

## Notes from the President

by Walter B. Rudolph

As February turns to March, March always brings to mind Jussi Björling singing "Diamonds on the March Snow" (Sibelius: "Demanten på marssnön") and thoughts of Spring. With these ideas we greet each of you Jussiphiles. Fulfill your fancy with the 2014 Journal and all of the news, reviews and memories of Jussi Björling.

The 200th anniversary of the birth of Giuseppe Verdi has spawned a new well-spring of reissued recordings. How fortunate for lovers of the art of singing! That Richard Wagner's 200th also occurred in 2013 was further benefit, even if you don't subscribe to the Teutonic tales of the German *Meister*. The competitive spirit that has always existed between the two composers has resulted in an effort to "one-up" the other. Sony's relationship with the Metropolitan Opera has been reissuing performances for several years—each one totally legal and often in better sound than any of the previous editions. In recent years we have begun to see multiple efforts in restoration of Met (and other) performances.

So as you read this issue, you will find detailed reviews on Jussi Björling's December 14, 1940 *Un ballo in maschera* and the remastered RCA *Aida*, largely recognized around the world as one of the cherished *Aida* recordings. They say 'good begets more good,' so let's watch for what more the future holds.

Dwelling on the young Jussi (and his brothers, Olle and Gösta), Harald Henrysson's indefatigable research presents us with the results of the last tour—now without the guidance of father David (after his death). The difficulties, harrowing experiences and heartbreak in Värmland are continued rev-

elation into the personality and character of Jussi Björling, and the Sweden that defined him and his brothers from their youth.

Many will acknowledge that Enrico Caruso and Jussi Björling crown the tenorial *Fach* of the 20th century. Geirr Oppi and Carl Friedner of the Scandinavian Society express their stance on the pair in two articles which will surely spark your own additional opinions.

Welcome and better acquaint yourself with three new Honorary Advisory Board Members: Irene Dalis, Joseph Calleja and Richard England. Each with a distinct connection to Jussi Björling.

Dan Shea has been extra busy working toward a Chicago gathering for us in 2015. He and I will be pursuing specifics this Spring, so wait and watch for more information and details.

Also make note that the splendid webpage of the Jussi Björling Sällskapet is now available in English (<http://www.jussibjorlingsallskapet.com/>). (See inside back cover)

We thank you for your annual contributions. If you have not yet contributed for 2014, please use the enclosed membership form. Your participation and generosity sustains the Jussi Björling Society-USA.

And now with Verdi comfortably listening to his remastered *Aida* and *Ballo*, and Jussi Björling melting the diamonds in the March snow, sit back and enjoy the Journal.

Walter B. Rudolph, President



Jussi and Bongo in the "March" snow

PS 1: The idea of having a "letters to the editor" section has been suggested. These would be definitely considered, with the understanding that the content would need to be more timeless than something "of-the-moment." Remember we publish only 3 times a year.

PS 2: Book Alert: Harald Henrysson informs us that an updated, printed version of parts of his Jussi Björling *Phonography* may become available. See more details on p. 16.

PS 3: *Mille grazie* to the the board especially to Sue Flaster and Dan Shea for assistance with this issue.

