

DELIUS NEWSLETTER

MAY 1964

Whether or not this newsletter appears before the A.G.M. in a fortnight's time is dependent on our secretarial staff whose valiant efforts are much appreciated. I think that during the summer months we must call on their services less often, so that the next newsletter will definitely not appear until late July!

The season is now approaching when Delius' music, as it were, contains its most nostalgic notes - late spring and early summer. So members may wish to listen to more music and read less newsletter. In this respect, our efforts as a pressure group seem to be paying off. Dr. Gibson, who normally advises me as to what has been played recently, has sent me such a long list, that I feel in duty bound to precis it and say 'Delius has been played at least once a week on the radio, and this regularity shows every sign of continuing'. In fact, when the B.B.C. finally starts their 'music all day' programme on the Third wavelength, Delius should appear almost daily. Needless to say, we shall keep up our approaches to the B.B.C. as they definitely seem to be paying off.

Members may have noticed, several weeks ago, a concert advertised in the Radio Times for a Saturday afternoon including a work 'In a Summer Garden' by Sibelius. When the announcer introduced this work, he said: 'Of course, this should have read Delius'. I liked the "Of course". One can visualise a television interviewer asking the 'man in the street', "Can you tell me who composed 'In a Summer Garden?'", and getting an answer like - "Now let me see. In someone's garden. Is that by the same man as 'In a Monastery Garden?'".

I suppose Delius and Sibelius can almost be said to be at opposite musical poles. As a lover of both composers, I have often wondered if the Finns are fond of Delius, as the antithesis of Sibelius. Since I hope to visit Finland this summer - and hear some Sibelius in his natural surroundings - I thought that I could do my own research. But I have recently been reading a book on Finland, by an English woman who taught English there some years ago.

It appears that one evening she decided to play records of English composers to her class. And I quote - "They only showed any real appreciation for Elgar. As for Delius, he was altogether too much for them, and, in the middle of On Hearing The First Cuckoo In Spring, I distinctly heard one of the audience remarking loud and clear "Where's the cuckoo? I can't hear it! What's this got to do with a cuckoo, anyway?".

So it appears that the Finns are not receptive to Delius. Perhaps they are jealous of the warmth in his music, and prefer the 'cold, clear water' of Sibelius.

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At least our friends over the Atlantic appear to be much more enthusiastic. Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel have kindly given me a copy of the programme of this year's Jacksonville Festival in Florida, which they again attended, and a wonderful selection of Delius it contains.

The festival lasted four days. On the first, held on 6th February, the programme consisted of the Prelude to Irmelin, the Florida Suite, Over the Hills and Far Away, and the Piano Concerto.

The second evening consisted of a selection of songs, and a piano reduction by Philip Heseline of the Cello Concerto. The third evening consisted of more songs, and a piano duet arrangement of Eventyr, and the final evening consisted of the Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra, and the Concerto for Violin and Concerto, both played in the Heseltine arrangements with piano accompaniment.

The meeting held early in April of the Holborn Library was well attended, and we all thoroughly enjoyed the talk, given by Mrs. Dugmore entitled 'The Search for Delius'. The slides showing scenes that Delius would have known were most interesting, even allowing for the fact that the projectionist - alias your newsletter editor - put half of them in upside down. Since some of these were maps of Norway, it was difficult to know whether we were following the walking tour of Delius and Beecham in 1909 forwards or backwards. Nevertheless, we were glad to renew acquaintance with members again, and hope that more talks of this nature will be forthcoming.

Actually, for members who like booking dates well in advance, we hope to have Stanford Robinson to come and talk to us about Delius at the Holborn Library on 29th September. Although five months away, we hope that members will make a note of the date, as we would like a good 'turn-out' for what promises, I feel sure, to be a most interesting talk.

Further good news. I understand that the Cello Concerto is in process of being recorded with Jacqueline Du Pré, backed by the Songs of Farewell. Members are asked to encourage all their friends to buy it when it is issued (probably at the end of 1964) so that it joins the Beatles in the Top Ten.

Several members have congratulated us on our March newsletter, and particularly on the article "A Trip to Grez", though two members have not been completely in accord with every statement.

Mr. Aickman writes:

"Mr. Rippin's description of a visit to Delius's house strikes me as an exceptionally good piece of writing, precise, detailed, and informative, with several important things in it that I for one did not previously know; but, as the happy owner of an important painting by Jelka Rosen, I should hate it to be thought that the opinion of her work which is attributed in the article to Madame d'Aubigne is the last word on the subject. Many people have been struck by the affinity between Jelka Rosen's painting and Delius's music, and my own view of the former is akin to Sir Thomas Beecham's view of the latter, as quoted in Mr. Cardus's memoir:

'The defect is not in Delius. It is the barbarous age we live in that is incapable of understanding such music, an age in which no newwork could possibly appeal if it revealed evidence of breeding, delicacy, a sense of regret, and a craving for beauty.'

"All the works by Jelka Rosen that I have seen strike me as revealing just these features. She was a minor artist, but personal and charming. It is probably, of course, that Madame d'Aubigne had not seen specimens of her best work."

Mr. Marlacy Jones writes:

"Your Chairman may be interested to know that MILO referred to on page 5 was first issued in October 1929 as the official organ of Sir Thomas Beecham's founding of the Imperial League of Opera. I have also the November and December issues of that year. The scheme did not flourish and eventually subscriptions were refunded."

Mr. Threlfall is most grateful to Mr. Tall for responding so quickly to his request for help in obtaining the vocal score of "A Village Romeo and Juliet". Members may not know that this is in fact still obtainable at Boosey and Hawkes (price 70/-), as is the full and miniature scores of FLORIDA.

Also, Galliard Ltd., 148 Charing Cross Road, W.C. 2, are the publishers of Mr. Fenby's arrangement of "Late Swallows". The full score costs 7/6, parts each 2/6 (Double Bass 1/-).

We are grateful to Mr. Hodgson for the following delightful episode that befell him a few weeks ago.

"A few days ago, I shuffled into the Whitechapel Art Gallery to see an exhibition of modern paintings by an American called Raushcenberg.

I don't really like modern art, though I quite like trying to like it. There were pictures with mens' ties stuck in the middle. Pictures with bits of wood and old tin nailed into them. A great variety.

I found myself at a picture called "Broadcast". It meant nothing to me, but as I stood there I thought I could hear music - very faint, but nevertheless, there it was. From the top right-hand corner of the picture something very like Delius was being filtered through the paint! In the centre, half hidden in a clot of blue were three radio knobs (believe it or not). I tweaked one clockwise. It was Delius - unmistakably. Then a bit more clockwise and a bit more until the whole place was filled with Dance Rhapsody No. 2.

Everyone was staring at me. So I tried desperately to look unconcerned. - I set my nose about six inches from the canvas and pretended to examine the blobs with an expert eye.

"Marvellous, isn't it?" said the man beside me.

"Yes, it is", I said.

But I think he meant the picture. "

I find I have outstanding two longish articles by Dr. Gibson and Mr. Wright. Since Mr. Wright's is the longer, I am arranging to have it stencilled separately, and sent out with the next newsletter, to avoid delaying the issue of this one.

In the meantime, I trust he will forgive me if I include the one from Dr. Gibson, which seems to have been in my drawer for some time.

Delius and the Twentieth Century

Stanford Robinson's inclusion of "North Country Sketches" in his programme of 4th December, 1963, was an event for Delius lovers. It is a work which occupies a high place in Delius' output. A certain contemporary composer has said that this "work of genius" sent "shivers down his spine". At first, it seems strange that Delius, who was to a considerable extent an impressionist, is relatively neglected compared with Debussy, but this matter clarifies a little when one finds people praising Debussy's later works, in particular the late sonatas, in which Debussy had moved away from impressionism, and strongly anticipated some later twentieth century developments. The American pianist, Charles Rosen, writes . . . "Three years before his death Debussy finished the Twelve Etudes for piano. To a far greater extent than the two books of preludes and the "Images" for orchestra, they are a statement of what he had done, and could do in the art of music", or again, "Along with the ballet "Jeux", the Twelve Etudes seem to be placed above the "Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian" and even above the three famous chamber sonatas."

Recently Albert Sammons' son-in-law Mr. Hill, a very keen Delian, remarked that what made Delius unpopular now compared with Debussy was the fact that Debussy "had rhythm". Similar remarks were made in the Delius Centenary Year by Neville Cardus and others. However, "Rhythm" can mean either the old boom-boom-boom, or its negation, which is meant by "Rhythm" in really modern music. It is amusing to note that it was precisely on this rhythmic aspect, where so many critics have attacked Delius, that Anthony Payne, in his recent broadcast, defended Delius and stressed the modernity of his music, even mentioning Webern and Stravinsky almost in the next breath.

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Delius has recently been mentioned in connection with early Schoenberg. The programme notes for the 8th November Festival Hall performance of Schoenberg's "Gurrelieder" contained the following passage:

"To a sophisticated modern audience in London "Gurrelieder" may well recall phrase after phrase of Wagner's last operas, of Brahms' lyrical music, of Mahler and Strauss and Elgar, perhaps of Delius' "A Mass of Life" (composed in 1905)."

That Delius is not even mentioned in the "Pelican" publication, "European Music in the Twentieth Century" is nothing short of ridiculous. (Other anomalies are that Falla is not mentioned; also Bax is not, whereas Vaughan Williams and Holst are).

To start with, chronologically, nearly all Delius' major works were written in the twentieth century, and, although one might say that in their character they belonged largely to the nineteenth century, harmonically they are at least as much twentieth century as Strauss and Mahler. Anthony Payne has made it clear that rhythmically Delius, in certain works, was definitely not nineteenth century. Also Deryck Cooke once wrote: "As a choral composer, Delius is in a class of his own, as anyone who has experienced the full impact of "Sea-Drift" and "The Song of the Hills" can testify. His writing for chorus was easily the most extraordinary in the history of music until the advent of the twelve-note school".

One has only to read some of the remarks made by early twentieth century critics to realise that they did not regard Delius as nineteenth century.

It is fundamental, of course, that a book on 20th century music will devote space to Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartok, Hindemith, etc., but when one finds Delius neglected yet a handful of twopenny halfpenny composers, several British, given space - you can guess the type - at first it is simply amazing, but one realises afterwards that it is just one more symptom of the widespread pompous intellectualism, which was the very thing Delius hated and reacted against, shown for example in his music. One large historical fact, apart from any judgements one would make, concerning the musical scene of this century, is the enormous influence of Delius on, for example, writers of film music but to the pompous intellectual, either this just did not happen or, if it did, it was not music and so not his concern. But sure enough, under this intellectualism lies naivete. For example, one writer in the Pelican Book says of Britten; "He makes hay of the crudely mechanistic Hegelian idea that music develops in a strictly dialectical way, from one moment of 'historical necessity' to another." It is this writer himself who is crudely mechanistic. He talks as if for Hegel, the dialectician, a general did not have meaning essentially relative to its specific variations or exceptions, or that the progressive aspect of a developing situation was not something essentially relative to its reactionary aspect.

We are very happy to include in this newsletter our first report from our Midland branch, sent by Dick Kitching:

REPORT OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE
MIDLANDS BRANCH (CONTRIBUTED BY MR.
E.E. ROWE)

The inaugural meeting of the Midlands Branch of the Delius Society was held at Allestree, Derby, chez R.B. Kitching (Chairman) on Wednesday, 22nd April 1964, eleven persons attending, including one visitor from San Francisco.

The evening was notable for the number of precedents set, which seem unlikely to be matched in the future - viz. the erudition of the Chairman's address and the diligence of its preparation, and the excellence of the refreshments provided, which included vins rouges et blancs and two other beverages, not to mention a feast of patisserie and petits-fours.

The meat of the address, after an introductory hors d'oeuvres comprising details of the composer's life and habits, was a series of taped musical illustrations of three aspects of Delius' work - his descriptions of nature ("Summer Night on the River", the opening of "Brigg Fair", and "North Country Sketches"), his individual choral style ("Song of the High Hills", "Arabesque"), and his mastery of mood (contrasting "Songs of Sunset" and "Sea Drift"). Mr. Kitching's learned commentary and occasional piano interpolations made reference to various other works, just sufficient to whet our appetites for further hearing of those which were unfamiliar.

Informal (desultory) discussion of the form of future meetings followed the gateaux, and it was agreed that music played or performed should not be confined to Delius or his period, but that each meeting include at least one item of Delius and one item of other twentieth century music.

Although this newsletter will arrive after the A.G.M. no mention has been made of it as a full report will appear in the next issue of the newsletter, as will, I hope, a selection of letters written to one of our members, Mr. Orr, by Delius. Mr. Orr has very kindly sent us a copy, and they make fascinating reading.

Sometime during the summer, I must also issue an up-to-date list of members, since it is a year since I issued the last one. Although a few members have not renewed their subscription, the great majority of you continue to give us your valuable support, which is much appreciated.

In the meantime, here is a list of our latest members:

123 (omitted by mistake from the last newsletter)

C.A. Rose Esq.,
34 Newbury Gardens,
Upminster, Essex.

129 Gerald F. Warburg Esq.,
9 East 79th Street,
New York 21, N.Y., U.S.A.

130 Roger Buckley Esq.,
3 Cranmere Road,
Higher Compton,
Plymouth.

131 Miss Jane Tranter,
Goldsmith's House,
Park Village East,
Regent's Park,
London, N.W. 1.

132 Mr. & Mrs. B.R. Dunn,
and 4 South Road,
133 The Park,
Nottingham.

134 Miss Shirley Clover,
Flat 4,
37 Newcastle Drive,
The Park,
Fottingham.

135 M.C. Manning Esq.,
6 Wellington Square,
London, S.W. 3.

136 Ernest Chapman Esq.,
10 Turner Lane,
London, N.W. 11.

137 John Michael East Esq.,
The Director of Music,
Stonyhurst College,
Whalley,
via Blackburn,
Lancs.

DELIUS SOCIETY - FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1963-64

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
B/forward	£ 29.18. 7.		
Members Subscriptions	133. 0. 11.	Newsletters	£ 37. 18. 0.
Donations	33. 8. 0.	Hire of Hall for AGM May 1963	5. 5. 0.
Grant from Delius Trust re Concert 4/1/64	50. 0. 0.	Concert Leighton House 4/1/64	56. 3. 6.
Sale of Festival Programmes	1. 8. 0.	Advertising Concert 4/1/64	2. 0. 0.
Collections at Holborn Library	11. 2. 6.	Hire of Holborn Library and equipment	18. 14. 6.
		Lecturer's expenses 7/4/64	5. 5. 0.
		Licence for public use of gramophone records	2. 2. 0.
		Stationery	9. 10. 6.
		Float for Miscellaneous expenses	5. 0. 0.
		Sending out draft constitution	5. 2. 6.
			<u>£147. 1. 0.</u>
		Credit balance at 30/4/64	<u>111. 17. 0</u>
	<u>£258. 18. 0.</u>		<u>£258. 18. 0.</u>