Mrs. Natalie Yancey

BUT BETTER KNOWN AS NATALIE COLE-

No longer is she known simply as Nat (King) Cole's daughter, she has her own identity. She has done a lot of growing up, and her marriage is back on the track. She graces the cover of this month's DAWN Magazine.

By Frederick L. Douglass

Natalie Cole has found a self identity that she seems to be very comfortable with. She has achieved a level of stardom in her own right and she is no longer referred to as Nat King Cole's daughter or "little girl."

Artistically, she is at a very high point with two hot albums on the market - "We're the Best of Friends" in tandem with vocalist Peabo Bryson and her own LP, "Don't Look Back," which features some of Natalie's original

Her personal life is also on the upswing because she and her husband Marvin Yancy have finally ended their separation and developed a relationship filled with enough love and trust to enable them to withstand the pressures of being apart for long periods of time while pursuing their individual careers in the music industry.

Describing the circumstances that lead to her and Marvin Yancy splitting up, Natalie says, "One of the major problems was that our careers were out of balance and that threw our life way out of

"By that, I mean that there would be times when I was travelling for weeks at a time, never really getting home, while Marvin's career for a while mainly involved song writing and producing, but didn't call for him to be on the road a lot.

"He was home a lot more than he is now, and there were times I wanted to be there with him, but I couldn't. It was hard for both of us. Being apart a lot created tensions and hostilities between us we didn't know how to deal

"We went through all kinds of changes, like becoming suspcious and distrustful of each other. So when we finally did get a chance to see each other, we'd end up PAGE 16

fighting instead of giving each other the love and comfort we both needed. Finally, we drove each other away." How did Natalie Cole and

Marvin Yancy, the man who started out writing songs for her and ultimately became her husband, ultimately find a way to overcome the hurdles that were



Natalie told an audience as she brought her son Robbie on stage with her, "I'd like you to meet the fruit of my labor."

tearing their marriage asunder.

"First of all," says Natalie, "we both sat down to talk about our career goals and aspirations. We realized that we both wanted to continue our individual careers, but that we also wanted to be

"Yet our careers kept us apart because of the travelling. We knew that this was something that we had to accept and that we had to strengthen our spiritual relationship so that our minds and souls would be together even when we were physically apart.

"We had to rid our hearts and minds of suspicion and distrust, we had to overcome jealousy and rid our minds of nagging thoughts about whether or not we were faithful to each other when we were separated.

"We just had to balance out our lives, do a lot of growing up and get our act together. In the process of getting back together, we really got to know and understand one another.

"One thing we learned is that being in love with someone doesn't mean you have to be glued to them every second of the day."

While they have reconciled their relationship, Natalie admits that it is still hard work to keep their love burning. "Like I said, we still have to go through being separated for as long as a month when I'm touring and that's not

"We stay in constant telephone contact, but there are times when either Marvin or I will say 'That's It!' and we'll drop everything we're doing so we can get

"But one thing that really helps is that Marvin is now on the road a lot, travelling with his choir. He has this gospel group called the Fountain of Life Baptist Choir

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-Mrs. Natalie Yancey

(Continued from Page 16) which was nominated for a Grammy last year.

"Marvin's involvement with the choir and travelling has helped a lot in balancing out our marriage and the demands made on us by

Together, Natalie Cole and Marvin Yancy are a talented team, especially when it comes to coll aborating on composing songs. "Marvin and I worked together to write several songs on my latest album 'Don't Look Back,' induding the title track.

" 'Don't Look Back' means a lot to us because the tune symbolizes our starting over, learning from past mistakes, but most importantly, leaving the past in the past. We wrote 'Hold On' sitting side by side.

"Marvin wrote the melody of 'Hold On' two years ago, but the words took a long time coming to us, maybe because we had to learn to hold on to each other before we could write the song.

"We also wrote '(I've Seen) Paradise' and 'I'm Getting Into You' as a team. I collaborated with Gene Barbe, who produced my album along with Marvin, to write "Cole-Blooded."

Natalie says that she is very satisfied with the music on "Don't Look Back," especially the way the tunes she wrote by herself came off. "I was a little apprehensive about how my tunes 'Danger Up Ahead' and 'Beautiful Dreamer' would sound, but I was very pleased when I first heard them played back.

"I fek good when I first went album because I've never had as much to do with putting together the material for a recording.

"I had butterflies in my stomach after I was finished and I couldn't relax until I heard what the music sounded like. Listen, I've had six gold albums, but this album means more to me than all of them put together because I have put so much of myself into it.

"I'm committed to the material on this album because it also symbolizes how far I've come in the music business, something I never really thought I'd ever get

career as a singer would be a

The service of the contract of



Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Yancey.

natural for the daughter of Nat King Cole, Natalie says she never took music seriously until she was 22 years old.

"Music was always a hobby with me. It was part of life in the house I grew up in. Of course, I was exposed to the careers of my father and his brother Freddy, but I never thought about making a living by singing. That's why I got started late.



Natalie Cole

"But now I'm into music from head to toe. I've got some projects in mind that I would like to do in the future. I'd like to do another album along the lines of what Peabo Bryson and I did.

"There are a lot of artists that I'd like to work with. I'd also like to work with youths, especially those who are thinking about making a career out of being a singer or musician.

"Maybe I could get them to understand that show business is not as glamorous as it seems. It's hard work and there is very little luck involved. Success in this field also takes timing and pacing, so that you can learn to be in the right place at the right time and have enough strength left to take advantage of whatever opportunities come your way.

"You also need a lot of guts and a sense of what has happened in music before you came along. I've studied Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, Carmen McCrae, Billie Eckstine and so many others. Listening to them and observing them work taught me a lot about phrasing, diction and how to work the stage and the audience.

"There are many hassles that performers go through because they are in the fishbowl of public life where everyone's looking at you and you always have to be at your best. But there are also many rewards if you have the discipline to take care of business and ignore the distractions.

"I've learned to tune out a lot of the negative things that happen to performers by just concentrating on my husband Marvin and our son Robbie whenever people start to pluck my nerves."

When Natalie is not touring or working on an album in the studio. she likes to stay home with her family. Sometimes she visits a few of her close friends near her home in California.

She loves the neighborhood in which she lives and the way her neighbors look out for her. "You know, we had this big storm in California that did more than \$50,000 damage to our home. Anyway, the ground started giving away under my car and it looked like it was going to roll downhill over a cliff.

"Would you believe that one of my neighbors, who knows how dearly I love that car, ran out to a record store, bought one of my albums so that she could get the address of my management company so she could contact me to come home and save my car. Now that's a friend.

"As long as I have a few friends like that, my husband Marvin and my son Robbie, there is nothing in the world that can get me down."

Natalie Cole says that she will not be recording a new album for a while because she wants to devote her energies to promoting the material on "Don't Look Back." She has found time, however, to write a song entitled "Galatians, Chapter 6" which will be on the forthcoming album by her husband Marvin Yancy and the Fountain of Life Baptist Church.

"There is a verse in Galatians which inspired that song and keeps me going. Whenever I feel myself slacking off or getting ready to give up, I say to myself 'And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

"Those few words have brought me a long way."

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