

That Sound: Jenna Drey

Interviewed by DJ Chris Allen

In the ever-changing universe of dance music, there are very few artists who have the talent and support to achieve superstar pop status. Singer/songwriter Jenna Drey is prepared to prove that she is the exception.

Jenna is a very busy girl in our big gay world, but she took a few minutes to talk to *SHOUT* about her new album, *One Step Further To Crazy*, and much more.

Chris Allen: How did your performance at Chicago's Gay Pride go?

Jenna Drey: The performances all were incredible. I had a show on Friday night at the club, Circuit, where there were over 1,000 excited fans. Then I did a six song set for the Pride main stage afternoon performance. The crowd grew with every passing song, and it was great to see many people singing the words to even the new song, too.



Then the highlight was the Sunday Parade. There were over 400,000 people at this parade. I did about nine performances along the parade on a float that stopped about every quarter mile. Even though it was a cold rainy day, I had great time performing for

every single person, despite the fact that the mascara was running down my face, and my hair was frizzed out about two feet in every direction.

CA: Would you say that you have a big gay following?

JD: I have a wonderful gay following, and I'm thrilled about that. The gay community has always been so supportive of my music. I've always had many gay friends, and my male friends always joke about the fact that they think I was born a gay man in a woman's body.

I'm proud that my music has been so accepted and loved by this audience. When I'm performing, I really feel like I can just be myself, and they make me feel truly appreciated.

CA: Everyone's asking - who's the hottie in the video for "Why Should I Believe You?"

JD: Oh, there were several. But you are probably referring to "KILT BOY!" - right? Yes, that is the notorious Scott Leigh, who is an amazing dancer/choreographer in my video and in all my live shows. You can meet him in person if you make it to a Jenna Drey live show. Darn, I

think he just got married this weekend. But maybe the right boy can convert him?

CA: How'd you hook up with Mike Rizzo, Josh Harris, and Giuseppe D? They are among the cream of the crop of today's remixers and producers.

JD: I submitted my work to their management, and they were all excited to work with me. These guys are all great producers and arrangers, and I'm looking forward to working with all of them again. They all could relate to my style of dance and were excited to contribute their talent to the singles and remixes.

CA: How many tracks of your have made it to the Billboard charts?

JD: I've had my last two consecutive singles make it on the U.S. Billboard charts and the U.K. Dance charts. Both "Killin' Me" and "Why Should I Believe You" made both the Billboard Radio and Club charts. I'm also thrilled that "Killin' Me" made it into the Billboard Top 50 Most-Played Dance Songs of the Year of 2005.

CA: You wrote or co-wrote every track on the album with your production partner Keven Churko, except two really well-done covers of the classics hits "We're All Alone" and "All Out Of Love." What was it about those two songs that made you decide to include them on the album?

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JD: I've always loved the song, "We're All Alone." There was always something haunting and romantic about it that no other song ever created for me. I was daydreaming one day, playing and singing it on the piano, and it suddenly hit me - "This could be a dance song!" At first everyone thought it wouldn't work, but I was adamant about it. Now the fans are loving it.

CA: *The down and medium tempo tracks on this album - like "Impossibility," "Shadow of a Stranger," and my fave "I Told You So" - are awesome. Is that style of pop something you are passionate about, or is it more of a balance thing?*

JD: I love writing all styles of music. I studied classical composition in college, and I've written every style of music - including orchestral instrumental compositions. Now that would be interesting to include on an album.

I don't differentiate between great dance and great pop music. To me, they are the same, except dance music has a faster danceable tempo. SO many records today have all the songs sound the same. I think listeners enjoy having a variety of songs on an album; it makes things more interesting. That's my opinion, and the fans so far have strongly agreed.

CA: *What synths or software did you use in writing the songs on "One Step Further To Crazy?"*

JD: Believe it or not, most songs were started on the

acoustic piano. I wrote many of the choruses on the piano in full. Then I took the foundational idea and started a Pro Tools sequence to develop the song from there. All the songs were recorded and mixed on a full blown HD Accel ProTools system, and the sounds used were from multiple synths.

I was also lucky enough to record in a world class studio. Kevin Churko is the master engineer and producer in that department. I just focus on the writing, the melodies, and the lyrics

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JR: Mary J. Blige

CA: Is there any particular software that you are fond of?

JR: You know, I'm a Pro Tools guy. At home, I do a little bit of acid and garage band.

CA: When you're simply chillin' - what kind of music do you enjoy listening to?

JR: Lite FM, 60s & 70s soul and R & B.

CA: Awesome - thanks bunches dude. Is there anything you wish to add?

JR: Keep house alive.

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DJ Chris "Dig'm" Allen is a musician and journalist who lives in Austin. Catch him spinning live at Rain on 4th in Austin and Halo in Bryan/College Station.

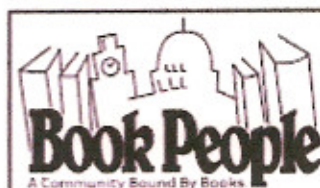
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CA: What advice do you have for those following the dream that you are living?

JD: Don't listen to anyone who tells you "no," or that you are not good enough - ignore the negativity and move on. But also make sure your dream is for yourself, and not based on gaining other people's acceptance. Follow a dream because you like the journey - the task, the practice, the craft of what it is you are trying to create - and not just an end result.

Jenna's music can be purchased at many online music retailers. Stay tuned for upcoming news and performances at www.JennaDrey.com.

To read more of the Chris Allen's interview with Jenna Drey, visit www.ShoutTexas.com



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