

The Jussi Björling Recording Survey – “Song” Results

By Walter B. Rudolph



Walter B. Rudolph



Jussi hears a reference recording on January 21st, 1939

In our home, not a day passes without a telephone call survey. Any purchase, chat, or other inquiry one makes on the Internet is followed by a survey. Going to the Post Office or any fast food joint always invites a survey on the receipt. Truly we could call our world today “The Survey World.”

So when we offered the opportunity to participate in this first JBS-USA survey, we hoped you wouldn't all be surveyed-out, and decline participation. Nearly 20% of our membership sent in their choices, and only a couple arrived after the deadline, so we decided to also include them in the results. And while the goal was to identify the Top Five Song and Aria Recordings, and the Top Three Opera Recordings, there is much more to be seen, heard and explored.

We promise the aria and opera results in forthcoming publications.

Fifty-four (54) individual song titles received votes in the Song category. The survey allowed for specific performances to be identified, and approximately 30% of participants provided that information for most of their submissions. In many cases this information is insufficient to be conclusive. Therefore any preferred performance listed for each title is provided only when a clear choice was indicated. Also, please keep in mind that all participants may not

have had access to (or made choices based on) all of the Jussi Björling recordings. “I know what I like and I like what I know” becomes the basis of this adventure. And we do not know how many votes were for a favorite song versus a favorite performance.

So here is the full list of all 54 songs, listed in order of preference by the participating members of the Jussi Björling Society-USA. The second (inner) row shows where the multiple ties occurred. The first (outer) row shows the order of all 54 songs, randomly removing the ties. The year in column 4 indicates the most often selected performance, when one was indicated, unless there is only one performance from which to select.

* * *

Note that in the top 10 songs, most of Jussi's languages are represented – German, Swedish, Italian and English. Two French songs are sung in Swedish and English. There are two female composers in the list (d'Hardelot and Beach), and many other details to be gleaned. We hope you will enjoy these ample considerations.

Obviously there are songs which received only minimal votes. Perhaps you'll find some you don't know or haven't heard recently? There are surprises lurking! ■

JBS-USA web site

Please visit our new, ever-so-improved, attractive and updated web site at jussibjorling-society.org. Our own Janel Lundgren put in countless and productive hours working with web designer Amory King to give us something we can both use and be proud of. Note that for the first time, both the PHONOGRAPHY and the performance Chronology can be accessed from our site. Many thanks to all those members who helped to defray the cost of this huge and welcome project.