

Licks

Josie, Are You a Bitch?

According to Elektra Records, Josie Cotton's "Johnny Are You Queer?" is already the number-one all-time most re-requested record on Los Angeles's KROQ-FM. Now, that means bigger than such good stuff as "Satisfaction," "You Can't Hurry Love," "The 81." How come, you may ask. Well, don't blame the tune or the production. The record is minimal Joan Jett Go-Go's attitude pop (in fact, the song was a hit in the Go-Go's live show, Elektra says), with all the attendant clichés - - anemic guitars that perk up a couple of times to remind you that the guys made it to the session, handclapclapclapclap handclapclapclapclap, doldrums, and a disingenuously coy lead vocalist who loses any bid for sympathy by leaving us with a supposedly sincere vulnerability, followed by a repulsive whine. This woman doesn't sing; she flounces. She comes off like a nasty brat.

That leaves the words. You see, this girl has a problem. She comes on to Johnny like gangbusters, but nada: "When I make a play/You're pushin' me away." And there are not-so-subtle clues that, well somethings

up: "I saw you today , boy/Walking with them gay boys." Just the stuff of a 1981 True Lust comic book, or maybe Tom Lehrer's cracked scientology brought up to date. But nope. Brothers Bobby and Larson Paine penned and produced this ditty, and their record reads: perversely, with prejudice. It's 1981, guys. Reagan, Falwell, the fabulous Phyllis Schlafly. "Is there something wrong?," "Why are you so weird, boy," and they like do reflect, even if written with putative good humor, a spe-cific, distasteful point of view. And if Johnny is so obviously gay, then why doesn't this poor unfortunate get the message and give it up? Why doesn't she consult a shrink about her neurotic attachment?

What? It's just a silly pop song, not meant to be taken seriously? One more word, then: "queer." Okay, I guess it's lesson time again: gay people can use the word "queer," blacks have dibs on the "nig-ger," and so on. Generally, when oppressed people use such words they imbue them with a lot of personal history and a triumphant sense of humor. But straight people saying "queer" and white people saying "nigger" implies the choice, however subliminal, of a pejorative word - - a dirty word. And we all know that dirty words aren't nice. But they sure are catchy, aren't they?

Jim Feldman

Fuck you, Jim Feldman. This is an honest depiction of a real life social phenomena for girls everywhere, albeit a guileless one in this case. I, on the other hand, have sonar-like gaydar and an unabashed undying love for this community that your bitter, thin-skinned, humorless wasteland of a review cannot ever come close to diminishing. Just to be clear, the word 'queer' has now officially been de-fanged on the world stage.. as should you.

Josie Cotton
