



**Tito  
SCHIPA**

**The Complete 1924-1925  
Recordings, Vol. 2**

**DONIZETTI**

**PUCCINI**

**DELIBES**

**VERDI**

**FLOTOW**

**LISZT**

## Tito Schipa (1888-1965)

### Schipa Edition • 2

Tito Schipa has become some kind of template for a certain style of lyric tenor, something more than a *tenorino*, something less than a *spinto*. His long career, based on a superb technique and a whole heap of charm, spawned a host of successors. Among those immediately following on from him were Cesare Valletti, Ferruccio Tagliavini and Heddle Nash, themselves succeeded by singers such as Alfredo Kraus, the young Carreras and, most recently, Roberto Alagna. Yet, while all of these have had or are having important careers, none has ever eclipsed the star of the original because there was something in Schipa's art that was frankly inimitable, not least the particularly plangent timbre that was his alone and his perfect judgment of rubato, and those subtle lingerings over a phrase that can be heard as well as anywhere in the first of Wilhelm Meister's solos on this issue.

The fluency and lightness of Schipa's singing, most particularly in Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti, surpassed that of his contemporaries and most of his successors. Because his voice was not large, it was peculiarly well suited to recording, which was able to give a very faithful idea of what Schipa sounded like in the theatre. Realising that, its owner approached the acoustic horn and then the microphone in a wholly relaxed, unaffected way so that his listeners to this day are beguiled by the results. Indeed the word "caress" might have been created for Schipa - try his justly famous account of *Princesita* (Naxos 8.110332), where you hear the very essence of all that makes Schipa's finely chiselled singing, with the final passage sung in a delicate mezza-voce, so special, turning dress into gold with the true alchemist's art.

Born on 2nd January 1888 (that is the date given in Grove - other sources give 1887, 1889 and even 1890), Schipa studied in his birthplace, Lecce (in Puglia), where he was supported in his studies by the local

bishop. Besides singing he studied piano and composition, and from an early age wrote songs and pieces for piano. Six further years of vocal training followed in Milan (with Emilio Piccoli), before he made his début in 1910 as Alfredo in Vercelli (Piedmont), followed by the Duke of Mantua in Messina, with Muzio as his Gilda. The next two years were spent touring the Italian provinces, singing, among other rôles besides the Duke and Alfredo, Rodolfo, Almaviva, Ernesto, and heavier parts such as Turiddu and Cavaradossi that he soon and sensibly dropped. During the 1912-13 season he first sang in Milan, at the Teatro del Verme, as Alfredo and Cavaradossi. In 1913 he went abroad for the first time, to the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires where he appeared as Wilhelm Meister, Alfredo and Gérard (*Lakmé*).

In the following seasons, after débuts in Rome and Naples, he made his first appearance at La Scala on 26th December 1915 in the unexpected rôle of Vladimir in *Prince Igor* (that must have been an occasion to treasure). From then on he was in demand everywhere in Italy and abroad, and he widened his repertory to include Massenet's Des Grieux, Fenton, Elvino, not to forget his creation of the rôle of Ruggero in the premiere of Puccini's *La rondine* on 27th March 1917 at Monte Carlo (another occasion that must have been memorable). In 1919 he went to the United States for the first time, appearing in Chicago as Duke of Mantua to Galli-Curci's Gilda. He also appeared in New York with the Chicago company in 1920 as Elvino, Fenton, Duke of Mantua and Alfredo.

For most of the 1920s he remained in the United States, singing in Chicago and giving hugely successful concerts, only returning to Italy, to La Scala, in 1929, as Nemorino, another of his most successful parts, followed by another, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*. His return was such a triumph that he sang in all the major

houses over the next few years in all his favourite rôles, while going back to the United States for his long-delayed Metropolitan début on 23rd November 1932 as Nemorino, first of many acclaimed appearances in that house in the 1930s. At the same time he now sang regularly at La Scala, including an appearance in *L'amico Fritz* with Favero in the 1936-7 season, which led to their legendary record of the Cherry Duet from Mascagni's pastoral opera. During World War II he remained in Italy and after it re-appeared at La Scala in 1949 in *Il matrimonio segreto*.

Now in his sixties, Schipa's career was beginning to wind down, although he still made occasional operatic appearances and gave sporadic concerts well into the 1950s. Another aspect of his career was the highly popular films he made in the 1930s which preserve for us his delightfully insouciant personality, but he is best encountered in his long list of recordings, made in all periods of his career, vital evidence of his great artistry.

Schipa's acoustic Victors were made when he was at the peak of his career, that is in his early thirties. Oddly, but perhaps understandably, they have been the least reissued among all his recordings, interest on LP and even on CD having so far concentrated on the rare early recordings up to 1921 and thereafter on the electrics, by which process most of the Victor acoustics were re-recorded. They nicely chronicle the shape of his repertory in his prime, which included much popular ephemera of the time, with which he delighted the

groundlings at his recitals and in his films, and at the same time included items from many of, though far from all, the operas in which he appeared. The operatic items include many unbeatable performances. In the three duets that begin the present release one is left wondering if the lovers' duet from the final scene of *Don Pasquale* has ever been better sung. The long list of songs that follow, though perhaps they should not all be played at one sitting, once more encapsulate just why Schipa was so much revered in trifles.

By the 1925 sessions, the electrical process had superseded the acoustic, and of course we hear Schipa's voice in fuller sound. Here is the definitive account of *Una furtiva lagrima*, perhaps even more suavely voiced than the better-known 1929 account and sung with the necessary emotion held within a classically balanced and sensitively maintained legato. Then there are the romantically ardent solos from *Martha* and *Werther* (the latter properly sung in French and with a perfectly controlled diminuendo at the close of the first verse), Gérald's airy piece from *Lakmé*, above all a justly renowned version of the final duet from *La Bohème*, in which Schipa is joined by Bori, possibly the most moving Mimi of all time. So we leave the tenor, even after so many titles, wanting more of his faultless style, silvery tone and unutterable charm, gifts that together make him one of the twentieth century's greatest singers.

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## 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 works 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 78 rpm 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.

- |          |   |      |           |  |      |
|----------|---|------|-----------|--|------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>VERDI: Rigoletto:</b><br><b>È il sol dell'anima</b><br>with <b>Amelita Galli-Curci</b> , soprano<br>Recorded 17th September 1924<br>B 30909-2 (Victor 3038)            | 3:00 | <b>8</b>  | <b>VERDI: Rigoletto:</b><br><b>La donna è mobile</b><br>Recorded 16th June 1925<br>BVE 28492-5 (Victor 1099)               | 2:07 |
| <b>2</b> | <b>DONIZETTI: Lucia di Lammermoor:</b><br><b>Verranno a te</b><br>with <b>Amelita Galli-Curci</b> , soprano<br>Recorded 17th September 1924<br>C 30910-1 (Victor 8067)    | 4:37 | <b>9</b>  | <b>FALLA:</b><br><b>Jota (Siete canciones populares españolas)</b><br>Recorded 16th June 1925<br>BVE 30086-7 (Victor 1153) | 3:02 |
| <b>3</b> | <b>DONIZETTI: Don Pasquale:</b><br><b>Tornami a dir che m'ami</b><br>with <b>Amelita Galli-Curci</b> , soprano<br>Recorded 18th September 1924<br>B 26890-8 (Victor 3034) | 3:01 | <b>10</b> | <b>DI CAPUA:</b><br><b>O sole mio</b><br>Recorded 16th June 1925<br>BVE 33004-7 (Victor 1099)                              | 2:41 |
| <b>4</b> | <b>BARTHELEMY:</b><br><b>Pesca d'ammore</b><br>Recorded 18th September 1924<br>B 28493-11 (Victor 1063)   | 3:22 | <b>11</b> | <b>LISZT (arr. Schipa):</b><br><b>Liebesträum</b><br>Recorded 19th June 1925<br>CVE 30087-13 (Victor 6543)                 | 4:44 |
| <b>5</b> | <b>SCHIPA:</b><br><b>Ave Maria</b><br>Recorded 16th May 1925<br>CVE 30085-5 (Victor 6543)   | 4:25 | <b>12</b> | <b>SCHIPA:</b><br><b>A Cuba</b><br>Recorded 19th June 1925<br>BVE 30093-9 (Victor 1153)                                    | 2:20 |
| <b>6</b> | <b>DE CRESCENZO:</b><br><b>Ce steve 'na vota</b><br>Recorded 15th June 1925<br>BVE 30911-5 (Victor 1438)  | 1:54 | <b>13</b> | <b>TRAD. (arr. Schipa):</b><br><b>La farfalletta</b>   | 1:28 |
| <b>7</b> | <b>CAMPERO:</b><br><b>Madrigal español</b><br>Recorded 15th June 1925<br>BVE 32897-3 (Victor 1126)  | 1:49 | <b>14</b> | <b>ANON (arr. Cibelli):</b><br><b>La girometta</b><br>Recorded 19th June 1925<br>BVE 33002-4 (Victor 1126)                 | 1:47 |
|          |   |      | <b>15</b> | <b>BUZZI-PECCIA:</b><br><b>La niña querida</b><br>Recorded 24th November 1925<br>BVE 33937-2 (Victor 1186)                 | 2:40 |

<b>BUZZI-PECCIA:</b>			
<b>16 Mal d'amore</b>	3:23	<b>21 Oh! Dio, Mimi!</b>	3:15
Recorded 24th November 1925		with <b>Lucrezia Bori</b> , soprano	
BVE 33938-3 (Victor 1186)		Recorded 24th November 1925	
		CVE 33944-2 (Victor 8068)	
<b>FLOTOW: Martha</b>			
<b>17 M'appari</b>	3:20	<b>22 Pourquoi me réveiller?</b>	2:48
Recorded 24th November 1925		Recorded 25th November 1925	
CVE 33939-2 (Victor 6570)		BVE 33945-3 (Victor 1187)	
<b>DONIZETTI: L'elisir d'amore</b>			
<b>18 Una furtiva lagrima [Take 2]</b>	4:23	<b>23 Fantaisie aux divins mensonges</b>	3:16
Recorded 24th November 1925		Recorded 25th November 1925	
CVE 33940-2 (Victor 6570)		BVE 28494-10 (Victor 1187)	
<b>DONIZETTI: L'elisir d'amore</b>			
<b>19 Una furtiva lagrima [Take 3]</b>	4:23	Tracks 1-3, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16-21 sung in Italian	
Recorded 24th November 1925		Tracks 4, 6 sung in Neapolitan dialect	
CVE 33940-3 (Victor 6570)		Track 5 sung in Latin	
		Tracks 7, 9, 12, 15 sung in Spanish	
		Track 22, 23 sung in French	
<b>PUCCHINI: La bohème</b>			
<b>20 Sono andati?</b>	4:27	Tracks 1-12, 15-23:	
with <b>Lucrezia Bori</b> , soprano		Victor Orchestra • Rosario Bourdon	
Recorded 24th November 1925			
CVE 33943-3 (Victor 8068)		Tracks 13, 14: José Echániz, piano	

Playing  
Time  
72:14

# Tito Schipa (1888-1965)

SCHIPA EDITION • 2

The Complete Victor Recordings 1924-1925, Vol. 2



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- 1 **VERDI: Rigoletto:** È il sol dell'anima \*
- 2 **DONIZETTI: Lucia di Lammermoor:** Verranno a te \*
- 3 **DONIZETTI: Don Pasquale:** Tornami a dir che m'ami \*
- 4 **BARTHELEMY: Pesca d'ammore**
- 5 **SCHIPA: Ave Maria**
- 6 **DE CRESCENZO: Ce steve 'na vota**
- 7 **CAMPERO: Madrigal español**
- 8 **VERDI: Rigoletto:** La donna è mobile
- 9 **FALLA: Jota (Siete canciones populares españolas)**
- 10 **DI CAPUA: O sole mio**
- 11 **LISZT: Liebestraum (arr. Schipa)**
- 12 **SCHIPA: A Cuba**
- 13 **TRAD. (arr. Schipa): La farfalletta**
- 14 **ANON. (arr. Cibelli): La girometta**
- 15 **BUZZI-PECCIA: La niña querida**
- 16 **BUZZI-PECCIA: Mal d'amore**
- 17 **FLOTOW: Martha: M'appari**
- 18 **DONIZETTI: L'elisir d'amore: Una furtiva lagrima [Take 2]**
- 19 **DONIZETTI: L'elisir d'amore: Una furtiva lagrima [Take 3]**
- 20 **PUCCINI: La bohème: Sono andati? †**
- 21 **PUCCINI: La bohème: Oh! Dio, Mimi! †**
- 22 **MASSENET: Werther: Pourquoi me réveiller?**
- 23 **DELIBES: Lakmé: Fantaisie aux divins mensonges**

\* with Amelita Galli-Curci, Soprano

† with Lucrezia Bori, Soprano

Tito Schipa (1888-1965) began his career as a composer before becoming a professional singer. After making his operatic début as Alfredo in *La traviata* in 1910, he made numerous appearances throughout Europe. He joined the Chicago Civic Opera in 1919, and remained there until 1932 when he made his début at New York's Metropolitan Opera. The outstanding *tenore di grazia* of his time, Schipa had a distinctively sweet, yet incisive timbre to his voice. The fluency and lightness of his singing, most particularly in Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti, surpassed that of his contemporaries and most of his successors, while his ability to express a sense of pathos and passionate intensity was rare for a lyric tenor. This second of two volumes of Schipa's complete early Victor recordings presents the singer in his youthful prime. Volume 1 is available on 8.110332.

MADE IN  
THE EU

05537



Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Ward Marston  
Special thanks to Lawrence Holdridge, Peter Lack and Jeffrey Miller  
Previously released on Romophone

[www.naxos.com](http://www.naxos.com)

A complete track list can be found in the booklet  
Cover image: Tito Schipa (The Tully Potter Collection)

