

ning for Franz and his wife-to-be, Franziska, “one of the most special evenings of my father’s life” according to Ms. Delmar. She wrote *Serenade* based on the audiotapes her father had made in the last years of his life.

The following three chapters of *Serenade* describe Franz’s next year: auditions for work, roles learned and performed —Wagner (Beckmesser, *Meistersinger*) in Prague, Verdi (the King, *Aida*) in Czechoslovakia: Prague or Aussig. But there were increasing signs of trouble: Jews were being marginalized and menaced; their businesses plundered in Germany; could this terror come to Austria and Czechoslovakia?

The main body of *Serenade* tells this couple’s story, well described by historian Paul Lawrence Rose:

“Carol Jean Delmar has painted a rich picture of the opera culture of pre-World War II Europe . . . She recounts her parents’ forced odyssey from Hitler’s Europe to safety in America, which she sets in a moving narrative of their long loving relationship. As an opera critic and journalist, Carol Jean has delved into both her family history and the musical life of the era, to present a vivid illustration of the destructive and inexorable power of brutal politics on both innocent individuals and artistic life alike . . .” Overall, this is a unique and remarkable book. ■

*Excerpts printed here out of context by permission of the author and publisher.*

## *James Melton: The Tenor of His Times* by Margo Melton Nutt

*Dr. William C. Clayton*



James Melton

Those of us who love James Melton’s singing have been waiting a very long time for this informative and revealing biography/memoir. The author, his daughter and only child, attests that she spent “twenty plus” years writing it, and the book has been well worth the wait. Drawing on family letters and newspapers (thanks mainly to her mother’s voluminous scrap books), she has interwoven her father’s dynamic life with her own participation and memories in a volume redolent of triumph and later troubles.

Biographically, she limns Melton’s life from his humble beginnings in Florida through his glory years on radio, in concert and film, and roles at The Metropolitan Opera, to his sad end when music tastes had changed, his public had deserted him, and financial woes had all but buried him.

The memoir aspect arises when she is old enough to know her father first-hand, and the book deftly becomes a coming-to-grips tale.

Ms. Nutt clearly states her purpose: “This book was never intended to be an exhaustively detailed and footnoted biography—rather it is a daughter’s portrait of the fascinating man who was her father.” She has achieved surpassingly well.

*Available, 560 Hawk Pine Rd. Norwich, VT 05055, 2013, 258 pages, soft cover; and at Amazon.com.*



**We note the passing of Adolph “Bud” Herseth**—long time principal trumpet of the Chicago Symphony, whose trumpet virtuosity he credited, in part, to Jussi Björling.

Herseth has long stated that Björling is one of his musical idols. The following is found at this link: [http://abel.hive.no/trompet/tpin/Bud\\_Herseth.html](http://abel.hive.no/trompet/tpin/Bud_Herseth.html).

“Adolph Herseth calls [Jussi Björling] his all-time favorite musician to listen to. After hearing that, of course, I had to go out and buy a Jussi Björling recording (The Ultimate Collection, RCA 74321 63468 2). I have been listening to Jussi in my car for the past few days and what first struck me was how much his singing, the intensity of his voice, the vibrato, reminds me of Maynard Ferguson! I mentioned that to Bud and he agreed, saying that as a boy, Maynard listened to great opera singers and violinists and that was his concept of sound when learning the trumpet. As Bud said, “That’s what it’s all about!” Well, from now on, any students of mine that aspire to be principal or lead players are going to be listening to Jussi Björling! I brought my Jussi Björling CD to dinner last night and Bud was kind enough to autograph it ‘My Favorite! Bud Herseth.’” Mark Minasian, Hawaii.

—Dan Shea