



# COMMAND PERFORMANCE

MANDY MOORE ISN'T AFRAID OF A LITTLE HARD WORK

Whether playing a god-fearing tight-ass in *Saved!* a slightly crazy emerging pop star in *American Dreamz*, a soon-to-be newlywed who has to deal with the shenanigans of an off-kilter priest in *License to Wed*, or book illustrator Lucy (her most mature role to date, opposite Billy Crudup) in the upcoming, darker, New York-set *Dedication*—Mandy Moore commands your attention.

Add to that list a new album, *Wild Hope*—which she co-wrote with a variety of her musical heroes, including Chicagoan Rachael Yamagata, Michelle Branch and Lori McKenna—a clothing line, appearances on TV shows, multiple magazine covers and relationships that keep her name in the tabloids, you might think she would be a little harder edged. Hardly.

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This 23-year-old consummate professional is truly as sweet as one would think. She's self-deprecating, honest and grounded, disinterested in the wild antics of some of her contemporaries and admits she would likely be the same person if she had followed a different career path and become a journalist like her mom. *UR Chicago* met up with Moore, who sipped champagne from a Dixie cup, on a recent trip to Chicago to discuss her movies, music and being beautiful without conforming to fit a certain Hollywood mold. —ARI BENDERSKY

**Do you relate to the characters you play in movies?**

In *American Dreamz*, I related to her passion and ambition. But she took it to a place I would never feel comfortable with. [Fame and success] was at any cost.

**Where do you draw the line?**

Way, way, way before that! (Laughs.) She was willing to sacrifice anything and everything to get to the top, and that's not really my cup of tea.

**You seem really grounded and come across that way in the public eye. Lindsay Lohan started out that way and then got caught up. How do you avoid the wild life?**

I've never been tempted to live like that. At the end of the day, I want to hang out with my friends or live a quiet existence outside what I do for work.

**Speaking of work, you've been busy lately, with four movies coming out this year.**

Yeah, I work hard and am very serious about what I do. I don't mind working hard for it. But it does catch up to you!

**Your new album, *Wild Hope*, as you've said, is a diversion from the trite pop songs you made when you were younger. Do you look back and wish you hadn't made those songs, or do you feel like they're the building blocks?**

No, they were definitely the building blocks. I can be embarrassed about it, but it was the quintessential place to start for someone my age at that time.

**There's obviously more substance to the material now. You've had a few long-term relationships. Did that make its way into the songwriting?**

I think the life I've led the past couple of years definitely makes its way into the songs and is inspiration for some things.

**What was it like to write with someone like Rachael Yamagata?**

I'm a huge fan, and the opportunity to work with someone who is *so* talented and just like, to me, a great role model and obviously somebody I have on a pedestal—who wouldn't want that opportunity?

**You put her on a pedestal?**

Oh yeah! And to be able to call her a friend? I mean, she's like a big sister to me. I adore her.

**Your sound is so different from when you were younger. It's lush, well-produced and has a cool country edge. Where did that come from?**

I think there's a little folk in me, a little country girl in me. I have a little alt-country Patty Griffin, Ryan Adams in me. I wanted [the album] to be organic and sound the same live as it did in the studio.

**You've worked with some amazing actresses—Diane Keaton, Kate Winslet, Mary Louise Parker. How do they affect you when you're working with them?**

I think just the choices they've made in their careers definitely influence me. You want to achieve the same thing. For me, longevity is key, so I look up to people who've made strong choices and are true to who they are—a bit quirky.

**Speaking of personal choices, you definitely seem happy to not starve yourself to fit into any preconceived mold of beauty. What's your opinion about weight and appearance in Hollywood?**

I don't think it's necessarily right. I'm happy to represent a regular-looking person. Regular-looking people should be able to be in this business and entertain and sing and act like everybody else. I've always been a little bit of an underdog or slightly different. I guess it all fits, it all works. I am who I am.



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