

DELIUS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER NO. 7 - FEBRUARY 1965

Chairman - David Simmons

Newsletter Editor:
Charles Barnard,
16, Priory Close,
Woking, Surrey.

Hon. Treasurer:
Miss Ann Todd,
9, Woodstock Road,
Alperton, Middx.

On December 15th, I was casually looking at the back page of The Times when my eyes alighted on a notice of a sale of letters at Sothebys the following day. And amongst these were listed "A series of 81 autograph letters and 41 autograph postcards to Philip Heseltine."

So for the first time in my life, I entered Sotheby's and purchased the 3d. catalogue (quite the best threepennyworth of catalogue I have ever bought) and saw the letters in question - all fascinating - together with the original score of the 2nd Dance Rhapsody.

Determined thereupon to attend the auction, even if only as a spectator, I left Sotheby's all agog for the events of the following day - when on the 16th December the letters, after vigorous bidding, were sold to the British Museum for £700, and it is good to know that there they will be in safe keeping. I could not help thinking at the time that my own correspondence is unlikely ever to be so valuable, but I am now asking all my friends to make a point of keeping my letters to them.

I was glad to see the Dance Rhapsody No. 2 go to the Delius Trust for £450. I don't suppose that Delius received anything like £450 for the work when he wrote it, but it's nice to know that it's not only impressionist paintings that are going up in value at Sotheby's.

Members may be interested to read the extracts from the letters that were printed in the catalogue, which I quote in full.

Note.

I have underlined those words which were printed in italics.

Lot. 395 DELIUS (FREDERICK). A series of 81 A.L.s.s. (many with envelopes) and 41 A. Postcards s. Grez sur Loing, etc., 1911-22, and 20 Letters and 10 postcards written by Mrs. Delius at her husband's dictation, id., 1921-29, all addressed to Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock) covering a variety of subjects (the writer's music and that of other composers, critics, religion, philosophy, the social system, the 1914-18 war, Heseltine's career, etc.), also 38 A.L.s.s. and 19 A. Postcards s. from Mrs. Delius to Philip Heseltine, containing much information about her husband and his works, Grez sur Loing, etc. 1913-30, with an A.L.s. from Mrs. Delius to Sir Thomas Beecham mentioning the 1929 Delius Festival and the Delius Edition and analysing "En Arabesk" (she appends a literal translation of this), Grez sur Loing, 14th Aug. 1929, a photograph of Delius, inscribed to Philip Heseltine and signed, and a prospectus of the 1929 Delius Festival with a reproduction of Augustus John's portrait of the composer loosely inserted.

/.....You are just

.....You are just going thro' what I have also gone through and I own that until I had become an entire disbeliever in any Life here - after I was constantly in a very unsatisfactory state of mind - Read Nietzsche - the "Anti-Christ" - "Beyond good and evil" - Christianity is paralysing - If one is sincere it utterly unfits one for Life - If hypocritical one becomes hateful to oneself - And thenceforward one can only live amongst similar hypocrites - England and America have, I believe, the monopoly of such. The moment you chuck all this rot over board Life becomes interesting - wonderful - and one gets a great desire to make something of it - to live it to the full.....(Grez sur Loing, 28th April, 1911).

.....I am so glad you like the sound of Brigg Fair and am very sorry you did not hear it conducted in a better way - What you say is perfectly correct - one must beat one in a bar - 3 makes me shudder - Then again the slow section can scarcely be taken slow enough - The maestoso section must be taken solemnly and not hurried....I do not believe in any music constructed knowingly on any Harmonic Scheme whatsoever. All the people who write about the Harmonic system or try to invent other systems Quarter tones etc. Dont seem to have anything to say in Music - Systems are put together from the compositions of inspired musicians Harmony is only a means of expression which is gradually developing - I dont believe in learning Harmony or counterpoint..... (Grez sur Loing, 4th Dec. 1911).

.....Bernard Shaw has a wonderfully clear mind but not much feeling. He is superficial like nearly all Irishmen - He is a clever - very clever polemist-journalist - and what he really wants to do is to surprise you or make you laugh - or shock the "Bourgeois" just enough to avoid being put in prison - And then again he is no artist whatever - He is the "Richard Strauss" of literature [sic].... (Cap Ferrat, 22nd Aug. 1912).

.....Of course the attitude of the critics is always stupid - Critics as a rule are musicians who have failed. I know no exception.....Music is a matter of temperament - Emotional music will be understood at once by emotional people - Intellectual music will be liked and understood by intellectual people and so on and so forth - I don't believe in music you have to get accustomed to - that is what puts me out about Schönberg.....(Grez sur Loing, 24th Sept. 1912).

.....You ask me for advice in choosing between the civil service - for which you seem to have no interest whatever - and music, which you love - I will give it you - I think that the most stupid thing one can do is to spend ones life doing something one hates or for which one has no interest - In other words it is a wasted life - I do not believe in sacrificing the big things of life to anyone or anything... (Grez sur Loing, 11th Jan. 1911).

.....We have been having very exciting times here. During the German advance there was an ever growing panic here caused, no doubt, by the refugees from Belgium and the North of France streaming thro' Grez - The high road to Nemours was a terrifying sight and we sat for hours watching the terrified stream of humanity pass by in every sort of vehicle possible - We had hundreds every night in Grez and they told terrible tales of German atrocities - On Sept 5th it got too much for us and we also could hear the booming of the canon (Battle of the Marne) so we decided to get out also, so we left for Orleans in a cattle truck with 50 or 60 others....(Grez sur Long, n.d., postmark 26.10.14).

/.....I have

.....I have experienced the [British] press and public acclaiming Electra as one of the greatest masterpieces of the world - a work which has already died a natural death - which it deserved - and the Village Romeo was declared undramatic - It is one of the most dramatic and emotional works ever written and in years to come will be constantly played everywhere - Beecham's production was from a scenic point of view perfectly mediocre and inefficient - He used old Covent Garden Scenery - now a scene out of Gotterdammerung again one out of some other opera. The singers were nearly all bad and inefficient and none of them could act.....(Grez sur Loing, 15th Oct. 1916).

.....I, myself, am entirely at a loss to explain how I compose - I know only that at first I conceive a work suddenly - the work appears to me instantaneously as a whole, but as a feeling - the working out of the whole work in detail is then easy as long as I have the feeling - the emotion - it becomes difficult as the emotion becomes less keen, sometimes I am obliged to put the work aside for months - sometimes years - and take it up again, having almost entirely forgotten it; in order to bring back my first feeling.....(Biarritz, n.d., postmark 3.7.18).

.....I heard "Le Sacre du Printemps" last night - an anti-musical and pretentious row(Hampstead, n.d., postmark 8 June 21).

.....I heard the cuckoo for the first time day before yesterday... (Grez sur Loing, 25th April n.y.).

.....Last Sunday "Appalachia" was played in Paris, Beecham conducted. The orchestra was 2nd rate and the chorus awful and Beecham seemed to be entirely out of his water and made nothing of the orchestra or chorus.....(Grez sur Loing, n.d., postmark illegible).

To me the two most interesting letters are those concerning critics (Delius Society members excluded, of course) and how Delius composed. This is particularly fascinating. I suppose most composers write music as we lesser mortals write letters. The music flows like words, though even composers must stop at times, and wonder what they are going to say next.

Forthcoming events

In a letter published in the Telegraph on the 4th February, Miss Phyllis Dabbs, Secretary of the Royal Choral Society (and member of the Delius Society) refuted any suggestion that London was "musically starved" during the period of the closure of the Royal Festival Hall and drew attention in particular to four concerts given by her Society, pointing out that "one was a performance of Delius's 'Mass of Life' for the Royal Philharmonic Society, which was claimed as an important event for English music."

Miss Dabbs referred to the many excellent concerts given in other halls, and among these we must commend the Sunday series at the Odeon Theatre, Swiss Cottage, London, N. W. 3., given by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of distinguished guest conductors.

/ I would

I would like particularly to draw the attention of members in the north of London to the concert on SUNDAY, MARCH 28TH, at the Odeon Theatre, Swiss Cottage, to be conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent, which will include Delius' "PARIS". The full programme, which starts at 7.30 p.m., is as follows:-

Suite from the Water Music by Handel
Symphony No. 1 by Prokofiev (Classical)
Paris - Song of a Great City
Symphony No. 1 by Sibelius

Members in the south may be particularly interested to know that Sir Malcolm is to conduct this same programme, starting at 7.45 p.m., at the Fairfield Hall, Croydon, on SATURDAY, 27TH MARCH.

Members Evening

On FRIDAY, 26TH MARCH, at 7.30 p.m. we are holding a members concert at the Holborn Library, 32 Theobalds Road, London, W. C. 1. At the special invitation of the Committee, one of our members, Mr. Robert Threlfall, has kindly agreed to perform the following programme:-

"Piano music by Delius and his friends"

- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|---|---------------|---------------------|--|
| I. | (1) | Zum Carnival (polka) | (1885) | } Delius | |
| | (2) | Dance for Harpsichord | (1919) | | |
| | (3) | Mazurka and Waltz | (1923) | | |
| | (4) | Waltz | (1891 - 1922) | | |
| | (5) | 3 Preludes | (1923) | | |
| | (6) | Toccata | (1923) | | |
| II. | | Norwegian Bridal Procession | } Grieg | | |
| | | Students Serenade, op.73 No. 6 | | | |
| | | In Ola Dale, op.66, No.14 | | | |
| | | Folk-song preludes II-III | | Peter Warlock | |
| | | Irish Tune from County Derry
(ded. to Grieg) | | Percy Grainger | |
| | | London Bridge | | H. Balfour Gardiner | |
| | | Carillon | | Norman O'Neill | |
| | | Cherry Ripe
(ded. to Grainger) | | Cyril Scott | |

John White and myself are at present seeing what we make the following duets sound like:- A Song before Sunrise; Dance Rhapsody No. 2, and North Country Sketches. We hope that by 26th March we can show that the Committee can have practised what they preach.

Any other members who would like to perform, please bring your music along with you. The whole evening is meant to be informal, so we shall not be issuing a programme as such before the meeting. I understand, however, that our Midlands group (also in the top ten) are putting on a musical evening this month, and have already mustered "a soprano, violinist, cellist and bassoonist", so that the London group will have to look to its laurels. Can anyone possibly bring along a full orchestra.....

Mention of the Midlands branch reminds me that I must include the latest report which Dick Kitching has sent me:

/ Report

REPORT OF THE MIDLANDS BRANCH OF THE DELIUS SOCIETY

In June the Midlands Branch held its second meeting. In September the Hon. Member from Burton-on-Trent, Coral Crinnell, wrote to the Chairman to enquire whether the Branch had folded up, or whether she had been struck off the register. This stimulated the Chairman into calling the Third Meeting which was duly held on the 19th October at Richard and Alison Beland's flat.

Just as the Chairman was leaving for the meeting, the telephone rang, and a voice announced that the caller was Rodney Meadows who was in Derby on business. The Chairman had invited him to the meeting before realising the dire consequences which might result if Rodney reported unfavourably to "Head Office".

The Belands had had to remove most of their furniture in order to accommodate the fourteen persons who attended. However, the cushions brought by the Chairman in case of emergency were not required.

Everybody was delighted to meet Rodney who gave a short introduction to the Delius item - "Paris". The Beland high-fidelity equipment did full justice to the large battery of percussion featuring in this work; the Chairman (whose record it was) had not heard many of these instruments before when the record was played on his own equipment.

The other works performed were - Haydn's Horn Concerto (Number 2 in "Es Dur" as the Chairman announced - no other information being available as the sleeve was in German); Prelude to Parsifal; Beethoven's Fantasia for Piano, Chorus and Orchestra (in which an uninvited chorus of motor cycles reminiscent of the Manx Grand Prix joined); and finally Faure's lovely Requiem performed by Ansermet with Danco and Souzay. As usual, the delicious "eats" provided by the hosts caused us to take a longer interval than intended with the result that someone suggested that only "Highlights" of the Faure be performed; this was hurriedly vetoed, however, and we eventually emerged from "Paradisum" about 11.15 p.m.

Mr. Kitching had previously drawn our attention to the fact that we had erroneously "credited" Miss Coral (not Carol) Crinnell's membership to him, when in fact it was thanks to our member, Mr. Robert Wright.

We commend Miss Crinnell's initiative in writing to the Chairman of the Midlands group as she did. We were rather saddened to know that one of our keen members, Miss Morrison, had missed the lecture at Holborn on the 29th January, because she had not apparently received a copy of our December newsletter. Although it is of course intended that each member should receive a copy of the newsletter as it is issued, accidents can happen, and as on present plans we hope to issue a newsletter every two months, we do recommend members to contact us if they have not heard anything from the Society within a reasonable period. Most recent newsletters were ~~September~~ (re-numbered 5); December (numbered 6).

We had been looking forward to seeing members of our Midlands group at the BBC studio at Maida Vale on Saturday afternoon, 30th January, but the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill necessitated a change of programme. In the evening, Sir Malcolm Sargent conducted what our Secretary, who was present, has described as an outstanding performance of "Brigg Fair".

/ "Your record choosing"

"Your record choosing"

This is the title of a publication recently advertised in The Gramophone. The results of a limited survey undertaken by "Y.R.C." show "The Mass of Life" to be the record most in demand for reissue (acknowledgments to Mr. Ian Walker for this information).

"Songs of Farewell" and the Cello Concerto

It is gratifying on many counts to know that Miss Jacqueline du Pre recorded Delius' cello Concerto on 12th January, not least that it brings us nearer to the date of issue of "Songs of Farewell".

Delius Sonata No. 2

We have long hoped that Frank Merrick could be persuaded to record Delius, and now this distinguished pianist and Henry Holst have combined to record the Delius Sonata for violin and piano No. 2 in C, Catalogue Numbers (Mono) LPA 1099 and (Stereo) SLPA 1099, both priced at 40/- including purchase tax.

The Company is W. H. Barrington-Coupe Ltd. 1/3, Felixstowe Road, London, N. W. 10, and the label they are now using instead of Delta is CONCERT ARTIST. The record will be obtainable through the usual record dealers, and is expected to be available this month.

The reverse side is another lovely work - the Bax violin and piano sonata No. 1 in E, which these artistes included in their recital at Leighton House last October.

We owe Mr. O'Brien, a member of the Delius Society, and Secretary of the Frank Merrick Society, a vote of thanks for his efforts to get the Delius work recorded, although Mr. O'Brien tells us that the artistes themselves were always most co-operative. Mr. O'Brien adds "if the pressings come out as well as the tape, the result will be first rate, and in any event the performances are lovely."

We understand that Mr. O'Brien would be prepared to help anyone abroad or at home who is unable to obtain this record, and can be addressed (Mr. B. O'Brien) at 29, Gordon Place, Kensington, London, W.8.

Members on the move

We recently said goodbye, for at least two years, to our member, Miss Rita Coleman, who has left for Malta to become Personal Secretary to the first British High Commissioner. Before leaving, Miss Coleman renewed her subscription, saying how much she would be looking forward to receiving our newsletter while she is away.

We were also able to welcome our U.S. members, Professor and Mrs. Randel, on their way through London to Italy, where Professor Randel is to take up a six months assignment as Fulbright-Hays lecturer in American literature at the Instituto de Lettere Inglese, Università degli Studi, Bologna.

Talking about books

It is with pride and pleasure that we record literary success of two of our members. We are anticipating this, with good reason, in the case of Professor Randel's book "The Ku Klux Klan - A Century of Infamy", which will be published in America on March 15th.

/ Mr. Robert Aickman

Mr. Robert Aickman, who has often contributed interesting and thoughtful comment to our newsletter, was highly commended by Brigid Brophy in the New Statesman for his collection of short stories, "Dark Entries", published by Collins.

Apologies for a misunderstanding in the July newsletter by which it was said that Cedric Glover describes in "The Mysterious Barricades" an imaginary performance of "Fennimore & Gerda". In fact Mr. Glover makes only a passing reference to an imaginary performance!

But perhaps it is not so imaginary as all that, since Mr. Ian Walker has informed us that The Musical Times for January carried an advertisement for the Yorkshire Opera Society, who asked for funds, and gave their aims, one of which was to stage a Delius opera?

"More than Music"

The following is an extract from Alec Robertson's autobiography which I have recently been re-reading:-

"I was once told of a man who, on hearing Delius's more sensuous music, was seized by an almost uncontrollable urge to remove all his clothing and engage in Pan-like diversions quite unsuited to his profession - which was that of a solicitor's clerk. He was, fortunately, sufficiently controlled to limit his response to the urge to the privacy of his chamber. Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" had no effect on this curious character, for it was not the rhythm that aroused him, but it was strange that he should have been left unmoved by Debussy's Pan-like music in L'Après Midi d'un Faune."

Yet another example of the music of Delius being quite unique, though in an unusual manner. I don't think it would be quite proper to enquire whether it has a similar effect on any member, though any attempt at such a procedure within the confines of the Holborn Library would no doubt be "dealt with" by the caretaker!

New Members

We welcome our first, we believe, B.Sc. (Hort.) in

Mr. Kenneth Ashburner,
High Hedges,
Tower Road,
Tadworth, Surrey

and the following members whom we believe were attracted to the Society by the splendid advertisement our member, Mr. G. H. Parfitt, arranged for us in the January issue of The Gramophone:-

Mr. Robert Rockcliffe,
122, Fernlea Road,
Balham, London, S. W. 12.

Mr. Paul Sweetman,
27, Broadlands Road,
London, N. 6.

Mr. & Mrs. C. Bemsted,
56, Claremont Road,
London, W. 13.

Mr. Sweetman writes:-

/ "As a life-long

"As a life-long admirer of the music of Delius I am delighted to be joining a Society bearing his name.

"I am the head of a Music Department in a large secondary school in Toronto, Canada, at present on sabbatical in London".

For an obvious reason, we are delighted to enrol as a new member also -

Mr. A. D. Berwick,
13, Ellison Terrace,
Greenside,
Ryton, Co. Durham,

who wrote on the 17th December:-

"I was listening to "Concert Calendar" on the Third Programme today, and the introducer began to talk about various societies, and mentioned a one concerning Frederick Delius, giving your address. Although still at school, I have already come to love Delius' music, and I would be grateful if you could send me any information concerning your Society."

Frederick Delius/Edvard Munch

"Delius never lost a friend". With this statement, John Boulton Smith, our lecturer on 29th January, and a lecturer at the Brighton College of Art, quickly established contact with his audience when he gave an illustrated talk on "Frederick Delius and Edvard Munch: Forty years of friendship". It is hoped to include an account of this lecture in a forthcoming newsletter.

Among those present we were particularly glad to welcome Mr. R. Christopherson, Vice-Chairman of the Anglo-Norse Society, and new members Miss Patricia Kirke, Mr. Kenneth Ashburner, and Mr. Robert Rockcliffe; also Mr. Aprahamian representing the Trust.

In conveying our thanks to our lecturer, Mr. John Boulton Smith, and also to our member, Mrs. Dugmore, for her part in arranging this evening, Mr. Fenby spoke of Delius' feeling that Norway was his "spiritual home".

Members may be interested to know that there is an exhibition of Munch's graphic work at the Gallery of the Chelsea School of Art, Manresa Street, London, S. W. 3. until February 27th. Hours of opening:- 10 a.m. - 8.30 p.m. and on Saturday 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Admission free. Our Secretary writes "Unfortunately there is no Deliana on view, but members may be particularly interested to note Munch's non-musical treatment of "The violin concerto"!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We would like to give members early notice of this event, which will take place on SATURDAY AFTERNOON, 1ST MAY - on present plans starting at 2 p.m. - at the Holborn Library, 32 Theobalds Road, London, W. C. 1. We understand that although from that date the Saturday closing hour will be 5 p.m. we should have no difficulty in getting an extension to 6 p.m. though not beyond that time.

This extra hour will certainly be necessary as we are in touch with Mr. Denham Ford, Sir Thomas Beecham's orchestral manager and secretary for some six years from 1946 onwards, who will give us a lecture starting at approximately 4.30 p.m. to follow the AGM, on which day we of course hope that many out of town members, including our Midlands group, will be present.

But meanwhile, your Chairman and Committee hope to see a large gathering of members at Holborn on the 26th March.

Charles Barnard
Newsletter Editor.