

= Deborah Kerr =

Deborah Kerr CBE (/ k??r / ; born Deborah Jane Kerr @-@ Trimmer ; 30 September 1921 ? 16 October 2007) was a Scottish @-@ born film , theatre and television actress . During her career , she won a Golden Globe for her performance as Anna Leonowens in the motion picture The King and I (1956) and the Sarah Siddons Award for her performance as " Laura Reynolds " in the play Tea and Sympathy (a role she originated on Broadway) . She was also a three @-@ time winner of the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actress .

Kerr was nominated six times for the Academy Award for Best Actress , more than any other actress without ever winning . In 1994 , however , having already received honorary awards from the Cannes Film Festival and BAFTA , she received an Academy Honorary Award with a citation recognising her as " an artist of impeccable grace and beauty , a dedicated actress whose motion picture career has always stood for perfection , discipline and elegance " . As well as The King and I , her films include An Affair to Remember ; From Here to Eternity ; Quo Vadis ; The Innocents ; Black Narcissus ; Heaven Knows , Mr. Allison ; King Solomon 's Mines ; The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp ; The Sundowners and Separate Tables .

= = Early life = =

Deborah Jane Kerr @-@ Trimmer was born in a private nursing home (hospital) in Glasgow , the only daughter of Kathleen Rose (née Smale) and Capt. Arthur Charles Kerr @-@ Trimmer , a World War I veteran who lost a leg at the Battle of the Somme and later became a naval architect and civil engineer . She spent the first three years of her life in the nearby town of Helensburgh , where her parents lived with Deborah 's grandparents in a house on West King Street . Kerr had a younger brother , Edmund (" Teddy ") , who became a journalist . He was killed in a road rage incident in 2004 .

Kerr was educated at the independent Northumberland House School , Henleaze , and at Rossholme School , Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare . Kerr originally trained as a ballet dancer , first appearing on stage at Sadler 's Wells in 1938 . After changing careers , she soon found success as an actress . Her first acting teacher was her aunt , Phyllis Smale , who ran the Hicks @-@ Smale Drama School in Bristol . She adopted the name Deborah Kerr on becoming a film actress (" Kerr " was a family name going back to the maternal grandmother of her grandfather Arthur Kerr @-@ Trimmer) .

= = Career = =

= = = Theatre = = =

Kerr 's first stage appearance was at Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare in 1937 , as " Harlequin " in the mime play Harlequin and Columbine . She then went to the Sadler 's Wells ballet school and in 1938 made her début in the corps de ballet in Prometheus . After various walk @-@ on parts in Shakespeare productions at the Open @-@ Air Theatre in Regent 's Park , London , she joined the Oxford Playhouse repertory company in 1940 , playing , inter alia , " Margaret " in Dear Brutus and " Patty Moss " in The Two Bouquets .

In 1943 , aged 21 , Kerr made her West End début as " Ellie Dunn " in a revival of Heartbreak House at the Cambridge Theatre , stealing attention from stalwarts such as Edith Evans and Isabel Jeans . " She has the rare gift " , wrote critic Beverley Baxter , " of thinking her lines , not merely remembering them . The process of development from a romantic , silly girl to a hard , disillusioned woman in three hours was moving and convincing " .

Deborah Kerr returned to the London stage 29 years later , in many productions including the old @-@ fashioned , The Day After the Fair (Lyric , 1972) , a Peter Ustinov comedy , Overheard (Haymarket , 1981) and a revival of Emlyn Williams 's The Corn is Green . After her first London

success in 1943 , she toured England and Scotland in Heartbreak House . Near the end of the Second World War , she also toured Holland , France , and Belgium for ENSA as " Mrs Manningham " in Angel Street , and Britain (with Stewart Granger) in Gaslight .

Having established herself as a film actress in the meantime , she made her Broadway debut in 1953 , appearing in Robert Anderson 's Tea and Sympathy , for which she received a Tony Award nomination . Kerr repeated her role along with her stage partner John Kerr (no relation) in Vincente Minnelli 's film adaptation of the drama . In 1955 , Kerr won the Sarah Siddons Award for her performance in Chicago during a national tour of the play . After her Broadway début in 1953 , she toured the United States with Tea and Sympathy . In 1975 , she returned to Broadway , creating the role of Nancy in Edward Albee 's Pulitzer Prize @-@ winning play Seascape .

In 1977 , she came back to the West End , playing the title role in a production of George Bernard Shaw 's Candida .

The theatre , despite her success in films , was always to remain Kerr 's first love , even though going on stage filled her with trepidation :

I do it because it 's exactly like dressing up for the grown ups . I don 't mean to belittle acting but I 'm like a child when I 'm out there performing ? shocking the grownups , enchanting them , making them laugh or cry . It 's an unbelievable terror , a kind of masochistic madness . The older you get , the easier it should be but it isn 't .

= = = Films = = =

Kerr 's first film role was in the British production Contraband in 1940 , but her scenes were left on the cutting room floor . With her next two British films ? Major Barbara and Love on the Dole (both 1941) ? her screen future seemed assured and her performance , said James Agate of Love on the Dole , " is not within a mile of Wendy Hiller 's in the theatre , but it is a charming piece of work by a very pretty and promising beginner , so pretty and so promising that there is the usual yapping about a new star " . She went on to make Hatter 's Castle (1942) , in which she starred opposite Robert Newton and James Mason , and then played a Norwegian resistance fighter in The Day Will Dawn (1942) . She was an immediate hit with the public : British exhibitors voted her the most popular local female star at the box office .

In 1943 , she played three women in Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger 's The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp . During the filming , according to Powell 's autobiography , Powell and she became lovers : " I realised that Deborah was both the ideal and the flesh @-@ and @-@ blood woman whom I had been searching for " . Kerr made clear that her surname should be pronounced the same as " car " . To avoid confusion over pronunciation , Louis B. Mayer of MGM billed her as " Kerr rhymes with Star ! " .

Although the British Army refused to co @-@ operate with the producers ? and Winston Churchill thought the film would ruin wartime morale ? Colonel Blimp confounded critics when it proved to be an artistic and commercial success . Powell hoped to reunite Kerr and lead actor Roger Livesey in his next film , A Canterbury Tale (1944) , but her agent had sold her contract to MGM . According to Powell , his affair with Kerr ended when she made it clear to him that she would accept an offer to go to Hollywood if one were made .

Her role as a troubled nun in the Powell and Pressburger production of Black Narcissus in 1947 did indeed bring her to the attention of Hollywood producers . The film was a hit in the US , as well as the UK , and Kerr won the New York Film Critics ' Award as Actress of the Year . British exhibitors voted her the eighth @-@ most popular local star at the box office . Soon she received the first of her Academy Award nominations for Edward , My Son , a 1949 drama set in England that co @-@ starred Spencer Tracy .

In Hollywood , Kerr 's British accent and manner led to a succession of roles portraying refined , reserved , and " proper " English ladies . Kerr , nevertheless , used any opportunity to discard her cool exterior . She starred in the 1950 adventure film King Solomon 's Mines , shot on location in Africa with Stewart Granger and Richard Carlson . This was immediately followed by her appearance in the religious epic Quo Vadis ? (1951) , shot at Cinecittà in Rome , in which she

played the indomitable Lygia , a first @-@ century Christian . She then played Princess Flavia in a remake of The Prisoner of Zenda (1952) . In 1953 , Kerr " showed her theatrical mettle " as Portia in Joseph Mankiewicz 's Julius Caesar (1953) . She then departed from typecasting with a performance that brought out her sensuality , as " Karen Holmes " , the embittered military wife in Fred Zinnemann 's From Here to Eternity (1953) , for which she received an Oscar nomination for Best Actress . The American Film Institute acknowledged the iconic status of the scene from that film in which Burt Lancaster and she romped illicitly and passionately amidst crashing waves on a Hawaiian beach . The organisation ranked it 20th in its list of the 100 most romantic films of all time .

Thereafter , Kerr 's career choices would make her known in Hollywood for her versatility as an actress . She played the repressed wife in The End of the Affair (1955) , with Van Johnson ; a nun in Heaven Knows , Mr. Allison (1957) opposite her long @-@ time friend Robert Mitchum ; a mama 's girl in Separate Tables (1958) opposite David Niven ; and a governess in both The Chalk Garden and The Innocents (1961) . She also portrayed an earthy Australian sheep @-@ herder 's wife in The Sundowners and appeared as lustful and beautiful screen enchantresses in both Beloved Infidel and Bonjour Tristesse .

Among her most famous roles were Anna Leonowens in the film version of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical The King and I (1956) ; and opposite Cary Grant as his shipboard romantic interest Terri McKay in the bittersweet love story An Affair to Remember (1957) . She reunited with Grant and Mitchum for a sophisticated comedy , The Grass Is Greener , and then joined Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra in a love triangle for a romantic comedy , Marriage on the Rocks . In 1966 , the producers of Carry On Screaming ! offered her a fee comparable to that paid to the rest of the cast combined , but she turned it down in favor of appearing in an aborted stage version of Flowers for Algernon .

In 1967 , Kerr starred in the comedy Casino Royale , achieving the distinction of being , at 46 , the oldest " Bond Girl " in any James Bond film , until Monica Bellucci , at the age of 50 , became a " Bond Girl " in Spectre (2015) . In 1969 , pressure of competition from younger , upcoming actresses made her agree to appear nude in John Frankenheimer 's The Gypsy Moths , the only nude scene in her career . Concern about the parts being offered to her , as well as the increasing amount of nudity included in films , led her to abandon the medium at the end of the 1960s in favour of television and theatre work .

= = = Television = = =

Kerr experienced a career resurgence on television in the early 1980s when she played the role of the nurse ? played by Elsa Lanchester in the 1957 movie ? in Witness for the Prosecution . Later , Kerr rejoined screen partner Robert Mitchum in Reunion at Fairborough . She also took on the role of the older Emma Harte , a tycoon , in the adaptation of Barbara Taylor Bradford 's A Woman of Substance . For this performance , Kerr was nominated for an Emmy Award .

= = Personal life = =

Kerr 's first marriage was to Squadron Leader Anthony Bartley RAF on 29 November 1945 . They had two daughters , Melanie Jane (born 27 December 1947) and Francesca Ann (born 20 December 1951 and subsequently married to the actor John Shrapnel) . The marriage was troubled , owing to Bartley 's jealousy of his wife 's fame and financial success and because her career often took her away from home . They divorced in 1959 .

Her second marriage was to author Peter Viertel on 23 July 1960 . In marrying Viertel , she became stepmother to Viertel 's daughter , Christine Viertel . Although she long resided in Klosters , Switzerland and Marbella , Spain , she moved back to Britain to be closer to her own children as her health began to deteriorate . Her husband , however , continued to live in Marbella .

= = Death = =

Kerr died on 16 October 2007 in Botesdale , a village in Suffolk , England , from the effects of Parkinson 's disease . She was 86 . Less than three weeks later , on 4 November , her husband Peter Viertel died of cancer . At the time of Viertel 's death , director Michael Scheingraber was filming the documentary Peter Viertel : Between the Lines which would include reminiscences concerning Kerr and the Academy Awards . She is buried at Alfold .

= = Honours = =

Deborah Kerr was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1998 , but was unable to accept the honour in person because of ill health . She was also honoured in Hollywood , where , for her contributions to the motion picture industry , she received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1709 Vine Street .

Kerr won a Golden Globe Award for " Best Actress ? Motion Picture Musical or Comedy " for The King and I in 1957 and a Henrietta Award for " World Film Favorite ? Female " . She was the first performer to win the New York Film Critics Circle Award for " Best Actress " three times (1947 , 1957 and 1960) .

Although she never won a BAFTA , Oscar or Cannes Film Festival award in a competitive category , all three organisations gave Kerr honorary awards : a Cannes Film Festival Tribute in 1984 ; a BAFTA Special Award in 1991 ; and an Academy Honorary Award in 1994 .

In September and October 2010 , Josephine Botting of the British Film Institute curated the " Deborah Kerr Season " , which included around twenty of her feature films and an exhibition of posters , memorabilia and personal items loaned by her family .

Biographies of Kerr have been published by Eric Braun and , in 2010 , by the entertainment journalist Michelangelo Capua , but she has yet to receive an @-@ depth study of her filmography , artistry or life .

= = Award nominations = =

Deborah Kerr was nominated six times for the Academy Award for Best Actress : Edward , My Son (1949) , From Here to Eternity (1953) , The King and I (1956) , Heaven Knows , Mr. Allison (1957) , Separate Tables (1958) and The Sundowners (1960) . She received one Academy Honorary Award for her career in 1994 .

She was also nominated four times for the BAFTA Award for Best British Actress : The End of the Affair (1955) , Tea and Sympathy (1956) , The Sundowners (1961) and The Chalk Garden (1964) .

She received one Emmy Award nomination in 1985 for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Limited Series or a Special for A Woman of Substance . She was also nominated for the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress ? Motion Picture Drama for Edward , My Son (1949) , Heaven Knows , Mr. Allison (1957) and Separate Tables (1958) .

= = Filmography = =

= = Radio appearances = =