

# World Mourns with Italy as Caruso Passes

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LEGIONS of his admirers mourned over the death of Caruso and expressions of grief were universal. To close friends of the tenor the news was especially shocking because many of them had received letters from him only the evening before his death. In all of these messages he emphasized the improvement in his health and expressed the confident hope that he would be singing in New York next season.

Constant telephone calls to MUSICAL AMERICA from musicians who begged to know whether the statements were true, were received, and the inquirers expressed deep regret at the loss of the operatic idol.

Among the statements received by MUSICAL AMERICA in regard to the tenor's death were the following:

ANTONIO SCOTTI, long the associate of Caruso and one of his closest friends: "What can be said at this hour? He was my dearest, my best friend. I was with him constantly, first during his year in London, and then, the first years here. I well remember when he arrived, how I introduced him to the press representative of the Metropolitan, and in my own broken English translated his Italian interview. He was my brother! Only last night I was reading a letter he had sent to Mr. Sisca, editor of *La Follia*, in which he said he was feeling fine and that he would soon be thinking of leaving Italy to return to America. It is a serious loss the world sustains."

BRUNO ZIRATO, secretary of the tenor, who is occupying Caruso's suite at the Vanderbilt Hotel: "I do not, I will not believe it." When assured that the report came through an authorized source he said: "They must have made a mistake this once. I will not believe it."

ALLAN HINCKLEY, bass, formerly of the Metropolitan Opera House: "He was the whitest man among singers, always ready to share with everyone honors which for the most part were his own."

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### Caruso's Fee Ranged from \$10 to \$10,000 in Twenty-six Years

CARUSO received for his first operatic engagement in Naples in 1894, \$10 a performance for four performances. In 1920, the tenor was paid \$10,000 a performance for ten performances in Havana, and refused an offer of \$12,000 a performance in Peru. Guglielmo Vergine, his first teacher, refused at first to take him as a pupil, saying: "There is no voice there!" His fee at the Metropolitan has been \$3,000 a performance for a number of years.

He was always eager to assist the inexperienced on the stage and was peculiarly lacking in the so-called knocking qualities. I never will forget the first time I sang with him in 'Aida,' when I was not too sure of my Italian nor my stage positions. His nod of approval after I had finished and his taking of my hand to share honors, at the time seemed trivial, but now when he is gone, show the greatness of his nature. May he rest in peace."

SALVATORE FUCITO, Mr. Caruso's accompanist: "It is unbelievable. Only

## Anecdotes Illumine Many Facets of Adored Singer's Genial Nature

CARUSO was noted for his generosity and kindness. He delighted in making others happy, and was known for his benefactions both large and small.



On Christmas he frequently played patron saint to his associates of all degrees at the opera. Thus, in 1917, he conceived the idea of distributing crisp five-dollar bills to every member of the chorus and the orchestra at the Metropolitan, the whole amounting to \$1,000, it is said. Doubtless many of these gifts are to-day preserved as mementos.

The public testimonials and trophies presented to the singer were legion. It was once said the loving cups and punch bowls he had acquired were rapidly forming so large a collection that some day he would require a storehouse to keep them in. On the occasion of one of his birthdays Caruso was asked why he did not give a party in celebration of the event. "How could I?" he laughingly replied. "If I should, I'd have to invite all New York, for all are my friends."

On the occasion of Caruso's farewell appearance in Havana in June, 1920, there was a bomb explosion in the rear of the Opera House balcony. He was in his dressing-room at the time, in preparation for the Triumph Scene, the opera being "Aida." "Great Heavens!" the tenor is said to have cried to his manager, in mock alarm. "What's happened to me now?" The orchestra played the Cuban national anthem, and later a typically Latin explanation deplored the devastating chagrin of a portion of the clientele because of a change of opera!

### Skilled in Pencil and Brush

CARUSO was a decorative artist of definite talent, particularly in those striking sketches which he produced with so little effort. He amused himself and other members of the Metropolitan Opera Company by "drawing" them during intermissions at the opera. He used water-color as a medium sometimes as, for instance, when in February, 1918, he had made a triumphant appearance in the title rôle of "Le Prophète." He embodied his conception of himself in this part in a sketch published in color in the issue of MUSICAL AMERICA for Feb. 23 of that year. John of Leyden appears in profile against a



last night I received from him a letter in which he says, 'I am in the best of health, thanks to baths in the sun and sea. I will be selling my voice for at least twenty years more, and will strive the more forcefully to reach the heights of my ambition.' I remember just before he left for Europe on the pier he said to me, 'I am sure to come back, to study new rôles, and people will say it is the old Caruso. If I am not sure of fulfilling the same work I have done in the past I will never return.' He was ever conscientious and thoughtful for his public. I am too overcome to say anything. Such sorrow as this leaves one silent."

MARZIALE SISCA, editor of *La Follia*, the Italian weekly, and a friend of Caruso, was so overcome by the news that he left his office. When finally reached he said: "I am broken over the shock. Last night Mr. Scotti came to my house and we read over a letter from Mr. Caruso in which he said he was tremendously improved, and that in a week he expected to be completely recovered. We discussed what parts he would sing next season. It is characteristic of the tenor that in his letter to me he enclosed a sketch of the Sicilian actor, Grassa, who is coming to America next fall. He requested me to help the actor all I can. It was always his first

thought to help others as much as he could."

### Benjamins Have No Word

PARK BENJAMIN, Jr., brother of Mrs. Caruso: "The family has heard nothing outside what we have read in the newspapers. We have received no cable from my sister, and at the cable office they tell us that personal cables are generally delayed. This is probably the reason. All the letters have told of his improving health. We know no more and are waiting anxiously for word from my sister."

From the offices of Park Benjamin, father of Mrs. Caruso, it was said that Mr. Benjamin was not in and it was not known where he was.

From the office of the Metropolitan Opera Association on Tuesday evening it was said that a cable from Mr. Gatti-Casazza was expected but no word had been received up to a late hour.

FORTUNE GALLO, impresario of the San Carlo Opera Company: "The loss of Enrico Caruso means more than merely the death of a man. It means the passing of a golden-voiced artist whose singing brought joy to millions of people. The death of Signor Caruso leaves vacant a place in the operatic world and in the hearts of the public that no other can fill, for Caruso was more than singer, he was an international institution. To me he was a lovable friend, an artist to admire and a man whom I respected for his many admirable qualities. The news of his death was a real shock to me as I had recently received word that he was on the road to good health."

daughter kindled the affection of the public anew with each appearance of photograph or article. Yet the eternal boy in this great singer, cut off in his prime, will always be part of a fascinating picture.

Enrico Caruso as *Canio* of the pummelled drum in "Pagliacci," the jaunty promenade in fawn-colored top-coat and the inevitable Turkish cigarette in the long

holder, will remain long in the memory as a beloved figure, the greatest vocalist of his time.



### Voice of Opera's Great Star Perpetuated in Records of His Best Work

THE voice of Caruso is hushed in death, but the singing that delighted hundreds of thousands of music lovers will still continue to inspire and thrill countless numbers in years to come. The golden tones have been perpetuated through the medium of Victor records. Unlike the singers of old, whose voices live only in tradition, the voice of Caruso is thus preserved. Records of 167 of his most famous songs and operatic numbers have already been issued, and a great number are still unreleased.

Already these records have made the name of Caruso a household word in lands where the singer never appeared in the flesh. In remote South Sea islands, in African villages, and in habitations in the Orient, although he never came "in person" they will tell you of the "grand phrase," and assert that no one ever sang the Arioso like Caruso. Night after night his golden tones ring out under the tropic moon, on islands where the income tax of the total population would not approximate the fee claimed by the tenor for one night at the Metropolitan. Under the palm trees of Fiji, in the heart of the Australian bush; wherever the phonograph goes, you may hear Caruso sing "Celeste Aida" or "Che gelida Manina." Preserved in concrete vaults in Paris are duplicates of records already issued, to be opened in a hundred years, that new impressions may be made from intact originals.

### The Lure of Filmdom

THE varied operatic rôles the great tenor sustained gave scope to his histrionic genius—the realism of his make-up in recent years being almost amazing, but it was in his two appearances in the motion pictures in 1918 that

he proved himself an actor *par excellence*. At first, it is said, he was greatly indignant with the suggestion that he appear in the celluloid drama. But he became so fascinated with the routine and appliances of the studio

that on his wedding day he motored straight from the church to the private projection-room of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, where he and his bride began their honeymoon with a view of his first film. One day, it is said, Caruso reversed the photographic process and turned the camera upon Jesse Lasky, the director.

Although Caruso understood and spoke English well, he was most conscientious about acquiring the absolutely correct pronunciation. He was once surprised in the process of mastering this original phonetic sequence of sounds:

"O seiken in sie bai dhi don's erli lait Wat so praudli ui heild at dhi tuaulait last glimmin?"

This was nothing else than the first two verses of "The Star-Spangled Banner," set down in Italian vowel-sounds, in the artist's own handwriting. He had occasion many times to sing the song, for at theaters the public idol was always espied and called upon for a song, and this was the "number" he usually chose.

Caruso's home life was almost idyllic, and his love for his wife and little

