

The Formerly Known As Prince Enjoys Musical Freedom With Hit Album 'Emancipation' Artist

The Artist formerly known as Prince says his current hit album, *Emancipation*, is the album he "was born to make."

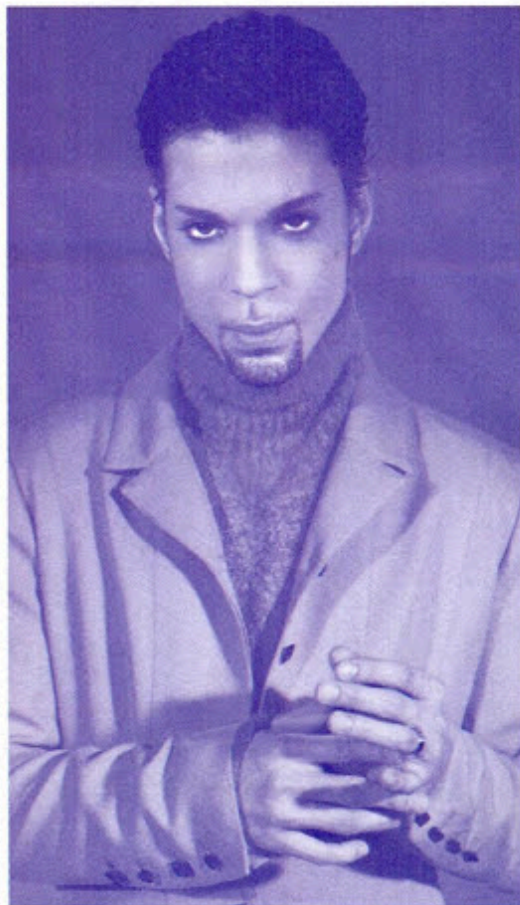
And judging by the album's sales, it is the album that his fans have been waiting to buy.

At JET press time, the three-CD set had been certified double-platinum after selling more than 2 million copies.

"Freedom is a beautiful thing," The Artist said upon the album's release. "I've been looking forward to this day for some time. *Emancipation* is the album I was born to make."

The album features the hit debut single *Betcha By Golly Wow*, a remake of the Stylistics '70s hit, and other gems including, *Somebody's, Somebody, The Holy River, Emale* and extraordinary renditions of Bonnie Raitt's *I Can't Make You Love Me*, Joan Osborne's *One Of Us* and the Delfonics' *La La Means I Love You*. His upcoming single, *Face Down*, is slated for release in June.

"The whole process of this record was different," The Artist recently said. "I'm a free man, I'm a happy man, I'm a married man and I'm a clear man. All the tracks on this record are free, happy and clear. Making this record was uplifting for me."



Steve Parke

▲ The Artist formerly known as Prince celebrates his newfound musical freedom with his double-platinum album, *Emancipation*.

The Artist notes, "I can find inspiration in anything: hip hop, country and western. I've written a lot of love songs, but I'm writing them a little different now."

The Artist feels that *Emancipation* symbolizes the artistic freedom he feels now with his new recording contract with EMI after a bitter split from Warner Bros. Records, where he started his career in 1978 with the tune *Soft and Wet*. He became a major star with the 1979 hit, *I Wanna Be Your Lover*. He changed his name from Prince to the male-female symbol in 1993 (JET, June 28, 1993).

Emancipation is on his own label, NPG (New Power Generation). EMI-Capitol Music Group manufactures and distributes his recordings.

He reveals that he once wrote the word "slave" on his face because that's what he was—a slave to the music industry. He says before *Emancipation*, he never really had total creative freedom and regrets that he never owned the master tapes of his big recordings such as *When Doves Cry*, *1999*, *Controversy* and *Purple Rain*. Those master tapes are owned by Warner Bros. It is customary for record companies to own the master tapes of works recorded on their labels.

"If you don't own your master tape, your master owns you. And you might as well write slave on your face too. It's all about ownership."

Blacks must own their businesses and control their career growth, The



▲ The Artist entertains fans during one of his trademark, spectacular performances at the 4th Annual VH1 Honors in Universal City, CA.

Artist believes. He says having the word slave written on his face was "a reminder to all of us that there are ceilings placed above us." He says Blacks should realize "your mind can get rid of anything. I can't stand for a ceiling to be put on me."

This time around, he records for his own label and owns the master tapes of all of his recordings. "I'm completely free of all ceilings; my soul is running around, everyday, all day."

Late last year, there were unconfirmed news reports that a son was born to The Artist and his wife,

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▲The talented musician jams to the joy of his emancipation during the launch party for his album, also titled *Emancipation*, at Paisley Park Studios in Minneapolis.

Mayte. The baby reportedly died of a rare birth defect.

The Artist refuses to discuss the matter, but the sensitive superstar singer sincerely loves children and recently completed a concert benefit tour for needy children. "The Love 4 One Another Charities Tour" was established by The Artist to raise money to support the interests of underprivileged children and people in need across the U.S.

Soon after the release of his album, The Artist threw a party at his multimillion dollar entertainment complex, Paisley Park, near Minneapolis for hundreds of grade school and high school students from all over the U.S.

Following his concert performance, The Artist and his wife, Mayte, met with the students and presented them with black parkas emblazoned

with his symbol on the back. The students were selected from thousands who sent their report cards in to radio stations throughout the country.

The Artist will celebrate his newfound musical freedom this summer with a special U.S. concert tour.

With *Emancipation*, the performer is also experiencing personal freedom and a spiritual awareness. He recently read the bestsellers *Embraced By the Light* and *The Celestine Prophecy*. "I'm studying religion and philosophy; that's what I want my music to reflect. It's hard to put that in a pop song."

The Artist admits that he is still a bit of a recluse and only has a few friends in the music business, including Me'Shell N'degocello and Lenny Kravitz. "These are the ones who have reached out for me," he

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▲Shortly after their wedding in 1996, The Artist and his bride, Mayte, attend a New York Knicks vs. Chicago Bulls game at Madison Square Garden in New York.

says, noting that the three of them "come from the same garden." He notes, "I can't say I have many friends in the music industry."

When he talks about his wife, Mayte, his eyes fill with tears of love and joy. These are tears of a happy



man who has made a long journey around the world and has finally found what he was looking for.

"When you are in love with someone, you can see God," he believes. "God is love; real love is perfect."

The happy couple married on Valentine's Day in 1996 in Minneapolis during a private ceremony (JET, March 4, 1996). "I didn't take any pictures at my wedding. Mayte said, 'I don't want a lot of people; we need room in the church because a lot of angels are going to be there.'"

He is thankful for his wife's loving support. "Through her eyes I could see different things."

He mentions his former famous friendship with his protégée, Vanity, who is now an evangelist. "Everyone thought I was going to marry Vanity. She is where I am right now. She's connected with her spirit. I heard her say she was worrying about my spirit, but everything is OK," he says happily.

The Artist assures his fans that he is also doing quite well financially. "I will never be bankrupt," he declares. "I will never run out of money. I've made 20 albums. The money alone will support me...forever. Not to worry."

Reflecting on his newfound freedom, spiritual awareness and hit album, he notes, "This is the dawn for me. This is what I've been leading up to; this will happen to everyone if they let love guide them...I'm free."

◀ The mysterious musical genius gives the press an "OK" sign backstage at the 28th Annual NAACP Awards ceremony in Pasadena, CA.