

Björling on *Pristine Audio* and *Immortal Performances*

By Kristian Krogholm

There are a few record companies left that continue to restore and release old archive recordings in high quality sound. Richard Caniell's *Immortal Performances* in Canada is one. I strongly recommend *Roméo et Juliette* (IPCD 1003-2) and Verdi *Requiem* (IPCD 1073-2) and a NEW release is due in April/May 2019 (IPCD 1110-2 *Manon Lescaut* 1959 + bonus concert recordings).

Pristine Audio in France is another. Andrew Rose is the man who performs most of the miracle work there but also Mark Obert-Thorn and Ward Marston have delivered brilliant restorations for *Pristine*. I advise everyone interested to check out their website: pristineclassical.com.

There are some really groundbreaking issues of recordings of yore by Furtwängler, Klemperer, Toscanini, Rachmaninov etc. which bring out every detail of those old sources in the most invigorating way. *Pristine* has offered several good transfers also of Björling recordings, among which the 1946 "Cantique de Noël" is really top notch. It is simply the clearest and most dynamic Björling recording made before the introduction of the mono tape. Among the CD-sets I recommend *Un ballo in maschera* (PACO 140), the 1957 Sibelius Memorial Concert (PASC 158), *Aida* (PACO 127) and Verdi *Requiem* (038).

In two recordings, *Il trovatore* 1941 (PACO 134) and *Rigoletto* (PACO 143) *Pristine* — in my opinion — has added too much bass, making Jussi's voice sound warmer and fuller, but also darker, slightly older and less dynamic. The addition of bass often makes Jussi sound older and at times muscular. RCA has contributed often to that understanding. The 1958 Carnegie Hall set is one example.

Both *Immortal Performances* and *Pristine Audio* strive towards a natural sound, often with great dynamics. They are always looking for supreme sources. For the upcoming release of the Stockholm *Manon Lescaut*, Richard Caniell has through the kindness of Stefan Johansson had access to the very best source. Also Harald Henrysson and the Jussi Björling Museum have made contributions. If you love great singing you have to add this CD to your collection! ■

Continue the Song ...

Help secure the artistic and financial strength of the **Jussi Björling Society-USA** for decades to come. When planning your financial future, please consider making a gift to help us preserve and promote the legacy of this supreme artist for the next generations.

One of the simplest ways to remember JBS-USA in your estate plans is through your will. You may specify that your gift be used in general support of the Society, or for a Special Projects fund. Our Tax Identification 501(c)(3) Number is 36-4227371.

We invite you to remember JBS-USA with this simple, powerful gift, a beautiful song for the future!



Merry Widow Jacket Donated to JBS

The Board of Directors is happy to announce the donation of an elegant, glamorous jacket, made in the costume shops of the Metropolitan Opera, and worn by Susan Graham in the Met production of *The Merry Widow*. The jacket is beautifully made, in hues of blue and purple, with exquisite beadwork on the lapels and flowing cuffs, and Susan Graham's name and Met label still attached to the lining. The jacket is absolutely gorgeous, and is suitable for wearing or framing!

This valuable gift comes from our long-time friend and Lifetime Member Carol Pozefsky, who purchased it through the Met Opera Gift Shop, and wants it to be used as a fundraising item for the Society. We greatly appreciate her generous gift! The Board is discussing several options, including offering it as an auction item at the next conference, or simply as an online sale. We will keep you informed! Thank you Carol! ■