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The Legendary Bobby Caldwell and the Portland Jazz Orchestra with Special Guest Patrick Lamb

Jimmy Maks Friday April 30th
221 NW 10th Ave. Portland, OR 97209

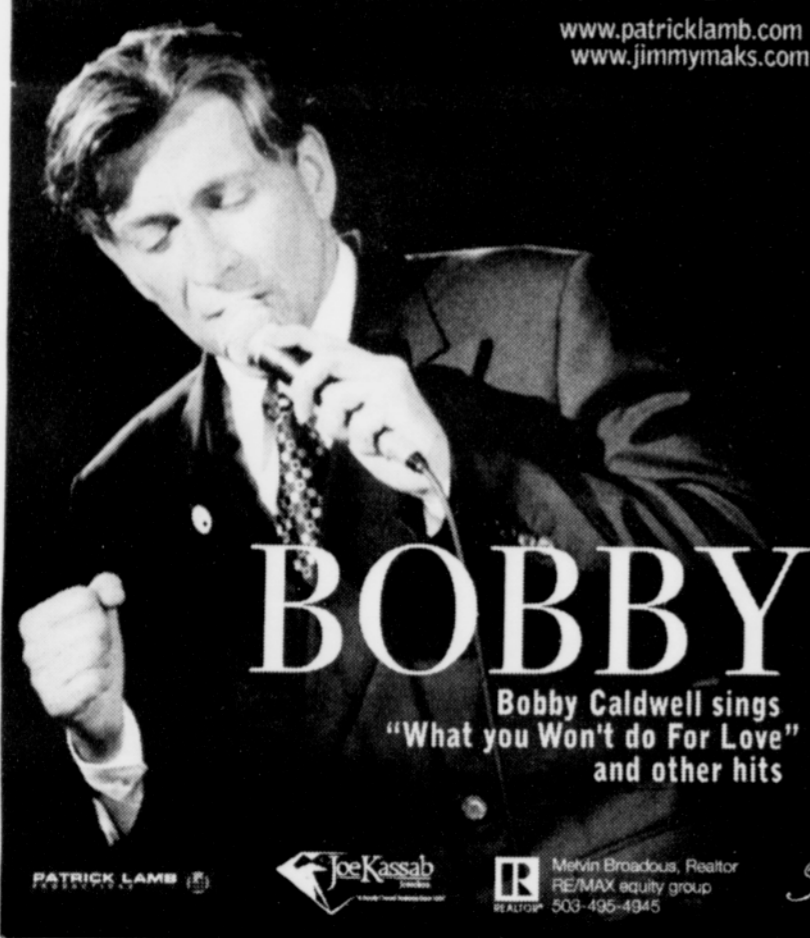
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Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

For Usher, Sexy is Back

New found bachelor changes course

(AP) -- Less than two years ago, Usher was glorifying his evolution as a man with "Here I Stand," a CD that found him celebrating his new role as husband and father while shunning the image of a sexy bad boy unable — or unwilling — to make a lasting commitment.

Now, with the release of his latest album, "Raymond v. Raymond," the 31-year-old talks about maturity again. But this time, it comes from lessons learned after disappointment — not only in the discouraging sales of that album, but in the failure of his two-year marriage to Tameka Foster Raymond, the mother of his two young sons.

"Having one of the most sincere moments and occurrences take place in that period of my life, it taught me a lot," Usher said. "It was very beautiful... It just simply didn't work. But I never undermine that moment in my life because it's valuable... and in my life, I try to learn from my experiences."

And his experiences have taught him a lot in a very short period. In 2007, he was still soaring from the 10 million-selling 2004 album "Confessions," which firmly established him as a superstar with such smashes as "Yeah!" and "Burn," when he decided to get married. Stylist Tameka Foster was eight years his senior and had three children of her own.

The elimination of one of music's most desirable bachelors made the union unpopular among his fans. The more serious blow to his career, though, came from his professional priorities. With "Here I Stand,"



Usher performs March 30 on ABC's Good Morning America show in New York. (AP photo)

Usher, who had built his career on his appeal as a playboy — even as a 15-year-old crooner — decided to focus firmly on family.

The result? "Here I Stand" sold just 1.2 million copies. While Usher is careful not to call the album a mistake, he does acknowledge that the material was such a departure that his fans may have had difficulty digesting it.

"I definitely do think having gone from being a very single bachelor to a married father of two children definitely changed the perspective of who I am and what

I had to offer," he said. "But then there are those who did recognize it and did understand that there is some great value in that."

Given his new album's first single, the hit "Papers," which was a very thinly veiled look at his divorce, one might have expected "Raymond v. Raymond" to detail his tumultuous relationship. Instead, the CD looks to re-establish Usher as the sensual — and single — entertainer whose life revolves around beautiful girls and clubs, not changing diapers and staying home with a wife.

Latest Album Soars to No. 1

Usher scored his third consecutive No. 1 album on the U.S. pop chart last week.

Usher's "Raymond v Raymond" sold 329,000 copies during the week ended April 4, according to Nielsen SoundScan. He previously led the tally with 2008's "Here I Stand" (443,000 copies in its first week) and 2004's "Confessions" (1.1 million).

Usher supported the new set's release with stops this month on "American Idol" and "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," and on both he performed his new single "OMG." The single is expected to make a handsome debut on the Billboard Hot 100 when the new chart is unveiled Thursday.



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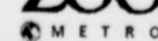
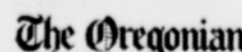
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