

Here's a brief example of how pirating still can cause harm even in Europe and with music that was recorded over 50 years ago: Back in 2001, Bluebell issued a complete version of Gounod's opera *Roméo et Juliette* from 1940 with Jussi in wonderful form, quite an event for lots of us. This was a first-class production based on the original recording by Sveriges Radio, Bluebell having been granted the rights to that recorded material, which still required expensive processing. Fine and dandy: we got a first-class production of this beautiful *Roméo* from 1940.

BUT there's a problem here. A British company called Encore released a complete *Roméo* also, the very same 1940 broadcast from the Royal Swedish Opera, and it was sold at bargain prices in the US, \$8 for a 2-disk set, and certainly comparably cheap elsewhere. Well of course it was cheap: it was simply copied directly from the Bluebell edition and sold without any sort of discussion of the musical forces involved, just the names of four of the twelve singers and those wretchedly misspelled. There was a clash of lawyers this spring, and what may be a satisfactory resolution, with the US distributor at least pulling those CDs from its shelves. We think.

Lessons here? Well, Björling still sells: essentially every single one of his important recordings is still in print. Certain of those recordings are off the charts, here's a great example: the duet from Bizet's "The pearl fishers" as recorded by Björling and Merrill in 1951. In the US it's still available from its present owners SonyBMG. But world-wide there are currently over 50 issues on dozens of labels featuring that duet, according to a count that Harald made recently!

You can get this duet with all sorts of other music, and in all sorts of quality – some of it is so badly done, you wonder what's the fuss, almost: but still enough comes through to persuade, even on the worst versions that we've heard to date. Again, caveat emptor!

4. The hunt for lost broadcast material in good sound, at places like the Library of Congress.

This is a huge task but very little new has been accomplished during 2007 aside from the points mentioned above about the 1947 Met *Trovatore*, the coming new Bluebell CD, and Greg's CD. We have renewed our contacts with the Idabelle Firestone Library, the Bell Telephone archive, VAI, the Nostalgia Company, the Library of Congress, the NY Public Library archives of sound and other organizations. Especially useful and enjoyable was a January visit to NYC to hear Seth Winner in two lectures about the Toscanini archive, and the opportunity to consult with him about practicalities: What procedures are likely to be effective, and whom to work with?

In the meantime, it's clear e.g. that JBS-USA has access to Voice of Firestone material that the Firestone Library lacks, so we can consider offering to help fill some gaps in their collection. That done, it's possible that a practical way to secure rights to publish that material may emerge from their institutional position. We have much to learn!

In the meantime, you could get a look into this vast and complicated world by googling a few key names: try *seth b. winner sound studios* and *marstonrecords.com* just to get started!