



Enrique Gilardoni
and Javier Camarena
in Frutillar, Chile,
July 4, 2015

authorize me—if I could contact Javier—to invite him to become one of Honorary Advisors of our Society. The positive response of Wally was swift (*with JBS-USA Board acclamation*) and we attended the recital with the hope of being able to contact Javier at the end of it.

The first part of the recital was dedicated to opera arias and pure “bel canto.” It began with “Ah! lève-toi soleil” from Gounod’s *Romeo et Juliette* and continued with “E servato questo acciaio. L’amo tanto” from Bellini’s *I Capuletti e i Montecchi*. Then “Si, ritrovarla io giuro” from Rossini’s *La Cenerentola*, and to close, “Ah! mes amis quel jour de fête” from Donizetti’s *La Fille du Regiment*.

The second part was devoted to Zarzuela fragments (Jota “Te quiero morena” from Serrano’s *El Trust de los Tenorios*

and “No puede ser” from Sorosabal’s *La Tabrerna del Puerto*) and Mexican songs by Roberto Cantoral, Consuelo Velásquez and Luis Alcaráz that were interpreted with the grace and authority of the one who knows what he is singing.

The encores included a song that Jussi recorded in Swedish in 1936: Osán Pérez Freyre’s “Ay, ay, ay” whose author was born in Chile. The recital culminated with “La donna è mobile” from Verdi’s *Rigoletto* causing an endless ovation from the excited audience.

Following the recital a cocktail was served in which I had the opportunity to talk with Javier. I congratulated him and thanked him for the magical moment that he made us to live, but at the same time, I told him that he had created in me a doubt. Javier looked at me as not understanding what I meant with creating a doubt. I then explained: Until now I was convinced that the most beautiful tenor voice that I ever heard live was Fritz Wunderlich’s, and now I’m in a doubt.

“Don’t tell me that you saw Fritz Wunderlich!!” he replied.

“Yes. That is one of the few advantages of being old. I saw him in 1961 at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires in three operas: *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *Die schweigsame Frau*.

I then explained to him that I had devoted many years of my life to the art of Jussi Björling, that I was correspondant for

South America of the JBS-USA and I was an honorary member of the Jussi Björling Sällskapet of Stockholm; and the President of the JBS-USA had requested me to invite him to join the list of Honorary Advisors of our Society.

Javier was very pleased and grateful for the offer and asked me to coordinate the details with his Executive Assistant Karla Sarmiento who was present at the event. It was a pleasure to contact Karla, a friendly and charming lady with whom I subsequently exchanged several e-mails through which she officially confirmed with me the acceptance of Javier to the offering that I had made him.

To complete this process, our President sent to Javier two letters, one in English and the other in Spanish officializing the appointment and the name of Javier Camarena appeared printed in the letterhead among the other honorary advisors.

We will follow with attention the trajectory of this great singer whose heavy agenda will keep him for many years singing in the most important opera houses of the world among the greats of the opera. We wish him the best of success, first because he is an exceptional singer and second, because through the limited contact I had with him, I could see that his personal qualities are not inferior to his artistic ones. ❖

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