



Delius's Last Years

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self-absorbed poet who asks us to see world tragedies in the collision of his private troubles and joys. He found the basic material for his music in those of his sensations which have an appeal for all. He sagaciously selected, and discarded the rest. We call such material objective since it deals with matters that all human beings meet in their own lives. But we also call objective all that the whole of humanity can experience when it is summed up in one man's work. But Delius was not a Shakespeare, and he is the more admirable for his understanding of the character of his own genius. He was at no time in danger of the other, almost worse, fate of the so-called objective composer—that is, the one who expects us to recognise all the troubles and all the joys of the world as only a few facets of

the blinding shine which reflects the cosmic upheavals of his vast soul.

Delius's art is so completely satisfactory because while being definitely circumscribed it is so justly balanced. His music never undertakes to convey anything that does not belong to the adventures of every sensitive human spirit. To all that he touched he gave a new meaning, a new colour, a new outline, a new loveliness, and a new poignancy. Music is greater, richer, and deeper for what he gave to it.

All hearts are fuller that have received a part of the overflowing treasure which Delius poured out in sweetly throbbing song. In gratitude we cherish the memory of this great and lovable artist whose rapturous melodies soothe our grief at his departing.

BERNARD VAN DIEREN.

DELIUS'S LAST YEARS

By ERIC FENBY

I HAVE been asked to write a few words about the last years of Frederick Delius's life, and upon the conditions of the work which it was my privilege to do as his musical assistant. I find myself assenting with mixed feelings,

hastened his end. For nearly forty years her loyalty and devotion never failed him. From 1928 to 1933 his condition remained much the same; but this year he became considerably thinner and more pathetically feeble: yet,



DELIUS'S HOUSE AT GREZ-SUR-LOING

even reluctance, for in my heart I feel that silence would have been the nobler tribute. I am too near the painful and heart-breaking events that preceded his death, when it seemed so often that the height of human endurance had been reached, only to find that still more demands were to be made on his frail spirit. The shock of his wife's recent illness undoubtedly

four days before he died there was no indication that death was imminent.

Delius was a most complicated and contradictory personality. He was a man of the utmost truthfulness in all things. Everything and everybody was subservient to his ruthless devotion to his art. It was his life. There was no nonsense about him, nor would he

tolerate it in others. He possessed a fine commonsense, an extraordinary insight, and a keen wit. Fearless, he was often outspoken to an alarming degree, and even in his last years though he was but the relic of a man physically, a few minutes in his presence was sufficient to reveal his exceptional vitality. No more proof of this is needed than a moment's reflection on the almost unbelievable difficulties under which he composed his last works. Surely it is no exaggeration to say that never was music written so laboriously. It was impossible for him to work longer than an hour and a half a day. He used to be carried to the music room at 4 p.m. and brought away exhausted at 5.30 p.m., and was rarely able to continue on the next day. Thus it took days for him to dictate in full score what in his prime would have been accomplished in an hour. In 1928-29 he completed by dictation two works for the Delius Festival—'A late lark' (poem by Henley) for tenor and orchestra, and 'Cynara' (poem by Dowson) for baritone and orchestra. In the following year he wrote 'A Song of

Summer' for orchestra, the Violin and Piano-forte Sonata No. 3, and 'Caprice and Elegy' for 'cello and chamber orchestra; but these works were child's play compared with the task of dictating 'Songs of Farewell' (Walt Whitman) for double chorus and orchestra. Next followed the 'Idyll' for soprano, baritone, and orchestra, and the short 'Fantastic Dance.' Whatever the merits of these works they are at least a monument to his supreme courage, wonderful patience, and heroism. No one will ever know what Sir Thomas Beecham has done for Delius in editing his scores, nor the amount of deep thinking and industry he has put into their preparation for performance. We have not to be reminded of the results. But we have all to be reminded of the splendid pioneer work of the late Dr. Hans Haym, of Elberfeld. Without his untiring efforts Delius would have had to wait years longer for recognition in Germany.

May all young artists imitate his artistic integrity. His death is a great loss to the world of music, and, may I add, to me personally.

The Charm of the Three Choirs Festival

By ALEXANDER BRENT-SMITH

NOT the least of the charms of the Three Choirs Festival is its triennial change of setting. When we visit Ober-Ammergau or Salzburg, we know that, though the details may change, the surroundings will be substantially the same as they were at the last festival, and that though the theatre or edifice in which the performance will take place may be slightly altered or decorated, the acoustics will be the same as they were previously. But in the Three Choirs Festival this is not so. Anyone who has attended a festival in Worcester only can form no idea of a festival in Gloucester or Hereford. Not only will there be a change in programme, but a complete change of scenery, setting, and acoustical values, so that two performances, with the same chorus, soloists, conductors, and orchestra will be slightly different according to the cathedral in which they are performed.

Before we consider the performances in the cathedral, let us ramble round the countryside in which the city stands. It is not my purpose to belaud the Cotswold Country to the disadvantage of the neighbouring counties; and if Gloucester looks with pride to her Cotswolds, so Worcester may look to the Malvern Hills and Hereford to the Black Mountains. The

city of Gloucester, though very interesting, is not strikingly beautiful, and not until one has climbed to the top of Birdlip, Painswick or the Haresfield Beacon does one understand why Gloucester folk are so proud of their country. From the top of the Painswick Beacon (known locally as Painswick Castles) there is surely no finer panorama in England. Nine hundred feet below us lies the river Severn gleaming in streaks and patches from Tewkesbury on our right to the Bristol Channel on the left. Those who have good sight, or good imagination, can see the arches of the Severn Bridge, six leagues below us on our left. It is an expanse of country at which we can gaze with never-ceasing interest.

Anyone who wishes, after the performance of some masterpiece, to escape from the tinkle of cups and of critical chatter, cannot do better than drive up by Cranham or Brookthorpe, and wander upon the Painswick Beacon until the call of supper bids him return.

Indeed, hospitality must rank as one of the very real charms of these festivals, the only drawback being that there is hardly sufficient time for all the available music and meat. As it is, these festivals are (as a great composer once phrased it) good food interrupted by music.