

Clayton and others to provide helpful advice and assistance with such projects as translations of German-language articles, and our first JBS CD-release (which has now raised well over \$1000 for JBS). Janet also provides JBS with never-failing support and advice, and with husband Anders, warm and gracious hospitality—especially during last year’s well-remembered conference in St Peter, MN.

Our program ended with Don Goldberg’s program celebrating the career of great American tenor Richard Tucker. Especially interesting were some rare and thrilling recordings from Tucker’s early career and the cantorial literature.

For some of us, the fun continued with an afternoon visit to the Caruso Museum in Brooklyn followed by dinner, with host Aldo Mancusi. Next morning a contingent of 20 joined Met Opera Director of Archives Bob Tuggle for a special tour. A few of us attended the following night’s performance of *Il Pirata* with Marcello Giordani and Olga Makarina (substituting ably for an indisposed Renée Fleming), and were led by Anders Björling to inspect two Met exhibits featuring Jussi: one for Faust that showed Jussi with Victoria de los Angeles in 1953, and Emil Näsval’s bronze bust of Jussi that is permanently exhibited in the artists’ gallery.

So much to do in New York! Some, like Enrique Gilardoni, managed to get to hear Anna Moffo’s interesting talk on her great career, on Oct. 23 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We hoped that she’d be able to join our conference banquet, but that turned out not to be possible—this time: We need to return to New York City!

A Remarkable Cache of Björling Recordings Retrieved from the Library of Congress

By Sue Flaster

The Library of Congress [LC] collects every book published in the United States. They also collect, when possible, copies of radio and television programs which have been somehow preserved, either on disc or tape. Could their archives contain anything interesting for the Björling recorded legacy?

Early in 2000, Cantor Don Goldberg made two trips to the LC to research Jussi Björling radio

broadcasts from the 1930s to 1950s that might be archived there. His report of those excursions was published in Issue 11 of this Journal (Fall 2000). Don had found that indeed the LC is holding a number of radio broadcast tapes and acetate disks containing work by Jussi. In some cases, this material has not been heard since it was first aired nearly 60 years ago; in other cases, broadcast material which has been

Jussi as Pagliaccio with speaking with Enrico Caruso’s widow, Dorothy Caruso, in “We, the People.”



Library of Congress broadcast programs

Numbers and letters are consistent with usage in H. Henrysson's "A Jussi Björling Phonography."

4504, Voice of Firestone: 19 November 1945

b. Who is Sylvia (Schubert) – c. Le rêve – d. Jeanie – e. M'appari

b has been commercially released, it's in English and a bit odd.

c, d, e appear not to have been released; c in particular is spectacular, and the sound is fantastic overall.

4602, Voice of Firestone: 21 January 1946

b. Will you remember (Romberg) – c. For you alone – d. Miserere (with Eleanor Steber in b, d)

b and d have been released; c has not, but has a bad scratch running through it, to the end of the broadcast (easily repaired with modern transcription methods).

4603, Voice of Firestone: 25 March 1946

b. Jeg elsker dig – c. Concealed in this retreat – d. Because – e. Neapolitan love song

Nothing here seems to have been commercially released. The sound is really excellent, and (e) is one of the best Nls versions.

4605, Ford Sunday Evening Hour: 12 May 1946

a. Salut, demeure – b. Jungfrun under lind – c. Land du välsignade – d. Mother o' mine

(a) does not appear to have been released, although the other items have been. In fact this is a truly splendid "Salut, demeure" with fantastic pppp's. The sound is terrific throughout.

4801, Bell Telephone Hour: 15 March 1948

a. Mattinata – b. Lilacs – c. Clorinda – d. Ah, fuyez, douce image

All items have previously been released, but perhaps not in such excellent sound—despite a small scratch in "Mattinata." The versions of "Lilacs" and "Mattinata" may be the best yet.

4901, Bell Telephone Hour: 4 April 1949

a. Ständchen – b. Neapolitan love song – c. Addio all madre

These are really fine, and b is the best version of all of Nls's.

5006, Bell Telephone Hour: 23 October 1950

a. O, paradiso – b. In the silence of night – c. Zueignung – d. Come un bel di di maggio

All items previously released. The sound here is excellent, with "Silence of night" extraordinary for phrasing and astounding legato.

A72, We, the People: 16 February 1951

a. Interview together with Dorothy Caruso – b. Vesti la giubba

Previously unreleased, indeed its very existence in doubt. The interview is amusing but not very informative, in which both read from cue cards. Jussi talks very fast. The "Vesti" seemed to me a little dry. He may have been nervous. Superb sound.

5102, Bell Telephone Hour: 12 March 1951

a. Vesti la giubba – b. Rose of Tralee – c. Celeste Aida

All items previously released. The sound is good overall, with some scratches. THIS "Vesti la giubba" is tremendous! I think this is the best "Celeste Aida" sung by Jussi, and therefore the best one sung by anyone.

commercially available in crude sound, existed at the LC in excellent – and occasionally pristine – sound.

Late last summer, Harald Henrysson began the work required to get authorization for the LC to copy and release these programs to the Björling Museum. Although a large number of these programs were of interest, time and available money limited how many Harald would be able to get copied in summer 2002. While waiting times for the LC's transcription services might have been very long, due to backlogs created by the security issues arising from the terrorism of 9/11/01, Harald argued that he needed the recordings in time for the October JBS Conference in Manhattan. Thanks to friendly interest by the LC staff (the key contact person, Jerry H., was himself a tenor!), the LC would expedite Harald's requests, provided he could get releases from the legal departments of the NBC and ABC Radio Networks.

Harald patiently wrote many letters and made many phonecalls from Sweden, before finally finding the right network lawyers to ask permission to have copies made of their radio programs. The process was frustrating, since while the lawyers guarding the networks' "intellectual property rights" seemed willing enough to help us, once we finally found them, it was simply very hard to find these people! By the end of September, the various approvals had been made, a check for \$700 had been sent to the LC, and by mid-October the completed CDs were on their way to Andrew Farkas at the Library of the University of North Florida.

The CDs with this material were sampled for members of the JBS

Conference in Manhattan on Saturday morning, October 26, 2002. These recordings also have been shared with the Swedish National Archive of Sounds and Pictures.

Now we hope to contact the NBC and ABC legal experts again and attempt to arrange some slightly broader release of this material to interested members of the chapters of the Jussi Björling Societies in the UK, USA and Scandinavia, so they may be able to own and enjoy these recordings.

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(You can get a bit more on Mrs. Firestone's songs if you go to www.classicthemes.com/50sTVThemes/themePages/voiceOfFirestone.html www.newenglandconservatory.edu/libraries/aboutlibraries.html.)

Another Look at the NYC Conference

By Dan Shea

Let's take one more look at our October 2002 conference: One way to get a sense of the occasion, is to look at the actual program for that event. You'll find a facsimile of the program below, along with a transcript of Regina Resnik's especially insightful reminiscences of Jussi made during George Jellinek's panel program on October 26.

We point out that videotapes of the main talks are available; details are given at the end of this article.

Björling family members prepare to enter the Met for Andrea Chénier: Lars, Lisa, Janet, Susie, Anders.

