CLEVELAND OHIO -- When asked why he came up with thename Maze, he pondered and said, "We were spitting out a lot of names, but at the end of the day, [it]was the one that everybody liked. The music would take you to different places [lake a maze], so it kinda fit." He laughed, "So [coming up with the name], that's my claim to fame. Not really any divine intervention, but then again, maybe it was."

Frankie Beverly and Maze: The band that keeps on kickin'

By KEVIN CHILL HEARD

Managing Editor

Maze featuring Frankie Beverly represents one of the most enduring musical groups among

bands in the modern era. The group will be performing in Cleveland at Voinovich Park on July 1 as part of the first ever, two-day July 4th Music Festival.

I recently had a chance to speak with group member Roame, who was not only an original Maze member, but also came up with the group's name.

In discussing the group's unparalleled devotion among its loyal fans he stated, "The style that we created, that has never changed. No bombs or fire, or extra added productions, we just come out and play real and true and passionate music. This would be the band that I made sure I saw if I wasn't in this band!"

Roame says the people can see the love the members have for one another and he should know, having been in the band since 1969.

The group started out "TheButlers." Frankie Beverly and McKinley "Bug" Williams are the only remaining members from those days. The group then changed its name to "Raw Soul."

"We moved from Philadelphia to the Bay Area in '72," said Roame. "We had done pretty much all that we could do in Philly and we were influenced by self-contained bands like Sly and the Family Stone and Santana. We wanted to go where these bands were and they were in the Bay Area."

There, Marvin Gaye's sister-in-law saw them and told her sister, Jan Gaye, Marvin's wife. "Marvin came up and saw us and we blew Marvin away! We were signed to Capitol Records in '75," the band member exclaimed.

"Before we signed, Marvin didn't like the name Raw Soul and he suggested we change the name. We had gotten a little smoother, so I came up with the name 'Maze.'"

When asked why he came up with that name, he pondered and said, "We were spitting out a lot

of names, but at the end of the day, Maze was the one that everybody liked. The music would take you to different places, so it kinda fit." He laughed, "So [coming up with the name], that's my claim to fame. Not really any divine intervention, but then again, maybe it was."

When asked about the difference between the groups now as opposed to their ways of making music he said, "Everything now is so instant and quick-fix and easy to do. Nowadays you got guys who call themselves musicians and can't play an instrument. It's too easy for them." Roame did at least credit one band from the "relative new era" with being worthy of praise. "I listen to Mint Condition," he admitted. "They've worked with us quite a bit. They are a great band."

Finally the question of "When the heck is Frankie Beverly and Maze gonna come out with something new?," got answered after he laughed then stated the obvious. "We haven't had out product in 20 years. 'Back to Basics' was the last album we had out and we still sell out every major city we go to."

"Great songs are great songs and people always want to hear them" and he's correct.

"There's a reason for that," he continued. "Frankie is one of those type writers that is not gonna bring anything less than what people want. He has tracks, and hopefully by next year, possibly, you'll hear something."

Sooo, what's the name of this elusive new Frankie Beverly and Maze album? He laughed and said "It's called 'Anticipation.'"

For more information about the July 4th Music Festival (July 1 & 2) call (216) 832-0131. Tickets are available at the Call & Post Newspaper, 11800 Shaker Blvd. in Cleveland.