

## Endnotes

### 1. Volume I:

**J.S. Bach:** Suite No. 2 in b Minor, BWV 1067 (June 2, 1931); **J.C. Bach:** Sinfonia in B-flat Major, Op. 18, No. 2 (June 10, 1927); **Cherubini:** *Anacreon* – Overture (June 10, 1927); **Beethoven:** Symphony No. 8, Op. 93 – 2nd Mvt. (June 10, 1927); *The Ruins of Athens*, Op. 113 – Turkish March (May 31, 1930); *Leonore* – Overture No. 1, Op. 138 (June 2, 1931); *Coriolan* – Overture, Op. 62 (June 1, 1931); *Egmont* – Overture, Op. 84 (June 2, 1931); *Leonore* – Overture No. 3, Op. 72b (May 30, 1930); **Weber:** *Der Freischütz* – Overture (June 1, 1931); *Euryanthe* – Overture (June 1, 1931); *Oberon* – Overture (May 12, 1928); **Mendelssohn:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Op. 61 – Scherzo (May 12, 1938); **Berlioz:** *The Damnation of Faust*, Op. 24 – Dance of the Sylphs and Hungarian March (May, 1926); **Liszt:** *Les Preludes* (June, 1929); **Wagner:** *Lohengrin* – Prelude to Act I (June 10, 1927); *Tannhauser* – Overture (Dresden Version; May 9, 1932); **Brahms:** Symphony No. 3, Op. 90 (May 10, 1931); Symphony No. 1, Op. 68 – 3rd Mvt. (May 31, 1930); *Academic Festival Overture* (May 30, 1930)

### Volume II:

**Suppé:** *Poet and Peasant* – Overture (May 11, 1932); **J. Strauss, Jr.:** Perpetuum Mobile, Op. 257 (May 11, 1932); **Tchaikovsky:** Symphony No. 4, Op. 36 (June, 1929); Symphony No. 5, Op. 64 (May 10, 1928); Symphony No. 5, Mvts. 2 and 3 (June 10, 1927); Serenade for Strings, Op. 48 – Waltz (May 12, 1928 – 2 takes); *Romeo*

*and Juliet* (May 30, 1930); **Bizet:**

*L'Arlesienne* – Adagietto (June, 1929);

**Grieg:** Two Elegiac Melodies, Op. 34 (June 3, 1931); **Mahler:** Symphony No. 5 – Adagietto (May, 1926); Ravel: *Bolero* (May 31, 1930); **Beethoven:** *Coriolan* – Overture, Op. 62 (May, 1926); *Egmont* – Overture, Op. 84 (May, 1926); **Wagner:** *Tannhauser* – Overture (Dresden Version; May, 1926); **Mendelssohn:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – Scherzo (May 12, 1928)

2. Pearl's *New York Philharmonic* – *A Sesquicentennial Celebration* features recordings by Stransky, Mengelberg, Toscanini, Beecham, Reiner and Barbirolli, made between 1917 and 1939. Pearl included an unpublished Brunswick recording of Brahms' *Haydn Variations* which they attributed to Toscanini, but the performance is grossly inferior to Toscanini's 1936 Victor recording. No one who knows Toscanini's work could possibly credit him with this second-rate reading. Someone should check the log books to see if Henry Hadley, Associate Conductor of the orchestra at that time, made any test recordings for Brunswick.
3. Also included in this collection are the 1935 Koussevitzky/Boston *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, the 1932 Beecham/Wallenstein/N.Y. Philharmonic Don Quixote, the 1934 Stokowski/Philadelphia *Death and Transfiguration*, and the 1941 Stock/Chicago *Aus Italien*.
4. Moses JM. *American Celebrity Recordings, 1900-1925*. Dallas: Monarch Record Enterprises, 1993.

**Enrico Caruso: *The Complete Electric Re-Creations.***<sup>1</sup> Re-recorded 1927-1939. Pearl CDS 9030 (2 CDs).

Enrico Caruso died in 1921, four years prior to the introduction of electrical recording. The Victor Talking Machine Company, like most record companies, was anxious to replace the acoustical recordings of their most popular artists with electrical remakes. Caruso would never be afforded this opportunity, and by the late 1920s most consumers were reluctant to purchase records made with the antiquated acoustical process regardless of the stature of the artist. In an attempt to revive the public's interest in Caruso's recordings, Victor embarked on an ambitious project which they

would accord no other artist – the overdubbing of Caruso's old acoustic records with new, electrically recorded orchestral accompaniments.

Victor's first experiments in rerecording Caruso took place in 1927 with Rosario Bourdon, the Montreal-born 'cellist and conductor who was Victor's music director at the time, monitoring a playback of the original recording with headphones while conducting the orchestra. Victor's recording technicians mixed the original recording with new accompaniment and cut the result on a new 78 rpm master. As John Steane points out in his excellent liner notes, Bourdon became the first conductor in history to accompany a dead man.

These experimental sessions must have been extremely frustrating. The first rerecording session involved Caruso's 1916 recording Tosti's "Luna d'Estate". According to William R. Moran's discography, twelve takes were rerecorded during three sessions between September 23 and November 3, 1927.<sup>2</sup> This was followed by seven attempts at rerecording Tosti's "A Vucchella" during the November 3 session (the matrix numbers listed by Moran imply a total of eleven takes, so others were probably done earlier). The November 3 session also included six takes of "O sole mio" conducted by Bourdon (again, there must have been one earlier session, since Moran's matrix numbers imply an earlier take).

None of the 1927 experiments were considered satisfactory enough to warrant commercial release. Victor put the entire project to rest until 1932, when, under the direction of Nathaniel Shilkret, commercially acceptable results were finally obtained. Victor made a total of eleven rerecordings between December 3, 1932 and April 24, 1933, eight of which were commercially released. At this point, the Depression forced Victor to abandon any further investment in the rerecording project. HMV, primarily under the baton of Lawrence Collingwood, continued rerecording Caruso until 1939.

Pearl's *Caruso – The Complete Electrical Re-Creations*, contains one version of every surviving Caruso rerecording, both published and unpublished. In some cases, earlier unpublished rerecordings were replaced with more successful published versions. A few of the Caruso recordings chosen for the 1927 experiments were done again in 1932 for commercial release, including Bartlett's "A Dream" and "O sole mio". Still other unsuccessful Victor attempts were redone by HMV. Pearl has included only the final published version in cases where more than one rerecording survives, since the same Caruso originals are involved in each case.

Musically and technically, the Caruso electrical "recreations" vary from quite satisfactory to dreadful. The 1932 and 1933 Victor rerecordings are by far the best, with the arias from *Les Pecheurs de Perles* and *I Pagliacci* being especially fine. The least satisfactory Victor rerecording is "La donna è mobile" from *Rigoletto*, where Victor made no attempt to cover up the acoustically recorded orchestra when Caruso is singing. Only the short passages for orchestra alone were rerecorded electrically, resulting in several disconcerting changes in orchestral sound. Even the best of the Victor rerecordings have synchronization problems. It was never possible to completely bury the acoustically recorded orchestras, and all of the rerecordings have at least a few measures where the two orchestras are not together. The trumpet fanfares in "Celeste Aida" are especially problematic in this regard. Quite often, the electrically rerecorded orchestra is out of tune with the acoustical original.

The HMV technicians never mastered the technique developed by Victor, and some of their rerecordings are, as Moran accurately describes them, "excruciatingly bad".<sup>2</sup> In "O paradiso" from *L'Africana*, the engineers were constantly riding the gain on the original recording, lowering it during passages for orchestra alone, and raising

it whenever Caruso was singing. As a result, the surface noise of the original is constantly changing in level, a most annoying side effect. The Handel's "Largo" and Sullivan's "The Lost Chord" were originally recorded with orchestra, but HMV rerecorded them with organist Herbert Dawson. In both rerecordings, Caruso's voice sounds as if it has been put through a narrow band filter. A tinny, strident voice emerges, completely lacking in Caruso's characteristic warmth. Victor's "unsuccessful" 1927 experiments are actually superior to many of the published HMV rerecordings. Only two HMV rerecordings approach the technical success achieved by Victor – "Inspirez-moi" from Gounod's *La Reine de Saba*, and "Mamma, quel vino è generoso" from Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Both were rerecorded on November 13, 1936 with Lawrence Collingwood conducting the London Symphony Orchestra.

Today, it is difficult to consider even the best of the electrical recreations an improvement over the originals. In the early 1930s, they were a vehicle for selling new copies of technically obsolete records. Aside from two Luisa Tetrazzini discs rerecorded by HMV, Caruso was the only artist from the era of acoustical recording afforded this treatment, a true testament to his stature. Although many of this century's greatest tenors were active in the 1920s and 1930s, Caruso was already regarded as unique and irreplaceable. One cannot fault Victor and HMV for using new technology to keep his recordings in their catalogs.

Only one unpublished duplicate might have merited inclusion in the Pearl set – the December 3, 1932 rerecording of "Una furtiva lagrima" from *L'Elisir D'Amore*. Although the same 1911 original is featured in HMV's published 1939 rerecording, the bassoon solo in the 1932 version was performed by Walter Guetter, principal bassoonist in Leopold Stokowski's Philadelphia Orchestra from 1922-1937, and one of this century's most important orchestral musicians. A test pressing of this rerecording was owned by Guetter's widow and included in its entirety on a privately produced audiotape made many years ago called *The Walter Guetter Canon*. The tape features excerpts from Guetter's Philadelphia Orchestra recordings, and copies have circulated among bassoonists. This reviewer obtained a copy from the bassoon instructor at The Crane School of Music. There are many intonation and synchronization problems, and Caruso's voice is underbalanced, so it is understandable why it wasn't issued.

The unidentified narrator credits the forces involved in the rerecording as being Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra, but this is highly unlikely. Bolig and Moran list Shilkret as being the conductor on this and all other rerecordings made on December 3, 1932, and neither Stokowski discography makes any mention of this recording.<sup>5</sup> A more plausible scenario is that Guetter was hired as a free-lance musician to perform with the in-house "Victor Symphony Orchestra" for this session. Guetter's unique playing would certainly have justified its inclusion in this collection, but the condition and/or availability of the single surviving copy may have made this impossible.

Ward Marston's transfers live up to the high standards set in Pearl's *The Caruso Edition* reviewed by this writer (*ARSC Journal* 1991;22(1):110-125., 22(2):238-243), with careful attention paid to correct playback speeds. *Enrico Caruso – The Complete Electrical Re-Creations* is a worthwhile supplement to The Caruso Edition. For historical interest alone, serious collectors will surely wish to purchase this set as a final chapter in the "complete Caruso" saga. *Reviewed by Gary A. Galo*

## Endnotes

1. **Verdi**: *La Forza del Destino*: Solenne in quest'ora (w/Antonio Scotti, Mar. 13, 1906; rerecorded Dec. 3, 1932 w/Nathaniel Shilkret, conductor); **Meyerbeer**: *L'Africana*: O paradiso (Feb. 20, 1907; rr. July 8, 1936, w/Walter Goehr); **Leoncavallo**: *I Pagliacci*: Vesti la giubba (Mar. 17, 1907; rr. Aug. 15, 1932 w/Shilkret); **Verdi**: *Rigoletto*: La donna è mobile (Mar. 16, 1908; rr. Dec. 3, 1932 w/Shilkret); **Puccini**: *Tosca*: Recondita armonia (Nov. 6, 1909; rr. Oct. 19, 1935 w/Lawrence Collingwood); **Bizet**: *Carmen*: Il fior che avevi a me tudato (Nov. 7, 1909; rr. Oct. 23, 1936 w/Collingwood); **Geehl**: For You Alone (Dec. 28, 1910; rr. Oct. 25, 1933, cond. unknown); **Tosti**: Addio (Dec. 29, 1910; rr. Oct. 29, 1937 w/Collingwood); **Donizetti**: *L'Elisir d'Amore*: Una furtiva lagrima (Nov. 26, 1911; rr. Nov. 9, 1939, cond. unknown); **Verdi**: *Aida*: Celeste Aida (Dec. 27, 1911; rr. Dec. 3, 1932 w/Shilkret); **d'Hardelot**: Parce Que (Dec. 7, 1912; rr. Oct. 25, 1933, cond. unknown); **Sullivan**: The Lost Chord (Apr. 29, 1912; rr. Nov. 3, 1933 w/Herbert Dawson, organist); **Granier**: Hosanna (Dec. 7, 1912; rr. Jan. 8, 1937 w/London Symphony Orch., Collingwood); **Verdi**: *Rigoletto*: Parmi veder le lagrime (Feb. 24, 1913; rr. Nov. 9, 1939, cond. unknown); **Bizet**: *Agnus Dei* (Feb. 24, 1913; rr. Oct. 19, 1935 w/Collingwood); **O'Hara**: Your Eyes Have Told Me What I Did Not Know (Apr. 10, 1913; rr. Sept. 9, 1938, cond. unknown); **Fauré**: Les Rameaux (Dec. 15, 1913; rr. Jan. 8, 1937 w/LSO, Collingwood); **Mascagni**: *Cavalleria Rusticana*: Mamma, quel vino è generoso (Dec. 15, 1913; rr. Nov. 13, 1936 w/LSO, Collingwood); **Gartner**: Trusting Eyes (Mar. 9, 1914, rr. Oct. 29, 1937, cond. unknown); **Tosti**: Parted (Mar. 9, 1914; rr. Oct. 29, 1937, cond. unknown); **Tosti**: La mia canzone (Jan. 7, 1915; rr. May 25, 1934 w/Collingwood); **Franck**: La Procession (Feb. 5, 1916; rr. Jan. 8, 1937 w/LSO, Collingwood); **Tosti**: Luna d'estate (Feb. 5, 1916; rr. Nov. 3, 1927 w/Rosario Bourdon); **di Capua**: 'O sole mio (Feb. 5, 1916; rr. Aug. 15, 1932 w/Shilkret); **Goldmark**: La Reine de Saba: Inspirez-moi (Feb. 5, 1916; rr. Nov. 13, 1936 w/LSO, Collingwood); **Cottrau**: Santa Lucia (Mar. 20, 1916; rr. Oct. 23, 1934 w/Collingwood); **Bizet**: *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*: Je crois entendre encore (Dec. 7, 1916; rr. Dec. 3, 1923 w/Shilkret); **Flotow**: *Marta*: M'appari tutt'amor (Apr. 15, 1917; rr. Aug. 15, 1932 w/Shilkret); **Gastaldon**: Musica proibita (Apr. 15, 1917; rr. Sept. 9, 1938, cond. unknown); **Alvarez**: A Granada (Sept. 26, 1918; rr. Apr. 24, 1933 w/Cibelli); **Fucito**: Sultano a Tte (Feb. 10, 1919; rr. Nov. 28, 1934 w/Collingwood); **Tosti**: "A Vucchella (Sept. 8, 1919; rr. Nov. 3, 1927 w/Bourdon); **Cottrau**: Addio a Napoli (Sept. 9, 1919; rr. Sept. 9, 1938, cond. unknown); **Handel**: Serse: Ombra mai fu (Jan. 29, 1920; rr. Nov. 3, 1933 w/Herbert Dawson, organist); **Donaudy**: Vaghissima sembianza (Sept. 15, 1920; rr. Feb. 28, 1934 w/Collingwood); **Bartlett**: A Dream (Sept. 16, 1920; rr. Dec. 3, 1932 w/Shilkret)
2. Moran WR. "Discography of Original Recordings" and "The Electrical Recordings of the 1930s." In *Enrico Caruso – My Father and My Family* by Enrico Caruso, Jr. and Andrew Farkas, Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1990.
3. Bolig JR. "Caruso Discography" – Unpublished revised edition, 1991 (private copy).
4. Robinson P. "Discography." In *Stokowski – The Art of the Conductor*. Canada: Lester and Orpen, Ltd, 1977.
5. Movan, Bolig and Robinson.