

## Make Some B-Movie Magic With Josie Cotton's Groovy New Tune, "Girl In Gold Boots": BUST Premiere

BY HAYLEY CAIN IN MUSIC



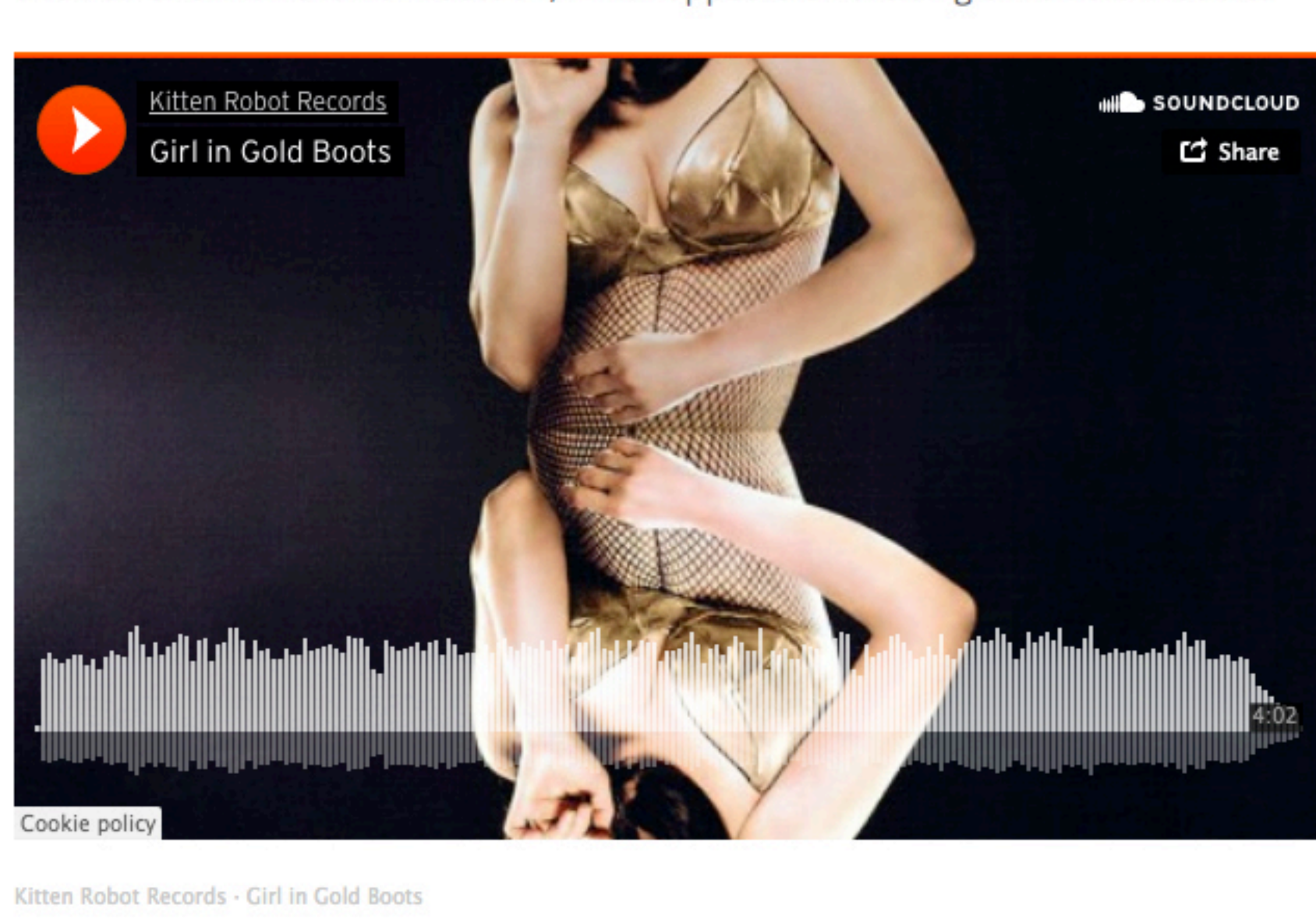
Inside the kaleidoscope of [Josie Cotton's](#) psychedelic songbook, every pop culture reference holds an unexpected meaning, every late night B-movie a deeper story to tell. Today, BUST is thrilled to premiere Cotton's grooviest track to date, "Girl In Gold Boots," inspired by the 1968 film of the same name, and what Cotton has herself has described as "one of the worst movies I have ever seen, in which insanely bad dancing hits an all-new low." That's right. Grab the popcorn and don't you dare skimp on the butter. Just dump it on!

Cotton's long-lost album *Invasion of the B-Girls*, slated for a new release May 1, is a totally swanky, sometimes funny, always danceable homage to her favorite so-bad-they're-great films of yesteryear, including themes to "She Devil on Wheels" (1968), "Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!" (1965), "Beyond the Valley of the Dolls" (1970) and John

Water's iconic cult classic "Female Trouble" (1974), which [Cotton released as a digital single earlier this month](#). You could say that the singer-songwriter has built her career on crafting her own one-two punch of sly, neo-retro style and subversive substance (always with a mischievous wink for the peanut gallery).

"I was obsessed with science fiction movies since childhood, a lot of which you could call B-movies; but seeing '*Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*' as an adult was a kind of *come-to-Jesus* moment for me," Cotton said of her inspiration to cover these forgotten "classics" (unlike her eyeliner, she uses the term very lightly). "It suddenly occurred to me that I could do a whole record of theme songs from B-movies. So I went on a search and watched an insane amount of movies for about a year ... My criteria was it had to be a '*great*' song from a '*bad* movie...'*bad*' meaning '*good*' and '*great*' meaning it was a fantastic *song*."

Originally debuted in 2007 as an unmastered, unpolished and extremely limited CD-only release, *Invasion of the B-Girls* never enjoyed its true moment in the limelight. In fact, many diehard fans are probably just hearing about it now. Meticulously remastered and shimmering with fresh sonic sparkle, the release will be available via streaming platforms with vinyl courtesy of Cotton's own label, [Kitten Robot](#), as well as [Dionysus Records](#). Produced by Cotton, punk legend Geza X (*Black Flag*, *Dead Kennedys*), and Bill Rhea (*Del Rubio Triplets*), *Invasion of the B-Girls* includes liner notes written by John Waters as well as guest performers like David Kendrick (*Devo*, *Sparks*) and Paul Roessler (*Screamers*, *Twisted Roots*), Geza X, Kenny Lyon (*Spain*), and Tower of Power's horn section, which appears on the single "Female Trouble."



Kitten Robot Records · Girl In Gold Boots

Born in Dallas, Texas with killer pipes and a mind to use them, Cotton made the obligatory rock n roll pilgrimage to Los Angeles in the late '70s, just as the new wave scene had reached an apex of Aqua Net and attitude. Her famous rendition of "[Johnny Are You Queer?](#)," the hit single off her beloved 1982 album *Convertible Music*, truly marked an era, and Cotton's energetic 1984 follow-up, *From the Hip*, hangs tough alongside any quintessential '80s listening. Pop masterpieces like "He Could be the One" and "Jimmy Loves Maryanne" further stoked Cotton's international fame (plus, teens fell in love with her prom scene performance in the seminal '80s movie *Valley Girl*). Still, Cotton never quite reached the level of success of contemporaries like The Go-Go's, instead remaining just slightly off-kilter from the crowd and eternally cherished by the underground.

Last fall's previously unreleased full length, *Everything is Oh Yeah!*, and standout single "Ukrainian Cowboy" marked Cotton's revved-up return to the public stage (although she'd been quietly recording songs in her own studios for years). Any fan will tell you: this has been a miraculous time to be alive. Sure, the world is in shambles, but we've got new Josie jams to spice up the apocalypse!

No longer relegated to rare midnight showings and seedy drive-ins, *Invasion of the B-Girls* is Cotton's cheeky contribution to a world that could undoubtedly use some daring distraction, if not a bit of green slime. Listen closer, and you'll understand that the new wave princess isn't simply reveling in high camp fun. By shedding light on this dark and somewhat sticky corner of the theater, Cotton is championing (or at least egging on) these B-movie heroines, however flawed they might have been.

Perhaps it's not so insane to imagine that a leather-clad villainess lurks inside each of us. Slide off that motorbike and zip up those gold go-go boots! Now we can all savor Cotton's midnight screening soundtrack like we were always meant to: with a martini in one hand and some poor sap's heart in the other.

**Congrats on your latest single off *Invasion of the B-Girls*, "Female Trouble!" Has John Waters commented yet?**

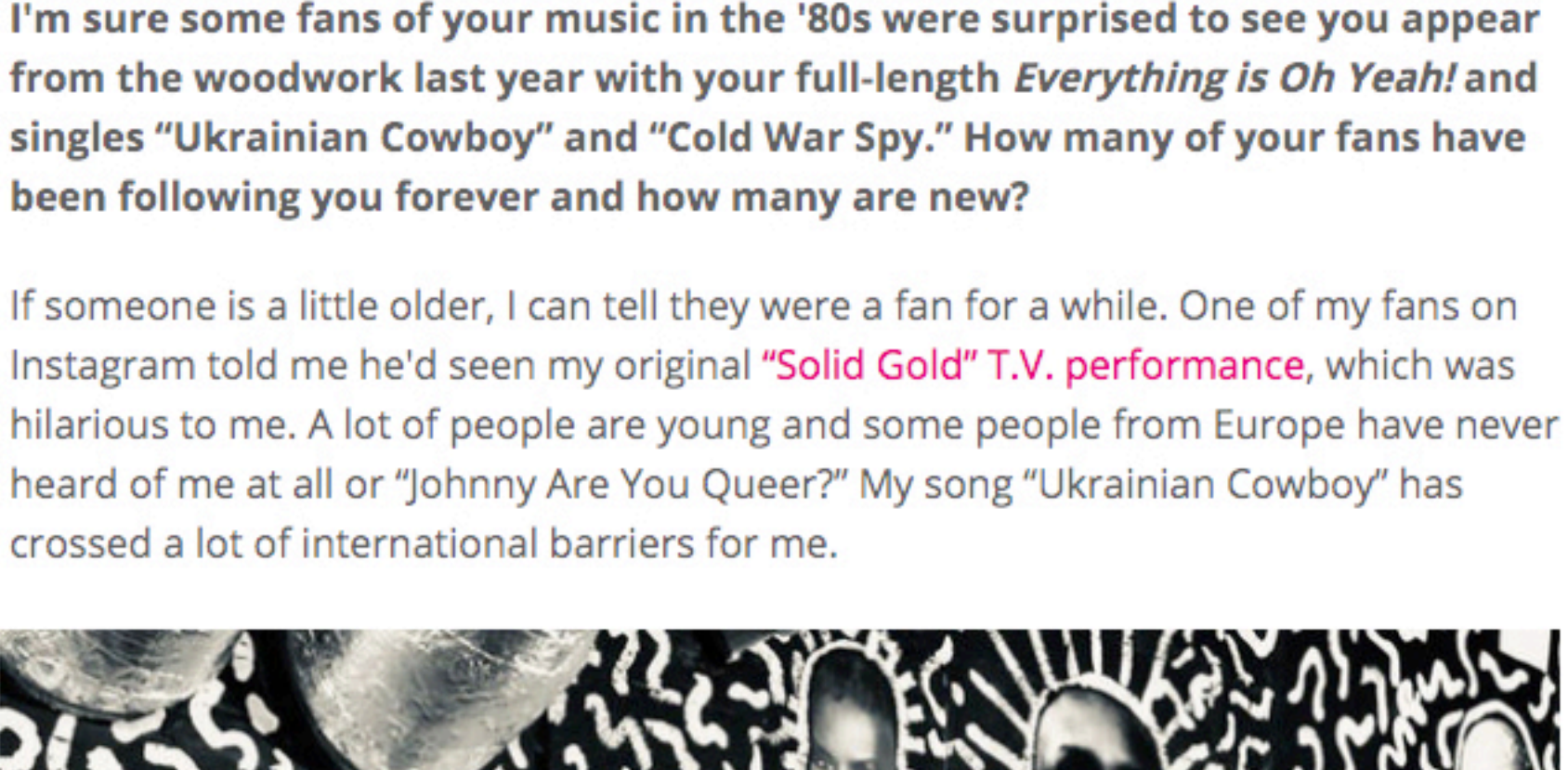
I haven't talked to him in awhile, so I don't know his reaction. However, I've played it for him in the past and he loved it!

**You've done some great write-ups on the movies you sing about on *Invasion of the B-Girls*.**

I had so much fun writing those. It actually makes you look a lot deeper into something pretty shallow. But you find a lot of depth in the most shallow things.

**I'm sure some fans of your music in the '80s were surprised to see you appear from the woodwork last year with your full-length *Everything is Oh Yeah!* and singles "Ukrainian Cowboy" and "Cold War Spy." How many of your fans have been following you forever and how many are new?**

If someone is a little older, I can tell they were a fan for a while. One of my fans on Instagram told me he'd seen my original "[Solid Gold](#)" T.V. performance, which was hilarious to me. A lot of people are young and some people from Europe have never heard of me at all or "Johnny Are You Queer?" My song "Ukrainian Cowboy" has crossed a lot of international barriers for me.



**"Ukrainian Cowboy" is fabulous song, as "Cold War Spy." What's your interest in Soviet-era history? Do you have any Russian heritage?**

I have some Russian in me. One of my fathers—there's a whole slew of them—he'd trained in Yugoslavia as a ballet dancer. I have a little "Russian cowboy" thing going on because my grandfather was a real cowboy. For "Cold War Spy," I was fascinated by the Stasi. No one was better at spy-craft. I started reading about the subject after I had come up with title of the song. Then I became obsessed with all their instruments of torture. There's a video on YouTube of a Stasi officer showing other officers how to brainwash people, which we actually used in my song. Reading was forbidden, especially authors like Aldous Huxley. I went into that world so deeply; I think I will always be in that world now. I just go into periods where I do an insane amount of reading and thinking, wondering and questioning.

**There's a lot of orchestration to your songs and so many lush layers of sound. You also have your own studio. What's that like?**

I have a studio now in Filipinotown in L.A. Paul Roessler is a musical genius. Whenever I'd bring anything over, he'd jump into the deep end with me. I'd say, "Can I really say that?" And he'd say, "Yes! You have to." I mean, when can you say, "the purge of Stalin" in a pop song?" For "Ukrainian Cowboy" he added all these Russian instruments. I didn't want it to be a joke, and so it became sort of a sad cowboy song even with this funny polka music going on. We have so much fun in the studio. It's really just the two of us in a room, hashing it out.

**That's the magic! You also play guitar.**

I play guitar, keyboard on a few songs, and I actually programmed some drums on my last record, which was fun. Mainly I'm just loving being on stage and playing guitar. It's an awesome, fun thing to do!

**You're not a simple "pop" musician. Your 2006 album *Movie Disaster Music*, for instance, has this great ambiance. It's loungey, almost like exotica. How do you approach different musical styles?**

That's what was so hard about being an '80s artist. As much fun as it was, I had such a love of different kinds of music. I love bluegrass, the lounge stuff, international music, I love rockabilly and 1960s surf music. It's whatever the song is going to do. I kind of follow the song. It really seems to come out of a melody, then an idea, then the music shows me what it wants to be.

**In interviews you've said you didn't really hang out with L.A. punk bands of the late '70s, like the Germs or X. Were you part of the great rockabilly scene of the time? Do you have a little country in you?**

When I came to L.A. from Texas I had rejected all country music, because my mom was in Tammy Wynette's fan club. George Jones was Jesus. I was more into British Invasion and girl groups. I didn't want to be in my mom's world, which I guess sounds harsh, but you know how it is. When I met [producers] The Paine Brothers, they were working with Levi and the Rockats, The Go-Go's and Fear, and there was a whole rockabilly scene going on. When we first started talking about working together, they said, "You've got to listen to Tammy Wynette! You must study her singing and songwriting." I said, "Really, god? The irony is killing me here!" When I started listening to her records, the emotion and delicate way she pulls your heart out of your chest...she just has so much vocal control. I learned how to sing by copying singers I liked. I went on to a Wanda Jackson and Tammy Wynette phase, where I was trying to come a little close to that type of singing because it was so incredible to me. My mom got to see it and say, "Told you so!"

**Which '80s contemporaries inspired you? Are you surprised that certain bands from back then are still around, recording and touring?**

I was inspired by The Go-Go's; their melodies and their songwriting were amazing, and Missing Persons as well. I heard Missing Persons' demo before it ever came out. As we were recording "Johnny Are You Queer?" I heard that demo tape and went, "Oh my god. I'm in serious trouble here because this is fantastic!" I am surprised that the '80s have survived. I think we're on our third time "falling in love" with the nostalgia. It was an innocent time. I didn't realize it was so innocent until now. A friend texted me and told me they're doing a modern remake of *Valley Girl*. I thought, "How are they going to do it now?" They'd have to add school shooting, opioids, and now a pandemic. I don't know how they're going to walk that line. I'm scared to see it!

**Is it weird to be an '80s icon? And to have your reality repackaged and sold back to you?**

We live in interesting times! And things move fast. I meet people at clubs when I go out and 20-year-olds know exactly who I am. I wonder, "How do you know me? I disappeared for a long time!"

**You sure did. In 2011 you had a funny tweet about "coming back" to the public eye. How do you feel about social media now?**

I didn't realize that people thought of me so kindly until Myspace, really. I had a really odd relationship with the press, corporations, record companies, management, all of that. I didn't know people still thought nice things about me. It's been amazing to be able to connect with them!

**Well, we're sure glad you're back. What keeps you at it?**

I just came back New Year's Eve 2018, and I've really met some incredible people; some of them have become my friends. Ever since I left the music business, I always had a recording studio, so that was my little window to the world. As long as I could still be making music and be around people who had dreams, that was it. I just love being around people who love the process of writing and recording.

Photos courtesy of Josie Cotton