



Enrico  
**CARUSO**

**The Complete  
Recordings  
Volume 4**

**Includes:**  
**Questa o quella**  
**La donna è mobile**  
**O terra addio**  
**Recondita armonia**  
**E lucevan le stelle**

**Recorded 1908–1910**  
**New restorations by Ward Marston**

## Enrico Caruso

### Complete Recordings, Volume 4

By 1908, the date of the first recordings on this disc, Caruso was at the summit of his profession. Audiences went into raptures over his stage performances, his records were bought in their millions by a vast and appreciative public, many of whom had never been near an opera house. Even those critics who acknowledged his faults generally agreed that they had never heard a voice so beautiful and so evenly produced throughout its range. He was never, of course, the only tenor, even in New York. For pure lyric *bel canto* rôles, there were many who preferred Alessandro Bonci, who could also be heard at the Met until he was signed up to perform with Oscar Hammerstein I's Manhattan Opera, along with Melba, Calvé, Tetrizzini and others. But the operas of Donizetti and Bellini, in which Bonci excelled, were increasingly out of fashion. What most people wanted to hear was the music of Verdi and his successors, and here Caruso reigned supreme.

Reading the catalogue of his successes from those years, and listening to the recordings, it is easy to overlook the strains and tribulations. To begin with, the sheer quantity of work undertaken was daunting. Over a career of 25 years, Caruso averaged one operatic performance every five days, and at peak periods in each year he was appearing much more often than that. Then there were concert tours and recordings. Despite attempts to conceal the fact, it became known that the singer had found it necessary to have an operation in the summer of 1907 to remove nodes from his vocal cords, a sure sign of vocal stress. A similar operation was carried out two years later.

More alarming were the household troubles. In the summer of 1908 Caruso was overcome by humiliation and despair at the discovery that Ada Giachetti, the

mother of his two children (though never legally his wife), had run off with his chauffeur. The affair was disastrous and short-lived, but Ada never returned. The reasons were complex, partly to do with Caruso's many infidelities, partly with Ada's resentment at his refusal to allow her to continue with a successful singing career of her own. Even by the standards of the day, his views on the subject were rigid: 'In our family Mrs Caruso takes care of the home and the children; I do the singing.' Enrico Caruso Jr, always sympathetic to the memory of his father, cites no fewer than seven examples of husband and wife singing teams from that era, and gives his opinion that there was no sensible reason why his mother should not have been allowed to sing at least a few performances each season, with or without Caruso. Most bitter of all for her to bear was the connection between Caruso and her younger sister Rina, who had been in love with Caruso since the age of seventeen, and whose own career as a soprano was now blossoming. When she sang at Covent Garden with Caruso in the 1906 season a full-blown affair ensued, which carried over into the following year.

Ada's rejection was a blow from which Caruso never quite recovered, though he remained resolutely determined not to allow it to affect his career. For many years afterwards he was plagued with headaches, and after playing in *La Bohème* or *I Pagliacci* (each in their different ways reviving private thoughts of Ada) he was frequently to be found in tears. The recording legacy bears witness to his anguish. The gap of over eighteen months between the dates of tracks 6 and 7 on this CD suggests an unusually long absence from the studio, but the truth is that a further session did take place during that period: in November 1908 six numbers were

recorded, none of which Victor thought worthy of release.

Of the twenty tracks on this CD, eight had been recorded before by Caruso, but with piano accompaniment rather than orchestra. The favourites from *Rigoletto* and *Tosca* fit into this category, together with *Celeste Aida*, *Bianca al par di neve Alpina* from the Italian version of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, and the *Flower Song* from *Carmen*. This last was unusual in that Victor decided to record and issue it in both Italian and French (the language in which Caruso had regularly sung it since 1906). *Celeste Aida* had in fact already been recorded with orchestra back in March of 1906, a take which was retained but never issued (see Volume 3 of the Naxos Complete Caruso). It is not hard to see why it might have been considered unsatisfactory – taken at a painfully slow tempo, that version lasts fully thirty seconds longer than the one on this disc.

The great moments of Verdi provided plenty more possibilities. The duet from the last Act of *Aida* was an obvious attraction, especially since it fitted neatly onto two sides of a 12" record. The old war-horse from *La Forza del Destino*, *O tu che in seno agli angeli*, makes an interesting contrast: Caruso here at full power and displaying a wonderful richness of tone in the climactic moments. There are three numbers from *Il Trovatore*, the first two recorded only a few weeks after Caruso had made his first appearance in the rôle of Manrico. The two versions of the *Miserere* (tracks 18 and 19), dating from nearly two years later, are intriguing for what they tell us about the care which went into these sessions. The disc from 27th December 1909 was obviously a

final rehearsal for the two soloists and there was never any intention that it should be issued. Ten days later the chorus turned up at the studio to join them and the business was successfully completed.

Caruso tended to give German opera a wide berth, no doubt conscious that his talents were best employed elsewhere. Apart from Flotow's *Martha*, which he sang regularly though always in Italian, there were only two others in which he ever played: *Lohengrin* (three performances only) and Goldmark's *Die Königin von Saba*, an opera which has since sunk into oblivion, leaving behind it the delightful tenor aria called in this Italian version *Magiche note*. It is a welcome example of Caruso at his most lyrical and graceful, though the high notes at the end remind us that some critics were unhappy with his use of the 'white' voice at such moments.

The three non-operatic items on this disc are the kind of songs that Caruso sang as encores on his regular concert tours around the world. No doubt his listeners were enchanted to feel themselves touched by the authentic spirit of Naples, but one is inclined to say that the best of Caruso is not to be found here; it takes a peculiar kind of genius to take a trivial, undistinguished little song and make of it something sublime – the genius of a Schipa, a McCormack or a Tauber. Caruso, noble and generous soul that he is, cannot resist giving his all, when less might have produced more.

**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 playback speeds in this volume are fairly uniform. However, Caruso does transpose "O tu che in seno agli angeli" from *La Forza del Destino*, so I have transferred this recording a semitone below score pitch. The recordings in this volume are presented chronologically by recording date, except for tracks 12 and 13 which follow the proper musical sequence. In addition, the arias from both *Rigoletto* and *Tosca* have been sequenced as they appear in each opera.

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 BUZZI-PECCIA: Lolita  
(16th March 1908, Mat. C-6032-1) 88120
- 2 VERDI: Rigoletto, Act I: Questa o quella  
(16th March 1908, Mat. B-6035-1) 87018
- 3 VERDI: Rigoletto, Act IV: La donna è mobile  
(16th March 1908, Mat. B-6033-1) 87017
- 4 VERDI: Il Trovatore, Act III: Ah, sì, ben mio  
(16th March 1908, Mat. C-6034-1) 88121
- 5 VERDI: Il Trovatore, Act IV: Ai nostri monti ritorneremo  
Louise Homer, *mezzo-soprano*  
(17th March 1908, Mat. C-6036-1) 89018
- 6 VERDI: Aida, Act I: Celeste Aida  
(29th March 1908, Mat. C-3180-3) 88127
- 7 DONCIEUX-TOSTI: Pour un baiser  
(6th November 1909, Mat. B-8343-1) 87042
- 8 RUSSO-NUTILE: Mamma mia, che vo' sapè  
(6th November 1909, Mat. C-8344-2) 88206
- 9 VERDI: La Forza del destino, Act III: O tu che in seno agli angeli  
(6th November 1909, Mat. C-8345) 88207  
(transposed down a semi-tone to E minor)
- 10 PUCCINI: Tosca, Act I: Recondita armonia  
(6th November 1909, Mat. B-8347-1) 87043
- 11 PUCCINI: Tosca, Act III: E lucevan le stelle  
(6th November 1909, Mat. B-8346-1) 87044
- 12 VERDI: Aida, Act IV: La fatal pietra  
(7th November 1909, Mat. C-8353) 89028
- 13 VERDI: Aida, Act IV: O terra addio  
Johanna Gadski, *soprano*  
(6th November 1909, Mat. C-8348-2) 89029
- 14 GOLDMARK: Regina di Saba (Die Königin von Saba), Act II: Magiche note  
(7th November 1909, Mat. B-6062) 87041
- 15 BIZET: Carmen, Act II: Il fior che avevi a me tu dato  
(7th November 1909, Mat. C-8349) 88209
- 16 BIZET: Carmen, Act II: La fleur que tu m'avais jetée  
(7th November 1909, Mat. C-8350) 88208
- 17 MEYERBEER: Les Huguenots (Gli Ugonotti), Act I: Bianca al par di neve Alpina  
(7th November 1909, Mat. C-8351) 88210
- 18 VERDI: Il Trovatore, Act IV: Miserere: Ah! che la morte ognora  
Frances Alda, *soprano*  
(27th December 1909, Mat. C-8506-1) (unissued)
- 19 VERDI: Il Trovatore, Act IV: Miserere: Ah! che la morte ognora  
Frances Alda, *soprano*  
(6th January 1910, Mat. C-8506-3) 89030  
recording with Metropolitan Opera Chorus, NY.
- 20 FLOTOW: Martha: Act I: Solo, profugo, reietto!  
Marcel Journet, *bass*  
(12th January 1910, Mat. C-8546) 89036  
NY.



COMPACT  
disc  
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The Complete Recordings of Enrico Caruso  
Volume 4Playing Time  
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HONG KONG

1	<b>BUZZI-PECCIA: Lolita</b>	2:54	11	<b>PUCCHINI: Tosca - E lucevan le stelle</b>	2:59
2	<b>VERDI: Rigoletto - Questa o quella</b>	2:02	12	<b>VERDI: Aida - La fatal pietra</b>	4:21
3	<b>VERDI: Rigoletto -: La donna è mobile</b>	2:14	13	<b>VERDI: Aida - O terra addio</b>	4:04
4	<b>VERDI: Il Trovatore - Ah, sì, ben mio</b>	3:25	14	<b>GOLDMARK: Regina di Saba - Magiche note</b>	3:05
5	<b>VERDI: Il Trovatore - Ai nostri monti ritorneremo</b>	4:13	15	<b>BIZET: Carmen - Il fior che avevi a me tu dato</b>	3:44
6	<b>VERDI: Aida - Celeste Aida</b>	3:25	16	<b>BIZET: Carmen - La fleur que tu m'avais jetée</b>	3:43
7	<b>DONCIEUX-TOSTI: Pour un baiser</b>	2:36	17	<b>MEYERBEER: Gli Ugonotti - Bianca al par di neve Alpina</b>	4:01
8	<b>RUSSO-NUTILE: Mamma mia, che vo' sapè</b>	3:33	18-19	<b>VERDI: Il Trovatore - Miserere: Ah! che la morte ognora</b>	7:31
9	<b>VERDI: La Forza del Destino - O tu che in seno agli angeli</b>	4:07	20	<b>FLOTOW: Martha - Solo, profugo, reietto!</b>	4:07
10	<b>PUCCHINI: Tosca - Recondita armonia</b>	2:23			

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NAXOS  
Historical

Archivist &amp; Restoration Producer: Ward Marston

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All tracks recorded in Camden, New Jersey by the Victor Talking Machine Co.  
All tracks accompanied by the Victor Orchestra

www.naxos.com

Cover Picture: Enrico Caruso (Lebrecht Collection)

