

With Hon. Secretary's compliments.

DELIUS SOCIETY - NEWSLETTER MARCH, 1964.

Newsletter Editor:

Charles Barnard,
16, Priory Close,
Woking, Surrey.

Hon. Treasurer:

Miss Ann Todd,
9, Woodstock Road,
Alperton, Middlesex.

I feel somewhat guilty at the delay in preparing this newsletter, as contributions from members have been coming in frequently, and I have more than enough material for this edition. I should obviously never succeed as a journalist, as I would always be missing the deadline. But I will make a special effort to get another issue out next month, after which those of you who can attend the AGM on 2nd May can come along and give me some tips on how to increase my productivity in this field.

First of all, though, let me remind you of our next two meetings, both in the Holborn Library, at 32, Theobalds Road, London, W. C. 1. On TUESDAY, 7TH APRIL, Mrs. Rachel Dugmore will be giving us an illustrated talk on countries and scenes visited by Delius, and this is due to start at 7.30 p.m. Members have been expressing considerable interest in this lecture.

On SATURDAY, 2nd May, we hold our Annual General Meeting. We are suggesting an earlier starting time - now 2 p.m. - so that we can have finished our official business, if possible, by, say, 4 p.m., when the ladies on the Committee have kindly offered to serve tea. After this, we shall have a further chance to get to know one another, and if anyone would like to hear some Delius music, we shall be pleased to arrange it. Our President, Mr. Fenby, has written to say that he intends to be present, so we hope that as many members as possible will be able to come along. We have not been able to get the extension after 6 p.m. on the 2nd May for which we had applied to the Holborn Library, but have an alternative suggestion to offer, as follows.

The Committee thought it would be a nice idea if we were to book a table in a restaurant for the evening of 2nd May, to follow the AGM, so that those who feel inclined can continue their conversations over a meal, in a manner which I am sure Delius would have approved. I myself have always found Bertorelli's in Charlotte Street an agreeable place, and I have therefore contacted the Manager, who can offer us a private room - seating up to forty - and a choice of two menus, each at 20/-. This sum does not include wine, but a good carafe can be obtained there for about 11/-, for those who like to wash down their meal.

I should perhaps mention that Bertorelli's does not provide canned music with its fresh food, though "They are not long, the days of wine and roses" might prove rather too distracting on this occasion!

Will those who are interested kindly advise our secretary, so that we can have an idea how many will be joining us for dinner? (If only a dozen or so intend eating, we shall obviously not need a private room).

/ Although

Although we shall have to meet the cost of our meal from our own pockets on the evening, I think it will be agreed the charge is comparatively moderate (money is not required in advance) and friends of members will of course also be welcome to join us.

In writing, perhaps members would indicate which of the two suggested menus they would prefer, although as it will only be possible to order from one, perhaps it would be more to the point to hope that neither menu contains anything to which members are allergic!

'A'	'B'
Grapefruit Cocktail	Minestrone
Rainbow Trout Meunière	Filots de Sole Palace
Tournedos au Croissons *	Suprême de Volaille **
Pommes Sautee	Pommes Croquottes
Choux de Bruselles	Haricots Verts
Peach Melba	Ananas au Kirsch ***
Cafe	

If my translation is correct, * steak with water crass
 ** chicken *** pineapple in a sweet liquer.

But for the sake of those on strict diet, I will hurry on to two events which are to take place on March 21st.

ON SATURDAY, 21st March, our Chairman, Mr. Fenby, will be addressing the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Society in Birmingham, in a talk entitled "Friend of Delius". At least one of our members, Mr. R. O. Wright, will be attending, and we hope that he will be able to send us a report in due course.

On the same day, in London, Maureen Morelle will include three Delius songs in her Wigmore Hall recital.

Looking back, on February 29th the BBC programme "Recent Releases" included the Closing Scene from "Koanga" which has just been issued by Phillips on an LP entitled "Encore - Sir Thomas" including also music by Bizet, Nicolai and Rossini.

Mrs. Grace Swanston has informed us that Doris Arnold included "On Hearing the First Cuckoo" in her programme "These you have loved", and this item will also be included in the Hammersmith Philharmonic Orchestra's concert at the Hammersmith Town Hall, on March 15th.

On April 3rd, Sir John Barbirolli and the Halle Orchestra will play the Intermezzo from "Fennimore and Gerda" in the Royal Festival Hall concert. This is a particular favourite of Sir John's.

/ We are

We are indebted to Mr. Friend for the following article, which was printed in the Royal College of Music magazine (Xmas term), and held over from the last newsletter.

A VISIT TO GREZ by John Rippin

Just under forty miles from Paris on the road to Lyons lies the ancient royal town of Fontainebleau, in the forest that bears its name. Around the eastern flank of the forest the River Loing winds slowly northwards to join the Seine. Drive along the "route nationale" to Montargis from Fontainebleau and, after about six miles, you reach a small crossroads, the left hand arm leading directly into Grez-sur-Loing and then over the bridge to Moret-sur-Loing.

The houses and streets of Grez are not in themselves outstanding - they are such as you might find in many French villages. It is the river, flowing behind them, which gives the place its atmosphere: wide, slow, with the broad-leafed reeds being bent to lie flat along the surface, catching the light, disturbing the smooth current. It was the quiet and peace of Grez that appealed to Delius and his wife Jelka when they moved there shortly after their marriage in 1903. Here they stayed until the ends of their lives, Delius dying in 1934 and Jelka living only one year longer.

The house was formerly part of a large chateau belonging to a Marquis de Cazeau who had neglected it and let the garden run wild. Jelka had been given permission to paint in the garden and, when the property was for sale, somehow managed to get the money together to buy it. Later on, when money was difficult, the house was bought by Balfour Gardiner who allowed Delius to live there, rent free, until his death, and it was from Gardiner that the present owners, Professor and Madame Merle d'Aubigne, bought it in 1936. Delius's marriage and move to Grez, which had just the right atmosphere for his work, coincided with a sudden flowering of his style, and his compositions from this time onwards, beginning with "Sea Drift", make an impressive list.

The house is flanked by a church and a ruin. The church, heavy and dating from the 13th century, has an oppressive square tower which juts out into the roadway. The ruin is a single tower, "la tour de la dame blanche", all that remains of a mediaeval castle where Louise de Savoie, mother of Francois I, died in 1531. Much remains unchanged from what it must have been when Delius lived there. As you walk down the road into the village, though, you will notice that many roofs wear television aerials; the field across the bridge, on the other side of the river, is given over to "le camping"; the old stone bridge has an ugly gap in it clumsily stopped with a wooden structure, the result of eagerness on someone's part to blow it up in 1944 in the face of the German army.

The house is large. A double gate leads off from the road into an archway, big enough to take a carriage, that divides the house into two wings on the ground floor. The main living-room leads from the side of the archway and now takes in what was once a smaller room. The stairs wind up from this room to the floor above. The corridor which formerly ran parallel to the street at the back of the house, now runs along the front, so that the upstairs rooms look over the garden.

On the church side is the studio over what was the coachhouse, where Jelka used to paint. On its two rough wooden doors, are the paint daubs where she worked her brushes out or tried a colour. What was Delius' music room, at the other end of the house, has been divided into smaller rooms. The small room which was Eric Fenby's when he arrived to work as amanuensis has now gone, its place being taken by a terrace balcony with stone steps leading down into the garden below.

In Delius's time the garden ran in a gentle slope from the house to the river. Today the upper half is in two shallow terraces of flags and lawn. The boundaries are old stone walls, covered with espaliers on the tower side, and round the lawn are beds stocked with summer flowers and roses. The lower half of the lawn is less formal. In the middle is a sunken pond stocked with goldfish and fed from a spring which rises beneath the house. The water, always moving, flows under a rustic bridge and then into the river itself. Plane trees at the bottom run right to the water's edge. There is a boathouse by the wall, a canoe upside down on trestles and a few more flagstones to make a landing stage. Everywhere are signs of care and neatness: new grass sown at a curve in the path, the edges trimmed, the paths swept; a wheelbarrow and besom ready to sweep up fallen twigs and leaves. Across the river is a large meadow with a row of young poplars breaking the breeze and acting as a backcloth for the waters between.

On the way back to the house Madame d'Aubigne pointed out the cluster of bamboos which had been planted by Delius to shield him from the sight of anyone rowing on the river. There is an old, twisted apple tree with windfalls swept into a neat pile beneath, some currant bushes, rhubarb, and a small walled vegetable garden under the studio windows. Around are signs that the garden today is used and enjoyed - a child's swing among the trees near the water, a "chaise-longue" on wheels on the upper terrace, some cowboy hats and a couple of bicycles for Madame's grandsons, one of whom came cycling down the path to greet a polite "bon jour, m'sieur" with outstretched hand.

This is a house that is lived in; it is not a museum. There are no plaques on the wall, no "Delius rooms". Madame d'Aubigne has one or two English books on Delius and some photos discovered in the house when she moved in. She had seen some of Jelka's paintings and believed that there was one in the local "Mairie" on the other side of the church. "Were they any good?" "No, not much. Very impressionist but rather poor."

Going to Grez is not like going to, say, Broadheath, and walking into Elgar's birthplace and the reconstructed study, seeing the pen and papers on his desk as if he had just got up and walked out and would be back soon. But, in that garden at Grez, with the sun, the trees and the flowers, the old stone walls and the smell of wood, the quiet and, above all, the river flowing silently and slowly past at the bottom, it was impossible not to think of "In a Summer Garden". I shall not hear that again without thinking of Grez and the summer afternoon when I was able to visit it for an hour or so.

A friend of mine recently bought a Delius song in a London music shop, very much second hand. He was intrigued to find inside a copy of a music magazine called MIO which apparently flourished in the twenties, and was edited by Philip Heseltine. One of the pages was devoted to a poem entitled "Delius". Though no notes were attached, I should imagine it was written after the 1929 festival. I include it, without comment, as an example of "Deliana".

"The midnight folk, the eerie goblin-kind,
 "Lean upon drums and dance along the wind,
 "Pluck at the strings until the darkness fills
 "With black wings teeming from the tunnelled hills,
 "And shapes that gibber against the coming of day
 "Until day comes, and the gloomy array
 "Creeps away.

"A mood passes and a voice sings
 "Of passion's hunger and of beauty's thrall
 "And the faint shades of unremembered things
 "That fade at last for ever, lonely beyond recall.

"Through lands fantastic and lands a-shimmer with heat,
 "Dark forests and lone plains benumbed with frost
 "(Icicles glittering over the violins)
 "The mind has travelled afar - then a psalm rings
 "In praise of the dancing, laughter and strength of Man.

"And, all the while, the blind weaver of all these dreams
 "Listens and dreams.

"Slowly a hand falls, the music ends.
 "From the peopled hall
 "Call upon call of praise and love,
 "To the ringing roof ascends.
 "Under a lighted dome
 "The wanderer comes home:
 "His country makes amends."

But not perhaps sufficient "amends", as the following item may show:

Following a suggestion by Mr. G. L. Gray, we wrote to Phillips about the "Mass of Life" and received this reply:-

"Thank you for your letter of the 6th February regarding the release of the Delius "Mass of Life". While we ourselves would very much like to release this we feel we must draw your attention to the fact that when it was available at full price the sales were abysmal. If we were to re-issue this on a cheap label we would need assurance that we could sell at least five thousand sets to make this a commensal proposition.

"We do agree that the association of Sir Thomas Beecham and Delius does make this work unique, but unless people are prepared to buy it what is the use of our issuing it."

I was interested in a remark by the critic Andrew Porter in the Financial Times on 23rd January. He was reviewing the previous evening's performance at the Festival Hall of Holst's Choral Symphony, and his second paragraph read:-

/ "Every British

"Every British composer has his champions. Play more Bantock/Bax/Boughton/Bridge/Delius/Holbrooke/Ireland/Moeran/Cyril Scott/Vaughan Williams; the cries go up and the list of them is long when we include living composers. But play them, I would add, in the regular course of events, not partitioned away into special concerts. There are, for example, many Delius works that everyone enjoys, but the only times we hear them now seem to be in all-Delius programmes that attract only the faithful. So too with Holst's Egdon Heath and Hammersmith, two works that should surely be in this country's normal orchestral repertory."

I agree with this entirely, and was remarking that I hope this year, unlike last, several Delius works will be included in Promenade Concert programmes, each on separate nights, when we received the following cordial letter from the BBC, in reply to our letter pointing out that no Delius work was included in the recent series of concerts by British composers.

"Let me say straight away that we were very conscious of the absence of Delius from the programmes. For various practical reasons, however (such as rehearsal time, availability of the BBC Chorus, availability of soloists, the amount of money we could spend on the project, etc.), we had, of necessity, to omit certain works we had hoped to do.

"Although another 'series' of British concerts is not planned at the moment, we shall be doing a number of Delius works in our regular programmes. On Saturday, May 30th, Rudolf Kempe will be recording "Sea Drift" (with John Noble, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus) in Maida Vale I Studio. There will be an invited audience, and perhaps you would like us to reserve some seats for members of the Delius Society. The complete programme is: WEBER Overture, Euryanthe; DELIUS "Sea Drift"; SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No. 10, and the recording will commence at 7 p.m.

"'Sea Drift' will also be in this year's Proms. Programmes farther ahead are still in the planning stage, but I very much hope to include 'A Mass of Life' and several other Delius works in the January, 1965 programmes."

We do hope members will agree that the BBC have gone some way to assure us that Delius is still a live issue; and further we have been asked to send details of our activities to Portland Place from time to time.

WILL MEMBERS KINDLY LET OUR SECRETARY KNOW, BY AN EARLY DATE, IF THEY WISH TO BE INCLUDED IN AN APPLICATION FOR TICKETS FOR 30TH MAY (letters to be addressed to 45, Redhill Drive, Edgware, Middx.)

On March 3rd, the BBC Concert Hour, conducted by Vilen Tausky, included "Dance Rhapsody No. 2" in its programme, and this was also broadcast on January 16th by the BBC Scottish Orchestra under Norman Del Mar.

An outstanding event was the talk given by Mr. Anthony Payne in Music Magazine on 26th January, and in answer to our letter of thanks for this broadcast, Mr. Payne wrote:-

/ I was

"I was most flattered to see my talk promoted in your newsletter and hope that some members of perhaps less progressive tastes than myself will now not think that those younger musicians who follow Webern, Schoenberg, etc., etc., are unable to appreciate composers like Delius.

"You may be encouraged to know that two friends of mine - both young composers who will make names for themselves - possibly big names - look upon Delius as a composer of daring and accomplishment; they are both men of considerably "modern" tastes.

"Ever since I was at school I've loved Delius music and I find he stands the test of time pretty well. Although these days my work on keeping abreast of the latest pieces etc. means I go months at the time without hearing any Delius - I'm never disappointed when I have a disc or tape session.

"I was interested to see "Arabesk" mentioned in your letter - I think it without doubt one of Delius's finest achievement, but not even Delians seem to mention it much. I tried to include an excerpt in the talk but it just couldn't be fitted in."

The recent very welcome appearances in this country of Duke Ellington remind us that last December, Mr. H. Roberts of Oxford wrote us as follows:-

"Sometime ago, someone made a jesting remark in the June newsletter about 'any member playing 1st trumpet in a hot jazz combination.' Actually, many jazz musicians way back in the thirties were Delius lovers. Jean Pougnet, the interpreter of the violin concerto, first made his name as a 'hot' violinist (so, if I remember rightly did Hugo Rignold).

"Above all, Duke Ellington is reputed to be a Delius fan. I have no personal knowledge of this; it is perhaps a clue that one of Duke's works is entitled 'In a Blue Summer Garden'.

"It would be an honour both for the Duke and for our Society if he could be persuaded to become a Vice-President. Moreover it might be an item for the gossip columns."

On February 28th, Mr. Malcolm Walker gave a very powerful talk on Frederick Delius - his life and music, with record illustrations, to the London Symphony Orchestra Club.

Mr. Walker's musical illustrations were "Sleigh Ride", the songs "The Violet" and "Autumn", the last act of "A Village Romeo & Juliet", a considerable excerpt from the beginning of part 2 of the "Mass of Life", "In a Summer Garden", "March of Spring" from North Country Sketches, the "Golden Road to Samarkand" from Hassan, and the Caprice & Elegy.

The L.S.O. club bulletin included the following note:-

/"Now

"Now we no longer have Sir Thomas Beecham, we no longer hear overmuch the music of Delius. How often one hears this remark in the face of box-office promoters, very few of whom have at any time been anxious to promote performances of what they generally regard as "unknown composers". Unknown that is as far as public popularity is concerned.

"Yet Beecham, Geoffrey Toye and other performing musicians in their day did their utmost to create the greatest possible interest in this composer's music by outstanding performances. Some of these are perpetuated on record while other live events from the past, full of significance, remain a vibrant, living memory.

"Certain opinions have it that Delius' music was too full of the French Impressionist School, thus causing its neglect; an unexplainable factor even at the present time, it is true to an extent that the composer cut adrift from his contemporaries yet the main portion of his output personifies the English pastoral scene much more convincingly than others were able to achieve in their writings. Here lies the unique essence of this great man's abilities: to conjure up a living picture before our eyes as we listen to his music....."

It is a fact that many of our members are consistently campaigning for the music of Delius, by talks and illustrated lectures, as will be shown from the following recent summary:-

Dr. E. K. Carley, who has recently returned from Sweden, included Delius, with particular reference to "Sea Drift", in a lecture he delivered on English music while he was in Sweden. Needless to say, Delius is virtually unknown there.

In January, Mr. Don Leaney, gave a talk to the Bushey and Watford Gramophone Society, with illustrations from "Lypalachia".

In February, Mr. G. K. Parfitt lectured to the Croydon Gramophone Society on Delius, and Mr. R. O. Wright gave the first of three programmes to the Dudley Recorded Musical Society, choosing "A Song of Summer" for the first lecture, to be followed by "Eventyr" and "Songs of Sunset" for the remaining two talks. Dr. Roland Gibson addressed the music society at the Brunel College, Acton, with illustrations from "Songs of Sunset" and other works of Delius.

I think we must all be very appreciative of this individual effort by our members.

Mr. H. Roberts - as expert on Delius as on the "Duke" - has asked us to draw the attention particularly of Oxford members to a gramophone recital he is putting on, on MONDAY, MAY 11th, which will probably include the suite from "Hassan" and "Paris". This will take place at the Clarendon Restaurant in George Street, Oxford. No time is mentioned, but members can contact him for further particulars at 13, Temple Road, Temple Cowley, Oxford.

Passengers at Liverpool Street station were spurred on their way, one cold morning in January, by a performance of "La Calinda" over the public address system!

/ Jacksonville Festival

Jacksonville Festival

Mr. & Mrs. Philip Emanuel kindly sent a programme from the 1964 Delius Festival at Jacksonville, Florida, which they attended, from February 6th to 9th inclusive. In the programme for the 6th was the "American premiere in this Festival" of the "Florida Suite", which was dedicated to the people of Florida. In subsequent programmes both the Concerto for Cello and Orchestra and the Concerto for Violin and Cello and Orchestra were played in "reduced" form, piano reductions by Philip Heseltine.

Our Secretary tells us that the programme and biographical notes by Mr. Hugh Aldorman, the Chairman of the Festival Committee, reveal most movingly the reverence with which Delius is regarded in this part of the world.

Looking Ahead

Mr. Noakes, a member of the Royal Choral Society, as well as the Delius Society, has sent us advance notice of a performance of "A Mass of Life" which is to be given at the Royal Albert Hall on November 3rd.

Mr. Noakes also tells us that there are signs that the anchor is about to be hoisted on a hitherto unrecorded work of Delius! (And we also have heard something to this effect).

New Members

Our Treasurer has notified us of the following new members, to whom we extend a warm welcome:-

Mrs. Llya D. Waller	}	The Gardens, Holwood, Keston, Kent.
Mr. Frank Waller		

Mr. Robert Threlfall,
14, Norman Avenue,
Sanderstead, Surrey.

Mr. Trevor Dannatt,
8, St. Mary's Grove,
London, N. 1.

Miss Spencer-Hess,
93, Richmond Hill Court,
Richmond, Surrey.

Could any member put MR. THRELFALL on the path to becoming the owner of a vocal score of the V.R. & J.? (He has already had access to a library copy, but wants a copy for his own use and study). Mr. White or Mr. Tall - any suggestions please?

Members may have heard a broadcast of Mr. C. W. Orr's songs on February 13th. The setting of "It was the time of roses" was particularly lovely.

Mr. C. Crafton Harris, also a member of the Delius Society, is to be represented by his lovely song "Autumn" at the Wigmore Hall on May 2nd, which date, unfortunately, clashes with our AGM.

Donations

The Committee would like to thank members most sincerely for many letters received, expressing pleasure at the activities of the Society. It is also most encouraging that since January 1964 donations have been received from three members totalling £26.6.0. This is particularly gratifying, since two of the three members are not able to attend London meetings, and must therefore depend on the newsletters to keep in touch with the Society's activities.

Such generosity spurs us on to maintain our output, in spite of the handicap of having no office equipment of our own (or even an office!)

It is a fact that we are almost dangerously **dependent** on outside assistance for our duplicating, and the lady who helps us with this has unfortunately been on the sick-list.

We hope to include in our next issue contributions from Mr. Wright on "A Mass of Life", and from Dr. Gibson, and would ask members to continue to send us material for our newsletters.

Dinner on May 2nd

A further reminder to let our Secretary know if you will be attending the dinner after the AGM on 2nd May.

The following item appeared under "Last Word" in the Evening Standard recently:-

"Eat-now-pay-later note: 'Wellingtonians' London dinner, Friday, June 19. Tickets 5 gns. including wine and tips. Apothecaries Hall, E.C.4. 6.30 p.m. Apply with cheque, post-dated if necessary....." - Advertisement in The Times".

David Simmons
Chairman.