

Memorials at Voxna: We look back (and ahead)

by Sue Flaster

For the last eight years, Stefan Olmårs has produced events with terrific organization and splendid music and lectures, and this year's mid-July gathering in Hälsingland upheld his very high standards while reaching for a wider focus.

Although the theme of these Summer get-togethers is remembering Jussi and his forefathers, the scope was broadened this year to include the Lindroos family, past and present, an exciting young tenor and an enthusiastic talk about Beniamino Gigli.

Peter Lindroos was an immensely talented Finnish tenor who died in an automobile accident in 2003. He was represented at Voxna by Petri Lindroos, his well-known bass son, daughter Sofia—violinist and soprano—and tenor-grandson Kristian (Petri's son) recently accepted into the Finnish music academy after an earlier venture into heavy-metal guitar. Kristian is all of 19 and has a promising and expressive voice. I believe he is also the tallest tenor I've ever seen. Physically, he and his basso father seem amazingly alike.

Margareta Hallin again joined us, proving again that the ability to share music is something far beyond the simple physical act of singing (or playing). As she moves up in age, Hallin continues to find convincing and moving expressions of what she feels. Hallin was accompanied by Sofia Lindroos in some charming Swedish songs with texts by Emil Hagström set to music by Thorstein Bergman—material she was also performing in Stockholm in August.

Danish tenor David Danholt was another surprise: he's young, charming

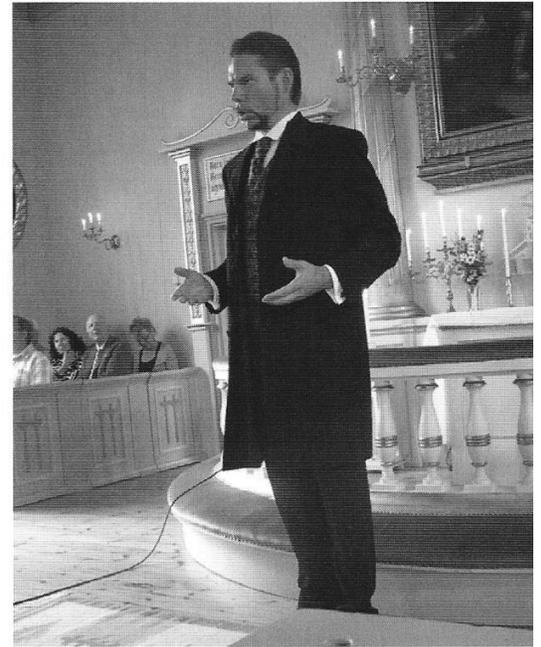


Tenor David Danholt

and attractive, and he can SING. Danholt can also play the accordion, as he accompanied himself on it for his encore of "O sole mio."

After dinner, Petri Lindroos made a graceful presentation on his father's career. The high point was a video of the "Guardate, pazzo son" departure scene from *Manon Lescaut*, in which he was clearly a convincing actor as well as a singer of dramatic authority.

The following morning, Torsten Brander of the Finnish Gigli Society, shared his particular enthusiasm for Gigli, playing some extraordinary audio recordings and a performance video of Gigli, pretty much a master class on what professional singing can be. ■



Lindroos, dramatic bass

RECORD REVIEWS *continued from page 5*

tion of this sacred piece, his voice almost choking with "pianto" in "et ab haedis". Jussi Björling's singing of "Ingemisco" is simply a lesson in how to sing! There is hardly any audible breathing, not even between a climactic high B (which rings out with divine beauty after a steady ascending scale executed with the same ease of finishing off a cup of tea) and of the following *pianissimo*. Only his live performance in Hilversum nine months later equals this. In the Rossini aria the comparison with Caruso is also quite striking, Björling singing the high D with a perfect blend of chest and head voices, with superb ease, musicality and beauty of tone, whilst Caruso's head note...I would not dare to call it a *falsetto*...but it sounds strange to me. The whole CD, although it spans a good 32 years between the earliest and the latest recording is highly satisfying. ■