

Film Close-Up: Mandy Moore

by Joey_Berlin

When she first appeared on the music scene in 1999 at the age of 15, Mandy Moore was the runt of the pop diva litter. While a couple of former Mouseketeers were locked in an escalating battle for the top slot, Moore chose to keep her squeaky clean image and bided her time. The adorable Moore never showed a lot of skin, staggered blearily in public or suffered a paparazzi meltdown. In short, she is cool, cute and smart.

MANDY MOORE - Mandy Moore plays an adorable caterer in the comedy 'Because I Said So.' CNS Photo courtesy of Suzanne Tenner. And she is also the one with the film career. Moore was savvy enough to play against type in the satires "American Dreamz" and "Saved!" Now she is co-starring opposite her screen idol, Diane Keaton, in the relationship comedy "Because I Said So." Keaton plays Moore's neurotic and meddling mom, who frets that her daughter is still single.

Off-screen, Moore continues to balance her dual careers in music and film, with a new CD due out in May and another comedy coming to theaters on the Fourth of July.

Q: How well could you relate to the uneasy mother-daughter relationship in "Because I Said So"?

A: I don't know if my relationship with my mom is so tumultuous. She definitely annoys me as much as Diane's character did in the film, but that's what you love about the mother-daughter dynamic, you know? I know with my mom, as much as she annoys me, everything she's doing comes from a good place, comes from love. So I try to keep that in mind. I didn't grow up with sisters. I have two brothers. So I loved that dynamic that my character had with her sisters as well, and with her mother on top of it. It was cute.

Q: Having grown up only with brothers, how did you feel about playing a woman who has two older sisters?

A: I was excited about the prospect of being surrounded by these three really amazing women for two months, and getting to gossip and talk about shoes and shopping and boys and all of that stuff. I mean, we would be having conversations and the camera would have been rolling for 10 or 15 seconds, and we had no idea because we were so immersed in our own world.

Q: And since you grew up with brothers, do you think the average guy would dig this movie?

A: I think it would be good for them to take their girlfriends and their wives. It's a good date movie. You get extra points. I mean, we love chick flicks so you might as well do something nice for us. Right before Valentine's Day, it's perfect.

Q: Your character happens to be a fantastic cook. How comfortable were you in the kitchen?

A: Not at all! I'm so uncomfortable in the kitchen. That was a challenge for me, to try and have it come across as believable that I knew my way around the kitchen and I had some sort of skill. Yeah, I'm terrible with food, really terrible. I can make eggs. But I can't make a grilled cheese sandwich, like I always end up burning it or the cheese isn't melted enough. So I knew I had a lot of work to do to make it look accurate.

Q: For your next film, "License to Wed," you worked with Robin Williams and another funny guy, John Krasinski from "The Office". What was that like?

A: They're amazing. I had so much fun doing that movie. That was difficult because I couldn't stop myself from laughing. The two of them together were just kind of lethal. So it took a lot of restraint on my part to sort of collect myself and not break. But I had so much fun doing it. I'm really excited about that movie.

Q: Turning to your music, you have said that you are more proud of your upcoming album than any of your others. Is that because this album is more personal?

A: Yeah, absolutely. This record, I wrote. They're my words and it's something that I've been working on for the last two years. And it's a reflection of me. It's so personal and vulnerable and I can't escape it. It's been sort of my pet project from start to finish. So I feel like there's more at stake with this than any of my past music efforts.

Q: Since you starred in the reality TV satire "American Dreamz," is it fair to say you are a fan of "American Idol"? Is that show a guilty pleasure for you?

A: Uh, yeah! I'm obsessed with "Idol." I was a huge Taylor Hicks fan last year and I am so charged up to watch this season. I love that it's corny and they do the Ford commercials and it's cheesy. I mean, it's pretty ridiculous but I love it. I don't like sports so this is my football game. It's like the ultimate playoffs, I guess.

Q: When your next album comes out, you should go on "American Idol" as a celebrity guest star.

A: No, see, to me, then the illusion will be completely burst. I don't want to know what goes on behind the scenes. I like watching it.

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