

FEATURED ARTICLE

Josie Cotton: B-Girl on Her A-Game

Right on cue for this *Twilight Zone* age, the “Johnny, Are You Queer?” chanteuse is back with a reissue of her classic *Invasion of the B-Girls* album.

In these days of coronavirus I have heard more than a few people declare, “This sure does feel like a bad sci-fi movie.” How appropriate it is, then, that Josie Cotton is reissuing a newly remastered version of her classic album *Invasion of the B-Girls* in this environment.

That record, originally released in 2007, is a collection of her takes on tunes and theme songs from classic horror and science fiction movies. Everything from *Valley Of The Dolls* to *Return of Godzilla* and the Russ Meyer classic *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* is represented.

Fans of music and movies will best remember Josie Cotton from her appearance in the classic '80s film *Valley Girl*, in which she performed her two best-known hits: “He Could Be The One” and “Johnny, Are You Queer?”

However, she hasn't slowed down in the ensuing decades. In 2019 and again in early 2020, Josie returned to the world of live performing. As someone who was lucky enough to see her three times before COVID-19 kicked in and canceled concert-going for the foreseeable future, I can attest that she is as beautiful and brilliant as ever, and her band blew me away.

I recently caught up with Josie from several dozen feet away, through the magic of fiber optics, to see how she is doing in self-quarantine, what her favorite B-movies are, why she didn't have “enough” groupies in the '80s, and her brilliant new CD reissue.

HUSTLERMagazine.com: How are you doing in this time of self-isolation?

Josie Cotton: I've become very philosophical. You just adjust to the new reality. Somehow. You seem to find a way. And not totally overreact. I could not have imagined this reality if someone had described it to me even three months ago. It almost seems serene outside. The weather is so beautiful, and the skies have cleared. I might not be saying that if I were in an emergency ward of a hospital. There is something almost *Twilight Zone*-ish about it.

I saw on social media that you said your love of sci-fi movies has prepared you for this time. How so?

There are so many scenarios and story lines that are like what we are experiencing in real life right now. Every day I wake up and it is like a different science fiction movie. I go, "Oh this is like *28 Days Later* with the scenes of the empty cities. Or today is like *The Andromeda Strain*. It is not as horrific as it could be. No zombies so far.

Are you doing anything creative with your time?

I have started writing. I am relieved I have that. I did not know if I was going to completely dry up in terms of writer's block. I am also singing on a song today via the internet. A group of musicians I know have put together this song about the pandemic. That will be a nice distraction. I was starting to record a new album before all this hit. I have a recording studio that I cannot even go to now.

Are you alone?

I am here with my dog, three cats and an uninvited mouse that has recently joined our family. The cats could care less about the mouse. They noticed it the first night and now they ignore it. I hear it scurrying and they are over it. They are wonderful company, but I am the only human in this house.





Do you miss dating?

Well...I would say that is a missing element in all of this. For everyone right now. Although I have heard that a lot of these dating sites are super active right now. That surprised me. It is not a perfect time to meet someone with what is going on.

Why did you decide to reissue your *Invasion of the B-Girls* album?

When I got my new management in place, we realized that if people wanted to purchase any of the music from my catalog it was not going through the channels it was supposed to. There were a lot of illegal situations going on, if you could even find the music at all. Other people were selling my music illegally. I was told that, in order to eliminate that situation, I needed to take all my music off the internet and reissue it myself on a different label. To start over. We formed a record company to do that. We are also starting to sign other people now. It seemed like no one had heard this music. A recording artist just wants to be heard.

Besides remastering, how is this version different from the original album release?

We also re-did the artwork on it. It looks like the poster for a horrible B-movie. Campy with humor. The record was named after one of my favorite films: *Invasion of the Bee Girls*. It is about a group of women scientists who are actually bees and who kill men during sex for their blood. It was such a perfect theme and plot line of a B-movie. I could not have asked for more. Except it did not have a theme song.

You have also added the track “Female Trouble”?

That song was something that was supposed to be on the original record. At that time John Waters was trying to release a record of Divine songs. The song had never been covered before and I was happy to wait to release it until the Divine album came out. Out of respect for John's wishes. Obviously, years have passed and that record never came to fruition. The Melvins had also recently covered it. I thought it was time to unleash it to the world.



Are you planning on reissuing more of your catalog albums?

Yes. We are going through my catalog and trying to do it with every record. Release them remastered with bonus tracks. At least one additional song. There is a point where I am going to release everything. I get control of my first two records in July 2020. For the reissue of *Convertible Music*, my first album, we will include “Blackout” on there. It was the original B-side of “Johnny, Are You Queer?” That was never on the original record.

What are some of your favorite moments from making *Valley Girl*?

That is tough because I was only on the set for two days. Looking back, it was pretty funny to be singing during a fight scene. But as far as memories from the set? There was not a huge party going on. It was just a series of hours being locked in a run-down and abandoned school that was freezing cold. No heat. I sat around freezing because I had on that miniskirt. It was not a lush set. It felt like a prisoner-of-war camp. There were not a lot of deep conversations going on. Just me and the band huddled in the freezing cold with my teeth chattering. Waiting to shoot. I am surprised people still care about it. I find it sweet and realize it was a huge part of people’s lives and they have all this emotion around the memories from that part of their life.

Did you realize that film landed you a lot of young male fans?

I did not until years later when I went online. I didn’t know people loved me so much. Particularly from the male gender. Many guys who were going through puberty who saw that movie at a certain moment, and I guess it had an effect on them. They sure reached out to me years later. It was cute. I always thought it was a girls’ movie because it is a romantic comedy.

Did you ever have groupies in the ’80s?

Not enough! (*Laughs.*) Not nearly enough. I had people that were kind of stalking me in a way. Most guys were intimidated by me. Really cute guys were not the ones who were following me around. I appealed to a certain type of fellow. The kind of guys you wanted to call the police about. (*Laughs.*)