

## Mariah Carey – Butterfly (1997)

Written by bluelover

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1. *Honey* 5:01 2. *Butterfly* 4:35 3. *My All* 3:52 4. *The Roof* 5:14 5. *Fourth Of July* 4:22  
6. *Breakdown* 4:44 7. *Babydoll* 5:07 8. *Close My Eyes* 4:21 9. *Whenever You Call* 4:21 10. *Fly Away (Butterfly Reprise)* 3:49 11. *The Beautiful Ones* 6:59 12. *Outside* 4:47 13. *Honey (So So Def Radio Mix)* 3:59 14. *Honey (Def Club Mix)* 6:17  
Drums – Dan Shea (tracks: 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 12), Nathaniel Townsley III Keyboards – Dan Shea (tracks: 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 12), Walter Afanasieff (tracks: 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 12) Mixed By – Mick Guzauski (tracks: 2, 3, 5, 7 to 9, 12), Tony Maserati (tracks: 1, 4, 6, 11) Synthesizer – Walter Afanasieff (tracks: 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 12) Backing Vocals – Melonie Daniels, Trey Lorenz, Mary Ann Tatum, Kelly Price Bass – Artie Reynolds Guitar – Michael Cirro

Butterfly was Mariah Carey's sixth album and the one where she departed from the formula that had been established on her breakthrough single, 1990's *Vision of You*. The album was released after Carey's much-publicised split with her husband and mentor, Tommy Mottola, the then-president of Sony Music Entertainment. At the time of the album's release, Carey told the *Los Angeles Times*: "At this point, I feel free enough to express what I'm really feeling, without using a smokescreen... It's definitely an evolution for me." This evolution meant that there would be a greater acknowledgment of her urban and hip hop influences and the last time that she worked significantly with her original producer, Walter Afanasieff, who had given her signature, ballad-heavy sound.

As a result, *Butterfly* is Carey's last truly great album to date. The main singles, *Honey* and *My All* (both US chart-toppers), demonstrate the record's two approaches. The former is produced by Puff Daddy and his team, with programming by Q-Tip. It's a breezy, street-savvy sound, partially based on the melody from *Hey DJ* by The World's Famous Supreme Team and Treacherous Three's *The Body Rock*. It gives new life to Carey's vocals, and for once her performance is relatively restrained, as she sounds positively engrossed in the material. *My All*, on the other hand, is written and produced by Carey with Afanasieff. It encapsulates her more traditional, straight ballad approach with Latin overtones. Across *Butterfly*, these styles meld

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together effortlessly.

However, the real joy is in the relatively dreamy down-tempo vibe of the remainder of the album. The Roof, produced by the then lava-hot Poke & Tone production duo, is probably the best example of this floating, ethereal soul. Featuring a sample of Shook Ones Part II by Mobb Deep, it updates the woozy soul of Marvin Gaye's Here, My Dear. Breakdown features two of Bone Thugs-n-Harmony, adding their rolling beats to Carey's melisma-rich vocal. Also surprising is the almost karaoke version of Prince's Purple Rain showstopper The Beautiful Ones, here presented as a powerful duet with Dru Hill.

Of course, being a Carey album, there is some requisite showboating (Whenever You Call, Outside), but judicious programming makes Butterfly a real treat, and comes recommended to those Carey doubters who have never strayed beyond her singles. --- Daryl Easlea, BBC Review

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