



LU YE PERFORMS FOR POPE FRANCIS

Chinese-Canadian soprano Lu Ye became the first Canadian and first Asian to sing at a Pope's birthday when she recently sang at a Dec. 20, 2013 Christmas concert in Rome in honour of Pope Francis's birthday. Her selections included Gounod's *Ave Maria* and *Silent Night*. **WKC**

CLASSICAL MUSIC IN POPULAR CULTURE



NELLIE MELBA ON DOWNTON ABBEY

Episode 3 of Season 4 of the popular British TV series *Downton Abbey* (PBS, Sundays at 9 PM) featured an appearance of legendary Australian soprano Dame Nellie Melba, portrayed by another legend, 69-year-old New Zealand soprano Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, who sang "O mio babbino caro" from Puccini's *Glianni Schicchi*, and Dvorak's "Songs My Mother Taught Me." The Daily Telegraph's

Rupert Christiansen faulted Te Kanawa's performance, especially her "sharp unsteady intonation, heavy vibrato and tastelessly swooping portamento." Christiansen was even more critical of the show's writing, saying that in 1922, when the episode was set, the then 60-year-old opera diva Melba would never have accepted being treated as a visiting tradesperson by head butler Carson, relegated to having tea alone in her room. **WKC**