

# AN INTRODUCTION

This list of all known recordings of Jussi Björling and their issues [referred to as *JBP 4*] is an updated version of Harald Henrysson's *A Jussi Björling Phonography*, 2nd edition (1993) [referred to as *JBP 2*]. The first edition [= *JBP 1*] was published in 1984. A 3rd print edition of the book (2014), where only issues on CD and DVD are included [= *JBP 3*], is available from the Jussi Björling Museum and from the Jussi Björling Society USA. This version of *JBP 4* was published on the web in November 2020, with 34 issues added from the previous version of April 2020. Future updates are planned.

3241 issues are now listed of Jussi Björling's 244 commercial recordings and 140 known live and radio recordings and films (concerts, etc., which may each contain many individual musical numbers).

The Björling music recordings known to still exist are comprised of 39 complete or almost complete operas or choral works (13 of which are commercial recordings), excerpts and fragments of various sizes from 15 operas and from one operetta potpourri (live or radio recordings), and 628 separately performed songs, arias, duets and scenes (222 of which are commercial recordings).

Errors are unavoidable in a work with so many details, and for which the reliability of the sources varies so much, so the author will be grateful for corrections or additions. They can be sent to: [harald@henrysson.org](mailto:harald@henrysson.org).

## **The list of Björling recordings and issues comprises four separate parts:**

1. Chronological list of recordings: "Studio recordings for record companies", followed by "Live recordings; Studio recordings for broadcasting companies; Radio interviews; Films"; each part listed in chronological order. For each recording, issues in all physical formats are shown. Downloadable files are not included.
2. List of issues (according to labels and numbers) in analog formats that have been commercially available.
3. List of issues (according to labels and numbers) of CDs and DVDs that are or have been commercially available (only a selection of CD-R labels is included).
4. Music index (reference numbers for the recordings are arranged by composers and works).

## **Chronological list of recordings**

### **A. Numbering**

Studio recordings for record companies are listed with a separate number for each work. No recordings have been added to those in *JBP 2* (Section I:A), so the chronological numbering there (1-244) has not been changed. When two takes of a recording have been issued, they are separated by an additional A or B after the reference number.

The 140 live and radio recordings and films each have a chronological number, with the music included sub-numbered by small letters (if no recording is yet found of a certain concert item, the letter is preceded by "?"). As in *JBP 2*, the numbers consist of the two last digits of the year, followed by a consecutive two-digit number within the year (for instance, #49.06 is the sixth known recording in 1949). Insertion of recordings found after 1993 has made a partial renumbering from *JBP 2* necessary, and a period is now inserted (49.06 instead of 4906) to show that *JBP 3* / *JBP 4* numbers are used. The *JBP 2* numbers are added in parenthesis after the new number when the recordings are described ("+" after a recording or an item means that it was found after *JBP 2* was published and thus does not have an earlier number).

When *JBP 3* was published, 9 live recordings not in *JBP 2* had been found (or, in one case, partly attributed to a hitherto unknown recording): 36.01, 37.09, 38.01, 39.04, 49.06, 51.02, 54.04, 55.03, 99.00 (#99.00 refers to a recording of unknown date and origin). After the publication of *JBP 3*, two more recordings have been found. In order to avoid a confusing renumbering of later recordings from the respective years, these recordings were given the same basic number as the preceding one in the list, but (1) was added for that one, and (2) for the new one. Thus, 55.01 & 59.07 in *JBP 3* have become 55.01(1) & 59.07(1) here, while 55.01(2) & 59.07(2) refer to the new numbers added.

For both studio and live recordings, the subdivision (a, a1, b1, b2, etc.) of operas and choral works is generally different from *JBP 2*, since new excerpts have been issued and are considered when the contents of an issue is described. Stereo recordings are indicated either through the inclusion of original stereo matrix numbers or, for live recordings, in a commentary.

### **Dates**

When an exact date or location for a studio or live recording is not definitively known, this is indicated by a question-mark. In *JBP 2* (pp. 159-173), many such details for studio recordings were discussed in notes which are not included here. Dates for complete opera recordings specify only the sessions when Björling is known to

have been present, when such information has been available. Radio performances are listed according to recording dates, but the information includes first broadcast dates when the broadcast was not live.

## **B. Titles**

Operas, songs, arias, etc., are listed under their title in the composition's original language, with the language used and the title in that language - if different - following in square brackets. The composer's surname and, if the item is taken from an opera or other larger work, the italicized title of that work, are added in parenthesis. For studio recordings, the original 78/33 rpm. matrix / serial number is written under the title. All known 78 rpm. take-numbers are listed, with those known to have been issued in boldface. For live and radio recordings, information about the archives that hold original recordings and their reference numbers and about their reference numbers in the Jussi Björling Museum collection may also be provided.

## **C. Abbreviations**

### **Languages:**

D = Danish, E = English, F = French, Fi = Finnish, G = German, L = Latin, N = Norwegian, S = Swedish.

### **Institutions:**

JBM = Jussi Björlingmuseet (Jussi Björling Museum, Borlänge)

KB = Kungliga Biblioteket (Royal Library, Stockholm)

SR = Sveriges Radio (Swedish Radio / Swedish Broadcasting Co., Stockholm)

SVT = Sveriges Television (Swedish Television, Stockholm)

## **D. Translations of the names of orchestras, venues, institutions, etc.**

The following names have been translated:

Band of the Royal Svea Life Guards = Kungl. Svea livgardes orkester

Concert Hall = Konserthuset (Large Auditorium = Stora salen)

Concert Palace (Bergen) = Konsertpaléet

Finnish Radio Orchestra = Radio-orkesteri / Radioorkesteren

Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra = Göteborgs symfoniorkester

Malmö Concert Hall Foundation Orchestra = Malmö Konserthusstiftelses orkester

Malmö Municipal Theater = Malmö stadsteater

Norwegian Radio = Norsk Rikskringkasting

Royal Academy of Music = Kungl. Musikaliska Akademien

Royal Opera House = Kungl. Operan (Kungl. Teatern)

Royal Opera Chorus = Operakören

Royal Orchestra = Kungl. Hovkapellet

SF Orchestra = SF-orkesteren

Stockholm Army Band = Arméns musikkår i Stockholm

Stockholm Radio Orchestra = Stockholms radioorkester

Swedish Film Institute = Svenska Filminstitutet

Swedish Radio = Radiotjänst (until 1957) or Sveriges Radio

Swedish Radio Chorus = Radiokören

Swedish Radio Orchestra = Radioorkesteren

Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra = Radiotjänsts symfoniorkester

Vienna State Opera House = Wiener Staatsoper

Vienna State Opera Orchestra = Wiener Staatsopernorchester

## **E. Presentation of issues**

In the Chronological list, issues are presented with labels, numbers (in boldface), sometimes country (for multinational labels and unrelated labels with identical names), number of units in a set (added in parenthesis, if more than one, or not evident from the record number), sleeve titles & (after colon) subtitles, and release dates (in italics, the year and, when known, the month of the earliest known release date in any country). \* after the number of an analog issue (thus not applied for CDs) indicates an original stereo recording, issued in stereo.

All issues are intended to be in chronological order, though such information is often hard to find. Dates followed by (?) may be rough estimates only, and other dates may also be more or less reliable. Sometimes a release is only estimated to have appeared "After" a certain date.

Sleeve titles are generally written in their most complete form, and always in the language used. In multilingual titles, the languages are separated by "=". If the same record number has been separately issued with different titles, these are all included but separated by "/" (slash) (if the titles were used in different countries, those are after the record number separated by semicolon). The use of capitals versus lower-case letters in labels and titles is respected, though for words written in capitals, only the initial one is retained. The composer's name is omitted for operas, etc., unless it is an integral part of a sentence.

## Lists of analog and digital issues

The 3241 issues are in these lists arranged according to format, label and number. The analog formats comprise 216 on 78 rpm and 214 on 45 rpm discs, 953 on LPs, 20 on open-reel tapes, 12 on 8-track stereo cartridges, 279 on audio music cassettes, 3 on laser discs and 19 on VHS video tapes. The digital formats total 1498 issues on CD, 26 on DVD and 1 on Blu-ray.

Record numbers are in different sources often provided with different label names, since opinions may vary what should be called a label, a record company, a sub-label or a series. The treatment here is intended to be as consistent as possible, and all the mentioned concepts are included in the information and therefore searchable in the computer.

Commercial numbers are generally written in their most complete form as found on the record or cover. Numbers may vary even on the same issue (e.g. with or without space or hyphen between prefix and number), and some standardization has been done. EMI CD issues (and Warner Classics reissues of them) are listed under the “main” part of the number (for instance: 6 28546 2), but with the corresponding extended number (50999 6 28546 2 7) added in a note.

The following information about issues is found only in these lists, not in the list of recordings:

- A. The issuing company and its location (between §...§ under the label name).
- B. AAD/ADD (analog or digital transfer), if known (between §...§ under the label name).
- C. Series or sublabel (in parenthesis after the sleeve title).
- D. Other forms of writing the number (as for EMI CDs), parallel numbers, numbers and titles for individual units in a set. (Contents of each unit listed separately.)
- E. Format details (EP, record size, tape speed, CD-R, enhanced CD, single CD, MP3 CD). \* after the number for an analog issue (not applied for CDs) means that one or more of the recordings it contains is an original stereo recording, issued in stereo.
- G. Important information about the Björling recordings, not included in the sleeve title.
- H. Label and number for the first issue of the same compilation of recordings, or reference to a simultaneous issue on another label (e.g. Decca/London).
- I. Special ways of distribution (e.g. promotion issues, or distribution with magazines).
- J. Names of engineers responsible for transfers / audio restoration (when information is available and regarded to be of special importance).
- K. Names of authors of notes, of which an important part is devoted to Björling.

Year and month of issue (year indicated by its two last digits) are in these lists found in brackets (e.g. {96-12}; {p96-12} = After December 1996 (p=post).

Reference numbers for the included Björling recordings follow, with studio recordings before live recordings, each series in chronological order. Recordings are listed separately for each unit in a multi-unit set. As far as possible, recordings have been checked for identification, and if a recording is found to be misidentified on the issue, the number is corrected.

A filled circle (●) at the end of the description of an issue indicates that a copy exists in the Jussi Björling Museum reference collection. Two circles indicate two versions of the issue (e.g., different contents or covers).

## Music index

The information here, arranged by composers and works, includes the composers' full names, years of birth and death and nationality, the names of text authors (both for the original versions and translations which Björling used), and the years when an opera or operetta was first performed. Song titles are supplemented by the beginning of the text in the language used (in parenthesis, followed by "..."), and by English translations of Scandinavian titles.

Numbers in italics refer to recordings with instrumental accompaniment (usually piano) or without accompaniment. Other recordings are with orchestra. Numbers in brackets refer to commercial recordings which are assumed to have been destroyed, or to individual concert numbers of which recordings have not yet been located and which therefore may or may not exist.