

## Mya

Remember the mood ring? There was a time when it was a must have accessory for any 'cool' guy or gal. Containing some mystic chameleon-like liquid that responded to the wearer's body temperature, the mood ring possessed a seemingly psychic ability to reveal the wearer's changing moods with its changing colors. Legend had it you could figure out how someone was feeling just by glancing at the mood ring on his or her finger.

One listen to Mya's third effort and it's obvious why this multi-talented and dynamic woman (recipient of a Grammy and a SAG Award), opted to title her album *Moodring*. Humorous, intense, playful, sexy, wise, womanly, off kilter and on point, *Moodring* is a sonic indicator of how Mya is living, loving and creating in 2003. Featuring songs co-written and produced by Mya and production from Missy Elliott, Timbaland, Damon Elliott, Knobody, Rockwilder, Omen, Tricky, Jam & Lewis, Ron Fair and Mya herself, *Moodring* is an honest reflection of Mya's mystic essence. "There are a lot of different emotions and situations on *Moodring*," Mya explains, "and that's because I really wanted to show how I feel. Because I'm at a point in my life where I'm comfortable sharing those sides of me. This album has been a playground for me."

*Moodring* is lyrically open, and musically Mya pushes herself in directions only hinted at before. From edgy hip hop flavors to smoothed out soul, banging techno to understated pop and sultry reggae (a la "Things Come and Go" featuring Sean Paul), the textures and tones on the album are as expansive as the emotions. "Moodring is a very hands-on record and it's very personal. My hope is that people will get to know me and also just enjoy some really good music."

An example of good music is the single "My Love Is Like... Wo," produced by Missy Elliott. Sexed-up and slinky, "Wo" is a no-holds-barred statement of purpose that finds Mya presenting herself as a decidedly in-control woman. At first, Mya admits, "I didn't like the song, or maybe didn't feel comfortable singing lines like 'my ass is like wo.' But after living with the track for about a year or so I started changing my mind, and really began to love it. I even came up with the concept for the video!"

Another song that takes Mya into uncharted territory is the techno rave-up "Whatever Bitch," produced by Mya and Damon Elliott. "That was a fun song," Mya laughs. Originally written three years ago, "Whatever Bitch" was inspired by Mya's desire to create a song tailor-made for the stage. Fueled by her numerous club dates, Mya and Elliott cooked up this high energy and humorously catty track. "I remember after Damon and I finished the song we drove down the Sunset Strip blasting the track and people just stopped and turned their heads! This was just a type of emotion that I wanted to explore and it came out great!"

That growth is also evident in the projects Mya undertook during the "down time" between albums. Trained as a dancer, Mya had a show-stopping supporting role in the critically acclaimed 2003 Academy Award-winner, *Chicago*. The cast of *Chicago* also won a SAG award for best ensemble. Working on *Chicago* was an incredible experience

for Mya. “I had to act, sing and dance and having to push myself like that was incredible. Being in a musical really took me back because before I’d even landed a record deal, I’d thought about relocating from Maryland to New York City and pursuing a career on Broadway. It was just amazing to work with that cast and to have the chance to really show different elements of my talent to a mainstream audience.”

Mya also just wrapped filming a small but pivotal role in the forthcoming Artisan Entertainment/Miramax Production feature *Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights*, playing a Latin big band singer in the 1950s. The movie is scheduled to open on February 13, 2004. “I thought about Lena Horne, Dionne Warwick and all those Ricky Ricardo performances on *I Love Lucy*. It was another chance to try something new and let people see me as a well rounded entertainer.”

A risqué side of Mya was showcased on the smash single “Lady Marmalade,” which also featured Pink, Christina Aguilera, and Lil’ Kim. This number #1 smash hit from the Academy Award-winning film *Moulin Rouge* won the 2002 Grammy for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group and the MTV Award for Best Video of the Year. The project marked the first time Mya had collaborated with other female artists, which made the song even more special. “‘Lady Marmalade’ gave everyone a chance to show another side of themselves and having that freedom certainly pushed towards the direction I went into on *Moodring*.”

At the age of 18, Mya burst on the scene with her infectious self-titled debut CD, which scored three top 10 singles, “It’s All About Me,” “Movin’ On” and “My First Night With You.” The spotlight continued to shine on Mya when “Ghetto Supastar” (from the *Bulworth* soundtrack) became a huge hit, as did “Take Me There” from the *Rugrats* soundtrack.

*Fear of Flying* found Mya moving towards a more mature sound. The album yielded the hits “Case of the Ex,” “The Best of Me” and “Free.” Mya supported the album with a rigorous touring schedule, bringing her dynamic fusion of dance with live vocals to audiences internationally.

Mya’s appeal isn’t limited to music. She was featured in several ad campaigns and today stars in a successful spot for Coke. Mya also takes time to give back, and in particular is outspoken about teen issues. She has served in past years on the advisory board of the Secret to Self Esteem program (an alliance between the Partnership of Women’s Health and Secret antiperspirant), dedicated to helping girls become strong women; and is presently working with the Pantene sponsored Pro-Voice Program.

Now with *Moodring*, Mya is poised to solidify her position as one of the most dynamic and diverse female entertainers around. Asked what she wants to convey, Mya replies “I’m hoping that fans will walk away with more of a sense of themselves and me.” The mood is ever changing and bright.