

Helen Marketti's Music Corner



By Helen R. Marketti



An Interview with Loretta Swit

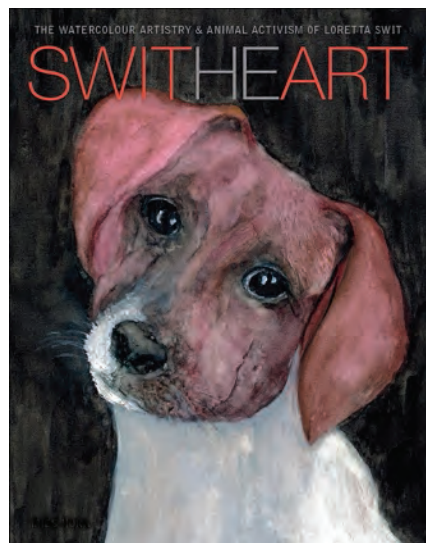
Loretta Swit has an extensive list of stage and television work that has spanned over fifty years but of course, many will recognize her as the iconic Major Margaret "Hot Lips" Houlihan from the hit television show, M*A*S*H.



Millions of people around the world are long time fans of M*A*S*H which was on the air for eleven years. (1972-1983) "I didn't actually read for the part," said Loretta. "It was more like a meet and greet. They had already auditioned over 200 women for the role. At the time I was working on Hawaii Five-O. My agent called and said he had made an appointment for me to see the executive producers, Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart. He asked me if I had seen the film, M*A*S*H which I had not. He told me that it didn't matter because there is no script and they

just wanted to meet with me. I didn't feel nervous because all I was going to do was say "hello". What was working in my favor was most of the TV work I had done was on CBS and M*A*S*H was going to air on CBS. I felt I had allies in my corner. I was very relaxed. They had dibs on me for the role and by that, I mean they saw me first! They provided the shooting schedule for the pilot and said they would be in touch. Meanwhile I was offered another role, to be in a movie with Olivia de Havilland! Either way I would be fortunate regardless of the outcome. My agent called Gene Reynolds and said that I was offered a movie role and that the dates conflicted with the pilot for M*A*S*H. Gene said that he was literally just getting ready to call my agent because they decided they wanted me for the part!"

This is the 50th anniversary year for M*A*S*H. The show is still running on the air! "I think it's incredible that the show is still being aired fifty years after it first started," said Loretta. "People were able to relate to the show. When we went off of the air in 1983, there were school kids who wrote their own stories of what they thought happened to each individual and how they lived the rest of their life. I consider it a fan-family and not just fans. People had family members who were similar to the characters on the show so many could identify."



Loretta has been involved with many projects which include a beautiful book now in its second printing, SWITHEART: The Watercolour Artistry & Animal Activism of Loretta Swit. The introduction is written by Mike Farrell and there is also a wonderful quote given my Jamie Farr. The book is a collection of artistic portraits of people's pets that Loretta has put her talented creativity to work to produce stunning images. There is a short story that accompanies each animal's portrait. Proceeds from the book sales

go to SWITHEART Animal Alliance. "I am thrilled about this project and it's growth," said Loretta. "Some of the pets chosen for the book were commissioned paintings and the owners wanted my idea or interpretation of their animal. Some of the people sent me snapshots of their pet. In some cases, I tried to put the snapshot along with my painting in the book. As an artist, it is subjective as to how you "see" the animal. Animals give us their love unconditionally,

They deserve our appreciation and respect. My charity uses the funds to help raise and train service dogs. Service dogs can give people back their security, confidence and independence."




Another delightful project is the development of a new fragrance. "I learned


that there are three kinds of perfumes which are woods, floral and exotic. My fragrance is exotic. I have a penchant for antiquities, ancient Egypt and Egyptian is where my thinking was when developing the fragrance." The perfume, SwitHeart is only available on Loretta's website.

Loretta shares some lasting thoughts about acting and appreciating each day. "It's a great thing what we do. Roles can be challenging, interesting and exciting. That is what bonds us. The roles and characters are living things. My life has been blessed and enriched. Goodness is the greatest force in the world. I believe that with all of my heart."

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