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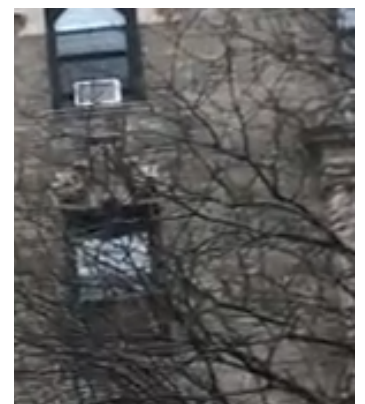
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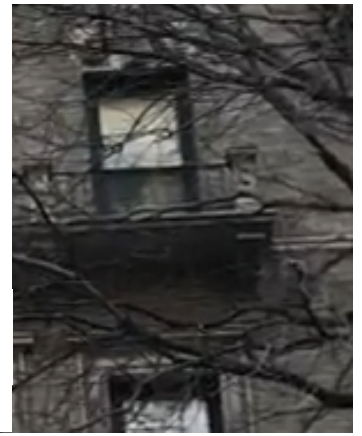
## CORONAVIRUS

# 'I'm singing for them': Broadway star Brian Stokes Mitchell, recovering from coronavirus, now sings from his NYC apartment window to salute health care workers

By ELLEN MOYNIHAN  
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS | APR 13, 2020



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Opera singer serenades people on street from his window.



Broadway legend Brian Stokes Mitchell, having come through his fight with coronavirus, is now performing nightly a little further uptown — from his Upper West Side apartment window.

As in many parts of the city, Mitchell and his stuck-at-home neighbors have been applauding and cheering for healthcare workers every day, with the cheers rising up like clockwork at 7 p.m.

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Now, as the clapping and air horn blasts recede each night, Mitchell takes to his window to serenade the street with a hopeful, defiant anthem.

His rich baritone rings out even as pots and pans continue to clang.



Broadway actor and singer Brian Stokes Mitchell sings out the window of his apartment on Broadway on the Upper West Side. (Gardiner Anderson/for New York Daily News)





Broadway actor and singer Brian Stokes Mitchell sings out the window of his apartment on Broadway on the Upper West Side, Manhattan, New York on Sunday, April 12, 2020. (Gardiner Anderson/for New York Daily News)

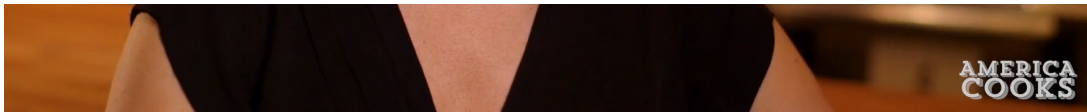
“This is my quest, to follow that star, no matter how hopeless, no matter how far.”

“I’m glad you’re okay,” a woman standing on the street below shouted up to Mitchell as he stood in his apartment window singing on Sunday. His apartment, appropriately enough, is on Broadway.

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“When I finally got to the place where I was symptom free — I could take a deep breath without a cough — I started to sing for the healthcare workers and the responders,” Mitchell told the Daily News on Monday.



Bystanders watch as Brian Stokes Mitchell sings out the window of his apartment on Broadway on the Upper West Side Sunday night. (Gardiner Anderson/for New York Daily News)

Mitchell started performing for the masses last week. He first thought of performing something different every night, but then settled on “The Impossible Dream (The Quest),” the show-stopping theme from the 1965 Broadway smash “Man of La Mancha.” Mitchell sang the song in a 2003 revival and was nominated for a Tony.

“It’s so soothing,” bystander Carrie Rodriguez, 52, said after Mitchell finished singing Sunday.

Broadway pianist Will Johnson, 44, lives in Washington Heights but came out just to hear Mitchell.

“My conductor friend lives across the street and took a video,” said Johnson. “I thought it was a one time thing but then people kept sharing the videos.”



He first thought of performing something different every night, but then settled on “The Impossible Dream (The Quest),” the show-stopping theme from 1965 Broadway smash “Man of La Mancha.” (Gardiner Anderson/for New York Daily News)

Mitchell sometimes changes “man” in the lyrics to “woman.”

On Sunday he tweaked the words to sing, “And the world will be better for this, that one healthcare worker scorned and covered with scars fought with his last ounce of courage.”

The 62-year-old performer said the virus was especially rough for about a week and had him running fevers up to 104.8.

“I was just short of ending up in the hospital,” he said. “It’s nice to be over it now, and through it, and on the other side.”



After it was introduced on Broadway, “The Impossible Dream” was covered by everybody from Frank Sinatra to Elvis Presley, from the Mormon Tabernacle Choir to, yes, Cher. Aretha Franklin performed it as the funeral for civil rights hero Rosa Parks.

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“People think it’s about doing something impossible. But the (subtitle) of the song is ‘The Quest,’” he said, going on to recite his favorite lyric from the song. ‘To fight for the right, without question or pause, to be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause.’ That’s totally the health care workers. They are doing that.”

“It’s about trying your best, trying to do something that feels impossible, as a country, as a nation. This is where we are now,” he added. “Artists have this wonderful ability to bring people together. We’re not able to do that on Broadway right now, but those things still exist in other ways.”

Mitchell, originally from Seattle, began his acting career in television with a recurring role in “Trapper John, M.D.” His first appearance on Broadway was in a production of “Mail,” for which he



Broadway actor and singer Brian Stokes Mitchell sings out the window of his apartment Sunday night.(Gardiner Anderson/for New York Daily News)





Bystanders watch as Brian Stokes Mitchell sings out the window of his apartment on Broadway on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, New York on Sunday. (Gardiner Anderson/for New York Daily News)

won the Theatre World Award for 1988. He won a Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical in 2000 for his starring role in “Kiss Me, Kate.”

Mitchell said many people in the Broadway community have been hit by the disease, lamenting his friend Terrance McNally, the famed playwright who died on March 24 from complications stemming from coronavirus. He also noted that for most artists, the disease has been financially devastating.

The Actor’s Fund, a nonprofit that provides safety net for those in the performing arts established in 1882, is more needed than ever, said Mitchell, who serves as chairman of the board.

“It feels like those 138 years is a rehearsal for what’s going on right now,” he said of the group’s history. “A lot of people in the

arts are considered gig workers.”

“What are people doing now that they’re in their house? They’re turning on television, they’re turning on Netflix. People are turning to artists whether they know it or not,” Mitchell added. “But you’re not only watching the actors, but the editors, the film scorers, the grips. There are a lot of people most of the time we’re just not aware of.”



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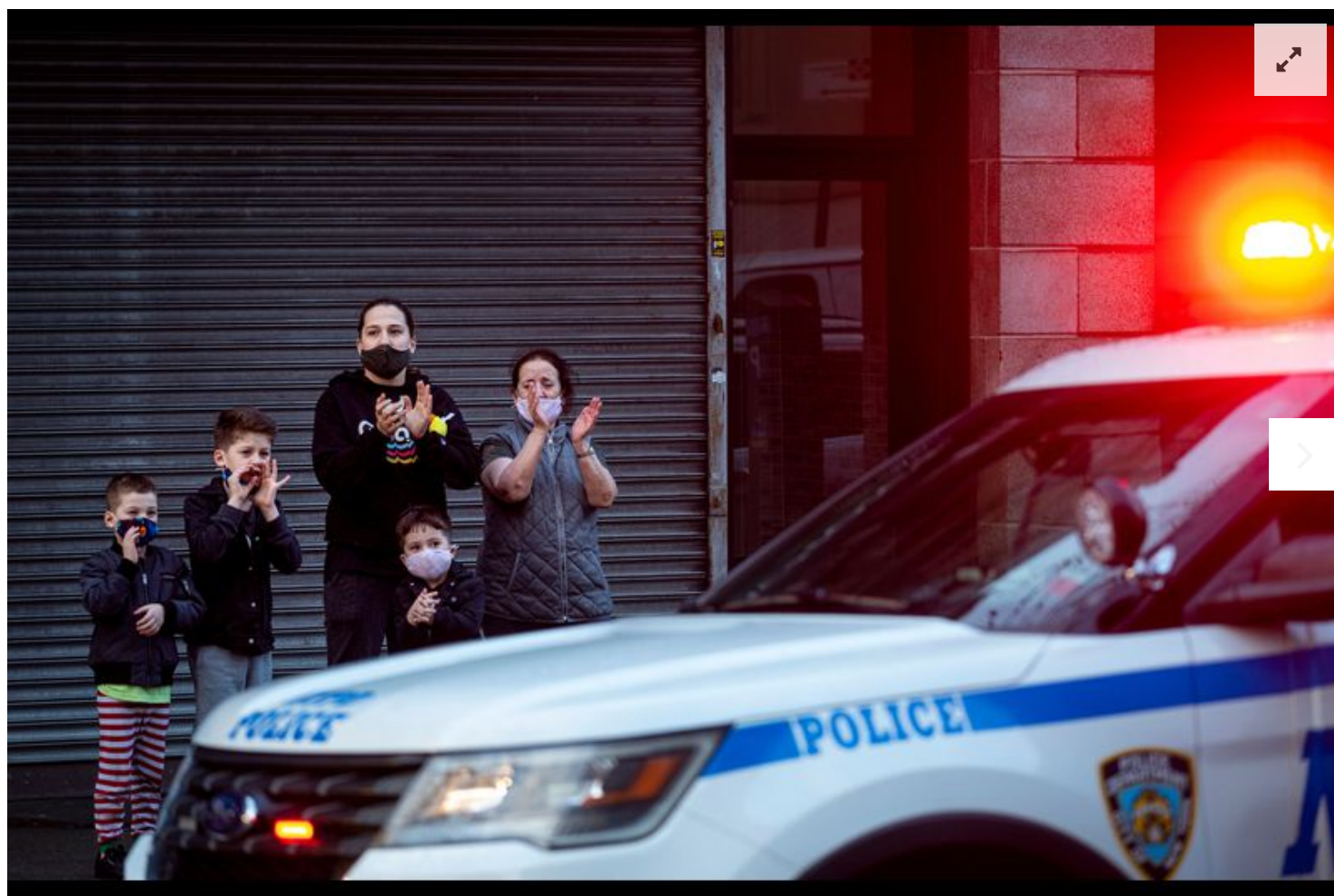
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Mitchell also called attention to workers who are sometimes invisible.

“There are a lot of heroic people out there, they’re so incredibly important,” said Mitchell. “The restaurant workers, the delivery people, the folks at the markets maybe being exposed and still showing up. I’m singing for them too.”

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“One of the things artists are good at is collaboration. If any one person messes up their job the whole thing comes apart like a house of cards. But that hardly ever happens,” Mitchell added. “I wish Washington D.C. would take a lesson on how well we work together, different ethnicities, different religions, different skills.”