

NATALIE COLE

When Natalie Cole's seminal *Unforgettable... With Love* came out in 1991, the jazz collection set a new standard for reinventing the Great American Songbook. The CD, which captured six Grammys®, including Album and Record Of The Year, spent five weeks at No. 1 and sold more than eight million copies in the U.S. alone.

Yet instead of exploiting the moment and rushing out a second volume, Cole thoughtfully took a step back, devoted herself to several other stellar projects including her riveting autobiography, and waited until she felt ready to return to the songs that fulfill her heart and soul. Releasing *Still Unforgettable* on September 9, 2009 the album won two GRAMMYS, one for Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album and Best Instrumental Accompanying Vocalist. It also earned Cole a NAACP Award for Best Jazz Artist.

“Timing is everything, and I wasn't in a hurry to make this kind of a record right away,” Cole says. “Something about now just seemed the right time. There is never a guarantee of success when you are ready to put out a record—especially one like this. You have to go with your gut, but I didn't want to be shamelessly chasing after the success of *Unforgettable... With Love*, so I waited.”

Still Unforgettable proved to be more than worth the wait: A co-venture between Natalie, DMI Music and Rhino/WEA, Cole lovingly wrapped her unparalleled supple voice around 14 standards. On this, her 21st studio album, Cole also took the reins as producer for the first time.

Just as she lovingly partnered with her late father, the legendary Nat “King” Cole, for a posthumous duet on the title track on the 1991 masterpiece, this time they reunited on the delightful “Walkin’ My Baby Back Home,” first recorded by Cole’s father in the early ‘50s.

“If there was going to be another ‘duet’ with Dad, I felt it should be something more whimsical, fun and light,” Cole says. “At the same time, I was looking for a song that would also be familiar to a certain type of audience. I think this is going to work just as well. It’s adorable and loving between parent and child. It feels like he’s right there with me. How do you top that?”

There’s only one way—by surrounding “Walkin’ My Baby Back Home” with songs that are on par, songs that are stars in their own right and come with rich and varied histories of their own. On *Still Unforgettable* Cole looked beyond songs made famous by her father. “I decided to go deeper into the American Songbook and not just get songs from my father, but also from Frank Sinatra, Lena Horne, Sammy Davis Jr., and Peggy Lee. The lyrics of these songs are about life. As a singer, they take me and my audience on a winsome journey.”

Still Unforgettable combines much-beloved classics like “The Best is Yet To Come,” “Come Rain or Come Shine,” “Nice ‘N’ Easy” with great songs that Cole discovered for

the first time, such as “Coffee Time,” a recommendation from Tony Bennett. “Every single one of these songs was a challenge to sing because the original performances are so iconic. It was difficult to find a way to approach each one without losing the essence of what makes them so great,” Cole says.

Therefore Cole and her co-producer Gail Deadrick turned to a who’s who of A-list arrangers including John Clayton, Patrick Williams, Nan Schwartz and Victor Vanacore, all of whom paid homage to the originals, while creating something new.

“It is a bit of an art to pick the songs and then ‘marry’ them with the right arranger,” says Cole. She and Deadrick “sat for hours and talked through each song and why it would work according to the personality and style of the individual arranger. Then we sat down with each arranger and talked the songs through again [and] what I wanted to accomplish, even down to specifics on whether to modulate a key or how the song should start.”

Before she captured 1975’s Best New Artist Grammy[®], Cole appealed to fans and critics alike with her versatility as an R&B, pop and jazz singer of the first order. Her canon includes such No. 1’s as “This Will Be (An Everlasting Love),” “Inseparable,” “Our Love,” “I’ve Got Love On My Mind,” “Pink Cadillac” and “Miss You Like Crazy.” The eight-time Grammy winner continues to astonish with her vocal dexterity and her intimate, knowing way with a lyric and melody.

Those talents will be on display as Cole continues to tour to promote *Still Unforgettable*: “I still love recording *and* still love the stage, but like my Dad, I have the most fun when I am in front of that glorious orchestra or that kick-butt Big Band.”

And like so many of her fans, she finds the beauty in these songs and a mystique that is missing from much of contemporary music. “Many songwriters these days seem to feel that they have to tell it all,” she says. “They don’t allow the audience to imagine. Everything is so graphic—there is no mystery.” “Conversely, the songs on *Still Unforgettable* go deeper into the treasure chest of great American songwriting, with lyrics and melodies that touch you and soothe you, appealing to your intellectual side, but most of all, appealing to your heart...”