly fit that category. I have to admit that initially I enjoyed the humorous songs much more than I did these emotional ones. Here I found the singing somehow grating. Yet, after several times through I, myself, am singing along and have basically forgotten what it is that bothered me. It's the message, embodied in their lyrics, which I remember and carry with me as I sing along. There's nothing more positive than that. The closing of the final song, "Hope is the key that unlocks the mind, lightens the burden or leaves it behind, and if that's what it takes to help someone live, then we have a lot we can give," sums up the power of their music.

While I don't profess to be an expert on music, nor do I make a steady diet on this kind of fare, I recommend Romanovsky & Phillips' *Be Political Not Polite*. Good, enjoyable, empowering, gay-positive music is not to be missed. The cover art alone makes this something worth having in one's collection. With the Christmas season upon us I could suggest this as a great gift idea for a loved one or for yourself.

Be Political Not Polite is available from Fresh Fruit Records (1-800-47-FRUIT). ▼

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