

ENTERTAINMENT

Captivating crooner draws mixed reactions

**Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice**

Well, well. What can I say about Maxwell?

I can say that he's a testament to the power of effective marketing. He's pushed as this ultimate sex symbol of the 90s, the Marvin Gaye of the next century.

That much wasn't evident in his performance at the House of Blues earlier this month.

I tried to see it. I tried desperately to see the appeal

of this young virtuoso, but try as I might, I just couldn't do it.

After a comedian opened the show, there was a long pause in preparation for the crooner. I don't know what took so long, especially as sources at the House of Blues told me that they'd already spent 10 hours building the set. I was excited in the beginning, but after a 45-minute wait and almost getting into a fight with some salivating fans, my

anticipation fizzled.

Finally, the curtains opened, revealing another white sheer set of curtains highlighted by blue, green and purple lights. Maxwell's voice loomed out from behind the stage and drove his fans into a frenzy. I laughed at the sheer corniness of it all.

When the sheer curtains parted, the stage resembled a dimly-lit apartment from the '70s, complete with blue, green and purple lava lamps and huge vase-like

formations serving as pillars on each side of the stage. Steam was being blown out from backstage.

Then the man himself came onstage. He was rather unimpressive in an all white, Miami Vice-esque ensemble. You know those pictures of him with his locks all done up, where he looks like some powerful, sensual lion-man?

He didn't look that strong and sexy in real life at all. Aside from the considerable bulge in his white pants, I

couldn't find a sexy thing about him.

All that wonderful, wild hair was tucked under a white, knit cap. He looked too conservative.

He started out with "Something, Something" and went into a medley of his most well-known songs like "Welcome" and "Cocoa Cure."

Then I got lost in the tirade of medium-tempo, surreal songs. They started to melt

into each other and created mood music that did not put me in the mood.

I asked exiting concert-goers what their impressions were, and responses ranged from, "He was great!" to "Eh, it was okay," and "I don't believe I paid \$65 to see that."

I'm glad that Maxwell's selling lots of music and gets lots of airplay, but I could not find any reason to go see him in concert unless you're a real fan of his music.

Knight glides in hit Broadway play

**Dwana Broussard
Special to Sentinel-Voice**

Gladys Knight, who recently completed a stint at the Desert Inn's Crystal Showroom, is now appearing in the hit Broadway play, Smoky Joe's Café.

She gave us quite a send-off on her last night in Vegas, treating her audience to her soothing "sit down at my kitchen table and make yourself at home" style.

She made us feel like we were invited to her party, and that she was truly glad we came.

And when someone in the audience shouted "Gladys, will you do something

gospel?" she took us all the way to church, and half way to heaven with "Amazing Grace."

Comedian Carl Strong (look for more of him in the future - he's hilarious) warmed the audience up, and we never cooled down. Between songs, Knight talked about life and love, and the fact that people really do need each other.

There's just something about an eloquent, beautiful, 50-something woman who's lived long enough to experience everything she's talking about, that makes you want to believe her, support her and celebrate your own

right to enjoy life.

Brother and original Pip Bubba Knight is not only still energetic on vocals and dance steps, but is also quite a comedian. His constant interruptions of Gladys could have been annoying, but he was so funny, and his lines seemed so "off-the-cuff," that he had the crowd in stitches.

Several years ago, Gladys initiated a program called "Caring and Sharing," which is her way of introducing new talent she is producing. Keyboardist/singer John Fluker and saxophonist Vincent Preister favored us with a sample of their skills, and were good enough to keep

us from getting restless while waiting for Knight to return to the stage.

Although this format prevented us from hearing many of Knight's classics, the show was both enjoyable and refreshing. After all, some of us have seen Gladys in concert more than a few times, and could appreciate the new approach.

Knight's voice and style are timeless.

She's better than ever, and if you don't get the chance to catch her on Broadway, you'll have the opportunity to see her the next time she's in Las Vegas. You won't be disappointed.



RAPPER DMX

DMX, Lauryn Hill win Source Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Rapper DMX won top artist and live performer trophies and Lauryn Hill was honored for best album and best new artist at The Source Hip-Hop Music Awards.

R. Kelly was named rhythm & blues artist of the year, and Outkast was the group artist of the year during Wednesday night's ceremony. *The Source* is a hip-hop music magazine.

The two-hour show was videotaped for broadcast Friday on UPN.

"The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" won for best album. The best single was "Ha" by Juvenile and The Hot Boys. Janet Jackson and Busta Rhymes won best video for "What's It Gonna Be."

Campbell to take cops to court

MIAMI (AP)—Now that prosecutors have dropped aggravated battery charges against him, rapper Luther Campbell says he may take the Miami Beach police to court. "If they don't apologize, maybe I'll sue them and get my money back," said Campbell, who estimated his legal bills at \$10,000.

Campbell, who has gained notoriety as front man for 2 Live Crew, was arrested last month after allegedly hitting a man with a whiskey bottle outside a nightclub. The state attorney's office said Monday the charge was dropped due to conflicts among the witnesses over what happened.

Campbell has been arrested at least five times on gun or assault charges that were later either dropped or downgraded.

He still faces a misdemeanor domestic violence case, stemming from a May 8 incident at a South Beach club.

Leasing co.: The Artist owes for a tour bus

DETROIT (AP)—A leasing company wants the Artist Formerly Known as Prince to pay thousands he allegedly owes for a rented tour bus.

Thides Leasing Corp. filed a lawsuit Monday claiming the Artist used the motor coach between May and October 1998 but never paid for it.

The Artist owes \$42,109 for days he used the bus, the suit said. The Detroit company also wants \$116,600 for seven months that he promised to use it but didn't,



THE ARTIST

preventing the company from renting the bus to other performers.

Londell McMillan, the Artist's attorney, did not immediately return a call for comment.

A Time of Spiritual Refreshing

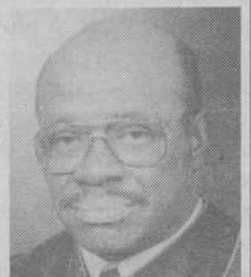
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