

In their words

What others have said about Nancy Wilson:

"Only 23 years old at the time, Wilson had a commanding blues- and soul-drenched jazz voice that was fully formed at the time of this recording. And unlike so many young singers, she was already committed to communicating lyrics rather than showing off how great her voice was."

— allmusic.com review of her 1960 album, *Something Wonderful*

"She brings a dramatic, narrative edge to lyrics, generating passion and intelligence, best savored in a room where every nuance can be heard with clarity."

— *The Hartford (Conn.) Courant*, Sept. 5, 2002

"She sings about heartsickness but always with alert control; she creates tension in her song readings, then pulls back. It's an old-fashioned art associated with places and styles that have largely disappeared."

— *The New York Times*, Jan. 12, 2003

"Wilson takes her song lyrics personally, infusing them with fresh meaning while extracting ever-surprising emotions."

— *People*, Aug. 28, 2006

"There's no faking this gal out. I told the kids: 'You can't pretend this is going to be good. You're either good or you're not. This isn't your Uncle Fudd and your Aunt Spoozy out there. You have to be good. This is Nancy Wilson.'"

— Phil Wallace, choir director at West High School, before her performance at its Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Sept. 23, 2005

NANCY

FROM PAGE D1

mother was the oldest of 12. As of last summer, there is one left. Most of them I lost in the last five years.

But I stay in touch with my folks. I've always been like that. I'm tight and close.

Q: Where were you born in Chillicothe?

A: At a midwife's house across from Zion Baptist Church on Water Street. She must have been in her 80s when I met her. That had to have been 30 years ago.

I went to her house and knocked and told her that I was one of her babies and I had been born at her house. She knew that I had married a minister, and she had some comment about that.

I said, "If anyone helps anyone get into heaven, I'll be helping him."

Q: Whenever people write about you, your "Midwestern work ethic" is mentioned. Is that a cliché, or does it exist?

A: I think it does exist, yes. In the mid-'60s, I once worked 48 weeks out of 52. I had to tell attorneys, management, husband: "This is not what I signed on for. I have a life. I have a child."

I became much more selective and did not allow people to just put stuff on the schedule and lead me around.

I've never had a lot of people traveling with me — hair-dressers and people like that. I always have a road manager who handles the instruments — someone who tries to make sure everybody gets to where they need to be. But at this point in my life, I don't have a staff, because if you have a staff you've got to keep working (laughing).

Q: How much did gospel music figure in your early style?

A: I went to church. I loved the music, but that was not what I sang. I didn't have this big, powerful voice. I do believe in a supreme being. I believe he gave me this gift of interpretation.

He brings the songs to me. I was not seeking the songs. I wouldn't have been able to sing for 50 years if I was singing gospel. I didn't have Shirley Caesar's pipes or Mahalia Jackson's pipes.

Q: Why didn't you ever formally study voice?

A: When I was about 12, my parents took me to a music teacher. I had already been singing. This teacher — I don't



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Nancy Wilson at the Grammys

remember at all what her name was — she said my voice would change and I was too young. But I never went to another music teacher.

I don't think it would have helped, though. I think that what I do, you are born with it.

Q: How surprised were you to win a Grammy for the second time in three years?

A: When they announced the winner, . . . I just sat there. I forgot the name. And then it was "Oh, my God, that's me!" I was very happy.

Q: Did you watch the entire televised awards show?

A: Yes. After I won, I bypassed the media. I went to them afterward because I didn't want to miss the Police. I have a crush on Sting — with a passion.

And I was very happy for Mary J. Blige. I've watched her mature. Her voice is so strong now. There was a little concern for her, and now she's got a grip.

And Beyonce? Oh! I was so glad to hear her just sing and let people know the power she has as a singer and not just the jiggy-jiggy stuff. And I loved the little girl from England — Corinne (Baylor Rae).

Of all the Grammys, this year had a little class.

Q: In high school, how did you meet Rusty Bryant at the Carolyn Club in Columbus?

A: I sang there one night — on my prom night. We went to the Carolyn Club after the prom, and I sat in with Rusty's band. He was at my house the next morning. He was asking my dad if I could go on the road with them.

Q: Was your dad cool with that?

A: It was all up to me, and I said no. I wasn't ready.

Q: So your parents (who died tragically in 1998) really trusted you.

A: I was an old soul. My parents were not show-business

parents. They didn't push me. They weren't out there saying, "Sign this contract." To this day I don't have a contract with my manager, who has been my manager since 1959.

It's about being wise in your selection of people. It's about having integrity and being specific about what will give you a decent life. I'm first. If I can keep me self-contained, then I can make sure that everybody is doing OK.

Q: After so many musicians, what about the first major players you performed with still stands out?

A: Oh, God, Rusty (Bryant) — he was so good! Hank Marr — oh, you talk about a band; they could *romp*. I mean, who cuts their teeth with a band like that?

Rusty was one of the best tenor (saxophone) players with a tone. That Hammond B with Hank Marr — Hank was an intellectual and a great musician who could swing you into bad health. I miss them so much.

Q: What do you remember about the first few days in New York in 1959?

A: Rusty (Bryant) introduced me to Cannonball (Adderley) on the corner of Broadway and 57th Street. I knew Cannon, and I knew Nat (Adderley). I told them, "I'm coming to record," and we set a date.

Q: What sticks out most from your time with Cannonball?

A: I remember being pregnant at the Apollo (Theater). Nat was on my right side, and Cannon was on my left. Kacy (her son) was in my stomach; I guess I was six or seven months pregnant. We were doing *Save Your Love for Me*. The middle of the song says, "I can feel it," and the baby shifted and the dress moved. It was so obvious. My whole stomach was so far away from my waistline. Nat just fell out. It was like Kacy hit him. The next line is "I can't conceal it," and the whole Apollo audience fell out.

Q: If you were turning, say, 20 on Tuesday, would you be attending college or trying to make a living onstage?

A: If I were 22 today and deciding to go to New York, I would not go. I would already be at some university studying medicine. I don't like the business today. I don't think what occurred when I was coming up would be possible today. I might be able to do it in Ohio, but, living in Los Angeles, I would not be able to tolerate the nonsense that happens. abeck@dispatch.com

NUMBER

FROM PAGE D1

from those of most other Carrey movies, which are usually weird. It's simply weird in a different way.

"I loved this character, Walter, because he's the ultimate family guy," says Carrey, 45. "He's a guy who just wants to have a normal life. He's most of us who just want things to be stable. But, like most of us, Walter is in denial. I think that we're all in a constant state of denial about the fact that we live on plates of rock that are floating through an unknown universe."

The fact that a simple number causes Walter's universe to go berserk isn't as bizarre as it sounds. There are those who think that there is something mystical about the number 23.

"A friend of mine in Canada handed it down to me because he saw it everywhere," Carrey says. "Then he gave me a book of 23 phenomena, which listed all the strange dates and odd occurrences. I thought he was crazy. But then I started seeing 23 everywhere."

"It entered my life in a big way," he says. "Suddenly I started driving all of my friends crazy."

Then someone mentioned Psalm 23, the Biblical poem with the passage "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. . . . Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

"Without fear and knowing that you're taken care of," Carrey says.

Suddenly things made sense to Carrey, to such an extent that he even changed the name of his production company from Pitbull Productions to JC23.

"I was on the Net talking to someone about changing the name of my company to JC23," Carrey recalls, "and my friend talked about that psalm. . . . about the 'valley of the shadow of death.' At the same time, another friend walked into my office with a newspaper . . . that had a big headline that read, 'Death Valley Blooms.' It was the first time in 100 years that it did bloom because of extraordinary rain. Those seeds were waiting for 100 years."

"I thought: 'How fitting. I think I'm on a weird and special journey here,'" Carrey says.

Then he got a phone call that was things a little spooky.

"I was explaining this company-name change to another friend," the actor says, "and he said: 'That's funny. I just wrote a script about the number 23.' I was totally freaked out. The first page of the script had me as this animal catcher capturing a pit bull. I went from Pitbull Productions to JC23, and the reason was not lost on me."

"The writer even told me to turn to the 23rd page in his script and then asked me to start circling every 23rd word

"When I got to the hotel room here, I was put in Room 1223. I look out my terrace, and the awning across the street is for the address 323. And then I ordered some breakfast, and there was a 23 written on my pancakes. OK, I made the last one up."

JIM CARREY

on that page. It was written like a code that was really cool."

Carrey has a folder of pictures he took to document "23 incidents."

"I took these with my camera phone," Carrey says. "Look, here's a tow truck from when my car broke down, with a 23 on the side. It's the 23rd truck in their fleet. I got the driver to take a picture of me with it. Look at the car in front of us in the picture. He has a 23 on his license plate."

"When I got to the hotel room here," Carrey says, "I was put in Room 1223. I look out my terrace, and the awning across the street is for the address 323. And then I ordered some breakfast, and there was a 23 written on my pancakes."

"OK, I made the last one up," he says, laughing. "But the rest is true, and it's eerie and freaky."

In a separate interview, director Joel Schumacher offers his own "23 incident," from the day he agreed to make the film.

"I was brushing my teeth afterward thinking, 'It will be my 20th movie if I do it, and I wish it were my 23rd,'" he recalls. "But then I thought, 'What about those two TV movies? So this is your 23rd job.' I couldn't wait for the next morning to call Jim and tell him about it."

The Number 23 is far from Carrey's first drama — his resume includes everything from *The Dead Pool* (1988) and *Simon Birch* (1998) to *Man on the Moon* (1999) and *The Majestic* (2001) — but it's easily his darkest. Still, he insists that he doesn't think of his work in terms of dramas, comedies, thrillers or whatever categories people might put them into.

"I've really always thought of myself as someone who lives in the middle of this wheel," he says. "I'm able to go to the extremes — which is the outside of the wheel. I can go out there and be zany and fun, but I can also go another route on the wheel and do something with depth and seriousness. There are many different colors to paint with when you're an artist."

"More than anything, I don't want to get trapped in just one type of role. I think funny is an appendage, but it's not my whole body."

ZUCK

FROM PAGE D1

Prize-winning composer and critic, died in 1989.

American dance, too, has suffered major losses:

• Alvin Ailey, the black American choreographer and artistic director, died in 1989.

• Martha Graham — the choreographer who shaped modern dance, truly an American art form — died in 1991.

• Rudolf Nureyev, the Russian ballet dancer who leapt to freedom in the West, died in 1993.

• Jerome Robbins, who was to American choreography what Bernstein was to American music, died in 1998.

Some giants are still with us, but the best of their careers is behind them.

None of the divas du jour equals sopranos Beverly Sills and Joan Sutherland. Opera superstar Luciano Pavarotti, the best-known of the Three Tenors, and Mikhail Baryshnikov, perhaps the most famous dancer of all time, are retired.

In all the arts, each generation stands on the shoulders of those who came before. From the icons of the late 20th century, we expect another generation of equal merit to arise, and a few artists — composers

Philip Glass and John Adams, and choreographer Mark Morris come to mind — might become larger-than-life.

"I certainly hope it is not the end," said Peter Stafford Wilson, music director of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra and associate conductor of the Columbus Symphony.

"But when one considers the electrifying presence of a Bernstein or a Karajan (the German giant of a conductor who died in 1989), Menotti or Copland, one is hard-pressed to think of an equal in today's terms — maybe John Adams, Yo-Yo Ma, perhaps Daniel Barenboim or Michael Tilson Thomas.

"We may have to wait for another generation to identify the 'greats' of the 21st century." Perhaps giants don't roam the Earth in each generation. Time might be needed to replace the great rush of talent that came at the end of the 20th century.

"I think there have historically been many periods of larger-than-life individuals followed by less iconic times," said Gerard Charles, artistic director of BalletMet Columbus. "Also, perhaps as long as the giants exist, most people will seek to emulate their success rather than strike out in a new and definitive path."

Donald Harris, a composer

and former dean of the Ohio State University College of the Arts, said, "I do worry that the dumbing down of culture, as witnessed daily on television and in most of the print media, will adversely affect the arts in our nation. Most of what catches on with the public is nothing but entertainment."

Still, he said, the nation is resilient.

"A phoenix can be reborn. . . . New talent will emerge to re-

place the Coplands, Bernsteins and Thomsons. I would be loath to predict who these new artists will be. I just have faith that they will be there."

Right now, however, the inevitable passing of the leaders of American culture in the 20th century feels like something a lot more profound.

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