

SYMPOSIUM RECORDS CD 1318

THE FIRST OPERA RECORDINGS 1895 ~ 1902 A SURVEY

Caruso's first records were made a hundred years ago. They had an immediate and lasting effect on the progress of sound recording, and records of his voice have been available continuously ever since. There have been first editions and re-issues, there have been compilations and complete editions. A significant centenary should be celebrated, but a yet further selection from the same material, albeit in a special centenary wrapper, would not be a worthwhile addition to the catalogue; rather, attempt something more novel for the listener, and more challenging for the producer. Thus the question, "What could the avid collector of opera-records buy before Caruso?" The answer is punctuated by a series of brief articles and notes intended to be read in the train as the collector, a century later, hurries home, likewise eager to sample his latest find.

Enrico Caruso (1873-1921) is popularly regarded as the greatest tenor on record, if not the greatest tenor ever. He and the Gramophone arrived just as the classic Italian so-called "bel canto" school was giving way to the new "verismo" operas. Beyond any other singer, Caruso had the qualities needed to excel in both. His first records were made on 11th April 1902, and it was at once apparent that he was "phonogenic"; the voice, the histrionic ability and the warm personality being instantly and unmistakably recognisable. The first records were so immediately successful that by November it was necessary for more to be made, to extend the repertoire and to replace masters worn out or damaged. Records continued to be made of Caruso every year until ill-health closed his career in 1920, and records of his voice have been available continuously throughout the world ever since.

The records were so successful that in a compilation to mark the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935 the narrator asked, "Did the Gramophone make Caruso, or did Caruso make the Gramophone?"

Certainly, enormous record-sales made Caruso's name a house-hold word worldwide, and the records generated large sums in royalties; though, as it turned out, much of these accrued after his death, and a goodly part went to the lawyers.

We should also consider how Caruso, the artist, perceived the Gramophone.

At first he walked into the studio (a hotel room), sang the agreed number of pieces, took the fee and went. However, this care-free attitude soon changed; he became extremely concerned that only the finest possible records of his voice should be released.

Today everyone uses cassette recorders to assess their own performances; unfortunately, we have no indication whether Caruso perceived in the new invention a means of study or self-criticism.

The Gramophone Company did succeed in recording a small number of leading opera-singers before Caruso: Medea Mei-Figner, Nikolai Figner, Chaliapin and Maurice Renaud, for example, and certainly others would have followed. However, expansion of the "Celebrity Catalogue" was certainly accelerated as the Company pointed to the success of Caruso's records; Melba and Patti, for example, were amongst those influenced by them.

It is often said that Caruso was offered a contract at the Metropolitan Opera House on the strength of one of his records.

There are around sixty books on Caruso, of which only four, by Key and Zirato, Emil Ledner, Mrs. Dorothy Caruso, and Enrico Caruso, Jr. & Farkas, are original sources.

There are discrepancies, but, nevertheless, putting together the details these offer, and allowing in some uncontentious details from other sources, we may reasonably conclude that:

Negotiations opened with initial feelers in late 1899 and concluded with the deposit of an advance on fees in April 1903.

Only in May 1903 were records of Caruso first released in America; though copies could have reached New York as much as a year earlier.

However, Maurice Grau, who initiated negotiations, had no need of records, he had heard Caruso, and when Heinrich Conried succeeded him negotiations were too far advanced for a record to be a material factor. But the story is good copy.

VRONI EIDNER No biographical details are available. From this record it can be surmised that she was an attractive operetta-singer, perhaps a local artist originally from central Europe.

A. del CAMPO Another artist of whom no biographical details are available. Likewise, he may have been a local artist originally from Europe.

FERRUCCIO GIANNINI [Ponte d'Arnia, Tuscany 1868-Philadelphia 1948] emigrated in 1885 to the United States of America, where he studied with Eleodoro de Campi, a pupil of Lamperti. His début was in Boston in 1891. He married Antonietta Briglia, a violinist.

Three of their six children followed them into music; most notably the third, Dusolina. Giannini was, by general account, the first opera-singer to make records. By the mid-90s, Berliner, his apparatus much improved, and his studio also in Philadelphia, must have been on the look-out for operatic talent with which to extend his catalogue. His requirements must have included reasonably robust voices, willingness to stop by several days running until satisfactory plates were taken, and remuneration on a scale he could manage. The Gianninis ran a small theatre in Philadelphia, possibly Berliner recruited Vroni Eidner and A. del Campo there.

There has been much mis-identification of F. Giannini, as the name appears on the records, with Francesco Giannini, also Italian, also a tenor, who sang with various American and English companies from about 1880 to 1895. [Francesco sang Manrico in London in 1885, and a review refers to his corpulence; Ferruccio was then seventeen.] So far as is known they were unrelated.

EDITH KATE CLEGG was born in London. She was taught at the Guildhall School of Music by Herman Klein, briefly by Bouhy in Paris, and by John Acton in Blackburn. She achieved considerable success in concerts and music festivals. In 1906 she made her début in opera, creating the part of Sophia in Liza Lehmann's *The Vicar of Wakefield* at The Prince of Wales Theatre. Subsequently she was at Covent Garden singing such roles as Suzuki [*Madama Butterfly*] and Magdalene [*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*]. She was a member of the Quinlan Company [Australia, Canada and South Africa], the

Beecham Opera Company and, in the 1920s, the British National Opera Company. Miss E. Clegg was amongst the first artists to enter the studio in the basement of 31, Maiden Lane, set up by Fred. Gaisberg, an American sent to Europe by Emile Berliner, hence the American style date. "E" indicating for the English market, a system rapidly dropped in favour of a numerical system. Pressed, alas, on extremely poor material.

Les TROUBADOURS TOULOUSAINS made a series of around eight records. Exalted claims for their identities have proved unverifiable. There must have been at least one more Troubadour as the other operatic item listed is "Choral des épées", also from *Faust*. Probably the group was a typical French provincial touring opera-party of the period.

ELLEN BEACH YAW [Boston 1869-Covina, California 1947] did secretarial work for a lawyer before studying singing, first in New York, and then with Mathilde Marchesi in Paris. After her début as a concert singer in St. Paul, Minnesota, she gained experience in Germany and Switzerland, and then sang in the Carnegie Hall. She created the title role of Sullivan's *The Rose of Persia* at the Savoy Theatre in 1899. The high-point of her career was, presumably, her solitary appearance at the Metropolitan Opera house as *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Alessandro Bonci as Edgar in 1908. She was celebrated for her coloratura and much advertised for her very high high notes.

W. ALBERT FRANSELLA was born in Amsterdam of Dutch parents, but Italian extraction. He was taught by his father, also a flautist, and Jac de Jong. He first played in public at 15, and at 16 he played under Brahms. As principal flute of the Queen's Hall Orchestra he played solo pieces at Henry Wood's first Promenade Concert in 1895. He was obligato for Melba and Tetrassini and was a professor at the Trinity College of Music, London.

EDNA MAY [née Edna May Pettie, Syracuse, N.Y. 1878-Switzerland 1948] made her début at 18 in a modest musical, *Santa Maria*. A year later her great success began with Gustave Kerker's *The Belle of New York*; invariably her "Follow On" brought demands for encores. In 1898 success in London with the same show made her the first American star to conquer London. For a decade she moved between New York and London, beautiful, with an attractive voice and manner, always re-conquering. In 1907, Nelly Neil disappointed, a poor book, and no outstanding number for its star. She interpolated "Follow On", perhaps as a grateful gesture to her adoring London audiences. When the show closed she married Oscar Lewisohn, never again appearing on the stage.

MARIE SUSAN TEMPEST [London 1866- 1942] was a pupil of Manuel Garcia at the Royal Academy of Music, gaining silver and gold medals. Her début in 1885 was as Fiametta [*Boccaccio*] at the Comedy Theatre. She was both actress and singer. She sang at the Opéra Comique. In America she sang Carmen, Dorothy, Manon and Mignon; also in *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Vogelhändler*. After 1899 she appeared only in comedy. Later she was in management.

KATE COVE [London 1871- ?1934] had a strong and pleasing soprano voice. She seems to have sung mainly in the better music halls in an era when either a singer or a

dancer was included in the programme, presumably as a contrast to the many comedians and singers of popular songs, who dominated most of the halls in the late Victorian and Edwardian period. In the years up to 1905 she made a number of records, Berliners, and then black-label Gramophone & Typewriters, some issued on the cheaper Zonophone label. Her voice and technique were remarkably adaptable and she tackled some difficult songs and arias. Little else is known of her career, one can only speculate why it did not follow a more conventional pattern.

CARO ROMA was an American singer who was billed as 'The Californian Nightingale', and liked to be known as Madame Roma. She made a brief provincial tour in the United Kingdom in 1899 in the minor musical *The American Heiress*, and whilst in London she made a few records.

LOUISE KIRKBY-LUNN [Manchester 1873-London 1930] After initial lessons in Manchester, she studied with Visetti at the Royal College of Music. Her début was as the witch in a student performance of Schumann's *Genoveva* at the Drury Lane Theatre in 1893. Augustus Harris engaged her, and her professional début was in première the of Stanford's *Shamus O'Brien* in 1896. Denis O'Sullivan, Lucy Carr Shaw [G. B. Shaw's sister] and Joseph O'Mara were in the cast, Henry Wood conducted and the first trombone was Gustav Holst. On Harris's death in 1897 she moved to the Carl Rosa company. For two years after her marriage in 1899 she sang only in concerts, but sang at Covent Garden from 1901. She appeared with Caruso at his first performance there in 1902, and sang Ortrude to replace Fremstad with little warning. Her success led her to a season at the Metropolitan Opera. Her appearances in opera, mainly at Covent Garden, continued until 1922. She was also extremely successful in concerts and on the festival circuit for three decades, from 1895 until 1925. Her earliest records have a vividness which was rarely captured subsequently.

JOSEPH O'MARA [Limerick 1864-Dublin 1927] His mother was a fine amateur singer, and he wanted to become a singer, but his father wanted him in the family business. Eventually he studied in Milan with Moretti. His début in 1891 was with the D'Oyly Carte company in Sullivan's *Ivanhoe*. Augustus Harris engaged him at short notice for *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Faust* in 1893. With Harris, at Covent Garden, at Drury Lane, and on tour he sang a wide range of music, from Saint-Saëns to Wagner, and including Stanford, mentioned above. He also sang in oratorio and at the homes of the affluent. In 1902 he joined the Moody-Manners company and he was in Beecham's 1910 season. In 1912 he founded a company himself, operating mainly in Ireland. Sound training allowed him to continue singing until shortly before he died. He was admired as an actor as well as for his voice. With only three records published, and they of surpassing rarity, he is less well remembered than John O'Sullivan and John McCormack.

LANDON RONALD [London 1873-London 1938] showed very early promise in music, leading to his entry into the Royal College of Music at 13, where his teachers included Parry, Frederick Bridge and Stanford. His career was divided between composition, conducting and accompanying. He was much in demand as a répétiteur, privately and in the opera house. His acquaintanceship, thus obtained, with many of the leading artists

was of great value to the infant Gramophone Company as it sought to persuade leading artists to enter its dingy studio and treat it as a serious purveyor of art.

GABRIEL SOULACROIX [Villeneuve-sur-Lot 1853-Paris 1905] studied at the Conservatoires of Toulouse and Paris, made his début at La Monnaie, Brussels and progressed, via the French provinces, to reach the Opéra Comique in 1885. He was in many first performances, including Messager's *La Basoche*. Many people were rescued by him when the theatre caught fire during a performance of Mignon in 1887. In 1894 he moved to the Théâtre Gaité Lyrique. There he was in the French première of Puccini's *La Bohème*, and in 1902 at Monte Carlo he was in the première of Massenet's *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*. His sudden death cut short a distinguished career. The voice is a high French bariton Martin used with exemplary style and polish.

RENÉ FOURNETS [Pau 1858-Paris 1926] Studied at the Paris Conservatoire and made his début as Frère Laurent in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* at the Opéra Comique in 1884. In 1892 he transferred to the Opéra, where his repertoire ranged from Leporello to Wotan. He left in 1899, but returned frequently as a guest, continuing his career in the provinces and in Brussels. He possessed a mighty voice, beautifully produced and applied always with elegance.

PAUL DARAUX sang the part of le Roi d'Arles in the première of *Renaud d'Arles* by Desjoyeaux at Monte Carlo in 1900. His colleagues included Ibos, in the title role, Navarini and Melchissèdec. At Fr.1,100 per performance his status was above all but the tenor. His records were made in Paris, but he is not known to have sung at either of the major houses there. It is a fine voice, and even with such a brief and scarcely significant piece as his vehicle he is able to project a personality and a sense of occasion.

HERMANN WINKELMANN [Braunschweig 1848-Mauer bei Wien 1912] intended to enter his father's piano manufactory, but instead had his voice trained by Koch in Hanover, which led to his début as Manrico at Sonderhausen in 1875. By 1878 he had progressed to Hamburg, where, the next year, he created the title role in Rubinstein's *Nero*, the composer conducting. He appeared as Tristan in London in 1882; Herman Klein could not believe it was his first performance of this. That year, also, he created the title role of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth. In 1884 he sang in five Wagner-Festivals organised by Theodore Thomas in North America. In 1883 he became a member of the Imperial Opera in Vienna, his creations there including the part of Mathias in Kienzl's *Der Evangelimann*. He retired in 1907 and taught. The records indicate the voice of a fine Heldentenor, but confirm a contemporary reviewer's comment that there was a shortage of breath. His son, Hans, was also a tenor.

SELMA KURZ [Bielietz, Silesia 1874-Vienna 1933] was discovered by a cantor who took her to Vienna, where he succeeded in finding a royal patron to finance studies under Röss, teacher also of Slezak. She also received advice from Jean de Reszke and Mathilde Marchesi. Her first appearances were at Hamburg in lower voiced parts than she later sang, e.g. Azucena and Fidès. She moved to Frankfurt-am-Main, where she was heard by Mahler, who arranged for her to move to Vienna. Her first parts there were Mignon and

Margu rite. She also sang Elisabeth and, apparently, Sieglinde. Mahler wanted her to sing *Die K nigin der Nacht*, which she did, and which opened her career as a coloratura, and *Fidelio*, which she did not. A trip to America was cut short by the discovery of a heart condition. She was later able to resume her career, but further illness forced her retirement in 1929.

ANNIE DIRKENS [Berlin 1869-Vienna 1942] studied at the Stern Conservatoire in Berlin and with Nina Falkenberg in Dresden. She made her d but in Berlin in 1890, and moved to Leipzig in 1893. In 1896 she began a highly successful career in Vienna, making Adele, the role of her d but there, her hallmark. She was married to an Austrian Count. During the Great War she was injured whilst serving as a nurse on Austria's eastern front. Afterwards she ran a tobacco kiosk by the Burgtheater.

FRANZ PACAL [Leitomischl 1865-Nepomuk bei Pilsen 1938] was a violinist in the orchestra of the National Theatre of Prague from 1887 to 1892. Then, after vocal studies under Gustav Walter in Vienna, he sang in choruses in Cologne, Bremen, Graz and Vienna. In 1897 he sang the small part of the Ruedi in *Guillaume Tell*, and was immediately made a soloist. Between 1905 and 1913 he sang successively in Prague, Riga and Posen. During the Great War he served as a senior official in the grain office in Prague. It is surprising that such a fine voice took so long to come to the fore.

LEOPOLD DEMUTH [Br nn 1861-Czernowitz 1910] His voice was discovered during army service, and he went to Vienna to study with G nsbacher. His first appearance, in Halle in 1889, was in the title role of Marschner's *Hans Heiling*. In 1897, experience gained in Leipzig and Hamburg, he became one of Mahler's singers in Vienna. He sang also at Covent Garden and Bayreuth. He died of a heart attack during a concert. There are many records of his fine baritone voice. The earliest are perhaps the best, bearing out the suggestion that as time went on his performances tended to become a little routine.

IRENE ABENDROTH [Lemberg 1872-Weidling bei Wien 1932] was born in Poland, but her parents were Austrian. After a first concert appearance at the age of eight, we are told that she sang arias by Verdi and Moniuszko, she studied, on a state grant, in Milan with Lambertini and Campanini, and in Vienna with Wilczek, a pupil of Lamperti. A second concert d but at Carlsbad in 1888 was followed by her stage d but as Amina in *La Sonnambula* in 1889 at the Hofoper in Vienna, after a postponement on account of the Mayerling affair. However, having started at the top she moved after two years to Riga and then to Munich, but then back to Vienna in 1895. According to her memoirs intrigues held back her success, but when Mahler arrived he realised her abilities. In 1900 she went to Dresden where she remained until 1908. After that she sang on the concert platform and taught. She sang a wide range of roles, though her records, few and very rare, concentrate on her phenomenally fleet coloratura, rather than musical insight.

THEODOR BERTRAM [Stuttgart 1869-Bayreuth 1907] was taught by his father; his parents were both singers. His d but was in 1889 at Ulm, where he remained for two years before moving to Hamburg, and to Berlin in 1892. From 1893 to 1899 he sang in Munich. From 1899 to 1901 he was in America, principally at the Metropolitan Opera,

and on his return he made his first appearance at Bayreuth. On his wife's death in 1905, he took to drink and eventually committed suicide. He was a fine interpreter of Mozart; his Wotan was considered incomparable.

DÉSIRÉ PAUWELS [Ghent 1861-Amsterdam 1942] studied in his home town and in Brussels from 1887 to 1889. His career was probably entirely in Belgium and in Holland, especially in Amsterdam. His roles included Canio, Der Evangelimann, Lohengrin, Rienzi and Tannhäuser. He was later director of the Rembrandt Theatre, Amsterdam, for which he engaged his pupil, Louis Morrison. This is one of his two known records, the other was for Lyrathon.

GIOVANNI APOSTULO [Athens 1866-Naples 1904] studied and commenced his career in Greece. His début, in 1888, was in a work of his contemporary and compatriot, Spyridon Xindas. After being for a while first tenor of a travelling Greek company, he went to Italy for further study with Pozzi. His first great success was at Ascoli as Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino*; it resulted in work all over Italy, including the San Carlo and La Scala. He also appeared in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Warsaw. At Monte Carlo he sang with Adelina Patti. His repertoire included The Duke of Mantua and Alfredo, des Grieux and Werther, Rodolfo and Cavaredossi. According to one source, a disappointment in love brought about the end of his career.

FELIX ASCH The record indicates a well-schooled German baritone; in itself unusual, as cantors, exceptions being Israel Schorr and Manfred Lewandowski, tend to be tenors. No biographical details have been traced, beyond the presumption from the label, that he was at a Berlin synagogue. Normally, as on so many examples in this compilation, music was cut down to 2 to 2½ minutes. Asch, however, was allowed 3 sides for this piece, suggesting that he was highly regarded. Presumably it sold well, as this is a remake. This is the second section. (The other two parts have not been traced.) The melody is of considerable antiquity and widely known. Apart from the well-known work by Bruch, it appears unmistakably in a late Beethoven quartet. Detractors have tried to make out that this prayer is to allow vows to be broken. In fact it asks forgiveness for promises which the supplicant is, through no fault of his own, prevented from keeping.

Sic transit gloria mundi. Of a number of singers, some may well have had major careers, little or nothing seems to be known. Symposium Records will gladly publish any details readers can add.

The Gramophone Company went through various changes, and in different countries it and its associates have had various titles. The earliest discs bore the name Berliner. From 1900 to 1907 Gramophone and Typewriter was used, indicating a brief and unsuccessful second line of business.

The records transferred here are all of 7"/19cm diameter; 10"/25cm records were introduced in 1901.

Tracks 23, 30 to 33 and 35 to 37 have G & T labels, gold on black; all the others are of the earlier Berliner style, lettering being pressed directly in the surface of the record, or embossed.

At first 4-digit catalogue numbers were used, a preceding initial indicated language, the first digit indicated type of content. E.g. F 4053 F indicating French language; and 4, concerted singers.

As the system grew, so an extra digit was used as an area/language code. E.g. 42780 4 indicating Germany/German; 2 indicating a male solo singer; number 780 in the series. Series were extended beyond the first thousand by adding a prefix. E.g. 2-32040

However, there were many inconsistencies, in particular, England/English had no area/language indicator. E.g. 3192

X after a catalogue number indicates a remake.

J (track 9) presumably refers to Johnson's very recently introduced wax process. Likewise, n.B. is believed to stand for "new Berliner", indicating use of (Johnson's) new wax system.

Full dates are as given on the discs, but it has been demonstrated that they are generally some days later than dates of recording; perhaps the date when the zinc or wax was processed.

Hand inscribed matrix details are often unclear, other readings of some details are possible.

WHAT WE HEAR TODAY: A TECHNICAL NOTE Until 1925 recording was direct, without such intermediaries as microphones, mixing-desks and amplifiers.

In the earliest days a flat disc of zinc was given a thin covering of a heavy soap-like substance. The disc was placed on a rotating table. As it revolved it also moved slowly sideways, under a stylus, so that a narrow close-turned spiral of soap was cut away, exposing the zinc beneath.

The artist performed close to the mouth of a horn which funnelled the sound energy to a diaphragm, which it caused to vibrate. The motion of the diaphragm vibrated the stylus so that the groove being cut wobbled from side to side in accordance with the original sound.

The disc was next placed in a bath of acid. The acid ate away the zinc where it was exposed, thus producing in the zinc a groove resembling the original sound.

By a process of electroplating, a heavy layer of metal was deposited on the zinc, completely filling the groove. Thus, when the zinc was removed, what had been a groove in the zinc, was a ridge on the new plate.

With a suitable cycle of steam heating and water cooling, the ridge could be impressed in a plastic material to produce a "Record".

"Playing" the record was largely the reverse procedure. The record revolved on a turntable, the groove passing beneath a "needle". Thus "wobbles" of the groove vibrated the needle, and a diaphragm connected to it. Lastly, a horn transformed the vibrations into sound in the room.

The system worked best for the human voice and for the violin, it was not very good with piano or orchestra, for the organ it was virtually useless.

Throughout the history of recording the capabilities of the recording process have been well ahead of even the best of reproducing systems. Thus, the quality of sound obtainable through the proper application of modern technology to old recordings is way beyond anything experienced by the original purchasers of the records.

However, the composition of early records had to include hard particles for

adequate wearing properties, and these particles cause noise. In so far as the spectrum of noise overlaps the spectrum of music and the structure of one resembles the structure of the other there must inevitably be some compromise in reducing one whilst preserving the other. In the case of rare records a further limitation is imposed by the condition of the best surviving copies.

Primitive though the early gramophones were, a considerable volume of sound was obtainable; the expression "Put a sock in it" may have originated in the use of a sock in the mouth of the horn as a volume-control.

Chronology of the Development of Sound Recording

- 1873 Enrico Caruso born in a poor quarter of Naples.
- 1877 Edison first reproduces sound.
- 1882 Parsifal, Wagner's last opera.
- 1884 Caruso survives the great cholera epidemic.
- 1887 Emile Berliner has vision of Gramophone, [i.e. discs instead of Edison's cylinders]
 - Starts to develop etching process
- 1888 Berliner demonstrates Gramophone.
- 1890 Cavalleria Rusticana (Mascagni), the first true verismo opera.
- 1891 or 1892 First discs released.
- 1892 I Pagliacci (Leoncavallo), the second great verismo success.
- 1893 Falstaff, Verdi's last opera
- 1895 Berliner Gramophone Company established, Philadelphia.
 - First known recording of opera, i.e. by a singer; there had been pot-pourri records of bands
- 1898 Recording studio in basement at 31, Maiden Lane, London, first artists drawn from near-by theatre-land. EMI the direct descendant of this enterprise.
- 1900 Wax replaces zinc as medium of recording, and, shortly after, duplication of matrices by electrolysis allows virtually limitless production worldwide.
- 1901 Death of Verdi.
 - Atlantic spanned by radio (reliability of test has been doubted)
- 1902 April 11th, Caruso's first recording session includes arias from:
 - L'Elisir d'Amore (Donizetti), early 19th century "bel canto"
 - Rigoletto (Verdi), mid-19th century
 - Germania (Franchetti), March 11th 1902, latest verismo opera.
 - 30th November, and perhaps 1st December, his second session.
- 1903 Edvard Grieg, Joseph Joachim and Sir Charles Santley make records, also Francesco Tamagno and Victor Maurel, creators of Verdi's Otello and Iago.
 - November 23rd, Caruso's first appearance at Metropolitan Opera
- 1904 Melba, Saint-Saëns and de Sarasate are recorded.
- 1905 Jean de Reszke refuses to sanction issue of records.
 - Piano rolls of Gustav Mahler.
- 1910 First records of Sir Edward Elgar and Mr. Thomas Beecham
- 1921 Death of Caruso in Naples, ?from lung cancer caused by smoking.
- 1925 Record industry transformed by introduction of electrical process.

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