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JOSIE COTTON

Reissues Breakthrough Album *CONVERTIBLE MUSIC*

Featuring the Hits “He Could Be The One” and
“Johnny, Are You Queer?”

By Greg Fontaine

80s New Wave Star, Josie Cotton is back with us again. The lady that brought us the controversial song, “Johnny Are You

Queer,” has reissued her breakthrough album, *Convertible Music* this last month. Besides being on her breakthrough album, “Johnny Are You Queer” was also used on the

soundtracks to *Jackass Number Two*, and *Valley Girl*. This song really brought Josie a lot of attention, both good and bad, but making the best of it all, the good prevailed.

It was originally released by Elektra Records in 1982. The following year it received a lot of attention when it was used in the 1983 film, *Valley Girl*, starring E.J. Daily, Deborah Foreman and Nicholas Cage. In fact *Valley Girl* featured the first starring role of Nicholas Cage in a leading man position. Josie even had a cameo in the movie, as she appears during the prom scene performing "Johnny Are You Queer." He Could Be The One, and "School Is In."

We hadn't heard much about Josie until last fall when she emerged with a new song, "Ukrainian Cowboy." This has given her the push she needed to get back on her horse and start singing and recording again. "Ukrainian Cowboy" also kicked off a new album, *Everything Is Oh Yeah!* This album of finished songs had been hidden away in Josie's attic for a number of years. It took the producers of the show, *Stranger Things* to get her to dig it out of the attic. Evidently they were looking for some 80s inspired songs to include in the soundtrack to the show. Josie retrieved the songs from the attic and remixed the entire project, thus creating her new album. So far, *Everything Is Oh Yeah!* has been receiving great reviews from both the press and her fans as well.

All Music Guide raved, "Cotton is a weirder version of Cyndi Lauper with a voice big and versatile enough to match." *Boing Boing* added, "[*Everything Is Oh Yeah!*] is both a time capsule and a time-travel fantasy that bounces from new wave to surf to girl group to neo-rockabilly... there are some fun, mid-'80s gems in here for sure."

Now the news is all about the reissue of *Convertible*. This album re-emerges due to something that Josie learned about just recently. It seems that there is a cool breakthrough in the music industry for artists just like her. As Josie explains, "There's now a provision that for once is in favor of the artist. It's basically a legal window that allows recording artists to get their masters back from the label after a 30-year window. Most 80's artists are eligible but the catch is you have to formally request it. So as of a few weeks ago, I officially have the rights back to my first two records on Elektra Records. I am over the moon."

Convertible Music was released last month at the beginning of August. "This record changed everything for me," Josie exclaims enthusiastically. She released the album digitally on her own label, Kitten Robot Records. The reissue of the album also features the Punk favorite, "(Let's Do) The Blackout." "I'm very excited about [releasing this song]," she says. "It was on the B-side of the original 12" for 'Johnny, Are You Queer?' Not many people have heard it except my hardcore fans."

"*Convertible Music* essentially put me on the map as a recording artist and songwriter which was my ultimate goal," she says. "It's funny though I think my name ended up being more famous than I am if that makes any sense."

"Johnny Are You Queer" was written by the Paine brothers, Larson and Bobby (Stray Cats, The Go-Go's, Fear, Levi & The Rockets). They also produced *Convertible Music*, bringing a variety of songs styles into



the mix, such as Surf, New Wave, Girl Groups, and Pop.

Josie explains about the variety of music encapsulated in *Convertible Music*, "The Paine brothers had this incredible knack to predict musical trends and what would be relevant down the road. I was in awe of their talent and they saw something in me so we were a good match. They were great mentors to me and taught me so much about songwriting and record production."

Also included on *Convertible Music* are the songs, "He Could Be The One," "Rockin' Love", "Systematic Way," and "No Pictures Of Dad."

"Even though making this album was more like a David Lynch movie gone wrong, we laughed a lot as we were recording it," reminisces Josie who wrote a majority of the songs. "The Paine Brothers were incredible story tellers. Someone will tell their story one day and I hope it's me because I had a ringside seat. We made some noise... yes we did."

All Music Guide proclaimed *Convertible Music* as "a classic of the whole California girly pop scene of the early '80s, on a level with the Go Go's' *Beauty and the Beat*, Bonnie Hayes' *Good Clean Fun*, and the first Bangles EP." It goes on to perfectly encapsulate the album by saying, "the songs, mostly written either by Cotton herself or her producers, Bobby and Larson Paine, are neat '60s pastiches with elements of surf (the glorious opener, 'He Could Be the One'), Shangri-Las-style melodrama (the sultry 'I

Need the Night Tonight'), and Farfisa-driven swoony pop bliss ('Rockin' Love,' 'So Close')."

Josie tells us that she is set for a lot of work as she will be reissuing her entire catalog to be released on Kitten Robot Records. She is also hard at work in the studio recording her 8th and newest album release.

Check out the newly reissued *Convertible Music* by Josie Cotton, now out on Kitten Robot Records.

Convertible Music

Track listing

- "He Could Be the One" – 2:48
- "Rockin' Love" – 3:02
- "Waitin' for Your Love" – 3:21
- "So Close" – 2:39
- "I Need the Night, Tonight" – 3:12
- "(Let's Do) The Blackout" – 2:57
- "Johnny Are You Queer?" – 2:46
- "Systematic Way" – 2:57
- "Another Girl" – 3:14
- "Bye, Bye Baby" – 2:57
- "No Pictures of Dad" – 3:33
- "Tell Him" – 2:36

"Part Shangri-Las, part Rachel Sweet, the all-original Josie has long been a favorite hipster vocalist of mine ever since I took personally her nasally joyous anthem 'Johnny, Are You Queer?'"

- John Waters, director/actor/artist

"The summer's best beach record."

- Rolling Stone