



Enrico
CARUSO

**The Complete
Recordings
Volume 9**

Includes:

Parle-moi de ma mère
(two previously unissued
1914 recordings)

Libiamo, libiamo

Luna d'estate

'O sole mio

Vecchia zimarra

Recorded 1914-1916

New restorations by Ward Marston

Enrico Caruso Complete Recordings, Volume 9

Caruso's career at the New York Met, his artistic home, was little affected by the outbreak of World War I in 1914. In Europe, however, things were soon to be very different. Without even being aware of it, Caruso sang a final farewell to Covent Garden in *Tosca* on 29th June, the day after the assassination in Sarajevo that lit the fuse for war. There would be no more appearances in Germany or Austria. After 1915, when Italy entered the conflict, it became increasingly difficult for Caruso to make any contact with his two sons, who were educated in England but spent summer holidays on the Caruso estate at Bellosguardo, near Florence.

As ever in Caruso's life, there was no shortage of work. Leaving New York in February 1915, while the season still had two months to run, he sailed to Monte Carlo, where he sang during March and April. There followed a punishing season in Argentina and Uruguay, during which the tenor made 52 appearances in 104 days. It would be unimaginable for any star performer nowadays to agree to such a schedule, entailing not just enormous physical strain but also inevitable anxieties over the need to fulfil the expectations of each new audience; Caruso was increasingly weighed down by the realisation that for anyone standing on the summit there is nowhere to go but down. A further test awaited him on his return to Italy in September, when he sang two performances of *Pagliacci* under Toscanini in Milan. He had not appeared there since 1902, when his singing had impelled the visiting representative of the Gramophone Company to make an immediate offer of a recording contract. The critic of the *Corriere della sera* gave an appreciative summary of how things had changed in the intervening years:

"He returns after many years' absence with a voice whose high notes are appreciably enhanced, its timbre become fuller and more manly, with a much greater breath span and greater expressive resources. In sum, his singing has a highly dramatic quality which

contrasted vividly with Milanese memories of a graceful tenor with an almost feminine delicacy in 'Amor ti vieta' from *Fedora* and other celebrated pieces of the same type."

It would be interesting to know how truly that listener actually recollected the quality of the voice as he had heard it thirteen years before. For of course by now it was possible for anyone to mark the changes that had taken place simply by comparing the recordings Caruso had made over the years. As if to make the task even easier, early in 1915 Victor were helpful enough to issue a new version of Tosti's *La mia canzone* (track 6), one of the songs that Caruso had recorded during the second visit of the Gramophone Company to Milan in 1902 (Complete Caruso vol. 1, *Naxos 8.110703*).

If one is struck by the vastly increased assurance of the later version and the fuller, rounder tone of the voice, no less obvious is a complete change in approach on the part of everyone concerned in the recording. In the Milan version, the piano accompaniment was rushed and flurried, the interlude an unhappy mess. No one seems to have minded: the important thing was that Caruso was singing into the horn in that hotel room and they were cutting some discs. Within a few years that attitude had disappeared. Sessions were properly rehearsed and nothing sub-standard would ever see the inside of a record shop. Not only that, but Caruso was now learning from his competitors. The two numbers with violin obbligato by Mischa Elman (tracks 11 and 12) were almost certainly prompted by the example of John McCormack, who over many years produced a steady stream of marvellous recordings in partnership with the incomparable Fritz Kreisler.

By this stage of his career Caruso had already recorded almost all the big operatic numbers that suited his voice. What remained was mostly odd little gems from operas that have since disappeared without trace – *Il Guarany*, *Le Cid*, *La Reine de Saba*. There were

exceptions, however: an aria from Verdi's *Macbeth* and the classic '*Angelo casto e bel*' (track 10), a severe test of pure bel canto singing which shows Caruso still able to draw out the sweetest and most lyrical tones when the occasion demands. On more familiar ground, '*Ingemisco*' from Verdi's *Requiem* and the *Brindisi* from *La Traviata* (track 1) filled two remaining gaps in the catalogue. Two versions survive (tracks 4 and 5) of the duet '*Parle-moi de ma mère*' from *Carmen*, though no recording was ever issued: it had always been supposed that only take 3 had been preserved, in the form of a test pressing made before the masters were destroyed, but a similar pressing of take 2 was recently found languishing in a barn in New Jersey by the producer, Ward Marston.

Almost half the items on this CD are in French, a language in which Caruso was now well practised; but his first allegiance was to the popular song tradition of his own country, and especially his birthplace. Michele Ciociano, Eduardo Di Capua, Gaetano Pennino and the cosmopolitan Paolo Tosti were just four of a small army of composers who flourished in Naples during the decades leading up to World War I, creating a world of

love and yearning for which Di Capua's immortal '*O sole mio*' stands as a universal symbol. This song, with its unquenchable zest for living, seems incapable of ever growing stale, and Caruso's performance of it is a classic (track 16), the top notes so easy and rich that they seem to come from the middle of his voice.

Without doubt, the strangest item on this CD is '*Vecchia zimarra*' from *La Bohème* (track 20). This was never intended for public sale, and the few copies made were given to Caruso's friends, to commemorate an extraordinary feat he had once performed on stage in Philadelphia. The real Colline in that 1913 production, the bass De Segurola, on one occasion had a throat infection, and by Act 4 his voice had gone completely. Caruso, who had jokingly said earlier in the day that he would help him out by singing the aria for him, did just that. Curiously, the Philadelphia press made no mention of the incident the following day; is it possible that no one in the audience had even noticed that the showpiece bass number was sung by the star tenor?

Hugh Griffith

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.

Enrico Caruso

Complete Recordings, Volume 9

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|----|---|------|
| 1 | VERDI: La Traviata, Act I: Brindisi: Libiamo, libiamo
Alma Gluck, soprano
(20th April 1914, Mat. B-14729-2) 87511
Orchestra and Chorus of the Metropolitan Opera, Giulio Setti, conductor | 3:09 |
| 2 | GOMES: Il Guarany, Act I: Sento una forza indomita
Emmy Destinn, soprano
(20th April 1914, Mat. C-14730-1) 89078
Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera, Giulio Setti, conductor | 4:33 |
| 3 | SZULC: Hantise d'amour
(10th December 1914, Mat. B-14357-2) 87211
Walter B. Rogers, conductor | 3:02 |
| 4 | BIZET: Carmen, Act I: Parle-moi de ma mère
Frances Alda, soprano
(10th December 1914, Mat. B-15483-2) (Never previously issued)
Walter B. Rogers, conductor | 4:47 |
| 5 | BIZET: Carmen, Act I: Parle-moi de ma mère
Frances Alda, soprano
(10th December 1914, Mat. C-15483-3) (Unissued on 78 rpm)
Walter B. Rogers, conductor | 4:49 |
| 6 | TOSTI: La mia canzone
(7th January 1915, Mat. B-15481-3) 87213
Walter B. Rogers, conductor | 2:40 |
| 7 | PENNINO: Pecchè?
with Bianculli, mandolin
(7th January 1915, Mat. C-15568-1) 88517
Walter B. Rogers, conductor | 4:28 |
| 8 | CIOCIANO: Cielo turchino
(7th January 1915, Mat. B-15569-1) 87218
Walter B. Rogers, conductor | 2:36 |
| 9 | VERDI: Requiem: Ingemisco
(7th January 1915, Mat. C-15570-3) 88514
Walter B. Rogers, conductor | 4:18 |
| 10 | DONIZETTI: Il Duca d'Alba, Act IV: Angelo casto e bel
(7th January 1915, Mat. C-15572-2) 88516
Walter B. Rogers, conductor | 3:48 |

11	DENZA: Si vous l'aviez compris Mischa Elman, violin; Gaetano Scognamiglio, piano (6th February 1915, Mat. C-15682-3) 89084	4:25
12	LEONCAVALLO: Les deux sérénades Mischa Elman, violin; Gaetano Scognamiglio, piano (6th February 1915, Mat. C-15683-2) 89085	3:00
13	FRANCK: La Procession (5th February 1916, Mat. C-17121-3) 88556 Walter B. Rogers, conductor	4:26
14	MASSENET: Le Cid, Act III: Ah! tout est bien fini!; Ô Souverain, ô Juge, ô Père! (5th February 1916, Mat. C-17122-2) 88554 Walter B. Rogers, conductor	4:10
15	TOSTI: Luna d'estate (5th February 1916, Mat. B-17123-3) 87242 Walter B. Rogers, conductor	2:14
16	DI CAPUA: 'O sole mio (5th February 1916, Mat. B-17124-1) 87243 Walter B. Rogers, conductor	3:23
17	GOUNOD: La Reine de Saba, Act II: Faiblesse de la race humaine!...Inspirez-moi, race divine (5th February 1916, Mat. C-17125-2) 88552 Walter B. Rogers, conductor	4:29
18	ROTOLI: Mia sposa sarà la mia bandiera (23rd February 1916, Mat. C-17195-2) Victor: 88555 Walter B. Rogers, conductor	4:13
19	VERDI: Macbeth, Act IV: Ah, la paterna mano (23rd February 1916, Mat. C-17197-1) Victor: 88558 Walter B. Rogers, conductor	3:23
20	PUCCINI: La Bohème, Act IV: Vecchia zimarra (23rd February 1916, Mat. B-17198-1) 87499 Walter B. Rogers, conductor	2:05
21	ADAM: Cantique de Noël (23rd February 1916, Mat. C-17218-3) 88561 Walter B. Rogers, conductor	4:17

Tracks 1-12 recorded in New York, NY • Tracks 13-21 recorded in Camden, NJ.



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The Complete Recordings of Enrico Caruso

Volume 9

 Playing
Time
78:14

1 VERDI: <i>La Traviata, Act I: Brindisi: Libiamo, libiamo</i>	3:09	12 LEONCAVALLO: <i>Les deux sérénades</i>	3:00
2 GOMES: <i>Il Guarany, Act I: Sento una forza indomita</i>	4:33	13 FRANCK: <i>La Procession</i>	4:26
3 SZULC: <i>Hantise d'amour</i>	3:02	14 MASSENET: <i>Le Cid, Act III: Ah! tout est bien fini! Ô Souverain, ô Juge, ô Père!</i>	4:10
4 BIZET: <i>Carmen, Act I: Parle-moi de ma mère (previously unissued)</i>	4:47	15 TOSTI: <i>Luna d'estate</i>	2:14
5 BIZET: <i>Carmen, Act I: Parle-moi de ma mère (unissued on 78 rpm)</i>	4:49	16 DI CAPUA: <i>'O sole mio</i>	3:23
6 TOSTI: <i>La mia canzone</i>	2:40	17 GOUNOD: <i>La Reine de Saba, Act II: Faiblesse de la race humaine!... Inspirez-moi, race divine</i>	4:29
7 PENNINO: <i>Pecchè?</i>	4:28	18 ROTOLI: <i>Mia sposa sarà la mia bandiera</i>	4:13
8 CIOCIANO: <i>Cielo turchino</i>	2:36	19 VERDI: <i>Macbeth, Act IV: Ah, la paterna mano</i>	3:23
9 VERDI: <i>Requiem: Ingemisco</i>	4:18	20 PUCCINI: <i>La Bohème, Act IV: Vecchia zimarra</i>	2:05
10 DONIZETTI: <i>Il Duca d'Alba, Act IV: Angelo casto e bel</i>	3:48	21 ADAM: <i>Cantique de Noël</i>	4:17
11 DENZA: <i>Si vous l'aviez compris</i>	4:25		

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MADE IN
E.C.**Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Ward Marston**

Thanks to John Bolig and Lawrence F. Holdridge

Tracks 1-12 recorded in New York City • Tracks 13-21 recorded in Camden, New Jersey
Music Notes: Hugh Griffith • All tracks accompanied by the Victor Orchestra
Tracks 1 and 2 with the Metropolitan Opera Chorus • Giulio Setti, Conductor
Tracks 3-10 and 13-21: Walter B. Rogers, Conductor

Track 1: Alma Gluck, Soprano • Track 2: Emmy Destinn, Soprano
Tracks 11 and 12: Mischa Elman, Violin • Gaetano Scognamiglio, Piano
A complete track list can be found on pages 5 and 6 of the booklet
Cover image: *Enrico Caruso in New York c. 1915* (Private collection)

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