

= Leavin ' (album) =

Leavin ' is the twentieth studio album by American recording artist Natalie Cole , released on September 26 , 2006 , by Verve Records . The album consists of ten cover versions of various R & B and pop songs and two original songs : " 5 Minutes Away " and " Don 't Say Goodnight (It 's Time for Love) " . It was the second of Cole 's albums to be released by Verve Records , and her first album in four years , following Ask a Woman Who Knows (2002) . Cole promoted the album as a return to her R & B roots , distancing herself from an identification as a jazz artist .

After its release , critics gave the album generally positive reviews , praising Cole 's interpretations of the covered material , and comparing her favorably to contemporary R & B artists . The album had limited commercial success in the United States , peaking at number 97 on the Billboard 200 . Internationally , the album charted in Germany and Switzerland . The album spawned one single ? Cole 's cover of Aretha Franklin 's " Day Dreaming " ? with an accompanying music video . She performed the song at the BET special An Evening of Stars : Tribute to Aretha Franklin . She embarked on a theatre tour in the fall of 2006 to support the album .

= = Background and recording = =

The Huffington Post 's David Munk said that the idea for the record started after his suggestion that Cole " return to her R & B roots by recording an intimate , classic soul CD with a small group of sidemen and simple production " . Munk served as an executive producer for the album . He viewed the recording sessions in Atlanta as eclectic and described Cole 's ambition : " [S] he shared with me her hope of making a country @-@ soul record in Memphis ; she also spoke of doing a piano @-@ voice album and of recording in Spanish " .

In an interview with American Songwriter , Cole said the album " was born out of desperation " to record a pop / urban project rather than a jazz one . She sought to avoid being typecast as a jazz singer by returning to R & B and demanding more artistic control . By being an arranger on the album , she said the recording sessions reminded her of how she : " missed the freedom ... ad @-@ libbing , you know , and being able to holler every now and then ... all of that energy " . She initially looked for original songs to record for the album , but said " the songs being sent were pretty bad . " An article in Vibe said Cole 's decision to create a covers album was a marketing strategy to breed " a connection between song and interpreter and between singer and audience " and appeal to " fans yearning for the good old days before they had to hire a sitter to go see a show " . Cole later clarified she could not afford to record an album of original material , explaining " we 're doing a contemporary urban record on a jazz budget " .

While promoting the album , Cole said " R & B , rock and pop has always been my forte " and called the music something she wished she had recorded " at least five years ago " . She revealed her dissatisfaction with being labeled a jazz singer and her desire to showcase her versatility as an artist , saying she aimed to " put out some music that we hadn 't heard in a long time from anybody , really " . The project was Cole 's first collaboration with R & B producer Dallas Austin . Rashod Ollison of The Virginian @-@ Pilot wrote the album represented how " [Cole] ad hung up the gowns and returned to her soul roots " ; In past performances , Cole would wear gowns when singing jazz . Following Verve 's requirement that the album had to include original material , Cole described her experiences with Austin , and keyboard player Chanz Parkman , as the inspiration for " Five Minutes Away " . Prior to the album 's release , CBS News ' Caitlin Johnson wrote that it was " a sharp turn for a woman perhaps best known for singing jazz standards . " Johnson connected the project to Cole 's reinvention and its title to " leaving the past behind " .

= = Composition = =

Leavin ' is a contemporary R & B and pop music album consisting of twelve tracks , with an additional remix on digital copies . Cole said the material " has given me the opportunity to explore the greatness in the songs of some of our most talented and gifted songwriters , " emphasizing the

album 's " fresh new twist on some great music " . The album opens with Cole 's cover of Fiona Apple 's " Criminal " . Len Righi of The Morning Call expressed surprise at Cole 's ability to transform the " agonizing , brazen lament " into " a funky , Tina Turner @-@ type , rump @-@ shaker . " The second track is a cover of Neil Young 's " Old Man " ; The Huffington Post 's David Munk called it " a personal rumination on her father " . The third song , a cover of Aretha Franklin 's " Day Dreaming " , was recorded after Austin sang it in the studio . Cole said she " added a little bit of a hip @-@ hop feel to it " . Richard Harrington of The Washington Post felt that the fourth track , a cover of Shelby Lynne 's " Leavin ' " , " metaphorically put a little distance between the original R & B diva and the pop star Cole " . The fifth song is a cover of Ronnie Dyson 's " The More You Do It (The More I Like It Done To Me) " ; NPR 's Jason King attributes the inclusion of " the saucy but largely forgotten Yancy @-@ Jackson mid- ' 70s track " to Cole 's A & R director . The song contains an homage to Cole 's previous single " This Will Be (An Everlasting Love) " . The seventh track is a cover of Kris Kristofferson and Rita Coolidge 's " Loving Arms " (here titled " Lovin ' Arms ") , which Verve marketed as inspired by Etta James , allowing Cole " the opportunity to move back to her 70 's roots with rich , shimmering vocals " .

JazzReview 's Donna Kimura called Cole 's funky approach to the eighth track on the album , a cover of Bonnie Raitt 's " Love Letter " , as " a worthy , fresh interpretation instead of a copy " . " The Man with the Child in His Eyes " was described as an " ethereal " take on the Kate Bush song . Maura Johnston of Rolling Stone highlighted the original song " 5 Minutes Away " as one of Natalie Cole 's top ten essential songs , calling it " a wise rumination on love and life accented by dry horns and capped with a rousing call @-@ and @-@ response " . The tenth track is the original song " Don 't Say Goodnight (It 's Time for Love) " , written by Cole , Ernie Isley , and Chris Jasper . Cole explained that she included the cover of Des 'ree 's " You Gotta Be " as the eleventh song on the album because of positive fan response to her prior performances of it ; she described it as an example of her experimentation with " bringing a jazzy flavor to some pop songs " . The album concludes with a cover of Sting 's " If I Ever Lose My Faith in You " , which emphasizes its spiritual context through the addition of four Beatitudes .

= = Promotion = =

" Day Dreaming " was released as the lead single from the album on August 1 , 2006 . Director Doug Biro shot the accompanying music video , which features Cole singing with her band in front of a white background . The song earned Cole a nomination at the 49th Annual Grammy Awards for Best Female R & B Vocal Performance , but she lost to Mary J. Blige 's " Be Without You " . Cole performed the single at the BET special An Evening of Stars : Tribute to Aretha Franklin along with her arrangement of Franklin 's 1970 single " Call Me " .

Following the release of Leavin ' , Cole was slated to appear on " a number of major morning and late night television programs " to perform " several intimate showcases " of her music . To further promote the album , she embarked on a theater tour in the fall of 2006 . It was her first club @-@ sized tour in almost two decades . Cole had chosen to sing her 1970s hits in an attempt to draw more R & B fans . She also decided to perform every song from the album , saying she couldn 't " remember when a performer took a whole album and performed it onstage " .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical response = = =

Leavin ' received positive reviews from music critics . Andy Kellman of AllMusic praised the album as " a treat for any Cole fan " and drew attention to how it sounded like it was recorded at a " leisurely pace . " He noted that Cole sounded like she was " breez [ing] through an easygoing set of covers " . The BBC 's Chris Rogers defined the album as " an ultra smooth mix of standards both tasteful and obtuse " . He noted that Cole 's vocal performance had a " tasteful restraint " when

recording covers instead of " the modulated warbling that seems to pass for contemporary R & B these days " . Rogers wrote that the album is a perfect fit for listeners of Joss Stone and Jamie Cullum Jay S. Jacobs of PopEntertainment called the album " jazzy but decidedly more modern and surprisingly strong " , similar to Cole 's 1999 release , Snowfall on the Sahara . People 's Ralph Novak , Chuck Arnold , V. R. Peterson , and Monica Rizzo commended Cole 's decision to " ditch the evening @-@ gown fare on her new CD " by recording more contemporary songs . Gugu Mkhabela from News24 awarded the album three out of five stars , describing the material as " pure old school with a modern twist " , with Cole providing " a touch of class and some depth to boot " . Daniel Garret of The Compulsive Reader also complimented the material , comparing it to Ella Fitzgerald 's 1993 album , The Best of the Song Books , and Diana Ross 's 2006 album , Blue and calling Cole one of the " three ladies of song " alongside Fitzgerald and Ross . Honolulu Star @-@ Bulletin 's Gary C.W. Chun favorably compared the album to Gladys Knight 's Before Me .

= = = Commercial performance = = =

The album had limited commercial success in the United States . It reached its peak positions on the Billboard 200 at number 97 and on Billboard 's R & B Albums at number 16 . Internationally , Leavin ' had a relatively limited commercial performance . In Germany , the album peaked on the German Album Charts at number 92 . In Switzerland , it reached a peak position of number 76 on the Swiss Album Charts .

= = Track listing = =

All tracks except " 5 Minutes Away " were produced by Dallas Austin ; " 5 Minutes Away " was produced by Natalie Cole .

= = Credits = =

The following credits are adapted from AllMusic :

= = = Managerial = = =

= = = Performance credits = = =

= = = Visuals and imagery = = =

= = = Instruments = = =

= = = Production and composition = = =

= = Charts = =

= = Release history = =

The follow release history was adapted from Amazon .