

Maxwell shares 'a little sumthin sumthin' about himself

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As I sat in my living room waiting for the phone to ring, a thousand thoughts crossed through my mind.

"What will he be like?"

"Will he be as deep as everyone thinks?"

"What if he's not talkative or won't respond to my questions?"

"Hello, LaWanza we have Maxwell on the line for you."

"Thanks."

Silence.

"Hey LaWanza, How ya doin'?"

Just like that. With the ease of every rhythm he has ever sang, Maxwell started our interview.

The Brooklyn, New York native began mesmerizing audiences in 1995 when he debuted with his first album, "Urban Hang Suite."

His wild hair and dreamy eyes left women breathless. And, his smooth style made brothas give him props.

Maxwell followed up that debut with a sold-out concert tour with Zhane in 1996 and the 1998 release of his latest CD, "Embrya," which is being heralded as a musical innovation.

"I'm amazed it took off," said Maxwell regarding the album's success. "Actually it has surpassed my expectations because it's incredibly un-R&B. It's a departure from the original."

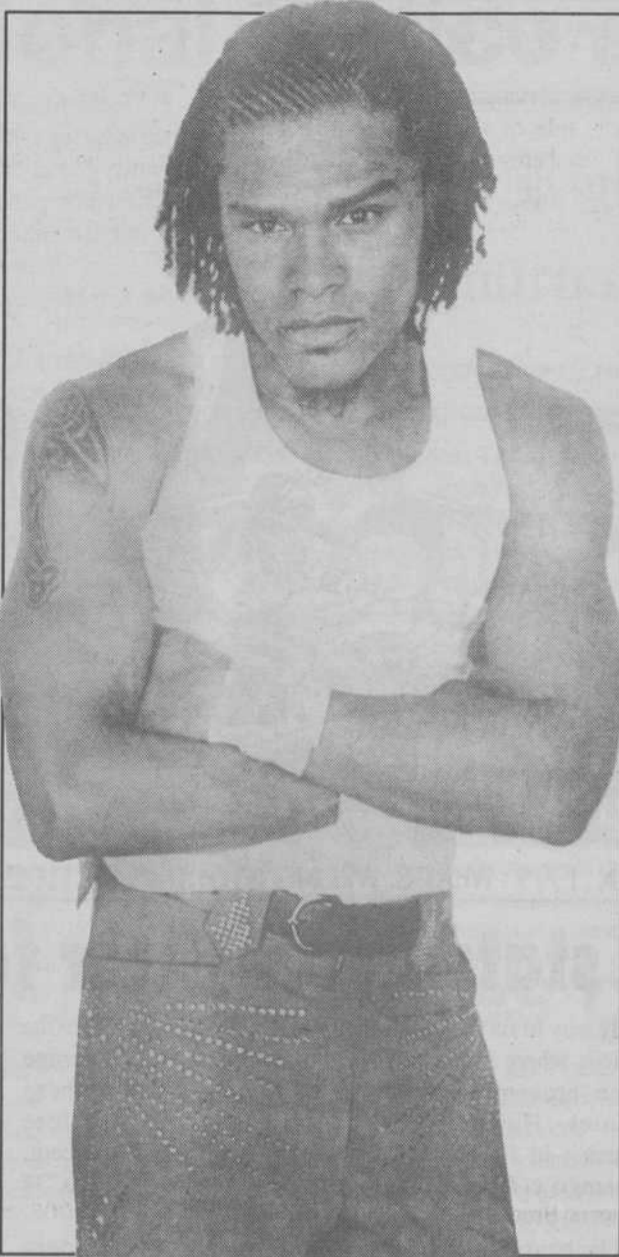
Departure is an understatement. Fans who got comfortable with the groove of tunes like "Sumthin, Sumthin" on his first project were probably shaken by the psychedelic energy of this latest release.

Ironically, Maxwell said his musical diversity has been both a blessing and curse.

"In entertainment you become a creative being," he said.

"The public makes you into something, and when you deviate, you're not always accepted."

Fortunately, ticket sales for this tour — which began Aug. 6 in Houston — indicate



MAXWELL

a wide acceptance.

"I can't believe how people are buying tickets," Maxwell said.

Always "amazed" or "unbelieving" of his status in entertainment, I had to remind him of his first concert's success when he hypnotized and romanticized audiences across the country.

His sexy dance moves and seductive vocals have even been compared to that of the legendary Marvin Gaye.

"I'm flattered beyond believe, but I think it's premature," he said. "I'm only four-years deep into this. I've got a lot more living to do."

Maxwell said he will build on the reputation of his first concert for this current tour. "There'll be some surprises. You'll just have to wait and

see," he laughed. "There'll be something funny, sexy, cool, sad and spiritual."

"A good concert makes you feel it all," he said.

In addition to the tour, Maxwell says he is constantly writing.

"I did three songs on the [soon-to-be-released] 'Best Man' soundtrack, and I'm just gathering more ideas."

But, don't try to time when the next album should be released because he doesn't work on an "album cycle."

"I don't work for results," he said. "I work off of faith. It's my love for music that motivates me."

It's also his love and passion for the music that has every woman 18 to 36 wishing he was her man (sorry, he's dating someone special) and every magazine

publisher calling for an interview.

While he likes to maintain his privacy, Maxwell acknowledges that he has to give the public what it wants ... him.

"I like my privacy, but sometimes you have to do 'star time.' So, I try to maintain a cool balance," he

said. What would he be doing if he weren't making beautiful music?

"That's unimaginable at this point," he said.

"This is always what I wanted to do. This is me."

And, what would we — Maxwell fans everywhere — do if he weren't doing what

he does so well?

I shudder to think.

The other 14 "Fortunate" cities on the schedule are: New Orleans, Sacramento, Oakland, San Diego, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., New York, Boston and Atlanta.

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Racism

(Continued from Page 2)

complaints against officers in incidents at this year's car show.

Tracking the number of minority arrests is not a good way to improve racial relations, said Deputy Chief Jim Johns.

"I'm focusing on equal treatment and trying to do better," he said. "Who the crowd is made up of is not important to us. They continue to make race the issue when

crowd misbehavior is the issue."

Police imposed a variety of tough measures after crowds last year turned over cars, threw rocks and bottles and smashed barricades. Police in riot gear used police dogs and tear gas to break up the disturbances.

Police arrested 519 people at the event last year. Eleven people filed internal affairs complaints.