

translation of that work, and follows it closely in the early chapters about Jussi's youth, Swedish Jussiphiles may have thought that the new book is mainly a translation of hers.

In fact, "Jussi" is substantially rewritten with many new narrative details, facts, documents, excerpted reviews, and interviews giving substance to our current evaluation of the great tenor's life and career. It seems especially important that Mr. Farkas was able to secure so many telling interviews by artists like MacNeil, Resnik, Tozzi, Soderstrom, Merrill, Solti, and others who provide reliable reports on Jussi's performances and personality. And the many performance-reviews quoted are essential grist for the diehard fan. In view of the exaggerations that afflict most operatic biographies, this one is refreshingly trustworthy - thanks to Mr. Farkas' painstaking detective work.

There are rumors of a Swedish translation which, if it materializes, may help Swedes to take a new look at this book. In the meantime, Mr. Farkas would appreciate comments and information about "Jussi." You can write to him at the following address: Andrew Farkas, Director of Libraries, University of North Florida, 4567 St. Johns Bluff Road South, Jacksonville, FL 32224-2645 or E-mail at afarkas@unf.edu.

III. Björling's Touch of Class By Roger Pines

Following are excerpts from Mr. Pines' excellent article in *Opera World*, Vol. 14 (enclosed):

"A critic once wrote of Jussi Björling, 'He sings so your heart melts.' Never was a truer statement made about any great singer. Björling's performances exude zest for life, love of music, love of humanity. His sound offers both a uniquely exhilarating brilliance and a glowing, comforting warmth. This is a tenor you can live with forever, a tenor for all seasons.

Why listen to Björling and other singers of the past? You can marvel at their technique, but there's much more to them than that. They stand for beauty of voice, *bel canto* style, dramatic commitment, and - most important- an overwhelming individuality that today's operatic idols often lack. You'll find thrills here and, especially if you're a singer, endless inspiration (hearing singers of Björling's ilk is comparable to an actor watching Olivier or a violinist listening to Heifetz."

Editor's note: Another excellent appraisal of Jussi's 'Uniquely Distinctive' voice by Anthony Tommasini appeared in the July 26 New York Times. For those of you who missed this, we are enclosing a Xerox copy.

IV. In the Spotlight

In my last letter, I shared with you Don Quinn's story. This month I am pleased to introduce member Cantor Don Goldberg.

"I became 'hooked' on Jussi Björling when a high school music teacher played a recording of "Celeste Aida". Tears welled up in my eyes and my soul, and this from an avowed Rock and Roll lover! I vowed to purchase a recording of his even though I didn't know what he was singing. After 42 years, Björling's voice still continues to thrill me. I have written about him in *Opera News*, produced more Björling radio programs than almost anyone else, and have lectured in colleges and town halls about his career. I heard Jussi in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Tosca*, and *Faust*,