The Delius Society Journal

Spring 2007, Number 141

The Delius Society
(Registered Charity No. 298662)

President
Dr Lionel Carley, BA PhD

Vice Presidents
Sir Andrew Davis, CBE
Mark Elder, CBE
Vernon Handley, CBE, MA, FRCM
Richard Hickox, CBE, FRCO
Lyndon Jenkins
Richard Kitching
Tasmin Little, FGSM ARCM (Hons) Hon D.Litt DipGSM
David Lloyd-Jones, BA Hon DMus FGSM
Julian Lloyd Webber, FRCM
Sir Charles Mackerras, CH, AC, CBE
Robert Threlfall

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

ISSN-0306-0373

Chairman
Roger J. Buckley

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

Secretary
Ann Dixon
38 Canadian Avenue,
Catford, London SE6 3AS
Tel: 0208 690 9136
Email: anncallison@yahoo.co.uk

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

Front cover: *The Red Shirt, Homosassa, Florida (1904)*
Winslow Homer (USA 1836–1910)
(National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, USA)

Back cover: Still from *The Yearling*
(See page 84)

The Editor has tried in good faith to contact the holders of the copyright in all material used in this Journal (other than holders of it for material which has been specifically provided by agreement with the Editor), and to obtain their permission to reproduce it. Sometimes, however, he has received no reply. Any breaches of copyright are unintentional and regretted.

Delius, by Achille Ouvré (c.1907-1910)
(Courtesy of The Delius Trust)

CONTENTS

Chairman's Notes 6
Editorial 7

OBITUARY 8

THE SOCIETY'S VISIT TO GREZ *by the Chairman* 9

AN AMERICAN NEAR PARIS *by Bonnie Brauer* 12

THE DELIUS PRIZE 2006 *by the Editor* 18

APPALACHIA:
- Delius on Florida & Negro music 23
- Delius and America *by John White* 26
- Philip Heseltine on Appalachia 32
- Two American Painters 34
- A Musical Analysis *by Paul Guinery* 36
- Four Conductors *by Martin Lee-Browne* 52
- A New British Work –"Delius's Appalachia at Queen's Hall" 67
- Lunch with Sir Charles Mackerras 69
- Neville Cardus on Appalachia 74
- Constant Lambert on Negro Music & Delius 76
- The Recordings *by Robert Matthew-Walker* 78
- A Postscript: Film Music – by Delius? *by Ian Lace* 84

LIFE AT GREZ: A MARRIAGE AMONG THE ARTISTS *by Lionel Carley...* 85

THE DELIUSES AND RODIN (Royal Academy Exhibition)
by Paul Chennell 100

ON FIRST HEARING…… *by Tony Watts* 102

DELIUS SOCIETY MEETINGS
London Branch, 27 September 2006: Ian Walker 104
Midlands Branch, 19 November 2006: Stephen Lloyd 107
London Branch, 7 December 2006: Roger Buckley 109

LETTERS – from *Tony Summers, Peter Ratcliffe, Richard Lewis, David Bridgeman-Sutton & Richard Packer* 114

MISCELLANY 119

CONCERTS
More Piano Duets at Bath 121
Paul Guinery's London piano recital 123
Lebenstanz in Oxford 125
Cello Sonata at The Wigmore Hall 126

THE ENGLISH MUSIC FESTIVAL at Dorchester-on-Thames 127

GUNTHER SCHULLER AND DELIUS *by Don Gillespie* 130

THE FEDERATION OF RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETIES LTD
by Anthony Lindsey 131

BOOK REVIEWS
Edvard Grieg in England *by Lionel Carley (Paul Chennell)* 133
Bax: A Composer and his Times *by Lewis Foreman (Stephen Lloyd)* 135
Roses & Rain: A Biography of James Elroy Flecker *by Heather Walker (Stewart Winstanley)* 138

CD REVIEWS
Delius: *Violin Sonatas; Piano Concerto & Orchestral Arrangements* 138

EVENTS 2006-2007 146

On the street wall at 94 Rue Wilson, Grez

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

These notes derive from three websites. First that of Sadler's Wells:

"This year Pegasus Opera Company celebrates the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in Great Britain by presenting a brand new production of Delius's rarely seen masterpiece *Koanga*. Bringing together professional soloists, dancers and an 86-strong orchestra and chorus, *Koanga* tells an old tale which deals with the very modern issues of racial and cultural conflict, inter-racial love and betrayal."

"Masterpiece" or not, *Koanga* is the first Afro-American opera, and a work of which the composer was extremely proud. A group of 35 from the Society will attend the matinée performance on 14 April.

From the Pegasus Opera Company's website:

"Pegasus Opera is the leading multiracial medium sized touring Opera Company in the UK, and was founded in 1992 by its current Artistic Director, Lloyd Newton. The Company creates opportunities for young professional singers from all backgrounds to develop and perform in high quality and innovative opera productions, thus preparing them for national and international houses. Pegasus feels that it is only through the nurturing of these diverse talents that a new form of cultural harmony can be achieved. This harmony encourages talent equally without regard to cultural heritage or ethnic background."

At the time of writing (early March), the Cheltenham Music Festival website actually carries no information as to the content of this year's programme, which runs for a full fortnight from 6 – 21 July. We must be grateful that we have heard from other sources that the final concert, on Saturday 21 July, will include a performance of *Appalachia*. On the strength of this information your Committee has decided to base this year's AGM Weekend (21 – 22 July) on Cheltenham. Further information will be included in a separate circulation to all members.

I look forward to seeing as many members as possible, either at Sadler's Wells next month or in Cheltenham in July – or both!

Roger Buckley

EDITORIAL

It is not often that the Journal can metaphorically throw a bouquet to the BBC, but Auntie did the cause of Delius proud at the beginning of December, by including a major work in the CD Masters programme every morning for a week – *Appalachia* (Sir Charles Mackerras's recording), a sizeable portion of *A Mass of Life* (Groves), *Sea Drift* (Hickox & Terfel), *Songs of Sunset* (Beecham) and *The Song of the High Hills* (Fenby), plus *On Craig Dhu* (from the marvellous recording of all the part songs by the Elysian Singers under Matthew Greenhall). All of those are, of course, very familiar to most Delians, but with luck a number of others whose life-style enables (and inclines) them to listen to the radio at 9 o'clock in the morning may well have got interested or intrigued – it's just a pity that the generations whom we hope may get to love FD's music would almost certainly have been at their desks with noses to their computers.

FD has done very well, too, on the re-issued recordings front recently - both Betty Humby-Beecham and Clifford Curzon playing the *Piano Concerto;* not only Albert Sammons's performances of all three *Sonatas*, but Menhuin's and Fenby's too; and Fenby conducting all his arrangements of FD's orchestral music. Reviews follow later in this Journal.

The Delian birds are still with us. By the time that Members have got to the end of this issue, they may well wonder whether, with four references to them, this publication ought not to change its name to something to do with ornithology.

One minor curiosity about this issue's 'selected work' is its title. As the map in the *Appalachia* section below shows, Florida – which was without doubt the inspiration for *Appalachia* – is not part of what is now known as Appalachia, the area of, and surrounding, the Appalachian Mountains. As Delius knew it was originally the Indian word for the whole of North America – but although he only went to Florida and Virginia, did he use it in that sense? Can any Member explain?

I have been in a dilemna over the probable political incorrectness of retaining various traditional descriptions of Afro-Americans in some of the quoted articles in the *Appalachia* section in which I have used there, in particular where one of them is actually part of the title which Delius gave to the work. My conclusion is that there is nothing improper about continuing to use them in their specific 'historical' context, and I hope that no readers will feel disposed to object. If, however, anyone is offended, I offer my apologies here.

In his review of the revised edition of Lewis Foreman's Bax: *A Composer and his Times,* Stephen Lloyd pays a generous tribute to the author for his quite outstanding contribution to the growth of interest in British music, and on behalf of the whole Society I would like to endorse Stephen's words most warmly.

The main subject for the Autumn issue will be "Delius in Denmark". I hope that any Member who might think of contributing an article on it (however short) will get in touch with me.

Martin Lee-Browne

The copy date for the Autumn issue of the Journal (DSJ 142) is Friday 10 August, and for the Summer Newsletter it is 22 June.

OBITUARY

JOHN KENTISH

A distant Delian link was severed last October with the death, at the age of 96, of the English tenor John Kentish, who, in a long career beginning in the 1930s, sang at Covent Garden, Sadler's Wells and Glyndebourne. In 1946 Sir Thomas Beecham, who was out of touch with musical affairs in England after conducting in the USA between 1940-45, returned to audition a number of relatively unknown British singers for his 1946 Delius Festival in October and November that year. Baritones Gordon Clinton and Redvers Llewellyn were among those he chose, while in the 36-year old Kentish he found the lyric tenor voice he needed for songs such as *A Late Lark*, *The Nightingale has a Lyre of Gold*, *Irmelin Rose*, *To Daffodils* and *La Lune blanche*. Delius's songs were well represented in the Festival and Beecham shared their conducting with his assistant, Richard Austin. The five that Kentish sang, however, he directed himself: he had not conducted *A Late Lark* since its first performance at his previous Delius Festival in 1929, when Heddle Nash had sung it. Delius lovers will always regret that the opportunity was never taken to record either Nash or Kentish in (especially) *A Late Lark* under Beecham's baton.

Lyndon Jenkins

THE SOCIETY'S VISIT TO GREZ-SUR-LOING
15 – 17 September 2006

Roger Buckley

Fifteen years on, and thanks to the continuing generosity and friendship of Jean Merle d'Aubigné, the Society paid another visit to Grez-sur-Loing and the former home of Delius. For some, this was a welcome return to a place of great significance. For others it was their first visit, eagerly anticipated.

In September 1991 the arrangements were made by Jonathan and Catherine Maddox. Another young and enthusiastic couple, James Baker and Joanna O'Connor, were our very capable organisers this time. The weekend got off to a rather dismal start thanks to the protracted misery of the Parisian ring road on a Friday evening. However, after the fifty of us had converged on the Novotel Ury near Fontainebleau, and over pre-dinner drinks, the Society's native bonhomie began to resurface and soon all was well.

Next morning dawned grey and overcast, but at the very moment that the coach arrived at the house in Rue Wilson and the party entered through the carriage doors the clouds parted and the sun poured into the garden that had so often been Delius's inspiration. Jean was on hand to welcome his guests, who immediately began to explore. Calling the party together by the terrace, the Chairman made some introductory remarks, recalling that Fritz Delius's first visit to this house had been in 1898 at the invitation of Jelka Rosen and her friend Ida Gerhardi; Jelka had bought the house, with her mother's help, the previous year. It was later to become the Deliuses' permanent home until his death in 1934, thanks to the generosity of their friend Balfour Gardiner, from whom Jean's father bought the house in 1936. The year 2006

Jean Merle d'Aubigné
(Photo: Colin Lee)

therefore marked the 70th anniversary of the occupation of this house by the Merle d'Aubigné family. Another anniversary that we celebrated in 2006 was the centenary of the birth of Eric Fenby, who had first come to the house as an apprehensive 22-year-old in 1928.

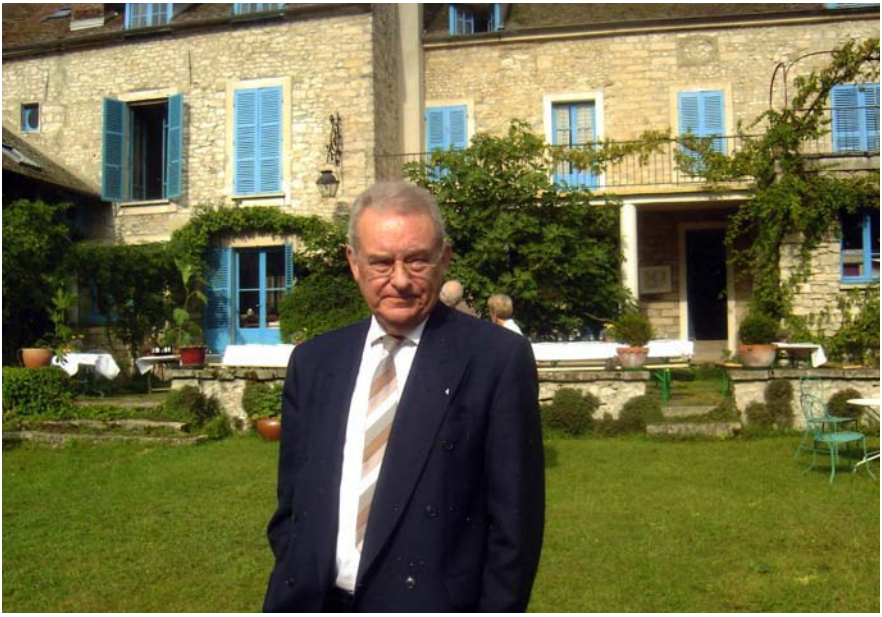
Presentations to Jean followed: first an orchestral score of *In a Summer Garden*, inspired by the very surroundings in which we stood, plus a good modern recording of the work. We also gave him a framed certificate from the Society, celebrating the occasion of our visit and acknowledging the generous hospitality of the Merle d'Aubigné family (and especially his mother Bibka and Jean himself) on numerous occasions over many years. This was illustrated by Jelka's 1912 portrait of Delius, painted at the house.

Some of the party then went on a tour of the village, led by Elizabeth Ferry, which took in the house of Corinne Courmes-Colomb, formerly occupied by the painter Emma Lowstadt Chadwick (1855-1932), and the Hôtel Chevillon, now a Swedish foundation, with the atelier of Carl Larsson at its heart. When they returned, the others, who had been strolling in the garden, departed on a similar tour. Afterwards a delicious lunch was served on the terrace, at which the conversation flowed as freely as the plentiful wine.

(Photo: Jean Merle d'Aubigné)

Following coffee most of the party departed for a trip on a nearby narrow gauge railway, the 'Tacot des Lacs', after which we returned to the house for soft drinks and some appreciative remarks by our President, Lionel Carley, who presented Jean with a copy of his new book on Edvard Grieg. Stephen Lloyd made his own presentation of a copy of his biography of Balfour Gardiner. The party finally returned to the hotel and, following a long and eventful day, relaxed briefly before dinner.

Later that evening we were joined by Jean and, between courses, Lionel rose to thank him for a truly splendid day and to propose toasts to him, and to our hard-working organisers, James and Joanna, whom he presented with a bottle of champagne. The rest of the evening passed in what we now recognise as true Delius Society style, with plenty of good cheer, reminiscence and humour. The party left for home the next morning, each member or guest taking away his or her favourite memories of a very special event in the history of The Delius Society.



The President in thoughtful mood at Grez
(Photo: Colin Lee)

THE VISIT TO GREZ

AN AMERICAN NEAR PARIS

Bonnie Brauer

[Bonnie Brauer, an American Member living in Ironton, Missouri, kept an engaging diary of her trip – and, with her agreement, this is a literal transcription of parts of it.]

Sept. 12,'06 3:30 pm
I kissed Dave goodbye & a lovely uniformed man on a smoke break told me Step One (where to go first in the St L Airport) so kindly….he even came in to see that I could follow his directions, & no one looked in my bag@! check in. Flight to Chi running 30 mns. late.

A young man from Chi who sat betw. me & a woman on our flight to Chi heard the announcement & shouted,"God Damn That City !"(meaning Chi). This was startling & I instantly thot he was odd & started to close myself off from him. He sat w/arms & legs crossed. Suddenly I thot"Oh! It"s MY anger he's showing me!"I began to own him (love him) as myself. The sensation was a huge flood of warm love for him/us. Gradually I began to speak w/him & make eye contact. The rest of our trip was quite pleasant, w/the gal to his left joining in the visit before we landed...two hours late!

I still had 20 mns. to get on London flight. I waited w/a Czech woman who spoke no English. She waved her gate pass at me, and I showed her that we were both in Group 3. Then I pointed to myself and said"American"and she pointed to herself & said Czech! So I said,"Dvorak!"and she said"Smetana!" and we were off into Czeck music. A beautiful, tall, dark woman of sweet countenance.

Good 5 hr sleep on overnite flight w/ok food & nice seatmate - Anne. She was going biking in Portugal. Got thru passport stamp & customs & found Stewart's taxi. Stewart Winstanley is the Sec. of the Delius Society & we've emailed for several years as I awaited this trip. The Society paid for my taxi to London: 50 pds!

The New Cavendish Club & Hotel is at 44 Great Cumberland Place in an old and rather posh section of London. My room is adorable - clean, bright, and 8x10 @ most. Stewart called w/suggestions, etc. My tea in their cup w/ their water never tasted better! A perfect dinner here @ the N.C. - lamb & vegetables in a formal dining room w/about 12 tables - small - real white linen

- lemon sliced very thin in the glass water pitcher. I ate alone w/no sound or other person there & loved it…. A first! Then I took a walk around the block. Wolf whistles from chaps who couldn't see my age in the dark – Bath in the deep tub & a lovely t-storm a/all my windows open – high ceilings w/intricate moldings, high windows. No a/c here & no wash rags – they expect guests to bring their own. No screens. Does this mean no bugs? If so, what to their birds eat, I wonder? The NC (New Cavendish) has a "lift" which holds a maximum of 4 people & altho my room (#4) was on the first floor - I had to take the "lift" to get to it. (Here the ground floor is where you start, and 1 is the next storey) When you press "one" the iron gate slams & up you go. If there's a lift to take you up, is there a put to take you down? I suppose that would mean our elevators could also be delevators.

FRANCE:
Friday – The first person I met for our bus trip was Lionel Carley & his sister Eileen. He's written many Delius books. As we loaded on the bus – Tony & Kay sat behind me & Tony pointed out the back of Buckingham Palace, Hyde Park (HUGE), Victoria (train) Station – very imposing and ornate; on thru Middlesex, near Chelsea, across the Thames (an unimpressive river @ that point, any way). All ages walk w/back packs or ride bikes ignoring traffic. Even old blokes w/canes had back packs & walked.

It costs 8 pds. a day to drive a car in & out of London – like a toll charge, to help keep fewer cars on the roads.

In Old Kent, there are tiny open produce markets in front of the little groceries. On a sign: There are more butterflies per sq kilometer in the Rain Forest than in all of North America.

A few horses & open space finally – as we left the "burbs" & approached the channel. Saw "The Weald of Kent" – lovely rolling hills w/trees filling the edges of fields: hops & apple trees here. On the backs of trucks: Our "Am I driving safely?" becomes "Is this vehicle well driven? Dial ____"

BOULOGNE:
High bridge across the river - a big river - big city, too.

After being up since midnight, I finally slept thru Paris rain & traffic as bad or worse than London's. We'll never get to Fontainbleu before dinner @ 7:30 – more graffitti than along the Chicago rails coming in – more like Oklahoma City than Paris. No one on board had ever seen this very plain side – we got a glimpse of the Eiffle Tower on the way back - not another sign of the "Beautiful City" to be seen.

From Jelka Rosen, Delius wife and a student of Auguste Rodin, the sculptor and her teacher: "Auguste, we are to be married on 23 September. I dread somewhat the ceremony @ the town hall (they'd lived together openly for 5 yrs living right next door to the cathedral!), but one must no doubt learn to be ridiculous gracefully.

GREZ SUR LOING:
(pronounced Grehy soo Loah - last letters not being pronounced in French unless accented). On a heavily overcast day, we walked down Rue Wilson to the large cobalt blue front doors of the Delius' home. Jean Merle d' Aubigné, our host & present owner of the home, greeted us individually - all 50 plus, w/a sweet & humble carriage about his nature.

As soon as I stepped in the doors onto a large stone patio, I saw, to my left, an oil painting of blue/purple irises and a nude. French doors there opened onto one part of the house, and Fr doors on the right opened onto the living room, dining room, and kitchen, w/stairs going up to Fred's bedroom and studio. The open patio leads to the courtyard where Jelka's glorious wildflower garden was.

Delius's Garden at Grez
(photo: Colin Lee)

My immediate sense, upon stepping into the garden, was the deepest & most complete sense of quiet that I have ever had. It is present all over the grounds of about 1 or 2 acres. This showed me how Fred could write such rich music, full of peace and yet founded in high emotion, too. Below the main garden, with high, ancient stone walls on either side of the entire property, is the sheep pen & chicken house – with lots of both and very friendly. The descent to the river Loing is gentle, and I passed a large pond set down into a hollow on the way, surrounded by fruit trees, all bearing, & a vegetable garden by the coop & pen, w/large pumpkins growing on a fence, an odd (to us) yet common sight here in France. Past the pond – plane trees of about l50 yrs of age, surrounding a very large open area. Their girth was about 6-8' wide w/branches occuring after 20 feet or so. An ancient park bench faces the river & the old jetty had a boat beside.

While the others roade the train, Stewart Winstanley took two of us rowing on the Loing. The Loing River: like the Black but not clear - 6 or 8 feet deep & slower than the Black. On either side – beautifully kept old homes & manses, spaciously apart, w/masses of flowers everywhere. Small children played on the other side & waved & shouted to us as we passed, and practiced their English w/Stewart, who shouted back. No other people were on the Loing, but Stewart & Lesley Buckley (Roger's wife), Roger and me. We rowed down to "The End of The World" as it's called here (and was so called by Fred, Percy Grainger, Sir Tommy Beecham, etc.). A cateract/waterfall on the right turned us round for our return trip. Back under the beautiful stone bridge (dating from the 700's, destroyed during WWII, restored in the '70's) and over to the little French mother w/ a boy & barking dog, to disembark and return to Fred's home. My only regret of my trip was not remembering to sing the "Aquarelles" on the river w/Lesley (Stewart claims he can't sing!).

As the day went on, the dark overcast lightened, & by 4pm a beautiful light spilled all over the village. Next door, at the ancient & huge stone cathedral, a wedding was taking place. Our large group was treated to a home made meal of fabulous French dishes w/fresh garden vegetables, fish, beef, salads, potatoes, rice dishes, breads, pickles, & all on beautiful china w/silverware. We sat at long benches just outside the house w/wine &/or champagne, none of which I had, of course. Our host ate w/us & was presented w/many gifts. I sat down at the middle section of the first long table, and was joined by Roger and Lesley Buckley. Seated to my left came Stewart Winstanley (how I have always loved his very English name), and to my right, the young and beautiful Joanna O Connor and her partner, James. She organized this entire venture and can't be more than 25.

When the train group returned to the house & gathered to say goodbye, the sun came out in full glory & the church bells rang over & over: the nuptial rites were completed: the young couple @ the cathedral were wed, & we were officially wed to the Deliuses in their garden. We lingered. As we left, the wedding party in very formal dress w/many bright & large hats passed by on the street, w/the bride & groom off in a Rolls. Guy's girlfriend, Barbara, & I stopped in the church as we left. It smelled like rose petals, which were strewn everywhere. Evening mass was being celebrated, w/a capella singing by the congregation.

We also walked (earlier) to an artists colony. I was impressed by the total quiet, simplicity of decorations, & lack of excess everywhere. I heard no voice, tv, car, or plane in the village, except for an occasional Renault creeping by in the narrow streets.

As an aside: our bus driver managed to get lost in this wee place and we all inhaled as one when he came within an inch of various cars parked on the narrow (and cobbled) roadways. So funny - we pictured angry Frenchmen shouting w/our very working class driver – gesticulating madly…..but all was well.

As we boarded our bus to return to our hotel in Fontainbleu, the sun's rays magnified the neat homes nearby – so beautiful – like the gold at the end of the rainbow.

Our hotel was a very pleasant modern place w/good food. Our group – all of us high as kites from our time in Grez, sat up talking & laughing in the bar (they drank booze; I drank in them) till 12 or so.

Up at 7. Visited w/Colin and his dear wife Sandra – also Dene & Bill (retirees who live in Wales & asked us over), Julian "Jules" (lovely round bright man w/bushy black eyebrows & a fringe of wild white hair & arresting, large brown eyes – quite Dickensonian), & Stephen Lloyd, who gave me a signed copy of his book on Balfour Gardiner – Delius' best friend, and the person who bought his home from Jelka's mother. Fred & Jelka lived there, rent free, courtesty of this man, for the rest of their lives. Anyway, Stephen gave me a copy of the book after he heard I was going to buy one.

I haven't mentioned Eric Fenby, Fred's amanuensis of the last six years of Fred's life. Eric, a young man of about 20, gave those years to Fred & Jelka so that much more of Fred's music could be written down, since by this time, Fred was blind & paralyzed (from syphillis). So – note by note – they worked miracles together, and the four of them: Fred, Jelka, Balfour, and Eric – created this incredible joint venture in Love.

I have been treated like a queen. It has been a peak life experience. Thanks, Dave, for cheering me on to do this wonderful thing. It has given me joy & a

sense of great independence. You are my dearest friend of all: husband, father, chief critter (as you have called yourself), and coolie, too!

On the plane, after eating a fairly good vegetarian lunch, I began to hear Fred's choral section of "The Song of the High Hills" in my mind, where his music has been alot on this trip, since I heard none live or recorded while in the UK/Fr. I asked myself, "What if I have to live, in spirit, w/o Fred's music?" And "I can't be immortal w/o Fred's music." These thots caused intense grief to rise up in me, so I had to turn to the window in order not to disturb my seat mates. When I get to the other side of this, I'll write it in here.

I cannot be separated from What I Am, & I am part of The Way. We are one, like the banks of a river: the river flowing between us being the music of awareness, from which I spring w/ all that is.

ADDENDUM:
My new friend Jo - a lady of late 70's at least made a dear statement of truth: "We Delians are born w/a microchip in our heads which is activated when we hear Fred for the first time, & then we are forever in the vortex of his music."

Our host, Jean Merle, did invite us to come again, and soon. He was quite interested in the likelyhood of my being related to Phillip Oyler, whom he had met as a child, along w/Sir Thomas Beecham, Delius' champion. I told him I'd let him know what I learn about P. Oyler.

As I prepared to take the lift down for my last taxi ride, the Latvian watress @ the NC dining room gave me a hug, just as Frank (who, on the trip I'd dubbed to myself the Quintessential Irish Gent) came off the lift, & we hugged. My cup of tea, hugs. We saluted each other w/the dearest language salutation of them all: "Safe Journey".

THE DELIUS PRIZE

The Royal Academy of Music, 17 November 2006

We were extremely fortunate to have Sir Charles Mackerras, one of The Society's Vice Presidents (most generously giving up most of the evening of his 81st birthday), as the Adjudicator – and unlike last year, when there was a variety of competitors (two sopranos, a string quartet, and a violinist), this time they were all strings – three violinists and a viola player.

Sir Charles Mackerras with the Prizewinners Liv-Marie Fletcher,
Edgar Bailey & Timothy End

The first performer in any competition is always at something of a disadvantage in the sense that they have to start the ball rolling. Liv-Marie Fletcher did indeed have some slight intonation problems at the beginning of the *Second Sonata*, but that was soon behind her - and her sweet, singing tone, with passion and muscularity where needed, and obvious musicality, resulted in a very satisfying performance. Three of the competitors played a second piece that was clearly intended to demonstrate their skills in 'show-

off fireworks', and Liv-Marie's was Elgar's early *Salut d'Amour*; she played it rather more slowly than is often heard, and with a considerable amount of portamento – which, Sir Charles commented, was very much 'the thing' in Delius's and Elgar's time. Curiously, she had very slight intonation difficulties in that too, but not in any way sufficient to spoil the performance. At the beginning of the week, her intended pianist had become ill, but Timothy End – already playing with another competitor - gallantly stepped into the breach, learnt the works in three days, and the partnership proved to be a very impressive one; he is a 'big' but very sensitive player, thoroughly at home on the keyboard, and his career prospects would seem to be excellent.

With Delius's approval, Lionel Tertis 'adapted and edited' both the *Second* and *Third Sonatas* for the viola in 1932, and Delius was thrilled with the result; having heard the former as recorded by Columbia, he wrote to Tertis "It is marvellously beautiful, and I am overjoyed…..and I never thought the viola could sound so lovely…..The few bars you repeat an octave lower only enhance the piece". Adam Newman played just the *Third Sonata*, without a second piece, and he produced a particularly deep and warm sound at the lower end of the viola's register. He clearly understands the Delian idiom – the (almost Irish-sounding) tune of the middle movement was played with real affection, and the winding down to the end of the work was beautifully judged. This was in fact his second appearance at the Prize, as he is the viola player of the Cappa Quartet, who won it in 2005. His accompanist, Ciara Moroney, had as good a CV as all the other performers, and was very competent, but somehow lacked a sense of real involvement with the music.

The third competitor, Edgar Bailey, played the first two movements of the *B major Sonata (Op.post.).* Only 19, he has a formidable technique, and a sweet, although perhaps not very robust, tone. He gave the feeling that he 'knew where he was going', with the whole span of the movements clearly in his mind, although in some inexplicable way, and unlike the others, he did not convince this reviewer that he really liked Delius. To be fair to him, however, that Sonata is not really very Delian! The second item in his 20-minute 'slot' was Kreisler's *Tambourin Chinois*, played from memory and with such great elan that in many ways it almost eclipsed his Delius. This was Timothy End's second appearance of the evening, and if anything his playing was even better the second time round; although he could easily have done so, he never dominated the texture – and on both occasions he helped to create a sense of true partnership.

Finally, as pianist for Charlotte Ansbergs (a very experienced student), Susie Summers raised the lid onto the long stick (whereas the others had only

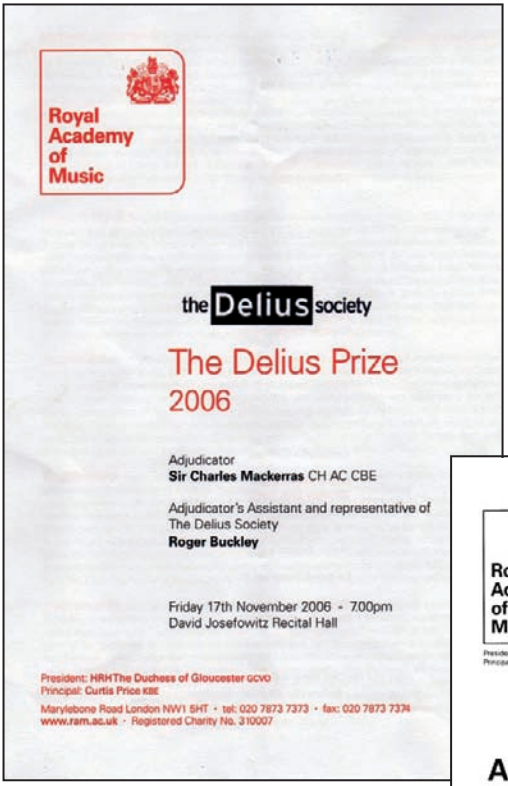
used the short one) – so that their performance was the most immediate one of the evening. Charlotte also chose the *Second Sonata* – and warm, singing tone just poured out of her 1741 Testore violin (lent to her by the Academy), while Susie proved to be a very sympathetic accompanist.

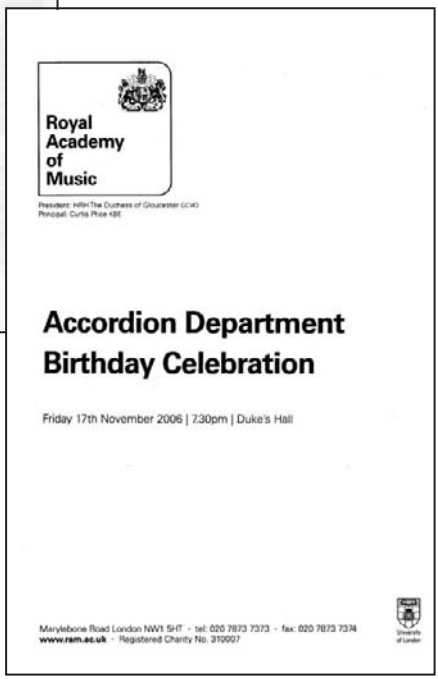
Sir Charles Mackerras with all the Competitors

It turned out to be far from easy to chose between the four – all were extremely good, and (as one would expect) they each brought a subtly different approach to the music. Talking before the result was announced, the members of the audience were by no means unanimous as to who the prize-winner and the runner-up would be – and, indeed, in his summing-up Sir Charles said what a difficult task he had faced, and how hard he had found it to make the choice. At least, however, (he said) it was only between performances of three of the four *Violin Sonatas* – rather than, as is often the case in competitions, a trombone player, a mezzo-soprano, a quartet and a percussionist! In the event, he awarded the £500 First Prize to Liv-Marie Fletcher and Timothy End, and the £250 Second Prize (an innovation this year) to Edgar Bailey and (the lucky) Timothy End.

Altogether it was a very satisfactory and enjoyable evening - and grateful thanks are due to the Royal Academy for hosting it again.

Martin Lee-Browne





Meanwhile, in another part of the wood...

JULIUS BUTHS GEWIDMET.

APPALACHIA

VARIATIONEN ÜBER EIN ALTES SKLAVENLIED M. SCHLUSSCHOR FÜR GROSSES ORCHESTER

MUSIK VON

FREDERICK DELIUS

KLAVIERAUSZUG VON OTTO SINGER

PREIS MK. 5.– NETTO

COPYRIGHT 1907 BY HARMONIE, BERLIN.
RIGHT OF PERFORMANCE 1906 BY HARMONIE, BERLIN.

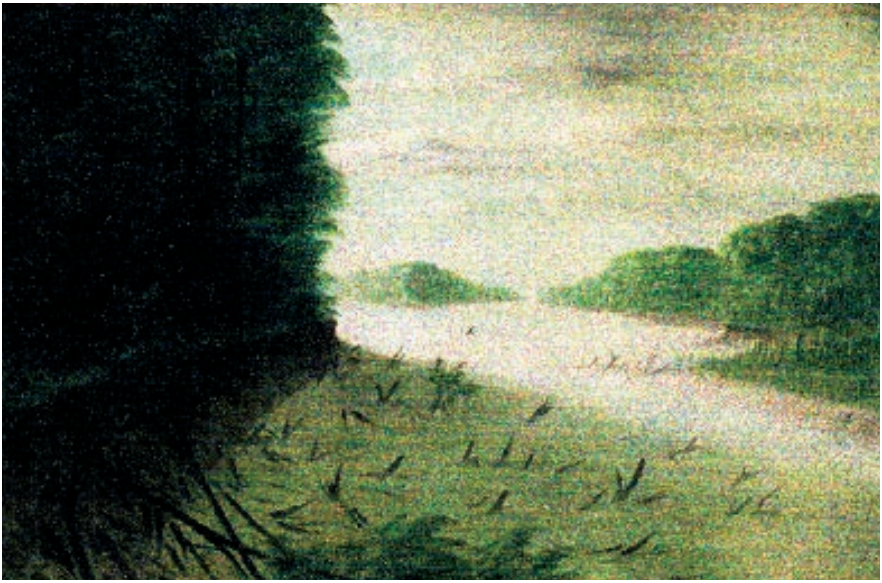
FÜR RUSSLAND EIGENTUM VON P. NELDNER, RIGA.
FÜR DIE ÜBRIGEN STAATEN
HARMONIE
VERLAGSGESELLSCHAFT FÜR LITERATUR UND KUNST.
BERLIN, W.

LITH. ANST. C. G. RÖDER, G.M.B.H., LEIPZIG.

DELIUS ON FLORIDA AND NEGRO MUSIC

From Delius's foreword to the German translation of James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, 1927/8*:

> It was as quite a young man that I left a manufacturing town in the north of England to spend a year and a half on an orange plantation in Florida, where I lived in the greatest solitude, surrounded almost only by Negroes.
>
> I would sit out on my verandah in the darkness of evening, and would hear from afar the singing of the Negroes. It seemed to harmonize wonderfully with the glorious natural surroundings. Before me stretched the immense breadth of the St Johns river…..



Scene from the Lower Mississippi
George Catlin (USA 1796 - 1872)
(National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, USA)

* This two-page forward was discovered by Jeff Driggers on the internet, and there is an extremely interesting article on it by him in DSJ 126 (Autumn 1999).

and around me the primæval forest with its indescribably strange stirrings of buzzing insects, of frogs and nocturnal birds.

Although I had grown up with classical music, a whole new world now opened up to me. I felt this Negro music to be something utterly new. It was natural and at the same time deeply felt. For me the Negroes were far more musical than any other people I had until then encountered. Their music emerged as unaffected and instinctive, the expression of the soul of a people that had undergone much suffering. It was almost always sorrowful, almost always religious, and yet always imbued with personal experience and human warmth.

Florida's natural scenery and its Negro music gave the strongest impulse to my musical creativity…..I believe that if America is one day to give to the world a great composer, he will have coloured blood in his veins.

The original Harmonie full and vocal scores carried the following note (not reprinted in the later editions), presumably also written by Delius:

Appalachia is the old Indian name for North America. The composition mirrors the moods of tropical nature in the great swamps bordering on the Mississippi River, which is so intimately associated with the life of the old negro slave population. Longing melancholy, an intense love of Nature, childlike humour and an innate delight in singing and dancing are still the most characteristic qualities of this race.

IN CASE YOUR DELIAN GEOGRAPHY IS A LITTLE RUSTY ....
The St Johns River is the blue underneath Jacksonville, and the Mississippi flows into the sea at New Orleans. The dark grey, brown and cream area is the southern end of the Appalachian Mountains (Appalachia), which stretch right up to New England.

DELIUS AND AMERICA

John White

"The entire music of Delius takes place in swamps."

This remark, attributed to Sir Thomas Beecham, is neither true, not is it meant to be taken seriously, but it would be possible to say that Delius's compositional career originated in a swamp, if Solana Grove* could be so described. Delius was 22 when, in 1884, he travelled with a young business companion, Charles Douglas, to this remote spot on the St Johns river in Florida with the ostensible purpose of growing citrus fruit. It is doubtful whether Julius, Delius's father, thought this a sensible project, and it is a measure of his desperation that he was prepared to finance it. He may have hoped that his son would work a little harder for himself than he would for his father's business: he had shown some ability in commerce. He had also shown a far greater talent for enjoying himself at his father's expense, a not unusual situation.

The two young men sailed to New York, again by sea to Fernandina in Georgia, and then went by train to Jacksonville. In the company of the vendor, they went by boat down the St Johns river to the Grove, and Delius must have been delighted with what he found there. Whether Charles Douglas was quite as enthusiastic is not known, but the relationship was brought to a sudden end when Douglas caught malarial fever and had to be removed to hospital. He may not have been sorry to go. Delius had no interest in the running of the estate, and entrusted this entirely to the foreman, Albert Anderson, and to the plantation workers. Julius would have been furious, but unsurprised, had he known. As for Delius himself: he had achieved the dual aim of putting as much distance as possible between himself and his irate parent, and of perhaps gaining a small income without doing any work himself. As Anderson's sister-in-law, Julia Sanks, remembered:

> Maybe he don't care what he eat if he can be at his piano or his fiddle. Long as he makes his music, he just doesn't mind what else…..He weren't much for hard work, Mr Delius, and that is a fact. Just that music. I ain't heard nothing like it since.[1]

[1] Lionel Carley ed: Delius: A Life in Letters Vol 1, 1862-1908. Scolar Press in association with the Delius Trust (1983)

In that last sentence, Julia summed-up the whole phenomenon of Delius's music in seven words. And, to echo Julia's words, Delius had not heard anything like the singing of the plantation workers before, particularly that of Albert Anderson and the children, who would sing to him, so that he could try to reproduce what he heard on his piano or his violin. What must have enchanted him particularly was the spontaneity of the music-making and its improvisatory quality as well as its beauty of sound. As an inveterate improviser himself, it could represent the essence of what music was meant to be: the free and instinctive expression of deep emotion without artifice or academic obstruction. What he heard would have been made up of hymns and popular songs as well as work-songs and choruses. The whole subject is considered in the greatest detail in Derek Healey's masterly work of scholarship, *The Influence of African-American music on the works of Frederick Delius*[2].

Delius had determined, even before he left Bradford, that he would devote his life to music, but he had no idea how this was to be achieved. He knew he was not proficient enough to make a living as a performer and further, this would mean subjecting himself to other people's ideas; hardly a Delian trait. What he possessed was a musical ear of extreme sensitivity and a desire, through experimentation, to develop an original and daring harmonic palette. It was this ability that must have impressed Thomas Ward when he met Delius in Jacksonville. Ward, a New York organist and accomplished pianist, was in Florida for his health and he would have realised at once what Delius needed was a course of serious disciplined study. Lessons in counterpoint and fugue followed and Delius always remembered how Ward made him work. It must have been these sessions that Julia described in her reminiscences, and from then onward Delius never lost the capacity for hard and continuous work. It was not, however, all work. Besides his extensive knowledge of the classics, Ward had a large repertoire of popular music, and he would doubtless join Delius at the keyboard in the shack at Solana Grove and play duets until the early hours of the morning. The influences on Delius of this kind of music should not be overlooked. On his trips to Jacksonville, he must have heard street musicians of many different races and colours, besides the music drifting from the windows and doorways of cafés, restaurants and bordellos.

It was in these circumstances and with these stimuli that Delius began to compose, and a piano piece *Zum Carnival* was published in Jacksonville. It is neither better, nor worse, than many similar pieces current at the time, and Delius was to introduce popular elements into some of his later compositions, especially those inspired by his Florida experiences. Meanwhile, Ward had

[2] The Delius Society, Philadelphia Branch Inc. supported by the Delius Trust 2003).

taken up a permanent post in Jacksonville in September 1884. Delius then left the plantation during the following summer: he had lived there for about fifteen months.

Delius stayed in Jacksonville for a short while, and then travelled north to Danville in Virginia where, after answering a newspaper advertisment, he became music tutor to the daughters of John Frederick Rueckert, a grandson of the German poet. He also taught at Roanoke Female College and, as might be imagined, was a success, both socially and professionally. Although making a little money, he was really only marking time, and in the spring of 1886 he left Danville for New York, where he stayed with a friend on Long Island (significantly, the 'Paumanok' of *Sea Drift*). Julius, at last, gave permission for an eighteen months' course at Leipzig Conservatorium on the understanding that Fritz (as he had originally been christened) would return to the United States and follow a professional career. Delius sailed for Liverpool in June, and after a brief visit to his home was in Leipzig in August. His American adventure had lasted a little over two years.

Although he always maintained that his tuition in Leipzig had been useless, there is nothing to suggest that it was unsympathetic or incompetent, and his attitude was a bad habit he probably acquired from Grieg, who frequently blamed the establishment for his own compositional problems. Delius had begun to compose in earnest, and a great deal of what he wrote over the next fifteen years would derive its inspiration from his Florida experiences. At the same time, however, he was writing music that expressed his love of Scandanavia, and particularly Norway. The mountainous, bare and forbidding Norwegian landscape is at an opposite extreme from the lush, tropical vegetation of Florida where the highest point reaches a vertiginous 345 feet! Both locations have this in common, however: they provide the solitude necessary for the contemplation of nature, and Delius always found inspiration in immense, echoing distances.

The duality of his musical *oeuvre* is illustrated by the title of his earliest song, written, according to the manuscript date (1885), whilst he was still in America. It is a setting of a poem by Bjørnson: *Over the Mountains High*, a subject that would continue to inspire Delius in many subsequent compositions. However, it was America that preoccupied him most, firstly with a tone poem *Hiawatha* (the surviving full score has a number of pages missing) and most importantly with the *Florida* suite, both dating from his Leipzig days. Initially dated 1887, the suite was considerably revised in 1889 and marks the first appearance of a Delian 'swamp' - in the second movement, *By the River.* The first performance of the suite was attended by Grieg, and it was Grieg who was able to persuade

Julius that his son should not be sent back to America, and should continue to receive his allowance for the following year. Delius then moved to Paris to stay with his uncle Theodore, and there began work on his first opera, *Irmelin* (1890-92). The location of this opera has been described as 'northern' by Sir Thomas Beecham, but the river music in the lengthy introduction to Act II suggests a much warmer climate – and here, indeed, we have another 'swamp'. Delius then has the best of both worlds by following this with a mountain climb in a thunderstorm! Specifically American, however, is the short piece entitled *La Quadroone (Rhapsodie Floridienne)* which forms the second movement of the *Petite Suite d'Orchestre* of 1889-90. But it is his second opera, *The Magic Fountain* (1894-5), that shows Delius's complete absorption in the natural sights and sounds of his plantation on the St Johns river, though not with the Afro-American singing: that had to wait until his next opera *Koanga*. As was to be expected, elements of the *Florida* suite appear in *The Magic Fountain*, notably at the beginning and where the Plantation Dance becomes an Indian War Dance in Act II - and the swamp duly appears halfway through this Act and remains with us until the end of the opera.

It is also evident that Delius felt that he had much to express in purely instrumental terms, and the *American Rhapsody* (1896) was the result. Lasting only a little over nine minutes, it is in embryo what was eventually to become *Appalachia* (1902), and one wonders whether Thomas Ward was in Delius's mind when he wrote it. Many of the motives of the later work appear at the beginning of the *American Rhapsody*, followed by a short dance section with more than a hint of *Yankee Doodle* in the busy figuration, and then the theme and two variations based on the *Appalachia* tune. The second of the variations introduces *Dixie*, and this in turn is combined with *Yankee Doodle* to provide a very noisy climax to the piece. Delius's methods of composition, and particularly of orchestration, frequently suggest painting, and not necessarily impressionism either. But this section of the *American Rhapsody* is like collage, with one tune pasted over another in a way likely to disorientate the listener; Delius uses the effect with far greater mastery in the opening of the orchestral nocturne *Paris* (1899). It is a relief when the music quietens and the *Rhapsody* gradually fades into silence. Although anticipating some of the passages in *Appalachia*, this piece, with its quotation of minstrel tunes, is far removed from the lives and destinies of the Afro-American slaves as expressed in the masterpiece of 1902.

Why Delius should return to America in early 1897 is still unclear. If, as Percy Grainger maintained, he had had a black mistress and she had borne him a child, it had taken ten years for his conscience to prompt him into

Negroes leaving Home
(Harper's Weekly, New York, 4/9/1864)

searching for her and her offspring. Alternatively, was it because the estate had fallen into disuse? Julius had bought the plantation and may well have demanded that his recalcitrant son should take some interest in the matter. We shall probably never know the real cause, but certainly the circumstances of the trip characterise it as a kind of sentimental journey in which Delius was able to re-visit old haunts in Danville and Jacksonville, as well as Solana Grove. He had taken with him his friend Halfdan Jebe; and the Princesse de Cystria, reputedly Delius's mistress in Paris, invited herself as the third member of the party. One can imagine Jelka's feelings: she detested both these people. However, they were not long away and by the end of May they were back in Paris.

Most significant of all Delius's early American compositions is the opera *Koanga* (1895-7), in which, for the first time, we can gain an impression of the singing of the plantation workers when he lived at Solana Grove. The first two acts abound with choruses, of which one may be an authentic slave song, and the rest noted on the spot or invented. George Washington Cable (1844-1925) had inserted the story of Koanga, or 'Bras-Coupé' into his novel *The Grandissimes*, and located the action in Louisiana and in the area of the

Mississippi delta, but there is no evidence that Delius ever went there. He had absorbed all the local colour he needed in Florida. *La Calinda*, from *Florida* is incorporated into the wedding festivities of Act II of *Koanga*, and the Everglades provided the setting for the swamp that occupies almost the whole of Act III.

Five years passed before Delius embarked on *Appalachia*, which was to be the summation of all that he had attempted to express arising from his Florida experiences. Those had coloured not only the compositions given American titles or situated in American locations, but also many works, or passages in works, with non-specific forms such as 'sonata' or 'suite'. One example of this is the *Piano Concerto* (1897 – subsequently re-written with the finale removed), where the main tune in the slow movement could easily have found its way into *Koanga.*

Undoubtedly, Delius's greatest American work is *Sea Drift* (1903), and perhaps his stay with his friend on Long Island remained in his memory whilst writing it. But the piece has little to do with Florida except, perhaps, in the unaccompanied choral section beginning with the words "O rising stars….". Gone are the luxuriance and the heat, and the writing has become stark and concentrated. It is *Appalachia* that is his ultimate tribute to Albert and Julia Anderson, the children and the workers on the plantation, and above all to Thomas Ward. In his music room at Grez, and looking down the garden to the river, is it unsurprising that his mind would return to landscapes and people that he could never forget.

© John White 2007

* Later, of course, Solano Grove

Other recommended reading:

Don C Gillespie: *The Search for Thomas F Ward, Teacher of Frederick Delius* (University Press of Florida, 1996).

Philip Jones: Delius's *American Rhapsody* (DSJ Spring 1987 No 93, pp 7-10 – reprinted from *The Musical Times*, December 1986).

APPALACHIA

PHILIP HESELTINE ON APPALACHIA

(From *The Musical Times*, March 1915)

Appalachia….. [is] fairly familiar in this country. [It is] the outcome of Delius's sojourn in Florida, and takes the form of a set of variations upon an old nigger folk-song, which, curiously enough, bears a marked resemblance to the theme of the quartet in the last act of *Rigoletto.* It was sung to the composer by one of the negroes on his orange plantation; there were only two of them, but both appear to have been remarkably gifted. The one in question possessed, in addition to his extensive repertoire of folk-songs, the gift of second sight, developed to a very high pitch, while the other could accomplish the astounding feat of whistling in thirds!

Appalachia is the first example of the peculiar style of musical landscape painting that is so entirely Delius's own. It is a little difficult to say precisely what that quality is, in his tone-painting, that enables him to suggest with such extraordinary vividness the feeling and the atmosphere of the landscape he is portraying, together with the emotions aroused by contemplation of the landscape. His methods make interesting comparison with the modern emotional landscape *painting* - in the literal sense of the word, for in both cases the results aimed at are broadly the same, though they are approached by different paths. Thus the painter has to reproduce upon the canvas a semblance of the external features of the landscape in such a way that those who regard it sympathetically will instinctively feel the emotion and atmosphere of which those external features are but symbols. The musician, on the other hand, has to do without the graphic definiteness which gives the painter a basis to start upon; his music must suggest at once the inner and the outer aspects of the picture. The extreme difficulty of achieving this will be at once apparent. Composers of nearly every period have attempted it, but few have met with any success. Either their music has been too personal and subjective to justify any one title being affixed to it rather than any other, or else, as Debussy has so often done, they provide a tone-picture which is astonishingly vivid and suggestive, but emotionally barren. Delius has a searching eye which penetrates into the very soul of things, and which nothing, however subtle or however deep, can elude. Perhaps the explanation of his strange magic is to be found in a kind of animism; for there is nothing his nature-studies suggest

so much as the fusion of the soul of things contemplated with perceptive and reflective human soul.

It is worthy of note that *Appalachia* was not written until many years after the composer had ceased to reside in Florida. The value of a long period of reminiscence, with all the inscrutable sub-conscious processes of mind it involves, cannot be too strongly insisted upon when one is dealing with the influence of external things upon creative work.

St. Johns river today

TWO AMERICAN PAINTERS

WINSLOW HOMER & GEORGE CATLIN

"The sun will not rise or set without my notice, and thanks." (Winslow Home, 1895)

Winslow Homer

The landscapes and seascapes by the American painter Winslow Homer (1836-1910) match Delius's music in many ways. His style was bold, with clean outlines and dramatic contrasts. One does not immediately think of Delius's music as being like that, but what about the march variation (11) in *Appalachia*, bursting out with a startling side drum crescendo after the *ppp* of the third initial entry of the chorus (see Paul Guinery's description on page 48); the radiance of "O past! Oh happy life" after the heartbreaking "…and I singing uselessly…" at the end of *Sea Drift*; or the stillness of the horn calls at the beginning of Part 2 of *A Mass of Life*, shattered by the great roar of "Herauf, herauf"? There is a cleanness of line to almost all Delius's music.

The front cover pictures of this and the previous issue of the Journal – *Red Shirt* and *Maine Cliffs* – both seem very apt, and illustrate Homer's interest in the relationship of Man and Nature. There are people, albeit often solitary ones, in many of his landscapes and seascapes, (and occasionally birds in the latter), but, whilst they are integral aspects of the pictures, and to a certain extent humanise them, they are insignificant, subservient to the majesty of the sea and the timelessness of the rocks.

His style was independent of the artistic conventions of the time – even

French Impressionism – and in particular his paintings of water have a fluidity, freshness and spontaneity which is quite unique. Very often his pictures are 'close-ups' – which in a curious way makes them seem authentically American – in the same way as American wine can be 'in your face' and instantly recognisable!

George Catlin (1796-1872) started life as a lawyer, but soon decided that a career as a painter would be far more fulfilling. Self-taught, he began as a portraitist, but he developed a strong interest in the American Indians, and in the 1820s decided that they would be his primary subject-matter. He travelled and painted extensively, particularly up the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, was the first artist to record the Plains Indians in their own territories, and built up an "Indian Gallery" of some 500 pictures which he exhibited all over America and in Europe. He was a simple, direct painter, and there are few subtleties in his work; indeed, his pictures of the world of the Indians are almost always in a bold, colourful, and often almost primitive, style.

George Catlin
(William Fisk (1849) – Courtesy of NGA Washington)

The National Gallery of Art in Washington has large collections of Homer's and Catlin's paintings, and it is well worth visiting its websites http://www.nga.gov/feature/homer/homer27.htm and http://www.gov/kids/catlin/catlin3.htm.

ML-B

APPALACHIA

A MUSICAL ANALYSIS

Paul Guinery

The authoritative current edition of the full score is the revised one (1989) published by Boosey & Hawkes as volume 9a of the Complete Works. This was based on their 1951 engraving, revised and edited by Beecham. It's also available in the B&H "Masterworks" series in a volume entitled "Delius: American Choral Works" and which includes Sea Drift. Appalachia is a "big" score in all senses and so for the musical examples which follow, with one exception, I've used the piano reduction made by Otto Singer for the vocal score, also published by B&H in a corrected edition (2001), this being more convenient for my purpose. Rehearsal letters tally between the full and vocal scores and, as before in these analyses, the shorthand reference "C+12" means the twelfth bar after letter C, counting C itself as bar 1.

Appalachia: Variations on an old Slave Song with final chorus is the full description on the front of the score and, as befits this panoramic view of the New World, Delius sets himself up with an extremely large orchestra. Let's examine what he calls for: three flutes, all of which double on piccolos; three oboes; a cor anglais; four clarinets: a pair of the "normal" variety in Bb, plus a bass clarinet and an Eb clarinet which can reach a perfect fourth higher than the Bb instrument and, as Forsyth notes in his authoritative treatise on orchestration (1914), has a shriller sound; it was pre-eminently used in military bands to "brighten and strengthen the top octave" – that particular function will come in handy in this score, as we'll see. Delius also requires four bassoons: three 'standard' ones plus a double bassoon; six horns; three trombones; a tuba; timpani; percussion (triangle, side drum, bass drum, cymbals and gong), all of which are used very sparingly indeed; two harps; and a full string section.

The composer noted on the original title page of the score: "Appalachia is the old Indian name for North America. The composition mirrors the moods of tropical nature in the great swamps bordering on the Mississippi River which is so intimately associated with the life of the old Negro slave population. Longing melancholy, an intense love for Nature, child-like humour and an innate delight in dancing and singing are still the most characteristic qualities of this race."

The ground plan of *Appalachia* is relatively straightforward: the theme

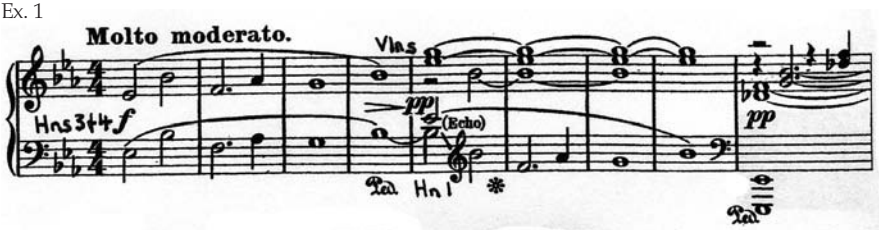
and main body of variations – I count fourteen of them – are framed by a substantial introduction and by what might be termed a choral epilogue (Delius's "final chorus"). Although sets of double bar-lines provide some visual clue throughout the score as to the way the music is punctuated in terms of structure, Delius doesn't actually number the variations individually. In fact once the variations are under way, they more often than not flow into each other so that the ear isn't necessarily aware of the 'joins'. Delius meant this work, I feel, to be heard more as a rhapsodic entity than as a series of separate compartments. The table below shows my scheme for the work:

	Section start	end	key-centre	bars (total)
INTRO.	Bar 1	B+11	(i) Eb	55
	B+12	E+7	(ii) B/Cb	23
	F+1	G+7	(iii) C	21
THEME	G+7	G+15	C	8
VARIATIONS				
VAR. 1	G+15	H+8	Fm	8
VAR. 2	H+8	I +1	F	8
VAR. 3	I+1	J+1	F	20
VAR. 4	J+1	L+13	(i) Dm/F	59
	M+1	M+12	(ii) Dm/Am	12
	M+12	N+10	(iii) Dm/F	26
VAR. 5	O+1	O+21	Cm/F	21
VAR. 6	O+21	Q+31	F/C	52
VAR. 7	R+1	R+14	F	14
VAR. 8	R+15	T+5	Cm/C	46
VAR. 9	U+1	U+42	Fm/F	42
VAR. 10	V+	X+12	Fm/Bm/F	37
VAR. 11	Y+1	AA+8	C	64
VAR. 12	BB+1	CC+1	Am/C	19
VAR. 13	CC+1	CC+15	C	14
VAR. 14	CC+16	CC+50	Am/Ab	35
EPILOGUE	DD+1	DD+9	(i) Abm	8
	DD+9	DD+20	(ii) Ab	12
	DD+20	FF+28	(iii) F	50

The fourteen variations make up three-quarters of the music in terms of duration. Also, as I mention below, there's the definite feeling of a mid-way point in the score after variation no.6; variations nos.7 & 8 are a musical 'point of repose' before Delius takes up his journey again and it's significant, I feel, that he begins to recapitulate some of his earlier material from that point on.

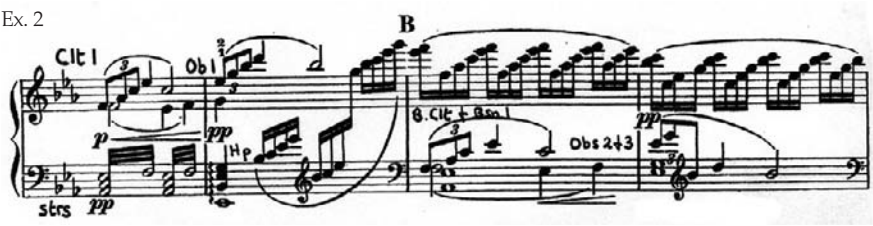
As an Introduction, the first ninety-nine bars of *Appalachia* are an exquisite example of mood-painting, 'setting the scene' in a three-part structure that begins affirmatively in the key of Eb [Example 1] with a series of horn calls that ring out three times: 3rd & 4th horns in octave unison at bars 1-5 and 13-17; and the 3rd horn alone at bars 25-28. If we imagine Delius depicting the "great swamps" bordering the Mississippi, then the distant echoes we also hear seem to come from the opposite bank of the river (1st horn: bars 5-8; 17-20; 29-32). The overall mood is hushed and expectant with faint quiverings from tremulous, muted strings; feather-light woodwind chords; and upward floating harp arpeggios, pointed and imitated by piccolo, clarinet and oboe and with just the faintest tremor of a pedal Bb from the timpani below:

Ex. 1



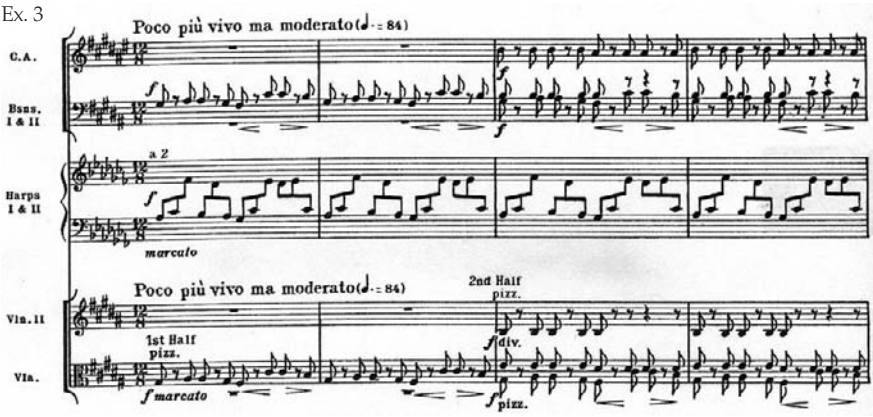
A flattened seventh (Db) has crept into the underlying Eb harmonies, increasing the sense of nervous uncertainty; then suddenly [at letter A+12] the mood is broken by a vigorous, upward-thrusting figure on divided violas and cellos, doubled by clarinets and bassoons: it's a familiar Delian fingerprint, this rhythmic figure of a triplet followed by a longer note value, usually leaning on the second beat of the bar, and often appended (i.e. in *A Village Romeo and Juliet*) by a little arching phrase ending in a falling perfect fifth . Delius probably absorbed it from Wagner's *Tristan* but he made it very much his own. Here is a variant of it taken up [A+22] by 1st clarinet followed by 1st oboe and then passed on to other solo woodwind instruments [Example 2], the little phrase weaving in and out of a rustling accompaniment:

Ex. 2



This first section of the Introduction comes to a close with the initial five notes of the horn call restated low down by double basses, along with 3rd bassoon and double bassoon, and coming to rest on an unexpected harp chord of G major. Suddenly there's a complete change of mood and a masterly example of Delius's orchestration skills, worth showing in full score:

Ex. 3



Here is the perfect example of Delius's reference to the natives'"innate delight in dancing and singing" as that essential instrument of "the old Negro slave population", the banjo, is brilliantly captured with the most economical but telling of means: *pizzicato* violas and 2nd violins, doubled by bassoons and cor anglais in the 'bright', metallic key of B major, enhanced by the tangy plucking of both harps playing in the enharmonic equivalent of Cb. It's as if a shaft of sunlight has suddenly pierced the primeval gloom of the misty swamp and the whole orchestra starts swaying to the beat: violins cascading, flutes and oboes trilling and flurrying, lower woodwind dancing away in 12/8 rhythms so that within fifteen bars the texture has thickened, leading to a triple *forte* climax [D+5] that's undepinned by a new pentatonic idea [marked *x* in Example 4] in E major, broad and virile, and very 'American' in flavour with its feel of 'wide-open spaces'. It's introduced at letter D by bass clarinet; 1st and 2nd bassoons;

3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th horns; and cellos. Soon it's taken up by *tutti* brass and horns, reinforced higher up by strings in Delius's ripest 'Florida vein'. It will also be recalled by the choir in the final pages of the work:

Ex. 4

The music peaks and then swiftly backs away, a double bar-line is drawn, all the sharps in the key signature are cancelled and we enter the third section of the Introduction, marked by the brilliant stroke on Delius's part of foreshadowing [F+1] the appearance of the main theme which will not actually appear in full until twenty-one bars later [G+7]. For now, Delius quotes just the first part of it [see the section marked *x* in Example 5] three times in swift succession: in the minor on 1st oboe, Eb clarinet and 2nd trumpet; then in the major on cor anglais, Bb clarinets, bass clarinet, 1st horn and violas; then on 1st and 3st horns in unison. Delius also sneaks in three advance references to the end part of his theme [marked *y* in Example 5], firstly on 1st and 2nd oboes [F+7 to 8]; then on cor anglais [F+11 to 13]; then on a solo 1st horn [F+13 to 14], an ingeniously subtle way of planting the gist of the theme in our musical subconscious.

The textures thin out and the music, with some characteristically Delian chromatic jostling, settles down onto a rich string chord of C major with the "added sixth" note of the scale (A natural). After this evocative, tripartite introduction to the "moods of tropical Nature" and its indigenous peoples (a lot has been summed up, musically, in just under one hundred bars) we're ready to hear "the old Slave Song" itself, rendered huskily by the cor anglais:

Ex. 5

It's a stroke of genius to assign that most melancholy and poignant of instruments, the cor anglais, to the unveiling of the theme – not only that, but to have it accompanied by bass clarinet and three bassoons, giving a richly dark-hued and oily *timbre* to the passage. Note how simply constructed the tune is (though obviously not by Delius himself): it's an ideally 'suitable case for treatment'. The tune is mostly built on a C major triad in second inversion: the first six of its eight bars only use the notes C; E; and a G at two different octaves. The 'tag' phrase at the end (i.e the last two bars) really only uses an additional D and A as passing notes; overall, this eight-bar phrase is constructed entirely from just five different notes of the scale.

It's also pentatonic (i.e. playable on just the 'black keys' of the piano), a feature it shares with the first eight bars of Jerome Kern's immortal melody evoking the Mississippi, *Ol' Man River* – and we know how much Delius admired that particular ditty, though of course it wasn't written until much later, in 1927. Whether or not there's any significance in the marked resemblance of Delius's Slave Song to the main theme of Verdi's Act 3 Quartet in *Rigoletto* (to the words *bella figlia dell'Amore* – literally, "beautiful daughter of Love") I really cannot say – I'd rather leave that one to the psychoanalysts!

After the theme, the 'variations proper' can now begin and they do so with a more angular harmonization of the theme in F minor, the 1st horn now taking over the melody from the cor anglais and with some occasionally caustic string writing as accompaniment. Then minor yields to major as the pace increases a little to a steady *moderato* and the clarinet in Eb, with the 1st bassoon doubling at the octave below, give another straightforward account of the theme, this time in F major and cushioned by flowing strings with a chromatic 'bite' to them in the last three bars.

These first two variations dovetail, as does the third, a vigorous *più vivo* which takes the *x* part of Example 5 and reworks it as a partially dotted triplet rhythm: this can be heard in 1st & 3rd horns and in 1st trumpet right at the start of the variation; then, six bars later, in 2nd & 3rd oboes, cor anglais and clarinet in Eb; finally, all the upper woodwind get in on the act. The timpani also reinforce this idea. In addition there's another motif that appears in counterpoint to it: it follows the outline of Example 2 and is introduced by the 1st violins [I +1]. It's subsequently multicopied by cellos, bass clarinet, flutes, horns and brass, etc. Downward flowing quaver passages, together with trills in strings and woodwind, supplement the texture of the first thirteen bars of this third variation – in fact, there's a lot going on and I'm reminded of Fenby's judicious comment that *Appalachia* is"the answer to those who regard Delius as a gifted amateur lacking technique enough to write vital music […] [and it] proves that Delius, in his own way […] can play the technicians at their own game." There is indeed no surer way of exposing compositional inadequacies than in a lengthy orchestral work in variation form: Delius passes the test with flying colours.

Seven bars before letter J, the busy nature of this section is quelled as the music pulls up slightly for a brief chorale-like and *molto cantabile* statement of the theme by strings and clarinets; then come three cadential punctuation marks over a timpani roll from (respectively) upper woodwind; brass; and, finally, bassoons and horns. This brings us to a double bar-line and a different time-signature (6/8), ushering in the fourth variation which is the most substantial of the entire set in terms of number of bars (ninety-six) and duration (around four and a half minutes).

It's in a three-part structure, ABA, and is kicked off by the cello section [Example 6] dancing to a D minor idea, blithe but at the same time dignified, and clearly inspired by the earlier dotted-rhythm treatment of Example 5(x). The second half of the tune [marked *x* in Example 6], a reply to the cellos from 1st and 2nd violins, obviously pleased Delius as he refers back to it on several occasions later on, notably in the choral epilogue:

Ex. 6

An English pastoral mood seems to be in the air – I'm reminded of Edward German or Peter Warlock in mock-tudor style. Then, after the full string section has answered its cellist colleagues, Delius elaborates the treatment for another fifty bars or so, with woodwind scales as decoration and the horns and trumpets taking up the dotted rhythmic impetus. The 3rd oboe, cor anglais and the violas initiate a chain-sequence of quotations from the first part of the slave song [K+2 to 5], deliberately emphasising the original duple metre against the prevailing groups of three quavers in 6/8. That trend is eventually passed down, via horn and trumpet, to the trombone section, tuba and double basses which extend the quotation in full. At letter L the textures overflow with exuberant *bonhomie* and even Richard Strauss at his best couldn't be more effective in his orchestration than Delius is here. Suddenly the plug is pulled: the swirlings of harps, wind and strings gurgle away and the opening of the theme sounds again in lower strings and bassoons as the texture thins and mutes are applied in preparation for an extraordinary 'interlude' – a mere twelve bars in length – but a highly significant part of the score.

These bars (they follow letter M) are scored solely for muted strings in shades of *piano* with just a few notes from bassoons at the end and they're not ostensibly connected with the main theme, melodically or harmonically. They're in Delius's most intimate manner, the harmonies unique to his sound world. Eric Fenby called them a "moment of revelation" [see p.55 in his book on Delius for Faber's *Great Composers* series; also his LP sleeve note to HMV ASD 2635]. Fenby saw them as a significant spiritual and visionary development in Delius's work, a signpost to the great *idée fixe* of his maturity: the transitoriness of mortal life in contrast to the perpetual renewal of Nature. "At last he knew what was in him to do," says Fenby and adds that henceforth

entire works were to be shot through with the same poetic vision that imbues these twelve brief bars and which, in his view, elevates them from the level of mere 'tunefulness' and gives them a transcendent significance. If you concur with this, then *Appalachia* can be seen as a tremendous advance on previous works such as the *Florida* Suite. This passage from the fourth variation certainly haunted Fenby when he visited Florida in 1966, prompting him to say later that "whatever Delius may have meant by it in the context of the work, to the end of my days it will conjure up the mysterious peace of Solano Grove, the spiritual birthplace of his most personal art."

These are difficult matters to evaluate subjectively but I think I know what Fenby meant. In the context of *Appalachia*, I would also put forward the eighth and fourteenth variations as further evidence of this emerging 'spiritual quality' in Delius's music and which make this score something of a turning point in his output.

But let's return to the fourth variation: after the *lento* interlude the cellos recapitulate their initial idea [M+6] and the strings take it up as before, but this time they develop it slightly differently. A brief coda, characterised by semiquavers and the discreet assistance of the woodwind, brings this variation to a close. Incidentally, I always experience a distinctly E.J.Moeran 'moment' just before the end, in the modal flavour of the two *fermata* string chords topped by 1st flute (especially the second of them).

I can also hear something of Elgar and Strauss in the fifth variation, which is led off again by the cellos in an upward-rising *con moto* idea and doesn't break new ground, so much as recall elements of the previous two variations, notably a dotted-rhythm treatment of Example 5(x). But here it's expounded much more forcefully in a complex *tutti* with militaristic overtones; a percussionist is finally called into action on the triangle [O+15] as horsey rhythms canter along to a background of upwardly rushing woodwind scales.

Variation 6 lifts the *tempo* up a further notch [letter P] with a *giocoso* solo from the Eb clarinet who plays a delightful melodic variant on the main theme, doubled by the first and second desks of the cellos. It's another imaginative piece of orchestration: the more 'nasal' quality of this particular variety of clarinet, reinforced by the cellos playing high up in their register (Delius takes them up to a Bb above the stave in the treble clef) gives a most vivid effect, akin to a clapped-out bugle. Lower strings accompany lightly, keeping pace with a running triplet figuration in the 1st and 2nd bassoons, the whole texture aerated by great upward sweeps of the two harps. After a fuller orchestration of the clarinet's ideas, there's another beautifully conceived passage at letter Q, marked *più tranquillo*: there are scalic triplets and arpeggios from athletic

strings and clarinets who work off their energy behind a trumpet solo that follows the melodic development of the slave song heard earlier from the Eb clarinet and cellos. The harp writing is exhilarating: could Delius have been influenced by Richard Strauss's seventh variation in *Don Quixote* (1897) where the blindfolded knight 'flies off' on his wooden horse? Strauss has a wind-machine as well as harps at his disposal, but the effect is comparable.

Delius's equally vivid music rises to a magnificent climax, built up from the momentum of rushing triplet figurations given to most of the orchestra. The 1st and 3rd trombones make an important entry [Q+17] with the theme [see l.h. piano part in Example 7] complemented by a counter subject that was foreshadowed a few bars earlier in bass clarinet doubled by cor anglais [Q+13] and is now pitted against the brass (in augmentation) in violins, 2nd and 3rd piccolos and oboes [Q+18] [r.h. piano part in Example 7]. Delius was notorious for dismissing what he called "Protestant counterpoint" but he certainly knew how to write it himself when the occasion arose!

Ex. 7

The music reaches an incandescent triple *forte* [Q+24] and then contracts, dying down in tempo and dynamics. At this point, Delius has a trick up his sleeve: the tenors and basses of his hitherto unused chorus enter *pianissimo* in just the final three bars with some gentle *"la, la, la"*-ing. What an effect that must have had on the 1904 audience – and it can still take anyone new to the work completely by surprise. At the slight risk of overdoing the effect, Delius repeats the gesture at the end of variations 8, 9 and 10; (he carefully instructs the singers to remain sitting for all of these brief interjections and only to stand for their final 'chorus' at letter BB).

The following two variations, which dovetail, contain some of the most memorably poetic pages in the whole score. We are in fact at the midway point: taking timings from Beecham's 1952 recording with the RPO, which has an overall duration of about 37 minutes, the Introduction, "slave song" theme and variations 1 to 6 take around 16 minutes, which is matched more or less exactly by the duration of variations 9 to 14 plus the choral epilogue. That leaves variations 7 and 8 as a five-minute central point of repose where Delius draws breath before (as we'll see) starting to recall material from the

Introduction as a form of recapitulation in the second half of the work.

Variation 7, then, begins with a solo from the 1st horn, *lento e molto tranquillo*, accompanied *espressivo* by chromatically moving strings at a very slow crotchet pulse of around fifty-four beats to the minute. The horn plays a beautiful melodic variation of the main theme with other members of the woodwind family adding little wisps of figuration around it, including a hint of the counter subject mentioned above [Example 7], heard here in the cor anglais [R+4 to 5]. The overall mood reminds me of *Summer Night on the River,* a star-lit night into the bargain, as this variation drifts on into the next one, marked *misterioso*. The strings, much divided, are spaced out in 'ethereal' chords to provide a halo of sound for the icy triplet figurations of the 1st harp and for pairs of falling thirds in woodwind (notably flutes and clarinets). It's a telling piece of orchestration with a 'glittery' feel to it .

We hear snatches of the upward triplet figuration first heard in the Introduction [see Example 2]: here, initially, they come from pairs of clarinets and divided violas [R+21]; shortly afterwards from bassoons and bass clarinet, amongst others. The shuddering *tremolandi* in the lower strings just before letter S also recall a similar passage from the opening pages of the work [A+15]. This is part of the musical recapitulation I was talking about and it's also revealed in the reappearance [S+9 to 12] of the opening horn theme from the Introduction [Example 1] along with a reminiscence of the harp arpeggios from that same section [12 bars before A]. The 1st horn is not only given the statement but also the echo seven bars later [S+19 to 22]. By now the strings are muted, with the violins reaching right up to the heavens, triple *piano*. There's a further reminder of the 1st horn call (this time muted) [S+29 to 32] ushering in the most magical entry of all from the male voices of the chorus: the 1st basses singing as quietly as they dare, answered by the 2nd basses and just the 1st tenors. Bows are hardly touching the strings at this point; the upper woodwind play two unresolved little figurations, introducing the uncertainty of an F sharp into the basic C major chording (a reminiscence of a similar passage at the end of the fourth variation, three bars before letter O). We are suspended in time and space, in a quintessentially Delian way.

But not for long: he soon breaks the spell to begin the 'return journey' with a waltz-like variation initiated (as were variations 4 and 5) by the cellos. The time-signature is actually 6/8 rather than 3/4 but no matter: this *andante con grazia* music still sounds like a slow waltz – and we even have a 'concert master' [the German term for the leader] present in the form of a solo violinist adding a counter subject to the cello tune. The harps and main body of violins then follow his lead as they accompany the main theme when it recurs on the

1st horn doubled by the cellos [U+9]. Since Delius is now seeking ways to remind us of some of his earlier material, it's not surprising therefore, given the dance-like affinities between this ninth variation and the fourth, that he quotes part of the main melodic idea of number 4 in the 2nd and 3rd flutes; Eb clarinet; and 2ndviolins. A comparison of letter U+12 to 14 with J+5 to 7 will make this clear. Further snatches of the slave song theme recur (i.e. in Eb clarinet and 1st violins, U+17 *et seq.*] as the waltz becomes more complex and builds to a *tutti* climax, pulling up the tempo and then returning to it but with the tension taken out (*ma tranquillo*). A sequential rocking figuration in 1st violins and woodwind moves steadily downwards in pitch and dynamic, momentarily interrupted by a snatch of the main theme from 1st trumpet, robustly doubled by the bass clarinet and 1st horn [U+30 to 33].

At this point, the tenors and basses add their third (and longest) interpolation so far: they have ten bars of *"la la la"*-ing, not dissimilar to passages in the third movement of Part Two of *A Mass of Life*. As previously, this *vocalise* effect rounds off the variation beautifully as the voices echo each other and die away over a hushed bed of strings, with touches of horn and bassoon.

After a moment of silence, variation 10 continues the mood of tranquillity as the woodwind meander in frosty chromaticism down the score-paper and then play wisps of figuration over sustained – and more warmly harmonized – string chords. But soon there's a 'chill in the air' again, emphasized by the appearance of the main theme in an unexpected B minor, a potent combination of bass clarinet, 1st bassoon and 1st trumpet. The orchestration here [U+8 to 14], with its 'open' spacing, its perfect fifths in lower strings and horns and its cold chromaticisms are a foretaste, for me, of the *North Country Sketches* of a dozen years later.

Then we turn the corner into F major [letter W] with, once again, the 1st horn, doubled by the cellos, playing the main slave song in full and as it was first presented to us in the 'home' key of C major (another example of Delius recapitulating his material in this second half of the work). And – dare one say it – this most unacademic of composers actually introduces a nice little hint of fugal counterpoint by dovetailing the last two bars of the theme with a further entry of it (a fourth higher, in F) by 1st flute, 1st oboe, clarinet in Eb and 1st violins (reinforcing the horns at this point by giving them some doubling from 3rd oboe, cor anglais and 1st trumpet). Actually, you could work the main theme as a strict canon either at a one-bar or two-bar interval – it does fit – but needless to say, Delius resists the temptation. No 'mathematics' for him!

After the build-up of texture in the bars before letter X, there's a 'dying fall'

to this tenth variation: *pianissimo* major and minor thirds from the two harps over sustained string chords recall similar passages in variation 8, while the bass clarinet breathes a soft reminiscence of the slave song and the men's voices enter for the fourth time with a very effective five-bar contribution.

Now, military music would seem an uncongenial field for Delius and yet he offers a very creditable pastiche of fife and drum in the eleventh variation. *Allegro alla marcia* is the unequivocal stage direction and the percussionists (they've been neglected since making a first appearance in variation 5 to play the triangle for one bar or so) at last have some work to do in fielding side drum, bass drum and cymbals (albeit a single crash of the latter). Delius writes a swaggering march based on the fanfare-like possibilites of the first half of the theme, with dotted rhythms for added colour. 1st trumpet, 1st flute and piccolo in three-octave unison give the lead whilst the strong, two-in-a-bar nature of this music (we are actually in a compound-duple 6/8) is emphasised by the rest of the orchestra. The march asserts itself in a *tutti* passage of great brilliance [Y+22 *et seq.*] with the dotted rhythms pounded out, aided by another reference to a melodic idea [marked *x* in Example 6] from variation no.4 (i.e. at letter Z itself in the upper woodwind). There's a perfect evocation of a military wind-band nine bars after letter Z, at which point all three flautists have changed over to their piccolos to join cor anglais, Eb clarinet, Bb clarinets, all six horns, timpani and side drum, anchored by a *tremolo* G natural, triple *forte*, from the double basses – a marvellous effect. Again, I'm reminded of Strauss's orchestral *militaria* in scores such as *Heldenleben* and *Don Quixote*; Delius can certainly hold a candle to him. There's a thrilling climax with lots of rushing semiquavers, reined in with an *allargando*, after which the music collapses in on itself. A brief triadic passage for the brass heralds sudden gloom as F minor and A minor are juxtaposed and we're invited to witness the natural appendage of a battle scene in the form of a funeral march.

This makes up the twelfth variation, in which Delius even finds within himself a touch of Elgarian 'pomp and circumstance'. It's an impressive moment, with the whole orchestra eventually contributing to the arch-like design which has a span ranging from relatively diatonic *mezzo piano* harmonies for strings and woodwind to searing *fortissimo* chromaticism scored for full brass, timpani and bass drum. The music then thins in texture and dynamic as two surreptitious little fanfare motifs in the key of C are heard from the 1st trumpet, ushering in (for the very first time) the entire SATB chorus with the thirteenth variation, a beautifully harmonized, unaccompanied version of the "slave song", stated in full and beginning with these words:

After night has gone, comes the day; the dark shadows will fade away; t'ords the morning lift a voice, let the scented woods rejoice and echoes swell across the mighty stream…

As Christopher Palmer once commented, the actual words are of no consequence ("doggerel" was in fact Fenby's term for them): what matters is the poignant sound of the close-harmony singing. The SATB choir becomes effectively a double chorus in eight parts for this fourteen-bar passage: I quote just the last six bars [Example 8] which themselves are an extension of the basic eight bars of the main tune and illustrate so well the harmonic complexity of the vocal writing. It's utterly Delian. (The German translation, retained in both full and vocal scores, is an apt reminder of the composer's high standing in Germany before 1914):

Ex. 8

Now that Delius has at last released his full chorus into the open for this *a cappella* moment, will he give them more to do? Well, not immediately: the fourteenth (and final) variation doesn't involve the voices until the very end of its thirty-five bars. But by now we should be used to the voices coming and going unexpectedly and in any case the orchestra has some potent magic of its own to weave. There's no evidence that Delius's powers of invention have begun to flag as he nears the end of his musical journey: on the contrary, this *misterioso lento* passage contains some of the most spell-binding pages in the entire score. We're initially in A minor, with muted strings, the three flutes and the three oboes oscillating between open-spaced chords [Example 9] while the Eb clarinet, the cor anglais and a solo viola provide an *ostinato* inner voice. Muted horns, bassoons and harps add a bass part to the chords and the result is a text-book example of Delius's marvellous ear for orchestral colour:

Ex. 9

The solo violin, doubled by 1st flute, adds a haunting voice to this ghostly landscape, which is given the additional sheen of four, intermittent, soft gong strokes; it offers us a painfully chromatic variant of the opening to the main theme [CC+25 *et seq.*]. As the textures thicken, so too does the harmonic writing which veers now towards Ab; a muted solo viola picks out the 'inner-voice' part [Example 9 x] which is also taken up by other instruments. The strings and woodwind stretch themselves out in full semibreve chords as the chorus enters with two sustained added-sixth chords in A flat, quadruple *piano*, their 'text' no longer "*la*" but a more expressive, sighing "*ah!...*" Words can't convey the effect of this exquisite variation; it's surely one of those moments which Fenby would claim as evidence that Delius knew what was in him to do. Fenby also mentions how struck he was by the strange colours of the trees growing in the swamps near Jacksonville: a dull, milk-chocolate hue juxtaposed with the grey of the moss envelopping them; seeing them for the first time made him understand some of the musical tone-colours in *Appalachia* and I feel he may well have been thinking of this particular passage.

The final three or four minutes of *Appalachia* are in the nature of a choral epilogue, introduced at letter DD by a brief, eight-bar passage in Ab minor, scored for woodwind only, and offering a variant harmonization of the main theme. (Robert Threlfall, in his editorial notes to volume 9a of the Collected Edition, mentions [p.68] that Delius intended to make this woodwind passage optional and that consequently, in an early lithographed Universal Edition of the full score, eight bars of empty staves were retained with no explanation! The current version of the score includes the passage – and quite rightly, as it seems musically necessary). A baritone soloist, instructed by Delius to sing from his place amonst the chorus, suddenly breaks in, *forte* and in Ab major, with a new tune to words that express the fate of those who must be separated:

O, honey, I am going down the river in the morning [….] I'll be gone when next the whippoorwill's a-calling….

Delius had sharp memories from his youth of the leader of a "singing bunch" in the tobacco factories, or stemmeries, starting off a song which the other workers would then pick up on, in close harmony, as they shredded the tobacco leaves – and that's exactly what happens here, with the jubilant *heigh-ho* of the male voices breaking in immediately after the soloist, followed by the women. However, the sadness of separation is not the dominant mood (*…don't you fret and cry…*) for the music veers into the brightness of F major as though lit with a sudden shaft of sunlight. There's the promise, for those who remain faithful, of being reunited – either here on earth or, symbolically perhaps, in heaven.

At this point, the words *"for the dawn will soon be breaking, the radiant morn is nigh"* are set to the music of the pentatonic idea from the end of the second section of the Introduction [Example 4(x)]. Interestingly enough, it also has close affinities with the similarly shaped rise and fall of the last six notes of the main theme. The music gradually increases in tempo, with the textures reminiscent of equally jubilant passages in *A Mass of Life*, emphasised by the chorus abandoning words for some more *la la la*-ing [sopranos at EE+14, full choir at EE+18] at a musical reprise of the little dancing phrase from variation 4 that was noted earlier [see Example 6(x)]. The main slave song is not forgotten by Delius, though, and it rears up [EE+19] *molto marcato* and *fortissimo* in bass clarinet, bassoons, 5th and 6th horns, 3rd trombone, tuba and double basses, permeating the exuberant texture until it's taken up by the full orchestra and by the chorus, who match their text to its final phrase.

The music now begins to slacken in intensity as the voices, seemingly lost for words in their excitement, resort to a simple *Ah!* in a downward chordal passage while the initial horn call of the whole work [Example 1] returns *fortissimo* on four horns [FF+7 to 10]. The triplet figuration from the introduction [Example 2] emerges again, principally in the upper woodwind and dominates the final bars once the voices have fallen silent. It's heard on full strings underpinned by horns and is then echoed by the woodwind. That gives the strings a moment to fix their mutes and they have the final word in the simple, but utterly beautiful, cadence that ends this great work.

FOUR CONDUCTORS

Martin Lee-Browne

> *"A true devotee is one who is devoted not to a person, but to a person's vision, to the task or mission or ideal which that person serves."*[1]

A substantial number of Delius's early major works - including *A Village Romeo & Juliet, Fennimore & Gerda, Appalachia, A Mass of Life, Sea Drift, Over the Hills and Far Away* and *Paris* – received their premieres in Germany. One of the interesting aspects of his early composing life is why, between 1899 (the year of the famous concert at St James's Hall) and 1907 (when the *Piano Concerto* was done at a Promenade Concert), was his music was not recognised or played in this country? In his *Delius*[2], Arthur Hutchings makes a number of suggestions, and one other possibility is that in those days, although born here, people would not necessarily have considered him as being English – both his parents were, of course, German, and he had lived far longer in America and France than in England – but 'contrariwise' he would not have readily admitted his German origins, and his music never reflects them or the German countryside. Whilst the 1899 concert was reported quite favourably by the critics,[3] it did not result in offers from conductors or impressarios to play his works:

> …..there was no highly gifted compatriot with the insight, the money or the influence to do for Delius what Beecham did in the following decades.[4]

and it was in fact four German conductors – Hans Haym (1860-1921), Julius Buths (1851-1920), Fritz Cassirer (1871-1926), and to a lesser extent Oskar Fried (1871-1941) - who were entirely responsible for the initial appreciation of the worth of Delius's music, and it was through their efforts that it at last became played, and gradually recognised as significant, in this country.

In those days, music played a much greater part in everyday German life than it did over here – every town of any size, particularly in the Rhineland and Thuringia, had its Director of Music, an opera house, an orchestra and choirs – and there was therefore a continual movement of performers and musical news between them. It was accordingly not in the least unusual that Buths moved from Elberfeld to Düsseldorf; or that Cassirer went from Lübeck to

Posen, then to Saarbrücken, to Elberfeld, and finally to Berlin. Over a period of years, therefore, many more people got to hear new and unfamiliar music that was promoted by those conductors – including that of Delius – than was the case in England. German audiences had no great difficulty with the extraordinary complexities of Strauss's *Don Juan* (first performed in 1889), Mahler's *Second Symphony* (1902) or Schoenberg's *Pelleas et Melissande* (1903) – whereas, with the exception of the new works of Parry, Stanford and Elgar (which in any event were written in the Germanic tradition), their English counterparts in the early years of the 20th century rarely heard anything more demanding than the easy-to-listen-to music of Frederick Cowen (1857-1935), Arthur Sullivan (1842-1901) and Edward German (1862-1936). One only has to compare *Brigg Fair* (first UK performance 1908), *Paris* (1908) and *In a Summer Garden* (1913) on the one hand with those three German works, and on the other with Parry's *Elegy for Brahms* (1893), a Stanford Symphony or *Cockaigne* (1901), Cowen's *The Butterfly Ball,* Sullivan's Overture *Di Ballo* and the incidental music to *Merrie England,* to appreciate just how radically different Delius's music was from virtually all that was being written by his then well-known contemporaries, and performed, in both countries. In fact, in terms of form and orchestration, it was much more closely related to the German music of the time, rather than the English. In brief, the task of winning over concert-goers in Queen's Hall, the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool or the Free Trade Hall in Manchester was far the greater.

Elberfeld (re-named Wuppertal in 1930) was a prosperous industrial town (boasting a magnificent suspended railway) on the banks of the River Wuppert, to the north-east of Cologne, and in 1890, thanks to Julius Buths, its Director of Music, it had flourishing Musical (i.e.orchestral) and Choral Societies. That year, Buths moved to become the Director of Music at Düsseldorf, and his successor was the 29-year-old Hans Haym. Haym had been born in Halle, some 40 kilometres from Leipzig (perhaps the greatest musical town in Europe) on 29 November 1860. At university, he studied philosophy and classical philology, and did not in fact embark on a musical career until he was in his mid-20s – but 10 years later, towards the end of which period he did some teaching, he landed the quite prestigeous Elberfeld job, and became the conductor of the Music Society and director of the Choral Society; he also became quite well-known as a pianist, and rather less well-known as a composer. [5]

When Jelka Rosen met Delius in 1896, she was studying painting at the Académie Colarossi in Paris, and her greatest friend there was a German girl, Ida Gerhardi, who happened to know Haym. The two girls set up

Hans Haym

house together at Grez-sur-Loing, and, when Delius began spending a lot of time there, he and Ida also became great friends, and she started promoting his music. In the autumn of 1897 she therefore wrote to Haym, asking if he would perform one of Delius's orchestral pieces[6] - and the outcome was far beyond anything that Delius could possibly have anticipated. Not only did Haym conduct the first performance of *Over the Hills and Far Away* less than three months later, but he became without doubt Delius's most powerful advocate and supporter in Germany – in much the same way as, a decade later, Beecham, and to a lesser extent Henry Wood, were to in this country. Haym was:

> ….an uncommon personality. A talented musician with an enquiring mind and a strong and tenacious disposition, he possessed an insight into unfamiliar works of merit well in advance of most German conductors of that day.[7]

He was, indeed, greatly interested in the new music of the time, and knew an important voice when he heard one. The Elberfeld authorities, however, warned him against doing *Over the Hills*:

> Dr Haym has been fiercely attacked at a meeting of the Town Council, on account of – Delius. One man recommended his dismissal.[8]

but he trusted his own judgement more than he did theirs. Some of the audience apparently considered it a piece of "outrageous modernity"[9].

Delius and Haym (again, like Delius and Beecham later) quickly became friends – for example, a year later in a letter to Ida, written in December 1898 from 25 Montpellier Street, SW, Delius asked her to give his regards to Haym and his wife, and a couple of years after that Haym was to save a tricky situation from getting out of hand: before the first performance of *Sea Drift*, the conductor, George Witte, wanted Delius to re-write some of the chorus parts, because he claimed that they were far too difficult. Delius got extremely angry, consulted Haym, and then on his advice (although no doubt much

against his natural instincts) firmly but politely declined to meet the request.

During 1901, Delius was in Germany for several months, and in October he went to Elberfeld where Haym was rehearsing *Paris* for its first performance – again, to be given as a result of Ida's continual pressure on conductors and music committees to play Delius's compositions. Delius was not too happy with what he heard, and began to be concerned as to whether Haym was the right person to give another première of his music. It was, though, really too late to do anything about it; for Delius to 'stand down' the only conductor who had to date shown a real interest in his music would undoubtedly have been embarrassing in terms of his and Jelka's friendship with Ida - and, of course, he wanted the work done. He need not, however, have worried; although something delayed programming, Haym was able to reassure him on 6 December that:

> Paris will be done! Six extra musicians & the second harp will probably be put on your account, the Concert Gesellschaft will be responsible for the rest. The first rehearsal is on Wednesday aft. at the latest. Hope you will be able to be there! Best wishes![10]

and, Delius (accompanied by Jelka) having come as he was bidden and supervised the rehearsals, when the great day, 14 December, arrived the piece was a huge success. Delius evidently stopped worrying about Haym's abilities, for three years later, on 15 October 1904, in the Stadthalle at Elberfeld, Haym and his local forces gave the first performance of *Appalachia*, and then, literally a week later, the first performance of the *Piano Concerto* (in its three-movement version), with Buths as the soloist – and also the second performance of *Lebenstanz.* The day before the first concert, Haym had written an 'introduction' to the work in a local paper:

> ……Frederick Delius is still almost completely unknown today even amongst musicians. It can, however, be only a question of time before his name will often be mentioned, and that the resonance of his name will be registered, as only a few names in the history of music achieve. I regard Delius as one of the most original and genial of living composers, one who calls forth to forge new ways, which the majority at first hesitate to follow. Who are you, that we should believe in you? He has finer ears than we, and hears and writes, therefore, sounds that no-one before him has heard. "Unheard of!" has unfortunately always been a reproof from those who prefer, or who are only able, to think, read and hear along the usual, familiar tracks. But that "Unheard of!" is for the genius often the only thing that *he* feels and hears, the obvious to him, the original flowers of his garden. He gives of them with full hands - and has to experience the fact that no-one comes to take them; and that the response is

Konzert-Gesellschaft

in Elberfeld.

Sonnabend, den 15. Oktober 1904, abends 7½ Uhr:

I. Abonnements-Konzert

unter Leitung von **Dr. Haym**

und unter gefl. Mitwirkung des gesamten **Lehrer-Gesangvereins.**

Das Orchester ist auf 80 Mitwirkende verstärkt.

Solisten:

Frau Kammersängerin **Luise Geller-Wolter,**

Herr **Anton Hummelsheim.**

Programm:

I. Teil.

1. Appalachia, Sinfonie mit Chor (Ur-Aufführ.) . . . F. Delius.
2. Lieder für Alt. . . . . H. Wolf u. Richard Wagner.
3. Rhapsodie für Alt-Solo, Männerchor u. Orchester Joh. Brahms.

II. Teil.

4. Vorspiel und Szenen aus „Parsifal" . . . . . Richard Wagner.
   (Gesang der Blumenmädchen (II. Akt) und Verwandlungsmusik und Gralsszene (Finale I. Akt).

Die zwei Knabenchöre sind gebildet aus den Gesangsklassen des **Gymnasiums** (Leiter Herr **Anton Weber**) und der **Ober-Realschule** (Leiter Herr **Ferd. Schemensky**). 11217

Konzertflügel: Rich. Ad. Hammerschmidt.

Ende des Konzertes gegen 10½ Uhr.

Abonnements: Mk. 20 (Mk. 22 40), Mk. 12 (Mk. 13,20), Mk. 8 10 (Mk. 9) und Einzelkarten: Mk. 5, 3, 2 (inkl. Steuer) sind bis 12 Uhr mittags bei Herrn **B. Hartmann** und ab 7 Uhr an der Kasse der Stadthalle zu haben.

Die Direktion der Konzert-Gesellschaft.

Für Mitwirkende und ihre Angehörige findet in Zukunft nach Beendigung der Konzerte im Speisesaal der Stadthalle **Restaurationsbetrieb** statt.

misunderstanding and ridicule, instead of thanks and admiration….[11]

and the reports of the concert, although certainly not effusive, were not entirely damning:

> Many of those attending the performance of "Appalachia", a Symphony with Choir[12], by Frederick Delius, will reflect on the work with a few doubts and uncomfortable feelings. Symphony with Choir? Did not someone else write such a one, that one immediately thinks of, when hearing this description? - Beethoven and his Ninth! But with this one, Delius does not wish to tread in his footsteps. In Beethoven, a powerful build up of sound and Architecture from which bursts the Hymn; in Delius, a row of erotic mood pictures, scenes from Florida and the Negro life, which have an outward connection in the constantly recurring motto-theme which is well known from the song: "Einen goldnen Wanderstab" (A Golden Roamer's Stick). The work is not at all too extravagant; the works of Richard Strauss have seen to it that the "modern music" of his disciples is not too foreign-sounding to the ears. At various melodic places and there, where in the mood-descriptive writing the bizarre dominates, one could have one's joy in Mr. Delius' talent. Unfortunately, one often heard the loud verdict: "Boring!" As in the Wagner [*Parsifal* excerpts] and Brahms [*Alto Rhapsody*], the Choir was a powerful element in the performance – and the relatively brief Farewell Song of a Negro to his sweetheart stood in stark contrast to the elaborate musical construction.
>
> Dr. Hans Haym…..devoted as much love and care to the new Symphony of Mr. Delius as to the works of the Masters Brahms and Wagner….. and provided an interesting evening. (Fr. K.)[13]

The Stadthalle, Elberfeld

> The first concert [of the season] was based on a varied programme likely to arouse a lively interest. It was most of all, surely, the scenes from "Parsifal", the stage-play of Wagner, that whetted the appetite for the whole work as performed, according to the Master's intentions, in Bayreuth. Afterwards one anticipated the Symphony of F. Delius, which had been heard already several times in Elberfeld. This Symphony depicts moods in Florida and bears the name "Appalachia", the old Indian name for N. America. Right from the beginning one could reckon on the erotic character of the artistry. It did not, however, show itself in a pushing way; the Negro singing was only discreetly discernible. Various really melodious parts were prominent. There were others, however, which were quite opposite-sounding, which illustrate from the efforts of the composer the pattern of Richard Strauss, specially in counterpoint and orchestration. A simple motif, built from the intervals of a broken chord, that also plays a role in "Rigoletto", runs through the composition, but does not, however, appear to prevent the work holding together. The a-cappella choir was the most effective, and had music to sing which made an immediate appeal, but the modern direction of some other parts refused to appeal in the same way. Mr Delius has undoubtedly talent; one could wish him that he soon turns in the direction of clarity - on to the tracks of elucidation: he could then be very content with his success. Thanks to the outstanding work of Dr. Hans Haym, it was an interesting evening.[14]

Haym's critical role in promoting Delius's music – which culminated in 1909, when he conducted two marvellous performances of *A Mass of Life* (yet again at Elberfeld) – was the subject of much research by an extraordinary old lady, Frau Marie-Louise Baum, an historian who lived in Wuppertal-Elberfeld, and the doyenne of the German Branch of The Delius Society. She sang in a performance of the *Mass* given to celebrate the centenary of the Elberfeld Choral Society in the Stadehall there on 11 December 1911, conducted by Haym, and she died, aged 92, in 1979. Perhaps her most valuable work was to help in putting together a definitive edition of the correspondence between Haym, Buths and Delius in the early years of the last century.[15]

Buths was 14 year Delius's senior. The son of an oboe-player, he studied at Cologne, Berlin, in Italy (as a holder of the Myerbeer Travelling Scholarship), and in Paris. He moved from city to city rather less than most of his colleagues: his first conducting post was in Breslau, where he stayed for four years; in 1879 he moved to Elberfeldt, and (as mentioned above) after a very successful 11 years as the Music Director there, in 1890 he took the same post at Düsseldorf. He translated Elgar's *The Apostles* and *The Dream of Gerontius* into German, and in 1902 he gave the first German performance of the latter at the famous Lower Rhine Festival; the following year he became

the Director of the newly established Düsseldorf Conservatoire. The first of Delius's works that he seems to have conducted was *Paris* in 1903, its third performance.

Julius Buths
(coll. Elgar Birthplace Trust)

Delius had originally promised Max Schillings, Music Director at Munich and another strong advocate for his music – *Sea Drift* was dedicated to him – the second performance of *Appalachia* at the 1905 Tonkünstlerfest at Graz in Austria. For some reason or other, however, after the Elberfeld première, "out of consideration for Buths", Delius changed his mind, and Buths – who had actually first learned of the work from Haym (another example of the 'circulation' of new music in Germany) – gave it in Düsseldorf on 13 June 1905.[16]

The third of the four conductors to take up *Appalachia* was Oskar Fried. Originally a hornplayer, he then studied composition with Humperdinck in Munich, and finally turned to conducting. He worked in Berlin from 1904 until 1934, and he made many appearances with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (particularly doing the symphonies of his friend Gustav Mahler) in the years from 1923, when Wilhelm Furtwängler was its principal conductor. Fried first met Delius in 1905 – it seems highly probable that it was either Buths or Haym (or possibly both) who introduced them – and that June Fried spent a while at Grez, getting really excited – first about the music, and later about the state of the as yet still unprinted full score and parts from which the Berlin orchestra was expected to play it at a concert on 5 February 1906:

Oskar Fried

> Appalachia is damned difficult.[17]

Come to Berlin at *once!* The orchestral parts of Apalachia [sic] really are in an incredible state! I have not enough time to put it in order, and we have certainly not got enough rehearsals to put up a good performance with the music as it is. No signatures! 146 dynamic markings — or very deficient ones! Whether flute or piccolo is not clear! With the two bassoons one never knows whether tenor or bass clef! The material must be put right before the first orchestral rehearsal, otherwise I cannot perform it. You must realise that we have no time here in Berlin for reading-rehearsals! The material must be clear and distinct, otherwise the musicians will certainly approach this new and difficult work with reluctance.

So please set out as soon as you receive my letter and help me to put the orchestra music in order, otherwise the performance will come to nothing.

Telegraph me as to when and whether you are coming. Great haste is essential.[18]

The critics were interested in the piece, but yet unsatisfied:

The Star Choral Society gave their first concert yesterday in the Philharmonie. We had not heard them for a long time…… one expects, of course, substantial results. Yesterday it was good in view of the difficulties to be overcome, even very good - but there was not much singing. The present Director of the Society, Oskar Fried, brings the instruments more into the foreground, (probably following his own inclinations and temperament as a musician), more than is really desirable for a choral society's programme. The concert yesterday consisted of two modern works, in which the choir played only a subordinate role. The one, "Appalachia" by Frederick Delius, that had its first performance [in Berlin], is a variation work for orchestra with a vocal tail-part; the other, Fried's "The Drunken Song", already heard here, lays the main weight on the solo parts.

Both works are interesting, but do not belong, according to my taste, among the most joyous of contemporary products…. A finer, much more introvertive, mature culture is spoken by Frederick Delius, the Englishman, who did not live and study in Paris for nothing. But I see him too, going erroneous ways. Delius is a newcomer from the realm of fanaticism [sic: 'Fanatismus' not 'Fantasie' !]. He does not gladly write a bar that has been similarly written before him, but the unfortunate part is that he does not find it easy to think of a melody which has not already been written by someone else. He senses this himself and so shuns a clear expression and seeks refuge in the duskiness of uncertain contours. A sure technique allows him there to effect, in parts, an originality. Something, however, that characterizes him even more and that makes his music for me uncomfortable, even almost unbearable. Delius apparently adores ugliness, unsightliness. There is no combination of sounds

that he does not bring together, and his fantasy is inexhaustible in producing disagreeable combinations. What he makes of a simple Negro melody, that has, perhaps, the spiritual content of a barracks fanfare, is quite unbelievable. Formally, "Appalachia" presents itself as a series of orchestral free Variations on that melody, in which the choir, at first purely with "la-la-la" tones, and then later enters with some sung text words. In content this should depict for us the magic of the tropical landscape and the character of its inhabitants. If one reads the analysis which Dr. Leichtentritt has written for the programme notes, one expects wonderful things. The ears, unfortunately, agree but a little with this, and do not find much that is accessible and acceptable. There are parts that are happy, erotic mood-pictures; but, however, as the music flows evenly along, or better said, meanders erratically here and there as if by accident, the end-impression is one of boredom. One hears so much nowadays of the example and influence of Mozart. Yesterday evening, however, neither were in evidence. One was aware, with an ever-recurring realization, that despite all attempts to break away from them, they will always remain the Being and Purpose of music.

Delius's "Appalachia" received moderate applause, whereas Fried's "The Drunken Song" received lively applause.[19]

(Dr. Leopold Schmidt)

There blows at last a whiff of fresh, warm life in the Starlet Choral Society since its direction has been taken up by Mr. Oskar Fried. Previously there were only rare occasions when a modem composer received any dignified attention or was in any way appreciated. Now in the Society's programme can be found representatives of the newest trends. There was novelty in yesterday's programme, a Tone-Poem entitled "Appalachia" for orchestra with final chorus by the young English composer, Frederick Delius, whose music Busom has already made known here in one of his this year's concerts, with "Nachtsmusik für grosses Orchester" *[Mitternachtslied Zarathustras].* With his "Appalachia" Delius attempts to give a musical mood-picture of Appalachia, the large North American woodland hill area. An old slave-song forms the core of the work Because the English tone-poet does not limit himself in his variations to a straightforward development of the chosen theme, but rather builds on the basis of this theme a wide and high architecture whose sweeping lines result in a brilliant production of the art of the builder. This production is achieved, of course, only by his artistic ability, his quite extraordinary orchestration and clever counterpoint, but not by his fantasy or invention. On these two points it would seem that Mr. Delius is deficient, because one searches for them in vain in the individual sections of the work. There are in total sixteen – for the wonderful mood-pictures that are so enthusiastically

spoken of in the programme notes. That very remarkable "la-la" [sic] which the male voices blend in with the orchestra at the close of several sections, is not really suitable to awake such atmospheric moods. Only the song of the choir in the finale breathes an atmospheric mood and allows, with its strong rhythms, the work to fade out very effectively. Just as the orchestra - which only once sounded imperfect (was, perhaps, the all-too adventurous harmonisation of the composer to blame?) – so also the Society's choir, which on this occasion had to sing more against the orchestra than with it, proved itself fully equal to the difficult task - and so it resulted, if not for "Appalachia", a complete success for the Starlet Choral Society and its conductor.'

Following Fried's performance, Delius agreed terms for the publication of the full score of *Appalachia* by the Berlin firm of Harmonie – and that, of course, was good news, for it meant that an increasing number of musicians would get to know (or at least to know of) the work. For example, in April, Delius lent the score to the critic Robin Legge and Percy Grainger; the following month, he gave Grainger one to take to show Grieg – who "was keenly interested"; two months later, Henry Wood lent a copy to Arthur Fagge, the conductor of the London Choral Society[20] – and it does not seem unreasonable to assume that the same was happening among musicians in Germany.

It was an amazing coincidence that in 1907 not only did Delius's music begin to be heard in this country – but that he met not only the man who was to become probably his greatest friend and benefactor, Balfour Gardiner, but also the one who was to be his strongest musical advocate for over 50 years, Thomas Beecham. And what a marvellous future resulted from those three events. Delius came to London in early April, initially to talk to Henry Wood about a performance of the *Piano Concerto.* He went to dinner with Gardiner on the 15th, and "they played Appalachia thro (a few musicians were there) all were tremendously taken with it. This really is my field".[21]

But from what music was it "played", and who were "they"? The Leipzig firm of Stich und Druck von C C Röder, GmbH - not Harmonie - published a vocal score in 1907, but was that before or after this occasion? Perhaps Delius brought a proof of it with him. There is no record of anyone having ever made a piano duet or two-piano arrangement. The 'player(s)' could have been either one person alone (Gardiner?), playing from the vocal score, if indeed they had it, or two doing some fairly remarkable sight-reading from the 1906 full score. Did Delius really mean "they"? An intriguing couple of questions for musicologists!

Fritz Cassirer was introduced to Delius's music by Buths and Haym, and had "fallen completely under its spell."[22] He conducted the premieres of both

Fritz Cassirer

Koanga in Elberfeld in 1904 and of *A Village Romeo & Juliet* in Berlin in 1907, and as part of an English tour in the latter year he came to London to give the first English performance of *Appalachia* – the first German to conduct Delius's music here. He had originally intended to do both *Sea Drift* and *Appalachia*, using the Leeds Festival Chorus and the London Symphony Orchestra, but the expense of bringing the former down to Queen's Hall and the quotation for hiring the latter proved to be far too much –"The concert would cost 7000M *without* a choir, without a baritone. Horrendous!"[20] He therefore set about finding alternatives. Someone told him about Beecham's newly enlarged New Symphony Orchestra, and – famously – after their concert on 19 October Delius ("a stranger of arresting appearance") and Cassirer, full of admiration for the orchestra, went to the green room, and asked Beecham if they could hire it.[21] Negotiations were satisfactorily concluded a day or two later, and Cassirer conducted *Appalachia* in Queen's Hall on 22 November with the Sunday League Choir. Delius was, of course, there, and also in the Hall were Havagal Brian, Cyril Scott, Bantock, Henry Wood, Grainger and Beecham (had attended some rehearsals as well, and whose first experience of hearing any of Delius's music this was). The work was extremely well received:

> …the performance had a reception so unrestrainedly enthusiastic that the composer was surprised and amused. He was called for by name to appear on the platform, and it can safely said that this work, not one of Delius's supreme masterpieces, was the first wholly to capture English listeners and critics.[22]

but far more important in the long term was Beecham's immediate excitement with the music – that was to flower into possibly the most celebrated relationship between a composer and a conductor ever to have existed:

> Then came the performance of *Appalachia,* throughout which my dominant emotion was wonderment that music like this could have remained unknown for years, when any number of inferior compositions were being given daily with the printer's ink scarcely dry upon their scores. The piece made a deep

impression on everyone, but in all that was written or said about it, its two outstanding qualities were hardly noticed. Whether it was or was not an authentic set of variations, whether it was too short or too long, or whether Delius had been well- or ill- advised in writing the choral finale just in the way he had done, were all points of secondary interest. What should have been evident at first hearing was the remotely alien sound of it, a note in English music stranger than any heard for over two hundred years, and the masterly and personal use of the orchestra. The instrumental combinations, notably those in the variations that depict nature life in the woods and swamps, were a revelation of what the orchestra could be made to utter, and although forty years have passed since it was first put down on paper, the whole work still astonishes by its variety of atmosphere, loveliness of tone, and the unorthodox exploitation of those *tutti* moments which are handled by most composers old and new in such depressingly stereotyped fashion.[23]

———

The views of the critics were, as so often, very different from those of the audiences and performers – for example:

As if with the design of illustrating the fatuity of the old custom of celebrating St. Cecilia's Day with music that was the most beautiful to be procured, a concert of three modern works was given last night in the Queen's Hall, at which the New Symphony Orchestra, under ther conductorship of Herr Fritz Cassirer, took part. The conductor showed his powers of a sound if not very inspired director of an orchestra in the *Meistersinger* overture, followed by a very long set of orchestral and choral variations by Mr Frederick Delius on a negro song that is quaint enough, although wholly wanting in the melodic suggestion which is wanted for such a purpose. The whole is called "Appalachia" (explained as the "aboriginal" name for America), and a chorus (on this occasion the choir of the Sunday League) sings a stanza that may possibly come out of some plantation song or camp-meeting hymn. The composer has much to learn before he can be held to be a successful or effective writer of choral music, but the first introduction of the male voices was clever enough, and perhaps the best touch of all was the orchestral imitation of a banjo in the introductory part of the piece, where there occur some agreeable themes or "calls". The work was received with great favour, and the composer was repeatedly recalled.[24]

Although not strictly within the scope of the title of this article, it should be recorded that the second English performance of *Appalachia* was given at the Victoria Hall in Hanley on 2 April 1908, by the Hallé and the celebrated North Staffordshire Choral Society, conducted by Delius himself. His skills on the rostrum were, as mentioned on pages 44 and 45 of DSJ 140, at best minimal, and sadly he fared no better on this occasion.

The reputation that Delius had acquired in Germany and elsewhere on the Continent as the result of the efforts of those four conductors had, by 1907, happily also "made him a figure of particular interest at home"[25]

© Martin Lee-Browne 2007

1 Emmanuel E Garcia: *Frederick Delius: Devotion, collaboration and the Salvation of Music* (2005).
2 (Macmillan & Co, 1948, pp.29-33).
3 *Ibid.*
4 *Ibid*.
5 There is an excellent article, *Hans Haym: Delius's Prophet & Pioneer* by Lionel Carley in *A Delius Companion* (ed. Christopher Redwood; John Calder, London, 1976).
6 Lionel Carley: *Delius: A Life in Letters* (Scola Press, 1983, Vol. 1, footnote 2 on p.121).
7 *Ibid.*
8 Letter: Cassirer to Delius, 30/3/1905 (in Carley *op.cit.* p.256).
9 Sir Thomas Beecham: *Frederick Delius* (Hutchinson of London, 1959).
10 Carley: *op.cit.* p 195.
11 *Täglicher Anzeiger für Berg und Mark*, 15 Oct 1904.
12 This title, although used in the poster for the concert (see illustration) seems to have been an entirely 'local invention' – it is not suggested in any of Delius's letters or manuscripts. In the programme for the 1905 performance in Düsseldorf, the title was given as *Appalachia (Dixieland) (Eindrücke aus dem Süden). Introduktion, Thema mit Variationen und Finale. Symphonische Dichtung [Symphonic Poem] für grosses Orchester, Baritone-Solo und Chor.*
13 *Täglicher Anzeiger für Berg und Mark*, 18 Oct 1904.
14 *Elberfelder Zeitung*, 17 October 1904. The work had not, of course, been performed before anywhere.
15 A number of those letters can be found in Volume 1 (1862-1909) of Carley *op.cit* – and he wrote an article on Frau Baum in DSJ 65 (October 1979).
16 Letters: Haym to Delius, 6/8/04, and Schillings to Delius, 28/2/05 (in Carley: *op.cit*. pp 247 & 254).
17 Letter: Fried to Delius, 4 /1/1906.

[18] Letter: Fried to Delius, 5/1/1906 (in Carley: *ibid.* p 261).
[19] Berliner Tageblatt, 6 February 1906 (Evening edition).
[20] Letter: 9 October 1907 (in Carley *op.cit.* p 301).
[21] Beecham: *A Mingled Chime* (Hutchinson & Co. Ltd. 1944, p 63).
[22] Arthur Hutchings: *Delius* (Macmillan & Co. Ltd. 1948, p 36).
[23] Beecham: *Ibid.* p 64.
[24] The Times, 23 November 1907.
[25] Carley: *op.cit.* p 278.

[As will be evident from the notes above, much of the information for this article has been derived from a number of sources, which I acknowledge with thanks. Particular gratitude is, though, due to the President (in particular for his Delius: A Life in Letters*), and to Robert Threlfall for his indispensible* A Catalogue of the Compositions of Frederick Delius. *I am also greatly indebited to Norman Jones, who searched-out and translated the various concert notices from German newspapers.]*

Slaves c. 1860

APPALACHIA

A NEW BRITISH WORK

Delius'"Appalachia" performed at Queen's Hall

This article appeared in the issue of The Daily News for 23 November 1907

It may be expected that Frederick Delius's "Appalachia" variations, performed for the first time in England last night, will be both praised and condemned. My own impression after hearing the work in bits at a rehearsa1 and as a whole last night are mixed. Frankly, what I heard in an empty, g1oomy hall impressed me more vividly than did the work performed as a whole. The repetition of sections enabled one to grasp the composer's subtle and individual harmony, and there was no question of the whole effect. That suffers, I think, from the form of the work not being quite suitable to the subject.

Mr. Delius has endeavoured to depict in music his early impressions of the Mississippi country, and to this end he has employed as his theme an authentic slave song, which, by the way, has a close resemblance to a well-known theme in "Rigoletto". The composer has built fourteen variations on this theme, all of them remarkable for atmospheric effect. The theme itself is but little varied, and that no doubt is part of the composer's plan. The slave song makes the connection of one variation with another, and the interest lies in the harmonic and contrapuntal treatment. In ordinary variations composers seem to do their best to present their themes in such extraordinary guises that they become practically new. Mr. Delius's plan is theoretically more artistic, but in practice it must be confessed that the constant repetition of a theme which is so simple that it really does not lend itself to elaborate treatment is monotonous. Then, to produce his picture of negro pathos, each variation ends in a diminuendo, which to my ears makes the composition stand still, and explains why I was more impressed in hearing it by sections than when it was played straight through.

Mr. Delius has written stronger stuff than this "Appalachia", which may be considered a "*jeu d'esprit*". On the other hand, I expect to see the composer blamed for not having insisted on his known mastery of scoring. That he has not is one of the merits of the work to my ears. Every effect he has planned comes off without any exhibition of obvious cleverness such as makes Strauss's "Salome" dance, which followed the Delius work, sound banal and

commonplace. It is rare that such reticence is shown by modern composers. The scoring of "Appalachia" is always in the picture. It produces the effect that is required, and does not make one gasp with astonishment. The harmony, individual and extraordinary as some of it may be, is conceived in the same artistic spirit, and the composer has resisted the temptation to make elaborate use of the chorus, which enters, pianissimo, only in the ninth variation. The choral effects of the words are very beautiful and unconventional.

Indeed, the whole work, in spite of some sense of lengthiness and of the monotonous effect of the constant repetition of the slave song, is a remarkable achievement. This is individual music that we heard last night — not only individual in its manner, but individual in its mood. The composer has painted his picture in delicate and elusive tints, and has eschewed anything like an expression of emotion out of keeping with the effect he has evidently desired to make. Certainly the voice of Mr. Delius is a new voice in music. The conductor, Herr Friz Cassirer, and the composer were most enthusiastically applauded.

Herr Cassirer is a conductor of great gifts. He made the New Symphony Orchestra give most animated and clear performances of Delius's work and of Strauss's "Salome" dance and "Ein Heldenleben" and this was the more extraordinary in that no large number of rehearsals was held.

[*This article was written by E A Baughan (1865-1938), a businessman and journalist who edited The Musical Standard from 1892 until 1902, was the music critic for the Daily News, and wrote criticisms for a number of other newspapers, including The Morning Leader and The Westminster Gazette. Often very outspoken, he was one of three prominent London music critics caricatured in Bernard Shaw's Fanny's First Play of 1911. Elgar had mixed views about him, and once remarked that he "cannot hum a melody correctly in tune – he looks at music from the point of view of a man of letters"*].

APPALACHIA

LUNCH WITH SIR CHARLES MACKERRAS

Sir Charles very kindly agreed to talk to the Editor between rehearsals in Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CM: This is a very curious coincidence! I was originally an oboe player, and when I came to England from Australia in 1947, the first opera in which I played was *La Boheme* with the Sadlers Wells Company under your uncle, Dick Austin – and the first clarinet was a charming girl who later became my wife!

Well, what about *Appalachia* [he pronounced the third syllable as in 'larch'] – do you pronounce it like that?

Ed: No, rightly or wrongly, *Appalachia* [as in 'late'].

CM: Of course, Beeecham used to say it [brilliantly mimicking him] 'Appalackia'! I first heard this marvellous, marvellous work during the War - in Sydney, with Sir Thomas conducting, and the soloist was the great Harold Williams, a famous baritone who often sang with Beecham. Williams was in fact an Australian, returning there for good, and he became a singing teacher. Another person from Beecham's circle who went to Australia at about the same time was Neville Cardus, the famous cricket and music critic of *The Manchester Guardian* (as it then was), who then became the same for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. When he first met the very young Joan Sutherland, and she was telling him of her ambitions, he said to her "Oh, no, my dear girl – you haven't the faintest possibility of succeeding in London – do stay in Australia – I mean, please don't dream of going abroad – you'll simply never succeed".

And a few years later he said the same thing to me when I was the first oboe in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, but keen to go to work in Britain – "My boy, don't waste your time! You're doing very well here, and getting a good reputation, but as for wanting to play in a British orchestra, or conduct there, you haven't the remotest chance, and would simply be wasting your time!"

Anyway, back to *Appalachia*. I got to know some Delius from Beecham's old Delius Society Columbia recordings, including *Appalachia,* in the early 1940s. I used to play them over and over again

- and I still remember being vastly impressed by the first *pp* entry of the full unaccompanied chorus, singing "After night has gone comes the day" to the main theme of the variations. I found it quite magical, and (as I now know) completely Delian in its chromatic treatment of that simple, diatonic tune. It's so evocative of the America of that period, with slaves working in the cotton fields of Florida, and so on. Delius wouldn't, of course, have actually seen slavery for himself - it ended in practice in 1863-1865 with Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation - but he was nevertheless able to imagine it vividly and evoke its atmosphere.

I also remember so well from that time being hugely impressed by the very beginning of the piece – with the haunting horn call – which is the introduction to the variations. That call is so simple; anyone could have written it, and it could easily have been played on a natural horn[26] - but as soon as the violins enter the music immediately becomes Delian, and characteristically chromatic. Then, marvellously, at the very end that music returns in an equally magic way. For me, and despite the very small participation of the chorus, *Appalachia* is Delius's greatest choral work.

Ed: Yes, it certainly is a very special piece – but do you think that, with so little for the chorus to do, it really is a *great* choral work?

CM: Well, I've always, shall we say, empathised with it very strongly. I find the unaccompanied entrance of the full chorus, with the female voices for the first time, is more beautiful than the similar passage in *Sea Drift* – although, of course, that is absolutely glorious too. The way that simple folk-song is changed into a Delian rhapsody is absolutely magical.

When I was a kid, I'd spend hours listening to Beecham's recording, and trying to take it down, to see exactly what was going on – and his choir was quite excellent. I'm not sure who they were, or whether it was an amateur one or professional one – but, either way, they sang brilliantly.

Ed: I think that it was the London Select Choir.

CM: Oh, yes. So, when I eventually saw the score, and found that I had taken the choral variation down almost exactly right, that was really a tribute to the excellent singing of the choir, with their very sure intonation in those complicated, melting harmonies - and that shews that <u>they</u> must have done it right! I love the preparation for the very military variation, with its dotted 6/8 rhythm [Letter Y in the full score]

– and then the way it's continually quoted all the time during that great broad variation. I think it's a quite masterly moment, and then the trumpet does the:

at the end, rounding it off [Letter Cc] – and then, after that gorgeous variation, for the first time the original horn call is quoted again, and it develops, as nearly all Delius's compositions do, into a continuous diminuendo, a fade out. Lastly, there is the lovely idea of the two sighing chords right at the end, G major and F major – so typically Delian.

Ed: I often feel that sets of variations generally must be really quite difficult to conduct, because by their very nature they are a string of shortish episodes, almost 'three-minute bites', that rarely grow out of each other – unlike symphonic works, which by definition develop, and where the thought is cumulative, so that the conductor and players can 'see to the end' right from the beginning. *Appalachia* almost goes a stage further than that, in that the original tune appears quite distinctly and unchanged in every single variation (except that sometimes it goes from 4/4 rhythm into 6/8), but throughout it is dressed-up in fantastically different orchestration – and that could well make it even harder to put across. Do you agree?

CM: Yes, that's very true. If you compare it with the *Enigma Variations* – which are a lot cleverer, with Elgar constantly using devices like inversions – for example, in the famous *Nimrod* the first part is a straight version of the theme in the major, whereas the second part is an exact inversion of the theme in the bass. As you say, the *Appalachia* variations are indeed really very basic, in that you never once lose sight of the tune – indeed, you couldn't forget it! – and Delius does it all by harmony and orchestration, never anything 'clever' like diminution and inversion at the octave, or the fifth, or things like that. No, as far as I know, he didn't like technicalities – but he had the extraordinary power of creating superb sonorities. Sometimes there is a huge orchestra producing a vast mellow sound, and at others he uses a tiny orchestra in a quite magic way – in *The Cuckoo,* for instance – to paint a truly evocative picture.

Ed: Now, tell me about conducting it.

CH: Ah, well! The first time I did that was when I was Principal Conductor

of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra – and it was just marvellous actually to work on a piece that I had known for so long. I found that the huge orchestral sound was something that one had to work on, particularly to make it soft and mellow. I've got such a sort of dominant affection for the work, and have felt a real sense of privilege each time I have conducted it – which hasn't actually been all that often. I've done it with the Welsh National Opera (and recorded it with them), once in London with the RPO (a great Delius orchestra in the old days) and, as I've said, in Sydney – and as I've always known the work so well I think I can say that it has no fears for me! You may be forgiven for thinking that this is a sacrilegious thing to say, but I've always preferred conducting it to *Sea Drift*!

Ed: Oh, dear! I'm perfectly prepared, of course, to hear what you say, as the lawyers often remark – I was one myself – but I'm afraid that, for family reasons which you will readily appreciate, I can't agree that it's the better work!

CM: And I'm unrepentant! [laughter] – and I feel that there are many Delians who actually share this view. There are *Appalachia*-people and *Sea Drift*-people, just as there are Bach-people, Handel-people, Mozart- or Haydn-people, and Tristan- or Meistersinger-people – and, much as I adore *Sea Drift*, I am definitely an *Appalachia*-person!

Ed: One can actually apply that to a lot of Delius – do you, for example, put *North Country Sketches* on your *Sea Drift* pile or your *Appalachia* pile?

CM: It definitely goes on the latter – as does another piece that I really love too, *The Song of the High Hills*. Sadly, I've only done it once – with the Welsh National Opera on the same disc as *Appalachia.*

Ed: What about the tempi in *Appalachia*?

CM: There is a temptation (no pun intended!) on the face of it to take much of Delius's music at the same sort of speed – but one must resist that, and realise that he was a rhapsodic composer, and the character of his music demands that the tempi be varied all the time. That was, of course, the style of the time, whoever's music it was – look at Wagner – and it's interesting that some composers gave very detailed directions as to how a piece should be played, and others didn't. Elgar marked every little nuance of tempo and every accent in his scores; Ravel did the same, although not quite as comprehensively, and Debussy rather less – whereas Delius hardly put anything in at all, and even Beecham's editions of Delius don't really help much with tempo and flexibility. I believe that finding the right freedom is really the key to

most Delius compositions – finding the right degree of flexibility, and getting a feeling of improvisation. You see, you can do it alright when there's just a piano and a violin, as we realised the other day[27] – but the conductor has to be so flexible that he can impose upon those orchestral players a feeling of freedom, without repeating the same thing every time he does a piece; I often feel after a Delius performance that I wish I'd done this or that bit rather differently – like one does with repeats in classical music, and then are still not sure whether either was right! Beecham, on the other hand, had such confidence in his own views – "Oh, well, Frederick had no idea….", which was, in a way, condescending towards Delius, even though he was his greatest 'fan'– and perhaps one should be a bit more serious about what were probably the composer's wishes.

Ed: Then, of course, the other thing in Delius is the question of the balance of the orchestral sound.

CM: You're absolutely right! It's really very difficult to get it so that all the parts come out, and it sounds rich and full, but yet clear – and, oh dear, it takes hours! I have a sort of mania about balance, and I'm always trying to find the right one between the instruments, because every hall and every orchestra is different – for instance the oboe may be a strong player, or a small-toned one, and everything has to be adjusted, because all the expressions – *mezzo forte, piano* and all that – are completely relative, aren't they?

Ed: Yes – and a real musician knows instinctively whether the sound is right or not.

CM: Very often it's just a question of how the conductor puts across his feelings for the balance.

© Sir Charles Mackerras 2007

APPALACHIA

NEVILLE CARDUS ON *APPALACHIA*

Michael Jackson has kindly sent this extract from the Chapter on Delius in Ten Composers (Cape 1945 – re-published in A Composers' Eleven (Cape, 1958) by Sir Neville Cardus (1890-1975).

Cardus was probably the most celebrated journalist of his day. A Mancunian by birth, he became celebrated throughout the English-speaking world for his writings on both cricket and music.

I think Delius will endure for a long time to come by virtue of his sensibility and his complete mastery of as much of technique as he needed. First of all let us look into the structure or physiology of one or two characteristic works of Delius; if we find a sound constitution and cerebellum we may with some assurance count upon a reasonable longevity.

The *Appalachia* Variations were sketched in 1897 and completed in 1902, a period during which nearly every British composer was churning out music more or less Teutonic in its square rhythms and excessive orchestration. Delius employs variation-form in *Appalachia* with a musicianship demonstrable in every bar, but he adapts the variation-form to his own imaginative ends and departs entirely from precedent. Every other set of orchestral variations, as far as I can recollect, begins with a statement of the theme which is to be varied. Delius prepares the stage for his theme, which he uses as a dramatic motif representing the enslaved people. He begins the work with a long introduction; a tone-poem evoking the sense of lonely vacant nature; a horn-call is sounded, and it is the main theme in embryo or as though echoed far away. Delius quotes from this introduction for poetic effect later in the course of the variations, and each variation carries the psychological interest a stage farther.

Considered strictly as variations of theme and harmony and orchestral colour, 'Appalachia' is of engrossing musical interest. The theme itself has been recognized as having something in common with the first phrase of the quartet in *Rigoletto* - no great scholarship or insight are needed to point the surface resemblance. Where, in *the St Antony Variations* of Brahms, or in the *Mozart Variations* of Reger, or in the *Symphonic Variations* of Dvorák, or in any other orchestral variations, can we find a transition, a building up from a simple foundation to a noble arch more imaginatively musical than Delius's transition from his slave-theme to the *molto lento* and its solemn processional

tread and its muffled drums, and the descent of the brass before we reach this *molto lento.* Then, at the end of the lamentation, Delius modulates gently to eight vocal parts at the words:
"After night has gone comes the day"

Only the highest order of inspiration can work as simply as this. It is strong music, tender music, majestic music and music aching with the Delius nostalgia. Also it is music fashioned with personal and self-contained craftsmanship. Delius's treatment of voices in *Appalachia* is his own; here, by the way, is another original stroke - no other set of variations calls for a chorus. Delius does not give us the voices in full at once, just as he does not give us his main theme in full at once. He is never obvious; he is as far removed from the obvious as Debussy himself. Long before the voices take concrete shape we hear only suggestions of them. The weaving of vocal echoes into the general texture of tone is delicate and haunting; for example, the end of the fourth and fifth variations may be quoted. From the point of view of fine musical craftsmanship and fine musical thinking; from the point of view of intensely imaginative expression, *Appalachia* is a masterpiece over which is suffused a beauty so slender that it catches us suddenly and inexplicably by the throat. Yet with all its ache of sensibility, the music goes through masculine and even rough weather before it dies away into the mists which concealed the secret places of the heart of the most poetic composer born in England.

Negro quarters in Georgia

CONSTANT LAMBERT ON NEGRO MUSIC

Stephen Lloyd has kindly provided this extract from a BBC talk given by Constant Lambert on The Origins of Modern Dance Music *in April 1936.*

Dr. von Hornbostel has also stated that there is a distinct connection between African folk music and Indo-Chinese music, noticeably the music of the East Indies, which, as we know, has nothing in common with Western music, particularly Western dance music. The same conclusion has independently been arrived at by a less scientific and more popular authority, Mr. Paul Robeson. So I think that to some extent we can count Africa out when talking about jazz, but we cannot count the Negro out. The question is what exactly is it that the Negro has given to modern dance music.

Though the African slaves may have taken their folk music to the plantations, it is doubtful if in pure form it lasted any longer than their native language. What they certainly did take, however, was an astonishing musical instinct and aptitude for giving a peculiar individual twist to the European music they heard and tried to reproduce. In the case of negroes who went to English and American possessions, they came into contact with the sentimental, not to say juicy, religious music of the Anglo-Saxons. The emotional impact of this richly harmonised music was, of course, enormously enhanced by the sentimental appeal of the words with their frequently expressed desire to escape from this vale of woe into a better land.

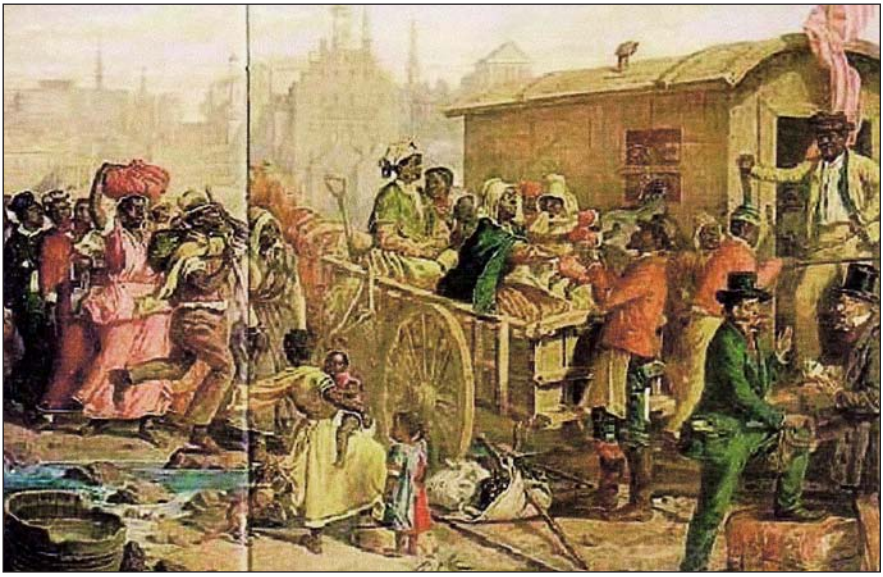
The negro spiritual was the result of this impact, and for the first time we find negroes singing spontaneously in Western harmony. But I think it is clear that these harmonic songs were completely acquired. If you go to the poor negro dance halls in Paris, where the band consists of unsophisticated Negroes brought up in French Colonies, you will find that the band puts syncopations and rhythmic frills round the music in a most up-to-date fashion, but you will find that harmonically speaking, they get no further than the banal, threadbare harmonics of the music they have been brought up with – that is to say, French music-hall song.

Blue harmony, if I may be allowed the phrase, is the production of the English-speaking negro, and a few chords of it are sufficient to show that we are in a different world. As far back as the nineteenth century, this blue

harmony was already beginning to influence high-brow music. I refer, of course, to the music of Delius, who spent much of his early life on a plantation in Florida, where the Negroes used to come and sing to him in the evenings. He has recorded the vivid impression they made on him in two works based on Negro subjects – *Appalachia: Variations on an Old Slave Song*, and *Koanga*, an opera whose hero and heroine are coloured. This is the first example of the negro influencing the white man, instead of the other way about.

In the wedding chorus, sung by negro slaves at the beginning of the second act of *Koanga*, we know that Delius was trying to capture as far as possible the atmosphere of the Negro spiritual of his day. The influence of the hymn is obvious in the four-square construction, but we can see the negro touch in the melancholy cadences and sensual harmonic elements which were later to crystallise into the blues.

In the Finale of *Appalachia*, which deals with the tragedy of a negro who has been transported to another plantation and has to leave his sweetheart, we get a rather more elaborate example, and more of the syncopation, which, although unlike the rhythm of African folk music, is typical of the American Negro.



Slaves going South

RECORDINGS OF A MASTERPIECE

Robert Matthew-Walker

In 1928, Delius could hear, in France, a live concert relayed from London which included *Brigg Fair*, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, and exclaim, in Eric Fenby's presence, "Splendid, Thomas! That is how I want my music played. Beecham is the only one who has got the hang of it." Two months later, Beecham made his first recording of the work, capturing forever the character of the music in what one might fairly claim to be an immortal performance for the gramophone.

Today, of course, the universality of the gramophone and the vast expansion of available repertoire on disc in recent years enable us to experience music with which we would otherwise rarely be given the opportunity of coming into contact, and yet whilst the well-intentioned critic has to cope (if he can) with a never-ending supply of new releases of what is euphemistically termed 'standard repertoire', other compositions which their admirers also believe to be masterpieces are rarely issued by the record companies or otherwise performed by concert-giving or broadcasting organisations. Even those who believe, ultimately, in the righteousness of natural justice find their beliefs stretched when contemplating the total number of recordings issued of such an original masterpiece as *Appalachia* and perhaps ask, "Why so few?"

For in total, just eight recordings of *Appalachia* have been issued in almost seventy years – the most recent was made in 1993 - and three of them are of live performances, not originally intended to be issued on disc. Only one of the eight is by a conductor whose mother tongue was not English – Antal Dorati - and his recording has been intermittently available, rarely so in the UK, and is currently out of print. For those practical reasons I shall not consider it in this survey, yet Dorati's sympathy with Delius's music was undoubtedly deeply-felt. Three of the other recordings are conducted by the same man, although as this person is Beecham we may feel that his recorded legacy of the work is more than sufficient, given Delius's endorsement of the conductor's understanding of his music. In some respects, that is undoubtedly true, but of Beecham's three extant recordings, two date from the 1930s and the third from 1952. The most recent is therefore 55 years old. These three versions are mono recordings, made before those later developments in recording technology

which enable us to hear such a large-scale composition as *Appalachia*, with its myriad textures, in something approaching the aural perspectives that Delius manifestly had in mind.

Beecham's recordings, because of their age, fall into the 'historic' category. Despite Delius's endorsement of Beecham, it does not necessarily follow that his approach to the work is the only one that matters. For its fullest realisation, great music surely demands great interpreters, and others may bring to *Appalachia* differences in approach which are musically equally valid. Therefore those later recordings, all made after Sir Thomas's death in 1961, should be approached with the same sense of application on the part of the listener as we bring to those by Beecham.

One of the initial points of interest in discussing these recordings is that *Appalachia* was the first work by Delius that Beecham heard – it was the spark that lit his subsequent devotion to the composer's art. As mentioned above, the performance in question was the British premiere of Appalachia in London in 1907, conducted by Fritz Cassirer. Knowing Beecham's later work, we might ask if Cassirer's performance was that on which Beecham modelled his own readings, but it is unlikely. It struck home - forcibly. Beecham recalled the occasion: "Like every other musician under thirty years of age who was present I was startled and electrified."

Today, we might be surprised at learning that Beecham "was startled and electrified" at hearing *Appalachia.* After all, in most respects, people might feel that the work clearly does not have the same impact that, say, Mahler's *Eighth Symphony*, Richard Strauss's *Salome,* Schoenberg's *First Chamber Symphony* or Scriabin's *Poem of Ecstasy* – all brand new works in 1907 - have on musicians who have not heard them before, and especially, if we may so imagine, on those unfamiliar with any music written since 1907. Perhaps we have become so used to the equation that 20th century music = noise that we find it difficult to imagine what it must have been like for Beecham hearing the work for the first time, exactly 100 years ago. Difficult, but not impossible, for the first thing that strikes the attentive listener, after hearing *Appalachia* complete, is that nothing, absolutely nothing, like it had ever been heard before. Heard from every angle, *Appalachia* is an utterly original creation: Beecham could have travelled the world, hearing every piece of music written up to that time, but he would not have heard anything remotely similar.

Many people will have access to the Boosey & Hawkes wartime edition pocket score of this work, taken over from the original Universal/Philharmonia edition of the mid-1920s (which is why the words are printed in German above the English). The Boosey & Hawkes score originally contained a

short analysis of the work on a separate insert by Ernst Roth, and I strongly advise those who have it, and who find difficulty initially in grasping the structure of *Appalachia*, to write in pencil in their copy a truncated version of Roth's analysis. On following the score with his analysis thus marked, whilst listening to a recording, the nature of the work becomes clear. The greatness or shortcomings of any performance of *Appalachia* rests or falls in the conductor's ability to reveal, one by one, the myriad features which lie at the expressive heart of the work, at the same time as ensuring that they blend effortlessly into the macrostructure of the composition.

It will be obvious from the foregoing that sound quality can be a factor of no little importance in discussing recordings of *Appalachia*. Clearly, we should not expect pre-war recordings to give us much more than the broader picture, but my observations are not meant to arrive at a 'best-buy' version; I have taken the view that readers will most probably have heard the work, might even be very familiar with it, and my comments are meant to reflect how each performance reflects fidelity to the score at the same time as expressing that uniquely Delian aspect of *feeling*. The recordings will be discussed chronologically, but there is one technical aspect of the first two Beecham accounts which should be borne in mind. This is that the performances from the 1930s were preserved on discs, not tape, and in modern transfers the discs are, as it were, 'joined up'. In those instances where the original side-endings coincided with a pause in the score, we do not know for certain how long Beecham made the pause in performance. This may be a minor point, but it is a valid one.

The first Beecham *Appalachia* is a live recording from the Queen's Hall in London in 1935, a year after Delius's death. The orchestra is the London Philharmonic, and although the recording shows its age, the first thing that strikes the listener is the extraordinary sense of atmosphere Beecham evokes. It is absolutely essential to begin the work with that sense of atmosphere. Apart from Wagner, whose influence on Delius has long been overlooked, I can think of only two other great composers – Bruckner and Sibelius – whose music opens with a similar vital characteristic of the creation of atmosphere. Those who know Beecham through his recordings, or were lucky enough to see him in the flesh, will understand that he possessed an ability to create and maintain atmosphere (perhaps that instinctive quality in his musical make-up drew him to Delius's work in the first place). In all three Beecham recordings, the initial sense of atmosphere is amazingly impressive. But even on the first page of the score, you need more than this, for Delius at once repeats the opening horn phrase *as an echo* – thereby creating, at the outset,

an extraordinary sense of space, such as we may observe in a vast natural panorama. This sense of distance as we scan the horizon is exceptional in musical art, and has to be established at the outset. Beecham achieves this with unerring mastery.

Within those opening twenty or so pages of score, Delius has presented the conductor with multiple problems. He has to create and maintain the atmosphere, transfer the listener's attention from the distance to the foreground without any aural dichotomy, build the massive orchestral climax and suddenly die away before the theme is (almost) stated, *meno mosso,* with the 'bluesy' Negro minor third – and don't forget, we haven't heard the theme yet. This is clearly music which demands a conductor of wholly exceptional abilities, and I have to say that in every one of the recordings that have been issued of *Appalachia,* with one exception, each conductor has solved these multiple problems well – sometimes, in Beecham's case, with an over-riding sense of such style as to cause us to catch our breath in the realisation of what is being achieved as we listen.

It may be thought that this is achieved at some cost, for if we turn to Barbirolli's 1970 HMV recording we can hear clearly – and not merely through the finer recording quality in Kingsway Hall – details such as we may strain to discern in Beecham's recordings. Barbirolli is more apt to pause fractionally, as on a country walk, pointing out this or that element as if he were bringing the colour of a wild flower to our attention against the backdrop of mighty hills in the distance. This is a lovely approach to the music, warm-hearted and endearing, and yet – it must be admitted – achieved with some structural disadvantage. For example, Barbirolli begins the marked *rallentando* at bar 51 too soon, and his control of dynamics in those opening pages is not as the composer so marks them – if the first bars are played *forte* (as marked), is the echo in this performance a genuine *pianissimo* in contrast? I don't think so. Yet there are times when this view of *Appalachia* exactly fits the mood of the music, although it is exceptionally difficult for any conductor to achieve this without appearing to dawdle, yet Barbirolli *does* achieve it, which is why – despite certain subtle differences between his view of the score and Beecham's – I regard his version as a wholly valid and indeed admirable one.

Three years before Barbirolli's Kingsway Hall recording was made, the BBC taped – and thankfully kept – a Promenade Concert performance conducted by Sir Charles Groves, who was invariably his own man, and in many ways his reading has claim to be considered the most complete of all. Groves is not quite the equal of either Beecham or Barbirolli in those opening pages – although Royal Albert Hall acoustic (pre-'flying saucers') is well caught by

the engineers, and adds a breathtaking aspect to the 'echo' horn phrase. He is unable to sustain the initial atmosphere as his older competitors can – but has an advantage which is denied to all other conductors on record of this work. This is that he has a much larger choir, made up of no fewer than four groups – the BBC Chorus, BBC Choral Society, Goldsmiths' Choral Union and the London Philharmonic Choir – at his disposal. The result is that he is the only recorded conductor who can, depending on the nature of the choral writing at any one point, vary the choral strength from a relatively small *a capella* group to that of a vast choral body, such as we might expect to hear in *A Mass of Life.*

The advantages are tangible, for in this work Delius introduces the voices almost by stealth – they are first heard as if coming from a great distance and gradually appear to get nearer until they burst with macarian vividness, singing their hearts out, and finally reinforcing the cadence E flat-F major (bars 630-632) with a relieving "Ah!" Only a large choral strength can make this point with the impact that the music surely demands. This is not to gainsay the choral balance in other recordings, but to point out that Groves takes full advantage of the opportunity offered him in those Ponsonby BBC days. In this performance, the 'approach' as it were of Man on Nature as exemplified in the vocal writing has an almost physical presence. At the end of the work, as surely as the composer intended, the Proms audience was able to experience that fusion of Man and Nature which lay at the heart of Delius's musical expression. Groves achieved that fusion naturally, not through the knob-twiddling of recording engineers.

Yet Groves's performance is forty years old and the recording quality, by its very nature, is not 'state-of-the-art'. Perhaps we expect to find sonically more acceptable versions in later Decca recordings, conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras and Richard Hickox. These conductors have made much-admired reputations as Delians, and in very many respects they would appear to have the best of all worlds – but as with all recorded music, the issues stand or fall on the quality of the music-making, not on the vividness of the sound. However, I regret to say that I do not care for Mackerras's 1993 reading at all – these things are, of course, totally subjective – but in view of his kindness in having agreed to talk to the Editor about conducting the work, I will leave it at that!

Richard Hickox's Decca (Argo) recording dates from 1980, and in purely technical terms is easily the best this labyrinthine score has received, although it too is getting on for being thirty years old. This does not matter at all in sound terms, for it is a long time in Hickox's career; nowadays, his discography

runs into hundreds of issues, yet in 1980 he had only been making records for three or four years – in other words, this was made at the outset of his career. Luckily, he had the best possible 'line-up' of musicians – the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, with its Beecham-Delius tradition then still viable, and the London Symphony Chorus – then the best in London, trained by Hickox himself. This is a fine performance indeed, and – without being wise after the event – the element of youthful fantasy which a deeply sympathetic young conductor can bring to this music, almost unwittingly, and which can add much to our grasp of the work (Delius was in his very early forties when it was composed, physically and mentally at the height of his powers), gives this performance an underlying sense of tensile strength. It is only through being judged at the highest level of interpretative skill that I hesitate to place this at the top of my deliberations.

I had hoped, when I began my comparisons, to arrive at a single, definitive, conclusion – but, for reasons which I trust readers will understand, I cannot. What cannot be denied is that the spell-binding originality of this music can, in the right hands, still cause us to be "startled and electrified".

© Robert Matthew-Walker 2007

A group of negros c. 1870

A POSTCRIPT: FILM MUSIC – BY DELIUS?

Ian Lace

The 1946 M-G-M film *The Yearling,* starring Gregory Peck, Jane Wyman and Claude Jarman Jnr, was a story about a young boy's love for his pet fawn. It captured the beauty of Florida's wetlands, yet reflected the harsh realities of survival for a poor farming family. The music for the film was by Herbert Stothart (1885-1949), who scored many of M-G-M's most prestigious films, including *The Wizard of Oz, The Barretts of Wimpole Street, David Copperfield* and *Pride and Prejudice.*

In *The Yearling,* Stothart quoted liberally from Delius's *Appalachia* – and the CD's notes explain how this came about: "To musically interpret the lush, untamed scrub of post Civil-war Florida, Stothart saw no need to reinvent the wheel. He chose to interpolate the work of Frederick Delius who had written a concert work for chorus and orchestra inspired by his years living in the Florida scrubs, called *Appalachia: Variations on an Old Slave Song*. In the original *Appalachia* manuscript there is a note in Delius's hand that the work "mirrors the moods of tropical nature in the great swamps bordering the Mississippi River."

In actual fact the locale, along the St Johns river, for *The Yearling* is practically the same as that where Delius worked at cultivating oranges as an escape from his father's oppressive wool trade. Delius noted the savage beauty of the Everglades and, indeed, the young farmer (Peck) falls victim to a deadly snake-bite.

Stothart's original music for the film is joyous and innocently playful, intimate and homely, and darker for the ruination of the family's meagre crops by the fawn that has to be killed – thus giving the boy a sad but realistic life-lesson. But it is Stothart's sensitive and seamless integration of Delius's *Appalachia,* so appropriate to locale and story – a theme of so much of Delius's music was the transience of life and love – that makes the music for *The Yearling* so affecting and memorable.

The Yearling film music is coupled with Stothart's music from another M-G-M classic, *Random Harvest* – and details can be found at http://www.filmscoremonthly.com

[The picture on the back cover is a still from *The Yearling,* showing the stars: Claude Jarman Jnr, Jane Wyman and Gregory Peck].

LIFE AT GREZ: A MARRIAGE AMONG THE ARTISTS

"Are all my blooms; and all my sweet blooms of love...."

Lionel Carley

In 1901 a view of Grez was painted by a young man who would become one of Japn's best-known artists. A plume of smoke from the house on the left tells us that the Deliuses are at home. It brings the inanimate house (houses tend, after all, to be still and silent in paintings) to life in a way that few other representational techniques can do, and one is grateful to Chu Asai for having captured this quiet moment

1903: A marriage at Grez

All the evidence points to Delius's considering the official ceremony relating to his marriage to have been of little significance in itself. For him there would not, of course, have been a moment's thought of having the ceremony in church. An opportunity missed, one might say, since the church at Grez-sur-Loing was after all situated next door to the house that he shared with his artist friend Jelka Rosen. They could have saved the trouble of the extra few metres walk to the Mairie had they chosen to be married in church.

About a month before their marriage in

Chu Asai: The Church at Grez (1901)
(The Mairie is just behind the Church)

September 1903 Frederick Delius and Jelka Rosen left Grez-sur-Loing on their honeymoon in Holland. They spent some three weeks away from their village home, visiting Antwerp, Amsterdam and the seaside resort of Katwijk aan Zee, and they stopped briefly too in Calais. Katwijk (or Katwyk), where for a while they came to rest, was a small town of some 6,000 souls. A small port, it was a popular watering place with a picturesque old church - and a colony of artists. In normal conditions it would not be have beendifficult to imagine Jelka taking her brushes and palette with her, and painting a canvas or two there. But conditions were not entirely normal. Delius and Jelka returned to Grez in early September, and some two weeks later they pledged their marriage vows at the Mairie. The date was the 23rd of September - the time, six in the evening.

Something of course does not quite add up here. Even today, it would be seen to be rather unusual for a couple to embark on their honeymoon a month before they actually got married. A hundred years ago it would have seemed even more surprising - to many even morally reprehensible.

So how did this unusual situation come to pass? All had in fact been carefully - perhaps one should say not quite carefully enough - prepared for an August wedding. Appropriate certificates had been obtained in June from the British and German Consulates in Paris and from the Procureur de la République in Fontainebleau. But Delius had thought that the bans had needed to be published only on the Sunday before the wedding, whereas French law very definitely required two Sundays. He had left putting in place the final piece of the wedding jigsaw too late. So the planned August wedding had to be postponed, simply so that the trip to Holland could take place as fixed.

However, there was in fact a pressing reason for this Dutch holiday to go ahead without delay. Jelka had begun, during the summer at Grez, to have serious worries concerning her eyesight - so much so that she feared that she was going blind in one eye. She had finally consulted a specialist in Paris who was able, thankfully, to reassure her that she had a cataract which could later be operated on, with every hope of success. The specialist strongly advised her to keep to her travelling plans. The trip would after all take her mind off the waiting period for the operation. She was not, however, to do any work - so there could be no painting - and she was advised in the meantime to lead a healthy lifestyle. So it was that Delius and Jelka left, thoroughly unmarried, for their honeymoon in Holland. When they returned to Grez, the bans were duly read, a month later than planned, on the 6th and the 13th of September. On the 14th Jelka wrote, despite her eye trouble, to her friend the French sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840-1917):

Dear Master,

It is a long time since I saw you and I meant to come and see you the other day in Paris, but did not have the time. I wanted to tell you that I passed through Calais and stopped to have a look at your superb Bourgeois there. I cannot describe to you the immense impression that this work made on me. I had one of those rare and sublime moments when one is completely imbued with the beauty of a work of art and I thank you for this! I spent a few weeks in Holland mostly by the sea; this beautiful monster always attracts me; I was with my friend Delius; and now we are to be married on the 25th of this month. I'm a little apprehensive of the ceremony at the mairie in Grez; but no doubt one must learn to be ridiculous gracefully!….I should love to see you again, dear Master, and learn what you are doing and how you are. We shall have a little pied-à-terre in Paris for the coming winter, so I hope you will be in town a little more often.

Delius sends you his best wishes.

Your devoted
Jelka Rosen

Rodin duly replied:

Dear Mademoiselle Rosen

I am very grateful for the letter that you so kindly sent me telling me of your high opinion of my bourgeois de Calais. I know that I shall always enjoy your sympathetic feelings. I must congratulate you on your festive day of the 25th at the Mairie de Grez. It is the ancient custom and there must be a consecration of your union.

I congratulate Monsieur Delius and beg him to accept my kindest regards.

Auguste Rodin

A week or so later the wedding took place, on the 23rd of the month according to official records – though the Deliuses' letters constantly refer to the 25th – the Mayor of Grez, Charles Girbal, officiating and with four witnesses present. Delius's chosen witnesses were René Besse, carpenter, and Isidore Roger, 'cultivateur' – I suspect his odd-job man and his gardener respectively. Jelka's were Eugène Couillard, schoolteacher, and Marie Blandel, servant. This was, then, no society wedding. The gardener just signed the marriage register with his surname, and Marie Blandel, the cook-housekeeper, had instead to make a spoken declaration, having never learnt to write at all. Roger and Besse lived in two houses just across the road from the Deliuses, and Roger's daughter Jeanne (who was well into her nineties when she died

in 1989) long remembered the invitations tendered by Jelka to her and to René Besse's daughter at various times to come in for a snack or even to celebrate Christmas. She was also a good friend of Marie 'la Bretonne', the Deliuses' cook. When the witnesses returned in their Sunday best from the marriage ceremony, they were immediately interrogated by their two daughters, who declared: 'If there's been a marriage, there must be a party!' So both girls crossed the road to see Madame Delius, who duly offered them something to eat. And that would seem to have been the only celebration shared with others of the village on this auspicious day. The Deliuses in other words, who had already lived together for some years, saw no reason to treat the function other than in a perfunctory way. This matter-of-fact attitude shows in a letter Frederick sent a few days later to his old friend the Norwegian composer, Edvard Grieg:

> On the 25th I married my friend Jelka Rosen here in Grez. (Civilement of course) have got even further away from God & Jesus. We lived together for 6 years, but we found it really more practical to legalize our relationship - One gets everything cheaper & one receives free & without further ado a certificate of honesty & good manners… I should very much like to introduce my wife to you & Frau Grieg - She is a painter & very gifted–

Grieg looked forward to meeting Jelka:

> Our heartiest congratulations and best wishes to you both. You know me well enough to realize that preachers viewed as a tribe are anathema to me. A marriage without preachers has something much more idealistic about it than a church marriage. But as you say: It is cheaper! (Very good!) And for the masses, more moral! (Just as good!).

Delius then wrote to another great friend, the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863-1944):

> Miss R. & I have just legalized our relationship as we consider it more practical - We have been in Holland but the weather was awful.

"So you are hooked and I am still a loose fellow'", wrote Munch in return, asking for Delius's advice (which he so often sought) as to how and where he might hold an exhibition of his works in Paris. Delius's family's reactions to the wedding were mixed. His father having died two years earlier, his mother sent him £25 as a wedding present. His German aunt, Albertine Krönig, however had many doubts. She seems to have been against the wedding, aware as she was that for years her nephew had lived on allowances supplied by his parents as well as by herself:

> If Fraülein Rosen were not to have sufficient wealth to cover the expenses of a household and of your life, the step would be very rash and foolish.

She was right of course. Delius had been composing for more than 15 years, but very little of his work - just a few songs - had been published, and there seemed to be scant evidence at this stage that he would ever make money out of his music.

Similarly unimpressed was another friend of Frederick, the writer Charles Keary (a regular visitor to Grez), who had a few years earlier written the libretto for Delius's opera *Koanga*. We read about him in a letter from William Blair Bruce (1859-1906), the Canadian painter to his sister:

> Keary I heard from months ago - he was so frightfully angry because of his friends Yelka Rosen and Delius, who quietly got married … without letting him know anything about it - he was as mad as a hatter - 'Thought Delius had more sense' etc etc.

In spite of everything, Delius could now be assured that marriage to Jelka Rosen would see his own modest and indeed uncertain income supplemented by her own much larger one. Her father was long dead and her mother had died in the previous year, leaving her a portion of the family fortune. And of course she owned fully the house at Grez. Moreover she was totally devoted to Delius and believed committedly in his genius. From now on, her own life and work was to be subordinated to his, and Delius would be more or less relieved from financial pressures.

1901: Rodin comes to Grez

Auguste Rodin was among the very first to be informed of the wedding. The only time the great sculptor visited the village had been in June 1901, and this had been at the invitation of Jelka, when he came to the house to stay for two days. He had written to her in March that year:

> … it seems to me that as soon as I possibly can I shall make my way to the Solitude that you have so well described at your home.

Jelka's reply followed:

> Will you really come? I hardly dare think of it and yet - I do think of it, so much joy and pleasure it will give me to show you my little corner of Paradise –

A little later, Jelka was to tell Rodin for the first time about Delius:

> Can I tempt you by telling you that there is a very artistic musician here who is a fervent admirer of your work, a great enthusiast of your Balzac who would be

very, very happy to make your acquaintance?

Soon, success - as evidenced by a short note from Rodin:

> My friend, I shall take the train at 9.32, will be at Bourron at 11.19 as you have indicated. Affectionately
> Rodin

Two wonderful days followed, with Jelka writing to Rodin soon after his departure from Grez:

> You wanted me to write and in my thoughts I am always still with you, but so sad that I no longer have you… Delius talks so much about you and asks me to pay his respects to you.

Later, Rodin decided to give Jelka a bronze. She returned from a visit to his studio in 1904 with a statuette of Pierre de Wissant, one of the Bourgeois de Calais:

> The other evening I came home with my treasure in my arms - in an absolute fever; my husband is utterly entranced; we both of us so admired the group of bourgeois at Calais. He will come to visit you on one of the coming Saturdays.

1903: Edvard Munch comes to Grez

Less than two years later, another great artist came to stay in the house, and Jelka wrote to Rodin telling him about the new guest:

> The young Munk, very, very interesting Norwegian painter, is here too. He is exhibiting at the Indépendants. I am sending you an invitation to the Vernissage in case this may interest you…I am working hard…Munk has encouraged me, like you…
>
> Delius joins me in expressing to you a thousand devoted and sympathetic thoughts!

So it was that two great artists - Auguste Rodin and Edvard Munch - journeyed to Grez within the space of two years. They did not elect to put up at the Hotel Chevillon or elsewhere, nor did they seek out other local artists: they came to stay at the home of Frederick Delius and Jelka Rosen.

1896: The Blair Bruces and a first meeting

How did Delius and Jelka come to meet each other in the first place? For several years Delius had been very much at home in artistic circles in Paris and could number some great artists as his personal friends. Edvard Munch had around 1890 entered into a friendship with Delius that was to last for

over 40 years. Then there was August Strindberg, little known at the time in his role as a painter, whom Delius got to know in the mid-1890s, many years after Strindberg's sojourns in Grez. Munch's lithograph portrait of Strindberg dates from the Swede's stay in Paris at this time. Delius would often dine with Strindberg and accompany him on walks through the Luxembourg Gardens and its neighbourhood. Then there was Paul Gauguin, whom Delius would often meet in Paris at this period. In 1897 the composer bought a particularly fine Gauguin canvas, *Nevermore*, which would remain in his possession throughout and beyond the First World War, but which was ultimately sold when the Deliuses were in need of money. Before the sale, Jelka made a careful copy of it.

One needs to look both to Grez and to Paris to find two more artists - a married couple, he from Canada and she from Sweden - who jointly bear the responsibility for this wedding at the Mairie de Grez. William Blair Bruce has already been briefly mentioned. In 1881 he had travelled to Europe from Hamilton, Ontario, to study painting at the Académie Julian in Paris. He

William Blair Bruce: Grez (n.d.)

married Caroline Benedicks (1856-1935), the Swedish sculptor, in Paris, in 1886, a year after first meeting her. Both of them would spend much time together in Grez in the following years. It is clear that both Delius and Jelka Rosen had separately become acquainted with the Bruces by 1895. In Jelka's case the first meeting with Caroline had been in the summer of 1895, when both had been painting in Grez:

Some years ago I travelled to the Swedish island of Gotland, in the Baltic, where Caroline and William had finally settled at the turn of the century and where I hoped that I might find out much more about this pair and discover how it had happened that they brought the Deliuses together. The ancient, fortified town of Visby, the island's capital, has a small but fascinating museum, and here can be found many canvases painted in Grez by Caroline and William. Most are kept in the vaults, together with paintings by other artists that had once been in the Bruces' collection. One that I found was an uncatalogued view of Grez-sur-Loing in 1882 painted by Arthur Heseltine (1855-1930), Philip Heseltine's uncle. Then there was a second source on Gotland - less rich and less well-known. This was the Bruces' large and isolated house, several kilometres north of Visby. Again there were paintings by the Bruces still hanging there. One, by William, was of Grez-sur-Loing, though it was impossible to be sure before taking it off the wall and examining the back of the canvas. There was another canvas there by William which I thought might be of the river Loing, but there was, unfortunately, nothing - neither title nor annotation - that might have verified this.

One particular source in the museum of Visby which is rich in references to life in Grez and to the artists who frequented the village is Caroline Benedicks Bruce's diaries. Those pages of particular interest to us seem to begin around 1889 and to continue for the next decade or so. If valuable, these diaries are not rich in detail, being for the most part a simple record of engagements. But they do give us the date of the first meeting of Frederick and Jelka and the circumstances in which they met. The year was 1896, and the date was 16 January. Caroline already knew Jelka, and William already knew Delius. They were both invited to dinner chez Caroline and William in Paris that evening, Jelka in the company of her mother, who was living with her at her studio in Paris:

> Mrs. och Miss Rosen, Mr. Delius till middag. [Mrs and Miss Rosen, Mr Delius to dinner.]

It had been Caroline's idea to bring Jelka and Frederick together. She knew that Jelka loved the songs of Grieg and liked to sing them. And she knew too

that Delius loved Grieg's music and was moreover a friend of Grieg. She had told Jelka:

> You must know a young Englishman, a friend of ours. He also loves Grieg and composes music himself, and he lives in a funny old house up in Montrouge where there is no concierge.

After dinner, Caroline asked Jelka to sing something and Jelka, so very appropriately, chose two songs by Grieg. With that began a life-long relationship. Unfortunately, Caroline's diary for 1895 - the year before this meeting - has disappeared. It might well have shown us how it was that Delius himself came into the circle of the Bruces. But we do have that engagement book for 1896, and this also documents William's times spent with Delius. Delius was hoping that his latest completed opera, *The Magic Fountain*, might be performed in the near future. Interest in the work had certainly been expressed by two opera houses, and so he was preoccupied with its presentation. The opera was based in the American South, and on the early encounters of Europeans with American Indians. William Blair Bruce had returned for a while to his native Canada in 1895 and had, as it happened, spent some time painting among Canadian Indians. What could have been more natural than for Delius, on seeing some of William's products of this period, to ask him to make some costume designs for his opera? William wrote home to Canada about his new friend:

> I am just busy now in the evenings designing Indian costumes for a libretto that one of my musical friends has written. Delius is his name. Bell [Blair Bruce's sister] will remember him, I think she has some of his music. It is great fun for evening amusement. We are making quite a nice thing of the front page of the music also.

Three pages of William's designs happily still remain to us in the Delius Trust's archive.

1897: Jelka buys her house

Toward the end of 1897, William Blair Bruce signalled to his sister from Paris:

> By the way I suppose you have heard that Yelka Rosen has bought Chad's old house down by the church (at Grez) and has been running a sort of cooperative boarding house with as many artistic friends as she could get together. Delius put in a couple of months boarding with them - slept out in the village of course – no gentlemen allowed in the house after midnight - she tried to get Keary to take a hand also, but he declined as he wanted to live a quieter life. I presume Yelka is cute enough to make the affair pay…

Among the Bruces' most intimate friends in and around Grez were the American painter Francis Brook Chadwick (1850-1943) and his Swedish painter wife Emma (née Löwstädt - 1855-1931), together with Arthur Heseltine and his French artist wife. There are many references, over many years, to these people in Caroline's diaries. The Chadwicks and the Heseltines, like the Bruces, soon became friends of the Deliuses too. And in the case of the Chadwicks and the house that Jelka bought in Grez in 1897 there was a particular connection, for Frank and Emma Chadwick had earlier rented this same house, and their children had spent their early happy years there. There is a photograph of the Chadwick family in the garden, and I am grateful to Corinne Colomb for having allowed me to copy it some years ago. I don't know which one of the children is Louise – a cause for regret, because I had the pleasure of meeting her on two occasions in the 1960s. (See page 103) She told me then: "We lived in [the house] ten years until my father bought one when I was ten years old." This latter house, bought by the Chadwicks at the beginning of the 1890s was the Hotel Laurent, where for a few years they took in paying guests before converting it to a private residence.

The Chadwicks and the Deliuses

There were three Chadwick children, with all of whom the Deliuses were friendly: Louise, Hilma and Carl - and Carl is mentioned from time to time in the Deliuses' letters as 'Chaddy' or 'little Chaddy'. The friendship was later to be extended to Hilma's husband, the American journalist and author Alden Brooks. Louise was quite gifted artistically. The family has a small notebook of hers which contains a delightful water-colour of a tennis match in Grez, a reminder of an entry made on 19 July 1889 in Caroline Benedicks Bruce's diary: 'Lawntennis "tournament" in Grez'. When Louise - whose married name was Courmes - died I was given a plaster bust which she owned. It was of Delius and it had been modelled by Jelka. So I travelled to Grez with the express purpose of taking it back to London, along with Delius's death mask and a cast of his right hand made after death, each item having come into the possession of Louise Courmes. These things are now safely preserved in the Delius Trust's Archive, and six copies of the bust have been made. The wonderful Swedish painter Carl Larsson once made a delightful sketch of Emma Chadwick taking a walk with a pet lamb in Grez. It is anyway almost impossible to talk about the artists of Grez-sur-Loing without just once referring to Larsson, who in the early 1880s had stayed longer in the village than had most of his Nordic fellow-painters.

So it is, then, that we have the Bruces and the Chadwicks among the earliest

friends of the Deliuses in the locality.

Ida Gerhardi and the Deliuses

"Jelka by Ida Gerhardi (1897)"

The German artist Ida Gerhardi (1862-1927), who painted portraits of Delius and Jelka, was Jelka's best friend, and in the 1890s the two painted in Grez together for several summers. Ida would remain Jelka's trusted confidante until her death in 1929. She was unquestionably the finer painter of the two, and her works are in a number of public collections in Germany. She and Jelka both attended art school in Paris in the mid-1890s, and she made in 1897 a small and rather beautiful portrait of her friend. It is not clear whether it was painted in Grez or in Paris. On the other hand I believe that a pencil portrait of Jelka was actually executed in Grez. At about the same time as the first portrait of Jelka, Ida also made one of Delius. This would have been painted in Grez in the summer of 1897, almost certainly in Jelka's garden and just shortly after the composer had returned from the second of his two visits to America[1]. Ida also painted her two friends on later occasions. These date from the summers of 1901 and 1903, and it could be that the 1903 portrait of Delius was made as a wedding present for the couple. In the background of the 1901 picture of Jelka can be seen the cook/servant and witness at the wedding ceremony, Marie Blandel, and down on the left there appears a cat - which is not referred to in the Delius correspondence - and a raven, 'Koanga', named after Delius's opera, which does appear frequently in the correspondence. There is a story that this - or a later - pet raven of the same name could distinguish between letters, brought by the postman, of which it approved and those of which it disapproved - signalling distinctly to the recipients its pleasure or displeasure. Ida painted one further portrait of Delius in Grez in 1912.

Arthur Heseltine: Grez (1882)

Arthur ('Joe') Heseltine and the Deliuses

The Deliuses' friendship with Arthur Heseltine lasted for many years - and it brought about a first meeting with Heseltine's young nephew Philip, who became a gifted composer and writer. The friendship with Arthur cooled distinctly after the Deliuses returned to Grez after spending several months away in London in 1915. Delius wrote to Arthur's nephew to inform him of the cause of this rupture in relations:

> Your uncle Joe has turned out an awful old fraud – Just fancy! whilst we were in England he spread the report about Bourron & Marlotte that we had been interned in a concentration camp in England & many other idiotic but treacherous reports about us - What do you say to that?… I had such confidence in him that I had written to him to go to my house in Grez & get me a certain book – It appears he searched the house like a detective & went thro everything… Of course, I do not want to see any more of him… his falseness raises my gorge.

Delius evidently did not know then that, in Grez at the start of the war, Heseltine had privately told Alden Brooks that yet another resident, the mild-mannered painter Matthew Smith, was clearly a British spy who had been sent to the village specifically to keep an eye on Delius. Our composer, said Heseltine, was pretending to be Danish, whereas he was quite clearly of German extraction. The Deliuses certainly had initial difficulties at the start of the war, suspicions being

aroused in connection with Delius's parentage and Jelka's German nationality. On yet another occasion Heseltine mocked them for ostentatiously flying a British flag from their house. Relations in later years with Arthur Heseltine were evidently not entirely cordial, but they were never broken, probably because of the importance that his nephew Philip had begun to take on in respect of the life and music of Delius. Philip had loved Delius's music since first encountering it while he was a schoolboy at Eton College. He had been overjoyed to find that his uncle lived in the next village to his idol, and it was while he was still at school that he first met the composer. He came to Grez many times and helped Delius in many ways musically, as well as writing the first English biography of Delius.

Christian Krohg and Delius

Finally we come to another Norwegian painter. He was of the generation that preceded that of Edvard Munch, and was probably the most important painter of his day in Norway. As Munch's teacher he has, of course, a particular significance in respect of Munch's development as a world figure. Christian Krohg (1852-1925), as well as being a prolific painter - particularly of marine scenes - and a highly regarded portraitist, was well-known too in Norway as a journalist. He was the first in that country to perfect the art of the informal newspaper interview, and his interviews were usually adorned with a pen and ink sketch that he made of his subject at the same time. In October 1897, following Delius's controversial début as a composer of incidental music in the Norwegian capital's principal theatre, Krohg joined Delius at the reception that followed

Christian Krohg: Sunday Morning (1882)

the first night. He took Delius aside and interviewed him about his music, about his love for Norway and about his time as a plantation owner in Florida, and at the same time he rapidly sketched this most cosmopolitan of composers. What Christian Krohg seems not to have asked was where Delius now lived. Had he done so, both would have been greatly surprised - and indeed would have found much more to talk about, for Krohg was among the earliest of the Nordic artists to come to Grez and to paint there. It seems that he was encouraged by his compatriot, Christian Skredsvig, who had in 1881/2 painted one of the greatest of Grez paintings, 'October Morning in Grez' – now at the National Gallery in Oslo. Krohg came in the summer of 1882, and among the canvases he painted at this time are two of the main street: 'Sunday morning' and 'Village street in Grez'. How could Delius have guessed, when being interviewed so far away from Grez fifteen years after the creation of these canvases, that the house he had just made his home had figured so prominently in two of his celebrated interlocutor's paintings?

Conclusion

In conclusion a word about two more portraits of Delius. The first is an early one of Jelka by the Spanish painter Leandro Ramon Garrido (1868-1909). Garrido certainly stayed in Grez, but this particular picture was more likely to have been painted in Paris. Forty years and more later, there was a final portrait of Delius, painted by the last of the artists who came to Grez-sur-Loing to depict him - the Scottish artist James Gunn (1862-1934), in 1932. This is how the composer is frequently remembered, blind and paralysed as his life drew towards its end, but nonetheless noble and with a certain hauteur - and with his mind still teeming with musical ideas. Gunn also painted a portrait of Eric Fenby. On one of my earliest visits to Grez, in the mid-1960s, I had the privilege of meeting three people who remembered the old man: Louise Courmes, of course; then there was the charming André Baron, who was Delius's chauffeur; and finally Gaston Fleury, policeman, who was one of the pallbearers at the composer's funeral. One wonders now if there is anyone still living in the village who has memories of one of England's greatest composers.

Others artists who lived in or visited Grez and who were known to the Deliuses:

William Rothenstein (1872-1945), English painter (portrait of Delius)
Achille Ouvré (1872-1951), French illustrator (portrait of Delius)

Georges-Daniel de Monfreid (1856-1929), French painter (portrait of Delius)
Catherine Barjansky (? - ?), Russian sculptor (wax bust of Delius)
Henry Clews (1876-1937), American sculptor (plaster mask of Delius)
Matthew Smith (1879-1959), English painter
Roderic O'Conor (1860-1940), Irish painter
John Lavery (1856-1941), Irish painter
Guy Maynard (1856-1936), American painter.
August Strindberg (1849-1912), Swedish writer & painter
Hilma Brooks, née Chadwick (? - ?), French painter
Albert Edward Sterner (1863-1946), American painter
Ella Blackburn (? - ?), English painter
William Stone (1842-1913), American painter
Oda Krohg (1860-1935), Norwegian painter
Per Krohg (1889-1965), Norwegian painter
Ludvig Karsten (1876-1926), Norwegian painter

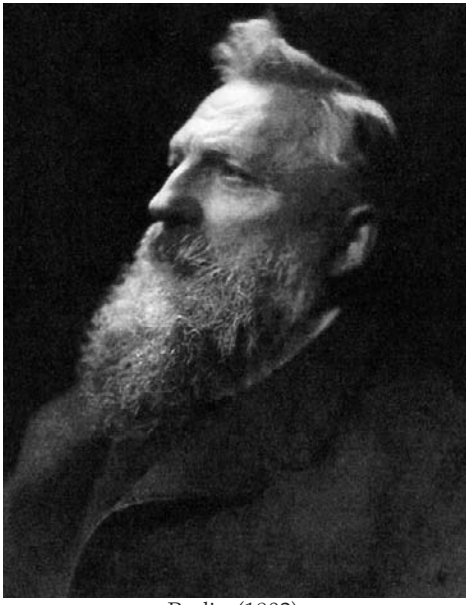
Note:
This article was originally prepared as an illustrated lecture delivered in French at a special event ('Hommage à Frederick Delius et à Jelka Rosen') in Grez-sur-Loing on 20 September 2003, marking the centenary of the Deliuses' marriage. The day-long celebration was organised by Claire Leray, together with the late Michel le Harivel, under the umbrella of 'Artistes du Bout du Monde', a society commemorating the activities of the many international artists who painted in and around the village. I have partially rewritten and updated my original talk, adding a little extra detail, but the initial focus has remained on the marriage. The choice of the main artists referred to was my own, cited for the information and, one hopes, the entertainment of our friends the Grézois who chose generously to mark the day and to learn a little more about the Deliuses and their painterly environment.

THE DELIUSES AND RODIN

The Rodin Exhibition at The Royal Academy of Arts:
23 September 2006 – 1 January 2007

Whilst Delius's music cannot be directly linked to the creativity of Rodin, the French sculptor was an artist admired by the composer. Rodin enjoyed a friendship of many years with Jelka Delius. This exhibition gave a fascinating insight into Rodin's work, and clarified why Delius admired the Frenchman's work.

Auguste Rodin (1840 – 1917), the French sculptor who heralded the modern age, was celebrated in this major retrospective of his work at the Royal Academy of Arts. Ten themes, arranged chronologically, revealed the sources of Rodin's inspiration, from his studies of unposed models to his love of the Antique. Central to the exhibition is an exploration of Rodin's relationship with Britain, where he established his name as a sculptor of international standing. *The Gates of Hell* and *The Thinker* featured amongst some 200 pieces of the highest quality, which were borrowed in large part from the Musée Rodin and the store at Rodin's home in Meudon.



Rodin (1902)
(Photo: H Walter Barnett)

A talented draughtsman, this exhibition also presents Rodin's lyrical and erotic drawings, alongside contemporary photographs of the artist and his work. This was the first major Rodin exhibition in Britain for 20 years, and it included works that have never before been exhibited outside France. The story of Rodin and Britain, the sub-theme of this exhibition, begins with his first visit to London in 1881; he exhibited at the Royal Academy the following year. Due to the championing of William Henley and the enthusiasm of early collectors like Constantine Ionides and Lord Leighton PRA, Rodin's confidence grew, as did his profile in Britain. Interestingly Rodin experienced professional successes in Britain before he became an established artist in

Paris. The visits and honours were renewed after 1900 when the founding collectors of the museums in Cardiff, Manchester, Glasgow and elsewhere bought Rodin's work and he was fêted by the aristocracy and politicians who sat for their portraits. Rodin's affinity with Britain was further affirmed in 1911, when the Burghers of Calais was bought for the nation through the National Art Collections fund, and in 1914, when he donated 18 works to the state, now in the collection of the V&A, 14 of which were on display.

Jelka Rosen met Rodin for the first time in 1900. Lionel Carley includes in *Delius: A Life In Letters 1862-1908* (p 176) a long letter from Delius in Berlin to Jelka, after her first meeting with Rodin, in which he said he was: "…glad you like Rodin so much it is always interesting & often helps one to be in contact with real artists and they are fewer than we really believe-". Though we do not know of any contact between Rodin and Delius before 1900 clearly the composer had an informed admiration for the sculptor by that time. Delius does not appear to be as devoted to artistic traditions as Rodin clearly was. We must assume that these two men had different artistic values.

Jelka's friendship with Rodin lasted until his death. There are 35 letters between them, from 1900 to 1914, in existence. In one, of 1901, Jelka told Rodin of Delius's admiration for his art, and in particular for Rodin's sculpture of Balzac, which at the time was a controversial piece, not popular with French critics. Rodin stayed with Jelka at Grez for two days in June 1901. A month later Rodin wrote to Jelka, telling her that he is reading Nietzsche; "…and I find a man of genius, very often obscure, but one may sometimes guess. I envy your having reached his level" (Lionel Carley *ibid.* (p 192)).

Another member of the Delius circle, Percy Grainger, also met Rodin, at the home of Mary Hunter, the society hostess and sister of Ethel Smyth. Grainger told Sigurd Fornander in a letter of 1945 (included in *The All-Round Man: Selected Letters of Percy Grainger,* edited by Malcolm Gillies and David Pear (Clarendon Press Oxford, 1994) (p 201), that he had met Rodin, and that the sculptor was one of the artists who had "touched me through their art and creative greatness." Rodin's beautiful bust of Mary Hunter was a highlight in the exhibition and was excellently displayed.

This exhibition has broadened my knowledge of Rodin and his work, and has filled in some interesting gaps in the artistic background to the lives of Fred and Jelka Delius. This illumination has been achieved by bringing together and allowing us to see so many major works by the great sculptor, so much admired by the Deliuses and Grainger. The exhibition reminded me how sophisticated and wide-ranging Delius's visual artistic interests were.

© Paul Chennell 2007

ON FIRST HEARING...

This poem, under its original title First Cuckoo: For Frederick Delius, *won first prize in the Christchurch Open Poetry Competition in 1993, earning the author the princely sum of £20. Those who are not into modern poetry may find it a bit strange, with its quotations from Keats, and references to Welsh wizards and Omar Khayyam - but, given the subject of the poem, Members may agree that it has at least some curiosity value for the readers of the Delius Journal.*

That opening seventh on divided strings -
Bassrooted, skyreaching, a revelation
Of trees tall as enchantment, yet alive
With the leaves' vibrato. As though a veil,
Fallen longsince on the unfallen world,
Were lifted suddenly, it seemed that here
Were nature's very lineaments and the heart's
Translated into music.

The Delian cuckoo was my nightingale.
Already with thee. (Gwion of the grove
And Omar under ruined palace walls
Heard, each in his respective tongue, the bird's
Reiterated, sad, almost rhetorical
Question: *Cw-cw?*
Ku-ku?
Where? Where?)

Faint sibilance: the needle skates on static,
At the still centre gives an upward lurch,
Then swings home settling – *click* – upon its perch.
Fled is that music.
Fourteen years old, desultory doodler at keyboards
And in countless exercise books,
I cried bitterly, knowing myself unequal
To the challenge of that palpable beauty.

Delius, you were the death
Of whosoever else I might have been.
The irresistible current of your song
Took me by the heart and carried me out
Beyond the tawdry glittering arcade
Of attainable goals and recognised destinations. . .
Believing nothing, empty of every inheritance,
I reached out, blindly, to touch
. . .the viewless wings?

Note

"…'cw-cw', pronounced 'ku-ku' means 'where? where?'. It cries: 'Where is my love gone? Where are my lost companions?' Curiously enough, the same sentiment occurs in Omar Khayyam's elegy where the 'solitary ring-dove' broods in the ruined palace crying: 'Ku? Ku? Ku? Ku?' – the Iranian for 'where' being the same as Welsh…" (from *The White Goddess* by Robert Graves)

© Tony Watts 1993

The Chadwick Family when living at 94 Rue Wilson
(Courtesy of Lionel Carley)

DELIUS SOCIETY MEETINGS

LONDON BRANCH MEETING

New Cavendish Club, London on 27 September 2006

Music and History: The Great War

A talk by Ian Walker

The first meeting of the 2006/07 Season of the London Branch got off to an encouraging start with a fine talk by Ian Walker – *Music and History: The Great War.* Roger Buckley introduced the evening by explaining that Ian, a founder member of the Society, had responded to Roland Gibson's original letter to the *Radio Times* in 1962. After Cambridge and a successful career in education at Sevenoaks School, Ian had been much involved lecturing in history and musical appreciation to many local groups, including classes managed by the Worker's Educational Association.

During this fascinating evening, Ian surveyed the work of a number of British composers who lived during the period of what we came to know as the war to end all wars. His first musical example took us back to the Bournemouth Winter Gardens in August 1914, when Hubert Hastings Parry's *From Death to Life* received its première; [The second, *Via Vite,* movement]. Despite the atmosphere of the solidity and optimism of the Edwardian age, the events of that momentous month were to mark the twilight of the safe and predictable way of life in which its composer and many of his associates had grown up. Parry, teacher of Vaughan Williams, Holst, Butterworth and Howells, was one of the architects of the English musical revival and nearing the end of his long and creative life. He was an evolutionary agnostic and radical liberal, whose genius had brought us *Jerusalem,* the coronation anthem *I was Glad, Blest Pair of Sirens, Dear Lord and Father of Mankind,* and so many other great works, yet he has never received recognition for his five fine symphonies. The next musical example was *Mars: Bringer of War* from Holst's suite *The Planets* [Example] - a work, with its Wagnerian overtones, in which Holst, the radical visionary, had forecast the tragedies and human sufferings that total war inflicted on civilization.

Many British composers and musicians were to serve with distinction; some, tragically, were never to return. Of the survivors, medical problems had prevented the active participation of Howells, Bax and Ireland in hostilities; Holst, however, had worked with the YMCA in support of our troops in

Salonica. Ivor Gurney was gassed at Passchendale and never fully recovered; Moeran served as a dispatch rider, was badly injured by inoperable shrapnel penetration, and carried the shell fragments to the grave. Ralph Vaughan Williams enlisted as a medical orderly, but went on to serve with distinction as a junior officer in the Royal Artillery. Patrick Hadley lost a leg, and his friend, the organist Douglas Fox, an arm. Gordon Jacob, the master orchestrator, became a German prisoner in 1916 on the Somme; his brother was tragically killed. George Dyson, a lieutenant in the Royal Fusiliers, was invalided out with his nerves shot to pieces, but later recovered and became Director of the RCM. Arthur Benjamin, an early RFC casualty was shot down over the Western Front; York Bowen was invalided out of the Scots Guards with pneumonia; Edgar Bainton was interned near Berlin for the duration of the war; and C W Orr served with the Coldstream Guards in 1915/16.

Parry and Elgar were both too old for military service, but Sir Edward became a fierce and formidable special constable in the Hampstead area – and we then heard his Opus 75, *Carillon*, composed in 1914 and reminding us of the ruined bell towers of a devastated Belgium. Many of the patriotic Elgar's compositions of the period were war-related. George Butterworth, a young lieutenant in the Durham Light Infantry, was a man of extraordinary charisma and great musical promise; following his tragic death on the Somme, he was awarded a posthumous Military Cross. Like Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, he had found purpose and self-fulfilment in the comradeship of war. Butterworth's tone poem *Banks of Green Willow*, composed in 1913, was the next musical example. Cecil Coles was lesser known; a close friend of Holst and a military bandsman, he was never trained for front line service but was killed by a sniper's bullet in April 1918, whilst volunteering to rescue an injured comrade. Before the war he had been a successful conductor at the Stuttgart Opera and, unknown to his family, had composed a number of fine works. It was not until the 1990s that his daughter Catherine, a one-time student of Holst at St Paul's School, discovered a number of unpublished manuscripts; among them was his last uncompleted work, the suite *Behind the Line*s [Example: from *Cortège* in the Hyperion recording]. Both Dennis Browne, friend of Rupert Brooke, and Ernest Farrar, teacher of Gerald Finzi were also to die - Browne at Gallipoli and Farrar in France. We then listened to two rarely heard compositions - Farrar's *Wanderer's Song* and Browne's setting of Walter de la Mare's *Arabia.*

The German invasion of France greatly affected Delius and his household. The traumatic fact that many of his relatives, friends and German business associates were confronting each other as unwilling enemies was exacerbated

by the Delius' hurried departure from Grez, with the sound of gunfire becoming hourly more threatening. It was at Grove Mill House, the temporary home at Watford arranged for him by Beecham, that he composed the *Double Concerto* for the Harrison sisters, together with his *Requiem*, dedicated to "The memory of all young Artists fallen in the War" [Example: the last movement, with the words "The snow lingers"]**.** The Great War was to be a similarly traumatic experience for Arnold Bax; his father died, his marriage fell apart and many of his Irish friends were cut down by English bullets during the Easter Rising in Dublin. These tragic events were reflected in the second movement of his *First Symphony*, which was Ian's next piece of music. Arthur Bliss had a brave and distinguished war: commissioned in the Grenadier Guards, he was wounded on the Somme and gassed at Cambrai. The loss of his artistic and talented brother in the conflict affected him greatly, and his epic oratorio *Morning Heroes* was dedicated to his brother and to all his fallen comrades. It was based on Robert Nicholls' poem, *Dawn on the Somme* [Example: from the last movement]. Nicholls, who had been discharged from the Army with shell shock following the Somme, was later to adapt Walt Whitman's words for Delius' *Idyll,* composed in 1932. Frank Bridge, a lifelong pacifist and teacher of Benjamin Britten, was shocked and devastated by the War. He was never the same afterwards and his compositions, once sweetly lyrical, reflected his horror and revulsion. His 1924 piano piece *Retrospect* [Example] clearly showed his changing style.

Ian rounded off this fascinating evening by reminding us of the horrific statistics of the conflict and the brave and heroic part played by British forces – and, in lighter vein, briefly commented on the post-war popular interest in American Jazz and the blues, particularly in England. This idiom much influenced the young Constant Lambert to write his extraordinarily original masterpiece *Rio Grande* and *Elegiac Blues,* composed in memory of the black American singer/dancer Florence Mills.

In his vote of thanks, the writer congratulated the presenter for such a sensitive and scholarly account of this extraordinary period of our musical and national development.

© *Anthony Lindsey 2007*

MIDLANDS BRANCH MEETING

Weston Underwood on 19 November 2006

Constant Lambert

A talk by Stephen Lloyd

[Stephen Lloyd gave this fascinating talk to the London Branch in November 2005, and it was fully reported in DSJ 139. John Graham wrote a full account of the 'repeat'- but as, very naturally, there was a great deal of 'overlap' between the two, this is therefore a shortened version of his report.]

"I suppose there is no composer of modern times where work is more inspired and no composer less able to disguise those moments when inspiration has failed him" wrote Constant Lambert for *The Sunday Referee* in December 1931, as part of an article on Delius, a composer he admired but did not meet in person.

Stephen Lloyd's account of the life, works and influence of Constant Lambert proved to be a fascinating insight into a complex and often misunderstood character. Lambert was born 1905 and died 2 days short of his 46th birthday in 1951. He is remembered these days for his composition *The Rio Grande* - and possibly for his book *Music Ho!* and the incorrect belief that he died from drink.

Stephen looked at Lambert's character and interests from six different points of view: the composer, the performer, the broadcaster, the writer, the conductor and the man. As a composer his output was relatively small. He studied with Vaughan Williams and R O Morris at the Royal College of Music. Most of his music revolved around ballet, and many of his compositions did not use conventional orchestral forces, but unusual combinations of instruments and voices with unusual and obscure texts – and it is therefore not surprising that they are not often performed. Next, Stephen talked about Lambert as a performer, and his connection with William Walton and *Façade*. He played us an extraordinary extract of Lambert performing one of the numbers of *Façade*, at an amazing speed but with total clarity. Lambert was present at its first public performance - and the score of the full orchestral version bears Walton's dedication of the piece to Lambert.

Thirdly, Constant Lambert as a broadcaster and music critic. From the establishment of the BBC Third Programme in 1946 until his death, Lambert gave over 40 broadcast talks. Evidently one of them was on Delius, but Stephen had not been able to trace either a recording or a script of the broadcast.

Lambert was a brilliant writer, and this was the fourth aspect that Stephen Lloyd explored. *Music Ho!* is a critique of the musical world in the 1930s; Lambert disliked the music of Stravinsky, but loved jazz, Sibelius, and Russian composers, especially Glinka. Of the use of folksong in music he once said "There is not a lot that you can do with a folksong once you've played it. All you can do is play it again, louder." By the time he wrote *Music Ho!,* Lambert had already had many years experience as a journalist writing for publications like *The Listener, The Nation, The Radio Times* and *The Sunday Referee.*

In his day, Lambert was recognised as an outstanding conductor, making over 53 recordings, including the Delius *Piano Concerto, La Calinda* and *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*. However, it was the ballet that became his first love. Stephen described how following Diaghilev's sudden death in 1928, Lambert stepped in to write pieces for the Ballets Russes. With his wide-ranging knowledge of art, design, literature and music, he became in effect the English Diaghilev. He was the musical director of Vic-Wells from 1931, giving first performances of Vaughan Williams's *Job, A Rakes Progress, Checkmate* and also *Nocturne* using Delius's *Paris*.

Stephen then went on to talk about Constant Lambert's private life. First of all he destroyed the myth that Lambert died from drink. Lambert was, like many of his friends, a heavy drinker, but he was also an undiagnosed diabetic. He had a dislike of doctors and, if possible, avoided them. This was due to his experience of a childhood illness, resulting in six operations within 18 months that left him with a limp. On return to school, he was not popular because his infirmity meant he could not enjoy the sporting traditions expected of the public school ethos. However, it did mean that he had the opportunity and the time to read widely and study music.

Lambert was one of the first composers to be influenced by jazz. Stephen told of his fondness for Duke Ellington as a composer and performer, and his frequent visits to two London shows, *Dover Street to Dixie* and *Blackbirds*. When the star of these two shows, Florence Mills died, Lambert wrote *Elegiac Blues* as a tribute to her – and Stephen played us an extract from it that included a Delius-like triplet fingerprint fanfare.

In his day, Stephen concluded, Constant Lambert was considered to be a towering figure in music. Through his conducting, the ballets, his broadcasts and writings, the recordings and compositions which linked classical, jazz and popular light music, he had a great impact on the musical scene of the nation from before the war to his death in 1951. Stephen concluded his talk by playing a recording of *Sur la Plage* by Emile Waldteufel, the last piece of music that Lambert listened to.

The talk was illuminated by a quantity of recorded and broadcast extracts, newspaper and journal articles, and handsome books of prints of picture by Lambert's Australian father, a portrait painter, in which Constant and members of his family often featured as models. Stephen has amassed this information and research material for a biography of Constant Lambert that he is in the process of writing – and, in his vote of thanks, Richard Kitching wished him every success with it.

© *John Graham 2007*

LONDON BRANCH

The New Cavendish Club, 7th December 2006

The Delian Influence

A talk by Roger Buckley

The Chairman considered the musical forces that shaped Delius's own development, and then how Delius's musical style influenced other composers – and then some of the film music, popular music and jazz with (admittedly mostly vague) Delian connections.

Though Delius was a true original, certain influences can be detected, some of which Delius himself acknowledged; one of the earliest was that of Chopin's *Posthumous Waltz* – after hearing it twice he could play the whole piece through from memory. Next was Grieg, another great favourite of amateur pianists, and Delius was in no doubt of the importance of his influence. Then he fell under the spell of Wagner, declaring that he wanted to tread in Wagner's footsteps - an ambition that is clearly evident in Delius's early operas.

But perhaps the most important influence on Delius was black American music – and Roger read the marvellous description of his hearing negro music at Solano Grove in Delius's forward to the German translation of James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, 1927/8. That description is quoted at the beginning of this section of the Journal about *Appalachia*.

Delius heard Stephen Foster's songs in a 'black-faced white' Christy Minstrel Show at Bradford in the late 1860s, and probably spirituals there too in the 1870s, when a choir of black university students from Nashville,

Tennessee gave several highly acclaimed concerts at St George's Hall. Furthermore, he may also well have come across not only Dan Emmett's 1859 song *Dixie*, which he later incorporated into his *American Rhapsody*, the forerunner of *Appalachia*, but also *Marching through Georgia*, a Civil War song, the melodic shape of which Robert Threlfall and Philip Jones have shown was destined to haunt Delius's compositions for many years. In this context, Roger recommended *The Influence of African-American Music on the Works of Frederick Delius* by Derek Healey, published three years ago by our Philadelphia Branch and circulated in this country by the Delius Trust.

Roger thought that it was important to recall this background when considering the influence of Delius on American composers, especially those of popular music that spoke to the heart rather than to the head. One of the harmonic characteristics that strongly influenced Delius's emerging style was the use of 'substitution chords'. This expression, favoured by the American jazz pianist, drummer, singer and composer Mel Tormé – perhaps very surprisingly, a keen Delian and a former Member of the Society - means the process of putting entirely different chords to the same melody in each different stanza or phrase, usually with the intention of producing a more interesting effect than the original chord could have done. Much of *Brigg Fair* constitutes an obvious example of this: it is a set of harmonic variations on a melodic theme, or rather upon the implied harmony of the melody.

A number of composers dedicated compositions to Delius during his lifetime – Warlock, Bax, Grainger, Bernard van Dieren - and Moeran, whose *Summer Valley* Paul Guinery included in his recital in October. Other composers, of course, went much further – but Roger quoted from the short article about Anthony Payne's *Spring's Shining Wake* in DSJ: "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 expressing personal vision here and now." Nevertheless, Payne was much influenced by (among other composers) Delius, and several of his works have motifs, whether thematic, rhythmic or in terms of orchestration, that derive from scores by Delius. These include *La Calinda*, which inspired Payne's first work, *Dance Prelude*, which he wrote at the age of 18; *The Song of the High Hills*/ *Song of the Clouds*, an oboe concerto; *In a Summer Garden*/*Spring's Shining Wake*; *North Country Sketches*/*The Seeds Long Hidden,* a set of orchestral variations; and finally *The Song of the High Hills* again/ *Time's Arrow,* commissioned for the 1990 BBC Proms.

One well-known imitator of Delius was Robert Farnon, the Canadian composer of light music. He was best known for pieces such as *Jumping Bean* and *Portrait of a Flirt* – which, like many others - were tailored to fit on to one side of a 78rpm record. We heard the second of his *Three Impressions for Orchestra - In a Calm* – in the middle of which was a sensuous modulation straight out of Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloë*! – and the first half of the evening finished with that *Portrait of a Flirt*. The other musical examples before the interval were one of Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*; *Pieds-en-l'air* from Warlock's *Capriol Suite*; a version of Duke Ellington's 1941 *I got it bad and that ain't good*; and an extract from Payne's *Time's Arrow*.

Mel Tormé attended the 1976 AGM of The Delius Society, and was interviewed during his stay in London by Christopher Redwood, at that time Editor of the Journal. A transcript of that interview is in the Spring 1977 edition, No. 55, and it contains much of interest on Delius's influence on American popular music, especially film music. Roger also strongly recommended an article by David Eccott in DSJ No 134 (Autumn 2003).

Tormé claimed that many of Hollywood's early musicians were influenced by Delius. He singled out for mention the arranger Conrad Salinger, who orchestrated the scores for (among many others) *Girl Crazy, Anchors Aweigh, On the Town* and *Gigi*; the composer of the Star Trek theme, Alexander Courage; David Rose, a composer and arranger (who said to Tormé "everything I write I got directly from Frederick Delius"), and whose best-known pieces are *Holiday for Strings* and *The Stripper*; the Polish Gene Krupa – who was described by Tormé as "a mad Delius fan, a real admirer, knew everything. We used to talk for hours about the varying moods of Delius", and who become the most influential jazz and big band drummer of the 20th century. Finally, there was Les Baxter, a singer who became another arranger and composer – having, as Tormé once told Christopher Redwood, "all the old Delius Society record sets and whatever else was available at the time". Others who will perhaps be better known to Members were Erich Korngold, Max Steiner, Franz Waxman, Bernard Herrmann and Oscar Levant. All those composers moved easily between the worlds of Hollywood and symphonic music.

Roger believed that the influence of Delius's music began to be felt in Hollywood in about 1936. Oscar Levant, in the first of three autobiographical books, dated 1939 and entitled *A Smattering of Ignorance*, said: "I should mention that Delius was discovered in Hollywood about three years ago. It immediately became the standard thing for walks in the garden, bicycle rides or the English downs at dawn."The first composer to import the Delius influence into Hollywood was probably the Englishman Cyril J. Mockridge,

and he helped on the scores for the films *Beloved Enemy* (1936) and *How Green Was My Valley* (1941); later he was to say that "….of course my favourite was Frederick Delius. I had all his records and his scores, some which I brought back from London, England. I mean, they didn't have them over here, and that's where I got my harmonization – from *Summer Night on the River*, *In a Summer Garden*, *Brigg Fair*, and all those...". Mockeridge's story is interesting and Roger hoped that it might be taken up by someone for a future meeting of this Society.

Percy Grainger once declared that: "The three greatest composers who ever lived are Bach, Delius and Duke Ellington. Unfortunately Bach is dead, Delius is very ill but we are happy to have with us today The Duke." It could easily be that Delius himself was not familiar with the works of Ellington, which makes his prediction of 1928 all the more remarkable – but on the other hand, after listening to some of Beecham's early Delius recordings, Ellington himself declared that he did not believe that he had been influenced by Delius's music. Nevertheless, Christopher Palmer, in his book *Impressionism in Music*, thought that in his "atmospheric abstractions" (as Gunther Schuller[1] called them) Ellington used "a solo voice, in true Delian fashion, to spin an extra strand of colour into the rich warmly sensuous haze of reeds and brass."

Not everyone, of course agreed with the general theory. Schuller, in his book *Early Jazz*, comments that: "It was Constant Lambert … who first compared Ellington to Frederick Delius, which in turn led to a kind of tacitly accepted notion that Ellington had indeed been influenced by the English impressionist. … I cannot see how the use of lush ninth and eleventh chords or the tendency to an 'impressionist' approach constitute sufficient justification for such a claim. It smacks of over-simplification and the kind of snobbism that implies (that) a piece of jazz music is not very good until it can be equated with some accepted European compositions." In 1933, *The Melody Maker* magazine reported that: "Duke has taken a bundle of scores back to America" – and many years later 'the Duke' paid a tribute to *In a Summer Garden* in 1950 with his *In a Blue Summer Garden*, a period recording of which Roger then played.

The musical partnership between the great jazz pianist George Shearing – another member of the Society – and Tormé is by now legendary, and there is no doubt that the two men share an admiration – to put it mildly – for the composer; each makes his own tribute to Delius in their 1985 version of *Brigg Fair*, although Shearing does not reproduce Delius's harmonies but provides 'substitution chords' of his own. Roger ended his talk with a reference to Frank Sinatra, and played part of his *Close to you.*

A very unusual and fascinating meeting, with a lot of music that few people would ever have imagined would be heard at a Delius Society evening – strongly recommended to the Midlands and West of England Branches.

ML-B

Jelka's bedroom at Grez

LETTERS

From Tony Summers:

Yet more on Delius's timpani parts

In DSJ 139 I described my personal experience of trying to interpret the problematic timpani part in *The Song of the High Hills.* Having now discussed this with Robert Threlfall, I am pleased to discover that many of the issues I raised in my letter had already been dealt with by him when he prepared the Collected Edition. With advice from a leading professional player, Robert revised the layout of the timpani part to create a new version which is a model of clarity and economy. It is now always clear which of the three timpanists needed plays a particular passage - and in addition, Player 3, who is only required occasionally, needs access to just one drum (tuned to G or G sharp), and this can be done easily by sharing the largest drum of Player 2. This is the way the timpani part appears in the revised score and I can only hope that Universal have produced a new version for inclusion with the orchestral parts.

In my last letter I suggested that Delius had written *The Song of the High Hills* timpani part with hand drums in mind but having talked to Robert I am now not so sure! I was fascinated to learn that Delius specified 'chromatic kettledrums' on the manuscript front page of the original version of *In a Summer Garden,* though this does not appear on the published (and extensively revised) later version. At the time of the first version (1908) it was rare for scores to specify chromatic drums though they were beginning to be used in continental orchestras – Delius was clearly very much aware of such developments! Like other composers at the time (eg Strauss, Ravel, Stravinsky), Delius's later scores (eg *Eventyr*) require many changes of tuning, implying the use of pedal drums though they are not specified. However, because UK orchestras lagged behind their continental counterparts in adopting pedal timpani I still believe that hand-tuned drums might well have been used for the first performance of the *Song* in 1920. Was a photograph of the orchestra ever taken on this occasion?

Revision of Delius's orchestral parts to make them more user-friendly is an important exercise. In my experience many, if not most, amateur musicians dislike Delius and I am sorry to say that some seek to justify their view by accusations of amateurism and incompetence. Badly laid out or needlessly awkward orchestral parts simply play into the hands of these critics and we

should all be grateful to Robert Threlfall for the painstaking work he has done over the years to improve the standard of all Delius's published material, and to Bob Montgomery in particular for his similar work on Delius's bass oboe parts, which have now been rewritten to facilitate the players' actual fingering.

From Peter Ratcliffe:

And the last word on that subject……

With regard to Tony Summers's letter in DSJ 139, by a truly serendipitous coincidence I just happened to be at a temporary loose end in the offices of the Slovak Music Museum in Bratislava waiting to see if they had more translation work for me, and I found *Percussion Instruments and their History* by James Blades (Faber & Faber, 1970) on their bookshelves. I idly looked up Delius in the index, not thinking about Tony's letter, though I had read it only a couple of days earlier. There were just two mentions, one no more than a passing one, but I did find this: "[Delius] had previously [viz, before *Eventyr* and its xylophone part] written for three timpanists in *The Song of the High Hills* (1912)". If one of the greatest percussionists ever says that the work needs three timpanists, then I think that Tony can feel himself well and truly vindicated.

From Richard Lewis:

And those seabirds yet again…..

In answer to Sandy Sharp's letter (p. 120-1) in the Autumn 2006 issue (No. 140) of the Journal concerning the birds in *Sea Drift,* I have done a little research and come up with the following. Whitman's poem mentions *two guests from Alabama, four light-green eggs spotted with brown* and *this sea-shore, in some briers.* He also calls them mocking-birds in the second line of the poem. The description does indeed fit the mocking bird. According to the *Audubon Field Guide to Birds* (p. 638) the mocking-bird's habitat is "…open country with thickets and desert brush." Under nesting they say "3-5 blue-

green eggs, spotted with brown, in a bulky cup of sticks and weed stem, placed in a bush or low tree." Their range is described as "…from northern California, central Michigan, southern Ontario, and Nova Scotia southwards. Winters in southern part of range." Since the map extends their winter range to all of southern United States Alabama is certainly included. And of course Whitman's reference to Paumanok is Long Island, NY and towards the northern edge of the breeding range indicated on the Audubon map on p. 638.

[So Whitman did know a bit of ornithology! The Editor is very disappointed that no-one has yet commiserated with the poor right-hand bird – was it the he-bird, or the she-bird? - on the front cover of DSJ 140 which was, no doubt inadvertently, cut in half, or worse, by the printers.]

From David Bridgeman-Sutton:

Delius and Bridge House, Arthington, Yorkshire

Members might be interested in this:

Bridge House is on the A660 Leeds-Harrogate Road, just North of the junction with the A 659 (known locally as Arthington Lane) which runs from Pool-in-Wharfedale to this junction. The house takes its name from the crossing of the River Wharfe at that spot.

A Delius connection with the house was widely spoken of when we lived in Arthington something over 40 years ago. My wife first heard of it from her mother, Violet Collins (neé Harker, b.1896). Her father was one of a number of prosperous Leeds manufacturers and merchants who moved to Pool with the coming of the railway; they lived at the Pool (West) end of Arthington Lane. Violet was a keen singer who became a member of the Leeds Philharmonic and Leeds Festval choruses, as well as of other choral societies in the area. She took a very keen interest in the musical life of the district.

We lived in the area for a time in the early 1960s – first in Mrs Collins' old home in Arthington Lane, later in The Gables, Arthington. A Delius connection with Bridge House was still spoken about locally. Mrs Mitchell, who ran a grocer's shop in Pool mentioned it to my wife. So, too, did George Proctor, who died c.1962 aged well over 90. George had been organist of the village church for over half a century. Others, whose names cannot at present

be recalled, also spoke of Delius at Bridge House.

St Peter's, Arthington was built by the local "squarson", the Revd Thomas Sheepshanks in 1864. It was about 5 times bigger than the village needed and the music-loving squire determined that its music should be second to none. The church was equipped with an organ of more advanced specification than those of some cathedrals of the day and a choir school was founded in the house known as The Gables. All men applying for jobs on the estate were subjected to a voice-trial and singing in the choir was laid down as one of their duties. The choir is reputed to have reached very high standards and for years special trains were run between Arthington and local stations for the benefit of the very large congregations attracted to the church. World War I ended the tradition, though the parish remained musically lively for some time afterwards

George Proctor felt no warmth for the music - or beliefs - of Delius, but told me that the composer, as a young man, had been to the church occasionally when some work of interest was being performed. He gave no details that I recall for this belief. It may well have been that the Delius family rented Bridge House for summer months, rather than living there permanently. It was a favourite area for local business people (though the connection with Leeds was stronger than that with Bradford) and houses were thus let. The House may now be owned, or have been owned then, by the Earl of Harewood's Estates – Harewood House is a mile orso south of Bridge House on the A660. We have no knowledge of who the owner or tenant was when we lived in the area.

I wish we had collected 'chapter and verse' when we lived in the area – but we regarded it as just another facet of a part of the country that had been inhabited by many colourful characters. If anything further should occur to Althea or to myself we will pass this on.

Richard Packer wrote this letter to *The Independent* last October:

Whilst agreeing wholeheartedly with Michael Coveney that *Porgy and Bess* is a work of musical genius (Arts & Books Review, 27 October), I would challenge his statement that it was the first original black opera, as it was preceded three decades earlier by Delius's *Koanga* (first performed at Elberfeld in 1904), which has also received lamentably few London performances and is even less well known, except for the celebrated *La Calinda*, a sensuous dance enacted in the

opera, and also used by Delius in his early *Florida Suite*.

Like Gershwin, Delius had reason to identify with a distinctive ethnic cultural tradition, having encountered black music (which had such an important influence on his later works) whilst growing oranges on the plantation his father had acquired for him in Florida in a vain attempt to steer him away from a career as a composer. Fortunately for musical posterity, the experience had profoundly the opposite effect, and left an indelible imprint on Delius's musical vocabulary.

The late Christopher Palmer, in a radio essay first broadcast in 1969, drew a parallel between the work of the two composers, including some remarkable technical similarities between *Porgy and Bess* and some of Delius's most expressive music. There can be no doubt that the same influences, and maybe that of Delius's opera itself, informed Gershwin's great triumph some 31 years later.

MISCELLANY

Spirit of Norway, 2007: Celebrating Norwegian Music & Culture

That title gives little indication of the astonishing scope of this Festival organised by Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, which is taking place between 2 February and 7 July – in such diverse places as the Bridgewater Hall, the Norwegian Ambassador's residence in London, a church in Macclesfield and the Isle of Man, Grappenhall, Lichfield Cathedral and the Norwegian Church at Rotherhithe – not to mention the grand Baronial Hall and elsewhere in 'Chet's' itself. Of particular interest to Society Members will be the weekend of 18-19 May, when our President, our Chairman and Robert Matthew-Walker will be making major contributions to a 'Piano Forum: Grieg and England'. This is a really exciting venture, and everyone who might be in the slightest bit interested should look at the programme at www.spiritofnorway.co.uk, or ring 0161-834-9644.

And Norway again – Jelkas' pictures

Our American member Richard Lewis, having seen the paintings by Jelka in the last issue of the Journal (DSJ 140) wonders if anyone in the Society knows what might have happened to her painting titled *Norwegian Lake and Landscape.* It was used on the cover of the inset for a Unicorn-Kacnhana CD of *The Song of the High Hills* (and is somewhat similar to her painting which was used on the front cover of DSJ 138). The CD also contained the first orchestral recording of several Delius songs, and was recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust in 1983. The credits indicate that the painting was in the Percy Grainger home in White Plains, but when Richard called and asked them about it no one seemed to know anything about it. If any other member might be able to help, please contact the Editor, who will put him or her in touch with Richard.

American Member Bill Thompson has updated his MIDI/MP3 page. His email address is mailto:bill@thompsonian.info, and his website is http://thompsonian.info/delius.html

Brigg Fair

Ian Walker went to a concert by the Sevenoaks Symphony Orchestra under Darrell Davison on 12 November 2006, noted in Events below, and reports, of *Brigg Fair*, "It was a careful and honest performance under a conductor who is highly experienced at this level and much respected. It was an excellent local concert."

Book Award

From the USA comes the splendid news that Lyndon Jenkins's book *While Spring and Summer Sang: Thomas Beecham and the Music of Frederick Delius* (Ashgate, reviewed in DSJ 139) has gained the 2006 Award for Excellence in Historical Recorded Sound Research in the category 'Best Research in Recorded Classical Music'. The awarding body, the Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC), founded in 1991, recognises and encourages high standards and promotes awareness of superior works. The goal of its Awards Programme is to draw attention to the finest work being published in the field of recorded sound research.

'The Summer Pieces' – an apology

Unfortunately and quite inadvertently, the article in the last issue about the recordings of 'The Summer Pieces' failed to mention the excellent ones of *Summer Evening* and *Summer Night on the River* by the Chairman of the Trust, David Lloyd-Jones, and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, on Naxos 8.557143. We offer our sincere apologies to him.

CONCERTS

MORE PIANO DUETS AT BATH

26 August 2006 at The Pump Room, Bath
Marie Lee Gustafsson and Jessica Chan (pianos)

Aided and abetted by the indefatigable Tom Clarke, who founded the Bath Recital Artists' Trust some years ago, four postgraduate prize-winners at The Royal College of Music are rapidly and deservedly cornering the market in the four-hand versions of Delius's orchestral works. Following on from an evening in September 2005, the Trust presented a second, and then a third, recital – the three of which together included a substantial number of the transcriptions. The second of them was given by two very personable young ladies – Marie Lee Gustafsson from Sweden and Jessica Chan from Taiwan – playing duets and solos. Apart from original works by Chopin, Lizst, Frank Bridge and Moszkowski, and transcription of Schumann, Wagner and Bach, their programme included *On hearing the First Cuckoo…*, *Dance Rhapsody No 2* and *A Song before Sunrise.* Their very fluent techniques resulted in some exciting performances, but unfortunately they did not seem 'touched' by any of the Delius pieces – so that, in particular, '*the Cuckoo*', and the enigmatic and mysterious central section, and the coda at the end, of the *Dance Rhapsody* lacked that magical, 'suspended in mid-air', quality that other performers, whether orchestral or at the piano (like the two who played a month later) are able to bring to the music. Nevertheless, opportunities to hear these arrangements professionally played are extremely rare, and all in all it was a most enjoyable concert.

———

24 September 2006 at The Pump Rooms, Bath
Simon Callaghan & Hiroaki Takenouchi (piano)

These two had played duet arrangements of *A Song before Sunrise,* the 'Cuckoo', *Summer Night on the River, Dance Rhapsody No 2, The Cuckoo* and *Summer Night on the River* in the 2005 concert mentioned above (reviewed in DSJ 139, p 124), and this time we had *Brigg Fair* and *North Country Sketches*. The concert started with Sterndale Bennett's own arrangement of his *Concert Overture: The Naïades* – an enjoyable enough piece, very much of its time, which showed right from the start the remarkable unanimity of the pianists' playing.

All those Delius transcriptions, for piano duet, were by Philip Heseltine,

except for *Brigg Fair*, which was made by Dagmar Juhl in 1911, four years after the first performance. There are many notes in the full score, and Herr Juhl included too many of them - for the sound in the louder parts, particularly from the *secondo* end of the keyboard, and through no fault of the pianists, was too congested. (When Heseltine was working on his version of *The Song of the High Hills* in 1921, he said in a letter to Delius: "I came to the conclusion that a literal transcription, even for four hands, was too complex and too difficult to make effective, so I have begun again on a solo piano arrangement which, although it necessarily involves a good deal of omission, I think will be more effective and give a better impression of the work than a very full transcription for piano duet"). The build-up to the triumphant climax of *Brigg Fair* was superbly controlled – but perhaps the most impressive thing about the playing was the pianists' ability to maintain both the tension and their tone whenever the music gradually wound-down from *fortissimo* or *forte* to *piano* or *pianissimo,* becoming slower and slower. *North Country Sketches* was also marked by great sensibility – the first two movements, as the programme note said, "expressing poignant and bitter coldness and the feel of barrenness", the third properly dancing in "mazurka tempo", and the finale marching gaily towards Spring. We must be grateful for having been able to discover, or remember, how marvellously those arrangements evoke the infinitely more sophisticated sounds of the originals.

Schubert's *Andante and Variations in Ab*, D813 was – well, a piece by Schubert for four-hands on one piano, but played with as much musicianship and style as everything else in the programme. Samuel Barber's tongue-in-cheek, tender and ebullient six *Souvenirs* of 1952 (*Waltz, Schottische, Pas de deux, Two-step, Hesitation Tango* and *Galop*) finished this extremely enjoyable concert. It was fine playing by any standards.

ML-B

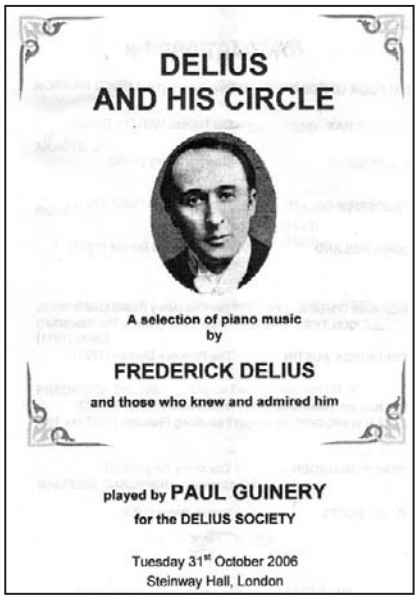
DELIUS AND HIS FRIENDS

Music by Delius and those who knew and loved him

Steinway Hall, 31 October 2006

A piano recital by Paul Guinery

Those of us who booked early for this magical recital by Paul Guinery were not to be disappointed! We were grateful to Malcolm Smith for having pointed-out at the AGM the relatively small capacity of the Steinway Hall and the need to get in ones' ticket requests at the earliest opportunity! What I was not aware of (and was not mentioned on the night) was the fact that Paul had given the same programme (albeit in a slightly different order) in April at Weston Underwood to the Midland Society Branch (see Review and Events in the DSJ 140, Autumn 2006), so the quality of the performance was underlined by the fact that many members who attended the first were keen for a second helping in London!



I will not bore the reader by another complete review as this has already been done most professionally by the enigmatic "EER". However, I would like to make a few observations that have crystallised in my mind in the couple of months since the performance.

Firstly, the Delius Society is extremely fortunate to count PG as such an active Member, and yet again is enormously in debt to him for providing us with a superb evening's entertainment (complete with wine in the interval and the excellent advice to have more than one glass!). Secondly, although we are all familiar with his expertise and erudition as a speaker both personally, to the Society, on BBC Radio 3 and more recently through his readings of Ivor Gurney at last Autumn's English Music Festival in Dorchester-on-Thames, how many of us could honestly say that we knew of Paul's considerable expertise on the pianoforte? You can thus imagine the magical, and I would say unique, combination of the two at this recital.

Paul began each work or set of works with an illuminating introduction to the music, the composers and their relationship to Delius. In many ways this

turned out to be a rather nostalgic reflection on a time (mainly between the two Wars) when English music publishers were two a dozen, and locally produced piano music by a great variety of English composers had an enormous market for home performance. Sadly, little of this music is still in print, and most of the publishers (apart from Elkin) are long forgotten. Like Paul, I collect a lot of this music from second hand book-shops where the only copies still remain. Unlike Paul I cannot play them to any degree of professionalism!

All the featured composers had close associations with Delius, from his great benefactor Balfour Gardiner (whose music began and ended the programme), his great supporter Norman O'Neill, to his great admirer and organiser of the 1929 Delius Festival (with Beecham), Peter Warlock. In addition, we heard works by composers who were influenced by Delius such as Bax and Moeran. As Paul exclaimed "Two quintessentially *Irish* composers, one born in Heston, Middlesex (Moeran) and the other in Streatham (Bax)"! The music that he played ranged in difficulty from the charming pieces by Quilter (written before the first World War) to the virtuosic works of Bax and Ireland.

As much of this music is now recorded, it was interesting to compare performances with those on CD. Bax, for example, was much admired by Delius, and accompanied May Harrison in the first performances of both the *1st* and *3rd Violin Sonatas*. Eric Parkin and Ashley Wass have recorded much of Bax's piano music on Chandos and Naxos respectively, and Wass has included in his latest CD works such as *The Maiden with the Daffodil* and *A Hill Tune,* both of which we heard at this recital. In comparison with Paul Guinery, Wass plays the former with perhaps greater fluidity, more fluctuations in tempi and more reflectively. Paul, on the other hand, is more forthright and less capricious in his performance, where I noticed that the influence of Delius (rather than Debussy) came across to me more strongly. His performance of *A Hill Tune* was magnificent, superbly played with great dynamic range and stands easy comparison with Wass.

There were many delights apart, especially the *Danse Negre* by Cyril Scott (Paul noted that Scott was often referred to as the English Debussy, but did not think that Debussy was often referred to as the French Scott!) and the *Reflections* of Delius himself. He also included a piece that Delius wrote for the harpsichord, which Paul referred to as the "worst work ever written for the instrument"! It sounded fine on the piano!

The magnificent and varied programme finished with a scintillating and perky encore of *Bank Holiday* by Moeran. Highly enjoyable!

© David Green 2006

LEBENSTANZ

Saturday 13 January 2007 at St Andrews Church, Oxford
St Giles' Orchestra, conducted by Geoffrey Bushell

As we have said before, how lucky the more seriously-minded musical public are that there are pro/am local orchestras all over the country who are prepared to perform really out-of-the-way works by British composers written in the period between about 1885 until the late 1930s. The St Giles' Orchestra in Oxford is one of them, and – 65 strong, with an audience of well over 100 - they opened this concert at the extremely fine Victorian church of St Andrews in Summertown with Delius's very rarely played *Lebenstanz.* It is difficult to see why that should be so, for it is only 12 minutes long, brimming with boisterous energy very much like the last big climax before the end of *Brigg Fair* (both are, of course, in triple rhythm), the dynamics ranging from lots of *fff*s to *pppp*. It is, though, a very difficult piece for an orchestra such as this with which to begin a concert, for the players simply haven't yet 'warmed-up' and got rid of their understandable 'before it's got going' nerves. There are lots of very fast notes for everyone – in particular, for instruments that don't generally play that sort of thing, the contra bassoon, horns and trumpets – and it has to be said that the general ensemble and tuning, both here and throughout the concert, were dubious. On the plus side, however, there was not only patent overall enthusiasm for everything they played, but also what seemed to be a genuine feeling for the Delian idiom. The audience will certainly have learned that all Delius is not slow and languorous!

Perhaps not surprisingly, that was truer of the very undemonstrative conductor, Geoffrey Bushell. He brought out the completely different characteristics of, on the one hand, the *con vigore* of the beginning and the other fast music, and on the other the *lento* and *tranquillo* sections into which the former sinks, whose ebb and flow he caught nicely. Although the repertoire is based on suggestions from members of the Orchestra, they are clearly given a strong 'steer', by Mr Bushell – as witness the fact that the second item in this concert was a very Russian-sounding piece, *The Cedar and the Palm*, by Vassily Kalinnikova, a contemporary of Scriabin; the next concert, on 21 June will include the first UK amateur performance of Frank Bridge's *Isabella*; and *Brigg Fair* is to be played in 2008.

There were also included an attractive, gently rhapsodic piece by Geoffrey Bushell, the Finale of *Swan Lake*, and an affectionate, if sometimes scrappily played, *Enigma Variations.* Here Elgar's skills as an orchestrator really helped the players achieve a very respectable balance in many places – and, as always,

the organ added that almost indefinable something to the (for this listener really quite moving) last 99 bars. All in all, it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening, and long may the orchestra continue its adventurous programming!

ML-B

———

CELLO SONATA

Saturday 20 January 2007 at the Wigmore Hall, London
Nash Ensemble (inter alia, Richard Lester ('cello) & Ian Brown (piano))

This short 'pre-concert' recital in the Nash Ensemble's series 'Realms of Gold – Elgar, his contemporaries and successors' took place at 6pm as a prelude to the main concert of the evening.

Frank Bridge's 1906 *Miniatures* for violin and piano opened the programme. They must be good to play, for they are crafted with all the miniaturist skill that we might be more readily inclined to ascribe to Fauré. The first movement is in nostalgic 'Palm Court' genre, the second is a hornpipe and the third a *moto perpetuo*. These were winsome interpretations, inspiring smiles all round. Next we heard Finzi's *Five Bagatelles* for clarinet and piano in what must have been near-ideal performances. The second conjures that same mood of felicity that permeates *Dies Natalis* in which Finzi took as his starting point the transcendentally lovely poetry and prose of Thomas Traherne. The arrangement with string orchestra is perhaps more accessible but these performances in their insight needed no such enhancement.

So far, so very good. Unfortunately what followed was a misinterpretation of Delius's 'Cello Sonata. The sound was for the most part lovely but the vital architecture of the piece was obscured. The pianist, who seemed ill at ease, over-pedalled in his attempt to create an impressionist mist of sound. The cellist reflected this misjudgement and, possibly as a result, his intonation suffered. Regrettably, this performance was unlikely to encourage newcomers to Delius's music to delve further.

Roger Buckley

THE ENGLISH MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Abbey, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, and nearby places
20 – 24 October 2006

After some false starts, this bold and exciting – but sadly very poorly advertised, and hence poorly attended – new venture finally got off the ground, and almost every concert was a 'winner'. The Festival was (as the programme book said) a much-needed "celebration of our nation's extraordinary diverse musical inheritance, offering audiences a unique opportunity of experiencing some of the most magical and inspirational works by English composers, both from past centuries and the present day". Apart from the well-known names such as Holst and Vaughan Williams (the latter's description of them as "Heirs and Rebels" providing the theme for the whole concert-and-talk-packed four days), Bax, Finzi, Britten, Elgar and Delius, the other composers represented in the programmes were Frank Bridge, Sullivan, a good number of those who wrote both instrumental and vocal music in the 16th century, Elgar's friend W H Reed, Algernon Ashton and Benjamin Dale, Lord Berners, York Bowen, Samuel Wesley and John Foulds, Moeran, Dunhill, David Owen Norris, Armstrong Gibbs, John Rutter, C W Orr and Constant Lambert – marvellous! The Delius Trust gave financial support to two of the concerts.

The recently and magnificently restored Abbey has excellent acoustics – and a big space for interval talking and sampling the extremely drinkable wine from a new local vineyard – but there is seriously insufficient room for a full symphony orchestra, let alone with a choir behind it. In the orchestral concerts, that meant that there was an inadequate number of strings to balance the wind and brass – but nevertheless, the overall effect was adequate enough. All but one of the chamber music and song recitals were held in the attractive old church at Sutton Courtenay and the quite excellent Silk Hall at Radley College, both about six miles away from Dorchester.

PART SONGS

CC21, conducted by Howard Williams,
All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay

With such a plethora of composers whose music very rarely, or never, finds its way into concert programmes to chose from, but which (on the evidence of these four days) is well worth hearing, the organiser, Em Marshall, could hardly

be blamed for not including more Delius than she did – but the Editor has to confess that his sympathies lay on both sides of the fence. On the Sunday afternoon, however, at Sutton Courtenay, the amateur choir CC21, well-trained and conducted by the very experienced Howard Williams, included in their programme the two part-songs which were the subject of Paul Spicer's article in DSJ 139, *To be Sung of a Summer Night on the River*. Although lacking a firm enough bass line – for which the Church's unsympathetic acoustic was probably responsible – the balance of CC21's three upper voices was excellent, and they sang (apart from a few brief moments) impeccably in tune, with a full and warm tone, and very accurate entries. The tenor soloist (a member of the choir) was a little blustery in his "La, la, la-s", but otherwise – and despite the rain literally hammering on the roof – both pieces were, like everything else, very sympathetically done, and the audience clearly enjoyed them.

ML-B

CELLO SONATA

Julian Lloyd Webber (cello) and John Lenehan (piano)
The Silk Hall, Radley College

This chamber concert was but one of 17 concerts given over 5 days at the inaugural English Music Festival held in October and based at Dorchester-on-Thames in Oxfordshire. It was held in the wonderful setting of the newly-built Silk Hall at Radley College, and what an excellent venue this proved to be throughout the Festival.

The whole concert was exceptional, and the other works beside the Delius were the Britten and Ireland *Sonatas*, and *In the Half Light, Nocturne* by William Lloyd Webber (Julian Lloyd Webber's father), but this report is limited to the Delius *Sonata*. JLW is well known as an excellent communicator, so it was wonderful that he introduced each work. He began by singing (not literally!) the praises of Em Marshall, whose whole idea this Festival was, saying how important, nay crucial, it is for it to continue, so that unknown works in the English repertoire can be heard again in public.

JLW raised an interesting point in the reference in his introduction to the so-called "French influence" on Delius and this sonata. This was actually a theme that also pervaded the excellent programme notes on the other composers, especially John Ireland. Delius, of course, was contemporary with Debussy and preceded Ravel. Although living in France and clearly hearing

many works by the two French giants, I would contend that the main elements of his mature style are evident in music written well before the standard works of those two. Interestingly, no reference is made in Grove to a "French influence" in Delius music (the main ones being Wagner and Grieg, of course), any more than there is reference anywhere that I know of to Debussy being influenced by Delius!

Enough of controversy! The performance of the Delius *Cello Sonata* proved revelatory. It was limpid, evocative, suave, reflective, controlled, ebullient and all this rolled into a single movement (albeit in 3 parts) of only about 12 minutes. In few other works is the 'harmony' between the two performers so essential. Without it, the work can drag and seem drowned in lyricism without having real sense of direction. As JLW pointed out, the Delius *Cello Sonata* is very tightly constructed and the fusion between 'cello and piano in this performance was miraculous. At times one completely forgot that there were two instruments involved, as they seemed to blend into one pure toned sound. This was a truly fine and deeply felt performance of a great work which, following its radiant and boisterous conclusion, was met with great applause. Happily, JLW and JL gave us an excellently played encore – Bridge's *Scherzetto.*

© David Green

GUNTHER SCHULLER & DELIUS

Don Gillespie, an American member, has sent this edited extract from a wide-ranging interview with the influential American composer, conductor, scholar, publisher and music educator, Gunther Schuller (b. 1925). Schuller conducted a performance of Appalachia *with the University of Texas Symphony Orchestra in November 2004*

The music of the British composer Frederick Delius was a great early influence on me. It happened because Thomas Beecham started to record most of Delius's best orchestral and choral works starting in the late twenties, and by the mid-thirties he had put out something like four volumes of Delius, each of which comprised 12 78-rpm sides. That's a lot of music. Remember, in those days only three Dvořák Symphonies had been recorded – there was actually more Delius on record than Dvořák. And when I started hearing this music at the age of 11 or 12, I just went crazy. There was something in me that craved that chromaticism. Even before that, as a choirboy, every time we'd rehearse a new work I'd look for the accidentals. If there were no sharps or flats I knew I wouldn't be interested. We called that "white music."

Delius didn't compose white music. And beyond that, it's wonderfully touching and melancholic. As a young man, that completely captivated me. Even today, I get goose pimples, something physical happens to me when I hear Delius's harmonies. I've never conducted *Sea Drift*, his great Walt Whitman setting, without finding myself totally in tears at the end. Delius has a kind of occult effect on some of us – I know it leaves others not only totally cold, but antagonistic. But for me Delius was one of the major influences in my musical life, one of the reasons I became a composer.

Appalachia, which was inspired by the sounds and sights of the Florida plantation which he managed in his early twenties, is a work I've never before had an opportunity to conduct. In fact, I have to confess I haven't heard it in 20 years. It's one of the first Delius pieces in which he consolidates something like his mature style. Speaking of which, I would say that Delius and Scriabin are the two composers who were able to take Wagnerian harmony and create a purely personal idiom. In *Tristan* and *Parsifal* you find places that harmonically approach atonality. In the case of late Delius and late Scriabin, you don't find that. Rather you find something more like polytonality. They invested Wagner's chords – which they often used in the second and third inversion – with a totally new effect. They made those harmonies float.

Don Gillespie himself wrote about Schuller:

> As a composer, he is perhaps best known for his works fusing jazz with classical techniques, a compositional process now famously termed "third stream" music. As the *New Grove Dictionary of American Music* notes, Schuller's "many and varied gifts have won him eminence as a leading standard-bearer of American music." The winner of the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1994, in 1997 he received the Gold Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Drawing on techniques of Schoenberg, Webern, Stravinsky and Varèse, Schuller's carefully structured music has won widespread acceptance both in America and Europe. Therefore, his enthusiasm for the music of Delius, an anti-academic composer of a completely diametric aesthetic, comes as a most welcome surprise.

© Don Gillespie 2006

FEDERATION OF RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETIES AGM

28 October 2006 at Bromsgrove

The FRMS is the central organisation administering the many recorded music societies established throughout the country, and our Society is one of its major affiliates. The principal benefit of this arrangement is that they negotiate the licences that enable us to play commercial recordings and films at our meetings, without fear of infringing British copyright legislation. Without this cover, we might need to pay specific royalties and seek an individual licence for each meeting. They do this on our behalf, by agreement with the Performing Rights Society. In addition, FRMS provides our branches with public liability insurance for all meetings. As in previous years, I represented The Delius Society at this worthwhile event. It was meticulously organised and, once again, I was impressed with the new standard of their management and administration. The formal proceedings, under the chairmanship of John Davies, went very smoothly. Two members of the Committee, Bob Astill and Graham Ladley, stood down, but Bob will remain as Webmaster. Ron Bleach (Elgar Society) and George Steele (Rochdale RMS) will fill the vacancies.

Over the past year, three societies had folded and one new one had been formed. I was sad to hear that the Wagner Society had gone, because of declining numbers and a failure to fill committee positions. Despite that, overall FRMS membership numbers had slightly increased and there was no cause for concern. The outreach arrangements, put in place by the Committee last year, for visiting and advising branches in difficulty, had been very successful. The Honorary Treasurer, Graham Kiteley, presented a clear and encouraging financial report. The FRMS's improved situation noted in 2004/2005 had been maintained and ample reserves had been established. This increase in the latest scale of affiliation/licence fees to member branches and societies had been kept well within inflation. The financial report was accepted unanimously, and Graham was applauded for all he had done to consolidate the FRMS's financial turnaround. Two minor adjustments to the constitution, concerning membership and committee financing, were approved. The meeting was very well attended, and I was able to meet a number of new society secretaries.

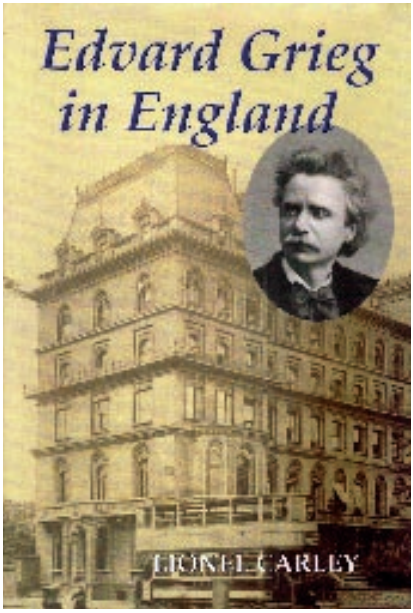
A recorded music programme celebrating the Kidderminster Branch's 70th Anniversary then took place, followed by a convivial dinner. The speaker was our own Vice President, Lyndon Jenkins – and, as usual, his very amusing anecdotes and relaxed presentation were much appreciated. The evening ended with a charming recital of music by The Duo Rosa, given in association with the Birmingham Conservatoire.

Anthony M Lindsey

BOOK REVIEWS

EDVARD GRIEG IN ENGLAND

Lionel Carley (The Boydell Press, 2006; i-xx + 488 pages & illustrations; ISBN 184383 207 0; £45)



Lionel Carley gives us a vivid picture of Grieg's connections with England, his visits, the people he met and the various aspects of his musical and non-musical life – very largely between 1862 and 1906. We also have an historical account of the family connections with Scotland. The book has a rich cast list of musical and non-musical characters, many of whom will be unfamiliar to most readers - and once again Lionel Carley shows his ability to describe a vivid cultural background to the life of a major composer. Grieg's music is now much less popular with audiences and critics than it was in the first half of the 20th century – and before reading this book modern music lovers may find it difficult to imagine how successful Grieg was as a performer and composer at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, both in England and Europe.

Grieg's European reception was no doubt very important for him, but the English audiences seem to have taken him and his wife to its heart from their first visit, making the relationship rather special. Clearly, however, the relationship with English concert organisers and critics was not all plain sailing. George Bernard Shaw, for example, was not by any means an enthusiastic admirer of Grieg's appearances in London, while Francesco Berger of the Royal Philharmonic Society clearly annoyed Grieg on several occasions, though the composer's correspondence is often diplomatic.

Delius was the closest of Grieg's English friends. They met as music students in Leipzig in 1887, through Christian Sinding – neither of them being particularly impressed or edified by the experience – and, as the quoted

correspondence between them from 1903 onwards illustrates, they remained friends for the next twenty years, until Grieg's death. There are interesting similarities and differences between the two composers. Both loved the Norwegian mountains, and found them an artistic inspiration. At various times both liked to be away from large groups of people, and to enjoy solitude. Both men had some interest in politics, although for Delius this was really superficial, whereas Grieg was capable of more direct action. Lionel Carley explores Grieg's developing interest in Unitarianism. Grieg met a leading exponent of this religious movement in England and was greatly impressed. We cannot however, imagine Delius varying from his profound atheism – and the two men clearly differed regarding religion.

Had Grieg lived twenty years longer, he would have seen the steady progress of Delius's compositional career. As the author points out, in 1907 "Grieg must surely have been aware of the steady inroads into continental Europe's concert halls being made by the music of his closest English friend". A month after Grieg's death Delius's *Piano Concerto* was performed in London, followed a month later by a performance of *Appalachia*. These performances began a vogue for Delius's music which Grieg would never know.

Another musical relationship Grieg valued was that, at the end of his life, with Percy Grainger. Grainger made a big impression on the older man, who was greatly taken with the brilliance of his pianism. The recent *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger,* edited by Malcolm Gillies, David Pear and Mark Corroll (Oxford University Press 2006) (pp 190-193) refers to Grainger's view that Grieg was more interested in his (Grainger's) pianism than in his compositions: "I thought I sensed an unbroken fretfulness in Grieg…..And it seemed to me that this fretfulness spread to everything of my own that I played." Grainger found it "hard to bear" Grieg's suggestion, in his day book entry for 5 August, 1907, that he would devote his best powers to folk music, when his energies might best be devoted to pianism. Busoni had impressed Grieg with his performance of the octaves at the end of the first movement of the *Piano Concerto*, but when Grainger studied it with Grieg, the composer asked him if he could speed up the octaves at the end of the first movement, and he was unable to do so. The book also mentions several other English performers who championed Grieg's music – the composer's reactions to some of them were not all favourable. One hundred years after his death, this new study prompts us to ask what Grieg was like as a pianist? Robert Matthew-Walker has thoroughly examined the recordings of Edvard and Nina Grieg, and Grieg's piano roll legacy, in *The Recordings of Edvard Grieg*. When we listen to the primitive acoustic recordings we hear echoes of

another age. What are for us crackling, distant and crude reproductions, were, of course, for music lovers in 1890 and 1900 popular, beautiful and vivid new music.

The narrative vividly tells of the sequence of events from Grieg's first visit and his various concert tours (some proposed, but cancelled due to his ill-health) right up to one year before Grieg's death in 1907. The book is very successful at analysing Grieg's approach to the business arrangements necessary for preparing concert tours. We learn much about the different organisations that invited him, their concert arrangements, and the payments Grieg received. The composer was a shrewd businessman, and his detailed records allow Lionel Carley to give us a vivid picture of the process of arranging concerts at this time. One important descriptive success of the book comes from the skilful use of contemporary accounts of Grieg as a performer and conductor.

I believe that this is a unique study, for I know of no other which examines the relationship of any composer with a European country other than his own, but in any event it is an extremely entertaining, interesting, informative – indeed superb – example of musical biography.

© Paul Chennell 2007

[NB: The Editor committed his perhaps most heinous sin yet, by stating on p 8 of DSJ 140 that the BBC Music Magazine had awarded the President's book four stars – whereas in fact it received the ultimate accolade of five stars. Abject apologies have been offered and accepted. Ordering details for this book can be found on the page immediately after that one.]

BAX: A COMPOSER AND HIS TIMES

Lewis Foreman (The Boydell Press (Third revised & expanded Edition; hardback, 570 pp and illustrations. ISBN 1 84383 2097; £22.46 to Society Members – see accompanying leaflet).

In the April 1984 issue of the *Journal* (No. 82, pp.13-16), I reviewed the first edition of this magnificent study that for over twenty years has been essential and compelling reading for anyone interested in Arnold Bax. Published by Scolar Press in Bax's centenary year, 1983, it was followed five years later by a second edition with a few minor revisions and additions (and 10

more photographs). Now, from Boydell Press, we have a 'Third revised and expanded Edition'. Much enlarged from the original 491 pages – even with the font size a point or two smaller – the question that those who own either of those earlier editions will be asking is 'Do I need to buy this later revision?' The answer is an emphatic yes.

First, the obvious advantages. With better quality paper, not only has the text been considerably further revised and updated, but the general lay-out, occasionally with more frequent paragraphing, is much easier on the eye. The catalogue of works, now in two columns, is more manageable and anyone already possessing an earlier edition need in no way feel cheated in having to splash out on this latest volume because many of the photographs have been changed, with quite a few better or just different individual snaps of Bax's contemporaries replacing the earlier ones, a few completely new ones, and the older plates generally improved in quality. For the first time there is a picture of Natalie Skarginska, the 'golden Roussalka with ice-blue eyes' whom he followed to Russia in 1910.

Much more important, however, are the factual additions to the text, these coming largely from the Harriet Cohen collection that the pianist bequeathed on her death to the British Museum (now Library) but which, until 1999, had been inaccessible to the public for 30 years. Cohen would seem to have ignored a codicil that countermanded an earlier will of Bax's leaving everything to her, and seized all the music and personal papers left at his death at the Storrington pub where he was living. Her obstructive possessiveness not only severely restricted the performance of some of Bax's piano works during her life-time (for example, she prevented other pianists from playing the *Symphonic Variations* for piano and orchestra; *Winter Legends* was probably a similar case), but it hampered researchers by keeping from view not only her own correspondence with Bax but also his letters to many female friends and relatives that had found their way into her collection. Having insisted that Bax destroy all letters from his wife, one wonders what else suffered a similar fate in her hands. The absence in the Cohen collection of any correspondence from Mary Gleaves, the other woman in his life - a very close friendship that amazingly went on for nearly 20 years without Cohen knowing - makes one fear the worst.

The enrichment of this study is chiefly due to the inclusion of extracts from a large number of surviving letters in the Cohen collection. These are illuminating, not least a correspondence from her to Bax which shows that their holiday in 1917 at Tintagel (that inspired Bax's most popular orchestral work) was not, as had been previously assumed, spent romantically in each

other's company. For two weeks Harriet was alone in Tintagel from where she regularly bombarded Arnold with letters to join her. When he did make the journey, it was to his family, staying over 20 miles away at St Merryn, from where he would try to find excuses to sneak away and be with her. But even in Cornwall their contact was to be more by post. As Foreman writes: "Instead of his lover, Bax found himself walking on the cliffs with wife, children and friends". There was, however, at least one opportunity for them to be together and one can perhaps sense feelings of desperation and separation in the passionate poem, *Tintagel Castle* (pp.160-1), that Bax wrote at that time and sent to her, especially in the lines about former lovers Tristram and Iseult - how "They stared out even as we do / Across the silken tide, / And sought in sundown splendours / The dream their world denied". In 1914, in the early days of the Harriet-Arnold relationship, we find her writing: "You don't know how I thank God for knowing you. . . So much nicer to me because I have you for my friend." How much of a millstone Harriet was to become is not difficult to assess: even in Bax's last years a projected book on him was abandoned because of her interference.

Bax visited Delius both at Rapallo and at Grez, and in a letter to Harriet in April 1926 he gives a vivid description of one visit to Grez and how, once Fred and Jelka had gone to bed, the house at night 'in the dimness of candles and somewhat feeble lamp light seemed rather eerie'. By contrast in the daytime "the spring is marvellous in the neglected and overgrown garden. The river flows at the bottom of it, and bluebells, pansies, wallflower and apple blossom riot in the pouring sunlight. It is astonishingly silent and peaceful, and most beautiful." (pp.243-4).

Bax: A Composer and His Times can be unreservedly recommended. There is a new foreword by pianist and Bax enthusiast David Owen Norris, with the original foreword by Felix Aprahamian now included as an extra appendix, and the discography has been compiled and thoroughly updated by Graham Parlett (whose *Catalogue of the Works of Sir Arnold Bax*, Clarendon Press 1999, might be regarded as an essential companion to this volume). One appendix that – shamefully – has not required any updating is the list of performances of Bax symphonies at the Proms. The last time that one was heard there was in 1984, and that after a gap of 31 years. One performance of a Bax symphony in 54 years – can there be any justification for such neglect? With such a splendid revision it is unfortunate that by some oversight the footnotes to four chapters (15-18) are those for the previous edition. However, the publisher has indicated that a correction slip will be issued for the two pages affected and it is anticipated that all will be corrected in the promised paperback version.

In the last chapter, 'Decline and Revival', there are, understandably, two omissions. While Ken Russell's Delius film *Song of Summer* has contributed significantly to the understanding of our composer, one cannot say the same of his 1992 London Weekend Television South Bank Show film *The Secret Life of Sir Arnold Bax* (with Russell as Bax and Glenda Jackson as Harriet Cohen) which, probably for that reason, is unmentioned.

On a more serious note, Lewis rightly pays tribute to the many musicians and conductors who have in more recent years furthered the cause of Bax, but the Bax revival (on record and in broadcasting, if not to the same extent in the concert hall) has been largely the result of the untiring efforts of one person – Lewis himself, and this might be an appropriate place to correct the modest omission and acknowledge a remarkable life-time's devotion, not just to Bax but to British music in general (including Delius). Lewis's promotion of British music in his many writings (including countless CD sleeve notes), in the concert hall, on the air, and as advisor to recording companies has enriched immeasurably our understanding and enjoyment of a wide range of music that might otherwise have remained neglected and unknown. A country that valued its artistic heritage more highly than its popular culture would surely find some means of suitably recognising such achievement.

I began my original review by saying that Lewis's many years of championing the cause of Arnold Bax had reached a worthy climax in his fine study of the man and his music. Geographical peaks are of a fixed height. How fortunate it is that musical ones have no such limitations.

© Stephen Lloyd 2007

ROSES AND RAIN: A BIOGRAPHY OF JAMES ELROY FLECKER

Helen Walker (Melrose Books (www.melrosebooks.com, or sales@melrosebooks.co.uk or St Thomas Place, Ely, Cambs CB7 4GG), 2006. ISBN 1 905226 06 3. £16.99 + £3.50 p&p

I have to admit that when I offered to review this book, even though I looked forward to discovering more about Flecker and his writing, I had an ulterior motive. Another biographical interest of mine over many years has been T E Lawrence (of Arabia) and he has more than a walk-on part in the life of

Flecker. Indeed, Lawrence, it has been suggested, was influenced to become a writer himself - as it turned-out, mainly about his desert adventures, though those exploits were to come after Fleckers' early death - because of his admiration for Flecker's writing. Moreover, there is no doubt that Lawrence was first introduced to the music of Delius through *Hassan* (of anecdotal interest perhaps for the Journal at a future time). When this biography of Flecker arrived on my doormat with a thud (over 700 pages), my initial reaction was of admiration for the fine production values of a biography that costs less than a third of most similar special-interest books. The book, incidentally, has an incredible 100-plus pages of chapter notes at the end, though they are quite helpfully sequentially numbered throughout. However, judgement of the 'book by its cover' was then a fair way off. As with every biographical book whose subject features in the life of Delius, my first step was to look in the index for his name - but was surprised not to find it (although he does get a mention in an afterword section on *Hassan*). Perhaps, though, this omission is not surprising, because Delius never met Flecker, and only came on the scene years after Fleckers' death. I should also say that this book does not give a detailed account of the production of *Hassan* or the circumstances of the incidental music by Delius; for that one has to go to Dawn Redwood's excellent small volume.*

Heather Walker talks of Flecker, during the late stages of his fatal tuberculosis, receiving a book of 600 pages and 'plodding' through it, but then qualifies that expression by saying that as well as implying a tedious task, it could also mean that a good deal of effort and concentration was needed. In this case, I am happily prepared, on balance, to incline strongly towards the latter view. However, during the early part of the book in particular, the author's style does slip into some lengthy paragraphs of facts, cryptic clues and even apparent irrelevances. What, for instance, was the point of including a mini-biography of the Schreiner family from South Africa and their relationship with Flecker's father - just a hint of a romance with their daughter - at a time well before Flecker was born, and who apparently never feature, or have any bearing on it? Fleckers' best friend at Oxford and beyond, Jack Beazley, also has a mini-biography, which is fair enough, but it seems to me, however, to be peppered with irrelevant details, such as his grandfather and father being 'Club Stewards' etc.,etc. Although this tendency to go off at a tangent with other personalia in the book is sometimes helpful, more often than not it is quite distracting - rather like making the reader pedal up a steep hill, only to freewheel down the other side, and arrive back at where he or she started from.

The author seems to me to be much better at dealing with the events of Fleckers' life story. She picks up the element of sadness and melancholy in Fleckers' life, beginning with his upbringing by strongly religious and overly critical parents upon whom he was financially reliant throughout his life, through his academic days at Oxford and later Cambridge, and then a brief career with the Foreign Office Levant Consular service in the Middle East. Nevertheless, his determination to write poetry, and his friendly, sociable and idealistic personality does shine through; furthermore, the book is a fascinating window on 'middle class' Victorian/Edwardian England and members of the literary circles of the time - including Rupert Brooke, with whom Flecker was well acquainted and who was to some extent a 'rival poet'. I spoke earlier of cryptic clues - well there are plenty in relation to Flecker's life and circle of friends in the author's analysis of Flecker's poems. Some of those clues I found totally absorbing - such as the interweaving of the story of his meeting during a sea voyage with a Greek lady, Hellé (who later became his wife), and his poem *The King of Alsander,* where Walker brings alive remarkably well the romantic feelings that only those two could have known. However I did not find at all convincing the strongly suggested much deeper relationship with Jack Beazley, evidenced exclusively, it seemed to me, by reading 'between the lines' of Flecker's poetry – and this is worth mentioning because so much is made of it. In particular my scepticism is because throughout the book the author also gives a contradictory picture of Flecker's inclinations in that respect, from a relationship with a 'shop girl' whilst at Oxford through to the time just prior to his marriage, when he seems to have been in relationships of various intensity with three women including his soon-to-be bride. And at one point in the book Walker even makes a crystal clear self-contradictory viewpoint: "[Edward] Marsh's attitude to the phrases used to describe the sexual attraction between men and women was bound to be different from Flecker's. Marsh's attraction was to his own sex."

Towards the end of the book especially, there is much (but perhaps unavoidable) long-winded talk about his correspondence concerning publication detail – no doubt of interest to some, but not for me and, I suspect, most readers. Nevertheless, the story was still kept alive for me here because it was throughout this period, the time when Flecker was dying in a Swiss sanatorium, that the final revisions of his play *Hassan* – described by Flecker himself as 'the hope of my life' – was completed. I think a good and simple measure of a biography of an artist or writer is whether it persuades the reader to investigate further, or return to aspects of their works, with 'new eyes'. Apart from his poem *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* and *Hassan,* I had

never before read any of Flecker's poetry, and I would say without doubt that this comprehensive biography certainly does that for me.

© Stewart Winstanley 2007

* *Flecker and Delius: The Making of Hassan* by Dawn Redwood; Thames Publishing 1978. ISBN 0 905210 06 9.

CD REVIEWS

DELIUS: VIOLIN SONATAS 1, 2 & 3

Albert Sammons, Evelyn Howard-Jones & Kathleen Long

English music owes a great debt to Albert Sammons, who not only championed Delius but also Elgar, Moeran, Rubbra and many others. In the first two of the Sonatas reviewed here, he is accompanied by Delius's close friend the pianist Evelyn Howard-Jones. For these reasons alone, these recordings are valuable historical documents.

The recording of *Sonata No. 1* (recorded in November 1929) was previously unpublished. Could this be because May Harrison and Arnold Bax had recorded it earlier in the same year? The Sammons is electric, and consequently much better than the acoustic recording of *Sonata No. 2.* Nevertheless, the piano sound is rather recessed (Bax made the same complaint to May Harrison concerning their recording). As one would expect, the performers give a lively and passionate account, and one soon forgets the quality of the sound. Sammons uses some *portamento*, particularly in the Lento section, but not to excess, and his sweet and pure tone is a treat. The *Molto Vivace* movement really is "*Molto Vivace*" - in fact, towards the end I felt that it was something of a scramble. The *Second Sonata* is much better recorded (as would be expected for 1944) and, again, Sammons gives an excellent performance. Perhaps Kathleen Long does not quite have the feel for Delius that Howard-Jones had, but this is a rather carping criticism.

Altogether, this is a "must have" disc for any full-blown Delius enthusiast. Space does not permit detailed comments on the Rubbra, but at the start, I thought Delius had written a fourth sonata!

© *Richard Kitching 2007*

DELIUS: PIANO CONCERTO in C minor

Clifford Curzon, BBC Symphony Orchestra cond. Sir John Pritchard (recorded 3 September 1981); BBC Legends, BBCL 418 1-2
Betty Humby Beecham, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra cond. Sir Thomas Beecham (recorded 4 & 16 December 1946); Naxos, Volume 5 of the Delius Orchestral Works 8.111006
Comparison: Benno Moiseiwitsch, Philharmonia Orchestra cond. Constant Lambert; Testament SBT 1014 (recorded 24 August 1946).

This revue is concerned primarily with two new releases of historical performances, of which I believe the Curzon is new to the catalogue.

Curzon's dates from the year before his death in 1982, and does not really show him at his best, although allowances have to be made for some of Delius's un-pianistic writing. It is slower than either of the other two above, the respective timings being Curzon: 25.45, Betty Humby Beecham: 22.53 and Moiseiwitsch: 20.62. Being recorded live – at a Promenade Concert - the ensemble (particularly at the start) is not always good, and Curzon makes heavy weather of Delius's attempts at Lisztian virtuosity. In the slower and more pianistic parts, his artistry shines through, and there is no denying that he gives his customary careful thought to the piece which he must have liked in that he chose to perform it so late in his career. Pritchard's contribution cannot match either Constant Lambert's or Beeham's. The cheering and shouting at the end, however, show that the audience enjoyed it!

Betty Humby Beecham was no doubt pressurised by Sir Thomas (her husband) to perform this piece, but she does give a creditable performance. Right from the start, the hand of Beecham is apparent - he gives the opening a rhythmic drive and verve not even equalled by Lambert, and the orchestral playing in some of the soft passages is exquisite. Some of Delius's more embarrassing virtuoso effusions are toned down to their advantage, but even he can do nothing with the final section (from Fig. 26 of the score to the end), where I have always felt that Delius finally lost patience with the piece and handed it to Szanto telling him to finish it off!

Moiseiwitsch: This was the first recording of the piece, and has been regarded as something of a benchmark. The virtuoso passages present no difficulty to this pianist and there is no doubt in my mind that, of the three considered here, he is the master. The orchestral contribution by Constant Lambert and the Philharmonia is of high order and very exciting, bringing out the drama whenever a chance occurs. My only reservation about the Testament CD is the quality of the sound – it is more strident than the old

World Records LP (SH224) with which I have compared it, and there is more surface noise. I assume, however, that it is not the World Record version that has been transferred to CD.

All three performances are, of course, of the one-movement version.

© *Richard Kitching 2007*

ERIC FENBY'S DELIUS RECORDINGS FOR EMI

DELIUS: VIOLIN SONATAS 1, 2 & 3

Yehudi Menuhin & Eric Fenby

ORCHESTRAL ARRANGEMENTS BY ERIC FENBY:

Dance (originally *Dance for Harpsichord*); *Two Pieces* for flute and strings (originally *La Calinda* and *Air and Dance*); *Five Little Pieces* (originally *Five Piano Pieces*); *Sonata for Strings* (originally the *String Quartet*)
Elena Duran *flute*, Bournemouth Sinfonietta conducted by Eric Fenby.
EMI 3 70566 2

The absence from the CD catalogue of the recordings that Eric Fenby made of some of his arrangements of Delius's music on an LP in 1978 has been a source of concern for some while. Its neglect was understandable: at 50 minutes' music the programme was too short on its own, and finding something to go with it was a problem. Malcolm Walker and I thought at one time that Eric's illustrated talk about Delius for EMI (now with *A Village Romeo and Juliet* on 5 75785 2) would have been a good companion but, alas, it would have made the disc too long. Now EMI, with Delius Trust support, has found the perfect solution: a double-album of 103 minutes' music, with the second disc devoted to another important Delius document also awaiting CD issue, Yehudi Menuhin's playing with Eric of the three (numbered) Violin Sonatas.

In 1977 I was writing for the Birmingham Post about the Malvern Festival being revived that year. I knew that Menuhin and Elgar's music were going to figure prominently, but when I got there it was a thrill to find Menuhin also down in one of the concerts to play Delius's *Third Sonata* – moreover partnered by Eric Fenby. It led the following year to recording sessions at which all three sonatas were played by them. These now reappear and they find the violinist in good technical estate and, with the benefit of Eric's collaboration, giving well-understood readings. They are more expansive in every movement than

Albert Sammons, and it is most interesting to find Tasmin Little's timings, though almost everywhere ahead of Menuhin's, closer to them. Menuhin was always quick – as Tasmin was - to pay tribute to the benefits of preparing all three sonatas with Eric: "It was quite wonderful to work with him on that music," he said when we included Delius's Second Sonata in his 80th birthday programmes on Radio 3; "Here was authority itself from *one who knew.*" And without any prompting from me, he launched into a beautiful, entirely spontaneous tribute in praise of Eric's unique work with Delius. None of that is here, naturally, but Eric himself writes about the Sonatas in the booklet, and that is a bonus.

1962 was the year that marked the centenary of Delius's birth, and among the good things that came out of it (not least the founding of The Delius Society) was Sir John Barbirolli's happy thought to ask Eric Fenby to arrange the third movement of the String Quartet, the movement known as *Late Swallows,* for string orchestra. Eric did, and Barbirolli premièred it with the Houston Symphony Orchestra (of which he was music director 1961-7) in Houston on 6 November 1963. I asked Sir John about it once, and he told me how well it had gone down in the USA; I was unsurprised when he emphasised, "Especially the middle section!" And he was quick to remind me that he had played in one of the earliest performances of the Quartet, in 1924, when he was cellist of the Kutcher Quartet: "I've loved that movement ever since," he added. The recording he conducted of *Late Swallows* in 1968 found him drawing the music out luxuriously a good two minutes longer than either Norman Del Mar or Eric Fenby subsequently did; no doubt having the full complement of Hallé strings at his command, against the smaller forces of the Bournemouth Sinfonietta in the other two cases, had a lot to do with it.

Metamorphosis of the complete Quartet into *Sonata for Strings* followed in 1977 when, at the Delius Trust's request, Eric attended to the remaining three movements. I've always admired the adroit way he grasped the opportunity to divide the parts, giving a passage such as that in the first movement between

22 and 24 (*Quartet*, miniature score), which always sounds stressful from four players, a much greater ease of execution (listen at 6'20" on Track 9 of the new CD). He also scrupulously preserves the music's momentum and its flow, and there is plenty of personality in the conducting. All of which seemed to suggest uncomplicated and fruitful sessions, which is why I was dismayed subsequently to learn that they had not been particularly happy, especially as it was Eric's first major recording. Some of the stress was later recalled by the flautist Elena Duran who, despite everything, played quite beautifully in three of Eric's arrangements (the *Dance, La Calinda* and the *Air and Dance)* even though it was her first experience of recording too. But the main burden lay on Eric, and I well remember him describing to me his disquiet upon being faced with an orchestra on its first day back at work after its summer holiday: hardly the best moment for an orchestra to be thrust into the recording studio anyway, and particularly so when faced with unfamiliar music under a conductor relatively inexperienced in recording techniques (as Eric was then: the Fenby Legacy was yet to come, of course).

In retrospect, it is perhaps surprising that the performances turned out so well – but they did, and still make required listening for Delians everywhere. The two transcriptions (originally a request from James Galway) are light and airy, while Eric's flute-and-strings version of Delius's *Dance for Harpsichord,* made especially for this occasion, is an absolute gem. At the time people said that the *Five Little Pieces* 'betrayed their pianistic origins' - I'm not sure how it could be otherwise - but I've always enjoyed these beautiful and intriguing fruits of a valuable inspiration of David Tall, who asked for them and in whose orchestra at the first performance Roger Buckley played. Eric was indeed a most sensitive orchestrator, and his re-clothing of the piano originals is highly effective and enjoyable. Despite his reservations over the recording sessions and the quality of some of the playing, it is good to have all these later manifestations of his devoted work for the cause of Delius preserved. They are historic documents and, of course, irreplaceable.

© *Lyndon Jenkins 2007*

EVENTS 2006-2008

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

Sunday 5 November 2006
Gastig Concert Hall, Munich,
Graham Waterhouse (cello) & Timon Attwegg (piano)
Cello Sonata, and works by Edward Gregson, Graham Waterhouse, Freda Swain & Ireland

Sunday 12 November 2006
The Playhouse, Sevenoaks
Sevenoaks Symphony Orchestra cond. Darrell Davison
Programme was *Brigg Fair*, Walton *Cello Concerto* &
RVW *A London Symphony*

Tuesday 14 November 2006
Lyric FM Irish Radio's Classic Channel
Britten Quartet
Programme included Delius's *Quartet*

Sunday 19 November 2006
MIDLANDS BRANCH
Ravenscroft, Weston Underwood, Ashbourne
Beyond the Rio Grande – Lambert, Delius, Jazz and other aspects – a talk by Stephen Lloyd

Thursday 7 December 2006
LONDON BRANCH
New Cavendish Club
The Delian Influence – a talk by Roger Buckley

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

Fridays 12 January – 16 February 2007
The Village Hall, Teffont, nr. Salisbury
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 2007
St Andrew's Church, Linton Road, Oxford (01865-311212)
The St Giles Orchestra cond. Geoffrey Bushell
Programme included *Lebenstanz*

Thursday 18 January 2007
The Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool (0151-709-3789)
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra cond. Vernon Handley
Brigg Fair, Violin Concerto (Tasmin Little) & Elgar *1st Symphony*

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

Saturday 17 February 2007
The Wigmore Hall,
The Nash Ensemble
La Calinda and *Air & Dance* (arr. flute & piano), plus Bax, Britten & Alwyn
(This concert was part of a series ('Realms of Gold') devoted to Elgar's contemporaries and successors. Details of the Nash Ensemble's future programmes can be found on their website: www.NashEnsemble.org.uk)

Sunday 18 February 2007
Villa Marina, Douglas, Isle of Man
Chetham's Sinfonia
Programme included *On hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* and works by Halvorsen, Tveitt, Vaughan-Williams and Greig.
(Part of the Chetham's School of Music Festival 'Spirit of Norway 2007'. For full details of this Festival which takes place between February and July 2007, contact Chetham's School of Music, Manchester on 0161 834 9644)

Tuesday 20 February 2007
LONDON BRANCH
New Cavendish Club
Delian threads in a Hornplayer's life - a talk by Julian Baker

Thursday 29 March 2007
LONDON BRANCH
New Cavendish Club
Boyd Neel – a talk by David Green

Tuesday 3 April 2007
Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre, London
BBC Concert Orchestra, cond. Charles Hazlewood
American Rhapsody, plus Copland and Dvořák Symphony 9

Wednesday 11 April – Saturday 14 April 2007 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

Sunday 15 April 2007 at 6.30
Conway Hall, London WC1 (no advance booking)
Raphael Wallfisch (cello) & John York (piano)
Cello Sonata, plus Debussy & Grieg Sonatas, and Sibelius

Sunday 22 April 2007 at 7.30
Whitely Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester (0161-838-7246)
Concert to include the *Cello Sonata* and sonatas by Greig and Debussy
Raphael Wallfisch (cello) and John York (piano)
(Part of the Chetham's School of Music Festival 'Spirit of Norway 2007')

Saturday 28 April 2007 at 7.30 (Doors open 7, unreserved seats)
Ecclesbourne School, Wirksworth, Duffield, near Derby (01332-841503/840509)
Piano recital by Bobby Chan
Programme includes *Three Preludes & Toccata*, Prokofiev, Schubert, Chopin & Liszt

Saturday 12 May
Haslemere Hall, Haslemere, Surrey (01428-642161)
Haslemere Music Society Orchestral Concert
No details, but programme understood to include *Summer Evening*

Tuesday 15 May 2007 at 7.30
Ipswich Corn Exchange, King Street, Ipswich IP1 1DH
City of London Sinfonia cond. Richard Hickox
The Walk to the Paradise Garden, Elgar - Cello Concerto (soloist: Jian Wang), Dvorak – Symphony No 7

Thursday 17 May 2007at 7.30
Cadogan Hall, Sloane Terrace, London SW1X 9DQ
City of London Sinfonia cond. Richard Hickox
Programme as for 15 May

Friday 18 May 2007 at 7.30
Whitely Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester (0161-838-7246)
Talk by Roger Buckley: *A breath of fresh mountain air – the friendship of Greig and Delius*
(Part of the Chetham's School of Music Festival 'Spirit of Norway 2007')

Saturday 19 May 2007
Whitely Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester
At 11.00: Talk by Lionel Carley: *Greig comes to England*
At 1600: Talk by Robert Matthew-Walker: *The recordings of Grieg*
(Part of the Chetham's School of Music Festival 'Spirit of Norway 2007')

Sunday 20 May 2007 at 7.30
Wycombe Swan, St Mary's St, High Wycombe HP11 2XE
City of London Sinfonia, cond. Richard Hickox
Programme as for 15 May

Saturday 4 August 2007 at 7.30
Three Choirs Festival
Princess Hall, Cheltenham Ladies College (TCF Box Office 01452-381638)
Gloucestershire Symphony Orchestra cond. Mark Finch
Dance Rhapsody No 2, plus Elgar/Payne (P&CM No 6), Howells, Gurney & Bridge
Thursday 27 September 2007 at 7.15
LONDON BRANCH
New Cavendish Club
Talk to be announced

Thursday 18 October 2007 at 7.15
New Cavendish Club
LONDON BRANCH
Talk to be announced

Produced for The Delius Society by Design & Print – Oxford