

# Future Travel Plans by Björling Societies Members, 2005-2006

We hope that if you're a member of the Scandinavian, UK, or US chapter of a Jussi Björling Society, you'll consider joining our programs at the **Los Angeles Opera on February 3, 2005**, as described on p. 2 of this Newsletter. That event involves an afternoon of discussions about opera, Jussi, and other tenors, followed by a very promising performance of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* at the opera house, with two superb new stars, Villazón and Netrebko. Further, there will be fellowship and tourism during the days before and after the opera, during the whole period February 2-4.

Even though there seem to be deadlines for obtaining opera tickets and hotel rooms, we may well be able to circumvent these right up until the last days of January, so if you're interested in joining that trip by all means either telephone your Editor, Dan Shea, in the US at +608-215-0757, or email him at dshea@chorus.net, to discuss ticket availability and travel arrangements.

What about other trips? We expect to offer a week-long trip to **Finland's Savonlinna Opera Festival in mid-July, 2006**, preceded by a week in **Dalarna, Sweden**, at **music festivals there** (Musik vid Siljan, and Dalhalla). Also a big attraction for most of us is Borlänge, close to the Lake Siljan location of the music festival and the home of Jussi Björling's Museum and its friendly host, Harald Henrysson.

A small group of us will visit the same places in July 2005, in order to

plan for the 2006 trip. You may want to join that planning-group, which we expect to be especially individualistic (our tours are never rules-bound, are based on allowing you the freedom to make your own choices). If interested, call or email Dan, as above. (After March 15, 2005, you can telephone him at +608-836-6911.)

And several members have expressed a wish for an **opera-cruise**, probably in the Caribbean in early winter 2006, with lectures about opera and singers as well as audio and visual recordings of performances. There also would be other music as well: young opera singers and their accompanists, and jazz. We're thinking in terms of arranging a new, medium-sized boat belonging to the Holland-America Lines, typically leaving from a Florida port. We'll be making plans for this trip in autumn 2005, by all means let us know if such a trip interests you. In the meantime, you could check the website **cruisecafe.com** for ideas.



One of the highpoints of the Congress's first day, at the Gold Foyer of the Opera House, occurred after Stefan Johansson's lecture—he turned over his microphone to Stockholm music-critic Carl-Gunnar Åhlén, who had a surprise recording whose existence was totally unknown: 8 minutes from the first act of Faust on January 4, 1936, Jussi singing with Joel Berglund. The sound was excellent and the singing was especially sub-

lime when Mephisto shows Faust a vision of Marguerite, Jussi sings "O Merveille!" in a truly marvelous way.

The December issue of *Gramophone Magazine* may well be available in bookstores well beyond December, and has some good articles on upcoming singers, especially young Peruvian tenor Juan Diego Floréz. Also of special interest is an article on "who's the greatest tenor?" in which Jussi's reputation shines as brightly as ever, as well as John Steane's article on the Björling Museum and the Societies's Congress last September, and the Björling Museum in Borlänge. Björling's reputation seems consistently well-acknowledged, right to present day!

The article on the Björling Museum in that issue pronounces it "the best" of all museums devoted to classical singers! Congratulations to Harald Henrysson for successfully carrying out his vision for the museum, and for receiving the fine recognition that John Steane and other Congress-members gave enthusiastically.

Jürgen Kesting at the Music Museum in Stockholm.

