

2009 Jussi Björling Conference

By Sue Flaster

The Board of the Jussi Björling Society-USA is happy to announce a Jussi Björling conference to be held in beautiful Charleston, South Carolina, May 15, 16 and 17 of 2009. Quite a bit of time has passed since our big gathering in Sweden, and the important year of 2011 is still a long way off. Don't miss this opportunity to see old friends, make new ones, hear wonderful music and learn a bit more about our tenor and his fellow musical Swedes.

We will kick off with a dinner cruise in the harbor, carriage tours through the wonderful historic district, talks on cultural life in Charleston before the Civil War and Swedes who were active in that cultural life, JB's career in the Royal Opera, and his tours in the American South and Cuba, as well as two concerts and a closing dinner.

As of this writing, we look forward to hearing tenor Mats Carlsson (whom several of us heard last Summer in Voxna, and whom the Swedish Society is sponsoring at a Spring concert. He is also the first recipient of the JB Sällskapet prize); bass-baritone John-Erik Eleby, a longtime member of the Society and an active performer at the Royal Opera; local soprano (and Met national finalist) Deanna McBroom; as well as speakers Stefan Johansson, Head of Dramaturgy at the Royal Opera; Nic Butler, local historian in Charleston and Curator Harald Henrysson. Other speakers are still being pursued, and we expect a visit from Joe Riley, mayor of Charleston for the last 32 years!

Charleston is one of the oldest cities in the US. It has a carefully preserved historic district, and—perhaps more

important—a long tradition of tolerance and respect for learning and the arts. The city itself sits on a peninsula between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers (both named for Lord Ashley Cooper, an early governor) and is wonderfully walkable and easy to navigate. As a city, Charleston is known for a staggering number of churches, an equally amazing number of excellent restaurants and a thriving container port.

The conference takes place on the weekend between the College of

Charleston graduation and the beginning of the Spoleto and Piccolo Spoleto Festivals, for anyone interested in those wonderful Festivals.

I am now working on hotel and other lodging options, and look forward to reporting on those quite soon in a separate mailing. ■

Tentative schedule: Charleston, SC Conference, May 15-17, 2009

Friday, May 15

7:00-9:30 pm dinner cruise in Charleston harbor

Saturday, May 16

Visit to Farmers' Market

10:00 am carriage tours arranged

1:00 to 4:00 pm, Charleston County Library auditorium

- Nic Butler, Ph.D, local historian: musical/cultural life in antebellum Charleston
- Harald Henrysson, Curator, the Jussi Björling Museum: Swedish musicians and other cultural figures in Charleston
- Stefan Johansson, Chief Dramaturg, Kungliga Operan: the cultural milieu from which these women issued and JB at the Opera

8:00 pm concert, College of Charleston recital hall: Mats Carlsson, John Erik Eleby, Deanna McBroom, Robin Zemp, piano

Sunday, May 17

10:00 am, College of Charleston

- Harald Henrysson, "Jussi in the South," the 1950's in the USA

2:00 pm, concert, College of Charleston recital hall, Deanna McBroom, Mats Carlsson,

- John Erik Eleby, Lars Björling, Robin Zemp, piano

6:00 closing dinner