

# Jussi Björling on the Internet

By Greg Fitzmaurice

The Internet is a wondrous place, something we never could have envisioned when we were growing up. We used to be limited to our public libraries and maybe the university libraries to do research on a particular subject and we often had to travel and spend hours looking through many books and periodicals to find information about things that are now at our fingertips. Through the many web sites and use of search engines we can now find any particular reference that has been made available online. While there is still much information that hasn't been placed on the web for our viewing, there is a great mass of information that we can now access with very little difficulty if we are willing to spend the time searching—and this is certainly true of our favorite tenor who happens to be a favorite of many all over the world.

Do you want to find reviews of some of Jussi's concerts or opera performances? That is simply done by using Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) and keying in the appropriate words. For instance, google "Bjoerling San Francisco Opera," and you can find that he made his debut with that company in 1940 in *La Bohème* and *Un Ballo in Maschera*.

One of the favorite sites of many on the Internet is **YouTube** ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) which is a web site devoted to short videos. Even though Jussi left little video for us to view, there are many, many YouTube selections for the fan to access. Most of

these are not videos, but simply pictures with an audio background. Do you want to hear Jussi sing "Funiculi, funiculà." Simply key in Jussi and Funiculi and you'll shortly be hearing him in a performance from a 1940 broadcast from Detroit. It's hard to tell just how much Björling material there is on YouTube, because there's so much. But anytime you want to hear Jussi, it's quickly available. I often use YouTube to show co-workers how wonderful Jussi is in singing "O helga natt" at Christmas—and I don't have to carry around a CD to do so, I just play it on YouTube.

Another of my favorite sites is **Sandy's Opera Gallery** ([www.cs.princeton.edu/~san/](http://www.cs.princeton.edu/~san/)) which features pictures of many famous opera singers. There are many pictures of Jussi in normal clothes and in costume in his many roles. It's a wonderful site and well worth visiting.

Of course the best sites to find out about Jussi are four with which most of you are already familiar: the **Björling Museum** in Borlange ([www.borlange.se/jussibjorling-english](http://www.borlange.se/jussibjorling-english)) the **Jussi Björling Society-USA** website ([www.jussibjorlingsociety.org](http://www.jussibjorlingsociety.org)) and the **Bjoerling Yahoo group** (requires membership, easily done) (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bjorling/>). Each of these contains much valuable information and samples of his recordings. Investigate these at your leisure, and be sure to visit [www.jussibjorlingsallskapet.com](http://www.jussibjorlingsallskapet.com), the **Scandinavian Society**.

There are a number of sites that

have pages devoted to Jussi which may be of interest (but which offer little new information). Here are a few of the better ones:

**Wikipedia** ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jussi\\_Bjorling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jussi_Bjorling)) Includes a good short biography, some reference recordings and some helpful links.

**Sony/BMG** ([http://www.sonybmgmasterworks.com/artists/jussi\\_bjorling/](http://www.sonybmgmasterworks.com/artists/jussi_bjorling/)) Has a nice biography of Jussi, plus they allow you to sign up for something called the "Jussi Björling Newsletter" which presumably will put you on an email list for any new reissue of JB recordings. I would think they would also use it as an indication of interest in future reissues.

**David L. Jones** (<http://www.voiceteacher.com/bjoerling.html>) Mr. Jones is a singing teacher who has analyzed Jussi's singing by watching the Voice of Firestone performances and who presents his analysis on his web page. It's very interesting reading.

**Andrea's Subito - Cantabile** ([www.cantabile-subito.de/Tenors/Bjoerling\\_\\_Jussi/bjoerling\\_\\_jussi.html](http://www.cantabile-subito.de/Tenors/Bjoerling__Jussi/bjoerling__jussi.html)) This is a web site with a very nice presentation of information about a large number of artists. In particular his reference to Jussi's recordings may be of interest.

Lastly, the most fun pages on the Internet devoted to Jussi are, for me, those in the social networking sites of MySpace and Facebook. These sites used to be considered the sole property of the young, but many people are now using them as ways to meet people with similar interests. Some people fear a loss of privacy as a result of using them, but in all my time on them, I've yet to have a problem. In fact, I've had very little correspondence from any of the people on these sites unless I have originated it myself.

**MYSFACE** On the Music pages of MySpace, you will find four groups de-

voted to Jussi. The most interesting one is simply called "Jussi Bjorling" ([www.myspace.com/bjorlingbjorling](http://www.myspace.com/bjorlingbjorling)). This group has 220 'friends', lists a nice biography of our favorite tenor, and features three recordings in addition to some very nice pictures.

Another MySpace group is called "Caruso & Bjorling" ([www.myspace.com/carusobjorling](http://www.myspace.com/carusobjorling)) and has 90 'friends'. In addition to a few recordings, this group also features three videos.

**FACEBOOK** JBS-USA has actually setup its own page on Facebook (page: **Jussi-Björling-Society-USA**) with 89 members at present. On this page you can find information about events the Society has planned and also information about new Björling recordings. There are also a few sample recordings to listen to. Members there are from all parts of the world.

Also on Facebook is an even larger group called "Jussi Bjorling fan's" [sic] which has 289 members. Other than a few pictures and audio recordings, there is little to see here other than the members who have shown an interest in Jussi.

Most delightful of all the Facebook assemblies is a group called "**Church of Jussi Bjoerling**". It only has 6 members, but I hope its ranks will swell with time since its purpose is so profound: "A group dedicated to devout classical singing fans gathering together to talk about and worship their God Jussi; discuss other classical singing saints of the past and new, upcoming singers. We await the second coming of Jussi, when he will descend on the earth singing a mighty High C of such power it will destroy all unbelievers and bad singers who are not protected from his wrath and there

will be a new world of glorious singing that rings like a clarion bell throughout eternity ..."

New pages and new groups are being formed all of the time. When you have a few extra minutes, go out and explore. Sometimes you can find some pretty amazing information about Jussi and his career. ■



Internet explorer  
Greg Fitzmaurice

## A Progress Report on Björling Radio Broadcasts from 1937-1952: Good News!

by Dan Shea

**T**hose of us who heard some of Jussi Björling's radio broadcasts from the 1940s and 1950s in good sound, via recordings obtained from the Library of Congress in 2002 by the JB Museum, have wanted to make those generally available. But the legal arrangements agreed to in 2002 forbade general release of that material, and our attempts to negotiate new arrangements with NBC Universal have been met with completely unrealistic financial demands.

Luckily all that material—and more—has become available via interesting new sources, and we have been advised that this material can be published and made available in the USA and elsewhere around the world. Thus JBS has made some preliminary arrangements with a fine record-publishing company, Music&Arts of San Francisco, to co-produce two or more CD, including the *Bell Telephone Hour*, the *Voice of Firestone*, the *Standard Hour*, and the *General Motors Hour*.

The actual programs available include those listed in Sue Flaster's article on the "Library of Congress recordings" published in issue Nr. 14 of the *JBS Journal*, as well as surprisingly good recordings from 1937 of the "Solenne in questora" duet from *Forza del Destino* with Donald Dickson, and the final scene from *Faust* with Dickson and Grace Moore. Our progress has been made possible thanks to deeply-appreciated cooperation by Atty. Christopher Whent, Fred Maroth of Music&Arts, collector Andy Pope, the Seth B. Winner Sound Studios, Anders Björling, the JBS Board of Directors, and others.

We look forward to bringing you regular updates of our progress toward publication of CDs with these radio broadcasts of Björling's performances, never before available in such high-quality sound!