



Susan Werner **"Live @ Club Passim"** Susan Werner Records

This album snuck out during May this year, having been recorded almost a year earlier at the "Mother Church of Folk Music" located at 47 Palmer Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts. On this thirteen song collection, as the occasion demands, supporting Susan's voice, guitar and piano are Greg Holt [upright bass], Trina Hamlin [vocals, percussion, harmonic] and Colleen Sexton [vocals, percussion].

Susan opens [this disc] with the title song from **"Time Between Trains"** her 1998 album and toward the close of the track Hamlin delivers an 'almost blows her brains out' harmonica solo. At the time of making this recording Werner was touring in support of **"The Gospel Truth,"** and from that 'then new' collection she delivers "Lost My Religion" and "Did Trouble Me." "After All Of This" is a new creation, that, in the 'faith focused' vein of the foregoing pair poses questions regarding passing from this plane to the next. During the two minute long 'Intro' narration Werner offers insights 'humorous and factual' into her tussles with religion – including crystal Methodism - and closes the gospel segment of her show with *the new, revised edition* of "Our Father," a pointed take on those who *only* profess faith.

A windy city resident since the dawn of the millennium, "Chicago Anyday" which Susan performs at the piano works as a travelogue as well as an amusing 'cheer leading' number dedicated to the nation's second city. Werner hails from rural Iowa and switching to acoustic guitar delivers her "Barbed Wire Boys" tribute to those hard bitten "full grown men" – *"sober as coffee in a styrofoam cup"* - who labour for a lifetime on the land there. "I Can't Be New" the jazz tinged title track of her 2004 recording for Koch Records is followed by the *"well, maybe not"* autobiographically amusing "Movie Of My Life." For me "May I Suggest" is that rarity, a 'once in a lifetime' musical marriages of word and melody that perfectly captures something extraordinary about this life. Not many songs flatten me on first hearing, but "May I Suggest" [eight years and counting, **RETAINS IT'S**] eligibility as one of that small, special coterie. Werner closes her Passim performance with "Help Somebody" and "Together" two further selections from **"The Gospel Truth."**

Folkwax Score 8 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 12/08.