

# Newsletter

of the Jussi Björling Societies of the USA & UK

No. 31—July 2017

## JBS-USA Announces 20th Anniversary mini-conference and CD

by Sue Flaster

JBS-USA is delighted to announce that the celebratory year of our 20th anniversary will kick off with a mini-conference in Washington, D.C. November 17th and 18th along with the issue of a very special members-only CD. We will begin on Friday the 17th by attending a rehearsal of Washington Concert Opera's presentation of Bellini's *La straniera* at the Lissner Auditorium. Those of us who attended this company's *Semiramide* a couple of years ago, and the D.C. members who regularly attend their productions, can attest to the very high level of performance we can expect.

During the day on Saturday, the 18th, we will be at the gorgeous Swedish Embassy to listen to a wide variety of highly qualified speakers. As of this writing, our speakers include Washington Post classical music critic Anne Midgette, Harald Henrysson, conductor and critic Will Crutchfield, our own Stephen Fischman and Peter Russell (former Director of DC Concert Opera and of DC Vocal Arts, among other things). Stefan Olmårs will talk to us about plans to get together early in Fall of 2018 in Sweden.

If you haven't been to the Swedish Embassy, it is a really spectacular building, and worth a visit under any circumstances.

On Saturday evening, members will adjourn to Maija Bodow's fantastic Georgetown home where she will once again host us for a buffet dinner and drinks. Maija has offered us this tremendous generosity several times over the years, and it has been a wonderful occasion to talk over what we've seen and heard, and to spend time with (usually) distant friends.

In honor of this important anniversary, our Board has been working together with the Jussi Björling Society in Scandinavia to produce a very special CD of items which either have never been released at all, or have simply not been available for a significant period of time. For instance, many of us who were present in Stockholm for the 2004 Congress will recall Carl-Gunnar Åhlen's *Faust* excerpt, not released until now. The Societies have worked together to acquire this stunning piece of singing, and it will be on the upcoming CD (available to members only). We will also include large chunks of the Vienna *Aida* and *Pagliacci*, up to now in very limited CD release. A long hoped-for bonus will be two electrifying excerpts from the legendary (and nearly mythical) 1939 Toscanini *Requiem*. The final item is something Lars Björling found in his father's desk drawer (the desk which now sits on the second floor of the Museum in Borlänge). Our plan is to have the CD ready for you to pick up in Washington.

Please see—and use—the sign-up sheet included here to reserve your place at the Concert Opera and the Embassy, as well as to place your order for the Fall delivery of the CD. ■



Embassy of Sweden



Carl-Gunnar Åhlen plays *Faust* at the Golden Foyer