

Leontyne Price still rates rave review

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

What makes prominent singers so attractive to audiences? Singers tend to attract far larger audiences than instrumental soloists. This is true not only in popular rock music, but in classical as well.

Even the most developed human voice would pale compared to the seven octaves of the piano, even to the narrower ranges of strings and winds. Yet, singers consistently command more respect by larger audiences than even the most sophisticated instrumental performers.

Frequently, I feel singers may be overrated while instrumental soloists are underrated. However, some singers deserve every bit of acclaim they get — possibly more.

Leontyne Price is one such artist. Many of us feel that we have grown up with her voice. This is because we have been hearing it since the early '50s — a rather long time for a singer. Yet, the voice is still resounding, with hardly any signs of fading.

Price performed to a sellout crowd at Orchestra Hall. She was accompanied by David Garvey, one of the finest available. The program ranged from established operatic repertoire to lesser composers, spirituals and songs in German, French, Italian and English.

Price demonstrated her affinity for late 19th century and 20th century music, for which she is known. The opening Handel arias, including ones infrequently performed from "Julius Caesar," were the only ones on the program from an earlier period. They were woefully out of stylistic context.

The full quality of Price's voice wasn't revealed until the later part of the Viennese songs by Joseph Marx.

But once that happened, there was boundless



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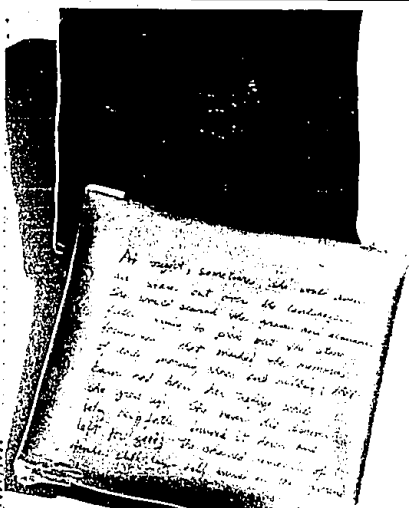
'Many of us feel that we have grown up with her voice. This is because we have been hearing it since the early '50s — a rather long time for a singer. Yet, the voice is still resounding, with hardly any signs of fading.'

art and magic in her singing. The richness of her voice retained its quality even in the higher range, reaching the occasional high notes with little effort.

The humor in the "Serpent" song by Lee Holby (text by Theodore Roethke) was catching, without artistic compromise. The spirituals reflected insight and understanding, yet they sounded like creations by acclaimed composers.

Leontyne Price sang three encores by Gershwin and Puccini to the appreciative audience, which wouldn't let her depart.

In one of her appearances a few years ago, Price said it would be her last here. This time, there was no such statement. Evidently, she is getting younger with age.



Sculpture displayed

"Remembering Home," lead and wood sculpture by Aristotellis A. Kambouris of Southfield, is in the show at Sison Gallery of Henry Ford Community College of Dearborn which opens Wednesday. The artist is one of three recent MFA graduates of Wayne State exhibiting there. This work, done in 1987, is 2 1/2 by 8 1/2 by 6 1/2 inches.



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