

Donna De Lory - Amazon.com Review

Donna de Lory has several solo albums out, but she's still best known as a back-up singer for Madonna, fleshing out choruses since the mid 1980s. There's more than a little bit of Madonna in De Lory's voice, at once fragile and vulnerable, yet still powerful, with a gospel-like yearning. On her own, De Lory has crafted artful pop on albums like Bliss and In the Glow, but she also tends toward the mystical and began incorporating Sanskrit mantras or Kirtans into her songs, a tact culminated on The Lover & the Beloved, a full-fledged Mantra journey. De Lory draws from the golden oldies of mantras, including "Hare Krishna," but revs them up with electronica beats, verse-chorus arrangements, multi-tracked vocals, and electronic textures sprinkled in with the sitars and tablas. Cameron Stone weaves his processed cello through De Lory's melodies and harmonium in serpentine rivulets, tying together the tablas of Girish Gambhira and the answering chants of Kirtan singer, Dave Stringer. Endowed with the materiel girl's sense of pop form and irresistible hooks, De Lory posits a confluence between pop and spiritual music, in which a repeated chorus has the same mantric effect as a chant. Her chants could be hymns to Krishna or a plea to a lover, but they are equally ecstatic and powerful.

- John Diliberto