



GREAT SINGERS • CARUSO

AAD

8.110704



Enrico CARUSO

The Complete Recordings Volume 2

Includes:

La donna è mobile

Questa o quella

Cielo e mar!

Qui sotto il ciel

Recorded in 1903–1906

New restorations by Ward Marston

Ernesto Caruso – Complete Recordings, Volume 2

Caruso's first stage successes came in Italy, the country of his birth. It was there too, in Milan, that his recording career began in 1902, but it is with the United States, and in particular the Metropolitan Opera, that his name is inextricably linked. From his début at the Met in 1903 to the end of his life, the November of each year saw him take up residence in New York for the winter season. Ambitious, energetic and intelligent, he soon developed a huge repertoire of operatic rôles; astonishingly, during the five-month season of 1906-07, he performed on stage no fewer than sixty-eight times. New Yorkers loved him and were ecstatic over his singing, while the financial rewards for Caruso were enormous: in fact, this was a happy and successful arrangement for all sides. But the huge public interest that grew up around Caruso and his doings was not only due to his work in the opera house. Even more important in terms of public recognition was the long and mutually profitable relationship with the Victor Talking Machine Company, which made the voice of Caruso familiar to millions who never had the chance to hear him in the flesh.

The contract signed with Victor in 1904, although it included a yearly fee of \$2,000 to ensure that Caruso's services belonged exclusively to them, explicitly made an exception for Victor's English associate, the Gramophone and Typewriter Company; but apart from the two G&T discs presented here Caruso never again recorded in Europe. He had no need to. Fred Gaisberg estimated that during his career the singer made close to five million dollars from sales of his records, a sum which translated into today's values is simply phenomenal. The 'exorbitant' fee of £100 paid to Caruso by Gaisberg for his first recording session in Milan had turned out to be the smallest of small change.

Except for *Recondita armonia*, all the Victor

recordings from 1904 are of arias which Caruso had already recorded in Milan. The decision to cover familiar ground again is understandable. The original recordings, priceless though they were, were made in haste and with little opportunity to look for suitable surroundings. More importantly, the singer himself had no experience of recording and could hardly have been feeling entirely at his ease. The improvement on the first American discs is very noticeable. Not only is the sound clearer on these versions, but Caruso shows greater assurance and a growing vocal mastery. No doubt a generally sanguine view of his own future would have played some part in this. With his career blossoming in New York and a five-year contract signed with Victor only four days earlier, Caruso must have been feeling enormously confident. More significantly, though, he was quite simply a better singer than he had been two years before.

Caruso was always ready to admit that early on in his career he had a voice which was 'short', with a tendency to crack on high notes. Matters had improved greatly from 1897 onwards after he met the soprano Ada Giachetti, who was later to become the mother of his two sons. 'Under her instruction and wise guidance Caruso evolved from a chorister into a true opera singer... Ada Giachetti! Caruso's great fortune and misfortune!' Such was later to be the verdict of Emil Ledner, Caruso's European manager. But even in 1902 there was still some way to go, and in Volume I of this series Caruso can be heard resorting to a very ill-matching falsetto at the close of both *Celeste Aida* and *La donna è mobile*. The first Victor recordings show how his technique had improved even in the space of two years, and by 1906 (the date of the last recordings on this CD) the difference was quite remarkable. We are inclined to think of a singer's technique as the ability to

achieve spectacular effects – the trumpet-like final note at the top of the register or the exquisite high pianissimo. But Caruso's development can be just as easily appreciated in *Cielo e mar*, a simple enough piece which imposes no particular demands on the singer. With the performance included on this CD, Caruso makes his own 1902 version (see Volume I, Naxos 8.110703) appear pedestrian and dull, not because there was anything particularly wrong with it but because he has now learnt the magic art of making singing sound completely effortless and natural. No longer constrained by his own vocal limitations, Caruso can now afford to be entirely at the service of the music. It is a colossal step forward.

And at last the orchestra has arrived in the recording studio. However inadequately its sound is reproduced, however much the improvised wind orchestrations conjure up for us images of a Mississippi paddle steamer, we should not forget the inspiration it must have provided to the singer. The musical support available at a recording session now bore at least some resemblance to what he was used to in the opera house. It is surely no coincidence that these 1906 discs are the first of the truly great Caruso recordings. Of the five items on this CD from that session, four were never recorded again by Caruso, and even *M'appari* was on

sale for eleven years before a second version was made. It is a remarkable indication of how pleased both he and Victor must have been with the results of the day's work.

The beauty of the voice, with its wonderful combination of sweetness and power, was no doubt the first thing that drew the public into the shops to buy these records, but no less admirable is the integrity of the performances. It speaks volumes for Caruso's artistry that almost a century later nothing in his manner of singing strikes a false note. If we listen to Gigli's records today, the marvel of the voice (a more perfect instrument even than Caruso's) can never reconcile us to the tastelessness and self-indulgence of the style. But with Caruso, once we are past the barrier of the poor recording quality, no more allowances need to be made. His renditions of *Che gelida manina* or *Salut, demeure chaste et pure* would not seem out of place if performed on the stage today. The phrasing is simple and unforced, the emphasis is on balance and proportion rather than milking each moment for its effect. These recordings are, and will remain for each new generation of singers, a lesson in the manners and repertoire of opera's grand century.

Hugh Griffith

Producer's note

This volume presents the last of Enrico Caruso's European recordings as well as his first for the Victor Company in the U.S. Tracks 1-3 contain Caruso's three cylinder recordings made for the Anglo-Italian Commerce Company. These cylinders were issued to the public by a process of re-recording the original master cylinders. Several years later, the Pathé company took over the rights to these cylinders and reproduced them in disc format. Sadly, the original AICC masters have disappeared. Consequently, all extant examples of these recordings, whether on cylinder or disc, are second generation copies by definition. Tracks 1-3 have been transferred from mint condition Pathé discs which possess a cleaner sound than the issued AICC cylinders. The remainder of this volume is transferred from original mint condition pressings. Special care has been taken to transfer each disc at the proper speed so that it accurately reflects the speed at which the recording was originally made. Three arias in this volume were recorded a semitone below score pitch. These transpositions have been noted in the track listings.

Ward Marston

In 1997 Ward Marston was nominated for the Best Historical Album Grammy Award for his production work on BMG's Fritz Kreisler collection. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Marston's name is 'synonymous with tender loving care to collectors of historical CDs'. *Opera News* calls his work 'revelatory', and *Fanfare* deems him 'miraculous'. In 1996 Ward Marston received the *Gramophone* award for Historical Vocal Recording of the Year, honouring his production and engineering work on Romophone's complete recordings of Lucrezia Bori. He also served as re-recording engineer for the Franklin Mint's Arturo Toscanini issue and BMG's Sergey Rachmaninov recordings, both winners of the Best Historical Album Grammy. Born blind in 1952, Ward Marston has amassed tens of thousands of opera classical records over the past four decades. Following a stint in radio while a student at Williams College, he became well-known as a reissue producer in 1979, when he restored the earliest known stereo recording made by the Bell Telephone Laboratories in 1932. In the past, Ward Marston has produced records for a number of major and specialist record companies. Now he is bringing his distinctive sonic vision to bear on recordings released on the Naxos Historical label. Ultimately his goal is to make the music he remasters sound as natural as possible and true to life by 'lifting the voices' off his old 78rpm recordings. His aim is to promote the importance of preserving old recordings and make available the works of great musicians who need to be heard.

The Naxos Historical label aims to make available the greatest recordings in the history of recorded music, in the best and truest sound that contemporary technology can provide. To achieve this aim, Naxos has engaged a number of respected restorers who have the dedication, skill and experience to produce restorations that have set new standards in the field of historical recordings.

Also available



GREAT SINGERS • CARUSO

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Enrico
CARUSO

The Complete
Recordings
Volume 1

Includes:

La donna è mobile
Celeste Aida
Una furtiva lagrima
E lucevan le stelle
Non t'amo più

Recorded in 1902 and 1903
New restorations by Ward Marston

**Anglo-Italian Commerce Company, issued by
Pathé Frères on cylinder and disc, October 1903,
Milan (with Piano accompaniment)**

- ① PINI-CORSI: Tu non mi vuoi più bene 2:22
(Mat. 84003 - AICC/Pathé nos. 84003)
② PUCCINI: Tosca – E lucevan le stelle 2:26
(Mat. 84004 - AICC/Pathé nos. 84004)
③ MEYERBEER: Les Huguenots –
Qui sotto il ciel 2:04
(Mat. 84006)

**Victor Talking Machine Company, 1st February
1904, room 826, Carnegie Hall, NY (with piano)**

- ④ VERDI: Rigoletto – Questa o quella 2:08
(Mat. B-994) Victor 81025 HMV 2-52480)
⑤ VERDI: Rigoletto – La donna è mobile 2:10
(Mat. B-995) Victor 81026 HMV 52062)
⑥ DONIZETTI: L'Elisir d'Amore –
Una furtiva lagrima 5:22
(Mat. B-996; C-996-1; Victor 81027/81021;
HMV 52065/052073)
⑦ VERDI: Aida – Celeste Aida 3:44
(Mat. C-997) (Victor 85022 HMV 052074)
⑧ PUCCINI: Tosca – Recondita armonia 2:34
(Mat. B-999; Victor 81029 HMV 52191)
⑨ PUCCINI: Tosca – E lucevan le stelle 2:36
(Mat. B-998; Victor 81028 HMV 52063)
⑩ MASCAGNI: Cavalleria Rusticana –
Siciliana 2:13
(Mat. B-1000; Victor 81030 HMV 52064)
⑪ LEONCAVALLO: Pagliacci –
Vesti la giubba 2:28
(Mat. B-1002; Victor 81032 HMV 52066)

**Victor Talking machine Company, 9th February
1904, room 826, Carnegie Hall, NY (with piano)**

- ⑫ MASSENET: Manon – Il Sogno: Chiudo gli occhi
(Le Rêve: En fermant les yeux je vois) 2:38
(Mat. B-1001-2) Victor 81031 H: 2-52479)

**Gramophone and Typewriter Company Ltd,
8th April, 1904, Milan (with piano)**

- ⑬ LEONCAVALLO: Mattinata 2:04
(accompanied by the composer)
(Mat. 2181 H G&T: GC52034)

- ⑭ BIZET: I Pescatori di perle –
Mi par d'udir ancor 3:23
(Mat. 2681 G&T: 052066)

**Victor Talking Machine Company,
27th February 1905, New York (with piano)**

- ⑮ DONIZETTI: Don Pasquale –
Serenata: Com'è gentil 3:42
(Mat. C-2340) (Transposed down a semi-tone to
A flat) (Victor 85048 HMV 052086)
⑯ BIZET: Carmen – Il fior che avevi a me 3:36
(La fleur que tu m'avais jetée)
(Mat. C-2341) (Victor 85049 HMV 052087)
⑰ MEYERBEER: Les Huguenots –
Bianca al par di neve alpina 3:55
(Plus blanche que la blanche hermine)
(Mat. C-2342-1) (Victor 85056 HMV 052088)
⑱ PONCHIELLI: La Gioconda – Cielo e mar! 3:28
(Mat. C-2343) (Victor 85055 HMV 052089)
⑲ MASCAGNI: Cavalleria Rusticana – Brindisi 2:27
(Mat. B-2344) (Victor 81062 HMV 52193)

**Victor Talking Machine Company,
11th February 1906, New York (with orchestra)**

- ⑳ FLOTOW: Martha – Act III:
M'appari tutt'amor 3:28
(Mat. C-3100-1) (Y 88001 HMV 052121)
㉑ PUCCINI: La Bohème –
Act I: Che gelida manina 4:05
(C-3101-1) (Transposed down a semi-tone to G)
(Victor 88002 HMV 052122)
㉒ GOUNOD: Faust: Act III:
Salut, demeure chaste et pure 4:15
(Mat. C-3102-1) (Victor 88003 HMV 032030)
㉓ VERDI: Il Trovatore – Act III: Di quella pira 1:39
(Mat. B-3103-1) (Transposed down a semi-tone
to B) (Victor 87001 HMV 2-52489)
㉔ DONIZETTI: La Favorita – Act IV: Romanza:
Spirito gentil, ne' sogni miei 3:51
(Mat. C-3104-1) (Victor 88004 HMV 062120)



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AAD

The Complete Recordings of Enrico Caruso

Volume 2

Playing Time
73:52

- | | | | |
|--|------|--|------|
| 1 PINI-CORSI: Tu non mi vuoi più bene | 2:22 | 14 BIZET: I Pescatori di perle – Mi par d'udir ancor | 3:23 |
| 2 PUCCINI: Tosca – E lucevan le stelle | 2:26 | 15 DONIZETTI: Don Pasquale Serenata: Com'è gentil | 3:42 |
| 3 MEYERBEER: Les Huguenots – Qui sotto il ciel | 2:04 | 16 BIZET: Carmen – Il fior che avevi a me | 3:36 |
| 4 VERDI: Rigoletto – Questa o quella | 2:08 | 17 MEYERBEER: Les Huguenots – Bianca al par di neve alpina | 3:55 |
| 5 VERDI: Rigoletto – La donna è mobile | 2:10 | 18 PONCHIELLI: La Gioconda – Cielo e mar! | 3:28 |
| 6 DONIZETTI: L'Elisir d'Amore – Una furtiva lagrima | 5:22 | 19 MASCAGNI: Cavalleria Rusticana – Brindisi | 2:27 |
| 7 VERDI: Aida – Celeste Aida | 3:44 | 20 FLOTOW: Martha – M'appari tutt'amor | 3:28 |
| 8 PUCCINI: Tosca – Recondita armonia | 2:34 | 21 PUCCINI: La Bohème – Che gelida manina | 4:05 |
| 9 PUCCINI: Tosca – E lucevan le stelle | 2:36 | 22 GOUNOD: Faust – Salut, demeure chaste et pure | 4:15 |
| 10 MASCAGNI: Cavalleria Rusticana – Siciliana | 2:13 | 23 VERDI: Il Trovatore – Di quella pira | 1:39 |
| 11 LEONCAVALLO: Pagliacci – Vesti la giubba | 2:28 | 24 DONIZETTI: La Favorita – Romanza: Spirito gentil, ne' sogni miei | 3:51 |
| 12 MASSENET: Manon – Il Sogno: Chiudo gli occhi | 2:38 | | |
| 13 LEONCAVALLO: Mattinata (accompanied by the composer) | 2:04 | | |

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Recorded in October 1903 in Milan (11–13); on 1st February 1904 in room 826, Carnegie Hall, NY (4–11); 9th February 1904 in room 826, Carnegie Hall, NY (12); 8th April 1904 in Milan (13–14); 27th February 1905, New York (15–19); 11th February 1906 in New York (20–24) • Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Ward Marston
Cover image: Enrico Caruso in *Aida* (Lebrecht collection)

