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Yul Brynner, who with shaved head and regally haughty presence played and replayed the starring role in The King and I for more than 30 years, died early today in a New York Hospital. He was 65.With him when he died at 1 a.m. at the New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center were his wife, Kathy Lee, and his four children, said Josh Ellis, the actors spokesman.He died of multiple complications that came as a result of what was originally cancer, Ellis said. He faced death with a dignity and strength that astounded his doctors. He fought like a lion.He was a remarkable person, Charlton Heston, who starred with Brynner in Cecil B. DeMilles 1956 movie epic The Ten Commandments, told the Associated Press. His work in King and I was beyond compare. He was a very special talent. Im very sorry to hear of his death.Though there were other Broadway and movie roles for Brynner, it is doubtful that any successful actor of his time had been so associated with a single character as was Brynner with the arrogant, bombastic King of Siam.None of Brynners other parts were nearly as memorable as the king. If he became typecast, it was something Brynner didnt seem to mind. For one thing, there were certain physical limitations that kept him from a wider variety of parts.I would have liked to play Henry Higgins (in My Fair Lady), he told a Times interviewer a decade ago, but I could because of my accent and looks. Unless I did it with an Outer Mongolian touring company.For another, the money from the play, the movie, and the seemingly countless touring companies of the play made him a millionaire.Born Tajdie Khan on July 11, 1917, on the island of Sakhalin off northern Japan, Brynner was the son of a Mongolian mining engineer and a Gypsy mother who died at his birth. His father was born in Switzerland and later secured Swiss citizenship and changed the family name to Brynner.For the first eight years of his life, young Yul lived in China, and then was sent by his father to live with his maternal grandmother in Paris, but she died soon afterward. He attended a Paris school for a time, but dropped out at the age of 13 and joined a Gypsy troupe as a traveling minstrel.He worked as an acrobat in a French circus for three years, performing on the high trapeze. But after a bad injury, Brynner turned from the circus to the stage.It was acting that brought Brynner to America, touring in a struggling Shakespearean troupe on college campuses. He added English and some Russian (learned from other actors) to his collection of languages that included French, Japanese and Hungarian while playing small parts and driving the troupes bus--all for \$25 a week.In February, 1946, he made his debut on Broadway, playing an Oriental prince opposite Mary Martin in Lute Song. After 142 performances, Brynner took the show on tour.But Brynner had doubts about his ultimate success as an actor. Years later, he remembered one night on stage--long before The King and I--when an outraged theatergoer hit him with a shoe. And it was a perfectly serviceable shoe, he said. The man must have really hated me.Brynner returned to New York in 1948, putting aside his stage acting ambitions and settling comfortably into the role of actor, director and producer in the fledgling television industry, ultimately directing episodes of Studio One, one of the more successful live, anthology television shows of the 1950s.But Brynner fell in love with the script of The King and I when Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein offered him the role. Hammerstein had seen Brynner in Lute Song, thought well of him and was influenced by Martins recommendation.The musical story of the imperious Thai king and the proper British teacher, Anna Leonowens, who went to Siam in the 1860s to instruct the kings huge flock of offspring and then had to acclimate herself to his court habits of polygamy and bowing at ground-level, had a rocky start when it opened out of town in New Haven, Conn., in February, 1951.It was a disaster. Brynner said in 1981. It was almost five hours long. There was nothing but conflict between Anna and the King. . . . Rogers and Hammerstein understood immediately that unless there was an underlying fascination (between the two characters), then there really couldnt be a fascinating show.With the book cut and sweetened, as well as a couple of new songs added (Shall We Dance and Getting to Know You) the show, starring Gertrude Lawrence and Brynner, opened in New York at the St. James Theater on March 29, 1951. It was a first-night hit.Richard Rodgers told me. You opened. You have a hit. Now freeze it, he said in late 1984, just before opening in yet another Broadway revival of the show.That wouldve killed me. I told him I would be faithful to the inner sense of the piece, but what I did outwardly was my business. I told him, If you cannot agree on that, please replace me. And I stayed four years and we became great friends.One thing that Brynner did freeze was his hair style. He had shaved his head to further resemble a Siamese monarch and kept it shaved for the remainder of his life.The King and I remained on Broadway initially for 1,246 performances before moving on to Chicago, Los Angeles and London on its first go-around.Overall, by the time Brynner reopened the play on Broadway in 1984, he had performed the role 4,400 times, winning a Tony award in 1952 and an Oscar for the 1956 movie version.Though Brynner tried to avoid being typecast--some of his favorite movie roles included lead parts in Anastasia (1956), The Brothers Karamazov (1958), The Magnificent Seven (1960), and Westworld (1973)--he became famous in a superficial sort of way for his shaved head. Brynners Romantic Image Lifts Baldies, read one newspaper headline.Despite that, Brynner always returned to The King and I--for the money, for the pleasure of a role he loved and, oftentimes, for lack of other work to do. Until I find a better role, Ill keep doing this one, he said in 1980.Every time Brynner played the king, he said, he would gradually immerse himself in the role each night.I couldnt even explain what it is, he said. Its something that happens while Im making myself up and Im alone. When youve played eight performances a week for as long as I have, some juices start running.I like to sit on stage left, where the stage manager sits, during the overture. I get the audiences pulse from their reaction to the music, from their sound. It doesnt even consciously enter my mind. . . .His last round of performances in the play, starting in December, 1984, was billed as a farewell engagement--and friends and fans feared that it would be just that.Brynner, a five-pack-a-day smoker, had learned in 1983 that he had lung cancer. He took radiation treatment and, in Brynners words, the results were spectacular. Later, Brynner journeyed to Hanover, West Germany, where he was treated by a controversial cancer specialist who advocated carrot-based vitamin treatments to prevent recurrence of the disease.By the time he opened on Broadway just before Christmas, 1984, Brynner could say the disease was in remission. Indeed, in his later years, he appeared amazingly robust, routinely booming his magnificent voice out to an audience of thousands without the need of body microphones. He danced around the stage with a still-lithe body--he was 6 feet tall and weighed nearly 180 pounds, no more than when he had opened in the role more than 30 years earlier.Towards the end, because of the cancer, the prospect of eventual death had helped him decide to retire the role, as he told the New York Times in 1984:Having been ill opens my eyes suddenly to the fact that--the Gypsies have a wonderful phrase for it--Your future is getting shorter. There are things I want to do beyond sharpening and honing this role further. . . . Im not even sure what. At the same time, the illness has changed the king for me. Some lines come as a surprise suddenly--Everyday, my Lord in heaven show the way and Everyday I try to live for one more day. This describes completely how I do the show and how I survived the illness.Growing up in the Far East helped me. There was an idea that you go to bed not knowing if you have a tomorrow and you must be thankful for every tomorrow and make the most of it. . . . I couldnt see myself going to bed and waiting to see what would happen with my illness. I preferred to play to 2,000 or 3,000 people and standing ovations. The choice is quite simple.Brynners last performance as the king was last June 29 at the Broadway Theater in New York City. Vlies novrtt o vniennu val pievienot to sarakstam? Pieteikties Neesi dalnieks? Reistrjies un pievienojies kopienai (1920-1985)Who Was Yul Brynner?Actor Yul Brynner began playing his most famous role, King Mongkut of Siam in The King and I, on Broadway in 1951. After more than three years and 1,246 performances, he starred in the film version in 1956, winning an Academy Award for best actor. Brynner then returned to the stage for 3,379 more theatrical performances. He also starred in such classic films as The Ten Commandments and The Magnificent Seven. Early Life and CareerYul Brynner was born Yuliy Borisovich Bryner on July 11, 1920, in Vladivostok, Russia, to father Boris Bryner, a Swiss-Mongolian engineer, and mother Marousia Blagavidova. While Brynner is best known for his acting career, and, more specifically, for his baldpate, rich voice and compelling screen presence, he was also a musician in his early years. After his father abandoned the family, Brynner's mother took him and his sister to China, then to Paris, where he played guitar and sang gypsy songs in Parisian nightclubs. After a brief career as a trapeze artist in France, Brynner moved to the United States in 1941 and began acting with a touring company. He made his Broadway debut in Lute Sang in 1946. The King and I'm 1949, Brynner made his film debut in Port of New York, co-starring with Scott Brady and Richard Rober. Not long after, he landed his most famous role, playing King Mongkut of Siam in Oscar and Hammerstein's production of The King and I in 1951. Actress Mary Martin had recommended Brynner for the role in the Broadway musical, and the actor garnered wide critical and commercial acclaim for his performance. Movies, 'The Ten Commandments' and 'The Magnificent Seven.' After more than three years and 1,246 performances, Brynner reprised the role of King Mongkut for the screen version of The King and I in 1956, winning an Academy Award for best actor for his performance in the film. The dazzling, Academy Award-winning success that might have become a trap for a lesser star became the ongoing glory of Brynner's career, from the peak of his stardom to his untimely death. But it was by no means his only role or his only achievement. Following the release of 1956's The King and I, Brynner returned to the stage for an additional 3,379 stage performances, the last of which occurred in 1985. Along the way, the actor also starred in such classic films as The Ten Commandments (1956), Anastasia (1956), The Brothers Karamazov (1958) and The Magnificent Seven (1960). In honor of his prominent acting career, Brynner received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (at 6162 Hollywood Boulevard). Outside of his performing career, Brynner worked as a photographer and authored two books, Bring Forth the Children: A Journey to the Forgotten People of Europe and the Middle East and The Yul Brynner Cookbook: Food Fit for the King and You. Personal Life and LegacyBrynner's romantic life included four wives, actress Virginia Gilmore, Chilean model Doris Kleiner, Jacqueline Thion de la Chaume and ballerina Kathy Lee, as well as numerous love affairs with such stars as Marlene Dietrich, Judy Garland, Joan Crawford and Ingrid Bergman. He had five children: son Yul "Rock" Brynner II with Virginia Gilmore, daughter Lark with actress Frankie Tilden, daughter Victoria with Doris Kleiner, and daughters Mia and Melody, two Vietnamese children he adopted with Jacqueline Thion de la Chaume. Brynner died of lung cancer on October 10, 1985, in New York City. Brynner is buried at the St. Robert Churchyard in La Touraine, France. A true sophisticate of deliberately mysterious origins, beloved as much by men as by women, Brynner was at home in a wide variety of languages and social environments. Today, the actor remembered for his looks, range of talents and energy on the set, as well as his capacity to draw others into the spell of his charm. QUICK FACTSName: Yul BrynnerBirth Year: 1920Birth date: July 11, 1920Birth City: VladivostokBirth County: RussiaGender: MaleBest Known For: Yul Brynner was an actor known for his roles in 'The King and I.' The 1946 and 1956 performances of his powerful voice and striking stage presence, His groundbreaking performance in "The King and I" began in 1951 and led to an impressive 1,246 performances on Broadway, followed by the film adaptation in 1956, for which he won an Academy Award for Best Actor.Beyond his iconic role in "The King and I," Brynner captivated audiences in numerous classic films including "The Ten Commandments," "Anastasia," and "The Magnificent Seven." His versatility enabled him to transition seamlessly between theatre and film, with an astounding total of 3,379 stage performances throughout his career. Brynner was not only a talented actor but also an accomplished photographer and author, producing works like "Bring Forth the Children" and "The Yul Brynner Cookbook." His legacy as a sophisticated, multilingual artist continues to resonate, earning him a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and ensuring his place in cinematic history.Early Life and EducationYul Brynner was born on July 11, 1920, in Vladivostok, Russia, to Boris Bryner, a Swiss-Mongolian engineer, and Marousia Blagavidova. His early life took a tumultuous turn when his father abandoned the family, prompting his mother to relocate with Brynner and his sister first to China and then to Paris. It was in the vibrant city of Paris that young Yul honed his musical talents, playing guitar and singing gypsy songs in local nightclubs. This artistic environment nurtured his creativity and enriched his passion for performance, laying the groundwork for his later accomplishments in theater and film.Brynner briefly pursued a career as a trapeze artist in France before making his way to the United States in 1941. He began acting with a touring company and made his Broadway debut in the musical "Lute Song" in 1946, setting the stage for his future success. His dynamic presence and unique style caught the attention of directors and audiences alike, marking the beginning of a remarkable acting career. With a foundation built on diverse experiences and a profound appreciation for the arts, Brynner was well-prepared to tackle the substantial roles that would later define his career.Career Start: The King and IYul Brynner, born Yuliy Borisovich Bryner in Vladivostok, Russia, made his mark on the entertainment world with his iconic portrayal of King Mongkut of Siam in the Broadway musical "The King and I." This role, which he began performing in 1951, showcased Brynner's striking bald appearance and commanding stage presence, capturing the hearts of audiences and critics alike. His performance was not just a fleeting success; Brynner starred in an impressive 1,246 performances over three years, solidifying his status as a leading actor on Broadway.In 1956, Brynner reprised his treasured role in the film adaptation of "The King and I," a move that not only broadened his audience but also earned him an Academy Award for Best Actor. This achievement further established Brynner as a Hollywood star. Following the film's success, he returned to the stage for an additional 3,379 performances, showcasing his dedication and passion for theater. Brynner's contribution to "The King and I" remains a hallmark of his career, reflecting his unique ability to bring characters to life with depth and charisma that captivated viewers worldwide.Film Success: The Ten Commandments and The Magnificent SevenYul Brynner achieved significant fame through his roles in classic films, most notably in "The Ten Commandments" and "The Magnificent Seven." In "The Ten Commandments" (1956), Brynner portrayed the iconic Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II, a role that showcased his commanding presence and powerful voice. The film, directed by Cecil B. DeMille, was a monumental success and solidified Brynner's status as a leading man in Hollywood. His performance was marked by both charisma and intensity, contributing to the film's epic narrative and visual splendor.Following the success of "The Ten Commandments," Brynner starred in "The Magnificent Seven" (1960), a film that redefined the Western genre. He played the role of Chris Adams, a gunslinger who assembles a group of outlaws to protect a small Mexican village from bandits. Brynners portrayal of Adams was marked by a blend of ruggedness and nobility, traits that resonated with audiences and critics alike. The film not only became a classic but also established a new archetype for characters in Westerns, further cementing Brynners legacy as one of the great cinematic icons of his time.Authorship and PhotographyYul Brynner's talents extended well beyond his acclaimed acting career; he was also a skilled photographer and an author. Throughout his life, he had a deep interest in capturing moments through the lens, often using photography as a way to express his artistic vision. His passion for the craft allowed him to explore different cultures and environments, showcasing a unique perspective that resonated with his experiences as a globetrotting performer. This artistic pursuit complemented his theatrical endeavors, revealing another facet of his creativity.In addition to his photography, Brynner authored two notable books during his lifetime. "Bring Forth the Children: A Journey to the Forgotten People of Europe and the Middle East" reflects his concern for humanitarian issues and showcases his compassionate spirit. The other book, "The Yul Brynner Cookbook: Food Fit for the King and You," illustrates his love for cooking and sharing culinary delights with others. Both works highlight Brynner's ability to connect with audiences not just through his performances but also through his written word and imagery, emphasizing his multifaceted artistic legacy.Personal Life: Four Wives and Five ChildrenYul Brynner's personal life was as dynamic and complex as his on-screen characters. The actor was married four times, with his first wife being actress Virginia Gilmore. Their marriage produced his only son, Yul "Rock" Brynner II. Following Gilmore, Brynner married Chilean model Doris Kleiner, with whom he had a daughter, Victoria. His third marriage was to Jacqueline Thion de la Chaume, a ballerina, with whom he adopted two daughters from Vietnam, Mia and Melody. Each relationship brought different chapters to his life, influencing both his personal and professional journey.In addition to his marital life, Brynner had a series of high-profile romances with notable stars of his time, including Marlene Dietrich, Judy Garland, Joan Crawford, and Ingrid Bergman. These relationships often drew media attention and contributed to his allure as a charismatic figure in Hollywood. Brynners family, especially his children, played a significant role in his later years, reflecting both his commitment to family and the complex nature of his personal relationships. Brynner's legacy continues not only through his films but also through the lives of his children, who carry forward the rich heritage of their father's remarkable life.Net Worth and Earnings: Financial LegacyYul Brynner, renowned for his captivating performances and distinctive presence, achieved considerable financial success throughout his acting career. By the time of his death in 1985, Brynner's estimated net worth ranged between \$10 million and \$15 million, a remarkable figure that reflected his status as one of Hollywood's leading actors. His earnings derived mainly from his extensive work in theater and film, notably his iconic role in "The King and I," which solidified his place in entertainment history. Brynners financial legacy also includes royalties from his performances, promotional appearances, and ventures outside of acting.Beyond acting, Brynner explored various creative avenues, including photography and writing, which contributed to his wealth. His published works, such as "Bring Forth the Children" and "The Yul Brynner Cookbook," added another layer to his financial portfolio. Given his broad appeal and strong fanbase, Brynner's astute business decisions ensured that he remained financially secure long after his passing. Today, his estate continues to benefit from residuals and royalties, marking his lasting influence on the entertainment industry.FAQsWho was Yul Brynner?Yul Brynner was a renowned Russian-born actor celebrated for his iconic role as King Mongkut of Siam in the Broadway musical and film adaptation of "The King and I." His powerful voice, striking appearance, and diverse talents made him a memorable figure in both theater and cinema.When was Yul Brynner born?Yul Brynner was born on July 11, 1920, in Vladivostok, Russia. He was the son of a Swiss-Mongolian engineer and a Russian mother, which contributed to his distinct and sophisticated presence.What was Brynner's most famous role?Brynner's most famous role was King Mongkut of Siam in "The King and I," which he first performed on Broadway in 1951. His portrayal received critical acclaim, leading to a successful film adaptation in 1956, for which he won an Academy Award for Best Actor.What other films did Yul Brynner star in?In addition to "The King and I," Brynner starred in classic films such as "The Ten Commandments," "The Magnificent Seven," and "Anastasia," establishing himself as a versatile and talented actor in the entertainment industry.Did Yul Brynner have any other talents?Aside from acting, Yul Brynner was also a musician and a skilled photographer. He authored two books, including "Bring Forth the Children" and "The Yul Brynner Cookbook," reflecting his diverse interests and talents outside of performance.What was Brynner's personal life like?Yul Brynner's personal life was marked by four marriages and several high-profile relationships with stars such as Marlene Dietrich and Judy Garland. He fathered five children, including two adopted daughters, showcasing a rich and complex personal history.When did Yul Brynner pass away?Yul Brynner passed away on October 10, 1985, in New York City, due to lung cancer. He left behind a legacy defined by his charm, talent, and incredible contributions to American theater and film.

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