

The Next JBS Conference, June 28–July 1 in Minnesota:

... the people, the program, the activities, registration arrangements

A progress report by Bill Clayton, Mickey Dove, Bill Dove, Tom Hines and Dan Shea

Our JBS held its first conference in Washington DC during June 1999, and it seemed a great success: lots of people meeting each other for the first time, enjoying the sessions together and even picking up some new ideas. Now we will build on our experience with a more ambitious 4-day event at Gustavus Adolphus College in St Peter, MN. We hope you'll consider joining the fun and "Jussiology"! For an early look at the campus, check out this website: www.gustavus.edu (and come prepared to admire the ingenious sculptures of Paul Granlund, located all over campus).

Conference proceedings begin the morning of Thursday, June 28, so we recommend that you plan to arrive Wednesday to socialize and settle in. There will be exhibits at beautiful Jussi Björling Hall on campus, and a videotape concert by Jussi. Our members will congregate at the nearby Carlson International Center, the residence where many attendees will stay. (And after dinner, we'll surely present some sort of preliminary event at Björling Hall—come and see what we will have arranged for you!)

Thursday. More time to meet new friends and shop (records, books, and a new silver Björling medallion) at Björling Hall, with the official opening sessions at 11 AM. After lunch there are two sessions: Bertil Bengtsson of the Borlänge JB Museum will present his talk on "Great Royal Swedish Tenors," followed by a Q/A discussion period. Then we'll introduce a new idea: a session of 15-minute talks on favorite great singers, by our own members – come and hear about the other singers whom JBS members love. There will be a second one of these sessions on Saturday morning, again conducted by Greg Fitzmaurice and Bill Clayton. (Do consider giving a talk yourself: there will be further information on this with your registration materials, and we hope to present as many talks as time allows.) At 6 PM we'll go to the nearby home of Janet and Anders Björling to enjoy a cocktail buffet.

Friday. For early risers, Björling Hall will open at 8:30 for shopping, exhibits and socializing. At 10 AM, Stephen Hastings, Editor of *Musica* (and author of a featured article in this issue) will speak on JB in Verdi, followed by some Q/A. Next we'll present a new installment (scheduled for broadcast in April) of The Vocal Scene series: George Jellinek will compare, on tape, recordings of JB and his great German counterpart, Fritz Wunderlich. Then Anders Björling will tell us about some of his own "Favorite recordings," and we're sure there will be some special family stories offered here. After dinner (but not dessert) on campus, Bertil Bengtsson will present his 3-hour extravaganza "Jussi Björling, the legendary tenor presented in sound, words and pictures": luckily the 3 hour timeframe includes a 25-minute break during which dessert and coffee will be served.

Saturday. Our first session will feature several of our members discussing their favorite great singers (one of whom will actually be present). Then Robert Tuggle, Director of Archives at the Metropolitan Opera, will discuss some of the challenges involved in writing operatic biography. He has assisted many authors with the resources of the Met's archives, and he himself is engaged in writing a biography of Kirsten Flagstad. One of the authors he has assisted frequently is Andrew Farkas, Editor for Amadeus Press' Opera Biography Series, and Andrew will join Bob in this discussion. After lunch, Walter Rudolph will moderate a panel discussion on "Jussi Björling, the man and the artist." A partial list of panelists includes Giorgio Tozzi, Anders Björling, Andrew Farkas and Bertil Bengtsson. From 3:30 to 5:00 we'll have a general discussion, moderated by Karl Hekler, on "Jussi Björling in live performance." After a short break, we'll gather for a gala banquet on campus and some sort of entertainment (our plans for this are still preliminary as this is written, in mid-March).

Sunday. Our first meeting will be for breakfast and a JBS business meeting, with a final talk by Cantor Don Goldberg, 10:30–11:45. We plan to leave campus at 12:15 by bus to the Twin Cities (with a box lunch available for the trip, if you wish). For those wishing to leave our conference at

cont. on p. 4

Second JBS Conference

cont. from p.3

this time, the bus will make a stop at the Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport. For those able to stay later there will be a tour of the American Swedish Institute with a short concert to be presented there by JBS member Kevin Carlson.

If you're on our mailing list, you can expect to get registration information by early April. If you haven't heard from us by then, please write to Mickey Dove (see Masthead for addresses). Now, by all means, continue to the next story . . .

An Excursion to Santa Fe, July 3–8

Several of us are planning to continue the fellowship generated during our conference, by extending our trip to include an excursion to Santa Fe, New Mexico, for two operas and some exploration of the superb state parks and museums dedicated to the local Indian history and culture. We'll see Verdi's *Falstaff* on July 4 (Fenton will be sung by Greg Turay, dubbed "the new Bjoerling" last spring by The New York Times) and *Lucia di Lammermoor* on July 6. The opera house there is perched in a natural bowl in the Tesuque hills, just outside of Santa Fe, and is partially open to the resplendent evening skies. (Even people who don't enjoy opera go there for its setting.) Productions are well known to be lavish and adventuresome, we can expect to enjoy the performances as well as the setting. Among those definitely planning to attend are Bertil Bengtsson and Elaine, Maria-Luisa and Enrique Gilardoni, Young So, Mati Zeiti and Gail and Dan Shea.

We have reservations at the Hotel St Francis on the central Plaza in town (a favorite smaller hotel, comfortable and inexpensive by Santa Fe standards), and for mid-priced opera tickets (\$60–80). If you think you'd like to join this excursion, call Mickey or Dan (check the masthead for addresses and phone numbers) as soon as possible to start planning.

(For some excellent information on our hotel, with links to all that is going on in Santa Fe, visit the website www.hotelstfrancis.com or www.santafeopera.org or, for camera buffs, photoartssantafe.com will tell you about a week-long program that starts on July 6.) ■

Some Perspectives on the "Editorial We"

Welcome to the Spring 2001 issue of this *Journal*, our latest experiment in producing a permanent "hard copy" record of what the Jussi Björling Societies are doing: Let's take a moment here to look ahead at some of the featured articles in this issue:

♦ We bring you an overview of JBS-USA's next conference, June 28–July 1 at Gustavus Adolphus College. We list the events of four very full days, and hope to tempt you to attend by describing the opportunities for many social interactions with fellow Jussi-cologists. And we have news of an additional post-conference trip to Santa Fe, New Mexico, for two operas and other excursions with your JBS comrades. We especially invite our British and Scandinavian comrades of the JBAS and JB Sällskapet to consider joining our Minnesota and New Mexico events.

♦ The extraordinary analysis by **Stephen Hastings** of Jussi's career, in "The Supreme Singing of a Shy Man," will give you much to ponder. You'll want to pull out your record collection, to keep up with Hastings' discussion. I especially liked his quote of Levi-Strauss, that "the invention of melody is the supreme mystery of mankind" and his opinion that "no tenor better than Björling enables us to understand the depth of that mystery."

These words remind me of other similar ideas that we've quoted in this *Journal*, for instance these of **Garrison Keillor** (in Issue 9): "none of [what was in the newspapers] had the slightest reality to me. What was most real was something missing from my life that was intimated in Great Music. I would look up from my desk to hear Jussi Bjoerling sing 'Nessun Dorma' from *Turandot* and suddenly know that my life lacked nobility and purpose . . ."