

## Editorial Aria

Welcome to Issue Number 15 of our *Jussi Björling Society Journal*—and a too-brief discussion here of a big topic: All that is going on in the world of Jussi Björling's tremendous legacy.

For us, January 2005 began with our hopes that you were enjoying your newly-arrived *Newsletter #8* with reports on the September 2004 Congress in Stockholm and Borlänge, jointly sponsored by the Björling societies of Scandinavia, UK, and US.

Our *Newsletter #8* also contained an enthusiastic review by Kristian Krogholm of Volume 5 of Naxos's Jussi Björling Collection. That CD is not legally available for sale in the US, and so for our JBS-USA members living in the US, we enclosed also a copy of this CD along with the *Newsletter*—at least provided your membership for the 2004 "Jussi-year" was current.

And to those USA members renewing for 2005, we sent out a copy of Naxos's Vol. 4 along with our June *Newsletter #9*. Both CDs in question had booklets with Harald Henrysson's usual fine notes for the Naxos series, but in Swedish! So we also provided a fine translation, joint work of Harald and wife Sue Flaster.



Now we have heard of yet another exciting new CD, still in the planning stage but perhaps due for Spring 2006 release by Bluebell. The contents would include material never before available—at least outside of the Museum and in optimal sound. Available for inclusion is Swedish Radio broadcast material from *Aida* (Act 1, 1940), *Roméo et Juliette* (Act 2,

1943), the "Siciliana" from *Cavalleria* and "Che gelida" from *Bohème* (1937), and from 1951, "Questa o quella" from *Rigoletto* and "Nessun dorma" from *Turandot*.

This material is all prime Björling! Sue says of the *Roméo* Act 2, that it's "staggeringly beautiful!" I know some of this material from past "pirate" sources—but now it would be available in pristine sound direct from the Swedish Radio master tapes.

To try to support the marvelous work of Bluebell and in particular to help production of this new CD, JBS-USA and JBAS have already found two "angels" in Ray Harsant and Beau Kaplan: Many thanks for their pledges of financial support!

JBS-USA would like to order a block of CDs too, for all of its 2006 membership, and we will be trying to

arrange that with Hanna Hedman and other Bluebell Directors.

Please consider renewing your membership now, in confidence that JBS-USA wishes to support this project to "the fullest extent possible." Help us enable this CD into early existence!

We're pleased to bring you some further installments in this issue, from Gail Campain's translations of the *Jussi Björling Minnesbok* (*Memory Book*), tributes assembled in the weeks following his death in 1960 by Bertil Hagman. As usual, these memoirs help us understand the real Jussi, as he is vividly recalled by friends, co-workers, and admirers.

You might want your future travel plans to include a visit to Sweden's music festivals based on Jussi and his music. Our *Newsletter #9* told of four separate events last summer, and in

Anders and Lars with their parents and Bidú Sayão at the Met after Jussi's first *Roméo* there on January 15, 1947. As explained in the biography *Jussi*, p. 173, the boys were put off by Sayão's exuberant kisses and hugs. In fact, after this meeting Anders dubbed her "the kissingest lady in the world".



this issue we describe the most modest of these: the July 16-17, 2005, week-end in Voxna, Sweden.

There's a superb new recording of *Faust* available now, and it stars Jussi Björling: It's Naxos's newly remastered 3-CD set of a 1950 radio broadcast from the Metropolitan Opera, and it's vocal dynamite. Read a detailed review here—that begins and ends with simple advice, just two words: "Buy it!"

Back in 2002 there was published a new book on Jussi in Sweden, by Yrsa Stenius, and it created quite a lot of interest. Titled "Tills vingen brister" (Till the wing breaks), it found some hostile criticism as well as readers who thought it moving and insightful. Thanks to careful translations provided by Anders and Janet Björling, Prof. Dick Vowles, and Ben Swahn,

we can bring you in this issue a cross-section of reactions to this book.

And we can announce here that our list of Honorary Advisors now includes two more admirers of our tenor: Regina Resnik and Ben Heppner. Of course, Ms. Resnik has been an important commentator on Jussi's life, in her key interviews with Andrew Farkas for *Jussi* as well as at our JBS Conference of 2002. We'll provide some biographical notes on both singers in a future issue.

— Dan

*We dedicate this issue of our Journal to Anders Björling, who celebrated his 70th birthday on February 4, the day before the 95th anniversary of his father's birthday. We are grateful for all that Anders has done and continues to do to help JBS-USA and its mission.*

Anders with his parents before an all-star performance of *Don Carlo* in Chicago, November 1957.



## SPECIAL NOTE OF APPRECIATION

### Mickey & Bill Dove

During Summer 2004, Mickey and Bill Dove mentioned that they would like to step down from their long-time work on behalf of JBS-USA as Secretary and Treasurer, in order to pursue family and other interests. Mickey and Bill have been Founding Members in the strongest possible sense, with Mickey setting up databases for membership and finances starting in 1997, editing the first 11 issues of our *Journal*, and setting up our website. Bill assumed the Treasurer's duties in 1999, including filing federal and state tax forms, and helped complete the incorporation of JBS-USA, Inc. as a not for profit organization.

Both Mickey and Bill have done much more along the way, whenever special projects have needed organization (think of the first JBS CD of Jussi in "Che gelida manina" and especially the three JBS Conferences in Washington DC, St Peter MN, and New York City, for example). And their friendly advice and hospitality always has been available for the asking.

We are pleased that Mickey has agreed to continue as a member of our Advisory Board. And of course she continues to oversee the very active Björling discussion-group on Yahoo (to subscribe, go to [groups.yahoo.com/group/bjorling](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bjorling)).

We wish to repeat our thanks to Mickey and Bill for their indispensable work on behalf of JBS-USA, and hereby award them Life Membership in the organization they helped found so well!

—By the 2006 Board of Directors: Greg Fitzmaurice, Sue Flaster, Laura Homonnay-Demilio, Dan Shea, Art Skantz, Kendall Svengalis