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Nimbus Records

ENRICO CARUSO
Opera Volume 3



PRIMA VOCE

Enrico Caruso 1873 - 1921 • Opera Volume 3

DISC ONE

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| 1 | CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA , Mascagni - O Lola ch'ai di latti la cammisa
Rec: 28 December 1910 Matrix: B-9745-1 Victor Cat: 87072
Francis J. Lapitino, harp | 2.50 |
| 2 | LA GIOCONDA , Ponchielli - Cielo e mar
Rec: 14 March 1910 Matrix: C-8718-1 Victor Cat: 88246 | 2.57 |
| 3 | CARMEN , Bizet - La fleur que tu m'avais jetée (sung in Italian)
Rec: 7 November 1909 Matrix: C-8349-1 Victor Cat: 88209 | 3.53 |
| 4 | STABAT MATER , Rossini - Cujus animam
Rec: 15 December 1913 Matrix: C-14200-1 Victor Cat: 88460 | 4.47 |
| 5 | PETITE MESSE SOLENNELLE , Rossini - Crucifixus
Rec: 16 September 1920 Matrix: B-24474-1 Victor Cat: 87335 | 3.18 |
| 6 | SALVATOR ROSA , Gomes - Mia piccirella
Rec: 11 September 1919 Matrix: C-23150-1 Victor Cat: 88638 | 3.53 |
| 7 | IL GUARANY , Gomes - Sento una forza indomita
Rec: 20 April 1914 Matrix: C-14730-1 Victor Cat: 89078
with Emmy Destinn | 4.36 |
| 8 | LA BOHEME , Puccini - O Mimì, tu più non torni
Rec: 17 March 1907 Matrix: C-4315-1 Victor Cat: 89006
with Antonio Scotti | 3.12 |
| 9 | L'ELISIR D'AMORE , Donizetti - Una furtiva lagrima
Rec: 26 November 1911 Matrix: C-996-2 Victor Cat: 88339 | 4.25 |
| 10 | LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR , Donizetti - Chi mi frena
Rec: 19 January 1912 Matrix: C-11446-3 Victor Cat: 96201
with Luisa Tetrazzini, Josephine Jacoby, Pasquale Amato, Marcel Journet, Angelo Bada | 4.12 |

and pitch alters (typically it rises) by as much as a semitone during the performance if played at a single speed. The total effect of adjusting for all these variables is revealing: it questions the accepted wisdom that Caruso's voice at the time of his early recordings was very much lighter than subsequently. Certainly the older and more artistically assured he became, the tone became even more massive, and likewise the high A naturals and high B flats also became even more monumental in their intensity. But it now appears, from this evidence, that the baritone timbre was always present. That it has been missed is simply the result of playing the early discs at speeds that are consistently too fast.

Of Caruso's own opinion on singing and the effort required we know from a published interview that he believed it should be every singers aim to ensure *'that in spite of the creation of a tone that possesses dramatic tension, any effort should be directed in making the actual sound seem effortless'*.

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He was in Naples at the Vesuvio Hotel intending to recuperate from an operation he had undergone in the USA. He required further treatment, but misunderstandings by his Italian doctors caused tragic delays leading to his death on 2nd April 1921. It was not only a loss to music, but was felt by the world at large who mourned him. In Naples, the city of his birth, he was accorded a virtual State Funeral; the King of Italy himself opening the church for the procession of the cortège.

This is the final *Prima Voce* volume of all Caruso's published operatic recordings – the selection being driven by what was outstanding which itself was the result of what had proven most elusive. The recordings span virtually Caruso's entire recording career from 1902 to 1918 through which we hear encapsulated the development of his art and voice production and also the technical capabilities of the Gramophone.

After the original 1902 recordings made for the Gramophone & Typewriter Company, Caruso became contracted exclusively to Victor in New York, where he remained. Apart, that is, from the 1903 Zonophone discs included here. These extremely rare discs serve to illustrate an inherent problem of early discs which have particular reference to Caruso. In case anyone is still unclear, '78 rpm' was only ever a term applied for the convenience of record company marketing departments. Virtually no discs play accurately at 78 rpm. In the early years, when not even vague standards were established, speeds in regular use covered a huge range from 65 rpm to 90 rpm. What makes the situation worse is that there is no obvious stability within companies, during individual recording sessions or from disc to disc. Since the difference between 78 rpm and 75 rpm is a semitone the scope for error is significant.

In the case of the early recordings for Zonophone careful listening led the *Prima Voce* team to two conclusions: the correct playing speeds are *lower* than previously thought

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| [11] | MARTA , Flotow - Siam giunta ... Questa amera é per voi ... Presto, presto
Rec: 7 January 1912 Matrix: C-11437-2/38-1/39-1 Victor Cat:95207/08/09
with Frances Alda, Josephine Jacoby, Marcel Journet | 10.15 |
| [12] | FAUST , Gounod - Seigneur Dieu, que vois-je! ... Eh! quoi! toujours seule?
Rec: 12 January 1910 Matrix: C-8544-1/47-1 Victor Cat: 95204/05
with Geraldine Farrar, Gabrielle Lejeune-Gilbert, Marcel Journet | 8.39 |
| [13] | SAMSON ET DALILA , Saint-Saëns - Je viens célébrer la victoire
Rec: 10 February 1919 Matrix: C-22575-2 Victor Cat: 89088
with Louise Homer, Marcel Journet | 3.41 |
| [14] | SAMSON ET DALILA , Saint-Saëns - Vois ma misère, hélas
Rec: 7 December 1916 Matrix: C-18821-1 Victor Cat: 88581
with Metropolitan Opera Chorus | 4.48 |
| [15] | LE CID , Massenet - Ô Souverain, ô Juge, ô Père
Rec: 5 February 1916 Matrix: C-17122-2 Victor Cat: 88554 | 4.18 |
| [16] | AMADIS DE GAULE , Lully - Bois épais
Rec: 16 September 1920 Matrix: B-24465-6 Victor Cat: 1437 | 3.15 |

Total playing time

73.02

Tracks 5, 6, 13, 14, 16 – conducted by Pasternack
Tracks 7, 10, 11, 12, 15 – conducted by Rogers

DISC TWO

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|-----|---|------|
| [1] | EL MILAGRO DE LA VIRGEN , Chapi - Flores purisimas
Rec: 3 April 1914 Matrix: C-14662-1 Victor Cat: 88671
with Gaetano Scognamiglio, <i>piano</i> | 4.33 |
| [2] | AIDA , Verdi - Celeste Aida
Rec: 29 March 1908 Matrix: C-3180-3 Victor Cat: 88127 | 3.32 |

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[3]	AIDA , Verdi - Già i sacerdoti adunansi ... Aida a me togliesti Rec: 29 December 1910 Matrix: C-9748-1/49-1 Victor Cat: 89050/51 with Louise Homer	7.10
[4]	DON CARLOS , Verdi - Dio, che nell'alma infondere Rec: 30 December 1912 Matrix: C-12752-1 Victor Cat: 89064 with Antonio Scotti	3.29
[5]	IL TROVATORE , Verdi - Ai nostri monti Rec: 17 January 1913 Matrix: C-12804-2 Victor Cat: 89060 with Ernestine Schumann-Heink	4.29
[6]	LA TRAVIATA , Verdi - Libiamo, libiamo ne' lieti calici Rec: 20 April 1914 Matrix: B-14729-2 Victor Cat: 87511 with Alma Gluck and Metropolitan Opera Chorus	3.14
[7]	LA FORZA DEL DESTINO , Verdi - Sleale! il segreto fu dunque Rec: 10 July 1918 Matrix: C-22123-2 Victor Cat: 89087 with Giuseppe de Luca	4.24
[8]	RIGOLETTO , Verdi - Bella figlia dell'amore Rec: 20 February 1907 Matrix: C-4259-1 Victor Cat: 96000 with Bess Abbott, Louise Homer, Antonio Scotti	4.04
[9]	MESSA DA REQUIEM , Verdi - Ingemisco Rec: 7 January 1915 Matrix: C-15570-3 Victor Cat: 88514	4.22
[10]	LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR , Donizetti - Chi mi frena Rec: 25 January 1917 Matrix: C-19133-2 Victor Cat: 95212 with Amelita Galli-Curci, Minnie Egner, Giuseppe de Luca, Marcel Journet, Angelo Bada	4.11
[11]	RIGOLETTO , Verdi - Bella figlia dell'amore Rec: 25 January 1917 Matrix: C-19132-2 Victor Cat: 95100 with Amelita Galli-Curci, Flora Perini, Giuseppe de Luca	4.07
[12]	CARMEN , Bizet - La fleur que tu m'avais jetée (sung in Italian) Rec: 27 February 1905 Matrix: C-2341-1 Victor Cat: 85049	3.45

NI 7924/25

artist Gironi (who is singing the ship's captain) was supposed to answer 'do you want to populate America young man' but could not go beyond the word 'populate' before he burst into tears. The conductor Vitale, the good father figure to us all, took a large white handkerchief from his pocket and pretending to dry his perspiration, dried his tears.

Caruso was fortunate enough to create a number of important tenor roles early in his career including Maurizio in Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur* and Loris in Giordano's *Fedora* and went on to enjoy unbroken success in virtually every major opera house. His appeal was universal and his name on the cast list always ensured a sell out. Nowhere was this truer than at the Metropolitan, New York, where despite a rather indifferent debut in 1903 he was to dominate the house for almost two decades, appearing more than 600 times in almost 40 operas, singing sometimes twice a week. He created there the role of Dick Johnson in Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*, and was the star attraction on opening night for season after season alongside the finest artists of his time.

Caruso was thickset and hardly cut a romantic figure, yet his acting was convincing enough to win approval from the most demanding critics, satisfied that with his voice he embodied the charm and virility of any heroic character he undertook. Such was his position that in New York every tenor (resident or visiting) would risk being judged against Caruso's peerless sense of style and informed phrasing. He occupied a unique place in the pantheon of great operatic artists, being equally adored as singer *and* personality by the American public who saw in him an honourable and fine fellow. He was a supremely successful concert artist, a dedicated fundraiser and by common consent a kind and generous colleague. His passing at the peak of his career and aged just forty-eight was an enormous shock.

quality' which is apparent in many of his rival's voices, although not in his own. But musical tastes were changing: *verismo* was in vogue, and Caruso was the first to make the leap to a more dramatic outpouring of rich and telling vocal tone able to project over the heavier orchestrations of Puccini *et al* and consequently thrilling his audiences in a revolutionary way.

That most literate of the inter-war tenors, Giacomo Lauri-Volpi, in his book *Voci Parallele* states that Caruso when singing Nemorino's aria *Una furtiva lagrima* from *Elisir d'amore* with his verista style "acquired a breadth of expression and passion to which the public were unaccustomed. His predecessors had turned the well-known aria into a miniature, an ingenious work of elegance and inferred sighs. The phrase "m'ama, si m'ama, lo vedo" issuing from the throat of Caruso, on the contrary, was a cascade of sound which filled the house, leaving the audience dumbstruck with amazement". And of course, although he did not create the role of Canio, his recording of *Vesti la Giubba* from Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* not only secured for him one of his earliest contracts, it also became what we would call 'top of the pops'.

In his fine biography Edward Greenfield recounts another moment that attests to the effect the voice alone could make on Caruso's listeners. The famous conductor Vittorio Gui recalled an incident in 1902 when as a youth of seventeen he attended a rehearsal of *Manon Lescaut*. In the final act, when Des Grieux asks to be let on board to join Manon, instead of marking (singing softly or taking alternative lower notes), Caruso threw off his fashionable hat and cane and suddenly became the character Des Grieux, exploding with his desperate cry of supplication - *Guardate pazzo son*.

A great wave of emotion overcame all the musicians, chorus and conductor. We the students dried our tears in the dark. Finally the rehearsal is interrupted as the poor old supporting

13	AIDA , Verdi - Celeste Aida Rec: 11 April 1902 Matrix: 1784b with Salvatore Cottone, <i>piano</i>	G&T	Cat: 52369	3.28
14	MEFISTOFELE , Boito - Dai campi, dai prati Rec: 11 April 1902 Matrix: 1789b with Salvatore Cottone, <i>piano</i>	G&T	Cat: 52348	2.35
15	ADRIANA LECOUVREUR , Cilea - No, più nobile Rec: 1 December 1902 Matrix: 2880b Accompanied by the composer	G&T	Cat: 52419	2.40
16	L'ELISIR D'AMORE , Donizetti - Una furtiva lagrima Rec: 19 April 1903 Matrix: X-1552	Zonophone		3.42
17	TOSCA , Puccini - E lucevan le stelle Rec: 19 April 1903 Matrix: X-1553	Zonophone		2.56
18	GERMANIA , Franchetti - No, non chiuder gli occhi Rec: 19 April 1903 Matrix: X-1554	Zonophone		3.18
19	RIGOLETTO , Verdi - La donna è mobile Rec: 19 April 1903 Matrix: X-1555	Zonophone		2.41

Total playing time

72.40

Track 6 – conducted by Setti

Tracks 7, 10, 11 – conducted by Pasternack

Track 9 – conducted by Rogers

With sincere thanks to Bill Breslin for his generous assistance with the source material.

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Series consultant Norman White. <http://www.wyastone.co.uk>

Enrico Caruso 1873-1921

In spite of the enormous amount of media hyperbole heaped on Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo and José Carreras in the 1990's, only one name dominated most of the 20th century as being the epitome of the Italian operatic tenor - Enrico Caruso. What is more, he became a household name to a public who would never enter an opera house in their lives. He was special, but never without competition; indeed he was active in an era that could boast many equally distinguished tenors with similar international reputations. Fernando de Lucia, Giuseppe Anselmi, Alessandro Bonci, Fernando Carpi, and Carlo Dani were each models of the previous generation, and Beniamino Gigli (Caruso's logical successor) Giovanni Martinelli, Giulio Crimi, Hipolito Lazaro, Miguel Fleta, and Antonio Cortis continued along the path set by their outstanding Neapolitan colleague.

In retrospect it is now obvious that his overwhelming fame was due to the Gramophone and that the felicitous collision between the embryonic recording industry of 1902 and Caruso's voice (which was so well suited to the medium) was of inestimable value to both parties. At a time when virtually every family had the means of listening to recordings very few did not possess some examples of the world's most famous tenor.

Despite a humble background which gave no indication how Caruso might develop intellectually he turned out to be a rather remarkable man: not only a great singer but also a talented artist capable of producing beautiful bas-relief figures, and a caricaturist whose self-portraits and cartoons of colleagues achieved considerable caché. With no formal musical training, but a natural ear, he learned his roles quickly and with real understanding of character and context. From the outset the Caruso

legend held the public in thrall and books written by his former secretary, his widow and his son document his regrettably short but exciting life and times. There are also numerous other publications of varying erudition from commentators, vocal critics and artistic contemporaries who have analysed his recordings at length.

It all began in Milan in 1902 when Fred Gaisberg, the Gramophone & Typewriter Company scout, having heard Caruso in Franchetti's *Germania*, immediately negotiated a contract for ten arias to be recorded at one session in a suite at the Grand Hotel. The agreed fee was £100. Head office in London was unimpressed and infamously wired Gaisberg, '*Fee Exorbitant forbid you to record*', an order which was happily ignored and musical history was made. Subsequently his acoustic recordings, which have rarely been out of the catalogue having been recycled on every succeeding medium, have revealed to each new audience a talent that is difficult to compare with either his contemporaries or those singers of earlier generations. Caruso's commitment and elemental vocal dynamism, which combined lyricism with passionate declamatory powers, created an approach to singing that simply re-set the benchmark.

There existed other tenors who could sing higher and louder, or who could demonstrate a refined coloratura technique that was never a part of Caruso's vocal armoury. But none could match his dark opulent tone, suffused with Neapolitan sunshine, yet containing unbridled intensity. This sound was presumably learnt rather than God-given: the eminent teacher Guglielmo Vergine, when first auditioning Caruso, made the unflattering comment that the young man made sound that was "like the wind rustling through the window". Caruso was schooled in old traditions, where coloratura and high notes sung in a *voce mista* (mixed voice) were commonplace, and open vowels created what some critics described as a 'bleating