

Taylor: Every singer you've ever heard

► Continued from J1

holding background for 1,000 songs.

And with a vocal range just shy of five octaves, this imposing black man from Niagara Falls, N.Y., has finally found a home welcoming his ability to turn into just about any singer you've ever heard.

"I'm not an impersonator," Maxwell insisted, nor is this karaoke, though he's been there.

This is tribute, each song true to the style of the original.

You just never know who's next. Tonight it could be Al Green, Frank Sinatra, Elvis, Patsy Cline, Stevie Wonder, Tony Bennett, Aretha Franklin. Oh, please, let it be Louis Armstrong.

Maxwell doesn't even know what's next till a couple of seconds before hitting the next button.

"It might be an ooh or an aah from somebody," he said.

If there's a lull, out comes a "trump" song. "What a Wonderful Life" it was, night we were there. He knew.

No costumed Elvis

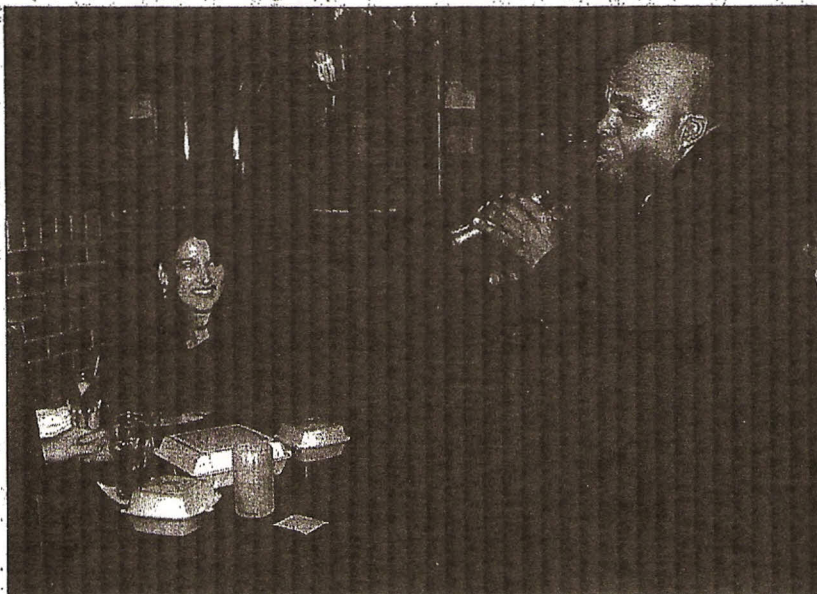
Steve Campbell, a principal in the restaurant, has been sold since a friend introduced him and he gave Maxwell a tryout almost four years ago. Now he's booked 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, unless he's off on one of his 20 or so yearly private gigs.

Campbell requires the tuxedo and soft beginning, to go with the "Buckhead-style" experience of food and entertainment that can appeal to anyone from 21 to 90.

As time goes by, the crowd becomes younger, and Maxwell adapts his playlist.

"I have a lot of energy. I'm a showman, and I like to move around a lot," Maxwell said.

Backstage in his dressing room, he might opt for a wig and poet's shirt for a Prince segment, complete with splits. Or maybe, tonight, it'll be Rick James. Or Michael Jackson. Or



PHIL SKINNER / Staff

Maxwell Taylor sings to Lydia Culpepper at the Ridge in Cumming, where he has become a fixture and a big draw over the past four years. He performs Friday and Saturday nights.

AJC.COM

► Go online to hear Maxwell Taylor sing.

IF YOU GO

- **Where:** The Ridge — Great Steaks and Seafood is at 1035 Turner Road, Cumming.
- **When:** Maxwell Taylor performs 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.
- **Cover:** None
- **Information:** 770-886-9003, www.maxwelltaylor.net.

Tina Turner. Truly.

You get the idea. Who it won't be in costume is Elvis — that gig he leaves to Elvis impersonator and close personal friend Mike Jones, who puts on his own show every weekend at the nearby Lantern Inn.

Who it won't be is Mariah

Carey or Whitney Houston. Anybody else, Maxwell said, his voice can handle.

Maxwell, 43, moved to the Atlanta area 10 years ago.

He has a studio in his Norcross home, where he has produced a few CDs.

Though he puts on a great show imitating others, some

backers are helping produce some of the more than 500 songs he's written.

This spring he hopes to finish a CD titled "Silence All Critics" that includes some original work.

Unlikely opportunity

Longtime backer Roz Alford, a principal with ASAP Staffing LLC, has been booking Maxwell for her company events for four years and promoting his talent.

From time to time, she's helped out with travel or funding.

"He just hasn't gone professionally to have a CD done," Alford said. "That's what I've been encouraging him to do."

About once a month, she goes to see the show at the Ridge, hoping for her favorite — Al Green.

"You have to see him to believe it," she said.

Maxwell said he tried the same kind of show in Buckhead, where no one gave him a chance.

"From the first day at the Ridge," he said, "those people received me like I was one of their own."

"Ain't that amazing?" he said, "a black man in Forsyth County going on four years. And they were the only ones who would give me a chance. These people would do anything for me."

"These people tip me, buy me drinks and food, I've been invited to their houses.

"What black man you know

sings up at Big Canceo? It's just amazing."

Maxwell said he's honored to be asked to sing at events like this summer's Vietnam veteran Casper Aviation Platoon reunion in Washington.

But if he could be granted one more musical wish, it would be to sing like Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin did, in front of a full orchestra.

"I could just die right then, because I would have accomplished everything," he said.

A New Year...
A New Home

In-Home Design Services Available

High Quality Custom Work



MILTEX
FABRICS, INC

25% OFF ALL FABRICS

(Excl. set inclusions)

25% OFF ALL TRIMS

10% OFF ALL HARDWARE

10% OFF ALL LABOR

(Excl. delivery and sig cover not included)

Sale ends January 29th

Parkaire Shopping Center
Intersection of Lower Roswell & Johnson Ferry Roads
Hours 10 - 6 Mon - Sat
770-579-6039 • www.miltexfabrics.com

ajchomefinder.com
where atlanta finds a home

SUBSCRIBE TODAY: 404-522-4141 OR ajcdelivers.com

