

**Piero Piccioni (featuring Catherine Howe)**  
***Il Dio Sotto La Pelle* Original Soundtrack**  
**(Sonor Music Editions)**  
**2020 (Originally Recorded 1974)**

BY ALICE PRICE-STYLES

“Piero was very taken with Marvin Gaye’s *What’s Going On*, and as I absolutely loved the album, I was very glad when Piero played it at a meeting in his apartment to discuss musical style,” recounts English singer and songwriter Catherine Howe of her first time working with Italian composer Piero Piccioni in Rome in 1974, on the rather exquisite song “Revelation.”

Howe had signed to the music-publishing company Carlin Music in 1973, and it was Carlin’s vice president Paul Rich—a musician himself who sang and played guitar for many years with dance bandleader Lou Preager and his orchestra—who asked her if she would like to sing for Piccioni.

“It was quite a taxing twenty-four hours for me, because I didn’t hear the song until I arrived, and then I had only the orchestration to listen to and a rather complex score to follow—and the lyrics weren’t written!” says Howe. “I really wondered how the next day’s recording session in Rome’s huge International Recording Studios was going to go.”

Of course, as the recording of “Revelation” can testify, it all went very well indeed. And just a few weeks later, Howe would return to Rome to record the vocals for “It’s Possible”—a sultry soundtrack gem that has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity in recent years as hip-hop sample fodder, as well as being Tyler, the Creator’s choice song to get high to in style.

To press play on “It’s Possible” is to press pause on everything else. A standout track on the magnificent, and recently reissued, soundtrack to Folco Quilici and Carlo Alberto Pinelli’s 1974 documentary film *Il Dio Sotto La Pelle* (God Under the Skin), an anthropological piece that explores the lives of several individuals who, in search of discovering a lost sense



of connection with the Earth and their own humanity, have renounced modern-day industrialized society and embraced ancient, alternative ways of living.

Piero Piccioni was as talented as he was prolific—scoring over three hundred films in his lifetime for the crème de la crème of Italian cinema, including Visconti, Antonioni, Rossellini, and more—and through mixing lounge with soul and psychedelic touches, plus use of a beloved Hammond organ, he created an elegant soundscape to evoke the film’s sense of searching for communion with the Earth and nature.

“It’s Possible” has a profound sense of sadness and hope tied up in its lyrics. Howe’s sonorous voice sings of desolate landscapes where “green grass” and “millions of flowers” used to grow, and yearns to once more “feel love running round in my brain,” ending with impassioned conviction on the refrain, “it’s possible.” Howe’s folk sensibility—and the sensitivity to nature that runs through her own discography, from 1971’s *A Beautiful Place* to 2010’s *English Tale*—resonates perfectly.

Similar to Gaye’s *What’s Going On*, “It’s Possible” captures a society in spiritual and ecological crisis; and through transcendent instrumentation and grounding human voice shows that the beauty in our life force is still there to be found. ●