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# Kathryn Crosby:

*Being in the theater  
is a godsend to her*

Story: ETHEL SIMMONS  
Photo: DICK KELLEY

Her face framed by a pink turtleneck sweater and wide-brimmed pink hat, Kathryn Crosby with her velvety brown eyes looks the soul of contentment.

At the Birmingham Theater, where she will open in the drama "Ladyhouse Blues" on Monday, June 4, Ms. Crosby arrived fresh from her morning interview on Channel 7's "Kelly and Company."

"Where's my lady?" she said purposefully, seeking out the interviewer. Full of flattery for the theater, she suggested doing the interview in her "beautiful dressing room."

She seemed genuinely delighted to have the spacious, star dressing room with its private bathroom. Ms. Crosby even commented on the bouquet of colorful spring flowers, provided by the management.

AS THE WIDOW of Bing Crosby, one of the best-known and best loved entertainers in American show business history, Ms. Crosby has led and continues to lead a full life.

She talked freely about her husband, who died in the fall of 1977, during the interview, appearing to enjoy reliving the good memories and facing up to the unfortunate realities.

"There's no right time to die," she said. "Bing's mother was 92 when she died, and he couldn't sleep for two years afterward."

Kathryn Crosby has always been a dedicated woman, who focused on her family but on her own interests, too. She pursued studies in nursing years ago and got her registered nursing degree after five years.

She still renews the fact that "the nurses fought me. I found that unforgivable. They thought I didn't have to work. One said to me, 'That's servant's work.' But we're all servants of the lord."

Ms. Crosby said that during the last six years of his life Bing was in poor health. He didn't need a nurse because she was there to provide care.

She still helps friends when they return home from hospitals. "Nursing has been so useful to me," she said. "I'm rather good and the price is right."



Kathryn Crosby says that with the women's liberation movement, she feels more confident about

FOR THREE SEASONS Ms. Crosby appeared with the American Conservatory Theater (ACT) in San Francisco. She worked with the theater from 1975-77.

She also had a morning, magazine-format television show for two years during that time. "Bing didn't like me driving home late at night (from the theater), but he didn't mind me getting up at 5 a.m. to do my television show," she said.

Still with a glow when she talks

about her husband, Ms. Crosby said the first year she was with ACT she only had small parts and "Bing teased me and said, 'Why don't you just phone it in?' The next year I had even smaller parts and he was furious I just loved it!"

The third year, she did get better roles. "The theater has been a godsend to me," Ms. Crosby said. Her acting experience has also included summer stock (she took the children with her each summer) and dinner

theater productions. After the Birmingham Theater run, she will appear in "Guys and Dolls" with Hugh O'Brian, who played Wyatt Earp on television.

The entire Crosby family performed on Broadway, in London and other major cities doing benefits. "Rosemary Clooney was with us all the time," she recalled.

KATHRYN AND Bing Crosby's three children are Harry, 29, who

works in London; Mary Francis, 19, living in San Francisco; and Nathaniel, 17, who is finishing high school and going to the University of Miami in the fall.

Asked about publicity surrounding Mary Francis recently, Ms. Crosby said, "It's different now. She's married and has a husband who adores her."

Before deciding to perform in "Ladyhouse Blues" at the Birmingham Theater, Ms. Crosby said she

rejected some 20 scripts including productions headed for Broadway.

She praised the Birmingham Theater, saying, "To start a new theater today is such a brave thing."

She said "Ladyhouse Blues" is a lovely play with overtones of O'Casey and feelings of Tennessee Williams. It's a woman's play about families and the needs of women to get out and start their own lives.

In the drama, written by Kevin O'Morrison and directed by David Regal of Detroit, she plays the mother of four daughters. The title is taken from a German section of St. Louis where, back in 1919 when the men went to war, the community was all women.

"The mother, Liz, is a woman, a mother, a widow. Her job is to keep her family together," Ms. Crosby said, describing her part, which she finds close to her own way of life.

THE DAUGHTERS are portrayed by Maria Ferrer of Beverly Hills, Calif., daughter of Rosemary Clooney and Jose Ferrer, in her stage debut as Dot, a glamorous fashion model; Lavinia Moyer of Detroit, artistic director of the Attie Theater, as Terry, a "woman's libber"; Linda Hart of Romulus as Elyse, the baby; and Janna Gjesdal, a local actress, playing Helen, who is tubercular.

Originally from West Columbia, a small town near Houston, Ms. Crosby talks in a soft voice that has a touch of Texas in it. She said recently she got together with some Houston friends. "And in 30 minutes I fell right into country speech."

When she married Bing Crosby she was 23, an age she claims was terribly old for a girl getting married from West Columbia. At age 30, she was half Bing's age and, "he threatened to trade me in for a new model."

With a high school friend, Ned McGrath, Ms. Crosby is writing "A Very Good Round — My Life with Bing," which she describes as an appraisal of the 20 years she and Bing spent together.

"Life is a mortal business, as the mother in this play says," she declared. Ms. Crosby admits working hard for everything she's got. "Everything came easy to Bing and so hard to me," she said.

## Students learn respect through musical 'Scat'

By JULIE BROWN

"Scat," a children's musical presented by the Whistle-Stop Children's Theater and the Bloomfield Hills schools, has a theme of respect.

"We try to teach respect for others, and for school property," said Tuffy Jones, playwright, producer and director of the show. "Respect is the theme for the school district this year."

"Scat," which will be shown at Vaughan Elementary School on Tuesday, June 5, is the story of the McNirzy family, and their disrespectful son.

Scat. Young Scat is a source of anguish because he lacks respect. Dad McNirzy arranges a party for Rock the Great, a famous rock star, but it is canceled because of Scat's behavior.

Katie, Scat's intelligent sister, designs a "respect" meditation for her brother to wear. This alters his behavior, and the party is rescheduled. Everyone meets Rock the Great, and a songfest is held.

"IT'S RUN just like a professional theater, and the children do everything," Mrs. Jones said. "The whole school participates. We work closely

with the teachers and the principal."

The play has been staged at Conant, Booth and Hickory Grove schools during the 1978-79 school year. The Vaughan presentation has a cast of 10, a chorus of about 40 and an 18-member dance troupe, Mrs. Jones said.

"Scat" is the third play staged by the Whistle-Stop Theater, which was founded by Mrs. Jones in 1976. She has been hired this year by the school district as an artist-in-residence.

Brenda McDonald, songwriter and music director, Betty Appleton, choreographer, and Sheila Devlin, piano ar-

ranger and accompanist, also are artists-in-residence. The school program has been partially funded by the Michigan Council for the Arts.

"I thought I would write another play, but 'Scat' has been so well received, we're going to run it another season," Mrs. Jones said. The theater group hopes to take "Scat" to several Detroit schools next year.

The theater group spends five weeks in each school. Auditions are held the first Saturday, and all cast members must be approved by teachers. The cast rehearses for two hours on Tuesdays

and Thursdays, and for two-and-a-half hours on Saturday mornings. Cast members are in grades 4-6; chorus members in grades 1-6.

"The chorus backs up everything," Mrs. Jones said. "They're a part of the show, too."

Appearing in the Vaughan production are Grant Faulkner as Scat, Alyson Keenan as Mom, Jim Long as Dad, Alex Boos as Grandma, Betsy Carlson as Racket, Pam Magiera as Katie, Anne Schneider as Tizzy, Craig LaBan as Dr. Getwell and David Ross as Rock the Great.

Nancy Lataif and Pam Spiro are stage manager and assistant manager. Alison Ball is lighting director, and Clive Long is the announcer.

Members of the makeup, scenery and stage crews are: Denise Elsen, Donna Marie Weir, Susie Matick, Andrea Gash, Patty Mack, Melissa Lalji, Kathy Conaway, Jill Sechowski and Nancy Murray.

"Scat" will be shown at Vaughan on Tuesday, June 5, at 2 p.m. for students and at 7:30 for parents. It will travel to Traub and Fox Hills schools on Thursday, June 7.

## Getting Around

By ETHEL SIMMONS



## Crawl boosts opera

Pubs in downtown Detroit were filled to overflowing May 17 when busloads of opera lovers and friends shared in the fun of the second annual Pub Crawl.

More than 2,000 metropolitan Detroiters went pub crawling to benefit the Michigan Opera Theater (MOT).

Sponsored by the Michigan Opera Theater Guild, the event attracted 500 more pub crawlers than the previous year's outing.

The final figures are yet to be announced, but Blanche Robinson, public relations director for the Michigan Opera Theater, estimates proceeds are in the neighborhood of \$5,000.

Eight buses pulled away from the Music Hall Center, filled with pub crawlers who made the rounds. Each bus traveled a designated route, picking up revelers with Pub Crawl buttons to transport them to the next stop.

PART OF the enjoyment was visiting places you hadn't visited before. At the New Miami Bar on Cass a five-piece bluegrass band performed on stage. The bar's blue-jeaned regulars clapped, hollered and whooped along with the band's twangy sound.

At the Woodbridge Tavern, as the evening wore on, the crowd accompanied a honky-tonk piano player. The deafening din bounced from the tavern's old tin ceiling.

One woman got up and danced by herself, then was joined by others in a dancing chain that snaked through the rooms. And these were all pub crawlers. Throughout the evening, David D'Chiera, MOT's

general chairman, smiled his way through stops at several of the 17 pubs from which participants could choose.

David and his wife Karen, who are Bloomfield Hills residents, started out with a crowd at the Old Shillelagh on Monroe shortly after 5 p.m. and ended up in a group dining at the elegant Rhinoceros on Ripelle several hours later.

Some of us didn't last the entire evening, but a few buses did continue on the route, picking up pub crawlers until the evening's end at 1 a.m.

THE SONG SHOP Saloon, Cobb's Corner, Union Street, the Gnome, La Cave, Grecian Gardens, Pipers Alley, Porter Street Station, the Bull Market, Cafe Harmonie, Rembrandt's Roadster, Franklin Street East and Clementine's Kitchen were other pubs crawled.

One amusing sidelight to the Pub Crawl was provided by a woman whose car had broken down on a street next to the Music Hall. While a gas station mechanic worked on her car, she came over to inquire about what was going on.

Told that people were boarding buses to visit pubs in the area for an MOT benefit, she explained that if her car hadn't broken down and if she hadn't been on her way to class, she would have loved to come along.

If you're an opera lover, memberships in the Michigan Opera Theater Guild are available at \$15 for individuals and \$25 for couples or families. Membership includes a guild newsletter and free attendance at talks given before the operas at Music Hall.



Pub crawlers board the "Suds Express" in front of the Music Hall.