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MadFolk News

April 27 brings Susan Werner back to the MadFolk Stage!

After writing twelve albums of songs in styles ranging from folk/rock to Tin Pan Alley to gospel, country and chamber music, what might a woman deemed by National Public Radio as "The Empress of the Unexpected" try next?

And as audiences will testify, Werner's been knocking it out of the park – or concert hall – all around the US for twenty years. Renowned as a charismatic performer, she's known above all for challenging herself to conquer new styles, almost like mountaintops, every few years.

From her 1995 major label debut, the folk/rock gem "Last of the Good Straight Girls," to her 2004 collection of Tin Pan Alley styled originals "I Can't Be New," to her 2007 "agnostic gospel" hymnal "The Gospel Truth", to 2013's tribute to agriculture and her Iowa farm roots "Hayseed" to 2018's Cuban flavored collection "An American In Havana" (SEE CD REVIEW IN THIS NEWSLETTER) Werner's creative restlessness has become her defining characteristic. But Werner says she's just getting started: "I just released an album of songs inspired by a trip to Cuba. Spring 2019 brings a fresh set of songs from Werner, this time a New Orleans inspired piano throwdown entitled "NOLA."

"I like concept albums, because they provide a place for the audience and the artist to meet. You may not know me and I may not know you, but we both know something about a farmer's market, about what it is to sit in a pew at church and wonder what life means, we both know something about falling in love and maybe falling back out again. I like to have a starting point for an evening's conversation with an audience – it's a great icebreaker."

She first arrived on the national stage when her 1995 BMG debut earned her national concert tours with Joan Armatrading and Richard Thompson. In 1996 Werner was featured as part of the "next generation" in Peter Paul and Mary's PBS special LifeLines.

She has performed on NPR's World Café, NPR's Mountain Stage, and in 2016 Nebraska Educational Television broadcast "The Land Will Outlive Us All," a one hour special on Werner, agriculture, and her 2015 concert tour across the state.


Susan's latest album brings a fresh set of songs, this time a New Orleans inspired piano throwdown entitled "NOLA." Beginning in February (2018), I just sat down at the piano, and practiced my ass off. Werner also made three trips to New Orleans to take in the city and the live music, and while there met David L. Harris, trombonist at Preservation Hall. "David was really key in helping me dial in on the right sounds, the right approach, and having him with me through the process and on the recording itself was enormously important." Produced by Erik Johnson (Huffamoose- Interscope), the album was recorded in New Orleans and Philadelphia and features Johnson's formidable jazz drumming, along with an unusual approach to the album's final cut, a cover of "The House of the Rising Sun." "It occurred to me," Werner says, "that no one had ever taken a New Orleans style approach to that song, with a story that is set in that city. I asked Erik to put together something different to keep time, and he used a tambourine, the sound of his feet keeping time on a wood floor, a jar of coins, and a bag of coffee. And it makes the tune sound haunting, lonely, in a totally unexpected way." Subject matter of the songs ranges from the mythical dangers of New Orleans amidst real ones in "Get You From Below;" a literal food tour of the city in "The Night I Ate New Orleans;" an invitation to shake-a-tail-feather in "Free Your Ass;" and a sober consideration of the role of slavery in the city's prosperity in "A Moment." Werner says, "New Orleans is so many things, some of it fun as hell and some of it absolutely heartbreaking. I love writing albums because it allows for a view of something from many angles, like a gem, many facets, some flaws

for sure too. And New Orleans is called 'The Jewel of The South' - maybe that is the phrase that really sums it up."

Location: North Street Cabaret, 625 North St. Doors open at 6:00 and show starts at 7:00

Tickets are \$23 in advance and \$25 day of show

Mad Folk Concert Tickets

When you see this symbol –  – you'll know that you're reading about a Mad Folk sponsored event. Advance tickets for Mad Folk shows are available online at www.madfolk.org

Purchase tickets ONLINE for Mad Folk concerts via Brown Paper Tickets (with \$1.62 service charge):

<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/producer/10879>

You can also purchase advance tickets by mail. Send a stamped self-addressed envelope with your check payable to Mad Folk, PO Box 665, Madison, WI 53701. If all else fails, call 608-225-0710 for information.

Sparky & Rhonda Rucker at Cave of the Mounds April 5th

The Cave of the Mounds facility will host musicians Sparky and Rhonda Rucker on Friday, April 5, 2019. The performers bring with them a repertoire of songs culled from careers promoting civil and environmental rights through song and story. The Cave of the Mounds venue is located at 2975 Cave of the Mounds Road, Blue Mounds. Tickets are \$12 and will be available at the door. The event begins at 7:30 p.m.

SPARKY AND RHONDA RUCKER perform throughout the U.S. as well as overseas, singing songs and telling stories from the American folk tradition. They are internationally recognized as leading musicians, authors, and storytellers. They accompany themselves with fingerstyle picking and bottleneck blues guitar, blues harmonica, old-time banjo, piano, spoons, and bones.

Sparky and Rhonda are sure to deliver an uplifting presentation of toe-tapping music spiced with humor, history, and

tall tales. They take their audience on an educational and emotional journey that ranges from poignant stories of slavery and war to an amusing rendition of a Brer Rabbit tale or their witty commentaries on current events. Their music includes a variety of old-time blues, Appalachian music, slave songs, Civil War music, spirituals, work songs, ballads, civil rights music, and their own original compositions.

You will hear soulful blues licks, heart-rending gospel, knee-slapping good rhythms, and bottleneck guitar slide. Over fifty years of performing, Sparky and Rhonda have performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, as well as NPR's On Point, Prairie Home Companion, Mountain Stage, and Morning Edition. Their recording, *Treasures & Tears*, was nominated for a W.C. Handy Award, and their music is also included on the Grammy-nominated anthology, *Singing Through the Hard Times*.

Earlier in the day, thanks to a generous grant from the Mount Horeb Community Foundation, the two musicians will perform for the eighth-grade classes in Mt. Horeb Middle School. The performance will be a presentation of *Swing Low, Sweet Harriet*, based on Harriet Tubman's work as a spy and scout during the Civil War when she helped lead African American soldiers on the Combahee River raid in South Carolina. In this program, Rhonda and Sparky blend storytelling and music to help students learn about the Gullah culture, Harriet Tubman, and the Civil War. The study guide that accompanies the program gives vocabulary words, background history, writing exercises, discussion topics, and recommended books to help expand learning opportunities. The presentation is based on Rhonda Rucker's historical novel for young readers, which was a Crystal Kite Award finalist.

JULIE ELIZABETH LUTHER June 29, 1956 - March 11, 2019

Many of us have visited Spruce Tree Music in Madison; looking, buying or having repairs done on our stringed instruments. Julie was the smile behind the counter. She will be greatly missed.

Julie Elizabeth Luther, age 62, died on Monday, March 11, 2019 after a long struggle with cancer. Julie was born in Evanston, IL on June 29, 1956 to Mary E. Luther and Dan D. Woller. After graduating from high school, Julie attended the University of Minnesota and received a B.S. degree in geography and anthropology. She began graduate school there but did not finish her M.S. in physical geography.

Julie met Wil Bremer through the folk music community in Minnesota. Julie fell in love with traditional music and learned to play the guitar as a teenager. For a while, Julie supported herself performing around the Midwest singing and performing on a variety of stringed instruments. She also performed on Wisconsin Public Radio and recorded the album *For All That*. Julie decided to move to Madison to be with Wil. They married in March of 1990 and worked together in Wil's music store, Spruce Tree Music and Repair.

Julie had three areas of special interest: traditional music, all aspects of

the outdoors and the music store. Julie included her love of dogs in her love of the outdoors. Wil, the love of her life, has been integral to all these activities for more than 30 years.

Julie was a strong, smart and interesting woman. She had a quirky sense of humor and most conversations with her were filled with wry comments and laughter. She loved nothing more than sharing a pun with her beloved brother Peter Hansen. Her love of dogs and nature led her to train and work with her Golden Retrievers especially in the field. Julie was an active long term member of both Badger Kennel Club and the Madison Retriever Club.

Julie wanted to thank her good friend Wendy Sundquist for everything she has done. She also wanted to thank Pamela Martin from the Ontario area for stepping up in so many ways and giving her Golden Retriever, Prairie, the perfect home. A big thank you to all the family, friends and medical staff who cared for and supported her over the last few years.

There will be a small gathering of family and friends at a later date. In lieu of flowers, please make a contribution to your favorite local conservation group in memory of Julie.



Review by Darcy Greder

The genesis for Susan Werner's An American in Havana is drawn from two trips she took to Cuba several years ago, and if you haven't already caught Cuba fever, one listen will get your body moving and your mind conjuring a trip to the island. Consistent with Werner's recent CDs, An American in Havana is a concept album much as The Gospel Truth explored an agnostic approach to faith and doubt, I Can't be New presented songs in the style of the Great American Songbook, Kicking the Beehive reflected Susan's dive into the Blues after a stint as Keb' Mo's sideman in preparation, among others. An American in Havana is more EP than full-length CD, and the six-song collection will leave the listener wanting more—fortunately, those catching Susan's show at the North Street Cabaret on April 29 will enjoy additional songs that capture the stories, sights and sounds of Cuba. And while touring in support of An American in Cuba, her show will also present new music from NOLA, a CD Werner just

released in early March, along with favorites from a discography of over 16 albums.

An American in Cuba features performances and arrangements by legendary Mayra Casales (Dizzy Gillespie, Tito Puente, Regina Carter), along with Werner's trademark song craft and wry, poetic lyrics. Werner credits Casales for helping her shape the compositions into songs that reflect and appropriately pay homage to the music and musicians of Cuba. Werner had to understand where and how Cuban musicians

place certain beats and off-beats—how they make the music sway. And it is those authentic rhythms that will inspire the most mid-western listener to move, in a most un-mid-western way—whether listening to An American in Havana or while enjoying the music in concert. The CD begins with "Cuba Is" which gives a litany of the sights, sounds, beauty and pathos of this country of crumbling old world charm and heartbreak.

"1955 Chevy Bel Air" is a breezy ride as the protagonist willingly succumbs to the siren's call of the island to fall in love with the car, and to jettison the buzz-kill girlfriend who tagged along and who just doesn't get it. For those who love, as this writer does, a Werner ballad, Havana Moon doesn't disappoint—and it will surely solidify one's desire to experience the romance of the city and a lover, whether near or far. Werner's wit is evident in Cordito, a song that details the making of the popular Cuban drink that will set your teeth on edge as you crave the concoction. Rounding out the collection is Nostalgia Al Estilo Lecouona, an appealing instrumental in homage of the Cuban master whom Werner became infatuated with, Ernesto Lacuona.

Perhaps Werner explains best how Cuba engages her senses and informs this project, "What does an American notice when an American goes to Havana? Of course the cars, the coffee, the amazing musicianship, the architecture, but you also notice the poverty—What does that feel like? What does that look like? There's a song called "The Stray Dogs." There are so many stray dogs in Cuba and we don't see them as much in the United States. So I wrote a song called "The Stray Dogs" which in the end isn't really about stray dogs at all. It's about human beings looking to belong to someone, including the tourists who have come to Cuba. What I love about doing these themed projects is they often have a style of music in them. Not only do they offer new subject matter, new things to write about, new lan-

guage with which to write about it, they also have a musical style built in. That's the most thrilling part of my job is cooking things up, almost like a chef, with a whole new palette every time around, and cooking things up with a whole new set of flavors. Cuba is the most flavorful thing I've ever whipped up yet because the flavor is built right in."

Mad Folk News is published monthly by the Madison Folk Music Society, a non-profit, volunteer-led society dedicated to fostering folk music in the Madison area.

Contact us at madfolk@charter.net. Learn about concerts, membership, scholarships, and volunteer opportunities at www.madfolk.org.

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The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

April 2019

Mad Folk Events.....



- Friday, April 5 - Sparky & Rhonda Rucker @7:30pm - \$12
Cafe of the Mounds - 2975 Cave of the Mounds Rd, Blue Mounds
- Saturday, April 27 - Susan Werner @7pm - \$23 adv / \$25 day of show
The North Street Cabaret - 610 North St, Madison

Gigs.....

Kiki's Righteous House of Music

- Invitation & Advance RSVP required.
For full details or to request an invitation, contact Kiki at righteousmusicgmt@gmail.com
- Friday, April 19th @ 8pm (doors at 7) The Low Czars -- \$10
 - Sunday, May 5th @ 8pm (doors at 7) Jon Langford and Jean cook -- \$15

Dave & Anne Host Folk

- Invitation & Advance RSVP required.
For full details or to request an invitation, contact Dave & Anne at annedave@chorus.net - 608-256-2958
- Friday, April 26th @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7) Ellis Paul - \$20 / \$17 under 18
 - Friday, May 10th @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7) The Whispering Tree - \$20 / \$17 under 18

Pat and Mary Ellen McCluskey

- Invitation & Advance RSVP required.
For full details or to request an invitation, contact mccluskeybros@gmail.com or 608-986-3760
- Sunday, April 14th @ 4:30pm (doors 4pm) JigJam - \$22-\$27

Venues.....



Wil-Mar Center
953 Jenifer St.
wildhoginthewoods.org
608-233-5687

Wild Hog in the Woods

- Fri, Apr 5th - Lisa Johnson, Rich Baumann & John Duggleby - @7:30pm
- Fri, Apr 12th - David HB Drake & Rick Fitzgerald - @7:30pm
- Fri, Apr 19th - Eric Peter Schwartz / Deborah Green - @7:30pm
- Sat, Apr 20th - Hootenanny! - @2pm
- Fri, Apr 26th - Judy Cook - @7:30pm
- Fri, May 3rd - Wattle and Daub - @7:30pm

FOLKLORE VILLAGE

3210 Cty Hwy BB
Dodgeville, WI
folklorevillage.org
608-924-4000

Folklore Village

- Tue, Apr 2nd - First Tuesday Open Mic @7pm
- Fri, Apr 5th-7th - English Country Dance & Music Weekend
- Sat, Apr 13th - Spring Botanicals Workshop w/ Gigi Stafne
- Sat Apr 27th - Women who Till, Toil and Tell Tales

Cafe Carpe

All shows at 8:30pm unless indicated otherwise.
Please call 920-563-9391 to reserve.

- Sat, Apr 6th, Jeff Maison & Tricia Alexander
- Thu, Apr 11th, Jeffrey Foucault / Erik Koskinen - \$22 - @8pm
- Fri, Apr 12th, Vance Gilbert - \$15
- Sat, Apr 13th, Bill Miller - \$20
- Thu, Apr 18th, John Statz / Kyle Cox - \$10 - @8pm
- Fri, Apr 19th, Bobby Long - \$15
- Sat, Apr 20th, Eric Andersen feat. Scarlet Rivera accompanied by Cheryl Prashker - \$20 adv / \$25 d.o.s.
- Thu, Apr 25th, Song Circle w/ Tricia Alexander - \$5 - @6:30pm
- Fri, Apr 26th, Harmony & Brad - \$10
- Sat, Apr 27th, Mark Dvorak / Dave cofell



18 S. Water St.
Ft. Atkinson, WI
cafecarpe.com
920-563-9391

Common Chord / Tracy Jane Comer & Friends

- Thu, Apr 18 @7:30pm - Tracy Jane Comer w/Alan Maslowski co-bill with Blue Stone (acoustic trio) - The Brink Lounge, Madison
- Fri, Apr 19 @6:30pm - Common Chord - Common Ground, Middleton
- Sun, May 12 @11am - Tracy Jane Comer w/Alan Maslowski - Brunch music at Common Ground, Middleton
- Thu, May 16 @7pm - Tracy Jane Comer w/Alan Maslowski and special guest Nancy Rost - The Brink Lounge, Madison
- Fri, May 17 @6:30pm - Common Chord - Common Ground, Middleton

Misc.....

Old Time Jam
Monthly - 3rd Sunday of every month, 4 to 6pm
EVP West 3809 Mineral Point Road
Coordinator: Al Wilson
cell: 608-572-0634
adwilson@pediatrics.wisc.edu

Madison Area Ukulele Initiative -- Singalongs 3rd Sunday 11am - 1:30pm
- for location visit www.MAUImadison.com

On the Air.....



Simply Folk on Wisconsin Public Radio w/ Dan Robinson, Host
Sun 5:00-8:00pm
Concerts recorded in Wisconsin, music and dance of people the world over. For playlists, calendars, station listings, and more, visit www.wpr.org/simplyfolk.



WORT 89.9 FM community radio
Sun -- 3:00-5:00pm
• "On the Horizon" w/ Ford Blackwell, Paul Novak, Gloria Hays & Helena White
Weekdays 9:00am-noon
• Mon - Global Revolutions (folk from the world over) w/ Dan Talmo & Martin Alvarado
• Tue -- Another Green World with Katie & Tessa
• Wed -- Back to the Country (country music on a theme) w/Bill Malone
• Thur -- Diaspora (folk and international) w/Terry O' Powers
• Fri -- Mud Acres (bluegrass and acoustic) w/Chris Powers



WVMO The Voice of Monona - Promoting the best in Good Music - Roots Music - Americana Music Plus Community Members Hosted Shows Streaming Live and on your mobile device through tunein radio

• Cajun Jam - 4th Sunday of every month 1pm-4pm
Ziggy's BBQ Smokehouse & Ice Cream Parlor - 135 S Main St. Oregon -- 608-238-6039

Madison Dance.....

- African/African-American Dance classes with live drumming -- Sun, 7:00-9:00pm -- Metro Dance, 3009 University Ave. -- 255-3677 / 251-4311
- SpiritMoves Ecstatic Dance 2nd and 4th Weds, 7:00-9:00 pm -- The Center for Conscious Living, 849 East Washington Ave. -- \$7 min. donation
- English Country Dance taught-1st, 3rd (and 5th) Mon7:30-9:30pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 238-9951 or 231-1040
- International Dancing -- Wed; classes 7:30-8:30pm, request dancing 8:30-11:00pm -- The Crossing, 1127 University Ave. -- 241-3655 and Sun, 8-10pm
- Irish Dancing -- Monthly Ceili and set dance events are posted at celticmadison.org/dance
- Italian Dancing -- Tue, 7:00-9:00pm, no experience or partner necessary -- 838-9403 (Philana)
- Madison Contra Dance Cooperative -- Tue; 7:30 jam band practice, intermediate level dancing 7:45-9:40pm -- \$5 for non-members -- Gates of Heaven, 302 E. Gorham -- 238-3394 (Steve)
- Morris Dancing -- Wed, 7:00pm - Neighborhood House 29 S Mills St. - casey.garhart@tds.net or John at 238-3847
- Scottish Country Dancing -- Sun, 7:00pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 358-4478
- Israeli Folk Dancing -- Tues, 7:00pm -- Will-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. Melissa Marver — mdmarver@gmail.com