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'La Bout du Monde' – the weir and watermill at Grez-sur-Loing

photograph: Stewart Winstanley

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Following the enthusiastic preliminary discussion at last year's Bradford AGM, the Committee has progressed the plan that the Society should set up a Delius Prize at one of the country's schools of music. A sub-committee chaired by Michael Green looked into the various possibilities and made recommendations that were further discussed before being agreed by the main Committee. It was felt that our first approach should be to London's Royal Academy of Music in recognition of its historical association with Delius through Sir Thomas Armstrong, a former Principal, and our late President, Eric Fenby.

The reaction of Prof Curtis Price, the current Principal of the RAM, could not have been more courteous or more encouraging. A meeting was subsequently arranged with the Registrar, Philip White, who outlined the various possibilities that exist, of which the Committee favoured a performance competition held in the context of a public concert. Final arrangements remain to be agreed but The Delius Prize is about to be advertised for the first time and we anticipate a competition date in the first half of November. Further details will follow.

The Committee is proud of this enterprise, believing that to encourage young people to discover the music of Delius for themselves is one of the best ways of ensuring that his works will continue to be considered and appreciated.

Bookings for the AGM in Gloucester are proceeding well. As always, the Three Choirs Festival offers splendid attractions and the weekend is supported by a full social programme. Please submit last-minute application forms and any queries to our Hon Secretary, Ann Dixon.

May I end on a purely personal note? I am delighted to advise fellow members that Lesley Crosland and I are shortly to be married. Many of you already know Lesley, who has attended the last two AGMs and various other meetings. I look forward to introducing those of you who have yet to meet her.

Roger Buckley

EDITORIAL

A few weeks ago I had an email from Ann Dixon, our Honorary Secretary, about a recent experience at the bank. Ann wrote: 'I went to pay in some cheques for the AGM – I gave this young man the paying-in book and he said, "What is a delius?" It's one of those comments that make it hard not to laugh, but I was quite pleased that I was able to explain seriously to him what one was!' I am certain that Ann isn't the only member to encounter comments like this. But it wasn't always so. Seventy years ago when Frederick Delius died at Grez-sur-Loing, the newspapers were full of reports of his death, and his musical achievements were celebrated. In recognition of this anniversary all the archive boxes in this issue feature press coverage from the time of the composer's death. These contemporary reports reflect the esteem with which Delius was held in 1934 – no explanation was needed then.

But, having said that, I continue to be surprised by what arrives on my desk, whether by post, telephone or email. Most unexpected of all recently, was the offer of an article about Delius playing cricket in 1882. We have all read that as a 'little boy' Fritz played 'cricket on the waste land at the bottom of Claremont' and 'scarcely ever missed a cricket match at the Bowling Green cricket club on Saturday afternoons', and now, thanks to the research of Ian Roberts we can verify his cricket skills. I am extremely glad that Ian, who is not a member of the Society, took the time to contact me. This is another vital piece in the 'jigsaw' of Delius's life.

Over the years, founder member John White has contributed numerous articles to the *Journal*. His painstaking research is greatly valued, and I am pleased to include a comprehensive analysis he has made of the literary sources for Delius's operas. And, just to prove that charity shops are worth the occasional perusal, Hugh Torrens has sent a short account based on the discovery of a book in Oxford. Last September many members made the pilgrimage to Grez to join in the centenary celebration of the wedding of Delius and Jelka. Stewart Winstanley and Brian Radford, recount their adventures on 'the riverbank' that weekend, and renew old acquaintances in the village where Delius lived for so long.

I try at this point in every edition, to find a different way to thank everyone who has contributed to the *Journal* . . . but I can do no more than offer sincere thanks for all your hard work, and express my hope that you will all 'volunteer' again in the future. Keep in touch.

Jane Armour-Chélu

WORDS WITHOUT MUSIC – The Literary Sources of the Delius Operas

John White

Anyone attending a performance of Wagner's opera *The Flying Dutchman* may find, from a helpful programme note, that it is largely based on a story from a satirical work by Heinrich Heine entitled *The Memoirs of Herr von Schnabelewopski*, and this surely must excite a little curiosity in the opera-goer. Critics will generally tell us that a composer has produced a travesty of the original literary or dramatic work without being at all specific as to the sins that have been committed in the adaptation. Delius's operas in particular, have raised many questions of this type and their librettos are invariably the main objects of censure. Despite this, all but *Irmelin* have been produced in the opera-house in comparatively recent years, some several times.

IRMELIN 1890 – 92

Sir Thomas Beecham states in his biography, that Delius's first opera is based on the combination of 'two old legends: 'The Princess and the Swineherd' and 'Irmelin" (1) but he gives no further information beyond saying elsewhere that the Irmelin legend is 'Northern and early medieval', and that of the Princess and the Swineherd relates to a 'less dateable period of the Fairy-tale'. (2) These vague remarks do not help us to *cherchez la femme*, but there was the hope that Delius had left a hint in Irmelin's soliloquy in Act 1 of the opera, where she refers to a story called 'East of the Sun and West of the Moon', which comes from the Norwegian Folktales or Norske Folkeeventyr of Asbjornsen and Moe. Unfortunately, she does not appear to be in these excellent tales, nor in the Brothers Grimm, nor yet again in Hans Andersen, but he at least has a story called 'The Swineherd' which has a passing similarity to the Delius libretto.

According to this, a Prince hopes to win the acceptance of the Emperor's daughter by sending her presents which possess magical properties; a rose bush and a nightingale. However, the Princess would accept neither because they were not artificial and the Prince was not allowed to pay court to her. He then disguised himself as a menial and was accepted as the Emperor's swineherd. Whilst tending the pigs he produced two enchanted toys which the Princess greatly desired but could only obtain by kissing him a number of times. Caught demeaning herself with a swineherd, both she and the Prince were expelled from the Emperor's domains. The Prince then revealed his true identity and rejecting the superficial and acquisitive Princess, went back to his own kingdom. Clearly, Hans Andersen's story would not have suited Delius in its original state.

The 'legend' of Irmelin – indeed 'familiar legend' according to A K Holland (3) – can be gleaned, in part at least, from Jacobsen's poem 'Irmelin' which Delius set as a song, the first draft of which probably dates from shortly after the completion of the opera. This strange little poem bears out Sir Thomas Beecham's description of Irmelin as a 'medieval heroine of fastidious disposition'. She cold-heartedly mocks and rejects all her suitors as being beneath her contempt and although the poem speaks of her as being 'loveliest of all', such a description hardly applies to her character.

Although she does not appear by name in the Brothers Grimm, they do have a story entitled 'King Thrush-Beard'. Once again we have a proud and haughty princess who makes fun of all her suitors and particularly of one young King whose chin, she said, was as crooked as a thrush's beak. It is difficult to visualise this ornithological peculiarity, as Sir Thomas might have termed it, but although it induced hysterics in the princess, the princess's father became increasingly vexed at his daughter's behaviour and swore that she must marry the first beggar who came to the gate. When a ragged minstrel arrived and sang before the King he gave his daughter to him and they were married. As might be supposed, the minstrel was King Thrush-Beard in disguise, but the remainder of the story resembles 'The Taming of the Shrew' and has nothing to do with Delius's opera.

Delius similarly decided that in his first Act Irmelin would reject her unsuitable suitors one by one, much to the annoyance of the King. If she does not make up her mind within the next six months her father will choose for her. When he leaves, what Sir Thomas describes as 'a merry chorus of villagers' passes by, extolling the delights of a carefree existence. It must be remembered that this is a fairy tale!

Act II concentrates on Nils, a Prince who imagines himself in thrall to Rolf, a robber baron, who has reduced him to looking after a herd of swine, and in the evenings he is expected to sing to the assembled company. He had been following a 'silver stream' which was to lead him to his destiny but had lost his way. Suddenly demanding to be allowed to find the stream again, Rolf tells him he is free to go, and Nils rushes off into the night.

The final Act commences with Irmelin, a disconsolate figure in the midst of the wedding festivities. Nils arrives as a ragged minstrel and is asked to spread some cheer amongst the assembled company by singing to them. His choice of repertory, a ballad about the herding of swine, would not have been expected to ingratiate him with this gathering of the nobility, still less with a 'medieval heroine of fastidious disposition', but everyone remarks on his princely demeanour and Irmelin is captivated by the song and by the singer. When the guests go off for the evening hunt, she sends for Nils and they arrange to meet in the garden at midnight and elope. The opera ends as they disappear into the forest at dawn, in search of the carefree existence suggested at the end of Act I, and presumably they

lived happily ever after.

In every fairy story there must be an element of magic and so in Act I we have voices in the air telling Irmelin of the prince she would eventually meet. They, and Nils' 'silver stream' are unexplained but presumably stem from the same source. The magic flowers that lure Nils away from the Silver Stream and into Rolf's domain are another matter. Here, Delius has been lured into Wagnerian territory and as Sir Thomas Beecham noted, Parsifalian 'Flower Maidens' duly appear to persuade Nils to remain with Rolf. And in the last Act, the sounds of the evening hunt in the distance as the two lovers embrace immediately recalls Act II of *Tristan and Isolde*.

Sir Thomas Beecham

Delius's text may appear banal, descending into bathos at times, but it is probably no worse than many another contemporary libretto – certainly no more so than some of the appalling English translations of repertory operas in common use at the time – and would have raised very few eyebrows then. It was considered that the language had to be heightened and 'poeticised' to bring it onto an equivalent expressive plane to the music. Delius was well aware of his shortcomings. In a letter referring to the early stages of *Koanga*, he confesses: 'My literature is not on a level with my music . . . I own my style and language is sometimes so vile that it shocks me as a musician.' He was never to find the right collaborator, except, perhaps, in the case of his only one-act opera, *Margot la Rouge*.

Although unlikely, it is tempting to mention another possible source for *Irmelin*. This comes from Gottfried Keller's 'Seven Legends' or 'Pious Legends Retold' and concerns a young and beautiful widow of a great nobleman who was being persuaded by the Emperor to marry one of his entourage. Eventually she agreed that she would indeed marry whoever won her hand in a great tournament. Secretly she hoped the victor would be a poor, valiant knight, for the famous noblemen and vainglorious suitors only disgusted her. How she married a poverty-stricken champion with a nagging mother is unfortunately irrelevant as far as the present article is concerned and, of course, all the stories quoted here are merely suppositions. The source of Jacobsen's poem and of Delius's opera is much more likely to lie in Danish folklore or ballad literature than elsewhere, and specialist knowledge is necessary in order to uncover it.

Delius's opera takes place in some mythical domain somewhere in central

Europe one assumes: he is not specific, and as Sir Thomas Beecham hints, it could be further North. However, he could not rid himself of the powerful influences of Florida altogether, as the swamp scene at the beginning of Act II attests, a scene which pre-figures similar but much more extended sections in the next two operas. Both of these have the Deep South of the United States of America as their background.

THE MAGIC FOUNTAIN 1893-95

It is evident that Sir Thomas Beecham greatly admired Delius's second opera, just as he did the first. He devoted an entire chapter to it in his biography of the composer and in preparation for a possible performance had a vocal score prepared by Eric Fenby and a set of orchestral parts extracted. Nothing, unfortunately, transpired from this project. (It is curious that he was unaware of the vocal scores already made by Florent Schmitt of both this opera and its predecessor.) *The Magic Fountain* was unknown at the time at which Sir Thomas wrote his book, so his chapter gives a detailed description of the plot together with many quotations from the text. As in the case of *Irmelin*, Delius had written his own libretto, but with some help from his friend from his Florida days, Jutta Bell.

Sir Thomas says nothing about the opera's origins beyond remarking that it belongs to the 'period . . . of the early part of the Sixteenth Century, when the enmity between the native Indian and the buccaneering Spaniard who had descended upon the Florida peninsular was at its height.' (4) This gives us no more than the background to Delius's subject, which must have been in his mind since his stay in America. It may have been suggested by a friend or by his own reading during the long period of solitariness at Solano Grove. He had already written a symphonic poem based on Longfellow's 'Hiawatha' and was now reading Fennimore Cooper, whose descriptions of nature he much admired. In a letter to Jutta Bell he outlined his operatic plans: 'I have a vague idea of writing 3 works: One on the Indians, one on the Gypsies and one on the Negroes & quadroons'. And of the present project he says: 'I want this work to be essentially Indian. I want the Indian Characters to be the most important. For this reason I don't want much of the Spanish element . . .' (5)

Jutta Bell

Despite this, one of Delius's central

characters is a young Spanish nobleman and is derived from the exploits of Juan Ponce de Léon (1460-1521) a Spanish explorer and administrator. He is thought to have taken part in Columbus's second expedition and after subsequent visits to the West Indies he explored and settled Puerto Rico, where he became governor but was displaced by rivals. Having learned from Indians of an island called Bimini on which there was a miraculous spring or fountain that could rejuvenate those who drank from it, he set sail from Puerto Rico in 1513, landing on what he thought was an island on Easter Sunday (Pascua de Florida). Unable to find the fountain, he tried again in 1521, but was wounded by an arrow during an Indian attack and died shortly afterwards.

I am grateful to Dr Lionel Carley for his explanation of how it is considered Florida achieved its name. The edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica I consulted said it had been named after its luxuriant vegetation and that Ponce de Léon had been killed by a Seminole arrow! Robert Threlfall has made it clear, however, that there were no Seminole Indians in Florida at the time specified in Delius's opera. (6)

The title Delius chose: *The Magic Fountain*, suggests a fairy tale and indeed this is another quest opera, consisting of two overlapping stories: the search for the fountain of eternal youth and the awakening of love between the young Spaniard and an Indian princess that would inevitably lead to their deaths. Ponce de Léon became Solana, after the name of Delius's plantation, and both were renamed Solano at a later date. Like Robinson Crusoe, Solano is shipwrecked and he is the sole survivor, reaching the shore in a state of total exhaustion.

Unaware of the historical facts, Delius then introduces his other main character, Watawa, a Seminole princess. Her tribe has been decimated by the Spanish and she has sworn to avenge herself by killing any white man she meets. The discovery of Solano on the beach seems an ideal opportunity, but he is unarmed and is therefore taken back to the Indian encampment where he is well treated by the chief, Wapanachi.

On his recovery Solano is eager to find the fountain and Watawa is appointed to be his guide and in this way Delius has bound his two stories together. To begin with, they have to consult an ancient seer, Talum Hadjo, who alone knows the path they must follow. This venerable personage dwells in another of Delius's swamps and has had the sensible idea of spending most of his life in a trance. None too pleased at being disturbed, he tells Watawa that, unprepared by years of fasting and contemplation, Solano will die as soon as he drinks from the fountain.

Eventually, and after much agonising on Watawa's part, they realise that they love one another and when they discover the spring, Watawa warns Solano not to drink. Solano has believed all he has been told of the existence of the fountain but now Delius has to allow him to behave with breath-taking illogicality and to declare that she should not trust old Indian legends! Foolishly, he challenges her

to die with him: she drinks from the fountain and expires in his arms, and then he too drinks and joins her in death.

As in *Irmelin*, *The Magic Fountain* contains several Wagnerian references besides the use of a number of leading motives in the development of the music. One example is of Talum Hadjo's world-weary ruminations before being interrupted by Watawa, which bring to mind Hans Sach's monologue at the beginning of Act III of *The Mastersingers*. And Watawa's tormented state of mind at the commencement of Act II of Delius's opera is suggestive of Isolde's outbursts in Act I of *Tristan and Isolde*. The same opera would seem to have inspired the final death scene in *The Magic Fountain*, but Delius's lovers are unencumbered with the weight of philosophical and symbolic meaning contained in Wagner's Liebestod, which was prefigured in the love duet in Act II of that opera.

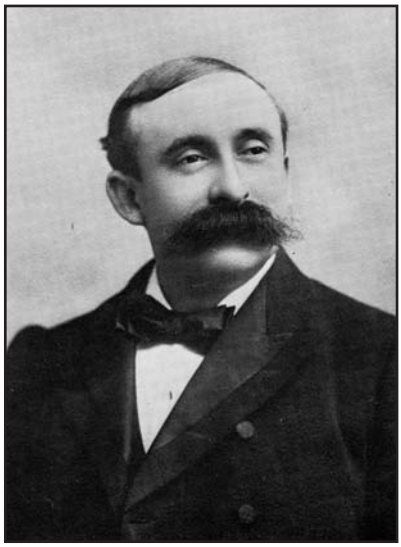
To suit the straightforward story of *The Magic Fountain*, the libretto is clear and to the point, despite the usual archaisms, and since the action takes place in the Sixteenth Century, modern speech would hardly have been appropriate. Delius restricts himself unnecessarily by clinging to rhyme, but the stiffness this produces does not hamper the music. Whether Delius's story was his own invention or was an amalgamation of several other sources, as may have been the case in *Irmelin*, awaits explanation. As he said in his letter to Jutta Bell already quoted: 'I read all I can on the subject which I am treating. And then treat the subject in my own way'. Fortunately no similar speculation is necessary with Delius's next opera, as it derives from one of the classics of American literature, the novel *The Grandissimes* by George Washington Cable.

KOANGA 1895-97

Delius's residence in Florida in 1884-5 coincided with the rise to fame of the writer and campaigner for civil rights, George Washington Cable. Cable was born in New Orleans in 1844. His family had come from the North, his father from Pennsylvania and his mother from Indiana. He grew up amongst the people he was to describe with such vividness and as a young man found employment first as a newspaper reporter and then as an accountant with a firm of cotton factors and commission merchants, writing in his spare hours.

In 1873 he met Edward King who was searching for new contributors to *Scribner's Monthly* (afterwards *The Century*). The proprietors of this publication were not impressed to begin with – believing that Cable's sympathies with the plight of the coloured people of the South might give their readers offence – but a collection of New Orleans stories was published in 1879 under the title *Old Creole Days* and an expanded edition appeared in 1883. Cable's story *Bibi*, based on the semi-legendary character 'Bras-Coupé', had been rejected by *Scribner's* for the reasons mentioned above, but Cable very cleverly used the milieu of *Old Creole*

Days as the foundation for a novel in which the 'Bras Coupé' story became an important element in the plot. With some misgivings, *Scribner's* accepted the resulting work, now called *The Grandissimes* and serialised it in their publication from November 1879 to October 1880. The novel became a bestseller and by February 1885 Cable was as famous as any writer in America and was even mentioned in the same breath as Mark Twain and Nathaniel Hawthorne.



Andrew Black – The first Koanga

The previous month Cable's essay on the race problem had appeared in *The Century* under the title 'The Freedman's Case in Equity', and following the publication of a further collection of essays in 1890, he lost most of his Southern readers! Cable's subsequent novels declined in quality and popularity, but *The Grandissimes* has remained in print since its first publication and with Old Creole Days represents his best work. Cable died in 1925 aged 81.

Behind the novel lies Cable's belief that 'slavery and caste were immoral in their very premise, wrong without mitigation'. There are two principal characters: Joseph Frowenfeld and Honoré Grandissime. The son of immigrant German parents and born in the northern states, Joseph travels south with his family in search of a better life in New Orleans. They arrive in the middle of an outbreak of yellow fever and all become infected, Joseph being the only survivor. One day, whilst tending the family graves, he is accosted by Honoré Grandissime, the young but accepted head of the most powerful family in New Orleans. He is the inheritor of a rigid caste system which he is attempting to alleviate in the upheaval created at the commencement of the nineteenth century by the cession of Louisiana from the French to the United States: the 'Louisiana Purchase'. Whilst Joseph is the earnest voice of the author's views, through Honoré Cable expresses the dilemmas of the time with the sympathy of one who grew up amongst the Creole community and who understood them fully and, in particular, their suspicion towards the new overlords, the hated 'Yankees'.

Cable pokes gentle fun at Joseph's earnestness, his pedantry and lack of humour, as he does at the easy-going Grandissimes with their persistent quarrelling and blinkered conservatism. Amongst the young Creole women we meet Aurore and Clothilde, whose charming patois is one of the pleasures of this altogether delightful novel and whose names appear in Delius's opera, but attached to

different characters. Aurore's childhood playmate was a little quadroon slave-maid of high Latin ancestry on one side and perhaps Jaloff African on the other. Purchased at the age of fourteen as maid to Honore's sister, she subsequently was given her freedom and became Palmyra Philosphe, a skilled hairdresser also noted as an adept in spells and divinations and practice in 'the less baleful rites of the voudous'. She was clever, cunning and strong-willed, a beautiful and formidable young woman. It was by the creation of this mysterious character that it was possible for Cable to introduce the story of Bras-Coupé into his novel.

The time is the end of the Eighteenth century and the events of the story take place only about eight years before the novel commences. One evening, whilst a party is taking place at the Grandissime mansion, a group of girls ask Raoul Innerarity, Joseph's Creole assistant, to sing them some songs and also to tell them the story of Bras-Coupé. At the same time Honore calls on Joseph and walking with him down to the river, recounts the same tale.

This narrative begins with the purchase of an entire cargo of newly arrived slaves by the general manager of the Grandissime estate. He sells one of these, a six-foot-five giant, to the overseer of Don José Martinez. When questioned, the slave mumbles his name in the Jaloff tongue but then in its Congolese equivalent as Mioko-Koanga, which in French would be rendered as Bras-Coupé. The name means that, by his capture, his tribe has lost its strong right arm, not that he has been maimed himself in any way. As a Jaloff prince he would rather die than be forced to work. Palmyre, the personal slave of Honore Grandissime's sister (Don José's intended bride), is persuaded to act as interpreter and Bras-Coupé not only falls in love with her, but also worships her mistress. He is promised that he may marry Palmyre and then becomes a compliant and useful slave. Palmyre is greatly distressed, as she secretly loves another – Honore!

There is a double wedding: Don José to Honore's sister, in the hall of the Grandissime mansion, and Bras-Coupé to an extremely reluctant Palmyre, on the rear veranda. Never having imbibed alcohol before, Bras-Coupé becomes roaring drunk and when his companions refuse to give him any more wine, he demands a drink from Don José. When he is refused, he knocks Don José to the floor and standing over his prostrate body pronounces a Voodoo malediction, before rushing off into the surrounding swamp.

Fever attacks the slaves; some die, others are weak and ill and they blame the curse. Don José also becomes ill and when Bras Coupé suddenly appears, to demand his bride, Don José, stricken with fever, is unable to do anything to help. Bras Coupé again curses the household and disappears into the forest. Foolish enough to take part in slave revels in Congo Square, he is caught by the police and in accordance with the existing penal code, his ears are cut off and he is flogged and hamstrung.

Don José's death does not persuade Bras Coupé to lift the curse, but when Don José's widow, out of compassion shows him her baby son, who smiles at him and touches his cheek, overcome with emotion Bras Coupé relents and dies. We then return to the listening girls, who comment on the sad story they have just heard.

Delius follows the same pattern as the book in having the story of Bras Coupé – here called Koanga – related to a group of girls at a plantation house party in the Deep South. Instead of Raoul Innerarity we have Uncle Joe, and he must have been a spellbinding storyteller as he keeps the girls up all night so that they can greet the dawn at the conclusion of the opera! One would have thought that he could have recounted an entire three-volume novel in the time!

The main change is the invention of a sub-plot. The overseer, called Simon Perez, continually presses his unwanted intentions on the heroine, now named Palmyra and these she angrily rebuffs. When Koanga is brought before his new masters she falls in love with him and he with her, and the wedding is arranged to coincide with Don José's birthday. Meanwhile Clotilda, Don José's wife, explains to Perez the secret information that Palmyra is her half-sister and must not be allowed to marry a slave. Perez agrees to help prevent the match if he can be permitted to wed Palmyra instead.

At the height of the wedding festivities, Perez has Palmyra abducted. Koanga demands her return, fights with Don José and fells him to the ground. He then pronounces a triple curse: 'from water ling'ring death; starvation on earth, and tainted fevers to corrupt the air', before escaping into the dense forest.

Delius then has a scene of Voodoo ritual which Sir Thomas Beecham considered, 'as likely to provoke risibility as to arouse terror.' It is strange he did not think the same of the Indian war dance in *The Magic Fountain*, but then he liked that opera, and could find little, if anything, to admire in *Koanga*, with the exception of the interlude and scene with the girls at the end.

To return to Koanga: he has a vision of the plantation in which he witnesses the plight of the slaves and hears Palmyra's despairing voice. He decides to return and lift the curse. When Perez again importunes Palmyra, Koanga kills him and is caught, scourged to the point of death and, carried on a litter, is set down beside Palmyra. As he dies, she stabs herself.

Despite Sir Thomas's derogatory remarks, the incantatory introduction to the Voodoo ceremony is a fine piece of imaginative writing as is the passage in Cable's book describing the swamp: 'Endless colonnades of cypresses; long, motionless drapings of gray moss; broad sheets of noisome waters, pitchy black, resting on bottomless ooze; cypress knees studding the surface; patches of floating green, gleaming brilliantly here and there; yonder where the sunbeams wedge themselves in, constellations of water-lilies, the many hued iris, and a multitude of flowers that no man had named; here, too, serpents great and small, of wonderful colourings,

and the dull and loathsome moccasin sliding warily off the dead tree; in dimmer recesses the cow alligator, with her nest hard by; turtles a century old; owls and bats, racoons, opossums, rats, centipedes and creatures of like vileness; great vines of beautiful leaf and scarlet fruit in deadly clusters; maddening mosquitoes, parasitic insects, gorgeous dragon-flies and pretty water-lizards: the blue heron, the snowy crane, the red-bird, the moss-bird, the night-hawk and the chuckwill's widow; a solemn stillness and stifled air only now and then disturbed by the call or whirr of the summer duck, the dismal ventriloquous note of the rain-crow, the splash of a dead branch falling into the clear but lifeless bayou'. (7)

In his article, 'Koanga and its Libretto' (8), Professor William Randel compares the Cable story with the Delius version and evidently felt that Delius's work would have been much improved if he had adhered to Cable's original, instead of devising a conventional operatic plot. By removing the story from its setting in the novel some changes were inevitable, particularly in the motivation of the characters. However, Professor Randel states that 'Delius had not been able, apparently, to strip the Bras-Coupé story . . . of the personal relationships tying the story to the rest of the novel' and these references had to be cut out 'a bar here, a page there . . . late in the rehearsal period' for the premiere of the opera at Elberfeld.

The troubled progress of the libretto could be summarised as follows. In February 1896, Delius wrote to Jutta Bell: 'I send you today my libretto of Bras-Coupé – I wrote the music and the words at the same time'. (9) At this stage it appears that Delius had sketched Act I and part of Act II. He tried to enlist Jutta's aid, as she had helped him with *The Magic Fountain*, but she was not able to assist.

Delius them met Charles F Keary, a novelist and author of historical and philosophical books and had detailed discussions with him over the previously prepared scenario. When Keary produced his libretto Delius found it clumsy, over elaborate and out of keeping with the subject. 'He destroyed the worst of the stilted words' (10) and asked Keary to rewrite the offending passages, as Jelka explained. The authors of the 1974 vocal score doubted whether Keary ever read *The Grandissimes* but he did, at least, possess the book. Delius asked him to refer to it in preparing a synopsis for the concert in 1899 when parts of Koanga were to be performed. An early draft of this synopsis called Cable 'Washington Cobb' and said the story took place in Florida!

Subsequently, Jelka translated the finalised text into German. When, as an act of homage to the dead composer, Sir Thomas Beecham produced the opera in 1935, he and Edward Agate revised the English libretto, and it was this text that demanded yet further revision for the 1972 performances of Koanga at Sadler's Wells.

This largely rewritten libretto was prepared by Douglas Craig and Andrew Page and the new words were used when the vocal score was reprinted in 1974. Expressions that would be objectionable to a modern audience were removed and

inappropriate 'poetic' diction was replaced by a more believable mode of speech. The authors claim to have read the first libretto, written by Charles Keary in 1896 (11) and they provide a very interesting synopsis of this, which differs in many places from that finally used at Elberfeld in 1904. Keary's original and finalised libretto appeared in Delius's first fullscore and in the contemporaneously produced vocal score and its copies, one of which would certainly have been seen by Messrs. Craig and Page.

The editors state that the changes made at the 1904 Elberfeld rehearsals 'completely altered the sense of the plot', (12) and point out the inconsistencies that resulted and which they had corrected as far as they were able. One of these Elberfeld changes was the removal of Honoré Grandissime from Act II, where his presence would only have confused matters, and instead Delius wrote an extra aria for Palmyra, to German words of course. At a later date Jelka translated this aria into English.

As has already been pointed out, the Keary/Delius libretto was written in English, not in German, the interpolated aria being the one exception. It is with some astonishment that we read in a later paragraph in the Preface that in 1933 Jelka began translating the German text (which she had written) back into English, with no regard for literal or musical sense and in a way that made nonsense of the drama and characterisation. This, the editors appear to believe, was the libretto printed in the 1935 Vocal Score.

Further confusion has now been added by the publication in The Delius Society Journal of a letter from Cecily Arnold to Miss Barr Adams (whose pen name was Norman Cameron) dated 6 November 1932. This refers to an earlier visit to Grez by Miss Arnold and says of *Koanga*: 'It is the libretto that has been revised – chiefly by Mrs D. – her niece acting as typist. They similarly revised the words of 'Romeo and Juliet' . . .' (13)

We are not told whether it was the English or the German text that Jelka was revising when Miss Arnold was visiting Grez, and certainly it was not in 1933 that this revision was taking place. The original manuscript full score of the opera, now owned by Jacksonville University has, as Professor Randel has stated, 'the English text . . . hand written in black ink (and) a German version, in red . . . above the English'. (14) It was this 1904 full score that Eric Fenby copied for Sir Thomas Beecham's 1935 performances and from which he prepared the Vocal Score published the same year, the title page of which bears no reference to Jelka's supposed part in the writing of the libretto. On the contrary, both the Vocal Score and separately published libretto state that the 'text [is] by C. F. Keary. Revised by Sir Thomas Beecham, Bart. and Edward Agate.'

What possible reason could there have been for asking Jelka to retranslate the German words back into English in 1933 and who would have asked her

to do so? Delius was still alive; she would hardly have undertaken such a task without his knowledge and consent and with her care and respect for his work it is unthinkable that she would have committed what amounts to an act of vandalism. Furthermore, Messrs. Craig and Page provide no documentary references for their assertions which must therefore be dismissed as being without foundation. It is unfortunate that students may well accept their statements as being facts.

The offending paragraph concludes with the remark that the 1935 Vocal Score 'provides an interesting and eloquent testament to the complete ignorance of the facts, and to the fanciful conceptions that Europeans had of . . . life in the Deep South'. (15) Delius had lived in the Deep South and his knowledge of it was neither fanciful nor could it be denigrated as 'complete ignorance'. His attitude towards the coloured and black people he encountered was never patronising but was one of admiration as is convincingly shown by many of his compositions and specifically by this opera and by *Appalachia*.

That an air of invincible superiority pervades the entire Preface rather detracts from the fact that the editors have provided us with a much-improved – indeed transformed – libretto, although it is necessary to remember that these are not the words Delius set. Now that, thanks to the editors, the Voodoo gods have been correctly named, we must hope that their supernatural, and hopefully beneficent, influence will ensure many more performances of this opera, the most ambitious and important of his early compositions.

A VILLAGE ROMEO AND JULIET 1900-01

The plot of Delius's fourth opera, A Village Romeo and Juliet, is taken from a book of short stories by Gottfried Keller under the general title *The People of Seldwyla*. Keller, a Swiss-German, was born in Zurich in 1819. His father was a master wood-turner and his mother a doctor's daughter. Keller was only five years old when his father died and his mother had to fill the house with tenants and boarders to provide for Gottfried and his sister.

Unfairly expelled from school at fifteen for a prank in which he played only a peripheral role, he declared his intention to become a painter but was unlucky in his teachers and only achieved a modest competence. A sudden onset of poetic inspiration in 1842 led to the publication of forty-one poems two years later and in 1848 the Zurich cantonal authorities offered him the opportunity to study in Heidelberg for a year. Here he fell under the spell of the stridently atheist philosopher, Ludwig Feuerbach, without becoming a fanatical follower, and in 1850 he was given a further grant to enable him to visit Berlin.

Further poems appeared in 1852 and the first three volumes of his novel *Der gr ne Heinrich* at Christmas time the following year. The remainder was finished by April 1855 and received enthusiastically by the papers. He returned to Zurich with

an established reputation and as he said, mixed ' with the best society'. Amongst these were Otto Wesendonck and his wife Mathilde, the muse who inspired *Tristan and Isolde*, and Richard Wagner himself, who Keller said gave 'very decent lunch-parties' which we may suppose were paid for by someone else.

After a comparatively unfruitful period, when the office of First Cantonal Secretary fell vacant he was offered the post to everyone's surprise. He held this position for fifteen years and carried out his duties meticulously. Although he had little time in which to write, he completed *The People of Seldwyla* and *Seven Legends* which was a re-telling of pious and extremely unlikely stories. With the conclusion of his duties as a civil servant he was able to resume writing and produced another volume of short stories, completely rewrote his first novel and went on to write two further books. Keller received the citizenship of Zurich and was at last recognised as a great writer with his best work spoken of in the same breath as that of Goethe. Nietzsche sent him his own works as they appeared, but the admiration was not reciprocated.

Although frequently in love, Keller never married. After the death of his mother he was looked after on very Spartan lines by his appropriately named sister Regula. He survived Regula's death in 1888 by only two years, dying himself a few days before his seventy-first birthday.

Short of stature and rather stout, he had an uncertain temper although the rage soon subsided. A keen sense of humour and a spellbinding gift for storytelling characterised all he wrote and J.M. Lindsay said of his works that 'they seem everywhere to reflect a consideration that the world is beautiful and life is good'. (16)

The People of Seldwyla appeared in two volumes: Volume 1 in 1856 and Volume 2 in 1874. Each contains five stories, usually of a satirical nature; although one senses the affectionate understanding he had for the people at whom he was poking fun. I have yet to trace a complete translation but individual stories have found their way into English. Of these, 'Spiegel the Cat' can be recommended, but not to cat lovers of a nervous disposition. *A Village Romeo and Juliet* is the second story in the first volume and is an exception in that it is a tragedy. Even here, however, there are touches of humour from time to time. The story is based on a brief newspaper report and Keller's expansion of this into a novella of nearly one hundred pages is a wonderful demonstration of the writer's gift. That this confirmed bachelor could so enter the hearts and minds of the young lovers defies explanation.

The story, which takes place in the late nineteenth century, concerns two prosperous Swiss farmers whose land lies on either side of an uncultivated field. One fine September morning, as they plough their own fields, they surreptitiously steal a little of this wild land, each being aware of what the other is doing. Their children arrive with a little green cart containing lunch and all sit down to eat. While

the children run into the wilderness to play, the farmers discuss how it was that the field fell into neglect. Once owned by a dissolute trumpeter, it should now belong to his grandson, known as the black fiddler, a disreputable itinerant musician who, having no certificate of birth, is unable to claim his rightful property.

Their children are Sali (Salomon) Manz and Vrenchen (Verena or Vreli) Marti. Sali is about seven years old and Vrenchen, five, and Keller gives us a long and amusing account of their games together. Their fathers resume ploughing, always appropriating a little of the fiddler's land, and in this they persist year by year. By the time Sali is ten and Vrenchen eight, the two children rarely see each other. When at last the disputed field is put up for sale, Manz acquires it and the farmers immediately quarrel, Marti maintaining that Manz has only bought the land in its now much reduced state, while Manz insists that he wants it as it was originally. Both men resort to the law and are gradually reduced to penury.

Elsie Morison and John Wakefield as Sali and Vreli in the 1962 Delius Centenary Festival production of *A Village Romeo and Juliet*

Manz has to sell his farm to take over a dilapidated inn in the village: Marti's wife dies of grief and neglect while Marti himself is reduced to the ownership of one field and a garden, both now neglected. They try to earn a little money by fishing and one overcast evening happen to be on opposite sides of the same stretch of river. Rushing to a nearby bridge they fight furiously in the gathering storm until their grieving children manage to separate them. Sali now sees Vrenchen for the first time for many years and immediately falls in love with this beautiful girl.

The following day, Sali sets off for Marti's house, hoping to meet Vrenchen again. Marti has gone to the village, and after they have overcome initial shyness, the young people agree to meet in the wild land where Vrenchen's father should not see them. Once there they encounter the Black Fiddler, who expresses considerable satisfaction over the ruin of the two families. When he leaves, they are too wrapped up in themselves to notice Marti, who has come in search of his daughter. Seizing her, he attempts to drag her away, ill-treating her brutally as he does so. Overcome with anger and fearful of what might happen to Vrenchen, Sali picks up a heavy stone and hits Marti over the head with it.

Although he appears dead, Vrenchen discovers that her father is still alive and sends Sali for help and to explain that the old farmer fell and injured himself. Marti's recovery is only partial, and now brain injured, he is taken to the public asylum in a state of blissful idiocy. Having left home with his few possessions, Sali joins Vrenchen at nightfall. They cannot forget what has happened and is seems certain that they must part to find work. The thought of separation is more than they can bear and knowing they love one another they fall asleep, as Keller says, 'as quietly and tranquilly as two children in one cradle'. (17) However, it is important to realise that they are children no longer. Sali is nearly twenty and Vrenchen seventeen and both have experienced poverty and suffering and the disgrace of their families.

Vrenchen dreams of dancing at their wedding and when woken by Sali is distressed at having no Sunday shoes in which to dance with him on their last day together. After carefully measuring her foot with a piece of string, Sali goes into the village, sells his watch and has enough money to buy her a new pair of shoes and with some left over for the days expenses. They sorrowfully bid farewell to Vrenchen's home and take a leisurely walk through the countryside. It is a beautiful September morning. On the outskirts of the next village they find an inn where they have breakfast and then continue their walk until, feeling hungry again, they find another inn and order a fine dinner. Both are shy at being looked upon everywhere as an engaged couple but nevertheless set out for the next village where a fair is being held.

They are delighted at the pretty things on display and each buys the other a ring, but they soon become aware that they have been recognised and are the subject of gossip amongst the crowd. Uncomfortable under this scrutiny they wander away sadly until Sali suddenly remembers an old inn where there is always dancing: *The Garden of Paradise*. Here is part of Keller's description of this hostelry:-

'The Garden of Paradise was an inn beautifully situated on a lonely hillside with a wide view over the country . . . It consisted of a single floor, the roof of which was borne at the four corners by caryatids of weather-beaten sandstone representing the four archangels. Round the edge of the roof sat little cherubs making music, chubby of cheek and belly, playing the triangle, the fiddle, the flute, the cymbals and the tambourine. The roof inside, the balustrade of the hall, and all the other walls of the house were covered with faded frescoes representing merry crowds of angels and saints, singing and dancing. But everywhere was blurred and dim as in a dream, and hidden, moreover, by a rich growth of vine, while ripening blue grapes hung everywhere among the leaves. Round the house stood wild chestnut trees, and strong gnarled rose bushes flourished as elsewhere the elder bushes. The roof was the dancing hall, and when Sali arrived with Vrenchen, they saw the couples gyrating under the open roof, while round the house a crowd of

merrymakers caroused noisily'. (18)

Sali and Vrenchen are immediately caught up in the dance, but Vrenchen was terrified to see that the music was provided by the Black Fiddler, whose strange companions included a slim girl, a wild girl, a hunchbacked bass-fiddler and a young horn player. Everyone was poor, but danced tirelessly even when it became dark and the only illumination came from the moon. When Sali and Vrenchen were at last faced with the prospect of parting, but cannot endure it, the Fiddler proposed that they should join his companions in their carefree life. After a mock marriage ceremony, they meekly join the departing procession of vagrants headed by the furiously playing Fiddler. After a considerable distance they contrive to slip away undetected. Exchanging the rings they had bought at the fair, they run to the edge of the river where a large barge is moored, loaded with hay. Climbing onto what was to be their bridal bed, they unhitch the barge, which begins to drift downstream.

As the dawn rose, to quote Keller again, 'two pale forms, locked in each other's arms, glided from the dark mass down into the chill waters'. (19)

The opera begins as does Keller's story, but when the children run into the wild land to play they encounter its rightful owner, now known as the Dark Fiddler. He tells them that they may play there as much as they like but to beware the time when the plough has claimed the last furrow. This prediction has immediate consequences: as the Fiddler leaves, the farmers start to quarrel, each accusing the other of stealing some of the disputed land until in a rage they drag their children away, forbidding them ever to play together again. This concludes the first scene.

According to the score, Scene Two takes place six years later. Delius has rejoined the story after the episode of the fight on the bridge and has therefore created problems for himself. The children at the beginning of Keller's story are only five and seven years old and they are evidently at much the same age in the opera's opening scene. This would mean that Sali was thirteen and Vrenchen eleven when they met again, which is absurd. If they are nearly twenty and seventeen as Keller states, how could they have been thirteen and eleven when their games in the previous scene were those of much younger children? It is clear from Keller's story that the farmers incursions into the wild land continued for about six years until Manz bought the field, after which six further years of law suits and increasing impoverishment reduced both families to beggary. There should be twelve years between the two scenes and not six, but no one appears to have been aware of this discrepancy.

The next four scenes follow Keller fairly closely although with some incidental episodes omitted. Originally there was a short intermezzo before the commencement of the last scene but *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* replaced this in 1906. There is no equivalent description in the story but no doubt Delius had in

mind the earlier passages in which Keller describes the young lovers' long walk to the fair.

After a brief chorus of vagabonds, scene six opens with the Dark Fiddler explaining to his followers how the quarrel came about between the two farmers and led to their ruin, but that now their children have become lovers. This is not a redundancy. It seems hardly credible that the others do not know at least part of the story, but Delius wishes it to be drawn to the attention of the audience again in order to heighten the impact of the tragedy which is about to take place.

Sali and Vrenchen arrive and the Fiddler greets them and invites them to join his band of wanderers. This is followed by what Anthony Payne has described as 'the most annoying of all the composer's laughing songs' (20) perpetrated by the Fiddler and his crew, and followed by sneering remarks calculated to decide the young people to have nothing to do with them. All this is Delius's invention and has no place in Keller. However, it is followed by a masterstroke. The rising moon floods the Paradise Garden in a mysterious light and in the distance the bargeman can be heard singing of the transience so central to Delius's art. This Paradise Garden is by the river's edge and not situated as in the story. A boat filled with hay is moored close by. Suddenly inspired, and full of love for one another, Sali and Vrenchen clamber onto the boat and cast off, throwing the plug over the side. The boat drifts downstream, and as it sinks into the enveloping water they consummate their love

As might be expected, the history of the libretto is somewhat confused. Keary was asked to write it and started to do so in 1897. No doubt because of his experiences over Koanga he had little enthusiasm for the task. Interestingly, in a letter to Delius, he mentions that he has, at the composer's suggestion, put a land auction into Act 2 'because you said that it would work well musically'. (21) Keary's reaction was that 'it don't literally' and of course it was omitted, but it might well have prevented the subsequent confusion over Sali's and Vrenchen's ages. It was probably Keary's version which Delius sent to Jelka in 1898, but meanwhile, Jelka had suggested that the opera should be set to a German text and Ida Gerhardi's brother, Karl-August Gerhardi, produced a German draft. Neither version satisfied Delius and after turning again to Keary, gave up in desperation and he wrote

Karl-August Gerhardi

his own libretto in English.

Delius was most insistent on this point. In a letter to Ernest Newman he states; 'the words . . . I made myself and in English, of course' and 'my wife then translated it into German'. (22) Shortly before, Jelka had made precisely the same comments in a letter to Philip Heseltine, adding 'it was in a way easier to get the German, as I had Keller's novel as a guide'. (23) It may seem a trifle quixotic to have written the libretto in English: this was a story written in German and Delius's reputation was steadily growing in Germany, but was yet to develop in England. Newman, however, could be expected to jump to the wrong conclusion as he was always grumbling about Delius's handling of English.

When the full and vocal scores of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* were issued by Harmonie of Berlin they contained Delius's original English words but printed below the German, an arrangement that was contrary to his wishes. The text was full of errors, and when the copyright passed to Universal Edition a corrected English text prepared by Sir Thomas Beecham was substituted. The amendments had been made for the first London performances and Delius said, in a letter to the publishers, that Sir Thomas had 'improved [the libretto] considerably and made it much more singable'. (24) Many re-writings have occurred over subsequent years and there will probably be many more: what relationship they bear to Jelka's German text (which was, after all, guided by Keller's book) must be left to the sensitivity of those making the adaptation. Fortunately, in the *Collected Edition*, we have the text as Delius approved it, and with the English uppermost!

The first performance of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* was to take place at the Komishe Oper in Berlin under the baton of Fritz Cassirer. Perhaps unwisely, Cassirer gave Hans Gregor the director of the Komishe Oper, the Keller story to read, whereupon Gregor pronounced the opera a bowdlerisation and said he 'could not perform an opera with a text like that'. (25) Cassirer then played the entire opera before Gregor and a panel of associates and all agreed that the music was magnificent and the libretto quite impossible. Despite which, the première took place in Berlin on 21 February 1907.

Fritz Cassirer

Apart from the alterations already mentioned in Delius's adaptation of the story, the increased importance he attached to the figure of the Dark Fiddler is obvious: the ultimate satisfaction of this baleful figure

would derive not merely from the ruin of the farmers, but also from seeing Sali and Vrenchen reduced to his level and that of his rootless companions. This Mephistophelian character has been likened to Delius himself, as he seems to symbolise a force of nature and indeed seems to be a personification of the wild land itself. Delius, of course, could have spent his life as an itinerant fiddler, but chose instead to settle for a mainly sedentary and domesticated existence of hard work, anchored to Grez-sur-Loing. A more likely candidate would be his friend, the Norwegian violinist Halfdan Jebe, who spent a wandering life and finally settled in Mexico. He was both disliked and feared by Jelka. One wonders if he ever recognised himself as the sardonic figure portrayed so powerfully in Delius's greatest opera?

MARGOT LA ROUGE 1901-2

This opera poses a number of questions for which there appear to be no answers at present. The libretto is attributed to 'Rosenval' and we know this to be the pen name of Berthe Gaston-Danville. She was one of the William Molard circle of writers, painters and musicians and must have had some ability to recommend her to this Parisian group, to which Delius also belonged. However, there is no mention of anything written by her, and no one appears to know whether this sanguinary piece started life as a short story, or a play, or was specifically written for Delius's attempt to win the Sonsogne musical prize. To what extent Delius was involved in devising the plot and whether he provided Madame Gaston-Danville with the opera's central idea, or a sketch of the plot, is also unknown.

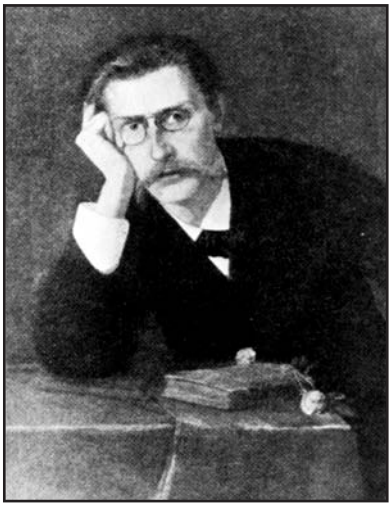
An essay in Zola-esque melodrama, the opera opens in a tavern on a Parisian boulevard, the haunt of prostitutes and their pimps. A group of them are drinking and gossiping, one of whom, Lili Béguin, divulges her passion for a menacing character called L'Artiste, whose present mistress is Margot la Rouge, so called because of her red hair. When Margot comes in she sits at a table alone and is obviously unhappy about the hold L'Artiste has over her. A shower of rain brings in three soldiers, one of them Sergeant Tibault, and he gradually realises that he knew Margot: five years before when they were sweethearts in their native village. He approaches her, and she, at first, insists that she is a different person, as indeed she has become, but he encourages her to remember her past and they join in a passionate declaration of love. At this moment L'Artiste appears and threatens Tibault, explaining that he bears this nickname because of his ability to kill a man by a blow on the back of the head. Lili maliciously tells L'Artiste that Margot really loves Tibault, and furious with jealousy he draws a knife and kills Tibault. Margot, seizing Tibault's sword, stabs L'Artiste with it while Lili rushes out, screaming for help. The opera ends with a pun: when asked by the police if she is Margot la Rouge, she holds out her blood-stained hands and says 'Can't you see it's me?'

Sir Thomas Beecham maintained that he disliked the opera not for its' story, but because of the quality of the music, a verdict which has surely been disproved now that it has been performed and recorded. The libretto was written in French and in French it should always be given. In its' terseness and claustrophobic atmosphere it anticipates the Fennimore of seven years later.

FENNIMORE AND GERDA 1909-10

Delius turned to one of his favourite authors, the Danish poet and novelist J.P. Jacobsen, for his last opera. Jacobsen was born in 1847, in Thisted, a small town in northwest Jutland. His father was a merchant, who, from a modest beginning, gradually acquired considerable wealth. Jens Peter himself became interested in the natural sciences, especially botany, which together with philosophy, he studied at Copenhagen University. He discovered Darwin and translated *The Origin of Species* in 1872 and *The Descent of Man* in 1875. These scientific studies and his own thinking led to a religious crisis after which he abandoned his Christian faith and from about 1870 became an atheist and remained so for the rest of his life. At first undecided between science and literature, he eventually chose the latter, a novella being published in 1872. On a journey to Italy, the following year, he contracted tuberculosis and the remaining twelve years of his life were spent in a 'determined but hopeless struggle against his grave illness'. (26) He died in 1885, aged 38.

Jacobsen had first planned his novel in 1867 when it was to be called *The Atheist,* but he increasingly concentrated his attention on the experiences of his central character Niels Lyhne and this eventually became the title of the book. The period is 1830 –64, so that Niels is only 34 when he dies at the conclusion of the story. First we are introduced to his parents.



J. P. Jacobsen

Bartholine Blid was a romantically inclined girl who longed to escape the dreariness of her petit-bourgeois existence and dreamed of the excitement of the world beyond Denmark. When young Lyhne comes to court her he seems to promise all these new experiences, but he soon relapses into an uneventful and undemanding life. When Bartholine gave birth to her first child, Niels, the parents were briefly reconciled, but Bartholine soon began lavishing all the benefits of her imagination on her son and would tell him endless stories, none of which convinced him that they could be true. He felt more at home with his father.

Like any small boy, however, Niels had his own imaginary world of adventure which he shared with his friend, the pastor's son, in their games together. Then, round about his twelfth birthday, Niels acquired a tutor and the family was revisited by his aunt Edele, a beautiful girl of 26. She becomes the object of Niels' shy adoration and it was with painfully mixed feelings that he overheard his rather absurd tutor proposing to her and her cold rejection of him. Her heart was elsewhere. Within the following year Edele became ill and although Niels prayed frantically for her recovery, his prayers were unanswered. It was Edele's death that sowed the seeds of his atheism.

Six months later, one of Lyhne's cousins, Mrs Refstrup, became a widow and her son Eric joined the Lyhne family. He showed he had the ability to take up a career in art and he was also good at outdoor games and a natural leader. The other two boys hero-worshipped him but he only stayed a year before leaving to work in a Copenhagen sculptors studio. It was Eric, several years later, who introduced Niels to Mrs Boye.

Mrs Boye was a thirty-something widow, very charming and rather flirtatious, and Niels became a frequent visitor. He was in love with her although she scolded him for his bloodless idealisation of women. 'There was in Niels Lyhne's nature a lame reflectiveness, child of an instinctive shrinking from decisive action, grandchild of a subconscious sense that he lacked personality'. (27) He was 23 and 'walked with a slight stoop, had beautiful hands and small ears, and was a little timid', (28) and was determined to become a poet although till then he had achieved nothing of distinction.

Niels was summoned home by the death of his father. Shortly afterwards, his mother became ill but recovered and he took her to all those places in Europe she had so wanted to visit when a girl. Now everything was a disappointment: she became ill again and died in the south of France. Returning to Copenhagen he found that Mrs Boye had become engaged and was reunited with her family from whom she had been estranged for many years. After a stormy scene ending in a passionate embrace, she suddenly ordered him to go and he left in a rage.

Eric then returned to Denmark after two years in Italy. He had deserted sculpture for painting but lacked true originality. He and Niels renewed their old friendship and when Niels decided to visit a branch of his family at Fjordby, Eric went with him. Consul Claudi and Aunt Rosalie had a nineteen-year-old daughter, Fennimore, and Niels fell in love with her. But one rainy evening, when they were all gathered in the sitting room, she sang a song which suggested such a bold, passionate and unbridled nature that Niels realised that she was not the quiet, charming girl he had supposed. It was Fennimore's beauty that captivated Eric and when, after an outing on the water, the party returned to the house, Eric and Fennimore remained in the garden and declared their love for one another.

Niels went to live in Copenhagen: Eric and Fennimore were married and lived in a little villa at Mariagerfjord. Niels had not recovered from the shock of their engagement and passed his time in fruitless research for a work that he would never write. Three years passed and then he suddenly received a letter from Eric confessing that creativity had deserted him and he could not paint. Would Niels visit him for old friendships' sake? In fact, Eric and Fennimore had grown apart: he would find an escape from his problems with his drunken companions and in consequence she had turned inwards and had become bitter and disillusioned.

When, one evening, Eric poured out all his frustrations and disappointments over cognac and cigars, Niels realised that he could do nothing to help his friend. When the bouts of drinking became more frequent, Niels and Fennimore were often together and they delighted in taking long walks in the neighbouring beech forest. One day, quite suddenly, they realised they loved each other and Niels wanted Fennimore to run away with him. She could not endure the disgrace this would bring and so they settled for a life of clandestine meetings and deceit which inevitably led to guilt and unhappiness. Fennimore was waiting for Niels one very cold evening in March when a telegram arrived telling her of Eric's death in an accident. Immediately, her horror at her affair with Niels, his best friend, convulsed her with self-reproach and grief. When Niels arrived, she turned all her fury on him and forbade him to ever see her again. The following morning she left the villa at Mariagerfjord forever.

After about two years of aimless wandering on the Continent, Niels returned to his estate, and like his father, helped out with its management and found in work on the land the satisfaction that can come from hard physical labour. He frequently visited a neighbour, Councillor Skinnerup, who had four daughters, the youngest twelve, and the oldest, Gerda, seventeen years old. The younger children recognised that Gerda was in love with this rather mysterious and romantic man and teased her endlessly. Niels soon responded to her adoration and asked the Councillor if he might marry her despite the difference in age. The wedding took place the following Spring.

Although Christian by upbringing, Gerda wanted to understand and share Niels' atheism and they lived happily together for three years and had a child, a little boy. Then Gerda became ill, and dying asked to see the pastor. When, months later, the child also became ill, even Niels gave way and prayed. But when the family doctor arrived it was already too late.

Utterly bereft, Niels joined the army to serve in the Dano-Prussian war of 1864 and was shot in the chest. The wound was fatal and he died a brave but agonising death, refusing to see a clergyman.

It has been necessary to summarise the novel to show the cumulative effect of the disappointments and tragedies in Niels' life leading to a kind of suicide

by proxy. The general tenor of the book is depressing and pessimistic, hardly surprising when we remember that Jacobsen was fighting a losing battle against tuberculosis during its composition, but such an outlook was contrary to Delius's aims in devising the opera.

Delius only concerned himself with the Fennimore episode and the courtship of Gerda. The libretto was originally written in German by Delius himself, probably in collaboration with Jelka, and should be sung in that language. It is suitably laconic and in places intentionally commonplace. It keeps closely to the book on the whole, but there are some changes. In the book, Niels does not overhear Fennimore and Eric in Consul Claudi's garden, nor is there a scene where the drinking companions call at Eric's house and drag him away. Fennimore and Niels were in the house when they declared their love, and not in the beech forest. This is a significant change, Jacobsen emphasising the claustrophobic domestic environment whereas Delius wanted to underline the brooding presence of the natural world and, it being Autumn, the transient nature of all human experience. In the opera, when Fennimore receives the fatal telegram telling her of Eric's death and she angrily dismisses Niels forever, she sees Eric's body being carried over the ice towards the house and she collapses on the snow-covered steps of the veranda.

To discover why Delius decided to include the Gerda section it is necessary to refer to the letter he wrote to Emil Hertzka in which he said: 'The only thing in Fennimore which made me hesitate was the gloomy and unresolved ending and it has been because of this that I have been occupying myself again . . . with my Gerda music and have become convinced that the Gerda episode is necessary after all to round off the opera'. (29)

Although Jacobsen's atheistic outlook was eventually reduced to a few pages in the completed book, it dominates the ironic conclusion. In rejecting the death of Gerda and the child and Niels virtual suicide, Delius imposed his own philosophy on the novel and in consequence, has falsified its meaning. For Delius art, despite his own atheism and his preoccupation with the fleeting quality of happiness, was to be a celebration of life, not its negation.

The opera was described by Delius as consisting of short, strong emotional impressions given in a series of terse scenes. This carries a distant echo of one of his earliest works, *Paa Vidderne* where the setting of a long poem for speaker and orchestra is divided into a series of nine self-contained sections. More importantly, *Fennimore and Gerda* in its Autumn, Winter and Spring sections, anticipates the plan of *North Country Sketches* and the outer movements of the *Requiem*, where the opening funeral dirge seems to emanate from the end of the Fennimore section.

The attraction of Niels Lyhne must have stemmed from the frequent passages of ecstatic prose in which natural phenomena are described with the exactitude of a scientist and the vision of a poet. One of these occurs with particular poignancy

at the time of Edele's death: 'a day flooded with sunshine, one of the days when the lark is never silent, and you can almost see the rye grow. The great cherry trees outside her window were white with flowers – nosegays of snow, wreaths of snow, cupolas, arches, garlands, a fairy architecture against the bluest of skies . . .' (30) 'Outside, beyond the window, the white flowers flushed to pink in the light of the setting sun. Arch upon arch, the blossoming sprays built of their gossamer bloom a rose castle, a vaulted choir of roses, and through this airy dome the azure sky shone with a softened twilight blue, white golden lights, and lights of gold flaming to crimson, shot like rays of a nimbus from every garlanded line of the ethereal temple'. (31)

A remarkable aspect of *Fennimore and Gerda* is the extraordinary change in atmosphere between the two parts: the *Fennimore* section is the beginning of Delius's Scandinavian period, whilst the *Gerda* episode belongs to his earlier style. Sir Thomas Beecham, who disliked the opera, only performed the Gerda 'pictures' and it is not difficult to see why he would prefer charm to austerity. And would it be so very wrong to wonder if in *Gerda* he sensed an echo of Delius's first opera, *Irmelin*, for again we have the suggestion that the lovers 'lived happily ever after' and even in the background 'a merry chorus of villagers'!

Delius's cosmopolitanism has inevitably led us up many blind alleys, and Ernest Newman's belief that Delius always composed to German words (*Sea Drift* included!) was one of them. He was right, amusingly enough, in the case of *Fennimore and Gerda*, whereas Sir Thomas Beecham was convinced that the opera should always be performed in Danish! But despite these misunderstandings, Ernest Newman was correct in his perception that Delius had 'been reaching out all his life to a new dramatic form germane to his genius . . .' and that in *Fennimore and Gerda*, '. . . here, at last Delius found a form that allowed him to describe the inner drama of souls in his own way, a way that allowed him to accompany the characters in person, by means of his music (especially of his orchestral interludes), in each of the decisive episodes of their career.' (32)

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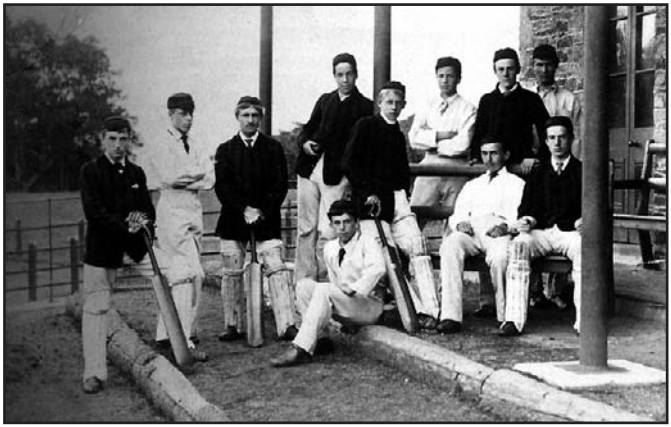
DELIUS THE CRICKETER – 31 May 1882

T Ian Roberts

Whilst researching for a new history of Giggleswick School, I came across a report of a cricket match played against the School on 31 May 1882 by a touring team from Bradford, Mr WA Dawson's XI. Dawson's XI had played the School in the previous season, but one man in Dawson's 1882 side, who had not played against Giggleswick in 1881, attracted my attention. The name of 'F Delius' looked strangely familiar. Could it be the young composer, aged 20?

Reference to the 1881 Census of Britain rapidly showed that there were very few people in England called Delius at that date. Indeed the name of the young Fritz did not feature in it, although the rest of his family duly appeared at the family home of 3 Claremont in Horton, Bradford with a suggestive gap in the children of Julius and Elise Delius listed, between their daughters Minnie aged 20 and Clara at 14. It seems that the composer was out of the country at the time of the 1881 Census (or not recorded for some other reason) but that he had returned just over a year later and was playing sociable cricket.

Was there any discernable connection between Delius and the other cricketers of the Dawson XI? Dawson himself looked like the William Alfred Dawson who was born at Bradford in 1850, was the son of a Halifax manufacturer and went to school at Marlborough College. If this is the same man, he was also at Trinity College, Cambridge between 1869-73 and won an Athletics Blue in 1872. He died in Ilkley in 1916. However, it is difficult to discern an obvious link between his team's players.



Giggleswick School Cricket XI – 1882

Delius is known to have attended Bradford Grammar School, and this is presumably where he learnt to play cricket. However, Dawson's was not a team solely of Bradford Old Boys. Nor were they cronies of Dawson's from his Cambridge days. Reference to the *Alumni Cantabrigienses* reveals few convincing matches with the names of the Dawson players. It would appear that Dawson's team had been put together from a wide range of social contacts.

The Giggleswick School cricket teams of the 1880s were not composed purely of pupils, particularly if the visiting side included adults; they also included staff members. The accompanying photograph of the School's 1882 Cricket Team is thus not of the team that played the Dawson XI, but of the squad from which those boys who played against Mr Dawson XI were drawn. This was not so much a matter of the School rigging the batting order to secure an advantage, but a reflection of the fact that in 1882 Giggleswick was still quite a small establishment, which had a shortage of sixth formers to field against visiting adult teams. The School had only been open to boarders for 15 years, but was already becoming a school of choice for the wealthy middle classes of the West Riding and East Lancashire areas. Its energetic Headmaster, Rev George Style, encouraged the playing of sport and was always ready to turn out for the School's cricket XI himself. So too was Mr Podmore, one of the first graduates of the newly established Keble College at Oxford, who had been on the Giggleswick staff for four years and who was renowned as a demon bowler.

Podmore's performance in the match on 31 May 1882 shows his value to the Giggleswick side. In the first innings, he bowled 133 balls from which only 28 runs were scored. He had 15 maiden overs and was responsible for 6 wickets, 4 being clean bowled by him and one catch. In the Visitors' second innings, one of the Dawson players was caught off his bowling and he caught one. Certainly Mr Podmore emerges as the man of the match. However, it could easily have been different. Just 3 days later, Podmore slipped on a damp wicket at Giggleswick and broke his left leg badly. It was already known that he was to leave Giggleswick at the end of the Summer term, as he was about to set up his own school at Eden Mount, near Grange-over-Sands. The match against Delius and Mr Dawson's XI was to be his last match playing for the Giggleswick home side, although in later years he was to bring his own touring sides to play against the School.

It was Mr Podmore who accounted for Delius in both innings. In the first, he bowled Delius for 11 runs. In the second, Delius was bowled Podmore, caught Rev JW Chippett (another Giggleswick master) for 4.

Delius was one of 5 batsmen on the Visitors' team to score double figures in the first innings. But he also performed well from the bowling analysis for his side. He bowled 40 balls, which included one maiden over, conceding 22 runs for the capture of one wicket, that of Giggleswick schoolboy William Herbert Pennington.

The cricket ground at Giggleswick today

Pennington and his younger brother Arthur, who was also playing in this match, were two of four brothers originating from Urmston, Lancashire, who passed through the School in the 1880s, all of them featuring in the football (ie rugby) and cricket teams of their day. Clearly Delius was not simply making up numbers for Mr Dawson – he could play cricket.

The result of this cricket match at Giggleswick on 31 May 1882? Despite the efforts of Mr Podmore, Delius and his fellow players for Mr Dawson's XI triumphed and Giggleswick School lost the first innings by 21 runs. Giggleswick scored 66, but Mr Dawson's XI had scored 87. In the second innings, Dawson's team was dismissed for 71, but Giggleswick did not bat again. Dawson's team was victorious.

Today, the Giggleswick School first cricket teams still play on the cricket pitch where Delius played in 1882 and the names of the School's players of the period are still commemorated on the painted honours boards inside the nearby (later) pavilion. Although the scene of a public school playing cricket looks quintessentially English and timeless, the School's superb domed Chapel which now dominates the scene also post-dates Delius's visit, being built to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and opened in 1901. Nevertheless, it is very much a centre for the musical life of the School, containing one of the last organs built by Henry "Father" Willis and was recently the setting for a performance of *Jesus Christ Superstar* attended by its composer, Lord Lloyd Webber. Edward Elgar is known to have visited Giggleswick as a friend of a local doctor who was also an old boy of the

School. The discovery of this hitherto forgotten connection with Delius, adds yet another musical association to those already enjoyed by Giggleswick School and a new dimension to our knowledge of Frederick Delius's non-musical interests.

Notes: The reports of the matches played by Mr Dawson's XIs against Giggleswick School in 1881 and 1882 and background on Mr Podmore appear in the School's official magazine of record, *The Chronicle*. Ian Shevill of the School's technical staff has provided the modern photograph of the School cricket pitch and produced the copy of the 1882 photograph of the School's Cricket XI outside the old pavilion known by Delius, which is preserved in the School's archives in its Brayshaw Library, whose librarian Barbara Gent is unfailingly helpful. The *Alumni Cantabrigienses* and the 1881 Census of Britain are now available on CD Rom and conveniently indexed as research tools. I have not yet succeeded in tracing reports of further matches played by Mr Dawson's XI in local newspapers or school magazines which might give more evidence of Delius's unsuspected prowess as a cricketer.

DELIUS FOUGHT HIS PARENTS, HIS PUBLIC, And His Illness

Frederick Delius (whose death is reported on Page One) is the last of Britain's triumvirate of supreme musicians – Elgar, Holst, Delius – to die this year.

He died in the house in which he had lived in seclusion since 1898 – set between the Castle of the White Queen and the church in Grez-sur-Loing, near the home of Strindberg, near the scene of Robert Louis Stevenson's romance.

Death for him was a release from suffering that had endured for more than ten years.

In his life, as in his music, Delius was kin to the greatest. Not deaf to his own harmonies like Beethoven – he heard his own works over the wireless – he was, like Handel, disregarded by the English, blind and paralysed.

OBSCURE DISEASE

He was the victim of an obscure disease brought on by overwork and the tension of the war. At the battle of the Marne he, in common with the villagers, had to flee from his home. The strain proved too great and an ever-increasing blindness added its tragedy to partial paralysis.

Scientists and specialists all over Europe combined to keep him alive. They were always on the verge of a cure. But the obscure nervous complaint baffled them. . . .

. . . . He was for years regarded by the general public as "the man that did the music for Hassan."

. . . ."England has a predilection for mediocrity," he cried in his despair. "Emotion is not liked by the English. It is not good form.". . . .

The Daily Express, Monday 11 June 1934

A DELIUS DISCIPLE IN NEW ZEALAND –

Hugh Torrens

Music must be the most subjective of life's delights. As Nietzsche, whom Delius thought 'the only free thinker of modern times', rightly said: "without music, life would be a mistake". If this is so, it is vital to investigate, and listen to, as much different music as possible. But the world's concert halls still seem to insist for commercial reasons, that Tchaikovsky's 6th Symphony and Rachmaninov's 2nd Piano Concerto etc are nearly all we need to hear. So we must be grateful to the BBC and the CD repertoire for allowing us more extensive explorations.

In Delius's day, music was often as insular as it is today (and there were no CDs).

The travels of Delius's music since around such 'islands', have perhaps suffered simply because he is too cosmopolitan and so belongs on no one 'island', nor is 'owned' by any one particular nationality. Thank goodness, *en passant*, for the musical tastes, and work, of Christopher Palmer (1946-1995) whose book on Delius (1976), I find fascinating. He has since involved me more and more in the wonderful, and highly characteristic, music of both George Dyson (1883-1964) and Herbert Howells (1892-1983) on both of whom he also wrote with his usual, knowledgeable, passion.

If music was insular in Delius's day, I have always been intrigued to learn just how the love, or even just an awareness, of his music spread. Examining in Oxford recently, in the fine Oxfam bookshop there, I found the fascinating book *Frederick Page: A Musician's Journal*, published in 1986 in Dunedin, New Zealand. When a quick browse revealed that section two was headed 'Christchurch: in praise of Delius 1923-1934', I had to have it.

Frederick Page – caricature by Juliet Peter

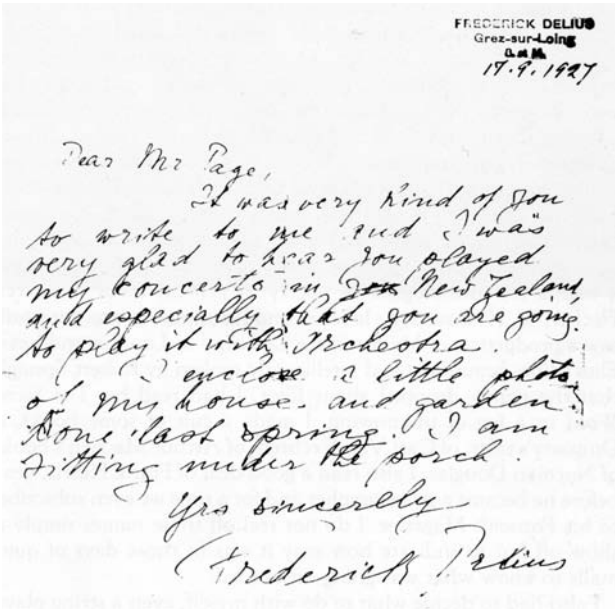
Frederick Page (1905-1983) gets a short mention in the *New Grove* (2001, volume 18, pp 985-6). Although this nowhere mentions his love of Delius, it does rightly confirm how 'vivid' his *Journal* is, and that his criticism was equally 'pungent'.

His *Journal* notes how after 1922 . . .'I was reading everything I could lay my hands on in the way of books on music. Cecil Gray's [*A Survey of*] *Contemporary Music* [first edition 1924] was exciting, as it

showed that Gray, who was an all-or-nothing man, thought Delius was good. But the book that transported me was Philip Heseltine's *Delius* [1923]. I knew nothing of Delius's music. How could I [a pianist], as he had been writing for choirs and large orchestras? But something in Heseltine's book opened a world for me and I quickly got hold of some songs and of the two [then] available violin and piano sonatas. I badgered friends to sing and play these with me and was obsessed by the music. [Ernest] Empson then rummaged in his cupboard and fished out a copy of the Delius Piano Concerto that he had bought in Berlin in 1908. Only one copy, but I had it from memory in a week, went through it with Empson at a second piano at my next lesson. Here was music I could play: I didn't have to worry about tradition or style in its performance. I simply went for it. We duly played the work in this two-piano version at an Aeolian Club [Christchurch, NZ] concert. There were shakings of head over its modernity. Empson and [Angus] Gunter arranged for me to play it with the Christchurch Orchestral Society. I was beside myself with happiness - this was in 1927. I wrote to Delius and had a reply.

Dear Mr Page Grez-sur-Loing
17.9.1927

It was very kind of you to write to me and I was very glad to hear you played my Concerto in New Zealand, and especially that you are going to play it with Orchestra. I enclose a little photo of my house and garden done last spring. I am sitting under the porch.
Yrs sincerely, Frederick Delius


FREDERICK DELIUS
Grez-sur-Loing
S. et M.
17.9.1927

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I enclose a little photo of my house and garden done last spring. I am sitting under the porch.
Yrs sincerely
Frederick Delius

Further mentions of his love for Delius's music occur throughout the book. Soon after this, now studying music at Canterbury University College, Page had now 'fallen in love with Vaughan Williams's music, as well as that of Debussy and Delius'.

Then in 1935, after Delius's death, he was in London: 'Late September sunshine greeted us. I had expected London to be forbidding and tough and here it was, beautiful . . . Delius's *Koanga* was on at Covent Garden, a bit of luck. The gallery cost little, something like one and six pence. Beecham conducted and I was ravaged by his sound' (p 64) . . . 'I threw myself into concert-going, four and five a week, until I realised that I was falling asleep at some of them, couldn't remember what I'd heard, and disciplined myself to two a week. I had thought that London's musical life would be paved with gold and had to learn that this was not so. Beecham was in his hey-day, conducting Strauss, Sibelius, Delius and Mozart; he was a spell-binder. His *Sea-Drift* and *Song of the High Hills* were marvellous but he conducted not a note of Schoenberg, Stravinsky or Bartok' [more islands!] (p 65)

In 1958 after studies at Darmstadt, Page was back in London, where he 'heard [only] one piece of the Darmstadt school in five months, Stockhausen's *Kontrapunkt* 1, and that was transformed into an English aquarelle. One was reminded of [Edward] Dent's story of a performance of Delius's *Appalachia* at Cambridge. 'We managed to make it sound like Stanford by the time we finished with it". Finally in 1982 now in Xian, in China 'one of the piano teaching staff asked me whether I knew the music of Delius' [here rather less island!].

The last part of the book is a series of Impressions of Page from colleagues, pupils and friends. One, Roger Savage (pp 159-60) recalls one of his, 'vividest encounters with [Page] was at the Albert Hall in London after a Prom performance of Mahler's Sixth Symphony conducted by Pierre Boulez, the "beautiful Pierre" he idolised so. Fred was quite pleased to have heard the piece in the flesh, and was sure he *had* heard it since beautiful Pierre never falsified. But how much finer, among works of that sort, was (say) Delius's *Sea Drift*. Why didn't Pierre conduct *Sea Drift*? That really *would* be an experience! Boulez conduct Delius! From a European point of view the notion seemed impossibly bizarre. From an Antipodean one it was less so . . . Fred had once or twice murmured something about writing a life of Grainger. Now Grainger would . . . not have found the idea of a Boulez conducting *Sea Drift* bizarre. I guess the southern mind sees some things more clearly'.

Frederick Page's fine *Journal* allows us to see how clearly he saw the importance of Delius.

FREDERICK PAGE - A Musician's Journal 1905 – 1983, Ed. J M Thomson & Janet Paul, Published by John McIndoe, Dunedin, New Zealand, 1986. ISBN 0 86868 080 X

'HOMMAGE A FREDERICK DELIUS ET A JELKA ROSEN' – Grez-sur-Loing, 20 September 2003

Brian Radford and Stewart Winstanley

A different 'Summer Garden'

Early last year it was announced that a series of celebratory events to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the marriage of Frederick Delius and Jelka Rosen were planned to take place in Grez-sur-Loing during the weekend of 20/21September 2003. This was not a Society event but a local cultural initiative organized by *l'association Artistes du Bout du Monde,* a group local to Grez-sur-Loing. The details were widely publicised to the membership and over the ensuing months various members made their own arrangements to attend.

Our small party consisted of Stewart Winstanley, Richard Kitching and Brian Radford. We set off early on a Thursday morning and were joined by old friends Martin and Diana Lee-Browne at Dover where we boarded the Calais ferry glad that at least one in the party (Diana) spoke more than just 'school French'! Our plan had always been to make this an extended weekend to take in other 'arty' must-do activities, and first on the agenda was a visit to Monet's house and garden at Giverny. The run down from Calais included a stop for essential fuel supplies for the car's consumption, and also a stop for a supply of the crushed grape variety for personal consumption. Eventually, with tired and weary drivers almost forgetting the 'right' side of the road, we arrived at our charming hotel in Giverny just in time for dinner. As it turned out, this overnight stop was a wise decision as it enabled us to be on Monet's doorstep first thing the following morning.

The weather was absolutely perfect with the thermometer rising as the sun ascended a clear blue sky. As the doors opened we stopped just long enough for a ticket not even pausing to take in the large foyer exhibition and souvenir shop. Walking straight through into the garden and emerging from shade into brilliant light it was a sight to catch the breath and bring a lump to the throat. With hardly anyone else around except for the odd person tending the flowerbeds, it was as if for the moment, that world-famous garden, flushed with the fullness of incredible colour and still heavy with the sheen of morning dew, was ours and ours alone. Steadily but unhurriedly we strolled around the house now restored to its former glory and then along the paths and alleys of Monet's 'paint box' flowerbeds until we came upon the lily-ponds. Here, shafts of sunlight through willow and wisteria re-created those incredible water reflections of Monet's art and all the while a feeling that somehow he might appear around the next tree peony or bamboo grove. After

a couple of hours we reluctantly turned to retrace our steps but were soon met by a 'tide' of people . . . the first coach parties had arrived!

Another artists view

Though our visit to Monet's garden was short, there were no regrets. We had seen it as it should be seen, and went contentedly off to an early but relaxing lunch still overwhelmed by it all. A steady afternoon car journey, by-passing Paris, towards the forest of Fontainbleau and our hotel in Moret-sur-Loing, gave time for a relaxed few hours exploring that charming mediaeval village. This place also was no chance choice of repose but yet another on our 'must-do list'. The impressionist painter Alfred Sisley had made this spot his home during the 19th century and so, with art book in one hand and camera in the other, we enjoyed a balmy early evening identifying Sisley's viewing points for many of his paintings.

'Wedding Day' at Grez-sur-Loing

On Saturday, the day of the celebrations, we breakfasted at a civilized hour and set off to drive the few miles to Grez-sur-Loing, arriving mid-morning at the right time for coffee at the '*Bar Tabac Presse de la Poste*' on the main street, *Place de la Republique*. It wasn't long before like-minded Society members and members of The Delius Trust smelled the coffee pot and our little hideaway quickly became the unplanned meeting point for the group of about 15-20 people who had travelled independently. At this time we were just 50 yards from the famous bridge and 100 yards along and around the corner from the 'Delius House' in *Rue Wilson*. The house and garden is a private residence today, but it and its village surroundings, remain largely as in Delius's time. The property has stayed in the Merle d'Aubigné family since those days and they have most lovingly cared for it, subject of course, to their own requirements as a family home. Jean Merle d'Aubigné and his late mother have been sympathetic and most treasured friends of the Society for several decades, and some years ago, and in kind consideration towards tourists to Grez-sur-Loing trying to locate the 'Delius House', they consented to a commemorative plaque to Delius being placed on the street side of the house.

Just a couple of weeks prior to the trip, Stewart had unexpectedly been able to make renewed contact with Jean, and our small group from The Delius Society and The Delius Trust had been invited to call upon him prior to the weekend celebrations. We therefore made the short walk to the house where we were most magnificently extended the hand of welcome and hospitality by Jean and a group of his friends. So on the day of that very special anniversary celebration, in very warm late summer sunshine, we were able to experience the lyrical atmosphere that still pervades that garden, inspiration for so much of Delius's music. Those present that had read Philip Oyler's marvellous description of the garden in Delius's day

(1) would have recognized many of the garden features in its wonderful riverside setting. During the visit, Stewart made a short speech of thanks to Jean and presented him with a few small gifts in appreciation of the occasion and of times past.

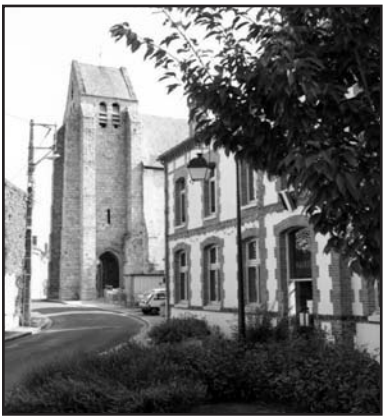
All too soon and with much regret we said our farewells and took a gentle stroll through the streets of this most charming French village to the Salle Fernande Sadler community room for the 3.00 pm opening of the 'Exposition' which comprised displays of paintings by various artists; including three by Jelka Delius herself – two views of 'Le Pont de Grez' which showed the bridge as seen from a bedroom of the Delius house, and 'Les Meules' which represented haystacks with a stooping figure working in the fields and a village beyond, both done in pastel shades of pink, green, orange, blues and creams. The other painting, specially brought over from England by Martin Lee-Browne, its present owner, originally belonged to his Godfather Henry Balfour Gardiner, and depicted a Norwegian landscape in shades of orange in the foreground and patches of white flecked with orange, depicting lakes, in the middle of the picture, deep purple mountain slopes beyond and paler blue mountain tops in the far distance.

Other paintings on display included a fine portrait of Madame Heseltine by Emma Lowstadt-Chadwick, and a portrait of that artist herself with her husband Francis painted jointly by both of them. There was a rural scene by Arthur Heseltine showing a team ploughing a field surrounded by woods, a portrait by Katherine MacCausland of Delius's doctor Maurice Roesch when still a boy, and a view of the *Rue Wilson* with the Delius house and the church beyond painted by the Japanese artist Chu Asai who lived in Grez for several months in 1900.

At 5.00 pm Claire Leray, President of *l'association Artistes du Bout du Monde*, opened the formal events of the day by welcoming distinguished guests and representatives of The Delius Trust, David Lloyd Jones and Dr Lionel Carley, and those of us of The Delius Society including Roger Buckley, Chairman, and Vice-President Richard Kitching. Also, a particular welcome was given to Agnes Weiske, a member of the Rosen family. Clare then introduced Dr Lionel Carley who gave a fascinating illustrated lecture, 'Frederick and Jelka Delius among the artists at Grez-sur-Loing', delivered in fluent French. The first part dealt with their wedding in

Claire Leray introducing the Mayor of Grez
Photograph Stewart Winstanley

'Messing about on the river' –
Diana and Martin Lee-Browne, 'Mole' (Richard Kitching), and 'Ratty' (Stewart Winstanley)
photograph: Brian Radford



The Church and Mairie at Grez
photograph: Stewart Winstanley

Jean Merle d'Aubigne and Lionel Carley
photograph: Stewart Winstanley

Outside Delius's house on Sunday morning
Stewart Winstanley, Ron Kirkman, Tour Guide, Martin Lee-Browne, Diana Lee-Browne, Richard Kitching, Brian Radford *photograph: Stewart Winstanley*

'Ratty' and 'Badger' near the bridge at Grez
photograph: Brian Radford

Grez, and we heard of the delay in the actual ceremony, that had been planned for August, but had to be put off to allow the bans to be read on two consecutive Sundays before the ceremony could take place. The actual wedding eventually took place after the Delius's had been away on their honeymoon in Holland! The ceremony on 23 September 1903 was at six in the evening, the Delius's choosing not to have a wedding in the church of Notre Dame et Saint Laurent next to their house, but rather, at the Mairie (town hall) just a few yards further on.

The second part of the talk dealt with the many artists who had visited the Delius's at their home, many of whom became firm friends. These included Auguste Rodin, Edvard Munch, William and Clair Blair Bruce, Francis and Emma Brook Chadwick and their children Louise, Hilma and Carl, Ida Gerhardi, the artist Arthur 'Joe' Heseltine (uncle of Philip Heseltine), Christian Krohg and James Gunn, who was to paint the last portrait of Delius that is now in the Bolling Hall Museum in Bradford, which members attending the last AGM were able to view there.

Finally, Dr Carley recalled three villagers whom he had met in the early 1950s when visiting Grez for the first time; Louise Cormes, the charming Andre Baron, the Delius's chauffeur, and Gaston Fleury, the policeman who was one of the pall-bearers at the composer's funeral. At the close, Lionel wondered if there was anyone still living in the village who yet remembers one of England's greatest composers?

At the beginning, after part 1 and at the end of the talk, the young Parisian pianist Clement Tokats played three groups of pieces as follows: -

Group 1	Bartok: Rumanian Dance No 4
	Delius: *Zum Carnival*
	Ravel: *Valse a la maniere de Borodine*
Group 2	Grieg: *Summer's Eve* Opus 71 No 2
	Delius: Prelude No. 2 'Quick' in D major
	(dedicated to Adine O'Neill from *Three Preludes* of 1923)
Group 3	Greig: *At your feet* Opus 68 No 3
	Grieg: *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen* Opus 65 No 6

The official opening of the celebrations was performed by the mayor of Grez, Jean Claude Boixiere, who formally welcomed all the guests, paid tribute to Claire Leray, Michel Le Harivel and the other organisers, and told something of the past history of the village and the improvements made in recent years during his mayoralty. He particularly paid tribute to former Mayor Fernande Sadler, who was a writer and author of the booklet *L'Hotel Chevillon et les Artistes Gres-sur-Loing*,

who had a passion for history and archaeological research, and after whom the Salle Fernande Sadler in which the events taking place had been named. At the end of his opening remarks the mayor presented commemorative medallions to Dr Carley, David Lloyd Jones and Roger Buckley and all then partook of champagne and canapés. This concluded the first phase of the celebrations.

As twilight fell during our walk to the evening concert there was just time for a few of us to make a small detour to the bridge and take in the atmosphere of a 'Summer night on the river'! The 12th century church of Notre Dame et Saint Laurent, in which Eric Fenby had worshipped, was the appropriate setting for the evening concert given by The Bridge Quartet from London. The programme opened with Dvorak's String Quartet in F Opus 96 *The American* (1893) followed by Samuel Barber's String Quartet, Opus 11. After the interval came the Delius String Quartet of 1916-19 with its *Late Swallows* third movement, which was enthusiastically applauded. As an encore the quartet played Frank Bridge's *Noveletten* No 1 of 1906. It was a marvellous performance but one wonders what Delius himself would have thought of holding the recital in that venue!

The final event of the celebrations was a candlelit dinner served in the Salle Fernande Sadler, which started half an hour late at 11.00 pm. This was a quite splendid six-course gourmet affair and as the last event of the day it was taken at leisure; a pace Delius himself would thoroughly have approved of. It was therefore close to 2.00 am when the revellers finally made their way home to their respective hotels, tired but absolutely delighted with the excellence of the event and the warm hospitality extended to all by the people of Grez. It was truly a fitting celebration and tribute to Frederick and Jelka a century after their marriage.

Along a lazy river

The following morning, Michel Le Harivel had arranged for an official guide to take those of us still in the locality on a tour around the village, and a charming lady did the honours, explaining the many features and their history in French, with Michel translating. A further delight was a visit to the former Pension Laurent located back along *Rue Wilson*. This property was purchased at the beginning of the 1890s by the American painter Frank Chadwick and his Swedish painter wife Emma Lowstadt Chadwick, who ran it for a while as a pension before converting it into the private house that it still is. It is now owned by Monsieur and Madame Ducharme and Michel had made special arrangements for us to pay a visit. After taking refreshments the family gave a tour of the garden that stretches down to the River Loing, taking in the many scenes familiar from paintings by such artists as Ernst Lundstrom, Julia Beck and Carl Larsson. As we enjoyed this new vantage point along the river towards the bridge, a water rat swam idly by and seemed totally unconcerned at our presence. With foresight, some of us may have felt that

the presence of this venerable creature was a portent of what was to come later in the day. A tour of the main part of the house followed. In the courtyard adjacent to the street we were shown the original studio used by the Chadwicks, complete with a fascinating painting of a riverside scene on a large canvas, now used to close off the roof space!

The final event of the afternoon for our original group of five was when we succumbed to Stewart's pressure and committed ourselves to a lovely old wooden boat in which we were rowed by him the quarter mile or so up-stream, past Delius's garden at a leisurely pace, as far as *le Bout du Monde* ('End of the World'). This is the site of two weirs sourcing the river as it runs beside an old mill, and a location to which Delius himself had been rowed from his own landing stage lower down many times seventy-odd years before (2). Thoughts and memories flooded in of all that had been read of those times, and in the heat of the day, as oars dipped among the osiers and lily pads, the scene also brought back the memory of that water rat from earlier in the day and of another such golden afternoon: -'. . . Green turf sloped down to either edge . . . while ahead of them the silvery shoulder and foamy tumble of a weir, arm-in-arm with a restless dripping mill-wheel, that held up in its turn a grey gabled mill-house, filled the air with soothing murmur of sound. It was so very beautiful that the Mole could only hold up both fore-paws and gasp, "O my! O my! O my!"' (3). Turning the boat in midstream, then drifting and gently rowing with the current, we once again slid past the edge of that 'Summer Garden' of heart, mind and ear. Then, was it just the heat haze between the shade of those great plane trees or did some in our small boating party imagine music on the warm air of that sylvan glade? Whatever it was, it inspired a group effort in a Delian unaccompanied Part-Song as we passed gently under the arches of that ancient bridge. Just fifty yards downstream on the opposite bank, adjacent to a riverside café, lay our mooring and as we tied up, a jazz band broke the spell with a Sidney Bechet number; but it was after all, a type of music which Delius himself had asked to be put on his gramophone all those years ago.

The journey home for our small group took us via Honfleur for evening dinner by the pretty harbour, and then to Le Havre for the overnight ferry to Portsmouth leaving us with memories of a weekend to treasure forever.

References:

1 Christopher Redwood (Ed), *A Delius Companion*, John Calder, 1976, p 49
2 Eric Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him,* Bell, London, p 76
3 Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*, 1908

Footnote from Brian Radford: Our grateful thanks go to Stewart Winstanley for organising our trip and co-ordinating the meeting points for members of the Society and the Trust, and to all of our hosts at Grez-sur-Loing for a wonderful weekend.

HOW DELIUS CAME TO FAME

Championed by Sir Thomas Beecham

FREDERICK DELIUS, whose death is reported in another page, had for years suffered from an incurable illness which almost arrested the creative career of one of the most remarkable artists ever born in England.

The end has come when the great musician, after a lifetime of semi-obscurity, has at last enjoyed full recognition of his genius – thanks in the main to the tireless work of Sir Thomas Beecham, who believed in him as the greatest of modern composers and acted accordingly.

Delius was born in England of a family of German and Dutch extraction; he tried his fortune in the United States as a young man: he received part of his education in Germany; he made France his home during the greater part of his life; he married a Swedish wife, and throughout his career he had the warmest place in his heart for the peoples and the literature of Scandinavia.

He was born at Bradford in 1862. At five he could play the piano by ear and began violin lessons. From 17 to 21 he tried his hand at business. At 22 he went to live on an orange plantation in Florida, where he worked at music. Thence he went to study for a time at Leipzig.

EARLIEST COMPOSITIONS

Some songs he wrote in 1888 were the earliest of his compositions heard at Sir Thomas Beecham's Delius festival in London in the autumn of 1929.

Delius settled in France in 1891. His friends, so says his biographer, Mr. Philip Heseltine, were poets and painters. He avoided musical society. His wife was a painter of some distinction.

In 1899 Delius, then unknown in London, gave a concert of his works at St. James's Hall, Piccadilly. He had then written many songs, the piano concerto, three operas and the beginning of "A Mass of Life," his choral masterpiece.

Soon afterwards come a series of his finest compositions – the opera "A Village Romeo and Juliet" (which Beecham was to produce twice in London, in 1910 and 1920), the choral poem "Sea Drift," the orchestral variations "Appalachia," and the English folksong variation "Brigg Fair."

His name reappeared in London in 1907, and in the next year Beecham began propagating his music, never ceasing in his efforts, which culminated in the six concerts of the 1929 festival.

START OF HIS ILLNESS

Delius spent the war-time partly in England, in France (where his house at Grez-sur-Loing was commandeered for military purposes), and in Norway. During the war he composed "North Country Sketches," the 2nd Dance Rhapsody, "Eventyr," "A Song Before Sunrise," the double concerto, and chamber music.

In 1922 his disastrous illness began. He became paralysed, losing all use of his legs, and in 1925 his sight failed.

In the sad years of his blindness he was cheered by the visits of devoted English friends and disciples, such as Mr. Norman O'Neill, Mr. Evlyn Howard-Jones, the pianist, and Mr. Heseltine. The last named conveyed to him the gold medal of the Philharmonic Society, presented in 1925. In 1929 Delius was made a Companion of Honour.

Delius was a man of the utmost sensitiveness and refinement – cultivated, ultra-civilised.

His music is of no school or category. Only in the most general way can it be said to derive from the later Wagner, possibly with some hints (in the earlier works) of the Scandinavian composers. He was essentially a colourist, and his most characteristic works are for orchestra. They reflect a meditative, passionate mind, in love with Nature, beauty and colour, yet conscious of an underlying sadness in the world, of "the tears at the heart of things."

The following tributes to Delius were given to a Daily Mail reporter last night: -

Dr. Malcolm Sargent: His death is a very heavy loss to English music. Everyone who knew Delius spoke of his extraordinary charm.

Sir Edward German: Delius was certainly one of the great composers – one of whom England should be proud.

Dr. Vaughan Williams: His music has a fleeting and intangible beauty which is entirely personal to himself.

Sir Walford Davies, Master of the King's Music: I am grateful to Delius for the wonderful richness of his harmony.

The Daily Mail, Monday 11 June 1934

DELIUS SOCIETY MEETINGS

DELIUS SOCIETY MEETING

25 September 2003, New Cavendish Club, London

'Eric Fenby and Delius – a retrospective tribute' – What led Fenby to go to Grez, and what was achieved as a result?

'Yet there is one thing the world with all its rotten-ness cannot take from us, and that is the deep, abiding joy and consolation perpetuate in Great Music' – Eric Fenby

Lyndon Jenkins, chairman and 'orchestrator' of the evening, introduced the panel of speakers – namely Lionel Carley, Stephen Lloyd and Brian Radford – outlining the intention to share personal views and recollections of Eric Fenby, with particular regard to his years spent with Delius in Grez.

To begin with, Lyndon questioned what had driven Eric to go to Grez. He described a young man from Scarborough, a solitary individual of twenty-two years of age and not at all robust, not, indeed, expected to live at one point. He was a church and cinema organist who had been to London only once and entertained thoughts of entering a monastery. What on earth would compel him to undertake such a task?

This question was discussed thoroughly by the panel. As a man of tremendous musical talents, Eric was presumably very much in demand within his community. If he so chose, an interesting but relatively ordinary life lay before him. He had happened upon *A Mass of Life* in a shop and felt drawn to it despite its Nietzschen text and his own Roman Catholic sensibilities. When he heard *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* Eric was 'struck by a kind of music I had never heard before, and I was ravished, completely carried away by it'. He believed that he had discovered a composer with a God-given gift and, when he heard of Delius's illness and incapacity, felt himself compelled, as Brian Radford suggested, by the 'hound of heaven' to assist. Not only would it have been against his faith not to comply with what he believed to be heavenly instruction, he would also have been rejecting an opportunity to do something extraordinary with his life, to escape his local future.

He therefore wrote to Delius (twice), offering his assistance. The panel contemplated whether or not Eric could really have known what he was letting himself in for, pointing out that no one else – not Grainger or Heseltine, for example – had been willing to do it. Once his offer of assistance had been accepted and he had made his way to Grez however, the panel observed that he must have felt extremely downcast. Eric's own references to his arrival were that after the first few days he would gladly have returned to England with his promise unfulfilled.

Through the panel and also via audience contribution we learnt about the reality of the situation; that Eric was dealing not just with a great composer but also with a sick man with many unfortunate and unpleasant symptoms. Fortunately for us he persevered, aiding the Deliuses not only with his musical abilities, but also with the qualities of immense loyalty and discretion that he practised unfailingly throughout his life.

This unrelenting loyalty gave rise to discussion as to what was *not* included in his book *Delius: As I Knew Him*. The paragraphs of the work – although beautifully written – are sometimes extremely short, as if edited. As Eric himself said 'There were things I didn't tell Ken Russell, you know'! All the same, when in 1966 a new edition of his book was brought out Eric, who would have been aged 60 by then, affirmed that 'My views in the main persist today, with some allowance for youthful zeal.'

The panel further enlightened us as to the character of Eric. They spoke of his love of work, his wonderful prose, his modesty and tendency towards light-hearted remarks. He was also, perhaps, a little pompous when young. When asked about his own compositions he was reputed to have said 'I have a great many things written down but am in no hurry. I prefer to let the light of maturity fall on them and I am willing to wait to see if this experience will bear fruit.' Amazing words for a man of twenty-two!

The point was raised that out of the six years in Grez, it took just four to complete the music, *Fantastic Dance* being the last piece. During this time, despite the picture given in the Russell film, Eric spent long interludes in England. Indeed he was not with Delius for most of 1931, visiting only for three to four weeks. Despite this, he was anxious not to give the impression that he had finished at Grez and would become irritated when it was implied that he had. He was very much present in 1934 when Delius died and Jelka was ill, his sense of loyalty and friendship once more compelling him to return after his task was completed.

Reference was made to Eric's contemplation of his final word on Delius, after having devoted two thirds of his life to the composer. He had, apparently, planned a book about certain selected works and how they should be interpreted. Sadly, ill health took over and, in spite of saying that he had at last everything in his head that he wanted to write, the book never appeared. At the conclusion of the first half we heard that enthralling recording that Eric himself made describing his first experience of taking dictation from Delius.

The second half consisted of the panel taking questions from the floor. These included enquiries about Eric's experiences with Alden Brooks, Percy Grainger (the famous tennis ball incident, we discovered, actually took place at Brook's house), which composers he admired, Delius's canary who would waken the composer every day with his singing and who had been named 'Tommy' after Sir Thomas

Beecham, and further exploration as to his character and how it must have evolved since Grez. A further Fenby reminiscence was played, this time his description of the completion of the final part of *Cynara*, vividly depicting Delius's methods of dictation.

Reference was made to Fenby's conducting experience. Lionel Carley said that Eric had given the best performance of the *Requiem* he had ever heard and Stephen Lloyd also recommended his *Song of the High Hills* as an excellent alternative version. It was concluded, however, that despite his evident skills and passion for the music, he perhaps came to conducting too late, not really understanding orchestral players whom he perplexed by giving speeches before making recordings. It was also felt that Eric was possibly too much in love with what he was playing and sometimes drew the pieces out in pace more than was necessary.

Time constraints made the intended playing of a rare recording of one of Eric's own works, specifically *Rossini on Ilkla Moor*, impossible, whereupon Roger Buckley gave a vote of thanks, praising the interesting ideas that had been touched on as well as the unique memories contributed by the panel (aka The Brains Trust) and members of the audience. He thought that the panel could rest assured that their aim to capture the spirit of Eric Fenby during the evening had been thoroughly accomplished.

James Baker and Joanna O'Connor

SPECIAL DELIUS NIGHT
SIR HENRY WOOD'S PLAN
From Our Special Correspondent
CHORLEY WOOD, BUCKS, SUNDAY.

"I have just telephoned to the B.B.C. and we have arranged, as a tribute to his memory, to devote an entire evening to the works of Delius at the Promenade Concerts which open on August 11."

Sir Henry Wood, the famous conductor, told me this at his home here to-night, shortly after receiving the news of the death of Delius.

"I consider his "Sea Drift," said Sir Henry, "to be one of the most beautiful choral works ever written. I remember that when he crossed the Channel to put on his ballad 'Eventyr' in England in 1916 he wrapped the manuscript round his chest so that in the event of the ship being sunk the precious papers stood a chance of being recovered. I afterwards produced the work at the Queen's Hall."

The Daily Mail, Monday 11 June 1934

DELIUS SOCIETY (MIDLANDS BRANCH) MEETING

11 October 2003, Weston Underwood, Derby

'Choosing a career' – reminiscences by Robert Threlfall

Robert has been a frequent visitor to the Midlands Branch over the years and we have benefited from his deep knowledge and practical musicianship covering a variety of topics. However, our Chairman, Richard Kitching, finally persuaded him to talk about the personal experiences, which had been hinted at, in his earlier talks.

Despite his high technical abilities as a pianist, Robert never became a professional musician, but spent 50 years in security printing. After a five-year apprenticeship to a member of the Stationers' Company, covering typesetting, bookbinding, printing etc., he eventually became manager of a printing factory at the age of 33 years, and continued in that role for 21 years until being appointed Company Technical Director.

In tandem with his paid employment, Robert was honing his skills as a pianist. Robert's father sought further lessons for him from someone eminent and was directed to the pianist Solomon then 32 years old and living in London. Solomon accepted Robert as a 16-year old pupil who travelled up to London weekly after work, or as frequently as his job would allow. Solomon was a charming and generous man and the official one-hour lessons often ran over schedule. He commented in a letter written to Robert in hospital, that he knew"how much you are missing your battles with the three-legged devil". Lessons concentrated on technique and initially on five-finger exercises. Solomon was a very helpful teacher who considered the three essentials of good piano playing to be"Quantity, Quality & Agility". Robert claims to have gained much from this period of tutoring. Unfortunately, Solomon's own professional career was later foreshortened by physical problems.

Robert was already giving piano recitals and began to play regularly with amateur orchestras in the London area. The standard of his playing can be judged by the fact that he gave the first London concert performance of Rachmaninof's 4th Concerto (revised version); and he also performed Bartok's 3rd Concerto. The venues were many and varied - his experience of performing in a Home Guard Drill Hall during the War being one of the highlights.

After Robert retired he was encouraged to combine his various skills in piano playing, the theory of music, printing, and an interest in manuscripts by undertaking to prepare the Collected Edition of the Works of Delius. This huge and high quality project was completed within the astonishingly short time of 10 years. Robert modestly claims that this was achieved because there was no committee but more or less immediate input on problem solving as required from professional musicians.

Robert also gave tribute to his late wife, Joan, for her full support during this long period of arduous activity.

This summary of Robert's talk necessarily omits the wry asides and humour with which he enlivened it.

Robert ended his reminiscences with a short and enjoyable piano recital: - Piano Piece No 4 – Liszt; Sonata in F Sharp op 78 (1st Movement) – Beethoven; *Hungarian Melody* and Waltz (arr. Richard Strauss) – Schubert; L'idée fixe - Berlioz/ Liszt; Impromptu in F Sharp – Liszt; Prelude op 16 No. 5); Mazurka op 40 No. 2) – Scriabin; Mazurka op 59 No. 3 - Chopin

Richard Kitching thanked Robert most warmly for a fascinating and thoroughly entertaining glimpse into his personal and musical life. The Midlands Branch members expressed appreciation for the hospitality, including refreshments, provided by Wyn Evans and Richard Kitching

Graham Parsons

DELIUS SOCIETY MEETING

New Cavendish Club, London
21 October 2003

An evening with Robert Threlfall in conversation with Paul Guinery

There must be few *DSJ* readers who have not heard of Robert Threlfall or be unaware of the massive task he has undertaken in preparing the new edition of Delius's Complete Works. But how much do we know of the rest of Robert's life? In conversation with Paul Guinery, Robert gave us a fascinating glimpse of a remarkable life, full of surprising achievements.

On leaving school he worked in the printing business; this experience was later to prove invaluable when Robert began preparing the *Collected Edition*. Meanwhile his father, wanting to give him the very best in teaching, took the bold step of arranging piano lessons with no less a person than Solomon. Contact was made initially by looking Solomon up in the phone book where he was distinguishable from the many other entries with this surname because he was listed simply as 'Solomon, Pianist'! Lessons with Solomon provided the solid grounding in piano technique that Robert had lacked and he then embarked on remarkable parallel career as a concert pianist. He soon realised the extraordinary level of stamina required to be a full-time concert performer, so this aspect of his life was kept as a part-time activity whilst the career in printing was pursued. Robert performed an extensive repertoire of mainly 19th century works but his claim to fame must

surely be to have given the London concert performance of Rachmaninof's Fourth Concerto (revised version) with the Modern Symphony Orchestra under Arthur Dennington.

As a performer, Rachmaninov remained a favourite pianist and Robert saw him play many times. Robert gave us a fascinating glimpse of the performing styles of just about every concert pianist active just before and after the War and it was amusing to find out that they kept each other up to scratch by regularly attending each other's recitals! Robert also gave many insights into concerts and conductors during this period. He heard many memorable concerts in the Queen's Hall with its splendid acoustics and we heard fascinating personal reminiscences of conductors such as Strauss, Mengelberg, Weingartner, Toscanini, Bruno Walter, Koussevitzky, Furtwängler . . . and of course Beecham. One particularly memorable concert must have been the first London performance of Rachmaninof's 'Paganini Variations' played by the composer with Beecham conducting.

Having had some personal experience of copying and correcting music from manuscript I was especially interested in Robert's reflections on the many interpretation difficulties he encountered in preparing the *Complete Works*. The Cello Concerto proved to be a particularly knotty problem. The manuscript score was one of the last Delius wrote himself, in rather shaky pencil. CW Orr prepared an ink fair copy to send to the printer but in Orr's hand, crotchets and crotchet rests sometimes looked alike! Many errors thus crept into the published score and parts – unnoticed by all until Robert's painstaking work put the matter straight. This was no doubt typical of many problems that Robert discovered whilst working on the new edition.

When The Delius Trust asked Robert for an estimate of the time and cost for completing the new edition they could not have asked anyone better: his long printing experience made him uniquely qualified to give an accurate prediction which was ultimately realised. Unlike most projects, this was one that was completed on time and within budget!

Paul concluded the evening by asking Robert for his idea of a perfect, imaginary, all-Delius concert, using any musicians he wanted, past or present. After some thought, Robert chose the following remarkable (and, to some, perhaps surprising) programme, to take place in a Queen's Hall rebuilt in the Elysian Fields (!):

Violin Concerto Soloist: Fritz Kreisler
Piano Concerto Soloist: Benno Moiseiwitsch
INTERVAL
Cello Concerto Soloist: Pablo Casals *or* Emanuel Feuermann
Double Concerto Soloists: Jacques Thibaud and Paul Tortelier
London Philharmonic Orchestra (as it existed in the late 1930s)
Conductor: Sir Thomas Beecham

This was very interesting and enjoyable evening which gave us an insight into aspects of Robert's extraordinary life of which many of us were probably unaware. Particular thanks must also go to our Chairman for asking Robin Cherry, a professional sound engineer, to provide and operate sound equipment that enabled the conversation to be heard with exceptional clarity.

Tony Summers

DELIUS SOCIETY MEETING

13 November 2003, New Cavendish Club, London

The Danish composer Bo Holten talking about his Delius recordings, his orchestration of Delius songs, conducting Delius and his own orchestration techniques.

It was no surprise at all that a generous gathering of over 45 members attended this meeting and, as we took our seats, there was certainly an air of eager anticipation to hear what Danish composer and conductor, Bo Holten might have to tell us. After all, his reputation preceded him, not least through the recent issue of two fine recordings of the music of Delius (reviewed in *DSJ*s 128 and 132). A little further research reveals that, as a composer, Bo has over 100 works to his credit, including symphonies, solo concertos, operas, chamber music, choral works, musicals and song cycles and he has always been concerned that his own music should be understood and influence people.

Introducing the speaker, our Chairman informed us that Bo had always had strong links with the UK, having studied bassoon at the RAM and appointed regular Guest Conductor of the BBC Singers in 1991 with whom he has worked for two months each year ever since. With them he has conducted around 50 concerts and radio recordings and they have made several Prom appearances at the Royal Albert Hall. In Denmark, Bo founded the vocal group Ars Nova in 1979 and they have given 450 concerts together including almost 120 world premieres. We also learnt that as a conductor, Bo has around 50 CDs to his credit. Roger reminded members that Bo was distinguished both as a conductor of Delius and as orchestrator of his songs.

Bo introduced himself by explaining how he had come to the music of Delius. We learnt that his Father had lived in England 1932-3 and had bought a 78 of *Summer Night on the River* and this 'rather weird piece' was sometimes taken down from the shelf. Duke Ellington was apparently 'God' in the Holten home and Bo's father never tired of telling him that Delius was the only composer the great Duke

really liked! But Bo really fell for Delius in his early twenties and wore out his first 'green' LP (*Late Swallows, Summer Night on the River* etc) over a couple of years. He absorbed so much of his music that Delius was in his bloodstream. There was a twinkle in Bo's eye when he told us that sometimes when he is conducting Delius he feels 'that is exactly how I would have done it"! Bo told us that he had taught orchestration and had written a thesis of some seventy or eighty pages on Delius's orchestration. He had also been a composition teacher for four years but as it was not really possible to teach composition he had tended to concentrate instead on helping his students with technical matters.

Bo then turned to the two recordings, the first of which included his orchestration of the early Five Songs from the Norwegian (1888) coupled with several orchestral works. He explained that in the process of orchestration he had tried to 'update' the songs in the way he imagined Delius might have orchestrated them as a more experienced composer. He had tried to make the songs 'less innocent'. Circulating Members with fragments of the full score and with the aid of the piano and the actual recording, Bo picked out a number of examples in order to illustrate his approach as an orchestrator. The first of the set, 'Slumber Song' was fairly simple and straightforward but Bo pointed out many subtle touches of orchestration, each verse being slightly altered. In 'The Nightingale', however, colour had been added to the opening chords by adding a harp arpeggio and introducing 'Straussian' trills. This certainly proved very effective, as did the syncopated brass at the *poco agitato*. Bo displayed an impish sense of humour in justifying some of his orchestral colours and embellishments, for example the rather 'Wagnerian' sound in 'Longing'. But he reminded us that Delius certainly knew his Wagner.

Coming now to the second recording Bo explained that in orchestrating the Five Danish Songs, he had taken fewer liberties because these songs were composed later, by which time Delius was more experienced and skilled. For example in 'I hear the night' we were able to compare Delius's piano score ('almost unplayable') with Bo's orchestral score and noted how subtle instrumental phrases coloured the music. He told us that he thought 'Autumn' was a wonderful song containing more Wagnerian influences.

Bo talked about conducting the music of Delius and the importance of 'flow' and 'getting the emphasis on the right beat'. It was important always to maintain the regular tempo of the music without undue lingering i.e. the conductor shouldn't linger on beat three in three time or on beat four in common time. Bo closed his presentation by emphasizing that Delius was a composer who was able to express the most serene sensibility and lyricism. At this stage unfortunately we ran out of time and were denied the opportunity of hearing him talking further about his orchestration techniques – perhaps on another occasion?

In thanking the speaker, Lionel Carley described Bo as a born communicator

whom he had first met in 1990 and who had provided us with two very distinguished recordings. We were interested to learn that there were actually two great men in Bo's life; Delius and Brian Clough and it was surprising to then learn that Bo had played football in the Danish equivalent of the 3rd Division! Lionel said the talk had been utterly absorbing and not too difficult for the non-technical in the audience. He then mentioned that he had sat in on much of the second recording and his one claim to fame was that he had helped Bo in the rehearsal of the shouts in *Eventyr*! We were reminded that these two recordings had been produced with the assistance of The Delius Trust, and intrigued to hear that there were plans for a third recording, to be made when funds were available.

Mike Green

DELIUS SOCIETY MEETING

West of England Branch Meeting, 17 January 2004

'A ramble around Delius' – A talk by Lyndon Jenkins

A group of 14 members of the society gathered at Ron Prentice's house at Ash Priors to hear this talk given by Lyndon Jenkins. What might have been initially intended as a 'ramble' turned out to be focussed on the two major players in the Delius story, Sir Thomas Beecham and Eric Fenby, and discussed the debt the composer owes to these two men.

Lyndon started by telling us how a composer's music often fell out of favour after their death, citing Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Sibelius as examples. This did not happen in the case of Delius due to the unique attention given by Beecham to promoting, editing and conducting his music. After the first Delius festival given during the composer's lifetime in 1929, Beecham went on after Delius's death in 1934 to organize another almost equally successful one in 1946. He recorded most of the major works on 78's for the first Delius Society subscription edition and later made many LP recordings before his death in 1961. Beecham wrote a biography of Delius and was involved in setting up the Delius Trust with Jelka Delius. No conductor ever served a composer better than Beecham served Delius.

Lyndon mused on the question of what motivated the young and 'green' Eric Fenby to write that letter to Delius. The music obviously moved him deeply but it is surely likely that Fenby's religious beliefs played a part in his decision to go to Grez. Their collaboration was a unique event in the annals of music. Lyndon played excerpts of Fenby relating in his own words the difficulties that he experienced and how eventually he and Delius were able to work together, rescuing valuable works

from oblivion.

After Delius's death and the formation of the Trust, Fenby had relatively little involvement with Delius's music, though in 1962 he was made artistic director of the 1962 Delius Centenary Festival and Rudolph Kempe took over the role of principal conductor after the death of Beecham the previous year. With the founding of the Delius Society that year it was natural that Eric should be asked to be our first president.

From 1962 onwards he made several arrangements of Delius's music such as *Late Swallows* from the String Quartet and the Dance for Flute and Strings arranged from the Dance for Harpsichord. An 'Indian summer' came in the 80's when he was asked by Unicorn Kanchana Records to make recordings of all the music that he had helped Delius complete as the 'Fenby Legacy'. This was to be his last great service to Delius, as soon afterwards he retired to Scarborough where he died in 1997.

This interesting talk, delivered in Lyndon's usual erudite manner, was illustrated by several less well known musical examples, including *Folkeraadet*, *Paa Vidderne* and the Suite for Violin and Orchestra, and reminded us all of what we owe these two men.

After the talk Ron and his wife Brenda had kindly laid on a most enjoyable buffet for everyone to celebrate the New Year.

Ray Osborne

"A GREAT MAN"

Sir Thomas Beecham, for more than a quarter of a century Delius's tireless advocate and incomparable interpreter, said last night:

"What I have to say of this great man cannot be expressed in a few words, or moments. He and I were friends for a great number of years, and the sense of loss is now too painful."

Dr. Richard Strauss –"A profound loss to music – his melody was a great gift to the world.

Sir Landon Ronald – Delius was a great man, and it is a dreadful thing that we should have lost within a few months three great composers as Elgar, Holst and Delius. It is nothing short of a tragedy for music in this country.

Sir Walford Davies (Master of the King's Musick) – His rich contribution to the harmonic texture of music will live, especially in view of the fact that he orchestrated so beautifully.

After the death of Delius had been announced in the B.B.C. news bulletin last night, and before the rest of the bulletin was read, an orchestra played the "Walk to the Paradise Garden," from the composer's "A Village Romeo and Juliet."

The Daily Telegraph, Monday 11 June 1934

DELIUS DIES IN PARIS

FREDERICK DELIUS and his wife, Jelka Rosen, the artist, who sacrificed her career to nurse her husband.

Blind Genius Who Found Fame On His Death-Bed

FREDERICK DELIUS is dead.

The blind genius who was considered by many connoisseurs to be the greatest musician England has produced since Purcell, died at his home at Grez-sur-Loing, on the outskirts of Paris, yesterday, at the age of seventy-two.

Only on his death-bed—on which he lay for ten years—did fame come to him.

His wife, Jelka Rosen, the painter, who had ruthlessly laid aside her brushes and palette to nurse him with passionate devotion during the years of his illness, was rushed from the nursing home, where she was recovering from a recent operation.

She arrived in time to be with him at the last.

Delius' Life Story—Page Two.

DEATH OF DELIUS

FAMOUS BRITISH COMPOSER

9 YEARS BLIND

WE deeply regret to announce the death, which occurred yesterday at his home at Grez-sur-Loing, near Fontainebleau, of Frederick Delius, the famous British composer.

Delius was 72. For the last nine years he had suffered the dual affliction of blindness and paralysis.

His music first became known in London through a concert of

FREDERICK DELIUS.

his works, which he gave at St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, in 1899, but it was not until 1929, when he was already blind, that full honour was accorded him here.

This was the occasion of the Delius Festival organised by Sir Thomas Beecham, the composer's greatest champion.

Delius came to London for the festival, travelling in an ambulance, and could be seen, a frail figure of ascetic profile, in the circle at Queen's Hall.

In the same year he was made a Companion of Honour.

The Daily Express and *The Daily Mail,* Monday 11 June 1934

CONCERT REVIEWS

Saturday 8 November 2003
Stude Concert Hall, Rice University, Houston, Texas, USA
Delius: *Sea Drift*
Vaughan Williams: *A Sea Symphony*
Houston Masterworks Chorus and Orchestra conducted by
Dr Craig Hella Johnson
Soloist: Gerald Dolter (baritone)

The program notes by David Mead for this concert, gave generous detail about Delius's life and musical style, along with insightful analysis of *Sea Drift*. There was also mention of Don Gillespie's finding that Thomas F Ward, teacher of Delius, resided in Houston in his final years.

Dr Johnson began the program with some spoken remarks. Here is my recollection of his comments: "The first work you will be hearing tonight is *Sea Drift* by Frederick Delius. Then, after an intermission, you will hear *A Sea Symphony* by Ralph Vaughan Williams. These two magnificent works are rarely performed outside of Europe. Both are settings of texts by Walt Whitman, whose poems were popular with composers in the late 19th and early 20th century. In *Sea Drift*, Delius's haunting music portrays the themes of death, loss and the transience of life".

In my opinion, *Sea Drift* was performed superbly. It was quickly apparent that Dr Johnson had prepared the performance with utmost care, and he demonstrated a great appreciation for, and understanding of, Delius's music. The music began quietly with shimmering clarity. The acoustics of the beautiful Stude Concert Hall were perfect. The 'surging of the sea' was felt throughout the work with gentle crescendo and decrescendo.

There were many 'spine-tingling' moments during the performance, particularly the choir entrances on 'Once Paumanok', 'Shine! Shine! Shine!' and 'O Rising Stars!' There were memorable moments in the orchestra also: the bass drum softly booming the crash of the waves; the two harpists in 'Yes, when the stars glisten'd'; and the many woodwind passages.

Gerald Dolter's rendering of the baritone solo conveyed the emotions of the story very effectively. His voice was well-suited to the work. My only wish is that his voice could have been amplified for a better balance with the orchestra and chorus: I had to strain to hear him clearly when the full ensemble was playing. I understand that using microphones for the soloists in this type of concert is not common practice, but in this case it would have helped.
The concluding section 'O past! O happy life!' was just overwhelming. As the

music died away, there was complete silence in the hall – then, a very nice round of applause from the audience.

Thus ended a rare performance of the music of Frederick Delius in Houston, Texas. I hope that the Houston Masterworks Chorus will follow this success with more of Delius's choral works in future seasons.

Bill Thompson

'Those Blue Remembered Hills':
British Music from the first half of the 20th century
The Nash Ensemble
Wigmore Hall, London, 15 November 2003, 24 January and 21 February 2004

This series of seven concerts took place over a period of six months. Nearly all of the composers featured were British and active in the first half of the twentieth century (apart from Robin Holloway, whose 60th birthday concert in October formed part of the series). Another unifying feature was a review of the early chamber music of Ralph Vaughan Williams. The title of the series, taken from Housman, reflected the powerful influence of 'A Shropshire Lad' on British composers writing before and after the First World War.

The third concert of the series began with a forthright performance of Delius's second violin sonata by Marianne Thorsen and Ian Brown. The rhapsodic line of the violin was beautifully realised and the complex harmonies of the piano part were most clearly rendered by the accompanist, revelling in the sonority of the Hall's resident Steinway. The programme also included the first public performance of RVW's 1898 string quartet, a brave and partly virtuosic work that hardly predicts the individual voice that was to emerge a few years later. That voice was however clearly heard at the end of the evening when Mark Padmore joined the quartet in a fine performance of On Wenlock Edge (1909). Earlier the same forces had rendered Warlock's accomplished songs for tenor and string quartet. The programme was completed by a performance of Bax's septet which he entitled Concerto for flute, oboe, harp and string quartet, a work which derived from an unpublished sonata for flute and harp.

The fifth concert also began with a Delius sonata: that written during WW1 for 'cello and piano. The Nash Ensemble's splendid 'cellist Paul Watkins had prepared the score with careful attention to textual detail and with the admirable support of Ian Brown he also achieved the structural overview that is so important in this work. Works by RVW again featured and the concert ended with his early piano quintet, scored for the same forces as the Trout Quintet of Schubert. We also heard

two song cycles for voice and chamber ensemble. The first was Gurney's The Western Playland, a compilation of settings of Housman for baritone, piano and string quartet. It was good to hear this rarely performed piece, though one felt grateful that it had not been programmed with RVW's On Wenlock Edge, a work with which it does not sustain comparison. The other item is an absolute gem: Butterworth's Love Blows as the Wind Blows, for baritone and string quartet. Some readers may recall that the mezzo soprano Nora Sirbaugh included the voice and piano arrangement of this piece in her recital at the 1997 Gloucester Three Choirs Festival. Butterworth delves deeply into the grace and pathos of four poems from W. E. Henley's 'Echoes', leaving the listener haunted.

The penultimate concert of the series also began with Delius. David Matthews has arranged the 'Two Pieces for Small Orchestra' for chamber orchestra. It was inevitable that the first chord of On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring, so memorably arresting in many a recording of the original score, should have been less effective in the hands of such a small number of players. Martyn Brabbins, conducting the Nash Ensemble, adopted a fairly brisk tempo, as suits the smaller forces. The arrangement lays bare, to good effect, the harmonic complexities of the piece. Summer Night on the River, already a more intimate piece, responded better to the reduced scoring, though there were slight problems with the balance between woodwind and strings. It was otherwise a sensitive performance and there were moments when one was delightfully transported by the pointilliste soundscape to the banks of the Loing. Elgar's wistful and probably even now under-rated Serenade in E minor followed. Brabbins chose a tempo for the central Larghetto that perfectly suited the deep emotional conviction of his players. Marianne Thorsen then joined the Ensemble to beguile a raptly receptive audience with 'the silver chain of sound' that is RVW's The Lark Ascending.

The final item was a concert performance of the one-act opera Savitri, libretto and music by Holst, in which the heroine of the title bargains successfully with Death for the life of her stricken husband Satyavan. In its theme, idiom and scoring quite unlike anything else on the evening's programme or indeed in the entire series, the opera establishes an individual voice of rare quality. There were splendid performances by Jean Rigby (Savitri), John Mark Ainsley (Satyavan) and Roderick Williams (Death).

In this series the Nash Ensemble has created imaginative programmes of considerable variety and interest, loosely united by a literary theme. The capacity audiences, notable for their relative youth, have responded enthusiastically.

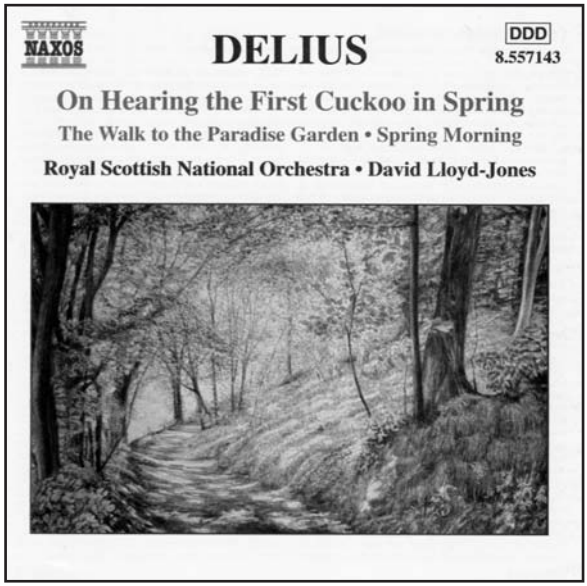
Roger Buckley

DELIUS: *Marche Caprice; Three Small Tone Poems: Summer Evening, Winter Night (Sleigh Ride), Spring Morning; American Rhapsody; The Walk to the Paradise Garden; Two Pieces for Small Orchestra: On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring, Summer Night on the River; A Song before Sunrise; Fantastic Dance*
Royal Scottish National Orchestra, David Lloyd-Jones
Naxos 8.557143 (DDD) Total playing time: 63'36"

The novel feature of this programme of orchestral works by Delius is that it is arranged chronologically, from the 1890 *Marche Caprice* to the *Fantastic Dance* of 1931.

A *Marche* made its first appearance in the *Petite Suite d'Orchestre* of 1889. Revised and much extended it appeared again dated 1890 as the last movement of the *Suite de 3 Morceaux Caracteristiques*. The first two items of this suite, *La Quadroone* and *Scherzo* respectively, have already been recorded by David Lloyd-Jones (though with another orchestra, the English Northern Philharmonia) on Naxos 8.553535 (1996). Armed with that disc and the present one, it is therefore possible to assemble a recorded performance of the whole of this effective early suite. Perhaps it will now be heard in the concert hall.

Hugh Priory's disc liner commentary suggests that the original orchestration of *Marche Caprice* has been used in this recording. This includes the piccolo and cornet parts omitted by Sir Thomas Beecham in his 'Edited and Arranged' version that was first performed in 1946. The result can be heard to be a spirited, competently scored miniature and the comparison with Bizet, whose fresh and bracing *Jeux d'Enfants* was published in 1871, seems apt, though we lack evidence that Delius was consciously influenced by this work.



Beecham's 1958 recording of *Marche Caprice* underplays Delius's possible miscalculation in allowing the trumpets to reach the tonic half a bar before the remainder of the orchestra at figure A of the

score. The problem, if such it may be considered to be, is now clearly revealed by the superior sound of the new recording.

The *Three Small Tone Poems* (*3 Symphonische Dichtungen*) of 1889/90 may have originally been four. Beecham indicated that he knew of a movement entitled *Autumn* that completed the sequence that we now have: *Sommer Abend* (*Summer Evening*), *Winter Nacht* (*Sleigh Ride*) and *Frühlings Morgen* (*Spring Morning*). Perhaps this will some day reappear, but meanwhile we have three pieces of considerable charm. *Summer Evening* and *Sleigh Ride* are well known and receive careful and authentic performances. Less than ideally, the orchestral sleigh bells that feature in the latter have a predominant pitch of D, which is at odds with the A major tonality of the piece. *Spring Morning* is musically the least accomplished of the three pieces but introduces, at bars 6 and 7, and later at bars 101 and 102, the germ of part of a melody that was become of great significance to Delius, though here remaining fragmentary and undeveloped. Robert Threlfall, in his article 'Late Swallows in Florida' (*Composer* 51, Spring 1974, pp 25-7) notes that the melody of which this fragment is a part arose from a number of separate ideas, the earliest being found in the *Florida Suite* of 1885/87 and subsequently developed in *Koanga* (1895-97). To this were added phrases that had their origins in *The Magic Fountain* (1893-95) and, as just mentioned, in *Spring Morning*. The complete melody is heard for the first time at the emotional climax of the opera, as Watawa lies dying in the arms of Solano and sings: 'See how the moonbeams / flood the sweet magnolia grove / Listen! The mocking-bird is warbling songs of love.' Solano answers: 'There I will wait for thee / in the sweet magnolia grove', the penultimate note this time being flattened to the 'blue' note. The musical example shows the original source of each phrase of the melody that emerges in its final form in the slow movement ('Late Swallows') of the String Quartet of 1916; the potentially 'blue' note is marked by an asterisk. Thus does *Spring Morning*, a charming but otherwise unimportant piece, contribute to one of Delius's loveliest and most emotionally significant melodies.

At nine and a half minutes, the *American Rhapsody* is the longest item on the

disc, and probably the least satisfactory, despite the persuasive performance it receives here. The start is atmospheric: we could well be contemplating the great St Johns River from the shore of Solano Grove. This is a good passage to try out on the 'innocent ear'! More pre-echoes of *Appalachia* follow, but thereafter, in the 'marching bands' sequence, the composer's fingerprints are rarely detectable. In the wistful coda we perhaps return to the vista of 'the mighty river'. This performance, and that of *Spring Morning*, form useful alternatives to those earlier recorded by the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by John Hopkins (Marco Polo 8.220452, 1987).

With the next item, *The Walk to the Paradise Garden*, we encounter the composer in his prime. David Lloyd-Jones realises the grand structure of the score and invests the music with much of the beauty and pathos of the opera itself. Perhaps it is his experience of conducting *A Village Romeo and Juliet* from which we here so richly benefit. This is a truly exceptional performance. The original orchestration appears to have been used, involving 28 woodwind and brass players. Beecham eliminated eleven of these instruments in his version for concert performance; the tuba in particular is a major loss.

The *Two Pieces for Small Orchestra* follow and it is to be hoped that they will attract the cautious or casual buyer to invest in the disc. *Summer Night on the River* receives a lovely performance, bearing comparison with that recorded with the LPO by Vernon Handley in 1983, a long-time favourite of this reviewer.

The liner note puzzles over the title of *A Song before Sunrise* but comes up with the plausible suggestion that it derives from a chapter heading in Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Another contender, perhaps, is Swinburne's *Songs before Sunrise* (1871). (If only Delius's library had survived, or had at least been catalogued!) This is a fine, fresh performance.

The disc ends with *Fantastic Dance* which was dictated to Eric Fenby and first performed in a broadcast that Delius heard only four months before he died. The exotic sound of the piece could well derive from the use of the whole tone scale, which is rarely encountered in Delius's works. David Lloyd-Jones adopts a good tempo and makes the best possible case for the piece.

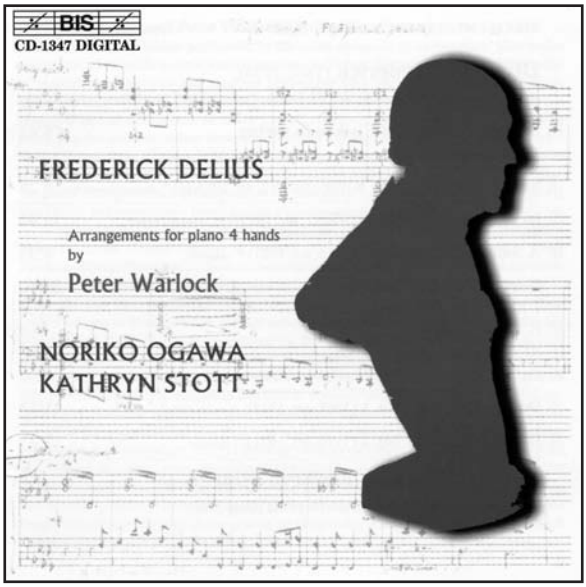
Forty-one years of the composer's life are encompassed by this disc which, with its carefully judged mixture of the familiar and the unfamiliar is bound to win new friends for the music of Delius. The sound is quite excellent and the value – need it be said? – is amazing. Conclusion: essential listening!

Roger Buckley

FREDERICK DELIUS – Arrangements for piano 4 hands by Peter Warlock
On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring, Summer Night on the River, In a Summer Garden, A Song Before Sunrise, North Country Sketches, Dance Rhapsody No 1 & No 2
Noriko Ogawa and Kathryn Stott, piano
BIS-CD-137 (DDD) Total Playing time 72'51"

It has been fascinating to listen to this disc – I have known several of these Heseltine arrangements (here understandably marketed under the name of Peter Warlock) for over fifty years, and in some cases they provided my first introductions to the music I grew to love so dearly. Yet such were the difficulties of finding a sufficiently gifted and sensitive partner that it is not until now that I have really heard how they sound when expertly played; indeed the elusiveness of a Delian pianistic soul-mate compelled me in the end to turn several of Heseltine's (and my own) duet arrangements into piano solos, which resulted in the CD that some members will know. I am also astonished to realise the total extent of Heseltine's work for Delius – there are three versions of In a Summer Garden, for two pianos, piano duet and piano solo (I made only two), then the rest of the works on this disc, the piano reductions of the last three concertos and *Hassan* (some in two versions), a two-piano version of *Brigg Fair* and an unpublished short score of *The Song of the High Hills*. That is true devotion and one need not wonder that Heseltine towards the end became rather tired of Delius's music.

Noriko Ogawa and Kathryn Stott play these arrangements with tremendous aplomb and exemplary clarity – the disc is worth hearing for *March of Spring* alone – throbbing with life, as the composer wished. They play extraordinarily well together, even managing some synchronised *rubatos*. They are most scrupulous in observing the written text, including all markings of tempo and dynamic, but this leads me wonder whether they realised the minefield they were entering in undertaking this project. I say this for two reasons – it turns out the Heseltine's texts are absolutely littered with errors; also Delius was notoriously



unable to explain how he wanted his music to be played, and following his written directions is often not the best way to do it (as Beecham well knew). It is to the credit of Ogawa and Stott that they have detected some of these errors: for instance they have restored most of the 'Scotch snaps' missing from my text of the North Country *Dance*. But there are four harmonic errors on the first page of *secondo's* part of this piece, all of which they faithfully reproduce, just as I equally faithfully reproduced them in a solo version I made at a time when the full scores were unavailable, imagining them to represent an advance in Delius's harmonic idiom. So frequent were the errors uncovered during the course of listening to this disc and examining the texts that they have been the cause of many a long phone conversation with Robert Threlfall, and the uncharitable thought has even crossed my mind that most of Heseltine's proof-reading must have been done in the intervals between his rare bouts of sobriety.

I must congratulate these players on the way they manage to bring out the entry of the cuckoo in the first piece, while maintaining the smoothness of the quiet new development of the Norwegian folk-tune. I never felt able to do this with only two hands and more or less gave up the attempt, feeling that to maintain the mood was more important than to be literal. The later direction 'rather broader' (for the last full appearance of the folk-tune) is a good example of the difficulty of hitting the right tempo in Delius: I have never been able to feel that it works to play the passage much slower, as is rather laboriously done here, and take some comfort from the fact that Beecham also ignores the instruction. The same applies to 'working up to the original Tempo' in *A Song before Sunrise*, which Beecham also ignores – it sounds ponderous if started this slowly. A more serious case is in the *North Country Dance*, where these players arrive at a funereally slow tempo in bar 73 (four bars before fig. 28 in the score). But who can blame them? – it is the result of Delius's repeated directions in the preceding bars to play more slowly. Personally I am convinced that one of these directions must be a mistake, and certainly most conductors make some kind of adjustment here.

The question of tempo is a vexed one. Ogawa and Stott play much of this music very fast – their timing for *A Song before Sunrise* is over a minute shorter than Beecham's and for *In a Summer Garden* over three minutes shorter than Mackerras's. Of course there may be something to be said for taking a faster tempo on a non-sustaining instrument, but the mood remains paramount. This is what I feel is missed in the first 'Animato' of *Summer Garden*, which fairly rattles along, and I do not feel they capture the moments of inward rapture towards the end. The players know the score well enough to arpeggiate a harp chord (not so indicated by Heseltine) in the second bar after fig.18, but I wish they had also noticed that there is a crucial E natural in the chord which Heseltine has inexplicably omitted. Another wildly fast passage in their performance is the first 'Vivo' in the *Dance*

Rhapsody No 1. It should surely be exuberant rather than showy, but at least this is not as bad as Percy Grainger's treatment of the same passage in his 2-piano version. I recently performed this in Switzerland and found that he had converted this *leggiero* passage for cellos and basses into a whirlwind of double octaves for the second piano; in fact the whole score is full of the most extraordinary changes in Delius's textures, dynamics, and even harmony, provoking me to another series of phone calls to Robert Threlfall. My copy has several pasted-on emendations, as I could not bear to play what Grainger had written. After the 'Vivo', our players get a very good relationship between the varying tempi – no easy task – and it all sounds wonderfully dancey and clear. The solo violin variation, which Heseltine described as the most exalted moment in Delius's work ('wonderful, causing tears') is beautifully balanced and together, but could have been even slower. I was curious to know how Heseltine would arrange the final variation (which almost demands two keyboards), but it sounds thin – not the players' fault – partly because Heseltine has omitted the opening kettle-drum flourish and the first eight notes played in unison by the six horns, though they are easily within reach of *secondo's* hands. How could he have overlooked this – in a place where the maximum noise is needed?

Another vexed question is that of the ties. What is to be done (by both arranger and performer) with long-held tied notes, especially in the bass of the orchestral texture, which are bound to soon die away on the piano? Heseltine is very inconsistent in the way he deals with this problem, sometimes omitting the ties or suggesting a gentle repercussion, but more usually leaving the performers to their own devices. The endings of *Summer Night on the River* and *Winter Landscape* are highly unsatisfactory, as one is here left with the sound of one note of the final chord instead of the whole chord. The most crucial case is in bar 36 (2nd bar after fig.18) of *Winter Landscape*, where the upper strings swell to *forte,* leaving the lower notes to die away helplessly unless something is done about it. This is one of several places where I feel the performers could have taken matters into their own hands. I should also mention that a whole bar is missing from this piece, due to the tape editor confusing two different Ds.

It strikes me again how good Delius's music can be made to sound on the piano – in a way that some other composers' (Elgar's, for instance) can not. Lovely though his orchestration is, there is something about his music that transcends it, and I think one reason may be that so much of his music was inspired by his own improvisations at the keyboard. I would like to take issue with the writer of the introductory note, who suggests that Delius had not much to contribute to the keyboard, and that there is little connection between his writing for the piano and that for orchestra. In fact Delius in his maturity developed a unique way of writing for the piano – I mean those ongoing rhapsodic chordal passages of changing harmonies, using differing spacings and registers, and paying scant attention to any

imagined need for 'movement of parts' or a coherent bass line. What could be more inspired in this way, and more perfectly suited to its medium, than the final page of the song 'To Daffodils'? Delius often uses this style and it reaches its apogee in the cello sonata. Moreover he manages to make this technique highly effective on the orchestra, as one can hear in *Song before Sunrise* and *First Cuckoo.* In the final three chords of the latter, the 'bass' moves directly from a B flat on the second violins to a note two octaves below on the double basses, a manoeuvre obviously inspired by keyboard improvisation – and there are many other such.

I am not so sure that I want to take on board the idea, also mentioned in the note, that the end of *A Song before Sunrise* represents an 'idealised cock-crow', even though it seems to have come from Fenby (it was also mentioned by Rob Cowan on Radio 3 recently). If it is so, it must be a very distant cockerel, for the woodwind figure is marked *PP* by Delius (though not, unfortunately, by Heseltine). Anyway, our players make no bones about it and wake us up with a startling thump on the C major *sforzato*, followed by a call to arms – I hope this idea does not gain currency as I feel this is basically one of Delius's quiet endings, and is so treated by most conductors. Again the central section of this piece really demands a relaxation of the tempo (though not marked by Delius) otherwise it sounds clattery – there is a moment of magic to be found where the strings play 'on the bridge'.

Another tricky issue in playing transcriptions is how to represent such things as string *pizzicati* and soft drum-taps. These days the fashion has swung towards extreme dryness, and I often feel, in the vein of Bernard Shaw, that I would like to murder pianists who play the opening of Schubert's *Ständchen staccatissimo* and with no pedal at all – the very sounds they are trying to imitate have some degree of resonance and duration, and Delius in the *Dance Rhapsody No 2* writes some of his bass *pizzicati* as minims. Fortunately my feelings towards Ogawa and Stott are not quite so strong, but the tendency to dryness is there, even in *portamento.* Maria Donska told me that once, in Schnabel's class, a rather lost student, when confronted by the master's disapproval, suggested helplessly, "perhaps a little pedal would help?", but I think that is really true here.

But I mustn't cavil any more. The *2nd Dance Rhapsody* receives a highly enlivening performance and I like the final *tremolando* representing a drum-roll. *Autumn* and *Summer Night on the River* are well-judged in tempo and texture and the strange harmonies command maximum attention when played on the piano. What wonderful and original pieces they are! – and how far the composer has come since, say, 1900 (I don't understand Heseltine's placing *Appalachia* at the apex of Delius's work). I think we must be grateful to these two pianists for working so hard on these difficult and elusive arrangements and filling a gap in the canon of Delius's recorded music.

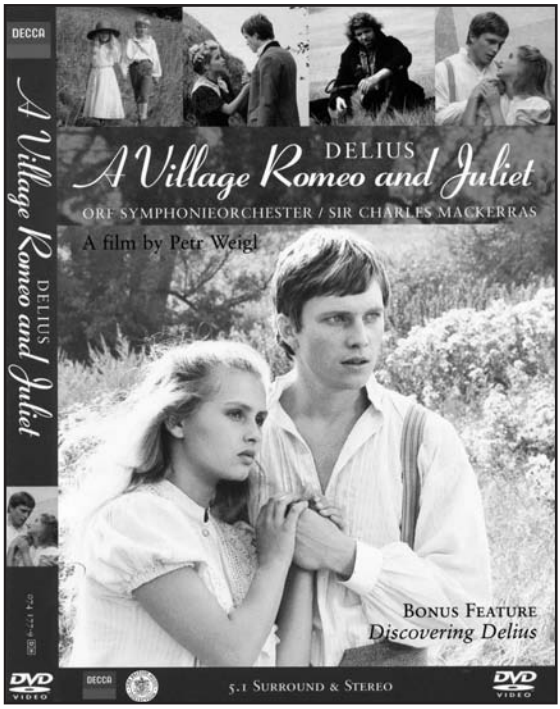
Alan Rowlands

DELIUS: A VILLAGE ROMEO AND JULIET

Director: Petr Weigl
Orf Symphonieorchester, Conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras
Vreli: Dana Moravkova/Helen Field, Sali: Michael Dlouhy/Arthur Davies, The Dark Fiddler: Thomas Hampson, Manz: Leopold Haverl/Barry Mora, Marti: Pavel Mikulik/Stafford Dean.
BONUS FEATURE: DISCOVERING DELIUS (Commentary by Derek Bailey)
Decca/Universal Music Co. 074 177-9

Petr Weigl's film of Delius's opera *A Village Romeo and Juliet* was originally released on video by Decca in 1992 but has long since disappeared from the shops. However the advantages of DVD over video are now well known and this is a good example of that: better sound and picture quality, easy scene selection, sub-title options etc. It is not my intention to directly comment on the 1990 Argos double CD release (soundtrack to the film) as that has already been reviewed (*DSJ* 105) and given the praise it deserves.

Most operas if filmed are recorded in their 'natural' setting of the stage. To shoot on location must not only present particular problems in production but requires a double suspension of belief in reality for the audience. As with the Hollywood musicals of a generation or more ago, the task of the Director is to create in the mind of the viewer a subconscious blind spot to the off-camera 40-piece orchestra and necessary dubbing by the singers. The physical demands of acting out the story 'live' whilst affecting to sing must have at times been quite difficult; Marti and Manz for instance 'singing' whilst actually working with a real horse and plough. There are times when the movements of the actors



appear unnaturally slow, but that is the genre in which they are performing so they can hardly be criticised for that. Given these circumstances, the main actors give convincing performances of a range of intense emotions. In particular Dana Moravkova (Vreli) is extremely persuasive in her portrayal of innocence, naiveté, and through worldly awakening to tragic romantic love. Thomas Hampson as the Dark Fiddler is quite magnificent, giving a superb performance of mysteriousness, tenderness and cynicism in equal measure

The semi-rural 'arcadia' locations for the film were obviously chosen with care. Both lighting qualities and atmosphere reflect the mood of Delius's music to maximum effect. The opening scenes of summer poppy-fields, the dream wedding scene, the fairground scene and Paradise Garden Inn scene all capture the right mood. *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* is exquisitely done; tastefully and joyously sensuous in a magically lit nature setting. The following scene, where we see what the Paradise Garden Inn has degenerated into, has just a touch of eroticism to make the point (perhaps just a little too much, but mild by today's film 'standards'). Finally, the romantic but tragic ending where Sali and Vreli embark on a raft that will take them to their passionate lovers' end, is poignantly and tastefully achieved. But, in striving to preserve 'taste' we are unintentionally presented with an amusing moment when Sali divesting himself of clothing, miraculously and immediately, appears wearing some sort of towelling toga in order to preserve his modesty. That is not in Delius's 'script'! But, there is one point of the film upon which I quibble. In his stage directions, Delius clearly has the boat (in this production a raft) sinking as it floats away; in the film it merely drifts off into the mist (though as an end shot we are shown a newspaper cutting saying that it did sink). Perhaps we should allow that there were practical filming difficulties in 'pulling the plug' of a solid wooden raft! Setting that aside, this is a marvellously realised filmed opera, and possibly (though hopefully not), the only one of Delius's likely to reach film.

Discovering Delius

Also made in 1992, this film has never been previously issued on general release and has been eagerly awaited by Society members long aware of its existence. Sixty minutes is all too brief for a film on the life and works of Delius but within those limits this film makes a worthy effort. After a quite literally, pedestrian opening, Derek Bailey's commentary takes us through Delius's life story in quick-time and then the rest of the film is set against a backdrop of musical interludes, opinion and reminiscence.

Each idiom of Delius's works (except the songs) is given at least some airing and analysis, with contributions from past and modern interpreters of his works, including musicians, scholars and critics. Most welcome of all are the several interviews with Eric Fenby, probably his last in recorded audio or film format and a

final, loving remembrance of a man who had literally changed his life.

There are some striking and atmospheric inter-cut sequences, such as Norwegian mountain scenery accompanied by appropriate Delius 'soundscapes'. My particular favourite is a brief gem of a segment filmed around the bridge, river and in the 'summer garden' at Grez-sur-Loing, set of course to a soundtrack interlude from the masterpiece work of that title. This is a film not only for those just discovering Delius, but also for those of us who have held his story and music in our hearts over many years.

Stewart Winstanley

From Edward Dax, New York: 'I have just viewed my newly acquired DVD A Village Romeo and Juliet which arrived yesterday. What a revelation! A most wonderful, exciting and moving 3 hours. To watch that beautiful opera performed is to undergo a profound experience . . .What a delight.'

Editor's note: Stewart informs me that our limited discounted stock of this DVD is rapidly dwindling. If you wish to purchase a copy please contact him as soon as possible. There are no plans to obtain further stock.

FRENCH GRAVE FOR DELIUS?
WIDOW PROSTRATE WITH GRIEF

FONTAINEBLEAU, Monday,

No decision has yet been taken as to the burial place of Frederick Delius, the world-famous British composer, who died at his villa at Grez-sur-Loing, near here, yesterday, aged 72.

There is a possibility that he will be buried in the cemetery of the quiet little village in which he lived for the past thirty-five years.

Mrs. Delius is prostrate with grief. Herself an invalid following an operation ten years [sic] ago, she is obliged to keep to her room where she is cared for by a nurse.

Death followed a long illness during which Delius, stricken with blindness and paralysis, had worked painfully at his art with the assistance of his collaborator, Mr. Eric Fenby.

Visitors to the villa would often catch a glimpse of the aged composer sitting motionless in an armchair adding to the score of a work in progress or listening to a gramophone recording of one of his later works.

Delius received a great shock on the death of his old friend, Sir Edward Elgar, a few months ago, and since that time his health had given ground for increasing anxiety.

"Death came as a relief," a close friend told Reuter's correspondent.

The Liverpool Post, Tuesday 12 June 1934

BOOK REVIEWS

BARBIROLLI – Conductor Laureate

By Michael Kennedy

The Barbirolli Society, 396 Pages, Softback, ISBN 1–85580-029–2 £25.99

Michael Kennedy's biography of Sir John Barbirolli has always been the standard work on the conductor's life. It first appeared in 1971, an affectionate and rounded portrait, accurate in every detail, true to character, and informed by the close 30-year friendship between them. Overdue for reissue, it reappears now from the dedicatedly supportive Barbirolli Society with some considerable additional advantages over the original. These are principally that a substantial amount of material for which there was not room in 1971 has been reinstated, new material added, and something like 80 photographs, many from Lady Barbirolli's own collection and previously unseen, included.

Its publication at this juncture is especially timely, because over the last decade an almost complete revaluation of Barbirolli the conductor has come about due to the stream of recordings appearing from various sources. This has not merely restored the greater part of the legacy arising from his years as chief of the Hallé (1943-70) but has yielded a number of largely unknown recordings from his time with the New York Philharmonic (1936-42) and from public concerts during his final decade. These latter, especially those involving Mahler and Bruckner, have been a revelation, introducing new generations to a conductor they never knew, and causing older perspectives to be adjusted.

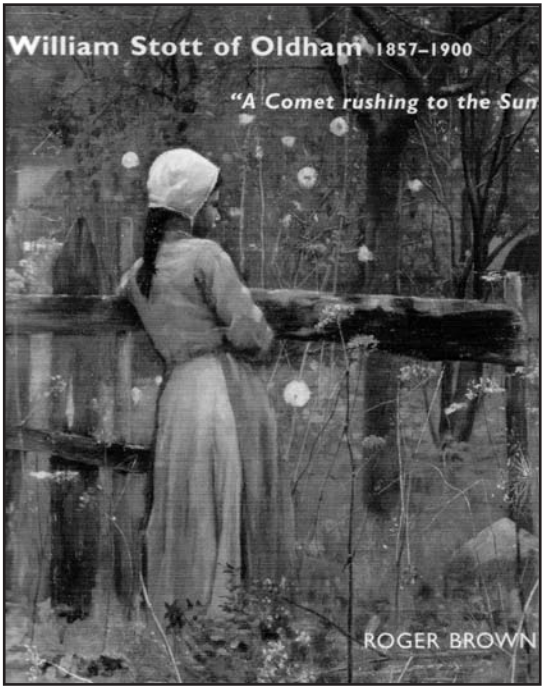
Michael Kennedy demonstrates even more conclusively that Barbirolli's American years were the opposite of failure. Some American critics were never going to accept him, but what must have been especially galling was to see his

work constantly belittled and an enthusiasm such as Elgar's Second Symphony dismissed as 'vulgar, self-indulgent and provincial beyond criticism'. There were even claims that the Orchestra had deteriorated, though his superb recording of Sibelius's Symphony No.2 with them as late as 1942 gives the lie to that. Fortunately his last decade, when he struck up wonderfully rewarding relationships with, particularly, the Berlin Philharmonic, has been adequately documented: the recordings from those years are a superlative testimony to the art of great conducting. While the listener explores Barbirolli's rich recorded legacy, this book is the ideal companion, as much for the curious newcomer as the listener with a sense of history.

Lyndon Jenkins

WILLIAM STOTT OF OLDHAM – 'comet rushing to the sun' – 1857-1900

ISBN 1 903470 21 8 (hardcover £25), 1 903470 20 X (softcover £20)
Paul Holberton Publishing – to accompany the Exhibition until 24 April 2004 at Gallery Oldham, Greaves Street, Oldham OL1 1AL



Of the many artists who frequented the lovely village of Grez-sur-Loing in the Seine et Marne region southeast of Paris there is one name that is seldom if ever mentioned. William Stott, usually known as William Stott of Oldham, died in 1900 aged only forty-two. And only now, apart from brief mention in journals, is a serious study of his work published, coinciding with an exhibition (the first since his death) in the Gallery at Oldham, and written by Roger Brown, the curator of the exhibition.

The son of a mill owner, Stott was determined to paint, and after initial training at Oldham under John Houghton Hague

The Bathing Place

he went to Paris at the age of twenty, where he was so strongly influenced by the artistic milieu that he became better known as a member of the European avant-garde than as a British artist. To begin with he followed those devotees of the 'plein air' school of Bastien-Lepage, whose centres of activity were Fontainebleau, Barbizon and Grez-sur-Loing.

It is significant that Stott's first success at the Paris Salon in 1882 was 'The Bathing Place' – a richly evocative scene on the Loing at Grez, bearing all the hallmarks of those painters who inhabited the village – the high horizon, the structure of horizontal and upright planes, the influence of the famous Corot, and an almost symphonic pattern of colour and brushwork, a technique which also influenced the 'Glasgow Boys', Lavery, Walton and T. Millie Dow. A young man, Stott's all too short life was influenced also by the impressionists and symbolists, and later by Whistler, but his technical proficiency (marking his quick rise to fame in European circles, which led to one critic penning the phrase" a comet rushing to the sun …") allowed him to assimilate those influences within a uniquely personal style.

'Mr Stott's personal view of art ripened at Grez' wrote R A M Stevenson in **The Studio** (October 1894), and Stott's next painting, 'The Ferry', surely exemplified that assessment. Like 'The Bathing Place' this painting, with its highly individual concern for sombre tonal values (similar to those of his friend at Grez, the Irish painter Frank O'Meara) is probably Stott's best-known work and also achieved considerable acclaim at the 1882 Paris Salon. The cover of this well-researched

catalogue depicts another of Stott's 'Grez' paintings – now called 'Girl in a Meadow' but originally entitled 'Prince ou Berger', a romantic idyll which shows a brief glimpse of the famous many-arched bridge which features in so many paintings by the artists of Grez.

Stott returned to Oldham in the summer of 1882 where he married. His reception by the establishment within the art circles of this country was, however, less than enthusiastic although he was held in high esteem by his fellows in the 'Glasgow Boys' It was at this point that he encountered the influence of Whistler (who interestingly enough had pursued the connection between art and music) and produced a series of pastels, a medium, suggests Roger Brown, showing some influence of Degas. Still in 'plein air' fashion several of these pastels, done at Ravenglass in Cumberland, were quite different from anything he had done before – being coastal scenes of sand, sea and sky, either in cold sunlight or even moonlight – which one writer averred 'affected me as music might'. Nonetheless the establishment continued to be antagonistic. One of the pictures from this period (in oils not pastel) entitled 'A Summer Day', depicting three naked boys on the sands, drew the misguided and barbed comment; 'Three dirty little street arabs are bathing on a mudbank of some airless Stygian shore . . .'.

The continued disapproval of the London critics again brought about a change of style, and with only about half a dozen years to live, Stott now began to produce canvases more Brangwynesque in rich texture and colour – 'The awakening of the spirit of the Rose' and 'The Happy Valley' – and became more closely involved with the provincial galleries of the North of England and of Glasgow. Notoriety in the shape of a public quarrel with Whistler, the result of a painting, 'The Birth of Venus', in which he had had the services, as nude model, of Whistler's mistress, did not endear him to the British establishment, and the painting was universally slated. From this point Stott drew his inspiration from Nature and the poetry of Keats, until his death, (which occurred on ship crossing to Ireland, prompting the unkind comment from Whistler "So he died at sea where he always was").

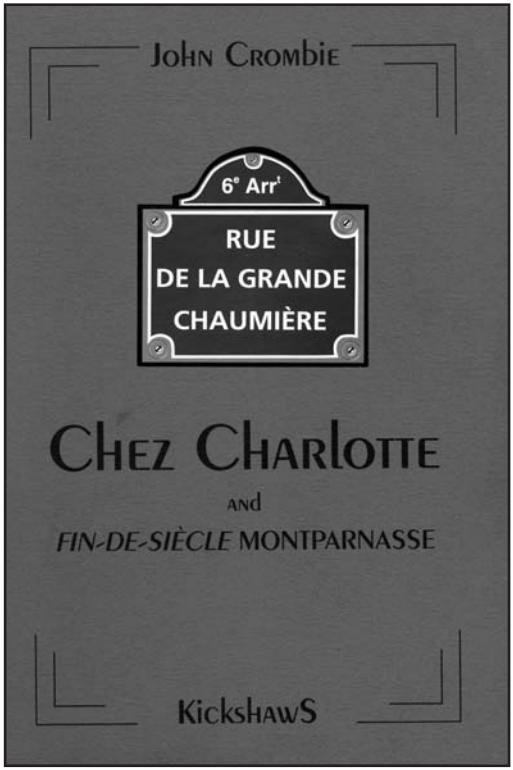
Whatever history may grant to Stott, to those of us who love Delius, and the music and ambience of the village of Grez, these few painting which earned Stott that initial acclaim in Paris will be thought of fondly as part of the exquisite stage setting, as it were of *Summer Night on the River, In a Summer Garden* and *Song before Sunrise*. This publication, beautifully produced with around one hundred illustrations, is of interest to all Delians, and must surely prompt a renewed interest and valuation of this fine artist.

Colin Scott-Sutherland

CHEZ CHARLOTTE AND FIN-DE-SIÈCLE MONTPARNASSE

By John Crombie
Kickshaws, Paris, 2003, card-bound, 132pp, 12pp b/w illus,
(limited edition of 500 numbered copies)

I have at the outset to tell members that they will find no further details about Fritz Delius's time in Paris in this book than in Lionel Carley's *Delius – The Paris Years* (which the author acknowledges in the bibliography). But, that said, this is nevertheless an essential companion to our Vice President's book, adding 'colour' to the image we have of that melting-pot of artistic creativity – the Montparnasse area of Paris in the 1890s. John Crombie is well placed to conjure up the *fin-d- siècle* cosmopolitan atmosphere of the crémerie at 13 rue de la Grande Chaumière in Paris; he lives at that address now. In his fascinating study, we can begin to really understand and associate with, the ambience and influences of the time – a time when Delius had yet to have any of his music performed, and his friends were more likely to be artists and writers: Gauguin, Mucha, Munch, Strindberg were just a few.



Some of the incidents, and comings-and-goings, are amusing – farce-like at times – at others almost tragic. But, it is Alsatian-born Charlotte Caron née Futterer, the self styled *Mère des Artistes* ('pay me when you can afford to'), who features most, and rightly so, for it was her backstreet restaurant that became a favoured haunt for a coterie of the most pioneering creative spirits in Paris at that time. Crombie describes their day-to-day lives, their struggles to achieve and create, against a backdrop in which we catch glimpses of the 'real world' they all lived in. It is inclusion of detail that makes this book so absorbing. For example, the homely nature of the crémerie is conveyed by 'the napkin rack, where customers, once they had put in an appropriate number of

appearances to qualify as habitués, each kept his or her own napkin, identifiable by its ring, in the allotted pigeonhole. A freshly laundered napkin was provided each week, courtesy of Charlotte'.

Although the book looks at the community of Montparnasse as a whole, it is the rue de la Grande Chaumière that features most: Colarossi's six-studio complex at No 6 (Delius met Jelka Rosen whilst she was at the academy in 1896, but it is incorrectly stated that they married the following year) and his second studio at No 16; Mademoiselle Triboulet's guest house at No 12; the rooms at No 8 where Gauguin lodged when he returned from Tahiti; the "little tin church" at No 5; and of course, the crémerie at No 13 where Charlotte covered the walls with the paintings of her clientèle. The wild, larger-than-life Strindberg was later to depict the interior of her establishment in his play *There are Crimes and Crimes*, although the premises were much smaller than we might think – only seating eight or ten people. Delius's memories of Strindberg, his 'extremely touchy' friend, can be found in *Delius: A Life in Letters 1862-1908* (Carley, p 404), but the picture that emerges of him, and his contemporaries, from this new book is much more enlightening.

Crombie quotes Delius's friend Richard Le Gallienne, who described the 1890s as, 'not so much the end of a century as the beginning of a new one'. The *fin-de-siècle* spirit is perhaps, in this time of rapid change, hard to comprehend, but the more we understand how artists, in the wider sense of the word, were influenced by each other, the better we can appreciate their later achievements. So, if you want to know why Strindberg often entered the crémerie through the window, and prowled the cemetery; why Munch had to toss his paintings out of his first floor window at No 8; why Christmas day 1894 changed Mucha's life forever; or understand the mystery surrounding Charlotte's Gauguin paintings, this excellent well-written book is definitely worth giving up an evening to read.

Counterfactuals are always tempting to consider: what direction would Delius's life taken if he hadn't frequented rue de la Grande Chaumière, and he hadn't met Jelka there? And, I wonder if the patrons of the cyber-café that now occupies the downstairs site of the crémerie, realise in whose footsteps they are treading?

Jane Armour-Chélu

Editor's note: This book is published, in a limited edition of 500 numbered copies, in France, by Kickshaws (a corruption of the French *quelque chose*) a non-profit association founded in 1980 to promote the hand-printing of books. The *prix public* in France is 18 euros. Delius Society members in the UK and Europe can obtain this post paid by sending 20 euros in bank notes only to: - Association Kickshaws, 13 rue de la Grande Chaumière, 75006 Paris, FRANCE Tel: (1) 43 25 12 87

THE DELIUS SOCIETY (PHILADELPHIA) BRANCH

A Delius Month in Philadelphia

We celebrated Delius's birthday slightly late, on 8 February, with a recital of 4-hand piano music at the Philadelphia Ethical Society Building. Two well-known artists, both Delius Society members and Philadelphia Orchestra musicians, played Peter Warlock and Heseltine-Delius in an offering amounting to a mini-survey of Warlock's relationship with FD. Following the interval came a very rare performance of Florent Schmitt's *Une semaine du petite Elfe Ferme-l'oeil,* Op. 58, No 1 after Hans Christian Andersen. These wild 'Dreams of Hialmar' are deceptively difficult even though the primo part uses only 5 notes in each of the 7 movements. The audience responded appreciatively to the superb performance as indeed they did throughout the evening. Schmitt, of course, arranged the first vocal scores for Delius's operas *Koanga*, *The Magic Fountain*, *Irmelin*, and *A Village Romeo and Juliet*. Robin Milford's *Lullaby* with its astringent nod to 'Daisy Bell', Norman O'Neill's *All Fours*, and Roger Quilter's *A Children's Overture* (arr. by Anthony Bernard) closed out the program. The single encore was Cyril Scott's *Mazurka,* Op. 67, arranged by Richard Lange.

But it was the first half that perhaps interested serious Delians the most. A vigorous *Capriol* started the program in splendid style. Then came three Heseltine-Delius arrangements: *Dance Rhapsody No 2*, *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* (with its rather loud cuckoo calls!), and *A Song Before Sunrise*. Then to compare Warlock's own style with that of Delius himself, came Fred Tomlinson's arrangement of the *Serenade* (*To Frederick Delius on His 60th Birthday*). It is interesting to note that while Warlock used his pen name only for his own music and Heseltine for his arrangements, the Oxford University Press published score for *Cuckoo* and *Summer Night on the River* uses Warlock as the arranger. I suppose that was for marketing purposes. The other pieces were published by Augener and use Heseltine. The program was good enough to take 'on the road'. Any takers?

Michael Stairs, *left* and David Booth, *right*
Photograph: Michael Kulas

On 20 February Dr Derek Healey appeared in Philadelphia at St. Mary's Episcopal Church talking about 'The Influences of African-American Music on the Works of Frederick Delius', which of course is the subject of his monograph published by The Delius Society last year. This was the Society's contribution to Black History Month. Besides numerous recorded musical examples, Derek was ably assisted by Shannon Hall, a 19 year-old African-American baritone who studies at the College of New Jersey. He sang with secure intonation unaccompanied and with a fine stage presence. Olive Healey was pressed into service to operate the CD player and managed that without a hitch! This presentation was a prelude to Dr Healey's Fenby Lecture on 6 March in Jacksonville as part of the Annual Delius Festival. Following the program, the church offered a lavish reception with hot and cold hors d'oeuvres and incredible mini cream puffs with chocolate sauce for dipping!

Bill Marsh

FREDERICK DELIUS DEAD
Peaceful End of Blind Composer
LYING IN STATE IN MUSIC ROOM

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT
FONTAINEBLEAU, Sunday

Frederick Delius, the famous British composer, died at his home at Grez-sur-Loing, near Fontainebleau at ten minutes past four this morning. He passed away peacefully in his sleep.

English music thus has to mourn, within a brief time of the death of Elgar and Gustav Holst, a third composer who had taken a leading and glorious part in the renaissance of the musical art of this country.

Seventy-two years of age, blind and partly paralysed, he had been ailing for some months, and the severe operation which his wife recently underwent in a French nursing home was a great shock to him.

His good spirits returned when Mrs. Delius was brought home, but by Friday afternoon he had been in great pain, and by Saturday evening it was evident that he was sinking. The end came just as he would have wanted it.

He now lies in the music room, in which he composed some of his greatest works.

This afternoon I saw Delius lying on his deathbed. The bier is covered with roses, of which he was particularly fond. The face bore an aspect of perfect calm and serenity, and the relicate [sic] hands have lost none of their beauty. . . .

The Daily Telegraph, Monday 11 June 1934

OBITUARIES

Anne Gardiner *(1908 – 7 September 2003)*

In the last *Journal* we sadly announced the death of Eric Fenby's sister, Lily Anne Gardiner, a keen and active member of The Delius Society for many years. The following text, kindly sent by Roger Fenby, is based on the funeral remarks made by the Minister at her cremation in Scarborough on 12 September 2003,

Lily was the eldest daughter of the late Herbert and Ada Fenby and sister to Eric and Marjorie. Singing was in the family and Lily had a beautiful soprano voice. She soon became known in the town as a fine oratorio soloist.

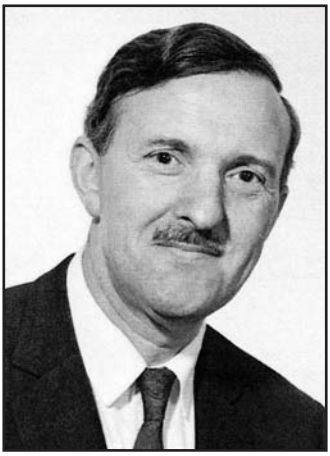
In 1932, at Scarborough's unique Open Air Theatre, Lily appeared in their first production of *The Merry Widow* and became a prominent member of the local operatic society.

On moving to London, she appeared in musicals such as *Bless the Bride* and *Big Ben* at the Adelphi Theatre, then, during the war she toured the country giving concert parties as a committed member of ENSA.

After the break-up of her marriage to Herrick Gardiner, she worked in music publishing, being associated with the magazine series, *Music and Musicians*, *Dance and Dancers*, *Films and Filming* and *Plays and Players*. Later she held various jobs in concert promotion.

For many years she was a staunch member and supporter of The Delius Society and their meetings were one of the things she missed when ill health prompted her return to Yorkshire in 1994 to be near Eric and Marjorie and their respective families in Scarborough. There she lived with her memories and photographs in the Elsinor residential home on the Esplanade till her death at the age of 95 on 7th September 2003, never loosing her flirtatious charm, her love of laughter and her deep devotion to music.

L S B Gilhespy *(4 August 1917 – 11 November 2003)*



Inevitably, with the march of time, the circle of founder members of our Society grows smaller. At Christmas I was sad to learn that the number of those who attended that inaugural meeting in London on 14 April 1962 had been further reduced by the passing of Lister ('Bob') Gilhespy, who died on 11 November 2003, aged 86, at his home in Switzerland.

Although we came ultimately to know each other quite well, in the early years I can only recall exchanging a few words with him at AGMs and other meetings. Later on, however, when I wrote an appreciation of the conductor Leslie Heward we discovered that his family had once lived for 30 years in Edgbaston, a few hundred yards from where I now live. Moreover, Bob's family had known Heward himself as a neighbour at a time when the conductor had consulted Bob's father, an eminent ENT surgeon who had also treated Richard Tauber. After that we struck up an enjoyable and fruitful correspondence that lasted until the onset of his final illness. His love of Delius's music was profound, and he acquired every new disc of it as soon as it appeared. Like me, he was a gramophone man (he had amassed a collection of something like 12,000 discs, scores and books) and so he was especially pleased when we began to issue our own Society discs; he loved to comment on them, which he did very knowledgeably.

Bob was one of nature's gentlemen, with a keen sense of loyalty and a strong feeling for tradition. He never wavered in his admiration for the work of our Society, and repeatedly told me that he thought the *Journal* 'absolutely first-class'. Like many of us, he remembered Estelle Palmley with the greatest affection. An international business career had meant him living in Switzerland since 1959, but he would try to make a visit to the UK coincide with a Society event: he and his wife came to the *Mass of Life* performance in Norwich, for instance, though sadly his health prevented him from attending our concert in memory of Eric Fenby (someone he greatly admired). He was, however, present at one or two AGM's at the RAF Club, and those who came to Birmingham in 2000 may remember my explaining that he was only absent because he was with some of his fellow Dunkirk veterans and HRH The Prince of Wales at the commemoration there marking the 60th anniversary of the events of 1940.

In correspondence with Mrs Gilhespy, I learned that for his 75th birthday she had chosen, quite at random and unaware of any special significance for him, a

card depicting 'The Bridge at Grez' (Sir John Lavery's painting). Bob had been quite delighted at such a fortuitous coincidence, but when we looked at it anew recently we noticed some significant differences between it and another version of the painting (presumably the final one which today changes hands for huge sums of money). This is a subject to which it may be possible to return, perhaps in a future *Journal*, when we can consider the different versions of this painting that meant so much to Bob.

Lyndon Jenkins

Trevor Hold *(1939 – 2004)*

The recent death of Trevor Hold will sadden all lovers of English song. His book *Parry to Finzi: Twenty English Song Composers* (Boydell, 2002) was a landmark publication, a major contribution, illuminating the subject with profound insight and scholarship whilst, at the same time, being an absorbingly interesting and approachable 'read'.

Trevor was born in Northampton in 1939 and, like Ivor Gurney, was dually gifted as both poet and composer. He read music at Nottingham University (1957-62), before becoming a lecturer on music at Aberystwyth and Liverpool Universities; later he was on the staff of Leicester University. His compositions embrace a wide range of genres, and in addition to numerous songs and instrumental pieces include the orchestral work *Gunpowder Plot Music*; the overture *My Uncle Silas*; a *Rondo* for string orchestra; *Requiescat* for speaker, choir and brass sextet; *The Falcon*, a church drama; an entertainment for children – *The Pied Piper;* and *Cinquefoils* for piano quintet.

As the then Chairman of the Ivor Gurney Society, I will always remember the fascinating talk that Trevor gave on two settings of Fletcher's 'Sleep', those by Gurney and Warlock, at a joint Gurney Society and Warlock Society event in Gloucester a few years ago. In 1998 he came to a combined Gurney Society/ Friends of the Dymock Poets weekend when I took a party on a walk over Chosen Hill in Gloucestershire. Trevor was a keen ornithologist, and as we walked along he delighted in pointing out the many different species of birds that he spotted.

After that weekend, he wrote me a delightful letter, enclosing a copy of his *Mermaids and Nightingales* collection of verse, all of which he had set to music at one time or another. The letter, he wrote, was 'Just a note to say how much I enjoyed the Gurney – Dymock Weekend: good company and conversation, stimulating lectures, delightful concert, a now memorable walk round Chosen Hill

— and excellent weather. What better way could one spend a May weekend.

Trevor was a gifted and sensitive man, a good companion and a creative spirit. It is deeply saddening that he has been taken out of turn.

Anthony Boden

Derek Hudson *(20 July 1911 – 31 October 2003)*

Some members may have known that Derek Hudson was the biographer of the composer Norman O'Neill, but may not be aware that he was married to Yvonne O'Neill, Norman's daughter and godchild of Frederick Delius, to whom the composer dedicated his *Waltz For a Little Girl*. Eric Fenby was particularly fond of Norman, and when the Hudsons' own daughter Katherine was born he agreed in his turn to be her godfather. Like her father, Katherine (a member of the Delius Society) is a respected biographer.

Derek was a journalist on the staff of *The Times* from 1939-1949, moving on to become Literary Editor of *The Spectator* (1949 -1953) and eventually joining the Oxford University Press in 1955. He was highly regarded as a writer and his books covered an extraordinary range of subjects. Among his publications are notable biographies of leading literary and artistic figures such as Arthur Rackham, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lewis Carroll and Charles Keene.

The biography of his father-in-law, *Norman O'Neill: A Life of Music,* which contained much new information about the close friendship of the Deliuses and the O'Neills, was published in 1945. Derek's autobiography, *Writing Between the Lines*, came twenty years later in 1965. A true gentleman, quietly civilised and highly cultivated, he summed up his long years in the literary world with characteristic modesty: 'I have enjoyed an interesting life, not without setbacks, but full of surprises'.

Jane Armour-Chélu

The Delius Society and the FRMS

Anthony Lindsey writes: Many of you will be aware that The Delius Society is affiliated to The Federation of Recorded Music Societies (FRMS) Ltd, for which an annual fee is paid. One of the main benefits of this arrangement is that we can play commercial audio and/or video recordings, which might otherwise be subject to copyright, at any Society meeting without having to pay specific royalties. Therefore, we do not have to apply to the Performing Rights Society (PRS) for either an individual, or a block licence, for any of our meetings. This is achieved under an agreement with the PRS, whereby the FRMS pays a group fee on behalf of its affiliates, absolving us of any copyright or third party insurance liabilities.

As the Society's link with the FRMS, I attended their Annual General Meeting, held at Kettering on Saturday 25 October 2003. Many of the other 229 national music societies were represented. The Delius Society and The Elgar Society are the two largest affiliated organisations. Some of you may be aware that the FRMS has gone through a very difficult period; however, I am very pleased to tell you that all these problems now appear to be behind them. The Chairman, John Davies (Nantwich RMS) handled the meeting with clarity and authority and, in the year since he took over, has very definitely earned the respect and confidence of the Federation. The new Honorary Secretary, Tony Baines (Stoke-on-Trent RMS) has completely overhauled the administration system and his organisation of the AGM weekend was of a very high standard.

After dinner, we were entertained by The Vine Quartet of the Northamptonshire Performing Arts and Music Service. It was a very pleasant evening and gave me the opportunity to meet representatives from all over the country and to encourage them to include Delius in their music programmes.

A full-length feature on Frederick Delius will appear in the next (Spring) issue of the FRMS house journal *The Bulletin*. This magazine is distributed nationally to FRMS members and let us hope that it will prove to be a valuable recruitment opportunity.

In the 'Wool Record'

Members who attended last year's AGM in Bradford will remember the fascinating talk given by Eugene Nicholson, Senior Keeper of the Bradford Industrial Museum. Eugene has since joined the Society, and kindly sent me a photocopy of a page from the *Wool Record* of 1962, edited by Royston Millmore, which mentions the Delius Festival of that year.

'Final Curtain on Bradford's Delius Festival

Bradford's centenary Delius Festival is now over, and has been a great success artistically. (I do not yet know how it has fared financially.) It started very cold, with the critics mewling and puking very pettishly at being torn 200 miles away from their modern wallpaper-stripping music to listen to music they thought they had locked in the lumber cupboard years ago.

But I will say that, once they had changed musical gear, their performance improved considerably, and before the festival was over, most of them made honourable amends. I am a woolman – and Delius scorned both wool and woolmen (and Bradford). But I do not scorn Delius or his music. Indeed, I could my visit to his opera "A Village Romeo and Juliet" an unforgettable experience. Judging by the storm of applause *and shouting* that followed the fall of the final curtain on this opera in London on Tuesday, I have the impression that my feelings are widely shared.

Incidentally, the wool trade must have been a lot more profitable when Delius was a young man than it is now. His father spent no less than £37,000 on the education of the 14 children. If we "gross this up" (as the accountants say) into 1962 pounds, we should have to multiply by at least 15. And that makes £555,000, *net* – i.e., *after* payment of income etc., tax.' (*Wool Record*, 13 April 1962, p 9)

Déjà vu ?

Roger Buckley writes: 'It is desperate, Jocasta, the boy cannot take down a simple tune.' Is there a familiar ring about those words? The fact is that David Mitchell has mined the Fenby amanuensis story, or perhaps Ken Russell's version of it, for a 'situation' in his newly published third novel *Cloud Atlas*. The reclusive blind composer, no longer able to write down his musical ideas and marooned 25 miles south of Bruges, is named Vyvyan Ayrs and is married to Jocasta, who is Belgian. The account is written in the first person by the amanuensis, and forms one of six slightly linked stories which make up the new book. The critics have raved over David Mitchell's erudition, ambitiousness and linguistic skill, though reservations have been expressed as to the real significance of the book and whether it actually makes for satisfying reading. (David Mitchell: *Cloud Atlas*, A Sceptre Book, Hodder and Stoughton, 2004. 529pp, £16.99)

Finally 'Nailed'

Malcolm Walker writes: Following on from the correspondence in recent *DSJ*s regarding Louis Kaufman and the Violin Sonata No 1 on the Concert Hall label, I noticed yesterday whilst at our local library, that a newly published autobiography by the artist gives November 1947 as the date of recording, the venue being given simply as Los Angeles.

Study Delius in Derby

Richard Kitching was recently able to inform Midlands Branch members of a course run by the Workers Educational Association in Derby entitled 'Delius and Bax'. This is a series of ten meetings beginning on 26 February, examining the life and times of each composer, together with a representative selection of their music.

Great Conductors

Brian Radford has advised me of a recent release: 'Great Conductors Of The 20th Century: Sir Thomas Beecham', a boxed set of two discs – EMI Classics 7243 5 75938 2 3. The normal selling price is £10.99 (at present, £8.99 online at Amazon)

This historic issue consists of previously unpublished recordings, with the exception of movements 2-4 of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 4 on disc two. Tracks 6-23 on disc one are perhaps the most unusual, since they were recorded at a live performance of *Appalachia* given by the London Philharmonic Orchestra with the Royal Opera Amateur Chorus at the Queen's Hall in London on 10 November 1935. The baritone solo is sung by Cuthbert Matthews. The orchestra is led by Paul Beard, and players in the orchestra include principal flute Geoffrey Gilbert, principal oboe Leon Goossens, principal cello Lauri Kennedy (Nigel's grandfather) and Marie Goossens on the harp. The performance is a very fine one and the recording quality is excellent considering its early date.

A Beiderbecke connection

Stewart Winstanley has sent me this postcard he received from Irish member Paul Kavanagh. Paul found the following quote by Pee Wee Russell in a 1955 book called *Hear Me Talkin' To Ya – The story of Jazz by the men who made it*, edited by Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff: 'Bix had a miraculous ear. As for classical music, Bix liked little things like some of those compositions of MacDowell and Debussy – very light things. Delius for example. Then he made a big jump from that sort of thing to Stravinsky and stuff like that'.

Another 'Walk'

Malcolm Walker writes: A hitherto unpublished recording of *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* by Richard Hickox and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra has been released on EMI 5 85156 2. It is contained on the CD called 'The Best of British Composers'.

The recording (made on 7-8 May 1989 in West Hall, Poole Arts Centre, Poole, Dorset) was unpublished in 1990 as the playing time of the CD on which it was planned to appear was in excess of 80 minutes. Hickox with the Bournemouth orchestra made a later recording of this work for Chandos, which has been available for a number of years.

Delius in the centre

Malcolm Smith took this photograph at last year's AGM in Bradford. Thanks to Derek Bell, I can now tell you all that FD is one of 30 'symbols' of the city of Bradford included on the Ivegate Arch, situated at the bottom of Ivegate, one of the City's oldest streets dating back over five hundred years. The Arch, commissioned by Bradford Council and erected in July 1988, was designed by Peter Parkinson, and made by Richard Quinnell.

Carl Nielsen og Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen Legat

We are very pleased to hear from Lionel Carley that Delius Society member, the conductor and composer Bo Holten, was recently award a grant by the foundation set up in 1957 in memory of the composer Carl Nielsen and his wife, the sculptress Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen. The award is made in odd numbered years to creative and performing artists in the world of music, and in even numbered years to visual artists. Thus the grant reflects the professional activities of the Nielsen couple. 'The most important qualification to be considered for the grant is demonstrated talent'.

The other two recipients in 2003 were the conductor Thomas Dausgaard, and the composer Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen

The Birds

Stewart Winstanley informed me of the following programme on 29 February on Radio 3: 'Attenborough's Journeys . . . In the last of his musical series, David focuses on musical interpretations of birdsong, from *On Hearing The First Cuckoo In Spring* by Delius to a slightly bonkers symphony made up of real birdsong'.

Trivia

According to www.Streetmap.co.uk Paradise Gardens is a street in Peterlee, Co Durham, and there are 21 streets named Delius in the UK. And . . . Peter Ratcliffe tells me that the gardens next to Prague Castle are called 'Rajská zahrada', which translates literally as 'Paradise Garden'.

Newsletter No 18 – July 2004

Please will members send all items for consideration for inclusion in the above, to Ron Prentice, Newsletter Editor. The last date for receipt of copy is 1 June.

The Delius Society Journal No 136

The next edition of the *Journal* will be published in October 2004. The last date for receipt of copy is 1 September.

He Gave Us Music

DELIUS, "the blind singer of the woods," is dead. Toll the bell for heroic genius.

Delius was the third of the trinity of Englishmen – Elgar and Holst were the others – who conferred noble music on this age and those to come. When such men die the generations of the sons of men are robbed.

He was blind and paralysed. He suffered that for twelve years, and yet continued to create new beauty. Let those who say that the brain is a mere machine explain that.

Delius was helped in his darkness. His wife, a painter of distinction, gave up her art to tend him, to write down what he dictated. Her gay, vivid pictures hung in his sitting-room at Grez-sur-Loing. That was her academy.

Could you think of one more enviable?

The Daily Express, Monday 11 June 1934

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From: Tony Watts

In response to Terry James's comments on the alleged Celtic aspect of Delius's music (*DSJ* 134), I suggest that one has to be careful in attributing an atmosphere of place to the essentially abstract art of music, especially when one's own perceptions are clearly different from those of the composer. In the case of *Koanga*, for example, the opera's action takes place at a considerable distance from the Mourne Mountains! We all make our own associations. Whenever I listen to the *First Cuckoo*, I am immediately transported to a wooded valley in Somerset called Holford Glen (which happens to be the place where Wordsworth is said to have conceived his 'Lines Written in Early Spring'). However, I don't for a moment imagine that the connection exists outside my own imagination. I put it down to my having lived in that region at the same time as I was discovering the music of Delius; during the long walks I took, my head was full of the stuff! The place and the music were imprinted on my sensibilities at the same time and in the same degree, and so became inextricably linked in my mind.

Having said all that, I must admit that similarities, coincidental or otherwise, have been noted between Delius's music and Celtic folksong: there is the so-called 'Scotch snap' and use of the pentatonic scale, for example. So perhaps Terry's perception of the music is not entirely subjective after all.

From: Terry James

I refer to my letter in *DSJ* 134 in which I suggested that some of Delius's tone poems seem to have a certain Celtic influence. Since this letter appeared, I have come across some relevant references that might be of interest in this matter. I note that Ralph Hill – who wrote the chapter on Delius in the book *British Music of our Times* (1946) comments; 'Delius's melodies show certain affinities in style with Celtic folk-songs, notably Hebridean. That these affinities were purely unconscious and. therefore coincident is proved by the fact that Delius knew nothing about Hebridean folk-songs at the time he was forming his own very personal melodic idiom, for they were neither collected nor published until some years later'. Interestingly, Hill concludes his piece on Delius by declaring that, 'most of his finest works are introspective and imbued with a certain sadness and melancholy – nostalgia is probably a more apt term'. I note too, that Lionel Salter in his *Gramophone Guide to Classical Composers and Recordings* (1978) writes that the music of Delius 'is often imbued with a sense of regretful yearning'.

These comments on Delius's music are expressed in terms that reflect many traits that would apply to the Celt. Something that strikes me as significant about Delius, the man, comes from his own thoughts: 'Music is a thing of instinct rather

than learning'. Instinct is very much a hallmark of the Celtic persona. Okay, Delius was not a Celt by birth, but neither was Arnold Bax, yet Bax thought of himself as a Celt. Consider too, what Geoffrey Palmer and Noel Lloyd say about Delius in their book *Music Tells the Tale* (1967): 'He was a poet who spoke in beautiful sounds instead of words. A dreamer whose dreams were spun out of the threads of sorrow'. Finally, I refer to Christopher Palmer's authoritative volume *Impressionism in Music* (1973) On page 167, he has this to say about Arnold Bax: 'In 1902, he came upon W B Yeats's 'The Wanderings of Usheen' – and in his own words 'the Celt within me stood revealed'. In Bax's instinctive Celticism may be found the reason for his response to the techniques of musical Impressionism. For Bax – like Yeats – was essentially a dreamer'.

Thus, we surely might conclude that Delius – like Bax – *was* a Celt, by instinct!

The Intimate Appeal of DELIUS – An appreciation by Constant Lambert

Although I was never fortunate enough to meet Delius, the sudden news of his death came with all the shock of personal loss. There is no other composer of which one could say the same thing, and the reason probably lies in the extraordinary intimacy of his music. Not an intimacy of scale, for few living composers have written more broadly planned works, but an intimacy of emotion. His best works become so bound up with one's own emotional life that in the end they seem more like actual experiences. Certain moods, situations and landscapes seem to express themselves in the audible form of his harmony and orchestration. . . . He had a pagan acceptance of this world's beauty, and the nostalgia of his music is like the curious melancholy that overcomes us when we look at a landscape the luxuriance of which is so great as to be almost oppressive. It is a mood that can only find its fullest expression in music.

The Radio Times, 22 June 1934

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SOCIAL EVENT 2004

As pre-notified in *Journal* 134 and *Newsletter* 17, The Delius Society 2004 Annual General Meeting and Social Gathering will be held in Gloucester on Saturday and Sunday 7/8August 2004. Members are reminded of the following arrangements:

Annual General Meeting – In accordance with **Rule 19**, the Chairman and Committee of The Delius Society wish to notify all members that the 2004 Annual General Meeting has been convened for Saturday 7 August 2004, at 3.00 pm.

VENUE: Hatherley Manor Hotel, Down Hatherley Lane, Gloucester GL29QA Tel: 01452 730217

This meeting will be held, following the buffet lunch, at 3.00 pm. Any member not wishing to be involved in the social events may attend the AGM only, under special arrangements. Should you just wish to attend the AGM, you will need to write to the Honorary Secretary nearer the event, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. A special ticket will then be issued, which will give admission to the AGM, **but will not include attendance at any of the other events**. Should any member need further information on these arrangements, please telephone the Honorary Secretary - the number may be found at the front of this Journal – or by email: DxnA@aol.com

Dinner and Social Gathering Full details of the weekend arrangements, the programme of events and a booking pro-forma were published in the Flyer that accompanied *Newsletter* 17 in January. If you have not yet reserved your place, it would be appreciated if this were done as soon as possible. Please contact the Secretary if further information is required.

Booking Procedure The per capita inclusive cost for the weekend activities will be £55. The initial deposit is £10 per person. Accommodation if required should be reserved by contacting the Hotel at the above address. If anyone has misplaced the information sheet and booking form and wishes to know more about the arrangements, please telephone or contact me by email as soon as possible.

Ann Dixon – Honorary Secretary

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Editor is grateful to Marjorie Dickinson, Secretary to the Delius Trust, for assistance in compiling the following listing. I would be grateful to hear from any member who knows of an event suitable for future inclusion in this column. (email: JaneArmourChelu@aol.com)
Some events were notified too late for inclusion in the previous *Journal*, and have already taken place. They are included here for the sake of establishing as complete a record as possible.

Saturday 8 November 2003 at 8.00pm.
Stude Concert Hall, Rice University Campus, Houston, Texas, USA
Sea Drift
Nancy Curtis (Soprano), Gerald Dolter (Baritone)

Monday 9 February
Suntory Hall, Tokyo, Japan
Violin Concerto
Tasmin Little (violin), New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra/Hirokami

Friday 20 February at 7.30 pm
DELIUS SOCIETY (PHILADELPHIA BRANCH) MEETING
St Mary's Episcopal Church, 1831 Bainbridge Street, Philadelphia
Derek Healey talked about his book on the influences of African-American music on the works of Frederick Delius. Musical examples sung by Shannon Hall (baritone)

Saturday 13 March at 6.30 pm
DELIUS SOCIETY (MIDLANDS BRANCH) MEETING
Ravensdale, Weston Underwood, Derby
'Frederick Delius – some friends and influences' – a talk by Anthony Lindsey

Sunday 4 April at 3.00 pm
DELIUS SOCIETY (PHILADELPHIA BRANCH) MEETING
Old St Joseph's RC Church, Philadelphia
To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water and *Late Swallows*
St Joseph's Schola Cantorum and In Clara Voce Chamber Choir
Curtis Institute Orchestra conducted by Matthew Glandorf

Friday 16 April at 7.30 pm
Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham
On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring
Summer Night on the River
Sinfonia VIVA conducted by Nicholas Kok

Sunday 18 April at 7.30 pm
Derngate, Northampton
On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring
Summer Night on the River
Sinfonia VIVA conducted by Nicholas Kok

Tuesday 20 April at 7.15 pm
DELIUS SOCIETY MEETING
New Cavendish Club, 44 Great Cumberland Place, London
'Some less appreciated aspects of Delius's music' – a talk by Tony Summers

Thursday 22 April at 7.45 pm
St George's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Southwark, London
Sea Drift
The London Concert Choir

Saturday 24 April
The Symphony Hall, Tokyo, Japan
Sea Drift and *Brigg Fair*
Osaka Symphonic Choir and Kansai Philharmonic Orchestra
Conductor: Takuo Yuasa Soloist: Paul Whelan

Thursday 6 May at 7.30 pm
Bridgewater Hall, Manchester
Song of Summer and *Cynara*
Hallé Orchestra conducted by Mark Elder
Soloist – Thomas Hampson

Friday 7 May at 7.00 pm
Royal College of Music, London
Free concert – 'An Audience with Frederick Delius'
Programme to include: *String Quartet* (1888), *Late Swallows* from *String Quartet* (1916), *Violin Sonata in B major* (1892), *Dance for Harpsichord* (1919), *Cello Sonata* (1916) and songs from *Five Songs From the Norwegian*, *Seven Songs From the Norwegian*, and *Seven Danish Songs* – Performed by staff and students of the RCM

Saturday 15 May at 2.30 pm
DELIUS SOCIETY(WEST OF ENGLAND BRANCH) MEETING
Weycroft Hall, Axminster
A programme of live music performed by Elizabeth Hayley (piano), Tony Lister (baritone), and Ron Prentice (double bass) – please contact Ron Prentice for further details

Friday 4 June – Sunday 6 June
Halsway Manor, Crowcombe, Taunton
The Eleventh 'English Song Weekend' – A feast of English vocal music
'Michael Pilkington on the 70th anniversary of the deaths of Delius, Elgar and Holst' – solo singing – master classes – madrigals – duets
For details of cost etc – contact www.musicair.co.uk or Tel: 01932 244038

Saturday 19 June at 6.30 pm
DELIUS SOCIETY (MIDLANDS BRANCH) MEETING
Ravensdale, Weston Underwood, Derby
A recital by the Malaysian pianist Bobby Chen
Admission by ticket only – please contact Richard Kitching for details

Saturday 26 June at 8.00 pm
The Pump Room, Bath
Romance
Cello Sonata
Irmelin – Interlude from Act 2, Duet and Finale from Act 3
Bath Recital Artists'Trust
Anna Mowat (cello), David Alexander (piano)

Sunday 11 July at 7.30 pm
Castle Manor School, Eastern Avenue, Haverhill, Suffolk
Late Swallows
Haverhill Sinfonia conducted by Kevin Hill

Sunday 25 July at 7.30 pm
Castle Manor School, Eastern Avenue, Haverhill, Suffolk
Idylle de Printemps
Haverhill Sinfonia conducted by Kevin Hill

Saturday and Sunday 7/8 August
THE DELIUS SOCIETY AGM AND SOCIAL GATHERING
Hatherley Manor Hotel, Gloucester

Saturday 7 August at 7.45 pm
Three Choirs Festival – Gloucester Cathedral
Five Songs From the Norwegian
Ruth Holton (soprano), Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Andrew Nethsingha

Sunday 8 August at 7.30 pm
Three Choirs Festival – Gloucester Cathedral
Violin Concerto
Tasmin Little (violin), Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Richard Hickox

Monday 18 October at 12 noon
Stratford-upon-Avon Music Festival – Town Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon
Cello Sonata
Naomi Boole-Masterson and Fali Pavri

Tuesday 19 October at 12 noon
Stratford-upon-Avon Music Festival – Town Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon
Four Old English Lyrics
Harriet Fraser (soprano), William Hancox (piano)

Wednesday 20 October at 7.30 pm
Stratford-upon-Avon Music Festival – Town Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon
Summer Night on the River
On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring
Orchestra of the Swan

Thursday 21 October at 12 noon
Stratford-upon-Avon Music Festival – Town Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon
Sonata No 3 for Violin and Piano
Ruth Palmer (violin), Katya Apekisheva (piano)

Friday 22 October at 12 noon
Stratford-upon-Avon Music Festival – Town Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon
Three Preludes for Piano
Nicola Elmer

Saturday 30 October
The Pump Room, Bath
Sonata No 3 for Violin and Piano
Bath Recital Artists' Trust
Ruth Palmer (violin), Bobby Chen (piano)

Obituary - A GREAT ENGLISH COMPOSER

FREDERICK DELIUS –THE TRAGIC TWILIGHT OF HIS LIFE

The death of Frederick Delius at the age of 72 was far from being unexpected, and, to music-lovers outside the circle of his personal acquaintance, it will come as a less severe blow than the tragic breakdown which, years ago, made the composer a helpless invalid.

Stricken with paralysis early in 1923, while engaged on the composition of the incidental music for the production of James Elroy Flecker's poetical drama, "Hassan", at His Majesty's Theatre, he struggled bravely on for some months, dictating the music note by note to his wife, until the additional calamity of blindness compelled him practically to abandon work. The last years of his life, however, were not wholly unproductive, thanks largely to the devotion of his amanuensis, Eric Fenby.

. . . Musical opinion is sharply divided on the merits of Delius's music. Certain of his admirers would accord him a place among the greatest composers of all time, while some critics point to his indifference to questions of craftsmanship and structural balance, and rank him as a sentimentalist with Spohr and Gounod. The truth seems to lie between the two extremes. That he has been over-praised is undeniable; he had neither the breadth of vision nor the sheer musical inspiration of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, or Wagner. His very individual style, mature by 1900, developed no further; the idiom of "Appalachia" (1902) and "Sea Drift" (1903) is essentially the same as that of the latest works.

His emotional range was not large, and as he abjured polyphony and rhythmic subtlety, relying wholly on harmonic resources, a certain monotony, both in mood and in the actual texture of the music, was inevitable.

Dr. Vaughan Williams has said that he "belonged mentally to the 'eighties", but there is much of the nostalgia of the 'nineties and a dreamy, languorous sweetness that repels some hearers as much as it attracts others. He had the Virgilian "sense of tears", but lacked the great masters' epic sense of tragedy.

But, in justice to the claims of those who would rank him with the greatest, he can only be judged by the highest and most exacting standards of criticism; and when all his weaknesses have been frankly acknowledged, the fact remains that in "A Village Romeo and Juliet," "Sea Drift," "Appalachia," the orchestral nature studies, and parts of the "Mass of Life," he has given us some of the most exquisite and moving music ever written by an Englishman.

The Daily Telegraph, Monday 11 June 1934

Please note that further details of Delius Society events (London only) may be obtained from Programme Secretary James Baker,
83 Hartswood Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 5AG (telephone: 01277 215208)

Details of Delius Society (Midland Branch) events may be obtained from
Midlands Branch Chairman Richard Kitching,
Ravensdale, 41 Bullhurst Lane, Weston Underwood, Ashbourne, Derby DE6 4PA
(telephone: 01335 360798)

Details of Delius Society (West of England Branch) events may be obtained from
West of England Branch Chairman Ronald Prentice,
The Mill, Ash Priors, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3NQ
(telephone: 01823 432734, email: ron@the-mill.co.uk)

STOP PRESS

Dates for London Autumn Meetings at the New Cavendish Club, 44 Great Cumberland Place – all at 7.15pm – Further details to follow
Thursday 23 September
Tuesday 19 October
Thursday 18 November

Have you visited the website recently? (www.delius.org.uk) It is updated regularly and future events that we hear about too late for inclusion in the *Journal* or *Newsletter* are added to STOP PRESS in 'Forthcoming Events' in the 'News' section. You can also find excerpts from the latest *Journal* online.

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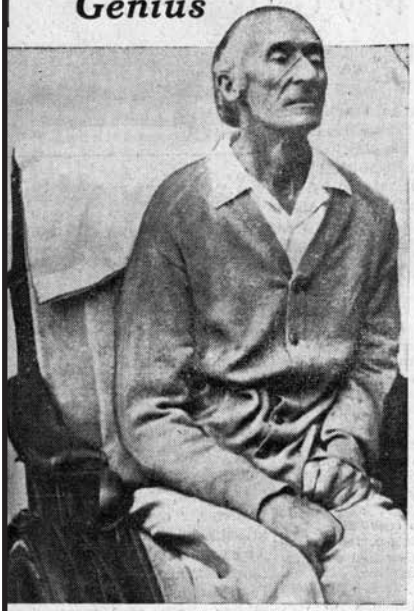
DELIUS, MUSIC'S BLIND HERO, DEAD

The Crippled Genius



Delius in his invalid chair.

TO BE BURIED IN ENGLAND

"DEATH CAME AS A RELIEF"

SICK WIFE'S VIGIL

FREDERICK DELIUS, the famous British composer, died at his French home near Fontainebleau at four o'clock yesterday morning after a long illness.

"Death came as a relief," said a close friend. Delius had suffered greatly. He was 72.

Mrs. Delius, herself an invalid following an operation ten days ago, had been hastily recalled from a nursing home to her dying husband's side, and, reports Reuter's Paris correspondent, was with him at the last.

It is understood that the body will be taken to England.

Music can offer no more moving story than that of how Frederick Delius spent the last years of his life fighting pain, paralysis and blindness so that the world should continue to receive his great gift of exquisite music.

Mrs. Delius

It is a story of sublime courage, of almost superhuman patience, of a partnership unique in musical history, and of the irony of fate which decreed that the great composer should be stricken just at the moment when his fame was recognised.

From the time the Bradford-born Delius threw up orange growing in

TURN TO PAGE TWO COL. ONE

Millionaire Flees To England

REFUGE FROM KIDNAPPERS

The Daily Chronicle, Monday 11 June 1934