

Two New Björling Programs from KBYU-FM

By Dan Shea

Have you heard special programs about Jussi Björling on your local Public Radio station? If so, the chances are good that they were produced by Utah's source for classical music—Brigham Young University's radio station, KBYU-FM, at the initiative of the station's General Manager Walter Rudolph. We'll report here on the currently-available program, called "Jussi Bjoerling in the 21st Century," and tell you about the next one due to hit the airwaves soon.

The "JB in the 21st Century" program was produced to mark Jussi's 90th birthday, and the 70th anniversary of his operatic debut. Mr. Rudolph interviews the tenor's son Anders for this new show—Anders shares personal remembrances of his father, and talks about the tenor's recordings. The last portion of the program focuses on the final orchestral concert given by Jussi Björling in Gothenburg, just a month before his death.

To hear the complete program yourself, you need access to a computer with webcasting: just go to www.kbyufm.org/jussi/ and you'll have it. You'll also have access to the written materials mentioned in the program, namely scans of the entire 14 page article on "100 Greatest Singers of the Century" from the July 1999 issue of *Classic CD Magazine*, and a related article from *Classic FM Magazine*, as well as a full list of all the selections played

during the program. (Very impressive work, provided by KBYU's Christine Nokleby.)

The next program, coming soon, focuses on Jussi in 1958 and in particular on his **Carnegie Hall recital** of March 2. Walter Rudolph interviews several people who were present at that concert (in fact, most of the interviews were conducted during JBS's Conference in New York City last year). Cantor Don Goldberg, for one, has an interesting story to tell about his role in getting RCA to [find and] produce the CD "Jussi Bjoerling at Carnegie Hall."

We can expect that the KBYU-FM's website also will make this new program accessible, with a similar deluxe treatment of collateral materials. Check their website occasionally to find it, and while visiting there enjoy some of their other programming, for instance a version of Wagner's Ring that you've never heard before: "Wagner Jazz" features a piano and jazz quartet in arrangements of themes from *Der Ring des Nibelungen* itself!

And if you'd like to learn more about how to urge your own local Public Radio station to carry these programs, contact Ms. Nokleby, the station's Public Information Manager, at 801-378-8490 or via email: christine.nokleby@byu.edu.

BBC's CD Masters Program Names Jussi Björling a "Featured Artist"

We heard from our friends Des Lockett and Eric Wimbles, of the UK's JB Appreciation Society, that the "CD Masters" radio program on BBC's Radio 3 had designated Jussi as its "Featured Artist" for the week August 18-22. This meant that the program's fine host, Rob Cowan, would be selecting and commenting on several of Jussi's recordings each day to play during the timeslot 10:00–11:30 AM, London time. We were pleased that he started off the week with a generous mention of our JB Societies, and that he provided detailed and knowledgeable commentary—as well as unhackneyed musical choices: for instance a generous portion of the 1940 Toscanini broadcast of Verdi's *Requiem*, and the Berceuse from Godard's *Jocelyn*. Of the latter selection, Cowan observed that Jussi sings it with his "characteristic emotional engagement," an apt comment but a subtle one—since this is not blood-and-guts *verismo*, by any means.

You can check out the BBC website yourself, and listen in on Radio 3's programming if you wish: just go to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3> and add [/classical/cdmasters/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/classical/cdmasters/index.shtml) to the URL to get more detailed information on Rob Cowan's programs. (Incidentally, you've seen Mr. Cowan's work before, since he wrote the liner notes for RCA/BMG's "JB-The Ultimate Collection.")