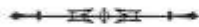


while I am making comparisons, let me say that I prefer Jussi's version of 'Because' better than Jan Peerce's—I say that even though I like the quality of both Thill's and Peerce's voices. Although I have all the other material on this set, I think the four songs mentioned are worth the cost of the whole set." Probably many of us agree. Chacun à son goût!



Then there are lots of other new releases this year, a consequence of European copyright law ceasing to protect recorded material after 50 years. For instance a CD called "Jussi Björling Opera Recordings 1948-1951" has been issued by the "Istituto discografica Italiana." However, the sound on these knock-off issues does not reach the quality of the material available from original sources from EMI and RCA, e.g. in the standard RCA set called "The ultimate collection."

Similar comments apply to the *Lebendige Vergangenheit* [Living Past] series, the sound on their CD about J.B. is barely adequate. When you are considering getting one of these "no name" CDs, our suggestion is to keep in mind the old saying, *Caveat emptor!*

## Coming in our next issue: A discussion of Yrsa Stenius' controversial book on Jussi

Swedish-Finnish journalist Yrsa Stenius has written an unusual appreciation of Jussi Björling, combining intense memories of her theatrical mother's love of the tenor's singing, her own fascination with Jussi's voice and career, and her personal reflections on the stresses of a public life—where one's reputation is always at risk. She boldly interprets known facts about Jussi's public and personal life to fit her theories of the artist's creative angst, and it seems that for many readers she has put together a plausible picture. Indeed many reviews of the book have been positive, but some have been strongly negative. **What are we to think, who are not Swedish and unable to read this book ourselves?**

We have assembled a collection of the more influential articles and reviews, positive and negative, on this book—and found translations of these articles, thanks to the generous efforts of Anders Björling, Ben Swahn, and Richard Vowles. **Thus we hope to be able to help explain the controversy created by the book in Sweden, in our next issue of this *Journal*.**

One small sample from the book came to the Björling online discussion-group from Stefan Olmås, as a contribution to our discussion (late January 2003) of Jussi's interpretation of Canio: According to Stefan's translation, Stenius writes "The young Jussi Björling could enjoy excelling in his improbable high

notes. The somewhat older and more mature man no longer sings just for making effects. He sings for life, for all that he is worth. His singing is serious, it's true and clear as an open eye. It's for real, as a young boy expressed to his mother, asking her to turn off the record-player with Jussi's last recording of 'Vesti la giubba,' because 'it hurts so much!'"

(No one can really object to this sort of discussion—which accords with the good memories of many Swedes of Jussi's singing at concerts, opera and over the radio, and explains why Stenius' book has increased the interest of young Swedes in Jussi's life and career. But some of her other opinions are less easy for some to accept.)

