

Brian Cheney - Tenor

Review - Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall Recital Debut

Cheney Thrills Audience at Weill Hall – Jerry Hadley Protégé Shines

By Tim Lentz

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New York City March 29, 2008 – “Tenor Brian Cheney, protégé of Metropolitan Opera tenor Jerry Hadley, gave his recital debut at Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall on Saturday evening. Cheney exhibited such control, expressiveness and pure vocal beauty that he certainly had the full house at Weill Recital Hall in the palm of his hand all evening.

He bravely began the program with Liszt's *Tre Sonetti di Petrarca*. His singing was unforced with long beautiful lines and phrases, warm, carefully crafted vowels and wonderful diction. Cheney approached the text with, as his late mentor was quoted as saying, “a complete lack of artifice”. His pianissimo singing was sublime and when power was called for he delivered the goods. He then sang the Songs of Travel by Vaughan Williams. I have never heard the song cycle sung by a tenor with such authority and expressiveness. The second half began with three songs by Reynaldo Hahn and here Cheney's French diction was extraordinary. The program concluded with two sets of American music. There were so many highlights and Cheney's professionalism was on clear display all evening but perhaps the peak of the performance came during the Bernstein song, *Candide's Lament*. For him to have the ability to transfer the emotion of that piece into an astonishing performance of such great musicality was a true testimonial to his work with Hadley. Cheney's affinity for American music was clearly evident and the delightful programming of Marc Blitzstein's *The New Suit* followed by Vincent Youmans' *Without A Song* to conclude the program was world class.

Pianist Catherine Venable was perfectly suited for Cheney and approached everything on the program with beautiful, sculpted phrasing, sensitivity and nuance.”

Business Manager:

Simon Holt

Simon Holt Artists

39 Prentice Williams Road, Stonington, CT 06378

SimonHoltArtists@gmail.com 860-705-3037

www.BrianCheneyTenor.com