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Love in Her Heart

Jackie DeShannon had fun in the 1960s. There were airplane pillow fights with the Beatles when she opened for them during their summer tour in 1964. She recorded with Burt Bacharach and collaborated with guitarist Jimmy Page, songwriter Randy Newman and legendary producer Jack Nitzsche. She also sang gospel with Elvis Presley and the Jordanaires at Mr. Presley's Los Angeles home—and even co-starred in a surf movie with Bobby Vinton.



Getty Images

Jackie DeShannon's new album is her first in 11 years.

Along the way, Ms. DeShannon wrote or co-wrote dozens of songs for herself and others—including "Put a Little Love in Your Heart" and "Bette Davis Eyes," which was a huge hit for Kim Carnes in 1981. "I probably would have been better known if my label at the time [Liberty] had put me on a star track rather than having me write songs and sing demos for other artists," said the 70-year-old Ms. DeShannon, one of Los Angeles' earliest female rock-era singer-songwriters.

"When You Walk in the Room," due Tuesday, is Ms. DeShannon's first album in 11 years and an acoustic reworking of 11 songs most closely associated with her. Instead of tackling the material the way it was originally recorded by her and other artists, Ms. DeShannon has created a warm, folk-country feel that occasionally reveals her Kentucky twang.

The signature hits are here, including "Put a Little Love in Your Heart," "What the World Needs Now," "Needles and Pins," "Bette Davis Eyes" and the touching title track, which was written in 1963 while Ms. DeShannon waited for a famous unnamed date to arrive. There also are surprises—like "Don't Doubt Yourself Babe," penned for the Byrds' first album in 1965, and "Bad Water," which deftly exhibits Ms. DeShannon's rich blues chops.

"I tried to keep my phrasing simple in the studio and let emotion take over," Ms. DeShannon said. "I wanted it all to be very plain, like Stickley furniture."

—Marc Myers

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