The Jussi Björling Society-USA is excited to announce that plans for our 2021 Conference in Chicago are being finalized, and we are now accepting advance registrations with the enclosed form, or online.

The dates are April 8 (eve), 9 and 10, 2021. The Conference will include nine distinguished speakers, group tickets to two wonderful concerts, and group discounted hotel rooms.

The venue will be the 9th Floor Thomas Club at Symphony Center, 220 South Michigan Avenue. We intend to bring together the very best in musical events and presenters to provide an enriching and enjoyable weekend for our membership—something to look forward to!

The Conference, our first in Chicago, will also be an important part of our continuing recruitment efforts for new members. We will reach out to the city's musical, educational, and Swedish communities. It is our hope to win fresh interest and new members for the Society, and to remind Chicago of Jussi's two decades of performances in the city - including his 1937 United States opera debut!

Following is the order of events as currently planned:

**THURSDAY, APRIL 8:** The Conference opens with a 5:00 pm dinner at Opus Restaurant in Symphony Center, followed by a 7:30 pm concert by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. JBS will have a block of discounted seats in beautiful Orchestra Hall.

The CSO concert program will include the Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde*, followed by the Wagner “Wesendonck Lieder” with Amanda Majeski, soprano. The Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony will conclude the evening. Fabien Gabel is guest conductor.

American lyric soprano **Amanda Majeski** specializes in Mozart and Strauss heroines, and performs to enthusiastic reviews at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Oper Frankfurt, as well as Glyndebourne Festival, Opernhaus Zürich, the Paris Opera and Teatro Real.

Conductor **Fabien Gabel** is recognized internationally as one of the stars of a new generation of conductors, having established a broad repertoire ranging from core symphonic works to contemporary new works and championing lesser-known works by French composers. He has been the Music Director of the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec since 2012 and Music Director of the innovative *Orchestre Français des Jeunes* since 2017.
FRIDAY, APRIL 9: Conference sessions will be held from 9 am to 12 noon, and from 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm, in the 9th Floor Thomas Club in Symphony Center. You may take a virtual tour of the venue by visiting the CSO website at https://cso.org/about/facility-rentals/virtual-tour/ and selecting the 9th Floor Club.

During the break for lunch, attendees may sign up in advance for boxed lunches in the venue, or may choose to have lunch in a neighboring café or restaurant.

Friday evening is free, but we will soon provide you with a list of performances, concerts and events occurring that night in the area, including Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Auditorium Theatre, Chicago Opera Theatre, and others. This will give you plenty of time to make your own plans and purchase your own advance tickets.

SATURDAY, APRIL 10: Conference sessions resume at 9 am and conclude at 1 pm.

Saturday afternoon is free, and you will find entirely too much to choose from, whether a leisurely lunch or glamorous shopping in the Loop. Don’t forget the Chicago Art Institute beckons just across the street from Symphony Center.

Saturday evening we reconvene at the Harris Theatre, 205 East Randolph Street, (a 5-minute taxi ride from the hotel) for the 7:30 pm concert of tenor Javier Camarena, the preeminent Mozart and bel canto specialist of his generation. Praised for his burnished tone, gleaming high notes and flawless coloratura, he regularly appears in leading roles alongside today’s foremost stars at the world’s top opera houses, and was the face of Opera News’s 80th anniversary edition this past January. A Jussi enthusiast, he is also a member of our Honorary Advisory Board. JBS will have a block of discounted tickets for this exciting concert.

Following the concert, we plan a final gathering in the lounge of the hotel for optional drinks and light fare.

THE HOTEL: JBS has a block of generously discounted hotel rooms at the Silversmith Hotel. Located at 10 South Wabash, the hotel is only four blocks away from Symphony Center, and offers room service, fitness center and free WiFi among its amenities. Rooms include large walk-in showers, coffee makers, safes, and small refrigerators. Breakfast and dinner are available on premises at their Adamus Restaurant.

THE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS:
Lars Björling, Jussi’s youngest son, was present at his father’s last performances at the Metropolitan Opera in the fall of 1959, and provides a detailed and warmly personal account of those performances in the upcoming Immortal Performances CD set (to be released November 2020).

The COVID-19 Issue: JBS is very aware that no one will feel comfortable travelling if the virus still poses a health threat, and that our plans may have to change as a result of the pandemic. Therefore, the Board of Directors will be monitoring the situation throughout the fall, and is prepared to postpone the entire conference to a later date if necessary. This decision will be reached by the close of 2020. In the event of postponement, attendees will have the option of having their registration and ticket fees transferred to the new conference dates, or refunded in full.
Andrew Farkas is co-author with Anna-Lisa Björling of the acclaimed Björling biography, *Jussi*. He is the co-author or editor of three other opera biographies and a bio-bibliography. He contributed book chapters, articles, bibliographies and reviews to a number of international publications, anthologies, encyclopedias and music magazines. He developed and directed the Library of the newly established University of North Florida (1970-2003). He was awarded the 1991 Distinguished Professor Award, and upon his retirement he was given the Library Director Emeritus title.

Henry Fogel is Producer/Host of Collectors’ Corner with Henry Fogel for WFMT Radio Network, a series including a broad range of orchestral, vocal, chamber and solo-instrumental music. Recently retired as the dean of Roosevelt University’s Chicago College of Performing Arts, he was also for many years president and CEO of the Chicago Symphony, and has held many important positions in music administration over the past 55 years.

Stephen Hastings has been the Milan correspondent of *Opera News* since 1991, and is the author of the masterful 2012 book, *The Björling Sound, A Recorded Legacy*. Born in London and educated in Oxford, he was editor of the Italian monthly *Musica* for many years. He is a frequent contributor to JBS publications, and has spoken at almost all JBS conferences, both in the United States and in Sweden.

Harald Henrysson is Founding Curator of the Jussi Björling Museum in Borlänge, Sweden, and an ultimate resource on the life and career of the artist. He is the author of a new book, *David Björling and His Sons in America*, as well as three published editions of *A Jussi Björling Phonography*. Co-founder of the Jussi Björling Society in Sweden, he has contributed notes for some 40 LP/CD recordings, and co-authored a JB Chronology on the web. In 2006, Henrysson received the Jussi Björling Award (*Jussi Björlingstipendiet*) from the Stockholm Royal Opera Soloists Foundation, and in 2011, the Scandinavian Jussi Björling Society Prize (*Jussi Björlingsällskapets Pris*).

Nils-Göran Olve is a former chairman of the Friends of the Royal Opera in Stockholm, and contributes regularly to the Swedish Jussi Björling Society as interviewer, lecturer, and writer. He also regularly provides articles on historic singers for the UK magazine *The Record Collector*. With a doctorate from the Stockholm School of Economics, he has written more than twenty books on management control.

Conrad L. Osborne, renowned critic, author, voice teacher and performer, is the author of the definitive book on the subject, *Opera as Opera: The State of the Art*. He also posts the extensive blog “Osborne on Opera”. As an international music critic, he has written for *High Fidelity/Musical America, The New York Times*, and *Opera News*, among many others. He also serves as an Administrative Consultant, with affiliations over the years with Affiliate Artists, National Opera Institute, and the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music.

Roger Pines is dramaturg at Lyric Opera of Chicago, where he joined the staff in 1995. An annual panelist on the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts’ “Opera Quiz” since 2006, he also writes regularly for *Opera News, Opera* (U.K.), opera-company programs nationally and internationally, and CD and DVD releases by major recording companies. Having taught the opera repertoire course of Northwestern University’s Bienen School of Music last year, he will return to teach it again in 2020-21.

Fred Plotkin is one of America’s foremost opera experts and has distinguished himself as a writer, speaker, consultant, teacher, and expert on all things Italian. He does a great deal of broadcasting (including his program “Fred Plotkin on Fridays” on *idagio.com*) and is the lead opera writer for New York’s *WQXR.org*. His book, *Opera 101: A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving Opera* is the best-selling opera education text in America.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

Walter B. Rudolph, retired broadcaster and musicologist, is a former President of JBS-USA. In addition to Jussi Björling, he has particularly followed the careers of Hans Hotter and Giorgio Tozzi. His most recent presentation was to the Richard Wagner Society in Washington, DC.

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Anders, Lars, and Ann-Charlotte Björling are invited special guests. We also anticipate some lively panel discussions and surprise musical visitors!