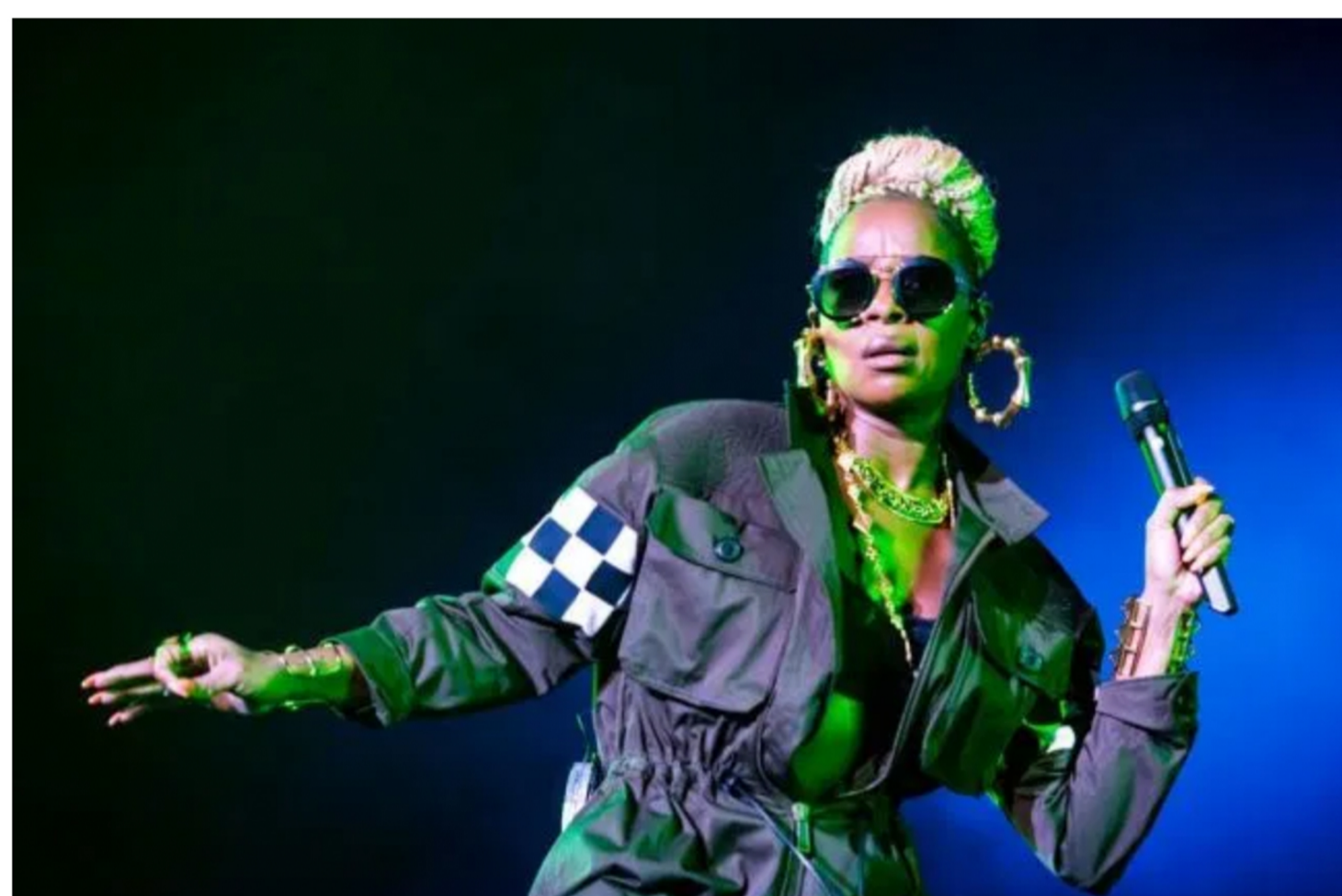


10 reasons why Mary J Blige is one of life's warrior women

 **Jasmine Dotiwala** Tuesday 18 Jul 2017 12:55 pm



She's a warrior (Picture: Getty)

Mary J Blige, the queen of hip-hop soul, is the most successful female R&B artist of the past 25 years, which is a bloody miracle considering a lesser life experience would've knocked most of us out.

As a fan who's the same age, I've observed her journey from day one; and while life just keeps hitting her relentlessly with blows, she, like a phoenix, rises again and again.

Like many of us inner city girls, Blige, who is from Yonkers in the Bronx in New York, was forced to put on a tough-girl persona in her younger days so others couldn't take advantage of her.

This eventually translated into her streetwise lyrics, which young women across the globe could relate to.

Blige started as a backing singer in the eighties at Uptown Records, and in the three decades since then, she has amassed countless hits.

She has won nine Grammy awards out of her 30 Grammy nominations, and she's one of the few entertainers in history to have eight or more albums reach multi-platinum status, and sold more than 50 million albums and 25 million singles worldwide.

Here are 10 reasons why Mary J Blige is one of life's warrior women:

1. She's not afraid to fix herself.

In the nineties, Blige had a reputation for being an awkward interview. During my days as an MTV VJ, my fellow VJ Donna Air panicked and asked me for advice on how to speak to her.

Blige wasn't awkward; she just wasn't media-trained back then. I always found her just lovely. But then, we were fly girls peer-to-peer chatting – she was just like one of my homies.

However, she allowed **media trainer Angelo Ellerbee to guide and media train her**, and reinvented herself to move forwards.

She wasn't her own worst enemy as so many in music today are. She played the long game.



Blige in 1992 (Picture: Raymond Boyd/Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)

2. She's not afraid to say sorry.

When she played her first ever London show in June 1992, she arrived late. Really late.

I remember the tension in the venue well. She sang three songs, disappeared for a 40-minute interval, and eventually returned for another brief stint before **being booed off**.

The audience was so inflamed they ripped the seats up and wrecked the venue.

Blige came back at a later date, performed beautifully, apologised and even made a song about it on a future album.

3. She's not afraid to love and lose.

Even though she fell for the player charms of cocky R&B boy-band lead member K-Ci from Jodeci, with whom **she was in an abusive relationship**, she moved past her broken heart and continued to search for her 'real love' that she'd always sung about and yearned for.

4. She was ridiculed and humiliated on national TV and still stayed classy.

The Word on Channel 4 was the biggest youth culture TV show of the nineties, fusing music, sex, scandal and celebrity. I was a presenter on series 5.

Every big and breaking music act of its era was on the show and that included Blige and her then boyfriend's band, Jodeci.

K-Ci was asked live whether he and Blige were an item, in love and planning to tie the knot. K Ci stuck to his boyband young, free, single and ready to mingle script to the scream of delighted, swooning fans.