"MADE IN SWEDEN," A CENTENNIAL TRIBUTE TO JUSSI BJÖRLING FEATURING SWEDISH TENOR MATS CARLSSON AND BJÖRLING EXPERT BERTIL BENGTSSON

NOVEMBER 7, SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Presented by the Consulate General of Sweden in Cooperation with San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Tickets available at *sfopera.com* or (415) 864-3330

San Francisco, October 12, 2011 – The Consulate General of Sweden, in cooperation with San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, will present "Made in Sweden" a special concert to commemorate the extraordinary musical legacy of late Swedish tenor, Jussi Björling (1911-1960), and to mark the centennial of his birth, on Monday, November 7 at 7 pm, in the Conservatory's Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall, 50 Oak Street.

The multi-media program features live vocal performances by Mats Carlsson, a leading tenor of the Swedish Royal Opera and the first recipient of the Scandinavian Jussi Björling Society Award, established in 2008. Björling expert Bertil Bengtsson will also offer historic recordings and a slide show presentation highlighting some of the greatest performers of the classical Swedish singing tradition, including Björling, Birgit Nilsson and others. Audiences will embark on a fascinating and moving journey through the life of this incomparable artist and Swedish music and cultural history. Special guest Anders Björling, Jussi Björling's son, will introduce the program. One of the greatest operatic voices of the 20th century, Jussi Björling, who was acclaimed at the world's major opera houses during his historic career, gave nearly two decades of memorable performances at San Francisco Opera.

Lyric tenor Mats Carlsson will perform folk songs and opera arias accompanied by leading Swedish pianist Love Dervinger. In recent years, Carlsson has established himself as one of the most sought after tenors in Sweden in both opera and concert. He is praised for his shimmering Nordic timbre coupled with an Italianate style. After a recent performance Gustav Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet*, noted that "Carlsson's crystal clear diction and perfect blend of light and dark timbre of his voice can compare to Set Svanholm and Fritz Wunderlich."

Bertil Bengtsson is a co-founder of the Scandinavian Jussi Björling Society, and is a longstanding consultant with the Jussi Björling museum in the singer's hometown of Borlange, Sweden. For twenty-five years he has researched the life and career of Jussi Björling as well as other great singers of the past. His international lecture venues include the Smithsonian Institution, Friends of English National Opera, London, and The St. Olav and Kirsten Flagstad Festivals in Norway. He has also produced radio programs and articles about Jussi Björling and other singers.

Tenor Jussi Björling was born in Sweden in 1911. He became a member of the Royal Opera in Stockholm in 1930, and two years later began his international career in Germany, followed by Vienna (1936), Chicago (1937), and London's Royal Opera, Covent Garden (1939). He made his New York Metropolitan Opera debut in 1938 and sang as the leading tenor for the company for the next two decades. Björling made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1940 as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*. His career with San Francisco Opera spanned from 1940 through 1958, with repertory at the War Memorial Opera House and Company tours to Los Angeles and Sacramento including *La Bohème, Un Ballo in Maschera, Il Trovatore, Roméo et Juliette, Faust, Manon Lescaut, Tosca, Don Carlo,* and *Rigoletto.* Björling's flawless vocal technique, silvery beauty of tone, gleaming upper register, and superb interpretive skills have made him one of the greatest and most beloved tenors of the twentieth century. He was regarded as the foremost Italian-sounding tenor of his day in the spinto rôles of Puccini and Verdi, and he also excelled in French opera. His tragic, early death in 1960 at age 49 ended a brilliant career that began during the acoustic era of recording and extended to the advent of stereophonic sound.

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Monday, November 7 at 7:00 p.m.

Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall
San Francisco Conservatory of Music
50 Oak Street in San Francisco

MADE IN SWEDEN – A Tribute to Jussi Björling
Presented by the Consulate General of Sweden
in cooperation with San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Mats Carlsson, *tenor*
Love Dervinger, *piano*
Bertil Bengtsson, *lecturer*
Anders Björling, *speaker*

PROGRAM:
Jussi Björling (1911-1960) possessed one of the greatest tenor voices of the 20th century. His musical legacy, along with other great performers of the classical Swedish singing tradition, will be celebrated in his centennial year with a combination of vocal performances by Mats Carlsson, leading tenor of the Swedish Royal Opera, and a multi-media presentation by Björling expert Bertil Bengtsson. Audiences will be taken on a fascinating and moving journey through the life of this incomparable artist and Swedish music and cultural history. Special guest Anders Björling, Jussi Björling's son, will introduce the program.

MUSICAL SELECTIONS (Mats Carlsson & Love Dervinger) –
Hugo Alfvén (1872-1960) / Saa tag mit hjerte (So take my heart)
W. Peterson-Berger (1867-1942) / När jag för mig själv i mörka skogen går (When I walk by myself in the dark forest)
August Körling (1842-1919) / Aftonstämning (Evening mood)
Ragnar Althén (1883-1961) / Land du välsignade (Thou blessed country)
F. Liszt (1811-1886) / Piano solo: *Petrarch Sonnet 104*
Hugo Alfvén (1872-1960) / Jag längtar dig (I long for you)
C.L Sjöberg (1861-1900) / Tonerna (Harmony)
Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) / "Recondita armonia" from *Tosca*
Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) / "Una furtiva lagrima" from *L'Elisir d'Amore*
F. Chopin (1810-1849) / Piano solo: Ballade No. 4 in F-minor
Amilcare Ponchielli (1834-1886) / "Cielo e mar" from *La Gioconda*
Giuseppi Verdi (1813-1901) / "La donna è mobile" from *Rigoletto*

TICKETS:
$20, available through the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330 or *sfopera.com*.

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