AMD Athlon XP 2800+ Barton core
1024 MB PC3200 Ram synced with cpu
Radeon 9700 Pro

Don't have any resource problems went I run Max CPU usage stay under 25% unless I'm rendering.

It could be the new gfx card is straining the cpu. Also what video renderer did you choose, HEIDI, OpenGL, or Direct X? I had problems getting Max to run when I tried using the DX renderer.