

Black Music Month 2014: June 21 musical salute to Maxwell



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It's Black Music Month. Enjoy the 2014 series. Support the artists. Buy their licensed music. And turn up as you dance along.

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Brief history: In 2010, I wrote a music series honoring Black Music Month on Associated Content's site (republished on Examiner). The focus was to honor new R&B singers, veteran R&B singers, solo rappers, and evenly split the musical salute between female and male rappers. The only artists I was not willing to split up were Salt n' Pepa because they worked as a unit. In 2014, it's about time to salute

more artists, but in the spirit of Salt n' Pepa's legacy, R&B groups and rap groups will be included. The pattern in 2014 will be newer R&B singers (from 2000 to present), R&B and/or hip-hop groups, veteran R&B singers, and then solo rappers, still evenly split between women and men.

Black Music Month Turn Up Factor "Turn down for what?": Name another artist who can disappear for seven years, come back when he's good and ready, and still have CDs flying off the shelf. Maxwell has always walked to the beat of his own drum and made music that no one else was making. He's somewhere between soul, funk, neosoul, R&B and (for

Chicagoans) stepping. Wild hair or low cut, the artist did not change no matter how long he'd been gone, and he still continues to make phenomenal tunes.

My Connection/First Memory to Artist: When I first saw him staring intensely into the camera during the "Whenever Wherever Whatever" video, I was not feeling this guy. But right before prom, my prom date had a Maxwell song on his voicemail. What a lady's man kind of move, but I was instantly impressed by his song of choice. Fifteen years later I still associate that song with my funny, charismatic, and gorgeous prom date (who I believe is married now so I mean no disrespect to his wife). After senior year of high school, then I really started listening to his music and loved just about every song he put out. It'd be very difficult to pick one favorite out of the pack, but "Pretty Wings" is in the top three. He's an easy artist to listen to straight through, and I was ecstatic to hear he recently worked with another artist I respect: Alicia Keys on the song "Fire We Make." It's always exciting to see two great artists work together and even better to see a creative video.

Numbers Don't Lie: Without trying to read Maxwell's brain, making Billboard charts just doesn't seem to be important to him. If he makes it, he makes it. If he doesn't, his core fanbase will still purchase his music in droves. With that said, he did make it to the Billboard Top 200 with "Fortunate" at number four (25 weeks). But when it comes to Adult Contemporary Billboard charts, he made a killing with three number one singles: "Fistful of Tears" (40 weeks), "Bad Habits" (38 weeks) and "Pretty Wings" (33 weeks). And his albums did well on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums charts: "BLACKsummers' night" (71 weeks, peaked at number one), "Now" (53 weeks, peaked at number one), "Embrya" (66 weeks, peaked at number two) and "Maxwell s Urban Hang Suite" (103 weeks, peaked at number eight).

For the first series of Black Music Month artists republished on Examiner (originally on Associated Content), [click here](#) to see all 30.

Shamontiel is also The Wire Examiner, and for the gladiators, she's the Scandal Examiner, too.

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