

## ELAINE PAIGE - biography

Elaine Paige, as an actress, recording artist, producer and broadcaster, has made a major contribution to the modern musical that ensures her own chapter in the entertainment world and justifies the title "The First Lady of Musical Theatre".

She has starred in numerous West End productions and on Broadway and in concert internationally, sweeping to fame when she created her award winning performance as Eva Peron in *Evita*. Shortly afterwards she created the role of Grizabella in the original production of *Cats* and the classic song *Memory* became one of Elaine's many hit records.

Further theatre productions: *Hair*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Grease*, *Billy*, *Chess* (with her record breaking number one hit *I Know Him So Well* with Barbara Dickson), *Anything Goes*, *Piaf*, *Sunset Boulevard* in London and Broadway, *The King and I*, *Sweeney Todd (New York City Opera)*. She has worked twice with Sir Peter Hall's Theatre Company in *The Misanthrope* and Feydeau's *Where There's A Will*.

Elaine has performed in concert worldwide from The White House to The Great Hall of the People in Beijing, from the Bolshoi to Sydney Opera House. She has appeared in many television roles including her own TV specials and Royal Variety Shows. She has recorded 18 solo albums (4 multi Platinum and 9 consecutive Gold) and 6 cast albums and has been honoured with a number of awards: Society of West End Theatre Award for Best Actress in a Musical and Variety Club Award for Show Business Personality of the year (1978); Variety Club Award for Musical Artist (1986) and Variety Club Award for Best Actress (1995); Gold Badge of Merit from the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (1994); HMV Lifetime Achievement Award (1996); Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Operatic and Dramatic Association (1999); Order of the British Empire for services to Musical Theatre (1995), Drama Desk Award nomination for Outstanding Actress in a Musical (2004) and Variety Club Special Presentation for 40 Years on Stage (2009).

This year marks the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the hugely successful weekly BBC Radio 2 show *Elaine Paige on Sunday*. The programme, devoted to musical theatre and film music, continues to delight audiences of over 2 million listeners each week with its mix of music and interviews.

Recent television work has included Elaine appearing as herself in the BBC hit comedy programme *Beautiful People*; the role of Dora Bunner in Agatha Christie's Ms Marple story *A Murder is Announced* for Granada/WGBH, and a guest star role in *Where The Heart Is* for Granada Television. In 2005 she completed her triumphant concert tour of Australia, New Zealand and the Far East and in 2006 she released her new album of songs from the stage entitled *Essential Musicals* followed by a sell-out concert tour of Scandinavia, and the UK prior to taking her new show to China and in March 2007 she performed in concert at the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Centre.

Elaine returned to the West End stage in 2007 to critical acclaim in the title role of *The Drowsy Chaperone* at the Novello Theatre, London for which she was nominated for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical for her performance in What's On Stage Awards, London. As well as performing in Europe and in the USA in concert Elaine recorded a track with Secret Garden, *The Things You Are You To Me* for their number one quadruple-platinum selling album.

September 2008 marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Elaine's West End debut and was celebrated with a book entitled *Memories* and a sell out international celebratory concert tour across the world including Scandinavia, China, the UK and Ireland (which resulted in a live CD release *Elaine Paige Live - Celebrating A Life On Stage*), and continued in October of 2009 across Australia & New Zealand where the Sydney concert was filmed for DVD release in March 2010 entitled *Elaine Paige Celebrating 40 Years On Stage*. On her return to the UK Elaine sang *I Know Him So Well* with Susan Boyle on her TV special *I Dreamed a Dream: The Susan Boyle Story*. Elaine also performed at the 2010 Cheltenham Jazz Festival showcasing a brand new jazz set to an enthralled audience.

November 2010 saw the release of Elaine's brand new studio album, *Elaine Paige & Friends*. Recorded in New York and produced by legendary record producer Phil Ramone for Rhino/Warner Bros Records. It features duets with 14 of her favourite musical performers, including (in alphabetical order): Paul Anka, John Barrowman, Michael Bolton, Kenny G, Barry Manilow, Johnny Mathis, Idina Menzel, Olivia Newton-John, Billy Ocean, Sinéad O'Connor, LeAnn Rimes, Jon Secada, Neil Sedaka and Dionne Warwick. The album entered the Top 20 in the UK and Elaine was awarded a gold disc for sales over 100,000 by the end of the year.

February 2011 saw Elaine return to the concert stage with a new show, which featured a selection of her favourite standards, her greatest hits and some of the modern classics from her new album. Following the tour Elaine flew to the US to star as *Carlotta Campion* in Stephen Sondheim's *Follies* at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC where she received critical acclaim from reviewers and audiences

Following an intimate concert at Chichester Cathedral as part of the 2011 festivities Elaine returned to the US to reprise her role in *Follies* and made her return to Broadway. *Follies* opened at the Marquis Theater in New York on 12<sup>th</sup> September and once again the critics were unanimous in their praise for her performance.

February 2012 saw Elaine perform two concerts at New York's Lincoln Center; amazingly these were her debut concert performances in New York, which the New York Daily News said "*After 34 years, London theater legend Elaine Paige finally got to sing Don't Cry for Me Argentina on a New York stage. 'It was worth the wait'*" Elaine then returned to the UK and her weekly BBC Radio 2 programme, *Elaine Paige On Sunday*, and she will also perform in concert to celebrate a newly refurbished Harrogate Royal Hall on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> April. Elaine will then return to the USA to open *Follies* at the Ahmanson Theater in Los Angeles for a limited engagement. With other concert dates around the world planned in 2012, her continued success on BBC Radio 2 and another CD of duets, *Elaine Paige & Friends 2*, in the planning stages, it's very fitting for Elaine to be singing, in *Follies*, "*I'm Still Here!*"

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