The Delius Society Journal

Spring 2006, Number 139

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President
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Julian Lloyd Webber FRCM
Sir Charles Mackerras CBE
Robert Threlfall

Website: http://www.delius.org.uk

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Chairman
Roger J. Buckley

Treasurer and Membership Secretary
Stewart Winstanley
Windmill Ridge, 82 Highgate Road,
Walsall, WS1 3JA
Tel: 01922 633115
Email: TheDeliusSociety@aol.com

Secretary
Ann Dixon
21 Woodlands Drive, Brooklands,
Sale, Cheshire, M33 3PQ
Tel: 0161 282 3654
Email: DxnA@aol.com

Journal Editor
Martin Lee-Browne
Chester House, Fairford,
Gloucestershire GL7 4AD
Tel: 01285 711417
Email: deliusjournal@lee-browne.co.uk

Front cover: Maine Cliffs (1883)
Winslow Homer (USA 1836-1910)
(Collection of the Brooklyn Museum, New York)
Back cover: Sir Thomas Beecham (and friend?) c.1924

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

2006 is an exceptionally busy year for The Delius Society. Our AGM weekend at the beginning of July coincides with the opening of Bradford's Delius Festival, which our Vice President Tasmin Little, the Festival's Director, has called 'Delius Inspired'. The major events of the Festival, continuing until the following weekend, are to be relayed on BBC Radio 3, and introduced by Paul Guinery, who is a Society Member, and a contributor to this and the previous issue of the Journal. A programme of concerts, recitals, talks, discussions and other events has been devised that will be of the greatest interest to members. Delius Festivals are rare, so try not to miss this one!

The Festival is part of a larger programme named 'Illuminate', a year-long series of exhibitions, concerts, films, children's activities and other events. Inaugurated in October 2005 and supported by £1.75 million of lottery money, as well as the organisations Yorkshire Culture and Yorkshire Forward, 'Illuminate' is based in five cities: Bradford, Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and York. Its stated aim is to 'to show the world that Yorkshire's key cities are places where artists thrive and new creative talent is treasured.' One would like to imagine that Delius himself would have approved heartily.

Nearly fifty members of the Society have booked with me for the AGM weekend. I am extending the deadline for applications to 30th April, so please, if you have been hesitating, do so no longer! Book your accommodation with the Victoria Hotel (01274 728706) quoting The Delius Society. Complete the application form that came with the January Newsletter, sending it to me with a cheque for £10 per person (deposit) and a self-addressed envelope. If you have mislaid the form, please ask me for another copy. Finally, book your concert tickets (Bradford Theatres Box Office, 01274432000). Your Committee hopes for a large delegation of members on what should be a most enjoyable and memorable weekend.

As the Journal goes to press, we have received confirmation from Jean Merle d'Aubigné, owner of the former Delius house, that the Society visit to Grez-sur-Loing can go ahead on the weekend of 16/17 September. We are extremely grateful to Jean, who is planning a programme of activities as well as a reception and lunch in his garden. Please mark your diaries now and look out for further information at the AGM and in the July Newsletter.

Then, in November (on a date to be announced), the third Delius Prize

competition will be held at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

The Society's evening meetings continue in London, the Midlands and the West of England, and never cease to surprise and delight those who attend with their variety, erudition and sheer entertainment value.

All of this activity denotes a Society that is enterprising and vigorous; yet there is a very real problem: the Committee needs new blood. Three of its members have announced their intention not to stand again in 2007 (assuming they are re-elected this year). Whatever your doubts or indecisions, if you feel even an inkling that you would like to help to run this great Society, please approach one of us for a chat.

Roger Buckley

Winslow Homer (1836-1910) – *Three Boys on the Seashore*
(Art Institute of Chicago)

EDITORIAL

The kind comments made since the appearance of DSJ 138 about its focus on *The Song of the High Hills* have been a pleasurable embarrassment. This issue is 'about' *Sea Drift* —and, in the absence of brickbats so far, I intend to continue the idea indefinitely. One of the reasons for that is the totally selfish one that is it a great deal easier to persuade possible contributors to write a piece about some specific aspect of a particular work, rather than having a conversation which risks going something like this:

> Editor: "Would you write an article for the Journal?"
> Potential Victim: "What about?"
> Editor: "Well, anything really - as long as it's to do with Delius, of course – what would *you* like to write about?"
> PV: "Well, I'm not sure — have you any particular ideas?"
> Editor: "Not really — I just have to fill 120-plus pages every six months with stuff which I hope Members may possibly find interesting or amusing. Do give it some thought — lots of it".
> PV: "W-e-l-l…..No, on reflection, I don't think I can help. Sorry!".

So far, though, almost everyone I have asked for a piece has taken the bait, and we have already been blessed with articles of very great interest and the highest quality. May that state of affairs continue!

I am conscious of the fact that my own article about the first performances of *Sea Drift* is very long — but I hasten to point out that that is not because of my own verbosity, but to the large number of quotations (largely from contemporary newspapers) which I have included in it! When looking for that material, I became so intrigued by the diversity of the criticisms of the music, some extremely sensitive and others claiming that it was completely incomprehensible, that - particularly in view of the opportunity to hear the work at Bradford in July - I felt that Members would appreciate the opportunity of reading a good many of them. As some will know, I have a particular interest in *Sea Drift,* in that it was my grandfather who sang the solo part in all the first four performances in this country — and I have no qualms at all about also taking the opportunity to show what a marvellous singer he was! It is very interesting that many of the comments in those 'crits' on the way that *Sea Drift* needs to be

performed, written nearly 100 years ago, are mirrored by what much of what Richard Hickox said in my interview with him about doing it today. I in fact have even more 'crits' than those used in the article, and would gladly copy them for anyone interested.

Two Members, Norman Jones and Ian Snook, who live respectively in Hanover and Zurich, have been extremely helpful in searching out copies of the programmes for, and providing me with translations of some newspaper 'crits' of, the Essen and Basel concerts that I have used in the first part of the article - and I am enormously grateful to our President not only for allowing me to quote from his marvellous *Delius: A Life in Letters* in the second part, but for countless other kindnesses as well.

Many members will know that a past Chairman of the Society, Lyndon Jenkins, has written a new book on Beecham and Delius, *While Spring and Summer Sang.* It is reviewed below, and I must urge Members to buy it – especially with the 25% discount offered by the publishers in the 'flyer' sent out with the January Newsletter.

Such arrangements hopefully benefit both sides – you get it cheaper, they sell more copies – and I am glad to say that there will be a similar arrangement to which The Boydell Press has generously agreed for our President's new book *Edvard Grieg in England,* due out in September. I am sure, therefore, that he would quite understand if you did not rush to the bookshops on publication day, and kept your enthusiasm to own a copy in check until you get your copy of DSJ 140, which will include an appropriate flyer, in early October.

Martin Lee-Browne

The copy date for the Summer issue of the Newsletter is 1 June and for the Autumn 2006 issue of the Journal (No 140) is 21 August.

OBITUARIES

RONALD KIRKMAN

Ron Kirkman, long-time member of the Delius Society, died in a hospital near Geneva, Switzerland on 20 November 2005 after a short illness.

Ron was born in Cheadle Hulme, Greater Manchester on 16 April 1930. He moved to Oxford and then London in the 1950s. By the mid 60s he was living in Paris, and in the late 60s he returned, to Kent where his sons Neil (1968) and lain (1969) were born. His family moved to Geneva in 1970 where he worked for the International Labour Organisation. The ILO is a division of the United Nations which monitors labour conditions worldwide, and collects and publishes general national and international labour related information. In 1980 he moved to Coppet, on the shores of Lao Leman (Lake Geneva), a beautiful village some twenty minutes drive outside Geneva. After retiring as Head of Publishing in 1990, he combined his love of work and love of literature by chairing until recently the ILO Staff Library.

Whilst we know of his love of the music of Delius, not many know that he was also very fond of the music of Elgar, Ravel and Debussy. Like your scribe, he also liked Jazz and in particular the big band music of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Stan Kenton and, on a lighter note, Frank Sinatra, particularly when backed by the fabulous orchestra of Nelson Riddle.

My wife and I first met Ron when a large group of Delians attended the Delius Association of Florida's 39th Annual Festival at Jacksonville in 1999. We were introduced in the lobby of the hotel on his arrival with his friend Barbara Moore. Barbara and 1 immediately recognised each other, as we had been session musicians (she as a backing singer and I as a double bassist) during the swinging sixties. After this we met Ron at many Annual General Meetings, when he would invite us to stay with him at Coppet. Unfortunately, circumstances did not allow this until September 2005, when we spent a wonderful holiday with him at his home. He appeared perfectly fit and healthy, and you can imagine the shock when just a few weeks later we received a phone call from a friend in Founex to tell us of his sudden death.

Ron was a real gentleman in all senses of the word and we shall miss him very much.

© Ron Prentice 2006

MICHEL LE HARIVEL

Clare Leray, of the Association Artistes du Bout du Monde in Grez, wrote to the President last December informing him of the death of Michel Le Harivel.

Michel had been a Member of the Society for some considerable time. He set up Les Amis de Delius, and over the years this group, based in Grez, accumulated a number of cultural activities to its credit. It was Michel who organised the 2003 celebration in Grez which marked the centenary of the wedding of Frederick and Jelka.

Fluently bilingual, Michel was always keen to foster links between this country and his favourite region of France. I am sure that we shall all remember him kindly and with gratitude.

Roger Buckley

DR. ROGER COTTON

As we go to press the sad news has arrived that Roger Cotton, a member of the Midlands Branch for many years died on 14 March. A tribute will be included in the Branch Notes in the Autumn issue of the Journal.

ERIC FENBY

2006 is the 100th anniversary of Eric Fenby's birth, and it therefore seems appropriate to copy here our President's contribution to the Memorial Edition of the Journal (No 121) and one of the pictures in it (in both cases with the agreement of the author and photographer)

Eric Fenby by the St. John's River at Solano Grove in 1982
(*Bill Early*)

Eric was a man in a million, and the privilege of being able to count him and Rowena as among one's most treasured friends has been a rare and happy one. He was ever-supportive of my work, and I was dependent on him in so many ways: all those prompt and courteous replies to my many questions, and then those suppers together from time to time, when ever more enquiries would be answered, even if the principal pleasure in such meetings lay in the chance for me to enjoy, in such warm companionship, Eric's unfailing good humour and Rowena's unfailing charm. Eric always knew that Delius's music was the main matter, but at the same time his own biographical writings on the composer tell us, even if obliquely, that before there could be music there had to be the man who made it. His inimitable *Delius as I Knew Him* is a work of enormous mastery. One can hardly bear to think of how, had he had more time and space in his very

full life, we might have had more great books from the man who, as a youngster, wrote that searing account of Delius's last years. There are so many anecdotes that one could relate in respect of conversations shared over nearly 30 years (one or two of them unprintable and so all the more enjoyable). But I'll just confine myself to saluting his memory, to treasuring some wonderfully generous inscriptions in his own as well as my books, and to saying that, Delius quite apart, so many of us in the Delius Society can thank Eric from the heart for what he gave to us in his own richly lived and complete life.

© Lionel Carley 1997

Eric Fenby in 1932, by James Gunn

THE DELIUS PRIZE 2005

The Royal Academy of Music, 25 November 2005

Although only in its second year, the Prize already seems to be an established feature of the Society's activities - and it was very pleasing that, by general consent among those who had attended last year's as well, the standard of performances was higher this time. Warm thanks are due to the Royal Academy for helping with the organisation of the event, and to the Adjudicator, the conductor Lionel Friend. He was assisted by the Chairman - and, from those who took part in the preliminary round, four competitors were selected for the final. They, and their programmes, were:

The Cappa Quartet:
Anthony Sabberton & Giovanni Guzzo (Violins)
Adam Newman (Viola) & Brian O'Kane (Cello)

Delius: 1888 String Quartet: Movements II and III.
Bax: String Quartet in G major: *Lento e molto espressivo*

Elizabeth Powell (Soprano) & Daniel Swain (Piano)
Ireland: Two Songs:
Blind
The Cost
Delius: Five Songs from the Danish:
Das Veilchen
Im Garten des Serails
Seidenschuhe
Herbst
Irmelin
Shulah Oliver (Violin) & Simon Marlow (Piano)
Delius: Violin Sonata no. 2
Elgar: La Capricieuse op. 17

Ingeborg Børch (Soprano) & Seth Williams (Piano)

Delius

Silkesko over gylden læst!
I Seraillets Have
Gerirebillede
Irmelin Rose
(from early versions of *Songs to Scandinavian Texts)*

Nielsen

Irmelin Rose
Æbleblomst

Stenhammar

Flickan kom ifrån sin älsklings möte (Op 4b no.1) Grieg;
Grüß (Op 24 no. 1)
Em Tratim (Op 24 no. 6)

The Quartet got off to a really unfortunate start, as one of the leader's strings kept slipping on its peg, and caused serious intonation problems. Very sensibly, they retired after the slow movement of the Delius for repairs, and returned later to give scintillating performances of the last movement and then the Bax. They had in fact been playing together for some while; their attack in the faster music was brilliant, and, obviously listening very carefully to each other, they produced an excellently blended warm sound - which was helped by the lovely old instruments that

The Cappa Quartet

had been lent to them (not just for this occasion) from the Academy's outstanding collection. One immediately felt that the music was in very good hands - they clearly understood the idioms of both composers; their intonation (after their 'break') was impeccable, their sense of rhythm very exciting, and their phrasing, particularly in the melting harmonies of the Bax, amply demonstrated their undoubted musicality.

Although by its nature, the evening's programme was not intended to be a balanced one, Elizabeth Powell then provided a good contrast. She had an excellent, if subdued, platform manner, with an attractive ghost of a smile and a sparing use of gesture. She tended to produce her voice from the back of her throat, and, although the sound was sometimes a little harsh, there was good firm tone when it was needed, and some beautiful top notes, especially in the first of the Delius songs. In comparison with the two other accompanists, Daniel Swain seemed to be somewhat less involved with the music - but all the songs were more reflective than exuberant, so perhaps he had less opportunity to make his mark. Words were the singer's weakness, but she nevertheless clearly has potential as an attractive, if perhaps low-key, performer.

Shula Oliver and Simon Marlow made an exceedingly good duo, and the sparks flew again. Like that of the Quartet, her attack was almost startling at times, although it occasionally resulted in some, albeit not off-putting, slightly-less-than-exact intonation. Also like the Quartet, both players were thoroughly attuned to the various moods, the ebb and flow, of the Second Sonata – there was a quite beautiful wind-down to the middle section, and the end of it had really elegant poise. Her second item, a piece of virtuoso 'tea-shop' (and completely

Shula Oliver & Jilly Little

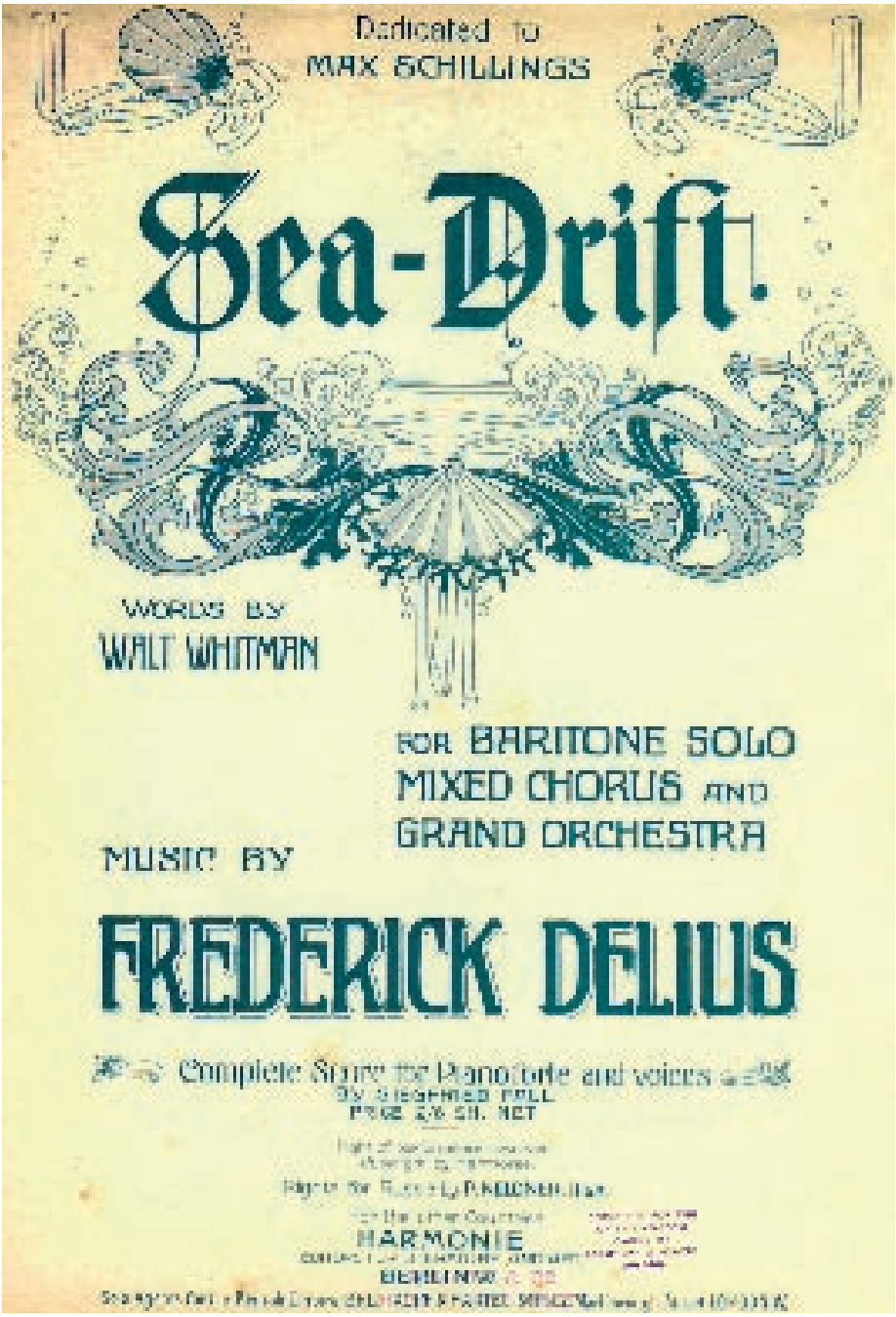
uncharacteristic) Elgar, was quite beguiling, and she sailed through its horrendous technicalities with great aplomb.

The last contestant (as they say on Mastermind), Ingeborg Børch, coupled a bubbly and endearing character with a warm, well-produced and even voice. Perhaps because her songs were mainly faster and bolder in character than Elizabeth Powell's, she and her pianist were able to be less inhibited, but in no way was her singing 'over the top'. Her words were good - although, most being in the original Danish and Swedish, probably few people understood them! - and she produced many gorgeous floating legato lines. Her personality hardly needed projection: it was simply there, illuminating every song she sang, and she brought all nine of them really to life making, in particular, a great success of Nielsen's *Æbleblomst.*

Few in the audience were surprised that Lionel Friend awarded the Prize to the Cappa Quartet, but it must have been very difficult to choose the runner-up. In the event, it proved to be Shula Olivera - although it was a little disappointing that he did not select either of the singers. To 'borrow' from 1 Corinthians 13 (without telling Delius), technique, understanding and musicality are the attributes that really define a performer, and the greatest of these is musicality. As Lionel Friend said in his summing-up, that of all four competitors was outstanding and indeed it was thrilling.
A thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding evening finished with drinks for all — and, as almost always, meeting the performers off the platform proved that they are human as well!

© Martin Lee-Browne 2005

OPENING OF THE CONCERT HALL OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY, 1912



Vocal Score – 1906 English Edition

SEA DRIFT

A PREFACE

Wilfred Mellers

…..Delius's *most* consummately realized work has as soloist a human voice, with full chorus and symphony orchestra. This is *Sea Drift*, written in 1904, significantly a setting of part of a poem by the aboriginally American Walt Whitman. The experience with which it is concerned could hardly be more elemental, since it deals in the life and death of two animate creatures, one avian, the other human, against the eternity of the all-encompassing sea from which emerges, and into which dissolves, the self. Whitman symbolizes the self as a sea-bird who sings of his separation from his (probably slain) mate. The solo baritone, who enunciates Whitman's free-flowing words, is Delius himself, who alchemizes words into music, and is also you and I, 'insensible of mortality' yet, like everyone else, 'desperately mortal'. But the soloist is also Delius as the small boy of the poem, or any small boy at the moment when he first apprehends the immutability of death: "my mate no more, no more, with me; we two together *no more*". Borne on the natural rhythm of the words, the vocal line recurrently flows into the pentatonic formulae that are most natural to the human voice; while the orchestra, with uncanny immediacy, dissolves their rudimentary humanity into the surge and sizzle of the sea. In acknowledging the fact of death the boy loses innocence, while the sea remains eternally unconscious. The loss of love – the sea-bird's dead beloved – and the boy's loss of innocence are interdependant: which is why Delius's final recognition of lost happiness ("O past, O happy life, O songs of love"), in a traditionally Edenic E major, is even more heart-rendinging than the immediate cognition of death. The music's dissolution into sighing appoggiaturas on the chorally reiterated 'No mores' sounds at once like the eternally breaking waves and the wail of a new-born babe.

Paradoxically, the symphony orchestra was a triumph of nineteenth-century technoIogy; yet at the end of this work the sighing orchestral appoggiaturas seem to *be* forces out there in the natural world: breaking waves that are also our breaking hearts at the dawn of consciousness —

specifically consciousness of the unconsciousness of death.

From *Celestial Music?* (The Boydell Press, 2002, pp180-181 – reproduced with their kind permission).

A MEETING WITH GRAINGER

It is from *Sea Drift* that the wonderful music of Frederick Delius came into my life. Shortly after my service in WWII, during my college years a good friend 'found' Delius, and Delius then found me as a devotee and modest champion of his music. How this happened is an amusing story:

At that time, I had a good friend, Marion, who was a student Piedmont College located in the mountains of north Georgia. This is some 75 miles or so north of Atlanta which is my home. Marion would visit me on weekends and we shared our mutual interest in music with his playing and my composing and listening to 78 rpm recordings, both mine and those that he borrowed from the College library.

On one occasion he brought an album called *Sea Drift*. This was a composer about whom I knew nothing nor had Marion until just prior to his visit. Here is how both Marion's and my first connection with the music of Delius. The college had as guest artist and lecturer, Percy Grainger. Friend Marion and other students were scheduled the job of meeting Grainger at the nearby railway station with the college station wagon. When Grainger arrived and was met by these college boys he asked how far the college was from the station, and they told him about 3 or 4 miles, maybe more; they really did not know. Grainger said,"Fine. Put my luggage in the wagon and one of you walk with me to show me the way. I've been on that train all night and a walk will be most welcome". Most of us know that Grainger was an active type and given to caring for his health, and active walking was one way to keep ones good health.

So friend Marion volunteered to guide this elderly guest to the college campus. Grainger took off on a trot with poor Marion trying desperately to keep pace which he did with great effort and He told me that upon reaching the college –"l thought I was going to die from exhaustion and loss of breath. I could scarcely keep up with that man, he literally ran to the college". . .

Well, all ended well - and Grainger's visit included an introduction to the students of much good music, including the music of Delius. Hence Marion brought *Sea Drift* for me to hear as he had been so struck with the beauty of this musical setting from the writing our own Walt Whitman.

© *Jack Strouss, 2006*. [Jack Strouss is a Member living in Atlanta, Georgia, USA].

SEA DRIFT

WHITMAN: LEAVES OF GRASS AND SEA DRIFT

R K R Thornton*

> *Listening to the opera music which so moved him, he believed he heard the very voice of wisdom itself. Trying to convey its mystery, and the parallels and correspondences with his own work, he told Horace Traubel "The words of my book nothing, the drift of it everything."*
> Philip Callow on Walt Whitman in his *Walt Whitman: From Noon to Starry Night* (Allison & Busby, 1992, p.121)

I have not been able to discover how exactly Delius came to choose Walt Whitman to set, let alone how he settled on the particular text he decided to call *Sea-Drift*. There are some pointers but few specifics, so an account of Whitman's life and reputation might suggest something of what lies behind the choice.

Whitman's rise to fame, or perhaps notoriety, as the first great American poet and the most inspiring example of fidelity to his art, was a remarkable event in the history of nineteenth-century literature, and a crucial event in American literature, though little in his life before the publication of his masterpiece, *Leaves of Grass,* in 1855 seemed to suggest that such a revolutionary book was likely to emerge from his not particularly distinguished history and his random experience.

He was born in 1819, the son of a farmer on Long Island (for which Whitman loved the Indian name Paumanok) who moved to Brooklyn, New York, in 1823 and turned builder. Walter (he only later democratized this to Walt) had a brief formal education in a Brooklyn school until he was eleven, and then took a variety of jobs: office boy in a law firm, printer's devil, journalist, compositor. Ironically for one with so little schooling, when the fires of 1835 disrupted the printing industry in New York, he became for five years intermittently schoolmaster and editor. At the age of twenty-

* Kelsey Thornton was Professor of English at Newcastle University and then at Birmingham University. He has written on and edited John Clare, Ivor Gurney and Ernest Dowson, and he is currently editing the letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins

Walt Whitman aged 35
(S Holyer, 1855)
From the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*

one he returned to Manhattan to become reporter, magazine contributor, small editor and politician, writing a temperance novel for money in 1842, and editing the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle* in 1846. Fired from the *Eagle* in 1848 because of a clash of politics, he made a brief but stimulating four month trip to work on the New Orleans *Crescent,* but was back in New York by the summer of 1848. Here he set up the Brooklyn *Freeman;* it did not prosper, and Walt went into his father's building enterprises and used the ground floor of the family home for bookstore and printing shop. He maintained his journalistic interests and eclectic curiosity, but in his notebooks one can observe developing the material which would cohere and refine and finally burst out as *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, published perhaps on the fourth of July but certainly within a week of his father's death. Paul Zweig, in a revealing book, *Walt Whitman: The Making of the Poet* (Viking, 1985) explores how this only moderately successful newspaper man, this wanderer about the streets of New York, this enthusiast for the operas to which his journalist's pass gave him access, this visitor of museums, galleries, exhibitions, this friend of street-car drivers, this collector of all and every unconsidered trifle became - or rather made himself - the astounding poet of America. He forged a language which appeared to have no art at all; merely an electrifying intimacy, but which seemed to express the whole of America. In *Leaves of Grass* Whitman created a new belligerently unliterary poem. It is, in Zweig's words:

> a siren song of 'union,' of 'merging'; it is, profoundly, a pastoral poem, but….. its happy place is not a green meadow beside a brook but the onrushing world of ordinary experience: the world of carpenters building houses, of tram drivers, of paving stones echoing the sounds of living men and women. For Whitman, democracy itself was a new sort of pastoral; its music was not that of a lone piper but something like a chorus of voices, a free-form opera raveling half out of control, a 'barbaric yawp.' What can we say of a poem that extends its pastoral embrace to every creature, trade, and place, leaving nothing out, resorting to the inclusive form of the random list to express its capacity for sympathy? Such a work could hardly be called a poem. It reflects an indiscriminate appetite, a mind that sees all the dreamed of fulfilments of religion and literature in the unvarnished, shaggy particulars of the everyday world (pp.135-6).

Its author was, as the engraving facing the title page of the first edition was meant to suggest, a casual working man, a man of the people, with

open shirt and lounging stance, someone whose artless-seeming anti-poetry would speak for all Americans. The book would remake the history of American literature and language, and in its way remake America. As he says in *To Foreign Lands*, one of the *Inscriptions* to the poem:

> I heard that you ask'd for something to prove this puzzle the New World,
> And to define America, her athletic Democracy,
> Therefore I send you my poems that you behold in them what you wanted.

He would spend the rest of his life adding to, refining, re-ordering and rewriting *Leaves of Grass.*

In 1862 he went to Washington to look for his brother George, who had been reported wounded in the Civil War at the battle of Fredericksburg. The wound was slight and George survived the war with almost a charmed life, but the experience of the army hospitals changed Walt's life. He got himself a job in Washington as copyist to an army paymaster but his central interest for some years was in a heroic round of visiting the war's casualties in the many hospitals around. Out of his experience came *Drum-Taps* (1865) and the later-published *Specimen Days.* The experience was both harrowing and uplifting for him, as he felt an unbounded love for and a need to serve what he saw as the youth of America. He fell ill after his debilitating routine of ministering to the sick and dying and the stress of revitalising them with his robust personality. His illness marked the beginning of Whitman's old age, just as this period also saw the first sure steps in his growing fame, signposted by William O'Connor's book on *The Good Gray Poet* (1866). When he was fired from his clerk's job in the Interior Department, supposedly for being an obscene poet, it was O'Connor who got him a new job in the Attorney General's Office, where he worked until his stroke in 1873. At that point he retired to Camden, New Jersey, where he lived first with his brother George, and after 1884 in a house on Mickle Street, where he corrected and augmented his poems amid a sea of cuttings, snippets and notes, and held court to an increasing number of visitors and admirers. He died in 1892.

Leaves of Grass reached its tenth edition in 1891 and had been available in England before the London edition of 1874. There had been two editions of selections in England: the first edited by W. M. Rossetti in 1868 and the second in 1886 by Ernest Rhys, the Everyman editor, who subsequently

went to visit him in Camden. In a letter to Rossetti in 1868, J. A. Symonds had noted that there were not many admirers in England: 'so few who are able to understand his excellences, so many who are irritated into a kind of madness by his want of taste in details' *(Walt Whitman: The Critical Heritage,* ed. Milton Hindus, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971, p.129). But most who pretended to any literary knowledge had heard of Whitman by the end of the century. Swinburne has passionately praised Whitman in 1868 in a comparison with Blake, and characteristically criticized him with equal passion in 1887 as merely possessing "excellent rhetoric". George Saintsbury, whose review of the latest edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1874 had been read by Gerard Manley Hopkins, noted that Whitman seemed intoxicated and inspired by the subjects of death and the sea, and concluded by noting his striking originality. Oscar Wilde, whose Oxford examiners in 1876 had asked him what Aristotle would have thought of Whitman, went to America on a lecture tour in 1882 and said to reporters that he thought that Whitman and Emerson had "given the world more than anyone else". Although Whitman at first turned down two invitations to meet Wilde, he subsequently invited Wilde to meet him, perhaps recognizing a fellow self-publicist. They met at George's house in Camden and had a mutually admiring afternoon. Though their opinions of each other subsequently cooled a little, Wilde recognized Whitman's importance in liberating art from its shackles: "You cannot conceive how doubly and trebly bound literature and art are in England. The poet or artist who goes beyond is pretty sure of a hard time. And yet there is a most determined class of the best people in England, not only among the young but of all ages, who are ready and eager for anything in art, science or politics that will break up the stagnation." (Richard Ellmann: *Oscar Wilde*, Hamish Hamilton 1987, p.162). Wilde visited the sage again in May.

Delius might have been aware of Whitman's reputation in Europe, but of course Delius had spent some time in America. He had tried fruit-growing in Solano Grove, Florida, in 1884, where the expansiveness of the life and the native music made a deep impression. He taught in Danville, Virginia, which he left in 1886 to go home, via New York. Most interestingly, Alan Jefferson's *Delius* (1972) says that he '"spent a short time with a Jacksonville friend on Long Island and is thought to have been engaged as a church organist in Manhattan" (p.18). Delius never made the trip to Camden, but on Long Island and in Manhattan in 1886, it is hardly

likely that he would not have heard of Whitman.

Perhaps the clearest example of a young musician's attitude to Whitman at around the turn of the century comes from Ivor Gurney. He had heard the first London performance of Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* in 1913, which had used words from a later section of *Sea-Drift*, and he rediscovered Whitman in 1915:

> He has taken me like a flood. One of the greatest of teachers. And as a poet, he among others has this enormous virtue — that when he has nothing to say, you may divine it a mile off. A marked copy may be read in half an hour; but oh, what gorgeous stuff it is!' (*Ivor Gurney: Collected Letters,* ed. R K R Thornton, MidNAG/Carcaret 1991, p.41)

Like Delius and many before him (and one suspects many after) Gurney was happy to select from Whitman, but as he said in a letter of 16 August 1916, "Walt Whitman is my man, however, and I want to write in music such stuff as *This Compost*" *(Letters,* p.134).

What did writers find in Whitman and what might Delius have found? In general, the exuberance, the iconoclasm, the unstuffiness would appeal, and the refusal to be tied down by tradition and external form; as Wilde said, the urge to "break up the stagnation". To many the appeal would be the democratic spirit, the refusal to condemn, and the embracing love of all things; to many more the simple energy and huge compassion of the man. To some, like John Addington Symonds, the attraction was the inclusion in his large expansiveness of openness to love both homosexual and heterosexual. But there were other things that might appeal. The musical construction of *Leaves of Grass* is often commented on, and the fact that it is addressed not to the intellect but to the ear. Whitman advised that "the reader should look for the same kind of music found in the Italian opera", with its arias and recitatives. The whole freedom of the composition, from formal structural patterns and its dependence on subtle repetitions in its artless art, might well have appealed to Delius. And it is not difficult to hear a Whitman-like energy in Delius's description of his *Requiem:*

> It is not a religious work. Its underlying belief is that of a pantheism that insists on the reality of life.... independence and self-reliance are the marks of a man who is great and free. He will look forward to his death with high courage in his soul, in proud solitude, in harmony with nature and the ever recurrent, sonorous rhythm of birth and death (quoted in Jefferson, p.75).

Delius took his text from what is now generally known by its first line "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking", and is the opening poem of the *Sea-Drift* section of *Leaves of Grass.* Delius takes the title of the whole group for his selection from the first poem. It was originally published under the title *A Child's Reminiscence* in the Christmas number of the New York *Saturday Press* in December 1859. In this earliest version, the first twenty-one lines are named '*Pre-Verse*' and are made up of a single sentence forming an introduction to the rest of the lines, there called *Reminiscence* and arranged in thirty-one numbered stanzas. Whitman was an inveterate reviser, and when the poem was reprinted in the versions of 1860 and 1867, it was given the title *A Word out of the Sea.* It got its present title in 1871, when it headed the *Sea-Shore Memories* group in *A Passage to India.* In Whitman's text, *Sea-Drift* is the general title given to the group of eleven poems put together for the edition of *Leaves of Grass* of 1881, made by consolidating seven poems from *Sea-Shore Memories*, two poems moved from the 1876 *Two Rivulets,* and two new poems. "The new group", says one critic, "is one of the poet's most consonant arrangements, held together by the impression, deep in childhood memory, of the sea and beach, an influence which is at the heart of his acceptance of the tragic in life."

The drift (so to speak) of Whitman's poem and its universality is succinctly stated in poem 11 of *Starting from Paumanok,* which is another working of the same experience:

> As I have walk'd in Alabama my morning walk,
> I have seen where the she-bird the mocking-bird sat on her nest in the briers hatching her brood.
>
> I have seen the he-bird also,
> I have paus'd to hear him near at hand inflating his throat and joyfully singing.
>
> And while I paus'd it came to me that what he really sang for was not there only,
> Nor for his mate nor himself only, nor all sent back by the echoes,
> But subtle, clandestine, away beyond,
> A charge transmitted and gift occult for those being born.

Delius seizes on this universality in his version. Of the original's 183 lines, Delius chooses not to use the introductory section but to begin at line 23 of

Walt Whitman aged 64
Photo by George C Cox, 1887

Whitman's text, setting up to line 129, but omitting lines 86 to 92 inclusive (the omitted lines are part of the bird's 'aria' invoking the moon and the land to return his love). The first 22 lines (the *Pre-Verse*) had placed the narrative in a historical frame, had suggested how the child's experience of the birds had been a vital shaping influence in his poetry. He writes of how he is now "A man, yet by these tears a little boy again". There are then three stages in the *Reminiscence* section of Whitman's poem: the two birds who sing their song of ideal love and happiness; the loss of the she-bird and the lament for the lost love; and the final section where the sea sings of death. Having told the story of the mocking-bird's loss, Whitman called its song an 'aria' and is ecstatic at the release of love in his heart at understanding the meaning. But the poet longs for more:

> O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere.)
> O if I am to have so much let me have more!

And the 'more' which he gets, the 'clew', is given him in the 'delicious word death'. As Whitman says, "My own songs awaked from that hour".

Delius ends his setting before Whitman's final section. Perhaps, finding in the experience of hearing the southern bird a reflection of how something from the south of America lit up his own creativity, he focused on the contrast of love and loss, and omitted Whitman's all-embracing sense of death and life in order to highlight his perception of how his own individuality and his own songs 'awaked'.

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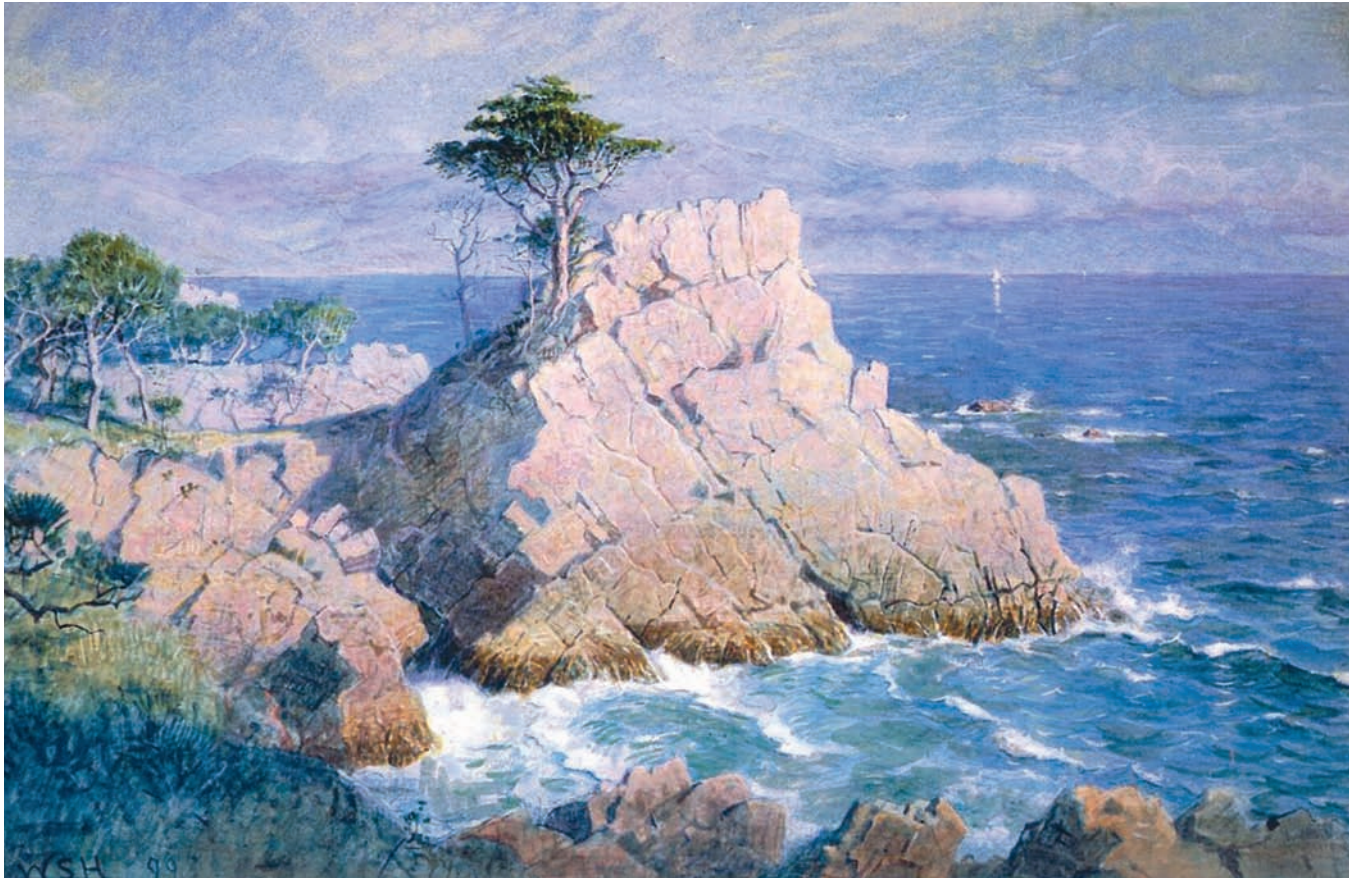
Indian Rock, Narragansett, Rhode Island – William Haseltine, 1864



William Stanley Haseltine (1835-1900) – *Midway Point*

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PUBLICATIONS OF *SEA DRIFT*

Robert Threlfall

Introduction

From its very first performances in Germany in 1906 and in England in 1908, Delius's *Sea Drift* appears to have been recognised as a masterpiece. Years later, the composer recounted to Eric Fenby how "the shape of it was taken out of my hands…..as I worked and was bred easily and effortlessly of the nature and sequence of my musical ideas…." He himself considered it "one of my best works". Over the years, a number of small details, not affecting the lines of the structure in any way, have been noted; it may be that the summary that follows is of some general interest and hence worth putting on record.

The title

My own copy of Walt Whitman's verse is the Nonesuch Press complete edition, and I have not consulted any other or earlier publications. However, the title to the group of poems from which FD chose the words for his setting appears everywhere with the hyphen – viz: *Sea-Drift.* All the original publications of FD's work by Harmonie-Verlag and later by Universal Edition also retain the hyphen (except for Harmonie's back-page advert!). After transfer of the rights to Boosey & Hawkes in 1939, all their reprints apparently omitted the hyphen, which has continued to be left out of all subsequent issues. The reason for this amendment is unknown; only conversation with American colleagues (to whom Whitman's oeuvre may naturally be considered more familiar) has drawn attention to this detail.

The words

Once past the title, the only discrepancy appears to be in bar 383, in the solo baritone's part. Whitman's poem here refers to the "husky-nois'd sea", but Harmonie's first edition of the full score prints "husky-voic'd

sea", a reading which may stem from the handwriting in FD's manuscript, subsequently overlooked in proof. (The survival of FD's manuscript is not assured; only a facsimile of bars 436 and 437-43 remains available). This same incorrect reading is consequently to be found in all following issues in score except for the most recent – the Masterworks volume of 1998. On the other hand, the original Harmonie vocal score reads correctly here; hence all subsequent issues of the vocal score are also right.

The underlay in printed editions

Those same facsimile bars establish once for all that FD set the original English words, and that Jelka Delius's German translation was interlined below. (FD's letter to Ernest Newman of 19 August 1929 gives independent, and indignant, confirmation of this). The first edition of the full score preserved this layout, which has been followed in all subsequent printings of the orchestral score – full, study or miniature. On the other hand, the original issue of the vocal score and separate chorus parts placed the German translation above the English text, presumably following the publisher's house custom; this position persisted until the newly-engraved vocal score issued in 1992 at last restored the English text to its correct upper place.

An amusing detail here concerns the hyphenation of one word: in the original full score, and in all copies of the vocal score and parts printed in Germany, the word concerned is split thus: "sin-ging". The miniature score, the first to be engraved, amends this to the etymologically more correct "sing-ing", which appears in all subsequent orchestral scores and all English printings of the vocal score. Of course, correct or not, FD's "sin-ging" is nearer to what is actually sung – and also, to all hailing (as FD did) from north of the Trent, "sin-ging" is what is actually said as well: the medial G is articulated in those Midland and Northern shires (a detail perhaps unremarked in the South?).

Changes to the orchestration by Delius

In his own copy of the full score (later the property of Eric Fenby and now in the Delius Trust Archive), FD had entered a number of amendments in the eight bars starting at cue no. 7, which strengthened the woodwind parts. (A photograph of part of one page is illustrated as Plate 7 on page 72 of my Editorial Report for the Collected Edition). He also added

many extra dynamics and a number of corrections into this copy, all of which were duly taken up by Balfour Gardiner in editing the "definitive" Universal/Philharmonia miniature score in 1928. The original full score was never reprinted by either Harmonie or Universal; they did, however, add these alterations to the orchestral material (and maybe to scores sent out on hire). Beecham's own set of material includes these publisher's additions, though his personal copy of the full score does not.

Changes in underlay, presumably suggested by other hands

The authenticity of these is uncertain, since none appear in editions specifically approved by FD; most are probably the decisions of practical chorus-masters:

(a) In altos and basses 7-10 bars after cue no. 7, the altered underlay marked by Eric Fenby into FD's own score (and also noted in some Beecham material and by Norman Del Mar) reads: "we two to/gether,/singing/all time". (This and many 'leads' entered by Fenby into FD's own score probably date from rehearsals for the 1962 Bradford Festival, and thus do not necessarily have FD's personal authority).

(b) In the basses, 5-6 bars after cue no.11, Fenby (and some Beecham material) repeats the words thus: "sea-winds blow, sea-winds".

(c) In the sopranos, 6-7 bars after cue no.15, Beecham's material suggests: "I think it is heavy/with love" – which avoids the separate syllables written by FD on the very high notes.

(d) A more difficult crux appears for three bars at cue no.17. Here the first full score, bedevilled by a page-turn (as also the m/s may have shown) has a non-sequitur in the English underlay in the tenor part. This was resolved in the Universal/Philharmonia miniature score, though Beecham's 1951 score solves the problem slightly differently (but his re-engraving remains partly ambiguous). For the Collected Edition, I originally followed Beecham's score, but subsequently, rightly or wrongly, proposed restoration of the Universal/Philharmonia reading in an errata slip. The Masterworks volume follows this later view, which is supported by all examined editions of the vocal score and the separate chorus parts.

(e) A rather different variant concerns the chorus basses in the 3 bars before cue no.20. Here Fenby marked the second basses to remain on the low F sharp and final E, as the obbligato 3rd bassoon part at this point. His reading is only otherwise found in the mysterious English separate voice

parts which will be mentioned at the very end of this article.

Some errors remaining in the printed scores

The first engraved orchestral scores (in miniature size) published by Universal/Philharmonia in 1928 were critically read for FD by Balfour Gardiner, whose accuracy is well-attested; they may thus be taken as definitive. Only the following minute 'dropped stitches' have been noted:

Bar 318: Harp 2 needs a bass clef at the bar-end;

Bar 336: Clarinets need a sharp sign to the C on the 4th beat;

Bar 348: The last note in the tenors (and supporting bassoon) should almost certainly be F sharp, not E.

Bar 373: The 1st flute should have a trill sign over the note (as in bars 374-5). This was added in pencil, none too clearly, by FD in his own full score; it was evidently overlooked in 1928 and still needs restoration, as it has escaped all subsequent editorial attention.

For the original printing of the full score in the Beecham edition of 1951 the work was re-engraved, with the inevitable introduction of a number of fresh errors which went undetected at that time. Over the years, these have gradually been corrected in the study score (and its reprints) based thereon and in Volume 9b of the Collected Edition (with a later errata slip); almost all were finally set to rights by the Masterworks volume. Unfortunately, in correcting the alignment in two bars (double basses at cue no.3; bass clarinet 9 bars after cue no.9) accidentals were omitted: such is life!

The different editions

It remains to survey the various issues that have appeared over the years, by considering the three publishers involved, in order:

Harmonie-Verlag

1. The first edition of the full score, an imposing tall folio 390 x 280, pp 67 (but with no plate number or copyright date), was issued in 1906. The music was lithographed by C G Röder of Leipzig from a written, not engraved, original. The English words appear above the German (which are in *Schrift)*, as in FD's m/s. The elaborate title page, designed and lithoed by Röder, is printed in a blue-green colour and gives prominence to the German title, with the English one added in parenthesis below. On his own personal copy, FD indicated that this should be reversed, viz *Sea*

Drift, gross drucken – (Im Meerestreiben klein drucken). I have not seen such a full score, but both versions of the vocal score are to be found – see item 2 below.

2. The corresponding vocal score, 314 x 240, pp 39, plate number 168, was also engraved and printed by Röder in 1906. Here the German text appears above the English throughout. The title page is similar to that of the full score, and it is also used for the front cover (printed on a blue-green stock). Two distinct states are to be found: one gives preference to the German title, with the English one in parenthesis, as already shown on p 86 of DSJ 137; the other gives the English title only (and the whole of the remaining wording is in English) as is reproduced below**.** Sets of the four separate chorus parts were lithographed and simultaneously issued for performance, with the German text above the English throughout.

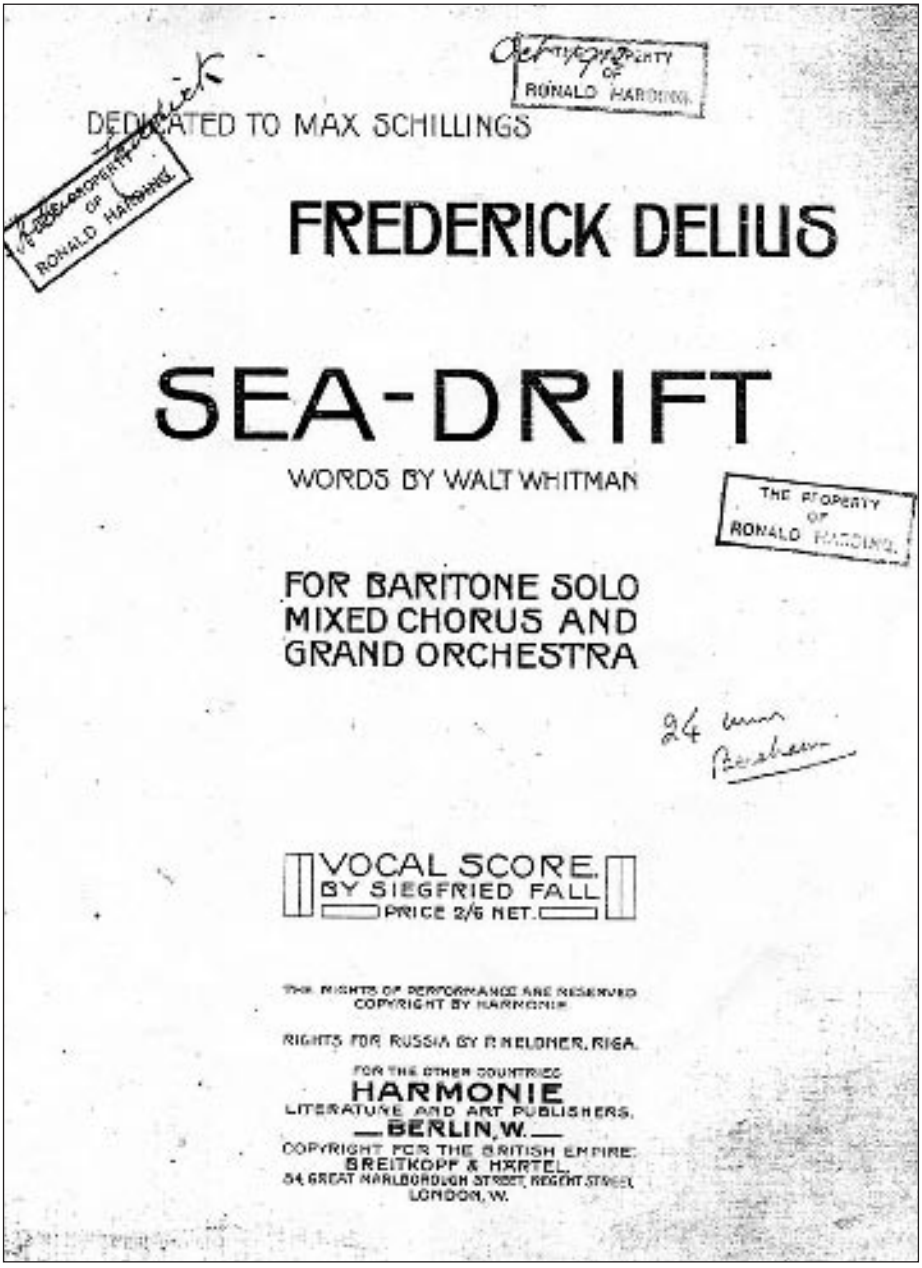
3. On 15 October 1908 Harmonie wrote to FD, sending a "newly-printed piano score", and hoping he would"like the new make-up". (Delius complained that some uncorrected errors still remained – indeed, the music text seems identical with the 1906 issue). The new issue is of a significantly larger page size, viz 333 x 267 (although the actual printed image, curiously enough, is a little smaller). An entirely different title page uses a severe, grotesque style typeface (with an unusual and immediately recognisable capital R) and is printed in black. The cover is printed identically, but in dark red, on a cream linen-finish manila cover paper. (This later style is also found in the contemporary issues of the vocal scores of *Appalachia* and *A Mass of Life*, as well as of the *Piano Concerto*). The only copy so far examined by the author has exclusively English wording; whether a parallel German issue appeared is not at the moment known. The cover/title page is also illustrated here.

[Paul – please insert picture "Sea Drift 2" as nearly as possible here – with caption "Vocal score – 1908 Edition]

Universal Edition

Delius's relations with Harmonie deteriorated during 1910-12, but it was not until 1921 that new contracts were signed with Universal to cover those works previously handled by Harmonie:

4. Universal apparently first took over Harmonie's printed stock of vocal scores and re-issued them in their own then-current style of cover as



Vocal Score – 1908 Edition

no. 3896, which was added just above Harmonie's number 168 at the foot of each page of music, and with their own name at the foot of the original title page. (It is significant to note that it is Harmonie's 1906 issue, with its distinctive title page, that was thus handled – not the 1908 re-issue, which seems rather rarer than its predecessor). Sets of the four separate vocal parts were lithographed anew for Universal, using a fresh printing image, by Waldheim-Eberle as no. 3895a-d, with their own imprint "Weag" at the end of each part.

5. Probably about 1926-7, Balfour Gardiner overhauled the vocal score for FD, and Universal's new edition of 3896 incorporated almost all of a lengthy list of his corrections to Röder's plates. This edition, re-printed by Waldheim-Eberle, has an entirely new title page in Universal's later style, as well as the green-on-green cover so familiar from their publications then and thereafter. A few years after (in 1931) another of FD's long-expressed complaints (shared with Charles Kennedy Scott) concerning the unsatisfactory single-line chorus parts was at last resolved. An octavo-size choral score was issued as no. 3896a, reduced from the full-size vocal score, thus rendering rehearsal and performance more certain at last.

6. Despite FD's frequent complaints during the 1920s that "the current lithographed [full] score is so defective – full of mistakes, passages having been re-orchestrated and improved" (9 March 1924), adequate stocks resulted in their continued use, with a UE sticker superimposed on the title page. However, *Sea Drift* (and *Appalachia*) was at last engraved in 1928, but in size suitably reduced, for the Philharmonia miniature score series, no. 215 (UE 8886). For these, as has already been noticed, the text was checked with scrupulous care by Balfour Gardiner, thus ensuring that the definitive state appeared in FD's lifetime.

Boosey & Hawkes

So the position remained until the transfer from UE to B & H in 1939. By 1944, the miniature score had re-appeared in the Hawkes Pocket Score series, as no. 43 (B & H no.8743), and the full score was at last being engraved to include Beecham's editing, thus forming one of the initial volumes of the Collected Edition as proposed under Jelka's Will of 1935.

7. This volume was published in 1951, as no.8915. Inevitably, the new engraving introduced errors (and proof-reading seems to have been inadequate). However, the re-issue of this volume, now numbered 9b, in

1988, followed by an errata slip in 1996, has enabled these matters to be progressively improved. Parallel issues of an octavo-sized study score in 1977, re-printed in 1989, mark further stages on the journey. The latest step is the inclusion in the Masterworks series in 1998 of a volume of "American Choral Works" (*Sea Drift* and *Appalachia*); the best text so far (despite a couple of new errors, referred to above). At some stage, probably in about 1950, Booseys had reprinted the UE vocal score which had been corrected by Gardiner as their no. 18102. It is stated to be "edited by Sir Thomas Beecham", but only the addition of metronome marks can support this claim, as the frequent modifications to dynamics included in their full score find no place here as yet.

8. As a result, the vocal score was completely re-engraved by B & H in 1991, and re-issued as their no. 1837. Here at last the English text was set above Jelka's German translation, and all Beecham's editing was included. The opportunity was taken to render some portions of the piano arrangement a little more user-friendly (and some, such as on the first page, a little more accurate). May this handsome current publication, with an excellent portrait of FD on its front cover, form a worthy tribute to his masterpiece almost a century after its first appearance.

Postscript

I have left to last a mysterious set of (single-line) chorus parts, with English words only, but no indication at all as to date or publisher. As a large quantity of these were located in Beecham's library, and they included very full printed performance indications (mostly, but not entirely, as found in his edited full score) it seems possible that they may form a private printing, run off for his own personal use at some stage. On the present evidence, more cannot be said; any further information will be appreciated!

Thanks are warmly extended to Christopher Redwood, who first noticed the different 1906 and 1908 vocal scores, and lent me his 1906 copy; also to Nigel Cavey who loaned me his 1908 score for comparison. Stephen Lloyd had already sent me a list of Balfour Gardiner's corrections to the earlier vocal score which he edited in the 1920s (which list, incidentally, overlooks a number of small errors in the piano accompaniment, which thus persisted until the 1991 re-engraving).

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SEA DRIFT

A MUSICAL ANALYSIS

Paul Guinery

In an article written in 1929 by Constant Lambert under the title "The Art of Frederick Delius", the distinguished conductor and composer made the claim that *Sea Drift* is one of a handful of works for chorus and orchestra in which Delius finds his "free-est emotional expression and, strangely enough, his most satisfactory formal expression." That notion of informal freedom of musical thought finding its most effective outlet through some sort of formal discipline is not really the paradox it might at first seem. It can be seen from a different perspective in Delius's comment to Eric Fenby about the nature of a good work always shaping itself to the laws of its own inner being. Indeed, as an example, Delius invoked his own *Sea Drift*: "which I think is one of my best works. The shape of it was taken out of my hands, so to speak, as I worked and was bred easily and effortlessly of the nature and sequence of my particular musical ideas, and the nature and sequence of the particular poetical ideas of Whitman that appealed to me." (Eric Fenby: *Delius As I Knew Him* p.35).

We may also infer from this that *Sea Drift* was a true "inspiration", one of those relatively rare acts of creation when the pen or brush seems to move over the paper of its own accord, almost involuntarily. Other musicians and artists have noted the phenomenon. But *Sea Drift*, for all its apparent spontaneity, is not just a piece of 'automatic writing'. There's abundant evidence of the craftsman at work, consciously moulding his material and shaping it. Even the most casual examination of some of the details in its construction will bear that out. But it also reveals, as so often with Delius, the futility of trying to package the music neatly into any predetermined 'form' – *Sea Drift* doesn't work like that. Though it falls readily into sections or paragraphs, it also evolves according to its dramatic nature, its 'inner laws' as Delius said.

Lambert, in that article, goes on to say that Delius's art reaches its greatest heights in such works as *Sea Drift* chiefly through the weaving together of "human passion and its background of elemental nature" and

he singles out the passage where the chorus breaks in with the words "Shine! Shine! Shine!", commenting that such moments "strike too deeply to bear analysis". Indeed, he adds that "technique and thought being so delicately fused in all [Delius's] best work, it would be foolish to waste time over pedantic criticism or analysis." Well, though I do agree with the spirit of those opinions I am, *pace* Mr Lambert, going to stick my neck out and try to subject *Sea Drift* to a little analysis or at least indicate some helpful signposts. Let's hope this doesn't end up as pedantry.

For the musical examples which follow, I've used the full score published by Boosey & Hawkes, available not only as volume 9b of the "Complete Works" but also in their "Masterworks Library" series, where it's usefully bound with *Appalachia*. *Sea Drift* was first published in full score by *Harmonie-Verlag* of Berlin in 1906; a revised score was issued by *Universal* edition in 1928 after Balfour Gardiner had read the proofs; this was subsequently entirely re-engraved by B&H and issued in 1951 in the edition by Beecham which itself was reissued, with minor corrections, in 1977 and then again in 1988. In some of my examples where it's more convenient to show an orchestral reduction, I've also used the B&H vocal score. References to "figures" are to the rehearsal numbers which match up in both full and vocal scores. As a form of shorthand, "Fig.9+6", for example, means the sixth bar after figure 9, counting 9 itself as bar 1.

Let's look at the instrumentation first, which is on the lavish side: triple woodwind plus trimmings i.e. cor anglais, bass clarinet and double bassoon; six horns; a brass section calling for three trumpets, three trombones and tuba (though, as we'll see, used with great restraint). Timpani; bass drum; two harps and strings complete the fairly extensive palette of orchestral colours. The mixed chorus is kept in four parts for the majority of the work, the major exception being the unaccompanied section at Fig.19 where Delius indulges in some *divisi* writing to enrich the vocal texture in up to eight parts. The other major player in the field is a solo baritone who must have a strong upper range: he's summoned up to a top F sharp above the stave on a couple of occasions – most notably on the word "love".

Sea Drift opens with forty-five bars of orchestral introduction, a mini-tone poem setting the Maytime scene by the sea-shore on Long Island (or "Paumanok" in the old Indian name Whitman uses). Delius nearly always writes magical openings and this, with the sunlit waves gently lapping the

briars in which the two sea-birds have built their nest, is no exception:

Example 1

The divided upper string chords sustaining the harmony (Ex.1a) suggest the stillness of the scene, wrapped in the hazy heat of the day; the descending melodic lines (Ex.1b) are given to the woodwind, passing in chains from flute to oboe to clarinet, like an evocation of waves calmly unfurling on the shore; meanwhile the two harps, cellos and double basses give an essential impetus to the texture (Ex.1c) suggesting the ocean waters gently rocking the nest. It is, as Eric Fenby commented, "music of unexampled accuracy, suggestion and poignance." And it's that last quality – poignance – which Delius portrays so vividly. The key signature of four sharps indicates either E major or its relative minor, C sharp, and in fact the music oscillates between these two key centres, lending it a sense of ambiguity as well as a strong premonition of something bittersweet to come. Technically, this 'happens' because although the opening string chord is C sharp minor, the bass line which almost immediately enters to underpin it, turns that minor chord into what's known as an added sixth i.e. a major triad with the sixth note of the scale added to it. But how arid such technical descriptions sound! What's notable here is the pungency of Delius's harmonic flavouring: the third and fourth bars, for example, "grate" an A natural in the 2nd violins again G sharps in the 1st violins and an unexpected F natural in the lower strings and harps. Something similar happens in the seventh and eighth bars with the F natural adding a salty tang to the air. These are hard things to put into words; but, as so often with Delius, there is in fact a rational musical explanation on paper behind the effect on the ear.

This opening material is most important for, as we shall see, Delius will draw on it again at key moments later on in the score, binding the whole work together. He also returns full circle to it at the very end, a symbolic

gesture that extends Whitman's poetic theme of transcience and loss from the specific to the universal, a situation that will recur again and again in other places and in other ages.

The choir enters at Fig.2 and sets the scene in words, the orchestral texture continuing much as before. A familiar Delian rhythmic trademark, his "signature" triplet motif, makes its appearance at Fig.3 in the 1st oboe, followed by cor anglais and 2nd clarinet; then 3rd clarinet, 1st bassoon and 3rd and 4th horns. This little rhythmic trait (Ex.2) soon permeates the whole of the rest of the orchestra:

Example 2

The baritone soloist enters at Fig.4+4, or at least not so much enters as sidles up to us; without warning he's suddenly 'there' on the scene, emerging from the choral texture with his comment "and every day the he-bird to and fro, near at hand…" The chorus almost at once makes way for him as he continutes his narrative. At this point I'd like to say a word about the treatment of the voices, both soloist and chorus, because it strikes me as tremendously original for a work of this sort. Delius often responds to Whitman's rather allusive poetic style by overlapping or 'layering' the text. Ex.3 will show what I mean: it's part of the choral passage just before the soloist enters:

Example 3

That effect is a natural result of the staggered entries by the various choral voices, but it does overlap separate words in the text. For example, on the first beat of the fourth bar of Ex.3 we have simultaneously the syllables *bri [-ars], sea [-shore], [sea-] shore* and *two*. Likewise, a few bars later, we hear *gue [-sts], two, fea [-thered]* and *[Ala-] ba [-ma]* sung simultaneously on the first beat. It's not only a question of the same line of text being overlapped or unaligned: there are also examples of totally different phrases laid over each other, as when the baritone soloist at Fig.4+4 is singing "and every day the he-bird…" whilst simultaneously the chorus is telling us about "four light-green eggs spotted with brown." This technique mustn't, I think, be taken as gaucheness or amateurishness on the part of the composer as it's obviously a conscious artistic decision and he does it at several points in the score. On paper it looks as if the text will be jumbled or obscured but it doesn't sound like that in practice. I think what Delius was trying to get across, was a sense of fluidity and improvisation, with different voices interrupting and talking over each other, as people tend to do in everyday speech. But it's unusual in secular choral works of this period: Coleridge-Taylor in his *Hiawatha* trilogy (1898-1900) hardly ever overlaps choral text; Elgar, on the other hand, in *Gerontius* (1900) does. If it does occasionally make the job of following the text trickier for a first-time listener without a copy of Whitman's poetry in front of him, it's worth it risk for the pay-off: a great sense of textual 'freedom' and improvisation.

The various roles that chorus and soloist play in the narrative are also a very fine example of Delius matching the spirit of the poem to his musical

treatment. The pure narration of the early part of the poem is mainly in the hands of the baritone after the choir's initial scene-setting, but it's also true, as we'll see, that the chorus 'becomes' the voice of the sea-birds just as the baritone himself does. This is a reflection of the whole process of what the narrator calls, at the outset, "absorbing, translating". In other words, there aren't necessarily any fixed points of view for chorus and soloist: like the treatment of the text itself, there is a symbolic "overlap" throughout as we hear the story from different (vocal) perspectives.

Another 'voice' – an orchestral one, in the shape of a solo violin – is used imaginatively (and poignantly) by Delius at selective points in the score. There's an initial example of this at Fig.4, with the violin emerging from the surrounding texture and then coming into its own *forte* for a half-dozen bars just before Fig.5 while the rest of the orchestra are marked right down in dynamic. There's a further example at Fig.6+16, again adding to what Beecham once referred to as the "tender pathos" of this magical score.

At Fig.5 itself the music subsides into a texture of pure string chords, pointed slightly with touches of solo woodwind and bass drum, the relative simplicity here matching the baritone's description of himself as "a curious boy". How strikingly Delius colours that word "curious" with a *sforzando* dischord; then, after the phrase "cautiously peering, absorbing, translating", responding accordingly with a few bars that have a slightly hesitant feel to them, 1st flute and 1st violins uttering quivering trills over the most delicate of accompaniments. Small things, I know, but very telling in their effect.

Then, suddenly, at Fig.6, comes the great *coup de théâtre* that Constant Lambert so admired as the chorus takes on the roles of the two migratory birds, raising an ecstatic shout of "Shine! Shine! Shine! Pour down your warmth, great sun!" Musically, Delius refers us back to the very opening, the chords in the first two bars of Fig.6 being the same as those in the opening four bars of the score, whilst the shape of the vocal lines reflects the initial falling phrases of the woodwind. The scene floods with light, as if the sun had burst out from behind a cloud, the warmth of its rays echoed in a now unambiguous affirmation of E major. The mood is rapturous and is given the fullest texture we've heard so far. But even so, Delius still keeps his maximum orchestral forces in reserve and although at this point he finally unleashes all six of his horns, never more than five are heard at

any one time; what's more, the brass section is still held back: only the 1st trumpet plays and then just for five bars. The brass will have their moments later, but not yet.

At Fig.7 the pulse expands into a consistent six beats in a bar rather than four: one of those swinging, ecstatic and dance-like passages that Delius is so fond of; here it reflects the fervour of the mating birds "singing all time, minding no time". But the composer doesn't linger long; a few bars later he puts the brakes on, reining the music right in as he swiftly lightens the texture and brings the dynamics down to *pianissimo*. Delius, the dramatist, is in full command of his powers as a new chapter in the music begins at Fig.8, the key signature changing for the first time in the piece, as the tonal centre of E major / C sharp minor is shed for the chilling suggestion of F minor as the baritone spells out the tragic news that the she-bird has not returned to the nest and will in fact never return there. The baritone solo here is in a style that's typical of the work, an example of what Beecham called the *arioso recitativo.* In other words, a type of recitative that's part way between a sparer, more traditional style of declamation and a warmer, more lyrical one with a fuller sense of melodic line. For Sir Thomas, Delius was a master of this technique; in an article on *Sea Drift* for *The Daily Telegraph* in 1953, he went as far as to call it "the finest example [of this] in all music."

The passage at Fig.9 in which the baritone recounts how the he-bird sits waiting in vain all summer long for his mate to return, is masterly. The key signature of four sharps is reinstated and Delius returns to his opening material but in skeletal form: the shimmering sound of the violins is absent and instead the familiar chords are softly outlined in woodwind and horns above the rocking motion of the cellos, double basses and harps to evoke the restless "flitting from briar to briar" of the forlorn "solitary guest from Alabama." We hear his own cry of incomprehesion on 1st violins and cor anglais four bars before Fig.9 (Ex.4a) and then again in augmented form at Fig.10 (Ex.4b), but with this time with a rising interval of a fifth rather than a fourth; this little motif also returns briefly at Fig.12+15 on 1st flute where the baritone describes the "lone singer, wonderful, causing tears"; there's an affinity, in shape at least, with a motif that occurs in the music of the Dark Fiddler in *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (Ex.4c). A conscious or unconscious self-quotation?

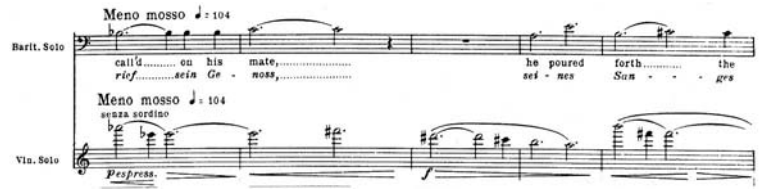
Examples 4a, 4b & 4c

A choral interjection along the lines of "Shine! Shine! Shine!", but here quite differently treated by Delius, begins at Fig.11 to a new F major melody which drives fluently along in 6/4 in one of the fullest textures of the work so far (at Fig.11+13 all six horns are at last momentarily heard though there's still no other brass in evidence). This memorable pasage (Ex.5) is a plea by the he-bird to the sea-winds to blow his mate back to him:

Example 5

This mood is only sustained for some two dozen bars before there's another transformation in sound at Fig.12. So far we've been bathed in the clear sunlight of a late spring day; now Delius ushers in the ominous, shadowy atmosphere of night-time which will be the backdrop to events until just before the very end. How wonderfully the composer evokes the glistening stars of the night sky in scoring that prefigures similar passages in both *The Song Of The High Hills* and *North Country Sketches*. It's very simply done but so effective: the harps provide the image of glittering starlight set against a lightly touched in background of muted string figurations and little dabs of *pianissimo* woodwind. A master orchestrator at work. The 3rd trombone and tuba make their first appearance at Fig.12+25, but far more significantly the solo violin is used again (Ex.6), doubled an octave below by 1st clarinet and then 1st oboe, to give voice to the despairing call of the he-bird to his lost mate:

Example 6



This evocative *nocturne* is the prelude to a major new section beginning at Fig.13, which begins *a tempo molto tranquillo* but gradually increases in pace as the metre evolves from four beats in a bar to six, and then to nine, as it sweeps onwards to reach a great climax at Fig.17.

Delius begins this impressive passage by reverting to the tonal centre of a warm E major as the narrator, from a retrospective standpoint, now reveals his own identification with the plight of the sea-birds: "he poured forth the meanings which I of all men know…". He looks back to his boyhood, to the furtive excitement of his nocturnal visits to the beach as a "curious observer" in warm lyrical phrases that are cushioned by sustained strings and horns with the solo violin weaving triplet figurations above. A reference to "avoiding the moonbeams" is another instance of Delius's skill in instrumentation, a wonderful effect as the harps take over the undulating triplets of the solo violin and transform them into something more glittery. Then, after a brief pull-up, the texture fills out and we

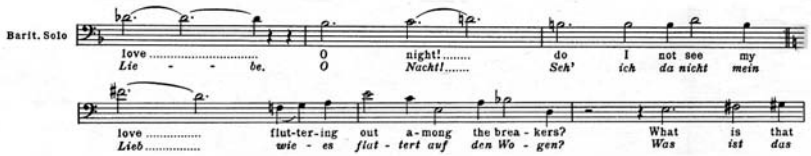
plunge into a new metre – 9/4 – at the same time shedding four sharps of the key signature for a single flat.

Delius more than matches the growing ecstasy of the poetry with its images of the "breakers tirelessly tossing" and the wind "wafting" the hair of the "curious boy" (an illustrative harp *glissando* at Fig.14+2) whilst the chorus has the last of its triple invocations ("Soothe! Soothe! Soothe!") this time a call to the waves "embracing and lapping, every one close." The 2nd violins begin a rushing chain of quavers at Fig.14+5 that's handed on to the 1st violins and then to the woodwind. The brass (trombones and tuba) make their first significant contribution to the score, beginning at Fig.14+9: as I noted, Delius has held them in reserve until now, a *tour-de-force* of restraint given that we're almost at the mid-point of the score. The impetus of the music becomes irresistible, well captured in a striking phrase (Ex.7) that emerges in the sopranos and is typical of the envigorating momentum of this whole section:

Example 7

Meanwhile, as the baritone sings of how "madly the sea pushes upon the land, with love", Delius increases the tempo a notch further and the vividly erotic imagery of the poetry becomes insistent in the music: swirling woodwind figurations, splashes of *glissandi* from the harps, the strings throbbing vigorously with eighteen quavers to the bar, the chorus interjecting such phrases as "with love!" "high and clear" etc. whilst the melodic lines of horns – and voices – reflect the swell of the sea in contours that are sometimes smooth and sometimes strenuously angular (Ex.8):

Example 8



Delius is always marvellous when it comes to building his music gradually to a climax and then suddenly deflating it - and here's a perfect example:

the music boils over at Fig.17 in the loudest moment of the score so far and then, in just four bars, descends from triple *forte* to *mezzopiano*, followed by a double-bar at Fig.18, reining in the speed a little and marking the return of four sharps in the key signature. The ground swell of the bass line still heaves a little before all the previous orchestral turbulence is banished, and we come to one of the most magical passages not only in *Sea Drift* but in the whole of Delius.

It's significant that at this precise moment Delius chooses to focus his musical expression on the sound of unaccompanied voices, both choral and solo. From Fig.19, his expansive orchestra sits silent for 26 bars, with only 3rd bassoon and double bassoon sneaked in *piano* to underpin the cadence at the very end of this *a capella* section, three bars before Fig.20, joined on the final chord by the quiet flick of a *pizzicato* from cellos and double basses. Delius does in fact also include a scored accompaniment for this passage using just clarinets and bassoons, but he asks in a footnote that the woodwind should only play"in case of necessity"i.e. if the chorus can't hold its pitch. Delius isn't renowned for always being so practical and I suspect that here he may have taken advice from others, perhaps a pessimistic German chorus-master? Better safe than sorry, though of course having any sort of accompaniment, however discreet, would spoil the effect. It would have to be a case of not just necessity but the 'dire' variety..!

It's such a masterstroke on Delius's part to focus on the unaccompanied chorus and soloist, which is why this passage should be always one of the highlights in any performance of *Sea Drift*. The"tender pathos"identified by Beecham as one of the major characteristics of the score is at its most memorable in the choral harmonies that begin (unambiguosly this time) in C sharp minor but resolve eventually onto a ripe chord of E major.

What also catches at the throat is the juxtaposition of the choral text, with its pathetic hopes that"perhaps the one I want so much, will rise with some of you", literally set against the contradictory assertion of the baritone soloist"shake out […] solitary here, the night's carols! Carols of lonesome love! Death's carols!" Delius's overlapping technique that I mentioned earlier is here at its boldest but most effective. This is the moment when hope is for the first time undermined and this unaccompanied section, all over in less than a minute, provides an important emotional focal point for the listener. But of course *Sea Drift* doesn't stand alone in Delius's works

in stilling the orchestra and letting the voices come centre stage at a key moment: there are parallels in, for example, *Appalachia* and *The Song of the High Hills.*

The soloist will not yet give in to total despair – that moment is still to come – and he clings to the infectious hope of the chorus in the yearning music that follows the re-entry of the orchestra at Fig.20: "somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me". Shortly afterwards we hear a motif in 1st flute and cor anglais (Fig.21+8) that's soon taken up by other instruments and begins to dominate, just as it will do again in the final pages of the score. In Ex.9 I quote its most developed form as it appears at Fig.22 in 1st violins:

Example 9

The chorus, now in the guise of the beloved, warns the soloist that his hopes are futile: "do not be decoy'd elsewhere, that is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice…" A dragging, melancholy downward fall of a semitone characterises this section, most poignantly and bitterly expressed at the *largamente* ten bars after Fig.22 (Ex.10):

Example 10

This terrible cry of despair ushers in one of only two instances in this score when we actually hear the full orchestra, brass included, deployed triple *forte* - only at figure 17 is there a comparable display of strength. There's a dramatic cut-off and over the barely perceptible rumble of timps and double basses the baritone finally gives way to utter despair in the line, marked *ad libitum*, "O I am very sick and sorrowful"; the string and low woodwind harmonies which underscore the word "sorrowful" are of unbearable poignancy. There's a fine example of Delius's attention to detail one bar before Fig.23 where he writes a little downward falling motif, in dotted rhythm, played consecutively by 3rd flute, 1st oboe and then 1st flute. Its significance is only apparent when the same phrase is repeated eleven bars later as a setting for the word "uselessly" in the soloist's phrase "I singing uselessly all the night." A little psychological detail that may go unnoticed but it is there, all the same.

The chorus softly echoes the word "night" and the music seems about to sink into oblivion. But Delius has one more stunning effect up his sleeve: at Fig.24 the warmth of E major returns quite unexpectedly as the soloist sings eloquently of past happiness that can never be recaptured whilst Example 9 (see above) is quoted in turn by 1st and 3rd horns, by 1st flute and by strings. It's the quintessential Delian expression of transcience and loss, here redeemed only by the glowing quality of the orchestral accompaniment as the soloist sings movingly of his past happy life "in the air, in the woods, over fields." Not so much here an affirmation

of that other great Delian theme, renewal in Nature, as an acceptance that if physical love is over, then at least transfigured, spiritual love remains in the memory. *Sea Drift* doesn't end in despair but in a dignified resignation that's beautifully – indeed, perfectly – expressed in the final two pages of the score. The strings, with just a sparing use of horns and selective woodwind, have the last say as the baritone falls silent, musing on the words "we two together, no more, no more!" with the chorus scarcely daring to breathe an echo of this. Delius brings back the rocking harp figure (Ex.1c) from the very opening of the work, underscored by the faintest tremor of the bass drum. And so we come full circle, musically, back to where we started, a symbol of the eternal nature of Whitman and Delius's theme. The harmonies of the opening are quoted once more in the final bars interwoven with a low B natural on a muted horn, marked *morendo* – dying away. The ambiguities of major and minor are finally laid to rest as the C sharp of the penultimate string chord resolves onto a B natural and the music fades into nothing.

An unforgettable ending to what is probably one of the most perfect works Delius ever wrote, in the sense that there's nothing that needs to be taken away and nothing that needs to be added. And the composer himself knew it. As Eric Fenby remembered, Delius said just a few days before he died: "Yes, I think if I had anything worth saying, my boy, I said it in *Sea Drift.*"

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from *Driftwood* – Winslow Homer, 1909

SEA DRIFT

ORIGINS AND THE FIRST PERFORMANCES

Martin Lee-Browne

As is the case with virtually all Delius's works, not only the dates when *Sea Drift* was started and finished, but also the motivation and spur behind its composition, are unknown. About the dates, there is no exact information at all – Delius's sister Clare said it was written "in 1903",[1] but Lionel Carley suggests that it was probably started that year and finished in 1904.[2] More interesting, however, is the question of why Delius decided to set part of a long poem by the most important American poet of the time - the section of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* titled *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking* - and that is, of course, the subject of Professor Kelsey Thornton's article above. As Michael Kennedy says in his *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*[3]:

> Walt Whitman's poetry played a major part in the renaissance of British music in the early twentieth century. Vaughan Williams was introduced to it in 1892 by Bertrand Russell, and his teacher, Stanford, had set Whitman in 1884.

and, although Delius was less warmly human than VW, the next sentences could almost equally well apply to him:

> Composers found its untrammelling metre an outlet for musical settings which would seem to be at one with the words, despite the oddity of some of the similes.....The reason for Whitman's appeal to Vaughan Williams is fairly obvious, apart from the sheer technical challenge to his musical powers. In Vaughan Williams' nature there was a strong vein of mysticism..... He was a romantic; he was also an agnostic, a questioner.

Delius was in America between 1884 and 1886, and after his initial period at Solano Grove, he moved to Danville in Virginia. The town was far from being a cultural desert. There were several newspapers, a debating society, a number of schools and two music societies, and although most of Delius's life there was involved with music, it seems very likely that he met quite a number of people with other interests, in particular literature - for

example, in the houses of the smart tobacco merchants to whose daughters he taught the violin, and where he might have also been entertained. It is known that his friend Thomas Ward gave him a copy of Byron's poems[4], and, indeed, given his lifestyle and occupation whilst he was in America, it would perhaps have been surprising if he had not got to know something of Whitman's poetry.

The first written mention of *Sea Drift* is in a letter of 28 February 1905 to Delius from the German conductor Max Schillings[5]: "I would gladly propose that we put Sea Drift on the programme" [for the 1905 annual Tonkünstlerfest of the Allgemeine Deutsche Musikverein, which that year was to be held at Gratz in Austria]. For unknown reasons, however, it was not included, and the first performance of the work took place on 24 May 1906, when the Tonkünstlerfest was held in Essen. Delius had instructed Harmonie to publish the full and vocal scores, but producing these in time must have been something of a nightmare, for on 8 May they wrote to Delius saying that they had just learned that:

> ...Speiss of Brunswick, the Court Opera singer, who was to have taken the baritone part, is not now going to do so, presumably owing to other engagements, and in 2 days we shall be told who is taking his place at Essen, we shall then immediately send this gentleman a copy of the vocal score. Herr Witte, the orchestra conductor in Essen, received a fully corrected proof, together with a good full score of "Sea Drift" in the middle of last week, which is in good time.[6]

Georg Witte (1843-1929) – a Dutchman, who had by then been the conductor at Essen for some 24 years - therefore had less than three weeks for the rehearsals, and Josef Loritz, the replacement soloist, something in the order of a fortnight in which to learn his extremely difficult part. As if that were not enough:

> Witte [found] fault with several passages in the choral sections on the ground of needless difficulty, [and] suggested some banal alterations in the part writing. As these would all have involved changes of harmony, the proposal aroused in Frederick a state of frenzied wrath soothed only by the calm advice of the resourceful Haym[7] who was luckily in Paris at that moment. He counselled a firm, but polite, refusal...[8]

Delius went to Essen for the premiere, and he must surely have been pleased, for:

Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein

Tonkünstlerfest in Essen

Erstes Orchesterkonzert.

Donnerstag, den 24. Mai, ? 1906

abends 6 Uhr

(Hauptprobe vormittags 10 Uhr)

Im grossen Saale des städtischen Saalbaues.

Essen programme – title page

Rudolf Siegel: Heroische Tondichtung für großes Orchester.

Otto Neitzel: „Das Leben ein Traum." Fantasie (nach Calderons Drama) für Violine und Orchester, op 33.

(Unter Leitung des Komponisten)
Herr Alexander Kosman.

Richard Mors: „Dem Schmerz sein Recht." Sinfonische Dichtung für großes Orchester.

(Unter Leitung des Komponisten)

Frederick Delius: „Sea-drift" (Im Meerestreiben) für Baritonsolo, gemischten Chor und Orchester. Engl. Originaldichtung von Walt Whitman. Uebersetzung von Jelka Rosen.

Herr Josef Loritz.

(Einstündige Pause)

Hermann Bischoff: Sinfonie in Edur.

I. Sehr schnell und feurig.
II. Ruhig und getragen (Quasi moderato con moto).
III. Presto. Ruhig. Presto. Ueberleitung. Sehr ruhig.
IV. Allegro moderato.

Walter Braunfels: Szene aus dem Märchenspiel „Falada." Dichtung von Karl Wolfskehl.

(Unter Leitung des Komponisten)

Frau Theo Drill-Orridge. Herr Josef Loritz.

Engelbert Humperdinck: Festgesang zur Feier der silbernen Hochzeit des Kaiserpaares am 27. Februar 1906. Für Sopran- und Tenorsolo, gemischten Chor und Orchester.

Fräulein Eva Leßmann. Herr Reinhold Batz.

Essen programme – p.1

> …the large Auditorium was completely sold out, reflecting the importance of the event…. Almost all composers and musicians of whom the German people had reason to be proud had appeared; as well from Essen itself, as from outlying places, all who came brought with them a serious interest and understanding of the musical art; in any case such an attentive and, at least in very large part, such a knowledgeable public has never filled our beautiful Municipal Garden Hall since its foundation, as on this evening.[9]

As the copy of the programme reproduced here shows, the concert was inordinately long by today's standards. Interestingly, in a letter of 19th March 1906[10] Schillings said:

> "None of the scores is especially difficult (like Strauss) or needs special musical forces. Delius is harmonically strange, technically not difficult; Siegel and Mors modern "Normalstyle" (a bit thick); Bischoff makes the greatest demands: he asks for the complexity of "Eulenspiegel".

but few players or singers today would agree with that view that *Sea Drift* is not technically difficult.

Bearing in mind the little amount of rehearsal time given to almost any concert in the early 20th century, and the particular difficulties attending *Sea Drift* in this one, it seems likely that (despite what was said in several of the reports quoted below) the performances were, by today's standards, neither particularly accurate nor successful. One critic, probably being polite, said:

> Whether anything profitable will emerge [from the festival] for Art and the progress of our musical culture remains to be seen. The first large orchestral concert yesterday evening did not, however, bring anything overwhelming, and did not quite reach the festival mood that has been achieved on earlier great evenings in the Concert Hall at Essen.[11]

The Musical Times of July 1906 was critical of the Festival as a whole, but approved of *Sea Drift*:

> The Annual Festival of Cacophony – for that it is more and more tending to become, besides bringing forward a few works which may be heard of again….[nevertheless] taking into consideration the crowded audiences before whom as appalling avalanche of the newest and most modern music crashed down into the abyss of time and space, the meeting was a distinct success. But whether the greater part, or even a small fraction of the novelties proved really enjoyable to any but the most advanced of the

young "Heaven-stormers" amongst musicians, critics and amateurs may bedoubted. Mr Delius's Sea Drift was generally acknowledged to be with one exception, the most important work of the Festival. It is a striking piece of musical impressionism, marvellously coloured, and, in spite of many extravagances, harmonically fascinating. There is no thematic material to speak of; chords and modulations, sound experiments and mood picturing alone produce an astonishing effect, and express the composer's poetic idea in such a convincing manner that the listener feels persuaded almost against his inclination that he has heard a masterpiece of a very individual and novel kind. The difficult work was beautifully sung by the Essener Musikverein; the orchestra and the soloist, Herr Loritz, were equal to every demand that was made upon their intelligence.

but, on the other hand, Germany's foremost musical periodical, *Die Musik*, really disliked it:

....a work of depressing cheerlessness such as I have scarcely heard before. One constantly has the feeling that the composer has composed just off the natural harmony; certain regularly recurring discordant progressions (seconds, sevenths, etc.) bring forth downright agonising impressions, which the sharply rhapsodic text by no means justifies. What is the good of all the ingenuity that is turned to such a piece if its effect is so miserable? Nonetheless, I am convinced that a whole string of conductors, true to their own principles, will not let slip this sea serpent next winter, and that a "well brought up" public will give the appropriate palpable expressions to its satisfaction that even such a piece has an end.[12]

Generally, however, the papers were enthusiastic:

While outside in the Municipal Gardens everything is resplendent in the most beautiful Spring green and Nature breathes joy and peace, inside in the great Concert Hall important artistic problems are being resolved, which, at least in their basic character, contrast powerfully with the above-indicated mood-picture, and bring one down to earth with a bump. Only one composition, by and large, takes into account the time of year: "Sea Drift" for baritone solo, mixed choir and orchestra by Frederik [sic] Delius. And not only this. To anticipate what follows, it must be said straightaway that this work, next to the Symphony by Hermann Bischoff constituted the most important part of the evening. It is a fine, wonderful and grandly-formed musical mood-picture, whose only defect is that it is perhaps musically somewhat too widely entwined. If we were to dispense with the solo and choir, there would remain in the unique orchestral score so much

left that is captivating, fascinating and moving, so that the listener could derive the purest joy from it. What interpretation, painting and illumination in this part of the work! Truly, the audience correctly felt, as it applauded so enthusiastically, celebrating this composer, that he is worthy to stand in importance alongside Hermann Bischoff.[13]

The close of the first part of the concert constituted a composition for baritone solo, mixed choir and orchestra: "Sea Drift" (Im Meerestreiben) by Frederick Delius, based on an English poem by Walt Whitman, translated by Jelka Rosen. The text reveals great poetical beauty, which through the composition gains even more of a meaningful extension and deepening discovery experience. Professor Witte, who conducted, had prepared and rehearsed the orchestra and choir section with much love and care, so that the whole made an extraordinary impression. The baritone part was sung by Josef Loritz, from Munich. Whether he was the most appropriate artist for this task seems to us questionable. The voice had not sufficient power for this, nor was the tone production faultless; we are of the opinion that more could have been brought out of the part than here happened. The work earned exceptional applause, which, coming from such a distinguished, composite audience, was indeed doubly valuable. There was then an interval of one hour before the second half, which (given the almost too-long programme), was a real necessity for the audience, if their receptiveness was not to become prematurely dulled and even completely exhausted. The first item after the interval was doubtless the most worthwhile work of the whole evening: the Symphony in E major, by Hermann Bischoff.....Thus ended the brilliantly performed first evening of the Music Festival, which offered almost too many good things, as the attention of the audience seemed to weary towards the middle of the second half![14]

As chance would have it, it was a rebel in his art-form who, apart from Mahler, gave most food for thought at this festival: Frederic [sic] Delius. Mahler strives for extreme clarity in his themes and instrumentation. He loves the diatonic scale and clear rhythms and all that is precisely defined. Delius, on the other hand, in his Sea Drift (Im Meerestreiben) has given us a work in which all of this is dispensed with. We can almost say that it consists only of chords and sounds, and that it seeks to restore music to its original elements.....liberation from fixed clear forms; very free harmony and mood-painting, which, as I have emphasized, rests almost solely on chords and sound. It is a rejection of all that has come down to us - in order to penetrate into the heart of poetry, and at the same time create something

new. The exceptional power of 'atmosphere', characteristic of ..... Strauss and Reger is also inherent in the piece by Delius, who is guided by this principle in all his work. Though we have no actual painting, we experience the lonely, forlorn, dreamy, slightly melancholy mood which the long sea-shore and the eternal harmony of the waves awake in us. The scene of this choral work comes to life before us without the composer having to take the trouble to paint it in oils. We sense it, and so we think we can see it. The choral and orchestral parts run alongside each other as though by accident, each going their own way. There is nothing to aid the ear of the soloist; it all consists purely of splashes of colour. Taken as a whole, it is a work of exquisite effects of sound and subtle beauty. The Choir of the Essen Musikverein and their Director, Professor Witte, as well as the soloist Loritz, created a real masterpiece in the splendid way by which they went about the immensely difficult task with which they were presented.[15]

Among the audience was the young conductor Carl Schuricht (1880-1967), who wrote to Delius later in the year:

Dear Maestro.....How much inspiration, pure delight and joy "Sea-drift" [sic] awakened in me and left imprinted on me, I will not describe to you in more detail, but just tell you that the mere knowledge of your physical existence has given me a source of inner warmth and joy in activity that enriches me in all my artistic undertakings.[16]

Fritz Cassirer (1871-1926), the conductor of the opera in Elberfeld, had given the première of *Koanga* there in 1904, and as mentioned below he would give the first English performance of *Appalachia* in 1907. He too was tremendously taken by *Sea Drift*:

To my surprise Herr Max Chop[17], to whom I played through the whole of your opera"R & J", brought me your songs and Seadrift [sic] in piano score. I had no idea that the things were already out. I have now got to know Sea-drift [sic] today! --- What am I to write? I could have almost howled with delight. I will say no more. I am quite beside myself and wanted just to let you know briefly. Does Zarathustra have nothing but this sort of stuff too? I hope that I shall soon come into possession of the score. You are now glorious in your maturity. Sitting comfortably and plucking the fruits from the tree! Round and ripe and sweet, it says everything that one simply forgets the artist.....I got Herr Chop utterly intoxicated![18]

Hermann Suter[19] of Basel also wanted to do it:

> For this winter it seems to me that it would be wiser for me if at a time when I am making some major demands on my choir (Berlioz Requiem, Bach B minor Mass) I could also make some lesser demands on them. In this way my whole Society, which as such has not yet sung anything of yours, might become acquainted with your style and won over for you by means of a smaller work. I have "Seadrift" [sic] in mind, which enchants me more each time I play it. I feel that if I can get Messchert for the baritone solo the work will be interpreted ideally. Who, by the way, sang it in Essen?[20]

and in the event it was he who conducted the second performance, given in Basel's Musicsaal by the Basel Gesangverein on 2 March 1907.[21] Delius was there too, and he also attended the final rehearsal the previous day, which:

> …..ended in the following little dramatic incident: After "Sea Drift", the audience applauded enthusiastically, as did Mr Suter, the conductor, who repeatedly called for the composer. There was then hissing as well as applause. The conductor, Mr Suter, was incensed and called out that that was bad manners and that he would not tolerate any hissing. A voice from the audience cried out, "We are allowed to express our disapproval too!" On Saturday (at the concert itself), there was only applause, and the composer was obliged to mount the podium to thank the audience.[22]

Critical reaction to the work in Basel was, as in Essen, divided:

> "Sea Drift" by Delius begins with the following text, and we wish to bring it to our readers' attention because it shows what we are sometimes offered in the name of "poetry", and how this word can mask bad taste and nonsense:
>
> > Once Paumanok, / When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing, / Up this seashore in some briers / Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together, / And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown, / And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand, / And every day, the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes, / And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them, / Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.
>
> Haven't composers got ears to hear such linguistic absurdities? The use of verbs is apparently something too vulgar, too common for the translator of the English poem, Jelka Rosen - hence the ellipses.

Aufführung
Basler Gesangvereins

Samstag, 2. März 1907

Im Musiksaal

Direktion: Herr Kapellmeister Hermann Suter

Mitwirkende:

Fräulein **Johanna Dick** (Sopran) aus Bern
Herr **Emanuel Sandreuter** (Tenor) aus Basel
Herr **Paul Bäpple** (Bariton) aus Basel
Herr **Hans Varerhaus** (Bass) aus Frankfurt a. M.
und das verstärkte Orchester der Allgemeinen Musikgesellschaft

Aufführung, Samstag den 2. März, abends 7 Uhr
Hauptprobe, Freitag den 1. März, abends 7 Uhr

PROGRAMM:

1. **Walther Courvoisier. – Der Dinnerstrom**
   Chorballade mit Orchester
2. **Hans Pfitzner. Herr Olaf**
   Ballade für Bass mit Orchester.
3. **Frederick Delius. - Im Meerstreiben**
   Tondichtung für Chor, Bariton und Orchester. -
4. **Schubert-Brahms. Ellens zweiter Gesang**
   Sopran, Frauenchor mit Hornbegleitung.
5. **Julius Weissmann. – Fingerhütchen**
   Märchen-Ballade für Frauenchor, Bass und Orchester
6. **Rich. Strauss. Gesang der Apollopriesterin,**
   Sopransolo mit Orchester
7. **Rich. Strauss. Taillefer**
   Ballade für Chor, Soli und Orchester.

Preise der Plätze

	Balkon I u. Sperrsitz I	Balkon II	Sperrsitz	Parkett I	Parkett II
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Billetverkauf bei den Musikalienhandlungen Hug und Hegar von Dienstag der 26. Februar an, sowie, am Tag 2. März, abends an der Kasse.
Für auswärtige Bestellungen ist der Betrag inclusive Porto zum voraus einzusenden.

16210

Poster for the Basel concert

This incredibly obscure poem blows up a minor incident (which is just about good enough for a little story, told in the nursery) into an event of high tragedy, and it does so in as tasteless a manner as possible. It is a poem that, in our opinion, is not particularly suitable for setting to music, and we find it hard to understand how one can set such large forces in motion for material of this kind.

Delius's music gave us absolutely no pleasure whatsoever, and, if we are honest, then we must admit that seldom have we been so dreadfully bored. It did not appear to contain a single comprehensible motif and the constant formless seething of the music has an unspeakably monotonous effect. After a few minutes listening to this work, we were so tired that it was only by making a great effort and summoning up all our energy that we were able to follow the course of the music. We consider it completely impossible for anyone who is not perfectly acquainted with the piano arrangement or the score to follow the endless harmonic labyrinths, which are totally contrary to all that we have understood up to now under the heading of musical euphony. The whole thing made a very wishy-washy impression on us.[23]

The most unusual work of the evening was ''Sea Drift".....The English text had been translated, not always felicitously, by Jelka Rosen. The beginning is so unclear that, until I learnt otherwise, I mistook the town of Paumanok for the hero of the poem, a love-sick male bird. But that is by the way. Of greater importance is the fact that, as the work proceeds, a unique poetic mood comes to the fore. The she-bird disappears, "perhaps killed", and, although the he-bird laments, calls, and tries to lure her back, she never returns home. A strongly elegiac mood is evoked by the text and the resonance of this mood is re-enforced by the composer's use of quite daring devices. Rarely have so many excruciating dissonances been strung together; but one senses an artistic will and sensitivity behind it all, and for this reason, one cannot reject this music out of hand. Our ears have got used to so many things over the years, and perhaps the Delian[24] processions of ninths and sevenths will, one day, be familiar fare. The solo baritone part predominates - sung by Herr Böpple with assurance and dramatic expression, despite the immense difficulty of the work - and the choir joins in at significant moments. When the soloist is in full flight, the poetic mood is at its loveliest. At the end, the composer returns to the somewhat serener mood of the beginning - a very pleasing effect.[25]

Zum Tonkünstler-Fest

FREDERIK DELIUS

a) **Im Meerestreiben** (Sea Drift)

Für Baritonsolo, gemischten Chor und grosses Orchester. Text von WALT WHITMAN
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> These modern works, some of which are very demanding, had been rehearsed with his usual care and penetrating insight by the Director of Music, Herr Suter; and the choir, known for its fine performances of classical works, stood the test when it came to modern works too. For the choir, in particular, these are hard nuts to crack, and so it is even more satisfying when they crack them so willingly and dynamically and when they produce such a pleasing result - as was the case at this concert. That the orchestra was not put in the shade in this respect is, so to speak, a foregone conclusion.....At the final rehearsal, it's true, there was hissing as well as clapping after the work by Delius - something one found excusable to a certain extent in view of such strange and not always pleasant-sounding music. At the concert, however, there was unanimous applause.[26]

Unfortunately, and perhaps surprisingly, there are no known letters from Delius, whether to Jelka or anyone else, saying what he thought of either the Essen or the Basel performances.

By 1907, scores of Delius's works were freely obtainable - and it was clearly time for *Sea Drift* to be done in England. A number of conductors were considering the possibility of performances, among them Cassirer:

> I now hear from Sharpe [his Agent] that he is not in a position to obtain a choir for me. I will therefore give a concert without a choir, which with regard to "Appalachia" and "Seadrift" I very much regret. The choir from Leeds - so Sharpe told me - would entail the expense of the railway journey. This would make it particularly dear. If you or one of your friends are in a position to obtain a good choir for me approximately from 15 October, then I am willing to revert to my original idea for a programme.....I am now committed to "Queen's Hall" and to the 22nd November, but not yet to the "London Symphony Orchestra".....Just imagine, the London Symphony Orchestra asks 1000M per rehearsal! The concert would cost 7000M without a choir, without a baritone. Horrendous![27]

but some ten months earlier, Delius had already sent the scores of *Appalachia* and *Sea Drift* to Henry Wood[28], presumably at the latter's request. His acknowledgement of them must have been exciting for Delius: "The latter work I am pushing very strongly with the Sheffield Festival Committee, and I hope that it will be included in our scheme".[29] The Committee indeed agreed to Wood doing *Sea Drift* at the 1908 Festival, and it seems likely that by then he had already made up his mind to have a young baritone, Frederic Austin[30], as the soloist – he had sung for Wood at Promenade Concerts and elsewhere since 1902 – and many years later Wood wrote

Henry Wood c. 1900

in his autobiography: "I purposely asked for Frederic Austin to sing the solo part because I knew of no one else who could be trusted to sing it *con amore*."[31] Things did not, however, go all that smoothly. The Committee had for long been determined that 'their' performance should be the first English one, and in November 1907 they wrote to Delius expressing their considerable disappointment at learning that the work was apparently to be given in London eight months earlier. Their letter said: "When we undertook to perform this work at our next Festival, it was on distinct understanding that it was to be the first performance in England".[32] Delius reported this to Granville Bantock[33]:

> Dear Friend…..The reply from Sheffield was almost rude, They said in 4 lines that the Committee refused my offer & and it would either play it or take it off the programme. It really seems preposterous (there never having been any question of 1st performance) they should now take up this attitude. Just fancy to require the first performance of a work 2 years before the Festival without any remuneration. Wood is of course behind it all. I feel quite sure he could have arranged it if he had wanted to. It really is taking my bread and butter away from me; for, all I get from the editor is a percentage on the music sold and performances. They seem to be able to pay him (Wood) a big fee! However, I don't care whether they play it or not.[34]

but neverthless Wood did conduct at Sheffield.

About a month earlier, Havergal Brian[35] told Delius:

> A few weeks ago, I left a copy of your "Sea Drift" with the conductor of the principal Society here in Staffordshire. I refer to the NS Choral Society (Conductor – J. Whewall). I saw him yesterday morning, and I now

understand that "Sea Drift" will be given by them immediately after the Sheffield Festival…..You may rely upon a fine performance of "Sea Drift" by the Choir – it is a fine one. There are certain formalities to be gone through – the choir (part of it) will want a "Sol fa" translation of "Sea Drift" and the passing by the Committee.[36]

and in June 1908 Thomas Beecham – whom Delius had first met after one of Beecham's early London concerts, and who was by then probably the composer's very strongest supporter – gave him marvellous news:

I have arranged with the Hanley Choir [the North Staffordshire Choral Society] to come to London next December (6th-12th) to sing your *Sea Drift.* I am going to conduct it at Hanley on Dec 3rd and I think it is practically settled that my orchestra are to go and play (i.e. 75 of them).[37]

I simply love Sea Drift – have learnt it by heart & you will be horrified to hear that I play and sing it on the Piano [sic] to people up and down the kingdom!!! Everyone likes it! But I assure you that I have learnt all the harmonies correctly.[38]

Back in 1902, Austin was lodging with Cyril Scott[39] in Liverpool, and Scott had introduced him to his 'Frankfurt Gang' colleague Balfour Gardiner – as the result of which they became lifelong friends. When Delius came to England in April 1907, Austin met him at a dinner party at Gardiner's London house, and after it Delius wrote to wife Jelka:

There is a splendid Baritone here a Mr Austin, very musical and I hope he will sing Sea-drift at Sheffield & later the "Messe".[40]

and the two of them, too, quickly became great friends – for example, in October Delius had this mainly intriguing letter from Austin:

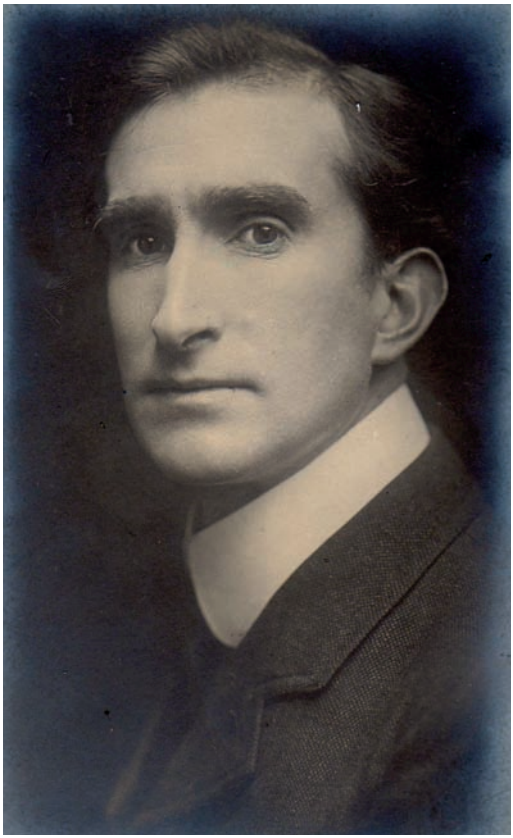
I was delighted to get your letter. Please forgive my scandalous treatment of it, but until now I've been working against time to get a Rhapsody of mine finished - which Wood is playing on the 16th. I'm so glad you're here for a long visit & look forward to meeting you again very much. Apparently there's to be an opportunity on Saturday, as I've just had a letter from Gardiner talking of a party for the Middlesex. We're both free & will come with pleasure. We have a friend staying with us whom we must bring along if you don't mind. A lady - but who will be quite game. Where shall we all meet?.....If we are going to be a large party on Sat? it would be well to get seats beforehand - box seats are the one's we generally affect. Perhaps, as you are in town comparatively, you wouldn't mind getting 3 for us? Last

time we went we had great difficulty.[41]

In the light of what had happened at Essen, Delius was probably very relieved that Austin went to great pains to learn the work:

> 'Sea Drift' is going well; I have rehearsed it three times already with Wood, and there are the choral & orchestral rehearsals still in front of me - so you may count on our thoroughness and enthusiasm. When do you come to London? I should very much like to go through it with you before the final rehearsals if possible.[42]

The performance was given in the third concert of the Festival, on 7 October 1908 in Sheffield's Albert Hall, with the Queen's Hall Orchestra and the 300-strong Festival Chorus. In addition to *Sea Drift*, the programme included York Bowen's *Overture in G minor*, Walford Davies' *Everyman* (in which Austin sang Everyman, the major part), the Bach *E major Violin Concerto* (with Kreisler - who also played the famous unaccompanied *Chaconne*), and finally Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*. The programme note, by the presumably local JA Rodgers, after commenting that "It is an agreeable coincidence that the music of Mr Frederick Delius, already well known through the medium of ordinary concerts, should obtain its first hearing at an important English provincial festival in the county of his birth", went on to give - remarkably if, as was presumably the case, he had not been at either the Essen or Basel performances - a beautiful description of *Sea Drift*:



Frederick Austin in 1907

> There is no formal structure in the work. The composer dispenses with representative themes; nothing is developed; only in one or two instances does a motive or harmonic expression recur; in fact the work is without organised plan. It is an impression in music of the pictures and emotions conjured up by the text. Yet, if devoid of formal design, it is far from being incoherent. The changing words of the text are mirrored and intensified in the music. Though phrases and harmonic patterns arise and disappear without orderly design or sequence, like the changing hues and cloud patterns on a summer sea - the entire work resolves itself into a composite whole, to linger in the memory as does the fixed impression of some exquisite Nature-scene – formless yet enchanting.

It seems that everyone on the platform was very well rehearsed. There was a *tutti* in the Hall the previous afternoon or evening (which Delius attended), and as the concert was in the evening of 7 October it seems very possible that – amazingly for those days - there was another rehearsal in the morning or afternoon before the performance. So the next day an excited Delius could not only write to Jelka:

> Dearest. Just a word to say that the performance went of[f] very well - It was a huge success - altho' I dont believe anyone really understood it - Austin sang wonderfully - The Chorus was wonderfull [sic] - Woods Orchestra knew it perfectly, but he did not always take the right Tempi - Sometimes too slow and then too fast[43] - However, it went quite well - I will keep some notices for you - Newman's[44] and some others are awfully good - I have only read one at present - but Austin read some more.....[45]

but (perhaps surprisingly) he talked to one of the local newspapers as well:

> "The Sheffield Choir was wonderful". Mr. Frederick Delius, the famous Anglo-German composer, could hardly express with sufficient warmth his appreciation of the singers who last night gave his delightful setting of "Sea Drift" so magnificent a rendering. "The Sheffield choir is wonderful", his voice vibrating with enthusiasm. A representative of the Sheffield Independent had asked him for his impression of the way in which his work was given, and he most readily told the journalist of his enthusiasm for the singers. "The rendering of my work", the composer said with obvious sincerity, "was excellent – excellent – excellent." "You were perfectly satisfied?" "Satisfied? Delighted! What can I say of so fine a performance except that it was really excellent? Mr. Austin was splendid. The only pity is that you have such a small hall here. The Chorus might well sing in a larger hall; but for what they did I am most grateful!"[46]

One curiosity about the reports of all the first four performances in England is that the music critics of provincial papers were generally far more enthusiastic and sensitive than many of those working on London papers or writing for musical periodicals. Perhaps the London critics were jaded, but in those days, of course, 'local' papers were much more serious than their modern counterparts, and the standard of writing in them was far higher than it is today. They frequently reported concerts (and many other events) in London, and some of the most celebrated critics worked for them – Samuel Langford and later Neville Cardus at the *Manchester Guardian*, Ernest Newman originally with the *Birmingham Daily Post*, and (albeit in a later period) Ernest Bradbury for the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. The extracts from the concert notices that follow (as well, of course, as those above) give a good idea of the widely differing views on *Sea Drift* when it was first heard – some critics liked the work and the performance, and some didn't, and indeed sometimes one wonders whether they were at the same concert!

> Mr Delius's Sea Drift also received an admirable performance. The choral tone was a tonic, searching and sympathetic, and Mr Frederic Austin sang the solo part with insight….Of its intrinsic qualities, it will be necessary to write more in detail later; is impossible to discuss it fully here, since it was after 10 o'clock when it was over…..The cantata is a setting of a part of the first of Mr Walt Whitman's "Seashore Memories". Mr Delius discards Whitman's personal prologue and epilogue, and he uses only the story of the sea-birds, and the lament which follows the work [sic] is an example of the harmonic idiom which he has made his own…..If there is much in the work which is difficult for some hearers, amends are made by the ending, for which the composer has written music of haunting loveliness.[47]

> Many of the audience shook their heads at this work and failed to catch its idiom, perhaps because it was performed somewhat perfunctorily. The idiom of the work is strange and subtle. Many of the designed effects did not come off, mainly because the instrumental and choral tone demanded a far finer adjustment than what was attempted……Mr Delius's music may be difficult to follow, if only because of its comparative formlessness. As I have said above, many felt untouched, but others discerned a consistency of treatment in the music and an atmosphere born of the poem. It may be hoped that the work may be heard again soon under ideal conditions of choral and orchestral balance. Mr Frederic Austin sang the bass solo with great conviction.[48]

> Compared with his other compositions, the harmonic basis of "Sea Drift" is more rational and the ear is not punished with crude bunches of dissonance. The writing for chorus and solo baritone is entirely free and independent of the orchestration, and is one continuous series of changing hues, a state of moody reflectiveness with a feeling for Nature; the roll of the "husky-noised" sea…..the chorus responded to every nuance of light and shade quite as loyally as the orchestra, and the effect upon the listener was a tribute to Mr Wood's careful conducting, and, withal, a triumph for a composer of character and originality. Mr Frederic Austin was the exponent of the solo, and was an inevitable partner in what was the most brilliant success of the week.[49]

One of the fullest and most perspicacious criticisms was the one by Newman to which Delius had referred – for the whole concert it was an almost complete broadsheet newspaper column in a tiny font size. There is no evidence that Newman had been to the Essen or Basel performances either, and on one hearing, therefore, he had got an amazing understanding of the music:

> Sheffield, Wednesday night
>
> For those who have been watching the progress of English music over the last few years, tonight's concert, with the first performance in this country of M. Frederick Delius's "Sea Drift" was the most interesting part of the Festival. Mr. Delius is a composer of pronounced individuality who, so far has made little effort to become known in his own country, but who is highly honoured in Germany. "Sea Drift" ….is based on a fine poem by Walt Whitman, in which there is, for that poet, a rather unusually deep vibration of purely lyrical feeling…. [Mr Delius's] idiom is entirely his own, which can be said of very few living composers, and, whether we like it or not, there is no denying that here is a new, quite independent personality to be reckoned with. I cannot always follow him in the working out of his harmonic texture, and some of the vocal writing….seems more appropriate to instruments than to voices, but in the case of a style so novel as that of Mr. Delius it is wise to suspend judgement on these points for a while. The writing for the solo voice is amazingly poignant in expression, and the general atmosphere of Whitman's scene – the lonely beach with the sad, grey outlook, the hollow surge and boom of the sea, the sting of salt in the air, and the mournful brooding of the stricken bird – all this is painted with most singular power in the orchestra. Most admirable of all, perhaps, is the

> singular unity of the composition. Mr Rodgers, in his admirable programme note….points out that there is apparently no formal structure to it, and no use or representative themes. That is precisely where Mr Delius shows his originality and his modernity….As music grows more subtle in feeling we want a more subtle system of structure, a system that shall dispense with the older external scaffolding and build more from the inside. That is what Mr. Delius does in "Sea Drift". The work has a quite remarkable unity. There is any amount of variety of expression in it, but, like a fine painting, it all seems bathed in the one atmosphere which is no small achievement in a work lasting an hour and a half [sic]. Anyone can score well these days, but Mr Delius is one of the few composers with an orchestral colour scheme all of his own….To this, no doubt, is due the satisfactory feeling or organic unity the work gives us. The melody, the harmony and orchestration are indivisible….The performance was excellent in its way, but that way, unfortunately, was not the right kind of way for this kind of music. More splendid choral singing one could hardly wish to hear, but, once again, I repeat that it is foolishness to sing modern works of this kind with the full strength of a large chorus. No only was tonight's chorus false to the whole atmosphere and psychology of the work, but, by overpowering the orchestra at times, it covered up a great deal that is most characteristic in the scoring. A chorus of about a hundred voices would have been ample for the work. One can hardly overpraise the masterly singing of the baritone solo by Mr. Frederic Austin.[50]

By that time, Beecham had heard the North Staffordshire Choral Society on several occasions, and had formed a very high opinion of them:

> "Why did you go to the Potteries for your choir, Mr Beecham?"
> "Because I couldn't get a good enough choir in London!"[51]

> This choir….was at that time in my view the most completely equipped for the interpretation of this particular kind of music. Under its excellent choirmaster, James Whewell, it had a bright ringing tone, undeviating pitch and a sensibility that marked it apart from most other large choral bodies of the day.[52]

and he used them for the two performances he had promised Delius back in the summer - in Hanley on 3 December 1908 and then in Queen's Hall on 22 February 1909 (not in December 1908 as had been the original intention). They also gave it in Manchester on 4 December, when, as Beecham amusingly describes in his autobigraphy[53], there were about 400

members of the orchestra and chorus on the platform and an audience of 300, in a hall holding 2,600. Austin was the soloist in all three performances, and (notwithstanding that Beecham did not have much time for it) the New Symphony Orchestra played for the first two; for the London concert, however, Beecham used his brand new Beecham Symphony Orchestra (the first of the three 'bands' which he formed and owned over the years, making only its second public appearance[54]). The choir received many plaudits: after all three concerts:

James Whewell

> The North Staffordshire singers were triumphant, singing the difficult music as if it were the familiar Elijah or Messiah.[55]

> The forces the conductor directed are among those who have made up their minds on the subject [of the genius of Delius], and the result was that a modern masterpiece had the best interpretation it has so far received. Mr. F. Austin, who sang the work when it was first rendered in this country at the Sheffield Festival, was immensely successful in the vocal solo part; and Mr. Whewell's singers, on perhaps whom the brunt of the work lay, sang as if inspired.[56]

> The choir deserves the utmost credit for finding their notes so accurately in music that is singularly ill-fitted for the voices.[57]

> The choral portions of *Sea Drift* are of a most exacting nature, but the North Staffordshire singers appeared to take delight in its difficulties, and sang with fine gradations of tone and colour.[58]

After the London performance, Beecham wrote to Delius, in very high spirits:

> "Sea-Drift" has come and gone — I am sending you some of the Press notices, and you can see what they say about it— Everyone, even the Press, agree about the Band, that it is first rate. The critic of the "Times" told Ethel Smyth that was the finest performance he had ever heard — They certainly played splendidly, I have never heard anything like it before, anywhere — Sea-Drift went stunningly, the Choir were beautifully in tune and quite safe and Austin's tempi were much better. Of course, his voice is very trying, but his share of the work was much better and more elastic — Generally, it was a far and away superior performance to those *you* heard. The Band were frantically enthusiastic, and if you had been there, you would have had a great ovation —They are really a wonderful lot, the richness of tone and delicacy of the wind are remarkable —I am so thankful now that I have got rid of that d—d N.S.O.[59]

but, as from the following year until 1920, Austin was one of Beecham's three principal operatic baritones[60], it is a little hard to understand the comment that "his voice is very trying" – particularly because Austin was rarely to get better notices:

> Mr F Austin…..was immensely successful in the vocal solo part.[61]

> ….towering above all was Mr Frederic Austin's exposition of the exacting solo part. Never in all my experience have I heard him in better voice. Of late it has grown more full and resonant…..[62]

> The performance of Mr. Delius's "Sea Drift" by the Hanley Choir [in Manchester] we thought better than at Sheffield. Mr. Austin, who took the solo part, has never sung here so well, and he was not, as at Sheffield, overburdened by the chorus. The improvement in his own singing was consequently great….But the success was sealed more thoroughly after [the powerful climaxes] by Mr. Austin's superb singing near the end of the work. More poignant singing we have not heard for a very long time, nor more poignant music.[63]

and in particular this from the doyen of all the critics at that time, Samuel Langford:

> Mr. Austin, who took the solo part, has never sung so well here before, and we was not, as at Sheffield, overburdened by the chorus. The improvment in his own singing was consequently great, and if we may suggest a further improvement it is that, with a choir that subdues itself where necessary, as finely as Mr. Whewell's choir last night, Mr. Austin might venture at times on an even more subdued expression himself……..But the success [of the choir] was sealed more thoroughly afterwards by Mr. Austin's superb singing near the end of the work. More poignant singing we have not heard for a very long time.[64]

The orchestra was hugely praised by all the critics, but Beecham himself did not impress one of them:

> Mr Beecham is a fine conductor, but his violent and often-times unecessary gestures detract greatly from the merits of his conducting.[65]

Thomas Beecham in 1907

and the oddest comment on the music came (as Beecham gleefully put it):

> ….from a gentleman of the Press, evidently recruited from the Sports section of the paper for the occasion, who wrote: 'Mr. Delius seems to have exhausted the whole gamut of aquatic emotion.'[66]

Curiously, five of the first six performances of *Sea Drift* were beset with problems: the short rehearsal period at Essen; the breakdown at Sheffield mentioned in the next quotation; the famous disappearance of the full score before the Hanley concert (which Beecham proceeded to conduct from memory – one

paper said "Mr Thomas Beecham showed his enthusiasm for the music of Delius by conducting from memory a performance of 'Sea Drift'"[67]); the tiny audience in Manchester – and finally an extraordinary happening at Queen's Hall:

> The run to Euston was good, the train pulling up at one of the principal platforms on scheduled time. The party went Westward by means of the tube railway. Tea was awaiting them, and after tea a rehearsal was called for. It transpired, however, the Suffragettes were in possession of the Queen's Hall, and would not be dispossessed long past the time for the band and the choir to meet. As a consequence, the band and the choir did not get together until the concert, though Mr Beecham had a quarter of an hour with the orchestra. Considering the character of the music, it was a dangerous thing to do, but thanks to the enthusiasm and efficiency of the choristers, the adaptability and executive perfection of the instrumentalists, and the clear, definite and inspiring control of Mr Beecham, nothing approaching a hiatus occurred. What a triumph this was for all concerned, and will be better appreciated, perhaps, if it be mentioned here that in the original performance of "Sea Drift" at Sheffield, notwithstanding the splendour of the forces employed, and the time expended in rehearsal, an actual breakdown occurred, so difficult and unconventional is the work.[68]

The Times was almost less enthusiastic after the Queen's Hall performance than it had been about the Hanley one:

> Mr. Frederick Delius, whose work was represented by the first London performance of his "Sea Drift" might well imitate Dr. Vaughan Williams's certainty of handling his orchestral resources. Much of the setting of Walt Whitman's beautiful rhapsody on the bird mourning for his dead mate is of the usual atmospheric vagueness, and it is not until the last few pages of the vocal score that the music contrives to express anything particular. When it does, it becomes real1y emotional, so that at the end the hearer forgets the tedium of the opening. The work, which was given at last year's Sheffield Festival, was admirably played and sung, Mr. Frederic Austin taking the solo part with great effect. The choir deserve the utmost credit for finding their notes so accurately in music that is singularly ill-fitted for the voice. In particular, the disposition of the chords in a passage in seven-part harmony is so ineffective that they might just as well be in four parts. The composer was called at the close of his work:[69]

while the often vitriolic Mr JHB Baughan, the 'conductor' (as he styled himself) *of The Musical Standard*, worked himself up into a veritable frenzy:

> We are afraid that Mr. Beecham will scarcely succeed in making Delius"Sea Drift' a delight to listen to. The composer would seem to be on the wrong path. We listened attentively to the music last Monday, and there seemed no excuse for its dullness and labouredness. Indeed, we venture to say that the spirit of the music is not the real spirit of Walt Whitman's poem. . We were very sorry for the vocal soloist Mr. Frederic Austin: he had abominably monotonous, barbarous and totally ineffective stuff to tackle. He was extremely enthusiastic, but not once did he - nor could anyone - touch us in the remotest manner....What we strongly object to, apart from the laboured character of the music, is the ugly and meaningless dissonance of 'Sea Drift'. We are scarcely convinced that it is the work of a master-musician of the first rank. Let Mr Delius study (say) the Prelude to "Tristan and Isolde" and endeavour to understand how clumsy, seriously lacking in contrast and often downright bad is his own music from a harmonic standpoint. He will also see the value of melody. There is melody *and* melody, but "music" without melody is not music at all.[70]

but the majority of the critics approved of the work:

> The orchestral scoring is brilliantly illustrative of the anguished fantasy of the irregular verses of the poet, and the choral writing, although extremely exacting, is often impressive and even fascinating. The treatment, of course, is essentially modern, but there is no question of an allegation of a formless cacophony being hurled at the [audience].....[71]

but the majority of the critics approved of the work:

> Manchester has invented a new way of showing that enthusiasm for music which it is so confident that it possesses. The method of proof consists in staying away from one of the most interesting concerts of the season. So Mr. Beecham, the New Symphony Orchestra and the North Staffordshire Choral Society went through the programme for the benefit of as fine a collection of empty chairs and benches as anyone could pray to be delivered from seeing.[72]
>
> This highly original and characteristic setting of Walt Whitman's sadly beautiful poem was performed at last year's Sheffield Festival. On that occasion it was received dubiously, mainly, we venture to say, because of its apparent formlessness and strange choral and orchestral idioms did not

square with the preconceived ideas of the audience. For our own part, we found that the consistency of style and feeling that pervade the work left a general impression of organic unity and form. This feeling was deepened by the finely sympathetic interpretation given by Mr. Beecham, who conducted the whole work from memory. Mr. Frederic Austin sang with great feeling the difficult, and not very vocal, solo portions. The choir….is one of the best in the country. [73]

"Sea Drifts" [sic] is one of those emotional compositions which demands from all engaged in its interpretation the best that is in them. When, therefore, the best that is in them is given by such forces as were employed on this occasion the result could not be otherwise than satisfactory. The conductor, Mr. Thomas Beecham, has the highest possible opinion of the genius of the composer….and the forces [he] directed are among those who have already made up their minds on the matter, and the result was that a modern masterpiece had the best interpretation it had so far received. Mr. F. Austin, who sang the work when it was first rendered in the country, at the Sheffield Festival, was immensely successful in the vocal part; and Mr. Whewell's singers, on whom perhaps the brunt of the performance lay, sang as if inspired, and with the aid of the magnificent orchestra carried the thing through flawlessly. There may be differences of opinion as to the means by which Mr. Delius obtains certain effects, but there certainly can be no two opinions that he does secure effects which, although generally new, are often very beautiful. "Sea Drifts" abounds in such instances. [74]

"Sea Drift" is an astonishing work. For all its new scheme of harmony, so rich as to be almost congested, it is an extraordinarily simple work – as simple as the beautiful, direct English of Walt Whitman's poem. Surely descriptive sound can go no farther than this. The swell and reach of the breakers rolling onto the beach, tearing and nagging at the sand below; the sense of infinite space, and the loneliness of the bird hovering on outstretched wings, looking for its mate; the poignant grief when the bird realises that he is singing uselessly in the night, and that he and his mate will be "together no more" – these aspects of nature, and of the emotions in animate and inanimate nature are transferred into sounds by Mr. Delius with a poignant fidelity that is almost bitter in its truth.[75]

The Sheffield performance undoubtedly aroused the initial interest in *Sea Drift* in this country, but it was hampered by Wood's stolid conducting. Whilst the quality of the music was obviously such that it would eventually

become known and loved in any event, and enter the repertoire of the more capable choirs and choral societies, Beecham's and Austin's three subsequent performances must, however, have helped to ensure that in due course the work would become widely acknowledged as probably Delius's finest work.

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1 *Memories of my Brother* (Nicholson & Watson, 1935, p 140).

2 *Delius: A Life in Letters*, (Scolar Press, 1983, Vol 1, pp 210 and 235). NB: From here on, all the letters quoted in the text which are reproduced in that inestimable work are simply referred to in these footnotes by their number.

3 OUP, 1964, p 82.

4 *Delius in America*, in *A Delius Companion*, edited by Christopher Redwood (John Calder, London, 1976, p 154).

5 Letter No 179. Max (von) Schillings (1868-1993) worked first at Bayreuth, then (during this time) Munich, Stuttgart and finally at the Berlin State Opera from 1919 to 1925. He was the dedicatee of *Sea Drift*, and wrote to Delius: "Accept these brief thanks for sending "Seadrift", the dedication of which is a great and genuine joy to me."

6 Letter No 193.

7 Hans Haym (1860-1921) German composer and conductor of the concerts at Elberfeld from 1890 until 1920.

8 Sir Thomas Beecham: *Frederick Delius* (Hutchinson, 1959, p 135).

9 *Essener Volks-Zeitung*, 26 May 1906.

10 To an unidentified recipient.

11 *Rheinish-Westfälischer Anzeiger*, 26 May 1906.

12 *Die Musik*, Vol. 19 (1905/1906), p.50 (Gustav Altman)

13 *Rheinish-Westfälischer Anzeiger*, ibid. - but by another writer.

14 *Essener Volks-Zeitung*, ibid.

15 *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 73. Jahrgang No. 24 13, June 1906.

16 Letter No 199. Schuricht became a strong champion of Delius's music. The reader will find an extract from another letter from Schuricht to Delius in *Delius: A Life in Pictures*, Carley & Threlfall (Thames Publishing 1983 p 54).

17 A German composer, music critic and writer.

18 Letter No 200.

19 (1870-1926). Before he became the musical director at Basel in 1902, he had conducted and taught in Zurich. *A Dictionary of Modern Music & Musicians* (JM Dent, 1924) describes him as "Without doubt the most eminent Swiss condr. His oratorio performances have justly become famous."

20 Letter No 197.

21 The programme was nearly as heavy as in Essen – see the poster above.

22 *Basler Nachrichten*, 5 March, 1907.

23 *National Zeitung (Basel)*, 6 March 1907.

24 It is interesting that this expression was in use as early as 1907.

[25] Schweizerische Musikzeitung und Sängerblatt, 9 March 1907.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Letter No 227.
[28] [Sir] (1869-1944), English conductor, and a very powerful force for music in this country for most of his career. He conducted the Sheffield Triennial Music Festivals between 1902 and 1911.
[29] Letter No 204.
[30] (1872-1952) English singer, composer, musical administrator and teacher, who was one of Beecham's principal operatic baritones between 1910 and 1920; he arranged the music for the famous production of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* which ran at The Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith from 1920 until 1923.
[31] *My Life of Music* (Gollanz, 1938, p 213).
[32] Note 3 to Letter No 249.
[33] (1868-1946). English conductor and composer.
[34] Letter No 249.
[35] (1876-1972). English composer.
[36] Letter No 241.
[37] Letter No 282.
[38] Letter No 284.
[39] (1879-1970). English composer and writer.
[40] Letter No 213.
[41] Letter, 21 Sept 1907 (Courtesy of Lionel Carley)
[42] Letter, Austin to FD 21 September 1907 (Courtesy of Lionel Carley).
[43] Wood was not generally regarded as a 'good' Delius conductor, e.g" Henry Wood did the Delius "Dance Rhapsody" disgracefully badly…."'Enery J", however, has no idea whatsoever where Delius is concerned."– Letter, Philip Heseltine to his girlfriend Olivia Smith on 14 February 1914, No 382 in *The Collected Letters of Peter Warlock*, ed.Barry Smith (The Boydell Press, 2005, Vol II).
[44] Ernest Newman (1868-1959). English critic and writer on music. He and Frederic Austin became a very good friends.
[45] Letter No 293.
[46] *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 8 October 1908.
[47] *The Times*, 8 October 1908.
[48] *The Musical Times*, 1 November 19008.
[49] *The Musical Standard*, 17 October 1908.
[50] *The Birmingham Daily Post*, 8 October 1908
[51] Charles Reid: *Thomas) Beecham* (Gollanz, 1961,p.59).
[52] *Frederick Delius* (Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1929 p.154)
[53] A *Mingled Chime* (Hutchinson, 1944, p 81).
[54] The first, exactly a month earlier, did not involve the full orchestra.
[55] *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 February 1909.
[56] *The Staffordshire Sentinel*, 23 February 1909.
[57] *The Daily Mail*, 23 February 1909.
[58] *The Times*, 23 February 1909.

[59] Letter No 309.
[60] The other two were Robert Radford and Frederick Ranalow, although not in exactly the same period.
[61] *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 4 October 1908.
[62] *Musical Opinion*, November 1908.
[63] *The Staffordshire Sentinel*, 5 December 1908.
[64] *The Manchester Guardian*, 5 December 1908.
[65] *The Staffordshire Sentinel* , 5 December 1908
[66] *Frederick Delius* (supra, p. 155).
[67] *The Musical Times*, 1 January 1909.
[68] *The Staffordshire Sentinel*, 23 February 1909. Neither the Suffragettes nor the breakdown at Sheffield appear to have been mentioned elsewhere, but there seems to be no reason to disbelieve this report.
[69] *The Times*, 23 February 1909
[70] *The Musical Standard*, 27 February 1909.
[71] *The Musical Times*, 1 March 1909.
[72] *The* [Manchester] *Daily Despatch*, 5 December 1908.
[73] *The Musical Times*, 1 April 1909.
[74] *The Staffordshire Sentinel*, 4 December 1908.
[75] *The Manchester Courier*, 5 December 1908.

Beecham, Newman and Austin (pretending to be Wagnerian)
in Newman's garden at Polperro, c. 1934

RICHARD HICKOX TALKED TO THE EDITOR ABOUT CONDUCTING SEADRIFT

I suppose that everyone meets seminal people in their lives, and I was extremely fortunate in that when I founded the Wooburn Festival and the Wooburn Singers in 1967, one of the first people to audition for the Singers was Pat Shirley-Quirk, the wife of John Shirley-Quirk. We were preparing the Fauré *Requiem,* and she said to me "Have you got a baritone soloist?"; I said "No", so she immediately volunteered John. I gave him the job - and to this day, I think that, with the exception of Colin Davis, he was the most intelligent and all-round musician with whom I have ever worked. We still keep regularly in touch. He was always suggesting things for the Festival that he either loved or wanted to get to know, rather as I do at the St Endellion Festival in Cornwall. In due course, he became the President of the Wooburn Festival, and in about 1976 having recently sung *Sea Drift,* he said that he would like to do it again with me in one of its concerts. John was an incredible teacher, and I learned more about music from him than anyone else I can think of. We delved into the piece together, I accompanying him on the piano, until we both knew it almost backwards. I shall never forget him singing "O am very sick and sorrowful" and "O, past, O happy life", either then or in subsequent performances.

It is the most marvellous music - the beginning (which needs quite a lot of rubato), with the rocking bass and the almost noiseless glances on the bass drum, I always think of as the lazy surging of the sea, with a gentle wind floating above. The intonation of the chorus is absolutely critical - not just here and in the a capella passage at the end, but all the way through. If they are not 100% in tune, apart from that, it also sounds very, very dull. There are places in other Delius choral works where the individual parts are really quite unchallenging to sing - but throughout *Sea Drift,* and particularly in the middle section, up to the climax at "...you must know who I am, my love, my love, my love, my love", the music is actually very hard indeed. If, though, the chorus really know the piece, and if, for example, those interjections "…with love, with love!" are absolutely involved and in tune, they sound quite wonderful.

After the opening, at Figure 3, "Up this sea-shore in some briars....", there needs to be lots of momentum – and it then winds down at "The sea-bird crouched on her nest, silent, with bright eyes...." That's another point where the chorus simply cannot sound flat and dull – I always try to make sure that my chorus have bright eyes themselves! "Shine, shine, shine" is more straightforward, but it needs very careful orchestral balancing- and that wonderful section for the baritone "Till of a sudden, may be killed, unknown to her mate....". I'll never forget how John coloured it; he'd thought about every syllable he sang, but yet his singing had that wonderful element of spontaneity. Then at "And thenceforward all summer...." the tempo quickens a little, the key changes seamlessly to F major, and at Figure 11 the sounds should be really magical. A kind of brief scherzo begins at Figure 12, "Yes, when the stars glisten'd...."; there it must really move, but it's quite intricate, and the balance must be right; you've got to hear the two harps there, with the strings not playing too heavily - that's very important. The music calms down again at "He called on his mate....", but the next section, "Yes, my brother, I know...." gradually gathers momentum, so that by Figure 14 everything is on wings, right up to that glorious climax of the whole piece at Figure 17. The wonderful violin solo at Figure 13, incidentally, is in the dreadful (for string players) key of E major, but it nevertheless has to be played with complete sensitivity. It looks straightforward on the page, but unless the leader is really inside the piece it's impossible for the *rubato* to be right. "Oh, rising stars...." at Figure 19 is, of course, the emotional heart of the work, and it really goes without saying yet again that here the quality of the chorus's singing will make or mar a performance.

I think that *Sea Drift* is the most flexible piece in all Delius - it has such ebb and flow. It lasts about 25 minutes, and in that very concentrated span of time you encounter every facet of his music, and every problem that he can throw at you. When conducting the work - indeed any choral or vocal work - first of all, it is absolutely critical that you know the text, and understand the significance of every single word. Then, one of the big problems with Delius's choral works is balance - the orchestra is so big, and the music is often very heavily scored and over-marked. For example, when we get into the "Shine, shine" section, it all builds up to a huge climax - and because you want to hear the words of the Walt Whitman poem, you therefore have to get the dynamics absolutely right. That's why,

when Boosey & Hawkes published the definitive edition, Beecham tried to solve as many balance problems as possible, but even he didn't really go far enough, and I believe that you have to reduce things still more than he did. You need a great transparency and a marvellous glow. It is easy for the piece to be earthbound, and it therefore needs a lot of rehearsal. Unless you have tons of time, you just can't sort out the orchestral textures; they are so clogged by what's on the page, and you've got to have time to thin them out. Once the players get a real understanding of the music, they can play it so much better, and achieve the balance themselves; those great blocks of sound on the horns and brass can be brought down, to let the words, and the important strands in the music, come through. You have to be able to hear the incredible weaving woodwind and the harp arpeggios from the very beginning until just before Figure 5, and the woodwind again two bars before Figure 17; the *forte* at Figure 6, "Shine! Shine! Shine!", is too much, and it must really be only *mezzo-forte* - and you just need time to resolve those sorts of problems. There needs to be a tremendous rapport between the conductor and the soloist, achieved well before you get near the orchestra or the chorus. *Sea Drift* is one of those pieces for which, when you have the final piano rehearsal with the chorus, it's a very good idea to have the baritone soloist there too, because they can learn how they have to interact. A good example of that is the unaccompanied bit at the end, "O rising stars", where the baritone emerges from the chorus in the eighth bar after Figure 20. The key is C sharp minor, and that's yet another place where it's extremely hard to keep in tune. Delius, although trying to be helpful, rather cruelly brings in the third bassoon and the contra bassoon just three bars before the section ends, and if that is out, even by a millimetre, it will sound just awful.

I've been very fortunate having originally had the time to study the piece so thoroughly with John Shirley-Quirk, and then, I having done quite a few recordings of small stuff with the City of London Sinfonia for Argo, Decca decided to splash out for me, and they very much wanted this piece – so I suggested John as the soloist. We were able to put all our joint thoughts and love of the work into that recording, and it's still one of the ones I'm most proud of. Usually when I hear a first take or a first edit back, I am running for cover, but I have to say that, for two reasons, the first time I listened to that one I had tears running down my face - firstly, for the incredible way in which John sang, and secondly because when we were

actually recording it (in the Kingsway Hall) Pat had just been told that she had terminal cancer - and with the whole piece being about the he-bird and the she-bird parting, it's a day I shall never forget. Normally I have a rule that if I make a recording of something, well that's it - but some years later, having gone to Chandos, I was very tempted, and fell to temptation because I was asked to record it with Bryn Terfel. I felt that it would be so different with him - and it was indeed equally valid, but I wouldn't say better. Their performances were just so totally different. So it's one of the very few pieces I have recorded twice, and I think that both versions have been very successful.

Sea Drift needs utter commitment, utter love and great shaping of the text; a feeling for orchestral colour, orchestral balance, and above all transparency - that floating, off-theground, quality. That is particularly so in the last section"O past, O happy life...." -which in that sense is rather like *The Walk to the Paradise Garden.* What I've been trying to show is that it is not a piece that can possibly be put together on the day with a 'rent-a-band' after one three-hour rehearsal, or even two! Very sadly, though, that's what Delius often suffers from.

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UNLIKELY BEDFELLOWS

The influence of Chopin on Delius is illustrated by the appearance of a particular dominant 13th chord from Chopin's *Waltz in E minor* in Delius's *Sea Drift.* Delius's affinity for added-note harmonies may stem from the richly-spaced dominant 9th and added 6th chords of the E major trio of the same Waltz.
(Ronald Stevenson: *Delius's Sounds*, in *Tempo* 151, December 1984)

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SEA DRIFT

THE HISTORY OF PERFORMANCES ON RECORD

Stephen Lloyd

DATE	PERFORMERS and VENUE	LABEL	DSJ REVIEW	TIME
1928 11 Nov.	Dennis Noble, Manchester Beecham Opera Chorus, London Symphony Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham Portman Rooms, London	WHS107 (private Beecham Society LP) SOMM-BEECHAM 10 (5/01)	- 130/51-4	25' 18" (LP) 22' 31"[1]
1929 29 May	Roy Henderson, Choir, New English Symphony Orchestra, Anthony Bernard New Chenil Galleries, Chelsea	Decca S10010-2 (78s: 8/29)	-	21' 13"
1936 3 April & 2 Nov.	John Brownlee, London Select Choir, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham Studio 1, Abbey Road, London	SDX8/11 (78s) SHB32 (LP: 11/76) BEECHAM 3 (11/90) Naxos 8.110903	- - 128/68-9	25' 44"
1951 22 & 26 January	Gordon Clinton, BBC Chorus, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham Studio 1, Abbey Road, London	CMS7643862 (3 CDs with *A Village Romeo*: 11/92)	110/13-14	22' 42"
1954 28 April & 2-3 Dec	Bruce Boyce, Chorus, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham Walthamstow Town Hall	ABL3088 (LP: 2/56) CBS61224 (LP: 3/71) SONY MPK47689 SBK62752 & SB162752 (12/93) SMK89430 (8/01) in Sony SX5K87342 (5 CDs)	- 44/12-13 109/25 - 130/55-6 -	24' 27"
1963 8 March	Carlos Alexander, Chor der Bayerischen Rundfunks, Sinfonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Carl Schuricht Herkulessaal, Munich	Archiphon ARC-3.0 (issued November 1999)	-	21' 03"
1973 18-19 June	John Noble, Liverpool Philharmonic Chorus, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Charles Groves Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool	ASD2958 (LP: 5/74) TCC2-POR54295 (cass.) CDM566113-2 (with Stamford) in 'The Very Best of English Song with Orchestra' EMI n858969 (3 CDs)	49/16-17 - 115/31 -	24' 36"
1980 17 April	John Shirley-Quirk, London Symphony Chorus, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Hickox Kingsway Hall, London	Argo ZRG934 (LP: 7/81) KZRC934 (cass.) Decca 110323-2 (1 & 7/94) Decca 467601-2 London 423136-2 ; -4 in Decca 470375-2 (2 CDs) in Decca 448170-2 (2 CDs with *Gerontius*, etc.: 3/96)	72/20-1 - - - - - -	27' 09"
1987	*Arne Weldgren, Radiokoren Choir and Radio Symfoniorkestra, Cedric Sylvest*	*A film, with photography by Benny Wilhelmson, produced by Margaretha Ferm for Swedish Television.*	-	c. 26'

1990 August	Thomas Hampson, Welsh National Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Sir Charles Mackerras Brangwyn Hall, Swansea	Argo 430206-2 (12/91)	109/21-2	24' 38"
1993 27-28 February	Bryn Terfel, Waynflete Singers, Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Richard Hickox Wessex Hall, Poole Arts Centre	CHAN9214 (11/93) [*Gramophone* 1996 award - choral section]	112/15	25' 49"

- The difference in timing is because of some pitch variation in the CD transfer, discussed below.

The first gramophone records of *Sea Drift* to be issued coincided with the birth of what was to become a famous record label. In 1928 Edward Lewis founded The Decca Gramophone Company Ltd, having bought shares in the company that had achieved considerable success in the development of the portable gramophone. (Its popularity in the First War trenches had been a major factor.) It then seemed only logical that Decca should make records to be played on its own design of gramophone, and so The Decca Record Company was formed in 1929 and its first recordings were released that year. A broad range of music was offered, from Ambrose and his Mayfair Hotel Orchestra to the Hastings Municipal Orchestra conducted by Basil Cameron. At the start Decca signed up the baritone Roy Henderson who, in April 1925 while still a student, had made a spectacular début, stepping in at short notice to sing the role of Zarathustra in *A Mass of Life* under Paul von Klenau. For many years he was to become closely associated with that work, but he also championed *Sea Drift* (which he had already sung under Beecham, Wood and Harty) when he asked Decca if he could record that work as one of their initial releases. They agreed, and in July they were boldly proclaiming in their first advertisements:

> Don't stir from your home! The Concert Platform is coming to you – via Decca Records! Let your home be filled with the beautiful strains of Delius. Let your arm-chair be a comfortable orchestra stall! Roy Henderson, England's greatest baritone, is one of the Covent Garden artistes to be heard, almost seen, on Decca records! Decca has not just recorded his glorious voice – it has *re-created it*.

The conductor for the recording of *Sea Drift*, although – probably for contractual reasons - not named on the record label, in the advertisements, or indeed in the *Gramophone* review, was Anthony Bernard (1891-1963) who was then best known as the founder-conductor of the London

Chamber Orchestra with which he regularly gave enterprising concerts of music both old and new, including early works by William Walton and Constant Lambert and those of his friend, Philip Heseltine. In March 1926 he had conducted Delius's infrequently performed Cello Concerto with Beatrice Harrison as soloist, and in October 1928 he included in a broadcast concert what was gloriously announced as Delius's 'A Symphony before Sunrise'.

At about the same time as recording *Sea Drift* Bernard was also involved in the recording of two other Delius works, *North Country Sketches* and *Air and Dance*. It was probably in connection with the latter work that, together with Philip Heseltine and others, he went to Grez in April 1929. Heseltine wrote to Edward Clark[2] on 8 May: 'I saw Delius last week and was fortunate enough to obtain from him the MS of an unpublished and unperformed piece for string orchestra, written some 15 years ago. It was recorded yesterday, together with the four *North Country Sketches*; and everyone who heard it was enchanted with it. I suppose this will be the first instance in musical history of a work by an important composer having its first public performance by means of the gramophone !'[3] Eric Fenby wrote of the visit: 'Imagine my surprise when, one morning, on going down to lunch, I discovered that Heseltine and several other people had arrived unexpectedly. . . The whole party stayed to lunch. Conversation was not easy, for the others, excepting Anthony Bernard, appeared to be entirely unmusical, and it was natural that we should want to talk about music.'[4] It is possible that not only was the *Air and Dance* discussed during this visit but that, at Heseltine's urging, a completion was devised to Delius's satisfaction and a title assigned.[5]

On 8 May Heseltine informed Fenby: ' "The North Country Sketches" and "Air and Dance" were brilliantly played in the recording studio yesterday. Bernard's handling of the orchestra was quite masterly.'[6] Jelka replied: 'It was so delightful to hear from you yesterday so promptly about the recording of the N.C.S.'s and the little string piece. I hope they will send us test-records as soon as possible, as Fred is very keen to hear it. It is a great pleasure to him that you have such a high opinion of the N.C.S. as he evidently knew it was one of his best works, and yet it was hardly ever played,' and she ended her letter: 'Love to Bernard and blessings for his fine conducting.' [7]

These records were made on 7 May for the Brunswick label. Just

over three weeks later Bernard recorded *Sea Drift* for Decca, and Delius was naturally anxious to hear all three recordings, with Jelka writing to Heseltine on 14 June: 'I have lost Anthony Bernard[']s address. Please tell him that Fred wants so very much to hear his records of N. C. Sketches and Seadrift as soon as possible; he is to get Decca or Brunswick to send them, please.'[8] Heseltine replied a week later: 'I have made enquiries about the gramophone records, and find, to my astonishment, that Sea Drift is being actually issued to the public on July 1st. The test records had already been sent to the factory when I called, but the staff assured me that they were very well satisfied with them. The orchestral pieces [i.e. *North Country Sketches* and the *Air and Dance*] have been put back for re-recording, owing to mechanical defects in the first set of records.'[9] Despite Heseltine's warm commendation and the company's claim that 'every ugly mechanical scratch [is] eliminated by the wonderful Brunswick electrical method of reproduction', for some reason these records were neither issued nor re-recorded, nor do they seem to have survived as test pressings. However, the release of *Sea Drift* proved more promising, with Heseltine writing to Jelka on 8 July: 'I heard the Sea Drift records to-day and was agreeably surprised. There are bad patches here and there, but on the whole the recording is much better than I had expected. Bernard's tempi are rather odd in certain sections – the opening is surely about twice too slow?'[10]

It seems that Delius heard a broadcast[11] of Bernard's recording before the Decca set reached Grez. A very critical Fenby, who also heard that broadcast, wrote to his mother on 30 July: 'The gramophone records of "Sea-Drift" were very poor indeed. A bad orchestra, a miserable little chorus and faulty singing by Roy Henderson, the soloist, and a poor reading by the conductor, Anthony Bernard. Delius did not recognize much of it.'[12] However, Fenby later remembered that when the records eventually arrived they 'sounded somewhat better on the gramophone'[13], and indeed Jelka wrote to Philip on 14 August: 'We greatly enjoyed Bernard[']s Seadrift on our Gram. We first heard it thro wireless, which was rather bad'[14]

For their recording venue Decca had taken an extended lease on the New Chenil Galleries in Chelsea, but as Spike Hughes was himself to discover when he and his 'Decca-Dents' made some jazz records there: 'The studios never produced a good recording. It was not the fault of the

engineers nor even of their recording gear; Chenil Galleries were obviously never intended by the Almighty to be anything in music but a labour ward for *Façade*.'[15] *Sea Drift* was to prove no exception. While the *Gramophone* reviewer considered it 'a superb testimonial to the performers', at the same time he warned readers that the recording was 'below the very best' and that 'even those who know *Sea Drift* well should hear the records right through at least twice'.[16]

Bernard sets a slow pulse for the opening that is a rather too slow once the chorus enters[17], and at 'Blow! Blow up winds' [11] one feels again the tempo dragging, but otherwise his overall shaping of the work is excellent, with well-graded climaxes. The main problem is the sound quality. The Decca engineer(s) presumably had had no experience of recording such large forces; the chorus blasts at climaxes and inevitably much of the orchestral and choral detail is lost. Looking back over half a century, Henderson thought that only a single microphone had been used.[18] Nevertheless, his voice is generally well caught, with clear and expressive enunciation, and under the circumstances he delivers an impressive performance. When heard continuously without side-breaks, it is a reading that conveys well the emotion of the work. The section at 'madly the sea pushes upon the land', when the music builds to a climax of despair, is particularly well handled. Fenby's strictures can perhaps be put down to poor reception of the broadcast, and considering that the performers were assembled solely for the recording, no doubt with limited rehearsal time and with no experience of a public performance, the results are very commendable. Bernard was probably having difficulty in keeping his choir up to pitch because at 'O rising stars' [19], where the woodwind normally play 'only in case of necessity', he has them accompanying throughout (the only recording in which this is done).

The set of three *Sea Drift* 78s (S10010-2) did not stay long in the catalogue and has never been reissued, although at the time of their 50th anniversary celebrations Decca did press a single-sided LP[19] consisting solely of the one work. Roy Henderson received a copy but it was not made available to the general public. If for historical reasons alone, it deserves a transfer to CD.[20]

Decca's *Sea Drift* was not the first time that the work had been recorded. The previous year Beecham had made a studio recording but obviously he had not been satisfied as he did not approve its release. The failure of

this recording to materialise emboldened Decca to announce theirs as being 'of very special interest in view of the forthcoming Delius Festival' which opened in October under Beecham's direction with *Sea Drift* in the first concert. Delius had questioned Beecham's choice of soloists for certain works in the Festival, writing to Heseltine in July: 'Would not Roy Henderson be better [than John Goss in *Arabesk*]? He sang the Mass of Life so expressively and also Seadrift. (I heard the latter on the Radio.[21]) It seems a pity that he is not singing at all in the Festival.[22] Please see Beecham at once about this. Why get D. Noble for Seadrift, who is not specially good, after what I have heard?'[23] Heseltine replied: 'Beecham says that Dennis Noble gave the best rendering of Sea Drift he ever heard at Leeds last autumn[24]. He has recorded the work with Noble, for the Columbia Company, and as it will be given at the concert which the Columbia Company are backing, it must naturally be sung by their man. Henderson has a good voice, but in the concert hall he cannot always hold his own against the orchestra.'[25]

Beecham's first attempts to record *Sea Drift*, with Dennis Noble, coincided with the 120-strong Manchester Beecham Operatic Choir's first visit to London for a Royal Albert Hall afternoon concert on 11 November 1928 to mark the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Armistice. Beecham conducted the London Symphony Orchestra in a programme that included *Sea Drift* (an appropriate choice for the occasion) and Elgar's *For the Fallen*, with the LSO leader W. H. Reed taking over the conducting of the operatic solos because Beecham had injured his hand. Although this was a Sunday, some time during the day the same forces recorded *Sea Drift* in the Portman Rooms in Baker Street. (Was Beecham naughtily using some of the concert rehearsal time for recording ?) Dennis Noble proves to be a strong interpreter; his diction is superb, with every word audible. Three years later he was to introduce *Belshazzar's Feast* at Leeds and Beecham engaged him for *Sea Drift* on three further occasions (including the Delius Festival), but compared with Henderson and many later soloists his voice sounds rather 'throaty', especially in the upper register, with an expressive style of singing that now sounds rather dated.

Unlike Bernard's recording which was accommodated on six 78 sides, Beecham's was planned for seven, with three 'takes' being made of the first two sides and two each of the remaining five. It is not known exactly why Beecham never approved this recording for release but it was quite likely

more a matter of balance: the opening favours the strings too much so that the individual woodwind lines are unclear, and the choir sounds rather recessed and lacking in body. Although balance in the recording studio is a different matter from that in the concert hall, it is interesting to see from a diagram in a letter from Heseltine to Jelka how Beecham arranged his forces for the Festival performance of *Sea Drift*: the soloist was placed well forward on Beecham's left, the strings were divided either side of the conductor, and the woodwind were ranged in front of the choir with the brass and percussion behind. As Heseltine wrote: 'The rehearsal was magnificent: the choir sat amongst the orchestra, and for the first time in my life I heard what I have always hoped, in vain, to hear – a chorus and orchestra that sound like one homogeneous body.'[26]

Beecham's first recording of *Sea Drift* remained unissued until the Beecham Society of America included it on a private LP.[27] In 2001 Shirley, Lady Beecham authorised its official release as part of the Somm Beecham Collection on CD. Using alternative takes, it was skilfully remastered, with the overall sound considerably improved. There is, however, one fault. 78 side-joins can be notoriously problematic, and the join at the end of the 'O rising stars' section, when Noble continues with 'O reckless despairing carols', is almost a semi-tone sharp and remains so for a little while. (This pitch variation is not apparent in the LP issue.) Nevertheless, it is a fine performance, making a worthy addition to the two versions that Beecham approved and were issued in his life-time.

Beecham's first officially released *Sea Drift*, again on seven 78 sides, was recorded in 1936 in two widely spaced sessions[28] and issued in the second of the three Delius Society 78 volumes. This time the soloist was the Australian baritone John Brownlee, and the first session came less than a fortnight after a Queen's Hall performance. 'Sir Thomas Beecham is adept at the peculiar balance required for Delius' music,' commented *The Times* reviewer of that performance, 'but in *Sea Drift* yesterday he frankly treated it as an orchestral tone-poem until the last part . . . Mr John Brownlee was effectively audible only in his last pages. His voice is, perhaps, too rich and mellow for a part that really requires an incisive edge to be heard riding, as it were, on the surface of the orchestral sea.'[29] These problems were overcome in the studio where Brownlee's 'rich and mellow' voice comes through well, if not quite as forward as Noble. Neither Noble nor Brownlee is accurate with the phrase 'carols of lonesome love': both

of them wrongly pitch the word 'love' and Brownlee phrases 'lonesome' inaccurately. This version was transferred to LP for the first of World Records' two boxed sets of 'The Music of Delius', SHB32, and it has since had two CD transfers: as part of 'The Beecham Collection' on Beecham 3, and more recently in Naxos' Beecham-Delius series. The earlier transfer is the one to be preferred with its slightly fuller-bodied sound. Brownlee's is probably the best all-round recording of *Sea Drift* on 78s.

Beecham went into the recording studio with *Sea Drift* again in January 1951, this time with Gordon Clinton as soloist. Clinton had sung *An Arabesque* at the 1946 Delius Festival[30]. In 1948 he was the Dark Fiddler in Beecham's two BBC performances and the subsequent recording of *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, and in 1949 he twice sang *Sea Drift* for Beecham: in Sir Thomas's 70th birthday concert on 2 May at the Royal Albert Hall and in an all-Delius BBC Maida Vale broadcast on 24 June. His is a pleasant light baritone voice but it lacks the depth and richness that one might feel essential for this role. Clinton identifies well with the spirit of the text and his pitching of the notes is exemplary, but, just as in moments as the Dark Fiddler, one feels that his voice is being stretched to its technical and expressive limits. His phrasing of 'he poured forth the meanings which I all of men know', for example, has none of the strength or urgency that Brownlee and others bring to it, almost as if he is unable to sustain the long high-pitched phrase. Nevertheless the recording is an excellent one, but it was not released in either Beecham's or Clinton's life-time and its only issue has been on CD, coupled with *A Village Romeo and Juliet*.

For what was to be his last recording of *Sea Drift*, made in 1954, Beecham chose the Canadian baritone Bruce Boyce who two years earlier had taken the role of Zarathustra in his *A Mass of Life* recording. Comparing the two recordings that Sir Thomas approved, with Brownlee and Boyce, his overall interpretation seems to have changed very little during the eighteen-year interval, despite his age (75). It first appeared on a memorable LP where it was coupled with a definitive reading of *Paris*. As one would expect, the Philips (Sony) version, even though still in mono, wins over the earlier one by virtue of its superior spacious recording. The harps, so clear at 'Yes, when the stars glisten'd all night long' (and a little later at 'Avoiding the moonbeams'), are hardly audible in the earlier version, and some other details, like the *forte* muted horns at 'you husky voic'd sea', only emerge in the later recording. The soloist's voice is captured better, although the BBC

Chorus is very sibilant. A side-by-side comparison of the original LP and the two SONY CD releases shows that the sound has been brightened in places, bringing out the chorus and soloist a little more, but at the expense of the occasional loss of body to the soloist's voice and also, in the latest transfer, a touch of shrillness and even slight distortion at the choral outburst 'Shine ! Shine ! Shine !' The bass is a little over-reverberant in places as well. It is much to be regretted that Beecham never made a stereo version. But despite its minor recording imperfections, this is a near-perfect interpretation because the phrasing and tempi at all times feel unquestionably right. Bruce Boyce is the most satisfying of Beecham's soloists on disc.

The first stereo *Sea Drift* was recorded nearly twenty years later by Sir Charles Groves who, in the post-Beecham years, conducted as much Delius as any other conductor, most notably giving more performances of *A Mass of Life* than even Beecham did. Arguably his finest achievement was reviving the *Requiem* in 1965 when principal conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. His recording of *Sea Drift* was made with his Liverpool forces two days after performing that work and *The Song of the High Hills* in York Minster as part of the 1973 York Festival. The soloist at York was Thomas Hemsley, but it was John Noble who went into the studio to record the work. It was perhaps an unwise change. Noble sounds too uninvolved, too emotionally detached as a story teller, with a degree of monotony in his singing, and the performance as a whole lacks drama. There is one interesting feature: this and all future recordings differ from the earlier ones because in the phrase 'Till of a sudden, maybe killed' the soloist takes the low C on the word 'killed' instead of the higher A natural, correctly following what the score directs when English words are sung.[31]

Richard Hickox's first *Sea Drift*, in 1980, is a well-recorded version, benefiting both from the warm Kingsway Hall acoustic and John Shirley-Quirk's rich bass-baritone voice which is never submerged beneath the orchestral and choral textures. Tempi are occasionally on the slow side, especially in the latter half of the work, such that when the direction *molto lento* is reached, observing it would almost bring everything to a standstill. Yet it is such a thoughtful reading that one becomes less aware of the tempo, being drawn instead to the mood of the moment.

Another sympathetic Delian is Sir Charles Mackerras who offers, amongst the many major Delius works that he has recorded for Decca,

a strong reading of *Sea Drift* with the Welsh National Opera Chorus and Orchestra, and with Thomas Hampson as soloist. Hampson, the Dark Fiddler both on screen and on the soundtrack of *The Village Romeo and Juliet* (DVD and CD), is in fine voice, as are the chorus who bring a burning attack to 'Shine! Shine!' This is a very rhythmical and well-paced performance, building to a magnificent climax at 'O darkness, in vain'. The solo violin at 'Yes my brother' could have been a fraction more audible, and it seems as if an edit has robbed the flute of a silent beat at figure 1. But these minor details apart, overall it is a very satisfying recording.

Two years later there appeared stiff competition from Hickox's second recording of *Sea Drift*, in rather more spacious Chandos sound, with another very expressive soloist in Bryn Terfel. Like Shirley-Quirk and Hampson, Terfel seems fully in sympathy with Whitman, admirably conveying the meaning of the text. *Sea Drift* is not a work that plays itself: it poses many problems of tempo, especially in the latter part with the score's successive directions of *poco piu lento*, *piu lento*, *'rallentando molto'*, *'lento'*, *'largamente'*, *molto lento'*, etc. On repeated playing one becomes more aware at that point in this deeply felt performance of the broadening tempi – Hickock's two recordings have the longest playing time amongst all those issued (by comparison, his 2004 Proms performance was, at 23' 45", two minutes shorter than his Chandos recording) – yet, as with his earlier version, the intensity of the performance wins over. Some small quibbles: one might wish for more variety of expression in the chorus's phrasing of 'O rising stars' and for the word 'perhaps' to be less unnaturally tied to the previous word 'stars', and a black mark to Chandos for not providing, unlike Argo, any cues in this recording for the listener to select particular sections of the work.

Off-air and non-commercial recordings normally lie outside the scope of record reviews, but because this is an historical survey and because archive recordings are occasionally released on specialist labels, their inclusion here can be justified. Almost without exception, none of the conductors who championed Delius's music on the Continent during the composer's lifetime is represented in the Delius discography. The one exception is Carl Schuricht (1880-1967) who frequently conducted Delius's works and gave several performances of *A Mass of Life*[32] and *Sea Drift*, as well as other works such as *Lebenstanz*, the Piano Concerto and *The Song of the High Hills*.

Schuricht had a particular fondness for *Sea Drift* about which he himself wrote:

> I heard *Seadrift* . . . performed at a festival held in Essen in 1906 [the work's first performance] with the composer present. As I listened to this music, which is so undeservedly sneered at nowadays, I forgot orchestra, singers and audience and lost myself in a dream from which I only awoke the next morning. I went to see Delius. He was a charming man, natural, sensitive and good-hearted. 'I am like Brünnhilde,' he said to me. 'I have eight sisters . . .' As for me, I declared to him, 'I haven't got an orchestra yet, but as soon as I have, the first work I'll play is your *Sea Drift*!' And I kept my promise, at Frankfurt[33], though I slightly rearranged the orchestration which I considered imperfect. Delius was in the audience again that evening. He embraced me and said, 'You did well to re-touch the orchestration. It's something I should never have given anyone permission to do, but with you it's different, because I realize you are fond of me.'[34]

Four recordings exist of Schuricht conducting *Sea Drift*. One of these was revealed by Thomas Hemsley in a talk he gave to the Delius Society[35]. In 1952 he was engaged to sing the work with Schuricht and he had a private off-air recording made from the broadcast, part of which he played during his talk. He sang in English, but in the other three Schuricht performances the work is sung in German:

1. Herbert Vliete, North German Radio Orchestra.
   Date uncertain. (22′ 05″)
2 Heinz Reyfuss, Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra.
   1 February 1960. (23′ 10″)
3 Carlos Alexander, Chor der Bayerischen Rundfunks,
   Sinfonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks.
   8 March 1963. (21′ 23″)

The last of the above performances has been issued on CD by the German record label archiphon (ARC-3.0)[36] and is the only generally available recording of *Sea Drift* sung in German and the only one that allows us a glimpse of how Delius's music was interpreted on the Continent. It is a reading that initially appears to be 'more straight' than one is accustomed to, free of any sentimentality. It is the fastest of all recorded versions,

most notably in the first half of the work, yet it has great freedom and a fine sense of forward momentum without any hurry. Hemsley made the interesting remark that Schuricht 'didn't do what so many conductors do, conduct every beat'. 'O rising stars', while buoyant, may seem somewhat plain by comparison with other recordings, but in the closing pages one is taken to the emotional heart of the work.

Another German conductor, of a younger generation, to conduct Delius was Rudolf Kempe (1910-1976). He succeeded Beecham as principal conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and also took over the conducting of the Delius Centenary Festival at Bradford in 1962. One of his Festival concerts was broadcast[37] but does not seem to have been preserved in any archive, but when he became chief conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra he conducted *Sea Drift*, and two performances exist in private hands and presumably in the BBC Sound Archive, although they are not catalogued in the National Sound Archive:

1 John Shirley-Quirk, BBC Chorus & Choral Society, BBCSO. Maida Vale 10 April 1963, re-broadcast 20 July 1990 and 2 July 2001. (24'27")
2 John Noble, BBC Chorus, BBCSO. Maida Vale 1 June 1964, re-broadcast 21 January 1973. (25'16")

Kempe's is a much steadier reading, far removed from Schuricht's, following closer what one may call the English tradition. Both soloists are in fine form, Noble here giving a more deeply-felt performance than in his commercial recording under Groves. The choral singing is stronger in the later performance but either would be a worthy contender for release in the BBC Legends series as a further example of Delius's music being interpreted by a non-British conductor.

Three performances that have been preserved in the National Sound Archive are:

1. Brian Rayner Cook, BBC Singers, BBCSO, Charles Mackerras. Proms, 13 September 1980. NSA C961/23
2. Thomas Allen, BBC Symphony Chorus, BBCSO, Andrew Davis. Proms, 22 August 1993. NSA CD0066147 (23'15")
3. Paul Whelan, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Donald Hunt. Worcester Three Choirs Festival. September 1996, b/c 18 September 1996. NSA H7779/1 (26'31")

Brian Rayner Cook has a rich, expressive voice well suited to this work and the performance, under Last Night of the Proms conditions, is a good one. The Three Choirs Festival recording is hampered a little by cathedral acoustics but more by its slow overall speeds, and Paul Whelan's dry voice tires on repeated hearing. Andrew Davis at the 1993 Proms gives one of the very best of the live performances. Sir Thomas Allen is a superb interpreter and it is a great pity that his interpretation of Sea Drift has not been preserved on disc. (A BBC Transcription Service recording with Allen from the 1980 Edinburgh Festival also exists, with Andrew Davis conducting the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and the Philharmonia Orchestra.) Davis has an innate feel for the pulse of the work, and the Royal Albert Hall acoustics combined with the skilful balance achieved by the BBC engineers result in an aural perspective of great clarity. The BBC Symphony Chorus is outstanding at 'O rising stars', especially when one can hear so clearly the four-part singing, especially the male voices.

Other recordings in private hands that involve artists not represented on disc in this work include Sir Malcolm Sargent at the 1964 Proms with John Shirley-Quirk (26' 25"), and Sir John Pritchard at Huddersfield in 1977 with Donald Bell (25' 12"), a performance only marred by Bell on the words 'and I singing uselessly' oddly breaking 'less' across two syllables. One other recording deserves a mention here, although not generally available to the public: the 1987 Swedish Television film of *Sea Drift* should also be mentioned. (A video copy is not to hand at the time of writing to offer any other comments.)

It is customary for reviewers to suggest a 'best' recording of the work under discussion, something that cannot always be easily recommended. Whether or not the quality of recording is a chief consideration, in a work like *Sea Drift* much will depend on one's personal preference for the soloist. However, those wanting a version in good stereo sound should consider either Mackerras and Hampson or Hickox and Terfel, while no-one should be without a Beecham version, and Boyce on Sony can be safely recommended. Meanwhile, those interested in an interpretation that differs from what we are used to yet is equally valid and is of considerable historical importance should investigate Schuricht. But ultimately it is probably not a matter of what is best as any serious Delian will want to have several of the recordings discussed in this survey.

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(The author would like to thank Robert Threlfall and Brian Radford for their help by supplying some invaluable information for this survey.)

There is an interesting article about the recording of Sea Drift by Anthony Bernard mentioned above in the Philadelphia Branch's *The Delian,* which can be seen at http.//users3.ev1.net/~wbthomp/delius-sea-drift-article.htp. Ed.

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1 The difference in timing is because of some pitch variation in the CD transfer, discussed below.

2 Edward Clark (1888-1962), later husband of the composer Elisabeth Lutyens, was for a while an influential figure on the BBC staff with important contacts in contemporary music on the Continent. When conductor of the BBC's Newcastle Station Orchestra, he gave the first broadcasts of Delius's *Légende* (5 November 1924) and *North Country Sketches* (2 December 1926), and in a letter to Clark dated 29 November 1927, Delius wrote: 'I always remember with great pleasure the beautiful performance you gave about 6 years ago of the Cuckoo and Summernight at the Aeolian Hall' (BL Add. 5257).

3 Letters from Philip Heseltine to Edward Clark, B.L. **Add. 52256. Elgar's** *Carissima* **had a prior claim to being the first gramophone première, on 21 January 1914, with the composer conducting,.**

4 Eric Fenby, *Delius as I knew Him*, Faber 1981 p.59.

5 Beecham had conducted a private performance of a much shorter version of the (untitled) work in 1915. Its completion will be the subject of a more detailed article in the next issue of *The Delius Society Journal*.

6 Philip Heseltine to Eric Fenby, in Barry Smith, *Frederick Delius and Peter Warlock: A Friendship Revealed*, OUP 2000, p.463.

7 Jelka Delius to Philip Heseltine, n.d. [May 1929], in Smith, *ibid*., pp.463-4.

8 Jelka Delius to Philip Heseltine, 14 June 1929, in Smith, *ibid*., p.465.

9 Philip Heseltine to Jelka Delius, 21 June 1929, in Smith, *ibid*., p.466.

10 Philip Heseltine to Jelka Delius, 8 July 1929, in Smith, *ibid*., pp.471-2.

11 A search through *Radio Times* has failed to locate any broadcast of *Sea Drift* at that time. However, commercial recordings, which were far less frequently broadcast than they are today, were not always itemised in *Radio Times.*

12 Lionel Carley, *Delius: A Life in Letters II*, Scolar Press 1988, p.351.

13 *ibid*., p 351.

14 Letter from Jelka Delius to Philip Heseltine, 14 August 1929, in Smith, *ibid*., pp.475-6.

15 Spike Hughes, *Second Movement*, Museum Press Ltd. 1951, p.59. The second and third public performances of the Walton-Sitwell *Façade* had been given at the Chenil

Galleries in 1926, and among the early Decca recordings were excerpts from *Façade* recorded there in 1929.

16 *Gramophone*, August 1929, pp.122-3.

17 Bernard takes 2'08" to reach the chorus's entry [2] while Beecham in 1928 takes only 1'27".

18 In conversation with the author, 18 August 1986. An edited transcript appeared in *Delius Society Journal* 92, a special Roy Henderson issue.

19 The label incorrectly names Stanley Chapple as conductor.

20 Eugene Goossens' acoustic recordings of *Brigg Fair* and *On Hearing the First Cuckoo*, together with Henry Wood's *Dance Rhapsody No 1* (which has been available on CD) could be other historical orchestral couplings.

21 Probably on 7 February 1929 when a Hallé concert was relayed from Daventry and Henderson singing *Sea Drift* with Hamilton Harty conducting.

22 In fact Roy Henderson was a soloist in *A Mass of Life* in the Festival's final concert. The soloists were not changed.

23 Frederick Delius to Philip Heseltine, 6 July 1929, in Smith, *ibid*., p.470.

24 This was the Leeds Festival performance to which Eric Fenby had failed to gain admittance: 'My dear boy, if I had only known I would have put you on the platform!' had been Beecham's comment (*Delius as I knew Him*, p.10).

25 Philip Heseltine to Frederick Delius, 11 July 1929, in Smith, *ibid*., p.472.

26 Philip Heseltine to Jelka Delius, 2 October 1929, in Smith, *ibid*., p.502. (John Goss was the soloist in *Sea Drift* at the rehearsal as Dennis Noble 'could not come'.) *The Times* reviewer (14 October) nevertheless felt that 'The London Select Choir was hardly big, or, at any rate, prominent enough in *Sea Drift*'.

27 WHS107. *Sea Drift* was coupled with a live performance of *The Walk to the Paradise Garden*, Blue Network (ABC) Symphony Orchestra, 7 April 1945, and commercial recordings of extracts from three Handel-Beecham suites.

28 The first session was on 3 April 1936 when he also recorded an extract from Act III of *La Bohème* with Lisa Perli, and on 2 November he recorded the complete work again. The issued set used three takes from the first session and four from the second (Michael Gray, *Beecham: A Centenary Discography*, Duckworth 1979).

29 *The Times*, 23 March 1936.

30 See 'Gordon Clinton: Midlands Branch meeting 13 November 1982', reported in *Delius Society Journal* 79, pp.20-1.

31 In the English version the low minim C is for the one syllable 'killed' while in the German the last two syllables of 'ge – tõ – tet' fall on crotchets A and C. In the concert performance two days before the recording, Hemsley followed the older practice of taking the higher note.

32 1925 16 March Wiesbaden ('The splendid Schuricht took enormously great pains, is so enthusiastic...', Lionel Carley, *A Life in Letters II*, p.299), 1926 May Wiesbaden and Frankfurt, 1927 3 October Berlin, 1931 September Scheveningen.

33 7 November 1910.

[34] *Great Concert Artists: Carl Schuricht*, René Kister, Geneva, 1956, pp. 17 & 19.

[35] 18 March 2004. Reported in *DSJ* 136, pp.60-4. The date of this performance, probably with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, has not yet been found.

[36] This CD, that also includes Schuricht conducting Rudi Stephan's *Music for Orchestra* and Jacob Kowalski conducting Gabriel Saab's Symphony No 1, is currently out of print, but private copies may be obtained from Werner Unger archiphon.unger@t-online.de

[37] Later that year Kempe gave an all-Delius concert with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, but it was not broadcast.

"DELIAN"

Endnote 23 to the article above about the first performances of *Sea Drift* refers to the use of "Delian" in the early years of the last century. The very first coining of the expression ever recorded, however, is to be found in *Pervigilium Veneris,* a long 5th century poem believed to have been written by Tiberius. Its subject is a spring celebration of love, presided over by Venus, and it includes the following (in translation):"....it cannot be believed that Love is on holiday, if he had carried weapons.… He was ordered to go unarmed, he was ordered to go naked, or lest he might harm something with a bow, or with an arrow.…But when Love is naked, the same one is complete with weapons….Venus sends maidens to be compared with you with regard to chastity. There is one thing we ask, "Cede, O Delian Maiden....She herself would wish to you, that she might bend your chastity.... The entire night is to be occupied, to be kept awake with songs. Let Dione reign in the woods, you withdraw, O Delian one!"....Tomorrow let him love who has never loved….." Ed.

AND NOW A POTTED HISTORY ....

Sea Drift (ocean current) RT
RT 02/03
compose 1903 – 1904
first performance May 24, 1906, Josef Loritz, Essen, Musikverein and the cond.Georg Witte, Essen
memo
Bar chorus orch WhitmanBaritone, chorus and orchestral music.
According to Inoue harmony man compilation work' classic music work term model' Sanseido Co., Ltd. publication, as for composition 1903 years. In M. xxxxxxxxxxxxl presenting.
1903 year commencement? 1904 year completion? As for premiere at festival of the Allgemeine Deutsch Musikverein. October 7th of 1908, in the Sheffield Festival the Henry Wood, the Frederic Austin, the The Queen's Hall orch, with the battle array, Sheffield Festival cho replaying (the English premiere? December 3rd of 1908 Hanley, Manchester the immediately after the that, in each case Beechani direction. November 7th of 1910, the shoe Lee person (the Carl Schuricht) you replay. November 12th of 1910, the Hans Haym replays with the Elberfeld. Both as for the composition person has gone to hearing. 1 April of 911 you replay in London. October 3rd of 1912, the Henry Wood replays with the Birmingham. As for the German singing/stating Thorpe Bates. March 10th of 1914, with the German singing/stating of direction and the Thorpe Bates of the Charles Kennedy Scott, the Oriana Madrigal Society replays. March of 1915, with the German singing/stating of the Hamilton Harris, you replay in the Hall? concert. May 11th of 1915, with the London The British Music Festival replaying (Queen's Hall). London Choral Society, as for LSO and the German singing/stating Herbert Heyner, as for direction xxxxxx.. October of 1921, you replay with the cloth Bradford. February of 1925, you replay with the Cassel. Spring of 1927, the xxxxxxxxx replays in London. October 2nd of 1928, you replay with the Leeds Festival. May 29th of 1929, the German singing/stating of direction and Roy Henderson of Anthony Bernard, sound recording of New Symphony Orch and Chorus. This it blames the Fenby in the xxxxxxx.

(Another entry in that Japanese catalogue)

ELEGY – THE BIRTH OF A BALLET

Alex Hamilton-Brown*

In 1954, a friend lent me the 78 rpm Columbia recordings of *Paris* by Delius, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. I was deeply moved by the music and remember thinking, even then, that it might make a marvellous ballet. After that, I became an avid collector of Delius's music. But my first love was film. At that time, I was a film music editor with the Pathé film company in London. As my career advanced, I became a director and producer of documentaries and docu-dramas for television, and any further ideas of a ballet adaptation seemed to be forgotten. At least, that's what I thought, until fifty years later, when I had made my home in Vancouver, something quite extraordinary happened.

I was driving home along Second Avenue and had just switched on the car radio. Straight away, I recognized the menacing contrabassoon, notes at the beginning of *Paris*. I was immediately transported back in time to when I first heard the work fifty years before. Parking the car in a side street, I sat there entranced. As I listened, I began to visualise the dramatic elements of a film ballet set in Paris.

This is vintage Delius which sweeps us into the maelstrom of life's emotional upheavals, only to be wonderfully tempered by moments of divine tenderness. It is music that unerringly charts the heights and depths of the human spirit. But there is also a strong narrative sense to this work. It is always going forward; always taking you somewhere. There's a yearning for something unattainable, of longing and a great sense of loss. It suggests an agonizing struggle of someone victimized by their own fate, yet dreaming of another.

I bought the Sir Charles Mackerras EMI recording of *Paris* and sketched out a detailed scenario parallel to the music. Next, I arranged to have a storyboard drawn of the principal scenes. This gives prospective broadcasters and sponsors an idea of how the ballet will look on film.
Typically, performing arts projects are well supported in Canada, but for a project to trigger government funding, it must have a guaranteed broadcast date and the financial support of a broadcaster. I had just completed a film about Inuit sculpture for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, so

* Alex Hamilton-Brown is a freelance film-maker living in Vancouver

there was little difficulty arranging a meeting with the Programme Director, Bob Sherrin. While Bob loved the idea of a modern ballet for his new series 'Opening Night,' the cost was too high for him to become involved. Never one to give up, I made several money-saving modifications which brought it within his budget. In the end, he agreed to back it, providing I could get Karen Kain to come out of retirement to dance the principal role.

Before retiring in 1996, Karen Kain was Canada's leading ballerina. She starred as Prima Ballerina in London, New York and Paris. Rudolph Nureyev said of her that she was his favourite dance partner in *Swan Lake* and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. My immediate problem was to convince Karen to participate in the film.

When we met in Toronto in the spring of 2003, I played her the recording of *Paris*. It was completely unknown to her, but she was captivated by the music and immediately recognised its choreographic potential. We talked about the dream-like imagery and how story and movement would evolve freely from the music's enormous dynamic range. The idea of the film appealed to her and she felt that the perfect choice of choreographer would be Dominique Dumais, one of Canada's most innovative choreographers, who was then with the Mannheim Ballet in Germany. Dominique agreed to work on the film but it would be another

year before we could synchronize everyone's schedule to start filming.

Still under the required budget, I approached the Delius Trust to make up the shortfall, and following an excellent meeting with their chairman David Lloyd-Jones, thankfully the Trust agreed to a substantial grant that enabled us to become fully financed. The film would cost $527,000, which was a sizeable budget for a 21 minute 58 second film (excluding credits) – being the exact length of the Mackerras recording; no cuts were made to the Delius score. Shortly after that, Sir Charles kindly faxed me his approval to use his recording for the project.

Usually, when a ballet is filmed, it is shot in a studio or directly from a stage production. This film was decidedly different in that much of the dancing was shot in 'exterior' locations in Paris. The dark waters of the Seine and the Pont Neuf become focal points as the scenario unfolds. When the protagonist enters a secret entrance to the Paris catacombs, it is both a real experience and at the same time a metaphor of her subconscious. Filming in the catacombs was not allowed, so the caverns and passageways of the subterranean world were re-created in a Montreal studio.

We began shooting in Paris in the spring of 2004, which turned out to be more like spring in Siberia, with chill winds whipping up the waters of the Seine. To make matters worse, Karen's costume had to be fairly flimsy and flowing to allow her complete freedom of movement. So, just off camera, we had a stage-hand shadow her every move, 'standing by' with a warm blanket after each take. But in spite of the inclement weather, shooting went well and, being the consummate professional that she is, Karen's performance was never compromised by the conditions.

The question of whether Delius's music should be adapted for a ballet has been an on-going debate for years. I believe Delius was not particularly keen on his music being used in that way. But the fact is that this 'symphonic rhapsody' is eminently danceable. In the late 1930s, I am told, Frederick Ashton used a short extract from it to show off the brilliance of the young Margot Fonteyn.

None of our dancers was familiar with *Paris* but they loved its exquisite rhythmic patterns and cadences, its gut-wrenching emotional climaxes and wonderfully expressive tenderness. The *pas de deux* in the final five minutes of the ballet has been described by one media dance critic as "a startling and sensuous sequence that plays with eroticism, regret and the fragility of an aging body." (*The Globe and Mail*, February 24, 2005).

The music of Delius is not as well known in Canada as it is in the U.K. and Europe. But on 24 February 2005, there were over a quarter of a million people across Canada who saw *Elegy*; I venture to suggest that perhaps 95% of them had never heard the wonderful music of *Paris* before, and perhaps this new film ballet may in some part fill that gap. As to whether it will be seen in the UK, there's a possibility the film may be picked up by the BBC Arts Channel Four.

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Boulevard Montmartre, Paris, 1897,
by Camille Pissarro

DELIUS SOCIETY MEETINGS

LONDON BRANCH MEETING

New Cavendish Club, London on 20 September 2005

Frederick Delius: Some Friends and Associations
A talk by Tony Lindsey

Tony Lindsey began by reminiscing about his first Society meeting as a member, at which he had felt very much out of his depth - but quite clearly his subsequent 'personal journey of musical education' had been very fruitful, and had brought him a long way, for his talk was absolutely fascinating.

After talking about his musical education as a chorister, attending performances by the Southern String Orchestra, and meeting the Dolmetsch family, with the aid of brief word portraits our speaker then drew into his talk many connected with Delius, and played examples of short works by some of them. The first was Albert Sammons (to whose recordings Tony and a school friend, Robin Oakley Smith, a nephew of Sammons's, had listened) and his rather Delian *Plantation Dance* of 1915. This was followed by Delius's *On Craig Dhu*, the connection being the unhappy Etonian Phillip Heseltine - having heard the piece in 1911 at a concert in Windsor, and Beecham conducting *Songs of Sunset* the previous June, he fell under the spell of Delius, who soon became his guide and mentor. As Peter Warlock, Heseltine is remembered specially for his songs; and we heard *The Fox*, just about his last composition before his untimely death, followed by *Piedse en l'Air* from the *Capriol Suite*.

The first half closed with a lovely piece, *Benedictus* by William Lloyd Webber, played by Tasmin Little (a Vice President of the Society) accompanied on the organ by Ian Watson. The composer was, of course, the father of another of our Vice Presidents, the cello virtuoso Julian - and Tony acknowledged the efforts of those two exceptional artists to promote the music of Delius, despite busy international careers.

The second half was devoted to Grieg, the Frankfurt Group, Beecham and Fenby. An excerpt from *Paa Vidderne* (the farewell to the hero's mother) reminded us of Delius's never particularly warm relationship

with his own mother, and of his regular companions on annual walking holidays in Norway 'on the heights.' Friendship with Edvard and Nina Greig had done so much to encourage the young composer, and we heard the early (c. 1888) song *The Nightingale*, a setting of words by Theodor Kjerulf dedicated to Nina and sung in Norwegian by Henriette Bonde-Hansen.

Of Delius's 'Frankfurt Group' friends, Balfour Gardiner (born 1877 - *Second Prelude*, played by Peter Jacobs and *Shepherd Fennel's Dance*) and Norman O'Neill (born 1875 - Overture: *In Autumn* Op. 8, written in 1901) were the most constant. Balfour first met Delius at a dinner party given by Norman and Adine O'Neill at their London home in April, 1907; he was invited to visit the Deliuses at Grez, and they became very close friends; Balfour indirectly helped Delius to dispose of the Solana Grove plantation, and later, at a time of great financial hardship for the Deliuses, he bought the freehold of the Grez house and allowed them to remain there without payment. As an aside, Tony reminded us of Gerald Finzi's words after he first met Gardiner: "If one had tried to back a winner among the young men ... born between 1870 and 1880 one would have backed him before Vaughan Williams or Holst — as far as early promise was concerned. He is a ruddy faced old bachelor, adoring children and with an individual wit and delightfully perverse ideas. "The O'Neills were also very supportive - Delius stayed at their London home in Kensington on several occasions, among others for the first performance in England of *Appalachia* in November 1907. That year Delius and Norman were co-founders of the ill-fated Musical League with Elgar as President. Norman tragically died on 3 March 1934 after being struck by a small vehicle in Oxford Street whilst on his way to a rehearsal of his music for *Henry V*.

The last friend was Eric Fenby, the composer's devoted amanuensis, whose devotion and dedication over six years enabled Delius to complete a number of important compositions. Tony reminded us of Eric's own abilities as a composer – although he gave up writing whilst working for Delius. Having done the music for Alfred Hitchcock's film *Jamaica Inn* (of which little was used), during the actual filming and after a long walk across the moors with Charles Laughton, he imagined what Rossini might have made of the folk tune *On Ilkla Moor Ba'htat*. That led to *Rossini on Ilkla Moor*, which was completed in 1938, and we heard a recording by The Royal Ballet Sinfonia conducted by Gavin Sutherland.

Tony summed up by mentioning other friends who had tried to ensure Delius's musical posterity, including Grainger, Moeran, Quilter, Scott, Howard Jones, the Barjanskys and the Harrison sisters. In June we had commemorated the 71st anniversary of Delius's passing, and yet his influence lives on – through the devoted efforts of The Delius Trust (and in particular, of course, Robert Threlfall for his monumental *Collected Edition*); the founder and past Chairmen of the Delius Society; and the many authors, journalists, musicians and presenters who have worked tirelessly to perpetuate the memory of this gifted and original composer.

In proposing a vote of thanks for an excellent and fascinating talk, Malcolm Rudland mentioned, regarding Warlock's *The Fox,* that it had been Tony himself who had recovered the actual fox's mask from The Fox inn at Bramdean in Hampshire, and presented it to the Warlock Society's Chairman at a meeting at The Antelope in Belgravia. A generous round of applause followed.

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* Later, having been singing the folk tune on a walk with Tom Laughton, Charles's brother and a Scarborough hotelier, Eric had countered with his version "in a strangely foreign idiom." Having asked "Could you make it into an orchestral piece?" and being assured by Eric "Of course — no trouble at all", Tom had arranged with Kneale Kelly, the conductor of the Scarborough Spa Orchestra, to announce it on posters for the Gala Concert at the Scarborough Cricket Festival as "A new work by Eric Fenby, conducted by the composer". However, he omitted to tell Eric, who, when confronted by the poster, rushed to see Tom. "Are you mad" he asked; "How can I write a piece in time for a performance next week?" Nevertheless Eric composed it in Tom's music room at Harcourt Place, (his home which adjoined the Royal Hotel, Scarborough), and it proved to be a sparkling piece; Eric received an ovation, and it was performed over ninety times by various orchestras the following year. [See *Pavilions by the Sea* by Tom Laughton — Chatto & Windus, London, 1977].

LONDON BRANCH

New Cavendish Club, London, on 18th October 2005

Constant Lambert, Delius and Jazz
A talk by Stephen Lloyd

Did you first come across Constant Lambert as the composer of *The Rio Grande*? Stephen Lloyd believes that for many, their first and only knowledge of Lambert is through this work. In 2005, his centenary year, he has become a largely forgotten and misunderstood figure, remembered only as a heavy drinker who wrote *The Rio Grande,* but in this illuminating talk Stephen demonstrated the many-faceted achievements and under-rated brilliance of Lambert. The title of the talk referred to Delius and jazz, but we were given so much more than this. With his customary erudition and infectious enthusiasm, Stephen showed us Constant Lambert's extraordinary achievements as, successively: composer, broadcaster, journalist, writer, conductor (especially of ballet), jazz enthusiast and general polymath:

As a composer: Lambert's wide ranging interests left him little time for composition but his small output is distinctive and unconventional. He favoured unusual subjects, for example a planned choral work was based on the life of the black slave Henri-Christophe who became king of Haiti, and his opera (*Tiresias*) is about copulating snakes! The premiere of the latter was apparently given before Royalty and according to Lambert, "it took considerable ingenuity to ensure that the subject matter was clear to the gallery but concealed from Royalty." Lambert also favoured unusual ensembles: whilst at college he wrote songs with flute and harp accompaniment and *The Rio Grande* is scored for piano solo, chorus and an orchestra without woodwind.

As a broadcaster: Lambert joined the Sitwell-Walton circle as a young man; he became a celebrated reciter of Walton's *Façade,* taking over from Edith Sitwell after the first few performances. Walton considered him to be the best exponent of that work, and we heard an extract from an early recording in which Lambert's amazing rendition of "Thetis wrote a treatise…." (from the 'Tango Pasadoblé') surely breaks the speed record! It is most unfortunate that Lambert's early death prevented him from

making another recording which had been planned in 1950. Constant Lambert was a prolific broadcaster: he made nearly 40 BBC broadcasts on a wide range of generally offbeat subjects, e.g. Lord Berners, Satie, cats, Sousa, Chabrier…..all typical Lambertian enthusiasms! We were treated to part of a recorded talk on Berners, delivered in unmistakable fashion – each word carefully chosen and delivered with precise diction.

The writer and journalist: His book 'Music Ho!' (1934) has become a landmark of musical criticism – personal, idiosyncratic, entertaining and quite unique – but otherwise Lambert's writings have largely been forgotten. However, he was a prolific writer and journalist. Starting in the 1920's he researched early music, wrote film reviews for 'Le Figaro' (in French!) and became a regular contributor to the 'New Statesman', the 'Sunday Referee' (where he had a weekly column) and 'Lilliput'. Lambert's uncompromising concert reviews often led to clashes in the press, and Stephen provided several examples of these. He was noted for a witty and apt turn of phrase: in a review of Tovey's long-winded and academic *Cello Concerto* he described the first movement as "lasting as long as my first term at school."

As a conductor: Lambert was a renowned conductor of ballet, and he contributed greatly to the establishment of English ballet after the death of Diaghilev. In the concert hall he was a noted exponent of Sibelius - he conducted four of the symphonies at the 1946 Proms - and he had the knack of always finding just the right tempo for any piece. He conducted a good deal of light music and was associate/assistant conductor for several post-war Prom seasons. Lambert's interest in Delius is particularly fascinating. He conducted/recorded a number of pieces including *La Calinda* (a particular favourite),*The First Cuckoo,* the *Piano Concerto* and excerpts from *Hassan*, but his enthusiasm was not without reservation: he was critical of parts of the *Mass of Life* where he felt that Delius's style was unsuited to the more 'tub-thumping' side of Nietzsche. However, as Stephen pointed out, Delius's influence can often be detected in Lambert's works, for example the choral passage in *The Rio Grande:* "The noisy streets are empty and hushed is the town….".

As a jazz enthusiast: Lambert's interest in jazz started in the early 1920s when he, Walton and Angus Morrison discovered Will Vodery's band, and it lasted all his life. He championed jazz and defended it repeatedly against many critics. In particular, Lambert was a friend

and huge supporter of Duke Ellington, whom he admired as composer as well as performer. Jazz styles found their way into a number of his compositions, for example *Elegiac Blues* written in memory of the jazz singer Florence Mills, and of course *The Rio Grande*, written for his pianist friend Angus Morrison. Of particular interest in relation to Delius was an account by Malcolm Arnold of a radio broadcast by Lambert. Arnold remembered being struck by Lambert's theory that jazz originated from American Negro slaves exposed to missionary hymns whose harmony had then been 'twisted' to create blue notes. Lambert went on to say that Delius's exposure to the Negro slave music he heard in Florida must be the first example of black American music influencing a white European composer.

As well as showing us the extraordinary diversity of Lambert's life, Stephen was very keen to correct the misinformation and bad press that surrounds Lambert today. In a recent critical review Norman Lebrecht stated that "Lambert collapsed in the gutter and died from drink." Stephen made it quite clear that his death was due to undiagnosed diabetes, exacerbated by hard work, a punishing lifestyle and (it has to be said) heavy drinking. Like many of his friends, Lambert was a drinker but it did not cause his death, and it is regrettable that this aspect of him is all that many people remember today. Lambert achieved so much, and gave so much, to music in a life dogged with ill health and cut cruelly short at the age of forty-five. This was a truly fascinating and memorable evening and I am sure we all hope that Stephen's forthcoming biography of Lambert will raise his profile, and go some way to correcting the bad press that surrounds this forgotten and misunderstood man.

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PHILADELPHIA BRANCH

The Philadelphia Ethical Society Building on 23 October 2006

Frederick Delius - Devotion, Collaboration and the Salvation of Music
A talk by Dr. Emanuel Garcia

Much of this fascinating talk given last October to "an audience composed largely of Delius neophytes" (*The Delian*, December 2005) by Dr. Emanuel E Garcia, was concerned, often in a psychological context, with Delius's early years and the "collaboration" with Eric Fenby.

The story of the momentous encounter between Eric Fenby and Delius in the greater context of Delius's fascinating life and loves was explored in great detail, with particular attention being paid to the psychology of devotion and the role of collaboration in artistic creativity. Then, after describing Delius's early family life, his times and travels, and the tumultuous years in and around Paris with a host of musicians, writers and artists as he struggled to find his own musical language, Dr. Garcia considered Delius's long marriage to Jelka Rosen and her devotion and understanding at their home in Grez-sur-Loing. Excerpts from a recorded talk by Eric Fenby exposed the darker side of Delius' creativity, and the description of his final years and debilitating illness was given with the special insight of a physician.

Dr. Garcia,
Daniel Khalikov and
Elena Jivaeva
(Bill Marsh)

The talk was followed by a performance of Delius's *Third Violin Sonata* by two Uzbekiatian artists, Daniel Khalikov and his mother Elena Jivaeva – and the former can be download (by courtesy of Member Bill Thompson) at: http://users3.ev1.net/~wbthomp/delius-garcia.htm

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[The Philadelphia Branch continues to flourish – with tremendous enthusiasm and input from, among many others, Bill March and Bill Thompson. They also had a talk on 28 January 2006 from Pamela Blevins titled *Marion Scott & Ivor Gurney: Song of Pain & Beauty*. Their own Journal, *The Delian*, is an excellent publication. Ed.]

LONDON BRANCH

New Cavendish Club, London on 8 December 2005

The Delius Requiem – neglected masterpiece or…..?
A talk by Tony Summers

The high standard of the London Branch meetings was wonderfully sustained by Tony Summers, who provided us with both a lucid overview and a detailed study of the enigmatic and neglected *Requiem* – about which Tony once found it difficult to get information. Now, as a one-time performer of the work, he was able to provide his smallish, but very attentive, audience with a series of intimate and amusing insights into it. Throughout his talk, and by way of preparation for an uninterrupted performance of the work at the end, Tony played and commented enthusiastically on extracts from it. This was especially helpful to those of us who had not listened to it for a while, reminding me, at any rate, of its eloquent power and special atmosphere.

The *Requiem* is in no sense an orthodox requiem at all. Rightly brushing aside Warlock's and Beecham's negative comments, and notwithstanding that at one time Fenby found the piece depressing, but later revised his view, Tony told us how Delius himself had a very high opinion of his *Requiem* – not only because of the music, but because the text expounded

his philosophy of life. Some of those at the meeting went to Liverpool on 9 November 1965 to hear the first performance since the original première given by Albert Coates with The Philharmonic Choir in 1922. Although the occasion did not linger in Tony's memory (largely because of an appalling car journey he and Roger Buckley undertook from Oxford), I can assure him that it was a highly competent performance by Charles Groves and the Liverpool Philharmonic – particularly given that (as I was told by members of the orchestra whom I knew) at that time they were under great pressure.

Next, Tony discussed the 1994 Festival Hall performance, for which at a late stage, Martyn Brabbins replaced Vernon Handley – they both, of course, have a special love of Delius. For that, as Lionel Carley told us later, the German text was used. Soon afterwards, Tony was very closely associated with an amateur performance of indifferent quality under Brabbins - for which, disappointingly no bass oboe was available!

Tony felt that the Trust should endeavour to sponsor a thoroughly prepared fresh performance and recording - sung in German as a way of side-stepping the various embarrassments of the English text. Little, after all, could be done about the 'Hallelujah-Lah il Allah' chorus - an altogether curious episode, unlikely to be based on any of the advice which the composer had sought from Ernest Newman. As he now knew the work intimately, he was more than ever convinced that it was a major piece, containing music of the highest inspiration that far outweighed the occasional longeurs.

The piece was largely composed between 1913 and 1915 (much of it in Watford*) - and the dedication "To the memory of all young Artists fallen in the war" was added as late as 1918, perhaps as the result of the death of Delius' nephew (Clare's son) in the War. The words, a peculiar and unlikely blend of Ecclesiastes and Nietzsche, were provided by Heinrich Simon, a German-Jewish friend of Delius's (who was later shot by the Nazis in New York). Although their clumsiness was perhaps a major obstacle to performances, it remained a moot point as to whether the work should be sung in the original German, in the loose English translation by Heseltine, or even a fresh one. A further obstacle to performance might be the frequently astringent character of the music – closely related to *An Arabesque*, *North Country Sketches*, and *Eventyr* – adopted when Delius's idiom was becoming more searching and advanced. About this, Anthony

Payne writes supremely well in the latest *Grove.*

There is the dark opening, a funeral march and a sensual and languorous Part 3 ('A la grande amoureuse'); the last section (5) moves magically from winter to spring (as in *North Country Sketches*) in pusuance of the creed of eternal recurrence. Tony likened the 'spring' music to Stravinsky's description of 'the whole earth cracking open suddenly'. Challengingly, there are pre-Vaughan Williams brass chords (cf. *Job*), and pre-Holstian bitonalism – techniques neither of which Delius went on to exploit later. Did he need to hear this work in performance to see how these innovations sounded? Did illness play its part? At all events, I believe that for many of us, the final section offers moments of the ecstasy for which the composer was frequently searching.

Finally, we had a complete performance – that by Richard Hickox with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Rebecca Sinclair and a very impressive Peter Coleman-Wright (Chandos CHAN 0515 – a double CD with *A Mass of Life*) – and they more than rose to the occasion for the finale.

A gracious vote of thanks by Lionel Carley, who discretely offered a series of further insights and pieces of information, brought an excellent evening to a highly satisfactory conclusion.

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* *Vide* Lewis Foreman's talk to the London Branch reported in DSJ at p.81, DSJ 137.

ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

PATRON - HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

(Leader, Peter Mountain)

Soloists

HEATHER HARPER
THOMAS HEMSLEY

National Anthem

Prelude and Liebestod (Tristan and Isolde)	Wagner
Requiem for Soprano and Baritone soli double chorus and Orchestra	Delius

INTERVAL

Symphony No. 4a in E flat, Op. 97 (Rhenish)	Schumann

LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

(Chorus Master, Dr. J. E. Wallace, o.n.a.)

Conductor

CHARLES GROVES

The Society is most grateful to the Delius Trust for its generous contribution towards the cost of presenting the De ius Requiem at tonight's concert.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

DELIUS'S REQUIEM

Part of the note, by the critic A K Holland, in the programme for the performance of the Requiem on 9 November 1965 reproduced above – and mentioned by Tony Summers in his talk to the London Branch.

Delius's Requiem is in some sense a pendant to his Mass of Life. It is no more a Requiem in the usually accepted sense than the "Mass" is a work of Christian ritual. Indeed, it passed at one time under the name of "Pagan Requiem". Whether this title was given it by Delius or another (it is thus referred to in Percy Grainger's short memoir) no longer matters, for the printed score bears no such legend. It is inscribed—"To the memory of all young Artists fallen in the war". It was written during the first World War and first performed at a London Philharmonic concert in 1922 under Albert Coates. Although Delius considered it to be one of his best works, it has not been performed in this country since that date. Delius had been for many years settled in France at Grez-sur-Loing, near Fontainebleau. Forced to leave his home as the tide of refugees flowed before the German advance, he returned to find that it had been devastated not by the Germans but by French army officers who had been billeted there. In 1915 he paid a visit to England, and it was here that he completed the Requiem.

The authorship of the text is not stated: it was probably a compilation by Delius himself or his wife Jelka, and includes paraphrases of the Nietzschean philosophy which haunted him all his life and some direct quotations from the book of Ecclesiastes. As far back as 5898 he had begun to make settings of Nietzsche in the four songs from "The Joyful Wisdom" and the "Night Song of Zarathustra" which was afterwards incorporated in the "Mass of Life". It was 'Zarathustra' that inspired the Mass and to a large extent the Requiem. Of that work Nietzsche said that its fundamental idea was "the Eternal Recurrence of all things—this highest of all possible formulae of a Yea-saying philosophy"[1] And elsewhere he remarks that it would be possible to consider all 'Zarathustra' as a musical composition. The idea of Recurrence, itself possessing musical overtones, is the ultimate meaning of the Requiem.

Delius himself has left us a clue to his purpose, when he wrote: "It is not a religious work. Its underlying belief is that of a pantheism that insists on the reality of life…. The storm of reality destroys the golden dream-palaces [of the "weaklings"] and the inexorable cry resounds: You are the creature of the day and must perish…. Independence and self-reliance are the marks of a man who is great and free. He will look forward to his death with high courage in his soul, in proud solitude, in harmony with nature and the ever-recurrent, sonorous rhythm of birth and death".

In the passage paraphrased from Ecclesiastes (9 vv 7-10) Delius accepts the hedonistic philosophy of the Preacher: "Eat thy bread in gladness and rejoice in thy wine…. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest". The pessimism of Vanitas vanitatum, the recurrent motive of the Preacher, he mostly avoids and his conclusion is a great paean in praise of returning Spring.

[1] Surely a 'Grainger-ism! Ed.

LONDON BRANCH

New Cavendish Club on 21 February 2006

Fifty Delius Years

A talk by Lyndon Jenkins

If the humorous repartee between audience and speaker at the beginning of this extremely good evening was anything to go by, it was the meeting of the year. That was, however, only a foretaste of what was to come, as Lyndon Jenkins entertained 40 or so Members with a thoroughly riveting mix of amusing reminiscences, serious memories, and perspicacious comments about FD's music, the people who had played it, many distinguished musicians he has had the good fortune to get to know, and the early days of the Society. In a report such as this, however, it is quite impossible to re-create for those who weren't there the 'buzz' and happy atmosphere – let alone re-tell the stories. This report must, of necessity therefore, be largely limited to factual matters.

Lyndon began by telling of his first encounters, as a school-boy in South Wales in 1950, with music generally – Boult and the LPO at the Swansea Festival in Mahler, the Czech Philharmonic playing Dvorak inimitably, Barbirolli conducting Bruckner and Elgar symphonies – and then seeing for the first time Beecham with his so-responsive RPO in a characteristic programme of Mozart, Richard Arnell, Sibelius and Johann Strauss: at that concert he also heard Beecham give the first performance of his 'Concert Suite' from Act II of Delius's *Irmelin* – and fell in love with the music. His first illustration was part of the (now published) BBC recording of that music. Next, in a private recording, came part of Eric Fenby's brilliantly clever *Rossini on Ilkla Moor* conducted by Stanford Robinson in 1957, which further nurtured Lyndon's growing fascination with EF and his association with FD. In the late 1950s National Service changed Lyndon's life abruptly – but he had the good fortune, as well as the musical skills, to become a member of the 70-piece Royal Artillery Orchestra – and we had a good story about a rehearsal for a performance of the Beethoven Violin Concerto in Woolwich Town Hall when the Band Sergeant objected to the opening drumbeats on the ground that he didn't need anyone, let alone a mere bandsman, to set the tempo for him.

Returning to EF, we heard part of that famous recording expressing the doubts and despair that he suffered during his early days at Grez, which Lyndon thought a marvellous piece of vocal illustration 'that still struck him as harrowing'. Beecham's death in 1961 was seen as a real watershed, in terms of "who will follow him as FD's great protagonist and champion"? In the event, of course, a number of younger conductors were to prove that they were well attuned to the Delian idiom, though the volume of performances was much reduced – nevertheless, with every justification, Beecham is still seen as the primus inter pares. As the evening's chairman pointed out in introducing Lyndon, his enormous respect for Beecham's crusade for Delius's music is marvellously shown in his new book, *While Spring and Summer Sang*.

Following the Bradford Festival of 1962 came the setting up of the Society by Roland Gibson. After a somewhat shaky start there were times when its fortunes wavered, but with some strong-minded people on the Committee it eventually settled down. Lyndon was persuaded to join the Committee, working harmoniously for many years with Rodney Meadows, of whom he recalled fond memories. When he himself became chairman in 1994, self-effacingly, he did not mention that when he himself became chairman in 1994 things got better – and the Society became the strong and vigorous body that it is today.

Back to Grez and FD. Delius's friendship with Balfour Gardiner led, as is well known, to the latter's purchase of Jelka's house to relieve their financial difficulties – but few, if anyone, in the audience knew that when, two years after FD's and Jelka's deaths (during which period it had lain unoccupied) and it was sold to the Merle d'Aubigné family, Mme d'Aubigné did not know that one of the most celebrated musicians of the time had lived there for 34 years. That all came later, when people such as the film-maker Ken Russell began to arrive. Even Beecham turned up one day, quite unexpectedly, paying a nostalgic first visit since the Deliuses' time. There was a recollection of how the Society helped to engineer EF's return to the rostrum, and of how, when he made his recording of *A Song of Summer*, somewhat understandably in the light of his involvement in its composition, he could not resist spending several minutes at the start of the session describing how FD had dictated the piece to him.

Throughout his talk, Lyndon referred to EF's orchestration of various of FD's works, and illustrations included Sarah Walker's magical singing

of his version of *To Daffodils* and the arrangement he made for flute and strings for James Galway of the *Air and Dance*. He spoke fondly of the AGMs held in Scarborough, to be with the Fenbys, and movingly of his last encounter with EF. Finally, to round off the evening with what could be described as a musical joke, there was part of a very early work, the 1896 *Appalachia, An American Rhapsody,* which EF had tried to suppress - everyone agreed it was completely unrecognisable Delius.

The stories and the humour of the evening could not disguise the fact – indeed perhaps it was obvious - that Lyndon is one of the doyens of those who know, write and talk about English music in the 20th century with an obvious and great love. It was a privilege to have him with us.

ML-B

WEST OF ENGLAND BRANCH

The Mill, Ash Priors, Taunton on 18 March 2006

Frederick Delius: Some Friends and Associations
A talk by Tony Lindsey

I've never felt so relieved to find myself on the warm side of Ron and Brenda's stout front door. An evil wind was abroad – the kind that is said to put paid to the parental prospects of brass monkeys – and the trees were tearing their hair. Inside in the warm, I made a mental note to purchase a jar of Brenda's delicious-looking home-made apple, honey and ginger jam on the way out and took my place in the front room, which was chock-a-block with unfamiliar faces - Ron had taken the wise precaution of augmenting the recently depleted ranks of the West of England Branch by inviting members of the National Trust Music Group.

Ian Lace, who is a member of both the Delius and Elgar Societies, proceeded to give a most illuminating talk – one that had particular significance for me, as I have always loved the music of Elgar, who in my personal league tables is almost up there with Delius. Ian's main contention was that these two composers, often thought of as in many ways contrasting, actually had much in common and that their lives were

full of similarities and coincidences.

A natural starting point was the composers' one and only meeting, which took place only a year before they both died. Apparently, they got on very well together, and it emerged that they were certainly not unappreciative of each other's work. Delius admired Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro for Strings*, *Falstaff* (our first recorded excerpt), the *Nursery Suite* and his *Cello Concerto*. Elgar, for his part, *thought A Mass of Life* to be a work of genius (surprising, perhaps, considering their ideological differences). Any of us who thought of global warming and the excesses of the 'moral majority' as millennial phenomena were in for a bit of a surprise: amongst the topics discussed at this historic meeting was the way the destruction of the forests had changed the climate and brought about the crash of Delius's Florida adventure; later, Elgar described to Delius in a letter how in New York he had been approached by a deputation urging him to lead a prayer meeting to pray for the failure of Strauss's *Salome* – a proposal he described as 'so screamingly absurd that I don't think that I have recovered from the shock even now.'

Excerpts from *Paris* and *Cockaigne* (premiered the same year) were played for purposes of comparison. Both works contain musical depictions of the bustling life and energy of a great city, relieved by quieter, meditative interludes. The composers wives, Jelka and Alice, also came in for comparison – both were devoted to their husbands and their husbands' work.

While Delius is more obviously the poet of nature, finding inspiration in places as far apart as the Everglades of Florida and the mountainous landscapes of Norway, Elgar took much of his inspiration from the English countryside: 'Play it like something you hear down by the river,' he once told an orchestra. Ron pressed some buttons and we heard part of *The Song of the High Hills*, followed shortly by the Adagio from Elgar's *First Symphony.* As if to reinforce the pastoral connection, a handsome green woodpecker alighted on Ron's high lawn at some point in the proceedings (I think it was after the interval). It could be seen clearly through the large window behind the speaker as it strutted jerkily from right to left, disappearing at one point behind Ian's head, only to re-emerge before finally vacating the frame.

The first recording after the interval was of Tasmin Little giving an airing to her pet theory about Delius, the black mistress, the love child, the *Violin*

Concerto and Gaugin's 'Nevermore.' A poignant tale, Tasmin, and it may well be true, but I'm not sure we need a single 'explanation' for that current of longing and regret that runs through much of Delius's music: it's all of a piece with his artistic vision. Be that as it may, it provided Ian with a handy link (lost love) to the Elgar *Violin Concerto*. Elgar stated that this work enshrined the soul of *****. The fact that Elgar's wife, as well as many of his lady friends, had five-letter names was as convenient for Elgar as it is puzzling for everybody else: Ian mentioned both Lady Alice Stuart Wortley and Helen Weaver as suspects.

I must resist the temptation to paraphrase *every* point made by Ian during the course of this fascinating talk or I'll be taking up more than my fair share of the Journal; so I'll just mention the remaining musical extracts ('By the sad waters…' from *Songs of Sunset*, Romanza from *Enigma Variations*, Judas's aria from *The Apostles* and 'Now finale from the shore' from *Songs of Farewell*) and proceed to what Ian called 'the vexed question of the two composers' faiths – or lack of faiths.'

By juxtaposing two quotations used by Ian in his talk, we can throw some light both on our composers' well-known differences of belief and their lesser known similarities: According to Christopher Palmer: 'Delius had no belief in the "God" of popular religious contrivance; yet he was profoundly religious in the sense that his music aspires and looks through nature to some immanent spiritual reality, unseen and unknown.' Compare that to what Percy Young has to say about Elgar: 'In religion [Elgar] moved away from orthodoxy not I think because he had too little faith but because he had too much. Elgar believed in God – but finally not in any theological concept.' Religion, after all, is not an end in itself: it merely points the way; and the best signpost for you will depend on where you're coming from. Ian finished his talk by quoting from Sir Thomas Beecham's funeral oration for Delius and concluded that 'the triumph of Elgar and Delius is the music they left behind them.'

What I gained most from Ian's talk was confirmation of what I partly felt already – that Elgar and Delius, far from being the polar opposites of conventional opinion (one an ambassador for Catholicism, the other for Nietzschean individualism) they were in fact far closer to being kindred spirits – solitary explorers of the imagination, standing above the petty factions of their time. Listening to *The Dream of Gerontius* or the *Songs of Farewell*, I'm aware that music transcends mere doctrinal differences -

takes us places where the meddling intellect cannot go. Delius and Elgar died within a few months of each other in 1934, leaving, as legacy, some of the most beautiful and life-enhancing music of the last century. Joy, shipmates, joy!

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A MEETING WITH DELIUS

In 1929 I met Delius when he was in London for the Festival of his own music conducted by Beecham. He invited me to call at the Langham Hotel one Sunday afternoon; and his attendant carried him into the sitting-room of his suite and flopped him down on a couch, where he fell about like a rag doll until he was arranged into a semblance of human shape. There was nothing pitiable in him, nothing inviting sympathy in this wreck of a physique. He was wrapped in a monk-like gown, and his face was strong and disdainful, every line on it graven by intrepid living. He spoke with some scorn of English music in the main. "Paper music," he said with a North-country accent there yet, "should never be *heard.* Written by musicians self-concious..... afraid of their feelin's." Next he turned his attention to *The Times* critic, H. C. Colles I think it was: "Says I am obsessed by the chord of the somethin' or other. Do you know about chords? I used to, but I've forgotten."Then he told me I had rather missed the point, in one of my articles, of one of his own works."But," he added, "if you got my meaning wrong, you *understood* my language.""Thanks," I said. "I know your country; I've been there.""You're young for the job on the *Manchester Guardian,"* he said. (I was thirty-nine years old but looked younger, with what James Agate called a "Traddles-like countenance.") "Don't read yourself daft. Trust to y'r emotions." I might have quoted, but I was discreet enough to keep it to myself:

Grau, theurer Freund, ist alle Theorie,
Und Gold des Lebens gold'ne Baum.

An extract from Neville Cardus' *Autobiography* (Collins, 1947, p 254), submitted by Tony Boden

DELIUS 2 AND 4-HAND ARRANGEMENTS

24th September 2005 at The Pump Room, Bath
Simon Callaghan & Hiroaki Takenouchi (pianos).

At the instigation of our President, Lionel Carley, a group of Delians and friends gathered at the Marmaris Restaurant, Bath for an hour and a half of munch'n chat before repairing to the famous Pump Room for a concert organised by the Bath Recital Artists Trust and supported by The Delius Trust.

Simon Callaghan studied at Chetham's School and the Royal College of Music. He won the Prix Spécial in the Concours International Jean Françaix in Paris and has appeared on BBC Radio and Television. Hiroaki Takenouchi was born in Japan and since coming to London has studied at the Royal College of Music. He has performed at the Purcell Room, Queen Elizabeth Hall, St Martin-in-the-Fields and the Fairfield Halls – and his CD recording of Jeremy Dale Roberts' *Oggetti – Omaggio a Morandi* has recently been released.

For the Delians, the highlights of the concert were the four Philip Heseltine piano duet arrangements. The recital began with *A Song Before Sunrise*, and I was immediately'hooked'on the four hands-one piano sound quality of the two very talented and sensitive players, and was interested to hear chords and notes which had not been obvious in the orchestral sound. The second item was Mozart's Sonata in F major, KV497 which was beautifully played, but is not really to my taste. We were then back to Delius, with the *Dance Rhapsody No.* 2, followed by *On Hearing the First Cuckoo* and *Summer Night on the River*. I thought that these three pieces were superbly performed by these two young players, who showed such sensitivity and understanding of Delius's music.

Finally we were treated to *Two Characteristic Marches*, D968b by Schubert and *Dolly*, op 56 by Gabriel Fauré. I always enjoy Schubert and the *Berceuse* from *Dolly* took me back to the signature tune of the old BBC programme 'Listen with Mother' when my children were young. After an enthusiastic reception from the audience, the players were persuaded to play two short encores which were Schubert's *Marche Militaire* and yet another piece by

Heseltine - *Beethoven's Binge*, a 'skit' on the 5th Symphony.

A great evening was had by all, and we look forward to repeating it sometime.

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APPALACHIA

Saturday 4 February 2006 at St.Mark's Church, Broomhill, Sheffield.
Sheffield Symphony Orchestra, Viva Voce Chamber Choir, conducted by John Longstaff.

In my recent welcome letters to new members I have said that "this year promises rare and exciting events" and this performance of *Appalachia* in Sheffield was a suitable opener for those sentiments. Though I have endlessly listened to and loved this work over many years through various recordings, I have never before heard it performed live. Indeed, it is a work so rarely given that a performance by any enterprising orchestra and chorus rising to the challenge is worthy of support and encouragement.

And so it was that I travelled the 100 miles or so to Sheffield and, in the company of Brian and Jo Radford, joined the 350 or so strong audience who packed the church of St.Mark's, Broomhill in Sheffield. As a concert venue this is a deceptively apt building; though the tower and spire largely escaped WW2 bomb damage, the rest of the church did not - and so the main body of the church is now a sympathetically re-built exterior with an open, modern interior. There is space for considerable orchestral forces to assemble on a level with the audience, and for this concert the chorus was discreetly seated to the side and rear of the orchestra.

The evening was divided into two fairly neat halves, and, with the first given over to Dvořák's *New World Symphony*, the programme was quite obviously intended to be on an American theme. John Longstaff's conducting style and control was firmly established from the outset and the response from the orchestra was never less than exciting, and in my opinion worthy of any non-professional group. I hope, though, that I will be forgiven for not dwelling on the Dvořák - because it was obviously the Delius we had really come for - but it did serve to ratchet up our expectations

and excitement for what was to come after the interval. The introduction of *Appalachia* is all important in setting the atmosphere for the rest of the work, and here the first few bars were taken at a slightly swifter pace than I had been used to hearing; more of a 'leap out of bed sunrise' than a gradual awakening - but possibly John Longstaff was intent on immediately getting to grips with that vital 'flow' of Delius's music. In any event the tempo quickly took a breather and gently eased to create those 'moods of tropical nature' as noted by Delius on the original score. Throughout this and the first variations the woodwind section were particularly fine, and so we came to that change of direction at the fourth into the swinging waltz; it was nicely developed into the gentle tune on high muted strings that always reminds me of *Touch her soft lips and part* from Walton's *Henry V*. This passage is surely the one that Eric Fenby remarks upon as Delius's "moment of revelation; at last he knew what was in him to do".*

The first entry of the wordless chorus was judged to near perfection, in that it achieved the hoped-for ethereal quality of coming in so imperceptibly as to be heard almost as just another instrument of the orchestra. The discreet and level placing of the choir meant that they were not easily visible by the audience, and this also accentuated the feeling of mild surprise at their entry. A thrilling account of the brisk march tune came soon after, and followed in solemnity towards the heart and conclusion of the whole work. At around this point the choir moved out of their seats to come forward and stand as more of a part of the orchestra; then, exactly on cue, the soloist David Townend, a man of impressive physical appearance as well as voice, launched into the very familiar "Oh Honey I am going down the river….". Though brief, this role requires a voice of convincing sensitivity, projection and timbre to be at all successful. These qualities he had, and they carried the choir into the concluding chorus in a way so intensely moving that the work's soft lament drifting away 'down the mighty river' left a moment of stunned silence before the audience erupted into long and well deserved applause.

The first half of this concert was very good, the second half was something quite special - and John Longstaff, the orchestra and the choir are to be congratulated on a performance that will stay long in the memory. Let us hope that they will give it again sometime in the future so that others including many more Society members can experience the same as ourselves. Thanks also to The Delius Trust for their enthusiastic and well-

justified support.

© *Stewart Winstanley 2006.*

* *Fenby on Delius*: ed. Stephen Lloyd (Thames Publishing 1996, p. 173).

DELIUS, MUNCH AND A VISUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

An Exhibition at The Royal Academy, London – November 2005

For over forty years Frederick Delius and Edvard Munch were friends. An exhibition late last year, *Edvard Munch by Himself*, at The Royal Academy, allowed Delians to view some of the finest examples of Munch's work. There can be no doubt that Delius admired Munch's art. The exhibition catalogue indicates that: "The intention of this comprehensive survey of Munch's self-portraits is to present the artist's view of himself as formulated through his work – in other words, a visual autobiography".

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), the celebrated Norwegian artist, is regarded as one of the 20th century's greatest painters. *Edvard Munch by Himself*, the first major exhibition in London since *Edvard Munch: The Frieze of Life* (National Gallery, 1992), focused on the artist's lesser-known self-portraits and was the first time that such a large cross section, from all stages of his career, had been brought together. Drawn largely from the Munch Museet collection in Oslo, it comprised of 150 paintings, drawings, etchings and sketchbooks as well as rarely-seen photographic self-portraits. Starting with the first self-portrait painted as a seventeen-year old student at the Royal School of Drawing, Kristiania, the exhibition concluded with the last works produced in Ekely in the 1940s.

Edvard Munch by Himself represented a unique opportunity to survey Munch's career as he recorded himself passing through moments of self-doubt, depression, illness and passion. These self-portraits capture the artist's obsession with his own physical and mental well-being, concerns shaped by personal experiences, including the deaths of his mother (1868) and his elder sister (1877) from tuberculosis, and his own weak health and

bouts of depression. Included in the exhibition are *Self-portrait*: *Man with Bronchitis* (1920), representative of his preoccupations with his health, and the notable *Self-Portrait Between Clock and Bed* (1940-42). Munch's strong use of colour and distortion of the human form became characteristic of the way in which he communicates his feelings as a consequence of his personal experiences.

Curated by Iris Müller-Westermann, Curator of International Art at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, the exhibition wass divided into six chronological sections, depicting the relationship between the major events in Munch's life and his art. The exhibition opened with three early experimental self-portraits from the 1880s and lead on to work from the 1890s, showing how Munch formulated new ways of representing himself as a modern symbolist artist. In his art from around 1900 Munch could be seen exploring the artist's role as an outsider and his relationship to society.

Between 1902 and 1909, despite little recognition locally, Munch experienced artistic success in Germany and France. During this same period, however, he underwent a deep crisis of self-doubt that culminated in a nervous breakdown. The self-portraits of this period offer a candid view into his state of mind, revealing not only his inner struggles but also his frank self-analysis which, in turn, reflects the emergence of psychoanalysis. Abandoning the language of the Symbolists, Munch lightened his palette and used more directly expressive brush strokes. He returned to Norway, where he was gaining notice, and, between 1909 and 1921 resumed work with renewed vigour. The self-portraits from these years show an artist who had become more balanced and stable. Earlier themes, such as his relationship with the opposite sex and his role as an outsider, appear in a new invigorated form. Munch spent the last twenty years of his life from 1922 to 1944 in seclusion at his house in Ekely where he reveals his preoccupation with mortality and his own artistic legacy.

Throughout his artistic career, over more than sixty years, Munch was preoccupied with his health, sexuality, and mortality. Munch's stark, uncompromising self-portraits reflect his close friendship with and admiration for the work of his contemporaries who included, among others, Henrik Ibsen, Knut Hamsun, and August Strindberg who advocated the portrayal of the unconscious in their work.

On his death in 1944 Munch bequeathed all of the works in his possession

to the City of Oslo which founded the Munch-Museet in 1963. It is largely from this unparalleled collection that *Edvard Munch by Himself* is drawn. The exhibition coincides with the centenary of Norway's independence from Sweden.

Edvard Much first met Frederick Delius in about 1890. Their friendship lasted a further forty years and more until the death of Delius in 1934. In discussion with John Boulton Smith the author of *Frederick Delius & Edvard Munch*, (Triad Press 1983), Eric Fenby indicated that at the time of the composer's death, there were twelve prints of pictures by Munch in Delius's house at Grez. The inventory prepared after Delius died is not precise concerning these Munch prints owned by the composer. Of those identified by John Boulton Smith in his book, which were identified in co-operation with Eric Fenby, the following were on show at The Royal Academy in this exhibition:

Self-Portrait with a Skeleton Arm; lithograph, 1895
Madonna: 1895/1902
On the Waves of Love; lithograph, 1896
Vampire; oil on canvas, 1893-94
The Scream; lithograph, 1895

John Boulton Smith points out that Delius was able to assist Munch as a "Friendly ally living not far from Paris". Munch exhibited at the Salon Des Independants, from 1903 to 1908, with the exception of 1907. Delius appears to have helped Munch with practicalities regarding the sale and exhibition of Munch's work, as can be seen in letters included in Boulton Smith's book. It appears that Munch had a high opinion of Delius's judgement in these matters – and that Delius liked Munch the man, and admired his work. Boulton Smith indicates in his book that there are plenty of letters from Delius to uphold this view. In contrast, whilst Munch admired Delius the man, there is no evidence that he had any particular liking or admiration for Delius's music., and he had only a general interest in music.

This exhibition was helpful and enjoyable for Delians interested in one of the major visual artists known to Delius. In particular it was a wonderful opportunity to see five pictures by Munch which Delius admired and held copies of in his house until his death.

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BRADFORD TELEGRAPH & ARGUS
17 JANUARY, 1927.

THE GENIUS OF MR. DELIUS.

BRADFORD INTERESTED.

WHY FAME WAS MADE ELSEWHERE.

Bradfordians are being asked to support the efforts that are being made to secure the Order of Merit for Mr. Frederick Delius, the famous composer who is a native of the city. Music lovers here are enthusiastically taking up the suggestion, which came from Sir Thomas Beecham—appropriately, seeing that Sir Thomas was among the first to introduce the composer's works to this country.

But these latter-day efforts to secure honour for Delius are strangely late—too late, perhaps, for the composer's complete enjoyment, as his long illness has caused partial blindness and paralysis. Hopes are still entertained of a cure, however, though both English and Continental specialists are at a loss to diagnose his complaint.

Wrote as He Felt.

It has, therefore, taken Sir Thomas Beecham's "goad" and the composer's illness to help Bradford to waken up to the fact that some recognition of the work of Delius is overdue. True, the city may remember that Delius fled from it because its artistic life in his day was anything but encouraging for a youngster with an irrepressible penchant for music. Mr. Sam Midgley believes that had Delius been nurtured in a Continental atmosphere—super-saturated musically—such as that at Leipsig, his music would have been very different.

"In so much that an honour such as the Order of Merit is a recognition of Delius and his work, I heartily endorse the efforts that are to be made to obtain it for him, but otherwise I am not in the least interested," declared Mr. Midgley, the Bradford veteran of music, who for years has been intimately associated with the Delius family. "I abhor titles and academic distinctions, and I honour Delius because he has never sought them. Nor has he ever tried to conciliate public taste. Always he has written as he has felt, but this does not necessarily mean that he is a genius. I do not think he is that. If he had not had to contend with the absence of real musical life in his earlier years at Bradford, he probably would have been. Even some of the old masters who had parental opposition to overcome had the good fortune to live where music was the very breath of life. In Leipsig, for instance, where I lived in '73, it permeated the very place; you couldn't get away from it."

Disliked Hotels.

It is interesting to recall that when Delius was in Bradford (during 1921 when the Bradford Old Choral Society gave his "Sea Drift"), he stayed with Mr. Midgley, because he disliked hotels.

"We have had many distinguished musicians to stay with us," commented Mr. Midgley, "but Mr. Delius was so retiring—almost self effacing—that the situation became almost embarrassing."

Mr. Keith Douglas, the organiser of the Bradford Philharmonic Concerts, has urged patrons to do all in their power to help in obtaining the "O.M." for "probably the greatest composer since Richard Wagner."

DELIUS SONG MASTERCLASS

Royal College of Music, 16 November 2005

Neil Mackie's influence at the College, and the enthusiasm of some of its singing students, ensured that our second Masterclass was a great success. It was taken by Jane Manning, who, although principally known as a redoubtable advocate and performer of 'new' music, was clearly at home with the eight Delius songs that made up the programme. She repeatedly emphasised the need for flexibility of line and rubato, to think in long phrases, and to remember that these are very good examples of first-half-of-the-19 century Romantic songs. She was very thorough on details, at illuminating the words, and (as all the best takers of masterclasses are) at managing to be both critical and encouraging at the same time.

Jo Tomlinson, a soprano, has a light, young-sounding voice and a good, quiet presence; the fact that her tuning was sometimes not impeccable could well have been due to the fact that she was the first on the list. She was followed by a tenor, David del Strother, who has that inestimable ability to see the whole span of a song, and work towards its end in long phrases; he has a tendency to swallow the ends of words, but he proved to be a quick learner – for example, as soon as Jane Manning encouraged him to use some vibrato, his singing improved greatly. The bass Alan Tsang from Hong Kong had a gorgeously creamy voice, obviously understood the idiom and what he was singing about, and his words came over very well.

This reviewer felt that the next 'victim', Kimberley Robinson, used too much vibrato – although that is one of the most subjective aspects of singing generally – and that, very sadly, she did not seem to be very conscious of the poetry. Ed Jones's very self-effacing manner was something of a disadvantage, but his tenor voice had real character to it; he, too, produced a lovely smooth sound, and he is – indeed, as they all are - obviously a very intelligent singer. Two of the intending participants, Catherine Chan and Simon Wallfisch, having dropped out for valid reasons, the last to sing was yet another tenor, David Webb. He started in rather a 'hang-dog' way, seemingly uninvolved with the words – although in conversation with Jane Manning he obviously knew what they were about – but more interested in his voice. Nevertheless, he sang in satisfyingly long lines, and

Jane Manning

Delius Songs

16 November 2005
2:00 Recital Hall

RCM
LONDON

Summer Landscape *Young Venevil*	Jo Tomlinson
The Nightingale *So White, So Soft, So Sweet is She*	David del Strother
Homeward Way	Alan Tsang
Twilight Fancies	Kimberly Robinson
Love's Philosophy	Catherine Chan
It was a lover and his lass	Simon Wolfisch
Cradle Song	Ed Jones
Indian Love Song	David Webb

In collaboration with The Delius Society of Great Britain

the end of *Indian Love Song* was very poignant.

Every student must have felt somewhat battered by the experience – for Jane Manning talked so much that, particularly given the 'frisson' of the occasion and the short time she could give each of them, they could not possibly take in all her criticism and advice. She seemed to want everyone to 'do it her way', rather than encouraging them to give their own interpretations – but, although she did not always have time to illustrate exactly what she meant, some of her advice, particularly about words, could not have been bettered: "Go with the flow of the music, not the words", or "You can always make the words work with the music, but not visa versa". The whole afternoon was a very gratifying and happy one, for it showed that, albeit perhaps with a little encouragement from their teachers and Neil Mackie, there is at least a handful of young singers who appreciate FD's music and are prepared to learn and work at it without the incentive of a prize. Let's hope that they enjoyed the learning process and the event sufficiently so that they include some of FD's songs in many of their future recitals.

ML-B

Competition for a Royal College of Music Scholarship
Illustrated London News, 13 December 1884

ODE TO FREDERICK DELIUS

For Frederick Delius, Nature, climbing and Walking
Were subjects about which he loved talking,
And to tramp over vale and hill,
Was ever his joy and his will.
No peak was too high in Norway's clear sky.
Tweny miles a day
Was for him as child's play.
The glorious vistas and wonderful air
Were for him inspiration with which nothing could compare.
There his soul now wanders, free from all ills,
Including those cured by his friend Beecham's pills,
The sales of which filled lots of chemists' shop' tills;
And whose grandad's concoction paid failed opera bills!
Through his glorious evocation
Heavenly music is in "The Song of the High Hills";
Or with relaxed contemplation
In his beautiful Summer Garden, far from Bradford's mills.
Nature's Beauty was to Delius the purest food,
In her he found expression for every mood.
His joy is ours, pure distillation,
Incomparable, sublime Creation!
Melody, Rhythm and Harmony with Sensitivity he did bind,
In so many variations here we will find.
A joy to hear, with satisfaction deep,
A treasure for humanity, for ever to keep.
For his family at first an expostulation,
His later fame and acclamation
Can now be seen to be a veritable vindication.
Delicate yet tough, never ever rough,
Always totally exquisite, fulfilling every requisite.
In music of beauty Fred D made his mark,
As pure and as sweet as the notes of a lark
Singing high aloft above an old English Park,
His harmonies sometimes light, sometimes dark -
Yes! This is music to which I can hark!

© *Norman Jones 2006*

TWO AQUARELLES IN SWEDEN

John Ehde is a Swedish cellist and a member of the Society. One or two members may remember him playing the Delius Sonata during the 'Frederick Delius and Friends' Festival at Aarhus in Denmark in 1998, and he has written to the Editor about one aspect of his work - his involvement with the Berg Summer Academy in a village with gorgeous surroundings inthe north of Sweden. The leader and founder of the course, which is for about 20 young string-players, is a legendary Swedish violinist, Professor Karl-Ove Mannberg, who actually spent his whole childhood in the same village - and both he and John Ehde have played Delius's Concertos for their respective instruments. At the 2005 course, the final concert included *Two Aquarelles* and Holst's *St Paul's Suite.* The report concluded on a very Delian note: "As Fenby once said to me: 'I am so happy when I hear of the young people today doing well with Delius!'".

THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2006

AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD AT THE VICTORIA HOTEL, BRADFORD ON 2 JULY 2006 AT 11 AM

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 2005 Annual General Meeting (previously circulated).
3. Matters arising from the Minutes.
4. Chairman's Annual Report.
5. Treasurer's Report and Audited Statement of the Society's Accounts to 31 March 2006.
6. Election of Officers:
   Rule 21 reads: 'Election to the Officership and Committee of the Society shall be by vote of those present at the Annual General Meeting. Nominations shall be made: e*ither* (21.1) by the Committee; *or* (21.2) in writing, signed by two members of the Society'.
   Rule 21.3 reads 'A nomination under Rule 21.2, together with a notice in writing signed by the person nominated signifying his or her willingnessto be elected, shall be sent in writing to the Honorary Secretary not less than seven days before the date appointed for the Meeting'.
   Under Rule 21.1 the Committee intends to nominate:
   Roger Buckley (as Chairman), Michael Green (as Vice Chairman and Gift Aid Manager), Ann Dixon (as Honorary Secretary), Stewart Winstanley (as Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary), James Baker, Martin Lee-Browne and Anthony Summers.
7. Appointment of Auditor:
   Under Rule 17.3 the Committee intends to nominate Baldwin and Co.
8. Midlands Branch Report.
9. West of England Branch Report.
10. News of Affiliated Associations.
11. Plans for future meetings.
12. Any Other Business.
    Ann Dixon — Honorary Secretary

Members should note that copies of the Minutes of the 2005 AGM and the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2006 (both not yet approved) will be posted to those members who have notified their intention to attend the AGM before it takes place. Copies of those Minutes and Account (approved at the AGM) will be included with the Autumn issue of the Journal, to be posted to Members in approximately mid-October.

WHILE SPRING AND SUMMER SANG: THOMAS BEECHAM AND THE MUSIC OF FREDERICK DELIUS

Lyndon Jenkins (Ashgate; 2005;197 pages & illustrations; £45.00 - but see Editorial for Members' offer; ISBN 0-7546-0721-62005)

Despite the kind invitation of the editor, in one sense there is no need for me to 'review' the present volume. Anybody interested in the subject under discussion should want to acquire this major addition to the literature relating to Delius and his most illustrious champion and interpreter. This is especially so when they see coupled with them the name of a former Chairman of the Society who is an acknowledged expert on both of these remarkable personalities.

Yet in another sense a review is required, if only to draw attention to the riches contained in this slim but constantly informative study. As the title implies, it is not so much about Delius as about Beecham, and Lyndon Jenkins takes us step by step, performance by performance and recording by recording through the 27-year saga of their friendship and artistic collaboration. There have been performers before and since who have championed composers and added immeasurably to their general appreciation, but it can be stated quite categorically that nobody else has provided that extra element of interpretation amounting to compositional input in the way that Beecham did with the works of Delius. And not only the operas, orchestral and choral works. It is positively moving to observe the way in which Beecham's devotion to the Delian cause extended to his editing of chamber works and songs, which might reasonably be considered to lie outside his remit. Perhaps most remarkable of all, given Beecham's hyperactive professional (and social) life is the fact that he should have found time to write a book about Delius, and this not principally on the music, as one might have expected, but a well researched biography, with only the briefest references to the music, and containing just one short sentence of advice on its performance. Lyndon Jenkins is absolutely right in describing the part that Beecham plays in the story of Delius's career, as outlined in this biography, as 'self-effacing' -surely the only occasion that such an epithet can have been accurately applied to him.

The book has been carefully planned, dividing Beecham's association with Delius and his music into five periods, with four appendices of great interest, a bibliography and an index of Delius's works. Of the numerous well-chosen illustrations, I particularly like a rare photograph of Beecham conducting the CBSO in 1954 (*below*), which wonderfully encapsulates the serene, persuasive manner in which he coaxed the most magical woodwind solos that I have ever experienced. I also admire the clever way in which the author has made use of extended footnotes. In this way he has avoided clogging up the main narrative with detail which, however fascinating or newlymined, would have spoilt the flow of this engrossing story.

The Delius - Beecham relationship is, of course, thoroughly familiar, but I was constantly intrigued and delighted by newly revealed detail. Although Beecham had first met Delius only two years previously, it is surprising to find him writing to him at the planning stage of his 1910 Covent Garden production of The *(sic) Village Romeo* and *Juliet* 'the English text of Romeo will have to be entirely overhauled', implying that it is a translation, whereas it is by Delius himself. It seems possible that Beecham continued in this belief and infected others. At all events that other committed Delian, Norman Del Mar, who assisted Beecham on the 1948 BBC broadcast of the opera, insisted to the end of his days that Jelka's German translation was the original text. The book illustrates how quickly Beecham established himself as an unsurpassed Delius interpreter. Despite that fact that his unwise decision to perform *Appalachia* in Paris in 1913 with local forces

provoked Delius into writing to Heseltine 'Beecham seemed to be entirely out of his water and made nothing of Orchestra or Chorus', the paeans for his performances rose like a crescendo. Percy Grainger in the same year referred to 'the *touching glory* of the excellence of his performances. He is a ripping genius', and in 1914 Delius wrote to Jelka 'I am sure my music has never been played as well by anyone... Beecham has real genius, he feels every bar of my music like no one else'. But then, even in an age replete with autocratic conductors, Beecham had a style all of his own. Thanks to the reminiscences of Moiseiwitsch, we hear of his treatment of an LSO player who declined to perform as directed 'Very well, then ... let me put the alternatives to all you gentlemen. Either I sink to your level or raise you to mine. Now which is it to be? Am I to go down to yours? By God, gentlemen, no. If it kills me I shall raise you up, if I have to do it to you individually and bodily, each in turn, with a crane or without.' This was not the usual bullying, despotic approach that players frequently encountered; here was somebody laying down the law in no uncertain terms, but with a brilliant use of rhetoric and with a visionary artistic sense of purpose.

We are also given some unusual insights into Delius's world. It is very surprising to find James Elroy Flecker's widow writing in 1920 to Basil Dean 'I think Mr. Delius is anxious to do the music for the play and judging from his appearance – a bundle of quivering and spasmodic nerves-he is probably a good musician'. This is not at all the impression that the composer usually made on people and one totally at odds with his staid, conventional appearance at the time. Again it comes as a shock (I use the word advisedly) to learn that the Deliuses had no electricity at Grez until late 1926; it was only then that they acquired a wireless. Previously they had been obliged to go to a neighbour's house, and this is how, earlier in the year, they had heard John (né Giovanni) Barbirolli play the Cello Sonata.

Back to Beecham. It is fascinating to learn that when he conducted the Gewandhaus Orchestra in 1932 the wonderful opening folksong of *Brigg Fair* was played by the orchestra's young principal oboe, Rudolf Kempe, who thirty years later was chosen by Beecham to succeed him at the RPO. The innate quirkiness of Beecham's character reveals itself in the list of Delius works that he never performed. Chief of these is *Fennimore* and *Gerda* – the only one dedicated to him – which he described as being a piece about 'three dreary people with nothing to sing'. He did however include Scenes 10 and 11 in the 1929 Festival. He seems to have neglected

The Song of the *High Hills* (only 4 performances), which Christopher Palmer goes so far as to proclaim Delius's greatest masterpiece. Although clearly fond of the *Legende* for violin and orchestra, he never recorded it, likewise *Life's Dance.*

The discography throws up the startling fact that in 1938 – yes, 1938 – Beecham recorded on one side of a 78 rpm the second section of the first movement of *Florida.* Beecham's neglect of the adorable, if admittedly immature, *Florida* until a few years before his death is yet another mystery. Perhaps we could have been given more detail about the widely varying times of some of his recordings, especially as the earlier ones were heard and greatly admired by the composer. Also cuts are not always mentioned; these are important not only in terms of factual record but also in overall timings.

Inevitably there are a few niggles which, I must stress, seem positively petty in relation to the overall success of such an elegantly written, impeccably researched study. Chief of these is the lack of any detailed comment on Beecham's editing of Delius. I realise that this is hard to do without sound illustrations, but none the less half the magic of the Delius/Beecham performances and recordings lies in the subtle (although occasionally brutal) adjustments that Beecham made to Delius's curiously barren or perversely marked scores. There is still work to be done on this subject including its corollary, namely how much other conductors should follow in Beecham's footsteps. Lastly, may I humbly suggest that Delius's inverted compliment after hearing Vaughan Williams play him his *Sea Symphony* ('Vraiment, il n'est pas mesquin') would be better translated as 'it is certainly no mean effort' rather than 'truly it is not petty'.

This is a wholly absorbing book, rich in detail, compelling in scholarship and written with the literary equivalent of Beecham's characteristic flick of the wrist. It is typical of the author that he has managed to unearth what is probably only downright critical remark that Beecham ever made about his idol. Talking to Lord Boothby in 1958 for an interview in *High Fidelity Magazine* he said 'He was good company until he became tiresome on the subject of religion and Christianity. He considered it a part of his duty on earth to convert everyone to a deeply anti-Christian point of view, especially young people'. Beecham in the guise of General Booth – yet another aspect of the chameleon genius.

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NEW WORLD SYMPHONIES

Jack Sullivan. (Yale University Press, 1999; 262 pp, £25; ISBN 0-300-07231-7)

On a recent occasion at the Delius Trust office, there was a brief gap to be filled while I waited for a meeting to start or a visitor to arrive. At a glance along the miscellaneous books in the cases, I instantly recognised this as a newcomer (despite its 1999 publication). The title at once demanded further scrutiny, and a check through its index for "Delius" located so many pages of immediate interest that the book went straight into my briefcase. Only after lengthy study at home, and the purchase of a copy of my own, was the Trust's copy returned to Ogle Street!

I soon discovered that the book had been reviewed in Bill Marsh's *The Delian,* and that its author had lectured to the Delius Association of Florida in 1998. Although I had noticed both these references, nothing had prepared me for the quite exceptional interest of the volume itself. Its subject is a broad survey of the two-way traffic of, and influences on, composers between the USA and Europe - starting with Gottschalk (and Dvorak) and continuing to Korngold (and jazz). Written as it is in a refreshingly relaxed style, the story covers not only these historical extremes but includes the whole intervening area with impartial but well-informed attention.

It is naturally to the Delius references that Society Members will first turn, and here it is a welcome surprise to read such unbiased opinions in place of the bigoted ignorance (or paraphrases of Holy Writ) all too familiar to many of us. "It was Delius who started it all", we are told (p 193); "early Delius is more vital and important than is commonly supposed" we read on p 27. "The most original and mysterious of all Walt Whitman settings are surely those by Delius" (pp 129-130), and the highest praise is reserved for *Sea Drift* and *Songs of Farewell.*

Five searching pages (22-26) devoted to *Koanga* pay just tribute to that extraordinary score's extraordinary features, but the pages (137-138) covering *The Magic Fountain* gave perhaps even more pleasure to the present writer. Recalling, as I do, that a leading English scholar once dismissed the music of this piece in one line (and its libretto in a further half-line), it was good to read Dr Sullivan's balanced judgement of both especially of the libretto as "the most extended essay [Delius] ever wrote on the New World landscape. . . .all captured in just under two hours of

enchanted music".

Before any knowledgeable Delians dismiss the whole book because of a few dropped stitches, perhaps I should mention a passing confusion of *The Song of the High Hills, Songs of Sunset* and *An Arabesque* none of them New World Symphonies anyway! on p 141; also the reference to *Hiawatha* on p 49 which should probably be to *Florida.*

It will not surprise readers to learn of my own pleasure in the pages devoted to Dvorak's" American" scores maybe his finest works? as also to the recognition of Poe's influence on the composer of *The Bells:* Rachmaninoff, "who turned out to be a far more interesting figure than was once supposed" (p 90). And perhaps a printer (albeit now a long-retired one) may conclude with a word of special appreciation of the external features of this book paper, typography, binding, et al. - which makes it a particular pleasure to handle and possess.

© *Robert Threlfall* 2006

DELIUS: PIANO CONCERTO IN C MINOR
(1904 version RTVII/4)
IRELAND: PIANO CONCERTO IN E FLAT (1930)
LEGEND (1933)
Piers Lane (piano), Ulster Orchestra, cond. David Lloyd-Jones
Hyperion CDA67296.

Eleven years have passed since Piers Lane gave us his excellent EMI recording of the 1907 third version of Delius's Piano Concerto with Vernon Handley and the RLPO. Now we are doubly indebted to Piers Lane, as well as to Hyperion, for this splendid new CD of the earlier three-movement version of 1904. Even this does not represent Delius's first thoughts on the work: a still earlier version, dating from 1897, a one-movement *Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra,* appears not to have been performed in public. Fortunately, Delius did not abandon the concept at that point but instead set about radically recasting it in three movements. The resultant second version of the concerto, which we hear on this very welcome Hyperion CD, received its premiere at Elberfeld on 24 October 1904, with Julius Buths as soloist and Hans Haym conducting.

So why did Delius prepare yet another version? The third version of the concerto received its first performance in London in 1907, with Theodor Szanto, the concerto's dedicatee, under Henry Wood. Apparently dissatisfied with the 1904 score, Delius had set about recasting the work, including the deletion of the whole of the last movement and the addition of a beefy coda. But Szanto felt that further revisions to the piano part were also necessary. Ultimately, and with Delius's perhaps reluctant approval, Szanto rewrote the soloist's part, making of it the more virtuosic showpiece with which we are now familiar. How, then, does the 1904 version compare with the later hybrid? This new CD provides the answer, and it features a modem performing edition of the 1904 version made possible only by dedicated and expert reconstruction of the score.

In his meticulous CD booklet notes, Robert Threlfall gives a detailed description of the three-movement work and an outline of its later history. Additionally, he has provided the *DSJ* Editor with a useful summary of background information on the reconstruction of the score. He has explained that Delius's MS of the 1904 version survives in part only - there are gaps in the first movement *(Allegro ma non troppo),* the second movement *(Largo)* is missing entirely, but the last movement *(Maestoso con moto moderato)* survives complete. Julius Buths made an arrangement of the concerto for two pianos, but most of the last movement is missing. However, the complete original orchestral parts used in 1904 survive. (All that material, formerly in the Delius Trust's archive, was deposited in the British Library in 1995). Robert Threlfall, by reference to

Delius's MS full score, completed the two-piano score from where Buth's MS left off, and this was published by the Delius Trust (through Boosey & Hawkes) in 1990. Finally, John White offered to reconstruct the full score from the surviving set of orchestral material; this he completed by 1994. It was then set up and printed as Supplementary Volume 3 of the Collected Edition (by Boosey & Hawkes) in 1997 -

and it was used for this recording.

In a recent interview on Radio 3's *CD Review,* Piers Lane spoke enthusiastically about the reconstructed 1904 version, explaining that it is both more chordal and more spare than the Szanto version, and that it is true to Delius – more so than the Szanto. Lane believes that there is room for both, but said that he would very much like to champion this original version. Let us hope that he is given every opportunity to do so, for although Delius's piano writing here gives less opportunity for flamboyant display, the solo part is in no way lacking in depth and beauty. The first two movements are superb, and the availability for the first time of the original finale is a welcome bonus. The influences of Grieg and Liszt may never be far away, but there is here a satisfying sense that we are listening to authentic Delius. Piers Lane, playing with great sensitivity, power and panache, gives an ideal performance, partnered in gleaming and sympathetic style by David Lloyd-Jones and the Ulster Orchestra. The added advantage of excellent recorded sound makes this first CD of the 1904 version of the concerto an essential purchase for all Delians.

Many amongst us who remember the BBC Proms of the pre-Glock era will have since yearned nostalgically for the return to concert programmes of the John Ireland Piano Concerto, a work taken up by such eminent soloists of the day as Eileen Joyce, Clifford Curzon and Artur Rubinstein. Sadly and irrationally, it is just one of several superb British works of the first half of the twentieth century now apparently abandoned; shunned as unfashionable, irrelevant to our time. And yet Ireland's Concerto is every bit as relevant as the G major Concerto of Ravel, which shares something of its effervescent mood and which it predates by over a year. Composed in 1930, it is Ireland's finest large-scale work, while the haunting 1933 *Legend* draws upon the composer's fascination with the mystical and the ancient. Ireland had, as Christopher Palmer put it, "the true poet's feeling for beauty of sound". Although not displacing Eric Parkin's first-rate recording from 1986, with the late Bryden Thomson and the LPO on Chandos, both works are finely played on this new CD and are admirable companion-pieces for the Delius Piano Concerto.

© *Anthony Boden 2006*

LETTERS

From Dr. Jürgen Schaarwächter
(German Representative, The British Music Society)
Amthausstr. 16 76227
D-76227 Karlsruhe Germany
Phone 00+49+721+9474530
j.schaarwaechter@t-online.de

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

The bass oboe

I have been asked by Georg O. Klapproth, a renowned oboist in Germany, two questions re. Delius's use of the bass oboe / Heckelphone, which I would like to pass on to you; perhaps there is a member of the Delius Society who might be able to help. In Threlfall's *Supplementary Catalogue* (p. 84) it is mentioned that in the draft scores of *Songs of Sunset*, *A Dance Rhapsody* and *Fennimore und Gerda* Delius originally wrote heckelphone, but changed this later to bass oboe. Is this correct, and has anybody an idea as to why this happened? R. Howe (*The Historical Oboes 8*, in *The Double Reed* 25/4, 2002) writes that Delius had written the bass oboe sounding as written (i.e. untransposed). Has this ever been verified, or can it be verified?

I am very sorry for these very special questions, which I myself have been unable to answer. I would be very happy if any of your members would get in contact with me.

Yours sincerely
Jürgen Schaarwächter

From Tony Summers:

Some thoughts on the timpani parts in the *Song of the High Hills.*

I much enjoyed the six excellent articles in *DSJ 138* on different aspects of the *Song of the High Hills.* As an erstwhile amateur timpanist who once (a long time ago!) played in an amateur performance of this work I would like to expand on some of the comments made about the numbers of players and instruments required.

I seem to remember that I was one of two timpanists fixed to play – I suspect that this number was decided on because '2 players' appears at the front of the score, not from a study of the part. However, it is very clear that 3 players are essential: there are many places where three simultaneous timpani rolls are required on separate drums and this can only be achieved with 3 players. Having said this, player 3 does not have much to do and I remember that we co-opted one of the adjacent percussion players (the bass drum player) to step across and play when the extra player was needed. It is not difficult to combine the bass drum part with timpani 3 because the bass drum, though very important when it does play, has a fairly small part. I suspect this doubling arrangement might suit amateur orchestras but doubtless professional bands would insist on 3 full-time timpanists!

The score specifies 4 drums. Nowadays virtually all orchestras use pedal timpani and the timpani part could be played on 4 pedal drums – even the passage which so concerned Balfour Gardiner (see p. 43 of *DSJ 138*)- but would be easier with more than 4. But in 1911 when the work was written pedal drums were a rarity, especially in England, and Delius would certainly have imagined the part played on hand-tuned drums. I suggest that a minimum of 6 hand-tuned drums would have been needed* – possibly more – and that the players would sometimes have had quite a job coping with rapid changes of tuning. The third player would be particularly useful here in assisting with these changes. I would be very interested to know how many players and drums were actually used at the first performance!

Finally, a word about the timpani part itself. Delius makes an effort to indicate when one, two or three players are needed by writing on a corresponding number of staves, but he is not entirely consistent and it is often unclear which players use which drums. I remember having to

spend some time marking up the part to make it playable, and if only 4 (pedal) drums are available some notes have to be redistributed between players. The timpani play such an important part in creating the unique atmosphere in the *Song of the High Hills* and a new, rewritten part for this work would be very helpful in ensuring successful performances. An unclear, confusing part is an invitation to slipshod, inaccurate playing and does nothing for Delius's reputation among orchestral players.

*For example, the passage between figures 43 and 45 needs 6 hand-tuned drums and 3 players.

From Tony Noakes:

A Lifetime with *Sea Drift*

My introduction to Delius' most perfect work began *in utero*, when my parents took part in a 1934 Beecham performance. There are different opinions about pre-natal influences, but singing is an act that involves body, mind and spirit; there must surely be vibrations, and maybe also emotions, that a woman, singing while pregnant, will pass on to the growing child within her.

My parents were also in Beecham's recording with John Brownlee; this became my first conscious introduction to *Sea Drift*, which steadily seeped into my system. Listening to that Delius Society recording, on seven sides of 78 rpm discs, I came to understand the significance of "the solitary guest from Alabama" and "no more, no more", often sung by my mother as memories of *Sea Drift* recurred to her. Just as for her, it was the magic of "O rising stars" that first hooked me.

The first time I heard this work live was at the 1962 Bradford Delius Festival. I bought the Beecham LP with Bruce Boyce, which has *Paris* on the reverse side. I then went to work in San Francisco, where I met Ruth, whom, a year later, I married. But only two months after meeting her, I had to leave for New York, where I was to take a postgraduate course. Before leaving San Francisco, I bought for her a copy of the same record, and only later realized the inappropriateness of the gift - I was going 3000

miles away and didn't know when we would see each other again! I chose that record because it was the most beautiful music I knew; even after we were reunited, it is not surprising that, unlike *Song of the High Hills*, it never became one of Ruth's favourites.

Although I have been singing in a variety of choirs for 45 years, and this has included recordings and/or performances of *Mass of Life*, *Requiem* and *Songs of Farewell*, sadly my only chance to sing in *Sea Drift* was a frustrating one. Wyn Morris was chosen in 1967 to succeed Sargent as conductor of the Royal Choral Society. He included *Sea Drift* in a marathon concert which also contained Bruckner's *Te Deum,* Mahler's remarkable early choral work *Das Klagende Lied,* and the *Blumine* movement which he omitted from his first symphony. Morris at one rehearsal spent three-quarters of an hour on the first three bars of the Bruckner, but no more time than this on the whole of *Sea Drift*. I have no idea what the audience thought of the result.

As a writer of songs, I am always on the lookout for settable poetry. On discovering the Norton Anthology (an American publication), I made my own first Whitman setting: "A noiseless patient spider". This anthology includes the whole of "Out of the cradle endlessly rocking", and I was struck by how skilfully Delius (or Jelka) had chosen what words to set and what to omit.

This most perfect matching of words to music has been with me all my life, and will continue to enrich it as long as I have ears to hear.

From Ann Roques (of Northwood, Middlesex not a Member, but via Paul Brooks who produces the Journal):

Delius and Cricket

My father-in-law lived outside Paris before the First World War, where he played cricket with Frederick Delius. Years later, while listening to *Brigg Fair* he remarked rather sadly: "Delius's taking up of music was a great loss to cricket."

From Michael Jackson:

Fairly recently, I heard the langourous Barbirolli recording of Eric Fenby's arrangement of *Late Swallows*. This was an item on the first LP I bought of Delius's music around 1970, which aroused my enthusiasm for Delius, and led to my joining the Society.

Fenby, in his notes on the record sleeve, says "…..a beautiful autumn soliloquy in sound conjured up by thoughts of the swallows darting to and fro from the eaves of the house and studios at Grez...." I have always thought that Fenby (or perhaps Delius or Jelka) may have got this wrong, and that the swallows were in fact house martins. Many people confuse these two birds, along with swifts, all three being somewhat similar. At the time I bought the LP I was living in a top-floor flat, and house martins nested every summer under the overhanging eaves above the lounge window. All day long they swooped up and down to and from the nest feeding their young. Swallow nesting habits are quite different, they prefer flat rafters in outbuildings. Could any Member perhaps throw any light on the veracity of Fenby's statement, or can any recent visitors to Grez, or even the owners of the house at Grez, throw any light on this? Of course, I am not advocating changing the title of the music to *Late House Martins*!

In an attempt to answer my own query, I dimly remember reading long ago in a book by Henry Williamson (or perhaps it was Richard Jefferies or even W.H.Hudson) that country folk in days of yore called house martins 'eave swallows'. However, I would have thought that Delius, being a 'man of nature' would have known the difference between house martins and swallows, but could he have made a play on words — eave/eve/late?

MISCELLANY

Delius ignored

The two articles in DSJ 137 by Derek Cooke and Michael Kennedy about the general lack of interest in FD's music seem to have stimulated Members' interest, and I did receive one or two 'follow-up' letters. Only the interests of space, and because I think that we have 'done that' for a while, have I not included them here. However, Bill Marsh (of the very active Philadelphia Branch) has sent me a copy of a long but most interesting article by Ernest Newman, *His Country At Last Acclaims Delius,* written soon after the 1929 Festival for the *New York Times Magazine.* As it would run to well over 25 pages in the Journal, I do not feel that it would be possible to include it in this or any future edition, but I shall be more than happy to send a copy to any Member who would like one – and it can also be found at http://users3.ev1.net/~wbthomp/delius-newman-article-1930.htm.

There is, incidentally, another piece on FD by Newman in *A Delius Companion,* ed. Christopher Redwood. Ed.

New Delius recording restorations

Andrew Rose of Pristine Audio has made new digital restorations of historic Delius recordings: those by Anthony Collins (Decca LP, 1953) and by Beecham in Volume I of the 'old' Delius Society (Columbia 78s, 1934). Go to this link for full information, pricing and download instructions: http://www.pristineaudiodirect.com/LargeWorks/SymphonyConcerto.htm

These CDs can be bought by downloading them online, or purchase a CD copy by mail. The prices are very reasonable - £4.99 in a slip-sleeve, or £7.49 in a jewel case. If downloading, the CD covers can also be downloaded for printing, as well as a cue-sheet which is used by the Nero CD Burner program to break the album down into its individual tracks. Pristine Audio (0840-484-6088) also offers many other restored recordings in their catalogue, and Andrew Rose also maintains the E. J. Moeran website: http://www.moeran.com/index2.html.

Anthony Lindsey reports on two excellent events:

Delius in Cornwall

The rugged coastline and picturesque scenery of Cornwall has inspired artists, composers and writers over many years, and it is good to know that the performance of music by young and aspiring musicians continues to be actively encouraged at local festivals in the area. The 36th Annual Camborne Music Festival took place in November 2005, again centred on the historic Camborne Centenary Methodist Church with its fine acoustic. Like all such events, this one results from a great deal of hard work by a team of enthusiastic volunteers; the professional adjudicator this year was Jeffery Wynn Davies ARCM, Director of the Manchester Boys Choir and the North of England Festival Chorus.

The eighty or so classes attracted a large number of entries, and British music featured strongly – including songs by Bridge, Elgar, Finzi, Michael Head, Quilter, Stanford, Vaughan Williams, Warlock and of course Delius. Three young sopranos Laura Nicholas, Rachel Peters and mezzo Annabelle Coad each chose to sing *Twilight Fancies*, and they were all enthusiastically received by audience and adjudicator alike. It would be nice to think that some new student Delius Society members may emerge from this and other such praiseworthy musical endeavours.

Tony Noakes – 70 years Young

Tony Noakes, architect, composer, prolific song writer and a founder member of this Society achieved his three score years and ten in the summer of 2005. Dividing their busy lives between homes in North London and Western Australia, Tony and Beverley returned to England last autumn, to host a memorable birthday concert of his music on 10 September, in the Housman Room of University College, Gower Street - where he had read for his architecture degree back in the 1950s. Despite the pressures of a busy professional practice, Tony found time to study harmony with Hugh Wood and composition with Jeremy Dale-Roberts at Morley College. His works include almost 300 songs, a *Quaker Requiem*, nine piano sonatas

and a number of other instrumental works and carols.

This well attended event was held under the auspices of the Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club and much of the organisation was undertaken by the pianist Alan Reddish (who also accompanied most of the items). The Club, founded in 1899, gives informal concerts by its mainly amateur members that continue in London the same types of musical activities that are undertaken by the societies in both Oxford and Cambridge. Its first President was Joseph Joachim and the present one is Sir Neville Marriner.

Perhaps the most notable work was *9 Variations for Violin and Piano*, Tony's contribution to an invitation by the President of the Club in 1999 to member-composers to celebrate the centenary of the first performance of Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, by submitting a work containing new variations on the *Enigma* theme. The rest of the programme comprised *Three Pieces for Flute and Piano;* a wide selection of songs, including settings of Hardy (including *Over the Coffin* and *The Ruined Maid*), Vikram Seth; Paul Elouard (in translations by Beverley Noakes); and Michael Aitken; and *Two Chaconnes for Unaccompanied Viola.*

The performers were a second accompanist, Christopher Underwood; the flautist Camilla Bignall, the baritone Charles Luxford and the violist Bob Winquist; the guitarist Alpin Smart, the violinist Peter Wall, and the contralto Phillida Bannister – who, as well as singing two groups of songs, brought this memorable concert to a close with a sensitive and amusing performance of his bitter-sweet and very perceptive reflection on life, *Phenomenal Woman.* During the generous reception that followed, Tony warmly paid tribute to all the artists for their participation in an excellent evening.

AGM 2005

I have been taken to task (I believe in a light-hearted fashion) by the Chairman for saying, in my report of the AGM for the last Journal, that most of those who attended were over 60s. Almost needless to say, that was not intended as a criticism of Members collectively or individually – and I extend my apologies to anyone who felt slighted. On the other hand,

if the largest proportion of the membership was well under 60, we would without question have appreciably smaller attendances at our functions – so the over-60s do have their place in the great scheme of things! Ed.

Deliana Wanted

Christopher Maber of 165 Thornton Old Road, Bradford BD8 0HT (01274-788274) wonders whether any other Member has an off-air recording of a complete 'words-and-music' BBC performance of *Hasssan* in about 1971. If so, please contact him direct.

Raid on a Sand-Swallow Colony – How Many Eggs?
Winslow Homer 1874

EVENTS 2006

Saturday 28 January 2006 at 2
PHILADELPHIA BRANCH
St Paul's Lutheran Church, 120 North Easton Road (at Mount Carmel Avenue, opposite Glenside train station) Glenside, PA 19038. Annual Delius Birthday Event: *Ivor Gurney & Marion Scott –Song of Pain & Beauty.* A talk by Pamela Blevins.

Saturday 4 February 2006 at 7.30
St Marks Church, Broomhill, Sheffield
Sheffield Symphony Orchestra with local choir,
cond. John Longstaff
Programme included *Appalachia.*

Thursday 23 February 2006 at 7.15
LONDON BRANCH MEETING
New Cavendish Club
50 Delius Years – a talk by Lyndon Jenkins.

Sunday 5 March 2006
MIDLANDS BRANCH MEETING
Ravensdale, 41 Bullhurst Lane, Weston Underwood, Derbyshire (01335-360798)
A talk by Michael Green: *Delius and the Dance*

Saturday 11 March 2006
WEST OF ENGLAND BRANCH
The Mill, Ash Priors, Taunton (01823-432734)
A talk by Ian Lace: *Delius and Elgar – Personal Tragedies and Triumphs*

Tuesday 21 March 2006 at 7.15
LONDON BRANCH MEETING
New Cavendish Club (0207-723-0391)
A talk by Michael Green: *Delius and the Dance*

Saturday 25 March 2006
Whitworth Hall, Manchester
Manchester University Orchestra & Chorus, cond. Marcus Farnsworth
Programme included *Sea Drift*

Monday 27 March 2006
PHILADELPHIA BRANCH
Academy of Vocal Arts, 1920 Spruce Street, Philadelphia
1807 & Friends Chamber Ensemble: Delius:*Legende*,
Finzi: *Interlude for Oboe & Strings*,
Elgar: *Piano Quintet*.

Sunday 9 April 2006
MIDLANDS BRANCH MEETING
Ravensdale, Weston Underwood (01335-360798)
Piano recital by Paul Guinery
British piano music by friends & contemporaries of Delius, probably including Gardiner, Bax, Austin, Moeran, Warlock, Scott, Quilter, Grainger & Ireland.

Friday 21 April 2006
Moscow Performing Arts Centre
Chorus of Moscow Academy of Choral Singing & Russian National Philharmonic Orchestra, cond. Vladimir Spivakov [Soloists unknown]
A Mass of Life

Sunday 23 April 2006 at 7.30
Cambridge University Concert Hall, West Road, Cambridge (01223-335184)
Cambridge Orchestra, cond Darrell Davison
Programme includes *A Song before Sunrise*

Wednesday 26 April 2006 at 7.30
St John's, Smith Square, London SW1 (0207-222-1061)
London Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Christopher Warren-Green
Programme: Delius *On hearing the First Cuckoo* and *Summer Night on the River,* Haydn *C major Cello Concerto &* Beethoven *Pastoral Symphony.*

Thursday 27 April 2006 at 7.15
LONDON BRANCH MEETING
New Cavendish Club (0207-723-0391)
Sally Groves (Sir Charles' daughter) will give a talk about her father and her career in publishing.

Friday 28 April 2006 at 8
PHILADELPHIA BRANCH
Carmel Presbyterian Church, 100 Edge Hill Road, Glenside PA 19038
Piano recital by Clipper Erickson
Works by Delius, Quilter, Cyril Scott, Griffes, Dett & Gershwin.

Friday 28 April 2006 at 7.30
Symphony Hall, Birmingham (0870-909-4133)
London Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Christopher Warren-Green
Programme as 26 April.

Sunday 21 May 2006 at 7.30
Castle Manor School, Eastern Avenue, Haverhill, Suffolk (01440-763799)
(Part of 20th Foundation Anniversary celebrations)
Haverhill Sinfonia, cond.Kevin Hill
Programme includes *American Rhapsody.*

Sunday 11 June 2006 at 3
PHILADELPHIA BRANCH
Gala 30th Anniversary Concert:
Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA 19348
Michael Stairs (Piano), David Booth (violin & piano): including 4-hand works.

Saturday & Sunday, 1 & 2 July 2006 at 11 am
St George's Hall, Bradford, Yorkshire (01274-432000)
The Society's Annual General Meeting ;
Concert by BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Tasmin Little (violin), James Rutherford (baritone) & Leeds Festival Chorus,
conductor Rumon Gamba
Fenby: *Rossini on Ilkla Moor*;
Delius: *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* & *Violin Concerto*; Vaughan Williams: *The Lark Ascending*; Delius: *Sea Drift*

Saturday 26 August 2006 at 8
The Pump Room, Bath (01225-477785)
Jessica Chan and Marie Lee Gustafsson (Pianos)
Programme includes *Brigg Fair* and *A Song before Sunrise*

Sunday 24 September 2006 at 8
The Pump Room, Bath
The Bath Recital Artist's Trust
Simon Callaghan & Hiroaki Takenouchi (Pianos)
Programme includes *North Country Sketches*, *Dance Rhapsody No 1* and *In a Summer Garden* (Heseltine arrangements)

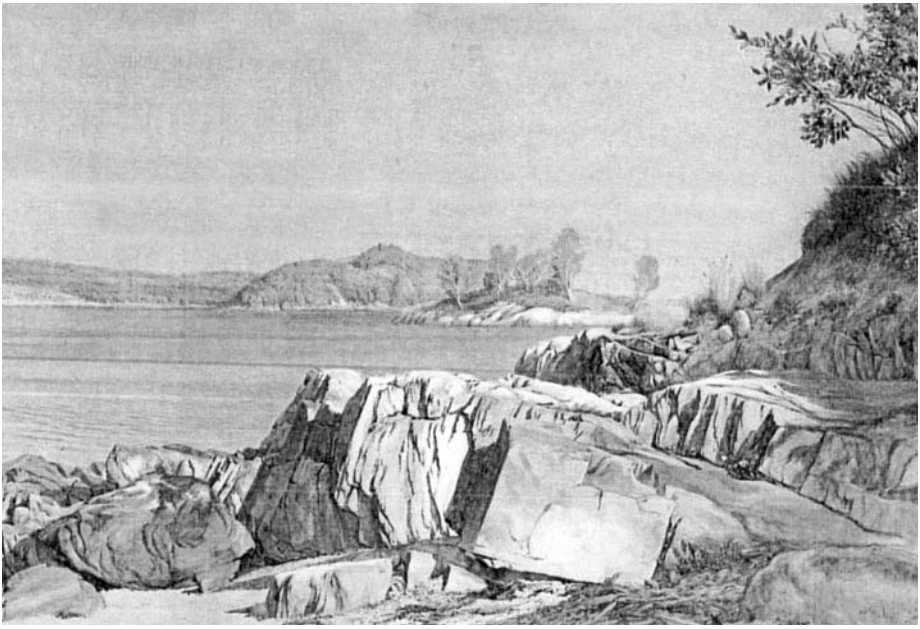
Sunday 15 October 2006 at 7.30
Epsom Playhouse (01372-742555)
Epsom Symphony Orchestra conducted by Darrel Davidson
Programme includes *Dance Rhapsody No 2*

Sunday 22 October 2006 at 7.30
Cambridge University Concert Hall, West Road, Cambridge (01223-335184)
Cambridge Orchestra, cond Darrell Davison
Programme includes *Dance Rhapsody No 2*

Thursday 26 October 2006
The Pump Room, Bath (01225-477785)
The Bath Recital Artist's Trust
Anna Mowat (cello) & David Alexander (piano)
Programme includes the *Cello Sonata* and *Elegy*

Tuesday 31 October 2006 at 7.15
LONDON BRANCH
Steinway Hall, W1 (0207-457-3391)
Piano recital by Paul Guinery
Programme similar to 9 April
Further details will appear in the Summer Newsletter

NB
Sunday 8 – Saturday 14 April 2007
Sadlers Wells Theatre, London
Koanga
A new production by Pegasus Opera Company. Further details will appear in the next issues of the Newsletter and/or the Journal.



Rocks and water – c. 1880 – unknown American artist

Produced for The Delius Society by Design & Print – Oxford

GRAMOPHONE CELEBRITIES
XIX – Sir Thomas Beecham

The gradual emergence of our greatest British conductor from the twilight into which he had retired when, as someone said, the pharmaceutical swings failed to make up for the operatic roundabouts, is worthy of more than casual recognition. It is a great event, and the new issues that we are expecting to get from Columbia will make many of us older gramophonists want to tell the neophytes that for years we have had Beecham records which, with all their faults, are none the less the most precious means of getting to know one of the most distinguished musicians of the present day.

He himself, Sir Thomas, is so elusive, sardonic, Whistleresque, that he is already surrounded by a cluster of legends and anecdotes, and it is hard to fix him for even the briefer thumb-nail sketch. One feels that his merciless twinkling scrutiny reduces the interviewer or photographer, and even the gramophone record itself, to a shyness and a self-consciousness. He has been so rude in public about the gramophone! Heaven and a few earth-worms alone know what he said about it privately and in the recording room. But still he must go into the gallery with other celebrities and must stand for a moment, with his Columbia records round him, to be considered and criticised like any other less Puckish celebrity

Born near Liverpool in 1879, Sir Thomas Beecham was educated at Rossall School and Wadham College, Oxford. His only regular instruction in music seems to have been a short course in composition by Dr. Sweeting at Rossall, and a few lessons from Dr. Varley Roberts while an undergraduate. Armed with the slight knowledge thus obtained and a whole lot more acquired or inherited in some mysterious fashion, he accepted the conductorship of a touring opera cornpany in 1902. This appointment was of short duration, being relinquished in order that he might devote himself to the study of composition. During this period three operas (no one seems to know how much or what else!) were written, all of which are still manuscript form.

Although he directed a large number of orchestral concerts from 1905 onwards, and, in fact, founded two orchestras - the New Symphony Orchestra (1906) and the Beecham Symphony Orchestra (1908) - it was not until 1910 that Sir Thomas first appeared in London in the role of operatic conductor. In this year he gave a season at Covent Garden, which embraced both old favourites and novelties, the most notable of the latter being the first English performance of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* by Delius.

During the next few years he produced and directed and motley selection of operas and ballets at Covent Garden and other London Theatres. In the earlier seasons several works were given their first performance, Stravinsky's *The Nightingale* and Holbrooke's *Dylan,* while in 1916 Bach's *Phoebus and Pan,* Stanford's *The Critic* and Dame Ethel Smyth's *The Boatswain Mate* were included in the repertoire. The seasons of 1913 and 1914 were mainly devoted to Russian works, of which memorable performances were given.

It was during this period that Sir Thomas founded his own opera company, which presented opera on a large scale both in London and in the Provinces, and sowed the seed which the British National Opera Company are trying so gallantly to nurture and bring to fruition to-day. In the intervals between these operatic ventures time was found to act as Artistic Director to the Royal Philharmonic Society from 1916 to 1918, to direct all the principal orchestras in the country, and promote concerts at which interest in the works of Mozart was stimulated by the "clean" and delicate interpretations, and realisation of the genius of Delius was compelled by determined advocacy.

For these and other invaluable services Sir Thomas received his knighthood in 1914. The baronetcy was inherited from his father in 1916.

The Gramophone, October 1924