



Lisa Mednick "**Semaphore**" Antone's Records

Seven years – *with an unresolved itch* - have elapsed since Lisa Mednick made her solo debut with the atmospheric "**Artefacts Of Love**" on the now defunct San Marcos, Texas label Dejadisc. That patience has now paid off with the arrival of the thirteen track "**Semaphore**" [yes folks, there is a very short hidden track]. Opening with "Wrecker," lyrically there are sufficient references to *ships, rocks, storms, breakers* and a *beacon on the shore* that would give the casual listener the impression that this was a "Pirate Jenny" *siren* song. That said listen closely, since Lisa's words work on a whole other level – that of male/female relationships. In terms of stylistic approach, on occasions, Mednick occasionally shrouds her story lines in mystery and "Stranger" is a prime example, as the narrator – "*I'm lost in a wilderness*" - searches for love. Taking its title from one of the bloodiest encounters of the American Civil War, the *male* narrator in "Chicamagua" surveys what has transpired [in his life] in the decades since the battle. Having buried his best friend following *the battle*, he returns home and marries that friend's fiancée. Years later, their grandchild, given the Christian name of the fallen comrade, also finds himself in uniform - "*sent way across the water to die for that flag, Well the one you and I stood against.*" The lines "*All roads led to sorrow from here, It didn't matter what colour you had on*" touchingly emphasise the ultimate futility of war [for all its participants]. Lisa's depiction of the *ghost of death* as a *female* entity, "*She is a sweet pretty angel, that falls just like the snow*" and "*she follows wherever I go,*" magnifies further the male narrator's innate sense of [seemingly endless] loss, as mankind exercises its instinct to conquer and destroy. The fact is, history consistently repeats itself. Richard Shindell regularly adopts the persona of a female narrator in song; with "Chicamauga," Lisa tellingly reverses that role, with one of the most haunting and thoughtful anti-war songs ever written. "Widow Of This World," which follows, is underpinned by a funky rhythm while the words refer, once more, to the issue of loss – be it in a relationship or the waging of a war. Elsewhere on this collection, the great lines keep on coming - "*In the mirror behind us is all we've been through*" from the road song "She Loved You" is a classic image, while "No More Rain" also deals with loss. In this case, that of property and/or life, caused by raging, rain swollen, rivers. My recollection is that "Sad Louisiana Waltz" is an older song, wherein Lisa recalls her years in New Orleans, and her lyric is supported by a gentle cajun rhythm. If you seek an overview of this collection, you could say that Mednick's loss [lyrically] is musically our gain. Lisa, don't leave it for another seven years.....

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

Arthur Wood

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