

Editor's comments



Walter B. Rudolph welcomes Terry L. Williams as the new JBS-USA President, Washington, DC, November 21st, 2015

This Journal is the culmination of my two terms as President of JBS-USA. While I'm only beginning to become acquainted with you, I'm grateful for the chance and rewards of working with a dedicated Board of Directors, and immersing myself in the chronicle of Jussi Björling.

For me, the highlight of the past JBS year was the Salt Lake City Conference. But much has happened since then, so highlights of this edition include:

- Presentations from the June Salt Lake City Conference.
- One of our most dedicated and generous members, Enrique Gilardoni, who recently celebrated his 80th birthday.
- Introducing the new President of JBS-USA, Terry L. Williams from Kansas City, MO, elected at the November Board Meeting in Washington, D.C.
- The passing of three formidable Jussiphiles, Don Quinn, Lars Hemmingsson and Robert Tuggle.
- The discovery and CD release of the 1959 Copenhagen Recital by Jussi Björling.

But there is far more inside, including additional submissions by Göran Forsling, Harald Henrysson, and Tom Hines.

Mark Harris (Chantilly, Virginia) became the newest member of the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting in November. An avid Jussiphile, I knew Mark during his college years—he brings gusto and passion *deluxe!*

The legacy of the man and artist Jussi Björling continues to bewitch us, and all who cross his path. May we rise above our own infatuations and make it a priority to pass on that which he left us, but also what he is no longer able to personally prolong.

Thank you for the generosity, confidence and support you have so liberally given over the past four years, and those previous years, which are now adding up to nearly 20 years since JBS-USA was founded. Let us look to that anniversary to continue the Jussi Björling Celebration that defines *The Jussi Björling Society-USA*.

—Walter B. Rudolph

PS: In July and November we will recognize 80th birthdays of two more Jussiphiles.

Greetings from your new President



Terry L. Williams, JBS-USA President

By Terry L. Williams

I wish you a very happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year! By the time you read this we will be nearly two months into 2016.

In the July 2015 Newsletter you learned how I came to be a part of the Jussi Björling Society - USA. When I joined in 2001, Dan Shea was president. I attended my very first Conference in St. Peter, Minnesota, where at the conclusion as I was about to head home, I asked Dan and Mickey Dove to let me know if there were some way I could be of service to the Society. The next thing I know, I am being asked to serve as General Counsel. I accepted without hesitation.

Dan was succeeded as president by Susan Flaster and then Walter Rudolph. Now in 2016, I become the fourth president of the Society. Dan and Sue and Wally served with distinction, their unique styles and skills considerably benefitting the Society and its members. Under their leadership, we enjoyed many successful conferences both in the United States and Sweden; quite

a number of CDs were produced and made available exclusively to members of the Society; and our bi-annual Newsletters and annual Journals always informed, enlightened, and entertained. All of this effort has contributed to the continued fulfillment of the Society's mission to honor and perpetuate the legacy of our tenor.

When Wally invited me to serve on the Board of Directors at the end of the 2015 Salt Lake City Conference, he also asked if I would agree to succeed him as president at the conclusion of his term. I was honored and delighted to accept both offers.

So, what may we expect a Terry Williams presidency to look like? First and foremost, the Society must continue to flourish and grow. How does it do that? Speaking globally, we perpetuate the magnificent work of my predecessors by continuing to schedule conferences, distribute new CD material, publish our newsletters and journals, and expand our membership. No matter how capable the president, this work would be very difficult to accomplish without the wonderful support of our dedicated Board of Directors, Advisory Board, and you, our loyal members. Each generously contributes time, talent, and treasure helping to assure the prosperity of our Society.

By the time you read this message, the new CD of the previously unreleased recording from the 1959 recital in Copenhagen will be available. (See the information box on page 14 and order form insert for more details.) We were privileged to hear a few selections at the Board meeting in November. Jussi is at the top of his game. The sound quality is exemplary. Brian Kellow, the Features Editor of *Opera News*, has committed to discussing it in his column. You are going to want a copy for your collection. Are there more of these gems waiting to be discovered? We do not know but are most hopeful. You can help be our eyes and ears by alerting us to any information you

receive about newly discovered, previously unreleased audio or video material featuring Jussi.

We are beginning to discuss plans for a 20th anniversary conference to be held in 2018. Perhaps in Sweden? Perhaps a U.S. location? More about that as we have information to share. We also are discussing the possibility of a "mini" conference in 2017. We will keep you posted. You are welcome to share with me your location preferences and topic suggestions for either conference.

We are working to update our website to attract a wider audience by making it more visually appealing and user friendly. In addition, we are seeking to expand our use of social media. We want to maximize the opportunities available on YouTube to share the legacy of Jussi Björling via Facebook and other venues.

We seek to expand our membership, in part, by attracting music students through outreach efforts to conservatories and music schools throughout the country. Now that our Newsletters and Journals have been digitized we are making copies available to these schools for study and research.

As much as we welcome music students to our membership, and as much as I want every young voice student exposed to the singing of our tenor, as was I, we need to cast our net in a wider arc if we are to grow and continue to thrive. How do we accomplish that goal? The answer: we all do that by our actions.

Each of you, our loyal members, is an Ambassador for the Jussi Björling Society - USA. Each of you is surrounded by potential new members. You know people who love operatic singing. Many of them know and love the singing of Jussi Björling, but are not aware of our Society. You can create that awareness. You can introduce those unfamiliar with Jussi's singing to some of his many recordings. You can invite your friends and associates to join the Society.

Last summer, I was engaged in a con-

versation on Facebook with someone, who, it turned out, is a big fan of Jussi. He was not aware of the Society. I invited him to join. He did. We could double our membership in short order if everyone recruited just one new member. Wouldn't it be wonderful if by the time of our twentieth anniversary conference we were 400 or more strong? But, it is not just about swelling our numbers, it is also about replacing members we lose.

The stark reality is that we are losing long time, faithful members. For some, their advanced age prohibits continued active membership. Others are dying. The number of people who actually saw Jussi live is dwindling. You will read an article on page 40 about founding member, Donald J. Quinn, who died in 2014. He saw Jussi live on 2 occasions. Don is but one example of people we are losing. There are many others. However, there still are prospective members who saw Jussi live. Perhaps some of them are in your circle of friends and acquaintances. How wonderful it would be to have as many of them as members as is possible. How wonderful to have them share their "live Jussi" experiences in future Newsletters and Journals.

I am honored to be serving as your President. I am privileged to have such capable, dedicated Board and Advisory Directors with whom to work. Above all, the Society is blessed to enjoy your continued loyal support that enables it to thrive and flourish. Together, we will make it possible for an unknown successor of mine to write in a future Journal that plans are underway to celebrate the Society's 50th Anniversary. Let's all commit to achieving that dream. ■