

# ListenUp

## Black Mascara makes its mark

Boshears' honest, gritty soul is rich, satisfying rock; contemplative, confrontational Browne returns to form

**A** Shannon Boshears  
*Black Mascara*  
(self-released)  
Rock/blues

On weekend nights in Little Rock, you'll likely find native Shannon Boshears on a local bar stage strumming her guitar and belting out classic rock and blues tunes. And she more than does them justice.

Sometimes, though, she'll throw in one of her compositions — even if you don't know it's hers, you're aware you're hearing something honest, real, gritty and soulful. And she rocks.

In the six years since her first CD, *Chicksinger*, Boshears' sound has matured. Atmospherically, *Chicksinger* evoked the sweat and barbecue tang of a summertime blues fest, and set loose a swarm of honky-tonk devils.

*Black Mascara*, to debut Nov. 8 with a release party at Cajun's Wharf, evokes its predecessor and more — think old-time gospel, anytime Southern rock with soul, and modern Opry. And it rocks.

The title song sets you smack-dab in the French Quarter with an homage to the flash of a swamp-grown temptress — “Black Mascara,” who wears platform shoes, is “draped in apricot feathers and a fake tattoo,” and to whom you “should never say never.”

Songs such as the joyous “Left at Lula” reveal her roots, with nods to legendary bluesmen Son House, Robert Johnson and Mississippi John Hurt.

Boshears always brings a sense of humor to her music, as evidenced in the love-gone-bad tune, “The Honeymoon is Over”: *We got drunk in love/And somehow wound up sober/ ... Well, this honeymoon suite just turned out to be sour.*

Accompanying Boshears are regular band members Lori Stidham on bass and vocals, Walter K. on



guitar and Charlie Macom on drums. Also featured are Mark Sallings of The Famous Unknowns on saxophone and harmonica, Matt Dickson on saxophone and Becky Haynes on African djembe drum.

Overall, the musical compositions are as rich as a buttery peach cobbler, and as satisfying as buttermilk biscuits and white gravy. Every song — from the uplifting country/gospel “Good Guitar” to the sassy “Hush Yo’ Fuss” to the earnest “Change Things” — is iPod- and roadtrip-worthy. Yeah, they rock.

*Black Mascara* is available at [www.shannonboshears.com](http://www.shannonboshears.com).

— RHONDA OWEN