



(Brett Callwood)

JOSIE COTTON PARTIES IN LONG BEACH

BRETT CALLWOOD × OCTOBER 17, 2022



Josie Cotton Parties in Long Beach: It was party party time at **Alex's Bar** from 2 p.m. on Sunday afternoon, as all manner of punks, misfits and glorious reprobates gathered at the beloved venue to celebrate the birthday of the also-beloved DJ Polyester.

The entertainment was solid throughout. **Cuspidors** is a Long Beach band and they seem to open for a lot of bands of the punky variety in this town, so we've caught them a few times. They rarely disappoint though — Gabriel Amos Harter has a touch of the David Byrne about him, though the sound is more Television than Talking Heads. There are melodies buried under the drone, and the effort is worth it.

Next up, **The McCharmllys** were an absolute joy. The "5 Piece Chicano Doo-Wop Band" hailing from Santa Ana & Los Angeles" (their Facebook bio) managed to both recall doo-wop bands of the past while adding a contemporary edge that is very attractive to punk, new wave and rockabilly fans. The band all look great, and the faster songs sit comfortably alongside old school crooner ballads. Recent single "Love Me Too" is a highlight, but there's no filler. We'll be checking them out further.



(Brett Callwood)

And so to the main event. New wave icon **Josie Cotton** emerged from the back rooms of Alex's Bar sporting what initially appeared to be a very dubious looking military uniform. Cotton immediately addressed it by nixing any ideas that it's Nazi in nature. Rather, she said, it's a German communist uniform. "I've been talked out of wearing it before," she said. Not this time. When the hat kept falling off during songs, she said "No wonder they lost!"

Historical humor aside, a 5 p.m. **Josie Cotton** show was a magnificent way to start an evening (and be home early enough not to make Monday morning a nightmare). She's assembled a superb band that can expertly and passionately play the full gamut of her quite eclectic repertoire. Notably, she's flanked by bassist Natalie Grace Sweet, and keyboardist Melanie Vammen (Pandoras, etc).

The setlist is awesome, start to finish. "School is In" from 1984's *From the Hip* gets things rocking early, and she also plays "License to Dance" from that same album. A fiery "Calling All Girls" is dedicated to birthday girl Polyester, and we get a welcome "Get Off the Road" from the underrated *Invasion of the B-Girls* album from 2020 — all covers of songs from B-movies.

Along a similar theme, we get her perfect cover of Johnny Rivers' "Secret Agent Man," plus manic renditions of "Calling All Girls" and "Pussycat Babylon." She closes with "Johnny Are You Queer" (obviously), and her cover of the Ramones' "Sheena is a Punk Rocker."

It was a sharp hour set but honestly, we could have done with another hour.



(Brett Callwood)

Josie Cotton Parties in Long Beach



(Brett Callwood)