

Hon. Treasurer:
Miss A. Todd,
9, Woodstock Road,
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DELIUS SOCIETY - NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 1963.

The BBC are determined to make me work hard in producing another newsletter so soon after the last one. Having failed to play the quartet in the "Music at Night" series on 11th October, they have now advised us that it will be included in the same programme on 1st November. Members who are thinking of writing a vitriolic letter should therefore wait until the 1st November, in hopeful anticipation that they can save a threepenny stamp. Otherwise, I would recommend a cascade of letters, as I feel sure this will pay dividends in the end.

In the meantime, I am happy to announce two dates that are now definite.

On FRIDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER, a recital of recorded tapes will be held at the Holborn Public Library, Theobalds Road, W. C. 1. at 7.30 p.m. It is hoped that the following will be played

- (i) The talk given by Robert Nicholls on a visit to Grez in the 1930s. This has been requested again as several members missed it last time. It will therefore not be played until after the interval, in case any members find 7.30 rather an early time.
- (ii) The string quartet (the BBC on 1st November permitting).
- (iii) The tape kindly lent by Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel of extracts from the Jacksonville festival. This includes two sections of "Songs of Farewell" with piano accompaniment, "Midsummer Song", the wedding music from "A Village Romeo and Juliet", and "To be sung of a summer night on the water". The last piece has been catalogued on the tape delightfully as "To be sure of a summer night on the water". Since our American friends are so confident of fine weather, members will, I feel sure, dress accordingly - the ladies in summer frocks and the men in shorts!

Finally, in case members have not heard the CBS record issued here in January, we hope to have a tape of Ormandy and the Philadelphia playing "Brigg Fair", "The 2nd Dance Rhapsody", "On Hearing the first cuckoo in Spring", and "In a Summer Garden". Or there is the lovely old recording of Sammons playing the violin concerto.

The ladies on the committee have once again kindly offered to provide refreshments, and a collection will be taken - during the wedding music from "A Village Romeo"?! - to help defray expenses. We look forward to meeting members again, and hope that London does not decide to welcome us with a thick fog.

The recital on SATURDAY, 4TH JANUARY, 1964, has now definitely been booked at Leighton House, 12, Holland Park Road, London, W.14 for 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

/ This hall

This hall holds 152 people, and the committee are very keen that it should be full. It has been decided by the committee that admission will be free. The cost of the recital is estimated at about £60. The Delius Trust has most kindly offered to consider a contribution towards the cost, and the committee would prefer another collection at the end, rather than charging for seats. This will avoid the expense of printing tickets, so will members please inform the Secretary without delay how many seats they will require. A list can then be made up, and admission can be vetted at the door. Although every member is welcome to bring along guests - especially potential members for the society - please do not ask for more seats than you expect to take up, because if the demand for seats is larger than 152, it may be necessary to limit members to two tickets each. After all, we have over a hundred members in Great Britain, and if they all decide to come along....

Unfortunately, refreshments cannot be provided on the premises, but for those who will feel the need for liquid refreshment during the interval, the "Holland Arms" is only two minutes away, and a warning bell, as used in "Brigg Fair" can no doubt be rigged up, to warn members that the second half is about to commence!

So please let the secretary know your requirements and write to her, Miss Estelle Palmley, 45 Redhill Drive, Edgware, Middlesex, not later than 30th November. In the next newsletter, - probably in late November or early December - I will report on how many seats have been allocated. I feel confident that a full house is possible, and only hope that the weather is kind.

I will give the programme in full in the next newsletter, but the suggested one will consist of the 1st and 3rd violin sonatas, and ten songs.

If this recital is successful, a most exciting prospect offers itself for a second recital. There is, apparently, a box in the Royal Academy of Music of Delius' music, most of which has never been published. Perhaps a recital could be arranged of, as yet, unheard Delius music. But, first, a full attendance is wanted on 4th January, otherwise our enthusiasm may be dampened!

One of our committee members, Mr. Rodney Meadows, has valiantly started to compile a list of Delius articles which have appeared in music magazines, etc., which can then form a nucleus for a library, from which members will be welcome to borrow. If any members know of any articles which may not otherwise have been noted, would they be kind enough to inform Mr. Meadows direct, at 16, Craven Hill, London, W.2.

Our chairman, Mr. David Simmons, broadcast in the Third Programme last Tuesday, 22nd October, in Record Review, comparing performances on record of Elgar's Enigma Variations. Assuming that he is asked to do another broadcast (X) he has said that he intends to compare Delius recordings. Further information will be given to members in due course.

Mr. Downey has written to say that he has tried unsuccessfully to buy miniature scores such as "A Mass of Life", "Songs of Sunset" and "A Song of the High Hills". He would be most interested to hear from anyone who has secondhand copies of these or others who would be willing to sell.

No doubt most members will want to hold on to their scores. Perhaps a better idea is for all frustrated score buyers to write to Mr. Emanuel at the Delius Trust, 74/78, Kilburn High Road, London, N. W. 6. If the Delius Trust is besieged by enough members, they can in turn besiege Boosey & Hawkes.

Mr. Wright has also written about the difficulty of obtaining a full score of "A Village Romeo and Juliet" from his county library. One of the long term aims of the Society is to assemble as complete a collection of Delius scores as possible so that these can be lent out to members.

In the same way, it would be nice to build up a collection of recorded tapes, which could also be lent to members. We are hoping that a recording of the recital can be made of 4th January. Not actually at the recital, but afterwards privately. Unless our member, Mr. Itter, of Lyrita recordings can be persuaded to put it on record for public sale.

Mr. Staveley has written to say that he has just read a book published by Hodder & Stoughton entitled "Sons of the Generous Earth" by Philip Oyler. "This is a book about rural France and the author describes among other things how he brought into order an old moated chateau near Grez. It is a book full of the sunshine and peace of France. There is a chapter on Delius, for Mr. Oyler had an open invitation (not given to many!) to call on the Deliuses; although Fred wasn't interested in farming and Mr. Oyler wasn't keen on music, they both loved Grez. There is a wonderful description of the garden - I have never read a better - and the close of the chapter is memorable."

Mr. Staveley also mentions a book entitled "A musical pilgrimage in Yorkshire" which is designed to be a star-studded gallery of county achievement. In it, the author, whose name is charitably forgotten, includes a reference to Delius as one who "wrote songs under the pen name of Peter Warlock". Perhaps the author's name was Fred Heseltine!

On Saturday, 19th October, at 8.50 a.m., Ludwig Koch gave a ten minute broadcast on Birdsong in music and sound. He played the Beecham record of "On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring", and followed it by recordings of the cuculus canorus! A happy ten minutes.

Miss Ann Todd, our Treasurer, writes:

"I would like to invite members whose subscriptions are due or overdue to renew without individual application. Alternatively, if those who feel unable to renew their membership would kindly let me know, it will save further reminders."

/ Our Secretary

Our Secretary, Miss Estelle Palmley, writes:-

"On taking over the secretaryship of the Society, I would like to convey tributes to members of the Committee through the medium of this newsletter.

"To MISS ANN TODD, who cheerfully and efficiently copes with everything from bank forms to decimal currency. Not only our Treasurer, but in herself a valuable asset of the Society.

"To MR. RODNEY MEADOWS, who is now primarily concerned with the drafting of a possible Constitution for the Society, and whose wisdom and quiet authority make him an invaluable member of the Committee.

"To MR. CHARLES BARNARD for his many, many activities on behalf of the Society, and for his tireless work to get the Leighton House concert under way. A most stimulating and pleasant colleague.

"To MRS. BETTY RUFFLE (former Secretary) for attending our last Committee meeting in spite of an injured arm sling-wise and a damaged eye, as a result of a car accident. We wish her a speedy recovery.

"To DR. ROLAND GIBSON, our founder-member, whom many of our early supporters will remember for his newsletters, to which he still makes regular contributions. We are fortunate that he continues to leave his busy world of physics to serve the Committee as Vice-Chairman and to lend prestige to the Society.

"To MR. DAVID SIMMONS, our Chairman, who presides over Committee meetings with the right blend of severity tempered by inborn good humour, and a wide knowledge of all aspects of music. Mr. Barnard has referred elsewhere to our Chairman's recent broadcast on the music of - ELGAR! But we exonerate him, since Elgar was after all an admirer of Delius.

"It is an honour to be the Secretary of the Delius Society, and in this way to revere the memory of Delius and his great interpreter, Sir Thomas Beecham".

Before welcoming once again Dr. Gibson's current serial on "The Mystery of Fred Delius", I should perhaps mention that he is not to be allowed to hold the field unchallenged! Mr. Wright has written to say that he is preparing an article challenging some of Dr. Gibson's views, which we shall be pleased to include in a later newsletter. Let it never be said that the newsletter is partisan!

Mr. Wright, incidentally, included "In A Summer Garden" in a Beecham Anthology to the Dudley Recorded Musical Society on October 23rd.

Dr. Gibson writes:

/"The Delius Quartet

"The Delius Quartet was not broadcast on Oct 11th, after all. During the past nine months or so, performances of Delius works seem to have become even more infrequent. However, the BBC Northern Orchestra broadcast 'Two Aquarelles' in their 'Concert Hour' of October 1st when the conductor was Maurice Handford.

"In the October 'Musical Times' there is an article on another composer who has declined in concert programmes - Bax. It was a surprise to see this article on a composer who is now almost neglected. The article mentions Frank Merrick's recording, for the Frank Merrick Society, of Bax's second piano sonata. The page opposite that on which the article appears contains a large advertisement by Chappell & Co. Ltd. relating to scores of Bax's symphonies, chamber music, etc.,

"Quite often one hears Bax compared with Delius. Gerald Abraham, in his 'Modern Music', wrote:

'Bax's music has little more than Elgar's, and no more than Delius's, in common with that which we recognise as truly modern. Bax's tendency to wealth of expression, to soaring on the wings of emotional rhetoric, his underlying romanticism of thought - all these are the antithesis of the fashion of modernism. Like Delius, another modernist in harmony only, he is a romantic who has acquired a subtler technique from the impressionists....'

"'Acquired....from the impressionists....' is a gross exaggeration. Delius was to a large extent an impressionist. One has only to think of 'Paris', 'In a Summer Garden', 'Summer Night on the River', and 'North Country Sketches', for example. One cannot separate impressionism sharply from late romanticism. On the other hand, one cannot isolate any composer from his contemporaries and predecessors though, of course, some influences are particularly direct. Neville Cardus writes, in his 'Talking of Music':-

'In his fine tone poem "Tintagel", Bax gets his effect of surge of sea and sense of distance by borrowing something of Mendelssohn's formula, blending it brilliantly with devices drawn from "La Mer" of Debussy; but of course Bax makes the work entirely his own and throws in one of the best and more beautifully curved melodies in all music of our time.'

"It has often been said that Bax was considerably influenced by Celtic folk music. In the book 'Modern Music' referred to above, Gerald Abraham wrote,

'The modern Anglo-Saxon composer is particularly fond of dressing up harmless diatonic tunes in the most daring chromatic clothes. Such a modish garb does not always suit the quiet, old-fashioned type of girl; especially if she happens to be a folk-tune, as she very often is. It takes a Delius to get away with "Brigg Fair". Too often the tune is altogether over-dressed.'

"One can, of course, think of a number of works, not only by Delius but by other composers, in which the composer 'gets away with it', even if the works are not up to 'Brigg Fair'.

Are Warlock's delightful 'Folk-Song Preludes', for piano solo, such a case - or are the tunes not folk-songs, but original? In proportion to size of output, Warlock, though not played a lot, fares better than Bax. For example, there was the all-Warlock programme given about 18 months ago at the Festival Hall by Gordon Honey, and recently the BBC broadcast a series of programmes of his songs. The only major Bax work broadcast recently is the obce quintet. When it comes to infrequency of performance, or neglect, Delius is just the biggest figure of a whole handful of composers who are somewhat out of fashion - Bax, Moeran, Van Dieren, Holst, Brian, etc., as has been pointed out a number of times recently in various journals, by Delius Society members and others."

We regret that owing to lack of space and the time factor - we want to get this issue into members' hands well before the 1st November - we are unable to publish in this issue a most interesting article on Delius entitled "English Naturalist" by Denis Vaughan, received from Mr. Leaney, which he had noted in the American publication "Opera News" of December 20th, 1962, but we will make every effort to include it in the next newsletter.

We are of course very much indebted to Mr. Leaney for his persistent campaign with the BBC, dating back to the spring of this year, for the Delius Quartet.

Incidentally, we are very much intrigued by a sentence in a recent letter from Mr. Leaney in which he referred to his intention to make a tape recording of the song "A Bird's Tale" by Delius - broadcast for the first time last Wednesday morning (the 16th October) - with the assistance of two alarm clocks, as he himself would not be at home at the time!

A final message from our Secretary, who says:

"I look forward to seeing all London members, and as many others as possible, at the Holborn Library on the 29th November.

"I also ask all members, and particularly our members from the provinces who are able, to send me collectively so many applications for the Leighton House concert on the 4th January that the Edgware Post Office is obliged to engage its Christmas staff even earlier than usual this year!"

New Member No. 117

We welcome Mr. B. Westcott to the Delius Society, whose address, as members will wish to note, is:

23 Brooke Dene Road,
Unsworth,
Bury, Lancs.