

# willie max

**W**e could keep it simple and tell you that Rose, Sky and Lyric, the three sister (and we mean that literally and spiritually) known as Willie Max are in perseverance and harmony, the rebirth of the Pointer sisters. We could tell you that their voices are so beautifully married that together, they sound like clear echoes of one an-

talent shows played out on the week-ends and on Sundays, they held their own church service in the basement of their house. "It was called the Sons Of God Sanctuary," Rose recalls. "Our mother is an ordained minister. Our brother played the drums and Sky, Lyric and I were the choir. It was beautiful. Neighborhood folks would

new group a chance and show folks that a family could come together and stay together. "Plus," he admits, "they just kept bugging me."

And give them a chance he did. Willie Max co-wrote 10 songs on the debut album Bona Fide. "We had a lot of artistic space," says Lyric. "Raphael allowed us to use our creative minds and flow," she remembers. "The album is strictly Willie Max." If you're wondering just what that is, their first single,

'Can't Get Enough' featuring Raphael, should allow you some indication. A dripping wet love song, "Can't Get Enough" displays the sensual balladry, reflective harmonies, and in your face type of lyrics Willie Max is set to deliver on their debut Pookie/Motown disc. Theatrics, laughter, emotion, funk, heart, soul, flair, and a down-home spirit that hasn't been seen in a family

group in quite some time, Willie Max's Bona Fide has it all.

Which means of course, coming full circle, keeping an unwavering faith and staying true to family. "Willie Max has to stay real," says Rose. "We can't work any other kind of way." She looks over at her sisters; they know what's coming next. Always have. "Seriously," she begins with a wink, "We will Willie Max-ify you!"



other. The fact that super producer Raphael Saadiz chose Willie Max to debut on his new label Pookie Records is reason enough to stop and listen. How about the fact that these three talented sisters decided that they wanted to go on Aaliyah's "One In A Million" tour so they learned the lyrics to her entire album in one day, bum rushed the audition and nailed the gig on the spot. "We walked into that audition like we owned it," laughs Lyric. "We Willie Max-ified Aaliyah on the spot."

William Max are the daughters of Willie Smith and Marie Maxwell Smith. Willie was a singer, emcee, comedian and tap dancer; Marie Maxwell Smith a jazz singer. Together, they were the kind of Mama and Daddy who lied about their ages; the couple whom daughter Sky Detroit-ly says had been together "forevah." Raising a family of seven, with spiritual ties so tight that living room

hear of the service and ask, can we come by yall's church," she remembers.

Willie Max first met Raphael Saadiq a decade ago in Detroit at a WJLB concert, back when they went by the classic name, The Smith Reflections. On a return visit to Detroit by Raphael, the girls met up with him again. "We were on a mission!" states Rose. This time they sang for him and he was impressed. Keeping in touch through the years, in 1996, The Smith Reflections became Willie Max, signed, sealed and delivered to Raphael's new Motown imprint, Pookie Records. Saadiq says that he signed Willie Max because he wanted to give this

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