

# Guide to the Collection of Enrico Caruso caricatures, photographs, and other material

MSS 100



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<https://guides.library.yale.edu/MusicSpecialCollections>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Gilmore Music Library  
120 High Street  
PO Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520  
musicsspecialcollections@yale.edu  
<https://guides.library.yale.edu/MusicSpecialCollections>

**CALL NUMBER:** MSS 100

**CREATOR:** Caruso, Enrico, 1873-1921

**TITLE:** Collection of Enrico Caruso caricatures, photographs, and other material

**DATES:** 1903-1987

**BULK DATES:** 1906-1915

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1 linear foot

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** This collection includes original caricatures drawn by tenor Enrico Caruso; portrait shots and photographs of Caruso in costume; handwritten correspondence by Caruso; two bronze busts of Caruso; and various articles and promotional materials on Caruso's career activity.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/music.mss.0100>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/music.mss.0100>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

- b. box
- f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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## Preferred Citation

MSS 100, Collection of Enrico Caruso caricatures, photographs, and other material, in the Music Library of Yale University.

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## Processing Information

Collection processed in 2014. Finding aid created in 2018.

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## Biographical Sketch of Enrico Caruso

Enrico Caruso, one of the most prominent and renowned tenors of the early 20th century, was born on 25 February 1873 in Naples, Italy. As a child coming from a poor family, Caruso sang in his church choir, and in 1894 he began vocal studies with Guglielmo Vergine. After debuting in Mario Morelli's *L'Amico Francesco* at the Teatro Nuovo, Naples, Caruso then studied with Vincenzo Lombardi until 1897.

Caruso's first notable success was in May 1897 at Palermo in Poncielli's *La Gioconda*. In Milan at the Teatro Lirico, he sang in the premières of Cilea's *L'Arlesiana* (Federico, 1897) and Adriana Lecouvreur (Maurizio, 1902), as well as Giordano's *Fedora* (Loris, 1898). In 1899 Caruso also sang in *Fedora* for his Buenos Aires debut, and for his Rome debut he sang in Mascagni's *Iris*. During the 1900–1901 operatic season, Caruso performed the role of Rudolfo in Puccini's *La Bohème* at La Scala, Milan, and Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*.

Caruso also sang in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Teatro di San Carlo, Naples, in 1901, but some amount of controversy over that appearance caused him never to sing there again. On 14 May 1902 Caruso made his Covent Garden debut as the Duke in Verdi's *Rigoletto*; and continued to perform at Covent Garden from 1904 to 1907 and in 1913 and 1914. Caruso also performed in Spain, Germany, Austria, and France.

Caruso debuted at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City on 23 November 1903 as the Duke in *Rigoletto*. From that point on he performed at least thirty-eight other roles there and created the role of Dick Johnson in Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* in 1910. Caruso's most frequent appearances with that company were as Canio in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, Radames in Verdi's *Aida*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, and Cavaradossi in Puccini's *Tosca*.

Caruso returned to Italy in 1914 and 1915 for benefit performances of *Pagliacci* in both Milan. He also sang several times in Latin America (Havana, Mexico City, São Paulo) between 1917 and 1920. His last public appearance was in Halévy's *La Juive*, at the Metropolitan Opera, on 24 December 1920. Caruso died in Naples, 2 Aug 1921, at the age of 48, of a lung or abdominal ailment. He made several recordings throughout his career, copies of which reside at the Yale Collection of Historical Sound Recordings.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection documents aspects of Enrico Caruso's professional life primarily through his own drawings, as well as photographs, correspondence, and various articles and promotional material. The caricature drawings by Caruso, which augment similar depictions that have been published in various books and articles, show the tenor in daily dress and in costume, both alone and with other performers. Some caricatures also feature other figures, such as composer Giuseppe Verdi. Photographs depict Caruso as Dick Johnson in Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*, a role he created at the Metropolitan Opera, as well as Canio in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, the Duke in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, and Des Grieux either in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* or Massenet's *Manon*. The correspondence written by Caruso includes letters in Italian and French. Articles and promotional materials discuss various aspects of Caruso's career. The collection also includes two desktop sculptures of Caruso, one of which he may have handcrafted.

## **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged in seven series: I. Caricatures. II. Clippings, promotional flyers, and articles. III. Commemorative booklets. IV. Correspondence by Enrico Caruso. V. Photographs. VI. Recordings of Enrico Caruso. VII. Desktop statues.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Caricatures

b. 1, f. 1	Auction tags: Gimbel Brothers, and article on caricatures sold	circa 1944
b. 1, f. 2	Enrico Caruso as Rodolfo in La Bohème by Giacomo Puccini Two drawings	circa 1907-1913
b. 1, f. 3	Other people [not in costume], including Giuseppe Verdi Eight drawings	circa 1907-1911
b. 1, f. 4	Other performers in costume Two drawings. See also: box 2, folder 14. One may be Enrico Caruso	circa 1915
b. 1, f. 5	Self-portraits Five drawings	circa 1911-1913
b. 2, f. 14	Enrico Caruso and female co-star in costume Oversize. See also: box 1, folder 4	undated
b. 2, f. 15	Drawing of Buzzi Piccia in autograph collection folio with additional documentation Oversize	circa 1910

## Series II: Clippings, promotional flyers, and articles

b. 1, f. 6	Clippings, promotional flyers, and articles	1921–1987
b. 2, f. 16	Enrico Caruso posed with sheet music and cigarette -- Theatre Magazine Oversize. Magazine clipping.	1916
b. 2, f. 17	Record slip cover with handwritten message in Italian by Enrico Caruso Oversize	1903 April 19
b. 2, f. 18	Scrapbook of Enrico Caruso clippings Oversize	1921
b. 1, f. 9	Gramophone record label; New York Times letter	circa 1959

**Series III: Commemorative booklets, 1910–1975**

One with auction tags

b. 1, f. 7



**Series IV: Correspondence by Enrico Caruso, 1906–1914**

Three of these items of correspondence are handwritten.

b. 1, f. 8

**Series V: Photographs**

b. 1, f. 10	Enrico Caruso as Cano in Pagliacci by Ruggero Leoncavallo; as the Duke in Rigoletto by Giuseppe Verdi	undated
b. 1, f. 11	Negatives: includes La Fanciulla del West (Girl of the Golden West) by Giacomo Puccini See also: box 2, folder 19	1910
b. 1, f. 12	Enrico Caruso portrait shots and candids four images	circa 1910-1915
b. 2, f. 19	Production shots of La Fanciulla del West (Girl of the Golden West) by Giacomo Puccini Oversize. See also: box 1, folder 11.	1910
b. 2, f. 20	Enrico Caruso in costume with white wig [as Des Grieux in Manon by Jules Massenet?] Oversize	undated
b. 2, f. 21	Enrico Caruso as the Duke in Rigoletto by Guiseppe Verdi Oversize. Includes auction tag	undated

**Series VI: Recordings of Enrico Caruso, circa 1944**

Inventory lists and related types of information

b. 1, f. 13

**Series VII: Desktop statues**

b. 3	Bronz bust of Enrico Caruso Handcrafted by Caruso?	1907
b. 3	Plaster bust of Enrico Caruso Dom Art 1002	undated

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Names**

Caruso, Enrico, 1873-1921