

Maxwell and BLACKsummers'night are the music winners of the year

Written by

Maxwell and his now-Platinum album BLACKsummers'night (Columbia) have emerged as the big winners this year in the music world, with across-the-board critical acclaim, major sales, and six GRAMMY® nominations plus a confirmed slot on the Awards Ceremony January 31. BLACKsummers'night was just named Number 1 Album of the Year in USA Today and NY Daily News, joining the New York Times (Jon Pareles) and the Washington Post, with more Best of the Year nods in the Associated Press, LA Times (Ann Powers), Boston Globe (Sarah Rodman); Philadelphia Inquirer (Dan Deluca), People Magazine (Comeback of the Year) and many more.

Maxwell was everywhere in 2009. His December television appearances alone included performances on The Jay Leno Show, The Today Show and The GRAMMY® Nominations Concert Live, of which the LA Time's Ann Powers wrote "Maxwell's performance of Michael Jackson's 'The Lady in My Life' ... not only stood out, it made a quiet case for itself as one of the best televised musical performances of the year." Maxwell also made appearances this year on the Late Show with David Letterman, CBS Early Show, Good Morning America, CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute and Jimmy Kimmel Live.

The singer and songwriter's great year encompassed the biggest sales week of his career with a #1 debut for BLACKsummers'night after its July 7 release, at 319,000 copies one of the top ten debuts of the year, while he made Billboard news as the first artist in the history of the Urban AC chart to hold the #1 (Bad Habits) and #2 spots (Pretty Wings) at the same time.

USA Today

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

..Eight years later, [Maxwell has] re-emerged with his moving BLACKsummers'night, which uses a personal love affair and its heart-rending breakup as the emotional well for a subtly sensual set of songs that reflect the pleasure, pain and ultimate sense of loss he experienced. And rather than enlist the usual retinue of star producers and songwriters to score a quick radio hit, he chose to rely on his soaring falsetto, intimate lyrics and a live studio band.

New York Times, (Jon Pareles)

1. Maxwell's fourth album...defies current R&B on all fronts. It's gentle and imploring, not cocky. It's elliptical, not blatant. It's hand played, by a band complete with a horn section, rather than programmed. It's so improvisatory that melodies change from verse to verse. And even when the rhythm gets funky, the sad, lovely songs -- about a crumbling romance -- are suffused with a yearning that's almost too intimate. It's soul music reinventing itself, moment to moment.

Washington Post (Chris Richards)

1. Maxwell's R&B masterstroke topped charts with a poise that evoked past, present and futures unknown. And while the neo-soulman's falsetto can bend time, heartbreak remains inescapable.

NY Daily News (Jim Farber)

1. ...Rather than simply mimicking the sensual old sound of Marvin Gaye, as so many neo-soul stars do, Maxwell offered a compete rethink. The new songs unfold slowly and cunningly, like mystery stories, with surprise melodies and fresh arrangements evolving along the way. Better,

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Maxwell's falsetto has never sounded more flexible, sweeping between the notes with the agility of an aerialist.

Los Angeles Times (Ann Powers)

Best of 2009

Few artists make music as attuned to the subtle dynamics of love and sex as this soulful tone poet. That this album was a hit proves that, even in the age of the Auto-Tuned booty call, some listeners still have taste

Associated Press (Nekesa Moody)

Best of 2009

..with BLACKsummers'night -- a compact, cohesive gem of an album -- we were reminded of how much we missed Maxwell's sensuous songs and plaintive croon. Maxwell's music also provided R&B with what it sorely lacked: a grown and sexy man who offers layered songs about relationships instead of sex, sex and more sex (are you listening, R. Kelly?).

Philadelphia Inquirer (Dan DeLuca)

Best of 2009

The first in a proposed trilogy, BLACKsummers'night derives its power from its persistent melancholy, and sublimely patient approach. Grown-up music that's full of feeling, but never overplays its hand.