

DONNA de LORY

LEARNING TO GRAB MADONNA

Going solo after exciting the world as one of Madonna's two female back-up singers, Donna de Lory "expresses herself" with her own dangerously addictive debut album, *Donna de Lory*, on MCA Records. With songs from various artists, including one written by Madonna, Donna wrote much of the material herself during the filming of *Truth or Dare* and while touring with "Blond Ambition" and "Who's That Girl."

Just as Madonna changes personas from one album to the next, Donna seems to change her very essence from moment to moment, right before your very eyes. Walking into the living room of her press agent's office in almost a completely transparent blacklace pants suit, Donna looks ready to fit the bill as the most sensuous of divas. However, jumping onto the couch next to me, she suddenly seems like an eight-year-old girl. Admittedly shy, Donna exudes the affectionate nature of an adoring younger sister and the worldly essence of an exotic dancer at the same time.

Although now seasoned by years of singing and dancing with one of the world's most notorious legends, Donna recalls with humor how shocked she was when she first started. "During rehearsals, Madonna used to tell us 'Grab me! Grab me!' I mean, she wanted us to grab her in our arms and create this thing like we were all lovers. And I didn't get it at first, I said, 'You want me to grab you like I want to fight you?' and she's like 'No! I want you to grab me like you want me!'"

Impassioned about many subjects from the environment to AIDS research, Donna is especially emphatic about confronting homophobia. "It's the number-one test for me with straight guys. 'If you have any attitudes, if you can't deal with it, you have no business in my life at all. I mean, it's a number-one thing for me!' It can be disappointing to lose a relationship that way, but that's the way it has to be."

Donna lives with her brother, Alan de Lory, a screenwriter/artist in L.A. He teaches disabled children gymnastics as well as working for Donna, and has shared everything about his life with her, including his

own coming-out process. "He's incredible. I love him so much. He's my best friend. We grew up together, we're just one year apart. He's the one that's going to keep me grounded through everything."

Although Donna has lost many of her friends to AIDS and, at fifteen, her mother to cancer, she still feels very connected with all of them. "I have this strong belief that everything that ever happens to you, you can kind of like close your eyes and be there again. The love that you have for somebody, will always live."

"I never felt good about going to my mom's grave and talking to her. I always thought my mom was still around. Her energy was there. I was in the studio once and I felt something like a feeling around me and I thought, 'wow, this feels like my mom is here.' My mom's come to me a lot in my dreams. I'm telling you, I have wild dreams."

As a tribute to one of her friends she has

lost to AIDS, Matthew Garey, she wrote the song "World With No Shame". "I struggled so hard, after working with Madonna especially. I'd go out there and I had my own voice and I had something I wanted to say. He was always there for me to tell me 'You can do it'. And he was such a great writer. The song 'Think It Over', he wrote the lyric to that. It meant a lot to me. All of a sudden I get this phone call...it was so sudden. A friend of Matthew's told me I should write Matthew a letter because I didn't get to talk to him and that somehow he would get it. So I wrote that song and that was my letter to him. He is an angel in my eyes."

Along with the release of her album is the single and video of "Praying For Love," which Donna confirms: "I'm still praying for love, definitely. That song is really about the bottom line. I know that is the most important thing, to have someone in your life. Every night when you go to bed alone you really realize it. You realize just how much you have to share with somebody and how much you can learn from someone. I'm definitely looking for that." ▼

Matthew Davis has had plays produced at Playwright's Horizons and attends NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

**MADONNA'S
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INTO HER OWN
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