



first recording
of the composer's "American" opera

DELIUS KOANGA

Opera in Three Acts with
Prologue & Epilogue
Libretto by Keary,
revised by Craig & Page

EUGENE HOLMES

CLAUDIA LINDSEY

Raimund Herinx • Keith Erwen
Jean Allister • Simon Estes
London Symphony Orchestra
& John Alldis Choir
SIR CHARLES GROVES cond.

Side One
(30:29)
Prologue & Act I

Side Two
(31:51)
Act II

Side Three
(22:50)
Act III (beginning)

Side Four
(29:00)
Act III (conclusion) & Epilogue
Total timings: 1 hr.; 54:10



The manacled but proud Koanga (Eugene Holmes) confronts his new owner Don José Martínez, wealthy southern planter, for the first time. From the American premiere by the Opera Society of Washington, December 18, 1970. Costume: Joseph Bella.

COMPLETE ON TWO DISCS
LIBRETTO ENCLOSED WITH
COMPLETE CAST LIST & CREDITS,
NOTES BY ERIC FENBY, DOUGLAS
CRAIG & ANDREW PAGE &
ENGLISH TEXT

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Koanga in America by Frank Corsaro

On March 2, 1884, the ocean liner "Gallia" departed Liverpool bound for America. Two weeks and a stormy crossing later, she docked in New York harbor. With not a single celebrity aboard, the arrival passed unnoticed by the press but for a brief item concerning George Paynter, the "Gallia's" bar-keep. Duly noted was the fact that this trip represented his 500th crossing of the Atlantic. On board, and no doubt helping Paynter celebrate this historic event, was Frederick Delius, making the first of two trips to America, enroute to claiming ownership of some orange groves in Solano Grove, Florida.

A similar passage into the American wilderness had been accomplished a half century earlier by a famous compatriot of the fledgling composer, the actress Fanny Kemble. In her "Journal of A Residence on A Georgia Plantation" (1838-1839) she struck a prophetic note, when she described the singing of the Negro slaves: "The high voices, all in unison, and the admirable time and true accent with which their responses are made, always make me wish that some great musical composer could hear these semi-savage performances. With a little skillful adaptation and instrumentation I think one or two barbaric chants and choruses might be evoked from them that would make a fortune of an opera."

By 1896, Delius had left his semi-tropical paradise and was back in England. The orange trees had rotted, but the impact of those "semi-savage performances" had endured. Casting about for a vehicle to contain the full measure of that impact, Delius hit upon a popular novel of the time, "The Grandissime," by the American George Cable. The section on the rebellious slave, Bras-Coupé, seemed an ideal subject for an opera. Being a staunch Wagnerite, not to mention a confirmed hedonist, Delius was not to be content however "with a little skillful adaptation." England, at the time, was the home of such worthies as James Barrie and Rudyard Kipling, and was playing host to the stage-struck Henry James and even Cable himself. Either from lack of acquaintance, or literary taste, Delius eschewed their presence and prevailed upon Charles Francis Keary (1848-1917) to fashion a suitable libretto for him. Unfamiliar with Cable's novel, or American mores (white or black), Keary, a facile literary jack of all trades, put about setting to verse the outlines of the plot as given him by Delius.

The operatic version of "Bras-Coupé" ("Maimed-Arm," in rough translation) was retitled "Koanga" (the original French name in Congolese). Its premiere in Elberfeld, Germany, in 1904, started a precedence that would become procedure. ("A Village Romeo and Juliet" 1900-1901, and Delius' final operatic masterpiece, "Fennimore and Gerda" 1908-1910, first saw the light of day in German premieres.) "Koanga's" debut performance was conducted by Fritz Cassirer, and an American, Charles Whitehall, played the title role in a leopard skin and blackface. It was not to receive its first English performance until 1935, a year after the composer's death. On that occasion it was conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham at Covent Garden, in a revised version by himself and Edward Agate. Again Koanga was a white man in blackface (John Brownlee). Lacking full pictorial evidence, I cannot guarantee the leopard skin had been entirely discarded. Both premieres elicited identical

response: Keary's libretto was denigrated and Delius' music highly praised. Yet alas, alas, and sad to say, Miss Kemble's "fortune of an opera" was not to be. In fact, "Koanga" was not to be again until its American premiere in 1970, where Keary's gaucheries (revised from a revision) still proliferated, while Delius, Wagner *cum* spiritual, utterly captivated. More than a decade after "Koanga's" initial performance, the American-Negro composer Scott Joplin (1868-1917) was to create a sister companion to "Koanga" with his "Treemonisha," wherein Handelian anthems jostle with "semi-savage choruses." In their special ways, both works are transcendental views of racial tensions and aspirations.

Transcendental is a key word toward understanding the overwhelming success of "Koanga" at its Washington, D.C., premiere. "Koanga" is typically Delian and so *sui generis*. However filled with traditional operatic forms, it remains more tone poem than opera. In "Koanga," Delius' pantheism is as strong a *dramatis persona* as any of the opera's characters. Perhaps time has been charitable to this composer at last, for the new media techniques employed in "Koanga's" behalf (hitherto the property of underground film makers alone) were successful in abrogating the canvas lakes and forests of standard operatic procedures, and allowed the virtues of the work to shine in a fresh perspective.

The Washington Opera Society production was, in its inception, as freakish as anything in the opera's history. Forced to cancel a local premiere of Virgil Thompson's "Four Saints in Three Acts," the Society was left to fill a vacuum stuffed with contractual obligations to Negro artists. When consulted by Mr. Hobart Spalding (then president of the Society) I suggested "Koanga" as a suitable, even inspired, replacement. I assured the perplexed Mr. Spalding that "Koanga" was indeed an opera and not the name of a boys' camp in the Adirondacks.

A play through of the score created instant euphoria, and plans were immediately initiated for its production. Mr. Ronald Chase, the brilliant sculptor and film designer, and I, devised a scheme for the work. This was accomplished mostly via long-distance telephone (New York and San Francisco). We were to meet literally face to face for the first time in the cutting room. We had three months until its designated premiere in December 1970. In order to accurately re-create "Koanga's" Creole atmosphere of the late 18th century, Mr. Chase was dispatched to Louisiana in September. With the kind assistance of the Louisiana State Tourist Bureau, Chase scouted a number of New Orleans mansions for possible location shooting. The estate Parlange (recently declared a national monument) was chosen to evoke the Grandissime mansion in the opera. Slave quarters were discovered in fine preservation on a run-down estate outside New Orleans. In two-and-one-half weeks, Mr. Chase, armed with Nikkormat camera, took over 500 still photographs (of which 200 were used) and with a Bolex 16 mm. camera (hand held and on tripod) shot over thirty minutes of film (of which twenty minutes were utilized). The media effects (a blending of all still and motion pictures) were the result of techniques such as superimposition, negative shooting, and a process called bi-packing, whereby three films are placed one atop the other,

through an optical machine, in order to get opaque darknesses and multiple color schemes. This process enabled us to create the surreal, even occultish landscape surrounding Koanga's flight from his white masters, and the ensuing Voodoo rites. As in the later "Village Romeo," three scrim served as projection surfaces—a front, rear, and middle distance scrim—which could be flown in and out as needed. The film images would be in constant play throughout the course of the opera, thereby creating a unique time/space dimensional reality. A chorus of forty was kept off-stage throughout the opera; their voices emanated from four speakers strategically placed in the Lisner Auditorium. A suggestion of great distance was obtained and controlled electronically. Minimal sets and props were in evidence: a platform representing the slave block, and several cane chairs were the sole stage properties. A scrim covered the orchestra pit, as in "Romeo," to help sustain visual clarity. The Bayreuth-like absence of music stands, etcetera, increased the poetic illusion. Four young black dancers officiated the Voodoo ceremony on stage.

The first of three performances took place on December 18, 1970, at the Lisner Auditorium on the campus of George Washington University in Washington, D.C. The forces responsible for its success were: the media team of Ronald Chase, Nananne Porcher, lighting designer, Skip Palmer, media operator representing Staging Techniques (and their battery of sixteen slide projectors and three 16 mm. movie projectors), costume designer, Joseph Bella, and choreographer Doris Jones. Heading the cast of superb soloists were Eugene Holmes and Claudia Lindsey, both black artists—at last! The Washington Opera Society chorus and orchestra were under the leadership of Paul Callaway, organist and choir master of the Washington Cathedral.

John Coveney, Director of Artist Relations for Angel Records, described the fruits of the collaboration succinctly, when he wrote in his liner notes for Angel's release (SBLX-3784) of "A Village Romeo and Juliet": "... it was beautiful in an unearthly sort of way but at the same time totally real. The spell of the Delius music was heightened to an extraordinary degree by the warm glowing colors in the changing imagery of multimedia... singers wandered among lush beauties of nature..."

To adumbrate the highlights of this particular production of "Koanga," I choose four instances. Before a bar of music was heard, the front and rear screens filled with a series of slow-dissolving stills of the Grandissime mansion and environs. An ante-bellum south was created within seconds. The house seemed to glow with light in a rear screen perspective, as the stage lights revealed the slave block on the estate. The eight young ladies, all in various shades of peach and white, came on, a trifle tipsy from party wine and dancing, drawn to this melancholy tryst with Uncle Joe in the moonlight, as if pre-ordained to hear his lamentable tale of Koanga and Palmyra. As they all froze in attentive poses, the screen images played over their somnolent forms and the transition back to an earlier time was accomplished. "Koanga" was presented in two instead of the originally designated three acts. The first act curtain came after Koanga's flight from Grandissime. The Wedding Scene in Act I Scene 2 was a blaze of Creole atmos-

phere. Only the principals and a few supernumeraries, representing the priest and his retinue, were visible during the wedding ceremony. Koanga and Palmyra strolled hand in hand between the three scrimmed areas on stage, their wanderings sharply outlined by the imaginative Miss Porcher's use of side lighting. A few steps taken by the lovers, and the skies, the waters, the land itself changed magically as if celebrating the event themselves. The caressing sounds of the off-stage chorus seemed a further manifestation of natural forces (a point I believe intended by the composer). The landscape became an ominous place of flapping herons' wings and shadowy underbrush at the moment of Palmyra's abduction and Koanga's curse. The Voodoo sequence in Act II began with the distant voices of the male chorus sounding antiphonally inside the auditorium, signaling the slow gathering of hostile forces. The ancient rites were mimed and danced between the front and rear scrims only. The infra-red and the white negative effects of the film intensified the blood ritual on stage. A touchy, even kitsch sort of scene was made palatable and even thrilling. With only four masked figures on stage caught in a swirl of pagan film images, an unconventional and arresting interpretation of mythic realities was achieved. In the score Delius has written a *liebestod* for Palmyra following Koanga's murder. Besting the master of Weimar, Delius concludes her lament with a long rhapsodic interlude for orchestra. As in the Wedding Scene, the images of land and sky played over the lovers' forms, now stilled in death. With Palmyra's body at his side, Koanga remained in a half-sitting position, his head thrown back and his sightless eyes turned toward the void, as if melding with the filmic cosmos.

Delius' transcendentalism had been realized and had won the day.

In the concert hall, two of Delius' "American" inspired masterpieces "Appalachia" (1902) and "Sea Drift" (1903) seem now to have taken hold. What the fate of "Koanga" will be remains to be seen. Happily, "Koanga's" revival is planned for the fall of 1975 by the Opera Society. While it may not "make a fortune" for Delius, this production of his opera remains a triumph for the composer and a breakthrough for opera in general.* And so a new form of visual poetry has helped forge a new theatre metaphysics. It can only further stretch the horizons of total theatre, and more completely serve the works to come, not to mention the dormant masterworks of the past. —FRANK CORSARO, Director

*The production of Delius' "A Village Romeo and Juliet" followed a year later to even greater success and plans for "Fennimore and Gerda" are now at the talking stage.

FRANK CORSARO is a man of many talents. As stage director he has of late realized multi-media productions of Delius' "Koanga," "A Village Romeo and Juliet," Janáček's "The Makropoulos Case," and in the near future Korngold's "Die tote Stadt" and Berg's "Lulu." He came to opera via the legitimate stage and television. As actor he recently debuted in Paul Newman's film "Rachel, Rachel," and as author, Belwin-Mills has just published his reinterpretation of Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du soldat." He is also a teacher who holds weekly seminars for singing actors in New York, where he lives with his singing actress wife Mary Cross Lueders and their one child. Mr. Corsaro is especially devoted to the music of Delius and hopes in time to mount the latter's complete works for the stage.



Recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust

Frederick Delius

KOANGA

Opera in Three Acts with Prologue and Epilogue

Original libretto by C. F. Keary

Revised by Douglas Craig and Andrew Page

Sung in English

KOANGA, *an African Prince and Voodoo Priest*

PALMYRA, *a mulatto, half-sister to Clotilda*

DON JOSÉ MARTINEZ, *a planter*

SIMON PEREZ, *Don José's overseer*

CLOTILDA, *Don José's wife*

RANGWAN, *a Voodoo Priest*

UNCLE JOE, *an old slave*

RENÉE

HÉLÈNE

JEANNE

MARIE

AUORE

HORTENSE

OLIVE

PAULETTE

NEGRO I

NEGRO II

} *planters' daughters*

Eugene Holmes (*baritone*)

Claudia Lindsey (*soprano*)

Raimund Herincx (*bass*)

Keith Erwen (*tenor*)

Jean Allister (*contralto*)

Simon Estes (*bass*)

Elaine Barry (*soprano*)

Pamela Smith (*soprano*)

Eleanor Capp (*soprano*)

Valerie Hill (*soprano*)

Doreen Walker (*contralto*)

Jean Temperley (*contralto*)

Lesley Reid (*contralto*)

Patricia Hogan (*contralto*)

John Dudley (*tenor*)

William Mason (*baritone*)

John Alldis Choir (*Chorus Master: John Alldis*)

The London Symphony Orchestra

conducted by

Sir Charles Groves

*The action takes place on a
plantation on the Mississippi
in Louisiana.*

Time: The second half of the 18th century.

Recording Producer: Christopher Bishop
Balance Engineer: Christopher Parker
Assistant Producer: John Willan

Recorded at Kingsway Hall
19–26 September, 1973

DELIUS'S KOANGA

a note by Eric Fenby

Delius finished the score of *Koanga* in Paris, 1897. He was 35 and still unknown. Two years later he used a legacy to give a whole concert of his music in London; the second part of the programme consisted of excerpts from *Koanga*. He still had to wait another five years to hear it in its entirety when Dr Hans Haym, of Elberfeld, at last persuaded his reluctant committee to stage the opera at the Stadttheater. Haym himself prepared the music and conducted several performances.

Koanga is one of those singular works that attract attention in Delius's development but which stand apart from the rest of his music. Usually, once a work was written, Delius's interest in it would wane. It would then be renewed and be relived temporarily every time he heard it again. For *Koanga*, however, he showed concern as though it held some secret bond that bound him to his youth in Florida. It was the one work he deplored in old age he was never likely to hear again. And so it proved. A dark grandeur pervades the score which, whilst yielding to hankerings after Wagner, recalls the tragic gusto of Verdi. The elements of time, place and plot allowed him a range of textures and moods wider than in his other operas.

In a lively prologue, planters' young daughters breathless from dancing beg an old servant, Uncle Joe, to tell them one of his much-loved yarns. He agrees. Delius takes us back two centuries by projecting an orchestral picture in sound of a moonlight scene on a sugar-cane plantation on the Mississippi in Louisiana, the Southern setting for Uncle Joe's tale:

ACT I

Palmyra, a mulatto slave-girl, sings of her troubled spirit. A cow-horn wakes the slaves for work. Men and women stretch and yawn and the

orchestra flexes its muscles too. Simon Perez, the plantation foreman, begins his daily pestering of Palmyra until Don José Martinez, the owner, appears. A new batch of slaves arrives and others sing as they work in the fields. A handsome specimen, Koanga, an African prince and Voodoo priest, is dragged in chains before Don José. He refuses to work, and with just pride bewails his fate. Palmyra feels the power of his spell and he in turn is drawn to her. Don José encourages this attraction and offers him Palmyra if he will submit. The bargain is struck and the wedding arranged. Perez is furious. The characters combine their various reactions in a vocal quintet of harmonic complexity. But only Don José's wife, Clotilda, knows the truth about Palmyra's birth, a secret she keeps to herself for the present as slaves add their voices in good humoured song in one of the rich ensembles in the opera.

ACT II

Delius delighted in distant voices and indulges in charming off-stage effects as the slaves prepare for their master's birthday and the wedding celebrations. A banjo strums its part in the score (surely anticipating *Porgy and Bess* by at least a quarter of a century). Emotional tension begins to rise between the child-like songs of the holidaying slaves, their itch to dance, the anger of Perez, the anguish of Clotilda and the joy of Koanga and Palmyra. In a fine aria "The hour is come", written after a rehearsal at Elberfeld, Palmyra gives her soul to Koanga and he, in most expressive tones, renounces his people and his lands far away to be a humble slave for love of her. They plight their troth to the seductive rhythms of the Creole dance "La Calinda". The excitement increases; Palmyra, parted momentarily from Koanga, is seized by Perez and his men and rushed away. Koanga is affronted and demands her back. Martinez refuses.

Koanga, enraged, threatens to bring down the curse of Voodoo and dashes off into the deep forest. A remarkable passage for woodwind in unison over a pedal in the basses reaches its peak as the voice of Koanga calls in the distance to his gods, and the orchestra clinches the emotional climax.

ACT III

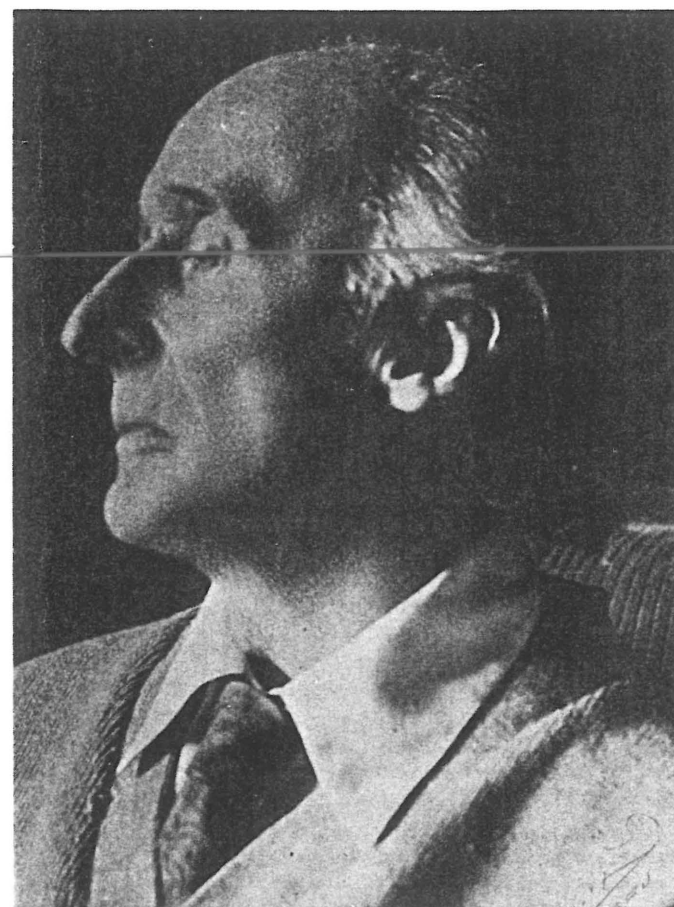
The prelude evokes a swamp at nightfall. An uncanny sense of the eerie scene deepens with each change of key as slaves await Koanga's coming to cast the magic spell with Rangwan, another Voodoo priest. Impressionist touches in the woodwind blend with weird incantations of the men. Blood from a gourd is poured on a fire, the slaves gash themselves with knives and a wild dance subsides in a vision of Don José's stricken plantation which has fallen under Voodoo's curse. The men bemoan their hopeless plight and Koanga imagines he hears Palmyra lamenting her love. In a marvellous outburst of dramatic splendour he calls on the morning star to lead him to her. Meanwhile, on the plantation, Christian slaves pray for deliverance. Don José, indignant and bewildered, promises revenge on Koanga if only they will get back to work. Perez still pursues Palmyra and Koanga appears as he tries to embrace her and chases him into the forest where he kills him with his spear. Koanga is set upon by Don José's men and suffers excruciating torture. He is carried in on a litter and dies by his bride, who, renouncing her faith, stabs herself and joins him in death. In the charming epilogue, we return to the girls sitting on the verandah listening to Uncle Joe. They stay up and watch the coming dawn. The day breaks, and sunlight floods the scene of a soft May morning.

© Eric Fenby, 1974.

KOANGA

*an introductory note to the libretto by
Douglas Craig and Andrew Page*

Frederick Delius



Koanga has never enjoyed critical acclaim, and what few words have been written about it have been unanimous in their criticism of the libretto. Having come to know the opera through producing it for the Delius Trust at Sadler's Wells in 1972, and suffering the frustration of trying to make any logical sense out of it, we felt that the strength and beauty of Delius's music deserved more help from the libretto. This is not to say that the music is not without its faults because Delius's sense of theatre left something to be desired. For example, the frenzied dance called *la Calinda*, banned in Louisiana on the grounds of obscenity, could never be performed to the stately music that Delius wrote for it. Nor is one bar of music, which is all Delius accords to it, really enough in which to stage a fight!

The story on which *Koanga* is based (however tenuously) comes from an episode in George Cable's book "The Grandissime", published in 1880. From this Delius prepared a rough draft for a libretto which he gave to Charles Keary in 1895. However, it is uncertain if Keary finished the libretto, because at some stage Delius fell out with him. As it happens, this libretto was never staged, and for the first production at Elberfeld in 1904, a German translation prepared by Jelka Rosen, Delius's wife, was used. The plot, never very close to the original story in Keary's version, was now even further removed and a new element of Christianity versus Voodoo was extraneously introduced. But worse was to come. In 1933, when Jelka translated it back into English for the London première, her pen was overflowing with poetic imagery. Adding to this her somewhat stilted style containing many sentences with perfect German, but not English, constructions, the result was a libretto almost claustrophobic in its sameness, bereft of any drama or characterisation and filled with mistakes. In fact, the libretto as published in 1935

provides an interesting and eloquent historical testament to the complete ignorance of the facts, and to the fanciful conceptions that Europeans had of Negro life in the Deep South.

Our purpose in reconstructing the libretto was to try and restore the feeling of Cable's book within the framework laid down in Keary's version. Our tools were a vocal score used at Elberfeld containing both the original Keary and the German translation clearly showing the cuts and alterations made, the Elberfeld production score and, of course, Cable's book. Where possible, we restored Delius's original note values and where further changes became necessary to facilitate phrasing, this was only finalised with the approval of Eric Fenby. Generally speaking we have updated the language, ironed out the inconsistencies, tautened the drama and given more point to the characterisation.

The biggest change we made in Act I was to adapt authentic Negro folk songs to replace the nonsense that Keary had provided. We also rewrote

the ensembles to give more logical expression to the characters' appropriate feelings. In Act II we restored a confrontation of lust and loathing between Perez and Palmyra which in Jelka's version had been reduced to a discussion of Christian ethics! Palmyra's aria is not in the original score but was specially written for Elberfeld. The prelude which introduces Act III again is not in the original but comes from his first, as yet unpublished, opera, *The Magic Fountain*, the replacement having already been made by Delius for the Elberfeld production. The various Voodoo deities called upon are now, in our version, all authentic, and, apart from Voodoo Manian, replace those invented by Keary.

We do not pretend to have solved all the problems which beset *Koanga* as a piece of theatre, but for a fuller explanation of what we have done, we would refer the inquirer to our preface to the new vocal score published by Boosey and Hawkes.

© Douglas Craig and Andrew Page, 1974.

LIBRETTO

SIDE ONE

Prologue

The verandah of a Southern plantation-house, orange trees on the left; huts in the background. It is evening. Dancing is going on in the house.

CHORUS
Ha, ha, ha, etc.

RENÉE
HÉLÈNE
Stop! stop! I am quite out of breath with dancing and it's so hot inside.

AURORE
OLIVE
Stop! stop! Let's stay here a while and cool ourselves before we return.

RENÉE
Look, isn't that Uncle Joe over there! What a wonderful story he can tell!

(Renée goes to meet Uncle Joe. Jeanne, Marie, Hortense, and Paulette now enter and join the others.)

AURORE
HORTENSE
Ah, there you are, Paulette, Marie, let's watch the sun begin to set. Yes, the shadows of night are falling.

RENÉE
JEANNE
HÉLÈNE
MARIE
OLIVE
PAULETTE
Look! how the shadows of night are falling; And from the hill the whippoorwill is calling. Soon the yellow moon will be shining, And the mocking bird for his fickle mate will be pining.

HÉLÈNE
MARIE
Come, let us all sit down and rest awhile. Sit down and listen!

RENÉE
JEANNE
AURORE
HORTENSE
OLIVE
PAULETTE
Sit down and listen!

RENÉE
JEANNE
And you, dear Uncle Joe will tell us a story of long ago of grief and love.

ALL THE GIRLS
Of grief and love.

UNCLE JOE
No, there is nothing fresh that I can tell.

ALL THE GIRLS
Oh, no, oh, no!

UNCLE JOE
You will not want to hear again a story that you have heard before.

RENÉE
JEANNE
Oh, yes we do!

ALL THE GIRLS
Do tell us, please, go on!

UNCLE JOE
The story of Koanga and Palmyra.

ALL THE GIRLS
Oh yes, go on, we love that one!

UNCLE JOE
Koanga and Palmyra.

ALL THE GIRLS
Go on, go on!
(Clouds descend and cover the scene. After an orchestral interlude, the clouds clear away gradually and disclose the garden of the plantation with slave-huts to the right.)

Act I

Fields of sugar-cane are seen in the distance, and behind them a stretch of the forest. It is quite dark though the full moon watches over the waving cane.

PALMYRA
Oh! I cannot sleep. My brain keeps turning round and round! How quiet it is; how hushed the world before the dawn, the coming dawn. How far removed my spirit seems from that of master or of slave, and yet no other life I know! Ah! look, the stars begin to pale and fade away. There sounds the horn that calls the workers from their beds to face again another day of sweat and labour in the fields.

SIMON PEREZ
Now then, it's time, come on, get up! Get out of bed you lazy lot. Get up, it's time, get out of bed you lazy lot, or else you'll get a taste of my whip! Ho there, get up! Get up! Get to your work and at the double you lazy indolent pack of slaves!

PALMYRA
Each cabin door opens to obey the foreman's voice. The world begins again its old unchanging round, and yet no hope shall dawn for me, nothing to ease my restless spirit!

(Negro men and women appear at the hut doors; they rub their eyes, yawn and gaze around.)

SIMON PEREZ
Up, get up! It's time you were at work! Now then, get up! time to be working, get out of bed and get to work.

SLAVES
It's dawn, it's dawn! Ev'ryone now will have to work his hardest. Put all thought of sleep aside till we reap the harvest. Get up Pete, get up Pete, or they'll come and get you. And Sal, not so happy. No not since your lover has left you! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
(Simon Perez disappears into the slave quarters.)

FIRST CHORUS OF SLAVES
Why here's Ned, just got up, half undressed, they woke him up with the whip; he always sleeps too long. Ha, ha, etc.

SECOND CHORUS OF SLAVES
Come on you girls, less chattering there! In the indigo fields you must do your share. Not until the work is done Can you have your fun! Ha, ha, etc.

SLAVES
O Lawd, I'm goin' away And I won't be back 'til Fall. I'm goin' to bring so much money That your apron strings won't hold. Don't chatter 'bout it, 'bout it, For if you do I'll cry. Don't say you're goin' to leave me For you know that that's a lie. To work!
(They go to their work. It is now full daylight. Enter Simon Perez)

SIMON PEREZ
Ah! There's Palmyra.
(Palmyra notices Perez)

PALMYRA
So his wooing begins at dawn! How much longer must I endure it!

SIMON PEREZ
O lovely Palmyra, why d'you turn away?

PALMYRA
Must you always pursue me?

SIMON PEREZ
You're more fair than this dawn, and as the sunshine warms the earth, so your beauty warms my heart. You are like the golden lily upon the dark green lake, or like a single topaz gleaming on a band of burnished gold.

SLAVES *(from the fields)*
O Lawd, I'm goin' away, etc.

SIMON PEREZ
Pale as moonlight your brow; *(he approaches nearer to Palmyra)* eyes that sparkle like stars, they set my heart on fire; I must have you for my bride, O lovely Palmyra! *(He tries to embrace her. Palmyra frees herself.)*

PALMYRA
No, that shall never be. Leave me! You only want me to satisfy your pride!

SIMON PEREZ
Hah! Be that as it may! Stupid girl! must I remind you, you are a slave, I am free!

PALMYRA
I am not a slave, but much more free than you. I have nothing to do with you or your master.

SIMON PEREZ
You silly child, when I ask you to marry me, you should be honoured! Why put on all these haughty airs and try to make us think that it's you who's running the house, instead of the mistress, Donna Clotilda? Remember this — you're just like the rest, a common slave girl!

PALMYRA
I hate you, but I am not afraid; my mistress will save me from you!

SIMON PEREZ
If I hated you, my pretty one, you'd soon find out the harm I could do! But here comes Martinez.
(Enter Don José Martinez; Palmyra is about to go.)

SLAVES
John say you got to reap what you sow; To reap in the harvest, reap what you sow. You sow in the rain got to reap in the rain, You sow in the sun got to reap in the sun Whatever the weather, you reap what you sow, Oh, John say reap in the harvest! etc.

DON JOSÉ MARTINEZ
Stay, Palmyra!

PALMYRA
I must go, sir.

MARTINEZ
No, stay! and another time ask me first if I wish you to go.

MARTINEZ *(to Simon Perez)*
Well, what's the plan today?

SIMON PEREZ
The men are down in the canes.

MARTINEZ
I want the big field cleared by the week, and if they grumble, use the whip. And the women?

SIMON PEREZ
They are all in the indigo fields. But we'll get a worse yield than we managed last year.

MARTINEZ
That old Diego's catamaran mostly brings us naught but trash, hardly worth the honest whip!

SIMON PEREZ
This time it brought the finest slave you've ever seen; a fierce Dahomey; already he has killed a driver with one blow!

MARTINEZ
We must find a way to render him of service!

SLAVES
(In the distance) John say you got to reap, etc.

SIMON PEREZ
I ordered them to bring him here. Look, here he comes.

(Koanga is brought in chained, guarded by two negroes. He looks neither to the left nor to the right and advances to the front of the stage.)

KOANGA
O Voodoo Manian, my fathers from your graves avenge me, avenge me on my vile betrayers. You hosts arise again and let the traitors' blood in rivers flow! *(Palmyra suddenly arouses herself and looks at Koanga.)* And let them be burned over a thousand fires! Yet more, a heavier curse: send them across the sea for white men's slaves!

PALMYRA
The signs I know only too well! a Dahomey Prince, Voodoo priest who will not deign to glance on those around.

KOANGA
But I shall never, never see again the slow Ouémé river, nor the wide and shadowy forest, where the serpents hiss by day and great beasts hunt their prey by night; nor the rocky heights where lofty eagles soar; nor the water hole where the deer would drink at dusk; nor shall I feel again that pounding in my veins while stalking it by night. But since I was betrayed I'm now a captive; yet never, though my flesh be torn away with whips, will I be slave to those that bought me. Voodoo Koanga vows it, hear his oath!

MARTINEZ
Your words are bold enough for princes, but one thing you must learn, the slaves I buy from overseas repay me by their work. Come, Simon Perez, tell me now what sort of work he ought to do?

SIMON PEREZ
Señor Martinez, men such as he can't be made to work. He'll not obey, I know his kind too well.

MARTINEZ
Then we must use the whip, and in a little while we'll see if he will work for us.

SIMON PEREZ
But even that would be a waste of time. He never would submit, never would utter a scream or groan, but laugh even at death! The common Congo slave may be cowed by the whip, not such as he! Over a wild and savage race once he was Prince and Priest. He'd think his tribe for ever shamed, should he consent to work and that his fathers would arise to give his soul peace in death.

MARTINEZ
That's nonsense, Perez! You must find some way to

tame him. This Prince and Priest, he's just a common slave, like all the rest! make him worth the money I have paid, or else the sun shall bleach his bones!

(Koanga becomes aware of Palmyra's presence.)

PALMYRA
Ah!

MARTINEZ
Did someone speak? Come here Palmyra! I had forgotten you were still here. My child, let's see if you can make him change his mind.

PALMYRA
But Don José, what can I do?

MARTINEZ
Perhaps your loveliness will prevail where whips and chains have no effect; so speak to him, Palmyra; and if that's useless, try a soft caress!

PALMYRA
What can I do, what can I say to him? Am I not filled with that same pride which makes him like a god? — Don José, spare me this, I am afraid!

MARTINEZ
Afraid? But why?

PALMYRA
Who knows? What can I say? You would not understand that he has magic powers.

MARTINEZ
I think the magic lies the other way; you have the power to make him know it. Come, show how my servants work!

PALMYRA
To work as slaves, he and I working together. And then will Voodoo arm his priest with power. *(She turns to Koanga)* If you agree to work with us, Koanga, you'll find your fate may not prove too hard to bear. If you can picture here Ouémme's water flowing, and learn to wield the sickle instead of the spear, you will find a better life with us, Koanga, Dahomey Prince, Voodoo Priest, a demi-god! You have heard the sound of weeping in your country, but we're happy and the work is not too hard. (What strange magic power has overtaken me? It fills my heart with painful longing that I never thought I should find in this unloving country. I feel it control my brain, urging my tongue to speak fond words of love of such sweetness that I have never known.) Yes, if you agree to work with us, Koanga you'll find your fate will not prove too hard to bear.

KOANGA
What voice is this that charms your ear, Koanga? Soft as the sound of silver torrents falling on the rocks in summer's midday languor! God, I renounce the words I spoke in haste! How far away now seems the wide Ouémme. Let others take revenge against my enemies. How quickly loving words dispel my anger! How they calm all the torrents in my heart! For her sake I will work, forget that I'm a prince. To make her mine I will renounce my people, forget my native land. Yes, let them bind my hands and take my freedom; I shall not care! If she's a slave, let us be slaves together! Give me this girl to wed and I, Koanga, will work for you. Yes, work beside your other slaves.

MARTINEZ
The magic works.

SIMON PEREZ
It's working well.

MARTINEZ
She hold him fast.

SIMON PEREZ
Look how he's all on fire! Well done, my Palmyra!

MARTINEZ
Well done, my Palmyra!

SIMON PEREZ & MARTINEZ
Yes, if we could get this Dahomey Prince, Koanga, to work for us, what a triumph it would be. No other slave would dare disobey a Voodoo. He would control them, they would surely work for him. Bravo! See, she's got him in her spell! He'll make a driver who'll be worth his weight in gold! Yes, if you agree to work for us, Koanga, you'll find your fate will not prove too hard to bear.

CHORUS *(in the fields)*
D'lilah was a woman fair,
Pleasant lookin' with black hair
D'lilah gained ole Samson's mind (fancy),
'Coz he thought she looked so fine.
He said to his Pa, "Now look see,
Can't you get that girl for me?"
Let me tell what Samson done,
He fought a lion and made it run;
Lawdy how that lion run!
Once they caught him but he looks
And sees a jaw-bone close at hand.
Picks it up and feels so sore,
He kills three thousand with that jaw!
Lawdy was ole Samson sore!
Samson's mother, she said to him,
"Find a girl among our kin!"
But Pa, he said, "Son,
You done grieve your Ma's mind
Must you wed that Philistine (woman)?"
Oh! Oh! Oh!

MARTINEZ
Agreed then, that's a bargain! The girl belongs to him.

SIMON PEREZ
My God! What is he doing! I must not lose Palmyra! *(To Martinez)* But Sir, you cannot give Donna Clotilda's maid to him!

MARTINEZ
I cannot? Who says I can't give her to him? If she can make him work, I can do with her as I choose! *(Enter Clotilda; Simon Perez whispers to her.)*

MARTINEZ
Come Clotilda, for you will have to help prepare for the wedding *(Martinez turns to negroes who strike off Koanga's chains.)*

CLOTILDA
No, she must never wed him, husband. She was placed in my care when she was a little girl. *(Koanga approaches Palmyra who stands spellbound.)*

MARTINEZ
That's nonsense, dear, just look how her charm's begun to work!

SIMON PEREZ
But our confessor would refuse to sanction such an evil deed.

MARTINEZ
My sanction is enough, I'll hear no more! Our good confessor shall be paid!

PALMYRA
I feel a strange foreboding in my heart; this Voodoo will bring me to my grave. There is nothing I can do, all my life have I been calling to him in my dreams? Has he been sent by Voodoo in answer to my prayers to release me from my chains?

KOANGA
Have I really won this lovely girl's affection? Is she now mine? Great Voodoo Manian, hear me now! Forget the vow I made in my wrath. Do not condemn me Voodoo, because I am weak. Jealous God, do not seek revenge, for you are far away and she is here.

(Palmyra turns to Clotilda.)

PALMYRA
Oh, gentle mistress who always was kind to me, always understanding; now I must leave your tender care and lead a life of my own. But I shall never forget that it was

you who, when my mother died took and cared for me as your own child. Why, when happiness to me do I fear to reply? And why am I so afraid that I'm in some evil power? I am captive in the toils for this Dahomey prince reminds me of my race, reminds me of that I can never never more enjoy: true peace of mind.

KOANGA
A little while and then this beauty will be my bride. And yet I am not happy; her beauty binds me fast where no man's chains could hold me. I tremble before a girl; I, who never flinched in war must in love faint-hearted prove, be afraid of woman's love! Hear me Voodoo Manian, forgive me the vow I made! She is all I have ever wished for, all I could ever want. My fathers, oh, hear my call! Jealous God, do not be revenged! Oh let her be mine.

MARTINEZ
Good that's settled without fuss; now it just remains to see to the arrangements. In a little while it will be my birthday. On that day we shall have a double feast. Yes, he shall wed her, I'll brook no interference in my plan. No, no Clotilda, nothing you can say will make me change my mind. Your entreaties will not move my heart. In spite of what you say, she is a slave and must do as I command. For he is a Voodoo and a Dahomey Prince who will have the respect of me and of mine.

CLOTILDA
Don José, how could you give Palmyra to a slave? She who has been my faithful maid ever since she came to me as a child. Must she without a word leave my service to marry a heathen slave, tho' brought up to be a Christian, just to satisfy your whim? Have you thought, have you forgotten that my father made me promise to treat her as my sister? Would you let a sister of mine be married to a slave? Make her doomed to a life of misery? No, no, it must never happen to this girl, for my father made her mine.

SIMON PEREZ
Never did I think that she would agree to marry another. I thought that I could win her since Clotilda seemed to be so well-disposed towards my plan. God damn this heathen Prince! And damn Señor Don José and his whims! But I'm not defeated so easily, I will find a way to foil this plan. No, they will never wed, for with cunning she'll yet be mine.

CHORUS *(in the fields)*
D'lilah took ole Samson's fancy, 'coz he thought she looked so fine
But there's something I can't say, did he visit (pay a call on) Timothy?
But his daughters fair I know
Were mighty sad (They were sad) to see him go!
But Delilah was his love,
She coo'd to him just like a dove.
But though she agreed to become Samson's wife
(But although she said she would wed him)
In the end she cost him his freedom.

End of Act I

SIDE TWO

Act II

(Sounds of merry-making are heard.)

CHORUS
Now once in a way (Just for today)
We are free for a day
And can lay down our sickles and our hoes;
Let the cane stand high,
The sheaves ungathered lie,
No girls tread the long cotton rows.
Oh! oh! come out, come out!
Oh! oh! Come girls, come out!
Ha, ha, ha, ha! etc.

BASS
No work today, strike the banjo, come and play!

(The terrace before the main entrance to Don José's house comes into view. On one side are seen the pillars and steps of the verandah; on the other side, behind orange trees, is an awning, under which negroes are celebrating their master's birthday and the wedding day of Koanga and Palmyra.)

QUARTET OF NEGROES
He will meet her when the sun goes down
When the whippoorwill sings to the moon;
When from magnolia trees the heavy scent is blown,
And strange lights wander o'er the dark lagoon.

(Enter Clotilda from the house. Simon Perez enters from the plantation.)

CLOTILDA
Perez, what can I do to stop this marriage? It must never come to pass!

SIMON PEREZ
If your husband, Don José, had made his mind up, no words of mine will make him change his plans.

CLOTILDA
It's you, Perez, far more than my husband who wants to force the Prince upon her.

SIMON PEREZ
Me? She is all too willing to wed the Prince without delay.

CLOTILDA
If only someone could win her, and save her from this act of madness!

SIMON PEREZ
Even if she marries this Koanga would it be so disastrous?

CLOTILDA
My husband must not know this, and I'm so terrified I hardly dare to tell you; Palmyra is my own father's child!

SIMON PEREZ
Good God! Is it true? Your father's daughter! This makes it certain, she must never marry the slave! But since you have no-one to help you, if I contrive to separate them and prevent the marriage, do you agree that I myself wed Palmyra?

CLOTILDA
Yourself wed her? But my husband . . .

SIMON PEREZ
Your husband would prefer me to Koanga! Give me your word, and I will do my best to help you.

CLOTILDA
She's coming. You have my word. If you can somehow stop this marriage; and therefore free Palmyra, I promise to give the girl to you!

PALMYRA *(singing in the distance)*
How time flows on! Whether it's dawn of day or evening scarce I know! I feel a strength within my heart that drives me on against my will. My life was lonely and so dull and while the future will not bring much change, at least I'll have a love to call my own, with whom to share my joys and who will dry my tears. *(Palmyra enters splendidly attired in bright silks and a silk scarf wound round her head.)* Or is it a dream and when I wake in the morning when the world's asleep, will he be there beside me still, or will I find myself alone?

SIMON PEREZ
Come rouse yourself, Palmyra and listen.

PALMYRA
It's you! You've spoilt a lovely day-dream! Can't you ever leave me alone and understand that I detest you!

CLOTILDA
Hush now Palmyra, calm yourself! Why so headstrong and proud? The only gift Koanga brings is one of everlasting shame!

PALMYRA

How dare you say he brings me shame! Oh, could you fathom, oh could you feel the bond of blood, the ties of race that work to make us one!

CLOTILDA

Madness, it's nothing but madness! Would you renounce your faith and creed?

PALMYRA

Your faith! Your creed!

SIMON PEREZ

That's not the way to win her. I've a better plan. Leave me with her a while; when you return you'll see I've told the truth.

(Clotilda goes out.)

CHORUS OF NEGROES

Be it but for a day, Ned,
The fiddler will play,
And we'll dance while the sky is aglow;
But when night-shadows fall,
We will drink in the Hall,
And tell all the stories we know!
(He will meet her when the moon is high,
Where the screech owls hoot and cry,
While the poplar trees whisper low!)

SIMON PEREZ

Listen, Palmyra! I know the secret of your birth. You are the sister of Clotilda.

PALMYRA

Her sister?

SIMON PEREZ

Now you will surely see you must forget Koanga.

PALMYRA

Forget him, so near to my heart!

SIMON PEREZ

A negro slave, and you a planter's daughter! You shall be mine! I love you, and I will promise to make you happy, Palmyra!

PALMYRA

What! Be yours! You must be mad! I can never love you.

SIMON PEREZ

You insolent girl! Do you despise me then?

PALMYRA

I hate you and always will!

SIMON PEREZ

Palmyra, you'd best take care. I'll have my revenge, you wait and see!

PALMYRA

I'm not afraid of you!

(Enter Clotilda.)

CHORUS OF NEGROES

Come leave the work, it can wait until tomorrow.
When there's dancing and song we forget our sorrow!

Dansons la Calinda, O hé

La, la, la, la, etc.

CLOTILDA

Have you persuaded her?

SIMON PEREZ

No, and never shall! We must use force to stop the wedding!

PALMYRA

The hour is near, when I to him my soul surrender.
Koanga beloved, is it a dream? No, his love inspires
and warms me and makes me proud of what I am, of

my descent. Africa! Land of his fathers! Glowing in splendour in radiance gleaming. Rapture filled, I think of him. Koanga, my beloved, brought here in chains, his freedom lost forever. Once a prince, but now a slave! But it's the Prince Palmyra will worship. Yes, I'll serve him with all my heart until I die. Dark and brave one, in joy or sorrow, what'er befall us. Oh hear me promise, I am thine!

(Martinez enters.)

CHORUS OF NEGROES

La, la, la, la, etc.

MARTINEZ

Here comes the happy bridegroom, dressed as a bridegroom should be! Koanga, come and greet your bride, then we can toast the happy pair!

(Koanga enters dressed in bright African robes.)

QUARTET OF NEGROES

Koanga hail!

(Koanga gazes around him, he advances slowly, and with great dignity towards Palmyra and lays his right hand upon her head.)

KOANGA

Far, far away, Palmyra, my people mourn for me. The streams more gently flow bewailing my fate. The mountains call me, yet I may never listen. No charms my land could offer, deprived of your love! Here I will work for you, a patient humble slave, and in your service find the labour sweet! Far, far away, my foes enjoy their triumph; my vile betrayers jeer and mock at me.

And round their fires at night will run the story, how in the West, Koanga is a slave. But vengeance were a poor reward, Palmyra, if I might linger by your side, working with you, and find the labour sweet!

CHORUS OF NEGROES

How clearly the voice of our homeland; how loud still it calls!

But for him, love is stronger and faith more clear than the palace of Kings.

Ah, Koanga, learn the lesson of strangers, for we are also held in bondage.

And yet on days like these, we also can be free.

CLOTILDA

Not yet, Koanga, no, not yet! First a glass of wine, and then the priest can start the service!

(Wine is served. The white folk gather round the table. Palmyra hands a cup to Koanga and kneels before him.)

SIMON PEREZ

A glass of wine to toast the happy pair, Koanga and Palmyra.

PALMYRA

Hail to thee mighty prince! At thy feet I gladly fall to bless our bond and grace our love! Now behold, for thee alone I'll dance; unloose my garment, my hair untwine, to please my chosen lord.

CHORUS AND PALMYRA

Dansons la Calinda! Ah! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
Dansons la Calinda! Ha, ha, ha, ha! La, la, la, la, etc.

CHORUS ALONE

Koanga, we drink a toast to the bridegroom, 'Health and Joy!' . . . For the bride, the lasting wish: may she never live to mourn! And is there one among us to be found, that will not give the toast?

PALMYRA

Come, take the drink I offer; greet thy bride, pledge her in crimson wine! Drink! drink, for ere the dawn of day, Koanga and Palmyra shall be one. Ah!

CHORUS AND PALMYRA

Dansons la Calinda, ah! Ha, ha! etc.

(Ballet of Creole Dancers, during which Palmyra finds herself swept to the back of the stage.)

CHORUS

He will win her when the sun goes down,
And the whippoorwill sings to the moon;
When from magnolia trees the heavy scent is blown
And dragonflies disturb the dark lagoon. Ah!

(Simon Perez, aided by a few servants, seizes Palmyra and drags her away by force. She screams. Koanga, astonished, does not understand at first.)

KOANGA

Where is Palmyra?

(Koanga approaches Martinez and strikes the table violently.)

Where is my bride? Who dares to steal Koanga's only joy?

MARTINEZ

Who dares to thwart the will of Don José

KOANGA

Quick, bring her back or else my curse will fall on you!

MARTINEZ

Miserable slave, my stick shall make you tremble!

(They fight, Don José falls. Thunder and darkness – Koanga, alone on the stage, advances and falls on his knees, with arms outstretched.)

KOANGA

Hear me God Voodoo: I have betrayed my trust, I have foresworn my faith. False to my fathers, now on thee do I call. I know thy secret power, reject me not and grant the gift I crave! Let all my white companions learn what magic may perform; that on their heads descend the worst of mortal woes, the triple curse, on land, on air, and flood: from water, ling'ring death, starvation on the earth, and tainted fevers to corrupt the air! Ogoun Badagris hear and answer me and let thy thunder wake applause!

(Koanga rises and is seen, by occasional flashes of lightning, making his way through the dense forest.)

KOANGA (in the distance)

Voodoo Manian, Voodoo Manian, thy hand hath set me free!

Heviosso and Tokpodu, protect me from harm!

End of Act II

SIDE THREE

Act III

A swamp at nightfall; an opening where a faint reflection of evening light lingers but soon fades. Will-o'-the-wisps are seen on the pools of water. On the right, the ground rises towards the hills.

VOICES (heard from afar)

Ah! Ah!
Onyame! Onyame!
Ruhanga!
Alivo du!
Mahou!
Dambala come!
Ayida come!

(Negroes gather together.)

RANGWAN

Hougan, Hougan, Koanga comes; I hear the sound of drums across the marsh. No creature dares to leave his home while Voodoo spirits are abroad.

NEGROES *(gathering closer together)*
Hougan, Hougan, Koanga comes!

(Enter Koanga accompanied by negroes with torches.)

RANGWAN & NEGROES

All hail, Koanga, mighty Prince, the leader of a noble race! Under you, we shall be free, never more to slave.

KOANGA

Come tell me Rangwan, holy priest, you know the spell that shall be cast tonight?

RANGWAN

All is prepared to work the magic spell we cast tonight.

KOANGA

Have you the nameless thing for sacrifice?

RANGWAN

I have its blood, my lord, it's all we need.

KOANGA

This is the night of the new moon. Selwanga's sacred night, and he will save us from our foes. Voodoo, now grant us strength! Rangwan, the holy priest and I prepare to sacrifice the blood. Gods of the upper air, and the depths below, reveal your mighty power.

CHORUS OF NEGROES

Come Papa Lébat, open wide the gate and let Koanga pass!

Now comes the shedding of the blood which thus fulfils our vow of sacrifice.

(Koanga and Rangwan gash their arms with knives. The priest pours blood from a gourd onto the fire.)

Look, they perform the magic spell.
Fear now is fled, Koanga is with us; and with Rangwan of the silver hair they cast the spell of destiny.

(Mysteriously, but not fast, the fire blazes up.)

RANGWAN

Voodoo hear!
The fire consumes the blood!

KOANGA

Voodoo hear! I shed my blood for thee!

RANGWAN

Ogoun Badagris, set thy dark forces to work!

CHORUS OF NEGROES

Papa Lébat hear your servant!
Lift the barrier, let him pass!
Come Onyame, come Ruhanga
Hear our call and answer us!

KOANGA

Onyame hear!
Show us thy mighty power!
(Koanga ascends the hill.)

CHORUS OF NEGROES

Papa Lébat hear your servant!
Lift the barrier, let him pass!
Oh hear our prayers, thou mighty power,
We have answered your command!

(The negroes gash themselves with knives and commence a wild dance. One by one they fall down, exhausted. The fire dies down; a mist covers the scene. Voices are faintly heard through the darkness.)

VOICES (severally)

See, he prays! . . . Voodoo must hear him . . . Can he reject a son? . . . Hard was our fate! . . . Yet we did bear it . . . Now those days are past! . . . Rangwan waits! . . . The fire is dying . . . Dark is the night . . . Far over the marsh the heron calls . . . What thing in the shadows went past in such a haste? . . . Dark is the night, etc.

(A vision of Don José's plantation appears. Negroes are lying prostrate and almost dying on the ground. Koanga is seen on the hill.)

VOICES

Sick and pale, sick and pale the sun sinks down on the dark and gloomy swamp. Yes, we are weary too and would gladly welcome death. Nothing can save us now, then why does death delay? Mist, mist obscures the dome of night; not a star looks down. No deliv'rance, no relief! Hope is fled and life is vain; death alone can save!

PALMYRA

(Plaintively) Ah!

KOANGA

I hear Palmyra's voice, it comes from far away, trembling on the haunted midnight air. Once to me that voice was life itself. I would have followed it everywhere. Close my ears O God, let me not hear, lest all our magic rites should come to nothing! There is nothing I have held so dear as my own people's plight and shame.

PALMYRA

My only love is far away! Ah!

KOANGA

Again she calls and all my vows are shattered! She is dying while I am far away. Let my new-born kingdom fall to ashes! Wait, I come to you!
(The vision fades and the morning star appears.)
Lead me morning star and light me on my way!
(The vision fades away and the scene changes to Don José's plantation.)

CHORUS OF NEGROES

Oh! Oh! etc.

SIDE FOUR

(Early morning, a lurid light shines through the mist; on the left are seen some cabins. Some negroes are gathered at the door of one of them. On the right, a shrine; houses of the white folk behind. Other negroes are praying before the shrine; Simon Perez is among them.)

CHORUS OF NEGROES

Once again, once again, the weary sun begins to light the gloomy swamp. Now another day begins in this land of living death. From this curse there's no escape, only in the grave.
(Enter Don José Martinez.)

MARTINEZ

Fools you are to weep and wail! Christians, Voodoos, you're the same, short of courage and heart! Will this wailing change your fate? If you must pray, then go to church and perhaps your prayers may do some good! Meanwhile, I want you back at work. *(Pointing to a cabin)* Who lives there?

NEGRO I

Palmyra, master.

MARTINEZ

Palmyra, she was to have been married to that wild Dahomey Prince who ran away and caused me so much trouble.

NEGRO II

You mean Koanga, it's his vengeance that's brought this curse upon us.

MARTINEZ

Fool! Do you believe that tale?

NEGRO II

We all believe it.

NEGROES

We all believe it. None can escape the curse of a Voodoo. Yes, we are dying through Koanga's curse. Forget him, master, let him not return, but rejoice in his freedom lest a worse fate befall us, even than that we know!

MARTINEZ

Listen, this is nothing but heathen chatter, and yet a bargain I will make with you: if I should ever capture Koanga, he shall suffer all the pains and torments that you yourselves have borne! That is a promise I will keep.

NEGROES

No master, it is Koanga's curse. Make peace with him, let him never return again; or else a dreader fate may fall than even this one we know!

MARTINEZ

Enough, silence! *(To Simon Perez)* Perez, I came to tell you a troop of horsemen are coming here. See that they lack for neither food nor comfort, for they've been searching for Koanga all day. *(He goes out.)*

NEGROES

Alas, our only hope of joy is fled; our days are nearly done!

(Palmyra steps out of a cabin, she is weak and leans against the door. The negroes disappear slowly.)

PALMYRA

Ah! Tell me where Koanga is! Will he return again? Is he alive? Or is he dead? How feeble and sick am I now; there's none who cares for me!

SIMON PEREZ

There's one who cares, Palmyra sweet! Do not mourn that heathen prince; why not marry me instead? *(He tries to embrace Palmyra)* I could make you happy if you would be my wife.

PALMYRA

No, never! Let me go! Help! Koanga, where are you? Koanga!

SIMON PEREZ

Koanga will never hear you; he is a thousand miles away!

PALMYRA

No, it's not true, you're lying to me!

SIMON PEREZ

I'm not, you'll have to face the truth! Why make yourself so ill with pining? Come, let's be happy while we may! You and I, Palmyra sweet!

PALMYRA

Oh coward! If he were here, you'd never dare!

SIMON PEREZ

What! Can you think of no-one else? Save your breath, for Koanga will never return.

PALMYRA

Ah!

SIMON PEREZ

And I shall gain your love! *(He takes her in his arms)* Great God in Heaven! *(Enter Koanga)* Can this be true? Koanga!

KOANGA

Now, by the seven times seven plagues in Agoué's deepest realm; it was time Koanga came! *(He approaches Perez)*

SIMON PEREZ

Spare me, have mercy! She is yours. Let me go unharmed!

PALMYRA

Slay him, O great Koanga, slay him! Kill him like a dog, Oh grant me that!

KOANGA

It shall be granted! He, most of all, deserves to die! *(Perez flees; Koanga follows and kills him with his spear.)*

PALMYRA

Oh God! There are the hunters! Yes, they have seen him! Away, away and leave the coward where he lies! The horsemen are nearing; quick, Koanga, run! They overtake him. Ah! *(A wild shout)* Too late! I cannot bear the sight! Let him be killed at once! But that's not what they do! They'll scourge him to death with their whips! Oh spare him God!

(Koanga is brought in on a litter and set down beside Palmyra. She falls on her knees.)

KOANGA

My spear, where is my spear? Palmyra, is that you? Oh, Voodoo, I have forsaken thee, and though I now

repent, I await my sentence. But God defend my people, upon the wide Ouémé under the ancient oak that proudly stands, whose branches protect our father's graves! Where every moon my tribe would gather round. *(Half raising himself)* I see them now, the hougan singers too; they dance, they dance; oh Voodoo, they call on thee. Arm them with all thy power, prepare their ways! The day shall come, oh sunlight send it soon, when on my white companions Koanga's vengeance falls! And then, then all is over. *(He dies.)*

PALMYRA

My Lord Koanga dead! Dead is my beloved Prince and Prophet! For all he suffered can there be a just revenge? He has passed beyond your anger, but his curse will stay with you! Hated whites who dared to kill a Voodoo Prince! He has passed beyond your anger! Mighty Prince, Dahomey's pride; great in war, great in love! You, who gave me my belief, and showed me Voodoo's mighty power. My Dahomey Prince, I cannot live if you are dead. I renounce my Christian faith. Accept my sacrifice, Voodoo; and remember thou the day! *(She stabs herself. Clouds cover the scene.)*

End of Act III

An orchestral interlude leading to

Epilogue

The clouds lift and reveal the verandah steps of the plantation house (as in the Prologue). The girls are grouped on the steps, listening intently to Uncle Joe.

JEANNE

How sad, how sad, Uncle Joe, that she should die; and you say it really happened.

RENÉE

How sad. I know that I will never sleep but in my dreams I'll hear Palmyra's cry.

JEANNE, HÉLÈNE, AURORE, OLIVE, PAULETTE
And I, and I.

RENÉE

Let's stay up and watch the coming dawn of day; for the moon has already gone to bed. All fears, all troubled thoughts will flee our minds, when once again, the warming sunlight streaming falls!

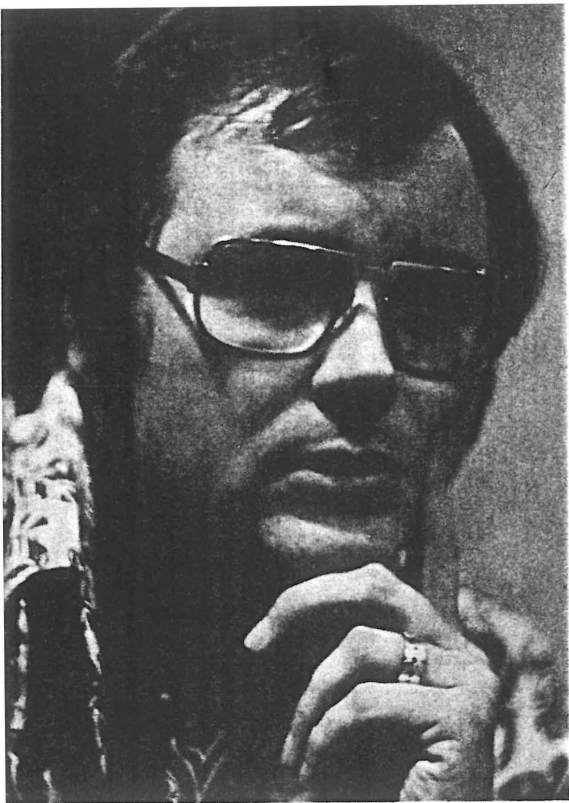
(Day breaks)

ALL THE GIRLS

See how the sun-kissed world awakes,
With Spring herself adorning;
Let's hope true lovers will find happiness
This soft May morning.

(Sunlight floods the scene.)

End of Opera.



(a)

(a) KEITH ERWEN (*Simon Perez*)

(b) RAIMUND HERINCX (*Don José*)
JEAN ALLISTER (*Clotilda*)

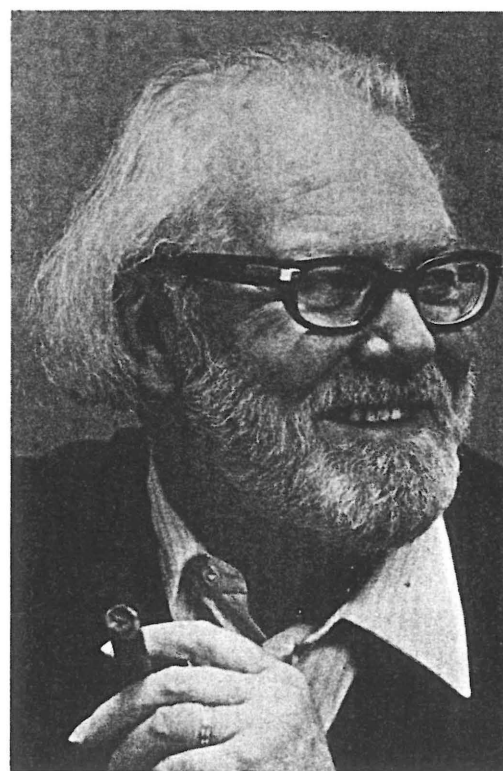


CLAUDIA LINDSEY (*Palmyra*)



(b)

(c) *Left:* EUGENE HOLMES (*Koanga*)
right: SIMON ESTES (*Rangwan/*
Uncle Joe)



SIR CHARLES GROVES



(c)

The Performers

EUGENE HOLMES

EUGENE HOLMES, who sang the tile role in Delius's *Koanga* in the recent Washington and London productions of the opera, is at present a leading baritone with the Dusseldorf Opera company and has recently appeared with them in a wide variety of roles including Macbeth, the Marquis de Posa (*Don Carlo*), Iago (*Otello*), and Lescaut (*Manon Lescaut*).

The son of a Baptist Minister, Holmes was born in Texas and spent his childhood in St Louis. In 1956 he graduated from college in Arkansas with a degree in music and later joined the Goldovsky Opera Workshop where he made his professional operatic début as John Proctor in *The Crucible*. In 1964 Holmes joined Indiana University as a graduate assistant and a year later became leading baritone of the Metropolitan Opera National Touring Company with whom he sang the roles of Germont (*La Traviata*) and Schuarnard (*La Bohème*).

In the 1969/70 season Holmes embarked on a concert tour of North America, in addition to performances of *Koanga* in Washington, and the following year took the leading role in the world première of Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Most Important Man* with the New York City Opera. In the same season he also appeared at the Worcester Festival, made his début with the Dusseldorf Opera, sang in a concert performance of *Porgy and Bess* in Munich and sang *Koanga* at the Camden Festival in London.

In February 1973, Holmes made his début with the Vienna State Opera as Amonasro in *Aida*. He also made his début as a recitalist at the Kennedy Centre in Washington during that season and appeared at the Saratoga Festival with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Future plans include new roles with the Dusseldorf Opera and a return visit to the Vienna State Opera.

CLAUDIA LINDSEY

CLAUDIA LINDSEY was born in New York and graduated in political science at Brandeis University. She won many awards for singing including a Marion Anderson Scholarship, the Metropolitan Opera National Council's Stoughton Award, a Whitney Foundation award and a contract with the National Music League.

Since embarking on a career as a singer, Miss Lindsey has sung with the New York City Opera, the Metropolitan Opera National Company, Western Opera, the Opera Society of Washington and the Spring Opera of San Francisco. She has an extensive operatic repertoire which ranges from *Aida*, *Fiordiligi*, the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro* to *Yum-Yum* in *The Mikado*.

In December 1970 Miss Lindsey sang the role of Palmyra in the Washington production of Delius's *Koanga* and made her British début in the Camden Festival production of the same opera in May 1972 at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in London.

RAIMUND HERINCX

RAIMUND HERINCX was born in London of Belgian parentage, made his first concert and operatic appearances in Europe in 1950 and settled in London in 1953. From then until 1956 he appeared in concert and recital and continued to appear in opera in Europe, until a successful series of television appearances led to his joining the Welsh National Opera company. During the next ten years he was also to sing over forty roles with the English National Opera and he also sang the dual roles of Creon and the Messenger in Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* at the Paris International Festival, and Nick Shadow in the same composer's *The Rake's Progress* in London, Brussels, Hamburg, Frankfurt and Stuttgart.

In 1964 he sang the role of Jaroslav Prus in the English National Opera's production of Janáček's *The Makropoulos Case* and the role of Captain Segura in the première of Malcolm Williamson's opera *Our Man in Havana*. Herincx has also appeared frequently in America and Canada – he sang in the North American première of Becaud's opera *L'Opera d'Aran* at the Montreal Festival, sang the solo baritone role in Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* at the Boston International Choral Festival and appeared with the Boston Opera Company as Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*. Herincx has also appeared in a number of contemporary works including the world première of Gordon Crosse's

opera *Purgatory*, Phyllis Tate's *The What d'Ye Call It* and in 1973 Tippett's *The Knot Garden* at the Royal Opera House. In addition to his operatic work, Herincx is also a fine oratorio singer and tours Britain regularly appearing with the major choral societies. Future engagements include appearances in the English National Opera's *Ring* cycle in the spring of 1974.

KEITH ERWEN

KEITH ERWEN was born in North Wales, but spent most of his childhood in Durham, studying music and singing at school. On leaving school he entered the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London where he studied singing for four years, first with Joseph Hislop and later with Walter Gruner. In 1968 he won the Cinzano Award and subsequently studied in Venice during the spring of 1969.

On completing his studies at the Guildhall, Erwen joined the touring company Opera for All, for two seasons, where he sang the roles of the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Rodolpho in *La Bohème*, Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, and the title role in *Fra Diavolo*. As principal tenor with the Welsh National Opera he sang Alfredo, the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Dmitri in *Boris Godunov*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Fenton in the investiture production of *Falstaff*, Don José, Rodolpho, Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra*, and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*. He made his Glyndebourne début in 1970 in *Die Zauberflöte* and in the summer of 1972 returned to sing Macduff in *Macbeth* with the company.

Erwen has also broadcast frequently for the BBC including *I due Foscari* in 1969 and *Il Corsaro* in October 1970 and he made his first recording for EMI in the summer of 1971 as Gastone in *La Traviata*.

In October 1969 Erwen made his début with the English National Opera Company as Alfredo in *La Traviata* and since the autumn of 1973 has been under contract to the company – new roles in this first season included Leicester in the new production of *Maria Stuarda* and Des Grieux in the new production of *Manon*. Outside engagements in 1974 have so far included the title role in *Don Carlos* in Cologne in February and the role of Ercole in Liebermann's *Penelope* in Ghent in March.

JEAN ALLISTER

JEAN ALLISTER was born in Ballymoney, County Antrim. Her musical talent became evident early on and she was awarded a special and unique grant by the Northern Ireland Government to continue her studies in England. Whilst still a student at the Royal Academy of Music in London she made her professional début at the Royal Albert Hall in performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*.

Well established as a much admired oratorio and concert artist, Miss Allister soon embarked on an operatic career. Her roles to date have included Arnalta in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Melide in Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* with the Glyndebourne Opera Company both at Glyndebourne and abroad, and roles in various Gilbert and Sullivan operas at Sadler's Wells, including Katisha in *The Mikado*. She also broadcasts regularly on radio and television.

Miss Allister has taken part in many commercial recordings and is also an accomplished recitalist, specialising in German lieder and French song.

SIMON ESTES

SIMON ESTES, who made his EMI recording debut as the Frate in *Don Carlo* was born in Centerville, Iowa in 1938. Although his family was musical, enjoying singing as a hobby, Estes was 26 before he even considered music as a career. Previously he had attended Centerville High School and Junior College and in 1957 had enrolled at the University of Iowa in Iowa City to study medicine. Finding it too specialised Estes changed mid-course to read religion, psychology and sociology. During his student years Estes had been doing a good deal of amateur singing and in 1963 he returned to the University to study music and singing with Charles Kellis. In 1965 with the aid of grants and scholarships he travelled to Europe where he made his operatic début with the Deutsche Oper in Berlin as Ramphis in *Aida*.

Estes stayed with the Deutsche Oper for ten months singing in five productions and travelling with the company to Rome in January 1966. He was then engaged by the Lübeck Opera where he sang Timur in *Turandot* and Bartolo in *Figaro*. He was also invited to sing with the

Hamburg Opera. In June 1966 Estes went to Moscow to take part in the First Tchaikovsky International Vocal Contest where he won a silver medal, returning to the States to sing at the Tanglewood Festival with the other American winners.

His career was by now well under way. He made his New York début in the autumn of 1966 in Handel's *Messiah*, followed by an American Opera Society début in Handel's *Julius Caesar*. The following spring he sang for the first time at the San Francisco Opera in *The Tales of Hoffman* and in the summer sang with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in Menotti's *The Bishop of Brindisi*. During the 1968/69 season Estes appeared at The Flanders Festival in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, sang in the Verdi *Requiem* in Madrid and three productions, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Macbeth* and Roger Session's *Montezuma* at the Boston Opera. In the autumn of 1969 Estes made his Chicago Lyric début in *Macbeth* and the following summer his British operatic début with the Scottish opera as Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*. He was immediately re-engaged by Scottish Opera to sing Sarastro in the following season and Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*.

The last three years have been equally busy, including recital tours of America and Canada, the leading role of Carter Jones in BBC Television's production of Gunther Schuller's *The Visitation*, engagements with the Chicago Lyric and a tour of Australia and New Zealand. He has also appeared regularly in concert including in Britain performances of Haydn's *Creation*, Handel's *Messiah* and a performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* in York conducted by Giuliani.

SIR CHARLES GROVES

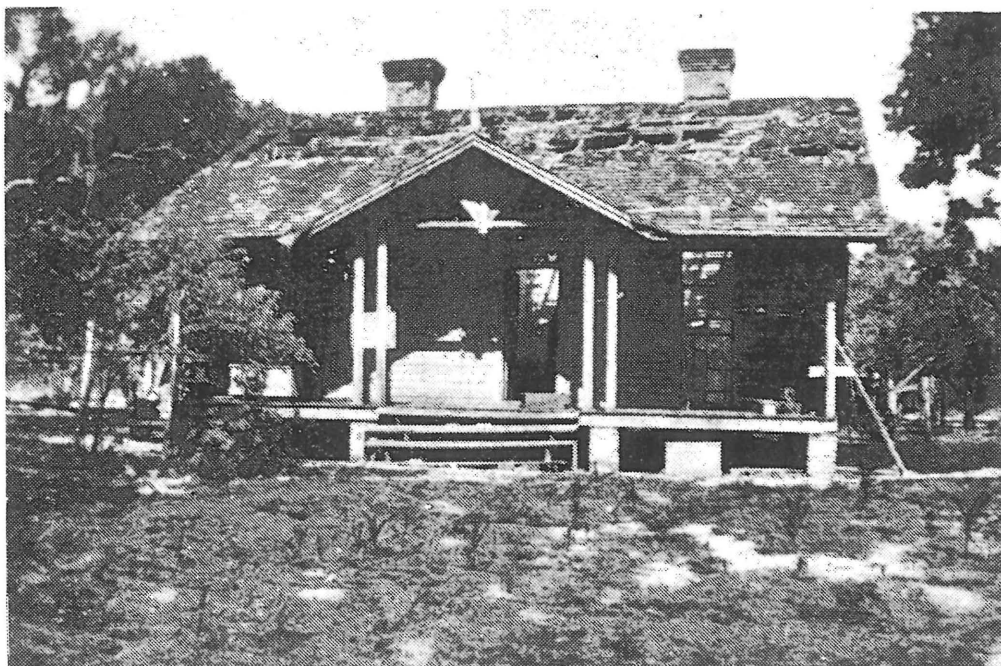
SIR CHARLES GROVES was born in London in 1915 and studied at St Paul's Cathedral Choir School and the Royal College. He began working with choirs and conducting orchestras during his student days, and became chorus master to the BBC Theatre Chorus, eventually going on to assist Toscanini in performances of the Brahms and Verdi *Requiems*, and the *Missa Solemnis*.

In 1944, Groves was summoned to the BBC Northern Orchestra, his first permanent conducting post. Working hard with his orchestra to produce a consistently high standard of playing, and extending the repertoire to include many unusual works, he established both himself and his orchestra as musical forces to be reckoned with.

In 1952, Groves moved south to Bournemouth to take over the ailing Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra which he re-formed as the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, extending the repertoire there to include seasons of opera with the Welsh National Opera Company and eventually earning for it the title of 'Orchestra of the West'.

In 1961, Groves became the first full-time conductor of the Welsh National Opera and immediately expanded the rather conservative repertoire to include the company's first Wagner opera, *Lohengrin*, and Rossini's *William Tell*; then, in 1963, he accepted the post he holds today, as permanent conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1966, the orchestra made its first tour abroad to Germany and Switzerland, returning in 1968, and in 1970 it played at the Festival of Modern Music in Warsaw and gave six concerts elsewhere in Poland.

Over the last few years London, as well as Liverpool, has seen Groves in the concert hall with happy regularity; he is now associate conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and also conducts opera at Sadler's Wells. He has made several appearances with the Munich Philharmonic over the last three years and has also toured the USA with the RPO and conducted in Rio de Janeiro, Geneva, Zurich, and Austria. He was knighted in 1973. Though he may not consider himself a specialist, he has earned the reputation of being a particularly fine conductor of English music and has conducted nearly all of Delius's instrumental works. 'I'm very fond of Delius because I feel that he is one of the truly original British composers; he has something to say which nobody has said before or since.' His fondness is more than evident in this recording of *Koanga*.



The remains of Solano Grove, Florida, where Delius lived from 1884 to 1885 and gained much of his inspiration for Koanga.

Delius's opera Koanga was first staged in England in 1934 in a production at Covent Garden conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. It was staged for the second time in May 1972 at the Camden Festival. Three performances were given at the Sadler's Wells Theatre and the cast included Eugene Holmes and Claudia Lindsey.

SOME PRESS REACTIONS

"After the première in Germany in 1904, the opera was done by Beecham at Covent Garden in 1934 and revived two years ago in Washington with Claudia Lindsey and Eugene Holmes in the principal roles of Palmyra and Koanga. On this occasion, too, these excellent Negro singers contributed much to the success of the production which included Jean Allister's outstanding Clotilda. The London Symphony Orchestra distinguished themselves under Charles Groves."

Peter Stadlen: the *Daily Telegraph*

18.5.72

"Few, if any, operas at the Camden Festival have been lucky enough to have the kind of skilled, cogent presentation lavished on *Koanga* last night. With the LSO under Charles Groves in the pit, economic but evocative sets from Peter Rice, and Douglas Craig's well-pointed production, Delius was done proud and as strong a case as possible made out for his third opera. . . . In consequence the work proved as eloquent, as noble, and as deeply felt as anything in the canon.

"Although *Koanga* is far from being as individual as many of the later, orchestral works, traits of both Delius's musical style and thought can be heard clearly emerging out of the late Romantic mould in which they seem set. The voice of Palmyra rising distantly in the background as a counterpoint to Koanga's third-act solo and the long, sinuous postlude to the principals' death scene are both highly individual creations; and the whole of the Voodoo scene has a powerful sense of that pantheism so beloved by Delius."

Alan Blyth: *The Times*

18.5.72

Front box cover: The Act II Wedding Ceremony from the American première of *Koanga*, with Eugene Holmes and Claudia Lindsey, presented by the Opera Society of Washington D.C. at the Lisner Auditorium, 18 December, 1970. Photographer: Tom Barnett

Biographical and production photographs by Clive Borda.