

my Times

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CHABAY IS HEARD IN DEBUT RECITAL

Metropolitan Opera Tenor Gives
Varied Program Before He
Appears in 'Carmen'

Ever since the Hungarian tenor Leslie Chabay joined the Metropolitan Opera in the fall of 1948 he has been so busy singing smaller roles that he has hardly had time to give a recital. But late yesterday afternoon at Town Hall, before going to the Metropolitan to sing a smuggler in "Carmen," he managed to make his local recital debut.

It was one of the best song recitals given here this season. One cannot say Mr. Chabay's talents have not been used at the opera house, but certainly his many appearances there—forty-three in the 1947-48 season, for instance—hardly have given him a chance to show how fully gifted an artist he is. It took the recital to do that.

Mr. Chabay sang early German church music, Elizabethan airs, German Lieder, a Mozart aria and Hungarian folk-songs arranged by Bartok and Kodaly. And he did each in a distinguished manner, for he is a master of different styles, besides being a skillful and sensitive singer.

He sings, too, with intense personal conviction. And in these days when one hears so many good interpreters with no voices, or fine voices with no interpretation, it was a real pleasure to listen to an imaginative singer who had adequate resources under such disciplined control that he could sing with his whole heart.

Although Mr. Chabay's voice is not especially large, it is a true tenor, which, if not always beautiful in itself, is nevertheless capable of many beautiful effects. Thus, in the opening "Bringt her dem Herren" of Schuetz, the repeated "Alleluia" conveyed many emotions, from human assurance to ethereal peace.

His Elizabethan songs were Dowland's "Lady If You So Spite Me" and "Say, Love, If Ever Thou Didst Find," both sung in exemplary English with grace and sweetness. His Lieder, all by Schubert, included "Freuh in-straum," whose many moods were all touchingly communicated, and "Die Liebe hat gelogen," which really turned grief into pure song. His Mozart was "Il Mio Tesoro," where the difficult coloratura passages were excellently sustained.

Tibor Kozma, who is a member of the Metropolitan Opera's musical staff, was at the piano. He proved a sensitive artist solicitous to achieve definite effects to complement the work of the tenor. In the Bartok and Kodaly songs he was particularly helpful, and Mr. Chabay, being on native ground, was especially good. One hopes his operatic chores will allow him the time to give more recitals in the future.

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