



MO KENNEY BRINGS IT HOME

Q & A by: Tiffany Thornton Photo: Paul Wright

It's been an incredibly impressive year for multi-talented Canadian singer/songwriter Mo Kenney. Since her debut self-titled album was released in the Fall of 2012, Mo Kenney has established herself as more than just an emerging artist. Kenney won the SOCAN songwriting award for her hit song "Sucker", several Nova Scotia music awards and this year's Pop Recording Of The Year at the ECMAs. Mo's powerful voice and rock/folk sound seem to garner notoriety wherever she goes. She has been performing all over Canada and Europe along side Canadian musicians Joel Plaskett (the producer of both her albums), Ron Sexsmith and Gordie Sampson.

Her much anticipated new album, aptly titled "In My Dreams", out this fall, finds Mo exploring different genres and delving into a stronger rock vibe. Local Connections Halifax sits down with Mo before she embarks on a fall tour of Germany, Austria and the U.K. Over a pint at one of her favorite haunts, Celtic Corner in Dartmouth, we chat about the amazing new album, climbing trees, and keeping it real.

Q: THE TITLE OF THE NEW ALBUM "IN MY DREAMS" IS QUITE THE DEPARTURE FROM YOUR FIRST SELF-TITLED ALBUM. DO YOU FEEL LIKE THE VISION YOU HAD EARLY ON FOR YOUR MUSIC HAS BEEN ACTUALIZED?

It's really an ongoing vision. This album was great to work on because I felt super comfortable with Joel this time. With the first album I feel like I was pretty nervous being around Joel.

I am a huge fan of his music, and I had never met him before so I was quite shy. We were really able to experiment together musically with this album.

Q: THE ALBUM COVER HAS A REAL MATURITY TO IT; A SENSE OF COMING INTO YOUR OWN & REDEFINING YOUR IDENTITY MUSICALLY. FROM THE SOUNDS OF THIS ALBUM IT HAS A WHOLE NEW VIBE TO IT AND YOUR VOICE IS A LOT STRONGER.

It's definitely more of a production compared to the last record. The last one was more guitar and voice based, but with this album I have been working with a band. I have a three-piece band that I work with; they play base and drums. I felt like with "In My Dreams" I had more freedom to go in that direction. Its bigger and heavier - more rock then folk. More rock inspired.

Q: I REALLY LOVE THE TITLE "IN MY DREAMS". HOW DID YOU DECIDE ON IT?

I contemplated calling it "Sophomore Jinx" with my weird sense of humor, but I found that there were about ten other records that had that name! So I felt like "In My Dreams" was better suited. There is a song on the album entitled "In My Dreams", plus I dream a lot so it all made sense for the title.

Q: LYRICALLY YOUR MUSIC HAS RAWNESS TO IT. DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE EXPOSED YOURSELF MORE WITH THIS NEW ALBUM?

It wasn't really a conscious thing, but I feel like my writing is

a lot more honest - not that I wasn't honest - before but now I feel like I was able to lay it out a bit more clearly. My writing has changed, but I haven't noticed. Preparing I notice, but with writing I just do it. I am not so conscious of it. It just evolves.

Q: JOEL PLASKETT PRODUCED THIS ALBUM AND THE TWO OF YOU COLLABORATED TOGETHER AND CO-WROTE ON A FEW OF THE SONGS. IT SEEMS YOU BOTH HAVE SUCH A SUCCINCT SYNERGY WHEN WORKING TOGETHER. WAS THAT ALWAYS THERE, OR HAS THE RELATIONSHIP REALLY EVOLVED?

I felt an instant affinity with Joel. I think its because he is such a nice guy and we have similar tastes in music. We share a similar vision and are into the same kind of stuff musically, so we are usually on the same page when it comes to production. The title song on the album was written in Cape Breton last summer. I wasn't sure if I was going to use it. Then I showed it to Joel and he and I worked on it. "Untouchable" Joel and I wrote together. It started out like a piano thing and a melody, but I wasn't really sure what to do with it, so I brought it to Joel and he really liked it so we wrote it together. "Telephones" is the cover song and it's a Mardeen song.

Q: THIS ALBUM SEEMS LIKE IT WAS A LABOUR OF LOVE. WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOU WHILE RECORDING?

I think the challenge is you can only do one song at a time. It's often hard to see the big picture and see the record come together, so I worry what will this be like when it all comes together; the sound. That was the struggle wondering what it would be like when it all came together.

Q: ARE THERE ANY SONGS ON THE NEW ALBUM THAT REALLY TOUCHED A PERSONAL CHORD FOR YOU?

"In My Dreams", I think. There are a lot of love songs on the album, but there are also some anti-love songs. Its kind of manic in that way - the record ends with three love songs and those were pretty personal.

Q: WHERE DO YOU DRAW A LOT OF YOUR INSPIRATION?

It's kind of weird and morbid, but the graveyards near my house in Dartmouth. I go there all the time especially at night. I love to climb the trees there.

Q: WHOM WOULD YOU LOVE TO WORK WITH IN THE FUTURE?

I was listening to Death Cab For Cutie, the group I loved when I was a kid. They were a new band that I loved listening to and I was revisiting those albums. I would really like to work with their Singer/Songwriter Ben Gibbard.

Q: WHAT CAN WE ANTICIPATE FROM NEW ALBUM

More depth for sure. It goes a bit deeper this time.

MO KENNEY'S LATEST ALBUM "IN MY DREAMS" IS NOW AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE ON ITUNES.

Neptune
THEATRE
GEORGE POTHITOS artistic director



A CHRISTMAS
STORY
By Jean Shepherd
Adapted by Philip Grecian

NOV 25 - JAN 4

902 429 7070
neptunetheatre.com

CAA eastport
FINANCIAL GROUP