



JENNA DREY

REUNITING POP AND DANCE MUSIC

By Bill Biss

Photography by George Kempet

With a three-octave range and a voice that shines with the tonal qualities of Chrissie Hynde from The Pretenders and Karen Carpenter exquisiteness, Jenna Drey simply sparkles in a stunning new set of songs called *One Step Further*. Taking the classic formula of pop and dance and bringing it vividly alive, Jenna wants to bring back a genre that for the most part...has all but disappeared on the radio. Her skills as a singer and songwriter prove that she has created a winning combination of a great pop sound spun into a whirling dervish of dance music. Working with two-time Grammy Award winning producer, Nile Rogers, known for his work with Madonna, Diana Ross and David Bowie along with sound engineer for Shania Twain, Kevin Churko, Jenna Drey's music is sheer enjoyment.

Buzz: *Congratulations on your record. It's so good to hear this genre of music once more. It really is a fun combination of pop and dance. It reminds me of the classic 80's vibes of Janet Jackson, Madonna or Sheena Easton.*

Jenna Drey: That makes me very happy that you like it. That's always been my thing. As an artist that's always loved that kind of pop/dance style and as a songwriter; that's my love and that's me. It's kind of like between adult contemporary and dance.

It's been a struggle in this day and age because this kind of pop took a back seat and was replaced by R&B and hip-hop. That music sort of became the new pop and so I thought, "I'll just keep doing this and eventually someone will like it."

Oh definitely. You have an incredible voice. What was the experience like of making *One Step Further* with Nile Rogers?

Nile is a really nice man. He was not at all pretentious, not at all what you'd think of when you think of a famous producer. He had no ego or attitude. He was really down to earth. He treated me as a professional. It was just like one musician to another.

"Don't Want to Cry Anymore," is that one of the songs that you wrote with Kevin Churko?

That's correct.

That song has an excellent arrangement. I can just envision putting the top down on the convertible and

flooring it to that song.

It's a very intense song. That's somehow the way my mind feels about it. Like you say, you want to drive fast when you listen to it. It's definitely about frustration and feeling like sometimes your life is a complete hurricane. I think that's something that everyone can relate to... when you feel like you're in a tornado and there is no way out (laughter).

My favorite on the CD is your cover of "We're All Alone." What you've done with it by changing the tempo is fantastic.

Thank you. I always thought that was a beautiful song. I thought that could actually work in a different style. I went back and forth on it. Is it going to work? Is it not going to work? I just thought it would work as a great dance song. I'm glad you like it. I wasn't sure what people were going to think about it.

Your voice has a beautiful Karen Carpenter quality to it on "We're All Alone."

I consider that a true compliment because she is considered to have an absolutely beautiful voice. Over all these years, she still has one of the most beautiful female voices. When I do my vocal exercises, I find myself just singing some of her songs. I've always loved the Carpenters. I think they're great.

You've been performing all over and at several Prides. How has the response been?

Everyone's loved it. Everyone has been completely into it. The response has been great. The dance market over all has been really receptive. When I think about dance music...I think about Kylie Minogue and Madonna and all those artists that are really crossover pop/dance. I feel so strongly about this, but I think it really stinks that the day happened when pop radio said, "Oh that's dance, so we can't play that anymore."

At some point, dance music became this techno, trance thing. It lost the music. At that point, they stopped playing dance music on the radio and there was this big break that occurred, where all of a sudden if you're dance, you can't be pop. I think that whole thing in my mind is bullshit.

Right.

I'm pretty much set on the fact that... in other



countries like England and Europe, pop music and dance music can work together and people really like it. It's really only here in the United States that there has been this big division. I'm really happy that Madonna did that dance record because it did get played on all the pop stations and even though the record itself, some people didn't think it was her best work, a lot of people still love hearing dance music. The pop markets are still very much stuck in the urban mentality and I'm going to keep doing what I can to make that crossover of pop and dance happen.

Your song, "Shadow of a Stranger" has a very cool James Bond vibe to it. Just hearing that song, I can envision it as the opening track for the next James Bond film.

Well! Congratulations, cause that's why I wrote it! I swear to God. I wrote that because

in my head I said, "I'm gonna write this theme for the next James Bond movie." This will be like the modern "For Your Eyes Only."

It fits perfectly for that kind of classic composition that they use for all the Bond films. That's one of the most intriguing things about your voice. It works in some many different musical styles as well. What's the next single scheduled for release?

It's going to be the song, "By the Way." "By the Way" had a tremendous response. The record promoters went crazy over that song.

If you ever perform here in San Diego...just give me a heads up and I'll be there.

I sure will. Thank you so much.

To hear Jenna Drey and purchase her latest CD, go to jennadrey.com.