

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Mia LeBlon Reinvents With New Single, Collaboration**



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"I have this fear that after I finish writing a song, I won't have the ability to write another," Mia LeBlon, a huge presence in a deceptively tiny frame, confesses. "But that hasn't really been the case. So I keep writing."

LeBlon built a reputation for herself in the Chicago music scene in the late 2000's, playing rip-roaring retro-soul rave-ups and Motown-flavored ballads, as well as lending her strikingly powerful voice to various other bands, both onstage and in the studio. Her oversized stage presence and encyclopedic knowledge of classic soul and R&B earned her respect in unlikely circles and, despite her aversion to the "business" side of the music business, she earned numerous SXSW showcases, performances on several of Milwaukee's Summerfest stages, gigs opening for Lucy Woodward, Everclear and Hedley, support from the likes of The Manno Brothers (MTV, JBTv, iHeartRadio). She found a succession of wildly different songwriting partnerships with collaborators throughout the Midwest, writing and recording a stream of songs, many still unpublished or incomplete.

After growing dissatisfied with the creative direction she found herself moving in last, she announced her departure from her most recent musical venture, and performances became increasingly sporadic, updates few and far between. But a chance meeting with Chicago songwriter/producer Yoo Soo Kim meant things were anything but quiet behind the scenes.

After holing up in Kim's Old Fire Studios, LeBlon was able to reconnect with herself, refine her creative vision, and remind herself why music meant so much to her. Rather than simply writing songs with someone else, LeBlon had finally found a partner--someone whose singular goal was to bring her songs

to life as they were, rather than pushing them to become something else. Kim, best known for his work as the frontman of indie-rock quartet Hemmingbirds, was anxious to stretch outside his comfort zone; LeBlon was anxious to, for perhaps the first time, work within hers.

"It took more than five years to get to this point, but the music finally sounds the way I feel inside when I'm writing it," she says. "It feels natural with Yoo Soo. I don't feel like he's forcing me to be someone I'm not. The old songs, I wrote them, but they didn't sound like me. I think I let people tell me what I should sound like to gain the most traction, in the hopes of earning money." She shrugs. "I can't waste time being someone I'm not."

The first track from LeBlon's upcoming release, "WWYD," is a striking departure from her 2011 debut, *Looking Glass*. The strident, soulful vocal is unmistakably hers, but there's a newfound element of restraint, of nuance--in short, of maturity. Kim's production pulls from the experimental side of contemporary hip hop and R&B, blending glitchy electronic beats with moody synths over the most minimal of piano lines to create a captivating, almost dream-like atmosphere. The chorus, when it arrives, is both unabashedly hooky and surprisingly confrontational, and when LeBlon finally shifts her voice into full gear toward the end of the song, it's a moment of sheer transcendence.

The best way to understand who Mia LeBlon is might be to ask her about music. Not recording it, not promoting it, not selling it...just music, as it exists in the world. When she talks about music, her entire demeanor changes. She stops worrying about whether she's imposing, nagging, asking for favors, stops wondering if she's talking too much or not talking enough, stops questioning whether or not she's made the right choices up to this point. All that worry disappears, and is replaced with an irrepressible enthusiasm, a genuine belief in the healing power the music--not just hers, but all music--can possess.

Perhaps it's idealistic. Perhaps it's her [ISFJ](#) personality type, of which she's fiercely proud. Perhaps it's even a little naive. But even knowing all that, Mia LeBlon still believes with a conviction that makes her impossible to deny.

"It's my form of therapy," she says. "My outlet. I realized it also helped others when I played my first open mic at some dive bar, and that kept me going. My personality type is sometimes called the 'Defender,' so any way I can help others, I will. I've come across people I considered close friends, people who took advantage of my willingness to drop everything and help them. I don't think we should expect anyone to give us as much as we give to them--but I'm human, so I do. And I get sad about it."

She stops herself, straightens up, and takes a breath. She seems to re-center herself, her thoughts finding purchase, her diminutive form expanding to fill the conversation in much the same way it fills the stage.

"When we get sad, we all need a cure," she says, finally. "So, I write."

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To interview Mia LeBlon, review "WWYD" or any subsequent releases, or share her music with your readers/listeners, please contact [mia.leblon@gmail.com](mailto:mia.leblon@gmail.com).

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