



Sean Hargwell

BETTY WHO

A popular viral video leads to a major-label debut for a dance-pop diva

EVEN IF YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE HER name, you'd likely recognize Betty Who's breakout hit "Somebody Loves You," which played as the backdrop of a 2013 viral video of a man proposing to his boyfriend in Home Depot while dancing with a flash mob. "Even today, people are falling in love with that

song for the first time," says the Australian singer-songwriter of the amateur clip that amassed nearly 13 million YouTube views.

Who-born Jessica Newham—was one of the first to watch the uplifting video. "Before it went up, they emailed it to my manager asking if they could use the song. That night,

after we gave our OK and it went public, it had almost a million views." The song was initially released in 2012 via an independent EP, but Who signed with RCA just four days after the proposal was uploaded. The sudden success led the classically trained cellist to drop out of Boston's Berklee College of Music just weeks before graduation to move to New York.

In 2014, nearly a year and a half after its release, "Somebody Loves You" went to No. 1 on Billboard's Dance Club Songs chart. The slow build allowed Who to focus on her major-label debut, *Take Me When You Go*. "If the song had been a huge, out-of-the-gate hit, I would have had nothing to follow it up with," says the 6-foot-1 singer. "I was challenged by the people I worked with. I wasn't allowed to settle—if a line wasn't perfect, I wouldn't rest until it was. I enjoyed that process."

With a sound evoking dance-pop of the 1980s and '90s, Who name-checks such artists as Michael Jackson, Madonna and Whitney Houston as influences, peppering the list with singer-songwriters Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan. But she's most often compared to Swedish pop star Robyn because of her retro-dance hooks and platinum-blond poof of hair.

"I'm a huge fan, but I didn't go in saying we should make this sound like Robyn, says Who, 23. "If anything, I said we should make it sound like Mariah Carey meets Phil Collins."

But how exactly does a classically trained cellist turn into a dance-pop diva? "It may seem like a stretch, but to me they were married. My whole life was about music—not just classical—so genres didn't mean anything to me."

—Katy Kroll

