

tha Kitt, a Performer Who Seduced Audiences, Dies at 81

OB HOERBURGER

Kitt, who purred and purred her way across Broadway, recording studios and television screens, had a career that spanned more than six decades, on Thursday. She was 81 and died in Connecticut.

Her cause was colon cancer, according to a longtime publicist, Anne Freedman.

Ms. Kitt, who began performing in the 1940s as a dancer in nightclubs, went on to achieve widespread acclaim in a variety of fields long before other entertainment multitaskers like Judd Apatow, Barbra Streisand and Bette Midler.

Her curvaceous frame and seductive vocal come-ons, also, along with Lena Horne, were among the first widely known African-American sex symbols Orson Welles famously called "the most exciting women alive" in the early 1940s, shortly just after he prompted him to bite her during a performance of "Time Runs," an adaptation of a play in which Ms. Kitt played Helen of Troy.

Ms. Kitt's career-long persona, the seen-it-all sybarite, when she performed in nightclubs in her early 20s, was one that became her signature, like "C'est Si Bon" and "For Sale."

Coming to New York, she appeared on Broadway in "New York Story" and added another major vocal crown, "Monotone Traffic." Brooks Atkinson has been known to say, "Prices even rise for me/Harry S. Truman bop for me/Monotone Traffic." Brooks wrote in The New York Times in May 1952, "Eartha Kitt is incendiary, but she can burst into

after that run, Ms. Kitt's best-selling albums included her biggest hit, "I'm a Bad, Bad, Bad, Man," whose precise, earthy diction and vaguely lascivious lyrics (Ms. Kitt, a native of South Carolina, spoke four



POPPERFOTO/GETTY IMAGES

languages),

From practically the beginning of her career, as critics gushed over Ms. Kitt, they also began to

sleeping in subways and on the roofs of unlocked buildings. (She would later become an advocate, through Unicef, on behalf of homeless children.)

best of this country off to be shot and maimed. No wonder the kids rebel and take pot." The remark reportedly caused Mrs. Johnson to burst into tears and led to a de-

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Joseph Grigely: SONGS WITHOUT WORDS

All pages: Joseph Grigely, *Songs without Words*, 2018,
Courtesy Air de Paris, Paris.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SATURDAY,



NICHOLAS ROBERTS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Selling Anticipation, With Buyers Galore

Does Maxwell belong in the pantheon of great soul men? For

Maxwell

has a curiously mixed legacy. The unfortunate genre of urban

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JON PARELES

MUSIC REVIEW

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2011

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RICHARD TERMINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Older Music Refracted Through a Modernist Prism

There were only two relatively short contemporary works in the remarkable recital performed by the tenor Ian Bostridge and the

to the Dowland song that refracts the music through a contemporary prism. The piano writing is alive with eerie repeat-

phasize what makes them music of the present, or beyond any historic era.

Mr. Bostridge's unconventional-

still.

Some pianists may find it almost unfair that Mr. Adès, who is first and foremost a composer,

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2014

Homely Nymph, Wooed by a God to Rouse His Wife's Jealousy

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RICHARD TERMINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

and sequined high heels. In moments of anxiety, Mr. Beekman dipped into the husky lower range of his voice. But he also lifted high phrases with tender lyricism

played with a deft combination of crispness, color and vitality by the impressive ensemble. When the choristers sang odes to joy and drunkenness, the singing was

charming Cithéron; the lively mezzo-soprano Emilie Renard as the tempestuous Junon; the young bass-baritone Edwin Crossley-Mercer as the cool, surly

suit and tie to mask his wily ways. The story comes to a near-halt midway when La Folie (Folly) leads the throngs in songs and dances celebrating the love of Ju-

ones of love. Just when the marriage vows are about to be taken, Junon appears, and the joke is exposed. Platée comes to realize not just

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formance featured a young cast alongside the veteran bass James Morris, who portrayed Méphistophélè with chilling conviction and naughty menace.

In the title role, David Pomeroy sang with a powerful, agile tenor and commendable French diction, although his voice sometimes sounded forced in the upper register. His "Salut demeure" was heartfelt, but his portrayal was often rather bland, especially next to the dramatically

Faust
Central Park

convincing Marguerite of Katie Van Kooten whose warm, gracefully expressive soprano was lively in the "Jewel" song and vulnerable in "Anges Purs! Anges Radieux!"

The able baritone Hung Yun was admirable as Valentin, her protective brother. The mezzo-soprano

Kate Lindsey sang with an attractive voice and was effective as Siebel. Keith Miller as Wagner and Jane Bunnell as Martha were also strong.

The musicians and singers must have been almost as frozen as the audience, which predictably, given the plummeting temperature, appeared to have thinned significantly by the end. But a sprinkling of determined listeners braved Faustian frostbite and stayed around for Marguerite's salvation.



Jennifer Taylor for The New York Times

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY,



Rahav Segev for The New York Times

Love Songs of a Heartthrob Rock the Garden

Continued From First Arts Page

remember, there's a reason: The radio version is faster than the album version, and about 30 seconds shorter.)

Mr. Carrabba's opening act was Brand New, a Long Island band that

petent and knotty emo songs but not enough charm or wit. And Brand New's live set was disappointing, too: in that arena the flailing bodies and drawn-out endings somehow made the band seem smaller, not bigger.

By contrast, the only thing wrong with Mr. Carrabba's streamlined set

emo band, Say Anything, the main thrill of Friday's concert was hearing how well his best songs have held up. He ended with "Hands Down," which first appeared on a 2002 "MTV Unplugged" album. And some fans were still singing the lyrics as they filed out of the building: "My hopes are so high that your kiss

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Michael Nagle for The New York Times
ursday, the audience gathered at the New York State Theater for a reception with rock-inspired pieces by the East Village Opera Company.

• the Classics With a Sampler of What's to Come

This season. Tickets in every section of the house cost only \$25, first come first served. The New York State Theater was packed, proving, any classical music institutions doubted it, that high ticket prices are a deterrent to audiences, especially younger people and neophytes.

Besides conducting, Mr. Manahan was the evening's affable host, introducing the singers, describing the music and generally trying to entice newcomers to check out the city Opera. The program began with a rousing, nearly frantic account of the orchestral entr'acte from Act IV of "Carmen," then segued into the spirited quintet from Act II, in which the Gypsies lot their next act of smuggling. Mr. Manahan explained that in this breathless, quicksilver ensemble piece tried to evoke a lot of rapid-paced chatter. It's a tricky piece, and the singers pulled it off deftly.

There were excerpts from Handel's "Semele" and "Flavio"; Mozart's "Così Fan Tutte"; Rossini's "Donna del Lago"; and other works. The lyric tenor John Tessier won the evening's biggest ovation for his ardent singing of the popular aria "Una furtiva lagrima" from Donizetti's "Elisir d'Amore."

A restless performance of the ominous orchestral interlude and the beguiling "Tanzlied" (sung by the baritone Keith Phares) from



Carol Rosegg

this neglected 1920 work, which opens on Sept. 24.

The agile soprano Elizabeth Futral and the sweet-toned tenor Ryan MacPherson were standouts as Violetta and Alfredo in the "Libiamo" duet and chorus from

thing from Musetta's Waltz (coyly sung by the soprano Elizabeth Caballero) to the bustling conclusion with the intrusive military band and the excited children's chorus.

After the concert the audience gathered in the promenade of the

versions of arias and ensembles from opera. Indeed, their first selection was a pumped-up yet surprisingly faithful rendition of the Overture to Mozart's "Nozze di Figaro." Most of the crowd seemed to love it. Mindful of protecting my