

Interview by Tim Board

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Photo credit: Rafael Paiva

KENDRA ERIKA

Although considered tone deaf as a child, Kendra Erika out of South Florida has gone on to achieve musical success. This includes several songs landing in the top ten on the Billboard dance charts, including hitting number one in 2019 with her remake of “Self Control.” Kendra’s 2020 single “Avalanche” was named as a finalist for the Palm Beach International Music Awards. However, beyond the accolades and milestones, this talented artist utilizes her exceptional voice to give back by teaming up with War Child, an organization that “works toward a world in which no child’s life is torn apart by war.” Kendra was kind enough to take some time to conduct the below interview via email with me.

Tim Board: How did you get started in music?

Kendra Erika: I knew I wanted to perform at such a young age, and it was only a matter of time I got involved with community and school performances. That ushered in classical training, which then led to me building upon that learned foundation in exploring different genres and styles. From that point on, I then wanted to take it to a more independent level in writing and recording my own songs. I was then, over the years and still counting, presented a series of people to collaborate with, and to this date, I’ve had five top ten Billboard hits, and more to come in the broader realm of both the global pop and dance markets.

TB: At what point did you decide you wanted to pursue music as a career?

KE: Partially in my mid to late teens and then throughout college. After I graduated from college, that’s when I began pursuing it full time.

TB: I read that your mother would not support you in a full-time music career until you finished college. You now have a degree in communications and international business. Did completing college help prepare you for your music career, and if so, how?

KE: It allowed me to develop and grow organically. I was still writing and recording throughout my college days to keep the instrument going strong and polished, as well as gigging and performing locally at lounges and bars. I feel that by going through college, I was able to really find myself and certainly chalk up a lot of experience to be able to write upon and pull from. It enabled me to reach a level of maturity artistically and in my individuality.

TB: You trained as a classical performer, but your music is mainly dance or pop. How was the transition for you from the two genres?

KE: Having that foundation legitimately helped me to transition from classical/theatre to jazz to pop/dance very fluidly.

TB: Who has inspired you musically?

KE: Frank Sinatra, Andrea Bocelli, Lene Del Rey, Inna, Kylie Minogue, Shakira

Music by Kendra Erika
"Song of Hope"



KENDRA ERIKA

TB: Who are you listening to these days?

KE: Lately, it's been necessarily not 'who' I've been listening to, but 'what' I've been listening to. I've been gravitated towards a lot of Deep House these days. I don't like to limit myself to what's on the main airwaves. I do my own research and find what turns me on and I run with it.

TB: You have worked with several Grammy-winning producers such as Charlie Midnight, Jan Fairchild, and John DeNicola, to name a few. What have you learned from these producers that helps you when creating/recording new songs?

KE: The key is to treat each collaboration as a 'come as you are' party and just be yourself. Especially when it comes to old school thinkers, making yourself out to be one to fit the current mold isn't attractive. That also goes for the new school thinkers on the other side of the aisle. The common objective that is yearned for on both sides is to be independent, authentic, and something that is refreshing and people forward.

TB: Up until recently your music style was more dance. Your last two singles 'Avalanche' and 'Song of Hope' are more ballads/slower tempos. Why the change of styles?

KE: Why not? It's always wonderful to switch it up here and there.

TB: You are donating a percentage of profits from the song 'Song of Hope' to the organization War Child. How did you get teamed up with this organization?

KE: I feel the universe played a huge role in the partnership. My two platforms that I have been ultra-passionate about for years now -- anti-child and human trafficking and pro education -- are supported and held in high regard by War Child. And so, the positive forces made a match from heaven.

TB: What is on the horizon for the rest of 2021 for Kendra?

KE: I've got an album in the works as well as visual representations, aka music videos to be filmed and released this year. Diving more deeply into how I can utilize my voice to be a vehicle in promoting my philanthropic endeavors in the prevention of child and human trafficking and pro education.

TB: The new album in the works, will it be brand new material, or will it be your previous singles packaged into one album?

KE: I'm thinking brand new material for the album...freshly dynamic and very sonically visceral. This one is going to show a lot of my ability and what I'm capable of.

Kendra has been a force to reckon with on the Dance Charts and her latest singles, although a departure from the dance genre, are enjoying success of their own. The album sounds like it displays even more of the talent that Kendra Erika possesses. It is also refreshing to see musicians giving back, such as Kendra is with War Child. You can learn more about the organization War Child at www.warchild.org. I want to thank Kendra for taking the time to do the interview and I'm looking forward to what the remainder of 2021 brings for her!

Links to website and social media sites:

www.kendraerika.com

[facebook.com/KendraErikaMusic](https://www.facebook.com/KendraErikaMusic)

www.twitter.com/KendraErika

www.instagram.com/kendraerika

<https://www.tiktok.com/@kendraerika>

Watch the video for "Song of Hope": <https://youtu.be/TN2S0e0mxFk>