

CULTURE AND MUSIC Soprano Leontyne Price at 85: An Angelic Voice

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Theme: [History](#)

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“Genius has no color boundaries .”

Today, the great American coloratura soprano Leontyne Price celebrates her 85th birthday. Although she retired in 1984, when her voice was still magnificent, she continued to sing in concerts. Much later, she even came out of retirement to sing after the tragedy of September 11th. She was 74. Here’s a clip of it:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=deOTNggaUBY

This great Diva helped bring some long-awaited regular entrée into the world of opera for black singers. Price credits contralto Marian Anderson (1897-1993) with the vocal and personal inspiration. As a black woman, she was denied many avenues to pursue in America, because the hostilities of the Civil War were still in place more than 100 years later in many parts of the US. In 1939, the DAR [Daughters of the American Revolution] denied Marian Anderson access to sing at an integrated concert at Constitution Hall. In response and with the gracious help of Eleanor Roosevelt, Anderson sang instead on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to a crowd of many thousands of Americans of all colors:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8FMTYSX-f8

Leontyne Price performed around the world to packed audiences; but she could often be found at the Metropolitan Opera singing Aida, or La Forza del Destino, or Tosca. In 1961, she was the first African-American to open a season at the Met, singing Leonora in Verdi’s “Il Trovatore.” She was also the first black singer to appear in a televised opera, “Tosca.” This became one of her stellar roles. Her rendition of the aria, “Vissi d’art, vissi d’amore” [“I live for art, I live for love”], remains a stellar reminder of how an awe-inspiring voice can transport one’s heart and one’s consciousness to sacred spaces. Here it is:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2A8djex1t4

Her concerts were always sold out. I feel quite blessed that I heard her many times in person. Her magnificent voice and her elegant presence were an inspiration and a way of being at peace –just by listening to her sing. Here are some of my favorite short videos of her singing:

1. Franz Schubert. “Ave Maria”:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDGJapT1k1o

2. Puccini. La Rondine. "Che il bel sogno":

www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPBVEpU26j0

3. George Gershwin. Porgy and Bess, "Summertime":

www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KRGV-Xcbx4

4. Giuseppe Verdi. La Forza del Destino, "Pace, pace mio dio" with James Levine conducting:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6sA2v58sGs&feature=related

If we are ever to achieve real consciousness, then our bodies and hearts have to hum and be in tune with the planetary energy of Gaia, Mother Earth. A measurement of about 3-7 Hz puts us in a meditative and completely calm space. However, now we are exposed to so much electroshock damage to the human nervous system from dangerous and invisible Electromagnetic Frequency technology. This is a daily bombardment of highly toxic energies that damage our DNA and brain function. No person can function on any kind of healthy level when these frequencies to which we are exposed at unprecedented levels are so high that any state of calmness is gone. From Chemtrails geo-engineered aerosols to the myriad of poisonous and mostly untested chemicals and hormone disruptors, we are uninformed experimental laboratory animals to a vast array of neurological assaults.

But if we can go back to basics, then there is always a peaceful, calm space that keeps us in tune. In harmony. Music makes that possible. The music of the universal spheres, can also be the music in our hearts. To be able to come from a space of peace and love can and must start with internal peace. In our crazed world, music can make this possible. We are all fortunate to have people who share their superb talents and impact our lives for the better. In the world of opera, the gift of Leontyne Price's singing is a marvelous reminder of the importance that music must play in our daily lives. It can bring us peace. It can give us an opportunity to be in touch with who we are. This must be an essential part of our lives. Music is also an opportunity to share magic and timeless moments on a higher level. Music is a divine way, here on earth, where we can share a central place in our hearts, in our lives, and in elevated consciousness.

Happy Birthday Leontyne Price. Thank you for sharing your great musical gifts with us.

Educator and environmental writer, and author Dr. Ilya Sandra Perlingieri acknowledges the tremendous importance of music in her life. Her love of classical music and opera is central to her daily life.

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