



**Enrico**  
**CARUSO**

**The Complete  
Recordings  
Volume 3**

**Includes:**  
**Celeste Aida**  
**O paradiso**  
**Deserto in terra**  
**Triste ritorno**

**Recorded 1906–1908**  
New restorations by Ward Marston

## Enrico Caruso

### Complete Recordings, Volume 3

The recordings on this CD date from the years 1906 to 1908, and they show the Victor Talking Machine Company beginning to make a broader range of Caruso's repertoire available to the public. It is still the works of Verdi, Puccini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer and Bizet that predominate, together with a scattering of popular songs. But where the first sessions were devoted to the choicest tenor arias (*Celeste Aida*, *Questa o quella*, *E lucevan le stelle*, the Flower Song and so on), now there are duets, trios, quartets, even a sextet from *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Caruso's association with the Met gave ample opportunity to prepare for the recording of these ensembles. Unlike the opera star of today, who is constantly on the move from one great city to another, Caruso was resident in New York for half the year. In the natural course of events he was intimately acquainted with the differing styles and qualities of the other Met regulars. His close friend and fellow Neapolitan Antonio Scotti, who is heard on several tracks on this CD, was a frequent partner on stage. Caruso was also used to playing opposite the American soprano Geraldine Farrar, the Puccini heroine on tracks 17 and 18. Of even greater importance was the connection with Nellie Melba, who can be heard as Mimi in *O soave fanciulla*, track 11. Caruso's highly successful Covent Garden debut in 1902 had been as the Duke in *Rigoletto*, when Melba had played Gilda. In 1904-05, his second New York season, the pair began a famous partnership as Rodolfo and Mimi in *La Bohème*, though the passion generated between them on stage does not seem to have carried over into real life. In the words of Enrico Caruso, Jr,

*Father was always considerate of his fellow artists, especially the ladies. When his*

*partner's voice did not carry as well as his, he would hold back in the duets so as not to overpower or overshadow her – unless it was Melba or Tetrazzini. He was less careful of Melba, because he resented her dislike of him as an Italian, and of Tetrazzini, because she came close to overshadowing him! But the latter was a friendly rivalry.*

Whatever the differences between them, this duet with Melba is a wonderful demonstration of Caruso's art. The natural simplicity and restraint of his phrasing, the combination of sweetness and power in the voice, the perfect unanimity of expression with his partner in the soft close would be hard to surpass.

Record buyers were always happy to hear the same music performed by different singers, and changes of personnel in the opera house were swiftly incorporated into the Victor catalogue. After Melba's association with the Met ended in 1910, Caruso was to record the *Bohème* duet again, this time with Geraldine Farrar as Mimi. *Bella figlia dell'amore*, the great quartet from *Rigoletto*, was recorded no fewer than four times with Caruso in the role of the Duke. Two of the versions are heard on this CD; later recordings included the voices of Tetrazzini (1912) and Galli-Curci (1917). The baritone on both the early versions is Scotti, whose duet with Caruso *Solenne in quest'ora* (track 2) requires its own commentary. This piece has presented a puzzle to listeners over the years, many of whom have been left wondering, in the first (minor key) section, just who sings what. For those without a perfect knowledge of the opera and its libretto, a little help may be welcome. Caruso's is the voice heard most of the time. But in the second of the answering phrases near the beginning (*Lo giuro, lo giuro*) Scotti

takes over, going up to a very tenor-like F, a tone higher than the earlier matching phrase of Caruso. The baritone briefly enters again with *Una chiave*, and the section ends with another brief interjection at *Lo giuro, sarà*; here the singer is recognisably Scotti – except that the voice which continues sounds identical, when in fact it is Caruso.

The perfect match between these two supposedly contrasting voice types reminds us that there was always a strong baritone element in Caruso's voice. Like other great tenors of his era such as Tamagno and Zenatello, he gives the impression of a baritone who has learned to sing high. It is this perfect blend of chest and head register that explains the traditional Italian tenor's extraordinary richness of sound, trumpet-like at full power – worlds apart from his northern European counterpart, whose ease and freedom at the top of the voice usually comes at the expense of the rich, more masculine qualities lower down. On one extraordinary occasion in Philadelphia, Caruso even sang the famous bass aria *Vecchia zimarra* in a performance of *La Bohème*. The Colline in that production, De Seguro, had a throat infection, and by Act 4 of the opera his

voice had gone completely. Caruso, who had joked earlier in the day that he would sing the aria for De Seguro on stage, did just that. 'But not as a tenor!' recalled De Seguro in wonder many years later. 'As a basso cantante, with the most beautiful voice that sounded like a cello.'

Caruso's sound was a product of the *bel canto* tradition of singing, which emphasises above all else the sustaining of a legato line: the liquid quality and the fullness of tone are both the natural result of a free and unimpeded throat. The technique remains the same whatever the style of the music. For Caruso, the Neapolitan songs that he sang as a young man at weddings and festivals were a perfect training for becoming an opera singer, and (as we hear on tracks 3, 4 and 14) he uses exactly the same voice for the songs of Barthélemy and Tosti as he does for Puccini and Giordano. It was for a later generation, singing into the newly invented microphone, to give popular song a territory of its own: a more private and introspective world with its own distinctive forms of expression.

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 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.

## Producer's Note

The present transfers were all made from mint condition original 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. The proper playback speed for Caruso's recording of the 'Rigoletto Quartet' with Abott, Homer and Scotti (track 6) is somewhat controversial. It had previously been assumed that this recording was made at score pitch, as are his other three recordings of this ensemble. However, I believe that this recording is transposed down a semitone. To me, Caruso's opening statement sounds quite unnatural at score pitch. Additionally, at score pitch, the playback speed would be 82.7 rpms, which is quite unlikely for a Victor recording. For those interested in hearing this recording at score pitch, however, I have appended it as track 19.

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.

- 1 VERDI: Aida – Celeste Aida 3:56  
(Unissued) (Rec. 13/3/06, Mat. C-3180-1)
- 2 VERDI: La forza del destino – Solenne in quest'ora 4:15  
(Antonio Scotti, baritone) (Rec. 13/3/06, Mat. C-3179-1) Victor 89001 HMV 054070
- 3 BARTHÉLEMY: Triste ritorno 2:29  
(Rec. 30/12/06, Mat. C-4159-1) Victor 88048 HMV 052153
- 4 TOSTI: Ideale 3:19  
(Rec. 30/12/06, Matrix: C-4162-1) Victor 88049 HMV 052154
- 5 MEYERBEER: L'Africana – O paradiso 3:36  
(Rec. 20/2/07, Mat. C-4160-2) Victor 88054 HMV 052157
- 6 VERDI: Rigoletto – Bella figlia dell'amore 3:52  
(Transposed down a semi-tone to C) Bessie Abbott, sop.; Louise Homer, mezzo-sopr.; Antonio Scotti, bar. (Rec. 20/2/07, Mat. C-4259-1) Victor 96000 HMV 054117
- 7 GIORDANO: Andrea Chenier – Un di all'azzurro spazio 3:44  
(Rec. 17/3/07, Mat. C-4316-1) Victor 88060 HMV 052158
- 8 LEONCAVALLO Pagliacci – Vesti la giubba 3:14  
(Rec. 17/3/07, Mat C-4317-1) Victor 88061 HMV 052159
- 9 PUCCINI La Bohème – O Mimi, tu più non torni. 3:01  
Antonio Scotti, bar. (Rec. 17/3/07, Matrix: C-4315-1) Victor 89006 HMV 054127
- 10 BIZET The Pearl Fishers – Del tempio al limita 3:22  
Mario Ancona, bar. (Rec. 24/3/07, Mat. C-4327-1) Victor 89007 HMV 054134
- 11 PUCCINI La Bohème – O soave fanciulla 3:20  
Nellie Melba, sop. (Rec. 24/3/07, Mat. C-4326-1) Victor 95200 HMV 054129
- 12 DONIZETTI Don Sebastiano – Deserto in terra 4:19  
(Rec. 10/1/08, Mat. C-5008-1) Victor 88106 HMV 052209
- 13 DONIZETTI Don Sebastiano – Deserto in terra 3:21  
(Rec. 10/1/08, Mat. C-5008-2) unpublished until 1948, issued on Victor 15-1037
- 14 BARTHÉLEMY: Adorables tourments 3:47  
(Rec. 10/1/08, Mat. C-5009-1) Victor 88115 HMV 032070
- 15 VERDI: Rigoletto – Bella figlia dell'amore 3:58  
Marcella Sembrich, sop.; Gina Severina, mezzo-sop.; Antonio Scotti, bar. (Rec. 7/2/08, Mat: C-5053-3) Victor 96001 HMV 054199 Walter B. Rogers cond.
- 16 DONIZETTI Lucia di Lammermoor – Chi mi frena in tal momento? 4:01  
Marcella Sembrich, sop.; Gina Severina, mezzo-sop.; Francesco Daddi, bar.; Antonio Scotti, baritone; Marcel Journet, bass (Rec. 7/2/08, Mat C-5052-4) Victor 96200 HMV 054205
- 17 PUCCINI: Madama Butterfly – O quanti occhi fisi 3:36  
Geraldine Farrar, soprano (Rec. 10/3/08, Mat C-6026-1) Victor 89017 HMV 054201
- 18 PUCCINI La Bohème – Ackho, dolce svegliare alla mattina 3:27  
Geraldine Farrar, sop.; Gina Viafora, mezzo-soprano; Antonio Scotti, bar. (Rec. 10/3/08, Mat 6025-1) Victor 96002 HMV 054204 Walter B. Rogers, cond.,
- 19 VERDI: Rigoletto – Bella figlia dell'amore 3:45  
( Transferred at score pitch) Bessie Abbott, sop.; Louise Homer, mezzo-sopr.; Antonio Scotti, bar. (Rec. 20/2/07, Mat. C-4259-1) Victor 96000 HMV 054117





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# The Complete Recordings of Enrico Caruso

## Volume 3

 Playing Time  
69:22

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Cover image: Enrico Caruso as Pagliacci (Lebrecht collection)

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