Side 1

DM 1359

11-0035-A

In Latin

Bizet

AGNUS DEI

(Lamb of God)

Enrico Caruso, Tenor

with Orchestra
PIETÀ, SIGNORE
(Lord, Have Mercy)
(Attributed to Alessandro Stradella, 1681)

Enrico Caruso, Tenor
with Orchestra
Verdi: Requiem

INGEMISCO
(Sadly Groaning)
(In memory of Alessandro Manzoni)

Enrico Caruso, Tenor
with Orchestra
Red Seal Record
"His Master's Voice"

RCA Victor

Side 4
DM 1359

11-0037-B

Rossini
Messe Solennelle

Domine Deus
(Praise Forever to God, the Father)

Enrico Caruso, Tenor
with Orchestra
RCA Victor

SIDE 5
DM 1359 11-0036-B

Rossini
Stabat Mater
CUSUS ANIMAM
(Through His Wounded Side)
Enrico Caruso, Tenor
with Orchestra
Jean Baptiste Faure
CRUCIFIX
Enrico Caruso, Tenor
Marcel Journet, Baritone
with Orchestra
ENRICO CARUSO

in

Sacred Songs

for

the Holy Year

Bizet - Agnus Dei
Stradella - Pietà, Signore
Verdi - Requiem: Ingemisco
Rossini - Messe Solennelle: Domine Deus
Rossini - Stabat Mater: Cujus Animam
J. B. Faure - Crucifix
Enrico Caruso in Sacred Songs FOR THE HOLY YEAR

The timely grouping of these sacred songs reveals the immortal tenor away from the glamorous operatic scene usually associated with the very mention of his name. Of Caruso’s recordings, the bulk are operatic arias, a great many are miscellaneous selections and comparatively few belong to the category designated in this album. From this group, RCA Victor has gathered six songs; they include the major portion of sacred numbers recorded by Caruso for the old Victor Company.

The earliest of these pressings is the beloved Crucifix of Jean Baptiste Faure, sung in French with the baritone, Marcel Journet. The recording was made January 7, 1912. Bizet’s Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) was recorded on February 24, 1913. From Rossini’s Stabat Mater, the tenor recorded the Cujus Animam; the date was December 15, 1913. In her touching memoirs of her late husband (Enrico Caruso, His Life and Death), Dorothy Caruso devotes a highly descriptive section to the rigors of recording during the early days of the industry. The comparatively primitive set-up did much to enhance the obvious difficulties involved in recording, difficulties that will always exist, regardless of improved technical conditions. Caruso was tireless in his efforts to reproduce his music in as nearly authentic a manner as was then possible. While working on the Cujus Animam, relates Dorothy Caruso, he sang the selection many times before he was satisfied with the results. Finally, when the recording met with his approval, he "drew a pearl stickpin from his tie and handed it to the exhausted trumpet player. 'You merit reward,' he said. 'In the end I thought you also would crack.'"

Chronologically, the next recorded selection included in this group is the Ingemisco (Sadly Groaning) from Verdi’s Requiem, composed in memory of the writer, Alessandro Manzoni. This disc was pressed January 7, 1915. Pietà Signore (Lord, Have Mercy) was recorded September 26, 1918. It is sung in Italian. The work is attributed to the prolific seventeenth-century composer, Alessandro Stradella. The final selection included here is the Domine Deus (Praise Forever to God, the Father) from Rossini’s Messe Solennelle. This excerpt, recorded on September 16, 1920, was the last disc ever made by Caruso.

Little did the artist’s devoted public realize that a few months later, on December 24, he would sing to them for the last time when he appeared on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House as Eleazer in Halévy’s La Juive. Caruso died in Naples, the city of his birth, on August 2, 1921.

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Caruso’s career as a recording artist for the Victor Company covered a period of almost twenty years. He made his first records in 1903, his last in 1920. The first of his discs to be issued was La Donna è Mobile from Rigoletto; the date was February 1, 1904. Caruso was the first great singer to have his voice recorded for posterity, and on the strength of his successes the Victor Company soon began its fabulous growth.

It was shortly after his debut in this country (in Rigoletto) that Caruso was invited to record for Victor. Previous to that he had experimented with records in Italy as far back as 1896. Later, he made discs which were released in Europe. But from the time of his early pressings made in the United States, Caruso confined his recordings exclusively to Victor. His first payments were cash; there was no contract. Today, the Caruso records are more in demand than ever and in recent years RCA Victor has seen fit to revive many of these under the Red Seal Heritage program.