

68 Chavmouth Court
Kings Rd, Richmond.

Dear Mr Slater,

The question of who is to be our secretary is still unsettled. However we can bring this up at our meeting, which will be at 3.30 p.m. Sat. April 14th, in the hall (Lancaster Hall) of the German YMCA at 35 Caven Terrace W.2 (continuation of Lancaster Gate) two turnings West of Lancaster Gate tube Stⁿ.

In my last newsletter I should have written, regarding "Songs of Sunset", "Downson's words" instead of "Downson's poem".

Mr A. H. Slade has kindly sent me a copy of the March 'Audio & Record Review', which contains an article by Burnett James on "The Delius Centenary".

B.J.'s article is, in my opinion, the best, in some respects, of the recent articles on Delius, although, like the majority of critics, he seems not to be clear as regards interpreting his own function or rôle as critic.

Many critics seem not to realise, e.g., that once they open their mouths, or put pen to paper, in the nature of the case they move away from the art aspect of the matter. A piece of music, e.g., can only be experienced; the moment one starts to communicate, to analyse, the unity of the work of art is broken. As critics one does & can only deal with form, but in as much as they do not realise this, confusing psychology with actual emotional processes, many critics oscillate between cross intellectualism and wild emotional utterances.

B. J. writes "The music of Delius expresses a predominantly private world of feeling, thoroughly subjective" but hastens to add "but it is strong & sturdy for all that". Again, he writes "Anti-intellectual perhaps", but hastens to add "but it is not merely emotional & spongy". Apparently B. J. is realising, though not very clearly, here, that the anti-intellectual is involved, shown e.g., in Delius' case by the very fact that he bothered to argue so much with other people (just as Delius, often called 'atheist', often attacked people's belief in God; but as the word implies, a real atheist is out of it all, he is just not interested, a church is ~~the same~~ just another building, & he does not make a point of labelling himself 'atheist').

Later, B.J. does say "The music of Delius was the outcome of a profoundly religious nature. His religion however, was pagan & sensual. If that looks like too much of a paradox then we are not near to the secret of Delius". He hated the organised religion of the English middle classes into which he was born; the bourgeois institutionalism of Victorian Bradford". Thus B.J. refers explicitly to Delius' social background.

Eventually B.J. writes "There was a conflict in Delius' temperament - ... & because he was at heart both pagan & pantheistic, he was deeply, bitterly, aware of the transitoriness of human life & earthly beauty". Yet, in spite of this "conflict", elsewhere B.J. (unlike certain other critics) implies that melody & harmony in Delius form an organic whole! Also B.J. does not tie up clearly this "conflict" with: - "Delius became caught up less by Nietzsche's thought, than by the matchless prose poetic prose in which it was presented", or with what he (B.J.) writes on Delius' social environment. "He lived at the end of an era, both social and musical; & his later music has the sunset glow, not only of his own life, but of an epoch". All that B.J. does is to add "He closes one door rather than unlocks another - ... He shows us the world's wound even if he cannot heal it".

One may not quarrel with this, but one feels like asking B.J. "What precisely is the relation of the social to the musical"? Also, to what extent would B.J. interpret his article as an expression of his own social environment?

Talking of B.J.'s "poetic prose", there is an article by D. Cooke in the current "Radio Times" on 'Fennimore & Gerda', in which he refers to its having "no arias, monologues or ensembles; the conversation, set to a musical equivalent of speech, is woven into a subtle orchestral score. - - -"

'Observer' Mar. 25, Peter Heyworth: "Like Delius, Debussy was of course, a great hater of anything that smacked of conscious form; all that was mere scholasticism. But whereas Delius lapsed into rhapsody, Debussy lays phrase alongside phrase with such consummate sureness & rhythmic subtlety - - -"

Mar. 10. Margaret Hayes played Delius' 2nd Violin Sonata at Wigmore H.
Mar 28. Guildhall School of Music & Drama plays D's "Idyll"
April 18. Royal Phil. under Bernard Herrmann plays "Brieg Fair"
April 26. At R.A.F. Anniversary concert, Hallé & Sir J. Bantock play "Paradise Garden".

Yours sincerely
Roland Gibson.