

# Newsletter

of the Jussi Björling Societies of the USA & UK

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## Phyllis Josell Meets JBS-USA Honorary Advisor Rolando Villazón



Phyllis Josell greets Rolando Villazon

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Rolando Villazón is internationally recognized as one of the leading lyric tenors of our day and has been acclaimed for performances at leading theaters across the world. I first heard him on February 3, 2005, when the Jussi Björling Society sponsored a “mini-conference” at the Los Angeles Opera’s Chandler Pavilion: Rolando was due to sing Roméo that night to Anna Netrebko’s Juliette, and administration officials at Plácido Domingo’s LA Opera had been very supportive of JBS’s inquiry about our bringing a group of about 25 members

to the performance. Not only were we given excellent seats for the performance, but LA Opera provided a room and sound equipment at the opera house for a JBS program during the day, and they even invited members of their Opera League support group to join us!

The program that afternoon consisted of talks and music chosen by JBS Advisors Walter Rudolph and Don Goldberg: The topic was mainly tenors, with special attention to Björling and Domingo as Roméo.

Needless to say, the performance of *Roméo et Juliette* was brilliant: both stars were in marvelous form and we had a perfect introduction to these two stars, at that time both quickly becoming well-established in Europe but not yet so well known in the US.

Thus I was happy to get a ticket for one of Rolando’s performances as Des Grieux in Massenet’s *Manon* in October 2006, paired again with Anna Netrebko and Plácido Domingo conducting. The reviews had been raves, here’s a sample: “Villazón’s voice is rich, powerful and elegant. Together they are everything opera, romantic

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