

# Natalie Cole devastates Pine Knob audience

By JIM WINDELL

## Review

When Natalie Cole comes full force at an audience, they respond to her with stamping and dancing. This young singer has that kind of effect. Sunday night at Pine Knob Music Theatre in Clarkston she displayed her remarkable talents and the much-romanced personal following she has gathered in just three years.

One of the songs from her second album was a Jackson and Vanely collaboration entitled "Sophisticated Lady." Unlike the old Duke Ellington tune by the same name, this one has hip lyrics which go something like, "She's a different lady with a different style... She's got lots of rhythm, she's got lots of class."

That song could be talking about Natalie Cole. She is certainly different from her famous father who gentled love songs. Ms. Cole wraps herself in a

song and then shoots it off.

**BUT, SHE HAS** class. With unmistakable poise and the self-assurance that marks first-rate entertainers, she has the voice and spirit to command attention from contemporary music fans and critics.

As a result, this concert at Pine Knob may well have been "the" musical event of the Knob's season.

With a steady stream of cars headed north on I-75 there was no way that everyone was going to be ready for the 8 p.m. starting time as scheduled. This became a jam-packed, oversold concert that had high energy and required little encouragement to warm up. The opening act, soul shouter Peabo

Bryson and his band, appeared after 8:30 and his 40 minutes on stage was marked by his ear-shattering sound and his appeal to "reach for the feeling."

Bryson is anything but subtle as he assaults his audience with waves of volume and exhortations to, "Talk to me, why don't you. Let me know you are with me."

**MOST** of the large crowd was with him by the time he did his current disco-soul number, "Feel the Fire." He left the stage with an excited, whipped-up crowd.

Because of a ridiculously long intermission and wall-to-wall, impatient and partying people, the tension of waiting for Natalie Cole was relieved by individuals and groups dancing in the aisles and on the grass to the blaring recorded sounds of disco hits like the O'Jays' "Use Ta Be My Girl."

This was an event in itself. Ms. Cole was greeted by dancing and a standing ovation at about 10:30. She was gorgeous in a shiny lavender and yellow pants suit featuring a plunging neckline.

She welcomed the crowd to her party and said that there were people at Pine Knob for the first time and she was going to "make sure you don't forget."

True to her word, she bounced, danced and sang until midnight doing mostly her own standards but infusing them with the spirit and exuberance of her supple voice and charming personality.

**MS. COLE SEEMS** the mistress of controlled frenzy which fitted into the atmosphere of the total evening here. In a live performance she attacks songs with force and shows her influences to be not only Aretha

Franklin, but Nancy Wilson and Ella Fitzgerald.

In her second of 14 numbers, she did an uptempo version of "Lovers" that was much better than what appears on her "Thankful" album. She then moved into "Mr. Melody" that included a breathtaking scat chorus.

Also included in her repertoire was a joyous "Inseparable," an electrifying version of the old Lennon-McCartney "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," a torchy "Good Morning Heartaches" and a romping rendition of "This Will Be."

For this audience, as with all of her appearances, she gave unstintingly of herself. Her energy-filled encore was "Be Thankful," which reveals her positive approach to life and her music. She gives her all, but whatever she touches becomes a tour de force that

is centered solidly around the essentials of excellent voice and generous spirit.

## Cedar Pointe trip announced

The Birmingham Summer Park Program will sponsor a trip to Cedar Pointe in Sandusky, Ohio, for children age 6-14 on Tuesday, July 25.

The group will leave at 8 a.m. from the Birmingham Ice Sports Arena, 2300 E. Lincoln, and arrive back at 7 p.m. Deadline for registration is July 21.

Further information is available by calling Linda at 645-0731.

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