

Sounds

# Witness member goes solo

Continued from 5B

Heaven" teams him with II D'Extreme. It gets my vote for the next single.

Teddy, it's good to have you back.

**Lisa Page**  
**More Than You'll Ever Know**  
**Michael A. Brooks,**  
**producer**  
**CGI Records**

☆☆☆ 1/2

Lisa Page has anchored the

group Witness for a number of years. It was a matter of time before she decided to do a solo recording. This is the time. "More Than You'll Know" is the recording.

Page has a wonderful, room-filling voice that's built for this material. It's contemporary, sometimes to the point of being r&b. That's to be expected. Producer Michael Brooks was once a member of Commissioned - the best at combining the genres. But the words leave no doubt this is a gospel CD. "No Other God,"

"Do It Again" and "Jesus Will See You Through" may soon become standards on gospel radio.

This is a job well done, but I hope it doesn't signal the end of Witness.

**Rating:**  
☆☆☆☆ Classic;  
☆☆☆☆ Excellent;  
☆☆☆☆ Good;  
☆☆ Fair;  
☆ Why?;  
**No Stars Given - A mess**

# Eartha Kitt still wows a crowd

Continued from 5B

Kitt still electrifies audiences with her one-of-a-kind persona, peppering her flirty set with gold-digging songs about champagne, stretch limos and pearls.

But in an era when cabaret is mostly musty theater, Kitt's shows are fresh and vibrant - and increasingly being embraced by Gen-Xers.

"It's absolutely marvelous," the former television Catwoman purrs. "Every time I see a younger audience, that makes me feel alive, really."

At New York's plush Cafe Carlyle recently, she let her heavy gaze fall onto a young man with close-cropped hair and multiple piercings huddling with his date at a front table.

Teasing, she writhed frantically toward him, shaking her size 6 frame like some sort of possessed belly dancer. But after shimmying suggestively for a few minutes, she finally gave up.

"Next time, bring your father," she purred. The intimate hall erupted into laughter.

Kitt is tickled pink by the appearance of fresh, twentysomething faces.

"Young people obviously come because they've been told to come by their parents or they know of me as Catwoman or they just saw me in a movie or heard my voice," she says.

"They don't know what to expect once they see me and they tell me that they become mesmerized. It's a happy surprise because then I find the same faces coming back again and again."

Her daughter, Kitt Shapiro, agrees: "I'm amazed at how diverse the group is. To see people in their 20s is amazing. It's a testament to who she is and what she's done all these years."

Keeping a high profile in recent years hasn't hurt attendance, either.

Kitt was a spellbinding walk-on in both the Isaac Mizrahi documentary "Unzipped," and opposite Rosie O'Donnell in "Harriet the Spy." She has also made several small-screen appearances on "The Nanny," "New York Undercover" and "Living Single."

"The audience needs to know that you're still kicking," Kitt explains.

Kicking is Eartha Kitt's forte. Exposed to grinding poverty as a toddler in Harlem, Kitt escaped to Europe as a hooper, learning her craft and breaking hearts



KITT

as a member of the Katherine Dunham Dance Troupe.

As her songs attest, Kitt was a Material Girl decades before Madonna was fitted for diapers.

"Give me a frank account," she slyly sings in one.

"How is your bank account?" She stretches out on the piano.

"You want my heart today, "What does your broker say?" Yet for all her vampy lyrics about extorting chunky jewels and luxurious furs from lovers, this illegitimate child of a half-black, half-Native American woman went out and earned hers.

But while she was an instant sensation abroad, her career in America has had more highlights - and low lights - than Dennis Rodman's scalp.

Part of the reason is Kitt herself - she's never been much of a shrinking violet. The city of Boston banned her from singing "I Want to Be Evil" during the 1950s, frightened of her predatory sexuality.

In 1968, she famously denounced the Vietnam War in front of Lady Bird Johnson, in a remark that led to a six-year banishment from America.

And somewhere in the bowels of the Pentagon, there's a thick CIA dossier denouncing Kitt as "a sadistic nymphomaniac with a vile tongue."

"In spite of everything, I'm still here," she says. "And, thank God, I'm still in demand. I consider myself very lucky."

Kitt has been nominated for two Tonys and an Emmy. Her latest critically-acclaimed album, "Back in Business," netted her a second Grammy

nomination. She has penned three autobiographies and has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Plus, she's the only performer who can get away with rhyming "nincompoop" with "incomepoop."

"That's the only word that rhymes, as far as I can think of," she says playfully during a recent chat in her publicist's Manhattan office. She lives in Westchester, New York, with two miniature poodles. There currently are no men in her life, apple tart or otherwise.

Though she works glamour to the hilt during her shows, when she's off-duty she's much more casual: Her face is framed by a turban that sits atop her head and she wears sweat pants and snow boots.

Over the years, Kitt has stood up for causes long before they were deemed chic: AIDS research, the environment, civil rights and homelessness.

"Nobody knows the feeling of rejection more than I do," the 69-year-old grandmother says. "When something is to me very important, then it's important enough for me to stand up."

"I say, 'If you don't rock a boat, how can anything be moved?'"

But the woman who has made lounge lizard-dom cool again says she mourns the loss of civility in show business.

"The business has gotten very noisy. People don't listen any more. The singers are singing at you, not to you," she says with a sigh. "Everything belongs to a corporation. Everyone is now working for Mickey Mouse."

Everyone but the hip-swivel-ing Kitt.

# Afro Center to sponsor Sertima

The Afro-American Cultural Center in partnership with BellSouth will present Dr. Ivan Van Sertima for a lecture on Tuesday, April 29. Van Sertima will present his rebuttal of the recent criticism of his highly controversial thesis on the African presence in pre Columbian America.

Van Sertima is a professor of African studies at Rutgers University. He is a literary critic, a linguist and an anthropologist who is highly respected in all three fields. As a literary critic, he is the author of Caribbean Writers, a collection of critical essays on

the Caribbean novel. He is also the author of several major literary reviews published in Denmark, India, Britain and the United States. He was honored for his work in this field by being asked by the Nobel Committee of the Swedish Academy to nominate candidates for the Nobel Prize in Literature from 1976-1980. As a historian of world repute, he has been honored by being asked to join the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) International Commission for Rewriting the Scientific and


Cultural History of Mankind. As a linguist, Van Sertima has published essays on the dialect of the Sea Islands off the Georgia coast. He is also the compiler of the Swahili Dictionary of Legal Terms, based on his field work in Tanzania, East Africa, in 1967. He is the author of "They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America," which was published by Random House in 1977. It is now in its twenty-first printing. It was published in French in 1981 and was awarded the Clarence L. Holte Prize, a bi-annual award

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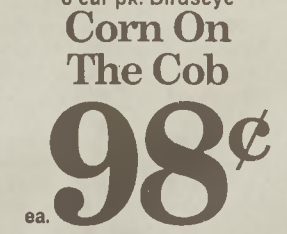
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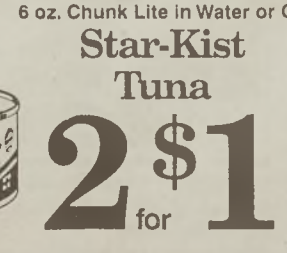
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