

Suzy Thompson



RADIO ADD DATE April 1, 2025

Suzy Thompson

Brings the wisdom of age to the songs of her early twenties on

Suzy Sings Siebel

Self-released

On *Suzy Sings Siebel*, Suzy Thompson takes ten masterful songs by 1970s singer and songwriter Paul Siebel and makes them her own. Best-known for “Louise,” famously recorded by Bonnie Raitt, Linda Ronstadt, and countless others, he wrote many more, most of which are “portrait” songs. He released two albums on Elektra but suffered from debilitating stage fright, and his songwriting dried up. He retired from music in the 1980s and disappeared.

“I first learned his songs in the mid-1970s,” Thompson says. “They became the soundtrack of my early twenties and of Eric Thompson’s and my courtship. By 1980, I had fallen deep down the traditional music rabbit hole and stopped performing more modern music, but I never forgot those songs. Forty years later, during the pandemic, I found myself returning to them and did a couple of online shows featuring Paul Siebel songs, including one in which I sang his entire first album, *Woodsmoke and Oranges*.

“By then, Paul Siebel was in his 80s, in very poor health, and living in rural Maryland. Somehow, friends of his heard about my online concert and arranged for him to watch it (Paul didn’t have a computer or cell phone). The next day, I received an email: ‘Paul loved your concert. He laughed, he cried, he sang along. He wants to call you, please send your phone number.’ Paul and I had four very long, intense phone conversations before he died on April 5, 2022.

“To be able to form a friendship with Paul Siebel and to know that he loved my renditions of his songs, was a dream come true for me. I had long wanted to do an album of his songs and now I finally have, with musical help from some of my most admired musicians including Cindy Cashdollar, John Sebastian, Molly Mason, Jody Stecher (who also produced), Kate Brislin, Bill Evans, Mark Schatz, Michaelle Goerlitz, and of course Eric.”

Paul Siebel’s songs endure as masterpieces of modern songwriting: unforgettable melodies paired with an uncanny instinct for blending poetry, storytelling, and incisive character sketches that are by turns tender, sarcastic, occasionally joyful but more often melancholy and regretful. Bonnie Raitt writes: “Paul Siebel amassed a devoted following among musicians, fans and critics alike. His first two albums were hugely influential.”

Suzy Thompson is a “musician’s musician,” a fiddle and guitar player whose more recent projects have included a landmark blues album with the Texas Sheiks (Geoff Muldaur, Jim Kweskin, Cindy Cashdollar, et al), duets with resonator ukulele and guitar goddess Del Rey, and a recent collaboration with Cajun superstar Ann Savoy. Suzy’s long musical journey began in her teens as accompanist to British singer Frankie Armstrong. In her 20s, she was a founding member of Any Old Time String Band and Blue Flame String Band. She has performed and recorded with banjo players Mac Benford (Backwoods Band) and Bill Evans (Bluegrass Intentions) and Cajun accordion legend Danny Poullard (California Cajun Orchestra).

1. BRIDE 1945 (3:29)
2. NASHVILLE AGAIN (3:21)
3. UNCLE DUDLEY (3:33)
4. LOUISE (3:37)
5. LOSE MY BLUES (2:47)
6. YOU DON’T NEED A GUN (3:18)
7. THE BALLAD OF HONEST SAM (3:46)
8. IF I COULD STAY (2:54)
9. ANY DAY WOMAN (3:33)
10. LONG AFTERNOONS (4:41)

Total play time 35 minutes

All songs composed by Paul Siebel

Radio Promotion by
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Suzy Sings Siebel song notes and publishing info

All songs by Paul Siebel

All lyrics FCC clean

1. Bride 1945

(MCA Music, ASCAP)

One of Paul's most poignant "portrait" songs.

2. Nashville Again

(Two-Ten Music, ASCAP)

Trepidation about re-encountering an old flame.

3. Uncle Dudley

(WB Music Corp, ASCAP)

When Paul was a boy in Rochester NY, his aunt ran a boardinghouse, and Uncle Dudley was one of the residents. This is the only song that Paul would admit to being about a specific person.

4. Louise

(MCA Music, ASCAP)

Paul's most well-known and well-loved song, famously recorded by Bonnie Raitt and many others.

5. Lose My Blues

(WB Music Corp, ASCAP)

Dancing to that fiddle music leads to...

6. You Don't Need a Gun

No publishing info

A "lost" song by Paul Siebel, who recorded this, but it was never released. Peter Siegel found it on a shelf after Paul died and allowed me to hear and learn it.

7. The Ballad of Honest Sam

(WB Music Corp, ASCAP)

Although this was written at least 50 years ago, it's perhaps even more pertinent today. Please sing along if you like, the more the merrier.

8. If I Could Stay

(WB Music Corp, ASCAP)

One of Paul's few "feelings" songs, the melody is all over the place just like the conflicted feelings of the singer.

9. Any Day Woman

(MCA Music, ASCAP)

Paul Kotapish says that this song should be required listening for all teenage boys.

10. Long Afternoons

(WB Music Corp, ASCAP)

"Some years among many, leave much more to remember." I did some extensive re-writing in order to change the gender, which Paul heard and liked. This is the most romantic song I know.

"Suzy has performed a conjuring trick, making the songs her own while conveying the essence of the originals so well that Paul Siebel's musicality is present along with Suzy's. The art is in service of the song; herein lies treasure." -**Jody Stecher**, producer of *Suzy Sings Siebel*

"Suzy has created a loving, heartwarming tribute to Paul, one of our most overlooked singer-songwriters. She's done him proud, setting each jewel of a song in a warm, intimate setting, with her sweet voice, great playing and gentle arrangements." - **Bonnie Raitt**

"Suzy has interpreted Paul's songs with grace and brilliance, sung them exquisitely, and created big, gorgeous, laid-back instrumental tracks that perfectly complement her voice. Paul encouraged this project, and he would have loved it." - **Peter K. Siegel**, producer of Paul Siebel's debut album, *Woodsmoke and Oranges*

"Suzy Thompson sings these songs with the same vibrancy and depth of understanding she brings to blues or Cajun or ballads or old swing tunes. Paul connected with Suzy after hearing her do a concert of his songs, not long before his death. I can only think he died much happier for hearing her renditions of his songs. I can't think of a songwriter who wouldn't feel the same; I know I would." - **Mark Simos**, songwriting department, Berklee College of Music