

katrina chester



by Hal B. Selzer

Katrina Chester was the focal point of the popular New York City underground band Luxx, and then hit the stage to portray Janis Joplin in the Off-Broadway hit *Love, Janis*. She has also been a part of several Trans-Siberian Orchestra tours. Now she's back in the public eye once again, with a new EP of her own.

The new project owes more to the blues-tinged sounds of Janis than the heavy rock that brought Luxx their fame. "Well, I have to admit, I was prepared for anything being where I've come from, Luxx, a hard rock band," muses Katrina. "But I couldn't have imagined the response to be as positive and excited as it has been. Industry-wise, I think it's refreshing, and with Joss Stone breaking the neo-soul market for a lot of us, it's bringing an old form of R&B blues back to the forefront with the twist of 'new'."

The new recordings bear the mark of some well known rockers, even though the music might be a bit of a left turn for them. The guitarist, and Katrina's chief collaborator, is Ian Hatton, who played with the rock band Bonham. Manning the skins is none other than Tommy Stewart, who was the heavy beat behind Godsmack during their rise to the top.

While it may not be what Luxx, Bonham, or Godsmack fans might be used to, the initial reaction continues to be extremely positive. "The reaction to the little clips I've played for fans has really blown me away," Katrina says. "I guess the thing they say the most is they have always wanted to hear me sing like this, with my own words. What blew me away the most when the idea of going solo came about was fans, friends and even family all sort of acted like they have been waiting for this, like they knew this was the direction I needed to go in at this time. Here I was thinking everyone would be shocked, meanwhile it was like everyone has planned me a surprise party and I was the only one who didn't

know! I guess when you have amazing believers like Luxx fans, and I have been lucky enough to have that, they are true fans of the art you create no matter how, when, or who you do it with. Lucky little shit, I am!"

Besides Ian, Katrina had a few other noteworthy collaborators for the new material. "The first track, 'Believe,' Ian and Rob (the keyboard player from *Love, Janis*) started writing the music together. Then I wrote with a friend named Daryl Pediford (of Kool & The Gang), who I met from all my years of work with TSO. Daryl is an amazing writer and singer and he helped me write the bridge on 'Believe.' I fell in love with his ideas!"

Marty Fredrickson, one of the top writers in the industry, whose credits include Aerosmith, Ozzy Osbourne, and Faith Hill, played a part in the song "Who's Lovin' You." "This song was in production for a long time before it got to where it is now," Katrina relates. "It originally started off as a song Ian and I wrote. Then a friend I met from TSO, singer/piano player John Margolis, came over and helped us really hone in on it, helped shape it to the form it is. A few months later, a friend of ours, Marty, was in town on business. He loved the song, but wanted to work on the chorus with us. He did and made the chorus what it is today!"

The Katrina Chester CD is available at www.katrinachester.com, and at www.CDBaby.com. "I'm really excited about the enhanced part of the EP," adds Katrina. "There is a video for 'Who's Lovin' You,' and a 'Making Of...' video for your computer, and I'm so happy to be able to include them. The 'Making Of' cracks me up every time I see it!"

Katrina has always been known for her live performances, and she has plans to take the new band out on the road. "I've been made aware from a lot of people about this whole touring circuit out in Europe for the blues/R&B market," she says. "There are a lot of festivals going on out there, and in the states, and that is what my agent and I are concentrating on right now. I think we should be ready to tour in the new year and I'm excited about this whole new market!"

As far as personal favorites among the new songs, Katrina finds it hard to pick. "Man, the magic question," she laughs. "I loved recording every one of them. Ask me after I've toured this for a while, and I can answer it then, I'm sure!"

