

# Editors' note

In this issue, you'll find an appreciation of Hjördis Schymberg who died recently at 99 and had so much to do with the professional life of Jussi Björling. The informative obituary note by Stefan Johansson, Head of Dramaturgy at the Royal Opera, is on p. 5.

We are also delighted to have Phyllis Josell's personal (and less personal) notes about honorary advisor Rolando Villazón, with a terrific picture. Again, the goal is to bring you news by and about our members, and we hope you'll consider contributing your ideas.

The treasurer of the Scandinavian Björling Society, Per Bäckström, gives us his impression of the 2008 Voxna concert, with photos from Hans Thunström.

Roger Horn has contributed some

ideas on musicians, professional and amateur, that lead him to an interesting insight on the integrity of Jussi Björling's own life-long career in music.

You will read more news about our Charleston Conference coming in May, along with costs and a request for deposits. And there IS news to be read!

There are more CD reviews here, both of new and not-so-new releases. The Society will continue to do its best to make such CDs available to members, even when they are not in general commerce in the US.

And on the subject of membership, this is the last time we will be sending a publication to every person on the mailing lists regardless of whether that person is a current member of the Society or not. Membership in the Soci-

ety is counted on a calendar year basis (although anything after November 1 is counted toward the next calendar year, so when you rejoin now, you're a member through 2009), and the annual membership donation is \$35. If you have not rejoined, please do it. We want you, we need you, and there's really no reason for us to exist without you. Please send your check to Greg Fitzmaurice, 4208 Swarthmore Road, Durham, NC 27707.

Membership is particularly important now, with the Charleston Conference coming up, and the important anniversary year of 2010 and the centennial in 2011. You will WANT to know what's going on, you will. ■

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*Villazon continued from page 1*

opera, anyway, is supposed to be."

Anticipating a superb performance, I signed up at the stage door entrance to visit Mr. Villazón after the opera, as a member of the Jussi Björling Society, and was granted permission to return. My personal experience in meeting Mr. Villazón was most enjoyable and never to be forgotten! It was an interesting backstage, a central open area leading to two main dressing rooms. Mr. Domingo was there and stood in the center area speaking with a number of us, and was very informative and gracious. Mr. Villazón's dressing room was quite large with a couch inside. He invited me to sit with him and we chatted, during which time I gave him the latest copy of the JBS Journal and

asked if he would honor the Jussi Björling Society by becoming an Honorary Advisor. He enthusiastically agreed and of course expressed admiration for the great Jussi.

During this time, there was a young lady with two friends taking pictures. When the friends were urging her to leave, she said to please wait because she wanted to take a picture of me with Villazón. He was so cooperative, and did pose for a picture with me, as did Mr. Domingo. It was the most social and memorable backstage experience in my many years of being an "opera groupie"! ■

– Phyllis Josell is a longtime member of JBS-USA with a "bi-coastal" purview of

*opera. She is an active supporter of opera in the New York City area and now lives in Laguna Woods, CA, where she attends opera in southern California.*