

SUSAN KREBS

jazz gardener

"In the time of your life, live so that in that wondrous time
you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world
but shall smile at the infinite delight and mystery of it."
- William Saroyan



Born and raised in Baltimore, Suze grew up in a home filled with the sounds of Bach, Beethoven, Gilbert & Sullivan, Broadway musicals and the blues of Bessie, Billie and Ella. Graduating from Hollins College with a BA in Drama & Dance, Susan went on to spend her twenties in New York City – studying acting with the extraordinary Uta Hagen, appearing in various Off-Broadway plays and musicals, TV commercials and performing with the improvisational theater company, *War Babies*. The New York clubs offered her a jazz education, presenting the likes of Duke Ellington, Sheila Jordan, Jackie & Roy, Alberta Hunter, the Mel Lewis/Thad Jones Big Band, Carmen McRae, Dizzie et al.

In 1976, Suze and her fellow *War Babies* flew to Los Angeles for a TV series. She chose to remain in L.A. and make it her new home – delighted that she could garden and hike – and that there were greater work opportunities. Over the years, Suze has appeared in dozens of TV shows (*Numbers, The West Wing, ER*), Films (*Million Dollar Baby, 28 Days*), Animation, TV & Radio commercials, and Theater, including her own solo musical revue, *Lunar*, the all-women's improvisational company, *The Wims*, and the contemporary opera, *A String of Pearls*, both in L.A. and at Carnegie Hall.



Throughout Suze's career as an actor and improviser, she was also performing occasionally as a vocalist, and studied for several years with the great jazz singer and teacher, Sue Raney. – Then, in 1995, seeking clarity and artistic direction during a four month "middle years" retreat in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Suze's sense of herself as a "jazz gardener" came into being - which she explains is "about the art of becoming - whether working with plants or music or with oneself - to dig down, to cultivate, to encourage growth, to thrive and flourish, and eventually to let go and begin the cycle anew." And so, she returned to L.A. with the intent of devoting herself to the art of jazz singing both as a student and as a performer in order to tell her tale through song.

Suze now performs regularly throughout Southern California, including such venues as the L.A. County Museum of Art, The Vic, Hollywood Studio Bar & Grill, Steamers, Jazz @ the Crowne and Cafe 322. Following the 1999 release of her debut album, *Jazz Gardener* (Sea Breeze Jazz), came *What Am I Here For?* (GreenGig Music 2002). Both projects were created by Suze and her group of superb L.A. based musicians, including her longtime drummer/producer, Jerry Kalaf, and the saxophonist extraordinaire, Gary Foster.



Suze's latest project is *Jazz Aviary* (GreenGig Music 2007) – a concert of *musical ornithology* – a Celebration of Birds through Music, Poetry & Birdsong. Conceived and performed by Suze in collaboration with the Soaring Sextet, Musical Direction by Rich Eames and co-produced with Jerry Kalaf, it is now a unique and beautiful recording.