

Midsummer 2006 in Minneapolis

Our JBS-USA Board met in Minneapolis during June 9-11, 2006, weekend, at the same time as the local Schubert Club's Mid-Summer Song Festival. Our idea was to attract some JBS members to join us for a Jussi-program to be held at the interesting American Swedish Institute there, and to participate in some of the Schubert Club's excellent

ASI executive Bill Beyer and fellow ASI Chorus members Weldon Hultgren and Ken Lundgren join Anders Björling and AUSS activists Ken and Ellen Svengalis, June 2006.



Anders Björling and Harald Henrysson at the ASI

programs: free lunchtime lieder recitals, concerts by Håkan Hagegård, Bolcom & Morris, and others. The JBS program might even attract some new members.

At the same time, our Board could meet and do some business, with an opportunity for some members to participate. And we'd get a chance to work together: our Board does most of its work by email and telephone, so a chance to meet in person seemed much more like fun.

We asked Anders Björling and Harald Henrysson to speak, and they both graciously agreed: we are blessed with these two men and their sustained efforts on behalf of the Jussi Björling Societies!

With an attractive program by Anders and Harald scheduled for Sunday afternoon, June 11, we were glad to see a good turnout of over 50 people eager to hear about Jussi's life and career. Anders spoke about family memories and at the same time illustrated his story with a large collection of his own photographs. After a short break

for questions and refreshments, Harald spoke on "Jussi Björling's first US tour: David Björling and his sons cross the continent 1919-1921" and he succeeded in recruiting several people there to help him in his work gathering information from midwestern libraries and museums on the touring Björlings of that era.

Our business meetings were held at the beautiful home of Art and Marilyn Skantz. We were glad to have members Vern Kenney and Michael Mayer, and longtime advisor Walter Rudolph, join the meeting.

We discussed some promotional ideas for the new Bluebell 2-CD set of opera broadcast material: we have tried in several interesting ways to cooperate with classical music radio stations, including WFMT, WQED, KBYU/Classical 89, and KUSC, and we need to do more with those ideas. (Many thanks to devoted members like Bea Bobotek, Phyllis Josell, Bob Gelfand and others for their initiatives!)

Another topic of great interest concerned getting out unpublished material, especially Björling recordings, for our membership, and our most recent efforts here were summarized in the June 2007 JBS Newsletter. In fact, one idea that Greg Fitzmaurice proposed at

Note for our Washington DC area friends:

Consider joining our Board members for a social hour and dinner together on Friday, March 28. If interested, call or write Sue Flaster, area Board member Ward Murray, or Dan Shea, for further information. Our Board will be meeting on March 29 and then attending the National Opera's performance of *Rigoletto* that evening. For information on the WNO opera schedule check www.cd-opera.org

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this meeting has since resulted in a remarkable success: the publication by WHRA of the 1947 Metropolitan Opera broadcast of *Il Trovatore*, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. After Greg explained that the well known music transcription engineer Ward Marston had an especially fine tape of this broadcast available, and might be willing to prepare the tape for publication in CD form, action followed quickly and the result is this surprising new addition to our understanding of Jussi's changing approach over the years to one of his most important roles.

There were other ideas that will be developed elsewhere, including the start of plans to help participate in activities built around the 2010-2011 Björling anniversary season.

We are pleased that Håkan Hagegård has agreed to serve as an Honorary Advisor to JBS-USA. He appeared at several Schubert Club events and some of us heard his master-class with area voice students, as well as a discussion forum on the Bergman *Magic Flute* movie in which he starred as Papageno.

We also attended a Schubert Club concert featuring composer William Bolcom and singer Joan Morris, in a program surveying classic American songs of the twentieth century. Joining us for this were JBS members Michael and Gina Mayer, Linda and Leigh Metcalf, Walter and Marilyn Rudolph, and David and Kathy Williams; others split off to attend a Twins baseball game - Sue Flaster and Harald, Nancy Williams and Matt Mancini. Chacun a son gout!

We plan to repeat such programs elsewhere around the country: watch for progress on some developing plans for a meeting in Charleston, probably in April 2009!

Anna-Lisa Björling-Barkman —An Appreciation



At the top, with Jussi in San Francisco, 1948

Over a year ago, the Björling family lost their eldest member, Jussi's widow, Anna-Lisa Björling-Barkman. She died on November 24, 2006, in Stockholm after a short illness. With her passing the members of the Jussi Björling societies also lost someone very special, their devoted patron and societal friend. Anna-Lisa was born in Stockholm, on March 15, 1910. She was the daughter of Royal Orchestra oboist John Berg and his wife Emy. (A photograph of the Bergs, with Anna-Lisa and her brother Olle, can be found in the bi-

ography *Jussi*.) She studied singing at the Royal Academy of Music. Independently from her professional ambitions, in 1933 she was chosen as Stockholm's first Lucia [see *Jussi*, pp. 71-2], a tribute to her personal charm. Upon the completion of her musical education in 1935, she married the promising young singer Jussi Björling. They had met at the Music Academy, introduced by his brother Gösta. The establishment of a family soon followed; their eldest son Anders was born in 1936, Lars in 1939, and daughter Ann Charlotte in 1943.