

Maxwell Paris plays the name 'game'

The name is garnering a buzz, but it's not what you may think.

Maxwell Paris is not the name of a band.

It's not the name of a person.

It's not even the name an album.

Maxwell Paris is a pen name — devised to catch your attention.

And it's working.

"I've heard my name mispronounced and misspelled more times than I can count," jokes J. Michael Plevyak, the Bloomsburg multi-instrumentalist who recently released his debut album, "Dangerous Games."

"I just tried to come up with a name that I thought people would remember," he says. "I started a production company — Maxwell Paris Productions — and so many people commented on it and seemed to remember it that I took it from the publishing company and used it as the artist. There's no real meaning, other than that the initials are the same as mine."

The 13-track, independently released CD — which is available at all Gallery of Sound stores and has received positive reviews in various trade magazines — is the sole project of Plevyak.

(You can hear a sampling of the album this Sunday on "The Cellar Full of Noise." Showtime is 8 p.m. on 97.9 FM — The Mountain.)

Plevyak says he played "every single note" on the album himself.

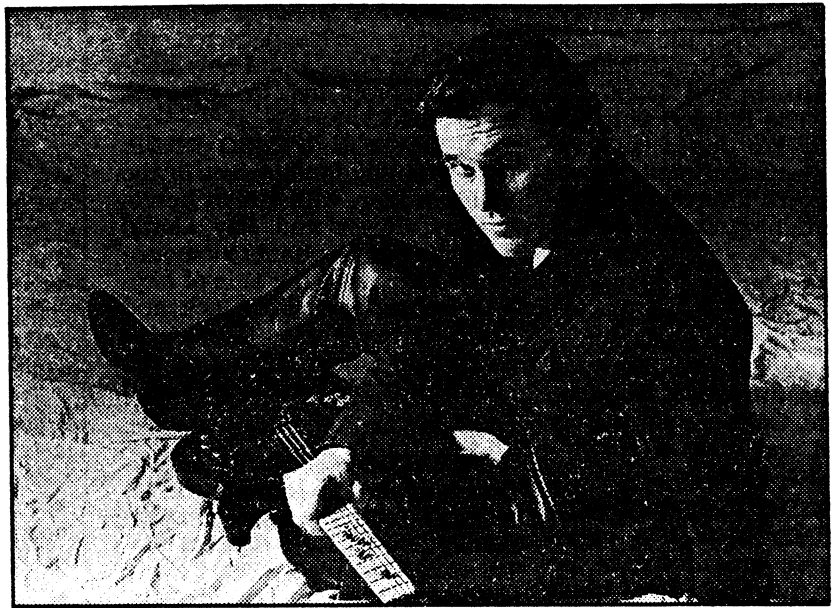
"I've taken lessons on all those instruments at one time or another," he says, adding that while he's done studio work on other locally released albums, and even for Warner Brothers, this is his first full solo project.

"The time came," he says.

"This was music no one had ever heard before. I just, for some reason, woke up one morning and decided I was going to make a CD."

The album, says Plevyak, took "roughly 1,200 hours" to complete. "It took me basically the best part of a year," he says. "It was all of my spare time — weekends, everything."

Spare time, that is, from his work as an industrial engineer which, he says, was an asset when he recorded the album. "The engineering background really helped me a lot in terms of the technical requirements to make a CD quality recording," says Plevyak.



Maxwell Paris finds a new project

A production and studio wiz, Plevyak is now considering taking his show live on the road.

"I've played in rock bands through the years," he says, "but I have not performed this project live. I am thinking about it as of late because it seems to be taking off. There's a lot of things happening with sales and promotion ... people are liking it — people are buying it. The radio airplay is going to start soon."

That, he says he hopes, will allow him to distribute the album worldwide.

"I'm soliciting major labels right now for what would amount to a distribution contract," he says. "I want to demonstrate some regional sales and success. Actually, I'm more interested in international distribution. Approximately 50 percent of the record companies' gross sales are overseas. I've been to Europe a couple of times in the last two years, and they play American music over there exclusively."

Citing blues, hard-rock and classic rock an influence, Plevyak says it was an eighth grade garage band that gave him his first experience as a vocalist. "I went down the road one time and visited a kid's house," he recalls. "He wanted to get a band together and he said, 'We need a singer.' He looked at me and said 'You sing.' That was my first contact with rock 'n' roll."

But it wasn't his last.

Maxwell Paris
 "Dangerous Games"
 Available at all Gallery of
 Sound locations

The new album, with lyrics on tracks such as "Tower of Love," "Heather and I" and "Because I Love You" delves into the complexity of relationships between men and women.

"The theme plays along what happens when you put the two sexes together," he says. "The games that happen between the male and female... the game of love."

Cellar Full of Noise

This week on The Cellar Full of Noise, Mike Naydock will highlight Maxwell Paris' "Dangerous Games" CD, and will also play tunes by Unfinished Business and Brand New Delusions.

Showtime is Sunday at 8 p.m. on WZMT 97.9 FM — The Mountain.

● "Music On The Menu" appears each Friday in The Times Leader. Local and out of town artists interested in being profiled may contact Alan Stout at The Times Leader, 15 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre, PA, 18711 or call 829-7131.