

Tenor sounds like he's headed for stardom

By Mary Jane Doerr
special writer

Opera lovers are always looking for new talent, young rising singers

on their way to stardom. Too often these singers fail to become the bright talent promised so early in their careers.

Tenor Gregory Hopkins is a new

talent just appearing on the horizon. But he is a star not likely to disappear in the morning mist, so to speak. He has already auditioned for a spot on the Michigan Opera Theatre roster and with his talent, we will be seeing him in the future.

He made his first Detroit appearance Wednesday at the Detroit Public Library on the newly formed E. Azalia Hackley Memorial Concert Series. He has a bold, brilliant sound that improved throughout the evening.

HOPKINS HAS high Cs and Ds to spare in his pianissimo, falsetto, and

at full power. His interpretations varied with the changing moods of the many love songs. Moods were created with an evenness of tone.

Hopkins is young and has not totally come into his full capacity as a singer. He elected to sing only one actual aria in his two-hour concert, "La donna e mobile" from "Rigoletto," and that was for one of his encores. His interpretation was simple, straightforward and humorous, if not flippant.

The other numbers he chose for the recital were very operatic in nature. Three Liszt songs were the best of the evening. "A, quand j'adors



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gave Hopkins the opportunity to end in a lovely falsetto. "Enfant, si j'étais roi" gave him the chance to vary his interpretation and "Pace non trovo" was an occasion to expand his Italian tenor sound and build up to his high C.

THROUGHOUT THE evening Hopkins carefully selected numbers to exercise his voice into the mode for the next piece, carefully working his instrument into a new mood and further expansion, especially at the upper ranges.

Most interesting of the evening

was the African Brazilian composer A.C. Gomes' aria "Quando nasceste tu" from "La Schiava," which is highly Verdi in style. Most appealing to this critic was Hopkins' relaxed blues styles in the Spanish poem "Te he llorado" by William Howard Moore.

Hopkins has learned how to use his voice to excite his audience. He has to capacity to hold high notes over beats but is too much of a musician to do that unless singing a free-styled piece such as the Five Spirituals at the end of his program.

Accompanist Sylvia Olden Lee styles her playing as interpretatively as Hopkins, which gives a singleness to their music. She teaches vocal interpretation at Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

Hopkins, also from Philadelphia, has won competitions in two major Italian cities. He will be winning more.

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