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The arresting Josie Cotton

## MUSIC

## REVAMP

Two '80s musicians return

BY KURT B. REIGHLEY

**JOSIE COTTON***Invasion of the B-Girls*  
SCRUFFY RECORDS**PYLON***Gyrate Plus*  
DFA

**DON'T LET QUENTIN TARANTINO'S übercool *Death Proof* soundtrack fool you. Traditionally, the songs in vintage exploitation flicks and straight-to-drive-in spectacles were as schlocky as the films that spawned them. But you know what they say about one man's trash. On *Invasion of the B-Girls*, Josie Cotton hits pay dirt mining this dubious vein.**

Cotton knows kitsch. In 1981 the Los Angeles singer scored with the new-wave novelty "Johnny, Are You Queer?" And as her two subsequent albums can attest, Cotton deserved better than "one-hit wonder" status. Her 2006 comeback, *Movie Disaster Music*, didn't play up her strengths as an underground camp icon; thankfully, its sequel does not repeat that mistake.

*B-Girls* features nine ditties (plus a whiz-bang Ursula 1000 remix) culled from the oeuvre of hacks like Russ Meyer and Herschell Gordon Lewis. Cotton does a great kitten-with-a-whip routine on "Maneaters

(Get Off the Road)" and "Run Pussy Cat," complete with engine-revving sound effects. But she achieves takeoff velocity when she peels off the catsuit: "Beyond the Valley of the Dolls" blossoms as a sugary, dream-like reverie, while "Who Killed Teddy Bear?" imitates cut-rate Burt Bacharach, its arrangement overripe with seesawing strings and muted brass.

Speaking of Bacharach, Cotton skips his 1958 genre entry, "The Blob," in favor of the groovy, gurgling "Green Slime." Talk about commitment! Heck, she even coos the exotic "Shiawaseo Yobou" (theme to *Ghidrah, the Three-Headed Monster*) in Japanese. But that unstinting dedication and scrupulous detail—B-movie maven John Waters even contributes liner notes—is what makes the polished *B-Girls* a winner.

While Cotton was warbling "Johnny" in the Reagan era, **Pylon** crawled out of the same Southern scene that birthed the B-52's and R.E.M. The quartet never connected with the mainstream like their Athens, Ga., peers, but the influence of their angular art rock resonates loudly today; Pylon's spiky guitars and pummeling drums are integral elements for four out of five new Brooklyn bands.

James Murphy of LCD Soundsystem frequently drops Pylon's "Danger" into his DJ sets, and he now repays the band by releasing an expanded version of Pylon's 1980 debut, *Gyrate*, on his DFA imprint. While she wasn't as accessible as Debbie Harry or Belinda Carlisle, Vanessa Briscoe, Pylon's vocalist—one hesitates to say singer, listening to her tantrum on "Feast on My Heart"—wielded considerable charisma and great riffs too. A long-overdue reissue, *Gyrate Plus* will make your hips do just that. ♣