



JUNE 14, 2020 JED RYAN

JOSIE COTTON'S "INVASION OF THE B-GIRLS": Summer "Camp" Is Starting Early!



When putting a new CD on for a "spin" for the first time, most of us know the exact musical moment when we fall in love with the album. In the case of Josie Cotton's Invasion of the B-Girls, it won't take the listener too long. For me, the noble devotion came within seconds of the kickoff track. Hearing the lovely Ms. Cotton coo, "We are the Hellcats that nobody likes. Maneaters on motor bikes!" had me at the first "vroom!" Those lyrics are from the song Maneaters (Get Off The Road), originally heard in Herschell Gordon Lewis' 1968 She-Devils on Wheels, an exploitation movie about an about an all-female motorcycle gang. Cotton's girlish, enthusiastic delivery of those deliciously decadent lyrics and her sexy-but-tough persona (A persona that resurfaces often throughout the album) are a splendid match for the music: a combination of retro flavor and all the energy of the best of 80's pop—which, of course, suits this New Wave icon perfectly. Get your helmets on, because Invasion of the B-Girls is a wild musical ride...

This newly re-mastered version of Invasion of the B-Girls is a 10-song collection of cover versions of B-movie theme songs, mostly from the 1960's. Through her selection of the music, Cotton (an aficionado of obscure cinema herself) pays homage to such cult film faves from Russ Meyer's Faster, Pussycat Kill! Kill! and Beyond The Valley Of The Dolls, to some movies that only the most hardcore cinemaphiles such as myself would even know about: an example being the 1965 psycho-thriller Who Killed Teddy Bear? which starred Sal Mineo. That track, by the way, is an example of Cotton's skills at elevating the music from the original source material. While Who Killed Teddy Bear? was anything but a masterpiece (And yes, I DID see it...), Josie gives a lush treatment to the title track of the same name, adopting a combination of child-woman innocence and sex kitten seduction. It's a similar case with Girl in Gold Boots, a movie Josie described in a past interview as "undoubtedly one of the worst movies I have ever seen, in which insanely bad dancing hits an all-new low". The harmonica-driven title track from that 1968 film now enjoys a take-no-prisoners beat and—like many of the songs on the album—a vibe that truly defies genre. Green Slime, from The Green Slime (a Japanese-made sci-fi movie whose biggest claim to fame may be that it was used for the pilot episode of the TV series Mystery Science Theater 3000 in 1988.) is, well... every bit as campily irreverent and musically indulgent as the title would imply. Run Pussycat, from Russ Meyers' truly inimitable 1965 film Faster, Pussycat. Kill! Kill!, captures all the wild, untamed, and intractable spirit of the famous trio of sexy-but-tough women in the movie. Shiawaseo Yobou (translated as "Let's Try to be Happy") is from 1964's Chidora, the Three-Headed Monster. It's sung entirely in Japanese, which is appropriate because Ms. Cotton is, to use a piece of '80's pop culture lyrical ephemera, "Big In Japan". It's also the most unique track on the album, offering a delicately beautiful "cool down" period of sorts in between the renegade retro recklessness.



Photo by Piper Ferguson



To re-state the obvious, there are many standouts on Cotton's new album, but two tracks deserve special mention. Her take on Days of Now and Then, an idiosyncratic love song of sorts from 1970's ultra-campy (and originally X-rated) Beyond the Valley of the Dolls, captures the aura of the sole tender moment of genuine humanity from a sexploitation movie that would, by design, boldly defy any norms. For this truly beautiful track, Cotton's delivery is pure and often transcendent. The title track from 1966's The Black Klansman, a racially-themed song more relevant than ever in 2020, is unquestionably the album's greatest showcase for Cotton's unblemished vocal skills, allowing her to show off an impressively wide range of notes.

Invasion of the B-Girls, available for digital download for the first time, not only sounds better than ever but also boasts a brand new musical gem: Cotton's rendition of the opening song to her friend John Waters' 1974 cult triumph Female Trouble. Originally sung by the movie's late great star Divine, Josie's version is truly irresistible from start to finish. Water's prophetic roasting of celebrity culture makes the song's lyrics "I'm berserk! I like it fine! As long as I'm...Grabbing a headline!" more timely than ever as we enter the second half of 2020. Speaking of 2020, the unapologetically fun spirit of Josie Cotton's Invasion of the B-Girls is just what we need in these crazy times. (And we all thought the EIGHTIES were crazy...Wow!). By the time you reach to the album's finale, the beautifully mournful Goodbye Godzilla (from 1984's The Return of Godzilla), you'll be shedding a tear much like the heroine singing the unorthodox love song to the famous kaiju. Hopefully, there will be more music from the supremely talented Ms. Josie Cotton on the way, movie-inspired or otherwise. So don't say "Goodbye". Echoing the lyrics of the album's closing song, say "Sayonara, til we meet again".



Photo by Piper Ferguson

Josie Cotton's Invasion of the B-Girls, the new and remastered version, is available for digital download. Visit <http://www.JosieCottonMusic.com> for more information!