

Baritone Ettore Bastianini, Finally Silenced by Cancer

Special to Newsday

Sirmione, Italy—Funeral services are to be held tomorrow for Ettore Bastianini, 43, a leading baritone who sang several seasons at the Met. He died Wednesday from cancer of the vocal cords and epiglottis at a clinic here.

Bastianini suffered from the disease for four years, but refused to make his affliction known to the public. Until his final appearance in 1965 at the New York Metropolitan Opera, Bastianini continued to sing after the condition was discovered and gave his last performance with a paralyzed diaphragm and able to use just one of his vocal cords.

His singing, even with his severe and secret handicap, almost always received enthusiastic reviews. Before joining the Met in 1953, Bastianini appeared widely in Italy, including a stint at La Scala of Milan where he performed in "La Traviata" with Maria Callas. His roles at the Met included Count di Luna in "Il Trovatore," Gerard in "Andrea Chenier" and his final performance as Rodrigo in Verdi's "Don Carlo."

He matched his courage on the stage with feats of daring during World War II. As an 18-year-old mechanic in the Italian Air Force, stationed in Africa, Bastianini and some friends used only a sketchy knowledge of flying to steal a plane and pilot it back to Italy when they heard Italy was losing the war. He also took part in the Palio, a traditional horse

race run on cobblestones in the Siena village square with almost no rules except survival of the fittest.

Bastianini and his wife were separated, and she and a son survive. The funeral service tomorrow is planned in Siena.

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