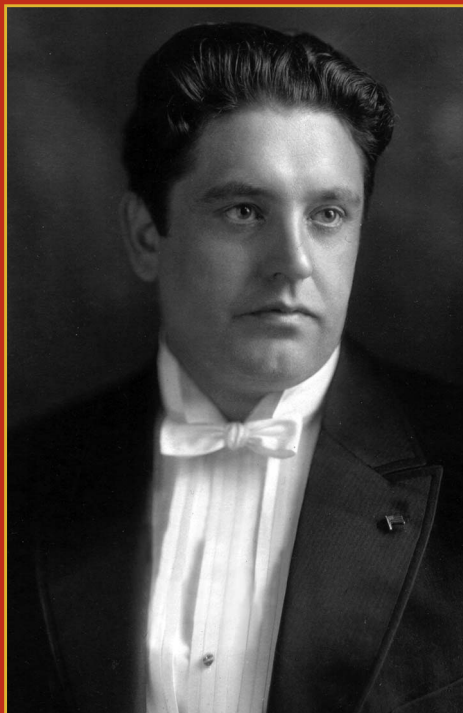




**THE McCORMACK EDITION • 5**

**ADD**

**8.111315**



**John  
McCORMACK**

**1914-1915**

**Acoustic Recordings**

**SCHUBERT**

**VERDI**

**MASCAGNI**

**PUCCINI**

**FOSTER**

**BALFE**

**BENEDICT**

**New restorations by Ward Marston**

## The McCormack Edition, Volume 5

### 1914-1915 recordings made by the Victor Talking Machine Company, Camden, NJ

- SCHUBERT:**
- ① *Softly Through the Night is Calling* (D. 957, No. 4) 3:40  
with **Fritz Kreisler**, violin, **Vincent O'Brien**, piano  
31st March 1914; B-14651-1 (Victor 87191)
- MASCAGNI: Cavalleria Rusticana**
- ② *Ave Maria* (adapted from the 'Intermezzo') 2:58  
with **Fritz Kreisler**, violin, **Vincent O'Brien**, piano  
31st March 1914; B-14652-1 (Victor 87192)
- BALL:**
- ③ *Who Knows?* 2:02  
with **Francis Lapitino**, harp  
6th April 1914; B-14665-1 (Victor 64424)
- LÖHR: The Little Grey Home in the West**
- ④ *The Little Grey Home in the West* 1:37  
with **Rosario Bourdon**, cello  
6th April 1914; B-14666-2 (Victor 64425)
- OLCOTT:**
- ⑤ *My Wild Irish Rose* 3:15  
from *The Romance of Athlone*  
6th April 1914; B-14667-1 (Victor 64426)
- LEHMANN:**
- ⑥ *Bonnie Wee Thing* 3:05  
6th April 1914; B-14668-2 (Victor 64427)
- FEARIS:**
- ⑦ *Beautiful Isle of Somewhere* 2:20  
6th April 1914; B-14669-1 (Victor 64428)
- WELLINGS:**
- ⑧ *Golden Love* 3:35  
7th April 1914; B-14670-1 (Victor 64429)
- D'HARDELLOT:**
- ⑨ *Because* 2:25  
7th April 1914; B-14671-1 (Victor 64430)
- KING:**
- ⑩ *Avourneen* 3:13  
7th April 1914; B-14673-1 (Victor 64431)
- NELSON:**
- ⑪ *Mary of Argyle* 2:50  
7th April 1914; B-14674-1 (Victor 64432)
- KNEASS:**
- ⑫ *Ben Bolt* 3:01  
7th April 1914; B-14675-2 (Victor 64433)
- BARTLETT:**
- ⑬ *A Dream* 2:16  
7th April 1914; B-14676-2 (Victor 64434)
- BALFE: The Bohemian Girl**
- ⑭ *When other lips and other hearts* 2:54  
7th April 1914; B-14677-1 (HMV 4-2488)
- FOSTER:**
- ⑮ *Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming* 3:16  
with **Harry Macdonough** and **Lambert Murphy**,  
tenors; **Reinald Werrenrath**, baritone  
8th April 1914; B-14678-1 (Victor 64423-2)
- DENZA:**
- ⑯ *Funiculi, funiculà* 2:30  
with **Harry Macdonough** and **Lambert Murphy**,  
tenors; **Reinald Werrenrath**, baritone  
8th April 1914; B-14679-1 (Victor 64437)

- VERDI: Rigoletto**
- 17 *Bella figlia dell'amore* 3:51  
with **Lucrezia Bori**, *soprano*; **Josephine Jacoby**,  
*contralto*; **Reinald Werrenrath**, *baritone*  
8th April 1914; C-14657-5 (Victor 89080)
- VERDI: La Traviata**
- 18 *Parigi, o cara* 3:24  
with **Lucrezia Bori**, *soprano*  
8th April 1914; C-14686-1 (Victor 88453)
- PUCCHINI: La Bohème**
- 19 *O soave fanciulla* 3:08  
with **Lucrezia Bori**, *soprano*,  
8th April 1914; B-14658-4 (Victor 87512)
- VERDI: Aida**
- 20 *O terra addio* 3:49  
with **Lucy Isabelle Marsh**, *soprano*  
9th April 1914; C-14694-1 (Victor 74398)
- BENEDICT: The Lily of Killarney**
- 21 *The Moon hath Raised Her Lamp Above* 3:23  
with **Reinald Werrenrath**, *baritone*  
9th April 1914; B-14693-1 (Victor 64440)
- WILLIAMS:**
- 22 *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* 3:20  
with **Harry Macdonough**, *tenor*; **Reinald Werrenrath**,  
*baritone*; **William F. Hooley**, *bass*  
23th November 1914; B-15415-1 (Victor 64476)
- TATE:**
- 23 *Somewhere a Voice is Calling* 2:57  
23th November 1914; B-15419-1 (Victor 64405)
- CRAXTON:**
- 24 *Mavis* 3:26  
23th November 1914; B-15420-2 (Victor 64407)
- DOREL:**
- 25 *When My Ships Come Sailing Home* 3:42  
29th March 1915; C15839-2 (Victor 74428)
- SANDERSON:**
- 26 *Until* 2:13  
30th March 1915; B15844-2 (Victor 64495)
- Tracks 3-24: with Orchestra  
Track 25 and 26: with Orchestra conducted by  
Walter Rogers
- Tracks 1-15 and 21-26 sung in English  
Tracks 16-20 sung in Italian

Special thanks to Lawrence F. Holdridge, Jeffrey Miller and John R. Bolig.

## John McCormack (1884-1945)

### The McCormack Edition Vol. 5

Of the many singers who bridged the musical worlds of the Victorian era and the twentieth century, John McCormack was the most versatile, the most adventurous, and the most modern. When we listen to this tenor's many recordings - even the earliest - we experience a singer who immediately demonstrates mastery of several types of music. He is also a vocalist without any of the old-fashioned mannerisms that would date him as a product of the Victorian world. With John McCormack we observe a timeless technique and a musical creativity that together make him stand alone among the singers of the last century. The 26 recordings included in the present set bring us nearly all the discs McCormack made in 1914; four additional selections from that year are to be found in Volume 4 of the Naxos McCormack Edition (8.110331). In these 26 records, we have outstanding examples of the superlative artistry that made this tenor the most popular concert singer of his time.

John McCormack was born on 14th June 1884, in the central Irish town of Athlone, where he received his early schooling, later attending Summerhill College in County Sligo. By 1902 he was in Dublin, urged by his father to take a job in the Civil Service. The young man had other ideas, however, and decided to become involved in Dublin's musical life, soon joining the Roman Catholic cathedral's Palestrina Choir. It was the director of that choir, Vincent O'Brien, who heard promise in the young man's voice and prepared him for the tenor contest in the May, 1903 Dublin Feis Ceoil, an important music contest. His protégé won the gold medal in that Feis, and with that victory came a new confidence and a sudden widening of his ambition. In 1904 he was singing in the Irish Village at the St. Louis World Exposition; this brief appearance in the United States was followed the next year by serious study in Italy. These vocal studies took place in Milan, under Maestro Vincenzo Sabatini, the father of Raphael, the novelist who wrote *Scaramouche*.

Months of study and hard work were rewarded by a début that took place in the small town of Savona, on

the Gulf of Genoa on 13th January 1906. The opera was Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz*. The title rôle that evening was sung by a very youthful Irishman who was supposed to look twice his 22 years. McCormack did not succeed with that illusion, and his discomfort was prophetic: he would always feel uneasy in costume and on the operatic stage. Musically, it was a modest success, with several performances of *Faust* following in nearby Italian theatres, but auditions for a position at La Scala were not successful. Italian audiences, accustomed to tenors of the more robust variety, never quite responded to the lighter weight of the McCormack instrument.

Realising his situation, the young tenor turned to London, where his attempts to gain entry to Covent Garden only repeated his La Scala experiences. It took a wealthy and sympathetic patron of the arts, Sir John Murray Scott, to open that door, and on 15th October 1907 the youngest principal tenor ever to sing at Covent Garden made his début as Turridu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*. The London critics were muted in their praise, and although McCormack had his foot in the door, he knew he had to work hard to keep it there. For the next few years, the singer worked mightily to develop his vocal flexibility and sharpen his technique. The results are still available to us: the recordings he made for the Odeon Company between 1907 and 1909 document what one critic has described as an artistic leap without parallel in the history of recording. By the time McCormack made his 1909 New York opera début as Alfredo in *La Traviata*, he was a fully mature artist.

While McCormack was struggling to begin an opera career in London, he also called upon his previous experience as a concert singer. He had sung many recitals in Ireland and England, and this ability as a song interpreter would now hold him in good stead. He created a sensation at a March 1907 Boosey Ballad Concert in London, an appearance so successful that Walter Legge always believed this recital, rather than his Covent Garden début eight months later, heralded the true beginning of his career in England.

These parallel careers continued when, late in 1909, McCormack found himself in the United States once again, this time as a tenor in Oscar Hammerstein's short-lived Manhattan Opera Company. That enterprise would soon be bought out by the Metropolitan Opera, but McCormack continued to do a good deal of operatic work during his early seasons in America. Critical reception was good, but when he turned to the concert platform, public response was overwhelming. A McCormack recital only had to be announced for it to be immediately sold out, as concert managers in every city clamored for the next season's dates. One reason for this unprecedented success – but not the sole factor – was the large Irish immigrant population already in the United States. Responding to this message from his audiences, the singer wisely decided to stop competing with operatic tenors of the Caruso and Martinelli variety; after these first years in America, he would appear almost exclusively in the recital hall. The rightness of this decision quickly became apparent as the singer began to command an earned income of a million dollars a year; this tenor had become the highest paid singer of his time. Dramatic proof of this success came during the World War I years, when his record sales for a single period surpassed even those of Caruso himself. When both tenors next met, the great Italian congratulated his Irish colleague, adding with only the slightest hint of sweetness, “But please, Giovanni, not to let it happen again, yes?” It did not, but McCormack had clearly reached a high water mark in his career.

With the Great War raging in Europe, McCormack and his family stayed in the United States, where they felt so comfortable they decided to become American citizens. The singer paid a high price for this change of allegiance, as people in England and other parts of the Empire reacted strongly to a perceived act of betrayal. Demonstrations forced McCormack to cancel a 1920 concert tour of Australia, and he was not to sing another recital in London until 1924. While politics continued to overshadow his musical activities in the English speaking world, the harried singer found comfort in a series of highly successful concert appearances in Paris, Berlin, and Prague. The early 1920s also witnessed his final appearances in opera. These took place in Monte

Carlo, where the tenor sang in such operas as *Tosca* and *The Magic Flute*; in 1923 he would create the rôle of Grizko in a newly edited *La foire de Sorochintzi* of Mussorgsky.

Three years later, he made an unusual concert tour of the Far East, and the end of that decade found him starring in one of Hollywood's earliest sound films. This was *Song O' My Heart*, a film not worthy as also marking the beginning of Maureen O'Sullivan's career. McCormack continued touring Europe and America until November 1938, when he gave his final concert at London's Albert Hall. He would remain a recording artist for HMV until 1942, and when World War II broke out he supported the allied effort with fundraising tours and broadcasts over the BBC. In 1943 he retired to Ireland; two years later, on 16th September 1945, he died at his home just outside of Dublin.

The recording sessions that make up the present set begin in March 1914. The first two selections give us some indication of the musicianship of Vincent O'Brien, the outstanding Dublin musician who had prepared his young singer for the 1903 Feis Ceoil. To thank his mentor for making so much possible, McCormack invited him to be his accompanist on his 1913 concert tour of Australia. Now, on his way back to Ireland, O'Brien joined his pupil in a series of recordings made in New York. It is O'Brien we hear in the piano parts of Schubert's *Serenade* and the Mascagni *Ave Maria*, both supported by Fritz Kreisler, whose melting violin illuminates both pieces. The well known music of the *Intermezzo to Cavalleria Rusticana*, given here with an unfamiliar text by the Victorian lyricist Fred Weatherly, is something between a song and an aria, with singer and accompanist again supported by Kreisler's sympathetic violin.

McCormack's original training for opera is documented by four selections, and each one helps us judge the singer's short-lived career on the opera stage. Because three of these are from Verdi operas, they provide valuable clues as we assess the weight of this tenor's voice and come to conclusions about his abilities as an opera singer. McCormack was an exceptional Verdi tenor, and the excerpts from *Aida*, *Rigoletto*, and *La Traviata* show his real mastery of that

composer's style. McCormack's vocal metal would never be heavy enough for him to sing Radames on stage, but in the opera's final duet, sung here with Lucy Isabelle Marsh, he gives a fine account of himself in the music of the rôle. The Duke in *Rigoletto* was much more amenable to him, and it was a part he sang often, frequently with Melba. Notice his clear, clarion singing in his opening vocal line, beautifully etched against Verdi's musical background. He is joined by, among others, Lucrezia Bori, a soprano who was a close colleague and friend. Their chemistry is immediately obvious, and is heard to greatest advantage in the final Verdi selection, the *Parigi, o cara* from *La Traviata*. One critic, commenting on this recording, described McCormack's tenor as "fragrantly fresh", an apt description; his voice blends beautifully with the liquid fragility of Bori's soprano. Seldom if ever have these ill-fated operatic lovers been so musically well served. The Bori-McCormack magic is heard once again, in the *O soave fanciulla* duet from *La Bohème*. As we listen to the clear musical sympathy between both singers, we are not surprised to learn that, when he would come to write his final book of memoirs, McCormack put Bori's name first on his short list of ideal Mimus.

To come from the world of Verdi and Puccini to that of three Victorian operas in English is to leave the Continent and enter the musical world of the British Isles, experiencing works that have been called, collectively, "The Irish Ring". This melodious group of operas is made up of Michael Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl*, Julius Benedict's *The Lily of Killarney*, and William Vincent Wallace's *Maritana*. Selections from two of these operas are included here: the tenor solo *When other lips* from *The Bohemian Girl*, and the tenor-baritone duet *The Moon hath Raised Her Lamp Above* from *The Lily of Killarney*. These arias in English show what a rich source of melody and opportunities for florid vocalism the "Irish Ring" provided; the art required by these operas allows us to experience the very definition of Victorian singing. That musical style vanished long ago, but in McCormack's seamless vocal line, and in the beauty of his rich Gaelic vowels, we have supreme examples of that lost musical tradition. We note too that, thoroughly Victorian though these

words and melodies may be, McCormack's technique always stands out for what it is, vocal execution that transcends the musical style of any single era. Here, as elsewhere, his musical imagination reveals him to be an utterly modern singer.

When McCormack made this series of records, he had been in America for five years, his efforts having become almost exclusively directed towards the concert stage. The outbreak of the war kept him in the United States, where he was the most popular singer of song the country had ever known. An important part of his song repertoire reflected his strong ethnic identity, both Irish and Scottish; when we listen to *Mary of Argyle* and *Bonnie Wee Thing* (marveling at the high *tessitura* he sustains in this latter recording) we remember that Scottish ancestry. His strong appeal to the thousands of Irish immigrants living in America is attested to by two selections given here. The first is *Avourneen*, the words of the song reporting on the separation and loss experienced by all who had to leave Ireland for the United States; "those you love and those who love you" echoes both sides of the immigrant experience. The other Irish-American selection is one first made popular by a McCormack predecessor, the tenor Chauncey Olcott. Olcott achieved enormous popular success with his musical plays, as he gave his audiences shamrock drenched visions of a romanticized Ireland. *My Wild Irish Rose* was one of that tenor's most famous melodies, but here it is sung with a level of artistry far greater than Olcott could ever have attained.

One additional title must come under the heading of "Irish song", even though the context of the piece is much wider than any single description. *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* was a song destined to become one of the classic anthems of World War I, a conflict that began a scant four months before this recording was made in November, 1914; the record we listen to here was one of the first in a long series of war songs of that era, and it remains the most famous musical theme to come out of that horrendous conflict.

A 1911 musical by Hermann Löhr, *The Little Grey Home in the West* gives us the present song of the same title, while *Ben Bolt* comes to us via another theatrical vehicle, the famous play *Trilby*, based on George du

Maurier's 1894 novel of the same name. *Tribby*, with its theme of the controlling Svengali exercising his power over the hapless heroine, is the distant ancestor of later film versions (including a 1931 *Svengali* with John Barrymore) and at least one musical well known to modern audiences as the *Phantom of the Opera*. The music of this latest treatment of the theme may be very different from that of the 1848 ballad *Ben Bolt*, sung in the 1895 play, but the story line in all of these versions is very similar.

An important aspect of McCormack as artist was his constant exploration of new music. Our singer was always looking for interesting material, a fact borne out by his exploration of American music that began as soon as he came to the United States. In 1911 he had created the tenor rôle in Victor Herbert's American opera, *Natoma*, and here we have two more results of that same adventurous spirit. These are, *Who Knows?* a setting of a poem by the African American writer Paul Laurence Dunbar, and the more familiar Stephen Foster song, *Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming*. Both are sung with understanding and respect, noteworthy qualities in an artist so new to the culture of the United States.

Other popular songs of the day have not perhaps achieved the status of classics, but some of them have found a minor place in musical history. One example is the well known song, *Because*, given here in an interpretation that shows the McCormack tenor in all its ripeness; it is a compelling performance. Other items were equally popular in their day and show us aspects of McCormack's art on record: listen to the echo effect he achieves in Bartlett's *A Dream*, for example. An even more striking example of McCormack's stunning technique is found at the conclusion of *When My Ships Come Sailing Home*. In a brief memoir, the tenor's long-time accompanist, Edwin Schneider, singled out this record, noting that the singer "does a swing of the octave to B flat and down again pianissimo", adding that this vocal feat "stumped Caruso", who vainly tried to imitate it. (After useless attempts, the great Neapolitan was heard to exclaim, "The beast! How

does he do it?"). Finally, observe also the unbroken vocal line that he gives two popular ballads of the day, *Somewhere a Voice is Calling* and *Mavis*. (Both end with one of his musical signatures, the haunting *pianissimo* of which he was the undisputed master.) Such popular items never survive more than a season or so, but here they are rescued from oblivion by this tenor's unique artistry. Part of McCormack's talent lay in persuading his listeners that the material he was giving them was worthy of their attention and worthy of his great art. Listen to McCormack lavish the timeless principles of Italian *bel canto* on these lowly American ballads of the hour.

As we delight in the wide variety of material from McCormack's song repertoire, we understand why song, not opera, became this singer's true *métier*. No one, including McCormack himself, would argue that he was a good actor in opera, yet we are continually impressed by the dramatic quality he brings to his songs. Listen, for example, to the pictorial immediacy he creates in *Golden Love*. As McCormack paints the opening images of that song for us, we are utterly convinced we are in the presence of living beings, interacting with each other in the bucolic landscape described in the words of the song. McCormack's art did not need settings and costumes; with him, drama is created by urgency of tone and coloration of words, all given in the service of music that, somehow, the singer convinces us is better than it is.

One final song needs some elucidation. This is the charming little Neapolitan novelty, *Funiculì, funiculà*. The song dates from 1880, and commemorates the first funicular railway around Mount Vesuvius. As always when McCormack uses his beautiful Italian, that language is made even warmer by his native Irish intonation. However, we have another reason to note the appropriateness of this recording in the McCormack discography: it was Luigi Denza who adjudicated the 1903 Dublin Feis Ceoil and awarded McCormack his gold medal on that occasion. Between Vincent O'Brien's presence in the first two recordings, and Maestro Denza's song, we are brought back to the

threshold moment in McCormack's career when he won his first important musical prize. Italian composer and Irish musician come together for some memorable moments in this volume, just as they shared that

singular moment in Dublin, the one that witnessed the beginning of one of the great musical careers of the twentieth century.

**John Scarry**

### **Notes on the Song Texts**

In concert and on records, John McCormack's legendary diction was one of his most admired qualities. However, with the passage of time, some antiquated words in some song texts need explanation for the modern listener.

The Robert Burns poem *Bonnie Wee Thing* has several words from the Scottish dialect that need clarification. "Canny" is best explained as "gentle" or "mild". "Tine" is further removed from English, and translates as "lose". Equally removed is "stounds" which means "with a sudden pang of the heart".

From Scottish dialect to Irish Gaelic is even more of a linguistic leap. Because McCormack's concert audiences were heavily populated by Irish immigrants for whom their native land was a living memory, we are not surprised that many of the Irish songs he sang very often included words taken directly from Gaelic. The sounds and meanings of these words would have an immediate emotional effect on these audiences. More than one word in the song *Avourneen* requires translation. "Erin" refers to the Gaelic name for Ireland, while additional words include the song title itself ("Avourneen" is not a name, but a term of endearment). Two additional Gaelic words of a similar nature are "acushla" and "asthoreen". "Acushla" is a variation of "macushla", which comes to us from two Gaelic words, "mo" and "chuisle", meaning "my blood" or "pulse of my heart". The meaning is that the person being addressed is as treasured as the pulse of the singer's heart, while "asthoreen" may be translated as "dear" or "beloved". The "-een" ending of this latter word also indicates a petite or diminutive person, "a little dear" being perhaps the closest we can come to an accurate translation of the term.

**John Scarry**

*The author wishes to thank Mr. Paul Worth for his material help in the preparation of these notes.*

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.



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**ADD**

**John McCormack**

The McCormack Edition, Vol. 5

The Acoustic Recordings (1914-1915)

**Playing  
Time  
78:15**

- |           |  |             |
|-----------|--|-------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>SCHUBERT:</b> Softly Through the Night is Calling (D. 957, No. 4)                       | <b>3:40</b> |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>MASCAGNI:</b> <i>Cavalleria Rusticana:</i> Ave Maria<br>(adapted from the 'Intermezzo') | <b>2:58</b> |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>BALL:</b> Who Knows?  | <b>2:02</b> |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>LOHR:</b> <i>The Little Grey Home in the West:</i><br>The Little Grey Home in the West  | <b>1:37</b> |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>OLCOTT:</b> My Wild Irish Rose  | <b>3:15</b> |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>LEHMANN:</b> Bonnie Wee Thing   | <b>3:05</b> |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>FEARIS:</b> Beautiful Isle of Somewhere   | <b>2:20</b> |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>WELLINGS:</b> Golden Love   | <b>3:35</b> |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>D'HARDELOT:</b> Because   | <b>2:25</b> |
| <b>10</b> | <b>KING:</b> Avourneen   | <b>3:13</b> |
| <b>11</b> | <b>NELSON:</b> Mary of Argyle  | <b>2:50</b> |
| <b>12</b> | <b>KNEASS:</b> Ben Bolt  | <b>3:01</b> |
| <b>13</b> | <b>BARTLETT:</b> A Dream   | <b>2:16</b> |
| <b>14</b> | <b>BALFE:</b> <i>The Bohemian Girl:</i> When other lips and other hearts                   | <b>2:54</b> |
| <b>15</b> | <b>FOSTER:</b> Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming  | <b>3:16</b> |
| <b>16</b> | <b>DENZA:</b> <i>Funiculi, funiculà</i>  | <b>2:30</b> |
| <b>17</b> | <b>VERDI:</b> <i>Rigoletto:</i> Bella figlia dell'amore                                    | <b>3:51</b> |
| <b>18</b> | <b>VERDI:</b> <i>La Traviata:</i> Parigi, o cara   | <b>3:24</b> |
| <b>19</b> | <b>PUCCINI:</b> <i>La Bohème:</i> O soave fanciulla  | <b>3:08</b> |
| <b>20</b> | <b>VERDI:</b> <i>Aida:</i> O terra addio   | <b>3:49</b> |
| <b>21</b> | <b>BENEDICT:</b> <i>The Lily of Killarney:</i><br>The Moon hath Raised Her Lamp Above      | <b>3:23</b> |
| <b>22</b> | <b>WILLIAMS:</b> It's a Long Way to Tipperary  | <b>3:20</b> |
| <b>23</b> | <b>TATE:</b> Somewhere a Voice is Calling  | <b>2:57</b> |
| <b>24</b> | <b>CRAXTON:</b> Mavis  | <b>3:26</b> |
| <b>25</b> | <b>DOREL:</b> When My Ships Come Sailing Home  | <b>3:42</b> |
| <b>26</b> | <b>SANDERSON:</b> Until  | <b>2:13</b> |
- with Fritz Kreisler, *violin*, Vincent O'Brien, *piano* (tracks 1, 2)  
with Francis Lapitino, *harp* (track 3)  
with Rosario Bourdon, *cello* (track 4)  
with Lucrezia Bori, *soprano* (tracks 17, 18, 19)  
with Lucy Isabelle Marsh, *soprano* (track 20)  
with Josephine Jacoby, *contralto* (track 17)  
with Harry Macdonough, *tenor* (tracks 15, 16, 22)  
with Lambert Murphy, *tenor* (tracks 15, 16)  
with Reinald Werrenrath, *baritone* (15-17, 21-22)  
with William F. Hooley, *bass* (track 22)

Of the many singers who bridged the musical worlds of the Victorian era and the twentieth century, John McCormack was the most versatile, the most adventurous and the most modern. The excerpts from *Aida*, *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata* demonstrate that McCormack, with his clear, clarion delivery, was an exceptional Verdi tenor. In the selections from Victorian operas by Balfe, Benedict and Wallace, McCormack is the master of florid vocalism and the seamless line. The popular Irish and Irish-American songs are sung with a level of artistry and musical imagination that transcends their humble origins. With Luigi Denza's *Funiculi, funiculà* we are returned to the threshold moment in McCormack's career when the Italian composer adjudicated the 1903 Dublin Feis Ceoil music competition and awarded McCormack the gold medal – the beginning of one of the great musical careers of the twentieth century.

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MADE IN  
THE EU

**IC** 05537

Producer and Audio Restoration: Ward Marston  
Special thanks to Lawrence F. Holdridge, Jeffrey Miller and John R. Bolig

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A complete track list can be found on pages 2 and 3 of the booklet  
Cover image: John McCormack (The John Scarry Collection)

