

# Rolling Stone

## Rufus Wainwright, Jimmy Fallon and More Pay Tribute to Kate McGarrigle

**Proteges and collaborators perform the late singer-songwriter's work in New York**



Rufus Wainwright performs during the celebration of the music of Kate McGarrigle at Town Hall on May 12, 2011 in New York City.

Eugene Gologursky/Getty Images

The performers at the Kate McGarrigle tribute held at New York's Town Hall last night were a family in more ways than one. The late Montreal singer-songwriter's literal relatives were there, of course – her sister Anna McGarrigle, her children Rufus and Martha Wainwright, and assorted nephews, nieces and in-laws. But there was also a heavy contingent of artists she mentored, collaborated with or otherwise inspired before her too-soon death at age 63 last January – people like Emmylou Harris, Norah Jones, Antony Hegarty, Teddy Thompson, Justin Vivian Bond, Krystle Warren, the novelist Michael Ondaatje and even Jimmy Fallon. Bond seemed to speak for almost everyone on stage when describing McGarrigle as "like a mother to me."

Although the three-hour concert was billed as "A Celebration of Kate McGarrigle," the prevailing mood was naturally somber. McGarrigle wrote and sang heartrendingly personal songs throughout most of her life; hearing them now that she's gone was emotional, to say the least. Performers and audience members alike could be seen tearing up during highlights like "I Eat Dinner (When The Hunger's Gone)" (a sweet duet between Harris and Thompson), "Go Leave" (a deeply felt rendition by Hegarty), "(Talk to Me Of) Mendocino" (sung by both Wainwright siblings with Jones), "Tell My Sister" (a wonderfully torchy performance by Martha Wainwright) and most of all "Proserpina" – the last song

Kate McGarrigle wrote before her death, a sad, lovely, honest tune that brought nearly everyone back on stage to close the night's first set.

### [Watch Emmylou Harris Perform a Tribute to Kate McGarrigle on Sirius/XM](#)

But the show also made room for the warmth, humor and life that are equally characteristic of her work. There were bittersweet smiles to be seen during "First Born" (wryly crooned by the Wainwright siblings) and "Work Song" (enthusiastically interpreted by Bond). And Fallon drew unexpected laughs with a short stand-up bit, comparing the McGarrigle-Wainwright clan to "a very talented Brady Bunch" or perhaps the Von Trapps.

The tears inevitably returned when, toward the end of the evening, Anna McGarrigle led the rest of the family on "Kitty Come Home" – originally written after the breakup of her sister's marriage, now taking on a newly mournful meaning. The show drew to a close a few minutes later with a group singalong of the folk standard "Dink's Song," whose refrain of "Fare thee well" felt especially sorrowful.

### [Rufus Wainwright's Emotional Return to Carnegie Hall](#)

"A Celebration of Kate McGarrigle" will return to Town Hall for a second sold-out performance tonight; all profits from both performances will benefit the Kate McGarrigle Sarcoma Research Fund. Those lucky enough to have tickets are in for an extraordinarily moving night of music.