

Newsletter

of the Jussi Björling Societies of the USA & UK

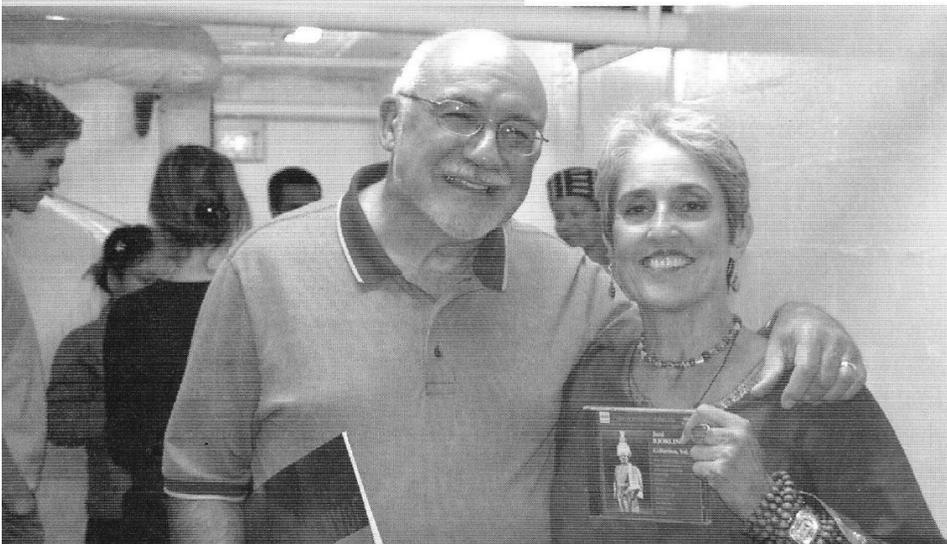
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We Meet an Honorary Advisor: Joan Baez in South Carolina

By Sue Flaster

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Dan Shea and Joan Baez at the Barrymore Theater in Madison, WI; Oct. 13, 2005

One of the most accomplished folksingers of the 1960s, Joan Baez has influenced nearly every aspect of popular music throughout a career that is still going strong.

She is well known for lending her pristine soprano voice to the service of political activism, notably in the areas of nonviolence, civil and human rights and, in more recent years, the environment. She is best known for her hits “There But For Fortune,” “Diamonds & Rust” and “The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down,” and to a lesser extent,

“Silver Dagger” and “Love Is Just A Four Letter Word.”

Her connection to the music of Jussi Björling dates back to early childhood; her connection to the Scandinavian and US JB Societies is rather more recent. In response to an invitation from Hans Thunström to be guest of honor at the Stockholm Congress, Ms. Baez wrote (on May 6, 2004):

“It is true that I have fallen in love with Björling, and it is for the second time. The first was when I was 8 years old. My mother played him when she was doing the housework, and I always listened. Whenever “Salut, demeure” came on she would stop what ever she was doing and close her eyes. When the transition of “Oui, c’est là, oui, c’est là ...” played, she would give a deep sigh, as she does today. And so do I.”

Unfortunately, Joan was ultimately unable to attend the Congress, but she later accepted Dan Shea’s invitation to be an honorary advisor to the JBS-USA.

On her current, very long, tour, Joan visited Charleston, SC, and sang at the Charleston Music Hall on April 6th. She was kind enough to offer tickets and backstage passes, and I accepted enthusiastically—and made sure to

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