

## VOCALIST/PIANIST DIANE SCHUUR CELEBRATES THE JAZZ OF HER PARENTS' GENERATION

### *Some Other Time* Spotlights The Music of Schuur's Formative Years

Vocalist and pianist Diane Schuur grew up at the intersection of two distinct worlds of music. On one hand, the radio of her youth telegraphed the sounds of Motown, the Beatles and other powerful forces of the '60s. On the other, her parents' home in Auburn, Washington, was filled with the likes of Dinah Washington, Nat King Cole and other luminaries of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century jazz.

Out of this melting pot, Schuur developed a hybrid style that merges the best elements of the jazz and pop traditions. Since her recording career began in the early 1980s, she has scored two Grammy Awards and three additional Grammy nominations, and has performed and collaborated with artists as diverse as B.B. King, Ray Charles, Stan Getz and many more.

On February 26, 2008, Schuur returns to her jazz roots – the music of her parents' generation, which includes some of the earliest and most enduring music in her creative consciousness – with the worldwide release of *Some Other Time* – CCD-30614 (Concord Music Group, Domestic) / HUCD3138 (Heads Up International, Int'l).

“This recording is a celebration of the fortieth anniversary of my mother's death,” says Schuur, whose mother died at age 31 in January 1967, when the aspiring young vocalist and musician was only 13 years old. “This is a celebration of the music she introduced to me when I was growing up. 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.”

The album kicks off with “Nice Work If You Can Get It,” a classic by one of the most influential songwriting teams of the last century, George and Ira Gershwin. Beginning here and for most of the set, pianist/arranger Randy Porter and guitarist Dan Balmer set up a rich harmonic platform for Schuur's playful vocals.

While the material itself may be from another era, *Some Other Time* as a whole is anything but a retro-flavored nostalgia trip. “Randy and I spent many hours going through the songs,” says Schuur. “His basic arrangements were really brilliant, but I'm glad I was able to add some things. I wanted to make things as different as possible. A lot of the songs came together right in the studio. It was a very spontaneous, very intuitive process.”

Also from the Gershwin canon is “I've Got Beginner's Luck,” which follows an elastic time signature crafted by the rhythm section of bassist Scott Steed and drummer Reggie Jackson. For all of the song's complexities, Schuur's equally pliable vocals have no trouble keeping up. Similarly, Schuur's rendition of Irving Berlin's “Blue Skies” a few tracks later is everything the title implies – wide-open, airy and full of possibility – with Schuur taking an interpretive and playful approach with the vocal line. She takes a similar tack with “My Favorite Things,” the whimsical Rodgers and Hammerstein classic from *The Sound of Music*, one of Schuur's favorite movies from her childhood.

While Porter handles the lion share of the piano work on *Some Other Time*, Schuur steps up to the keys for two tracks, “It’s Magic” and “The Good Life,” and proves that her instrumental chops are just as formidable as her vocal abilities. “I love ‘It’s Magic,’ because Dinah Washington did it so beautifully on a 1959 album called *What a Difference a Day Makes*,” she says.

The closing tracks have a poignant magic all their own. “September in the Rain” is taken from a 1964 recording made by a 10-year-old Schuur and her parents at a Holiday Inn in Tacoma, Washington. Filled with the same gusto that would later define Schuur’s vocal style as an adult, this reel-to-reel recording was later transferred to an audiocassette in the 1980s and finally to digital for this project by engineer Bill Smith.

Immediately following “September in the Rain” is an exchange between Schuur and her mother from that same period in the mid-’60s. Schuur’s mother asks if Diane knows “Danny Boy,” and Diane responds with the promise that she’ll record the song just for her. What follows is a heart-stopping rendition of the classic Irish tune that transcends the mortal plane and makes good on a devoted daughter’s promise more than forty years after it was made.

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.”

But there’s another connection, something much deeper and more personal, that Schuur makes with *Some Other Time*: “I would like to think that I’m reaching out to Mama,” she says, “just to tell her that I love her and that I appreciate the fact that she worked so hard in the short time that she lived. And I’m grateful that she was able to instill in me a love of music. Mama gave me that, and it follows me everywhere.”