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Yet Another New Björling CD?

by Dan Shea

Yes! We have learned of the unexpected existence of a tape of Jussi's October 15, 1959, concert at The Falconer Center in Copenhagen, with Bertil Bokstedt at the piano. A few of us have heard portions of 5 selections from this concert, "Die Mainacht" (Brahms), "Demanten på marssnön" (Sibelius), "Ideale" (Tosti), "Skogen sover" (Alfvén), "Come un bel di di maggio" (Giordano: *Andrea Chenier*), and they are all beautifully performed. Jussi seems to be in great form, as reviews confirm, and the tape was made

well by a resident technician at that house.

Especially interesting is the Brahms song, of which previously there had been no known live performance and only a single commercial recording by Björling, on his 1952 RCA song recital LP. Also on that Copenhagen program were lovely performances of two songs, by Liszt and Wolf, which Jussi recorded live only once previously, two months earlier at Gröna Lund.

This tape contains only about 60 minutes of music, a short program compared to most other JB concerts. The reason has to

do with an interesting accident which Jussi's accompanist Bokstedt had described in an essay for the *JB Minnesbok* (translated in the *JBS Journal* #15, 2006 and to be repeated in the CD booklet). Thus this previously unknown tape preserves the music of that very concert!

On another front, the known audio sources for Jussi's March 1952 *Voice of Firestone* broadcast had been of poor quality and thus had not been included in JBS's two previous compilations. Recently JBS found a new source for this program, showing that Jussi had been in top form and delivered a gorgeously sung "Nessun dorma," one of his best, as well as Speaks' "Sylvia," Herbert's "Neapolitan Love Song," and "L'alba separa dalla luce l'ombra." Also there to be enjoyed, as always, are the inevitable Idabelle Firestone start-and-end-pieces of the program.

Thanks to this new source material and the cooperation of John Haley, the owner of the 1959 Falconer Center tape, as well as the reliable genius of sound engineer Seth Winner, JBS expects to be able to help produce and distribute a new CD that will thrill us all. With a bit of luck, details on availability will be announced later in 2015! ❖



Judie and Anders Björling