

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Natalie Cole

"Whether it's a ballad or an up-tempo song, I want quality and thought put into it," Natalie Cole says emphatically. "A record should capture a real human energy — that's what's important to me."

"Everlasting," Natalie Cole's June 1987 debut album for Manhattan Records, is a reaffirmation of the high artistic standards by which she's always been guided. She's long been considered among the most versatile and passionate R&B/pop singers around — with this album, she's found the material and the producers to match her talents. Cole was excited by the project, and her enthusiasm makes for one of her most satisfying releases to date.

"The songs this time are some of the best I've ever had," she says. "What was missing on some of my last few albums were strong ballads — and we have several of them on 'Everlasting,' which certainly makes me happy. At the same time, the up-tempo material isn't predicatable, musically or lyrically. Often, the energy you put into a recording is covered up by over-arrangement and over-singing, until something's lost. We didn't do that this time."

Handling such a broad range of material was a challenge, but Cole enjoyed it. "Pink Cadillac," for instance, was something of an artistic

stretch for her: "That song was a real difficult direction for me, but at the same time I felt real comfortable with it and had fun. Dennis Lambert made it sound contemporary as well as giving it a street feel. It made the song something special."

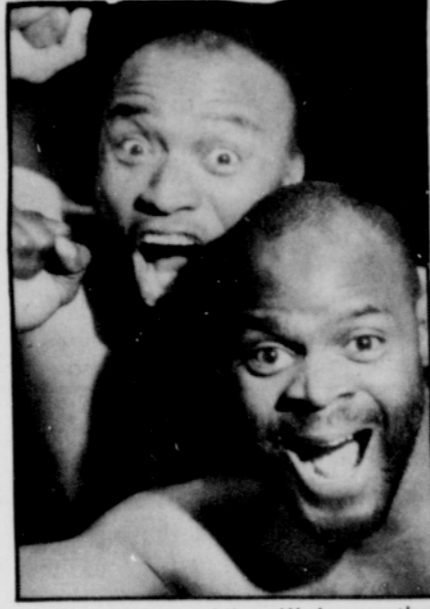
There's a lot to like on "Everlasting": solid songwriting, expert production and, most of all, a dynamic vocalist fully involved in her music. The LP serves notice that, after a several-year recording hiatus, Cole and her career are very much on the move.

Aside from her music, Cole has devoted time to raising her son Robbie (her husband, songwriter/producer, Marvin Yancy passed away several years ago). Charity work has also been important to her — in 1980, she served as chairperson for the American Cancer Society's fundraising campaigns, including the "Great American Smoke-Out." She has also performed in behalf of N.O.W. (Neighbors of Watts, an entertainment business charity that raises funds for children's centers in the Los Angeles ghetto) and headlined the "Because We Care" benefit for the Cambodian people.

"Everything is flowing well," Cole says of her career at present. "I can't wait to get out on the road again!" Rejuvenated personally and artistically, Natalie Cole is making outstanding music once again.

## "Woza Albert!" Rises and Moves to Winningstad Theatre

by Garland Lee Thompson



Yes, "Woza Albert!" is on the move! I first saw the original cast production in New York, at the Roger Furman New Heritage Theatre in Harlem in 1985, presenting one of the most powerful performances of the season. The return to New York of the Obie Award-Winning South African play had just completed a special two-week run at the City College of New York's Davis hall in January, and now it opens here in the new Portland Performing Arts Center.

The Storefront Theatre has picked up Rick Jones and Anthony P. Armstrong's production of "Woza Albert!" that first appeared at the Key Largo Nightclub last month, and has just opened it in the Winningstad Theatre, the smaller of the two newest theatre stages in the Pacific Northwest, and perhaps on the entire West Coast.

This also marks the first time that "Woza Albert!" is being performed by Africans of American decent. Does it "hold up"? Yes. What a stretch it is for Jones and Armstrong, who create and "paint a picture" clearly of a whole range of South African characters — Black, white and Afrikaner — slowly building tempo and a steady pace. It's not easy for American Black actors to grasp the energy and rhythm of Black South Africans, with Zulu background, and perform the shifting, pounding pace with convincing power and credibility.

It is very brave for these Brothers

to try it in the first place! They truly show their "behind", letting it all hang out using just a few hand-props and very few costumes (to none, at one point). The Armstrong and Jones "duo", do African "doo wop" and accapella at the top of the piece with dynamite "Hand jive"! Through song and dance with fast changing scenes, our dynamic duo weave a strange "what-if" tale of the return of Christ (they call Him "Morena") to, of all places, South Africa!

"Woza me!" "Woza" means "rise up" and "Albert" is Albert Luthuli, the Zulu Chief and one of the founders of the African National Congress. With cartoon noses, lots of actor's mime (not pure mime) and making their own outrageous sound effects, we are lifted up from just another "agit-prop" politico-series of vignettes, to a simply powerful, satirical statement of the lunacy of one of the world's gross-est abominations: apartheid!

This is "monster theatre" at its best! A bare stage, two bodies, something to sit on, a prop hanger and "away we go"; laying "brick-by-brick for the white boss machinery," doing "time for being Black," up in helicopters trying to "nuke the Jesus out of the Christ," while the "Naz" is taking "a walk on the waters!" I loved the chopper scene, as the South African airforce's "A-bomb run at J.C." backfires and their Afrikaner-cans are blown away into "the drink!" Jeff Forbes' lighting on that scene is super good!

John Zagone and Rick Jones are both wearing directors' hats, so my hat is off to them: Tony Armstrong; Gary O'Brien, producer; and "the Storefront gang". And, especially for getting "the real" Black South African playwright/actor, Selaelo Maredi, to consult on the music. Just keep working of "the dialects" with Colin Jones, dialect consultant, and you'll be alright: Okay?

Woza, y'all. You "got down and it for up and on" and made me forget the hunger aches and why we so poor in our "P.M., or post Martin" (Morena) period! So, "Woza" on down to the PCPA. It's just "cross de river".

## Spike Lee Talks 'School Daze'



Filmmaker Spike Lee talks with host Deborah Crable.

"She's Gotta Have It" filmmaker Spike Lee targets skin color conflicts and the need for unity among Blacks in his latest film, "School Daze". Lee plays a pledge in a fraternity whose motto is "dog or die" in the musical which centers around a Black college's homecoming. "Everything in the film is the truth," states Lee, and he explains why he was banned from shooting the movie at three Black colleges in Atlanta. Lee also discusses the return of his "She's Gotta Have It" character for a commercial he's directing that features basketball star Michael Jordan and tells why he knew his award-winning film, "She's Gotta Have It", would be a big hit, and addresses the "universal" quality of Black films in the Ebony/Jet Showcase the weekend of February 12-14th. Consult your local listing for date and time.

## A Celebration of Black Artists Hosted by U.S. Bank

U.S. Bank announced that it is hosting an art exhibit that includes the work of eight local Black artists, February 1st through the 29th, in the U.S. Bank Plaza Lobby. The exhibit is set to honor Black History Month in Oregon.

Works of Charolette Lewis, Howard Pernell, Samuel Bryant, Sheridan Haggar, Kathy Pennington, Tom Unthank, Mark Little, and Mario Jackson will be shown. This exhibit offers a diverse use of mediums including watercolor, embos-

sing, lithograph, pen and ink, photography, oil on canvas, acrylic on canvas, ceramic, and ink with prismacolor.

U.S. Bank is proud to salute these fine artists. They not only represent Oregon's Black Artists but the depth of artistry in the Pacific Northwest. U.S. Bank invites the public to come view "A Celebration of Black Artists" during the month of February. The U.S. Bank Plaza building is located on the corner of 5th and Oak.

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