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blogs

Hayes Greenfield

what's happening

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I am constantly on a quest for children's music that doesn't make adults flinch.

Hayes Greenfield's "Music for a Green Planet" with its sophisticated jazz riffs and tinkly percussion, its trumpets, tubas and Custom Z alto sax, qualifies.

This is catchy, meticulously arranged music; it's familiar, too, since he co-opts age-old lullabies. The lyrics, though, can be laughable.

It's not because they're so silly.

Rather, it's because they're so serious.

This is music with a mission, to turn malleable minds and bodies into tree-hugging, compact fluorescent lightbulb-using, solar power-seeking, Toyota Prius-buying adults.

Greenfield is hardly the first to realize that change is synonymous with youth. Children who learn to recycle their juice boxes come home and bug their parents to recycle their 64-ounce Tropicana cartons (Raleigh recycling actually accepts these!).

Many of the songs are knockoffs of familiar lullabies or children's songs.

On Greenfield's CD, "Rock-a-Bye Baby" is now "Rock-a-Bye Rainforest."

"Do You Know (the Muffin Man)" morphs into "Do You Know (the Things We Can Do to Save the Earth)" on a track called "Hush Little Planet."

"Remind your mom/ Remind your dad / to lower the heat / It won't be bad Turn on the AC just a tad / Use less and save the earth."

There is nothing subtle about this CD. Hayes Greenfield fairly clobbers the kids with his green spiel.

I am not offended because I am a convert. At home, we are obsessive recyclers to the extent that my son fished the foil from a piece of candy – a Hershey's kiss, I think it was -- out of the trash and hotfooted it over to our recycling bin. We compost our fruit and veggie scraps (though we're clearly doing something wrong because our eggshells don't want to disintegrate and appear in all their sulfuric glory when we use the composted soil to plant flowers).

Though Greenfield is preaching to a generation that's years away from getting driver's licenses, it doesn't deter him. In "We'll Be a Part of the Solution," which is his take on "She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain," he lays out his gas-guzzling vision:

"We'll be cruising in our hybrid when she comes / We'll be getting better mileage when she comes / We'll be a part of the solution / Cause we're making less pollution / We'll be cruising in our hybrid when she comes."

See what I mean? It's hard not to laugh at his earnestness – or at least smile.

Greenfield has lassoed a host of other musicians and a passel of kids to sing on various tracks, which holds my kids' interest more than one vocalist would. But he's penned the words, along with Margo Schepart.

The song-writing duo champions recycling, solar energy, wind turbines, eating local, protecting the rainforests and child labor. They lambaste our disposable culture and our dependency on oil. These are no lightweight lyrics.

Venturing into the hot (pardon the pun) topic of global warming on "Fiddle Dee Green," Greenfield stakes his political stand.

"Fiddle dee dee fiddle dee dee / Climate change is not a fantasy / Fiddle dee dee fiddle dee dee / The scientists know it's a reality / We have so much freedom to live as we choose / We must not be selfish with all that we use / Fiddle dee dee fiddle dee dee / The answer is green, clean energy."

All in all, this CD gets a thumbs up, which equates to a semi-regular rotation in the minivan six-disc CD changer.

Sure, it's sanctimonious but, hey, he's trying to save the earth. Plus, the jazz is really good, with plenty of piano and sax solos, and it's particularly transcendent when the kids are quarreling. As they bicker, you can dream of a better world.

Take a listen at [Music for a Green Planet](#).

For more kids music reviews on TriangleMom2Mom, go [here](#).

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Bonnie Rochman

Bonnie is a

TriangleMom2Mom featured blogger, appearing every Monday.

She lives in Raleigh and has written for The News & Observer since 1998. She has covered political unrest in the Middle East and chronicled the experiences of entrepreneurs in Vietnam, but that was long before her new bosses -- there are three of them, one more demanding than the next -- presenting her with her most challenging assignment to date: juggling the needs and perceived wants of boy/girl preschoolers and their baby sister.

Bonnie also writes [kids music reviews](#) for TriangleMom2Mom.

Posted on July 26, 2008 by [bonnierochman](#).

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