The Delius Society Journal

Autumn 2006, Number 140

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(Registered Charity No. 298662)

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Front cover: Delius in the Garden at Grez
(Jelka Delius)
(Reproduced with the permission of the Harrison Sisters' Trust)
Back cover: The Jacksonville Mural
(See Miscellany)

The Door at 94 Rue Wilson, Grez
(Photo by Claire Leray)

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Percy Grainger in the Garden at Grez
(Photo from Lewis Foreman's collection)

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As I predicted in my last Notes, 2006 is turning out to be a rewarding year for Society.

The AGM Weekend in Bradford proved thoroughly enjoyable, the Society's main annual event coinciding with the opening of the 'Delius Inspired' Festival. Fifty-six members and guests sat down to the Annual Lunch on 2nd July - and we were delighted that our Vice President Tasmin Little was able to join us on that occasion, despite the heavy burden of her responsibilities as Artistic Director and one of the Festival's principal artists.

Our Vice President Lyndon Jenkins, who played a major part in the Festival, was recently honoured by the Queen of Denmark who has conferred on him a Knighthood of the Danish Order of the Dannebrog ('Danish Flag'). This major honour recognises Lyndon's services to Anglo-Danish cultural relations, particularly in the field of music. The Order dates from 1671 and its conferment is the prerogative of the Danish monarch. It recognises special individual contributions to Danish arts or sciences or to the cultural interests of Denmark. At an investiture ceremony at the Royal Danish Embassy in London, the Ambassador highlighted Lyndon's contribution over many years in the fields of writing, broadcasting and promoting the cause of Danish music in the UK. In recent years these have included organising a month-long Danish Festival in Birmingham and an anniversary concert of the music of Denmark's foremost composer Carl Nielsen at London's Wigmore Hall. Warmest congratulations to Lyndon on this outstanding achievement.

As these notes are being written, final arrangements for the Society's fifty-strong September trip to Grez-sur-Loing are being made by the organisers, Joanna O'Connor and James Baker. We have been fortunate to have the generous co-operation of Jean Merle d'Aubigné, whose family this year celebrates seventy years in Delius's former home.

All the tickets have been allocated for the Society's meeting at Steinway Hall on 31st October, at which Paul Guinery will present a recital of piano music by Delius, his friends and contemporaries.

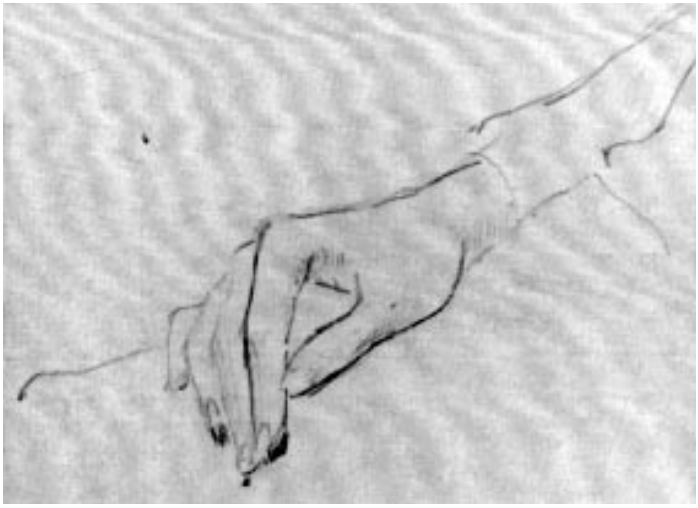
Tickets will be needed also for the final of the third Delius Prize competition, to be held once again in the David Josefowitz Recital Hall of the Royal Academy of Music at 7pm on Friday 17th November. The Delius Prize has been a highlight of the last two years. Please support this year's event, which is to be adjudicated by the distinguished conductor and Vice President of our Society, Sir Charles Mackerras. Booking details are given below.

In addition to all of these special functions we can look forward to a new

season of London meetings. But the Society faces a fundamental problem! As I explained both in the last edition of the *Journal* and at the AGM, three Committee members have warned that they will not continue to serve beyond 2007. The Society simply cannot function without a Committee. If, at the 2007 AGM, seven members are not prepared to stand for election, we may be faced with a resolution to wind up this great Society. It is your Society and the solution is squarely in your hands! If you think you might be able to help, please contact me or any other member of the Committee without delay. My email address is RJBuckley@aol.com, my telephone 01223 302302.

Roger Buckley

At the RAM's request, you are asked to apply in writing; your ticket(s) will admit you to the event and to the Delius Society reception afterwards. Please send ticket requests (a maximum of four per member), with a stamped self-addressed envelope to Ben Furnival, Box Office Administrator, Royal Academy of Music, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HT. Bookings will also be taken by telephone on 0207 873 7300.



Delius's right hand (1929)
(Ernest Proctor – by courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery)

EDITORIAL

Some members will have noticed that on the front cover of their copies of DSJ 139 there was only one 'seabird', and two little black blobs at the top right-hand edge. Those were in fact the feet of the second bird, but unfortunately the printers cut the poor thing in half, so that (to mis-quote The Seven Ages of Man) it came out 'sans body'. My apologies for not having made its crucial role in the picture crystal clear to them.

As I mentioned in the Editorial for DSJ 139, our President has written a magisterial book – *Edvard Grieg in England* – and it will be reviewed in the next issue. Suffice it to say in the meanwhile that it received four stars in the September issue of the BBC Music Magazine, the review ending "…an authoritative and well documented survey with generous illustrations and unlikely to be surpassed." For buying details, see below.

It being Eric Fenby's centennial year, I have headed each section of the article on the origins and first performances of the 'Summer Pieces' with something he said about each of the works.

Choosing the 'selected work' as the main subject of each issue is a pleasurable task for the Editor, but I imagine that some – possibly even many - Members have a particular favourite about which they would like to see a number of articles. It is, of course, axiomatic that the works must have an interesting 'background' in terms of my being able to commission between five and seven pieces about them - and it has to be said that some works simply do not. If, therefore, anyone has suggestions as to both a work and some aspects of it, or its background, I would (albeit without any guarantee of acceptance!) gladly consider them.

Our Vice-Chairman, Michael Green, gave a fascinating talk to the London Branch in March titled *Delius and the Dance.* It seemed to touch on an aspect of Delius's music that had never been explored before, and a slightly amended version of his text is therefore included here.

Some Members may feel that Paul Guinery's brilliant musical analyses in this and the two previous *Journals* are above their heads. I would, however, urge them not to skip to the next article, but simply to listen to the pieces – and, if they have pocket scores, with them open on their knees. Even someone who claims to have only a very elementary ability to read music should not in fact find the musical examples difficult to follow – and, leaving the 'technical bits' aside, the descriptions are marvellous evocations of what the music seems to express to him. I have little doubt that, if they do that, many Members will find that their appreciation of the music will be considerably increased.

Martin Lee-Browne

Edvard Grieg in England

Copies are available at the substantially reduced price of £33.75 (UK postage £2, rest of world £5) from Boydell & Brewer, PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF (01394-610600), and can also be ordered at: <www.boydell.co.uk/souk.htm>. When ordering please quote this reference number: 06167/75. After 30 November, the price increases to £45 plus postage.

The copy date for the Spring 2007 issue of the *Journal* is Wednesday 28 February 2007, and for the Winter 2006 issue of the Newsletter 1 December.

Ray Osborne – Delius's house in Grez in the 1920s

(Reproduced by courtesy of the Artist and Brian & Jo Radford)

OBITUARIES

PROFESSOR ROGER COTTON

As briefly reported in DSJ 139, Roger Cotton, a member of the Midlands Branch for several years, has died.

He and his wife Sue attended and hosted Midlands Branch meetings on many occasions. They were always sumptuous occasions, when Sue served a magnificent buffet.

Roger was a distinguished pathologist, being responsible (among many other things) for setting up the Nottingham City Hospital Pathology Department. After retirement, he became chairman of the Nottingham Branch of the Cancer Research Campaign, and instigated an appeal for £1.4m to set up an oncology department at Nottingham City Hospital.

He was an enthusiastic Delian and (together with Sue) a regular supporter of Nottingham Music Society.

Richard Kitching

BILL EARLY

William O. Early, known to all Delians as Bill, died on June 17 this year at the age of 74 after a long illness. He was born in Niceville, Okaloosa County, Florida, on November 20, 1931, and attended Fort Walton High School where he was a member of the band, his first experience in music performance. He served in the U.S. Air Force as a musician, playing baritone horn and French horn. After his discharge he enrolled in Florida State University, majoring in art, and playing baritone horn in the Marching Chiefs and in the Symphonic Band.

After two years at FSU, he moved to Jacksonville in 1958 with his friend Jeff Driggers and worked in retail advertising for over twenty years. A man of impeccable musical tastes, he was a regular attender at Jacksonville Symphony Concerts from the days when the orchestra played in The Armory. In the 1970s he joined the Delius Association of Florida and served on its Board for many years. He designed the Delius Festival Program Brochures from 1984 to 1997, and his photographs which chronicled years of Delius Festivals have often appeared in the Delius Society Journal and other publications. Bill also

oversaw the design and construction of the Delius Monument at the original site of the Delius house on the St. Johns River at Solano Grove. Bill is survived by his sister-in-law Lottie; two nephews, Steve and Joe and two grand nieces, Adreanna and Melissa; and by his companion and partner for 51 years, Jeff Driggers.

Any member of the Delius Society or Trust who has visited Jacksonville will have experienced the immense hospitality and generosity of spirit of Bill Early and Jeff Driggers. They always made a point of entertaining out-of-town visitors to the annual Delius Festival with invitations to meals and parties, often also providing accommodation in their riverside home. Even at the 2004 Festival, when Bill was in a nursing home and perilously ill, he supervised the annual party from his bed and made it home on the day – nothing would keep him away. I last saw him in February of this year, at home, devotedly cared for, watching old musicals on a giant TV screen – his musical tastes were catholic – a trouper to the last.

Helen Faulkner

Sir John Lavery – On the Loing

THE SOCIETY'S WEEKEND, THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & THE DELIUS INSPIRED FESTIVAL

Bradford 30 June – 1 July 2006

The Weekend and the AGM

Once again, the AGM was held in glorious summer weather over the weekend. One can almost guarantee to non-Delian friends that it is an ideal time for a holiday in England - but hardly in Bradford, which sometimes seems far away from England's "green and pleasant land"!

The choice of hotel was an excellent one. The Great Victoria Hotel lived up to its name. Built in 1867, it would surely have been known to Delius in his teens. Its lofty ceilings made it an ideal spot in the hot weather. An added surprise was the high quality of its food, especially the snacks. Many members enjoyed these before the official opening of the "Delius Inspired Festival" at lunchtime on the Saturday.

This proved to be in the basement bar of the St. George's Hall, where we assembled to renew acquaintance with old friends. We were welcomed by our Vice-President Tasmin Little, whose idea the Festival was, and who had valiantly undertaken much of the work involved in ensuring that it all actually happened. We then moved to the National Museum of Photography, Film and TV to listen to an erudite talk by our Vice President Lyndon Jenkins on Delius's life and works. As always, this was accompanied by a series of amusing anecdotes, many of them about Beecham, which enlivened the talk. At the end, Lyndon invited questions – but all he got was a recitation of further amusing anecdotes about Beecham! In true British fashion, people chose to ignore what was asked of them!

The excellent evening opening concert was followed by a buffet in the hotel - bad for the digestion, but very enjoyable as an opportunity for us all to discuss the concert and other matters; plenty of what Delius described as a "cold collation" to eat! The following morning we assembled for a substantial breakfast which, inevitably, was lukewarm - but the restaurant was comfortable, so no complaint there.

The actual AGM was then held at 11.00. The Chairman conducted it in his exemplary way, and the items were disposed of to everyone's satisfaction. For me, there were two items of particular interest. The first related to the annual Delius Prize, now running for two successful years. One Member asked whether in future years it could sometimes be held at the Royal Northern College of Music (or a similar place) for ease of access to Members living in the north. This highlighted a problem that has beset the Society since

its inception in 1962. Meetings are invariably held in London, since a large number of Members live in the south - but we must never forget those living elsewhere. Our Chairman promised to consider the suggestion, towards the time when the initial agreement with the Royal Academy of Music for holding the competition there for the first five years expires in 2008.

The other matter related to the Society's status as a registered charity, overseen by the Charity Commissioners. The Government has recently tightened the law relating to charities – partly because dubious organisations have registered as charities in order to claim tax advantages and it was suggested that further changes may be on their way which could result in some organisations losing their charitable status. The Delius Society will need to abide by all the law relating to charities – the Chairman assured Members that the Committee will keep a close watch on matters if and when they develop, as it would clearly be an extremely serious matter if we were unable to continue to exist as a charity. An extra burden has therefore fallen on the Committee, but I feel sure they will undertake it with their customary zeal.

Following the meeting, our President Dr.Lionel Carley gave a most interesting talk on his recently published his book *Edvard Greig in England*. It gives a wide-ranging account of Greig's activities in England between 1862 and 1906, and we were treated to a fascinating hour. Finally, we enjoyed our annual AGM lunch – during which Tasmin Little visited each of the six (or was it seven?!) tables for a delightful chat. And so another excellent week-end came to a close. Thanks are due for all the hard work put in by the Committee, and particularly the Chairman, to make it the success it undoubtedly was. Next year, we understand that we expect to meet in or near Cheltenham, so that we can visit the annual Festival there, at which a work of Delius may be played. At least that will be far away from the "dark, satanic mills" of Bradford!

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Concerts at St. George's Hall

Tasmin Little's organisation of the Delius Inspired Festival was so successful that, if she had not been a Vice-President of the Society already, she would have been made one at the AGM! Many Festivals simply have too much going on, so that it is almost a superhuman task to get to everything, or even to most things. As it was, however, here there was just two morning concerts and one every evening over the week – and all the programmes were very thoughtfully designed, with, in addition to the Delius pieces, music by many people who, one way or another, wereassociated with him or his beloved France.

The Opening Concert
(Photo by Michael Kulas of Philadelphia)

The opening concert in the evening of 30 June was superb by any standards – and a marvellous start to the Festival! The temptation to make it an all-Delius evening must have been strong, but that would have been just too much of a good thing – so to include a piece by another other Englishmen in each half provided just the right element of contrast, and they fully complemented the Delius works we had really come to hear. The concert was particularly satisfying in that it introduced the audience to two new performers seemingly with Delius's music already in their bones - the conductor Rumon Gamba and the baritone James Rutherford. The general feeling was that they have the potential to become great and consistent protagonists for Delius's music – and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra played quite excellently, with a real feel for the Delian idiom.

Eric Fenby's overture *Rossini on Ilkla Moor* is a gem of a piece, and it was a felicitous acknowledgement of his astonishing contribution to the catalogue of Delius's work. Suffice it to say that it sounded like real Rossini, crescendos and all, with scintillating playing from winds and strings alike. The other non-Delius piece was Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending*, a marvellous evocation of an English summer's day (like the ones we had over the whole week-end), played by Tasmin Little with a rapt stillness only ruffled by the hint of a breeze, clean lines, exquisite trills and perfect shape.

She knows the *Violin Concerto* like no-one else these days, and her performance of it was a classic one. She played with total assurance and

accuracy, caressed the quiet sections, was forthright in the energetic ones, and danced through the finale. The 'thematic and formal cohesion' of the work (to quote Fenby) was brought out in a thoroughly satisfying way. Before it, Gamba and the orchestra gave a quite beautiful performance of *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* – the end spun out with a golden tone – and they were then joined by James Rutherford and the combined Leeds Festival Chorus & Sheffield Philharmonic Choir to give the finest performance of *Sea Drift* that I have ever heard.

It is an incredibly difficult piece to perform, from all points of view - the conductor's, the soloist's, the orchestra's and that of the chorus. The baritone and the chorus must both project their words over a big sound, the chorus must be impeccably in tune - particularly at "Once Paumanok", the wonderful unaccompanied "Oh, rising stars" and the sopranos' high Bs. As Richard Hickox said in DSJ 139 (pages 81-84), you have got to get the balance between all the performers right, the music must ebb and flow, have that inexpressable 'off-the-ground' quality - and above all everyone has be committed to it and love it. Happily all those attributes were there in this performance; James Rutherford has just the right quality of voice, he is intensely musical, his words are impeccable, and he clearly identified with the boy and the he-bird. The orchestra played, and the large chorus sang, with great poignance and power, while Rumon Gamba showed evident enjoyment, integrity, sensitivity, and affection - as indeed he did throughout the concert - which will hopefully ensure that he joins our list of conductors who really understand Delius.

ML-B

During the following week a wonderful programme of concerts and events unfolded, beginning on the Monday evening with a concert *Delius and His Contemporaries,* a delightful 'melange' of songs and piano works given by Yvonne Kenny (soprano) and Piers Lane (piano); Tuesday evening saw Tasmin, accompanied by Martin Roscoe, playing Grieg's *Sonata in G minor*, Delius's *Sonatas Nos. 3 and 1* and Ravel's 'jazzy' *Sonata* of 1927.

Wednesday evening's *Eric Fenby Celebration,* a tribute to Delius's great amanuensis, was chaired by Lyndon Jenkins and featured showings of Ken Russell's exceptional 1968 BBC 'Monitor' film *Song of Summer* and Nick Gray's Yorkshire TV's *Song of Farewell*. It was attended by both producers: Lyndon welcomed them and reminded us that this was the first time that the films had been featured together – a unique occasion indeed. In introducing his film, Ken spoke briefly about the casting of the actors, especially Max Adrian, Maureen Prior and Christopher Gable, who played the main roles, and the tight budgetary restraints that precluded the use of the actual house

in Grez, filming actually taking place on location in England. Sharing their reminiscences of Eric Fenby, a panel chaired by Lyndon, and comprising Ken, Tasmin, Dr. Lionel Carley and me, paid tribute to a uniquely talented, modest and dedicated friend who, despite suffering that 'baptism of fire' during his first attempt to try to take down a tune from Delius's impossible dictation, had nevertheless stuck to the task which he had felt called to do with such dedication, leaving an invaluable musical legacy of their partnership for which we are eternally grateful. Ken reminded us of Eric's reaction when, turning up unannounced on the film set one day, he only made himself known afterwards, emotionally remarking "Yes, that's just how it was." The other members of the panel testified to Eric's caring and self-sacrificing nature in their dealings with him, his willingness to advise on the interpretation of Delius' music, and his dedicated work as President of the Delius Society. Nick Gray's retrospective film *Song of Farewell,* the story of Fenby's later life in music, which included shots of the Yehudi Menuhin School (with a young Tasmin!), an emotional return to the Delius house at Grez and Eric's final thoughts on those years as amanuensis, made a delightful end to the evening. Nick paid tribute to Eric and his willingness to fall in with their requirements throughout its making, and that final shot of Eric with Rowena walking arm-in-arm into the sunset still stirs the emotions of all those who knew and loved this very special man.

A Thursday lunchtime concert by the Yehudi Menhuin School Junior Orchestra in Bradford Cathedral displayed the quite exceptional talents of both the ensemble and individual very young performers. In the evening, sensitively accompanied by John Lenehan, Julian Lloyd Webber gave a stirring performance of Delius's cello *Sonata* on the instrument once owned by Alexander Barjansky, who had played the work to the composer in Grez on 11th October, 1928 - accompanied by Eric Fenby, the day after he first arrived. Other works by Debussy, Faure, Lloyd Webber and Rachmaninov completed the recital.

The Festival had many highlights but one in particular was hearing at the penultimate concert on the Friday evening a fine performance of Delius's unjustly neglected *Double Concerto for Violin and Violoncello* - composed in 1915 for May and Beatrice Harrison, and first performed by them at the Queen's Hall in London on 21 February 1920 under the baton of Sir Henry Wood. Frequently heard criticisms of performances are that either one or other of the soloists predominates, or that the orchestral sound overwhelms them both - but this was certainly not the case when Tasmin was joined by the young cellist Guy Johnston, the 2002 winner of the BBC Young Musician of the

Tasmin Little and the BBC Philharmonic after the Double Concerto
(Photo by Michael Kulas of Philadelphia)

Year, with David Atherton (who was the Musical Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra from 1989 to 2000) conducting the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. Here was a superb account of this neglected work, in which the soloists were in perfect balance throughout and were given due prominence over the orchestra whenever this was called for. Clearly there had been a lot of preparation and rehearsal time, and it showed, and for me the performance definitely 'topped' the few others I have heard.

The programme had begun with Henry Wood's heavily orchestrated version of Percy Grainger's *Handel in the Strand*, which certainly made everyone sit up and take notice, followed by Peter Warlock's *Serenade ('To Frederick Delius on his 60th Birthday')* – a piece written in 1923 to celebrate an event that had actually occurred the year before, since Delius at that time incorrectly believed that he had been born in 1863. The final work was Sir Edward Elgar's *Variations on an Original Theme* (*Enigma*). There was a freshness about this performance, resulting partly from the adoption of speeds in some parts of the work rather different from those normally heard, and partly from the innovative balance of the orchestra, which brought some instrumental elements into sharper focus with interesting and pleasing results.

The Bradford Festival Choral Society gave a concert in Bradford cathedral on the Saturday lunchtime, which included Delius's *Six Early Part Songs,* before the 'Festival Finale' concert in the evening given by Tasmin Little and Wayne

Marshall - the highly respected organist, conductor and pianist. The concert was quite a 'tour de force' and opened with Grieg's *Sonata No. 3 in C minor.* Written in 1887 and praised as 'heroic', 'passionate' and 'superb in breadth and power', it is a much neglected work (which Grieg himself described as having 'a wider horizon' than his first two) and Tasmin gave it a fluent interpretation. Delius's *Violin Sonata No. 2*, written in 1923, followed - a work that Tasmin has made her own through her recordings of it along with the other three; the performance was both commandingly articulate and thoughtful, whilst the performance of the *Sonata in B major Op. posth*. which followed the short interval well contrasted the strong sense of driving rhythm of the outer movements with the hauntingly sensual 'Andante molto tranquillo' middle one.

Wayne Marshall then took centre stage with his *Improvisation on Themes of Frederick Delius,* which was both a delight and a challenge to the ear. A gentle introduction, based upon *La Calinda* played in a minor key, moved through a succession of chordal inventions, with weaving fugue-like figures and fists full of notes, and the full extent of the keyboard was utilized in a dazzling display of pianistic versatility, the like of which I have never heard before. Tasmin then gave a scintillating performance of Maurice Ravel's *Tzigane,* with Wayne's brief piano solo passages coming to the fore - a wonderful account of a sensual and ravishing work. Rapturous applause followed. Encores there had to be, and Tasmin and Wayne segued into Gershwin's jazzy *I got rhythm* - and then finally Cole Porter's sensual *Beguine the beguine,* where the rhythmic drive and seemingly listless overtones brought more enthusiastic applause that resulted in four curtain calls. What a splendid evening!

Other notable aspects of the festival were Tasmin's arrangement with the Bradford Music Service for the artists to give 'Masterclasses' at local schools to give students an insight into classical music, and also the input of Lyndon Jenkins, who not only gave two fascinating talks (*Delius' Life and Works* and *Delius and His Greatest Champion* i.e. Beecham) but chaired the pre-concert talks and the *Eric Fenby Celebration* on the Wednesday evening, and also acted as Tasmin's 'behind-the-scenes' co-ordinator. I think that as its Director, Tasmin should be congratulated for the imaginative concept of this exceptional 'Delius Inspired' festival and for her success in lining up so many top names – it was in fact 'Tasmin Inspired' and one hopes that another such event will be organized by her at some time in the near future.

© Brian Radford 2006

I am, of course, far too young to have personal recollections of Bradford's 1962 Delius Centenary Festival. Clearly though, that famous event represented a high water mark in the City's cultural life during its 1960s'rebirth'. It was unique - a'one-off'. Last week's brilliantly conceived Delius Inspired Festival revealed programming strands and themes that could be developed in subsequent festivals. BBC Radio 3 devoted its prime evening'Performance on 3'slot to live or recorded broadcast of concerts and recitals from St George's Hall throughout the week. Media coverage has been positive and many visitors were attracted to the City."Delius Inspired"should be seen not as an end, but as a beginning - a precursor to a biennial event? - of which Bradford should not let go.

The appointment of Tasmin Little as artistic director could have scarcely been more appropriate. Little has strong Bradford connections, and the University's Music Centre is named after her. More important though, her passion for Delius is conveyed to the audience through performances of luminous intensity and her deeply personal introductions to the music. Another facet of her dual role as artistic director and principal performer helped to define the Festival. She engaged illustrious colleagues, partners and collaborators. This engendered an informal atmosphere of friends together, making music of the highest quality. When Little was not on the concert platform, she joined the audience. After their sublime performance of the Delius *Double Concerto* - Little, cellist Guy Johnston, and the BBC Philharmonic conducted by David Atherton - the violinist, smiling and still wearing her shimmering gold evening dress, made her way to a stalls seat to listen to Atherton's spacious reading of Elgar's *Enigma Variations.*

The Yehudi Menuhin School's Junior Orchestra concert in Bradford Cathedral was another very special occasion. Tasmin Little is a protégée of the School, and was present in the audience to hear virtuoso solo performances from tomorrow's stars - gifted youngsters from Britain, Singapore, Malaysia and Korea. Among many recital big lights in the relative intimacy of St George's Hall, I would mention Tasmin Little and Martin Roscoe's performance of sonatas by Grieg, Ravel and Delius (nos 2 and 3) and Little and Wayne Marsh's ravishing performance of Delius's *Sonata in B*, and Marshall's mercurial and explosive *Improvisation on Themes* by Delius - an absolute knock-out!

© Geoffrey Mogridge 2006

[*Adapted from an article in The Wharfdale Observer & Ilkley Gazette for 29 June 2006*]

MADAME ANNA MERLE-D'AUBIGNÉ ("BIBKA")

BIBKA AND GREZ-SUR-LOING

Jean Merle d'Aubigné

The discovery of the house at Grez by my parents, Robert (orthopaedic surgeon) and Anna (known to everyone as "Bibka") Merle d'Aubigné, and their decision to acquire the property happened on a pleasant day in the spring of 1936. It was a decision that was made in a very short time indeed.

Having just taken walk in the forest, they saw a sign – "Maison à Vendre" – hanging on the door of the house. They asked in the village for a key to the house, found the garden, walked down to the river, and then returned to the house to take a quick look inside. They decided there and then to buy the property, which they both thought wonderful and quite unique. Bibka and my father were utterly charmed by the place, located as it was between the church and the ruins of the Tour de Ganne, with beech and plane trees overhanging the river, a spring feeding a wash-house, so typical of the village, and a pond fringed by yellow irises and reeds.

I can well understand how what they must have seen as a typical English garden (perhaps a little overgrown by then, if one judges from some of the photographs of the time), with all those white lilies and hollyhocks around the house, touched a very sensitive part of Bibka. The river Loing at the bottom of the garden, and the proximity of the rocky outcrops of the forest of Fontainebleau also contributed to my parents' choice, canoeing and rock-climbing being much practised in my father's family – and indeed subsequently by his own children and grandchildren.

How did Bibka and my father get to know that this was the place where Delius and his wife Jelka had lived until so recently? To begin with, the seller was Balfour Gardiner, himself a composer who was a close friend of Delius. Furthermore the former presence of a painter in the house had soon become obvious when they came across the double door of the studio; used as a palette, it was thickly covered with all the warm colours employed by Jelka.

Before the war, Bibka had had a visit from Felix Aprahamian, and much later she had the pleasure of meeting other enthusiasts of Delius's music, among them Lionel Carley who first came to the village in the mid-1960s and who was to become a family friend. So many of those visitors were able to tell Bibka how much Delius and Jelka had loved their home and its natural surroundings. The beauties of this part of the Isle de France must surely have

influenced Delius's music and Jelka's paintings.

I write these lines at the very moment when we are busy preparing a reception for our friends of the Delius Society, many of whom are shortly to visit Grez. I am happy to offer this modest contribution to the Society's Journal, whose editor Martin Lee-Browne is, of course, the godson of that same Balfour Gardiner from whom my parents bought the house exactly seventy years ago this year. For this reason, I decided to ask my cousin Claude Thomas, herself well aware of the interest Bibka took in everything related to English culture (and in particular English literature), to write the following lines on 'Bibka and Great Britain'. In appreciation of her work, I wish to express my thanks to Claude.

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Honorary Member, The Delius Society

BIBKA AND GREAT BRITAIN

Claude Nathalie Thomas

My aunt, Madame Anna Merle d'Aubigné, known as Bibka to her family and friends, was blonde and blue eyed and felt happy in a northern climate. She hated olive oil, garlic and hot mediterranean summers. While not particularly well-versed in naval lore, she professed a great admiration for the spread of British power over the oceans of the world and for the accompanying influence of British civilisation in remote countries.

Presumably, her first contact with England came with an English governess, Miss Shawcross (Shorecross, perhaps? - I never saw her name in writing, though my mother, Bibka's younger sister, often spoke of her in adoring tones). Miss Sh. taught Bibka and her sisters reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as that brand of English then spoken in refined families. Miss Sh. enforced a rigorous daily schedule on the children. This was somewhat difficult to achieve, I imagine, in an otherwise Russian household, even though they lived in Paris most of the year. Bibka later confided to a friend that Miss Sh.'s insistent control of all practical matters was in fact a liberating factor: it freed Bibka's mind for 'things more interesting' than food or the niceties of domestic arrangements.

Yet all her life, Bibka loved English china, English manners, and the garden

of her country home near Paris, where she had planted a beautiful mixed border of flowers running down the side of the main alley, towards the river. She had learned some secrets of gardening during a long stay in a cottage, near Oxford I believe, with her first husband, André Prevost. (Andre was a racing man, inclined to prolonged sojourn not too far from the race tracks.)

At that time, Bibka became very friendly with a highly literate couple, Sydney and Violet Scuff, with their nephew, Edward Beddington Behrens, and with their entourage, including most particularly, one of their 'protégés', Joan, who was later to become Lady Moore, Countess of Drogheda. Joan was very charming and an accomplished pianist. She and Bibka remained friendly as long as Joan lived and could travel to France. But I only once heard her play on Bibka's Bechstein grand. Scarlatti, I seem to remember. Perhaps it was through Joan that Bibka realised the connection between her country home in Grez-sur-Loing and the composer Delius, who had lived there, and that she became involved with the Delius Society.

On the other hand, it is certain that the influence of Violet Schiff, whose husband under the name Stephen Hudson had been the first English translator of Marcel Proust, was predominant in orienting Bibka towards contemporary literature and her life-long favorites: Proust, Henry James, James Joyce, Kafka, soon joined by Virginia Woolf and Jean Rhys. Violet was apparently obdurate in her opinions and pretty dictatorial. Although we had never met, she once wrote in a letter to Bibka, which I saw: "Your niece is a silly, ignorant girl", because I had preferred *Portrait of a Lady* to *The Golden Bowl,* this last being Violet's favorite, and, according to her, James's masterpiece, beyond all question.

This kind of exchange on cultural matters occupied much of Bibka's correspondence with her British and also American friends. Many of these appeared at her luncheon table when they visited France, and their children stayed in Grez-sur-Loing with Bibka's own children and grandchildren. Thus, in later life Bibka kept up her relationship with the English language and all things British which were so important to her. She never lost her fondness for reading or speaking English and loved the visits of her English-speaking friends. Until she died, her bedside table was piled high with usually English books. The very night of her death, she had apparently been reading one of her favorites, a volume of short stories by Jean Rhys: *Tigers are Better Looking.*

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THE 'SUMMER PIECES'

FREDERICK DELIUS IN HIS GARDEN

Philip Oyler *

The privileged few who were welcomed to the home of Delius without special invitation were not surprised that he and his wife should have chosen to live in Grez-sur-Loing, and that they should have selected the house which they did, for though in itself it has no features of special interest, its setting is an inspiration to all who are affected by the sight of beautiful things. For those who would like to know some few intimate details upon which the eager eyes of the composer looked often and lovingly, this sketch is written by one who knows each tree in the garden, from the weeping-ash that reflects itself in the lily-pond, to the giant ash that overhangs the river and has two massive iron bands attached to a tall plane to prevent *it* from falling by its weight into the water.

But before we enter the garden let us come to Grez in the way by which visitors invariably come. We take the express train from the Gare de Lyon in Paris and alight at Fontainebleau after an hour's quick run. Passing the palatial hotel— the Savoy—where the ex-King of Spain has a permanent suite, we take the great high road that leads through the famous forest south to Vichy and the Mediterranean. On our way we pass under a beautifully designed aqueduct which conveys water to Paris, mount up through fine pines to a stone cross on high ground, where Napoleon met the Pope, descend again to the little village of Bourron resting under the hill on the southern border of the forest, and then after a mile's run in the open country we sight Grez on our left, or that part of the village which is visible from the high road.

It is only about eight miles from Fontainebleau station, and the approach disappoints a little, for the first two or three houses outside the village are

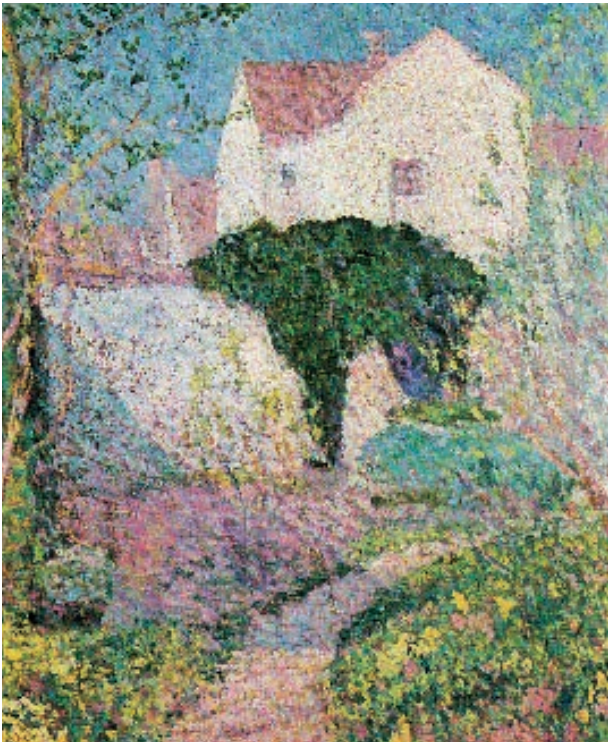
* Philip Oyler (1879-1974) was an English agriculturalist and writer, who became a friend of the Deliuses in about 1932. This article was originally published in *The Music Student*, July 1934, and it is reproduced in *A Delius Companion* (Ed. Christopher Redwood – John Calder, London 1980). This reproduction is by courtesy of Calder Publications Ltd.

See note 3 on page 34. Although Lyndon Jenkins quotes part of this most evocative piece of writing in his article below, particulary in light of the recent visit of Members to Grez, I make no apology for printing it in full – by kind permission of Calder Publications Ltd. –Ed.

modern and atrocious in every way; but these past, the joy begins, for one enters the village itself, where no change has been for many generations except the installation of electric light (which is now everywhere in France).

We wind down through narrow paved streets to the Poule d'eau (Water-hen) which was the centre of the noted artist colony in the past, turn to the right and have the old church facing us. We go in this direction, notice the ruins of an ancient fortress on our left and stop at the last house before reaching the church, for this is the house of Delius. It presents to the road an extended plain front with three storeys, the top one having dormers. It is distinguished from the other houses by being much longer, by having all its window shutters painted green instead of the prevailing grey, and by having at intervals rambler roses climbing up it and adding, when in bloom, some pleasing masses of colour against the solid stone walls.

There is no bell, so we take hold of a large wrought knocker and hammer loudly on the double massive doors, for these give entrance to a courtyard and not to the house itself. While we await the arrival of someone, it should



Jelka Delius – The Garden at Grez (n.d.)
(Reproduced by kind permission of The Eric Fenby Collection)

be explained that in the districts of France which have often been subjected to invasion through the ages, one sees no farms (unless fortress-farms) between village and village—nothing but unspoiled country, rich in corn or fruit or woods. The villages themselves present a means of defence and in them there are still the farmhouses, stables and cattle-pens, and the doors and door-ways have to be high enough to admit cart-loads of hay and corn. Sometimes these doorways are at the side of the house, and sometimes in the middle of it, with rooms above as is the case of Delius's house.

We will assume that we have entered the garden, having satisfied the doubts of Madame Grespier, a loyal French woman of long service with the family, who opens the large doors just wide enough to see with one eye who is there. It is she who scolds her mistress if she leaves her purse about, bakes excellent bread and other good things, makes the electric pump go when the electrician swears that it is completely worn out, holds on to the cellar key as though her very life depended on it. God bless her! She has let us in knowing that we have a free pass.

And what do we see? Not much for a moment. We have been standing in deep shade on the north side of the house and as we go out on to the other side, our eyes are dazzled by a rich sunlight falling on the courtyard. When they grow accustomed to this, they are amazed at a mass of flowers, so vividly intense, that one wonders what they are. We approach to satisfy our curiosity and find that they are roses of all sorts and annuals covering the ground completely between them. Owing to the nature of the soil and the fact that the climate is hotter in summer and colder in its short winter than in England, the herbaceous border is not a great success here. Many things refuse to grow at all, or grow in a very feeble way, and others have such a short flowering period that it hardly justifies them occupying the ground for twelve months to provide a few days' delight. One must adopt other methods, and that is why one sees so often in French gardens nothing but bedded out plants in formal plots.

But this would not satisfy the taste of Mrs. Delius and she has solved the problem in her own way. Finding that the slugs upset her arrangements when the seed was broadcast, she imposed on herself the task of sowing in frames and transplanting afterwards, leaving the gardener the duty of keeping them watered. The result is a riot of colour throughout six months of the year, for the annuals, regularly watered, seem to delight in the hot sun and bloom as one never sees them in England—petunias, salpiglossis, cosmos, phlox, nicotiana, marigolds in the most astounding luxuriance, with here and there a madonna lily growing amongst them and looking down upon them as a sort of benediction.

There is a reason—unusual indeed—for the especial luxuriance which these

annuals exhibit and here is the story. The Marquis de Carzeaux, from whom Delius bought the property, had an extraordinary way of amusing himself. He was fond of horses and kept a number of them. The lower parts of the west wing of the house were stables in his time. He disliked gardens and would not have one. Having large quantities of manure and no garden to put it on, he covered the ground with it till it was some feet thick, and he spent a lot of his time driving a four-in-hand round and round that which is now this beautiful garden. The great trees were there, of course, and the pond, but these were sporting obstacles, no doubt, from his point of view.

When we have satisfied our eyes with this feast of colour, and look around us, we find that the house has wings at each end that project southwards, thus forming the courtyard, and that, where the wings end, old stone walls continue, and indeed lead right down to the river Loing below, giving perfect seclusion. Moving out of the courtyard, where climbing roses spread in profusion on all sides, we notice on the east, and barely a hundred yards distant, the towering ruins of a Norman castle round which the jackdaws are ever circling and in which they find ideal nesting places. On the west, and even nearer stands the old church with its noble twelfth-century tower, beautiful in its stern simplicity. On either side, too, one sees the roofs of old houses, barns and sheds of many shapes and sizes, but all covered with mellowed brown tiles that seem to have deep purple shades in them, a most pleasing combination with the grey stone walls, and entirely satisfying to the eye.

Continuing down the path, we have to stop a little to miss an overhanging branch of an elder. It is growing out of the wall and is so gnarled in its antiquity that it reminds one of the twisted olive trees growing in the rocks of the south. Though the elder is a tree for which one has not much sympathy, since at times it can be almost a pernicious weed, this one in its great age has taken on a character that commands respect, especially in winter, when all the muscles of its limbs are visible. It will be allowed to die a natural death, having furnished an exuberant crop of fruit for countless seasons and providing nightly the roosting place of Koanga, the family tame jackdaw.

Beyond this the path forks, and both parts descend with pleasant windings till at length they reunite at the landing place by the river. Whichever one takes makes no difference. They are equally beautiful with fruit trees of various kinds growing on either side in luscious grass, with here and there a large clump of peonies. But it is really impossible to keep to either path. Between them in a little natural valley is a pool of enchantment, furnished by a never-failing spring of clear water. On its northern bank a weeping-ash – a Chinese variety – stands like a dignified guardian; at its southern end bamboos grow in luxurious

profusion to fifteen feet high and more, while yellow iris fringe its sides, and, if one approaches quietly, a pair of water hens will be seen at home. The hand of man has had very little to do with this lovely spot, and perhaps that is why it promotes a delight which one does not feel in beholding an artificial lily pond, no matter how rich in aquatic flowers.

Certainly it is not easy to pass on, yet when we do it is only to arrive at another beautiful place, a roughly circular lawn between the pool and the river. Here again there is an extraordinary natural charm. A beech with polished boles and of great height keeps guardian, this time at the northern end, apple trees are along the sides, and forming the border between it and the river, rise gigantic plane trees with the sun shining on their flaked boles—simple indeed all of it, but majestic in effect, a sight one could never forget.

And so to the river Loing, a wide, silent current with magnificent trees overhanging it on the village side, and pleasant meadows opposite. We sit on the bank awhile and admire the grandeur of the great trees above us, and turn round to look at the garden from the opposite direction. There in the foreground is the lovely lawn and beeches, to the left we see the eastern end of the church peeping between branches of apple trees, in front and middle distance the bamboos and various flowering shrubs form a thick screen which guards the secret of the enchanted pool, and to the right we have glimpses between the trees of the ruined castle.

There is a peace here—the peace of ages, and time passes softly and silently like the river beside us. Yes, it is a haven indeed of greenery in this summer sunshine, but when the trees are just breaking into leaf in the springtime it is perhaps still more fascinating, for where we see now the mown lawn and the lush grass under the trees and along the pathways, there are to be seen swathes of snowdrops, crocus, daffodil, periwinkle, violets cowslip, primroses, and pink low-growing delphinium. It is easy to guess that Mrs. Delius has been responsible for this, but one would not guess that these were mostly wild flowers, but daffodils with large trumpets like these grow wild hereabouts. Near the neighbouring village of Recloses on the hill there is a large wood, in one valley of which there are more flowers in early spring than one could ever imagine. They grow so closely packed that, if one leaves the footpath, it is in places quite impossible to stand without treading on flowers. Spring comes slowly in England and there are many weeks between the blossoming of daffodils and cowslips. But in this sheltered valley spring comes in with a rush and the result is astounding—indescribable even, if one has not seen it.

To this valley Mr. and Mrs. Delius made for many years a little pilgrimage with trowel and basket and from that inexhaustible supply transferred some

specimens which have found themselves so much at home in this haif-wild garden that they are trying to cover the ground completely.

As we are by the river we may as well get into the boat and push out. What magnificent old ash trees overhang the water! The giant planes have taken so much room that the ash trees have had of necessity to grow out horizontally from the bank in order to get light, and one has had to be secured to a plane, having ignored its centre of gravity. But what lovely reflections they make in the mirrored river! And what an interesting row of silver-stemmed poplars on the opposite bank. Planted by Delius? Impossible, they must be fifty years old at least. But they are not. He planted them in 1910, and the moisture which their roots get, and the many months of warm sunshine each year combine to produce that extraordinary rapidity of growth.

If we landed on the opposite bank and looked through them at the old bridge only two hundred yards down-stream, we should regret that Delius could no longer see what a delightful picture his trees have made. But let us paddle slowly upstream and admire the adjoining gardens with terraces and sloping lawns leading down to the water's edge, and past the little mill surrounded with flowers. Here the river has made islets and we steer among them and hear the roar of many waters, to the sound of which the village sleeps its quiet nights; for the weir is near, the water is churned, and when we have rounded the next promontory we shall be unable to proceed any further for we have come to what is locally known as the End of the World.

Postcard c. 1913

THE 'SUMMER PIECES'

IN A SUMMER GARDEN

Lyndon Jenkins

Delius composed *In a Summer Garden* in the spring of 1908 and, at the invitation of the Philharmonic Society, took charge of its first performance in London on 11 December that year. It was the second of his three attempts to conduct his own music in public, and he felt able to write to his wife afterwards: 'The orchestra played beautifully … and it sounded beautifully for me' … although this (perhaps necessarily) confident report was tempered by a more realistic appraisal to his friend, the composer Granville Bantock: 'I conducted without a catastrophe and that is about all …' In fact Delius, as we know, was a fairly hopeless conductor ('amusingly helpless' was Dame Ethel Smyth's description) and several friends and associates were trying to discourage him from wielding the baton. 'Don't beat 4 in a 6-8 measure,' Bantock had chaffed him when he heard of Delius's determination to introduce *In a Summer Garden,* and Dame Ethel was nonplussed by Delius's response at the rehearsal when she suggested to him that the orchestra had perhaps been dragging his music. 'Dragging it?' he replied, 'I should think they were! But what can you do if they will go on playing slower and slower?'[1]

After the première Delius revised his score extensively, and it is this version, published in 1911, with which we are familiar today.[2] At first Delius was firmly against providing a description of his music: 'I do not much care for the analytical programs as they are generally done, and for modern impressionistic music they are entirely useless', he protested to Berger, the Philharmonic Society's secretary; 'the title 'In a Summer Garden' puts them [the audience] into the atmosphere of my work – and that is really all I desire.' When Universal republished the score in 1921, however, Delius did allow a brief description to appear on it: he had evidently written this much earlier, because it had been printed in the programme of a performance of the work in Jena under Fritz Stein in June 1913:

> Roses, lilies and a thousand sweet-scented flowers. Bright butterflies flitting from petal to petal, and gold-brown bees murmuring in the warm, quivering summer air. Beneath the shade of the old trees flows a quiet river with water lilies. In a boat, almost hidden, two people. A thrush is singing – in the

distance.

'Here is the breath and soul of landscape in England', wrote that sympathetic Delius lover, the writer and critic Sir Neville Cardus, about *Brigg Fair,* the immediate predecessor of *In a Summer Garden.* I remember that when I was first becoming acquainted with Delius's music fifty years ago it seemed amazing to me that he could switch with such apparent ease from the perceived 'Englishness' of *Brigg Fair* to a much more intimate and more personal kind of utterance that was inspired by a completely different landscape in another country. That landscape was, of course, his own garden at his house at Grez-sur-Loing, where he lived for the last 36 years of his life and wrote all his best music. Anyone who has been there and stood on that still-enchanted ground will know what an unforgettable impression its special atmosphere leaves. But the garden cannot now be seen as Delius saw it and which he recorded so graphically in his music, so a verbal description may perhaps be helpful. Fortunately for us one exists in the vivid impression written down by a neighbour of the Deliuses at Grez, the writer Philip Oyler.[3] What it lacks in Delius's laconic conciseness it more than makes up in a wealth of attractive and enticing detail:

> … the massive double doors … give entrance to a courtyard ... Once inside, what do we see? Not much for a moment: we have been standing in deep shade on the north side of the house and as we go out on the other side, our eyes are dazzled by a rich sunlight falling on the courtyard. When they grow accustomed to this they are amazed at a mass of flowers, so vividly intense, that one wonders what they are. We approach to satisfy our curiosity and find that they are roses of all sorts and annuals covering the ground completely between them…. petunias, salpiglossis, cosmos, phlox, nicotiana, marigolds in the most astounding luxuriance, with here and there a Madonna lily growing amongst them. The result is a riot of colour throughout six months of the year … Beyond this the path forks, and both parts descend with pleasant windings until at length they reunite at the landing-place by the river. Whichever one takes makes no difference, they are equally beautiful, with fruit trees of various kinds growing on either side in luscious grass with here and there a large clump of peonies.
>
> Between them in a little natural valley is a pool of enchantment, furnished by a never-failing spring of clear water. On its northern bank a weeping-ash stands like a dignified guardian; at its southern end bamboos grow in profusion to fifteen feet high and more, while yellow iris fringe its sides … at another beautiful place, a roughly circular lawn between the pool and the river, a beech of great height keeps guard, apple trees are along the sides, forming

'The Pool of Enchantment' in Delius's Garden
(Photo by Stewart Winstanley)

> the border between it and the river rise gigantic plane trees … And so to the river, a wide, silent current with magnificent trees overhanging it … We sit on the bank awhile, and turn to look at the garden from the opposite direction. It is a haven of greenery in this summer sunshine, but when the trees are just breaking into leaf in springtime it is perhaps still more fascinating, for where we see now the mown lawn and the lush grass under the trees and along the pathways, there are to be seen swathes of snowdrops, crocus, daffodil, periwinkle, violet, cowslip, primroses and pink low-growing delphinium, so closely packed that if one leaves the footpath it is in places quite impossible to stand without treading on flowers.

This then is the garden that inspired Delius's music. There is only one thing missing from Oyler's description that *is* there in the music that Delius conjured, and that is the sound of insects – dragonflies, butterflies, even mosquitoes and frogs and, of course, 'the lazy hum of the busy bees' - they are all there in the sudden trills in the violins, the little motto theme in the woodwinds that we hear early on and which permeates the entire score. Although Delius employs a sizeable orchestra (triple wind, horns, trumpets, trombones and tuba) the

clarity of his orchestration and the deftness of his scoring often suggests chamber music.

And what music it is! In the opening bars Delius introduces us to his garden, setting the scene, as it were. Placid woodwinds – just a clarinet and a trio of bassoons – support a melody carried by the flute; all is calm, but within a moment of the strings entering at bar 5 with the same music we hear a persistent little four-note figure from the oboe: soon it is flitting to-and-fro among the woodwinds and it becomes a motto theme throughout the whole work: we shall hear it many times more, from the strings too. Suddenly the scene becomes more animated (4 bars after [3])[4]: the *tempo* quickens, the violins have more to do, there are several new melodies (some may only be wisps of melody but they are unmistakable) and they all lead to the work's first major climax. The music's colours are brighter all through this section – perhaps it is the middle of the morning, or even noon, because those descending woodwind chords (4 bars before [8]) repeated twice, could easily represent the sudden glare of sunlight coming through the trees as the explorer moves from one patch of shade to the next. As this section plays itself out we sense a new scene approaching – in the hands of a good conductor you can *feel* it – and here we are at the river bank, gazing at the slow-moving River Loing just as Delius must have done countless times. To our left we see the famous bridge spanning the water: directly opposite is his meadow, while, on the right hand, the river renews itself endlessly.[5]

The whole of the central section of *In a Summer Garden* (from 5 bars before [12] to 3 after [14]) depicts the river. The river theme itself, beautifully placed on the violas, is a great Delian melodic inspiration, while the continuous woodwind arabesques surely suggest the overhanging trees. Delius offers us his melody three times, but each time with subtly varied orchestration. The second time, notice the lapping harps that by emphasising the 6/4 rhythm impart a new feel to the music; also how the horns are brought in to double the violas (now in a higher register – in fact every statement of the river melody is higher in pitch than the last), so adding another colour and effectively tempering the tone of the violas as their pitch goes up. The third statement finds the violas in the treble clef, and now the trumpet comes to their assistance, adding an edge so that the ear is prepared for the final statement of the river theme when it enters at the highest pitch yet, high up on the violins. This section, too, fades and is done – but as we turn away, notice, beneath the solo flute figure, the sound of the wind murmuring in the trees.

Now (with Oyler) we look back up the garden and think, perhaps reluctantly, about retracing our steps. But there's no hesitation on Delius's

part: how easily he moves to the emotional kernel of the piece: the orchestra suddenly boils up, hesitates, gathers itself again – and this time there is no stopping a glorious climax unfolding that involves the full orchestra, with the glockenspiel adding its extra splashes of colour. When it exhausts itself, in three timeless held string chords, Delius recapitulates – not the music, for that would be foreign to his nature – but the earlier mood. It is as if we have chosen the alternative path for our return journey: the same garden is seen from slightly different angles; we see similar sights to before but the effect is different even as some phrases familiar from earlier on are recalled. The little motto figure is rarely absent and when, presently, Delius quotes the opening bars of the work, we are (you may think) back at the courtyard from where we set out.

From here on the scene dissolves … the music is by no means inactive – there's one fine broad string climax (1 bar before [24]) – but the colours of the garden are more muted, the mood is quieter and, for the first time, we hear the evening breeze in the trees and bushes. We know instinctively that the day in the garden is done; and so does Delius, for he simply lets this magical garden with its myriad flowers, scents and sounds, fade from before our eyes … 'All are my blooms, and all sweet blooms of love / To thee I gave while Spring and Summer sang'[6], he inscribed affectionately below the dedication 'to my wife Jelka Rosen'.[7] Are he and Jelka the two people in the boat in his brief description?

Many people regard *In a Summer Garden* as Delius's finest and most finished piece of orchestral writing, a masterpiece in which mood, form and sounds are combined effortlessly into an entirely convincing whole. To achieve his purpose Delius adopted the technique of the *pointilliste* painters that he so admired, and his score consists of tiny, elusive strokes of colour and rhythm. It is in the marvellous juxtaposition of these fragments of sound and in their natural flow that Delius justifies his procedure. It is sometimes said that the style is related to Debussy's impressionism, but it is quite distinctly Delius's own. *In a Summer Garden* reveals melody and harmony in just proportion, interdependent and magically transformed by instrumental colours; and few, I think, would disagree with Beecham's opinion that 'in it as much as in any other single piece can be found the quintessence of Delius.'

1. Ethel Smyth (*Beecham and Pharoah,* Chapman & Hall, 1935)
2. The original version was revived in 1942 when Constant Lambert conducted two performances with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and it was played again in

1974 by the BBC Concert Orchestra under Ashley Lawrence. A recording of the latter performance (part of a studio concert) was once available on a BBC Radio Classics CD (BBCRD 9128).

3. Extracts from Philip Oyler's *Frederick Delius in his Garden* ('The Music Student', July 1934, reprinted in *A Delius Companion,* ed. Redwood, John Calder, 1976). Philip Oyler (1879-1972) was born in Kent and spent his life on the land, working as farm labourer, tenant, owner and manager of estates in England and France. He wrote about his experiences in a book that is regarded as a classic of its kind, *The Generous Earth* (Hodder & Stoughton , 1950, reprinted in 2001 by Pallas Editions). While managing an estate at Grez-sur-Loing during the Deliuses last years he got to know them well and, in a second book, *Sons of the Generous Earth* (1963) can be found a chapter entitled 'Some Memories of Delius'.

4. An occasional reference to the printed rehearsal (or cue) numbers may be of interest to those who own a score. These numbers are the same in the Leuckart Edition (6678) and Universal Edition (18807) scores, as well as the re-engraving of the latter that now forms part of The Delius Trust's Collected Edition.

5. Readers are referred to the 'House and Garden' section of *Delius and Fenby* (Jenkins and Guinery, The Delius Society, 2004) pp. 60-71, which may be helpful in pinpointing some of the scenes mentioned. Views of the River Loing, for instance, are on pp.67-8.

6. Part of a quotation from Sonnet LIX of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *House of Life – Youth and Change.*

7. It may be of interest to recall that *In a Summer Garden* was the last music that Delius's wife Jelka heard, a moving story beautifully told in *Delius: A Life in Letters 1909-34* (Lionel Carley, Scolar Press, 1988) pp. 456-

8. Thomas Beecham *(Frederick Delius,* Hutchinson, 1959) p.167.

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THE 'SUMMER PIECES'

SUMMER EVENING, SUMMER NIGHT ON THE RIVER & A SONG OF SUMMER

A MUSICAL ANALYSIS

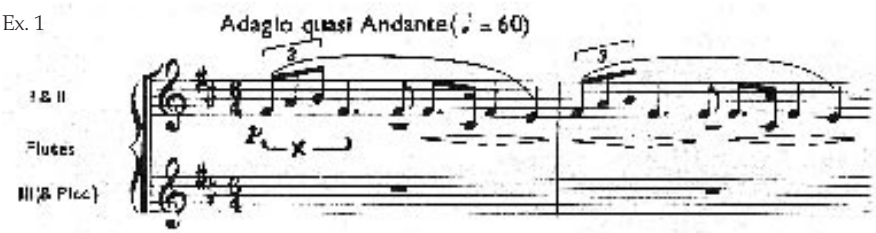
Paul Guinery

Summer Evening

[*References to "letters" are to the rehearsal letters in the 1951 Joseph Williams/Stainer & Bell edition of the full score, "edited and arranged" by Sir Thomas Beecham and included in volume 21A of the Complete Works.*]

This delightful piece has a relatively modest orchestration by Delius's later standards, calling 'merely' for double woodwind, with the exception of a 3rd flute doubling piccolo (there being no 'extravagancies' such as cor anglais or bass oboe); four horns; a standard brass section of three trombones plus tuba; timpani and strings.

Formally, the piece is fairly straightforward, though even in such an early work (1890) it has that characteristic Delian sense of being in continuous development or evolution. Grieg might have written it as an A-B-A, three-part structure; not so Delius. What binds *Summer Evening* together is the use of little rhythmic motifs which nearly all evolve from the very opening bar, played by the first flute with a simple harmonic accompaniment from bassoon and horns [Example 1]:

Ex. 1

That use of a triplet figure followed by a longer note-value ["x" in the example above] occurs time and again in Delius's maturity, a musical "fingerprint" that he made his own and, clearly in this case, right from his very earliest works. It permeates *A Village Romeo & Juliet* most notably, but it's also present in countless other pieces. In *Summer Evening* that rhythmic "cell" is passed on to the 1st oboe, to the 3rd flute and 1st clarinet and then to the 1st violins but not exactly as first heard. The interval between the first and third notes of the triplet is initially a perfect 4th, then a perfect 5th and then a minor 6th, so that the "cell" imperceptively "grows" a little each time — that's definitely composition rather than repetition, and the sign of a budding genius at work.

1st violins and 3rd flute double Example 1 in a fuller orchestration and then at four bars after letter C we find another development of the idea, with the triplet repeated two or three times and with an expressive ornamentation (curiously marked in the score as a "turn" but meant to be played as a "mordent") which is handed around the woodwind above a hushed bed of strings. This rhythmic development becomes more and more insistent and has a counter-theme matched to it, introduced by the 1st trumpet at letter D [Example 2] though hinted at, by the 2nd horn, five bars earlier:

Ex. 2

It's later taken up by flutes and clarinets at letter E, and then given out *fortissimo* at letter F by flutes and upper strings to form the first musical peak of the work. At letter G the mood relaxes again in one of those swift 'unravellings' of texture that Delius was so good at. We're down to *pianissimo* in just a few bars before the opening material is recalled at letter H, this time by strings followed by clarinets and bassoons. But Delius hasn't yet given us the sound of the full orchestra: the 3rd trombone and tuba still have to play, and must count 59 silent bars before they join in at letter J after a swiftly constructed climax which peaks *con elevazione* as the triplet figure is thundered out *fff* and marked *sostenuto.* In fact, with typical Delian disregard, the 3rd trombone and tuba are only required to play for a total of four bars, a duration of less than 20 seconds in the whole 6 minute work! Well, Delius was always an extravagant orchestrator...

There is a short *coda,* marked by a double bar, from letter K to the end, as the orchestra continues to ruminate mainly on the triplet figure (horns imaginatively muted at K itself, as if calling from the distance) and this

exceptionally fine example of "early" Delius dies away to its quietest dynamic with a rustle from the strings *pp,* fading to silence.

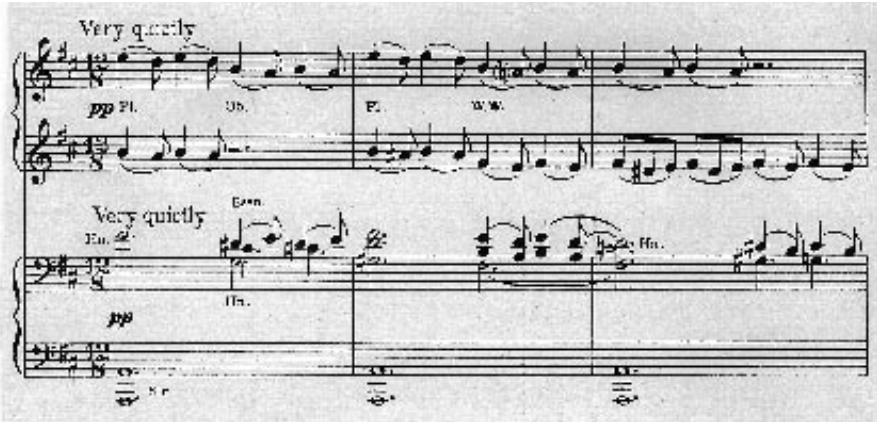
Summer Night on the River

[*References are to the OUP edition of the full score, as printed in Volume 27A of the Complete Works. The musical examples are from Peter Warlock's piano duet arrangement, published by OUP in 1931.*]

Eric Fenby memorably evoked the impression this short masterpiece makes when he wrote that "one can almost see the gnats and dragonflies darting over the waterlilies, and the faint white mist hovering over willow-tressed banks and overhanging trees... Delius's aural imagination is at its most acute and yet the orchestral palette he works from, is relatively small: just pairs of flutes, clarinets, bassoons and horns, a single oboe and strings.

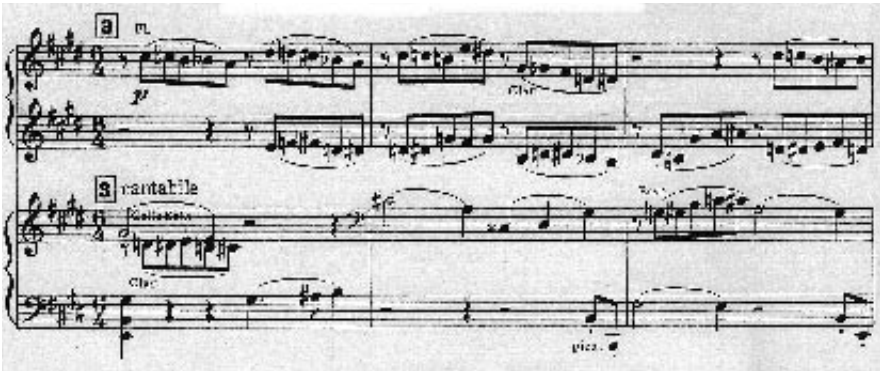
The first two dozen bars seem to evoke the gentle bobbing of a boat on water with the swaying motion in 12/8 time from the woodwind, underpinned by muted double basses [Example 3]:

Ex. 3



There's a disturbance in the waters at figure 1 where the strings enter, their mutes on, to give that characteristically "silvery" sound. Their chromatic harmonies are followed by some scurrying from the woodwind over a descending *pizzicato* passage, but then a gentle rocking rhythm establishes itself in very quiet dynamics, the faint hum of insects perhaps suggested in trills from 2nd violins and violas. At figure 3 a main melodic idea emerges on a solo cello, and this broadly arching theme will dominate the rest of the

Ex. 4



work [Example 4] [N.B. Warlock has added a key signature of four sharps to facilitate reading the accidentals].

This tune is sung to a light but very chromatic accompaniment whenever it appears, and Delius shows great imagination in varying the figuration. At figure 4 it appears up a minor 6th and with slightly varied intervals, shared between solo violin, solo viola and solo cello. Then at figure 5 it recurs, this time in an extended variant doubled in 1st flute, oboe, solo violin and solo viola and leading up to the loudest and fullest texture so far, peaking at 1 bar before figure 6, all the strings having by now removed their mutes.

The watery flow begins to slacken at 1 bar after figure 6 for a magical passage marked "very quietly" with a horn call four bars later, echoed immediately; it reminds me of an identical passage from off-stage horns at the beginning of the sixth scene of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* [figure 57 in the full and vocal scores.]

The familiar melody returns at 1 bar before figure 7, doubled at the octave on solo violin and solo viola and marked "becoming softer and softer as if dying away in the distance"; the pulse slackens more and more with a final fragment of the haunting tune, again from solo violin and viola, three bars before figure 8. The boat now seems to drift away down stream into the distance, 1st violins whispering their trills to little off-beat pulses from woodwind and *pizzicato* 2nd violins, a wonderful effect. These peter out and the flow of miraculous invention comes to rest on an added 6th chord on A natural in the lower strings, *pppp.*

A Song of Summer

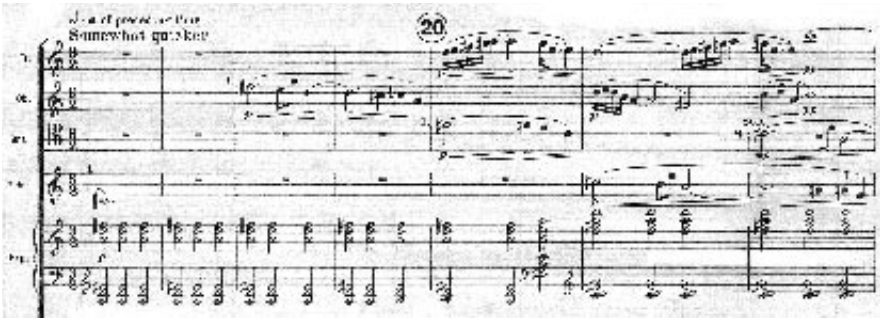
[*References are to the Winthrop Rogers edition (1931/1987) of the full score as reprinted in Volume 27B of the Complete Works*.]

The scoring calls for a large woodwind section of 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, cor anglais, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons and double bassoon; 4 horns; three trumpets; 3 trombones; tuba, timpani; harp; and strings.

One can do no better than to recall Delius's own description of the opening bars (via Fenby's recollection) as being set on the Yorkshire moors amidst the heather, with a view out to sea. The divided upper strings sustain a quiet chord high up, to evoke the calm of the scene; the cellos and basses suggest the lapping of the waves against the cliffs below with an upward-moving, slightly "modal" idea; the fluttering flute figure [Example 5] (which will be an important motif throughout the piece) representing the seagulls gliding overhead:

Ex. 5

After Example 5 is passed from flute to oboe to bassoon, the tempo doubles at bar 16, propelled by the harp which pulses along, underpinned by a soaring line from half the desks of the cellos (bar 16 onwards), as the oboe gives out a little theme that's actually shaped from the upper 1st violin part of bars 1 to 4: it has the outline of a descending whole tone from a held note and then on to a rising perfect fourth before a chromatic falling off [Example 6]:

Ex. 6

Delius juggles these two ideas for a while and then expands Example 5 in the first violins, from bar 24 onwards, into a broader theme. Two other important motifs emerge: the first, at bar 28 in clarinets and bassoons, is clearly an offspring of Example 6; the second, at bar 39, on 1st oboe, is a modal idea [Example 7] with the same dotted rhythm (the so-called "Scotch snap") that flicked the tail of Ex.5 (and also, incidentally, appears in the second movement of the *Third Violin Sonata* at figure 30):

Ex. 7

Out of these fragmentary melodic ideas, Delius derives virtually all the musical material for the rest of the piece, weaving together the threads in a way that defies analysis - unless the wood is missed for the trees! The texture thickens from bar 60 onwards until the full orchestra is heard for the first time at bar 70, with the upper strings now playing (in octaves) the same modal idea the cellos and basses gave out right at the start of the work. The mood becomes briefly ecstatic and then swiftly dies down again by bar 80 when, in turn, 1st flute, cor anglais, 1st and 2nd bassoons, 1st oboe and 1st clarinet recall Example 5, passing the idea in relay from one instrument to the other.

At bar 90, the harp begins its pulsing chords again, a major third lower than before and Delius now virtually repeats the section from bar 16 onwards, so that bars 90 to 116 correspond to bars 16 to 39. But the texture and orchestrations are quite different, even if the material is shared. Around bar 116, though, paths diverge as Example 7 dominates in the woodwind and is then passionately given out in octaves by the strings; it dovetails into the dotted rhythm of Example 5, now on full woodwind.

The music then sinks down by bar 139 and the remaining 17 bars are a coda of exquisite beauty, with the strings quietly providing a bed of sustained harmony above which the woodwind play fragments of Examples 5 and 7. 1st violins add their own recollection of Example 7 at bar 147, while the harp gently laps at the shore in bars 153 & 154 and a last cry of a seagull in the distance is heard from the 1st flute as the strings die away on a touchingly simple chord of pure D major.

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SUMMER EVENING

by

FREDERICK DELIUS

Edited by Sir Thomas Beecham

FULL SCORE

London
JOSEPH WILLIAMS LIMITED

THE 'SUMMER PIECES'

THEIR ORIGINS AND FIRST PERFORMANCES

Martin Lee-Browne

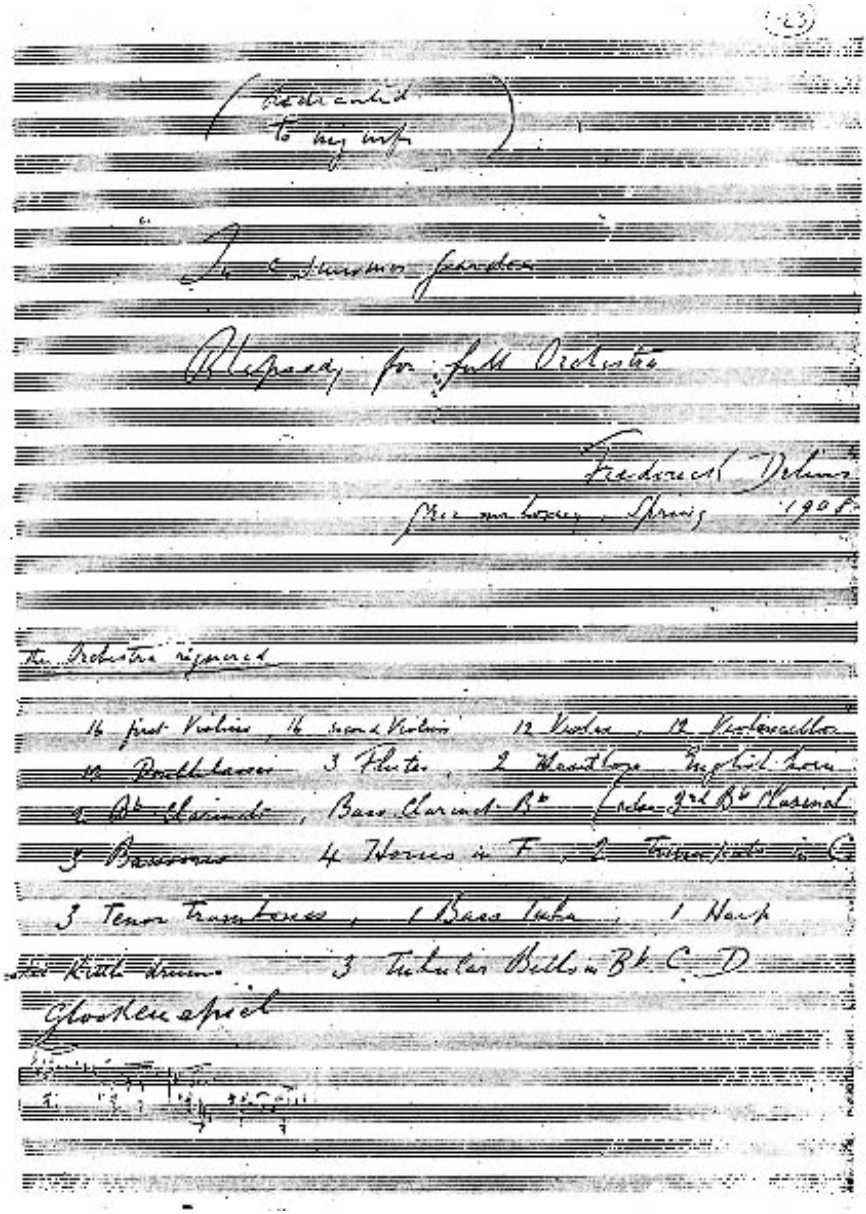
Summer Evening

> *The youthful sincerity of this music will commend it to the lover of Delius and its sonorous strains should appeal to those who shrink from fuller companionship.*
>
> Eric Fenby

This is very early Delius – written at about the same time as he began work on *Irmelin* and *Paa Vidderne* – and it is one of the *3 Symphonische Dichtung* (*Three Small Tone Poems)* which are collected in a manuscript dated 1890. The other two pieces were *Sleigh Ride* and *Spring Morning* – and as Delius spent much of the summer of that year in Jersey, Normandy and Brittany, it seems very likely that one or more of those places provided the inspiration for *Summer Evening*. (That could not have been the case for *Sleigh Ride*, as it was played to Grieg and Christian Sinding on Christmas Eve 1887, and there is no indication at all of what gave rise to *Spring Morning*). Surprisingly, they remained un-performed until 18 November 1946, when all three were played in the somewhat unusual setting of the Central Hall in Westminster, by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under the author's uncle, Richard Austin[1], as part of the second concert of Beecham's Delius Festival. Delius's manuscript full score and parts were used, as *Summer Evening* was not actually published until 1951, and then "edited and arranged" by Beecham. Being almost the slightest pieces in the entire Festival, they do not seem to have attracted a word of comment from the critics!

In a Summer Garden

> *Delius's house stood on the village street between an old church and a ruined keep, the high stone walls of his garden sloping down beyond the orchard to the river. He must often have longed for the summer change of landscape swamplike from autumn to spring, his work time, for he would lie fallow in the summer. Then the white courtyard would blaze with myriad flowers, and Nature rim his little world by the great trees at the water's edge. Indoors, apart from works by his friends Gauguin and Munch, all*



In a Summer Garden

(Original, 1908, version – copy by courtesy of Robert Threlfall)

The partly cut-off word before 'kettle drums' in the bottom left-hand corner is 'chromatic'.

the paintings on the walls revealed colourful studies of the garden in summer mood from the brush of his talented wife, Jelka. But the garden itself was her masterpiece, and the musical imagery it worked in her husband's mind was dedicated fittingly to her.

Eric Fenby

This came next in order of composition – Delius having considered eight possible titles, all of which are written on an early draft score: *Summer night, Rhapsody, Summer sounds, Summer Rhapsody, A Song of Summer, a Summer eve, a Summer song, Summer, 'On a summers eve'* and *'In a summer Garden'*. Even then, page 1 of the original manuscript score is headed *Summernight – Slowly with simplicity*[2], and it seems clear that for a long time *A Summer Rhapsody* was the title he seems to have favoured most strongly. He wrote to Granville Bantock on 30 June 1908, some five months before the first performance, saying "I am just putting the finishing touches to my new Orchestral work "A Summer Rhapsody"….". A week later, he had a letter from the Honorary Secretary of the Philharmonic Society, Francesco Berger, asking him "…to entrust to [the Directors] the *production* in England of some new, or hitherto unperformed Orchestral Work.", and in both his reply and Berger's next letter the piece was still referred to as *A Summer Rhapsody*. When, though, he finally opted for *In a Summer Garden* is not known – but that title was used in the concert programme, and it was never changed again. Likewise, Delius had many second thoughts about the music itself, and he made numerous amendments to the first pencilled manuscript before producing the 'clean copy' used at the first performance.[3]

In a subsequent letter to Bantock[4], Delius said that "The Philharmonic Society has accepted my conditions to conduct my new work - £25 - so in spite of your severe criticism on [sic] my conducting - I shall try again". As Lyndon Jenkins mentions at the beginning of his article above, however, Delius had few, if any, conducting skills: after his performance of *Appalachia* at Hanley some three months earlier, Beecham had remarked "He contrived, I never know how, to beat five-in-a-bar throughout", and following the rehearsal on the day before the concert Delius wrote to Jelka (who had stayed at Grez) "I seem to have more control over myself than at Hanley.…I beat once or twice 3 in a 4 bar – absentmindedness! – perhaps tomorrow I shall be quite master of myself."

In the event, he was quite pleased with his own efforts, but ambivalent about the success of the piece, in a letter to Jelka the day after the performance:

Just a word in haste to tell you about the Concert – I was quite cool when I

found myself on the conducting stand and made no mistake…..I don't believe many people understood the piece but they received it very favourably and called me three times.[5]

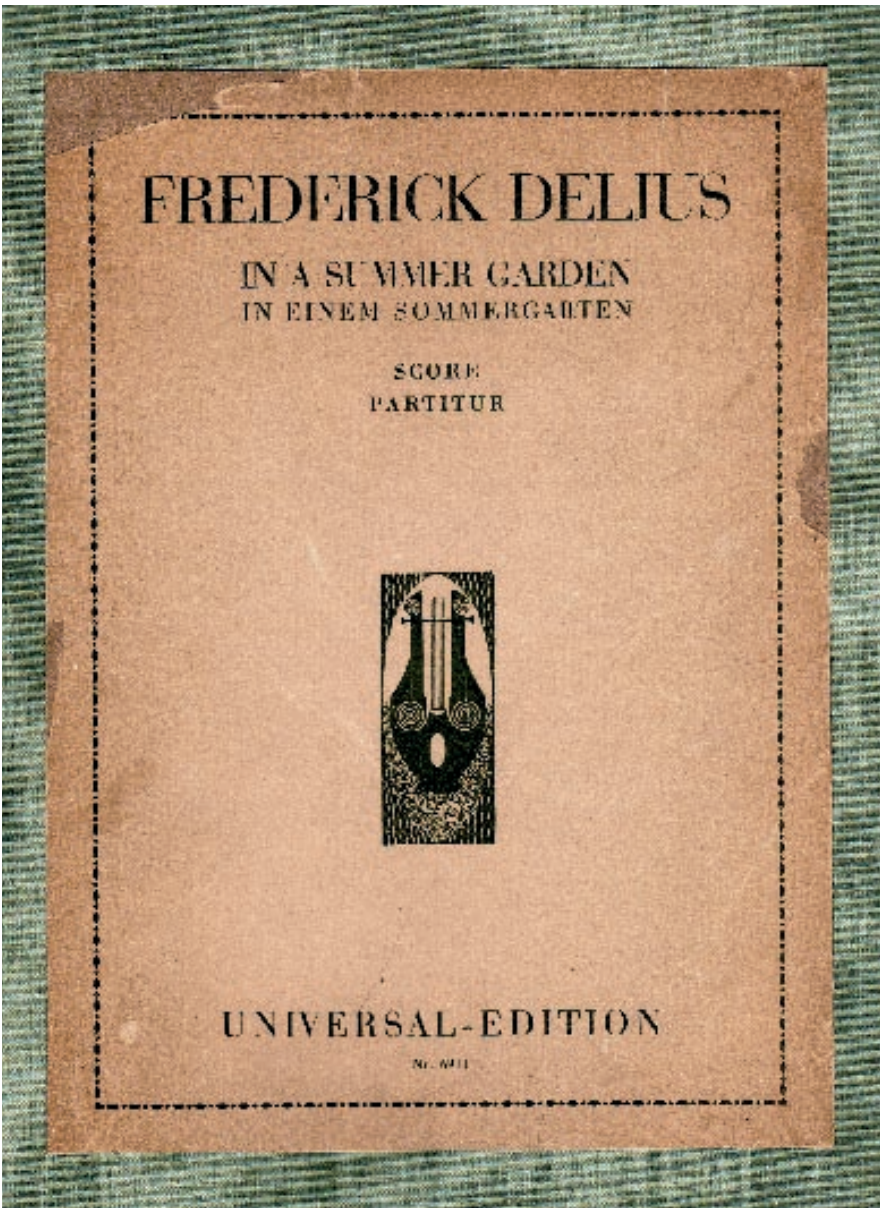
while he told Bantock:

I missed you in London very much – would like you to have heard my "Summer Garden" – No one understood it, I believe, except a few – I had not given them any analytical notes, so the critic had nothing to catch hold of – They want something which sounds like something they have heard before – As Runciman[6] would say – they like an old friend to come smiling towards them.… [7]

The original version - headed "(dedicated / to my wife)" [*sic, all lower case*] – remained in manuscript and was never printed. When the score of the revised version was published in 1911 by Delius's regular publishers at that time, FEC Leukart of Leipzig, there was a curious slip by both their engraver and the proof-reader, for it was "Dedicated to my wife Jelka-Rosen", and underneath that (as Lyndon Jenkins notes above) came "All are my blooms; and all sweet blooms of love/To thee I gave while Spring and Summer sang/ Spring 1908/Rosetti", followed, as it were in a footnote, by Delius's own description of what the piece was about: "Roses, lilies and a thousand sweet-scented flowers…."[8] In his programme note for the performance at the 1929 Delius Festival, Philip Heseltine quoted those words, saying that they:

prepare us for music of a peculiarly intimate and personal nature… the garden, running down to the riverside, at Grez-sur-Loing, near Fontainebleau, where Delius has lived for many years and where almost all his best work has been written. Yet the summer garden is only the setting for an emotional drama: there is no objective impressionism in music. This is one of the works cited by Cecil Gray in his fine essay on Delius in *A Survey of Contemporary Music*[9] as being unmistakably English in feeling. 'Delius,' he continues, 'like Keats before him, has often been unthinkingly reproached for the almost excessive sweetness and over-ripeness of his music. . . It is as well to bear in mind that this very sweetness and sensuousness is perhaps the most noteworthy characteristic of English art. The purist who would condemn it in the music of Delius is at the same time condemning a great part of Shakespeare, particularly the early works – Marlowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ford, Herrick, Campion, Dowland, Purcell even, and indeed, most of the greatest musicians England has ever produced. It is the very quintessence of the English spirit in art.'

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that, apart from a flowing tune in the middle section, with something of the same mood as the central love-song in *Brigg Fair,* there is not a single theme in the work; yet the effect of a continuous outpouring of melody is achieved by the subtle manner in which rhythmic and



In a Summer Garden
(Revised, 1911, version)

> melodic fragments are merged together into broad effects of light and colour that suggest the vivid luminous canvases of the gracious and gifted lady who inspired the work.

In the 1911 revision Delius:

> omitted a lot of original material, whilst other sections were reworked and extended, and some new material introduced. Some of the thicker-textured parts were'combed out', whilst a five-note figure in the oboes was promoted in the revised version and became a significant motif used by different instruments throughout the work. The central section was changed from quavers to crotchets: the broad tune on cor anglais and violas was revised with different decoration, whilst the original woodwind accompaniment marked'slow and dreamily' was replaced by complex broken six-part chords using a varying combination of instruments, and the horn counter-melody, suggesting moving water on the surface of the river, was added. Following the central section, four short further sections were rearranged by discarding the third entirely, and interposing the fourth section between the first and second. From this point onwards the two endings to the piece are entirely different, the original having big, almost Wagnerian climaxes referring back to the opening themes, whilst the revised ending was described by our speaker as'improvised doodling that perfectly fits the mood of the piece'.[10]

and another (it would seem very wise) omission was that of three tubular bells – which, although they might have been intended to invoke the sound of the bells at the church a few doors down from the Deliuses' house, would have detracted from the atmosphere of the piece.

Within a couple of years, the revised version was played a gratifyingly large number of times in both Germany and America. Among early performances, the conductor of the New York Philharmonic Society, Josef Stransky, gave it in Dresden in 1911, and again in New York on 25 and 26 January 1912; it was then done in Boston some three months later by Max Fiedler; in 1913 in Germany - where conductors such as Haym and Buths were becoming increasingly interested in Delius's music – it was done at the Jena Tonküstlerfest in June (Fritz Stein), and in Berlin in November (Thomas Spiering). The British Isles in fact had to wait for a performance until 18 December 1913; it was given in Edinburgh by the Scottish Orchestra (formerly the Glasgow Orchestral Union!) under its Polish conductor Emil Mlynarski (who later shared (with Beecham, Arthur Fagge[11] and Elgar) the conducting of the 3-concert Festival of British Music at the Queen's Hall in 1915) – and it was not heard in London until 27 March 1914, when Geoffrey Toye conducted it with the Queen's Hall Orchestra in one of three concerts of contemporary English music promoted

by Francis Bevis Ellis.[12] Beecham, who called the piece "well nigh flawless", conducted it for the first time some three months later, on 8 July, in an all-Delius concert at the Royal Academy of Music.

The American critics were greatly divided in their opinions:

> Delius's tone poem is better music, more genial, more filled with the spirit of true beauty than its companion piece, 'Brigg Fair', which we heard last season. It is mood picturing of an impressionist kind. Though the voice of Debussy is detected in it, it is not the kind to which Debussy's later efforts belong, deliberately neglecting musical form and substance as determined by definite structure, for there are definite themes definitely developed. The orchestration has charm, an individual color of its own, peculiarly adapted to the expression of the composer's ideas and to giving the suggestion of the outdoor spirit at which he has apparently aimed. 'In a Summer Garden' will do much for the composer's reputation in New York.[13]

> The much debated composer Delius ought to change his name to Devious, for it would describe his music better. He is one of the men who carry a bunch of keys which they use in season and out of season. Even so pastoral a picture as 'In a Summer Garden' has to be unlocked by several different keys. When Music, Heavenly Maid, was young, she used to stay in the key of C or G long enough for the auditor to catch his breath. But nowadays she sprints through the 24 major and minor keys, and a few others which have not yet been invented, until it resembles a musical Marathon rather than a symphonic poem. But we had not recovered from the torture of Delius to be fully in the mood for Wagner.[14]

> …Delius himself is undoubtedly a poet of high rank, a musician who seeks and sometimes finds a rare beauty that is his own secret, or nature's secrets for him alone. There is a warm and lovely cantilina supported by harmonies rich and rare in this tone poem.[15]

while those English colleagues were much the same:

> The third concert [of the Philharmonic Society's 97th season] was under Mr Landon Ronald, and then only came the first novely, viz. "In a Summer Garden", composed and conducted by Mr Frederick Delius, music much after Debussy's later style, *i.e.* very vague.[16]

> No-one who heard this programme could deny the extraordinary beauty of Delius's orchestral sound, or that that beauty is achieved in a great variety of ways….there is the way of the dreaming pieces of spring and summer, in which tiny details of phrase supplied by different instruments make up a very varied scheme of colour by very simple means…[17]

> The novelty at the Philharmonic concert was "In a Summer Garden" of Mr Frederick Delius. It lasted twenty minutes and the frank confession has to be made that I could make neither head nor tail of it. This is a sad position when you sit hoping for an early end. One writer suggests that virtue might be found were the work reduced to a third of its present dimensions, while a very distinguished music critic, referring to the additions to the orchestra, thought that people must wonder why so many extra instruments were called into requisition in order to say so little![18]

and 15 years later:

> In "In a Summer Garden" the same feeling [of melancholy rising to passion] is, inappropriately, not far away. It is a lovely garden, but it is a shady garden, and, except for a sunbeam shed by the little tune on the glockenspiel we get little summer light or heat.[19]

but by the time of the 1946 Delius Festival, reviews were really positive:

> The only completely satisfying work in the programme was "In a Summer Garden," which does perfectly what it sets out to do on a small canvas. Sir Thomas Beecham conducted the orchestral works and, as always, in Delius, secured the beauty of tone and texture which are more than usually necessary in music that depends primarily for its appeal on sensibility and powers of evocation. [20]

Summer Night on the River

> *No orchestral work by Delius demands such deep insight and sensitive skill in performance as this; the balance of woodwind timbres in this musical 'chiaoscuro' is imperative to a visionary realisation of the score.*
>
> Eric Fenby

In the course of a letter to Delius of 5 March 1913, Percy Grainger told him that:

> I do wish you had in print some piece for not too big orchestra (horns, 2 trumpets, no strange woodwind, nor too many strings required) & not too wildly hard, that orchestras such as those at Bournemouth, Belfast, etc could perform it, a piece that could be performed with an hours or 3/4 hours rehearsal & then form part of general repetory. In all these towns they are conscious of your greatness & growing British fame & long to do something but are held back for want of instruments or fear of a difficultness beyond their powers.

and he later wrote on his own copy of that letter: "This request led Delius to complete his 2 pieces for small orchestra". That seems somewhat unlikely, as the manuscript is undated, but the first printed score of the *Two Pieces for Small Orchestra* (published by Tischer & Jagenburg in 1914) gives 1911 for *Summer Night*.[21] The other piece is, of course, *On hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring.* Again Delius had difficulty in settling on the exact wording for the title – and for this one he considered *Summer night on the River*, *Summernight on the River*, and simply *Summernight.*

The première of the *Two Pieces* was given by Arthur Nikisch and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in their own hall on 23 October 1913. The diminutive Nikisch was the archetype of a famous *maestro*: a passionate conductor with a huge personality, who often 'stormed the audience off its feet' – and it seems unlikely that Delius would have initially chosen him to give these delicate pieces for the first time. Nevertheless, he was very pleased at the outcome:

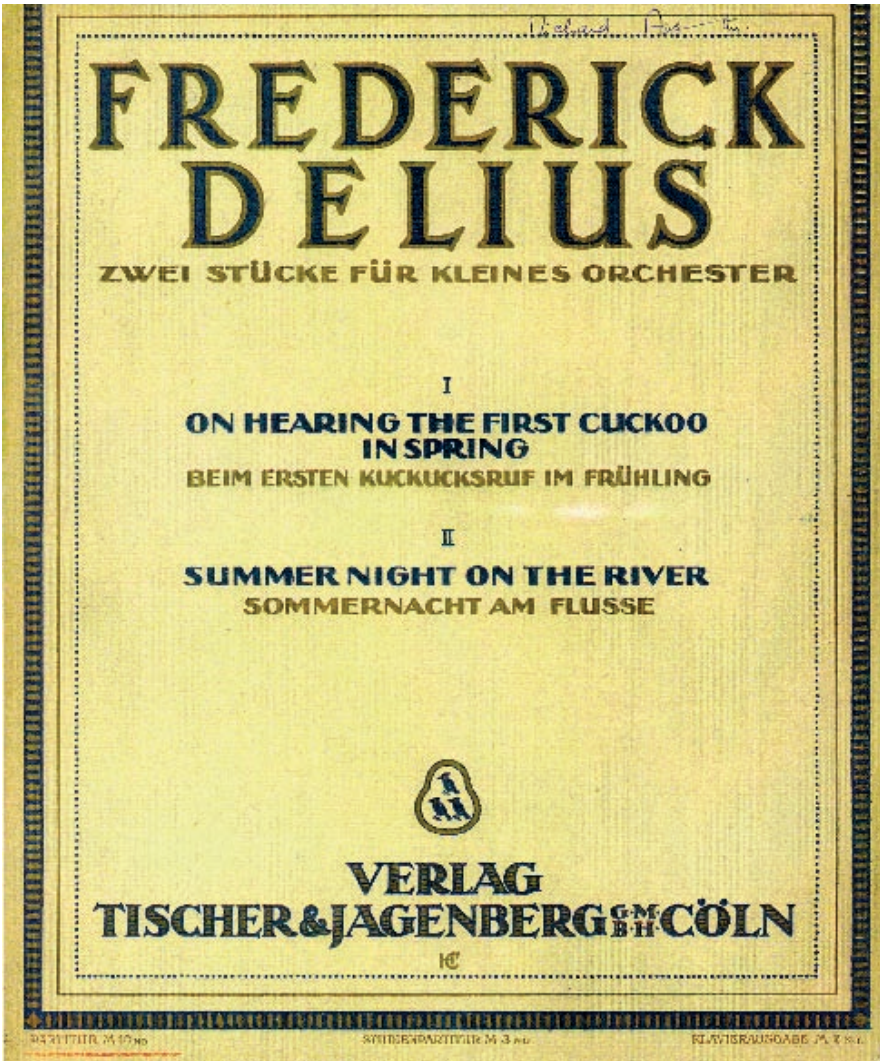
> Nikisch gave a beautiful performance of the 2 pieces – The first he took rather too slow – the public seemed to like it the best – altho I like the 2nd best.[22]

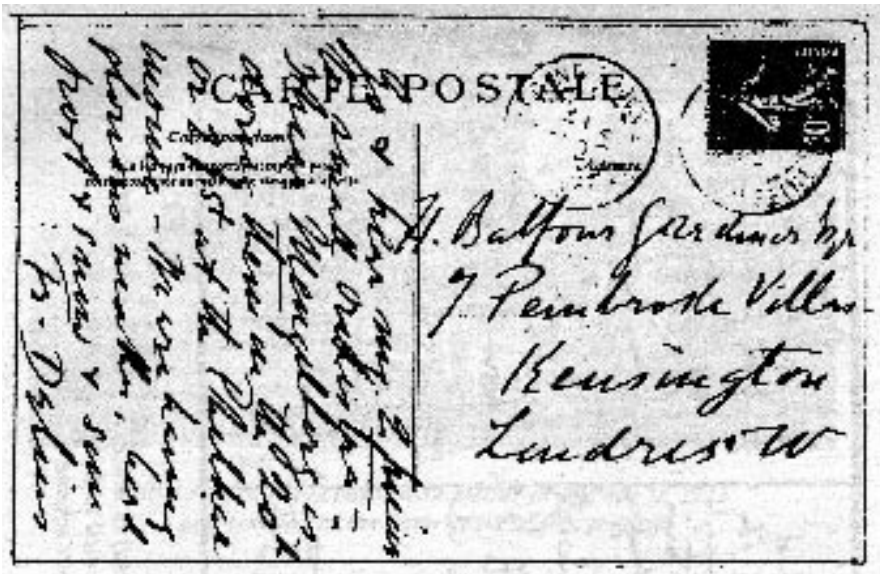
Delius sent Balfour Gardiner a postcard from Grez on 18 January 1914, urging him to go to the Philharmonic Society concert at which another celebrated conductor - Willem Mengelberg – would give the first English performance two days later (having already played them in Amsterdam). This time, the critics all approved:

> Two charming pieces for small orchestra by Delius were played for the first time……the second is an imaginative study in quiet tones based on a barcarolle rhythm. Only strings, woodwind (flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons) and horns are used, but the composer shows his mastery of orchestral effect in the delicately varied combinations of tone which he achieves from them…..The "Summer Night", with its greater variety, its sinuous interweaving of themes, and its interesting harmonic scheme, is more engrossing, less obviously attractive. Both were excellently played.[23]

> It is a long time since we heard an important new work from the pen of Frederick Delius, and it cannot yet be said that the spell is broken. Neither of these tone-poems, in spite of their great charm, could be described as important. They are small, both in design and character, but within their range they are completely successful. Their delicate tone-painting and subtle, shifting orchestral and harmonic colours reveal the hand of a master at every point.[24]

Within a few months the pieces were also played in Frankfurt and Cologne, and by the end of the year in America. Grainger, to whom Delius enthused


FREDERICK
DELIUS
ZWEI STÜCKE FÜR KLEINES ORCHESTER
I
ON HEARING THE FIRST CUCKOO
IN SPRING
BEIM ERSTEN KUCKUCKSRUF IM FRÜHLING
II
SUMMER NIGHT ON THE RIVER
SOMMERNACHT AM FLUSSE
VERLAG
TISCHER & JAGENBERG G.M.B.H. CÖLN



Delius's postcard to Balfour Gardiner

about his garden in a letter on 29 April 1914:

> Cant [sic] you come over here & pay me a visit with your mother. The spring has been simply divine – The garden is full of Lilacs & Laburnums in full bloom – Try & come – I have 2 new orchestral pieces…..

was always trying to persuade conductors to programme Delius's works: in 1915, he sent the score of the *Two Pieces* to Walter Damaroch, who replied:

> Many thanks for the fascinating Delius scores. I shall most certainly do them next winter and am glad of the opportunity of introducing them to New York.

which he did, so that Jelka could tell Marie Clews (who, with her husband the American painter Henry Clewes, lived in Grez for some years):""Everyone [in New York} seems to love them and Damerosch will therefore do them again soon. I wish he would when you are in America!"[25]

Perhaps the most poignant performance of the piece was the one by Beecham and the LPO at Delius's re-burial in Limpsfield Churchyard on 26 May 1935.

A Song of Summer

> *"I want you to write down this new opening for the new work. Bring your score-paper and sit beside me. I want you to imagine that we are sitting on the cliffs in the heather looking out over the sea. The sustained chords in the high strings suggest the clear sky and calmness of the scene... 7/4 in a bar (four and a three: divided strings, chord of D major - A, D, F# doubled at the octave, lowest note the A string of the violas)"*
>
> FD talking to Eric Fenby

Eric Fenby offered to become Delius's amenuensis in 1928, and this was the first piece on which they collaborated. The manuscript score is dated 1929, and the printed scores – produced by Boosey & Hawkes, who became Delius's regular publishers in 1931 - give 1930. The music is based on material from Delius's much earlier (1918) *Poem of Life and Love*, which was never published – but this time the name was never experimented with. Between 1905 and 1917, in some of his scores Delius had included a very unusual instrument, a heckelphone or bass oboe,[26] and the original sketches for this work included another curious and rarely-used one, the sarrusophone - a brass instrument, looking somewhat like a contra bassoon, and also played with a double reed – but in the first of the two versions of the score, in Fenby's writing, the part is given to a contra.[27]

Delius had never trusted Henry Wood as a conductor of his music, and was very concerned to learn that he was to give the first performance of the piece at an all-Delius Promenade Concert in Queen's Hall on 17 September 1931 – so Jelka wrote urgently to Fenby:

> Fred at once said, Oh I am afraid that he will take all the wrong tempi like he did in the 2nd Dance Rhapsody. I said: Shall I ask Eric if he would go to London for the rehearsals as Deputy for the Composer? Delius said: I think that would be *splendid* – if Eric will do it. He must hear the rehearsals. Fred would write to Wood saying that you happen to be in London just then and any questions arising as to tempi etc, and that having written and edited the work for Delius you know exactly how Delius intends it to be played.[28]

Fenby in fact did that[29], and it worked:

> We listened with the greatest pleasure last night. It crackled a bit, but yet came thro' well and I got it loud, by having all seven lamps. Fred was enjoying himself, and looked radiant about the Song of Summer. "It's a good piece" he said several times. He will write about it himself but as he perhaps will not do it today I will send this off first, and try to catch you at your London address. Fred said that the Tempi were perfect in S o. S., and it was surely a blessing that

Frederick Delius

A SONG OF SUMMER

for

ORCHESTRA

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ORCHESTRAL SCORE	7/6
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you were there.[30]

> But there was plenty of real Delius [the *Piano Concerto,* earlier in the programme, had not pleased the reviewer] – the beautiful Brigg Fair, for instance, and also a novelty *A Song of Summer*, recently composed, a rhapsodic meditation of intensely characteristic quality and wholly beautiful. It came after the Violin Concerto, and continued to muse over one of the themes of that work.[31]

> A popular success for Delius on September 17th was a splendid gesture to a composer who has been handicapped in recent years by ill-health and public indifference. The first performance of a new work for orchestra entitled *A Song of Summer* revealed a work of singular poetic charm and beauty continuing the line of Delius's works. As a structure, it is much more organic than the *Violin Concerto*….. [32]

The Deliuses listened on the wireless – as they did any concert including any of Delius's music – and the following day, 20 September, Delius sent a letter to Fenby (dictated to and written by Jelka, as all his correspondence had been since early 1922) which began:

> I cannot thank you enough for all you have done and I am sure that the beautiful performance of the Song of Summer is greatly due to your being on the spot and playing it to Wood beforehand. It came through beautifully and I am really *very pleased* with it.

How marvellous that the pathetic, deaf and paralysed composer, whose works for orchestra are second only to those for orchestra and voices in the whole of his output, should be so pleased with the première of his last significant one, that cost him and Fenby such tremendous effort.

1 He shared the conducting of the Festival with Beecham - see Lyndon Jenkins's *While Spring & Summer Sang* (Ashgate 2006, p.101-2).
2 See Robert Threlfall's *Frederick Delius: A Supplementary Catalogue* (p.173), and Lionel Carley's *Delius: A Life in Pictures* (p.64).
3 Ibid., Threlfall.
4 Letter, 11 September 1908.
5 Letter, 12 December 1908.
6 John F Runciman (1866-1916): an English critic.
7 Letter, 17 December 1908.
8 The words are actually in German:"Rosen, Lilien und tausend duftende Blumen. Bunte Schmetterlinge flattern von Kelch zu Kelch und goldbraune Bienen

summen in der warmen zitternden Sommerluft. Unter schattigen alten Bäumen ein stiller Fluss mit weiben Wasswerrosen. Im Kahen, fast verboge, zwei Menschen, Ein Drossel singt – ein Unkenton in der Ferne,"

9 (OUP 1924).

10 Brian Radford in DSJ 84, reporting a talk to the Midlands Branch by Barry Iliffe.

11 The conductor of the London Choral Society –"who [so the programme note writer said, perhaps forgetting Charles Kennedy Scott] by his unremitting labours….has earned a just reputation as the pioneer of modern choral music in the Metropolis.

12 A member of the de Walden family and, like Balfour Gardiner (with his famous series of concerts in 1912 & 1913), rich enough selflessly to spend a great deal of money advancing new English music. Toye later recorded the work, as well as, among other things, the *Two Pieces for Small Orchestra* – and Delius wrote to him: "The records are splendid, and I am delighted with the way you conducted them, all three. Your interpretation of these works is most poetical and understood entirely."

13 *The New York Times*, 26 January 1912.

14 *The Boston Advertiser,* 20 April 1912.

15 *Musical America,* 27 April 1912. These three quotations are taken, with permission, from a fascinating chapter, *Critical reaction to Delius's music in the US* by Don Gillespie and Bob Beckhard in *Frederick Delius: Music, Art and Literature* (ed. Lionel Carley, Ashgate 1998).

16 *The Monthly Musical Record*, January 1909.

17 *The Times*, 8 July 1914.

18 *Musical Opinion*, January 1909.

19 *The Times,* 14 October 1929.

20 *The Times,* 8 November 1946.

21 See Robert Threlfall's *Catalogue* at p.147, the President's *Delius: A Life in Letters*, Vol 2, note 2 to Letter 376, and Lyndon Jenkins: *ibid* pages 18 & 19.

22 Letter to Jelka, 24 October 1914.

23 *The Times*, 21 January 1914.

24 *The Musical Times*, 1 February 1914.

25 Letter, 23 December 1915.

26 As to which, see Robert Montgomery's article which appears later in this issue.

27 Threlfall, *Supplementary Catalgue* (p.89).

28 Letter, 17 September 1931.

29 See Fenby: *Delius as I knew him* (G Bell & Sons Ltd, 1936, p.111).

30 Letter, Jelka to Fenby 18 September 1931.

31 *Monthly Musical Record*, 1 October 1931.

32 *Musical Opinion*, October 1931.

[*NB: One of the most fascinating things about writing on Delius and his music is that articles, extracts from books, facts, letters and newspaper criticisms can all be looked at in so many different contexts. I make no apology, therefore, for having taken much of the material for this (and my other similar contributions to the Journal) from books and articles by well-known Delian authors - in particular Eric Fenby, Christopher Redwood, Robert Threlfall, Lionel Carley, Stephen Lloyd and Don Gillespie – but hopefully I have drawn a number of threads together to look at aspects of Delius's music in a different way. To all of them, I am greatly indebited*].

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Henri Rousseau (1860-1939) – Luxemburg Garden

THE 'SUMMER PIECES'

MARK ELDER TALKS TO THE EDITOR

My introduction to Delius's music came when I was at school, for my assistant housemaster loved it and there always seemed to be a Delius record on his gramophone. I shall never forget him playing Jacqueline du Pré's recording of the *Cello Concerto* - I listened incredulously, because the music was so different from anything else that I had ever heard. I accompanied someone in one of the violin sonatas, and then, when I was at Cambridge, I played the bassoon in a performance of *Sea Drift*. I learned so much from doing that, hearing the music from inside, rather than outside – and I have to confess that I found some parts of it just so moving, but others extremely difficult to understand. I heard quite a lot of Delius before I ever saw a score, and I remember my surprise, when I did, at seeing how the pieces of which I had grown fond looked in print. I gradually found myself getting more and more drawn to the music - although I didn't in fact conduct very much of it until I came to the Hallé. In 2003, though, we recorded the *Irmelin Prelude*, *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* and *Brigg Fair* (with, at the end, the 1908 recording by Percy Grainger of the 75-year old Joseph Taylor singing the tune at the Brigg Festival) – and *Summer Night on the River* is to be released in due course. I think that *Brigg Fair* is an English masterpiece, and some of the variations on that simple tune are just magical.

Summer Night on the River is another masterpiece – quintessential Delius that makes no compromises, either for his image or the listener. Not only, however, is it quintessential Delius, but it also seems to me to be unique in his output, in its remarkable tonality, or rather the lack of it. It literally changes from one bar to the next, with accidentals everywhere, and, for example, the descending chromatic wind figures that accompany the central tune for the solo cello (and then the solo violin and viola) are quite extraordinary. At times the music sounds quite Mahlerian. To my way of thinking, it is not in the least naturalistic, in the way that perhaps Strauss sometimes is (albeit in a quite different way); it is the evocation of a mood, and you cannot possibly say at any particular point "That's a dragonfly hovering over the water" or "That's a bumble bee off on its way home".

Like nearly all his music, it is very hard to conduct. There is no way that, whether in this piece or in any other of Delius's music, you can simply play the notes as written - but on the other hand, he does not tell you what he wants. As Beecham related, "Occasionally I asked him, Frederick, what d'ye want done

here? He said, I can't remember anything about it, do what you like with it". That is, however, one of the many reasons why I enjoy conducting it, for the way he presents the music without any detailed instructions forces me to make my own choices and decisions – and that can be very humbling. It takes a long while to rehearse, for the players really need time to feel which notes in the phrases are the important ones, and to discover the right balance between themselves and the other instruments.

I have known and loved *A Song of Summer* - one of the first of the works dictated to Eric Fenby – for many years. There is in that music an open passion that I find in very few other composers - Bax is one of them – an almost excruciating ecstasy in both the very quiet opening, and in the searing violin phrases and high horns of the rapturous central and penultimate sections. It is easier to understand than *Summer Night*, but it's just as hard to control.

I can't say that I like all Delius's orchestral and choral music. Some of it – for instance the first two movements of *North Country Sketches* - is really quite 'difficult' in a very

Bruno Liljefors – The Old Bridge in Grez (1884)
(Private collection – copy courtesy of Bo Holten)

different sort of way from *Summer Night*; the texture of the *Songs of Farewell* and the *Songs of Sunset* is much the same throughout; and it has to be said that parts of some of the works are really pretty boring for the cellos and basses to play, and for the chorus to sing, with bar after bar of nothing but crotchets and quavers! Delius's music, however, has such a wide range – from the works mentioned above to the concertos, the stranger ones like *Cynara* and *Idyll,* and the gigantic *A Mass of Life*, and I would particularly like to conduct all three of those sometime in the future.

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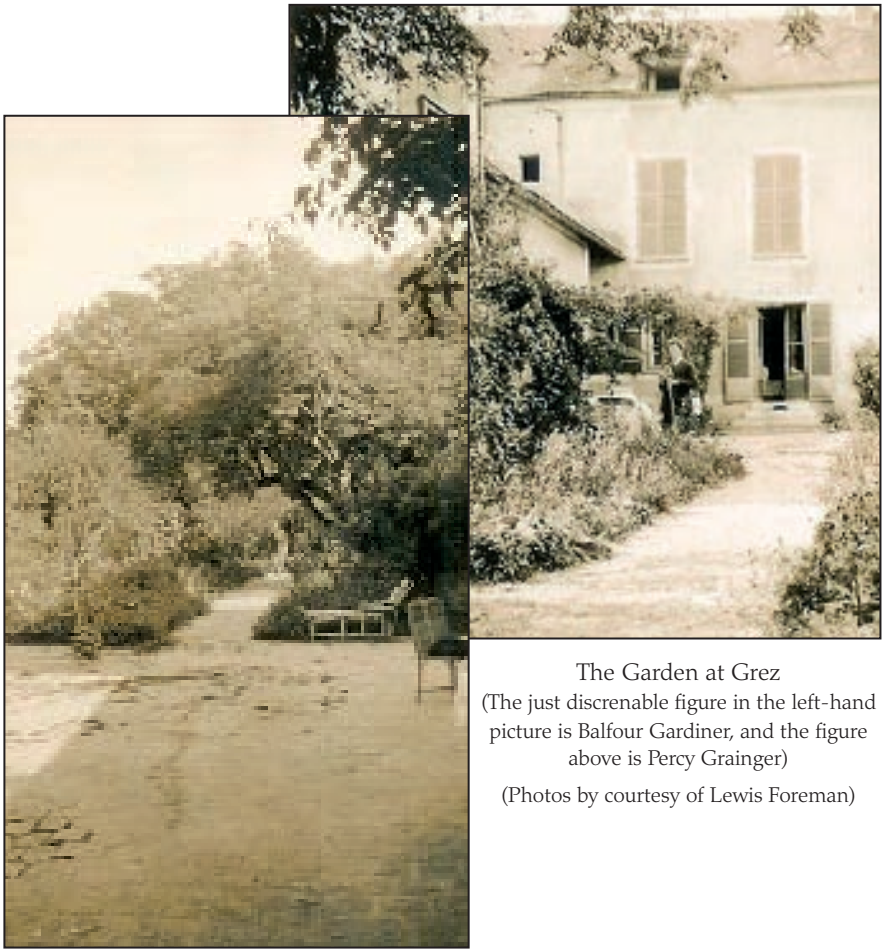

The Garden at Grez
(The just discrenable figure in the left-hand picture is Balfour Gardiner, and the figure above is Percy Grainger)

(Photos by courtesy of Lewis Foreman)

THE 'SUMMER PIECES'

TWO UNACCOMPANIED PARTSONGS

A CONDUCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Paul Spicer *

Delius wrote these two gorgeous partsongs in late Spring of 1917 when he was living at Grez. Small as they are, they are rightly amongst his best-known and best-loved pieces. They perfectly encapsulate his dreamy, chromatic style when in this mode of writing, and they perfectly reflect the title.

The mood engendered is that of a someone lying in a small boat, letting it drift where it will while he looks upwards in a wistful reverie. The picture painting is impressionistic and suggestive to the imagination. Delius paints his picture purely in music as there are no words and, rather like the advantage of radio over television, this increases the songs' power of suggestion. The two songs are very different from each other but share common cause in their underlying tenderness and reflective nature. The first is pure daydreaming where the second starts out as if some prompting arouses the man (a tenor solo) to activity, but this is only a brief glimmer as the song maintains the feeling of reflection intensity of which is heightened by the heroically high tenor part.

These are very difficult pieces to sing well, and they have to be well sung or they simply fail. The whole point is to transport the listener to a different world for however brief a period, and if the listening experience is clouded by infelicities in the choral sound the whole effect is as if null and void. So what goes into producing an ideal performance?

Delius's whole effort in the first song is concerned with the production of a true *legato*. His instructions about breathing (and how obvious it is that he wishes we didn't have these human limitations!) are mostly concerned with damage limitation, giving printed commas where he feels he can accept short breaks in the legato texture. In fact, when I perform this piece, I delete most of these mid-phrase commas as unnecessary and use 'staggered' breathing where

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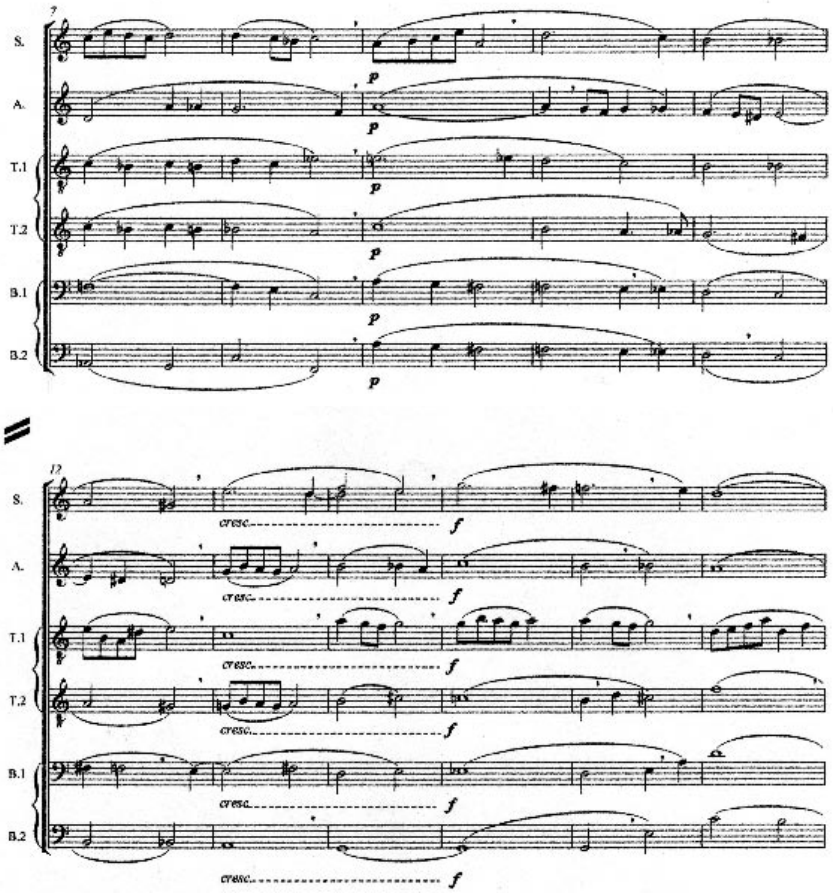
* Paul Spicer is the Professor of Choral Conducting at the Royal College of Music; he conducts five choirs, including the Birmingham Bach Choir and the Finzi Singers, runs choral singing workshops, produces recordings, and does much composing.

singers breathe at different places in a phrase and *never* at marked or obvious places. This maintains the desired legato and keeps the music flowing on as Delius imagined. Natural breathing is essential at phrase ends, or the result sounds forced and unnatural. But phrases in this piece can be deceptive or ambiguous. For instance, the sopranos' first four bars could be two phrases or one where there next four bars are unequivocally two. I prefer to make those first four bars one phrase to underline Delius's principle and to make the altos, tenors and basses in the next four bars one phrase under the sopranos' two in order to create the sensation of *legato*:

Windows in music – breathing spaces – are as necessary as windows in houses; they let in the light and break up the textures. So the whole edifice of this song needs to be analysed in this way and each bar and phrase needs weighing up for effect and practicality. Delius has a very particular sound-world in mind for this first song. He asks for the choir to use an 'uh' vowel as in the word 'love'. In addition he asks the basses at the beginning, singing a high D above the stave, to sing falsetto, thereby ensuring a complete blend of voices between parts.

Dynamics, too, he covers in his footnote, wanting to make sure that a real *pianissimo* is achieved. So a conductor has to work hard to balance and blend his choir so that no voice part is prominent except where a point of imitation or the continuation of melody line taken into another part shows need. This happens, for instance, in bars nine to twelve where the altos take over from the sopranos in bar ten and the tenors from the altos in bar twelve. Particular care is needed at these points to make these continuations as linear and matching in tone as possible.

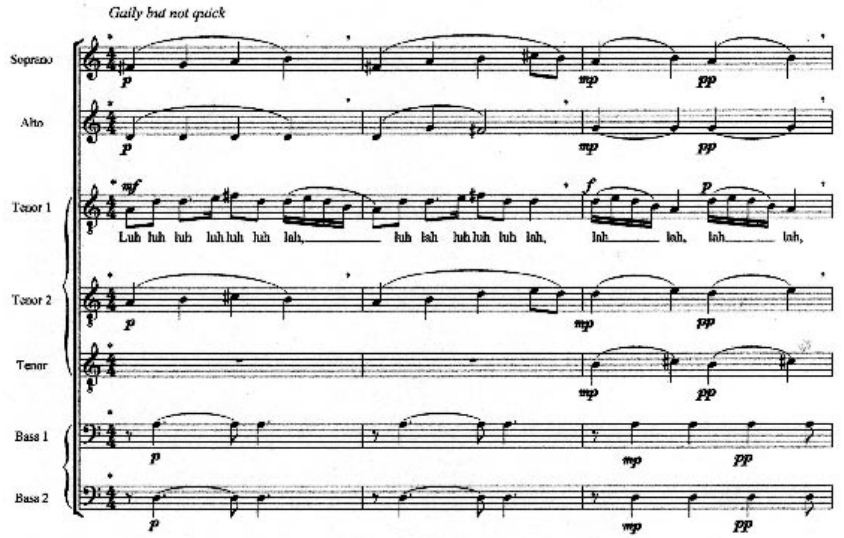
The development of tone required in bar thirteen is governed by the extremely high tenor part in bar fifteen. This needs support. Thus, the increase in tone which the *crescendo* at bar thirteen requires brings the short piece to a highly effective climax after which the music subsides once more into the gentle reverie of the opening. Some choirs will want to give the high tenor part to an alto line which is entirely understandable but nevertheless regrettable. Part of the feeling at this point is the intensity of this moment of 'stretch' which singing extremely high brings with it. Of course it depends on the *quality* of the voices available, and Delius was obviously imagining effortless professionals or very highly gifted amateurs when writing this music. However, to my mind it is better to have tenors singing falsetto than altos taking over in this section.

It will be noticed that the tenors actually take over the second bar of the phrase from the altos in bar fourteen and then lead it forward over the top B in bar fifteen:

This is no serendipituous matter on Delius' part. Starting with the slightly gentler quality of female altos, the tenors carry the phrase to its climax with their greater tonal power, especially at this tessitura. It is all to do with quality of sound.

Delius is very careful with his dynamic directions and choral directors need to take careful notice of where his markings lead and how, tonally, this can be best achieved. The end of this first song needs particular attention as his *dying away to the end* marking needs to do just that but in such a graded way as to allow room for further diminuendo or *niente* on the final note. It has to

be very finely judged.

The second song has a very different feel about it, although the prevailing air of wistfulness is not far beneath the surface. Here, we have a tenor solo part which sings throughout and the choir is thus in an accompanimental – or perhaps more accurately – a *surrounding* role. Again, Delius is quite specific in his instructions, showing his extremely keen ear for precisely the sound he wants to hear. The music is marked *Gaily but not quick*. For me, the first two bars set up what might indeed be a 'gay' (what a shame we can't use that word in its proper context more often these days) feeling as the nature of the tenor solo has that slightly elusive folksongy feel of someone walking down a country lane whistling to himself:

Care really needs to be taken to observe Delius' directions about use of *staccato*

where the 'front' of the note has that effect but there is still a *legato* undertow. So it is almost like a tiny forte/piano with the *forte* being the initial impact and the *piano* being the underlying legato.

All matters of phrasing discussed for the first song are relevant here too. The difference being that in the first song Delius did not write one single rest in any vocal part, but here there are rests given for the basses in the first and last parts. These create syncopation which lends weight to Delius' feeling of the lighter-hearted nature of this second piece. Echoes are a big feature of the this music and need to be very carefully observed in both choral and solo parts as they underline the wistful side of the mood Delius is conjuring.

Overall, the major problem which any choir is going to face as they tackle this music is that of tuning. Delius' highly chromatic style of writing, together with his predilection for splitting parts and creating rich textures makes for a challenging sing. In fact, this music would be a major undertaking for an amateur choir and particularly when considering that they constitute only five minutes of a programme! However, they are five wonderful minutes and are worth whatever preparation time is needed. When first performed in 1921 they were sung by the Oriana Madrigal Society under their expert conductor Charles Kennedy Scott. It would have been fascinating to hear how they coped with the demands placed upon them.

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Percy Grainger inappropriately dressed for a Summer Afternoon on the Loing
(Reproduced by kind permission of Stewart Manville and the Percy Grainger Library)

THE 'SUMMER PIECES'

THE RECORDINGS

Lewis Foreman

❍ ***Summer Evening***

(1949) RPO/Beecham: Dutton 2CDEA 5026
(1958) RPO/Beecham: EMI 567552-2; EMI CDS 7 47509 8
LPO/Handley: CHAN 8330
English SO/Boughton: Nimbus NI 5208
Northern Sinfonia/Hickox: EMI HMV5 73453-2

❍ ***In a Summer Garden*** **(Revised vesion)**

Philharmonia/OA Hughes: ASV CDDCA627
(1936) LPO/Beecham: Naxos 8 110905; Dutton CDBP 9745
LSO/Collins: Dutton: CDLXT2503; Dutton CDAX 8006; Belart 461 3582; Decca 470 375-2
RPO/Beecham: Sony SMK 89429
Philadelphia O/Ormandy: Sony SBK62645
Hallé/Barbirolli: EMI 565119-2
Hallé /Barbirolli HMV5 74054-2; 575791-2
Hallé /Handley: CFP CD-CFP 4568
Bournemouth SO/Hickox: Chandos CHAN 9355
BBCSO/A Davis: Erato 3984-25866-2; Teldec 8573 89084-2; Warner Apex 8573 89084-2
WNO/Mackerras: Decca 460 290-2DF2

-- Original version
BBC Concert O/Lawrence: BBC Radio Classics BBCRD 9128

-- Arranged piano, four hands (Peter Warlock)
Ogawa and Stott: Bis CD 1347

❍ ***Summer Night on the River***

(1928) RPO/ Beecham: Dutton CDLX 7011
(1929) NSO/Toye: Dutton CDAX 8006

(1935) LPO/Beecham: Dutton CDBP 9745
LSO/Collins: Belart 461 3582
Hallé /Barbirolli: EMI 565119-2
Bournemouth Sinfonietta/ del Mar: CHAN 6502
BBC SO/Pritchard: BBC Radio Classics 15656 91332
BBCSO/A Davis: Erato 3984-25866-2; Teld 8573 89084-2; Warner Apex 8573 89084-2

-- Arranged piano, four hands (Peter Warlock)
Ogawa and Stott: Bis CD 1347

❍ ***A Song of Summer***
(1953) LSO/Collins: Belart 461 3582
(1950) Hallé /Barbirolli: Barbirolli Society CDSJB 1005
Hallé /Barbirolli: EMI 565119-2
RPO/Groves: EMI 7 63171 2
Philharmonia/OA Hughes: ASV CDCDA 627
Hallé /Handley: Classics for Pleasure CD-CFP 4568
RPO/Fenby: Unicorn UKCD 2072

[There are many incarnations of these recordings and a variety of issue numbers, not all of which are given here.]

Summer Evening

For most Delius lovers, until after the Second World War there were only three summer pieces, *Summer Evening* (*Sommer Abend*) being unheard in the composer's lifetime - although written in 1890 it was not performed until 1946. It was first recorded by Beecham on 78s (DB 9757/8) in 1949, and again in 1956 in stereo, but is the least recorded of these summer pictures, with only later versions by Vernon Handley, William Boughton and Richard Hickox.

Summer Evening was the first of *3 Symphonische Dichtungen*, but it is not as immature a piece as that would suggest, and already has a feel of the mature composer about it, in the melodic line, the instrumental placing and the overall pacing. While Delius is still drawing something from Grieg, the work is shaped by Beecham's unique treatment but yet responds when a later conductor wants to be slightly more robust about it, as Handley does in his LPO recording.

In a Summer Garden

In this survey *In a Summer Garden* is the big one. The revised version was first heard in the UK in the two performances in Edinburgh and Glasgow in 1913 conducted by Emil Mlynarski. From the programme for the Glasgow performance on 23 Dec 1913 we read:

> The work, at once reposeful and passionate, is very modern in feeling and treatment. The composer succeeds in creating an atmosphere which is his own secret; its fascination must be felt, and it is doubtful whether musical analysis can help us to do so.

Well, it no longer sounds modern - but to succeed the conductor certainly needs to create the atmosphere, though there is more room for manoeuvre that perhaps was once thought.

This rhapsody was first recorded by Geoffrey Toye with the LSO for HMV. His timing of 13'20 against Beecham's 1936 timing of 14'05 or his later one of 14'11 and Barbirolli's 14'57 perhaps give the clue to the dissatisfaction some have felt at a perceived lack of atmosphere. Yet, recorded at the Kingsway Hall on 19 January 1928, Toye pre-dates the London 1929 Delius Festival and thus constitutes an important step in the Delius story. It is well worth having, a slice of history, if not a first choice for day-to-day listening.

Toye was followed by Beecham with his LPO in October 1936. He immediately became definitive, even on 78s, and is vividly heard on various CD reissues – I listened to *In a Summer Garden* on Dutton CDBP 9745, which is splendidly bright. After the war, Collins with the LSO has much to offer, in 1953 still in mono. Collins' bold instrumental detailing combined with sensitive phrasing and a ready response to the more fervent passages make it a version one still wants to hear occasionally. Beecham's stereo CBS version with the RPO is now on Sony SMK 89429, a terrific programme coupled with *North Country Sketches* and Appalachia. Unexpectedly, Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra recorded it in 1960, and they bring a passionate immediacy to Delius's music demonstrating that there are more ways to approach it than with Beecham. Other conductors also take this line, and post-Beecham we have eloquent readings by Handley, Hickox and Andrew Davis among others. All will please, but perhaps the most recent, Andrew Davis with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, has all the benefits of the latest technology with the BBC Symphony Orchestra catching the mood, with a fervent energy of which Delius would have surely approved. Worthwhile, too, is the most indulgent reading of all, Barbirolli with the Hallé in 1969 for EMI.

Expansive and unhurried, Barbirolli's plastic phrasing catches the summer languor to perfection, while his climaxes erupt with passionate fervour, and his sense of flow is wonderfully sustained, unsurpassed by any other.

However, there is a version of this lovely atmospheric score which is my special favourite, and that is Ashley Lawrence's broadcast of the original version with the BBC Concert Orchestra, recorded by the BBC on 12 January 1974 and broadcast on 29 January that year. It was in a fascinating programme, including the *Norwegian Suite* which excited a lot of interest among Delians at the time. Its appearance on CD in 1993 on the IMP 'BBC Radio Classics' label (BBCRD 9128) is one of the most cherishable of off-air recordings. In this version the piece runs 17'07 and for my money is unmissable, an essential appendix to any Delius collection. The summer warmth, instrumental detail and ecstatic climax are all perfectly caught. (I suppose I must admit my guilty secret: I prefer this version of the music and its recording to any other.) Yet surprisingly no-one else has thought to record this glorious version of the score again.

Even more recondite is Peter Warlock's transcription for piano, four hands, recorded by Noriko Ogawa and Kathryn Stott for Bis. No-one should approach Delius's atmospheric score in this black and white medium first, if they did not know the orchestral sound - unless, perhaps, as one of the pianists. Yet it is a splendid footnote, and here all that instrumental detail suggesting garden sounds and birdsong are more precisely caught, perhaps cleaning the picture for the next time you hear it in colour. Their programme also includes *Summer Night on the River*.

Summer Night on the River

The second of the *Two Pieces for Small Orchestra* tends to get forgotten in favour of that iconic cuckoo. A convenient length for a 78rpm disc, there were several early attempts to record this atmospheric music. I have not heard Barbirolli with the NGS Chamber orchestra (NGS 72), which has not been reissued, but the LSO with Geoffrey Toye and Beecham thrice with the Royal Philharmonic (in 1928 and 1935 it was the Royal Philharmonic *Society* Orchestra) but despite some lovely instrumental detail this music needs atmosphere, notably evident in Beecham's 1958 recording. Even more so from Barbirolli and the Hallé in 1970, the last year of his life.

I have never come across the version by the Concert Arts Orchestra and Felix Slatkin, and the mono Collins has all the qualities of the other Delius on the disc. But again, we have a handful of post-Beecham readings by Handley and the LPO, Barbirolli and the Hallé and Sir Andrew Davis

and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, all of them worthwhile and beautifully characterised in modern sound. Good, too, is Norman del Mar's reading with the Bournemouth Sinfonietta, now on Chandos. Strong on live atmosphere is Sir John Pritchard's reading with the BBC Symphony Orchestra from the Royal Festival Hall in April 1984, which at 7'11 ran a few seconds slower than Barbirolli's expansive view.

A Song of Summer

Listening to this piece again, one is staggered at the achievement of the young Fenby in articulating the stricken Delius's vision on paper. Here, while savouring the atmosphere and the beautiful instrumental detail of the opening evocation, including the solo violin, we do not want to be too caught up in the atmosphere at the expense of the passionate final pages. Of the versions I have timed, Barbirolli's 1967 recording, lovely and beautifully shaped though it is, is perhaps just too indulgent at 11'19, nearly two-and-a -half minutes slower than Collins' business-like recording with the LSO (8'49). Here Fenby rather than Beecham gives us the clue, and his splendid 1981 Unicorn recording, produced by Christopher Palmer, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra has to be our talisman at 10'08. I have reviewed that from the LPs (DKP 9008/9) rather than the CD, but I would be surprised if that changed my view. I have also made a splendid re-discovery, for I returned to Sir Charles Groves's 1975 recording with the RPO, the timing at 9'36 giving some indication of his more robust approach. I must say I had completely forgotten this but find it refreshing, indeed a triumph, and now have a special affection for it.

What these recording demonstrate most of all is that old canard that Delius would not outlive Beecham is completely untrue. Beecham did noble work and remains the first choice for many works, yet this is music of a living performing tradition, and there is scarcely a dud among all these recordings. So with Beecham no-one will go far wrong in these colourful scores, but it is worth noting Handley in *Summer Evening*, Andrew Davis in *In a Summer Garden*, Barbirolli in *Summer Night on the River* and Fenby and Groves in *Song of Summer*. And that special footnote: Ashley Lawrence in the original version of *In a Summer Garden*.

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THE 'SUMMER PIECES'

DELIAN INSPIRATION

Anthony Payne's *Springs Shining Wake*

The programme note* for a work which owes its existence to *In A Summer Garden*:

Spring's Shining Wake, which was composed in the Summer of 1980 and Autumn of 1981, is the realisation of a project that I had had in mind for some years. It shadows the course of a late-romantic masterpiece — Delius's *In a Summer Garden* — without in any way quoting from it; and because of my very strong reservations about neo-classicism, and neo-romanticism, and of more overt quoting games such as are found in, say, Berio's *Sinfonia*, I feel an apology is necessary. There is a danger of pieces being written about other pieces or styles, instead of presenting artistic vision direct. The use of quotation or of flea-classic and other allusive styles, however sophisticated, is often an indication of unhealthy psychological dependence, and an avoidance of the problem of expressing personal vision here and now. It is scored for seven wind and strings with small percussion.

Delius was a composer with whom I identified very strongly in my early twenties, and I feel I did not develop individually as a composer until I had placed psychological distance between his music and that of the other late romantic English composers I loved. *Spring's Shining Wake* celebrates the detachment I eventually achieved, indicating my abiding feeling for such music yet my ability to stand back. In it, my present is connected with my past.

Opening on entirely personal and independent ground, only very loosely related to the model, the work then proceeds to find equivalents in my vocabulary for every structural and textural move in the Delius. Thus it sometimes approaches close to Delius' work, at other times, for technical and stylistic reasons, moves some way away. The spirit of the two pieces is also rather different. *In a Summer Garden* is a serene work largely lacking the nostalgic overtones that often colour Delius' music. My piece does paradoxically become a little nostalgic, for it speaks of experiences, not only musical ones, that will probably never be repeated; the trace, or 'wake', left on the mind after Spring has passed. It is, and I think will remain, very much

a work 'sui generis' in my output, a little outside the natural expressive and stylistic progress of the rest of my music. I will probably not attempt a similar experiment, but I'm pleased to have explored his little side-path just once.

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Rue Wilson, Grez
(Photo: Claire Leray)

THE 'SUMMER PIECES'

"COME HITHER, LASS ...."
– SOME OTHER MUSICAL GARDENS

The Editor and Stephen Lloyd

With the notable exception of *In a Summer Garden*, which depicts a garden pure and simple, without people, many, if not most, of the other 'musical gardens' are pretty wicked places, where sexual undertones – and overtones, too – flourish like flowers. Love and/or lust rule.[1]

Klingsor's magic garden in Act II of *Parsifal* is the biggest, grandest and most alluring of them all. In lavish productions it is peopled (or should it be girled?) with more gorgeous Flower Maidens than there are characters in all FD's operas put together, led by the chief temptress in all music, Kundry. Imagine:

> Tropical vegetation, luxuriant displays of flowers: towards the rear the scene is bounded by the battlements of the castle walls. Upon the ramparts stands Parsifal, gazing down into the garden in astonishment. From all sides, beautiful maidens rush in. They are clad in soft-coloured veils, hastily donned…[2]

– and lust (albeit lust that will turn to love) is definitely the order of the day there. (Perhaps thankfully, FD's operas are not built around the usual scenario of two characters who meet for the first time, exchange a few looks over forty bars of music, and then, hey presto, declare their undying love for each other.)

Sir Arthur Somervell's song cycle *Maud* (verses that Delius also set - for tenor and orchestra) takes place, as it were, in a garden – the "high Hall garden", and seems to be **all** about pure-as-driven-snow 'lurve':

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone.
An angel watching an urn,
Wept over her, carved in stone;
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
To find that they were met by my own….

There has fallen a splendid tear
From a passion flower at the gate,
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate
The red rose cries 'She is near, she is near',
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late',
The larkspur[3] listens, 'I hear',
And the lily whispers 'I wait'.

Do not be deceived, however. There's wicked thoughts lurking behind the very Victorian poetry of Tennyson's monodrama - like the fringed, purple chenille covering the naughty table or piano legs - and it's really a "crescendo of romantic infatuation"[4]:

> Come into the garden, Maud,
> I am here at the gate alone……

Harrington Hall in Lincolnshire, in which lived the heiress with whom Tennyson was hopelessly in love, is generally accepted as 'Maud's garden'. Judged by today's concern for smoke-free areas, she - or Rosa Baring – would have done well to keep out of a garden in which 'the woodbine spices are wafted abroad'.

Nights in the Gardens of Spain is about sultry evenings with the cicadas cicading, when it is too hot to take any steps to secure the attention of a boy other than by twitching a mantilla, or of a girl by stroking a thin moustache – but it will happen in the end. What they all really need instead is something cool with the stamp of Debussy, perhaps *Jardins sous la Pluie* – although that piece ought really only be played in the suburbs of Manchester**;** the exoticism of the moon-kissed, perfume-laden *Garden of the Seraglio***;** or even the perpetual peace enjoyed in a *Monastery Garden*, such as the Franciscan priory at Chilworth visited by Alfred W Ketèlby. His name[5] alone would damp anyone's ardour – plus that (as people say today) in the Editor's family it is very un-summery mud.[6] What did Mr K think the monks did in their monastery garden that justified those chocolate-box melodies, swannee-whistle bird calls, tolling bells and vesper choruses? Nothing, surely, as innocent as croquet, a game of ministerial repose, nor as energetic as the tennis in Debussy's *Jeux,* where girls and chaps dressed in virginal white spend much time hunting in the bushes for those lost balls[7] …… and one is all at sea in Bax's *Garden of Fand*:

> An enchanted Atlantic completely calm under the spell of the Other World… ..[and] Fand's miraculous island. Here is inhuman revelry unceasing between the ends of time, and the voyagers are caught away, unresisting, into the maze of the dance. A pause comes, and Fand sings her song of immortal love enchaining the hearts of her hearers for ever. The dancing and feasting begin again, and, finally, the sea rising suddenly overwhelms the whole island, the immortals riding in rapture on the green and golden waves….[8]

But terrestrial gardens are not only for lounging and revelry – they do have to be cultivated with TLC. FD had a Gardiner who lived in England, and who only managed to get over to Grez every now and again. He preferred trees to flowers. And, much as he loved the garden at Grez, he perpetuated one closer to

him, *The Quiet Garden*[9] "where stirred none, or the faintest, breeze" in which he could take his "days in ease". FD and Gardiner were both very friendly indeed with a chap called Percy – oh, what was his name, not Throw… - who was also an occasional visitor and, like FD, was keen on pianolas. Percy Whadyecalim was famous for a little piece that goes "Dum, dum, de dum dum; dum, dum, de dum……." – and as he had very green fingers, he used to grow *Green Bushes* - very simple shrubs, which made the task of finding tennis balls (tossed over the Delius house) much easier than it was in Debussy's poly(chrom)anth(o)us (-filled) garden. There was, of course, dear old Uncle Ralph, who was attracted by *Bushes & Briars* – but in very rural Down Ampney[10], where he was born and learned to play tennis, open fields surrounded the Vicarage, so there was no need for the court to be set in a shrubbery – and hence the players' were often heard shouting *Ball's across the Meadow*.

But to return to our opening premise, that most musical gardens in music are pretty wicked places where love and/or lust rule. This is certainly true of what is probably Delius's most famous garden - The Paradise Garden - which in truth is not a garden but a country inn, "covered in grapevines and . . . surrounded by chestnut trees that had run wild." And, of course, there's the Garden where the opera from which that much-played lollipop (an object, incidentally, for which many people lust) comes was first staged in England.

No, there's no getting away from the fact that, from the very first one, gardens have been places of temptation. Wise Colleen, however, had parental consent before indulging her lover in the sexually symbolic *Garden where the Praties grow*[11], while in Yeats's *Sally Gardens* the "young and foolish" boy[12] resisted his lover's call to "take life easy". Even the curé at Grez could not resist the urge to spy from the church tower on the nudes modelling in Delius's garden. But those everlusting days are long past, and we can now relax aurally in the peace of *In a Summer Garden* with its "roses, lilies and a thousand sweet-scented…." – but oh <u>no</u>, not that wretched throstle[13] <u>again</u>: it's already sung twice before in these pages. As Philip Heseltine wrote in a programme note, the music has "the effect of a continuous outpouring of melody . . . achieved by the subtle manner in which rhythmic and melodic fragments are merged together into broad effects of light and colour that suggest the vivid luminous canvases of the gracious and gifted lady who inspired the work"...y-e-s, you've read all that above too…..but isn't it marvellous writing![14]

Such are the sweet blooms of love.

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1 We should perhaps, for the benefit of the readers of this article, make clear

the difference between sex and lust. Sex is what posh people used to have their coal delivered in, while lust is something that Japanese car manufacturers proudly proclaim is never found on their vehicles.

2 Richard Wagner: Stage direction in *Parsifal* (Mainz. B. Schott's Söhne, 1883) p.117.

3 Delphinium consolidata – See Carl Linnæus: *Genera Plantarum, Fundamenta Botanica* (University of Upsala, 1736, p.1,473).

4 Professor Stephen Banfield in his sleeve note to David Wilson-Johnson's Somervell recital on Helios - quoted with his permission.

5 See Constantin Blaubrock: *A Compendium to the Ketèlby Family* (University of Illinois, 1997) p.237 et seq.

6 See the Editor's *Nothing So Charming as Music* (Thames Publishing, 1999) pp. 131-133.

7 Those that were hit into the kitchen garden were known as Lost Gourds; interestingly, the under-gardener there – a real expert with the praties – was called O'Sullivan.

8 Sir Arnold Bax: *The Garden of Fand* (Chappell & Co Ltd, 1922) p. 0.

9 Pub. Augner, 1923.

10 NGR40989725

11 See Susan Campbell: *Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Potato Famine* (Houghton Mifflin & Co, Boston, Mass. 2001) *passim*.

12 Wagner would have called him "der reine Tor" – another lad who got lured into a garden, but (as they say in the horseracing world) pulled-up at the last fence.

13 Throstle: a poetic name for thrush –"Any songbird of the sub-family *Turdinae*, esp. those having… a spotted breast ."(*Collins English Dictionary* 6th Ed 2003).

14 On a serious note, *In a Summer Garden* was the last piece of FD's music that Jelka heard. The BBC recorded Delius's funeral at Limpsfield, and the Director General instructed one of its staff, David Howarth, to take the records and play them to Jelka Delius in her Kensington nursing home where she was herself close to death. Howarth thought to take as well some of her husband's other music and chose *In a Summer Garden*, not realising the significance of the work regarding its dedication. Jelka died within a day or two. (David Howarth, *Pursued by a Bear*, Collins 1986, pp.48-53).

15 The Editor's name is given first so that he can receive any *Rebukia memberensis* (a poor survivor in late Autumn conditions).

HECKELPHONE OR BASS OBOE – WHICH DID DELIUS INTEND?

Robert Montgomery

This article tries to set out facts as far as we can tell concerning Delius's intentions regarding the heckelphone or bass oboe, a question that has long intrigued Delius scholars.

In writing it I have been spurred by what has emerged from the work done by Robert Threlfall and me for our forthcoming book *Delius and his publishers*, and by the timely enquiring letter from Georg Klapproth, recently retired from the position of solo cor anglais in the WRD-Sinfonie-Orchester Köln. Given that Georg and I have both played both the bass oboe and the heckelphone, and Robert Threlfall's unrivalled knowledge of the Delius scores, I think we may be able to throw some light on the question - what instrument did Delius have in mind when scoring the six works which, when published, included a bass oboe?

They are, with their years of completion: *A Mass of Life* (1905), *Songs of Sunset* (1907), *A Dance Rhapsody (No.1)* (1908), *Fennimore & Gerda* (1910), *An Arabesque* (1911) and the *Requiem* (1914).

The baritone or bass oboe certainly existed in the 18th century. There is one in the Paris Conservatoire Collection, made by Charles Bizet about 1750. In that instrument the excessive length of the bore was overcome by doubling it back on itself. In 1889 Lorée produced the instrument as it is today, with a straight bore. It uses a reed similar to the cor anglais, only bigger and blown with a cor anglais embouchure (that is, with the lips to some extent curled over the teeth). The compass is from B a 9th below middle C to the F a 13th above. It is not very powerful, which is probably why it was rarely used, being just a downward extension of the cor anglais.

At the same time that Lorée was making his baritone oboe, Wilhelm Heckel, having completed improvements to the Heckel bassoon and contra bassoon, turned his attention to other woodwinds. Wagner, impressed with his new bassoons, had said that he felt there was a need for a baritone double reed instrument which "should combine the character of the oboe with the soft but powerful tone of the Alphorn." The published scores of *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung*, *Tristan* and *Parsifal* all contain references to the cor anglais not being powerful enough, although Baines[1] suggests that Wagner's concern may have been that the old curved, and presumably less powerful, cor anglais

Bob Mongomery and bass oboe
(Photo courtesy The Delius Trust)

was still in use as opposed to the newer straight instrument. It took Heckel until 1904, after Wagner's death, to complete the instrument to his satisfaction; it was officially demonstrated in Bayreuth on 11 August 1904, played by the Cologne oboist Carl Erkert. It was then first used by Strauss in *Salome* in 1905. The instrument for which Strauss wrote has, to quote Philip Bate[2], "a tone rich and satisfying, with great body and considerable prominence in the orchestral ensemble," a description which certainly does not fit the bass oboe. The heckelphone, which is fingered like an oboe, is played with a bassoon type reed, but slightly smaller, and with a bassoon embouchure (that is, with little or no pressure on the reed). It also lacks certain linkages normally on the oboe, which makes some fingerings hazardous. Jimmy Brown, then playing first oboe at Covent Garden, recalls a story of a performance of *Salome* in 1951, when Joe Craen, on being taxed by the conductor for messing up the semiquaver downward scale at figure 79, gave as his excuse that he got his foot caught under one of the pads.

It is powerful. Its compass is effectively the same as the baritone oboe, with the addition of a low Bb and A. The fingering is basically that of the oboe, with the addition of a key operated by the right hand thumb to enable the low Bb and A to be produced (*Elektra* has a low A). This is only possible because the instrument rests on the floor, freeing the right thumb from holding up the instrument. To those unacquainted with the sound of the two instruments, compare the solo bass oboe in the Lento, 4th movement of Part Two of *A Mass of Life*, with the moment when John the Baptist comes out of the cistern in *Salome*, accompanied by oboes and cor anglais in octaves with a heckelphone at the bottom.

As described by Ulric Daubeny in *Orchestral Wind Instruments*, published in 1920*:*

> The baritone (or bass) oboe stands an octave below the ordinary oboe, and is of similar shape. Its lowest note is B natural instead of B flat as on the oboe, and it is played with a reed slightly larger than that of the cor anglais. The use of the baritone oboe is excessively rare, and even that threatens to be ousted by

> the new Heckelphone, an instrument of similar pitch (except that it descends to A instead of B), invented to meet the requirements of the composer, Richard Strauss.
>
> The tone of the Heckelphone is pure and of good quality, it is louder than that of the baritone, partly because it is played with what is practically a large bassoon reed, partly because the tone-holes are larger than those of the older instrument. The bell is of peculiar shape, being spherical with a circular mouth cut clean out of the front face. On the bottom is a knob which is rested on the ground, and helps to support the instrument.
>
> Delius, in scoring for the Heckelphone, mistakenly writes the parts in the bass clef at actual pitch, a most confusing procedure to the oboist, who probably plays the Heckelphone as an extra instrument. The correct method would be to write the notes in the treble clef, an octave higher than the actual sound.

The printed orchestral Delius bass oboe parts were originally notated in a combination of the treble, tenor and bass clefs, even more confusing to the player, until the Delius Trust recently had them correctly re-written in the treble clef. How Delius came to write for a bass oboe type instrument is conjecture. There is no doubt that he seems to have been confused over the difference between heckelphone and bass oboe.

Had he heard *Salome*? He probably heard *Elektra*, at Covent Garden in February 1910 – it was done in between the two performances of *A Village Romeo & Juliet*. Perhaps Delius came across the bass oboe in Paris and liked the idea of oboe timbre in its register? He could have visited the Lorée workshop.[3] Perhaps those to whom the heckelphone had been demonstrated sang its praises and perhaps he liked what he heard in *Salome*? It was certainly demonstrated by Wilhelm Heckel to Hans Haym and Fritz Cassirer in Elberfeld (now Wuppertal) in October 1904,[4] but there is no evidence that Delius was present. Hans Haym conducted Delius works that month in Elberfeld.

Taking matters chronologically, the draft manuscript score of *A Mass of Life*, on which Delius began work in 1903, gives the bass oboe, but this was before the heckelphone had been demonstrated. The first part composed was the 3rd section of part 2, the lento with women's voices, followed by a later rejected instrumental introduction to part 1, and neither of these sections has a bass oboe. Then came *Salome* in 1905. Between 1906 and 1908 Delius completed *Songs of Sunset*, *A Dance Rhapsody (No.1)* and began to compose *Fennimore & Gerda*, all of which give the heckelphone in the draft manuscript score, changed to the bass oboe in the published score. *Songs of Sunset*, written in 1906-7, has a bass clarinet, changed to a heckelphone in an early manuscript,

the finished work having a bass oboe but no bass clarinet. In 1909 we have the only references in the correspondence to the instruments, and possibly the reason why he seems to have abandoned the heckelphone. As the chart below shows, none of these works were performed until 1909, so the issue of which instrument was intended was not addressed until the July 1909 performance of *A Mass of Life* in London. It seems that a bass oboe was used for that performance, the player not having the correct crooks for London pitch, although he later demonstrated the instrument successfully to Beecham.

In his letter to Beecham of 3 May 1909 about the forthcoming June performance of *A Mass of Life* at the Queen's Hall Delius writes, "I employ a bass oboe which is a 'Heckelphone' and played by an oboe or English horn player, to be had from Heckel the inventor and instrument maker – can be hired". On 6 June, regarding the first performance of the *1st Dance Rhapsody* in Hereford that September, G R Sinclair, the conductor of the Hereford Festival, wrote to Delius to say that E W Davies (1856-1920) had agreed to double second oboe and heckelphone. However, Davies, who was an experienced London professional player, had asked what it was and said, "I have no knowledge of it". That Davies had not come across the instrument is not surprising, as *Salome* was not performed in London until 1910.

Beecham for his part did know the difference. In his letter to Delius dated 2 August 1909 he writes "…I wonder if you are coming over in September – I have arranged about the bass oboe for Hereford. I find out that Sinclair has been writing to another man who plays the 'heckelphone'. I am told that this particular instrument is a filthy affair and will not do – the man who played the bass oboe in the Mass has overhauled the instrument and got to the bottom of it. He now makes it sound most beautiful and it is quite in tune. I find that it is built to suit either high pitch or low, this being determined by crooks[5]. These we did not have for the Mass, - hence the weird noises. But now it sounds enchanting, and it is also the only one there is. If I were you I should write to Sinclair and tell him this or else you will be saddled with this other instrument which I am sure you will not like". That player was probably Bert Horton, (1866-1937), whom Leon Goossens later described as the earliest bass oboe player he knew, especially in Delius, but it could have been Fonteyne, a French player who bought an instrument form Lorée and played for Beecham in London. Delius may have taken Beecham's advice, as by 16 August 1909 Sinclair writes to Delius that he has "written to Mr Beecham about the bass oboe". In the event, no London bass oboe player was booked for Hereford and the solo part was entrusted with dire results to a Miss Bull, at whose expense Beecham made merry in *A Mingled Chime.*

Then came *A Village Romeo and Juliet* in 1910, when (as mentioned above) Delius must surely have heard the heckelphone in *Elektra*. After that there is no further mention of the heckelphone.

Work	Heckel in draft m/s	Final score	Date of compos'n	Date of publ'n	Date of first perf
Mass of Life	No	B oboe	1904-5	1907	1908-9
Songs of Sunset	Yes	B oboe	1906-7	1911	1911
1st Dance Rhapsody	Yes	B oboe	1908	1909	1909
Fennimore & Gerda	Yes	B oboe	1908-10	1926	1919
Arabesque	No	B oboe	1911	1913-20	1920
Requiem	No	B oboe	1914	1920	1922

So the answer probably is that he had never seen a heckelphone and thought, when writing *Songs of Sunset*, *A Dance Rhapsody (No.1)* and *Fennimore & Gerda*, that the two instruments were interchangeable, which they are not. Then in August 1909 Beecham explained the difference, after which he was content with the bass oboe. The bass oboe is certainly more appropriate for Delius's orchestration.

Coda

The scarcity of bass oboes and players has often been a problem in Delius performances. On 25 September 1916 Stokowski wrote to the Secretary of the Philadelphia Orchestral Society to say that he had had to cancel his proposed first US performance of the *1st Dance Rhapsody* the previous year, as he couldn't find either instrument or player. On 18 January 1918 Henry Wood wrote to Delius to say that although he played the *1st Dance Rhapsody* in Birmingham, he no longer had "a good bass oboe player". Horton had apparently been called up, even though he must have been over 50. The instrument is perhaps most apparent as a solo instrument in the *1st Dance Rhapsody* and the 4th movement of part two of *A Mass of Life*, and many listeners would not notice a sensible substitution. In Beecham's set of parts for the *1st Dance Rhapsody* there is a 2nd cor anglais part for when there is no bass oboe. The introductory solo fits the cor anglais until the final note, two bars before figure 2, when Beecham substitutes a bassoon. Similarly the bass oboe solo at figure 25, just before the final flourish, fits the cor anglais if the turn in the last bar goes up and not down. Robert Threlfall remembers Sir Malcolm Sargent using a bassoon in the trio in *A Mass of Life* instead of the bass oboe. I would hazard a guess that these are not isolated examples.

[1] Baines: *Musical Instruments through the Ages* (Penguin Books 1974).

[2] Philip Bate: *The Oboe, an outline of its History, Development and Construction* (Ernest Benn, London 1956).

[3] Lorée made only 12 baritone oboes between 1890 and 1912. Alain Giraud (*Les Hautbois Graves: in memoriam Karl* writes that Heckel have made some 150 to this day.

[4] Georg Klapproth

[5] The 1885 international pitch conference affirmed 435 as the standard. New wind instruments ordered for the Queen's Hall Orchestra in 1896 were at 440. Wind bands often played at a higher pitch (*Double Reed Gazette*, Autumn 2005).

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Leafing through the pages of the programme for the 1960 Hollywood Bowl series of concerts (as one does!) the other day, I came across "Three Preludes by Frederick Delius arranged for orchestra by Nelson Riddle". The "Three Preludes", I take it, meant the "Three Piano Preludes". I had certainly never heard of their ever being "arranged for orchestra" and I wonder if any members have. The mention of Nelson Riddle's name is perhaps also surprising! Undoubtedly renowned as an orchestrator/arranger of light music for films and artists such as Frank Sinatra, I was interested to learn that he had studied with Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

Roy Fredericks

MESSA ZHIZNI V MOSKV'YE

David Lloyd Jones

On 20 April this year, *A Mass of Life* received its first performance in Russia at a concert in Moscow's state-of-the-art International Concert Hall. The performers were the chorus of the Academy of Choral Art, a young quartet of soloists, and the recently formed National Philharmonic Orchestra of Russia under their conductor Vladimir Spivakov, who is also a violinist of international repute. It formed part of a series of Great Cantatas and Oratorios that the orchestra and conductor are presenting and was the suggestion of Lev Ginzburg, a notable behind-the-scenes enabler of musical events, who had heard the work in St. Paul's Cathedral in 1997 and been much impressed by it. I attended the performance, accompanied by my fellow Delius Trustee Martin Williams and his wife Gillian, and feel that I owe it to members of the Society to give some account of the occasion.

Let me begin by making two lightweight observations which occurred to me in relation to the fact that the work was being given in Moscow. First, that it seemed an appropriate place to be listening to those somewhat uncharacteristic woodwind figures that first occur in No. 3 of Part 2 (the so-called Second Dance Song) just after fig. 80, which have always struck me as showing the influence of the oriental chromaticisms of the Queen of Shemakha's music in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel*. Secondly, that about the only instrument in the world that could fulfil Delius's wish for a deep bell that sounds E flat below the bass stave (which he rather optimistically hoped could be conveyed by a very deep tamtam) is the Tsar's Bell, weighing over 200 tons, that is displayed in the Kremlin grounds. Even without the 11-ton section that broke off in a fire, it might be capable of producing the desired effect if it were ever possible to lift it off its platform.

The performance started 15 minutes late – apparently something that almost invariably happened at this venue. The predominantly young chorus (smaller in number than is usual for this work) were ranged in three rows at the back of the orchestra and, as there were no seats, stood throughout the performance. They don't go in for programmes in Russia; instead a tannoy announcement gave some basic details about the work and listed the movements. As the performance was being given in the original German, a Russian translation was shown in the form of a page-turning book on screens to the left and right of the platform. A printed sheet containing this translation was also available.

The performance under Vladimir Spivakov was a fine one and thoroughly worthy of the unique occasion. The most striking thing about it was that it was done without an interval. This gave the work an irresistible sense of forward momentum, quite apart from solving the problem of the uneven timings of Parts I and II, which Beecham and Sargent used to re-order to make work effectively. Apparently it was once done like this at the Proms under Sir Charles Groves.

It is not my intention to don the mantle of a music critic when discussing the performance of a living colleague; all that I will say is that Maestro Spivakov adopted a generally brisk, flowing approach which paid dividends. Both chorus and orchestra gave of their best (faultless horns at the start of Part 2), and a very satisfactory balance was obtained in those passages which remain overscored, even after Beecham's adjustments of the dynamics. Igor Golovatenko, the baritone Zarathustra (what a pity that he has to lose his individuality and become the bass of the solo quartet in the final number), had apparently taken over the role at less than a week's notice, but he delivered his part with total assurance and commitment. The audience, which in numbers looked very close to the hall's capacity of 1800, gave the performance a warm reception which nevertheless stopped short of being quite as wholehearted as one might have wished. Altogether, a notable addition to the increasingly international spread of Delius's music. It is good to know that the concert was being recorded for two separate broadcasts on the Moscow equivalent of Radio 3.

There appears to have been only one review of the concert, and this appeared in the newspaper *Kultura*. It was wholly positive, although much of the space was taken up giving details the venue and the performers, and a brief account of the work. The reviewer stated that apart from Nietzsche, Delius appears to have been most inspired by the *Symphonie Fantastique* and *Parsifal*. She ended her review by saying: 'It goes without saying that in order to get to know such a work, a solitary hearing is insufficient. So that after the concert, the final impression that one was left with was of both a ravishing and an exhausting ecstasy'.

A final textual point: In the 1987 republication of the full score of *A Mass of Life* in the Delius Trust Complete Edition incorporatiw ng Beecham's editing, Robert Threlfall helpfully reproduces in small type a number of alterations to the baritone's vocal line that derive from the last reprinting during Delius's lifetime of the Universal vocal score. These amount to considerably more than lower alternatives to the occasionally testing high tessitura and, to my mind, often seem preferable in that they help to highlight important words. Has any

research been done on the origin of these changes, and have performances been given in which they have been consistently adopted?

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The Moscow International Concert Hall

MARGOT LE ROUGE

David Lloyd-Jones was interviewed by Paul Guinery on BBC Radio 3 before the broadcast on 8 July 2006 of the performance of Margot la Rouge recorded at the BBC's Maida Vale Studios on 28th June 2006:

PG (introduction): Each evening for the past week in Performance on Three, Radio 3 has been visiting the city of Bradford, where the composer Frederick Delius was born in 1862. Bradford's been honouring its illustrious musical son in a series of orchestral and chamber music concerts under the title 'Delius Inspired', and we'll be broadcasting the final instalment of that Festival in an hour's time, with a concert by the violinist Tasmin Little and the pianist Wayne Marshall including two of Delius's violin sonatas. By way of a prelude, Opera on Three tonight samples Delius, the composer of operas. It's not widely appreciated how many stage works he did actually write; an excerpt from one of them, *The Walk to the Paradise Garden*, has become popular, though it's only a fraction of a full length work, *A Village Romeo and Juliet*. There are also five other Delius operas, covering two decades of the composer's career, and which are hardly ever revived. To be honest, they weren't much performed in Delius's own lifetime and three of them never saw the stage at all, including *Irmelin*, which waited over half a century for production, and *The Magic Fountain* which remained unheard for nearly 85 years until its broadcast première by the BBC. The third member of that unlucky trio is the one-act opera which we're about to hear tonight, called *Margot la Rouge*.

It too was unperformed for decades, completed in the summer of 1902 but not staged for some 80 years. We'll be hearing a concert performance at the BBC's Maida Vale studios with the soprano Susan Bullock, the tenor John Hudson and the baritone Gerard Holt in the three leading roles, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Lloyd-Jones.

The original circumstances surrounding the composition of *Margot la Rouge* are partly to blame for its neglect. It was conceived as a competition entry in the same way that Mascagni's one-act opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* had been in 1889. But that proved a phenomenally successful winner, performed world-wide, whereas Delius's bid for a similar competition was a failure. The libretto Delius set was by an obscure French writer called Berthe Gaston-Danville who used the pseudonym 'Rosenval'. It's a highly melodramatic story set in a seedy Paris café, where a soldier, Sergeant Thibaut, recognises a former girlfriend, Margot, and they fall in love again. But Margot has a current lover, an artist, and when he finds out he tries to kill Margot with a knife. The

soldier intervenes and receives the fatal wound himself. In retaliation, Margot kills the artist with the Sergeant's bayonet and is arrested as the curtain falls. It's highly charged stuff, and on the whole worlds away from the essentially poetic, even symbolic librettos Delius had previously set. But that's not to say that there aren't opportunities for Delius to follow his natural lyrical impulses, notably in the ravishingly beautiful orchestral prelude to the opera and in the extended love duet which forms the emotional heart of the work. It's significant that those passages, totalling about a third of the score, were re-worked many years later in the early 1930s. That was with the help of Delius's devoted amanuensis Eric Fenby and it gave birth to a new composition called *Prelude and Idyll*, a setting for soprano and baritone of words by Walt Whitman. So, in the end, the best of *Margot* was salvaged.

Perhaps Delius tried too hard, for the purposes of the competition, to steer his musical style towards the newly-fashionable Italian school of 'verismo', exemplified at its best by Puccini, but which wasn't at all Delius's natural mode of expression.

PG: Well, tonight's conductor David Lloyd-Jones, a very experienced Delius conductor, is with me here at Maida Vale. David, is it fair to say that *Margot la Rouge* may be a rather banaal attempt at a 'verismo' opera but that it's redeemed, really, by some wonderful Delian passages?

DL-J: No, I wouldn't be as harsh as that. I don't think there's anything banal in it at all. It's the subject matter that is rather lurid and seems 'verismo', but otherwise he's got a real sense of the dramatic; he has a real sense of pace; he has a real sense of flow. There's hardly an empty bar in the whole work: it just flows the whole time, which is quite amazing.

PG: Do you find the libretto holds up, because Fenby wasn't very kind about it, neither was Beecham.

DL-J: Yes, but though Beecham wasn't squeamish in any way – Fenby may have been – it was really the subject matter: a rather sleazy bar on the outskirts of Paris frequented by prostitutes. Only the woman behind the bar isn't one, and I bet she's been one in the past. They all felt it was unworthy of Delius, but I don't think it was at all. I've a curious feeling that Delius rather enjoyed himself doing this. As far as I know, Delius was never commissioned to write a work in his entire life. He just wrote works because he wanted to write them. And so some people might criticise him and say: "Oh, he got into almost a rut, he just lay back and thought he'd write a piece about the high mountains in Norway", or "I'll write a piece about the river at the bottom of my garden", and therefore that he was incapable of adopting another style. But here he does adopt another style, and yet it is totally Delius, so I think it's a very remarkable

little work. I say 'little' because it's only about forty minutes long.

PG: It has this central love duet which is an extraordinary passage – some of the most wonderful music in the whole opera, I think.

DL-J: It is. Of course, it's very long, partly because the Sergeant and Margot slowly work their way into the fact that they have met before, and then it develops and then the voices join together in a really quite ecstatic love duet.

PG: David Lloyd-Jones, thank you very much.

The Singers

Margot la Rouge	Susan Bullock (soprano)
Lili Beguin	Janis Kelly (soprano)
Nini/First Woman	Lynne Dawson (soprano)
The Licensee/Third Woman	Elizabeth Sikora (mezzo)
Second Woman	Nicole Tibbels (soprano)
First Drinker/Soldier	Stuart Maclntyre (baritone)
Sgt Thibault	John Hudson (tenor)
The Artist	Jared Holt (baritone)
La Poigne/Waiter	Owen Gilhooly (baritone)
Totor/Police Inspector/ Third Drinker	Matthew Rose (bass)
Second Drinker/Soldier	Edward Price (baritone)

BBC Symphony Orchestra
Conductor: David Lloyd-Jones

DELIUS: THE ANAGRAMS

Tony Watts

Reading Norman Jones's illuminating article on car number-plates in DSJ 138, I was put in mind of an equally neglected area of Delian scholarship – the anagram. It is said that anagrams reveal some essential truth about their subject, and, indeed, devotees of the anagrammatic art maintain that an anagram *cannot lie*, citing as evidence such facts as that (for example) the letters of the name CLINT EASTWOOD can be re-arranged to spell OLD WEST ACTION. I decided it was high time someone applied this principle to our composer and accordingly I set about the business of permuting letters. The results of my research (summarized below) were disappointing in that I failed to discover any one anagram that captured the essence of its subject in the way the Clint Eastwood example does. However, I came across several that were not only thought-provoking, but also of obvious relevance to various aspects of Delius's life and work.

The name DELIUS on its own yields little more than USE LID. FRED DELIUS, on the other hand, gives us REFUSED LID and these two apparently contradictory anagrams obviously allude to the fact that in photographs Delius is seen sometimes with a hat on and sometimes without.

Another very pertinent anagram of FRED DELIUS is USE FIDDLER, which I assume is the injunction to include in *A Village Romeo and Juliet* that mysterious anti-hero sometimes said to represent Delius himself. It may also refer to several beautiful passages for solo violin found throughout Delius's orchestral works. There are several other anagrams derived from FRED DELIUS of which I have so far been unable to spot the relevance – though other readers may be able to work them out. These include: DESIRED FLU (unlikely); DERIDES FLU (more likely); DRIED FUELS (!); DUDE'S RIFLE (on loan from Clint Eastwood?); FLEES DRUID and the disturbing medical-sounding SEE FLUID, DR!

FRITZ DELIUS gives us no anagrams at all. That Z's the problem, of course; but if you get rid of it (which is strictly against the rules) the remaining letters give you the single word TRISULFIDE. As I can find no evidence that Delius consorted with chemists, that one remains a mystery.

FREDERICK DELIUS, with so many more letters available, should open up the field a bit. It's here that I struck a dilemma. In attempting to work out the anagrams, I found that one word kept pushing itself to the fore with embarrassing insistence. It was the word ****. And not only **** but also

****S, ****ED and ****ER. Now, I don't know to what extent these words formed part of Delius's vocabulary, if any – I must say, I've never thought of him as an early twentieth century Ozzie Osbourne or Gordon Ramsay. The words may, of course, refer (more literally) to his exploits as a young man in Paris. Anyway, at risk of seeming a prude, I decided not to lower the tone of our distinguished Journal by going down that road, so I have not considered those anagrams that include the above expletive and its derivatives. Other readers may be tempted.

The downside of that decision is that it only leaves me with one decent anagram. It's an intriguing one though – ERIC FIELDED RUSK. I've put a lot of research into the meaning behind that one and I'm certain that it refers to an incident that took place at Delius's house in Grez. It's well known that Percy Grainger, when visiting Delius, was in the habit of throwing items of baby food over the roof, then running round the side of the house and catching them before they reached the ground. On the occasion referred to, the item was brilliantly intercepted and retrieved by Fenby.

As I said, anagrams never lie.

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William Scott of Oldham – La Baignarde (1881)

DELIUS AND THE DANCE

Michael Green

Introduction [1]*

It must be said at the outset that Delius *should* be an unlikely candidate to produce dance inspired music. Considering the main elements of dance - rhythm and melody - Delius was not, as a general rule, rhythmically adventurous, nor was he a tunesmith; his uniqueness was essentially in the subtlety of his harmony and harmonic progressions. Melodies there are, of course, but not a great number which would be whistled by the proverbial errand boy - and rhythm exists more to maintain the flow of the music than to be of special interest in itself.

Along with Elgar, he shared a general disinterest in folk music - so we find no examples of the kind of folk *dance*-inspired pieces which, for example, Holst, Vaughan Williams and other contemporaries produced. Such folk music influences as there are date back to his early days in Florida rather than to the English musical scene. Nor will we find examples of baroque or early music dance elements in Delius. Having said this, the dance crops up time and again; sometimes influenced by texts he was setting, on other occasions as some form of celebration of the dance. So our search will not be fruitless.

I will consider Delius and the Dance from a number of angles, looking first at the early influences (particularly Florida), then touching on 'the ballet' and considering some examples of dance 'elements' and pieces that portray the 'spirit of the dance'. Finally, I will look at music influenced by texts. It is, of course, in the nature of the subject that this will be closer to a survey than a critical study of the works involved.

Early influences

Delius had a musical father who used to tinker on the piano when alone. He was a keen concert-goer and there was often chamber music in the house. Even before he commenced violin lessons at the age of six or seven, Frederick was playing the piano by ear and would be brought down to play for friends after dinner. He was brought up on Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, composers with whom he never felt any real affinity. and his first great musical impression was hearing the posthumous *E minor Waltz* of Chopin, played by a friend of his father's. After hearing the piece twice he could play it through

* See list of musical illustrations at the end of this article.

from memory [Philip Heseltine: *Delius*][2]. The waltz features regularly in Delius's music and, jumping ahead for a moment, from around 1889 there is the draft of an early *Valse* [3] which Delius later thought of incorporating, along with a companion piece, into a Rhapsody for piano and orchestra which was never completed. The two pieces were for many years the only solo piano compositions acknowledged by the composer. Although he never mastered a formal piano technique, Delius would improvise wonderfully - but sadly, with the exception of the not entirely successful *Piano Concerto*, which according to Fenby he didn't think much of himself [Delius to Fenby 1931. Eric Fenby: *Delius as I knew him*], there is no sonata or major piano work by which he can be judged. Apart from perhaps the *Preludes*, there exist only a number of pleasing though fairly trivial salon pieces, often in dance rhythms – including, for example, a *Mazurka* and two *Waltzes* (from the *Five Piano Pieces*), and the piano accompaniments to the instrumental sonatas and songs which are perfectly satisfactory.

Among other early impressions on the young Delius were hearing Wagner played by the Hallé Orchestra, a performance of *Lohengrin* at Covent Garden and, significantly, hearing Grieg's *Humoresken*. How the young Delius progressed from a fairly normal, non-academic, cricket-loving upbringing in Bradford to the almost total isolation of an orange plantation in Florida need not concern us now, but -

Florida

In March 1884, having secured approval and financial backing from his parents, Delius arrived in Florida to cultivate oranges – a task for which he was both unsuited and unqualified. His house at Solano Grove overlooked the St John's River and he found himself in an entirely new world – tropical air, unfamiliar sights and sounds and, in particular, the enchanting sound of the negro voices coming from the nearby plantation. Delius's sojourn in Florida lasted only nine months or so (and he only returned once, briefly, twelve years later) but this was a crucially formative and influential period of his life. It was here, from the organist, Thomas Ward, that he received the only musical tuition he ever considered worthwhile, and it was here that he 'saw the light' and started to compose.

Delius's first composition dates from this period (1895) and was his first piece to be published. It's a dance, in fact a Polka, called *Zum Carnival* which was dedicated to a friend from Jacksonville. It doesn't, however, conjure up images of the St. John's River or plantation songs – more likely it was influenced by companionable evenings spent with friends in Jacksonville [4].

The first work of Delius to receive a performance was the *Florida Suite*, on which he had been working for two years during a fairly unsettled period. After leaving Solano Grove in January 1886 he had moved to Jacksonville where he taught music and sang in the local synagogue. He then took up an appointment as Professor of Music in Danville, Virginia, played solo violin in the third movement of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto and was much admired socially. In the spring, after only a few months he went to New York, thence back to Bradford, summoned by his distraught father who agreed to finance an 18-month course at the Conservatorium in Leipzig. Here, Delius spurned most of the formal teaching but thrived on the companionship of intelligent fellow students and regularly attended concerts and the opera. During the summer of 1887 he went on a walking tour of Norway and met Sinding and Grieg, who became a great influence. He returned to Leipzig with a determination to compose and soon completed his *Florida Suite* which, on payment of a modest fee to the musicians, was performed for an audience of three; Delius, Sinding and Grieg, who happened to be in town. We don't unfortunately have a record of Grieg's views on the work.

Unlike *Zum Carnival*, the *Florida Suite* exudes the spirit of Solano Grove and consists of four movements, the first of which, Daybreak, incorporates the Afro-American dance *La Calinda* in which, surprisingly, Derek Healey, in his fascinating study *The Influence of African-American Music on the works of Frederick Delius*, can find no trace of such characteristics [5]. Delius was later to use this dance in Act II of his opera based on the story of the African voodoo prince, Koanga where it features as the wedding dance for Palmyra and Koanga [6].

In passing, let's remember that Act III of *Koanga* includes another example of the dance. There is a moment of drama as Koanga and the voodoo priest gash themselves with knives and blood from a sacrifice as they invoke voodoo deities in the casting of a spell and there is a wild dance of the slaves until they fall down exhausted [7] – music which is probably as dramatic as anything Delius wrote.

Returning to the *Florida Suite*, the third movement is titled 'Sunset – Near the Plantation' and here, in the *Danza* section Healey tells us that we have one of the few complete Afro-American melodies used by Delius [*ibid*]. He would most likely have heard and seen the black plantation workers singing and dancing to this to the accompaniment of a banjo at the setting of the sun. There may also be a Spanish element here in the livelier section [8]. Considering that Delius had no experience at this stage of how his music would sound there is a remarkably sure touch in the orchestration.

The spirit and atmosphere of Florida, its sights and sounds haunted Delius for the rest of his life and can be detected in works as diverse as the String Quartet and the Second Dance Rhapsody. The two songs *To be sung of a summer night on the water*, date from 1917 and have been aptly described by Lyndon Jenkins as 'Two small tone poems for voices'. The second of these has a melody which, according to Healey has all the characteristics of the banjo melody from the third movement of *Florida* as well as those of the fiddle tune *Roaring River* notated in 1853. Healey describes the melody as being of the *Possum up a Gum Tree* type [*ibid*]. Eric Fenby later made an attractive arrangement for string orchestra – the *Second Aquarelle* [9].

Finally, before leaving Florida, there is *Appalachia – Variations on an old Slave Song*, which Delius composed in 1902. Although the theme itself is one which Delius heard in Florida the only section which clearly relates to the dance is the Waltz variation, in the heart of the work, which though obviously related to the theme reminds us more of the dance parties Delius would have enjoyed in Danville than the plantation at Solano Grove [10].

The Ballet

[*The writer is much indebted here to the research of Jane Armour-Chelu on Delius and the ballet, resulting in her articles in DSJ 128, 129, 131 & 133*].

It would have been appropriate to consider some aspects of Delius's ballet music – but of course there isn't any! Ballets have been created to be danced to his music but there are no original ballet scores and so far as I am aware Delius was never approached to compose such a score. This places him in a separate category from his English contemporaries, for example, Holst, Elgar and Vaughan Williams who all made some contribution in this field. Delius made his views on the ballet perfectly clear:

> A ballet is all very well in its proper place as a pleasant after-dinner entertainment; but we don't want ballets to everything, and to proclaim the ballet as a form of great art – *the* form of the future, in fact, is sheer bunkum. But the English public seems to have an insatiable appetite for ballets, and the demand for such works having speedily exhausted the slender stock of living composers' ideas, the scores of long-dead musicians are pressed into service. None is immune. Bach fugues are employed as exercises in muscular mathematics and Beethoven sonatas 'interpreted' (!!!) by every hysterical, nymphomaniacal old woman who can gull the public into seeing a 'revival of the Greek spirit' or some other high-falutin' vision in the writhings and contortions of her limbs.

> There seems to be a very prevalent belief that any Tom, Dick or Harry has a right to tamper with a work of art, even to the extent of altering it beyond recognition and forcing it to serve a purpose its composer never dreamed of. In this direction irresponsible 'editors', 'adaptors' and 'transcribers' are as much to blame as the dancing cranks. It is time a law was passed to keep good music from violation.
>
> By all means become dancing dervishes if you want to, and dance in a delirious *cortege* right into the lunatic asylum: but don't try to justify your procedure in the name of art, nor degrade the works of great artists in doing so. Above all, don't spoil works of art for other people who may not want to dance in the same direction. We do *not* all go the same way home. Let us try to preserve a little clearness of vision so that we may see things in their proper perspective.

Notwithstanding Delius's passionate views on the adapting or transcribing of existing music for the ballet there are numerous examples of his own music being used for this purpose.

In 1936 Frederick Ashton created a ballet with the title *Nocturne* for the dancers of the Vic-Wells Ballet. It ran for 88 performances and, at a time when there was much discussion in the music and dance press on the subject, was considered to be excellent use of existing music – in this case *Paris* which certainly contains passages evoking the night life of that great city which suggest aspects of the dance [11] - although I would have to say, personally, that I would find the music of *Paris,* fine though it is, generally uninviting of choreography!

Probably the most ambitious example of the use of Delius's music for ballet is the 50 - minute one act ballet *Romeo and Juliet* which first appeared in 1943. Choreographer Antony Tudor created a version of the famous play to music by Delius arranged by the conductor Antal Dorati. This included (in sequence) *Over the Hills and Far Away, Walk to the Paradise Garden, Eventyr, Irmelin Prelude* and *Brigg Fair.* Dorati also provided some linking passages in the style of Delius, and Beecham was so impressed with the whole venture that he conducted a number of performances in New York. Although American audiences were enthusiastic, dancers found Delius's music difficult to empathise with. Another problem was the final dramatic tomb scene; Dorati consulted with Beecham on this but they could find nothing more appropriate than Brigg Fair which one can only imagine would have been woefully inadequate. Of the music selected by Dorati one is tempted to suggest that *Over the Hills and Far Away* contains some of the more balletic passages, such as this [12].

This production of *Romeo and Juliet* came to Covent Garden in 1946, and

again in 1950, but the ballet did not win critical acclaim, the music being found to be too lyrical and relating more to the English countryside than Florence. I think we might conclude that in this instance of a large scale ballet, consisting of the stringing together of five of Delius's compositions – none of which was intended to be danced to, the composer's instincts were sound. If the ballet did work for the audiences it would be on account of the sheer beauty of the music and its harmonic subtlety rather than its dramatic potential. Not surprisingly, over time, the Delius *Romeo and Juliet* has been eclipsed by Prokofiev's superb 3-Act ballet of 1938 which was, of course, written for dancers and contains much greater rhythmic interest, characterization and variety of mood.

Other shorter ballets have been more successful. For example, Royal Ballet's *In a Summer Garden* of 1972, and Frederick Ashton's *Walk to the Paradise Garden* - produced for Covent Garden in the same year and beautifully danced again by Birmingham Royal Ballet in 2000. These work better because they can rely on a single mood. Also *Florida Suite* of 1991 by Sarasota Ballet of Florida was very well received – and not surprisingly, because of course two of the four movements contain Afro-American-inspired dances.

Finally, the Jacksonville Festival, which has been going since the 1960s has featured many dance performances over the years, including the *Florida Suite, Dance Rhapsody No. 2, In a Summer Garden, Fantastic Dance, Over the Hills and Far Away, Life's Dance, North Country Sketches* and *Air and Dance.* Delius would not have approved!!

Dance and the Spirit of the Dance

The *Air and Dance,* for Strings of 1915 and the *Fantastic Dance* of 1931 (the last of the Fenby collaborations) are appealing though fairly slight, and the curious *Dance for Harpsichord* is another small scale, though attractive, short piece dating from 1919 and written for the British harpsichordist Violet Gordon Woodhouse. It is more often played on the piano, to which the span of the chords is better suited. Whenever I hear this piece I imagine I am listening to an accompaniment which has escaped from one of Warlock's songs! [13]. Also lightweight but nevertheless pleasing are the *5 Piano Pieces* dating from 1922-3, which include two waltzes and a mazurka. They were composed for his young god-daughter Yvonne O'Neill. Jelka helped Delius to write these down as he was losing the use of his hands and also his eyesight at this time.

In a more exalted category altogether, the two *Dance Rhapsodies* of 1908 and 1916 stand out as supreme examples of Delius's interest in 'the dance'; they frame two other important compositions: the revised version of *Life's Dance* and *North Country Sketches.* The *Dance Rhapsodies* are not really rhapsodies

at all, but, like *Brigg Fair,* are in variation form, and each has a contrasting central section. The *First Dance Rhapsody* was first performed at the Three Choirs Festival in Hereford in 1909 conducted by the composer on one of his rare appearances in this role. Fenby recalls Delius telling him "I had little talent for conducting and to make matters worse I caught a severe chill and had my wallet stolen just before the concert" [Fenby writing in *The Bradford Delius Centenary Festival Programme Book 1962*]. I haven't traced a review of the performance, nor do I know if there was any particular influence for the work, but it contains some wonderful music and provides a real opportunity for virtuosic display by the large orchestral forces. The structure, similar to that of the *Second Dance Rhapsody*, is: introduction; theme and variations; contrasting central section; further variations; coda with brief lively ending.

The slow introduction anticipates the attractive gigue-like theme, which is definitely one for the errand boys! This leads into the first variations, which vary in tempo and orchestration [14], and thence to the central section. Whilst I agree with Fenby that the work as a whole is "English in style", I'm not sure that I hear "a Spanish influence from Florida" in the central section. It sounds more eastern to me! [15]. After further variations, there is an exquisite transformation of the theme for violin solo and strings, described by Philip Heseltine as "perhaps the most intense and exalted moment in all Delius's work" [16].

The *Second Dance Rhapsody* came eight years later. It is shorter than its predecessor and follows a similar form although its two main thematic ideas - a graceful, mazurka-like melody and a recurring chordal idea - are introduced straight away [17]. Again, following a number of variations there is a central section notable for its exotic scoring with prominent harp, celesta, triangle and tambourine [18]. The work concludes with a recapitulation of the main material, reaching a climax and a brief coda. It is astonishing that these two dance rhapsodies are not performed more often; they each provide a wonderful showpiece for any competent orchestra.

In his *North Country Sketches* of 1913/14 Delius is expressly recalling impressions of the Yorkshire countryside which he had known as a boy and through which he would have ridden on his pony. Delius rarely talked about his music – even to Fenby during the six years he lived at Grez, so what was particularly in his mind when composing these sketches will never be known to us. The third movement is called, simply 'Dance' and both its mood and main theme, seem to link it closely to the *Second Dance Rhapsody* [19] & [20]. I wouldn't disagree with Fenby when he writes "The Mazurka-like Dance, characteristic of Delius, is again, I feel, a dance of the spirit rather than feet;

fitful, wayward, changeable in turn, as if only with thoughts of recurring Spring can the heart in Winter exult in dance" [Fenby: *Fenby on Delius*]. Does the chromatic woodwind writing remind us of Debussy's *L'Apres midi…*of 20 years earlier? [21]

Still following the 'spirit of the dance' theme, another important work framed by the two Dance Rhapsodies is *Lebenstanz* or *Life's Dance;* although its first version (confusingly called *La Ronde se Déroule)* appeared in 1899, predating the *First Dance Rhapsody* by some nine years. *Life's Dance* was inspired by a play called *Danzen Gaar* or *The Dance Goes On* by the Danish poet and playwright Helge Rode, who was a friend of Delius. Delius greatly admired his work and initially wanted to provide incidental music to this play, but the author felt that an overture would suffice. Although Delius carried out major revisions to the work in 1901 the final published version did not appear until 1912, with a revised coda that now satisfied the composer. Delius wrote to his publisher "I think *The Dance of Life* is my best orchestral work". He had also explained that "I wanted to depict the turbulence, the joy, energy, great striving of youth – all to end at last in the inevitable death". It is a work of great power and confidence with, to quote Lionel Carley,"a distinct nod in the direction of Richard Strauss" – although all of Strauss's great tone poems had been completed by the time Delius started work on his first version [22].

Dance Elements

I have been exploring a number of pieces clearly capturing the spirit of the dance in various ways. There are other compositions where, sometimes only fleetingly, a dance element occurs. We have already encountered some examples e.g. *Paris, Appalachia, Over the Hills and Far Away.*

In the opera, *A Village Romeo & Juliet,* which is set in six scenes, the chorus does not appear until the dream sequence, which is well into Scene IV, and only really comes into its own in Scene V - where, briefly, the cloak of doom is lifted from the two lovers. They wander happily along to the inn at Berghald where a fair is taking place with merry-go-rounds, shooting galleries, colourful stalls and a circus. In a spirited waltz the chorus conveys the cries of the show-people mingling with the happy peasants in their holiday costumes and we hear the ringing of the church bells. Dancers appear on a platform and the jollity subsides only briefly at Vrenchen's "Oh Sali, look at those lovely, lovely things"; Sali responds "If I were still rich, I'd buy you all those trinkets!", and then Vrenchen: "One little keepsake to recall this lovely day."Then the dance continues, wonderfully capturing the spirit of the scene [25].

A very different dance aspect occurs in the Violin Concerto. Cast in a single

movement, it nevertheless has a clear formal shape roughly corresponding with the more conventional three-movement concerto form. The final section opens with a 12/8 Allegretto which, though not so described by the composer, is surely another 'dance episode' [26]. *Brigg Fair* provides another example: alhough described as an 'English Rhapsody' the work is, like the *First Dance Rhapsody,* essentially a set of 17 variations - and it is perhaps not too far-fetched to suggest that at Variation 11 (marked in the score as "gaily") the music takes off very much in the manner of a country dance in 3/8. [27].

Text influences

Finally I want to mention three examples in Delius's vocal/choral music where the dance element arises from the texts he was setting. This is the case, for example, in the short unaccompanied *Midsummer Song* of 1908 where the chorus sing:

> On Midsummer Day we'll dance and we'll play
> And we'll wander and stray through the woods.

There is then a lengthy middle section of wordless la la'ing before the chorus return with:

> We'll dance and we'll kiss whilst it's youth, love and bliss
> And the night is not far away. [28]

The almost completed score of *Cynara* was set aside by Delius and forgotten around 1910, when he decided not to include it with his *Songs of Sunset.* Fenby found the score twenty years later, when he was looking through Delius's manuscripts and sketches for some novelty to include in the first of the two great festivals of Delius's music to be organized by Sir Thomas Beecham. Only the last four lines of Ernest Dowson's poem needed to be set to music and this was accomplished by dictation. In it, the poet is haunted and tormented by memories of a past love. And while there is nothing in the first two stanzas to suggest 'the dance', with the third, the mood changes:

> I have forgot much, Cynara! Gone with the wind,
> Flung roses riotously, riotously with the throng,
> Dancing to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;
> But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
> Yea, all the time because the dance was long.
> I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

Delius responds effectively to this sudden change of mood, with apt and colourful orchestration, influenced by the dance elements in the text [29].

Finally, we come to *A Mass of Life.* Alan Jefferson tells us [*Delius*] that

"one night in 1898 Delius composed *Mitternachtslied Zarathustras* (*The Night Song of Zarathustra*) to words by Nietzche. He was so excited by what he had achieved that he called out to Jelka and her friend, Ida Gerhardi, waking them and making them come down and listen". This music was, of course, later incorporated into the last movement of A *Mass of Life,* which was completed in 1905 and first performed in its entirety in 1909.

Delius was not a religious man and wrote "I want to make myself very plain to you as regards religion and creeds. Personally I have no use for any of them. There is only one real happiness in life, and that is the happiness of creating." Not surprisingly Delius responded wholeheartedly to Nietzsche's celebration of life and man at his highest as an individual. To quote Fenby again [*Fenby on Delius*]:

> This is the music of that Nietzschean joy as felt by Delius in virile manhood; spontaneous and careless of Wagnerian inflections that still continued to haunt him momentarily; the music of a sensitive, restless adventurer, a tireless walker and climber of mountains; not yet the perpetual harper on transience who reached uniqueness in its musical expression in the full ripeness of his later years.

There is no story-line in Nietzsche's poem and *A Mass of Life* consists of a selection of some of the more lyrical passages in eleven soliloquies devised by Delius with his friend, the conductor Fritz Cassirer. It is in two main parts, the central section of each being a 'dance song'. Indeed, 'the dance' is much represented in both the text and the musical realization. In Part 1 the 'dance' element is first introduced to a dancing accompaniment by the baritone in the second section:

> Now lift up your hearts, all lift them, brothers, high,
> higher! and forget not also to dance for joy.
> Lift your feet, ye merry dancers, or better
> still, stand right up on your heads. …….

The baritone continues, linking the dance with the 'holiness of laughter', and this leads into the extended third section, with the soloists commenting on aspects of the dance and joined by the dance-like phrases of the unaccompanied chorus at the tenor line "towards thee I bounded", then follows the wonderfully sustained and impassioned passage beginning "Now for a dance over hill and dale!" In Part 2, the second dance song follows an orchestral evocation of evening, and there is then a wordless chorus leading to the entry of the baritone soloist, accompanied by dance-like figures at:

> Stop not dancing, I pray, ye beautiful maidens!
> I come not hither to spoil your sport with angry looks.

> No woman hater I, but God's counsel before the Devil who is the spirit of heaviness.
> Then how should I be e're averse to the divine art of Dancing, or to maiden's feet with graceful ankles?

and so on…ending with:

> And with tears in his eyes, he shall come and beg a dance of you, and I myself will sing a song to which he'll caper – a dancing, mocking song on the spirit of heaviness, on his Highness, the Devil, who, so they tell me, is the Lord of Creation.

and the section concludes with an impassioned, wordless interlude of dancing maidens. In these passages, and indeed in *A Mass of Life* generally, Delius shows his mastery in bringing together the full forces of soloists, chorus and large orchestra in his wholehearted response to Nietzsche's visionary and life-affirming poetry [30].

Summary

I have attempted to illustrate the importance of dance to Delius, and to show that throughout his life, and without any desire to compose ballet music or folk dance suites in the manner of his contemporaries, or even look back to pre-classical dance forms, the spirit of the dance was never far from his mind. In Delius's more substantial works the dance form is never naïve, nor does it fall into the 'pot-boiler' category; it is invariably integrated within a larger context than pure dance, and more often than not it is essentially the 'spirit of the dance' which the composer delivers to us. If we consider the *Dance Rhapsodies*, *Lebenstanz* and *A Mass of Life*, for example, as standing apart from the more popular, better known and more pastoral '*Cuckoo*' and '*Summer Garden*' types of composition, we find a rather different Delius, for whom 'the dance' must have been a preoccupation and continuing musical challenge. We can only stand back and humbly admire his significant achievements.

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Music references

[1] *A Mass of Life* , Part 1 Section 3
[2] Chopin *Waltz in E Minor* Op. Posth.
[3] *Valse* (1889)
[4] *Zum Carnival*
[5] *La Calinda* (*Florida Suite*)

[6] *Koanga* Act II - Wedding Dance
[7] *Koanga* - Act III
[8] *Florida Suite* - 3rd Movement
[9] *2nd Aquarelle*
[10] *Appalachia* - Waltz Variation
[11] *Paris*
[12] *Over the Hills and Far Away*
[13] *Dance for Harpsichord*
[14] *First Dance Rhapsody* - Intro, theme & first variation
[15] *Ditto* - central section
[16] *Ditto* – coda
[17] *Second Dance Rhapsody* - Opening
[18] *Ditto* - central section
[19] *Ditto* - opening
[20] North Country Sketches - Dance
[21] *Ditto*
[22] *Life's Dance*
[23] *Mazurka and Waltz for a Little Girl* (*5 Piano Pieces*)
[24] *Ditto*
[25] *A Village Romeo and Juliet* - Scene V - Opening Chorus
[26] *Violin Concerto* - First movement
[27] *Brigg Fair* - Variation 13
[28] *Midsummer Song (Three Unaccompanied Part-songs)*
[29] *Cynara* (Stanzas 2 & 3)
[30] *A Mass of Life* – Second Dance Song

WHEN DID THE AIR ACQUIRE A DANCE?

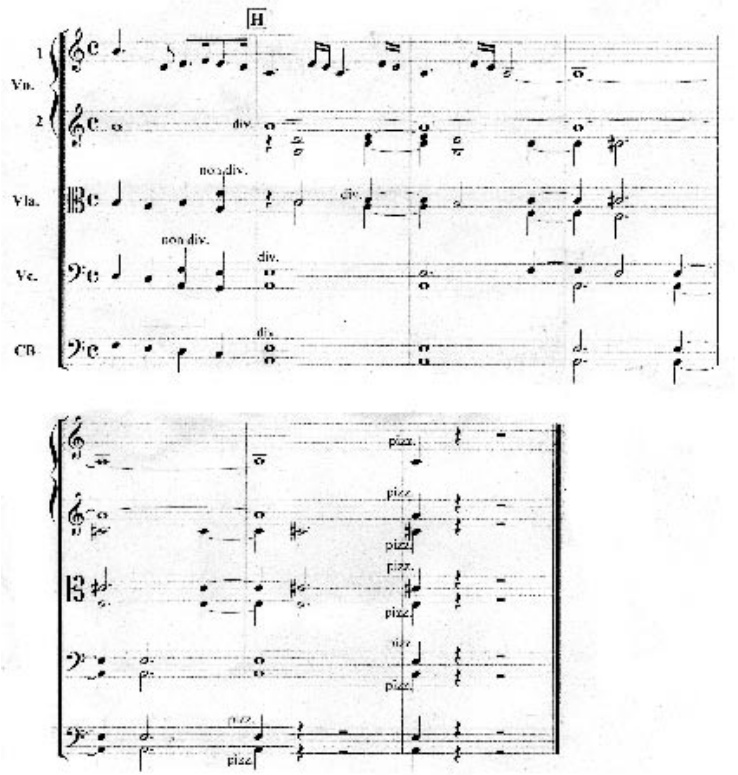
Robert Threlfall and Stephen Lloyd

There is a well-established law that *5* per cent of the people are responsible for 95 per cent of the problems, and no better example of this in Delian studies can rival the *Air and Dance.* It was first listed by Philip Hesletine as a 'Short piece for string orchestra', and played by Beecham in 1915 at a private concert at Lady Cunard's house. In 1925 Heseltine advised Jelka Delius that it would "sell much better if it is given a title"; it was therefore as *Air and Dance* that it was first introduced by Beecham to wider audiences at the 1929 Festival and, under the same title, it appeared in print from Boosey & Hawkes in 1931, both as a score-and-parts set and in Eric Fenby's piano solo arrangement.

Delius's (untitled) original manuscript of the work, evidently as played in 1915, is now in the Grainger Museum, Melbourne, Australia. It was ultimately handed over by Eric Fenby in 1948 with several larger manuscripts in response to numerous requests by Percy Grainger - a transaction apparently unknown to either Beecham or the Delius Trust (with results on the subsequent history of *Florida* already described in DSJ No.136 on pages 38-9). This manuscript consists of only 70 bars, whereas the published edition extends to 96. Already in October 1925 Jelka had written to Heseltine that "unfortunately Fred cannot make up his mind now to publish the little string piece, as he does not quite like the end and in his present state sees no prospect of altering it himself". However, it seems quite certain that the piece as recorded by Anthony Bernard earlier in 1929 (see *DSJ* No.139, page 87), and played later that year by Beecham at the Festival, was in the extended form as published in 1931. (Heseltine had meanwhile made a copy score which he had passed to Beecham.) The unanswered question remains: *when* was the original piece extended, and with *whose* assistance?

A couple of long telephone conversations (yes, they did also cover unfinished works by Elgar and Mahler !) forced us to a conclusion - hypothetical perhaps, but consistent with the known facts as far as can be traced. It is this: it appears most likely to us that the collaborator in achieving the definitive score for Delius must have been Fenby, not long after his arrival at Grez. It could well have been their first 'joint effort'; and if Fenby felt less of value had been achieved in this (a work later dismissed by him as "a comparatively poor piece") he might have omitted mention of it in his book, which often leaves tantalising gaps in musicological areas. Alas, none of us thought of asking Fenby during one of those 'any questions' sessions when so much of value was distilled

from his searching, if at times erratic, memories! Chronologically this proposal holds water, for we know that the work had not reached final form in 1925, by when Delius was unable to handle it unaided. Also, the fact that the original manuscript remained with Eric Fenby lends weight to his involvement with the work. Finally, if our supposition is correct, the sole definitive manuscript of the final version is that in Eric's hand passed to Boosey's for printing; thus explaining the absence of a similar manuscript in Delius's hand.

Two final points: first, it is clear from a letter from Jelka to Bernard Van Dieren (7 February 1931) that although Delius's manuscript used double staves for each string part, as was his custom in later years, Fenby's MS as well as Heseltine's copy 'boiled it down' to the conventional five-line system - an unfortunate decision which, when extended to the separate parts, causes needless problems in performance. Secondly, as a little curiosity, here follow the last seven bars of Delius's original (1915) manuscript version, commencing one bar before cue H in the 1931 publication:

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DELIUS SOCIETY MEETINGS

LONDON BRANCH MEETING

New Cavendish Club, London on 20 September 2005

Delius and the Dance

A talk by Mike Green

Mike Green's adaptation of his talk is printed above.

MIDLANDS BRANCH MEETING

Weston Underwood on 9 April 2006

Music by Delius, and those who knew and loved him

A piano recital by Paul Guinery

This stirring recital gave a reminder of past pleasures, but also afforded some future doubts. Few if any of the audience were less than fifty years old, yet many of the pieces heard were unfamiliar. One wondered how many of the composers featured would be known to the next or subsequent generations. Home music-making between the wars had fostered a wide range of salon music by British composers, often at the prompting of publishers, but the tradition scarcely survived into the second half of the 20th century.

Paul Guinery at the Midlands Branch

The earliest works in the programme were by Balfour Gardiner, Roger Quilter and

Cyril Scott, as well as Delius's precocious *Reverie* of 1890. Demonstrable craftmanship and sheer musical quality were enhanced throughout by Paul's thoughtful playing. In addition he gave to each set by way of introduction a few words of biography and/or historical context which were most helpful.

For me the high points of the day were a sparkling rendering of Ireland's *difficult Amberley Wild Brooks*, the lush plush of Moeran's *Irish Love Song* of 1926, the substantial *A Hill Tune* by Arnold Bax, and the haunting tranquillity of Scott's *Lotus Land* (albeit disturbed by two majestic glissandi). Paul's straightforward attack mastered the awkward piano writing of Balfour Gardiner, whose *Five Pieces* and *Mere* framed the whole programme, but I found this music intrinsically somewhat disappointing. In contrast, Frederic Austin's *The Princess Dances*, in Spanish style, was both attractive and colourful, and beautifully played.

We are most grateful for Paul's dedicated preparation and engaging performance of this wide-ranging recital. A vote of thanks was proposed by Stewart Winstanley and the substantial tea laid on by Brian and Jo Radford was approvingly attacked at the end of a stimulating afternoon.

The Programme

Balfour Gardiner	Five Pieces (1911)
Arnold Bax	The Maiden with the Daffodil (1915)
E J Moeran	Summer Valley (1925)
Frederick Delius	Three Preludes (1922-23)
Norman O'Neill	The Call (*Mary Rose*) (1920)
Roger Quilter	Rosamund (*Where the Rainbow Ends*) (1911)
Frederick Delius (arr. Heseltine)	Intermezzo (*Hassan*) (1923)
Peter Warlock	Folk Song Preludes (1917, rev.1922)
John Ireland	Amberley Wild Brooks (1921)
Frederic Austin	The Princess Dances (1921)
Percy Grainger	The Merry King (1939)
Cyril Scott	Danse Nègre (1908)

———————

Norman O'Neill	Four Songs without Words (1918)
E J Moeran	Irish Love Song (1926)
John Ireland	The Cherry Tree (1932 rev. 1937)
Roger Quilter	Dance in the Twilight (1916)
	Shepherd Song (1923)
	Pipe and Tabor (1923)

Arnold	A Hill Tune (1920)
Cyril Scott	Lotus Land (1905)
Frederick Delius	Dance For Harpsichord (1919)
	Reverie (1889-90)
	Three Fragments (1923-24)
Balfour Gardiner	Mere (1905)

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LONDON BRANCH

New Cavendish Club on 27 April 2006

My life in publishing

A talk by Sally Groves

The Chairman had invited Sally Groves, daughter of the late Sir Charles Groves, to give this talk, and introduced her. It was probably a unique occasion, as one suspects that it was the first time a beautiful member of the female sex had spoken to us Delians.

We were, of course, well aware of the splendid and important contribution to the Delius cause which Sir Charles made in his lifetime, with many public performances, broadcasts, and his recorded legacy of such works as *Koanga* and *A Mass of Life* which are lasting reminders of his tenure as conductor of the BBC Northern Orchestra, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He was a great man, and a dedicated musician.

Regrettably, however, we were not to be enlightened with anything about him or his lifetime in music, and instead Miss Groves rapidly related her life and work with various music publishers, and in particular with Schott & Co, of the London office of which she is a Director. It was interesting to hear of her special interest in encouraging and nurturing young composers; of the problems involved in the proliferation and promotion of new music; and of her dedication to, and close relationship with, established composers. After the coffee break, the meeting was entertained with a very long extract from the music of Michael Tippett, with whom she had had a long and rewarding association as both his publisher and a friend. It was a great pity that neither was the name"Delius"mentioned in her talk, nor was a note of his music heard all evening.

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PHILADELPHIA BRANCH

Glenside, Pennsylvania on 28 April 2006
Longwood Gardens, Pennsylvania on 11 June 2006

In its 30th anniversary year, the Philadelphia Branch presented two major concerts for a wider public. The first came on April 28th when pianist Clipper Erickson played an Anglo-American program in the "Concerts at Carmel Series" at Carmel Presbyterian Church in Glenside, Pennsylvania. The concert was in honour of Enos Shupp, who at age 90, recently retired as The Delius Society's Secretary. Bill Marsh presented Enos with an Honorary Life Membership Certificate during the intermission.

Clipper opened with Robert Threlfall's two transcriptions, *Nocturne* and *Plantation Dance* from the *Florida Suite,* and they contrasted nicely with *His Song* and *Juba Dance* from Nathaniel Dett's *In the Bottoms* which followed. Before the intermission came the huge *Second Sonata* by Cyril Scott, of which Clipper made the first recording for the Direct-to-Tape label. His performance of the very difficult piece dazzled the audience.

Longwood Gardens

After the intermission came Amy Cheney Beach's *Ballad*, Op. 6 and *Summer Evening*, Op. 16, No. 2 (also recorded by Mr. Erickson); *Deep Water (2001)* from a suite by local composer Daniel Barta; and a Tin Pan Alley selection including Fats Waller's *Numb Fumblin'*, James Johnson's *Carolina Shout*, and Gershwin's *The Man I Love* and *I Got Rhythm*. The concluding Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue* in the composer's own transcription (played from memory, as was most of the program) drew an instant standing ovation. This brought an encore: Chopin's *Nocturne in Db*, the only 'standard' work of the evening.

Clipper played on a beautiful Steinway concert grand hired for the concert by the Society. A fine reception followed the program.

The 2005-06 season concluded with a gala concert at Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA, the site of many Delius Society concerts in the past. The Ballroom event drew a huge crowd as always, most of whom stayed for the hour-and-a-half program. This year we had two of our brightest stars: Davyd Booth (violin and piano) and Michael Staira (piano).

The program – called "Anniversaries" celebrated Longwood's 100th, the Delius Society's 30th, and the 100th of the birth of Eric Fenby, and the programme was entirely British. There were piano pieces by Liza Lehmann, William Lloyd Webber (the rare *Three Spring Miniatures*) and two Billy Mayerl favorites. The violin and piano numbers included a rare arrangement of *Drink to me only with Thine Eyes* by one Gladys Ross (about whom we know nothing), Reginald King's *Song of Paradise*, and the first movement of Delius's *Sonata in B major*. Two violin and piano works also marked anniversaries: Hurlstone's (1876-1906) *Four English Sketches,* and Finzi's *Elegy,* played in honor of the 50th anniversary of the composer's death; Davyd Booth gave both the local premiere and made the world premiere recording of the latter piece in 1983. To gild the lily, Michael and Davyd joined at the 1929 Longwood Steinway concert grand for Heseltine's 4-hand arrangement of *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring,* and Quilter's *A Children's Overture* in the Anthony Bernard arrangement. These drew a standing ovation, and two encores for violin and piano followed: Felix Borowski's *Adoration* and Edwin H. Lemare's *Andantino (Moonlight and Roses)*, both of which have been recorded by these artists at Longwood but with organ accompaniment. Society members were then treated to a private inspection of the new organ museum, and enjoyed the new East Conservatory with its many fountains and water features, as well as all the magnificent gardens, conservatories, and sensational fountains.

Plans are already being made for a return to Longwood in 2009. In the meantime we are looking forward to the 30th anniversary dinner on November 10th at the Cosmopolitan Club in Philadelphia. An after-dinner concert will be given by pianist Alex Hassan on the Art Deco Steinway concert grand there, assisted by tenor Rob Petillo. Both are well known in the UK from their recordings on the Shell-wood label.

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WEST OF ENGLAND BRANCH

The Mill, Ash Priors on 6 May 2006

The Queen's Hall, London

A talk by Lewis Foreman

I'm glad I didn't miss this evening, hosted by Ron and Brenda Prentice. Had I done so I would never have known that Reginald Goss-Custard was not a creation of P.G. Wodehouse, but an accomplished organist, who recorded John Ireland's *Villanella* on the organ of the Queen's Hall in Langham Place, off Regent Street. And that's not all I learned during the course of this fascinating talk on the building – an institution, I should say – that could be described as the focus of British musical life during its forty-seven and a half years of life. It was completed in 1893 and destroyed by an incendiary bomb during the Blitz of 1941.

Lewis Foreman was Chief Librarian for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office ("Take me to your lieder") and is the author of the standard biography of Arnold Bax, as well as many of those illuminating notes you find in CD inserts once you've managed to extract them from those annoying little plastic tabs. Oh yes, and he's written 'musical obituaries' for the Independent. In short, a man who knows his stuff.

Lewis managed to recreate the Queen's Hall experience for us with a mixture of recordings and slides. We were shown pictures in grainy black-and-white of the building and persons associated with it, notably Henry Wood. The hall was done out with tasselled lights, palm trees and a special table for the Prince of Wales to put his hat and gloves on…oh, and there was that terrifyingly butch portrait of Ethel Smyth. Apparently the Queen's Hall does not exist on film, though Lewis says he has viewed many British films of the period in the hope of catching a glimpse as someone drove past it.

A famous feature of the Queen's Hall was of course the Promenade Concerts, founded by Robert Newman in 1895 – and a problem of sorts faced by the Proms in those early days was known as 'ladies-on-their-own'. Ladies-on-their-own, explained Lewis, was a euphemism for ladies whose profession had little to do with music and for whom the enjoyment of music was not the main reason for their attendance.

During the interval, I wandered into the garden with my cup of tea and a slice of Brenda's salivacious cake to engage in silent contemplation of Ron's refurbished waterwheel. Powered by the unlikely trickle of a small leat, this revolves with monolithic ease - an almost soundless testimony to Ron's

engineering skills, invoking in its smooth, unhurried motion thoughts of a tranquil and timeless nature… Hey, where's everybody gone? Quick! Back inside for the second half…

…which was devoted to the Queen's Hall during the 1930s. Toscanini, Beecham and Boult all conducted there during this period, while visiting conductors included Furtwängler (Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*) and Richard Strauss (*Don Quixote*). We were treated to extracts from these and many other performances – and learned that Alban Berg heard his last live performance of Wozzeck in a concert production by Adrian Boult for the BBC at the Hall in March 1935, a few months before his death.

Eventually we came to Delius. If he had not included some Delius (Lewis quipped) we would surely have lynched him; so he duly came up with two recently rediscovered EMI recordings made at the Queen's Hall - *Appalachia* in 1935 and the *Dance Rhapsody No. 1* in 1937. So we didn't need that rope and scaffold after all.

Finally, we heard an extract from the recorded reminiscences of one John Legge, doorkeeper at the Hall, followed by part of Felix Aprahamian's response to Lewis's talk on a previous occasion, in which he said that Lewis had"recreated his youth in music", for he had"practically lived in the Queen's Hall since 1929". Well, Lewis certainly recreated for *us* an important chunk of British musical history, bringing it all back to life with a mixture of sounds, pictures and delicious anecdotes.

Two more facts about the Queen's Hall: it seated 3000 and boasted a 3½-second reverberation time when empty (I'm not sure what that means but I'm assured it's a good thing to have).

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CONCERTS

TWO PIECES FOR SMALL ORCHESTRA

6th May 2006 at the United Reformed Church, King St, St Helens.
The St.Helens Sinfonietta, conducted by Alan Free.

St Helens, my home town, is hardly an artistic hotbed, overshadowed to east and west by Manchester and Liverpool. But Thomas Beecham, our greatest cultural export, would be happy to see an orchestra now well established there. Founded by Alan Free in 1997, the St. Helens Sinfonietta is a professional chamber orchestra bringing regular classical concerts to the town. The players are mainly either former members of major symphony orchestras in North West England or young professional players at the outset of their careers. They had previously performed only one Delius work, the *Two Aquarelles* in 1999, so it was good to hear them attempting the slightly more substantial (and better-known) *Two Pieces for Small Orchestra*. The local United Reformed Church, a pleasant modern building that makes a reasonable concert hall, was pleasingly full to hear a varied programme. Rossini's *Italian Girl in Algiers* overture was spoilt by patchy ensemble (which improved in later works, but never entirely disappeared), while local composer David Forshaw's *Planet Dances*, sounding like Malcolm Arnold's well-known national dance suites on a cosmological scale, brought a decent performance out of the orchestra, as did Rodrigo's ever-popular *Guitar Concerto* (the soloist, Scott Bradley, was thoroughly competent but not outstanding).

The Delius started the second half, and I was afraid ensemble errors might let the performance down, as in the Rossini. Thankfully it was not so bad, but hesitant entries surely had non-Delians wondering. The lack of balance was also a problem, the thin strings not providing the lush bed of sound in the thin acoustics of the hall that the wind arabesques (which were in turn played too matter-of-factly) needed. This is where the nature of the orchestra counted against them, the experience of some not quite compensating for the inexperience of others (it's not their fault, for I'm sure Delius is not a composer young instrumentalists are taught to play too early*). On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* flowed nicely, Alan Free avoiding the temptation to dawdle and emphasise harmony at the expense of melody. However, the start of *Summer Night on the River* was too fast, and the subsequent steadying of the tempo can't have helped the overall effect of the work on non-Delians,

together with the other problems already noted. The final work, Brahms's *St Anthony Chorale Variations*, was decently performed but lacked the wit and sparkle one would expect of a fully professional orchestra.

I rather fear that such orchestras as the Sinfonietta are and will continue to be cautious about playing Delius, given the extra amount of effort required for a good performance over and above what's needed for Brahms (I speak with similar experience from a choral society viewpoint) - when money is tight, and audience numbers important, do you take a challenging risk? Let's hope at least some, including this one again, do.

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AND SO TO BATH

Saturday 26 August 2006 at The Pump Room, Bath
Marie Lee Gustafsson and Jessica Chan (piano solos and duets)

After a long, hot summer, the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness seemed to be rapidly creeping up on us, as a group of nine West Country Delians met in Bath for what has become something of a regional tradition - another of the summer/autumn concerts arranged by the Bath Recital Artists' Trust. This (or any other time) is a particularly appropriate season to listen to Delius, whose music so often seems to be painted in autumnal tints. (Before making our way to the concert, past the Abbey, we noticed that further delights were on offer the same evening in the shape of an organ recital including works by Percy Grainger; even if the BBC can't find space in its summer showpiece for a note of either composer's music, the lamp is kept burning bright in the West of England!)

The evening was introduced by Tom Clarke, Artistic Director of the concert's sponsor (and a great supporter of the cause of Delius), and he invited Councillor Brian Webber to make a presentation of *A History of Bath — Image and Reality* to Lionel Carley on behalf of the Delius Trust, which has supported the concert series for some years - and then we got down to business.

Marie Lee Gustafsson is a recent graduate of the Royal College of Music, having received her early musical training in her native Sweden, and hers is clearly a name we shall hear more of in years to come. She began the recital with emotionally charged and at times powerful performances of Chopin and

Liszt, including the latter's *Isolda's Liebestod,* from the final scene of *Tristan und Isolde,* which Sir Malcolm Sargent once compared with *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* - perceptively observing that with Wagner we seem to be in the bedroom, while with Delius we are in the open air.

The centre-piece of the concert was a sequence of three Delius pieces, in which Marie was joined by Jessica Chan. Originally from Taiwan, Jessica came to the UK to study at the Purcell School for Specialist Young Musicians and is now continuing her postgraduate studies at the RCM. First came *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring,* which was, to be honest, a disappointment - played at a rattling pace and without, one felt, the sensitive phrasing the piece requires. It rather sounded, as one of our party opined, as if the Cuckoo were being pursued by a sparrowhawk! But much better was to come - a splendid performance of A *Song before Sunrise,* which is very difficult to bring off in Warlock's piano transcription, and was played expressively. Here the performers appeared to be truly at home with Delius, and there was much more light and shade, though I doubt whether many of the audience caught the significance of the 'cock-crow' which comes at the end of the piece, just as the sun peeps over the horizon. Finally another technically demanding piece, the *Dance Rhapsody No. 2.* By this time Marie and Jessica had really got into their stride, and played with obvious relish, to the evident satisfaction of the audience, in whom we could only hope some converts to Delius had been found.

After the interval, Jessica played *Three Sketches* by Frank Bridge, a musician who, like our beloved first President, has remained more associated with another composer's work (that of his pupil, Benjamin Britten) in the public's mind than in his own right. Jessica was awarded the first Frank Bridge Doctorate Studentship, and her affinity with the composer shone through her performance of this delightful work, which was acclaimed by the most enthusiastic applause of the evening. Finally, to round-off the concert, we heard Busoni's arrangement of the familiar Bach *Chaconne in D minor* from *Violin Partita No. 2* (BWV 1004), and two pieces by Moritz Moszkowski, who was a close contemporary of Delius - though, if these examples were typical of his work, much more in the mainstream of the European musical tradition. The *Valse* in particular was redolent of the Viennese scene, and one could almost hear the swingboats creaking in the Prater Gardens!

Our rich entertainment was supplemented by a double encore, two of Brahms's *Hungarian Dances,* through which Marie and Jessica romped with verve and vivacity, and they were rewarded with an enthusiastic ovation and a further presentation by Councillor Webber.

The concert programme announced a further recital in the series, also a four-hander, with performances of *Brigg Fair* and *North Country Sketches.* This is the annual celebration of Tom Clarke's birthday (at which a large cake will be shared by the audience). Long may the tradition continue. Happy Birthday, Tom!

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RETROSPECTIVE BOOK REVIEW

FREDERICK DELIUS

Thomas Beecham (Hutchinson & Co. 1959)

Reading Beecham's biography of Delius again set me wondering what kind of biography it is. We are so familiar with the various kinds – intimate details, formal and respectful tomes, unofficial biographies which reveal all the dirty washing, as well as hagiographies where the subject can do no wrong. Beecham's biography is, however, something approaching an official one; and although he wrote it to fulfil a promise to the composer's widow, he is certainly not uncritical of his subject. He tells us in his Preface how he spoke to Jelka about what she wanted, and he concludes that he must not burden Delius with "a load of wholly undesirable virtues". . I think he wants to give us a portrait of his friend – if not quite with 'warts and all' - then certainly with his weaknesses and foibles deftly rendered. Sir Thomas is a major figure in the Delius story, and he was in no way standing back and attempting to be objective. On the other hand, he is a Victorian, discreet in ways which we are not always today, particularly with regard to personal morality.

It is perhaps not really a surprise that this book appeared when it did. By the time of its publication Beecham had been the main – but not the only - musical advocate of Delius for fifty years. Beecham gives us his personal approach to the job of writing a biography of an eminent artist. He has a quite interesting preoccupation with material matters. He tells us a good deal about how much Julius Delius spent on his son's education and support; we even learn details of the provisions of Julius Delius's Will. This makes clear to us that Julius was not wholly negative about his son's artistic ambitions, and that he

was in fact concerned as to how his son would have financial security if he made music his profession; furthermore, it suggests that Julius did not think that music as a profession was beneath the dignity of a gentleman.

Beecham succeeds in projecting the narrative of the Delius story in a compelling way – even if scholarship has moved on since the book's first appearance, and we now have more details of various characters and events in the composer's life. What does Beecham's narrative seek to achieve? I think he wants this book to be a memorial to his friend. Sir Thomas was not renowned for his prose style, which is sometimes blustering and a little ponderous, but nevertheless the result is successful, if not spectacular, from the literary point of view

It is instructive to contrast Beecham's biography with the recent definitive study of Beecham and Delius, *Whilst Spring and Summer Sang*, by Lyndon Jenkins. Jenkins shows us to how much trouble Beecham went in order to thoroughly prepare himself and to promote the music of his friend. We now have Beecham's biography of Delius, and a study of Beecham's artistic devotion to Delius's music. What we now need is a full-scale biography of Beecham, which chronicles all the various aspects of his remarkable career, rather like Arthur Jacobs's biography of Sir Henry Wood.

But this is a historic document because of the friendship of the conductor and the composer. We cannot call it a complete biography – and for that we must turn to the magisterial two-volume *Delius: A Life in Letters* by Lionel Carley. Carley has thoroughly taken stock of his subject, stepped back, and given us a cultural background to his subject, as well as full details of the life; his will surely remain the definitive work for a very long time to come.

For those who have not read Beecham's biography, I would say read it and see Delius from Beecham's point of view – that of the musician, friend and supporter. I think those who read this book will agree that Oscar Wilde's dictum that 'each great man has his disciples and it is Judas who writes his biography' is wholly inappropriate here!

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MUSIC REVIEW

THE YOUNG PIANIST'S DELIUS: 10 PIECES FROM THE MUSIC OF FREDERICK DELIUS

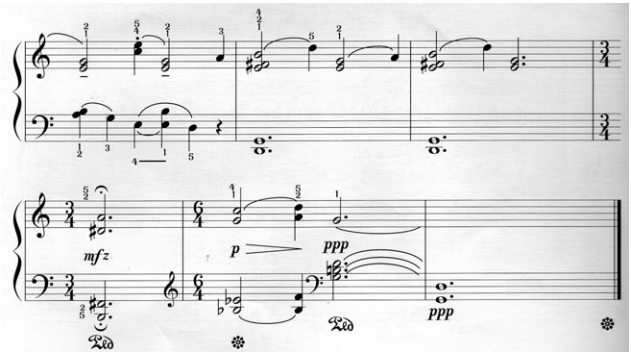
Arrangements by Ronald Stevenson.

(Bardic Edition, 6 Fairfax Crescent, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom, HP20 2ES – 0870-950-3493)

Readers may be familiar with Ronald Stevenson's admirable *The Young Pianist's Grainger* which, according to the internet, is still available from Schotts priced at £10.50. This Delius Volume was published in 1992, but has only now been submitted for review.

Ronald Stevenson says in his Editorial Note "This album is intended for children about 12 years of age and over, though younger ones will be able to play some of the easiest pieces". I have to say that, not having been a precocious child, some of the pieces would have taxed me considerably at the age of twelve, particularly *The Cuckoo* and the Intermezzo from *Brigg Fair*. I would also have found *Late Swallows* and the themes from the *Song of the High Hills* difficult to appreciate at that age or even somewhat later. I should have preferred the theme from Appalachia or one of the tunes from the *Florida Suite*.

That said, however, the arrangements very skilfully simplify Delius's subtle harmonies without destroying the essence of the pieces, which is certainly not easily accomplished. There is, however, one point upon which I felt that more guidance could have been given - and that is the elusive ebb and flow which is so necessary in interpreting Delius. For example, the last six bars of The Cuckoo have no indications of any changes of tempo except for the pause three bars from the end. If played as written (as it were with a metronome) this would make a nonsense of the piece. I think a child would need more guidance here:



Notwithstanding these perhaps carping criticisms, the venture is thoroughly commendable, and I hope that teachers may use this volume to introduce their students to Delius.

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LETTERS

From Paul Chennell:

I was interested to see Robert Threlfall's review of *New World Symphonies* by Jack Sullivan. I agree that this is an interesting read, and Sullivan is positive about Delius's art. Nevertheless, as I mentioned in my review of this same book in DSJ 126 (Autumn 1999) p.56, the book is frustrating because although the author has interesting things to say, particularly with regard to the influence of Whitman on Delius, it is clear from the book that the author is unfamiliar with some of Delius's music and with certain other writings on the composer. More careful copy editing would avoid minor errors such as misnaming Delius's father 'Julian' rather than 'Julius'. As this is a book for the general reader interested in music, it is important to take care with giving the reader the facts. I wouldn't recommend that anyone should raid their piggybank to buy this book new but if you see it on a second hand book stall, it is worth a read.

From Alan Rowlands:

I have fairly recently had a letter from someone in Australia, Douglas Smith, with whom I have not been in touch for well over 50 years. We were at Jesus College, Oxford, together in the late '40s and shared a great love of Delius's music. He had been spellbound by hearing *First Cuckoo* for the first time in his early teens - and so had I. He had made a piano arrangement of the molto adagio variation in the *First Dance Rhapsody* - and so had I. He was a violinist and we played the *Third Violin Sonata* in public and the *Violin Concerto* in private.

The reasons Douglas wrote to me at this point were mainly two. Firstly, he had just found out through the internet about my CD of Delius and Ireland piano music, and so has now joined the Society and obtained it. Secondly,

he had just discovered that there was a book of reminiscences of Thomas Armstrong that I had contributed to, and he was also able to obtain that. Armstrong (TA) had been a good friend to both of us at Oxford and we found that we both had touching letters from him written in his 90s.

TA was of course a great Delius lover himself. At different times he gave me two precious mementos - a beautiful sepia photograph of Delius, Jelka and Percy Grainger, and later Grainger's two-piano transcription of the *First Dance Rhapsody* with Delius's name written on it in ink (Jelka's handwriting, I think). Both these things had come to him from Balfour Gardiner.

I remember that when TA chose his Desert Island Discs, and Sue Lawley asked him which one record he would take to the island, he said *Brigg Fair*. When she asked him why, he said he couldn't explain, but it just had to be that. He was the most lovely man and has left the most affectionate memories for both Douglas and me.

What a bond this love of Delius is between people!

From Andrew Sellon:

This concerns the history of a member of my family, a great aunt of mine. I did not know her, but as a small boy can recall visiting her spouse, a dear old C of E canon, who in addition to long white hair had a canary that used to stand on his head, (the canon's head, that is).

Not to put too fine a point on it, the family story is that she, Mary Winifred Dundas, (her father also being a canon) had a youthful fling with Delius which lasted 'for two summers'. This would have been before her marriage in 1898. If I remember rightly, Delius was renowned for the number of affairs he had, but I am not suggesting that (unlike the one I believe he had during his sojourn in Florida) this one had any lasting effect on him. Unfortunately all those family members who might have known of this are long since dead.

Possibly this is not the sort of information that a Society set up to commemorate one of the greatest English composers wishes to bandy about – but I can assure that this interest in the history of my family will not lead towards publication. Should the name Mary Winifred Dundas be known to any Member of the Society in any connection with Frederick Delius, I would be most grateful if they would let me know.

Mr Sellon, who is not a Member of the Society, can be contacted at andrew@sellon.vispa.com

From Herr Heinz Wallisch:

Sunday, July 16 2006, I published an article about Frederick Delius, on our weblog in The Netherlands - *All Art is Quite Useless*, about the Fin de Siècle in the Arts. It is practically the same article (just here and there another word and a few extra sentences) with the same title as my contribution to the magazine of the oldest symphony orchestra in The Netherlands (Groningen, 1862), in 1985. The weblog is part of the publications of the Louis Couperus Society: http://www.louiscouperus.nl/weblog/?p=136#more-136

Sincerely yours,
Heinz Wallisch
Music and literary critic

[The article is in Dutch – not a language with which the Editor is well acquainted, apart from "Skrümbljoepdjibiestyj" which is allegedly the military command to mount a horse – so he cannot either recommend or dis-recommend it. To see it, go to the web site mentioned above, and click "Juli 2006" in the dates section of the drop-down menu on the left-hand side. The article is on the second page. Herr Wallisch is not a Member, but he can be contacted at Jupiterstraat 11, NL - 9742 ES Groningen, The Netherlands; email: HeinzWallisch@home.nl*. Ed.]*

From: Sandy Sharp

Sea Drift — continued!

After your splendid and wide ranging edition on Sea Drift it might be thought that there is nothing left to be said. Or is there? Well yes — it's that bird!

Some years ago someone pointed out to me that it was a *she* bird and not a *sea* bird. Sea birds don't nest in 'briers' nor can they be seen 'flitting from brier to brier'. This she/sea confusion is repeated by several contributors. Paul Guinery enthuses about Frederick's 'magical' opening with 'sunlit waves gently lapping the briars (sic) in which two sea birds have built their nest'. Richard Hickox talks of 'the sea-bird crouched on her nest' [That I am afraid was an editing slip – he did say "she-bird" to me. Ed]. When I checked an earlier source, I found that the muddle is no new thing. For example Christopher Palmer, in *Delius, Portrait of a Cosmopolitan,* refers to 'the bereaved sea-bird'.

Clearly there is something in the air or the water that causes this apparent word blindness. Freudian? Or Jungian?

Whitman, as your extract indicated, is helpful. Kelsey Thornton quoted:

> "... in Alabahma
> I have seen the she-bird, the *mocking bird,* sat on her nest in the briers hatching her brood. [My italics]
>
> I have seen the he-bird also,
> I have paused to hear him near at hand inflating his throat and joyfully singing"

At this stage it should be declared that this writer can scarcely distinguish a robin from a sparrow - perhaps some ornithological Delian can set the record straight?

MISCELLANY

'Delius in the Garden at Grez'

This picture by Jelka, reproduced on the front cover, belongs to The Harrison Sisters' Trust, and was for many years on loan to The Royal College of Music. In his book *H. Balfour Gardiner*, Stephen Lloyd relates how, after Jelka's death, Gardiner sent some of her pictures which had hung in the house at Grez for auction in Paris; he bought them himself, and then gave them away to a number of the Deliuses' friends – among them the violinist May Harrison and Frederic Austin. The one given to Frederic Austin was the Norwegian scene reproduced on the front cover of DSJ 139 – and it therefore seems highly likely that *Delius in the Garden at Grez* was the one that May received.

Ed.

The Jacksonville Mural

On a visit to Jacksonville in Florida to visit Jeff Driggers and the late Bill Early in February, I went to see the brand new Jacksonville Public Library which houses, amongst its special collections, the comprehensive archive of Delius-related material which Jeff has built up over many years. Prominent in the new library are two giant murals depicting prominent figures with Jacksonville connections, painted by Kathryn Freeman from Maryland. A young Delius is shown with a group of musicians performing from a score of the *Florida Suite*. Below him is a group of jazz musicians and below them singers are shown performing James Weldon Johnson's *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. The murals are reproduced in the back cover of this Journal.

Jeff Driggers, who still puts in many hours at the Library each week, claims no credit for the inclusion of Delius in the mural, but I think we can be absolutely certain that it is as a result of his decades of devotion that this new image has been created.

Helen Faulkner

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Ed.

Delius & Fenby – A Photographic Journey

There are still a limited number of copies of this wonderful Society-produced (2004) 76-page soft-back book, compiled by Lyndon Jenkins and Paul Guinery as a pictorial record of Eric Fenby's six years as amenuensis to Delius at Grez-sur-Loing between 1928 and 1934. It is a unique publication made up almost entirely of photographs, many of which have never been published. If you would like to buy an extra copy, whilst stocks last, for yourself, a friend or to donate to your local school or library, now is your chance. They are £6.00 (UK Pounds) or $12.00 (US Dollars) each, including packing & postage. Please apply to the Treasurer, Stewart Winstanley, at Windmill Ridge, 82, Highgate Road, Walsall WS1 3JA, UK. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Delius Society' – and please do not fold them.

Delius's Piano Concerto – recordings

Since Tony Boden's review of the 1904 (3-movement) version of the Piano Concerto appeared in DSJ 139, two new-for-old recordings of the 1907 (single movement) revision have been issued. The first is the 1946 recording by Betty Humby-Beecham, Sir Thomas and The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra – and it is in Volume 5 of Naxos's *Frederick Delius – Orchestral Works* (8.111006). The other works on the disc are *Eventyr* (1951), *Summer Night on the River, Summer Evening* and *A Song before Sunrise* (1949) and the *Violin Concerto* with Jean Pougnet (1949). The second re-issue is taken from a live performance by Clifford Curzon and the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sir John Pritchard

in the Royal Albert Hall on 3 September 1981 (BBC Legends, BBCL 4181-2). It is intended to include a review of them in DSJ 141.

Delian Offers and Wants

Somewhat to the Editor's surprise, every Member of the Society appears to possess exactly what books, music and recordings they need – but the facility to 'advertise' in this space remains available indefinitely.

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Delius and the Tambourine

Reg Prentice received an email saying "I would like to sell this instrument that belonged to Delius."Following a request for further details, the reply was "The only clue i [sic] have, [sic] is that i [sic] saw one before on TV and there was given information aboot [sic] it. There was also stated that Ruth Waterman, or her sister should have the clues. What I know further is that Rosen painted it and he used his thunmb from the rightarm [sic] in the hole." It seems possible that the intending seller came from Bradford. These are four of the five pictures of the tambourine which formed part of the first message:

Would any Member care to write a short article on the subject of *Delius and the Tambourine*?

EVENTS 2006–2007

Saturday 8 October 2005 [late entry – notified by Peter Ratcliffe]
Das Konzerthaus, Vienna
Michelle Breedt (mezzo-soprano) & Wolfram Rieger (piano)
English songs by (inter alia) Arne, Britten, Coates, Gibbs, Gurney, Harrison, Head, Parry, Quilter, Rubbra, Walton, Vaughan Williams and Delius (*Twilight Fancies*)

8 April 2006 [late entry]
Emmanuel Church, Didsbury, Manchester,
Chordiale Quartet (Leader, Ann Dixon, the Society's Secretary)
String Quartet & Schubert

Sunday 11 June 2006 at 3 [late entry]
PHILADELPHIA BRANCH
Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA 19348
Michael Stairs (piano) & Davyd Booth (violin & piano)
Programme included works by Delius, Lloyd Webber & Quilter

Saturday 26 August 2006 at 8 [late entry]
The Pump Rooms, Bath
The Bath Artists' Recital Trust
Jessica Chan and Marie Lee Gustafsson (Pianos)
Programme included '*The Cuckoo*', *A Song before Sunrise* and *Dance Rhapsody No 2*

Sunday 24 September 2006 at 8 [late entry]
The Pump Room, Bath
The Bath Artists' Recital Trust
Simon Callaghan & Hiroaki Takenouchi (Pianos)
Programme includes *Brigg Fair & North Country Sketches*

Wednesday 27 September at 7.15 [late entry]
LONDON BRANCH
New Cavendish Club, 44 Great Cumberland Place, London W1
(close to Marble Arch tube station (0207-723-0391)
Music & History: The Great War – a talk by Ian Walker.

Sunday 15 October 2006 at 7.30
Epsom Playhouse (01372-742555)
The 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)
The Cambridge Orchestra, cond Darrell Davison
Programme includes *Dance Rhapsody No 2*

Saturday 21 October 2006 at 7.30
Holy Trinity Church, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 (0208-881-0920)
CC21 (The Choir of the 21st Century) conducted by Howard Williams
Programme includes 6 Delius part songs, including *On Craig Ddu, To be sung of a Summer Night on the River, The Splendour falls on Castle Walls,* etc

Sunday 22 October 2006 at 2.30
All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay, nr. Abingdon
The English Music Festival
(0207-241-8953 or www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk)
CC21 – programme as for 21 October

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

Tuesday 31 October 2006 at 7.15
LONDON BRANCH
The Steinway Hall,
Piano recital by Paul Guinery
Music by Gardiner, Bax, Moeran, O'Neill, Quilter, Warlock, Ireland, Austin, Grainger & Scott

Thursday 7 December at 7.15
LONDON BRANCH
New Cavendish Club
The Delian Influence - a talk by Roger Buckley

Monday 9 December 2006 at 7.30
The Wigmore Hall, Wigmore Street, London W1 (0207-935-2141)
The Nash Ensemble
Programme includes *Violin Sonata No 2* (Marianne Thorsen)

Fridays 12 January – 16 February 2007 at 11
The Village Hall, Teffont, nr. Salisbury (Contact Ruth Hill on
0117-954-5032 or ruth.hill@bris.ac.uk)
Bristol University Music School
Six lectures by Christopher Redwood: *From Brigg Fair to Egdon Heath*
(An exploration of the music of Delius and Holst)

Saturday 13 January 2006 at 7.30
St Andrew's Church, Linton Road, Oxford (01865-311212)
The St Giles Orchestra conducted by Geoffrey Bushell
Programme includes *Life's Dance*

Saturday 20 January 2007 at 7.30
The Wigmore Hall
The Nash Ensemble
Cello Sonata (Paul Watkins & Ian Brown), plus Bridge & Finzi

Saturday 17 February 2007 at 6.00
The Wigmore Hall,
The Nash Ensemble
La Calinda and *Air & Dance* (arr. flute & piano), plus Bax, Britten & Alwyn
(NB: There are other interesting concerts of English music in this series)

Tuesday 20 February at 7.15
LONDON BRANCH
New Cavendish Club

Thursday 29 March at 7.15
LONDON BRANCH
New Cavendish Club

Wednesday 11 – Saturday 14 April 2006 at 7.30, with one matinée
Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, Islington, London EC1
(0870-737-7737)
Pegasus Opera conducted by Paul McGrath
Koanga

Tuesday 24 April at 7.15
LONDON BRANCH
New Cavendish Club
Saturday 28 April 2007 at 7.30 (Doors open 7, unreserved seats)
Ecclesbourne School, Wirksworth Road, Duffield, Derby (01332-841503/840509)
Piano recital by Bobby Chan
Programme includes *Three Preludes & Toccata*, Prokofiev, Schubert, Chopin & Lizst

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