

Battle displays meticulous attention to detail

By Mary Jane Doerr
special writer

Kathleen Battle has been called a light, lyric soprano. While she will never sing Alder or Mimi, her voice sparkles like a diamond and is as lyrical as poetry.

She sings with an easy flowing, natural poise, the epitome of an American-trained singer. And, with the careful management, selective choice of operatic roles and careful scheduling of her engagements, she

has attained superstar status in the opera world.

Saturday evening she returned to Detroit, the site of her professional debut. She sang Rosina in Michigan Opera Theatre's 1975 "The Barber of Seville," a fact she never includes in program notes.

Her concert on the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Four Star Recital Series at Fisher Hall consisted of German lieder and Negro spirituals. She gave meticulous attention to style, diction and interpretation.

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That is why she is what she is - great.

Lately she has been having some vocal problems. There was a faint interview because she didn't want to

strain her voice by talking.

There was a trace of stress in her voice as the recital began with Purcell's "The Blessed Virgin's Exposition." But her fitting baroque interpretation of this music and her expert manner of warming up her voice resulted in a marvelous delivery.

Battle is known for her lieder. Her voice quality and her attention to diction make the perfect vehicle for Schubert's most popular songs "Die Forelle" (from the Piano Quintet in

A Major) "Trout" and "Gretchen am Spinnrade" (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel).

Throughout the evening she moved between humor and serious numbers blending selections such as the lively Norina's aria "So anch'io la virtù iniqua" from "Don Pasquale" with the sustained melodies such as "Nacht und Traum" which tugged at the emotions. Strauss' "Aimée," sung out of order on the program, showed her coloratura skills.

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