

q feature: JOHN DUFF DOES IT AGAIN

By Jamie Booth

John Duff's first single off his yet untitled debut album, "Be Your Girl," is a celebratory anthem from another time. Simultaneously harkening Tom Jones, Cher, and Frank Sinatra, "Be Your Girl" is equally fresh and familiar.



Written by Duff, Eren Cannata (Grease: Rise of the Pink Ladies, Demi Lovato), and Koil PreAmp (Timbaland, Danity Kane) the explosive disco number with its 1940's inspired arrangement and top line is a romantic showstopper about unrequited love. Classic as it may sound, there's a twist.

"In today's modern world, when so many queer artists are releasing authentically queer music, I thought it would be fun to retroactively go back and design a legacy artist that never got a chance to exist," Duff explains. "In this song, I'm imagining a classic-that-never-happened from the point of view of a queer artist-that-never-was." John Duff's "Be Your Girl" is available now on Apple Music, Spotify, and all digital platforms.

"The song is about wanting to be chosen," continues Duff from his Massachusetts home. He admits it's a feeling he, as an artist, can relate with. "Every time I put out a new song, I have to compete for attention. You'd think after six years of releasing music, I wouldn't still be so desperate, but alas - here I am again, begging to 'Be Your Girl'."

Every element of the music was played by human beings - creating a warm and timeless sound. John Duff produced the song with Koil PreAmp and Eren Cannata, with additional engineering by Niko the Kid. Eren Cannata played guitar and bass on the track. Drums are by Daniel Crean, with strings by Godfrey Furchtgott, horns by Aaron Janick, and Miles Dalto on keys.

The visual was creative directed by John Duff after a year of studying Busby Berkley films. He took his treatment to Shawn Adeli (who also directed John Duff's "High Heels" music video), to oversee the vision. It is glamorous and theatrical. "It's everything I want to see in the world, and simultaneously the antithesis of what is cool right now," Duff says. When it came to choreography, Duff called

his friend and collaborator Nico O'Connor (Britney Spears, Pink, Bad Bunny) and together they choreographed the homage to movie musicals. But that's not all - Duff singlehandedly costumed the entire video, outfitting himself, as well as the 38 other complete looks for the dancers - all of whom he personally selected with O'Connor. "It may seem like I micromanage, but I have a vision. My personal success is contingent upon its execution."

John Duff grew up in a suburb outside of Baltimore, Maryland, the youngest of two sisters and a brother. He describes his childhood as "cute." Like many young children, he faced constant bullying. "I couldn't even take the bus in middle school because other kids couldn't control themselves around me - they were so upset by my existence." He says he doesn't hold any animosity towards anyone, and is even grateful for all he experienced. "The world will never be safe - even nature wants to kill you. I'm lucky that I was able to understand the risk I was assuming in living authentically. Words are not scary."



John eventually left Maryland to study musical theater at Syracuse University and after graduating, he made his way to the bright lights of New York City. He worked professionally as an actor - performing regionally, Off-Broadway, and commercially for six years. He even directed a short-lived off-Broadway musical *KatDashian's* - a hybrid of *Cats* and *The Kardashians*. The musical closed early after Andrew Lloyd Webber took legal action.

Since that time, John Duff has released multiple singles and music videos that have gone viral on social media including "House on Fire" and "Hokie Pokie". "The first part of my music career was a tribute to the kid that wanted to sing Britney Spears' songs in the talent show, but wasn't allowed. This new chapter is for the kid that took his parents' advice and sang Elvis and Frank Sinatra. Because honestly, they weren't wrong."

"Be Your Girl" is the first single from John Duff's upcoming concept album. It and the music that is to come, focuses on musicianship and nostalgia, and Duff says he will continue working in this traditional format. "There's a reason people don't make songs like this anymore," he reflects. "It ain't easy. If I can do this, I can do anything."

John Duff's "Be Your Girl" is being distributed independently and is available on Apple Music, Spotify, and all digital platforms. Its video is available on YouTube. Follow John Duff on Facebook and Instagram @ iamjohnduff

