



Nina Gerber “**Not Before Noon**” Goatscape Music

What can I tell you about Nina Gerber. Well for one thing she stands up there with the greatest guitar players, bar none – electric or acoustic. Circa 1978 - 1986, Nina was the constant road companion of the late, Kate Wolf, a woman who wrote lyrics about the ordinary aspects of life, the mundane almost, and transformed them into the extraordinary. *Spiritually uplifting sadness* may seem like a contradiction in terms, but that would be my summation of Kate's legacy. A sought after side-person, “**Not Before Noon**” is Nina's self produced, debut solo album. Never a vocalist, rather than resort to cutting a *wall-to-wall* instrumental album, Nina is joined by guest vocalists on half of the songs. What's more, Gerber has had the intelligence not to track the album in a song/instrumental/song formulaic manner.

The vocal contributors amount to Herb Pedersen – a man with a forty-year bluegrass/country rock pedigree that is second to none, Seattle based vocalist Kim Scanlon [ex Ranch Romance and solo], Jay Leno Show percussionist and vocalist Vicki Randle, the gravel tones of former Joy of Cooking songbird Terry Garthwaite, and two personages who need no introduction to Folkwax readers - Greg Brown and Lucy Kaplansky. And let's not forget the Da We Be's [Joey Blake, Rhiannon, Linda Tillery and Dave Worm] who scat their way through the penultimate cut, and Gerber composition, “Riff Raff.”

The Keith Allen composed, jazz inflected instrumental “Bigfoot” opens this set, with Nina's finger picking multi-tracked on a selection of acoustic guitars. Pedersen covers the Bruce Cockburn song “Someone I Used To Love,” with harmony vocals from Chris Webster [ex Mumbo Gumbo and solo], and Nina's accompaniment on acoustic and electric guitar explores numerous melodic twists and turns. By the title alone, “Late Into The Night,” the Gerber and Ford James co-write [he played bass with Kate], hints at being a gentle, almost sleep inducing melody and for the most part it is. Andrew Ratshin of Uncle Bonsai composed “Lullaby” which features Kim Scanlon's lead vocal plus harmony support from Pedersen. Greg's contribution is a previously unrecorded original composition titled “Kate's Guitar,” wherein Brown's words perfectly capture the essence and magic that Wolf encompassed in her music. As for Nina's support work on guitar, it is nothing less than intuitive and heartfelt. It's not often that you hear one of Clive Gregson's cleverly worded pop anthems as an instrumental, but that's what you get with “It's All Talk,” while Lucy Kaplansky closes out the set with Nanci's Griffith's tribute to those acoustic musicians who are constantly “Workin' In Corners.”

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

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