

'America's Got Talent' Star Jane 'Nightbirde' Marczewski Dies After Fierce Battle With Cancer

She fought a good fight and inspired millions along the way.

At the start of her career, Jane Marczewski was just a college student—a girl with a dream of one day making it big—and boy, did she ever.

After a hard-fought battle, the 31-year-old Marczewski, who went by the stage name “Nightbirde,” passed away Sunday, according to several press reports. Her physical journey on this side of eternity may have come to a close, but there will be no final curtain call on the indelible mark she left on the lives of so many people around the globe.

I was a college student at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, alongside Marczewski. Lynchburg is a small city and the “Liberty bubble,” as it’s known, is even smaller. So to us, she was just “Jane”—and *everybody* knew who Jane was: the “Liberty celebrity”—another phrase in the LU vernacular—whose music often filled university hallways and wafted through local, dimly lit coffee shops.

If downtown Lynchburg had a playlist, she was the headliner. But it never got to her head: Marczewski—who was a Christian—was always kind, always eager to make new friends and ever-willing to listen. These are just observations I made from a distance, as she and I weren’t really anything more than acquaintances. She was, though, an open book; her kindness and care were obvious.

Not long after she left Liberty, Marczewski developed breast cancer—a grim diagnosis she was *certain* she’d beat. And she did. She even released a song about it in 2019, “Girl in a

Bubble.”

Then the cancer roared back when she was 29 years old, this time taking up residence in her lungs, liver, lymph nodes, ribs and spine. The prognosis wasn’t good, but she soldiered on, filling social media feeds and prayers with a simple anthem: #SeeJaneWin.

Just days after her diagnosis—and just weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic turned the world upside down—Marczewski’s life was pulled out from under her: The husband whom she described as her “one great love” walked out on their marriage.

That journey—one marked by deep darkness and despair—led, though, to a glimmer of hope: She made it big.

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