

DIANE SCHUUR

Vocalist/pianist Diane Schuur is as eclectic as she is brilliant. A longtime disciple of Dinah Washington and other legendary jazz singers of the '40s and '50s, Schuur has built a stellar career by embracing not only the jazz of her parents' generation, but also the pop music of her own youth during the late 1950s and '60s. In a recording career that spans nearly three decades – and includes two Grammy Awards and three Grammy nominations – Schuur's music has explored nearly every corner of the 20th century American musical landscape.

Born in Tacoma, Washington, in December 1953, Schuur was blind from birth. She grew up in nearby Auburn, Washington, where her father was a police captain. Nicknamed Deedles at a young age, Schuur discovered the world of jazz via her father, a piano player, and her mother, who kept a formidable collection of Duke Ellington and Dinah Washington records in the house.

She was still a toddler when she learned to sing the Dinah Washington signature song, "What a Difference a Day Makes." Armed with the rare gift of perfect pitch, Schuur taught herself piano by ear and developed a rich, resonant vocal style early on, as evidenced in a recording of her first public performance at a Holiday Inn in Tacoma when she was ten years old. She received formal piano training at the Washington State School for the Blind, which she attended until age 11. By her early teens, she had amassed her own collection of Washington's records and looked to the legendary vocalist as her primary inspiration.

Schuur made her first record in 1971, a country single entitled "Dear Mommy and Daddy," produced by Jimmy Wakely. After high school, she focused on jazz and gigged around the northwest. In 1975, an informal audition with trumpeter Doc Severinson (then the leader of the *Tonight Show* band) led to a gig with *Tonight Show* drummer Ed Shaughnessy's group at the Monterey Jazz Festival. She sang a gospel suite with Shaughnessy's band in front of a festival audience that included jazz tenor saxophonist Stan Getz, who in turn invited her to participate in a talent showcase at the White House. A subsequent return performance at the White House led to a record deal with GRP, which released Schuur's debut album, *Deedles*, in 1984.

Over the next 13 years, Schuur recorded 11 albums on GRP, including two Grammy winners: *Timeless* (1986) and *Diane Schuur and the Count Basie Orchestra* (1987). The recording with the Basie Orchestra spent 33 consecutive weeks at No. 1 on the *Billboard* jazz charts. In 1991, *Pure Schuur* made the number-one slot on the Contemporary Jazz charts, and *Heart To Heart* – a 1994 collaborative recording with B.B. King – entered the *Billboard* charts at No. 1.

After one album on Atlantic records in 1999 – *Music is My Life*, produced by Ahmet Ertegun – Schuur joined the Concord label with the 2000 release of *Friends For Schuur*.

The move to Concord marked the beginning of a series of highly successful collaborative projects: *Swingin' For Schuur* (2001), a set of finely crafted duets with trumpeter Maynard Ferguson; *Midnight* (2003), Schuur's unique interpretations of thirteen songs (mostly new material) written or co-written by Barry Manilow; and *Schuur Fire* (2005), a decidedly Latin-flavored album featuring the Caribbean Jazz Project.

Some Other Time, Schuur's February 2008 Concord release, is a recording of songs by jazz artists whom she first discovered via her parents during her childhood and adolescent years. The album features songs by George and Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Sammy Cahn, Rogers and Hammerstein and more. The set also includes a surprisingly mature-sounding rendition of "September in the Rain," recorded at the Holiday Inn in Tacoma in 1964 when Schuur was only ten years old.

Some Other Time is, among other things, Schuur's celebration of the music of her parents' generation, and a tribute to her late mother on the fortieth anniversary of her death at the young age of 31. "This is a celebration of the music she introduced to me when I was growing up," says Schuur. "After enough time goes by, everything your parents ever told you, everything they ever tried to teach you, starts to make sense. You find out how they grew up and how they looked at the world in the context of their generation and their times."

Long regarded – and sometimes criticized – as an artist who has walked a tightrope between jazz and pop, Schuur sees *Some Other Time* as an unwavering statement about her commitment to the jazz tradition and its influence on her artistic sensibilities. "This album really is about coming back to the basics of my jazz roots," she says. "Not that I really completely left them, but there were a few detours along the way."