

His Lieutenant Tells How Caruso Masters a Rôle

Salvatore Fucito, for Five Years the Tenor's Accompanist, Describes Caruso's Methods of Learning

PROBABLY no one—save only the members of the great tenor's immediate family—is happier in a personal way over the continued improvement in the condition of Enrico Caruso than Salvatore Fucito, who for five years has been Caruso's accompanist. The weeks when Caruso was confined to his bed were gloomy and anxious ones for Fucito, but now that the tenor can sit beside the piano again and hum over old and new songs, the man who has assisted him in the mastery of his operatic rôles and who has played for him daily, whether at practice in his apartment, or on concert tours, is jubilant and very thankful.

To work with Caruso has been an un-failing inspiration to the accompanist, and his experience in his co-laborers with the tenor has proved invaluable in other work, he says, such as the coaching and teaching in which he has been engaged and which has occupied him more than ever since the tenor's illness caused a cessation of his work with Caruso.

"One of the remarkable but not generally known powers of Caruso," Mr. Fucito said when he was interviewed one day last week, "is his unusual faculty for concentration. He learns very quickly and he has different ways of learning. Sometimes he has stood at the piano for long periods, learning through singing. At other times he has whistled while I played—whistling while dressing or bathing, with his door open so as to hear the piano. More often he has listened while I played the music over,



Caruso Perfecting Himself in Rôle of "Eleazar" in "La Juive," the Last Rôle He Sang Before His Illness. Salvatore Fucito, His Accompanist, Is at the Piano

perhaps many times.

"As an aid in concentrating, he has turned away from the piano and pasted stamps in an album—he is an enthusiastic collector, you know. On other occasions he has drawn sketches while I played and has told me that this enabled him to listen more attentively and to grasp and retain what he heard more readily.

"CARUSO is always enthusiastic over a new rôle—providing the music of it is worth while. He had worked hard on *André Chénier* and fully expected to make it one of the

triumphs of his career. He was letter-perfect in it, as I knew by my rehearsals with him, and ready to essay it whenever Mr. Gatti-Casazza should say the word. I know it must have grieved him sorely to have been forced to abandon, for the season, the part which he had so recently added to his répertoire.

"The last previous new rôle which I had the honor and joy of seeing take shape at our daily rehearsals was that of *Eleazar* in 'La Juive.' It was a fascinating study, and I consider it a great boon that I should have been permitted to watch him shape this character, in-

tellectually and vocally, in his apartment which seems so far removed, in its home-like appointments, from the calcium and tinsel of the operatic stage.

"Caruso is never fully content with his characterizations or the manner in which he sings a rôle. So conscientious is he, that he is forever going back over such of his parts as are in the current répertoire and striving to improve them by a change of detail, a different inflection, an altered phrase. How long has he practiced at a time? Sometimes as much as two hours; at other times, much shorter periods. He has avoided setting for himself an exact routine.

"ONE of the surprising gifts possessed by Caruso is his ability to assume an entirely different color of voice as the fundamental of his interpretation of one rôle, in distinction from another. It has amazed me to see how he could assume these different colors of voice when he has gone to the record laboratories. I have accompanied him when he made his records and have been deeply impressed by the pains Caruso has taken to give his very best in every record. Some selections he has recorded over and over, many times, until he himself was satisfied, even though the experts in charge of the recording were fully satisfied with some of the recordings made previously.

"As accompanist for Caruso I have learned more than from any other source what beauty of phrasing is—as well as beauty of tone—something I have found invaluable in my coaching and teaching of others."

Mr. Fucito had been a concert pianist in Berlin for some years, when the war ended his activities there. He met Caruso again in Milan and came with him to this country in 1915, becoming an assistant conductor of the Metropolitan, which post he held for two years. He became known to the New York public chiefly through playing the accompaniments for the vocalists appearing at the Sunday night operatic concerts at the Metropolitan. He was with Caruso on the tour which preceded the recent Metropolitan season, as well as on the tenor's visits to Mexico City and Havana. One of Mr. Fucito's songs, "Sultanto a te" has been sung many times by Caruso, and a record of it, not yet issued, was made by him before his illness. O. T.

KITTY BEALE

Metropolitan Opera Company

First New York Recital Aeolian Hall, April 18, 1921

Max Smith, NEW YORK AMERICAN, April 19, 1921:

"Pretty Kitty Beale, heard more than a few times at Sunday night concerts in the Metropolitan, gave a recital all her own yesterday, in Aeolian, singing in tones of sweetly appealing delicacy, a program in Italian, French and English, to display her skill in the delivery of florid melody the dainty soprano contributed David's famous 'Charmant Oiseau.' . . . She succeeded, too, in demonstrating that she could rise to altitudinous heights lightly and accurately."

NEW YORK TRIBUNE, April 19, 1921:

"Miss Beale displayed flexibility and an agreeable quality of tone. . . . Her diction in English, French and Italian was commendably clear."

NEW YORK EVENING JOURNAL, April 19, 1921:

"Her usefulness at the opera it would appear from her singing yesterday might not be inconsiderable. . . . The voice has a well poised resonance and is thus sufficient to her needs in respect to carrying power, she has a good deal of taking personal manner, and a certain appeal of stage appearance. Moreover, the interpretative flair transpires in her singing of a song . . . to

the enumeration may also be added a clear cut enunciation, both to her English and French and Italian."

NEW YORK WORLD, April 19, 1921:

"Miss Beale's voice is best suited to songs of simple mould, and these she interpretes with considerable charm."

Katharine Spaeth, THE EVENING MAIL, April 19, 1921:

"Miss Beale has an easy manner upon the concert stage, her voice is light, flexible, pleasing. . . . She was somehow equally arch through Italian, French and English songs."

NEW YORK TIMES, April 19, 1921:

"She sang with confidence and with purpose of reproducing the spirit of the songs."

EVENING TELEGRAM, April 19, 1921:

"She has a voice of unusual range, fresh and flexible, there is in her voice considerable promise for the future. . . . In her phrasing Miss Beale showed great originality. . . . Her florid numbers included the 'Hymn to the Sun,' from 'Coq d'Or.'"

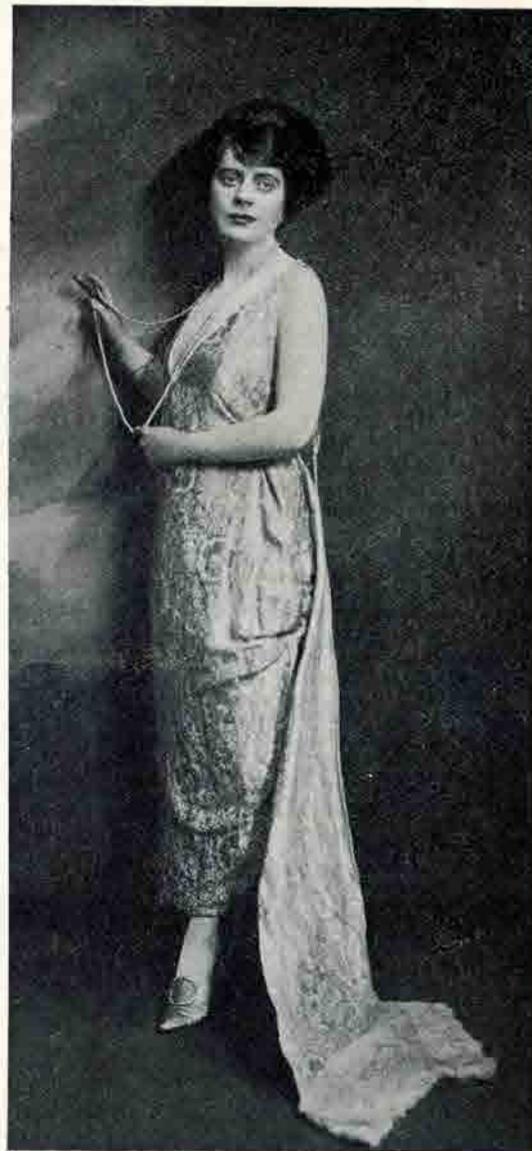


Photo by Mishkin

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