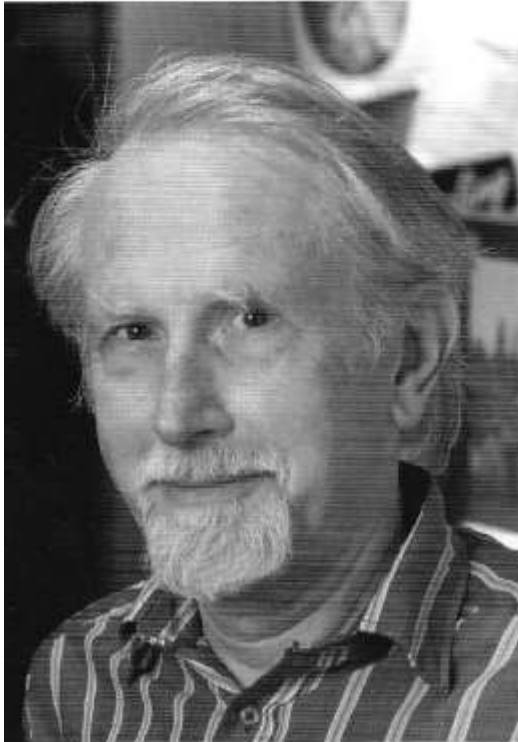


New CD and DVD issues with Jussi Björling 2012-13

by Harald Henrysson



Harald Henrysson

An important 2012 issue was "Jussi Björling in Concert: Finland & the U.S.A (Bluebell ABCD 116)." The 2-CD set includes two never before issued Finnish concerts, Jussi's 1955 New Orleans concert and several American radio recordings not heard earlier in such good sound, now restored by Seth Winner. This issue concludes the long series of important Jussi Björling issues on Bluebell.

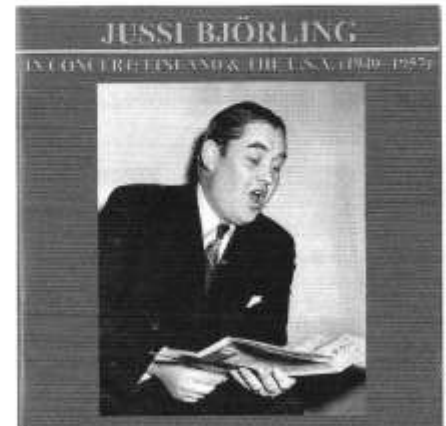
In April, the largest Björling issue of the year was released in Sweden, "Jussi Björling Collection (8.101101)" on 11 CDs from Naxos, all transferred by Stefan Lindström. The 8 first CDs had already been released in Sweden, the first seven also internationally.

CDs 9-10 contain Jussi's last studio recordings, except for the complete operas, from which excerpts are presented on the bonus CD 11. The notes, written by me, are only in Swedish, but an international edition with the notes in English was originally supposed to appear before last Christmas. I do not know—nor does Naxos Sweden—why it has been delayed or when it might appear. EMI's 2-CD compilation "The Very Best of Jussi Björling," originally issued in 2003, was reissued in 2012 with a new cover, together with other CDs in the series (6 78997 2).

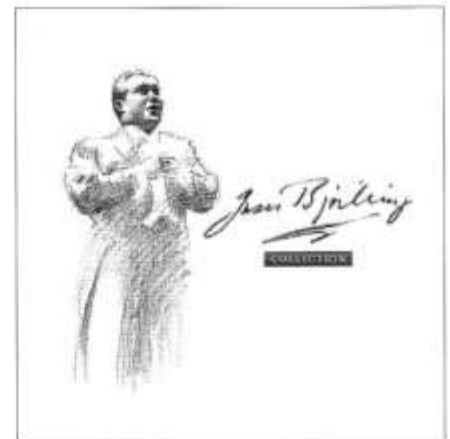
The Björling year 2013 began in January with a 10-CD box from Membran Music in Germany, on their Documents label: "Jussi Björling: The Swedish Caruso (600034; the title was already used by Legato and EMI!)." Membran earlier issued a 4-CD Jussi box on their Artone label and 10-CD boxes on Documents with several great singers closely connected with him. Such issues, devoted to the sopranos Tebaldi, de los Angeles and Nilsson, therefore also include excerpts from his recordings. In 2012, two great American baritones followed: "Robert Merrill: His Opera, Cinema and Musical Highlights (600002)"—it has no less than 14 tracks with Jussi—and "Leonard Warren: Triumph and Death With Verdi (600013)."

In 2012 Membran also reissued the Nilsson/Björling *Turandot* (Documents 233480). Jussi's *Tosca* was taken over by Urania (WS 121170). The British label Regis produced boxes with "The Great Operas" by Puccini (RRC 9011, 13 CDs) viz. Verdi (RRC 9012, 18 CDs). The former includes Jussi's *Bohème*, the latter his *Trovatore*.

Opera Depot in New York added the live 1939 *Traviata* (OD 10762-2) to their



Jussi Björling in Concert: Finland & the U.S.A. (1940-1957)



Jussi Björling Collection - 11 CDs from Naxos

earlier two Jussi issues, and the famous 1940 Toscanini recording of Verdi's *Requiem* has been released in a new transfer by Music & Arts (CD-1269).

In the DVD format, two issues are of interest. The 2011 Swedish documentary by Torbjörn Lindqvist, "Jussi I våra hjärtan," which was shown in Swedish digital cinemas and issued on DVD the same year, was

released in 2012 in a version with English subtitles as “Jussi Björling: He sang with a tear in his voice,” first in PAL and now also in NTSC. This documentary should not be confused with “Sagan om Jussi Björling,” which was shown on Swedish TV and also to those who attended the St. Peter conference. Lindqvist’s video includes interviews with Ann-Charlotte, Anders and Lars Björling, Henrik Engelbrecht (Copenhagen Tivoli), Kjerstin Dellert, Kerstin Meyer, Aase Nordmo-Løvberg and myself. Of course, there are also several clips from Jussi recordings.

The other DVD of interest is the 1953 film “Resan till dej,” including the scene where Jussi appears on a radio program singing the Aida aria and “Till havs.” This is only available in PAL format and without subtitles.

Further details about these issues and many others, which include one or more Jussi recordings, will be found in my list of “Björling’s known recordings and their CD and DVD issues” on the Björling Museum’s website, after a planned revision in March. Today, many of these issues are also downloadable as MP3 files on the web, and there are issues exclusively for download, but I do not intend to register those. My listing only concerns the physical formats, and in the future I hope to include the analog ones. In addition to the Jussi issues, it is natural to mention the first CD devoted to his brother Gösta, which was produced last year—Gösta’s 100th anniversary—by Lars Hemmingsson, honorary president of the Scandinavian JB Society. It includes several beautifully performed songs, excerpts from a Stockholm *Rigoletto* performance and also tracks where Olle, Karl and Rolf Björling can be heard. ■



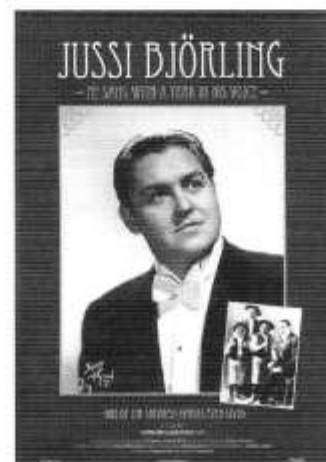
The Very Best of Jussi Björling – EMI



Jussi Björling – The Swedish Caruso – Membran



Gösta Björling – CD



Jussi Björling – He Sang with a Tear in his Voice – DVD



Resan till dej – Swedish movie

Editor’s note: A member benefit is access to the Bluebell 2 CD set, the Gösta Björling CD and the Lindqvist documentary DVD, which are otherwise unavailable in the USA. Place your orders on the <http://jussibjorlingsociety.org> website, or you may order directly with check to the Jussi Björling Society – USA, in care of:
 Dr. Dan Shea
 3337 Conservancy Lane
 Middleton, WI 53562