

THE MUSIC OF DELIUS

The early Recordings (1927-1938, 1948)

RECORD 1

Side One:

1. Paris—The Song Of A Great City—Recorded 9th April, 1934 (CAX.7120/5—SDX.1/3)
2. Summer Night On The River—Recorded 4th October, 1935 (CA.15315/6—LB.44)

Side Two:

1. Sea Drift (Whitman) w/John Brownlee (Baritone) and London Select Choir
Recorded 3rd April and 2nd November, 1936 (CAX.7772/8—SDX.8/11)
2. "Irmelin"—Prelude—Recorded 18th July, 1938 (CAX.8161—SDX.21)

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

conducted by SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, Bart., C.H.

RECORD 2

Side One:

1. Intermezzo from "Fennimore and Gerda"
Recorded 28th September, 1936 (CAX.7848—SDX.11)
2. Appalachia—Variations On An Old Slave Song (Part 1) w/B.B.C. Chorus
Recorded 6th, 7th and 31st January, 1938 (CAX.8153/60, 8167/8—SDX.15/19)

Side Two:

1. Appalachia—Variations On An Old Slave Song (Conclusion)—w/B.B.C. Chorus
Recorded 6th, 7th and 31st January, 1938 (CAX.8153/60, 8167/8—SDX.15/19)
2. La Calinda from "Florida" Suite—Recorded 7th January, 1938 (CAX.8162—un-issued)
3. La Calinda from "Koanga"—Recorded 11th February, 1938 (CAX.8189—SDX.21)
4. Final Scene from "Koanga" w/London Select Choir—Recorded 4th and 11th December, 1934 (CAX.7375/6—SDX.6)

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

conducted by SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, Bart., C.H.

RECORD 3

Side One:

1. Eventyr (Once Upon A Time)—Recorded 14th November, 1934 (CAX.7356/9—SDX.4/5)
2. Over The Hills And Far Away—Recorded 28th September, 1936 (CAX.7845/7—SDX.12/13)

Side Two:

1. In A Summer Garden—Recorded 2nd October, 1936 (CAX.7849/51—SDX.13/14)
"Hassan"—Incidental Music To James Elroy Flecker's Drama:—
2. Intermezzo and Serenade—Recorded 11th December, 1934 (CAX.7377—SDX.7)
3. Unaccompanied wordless chorus—w/London Select Choir—Recorded November, 1934 (TT.1853—un-issued)
4. Closing Scene—w/Jan Van Der Gucht (Tenor) and Royal Opera Chorus
Recorded 28th June, 1938 (CAX.8256/7—SDX.20)

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

conducted by SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, Bart., C.H.

Recording Venues:—

Abbey Road—Studio One

Records 1, 2 and 3.

Record 4—Side 2, Nos. 1 and 2, Record 5—Side 2, Nos. 2 and 3.

Portman Rooms, London

Record 4—Side 1, No. 1.

Fyvie Hall, London

Record 4—Side 1, Nos. 2 and 3

Large Studio, Petty France, London

Record 4—Side 2, Nos. 3 and 4, Record 5—Side 1, Nos. 1 and 2.

Abbey Road—Studio Three

Record 4—Side 2, Nos. 5 and 6

Record 5—Side 1, No. 3.

RECORD 4

Side One:

1. Brigg Fair—An English Rhapsody—Recorded 20th November and 11th December, 1928 (WAX.4335, 4441/3—L.2294/5)
2. On Hearing The First Cuckoo In Spring—Recorded 19th December, 1927 (WAX.3156/7—L.2096)
3. The Walk To The Paradise Garden from "A Village Romeo And Juliet"
Recorded 20th December, 1927 (WAX.3155, 3160—L.2087)

1. w/SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2 & 3. w/ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

conducted by SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, Bart., C.H.

Side Two:

1. (a) Whither (Autumn) (Bjornsen)
(b) The Violet (Holstein)—Recorded 11th February, 1938 (CAX.8190—un-issued)
2. (a) I Brasil (Fiona MacLeod)
(b) Klein Venevil (Bjornsen) (Sung in German)—Recorded 11th February, 1938 (CAX.8191—un-issued)
3. Evening Voices (Twilight Fancies) (Bjornsen)—Recorded 10th July, 1929 (WAX.5104—L.2344)
4. (a) Cradle Song (Ibsen)
(b) The Nightingale (Welhaven)—Recorded 24th June, 1929 (WAX.5069—L.2344)
5. (a) Irmelin Rose (Jacobsen)
(b) So White, So Soft, So Sweet Is She (Ben Jonson)—Recorded 9th April, 1938 (CAX.8231—un-issued)
6. (a) Le Ciel est par-dessus le toit (Verlaine) (Sung in French)
(b) La Lune Blanche (Verlaine) (Sung in French)—Recorded 9th April, 1938 (CAX.8230—un-issued)

DORA LABBETTE (Soprano)

1 & 2. w/LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

conducted and arranged by SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, Bart., C.H.

3 & 4. w/SIR THOMAS BEECHAM (Piano)

5 & 6. w/GERALD MOORE (Piano)

RECORD 5

Side One:

1. Irmelin Rose (Jacobsen)—24th June, 1929 (WAX.5068—un-issued)
2. (a) Le Ciel est par-dessus le toit (Verlaine) (Sung in French)
(b) The Violet (Holstein)—Recorded 10th July, 1929 (WAX.5105—un-issued)
3. (a) To The Queen Of My Heart (Shelley)
(b) Love's Philosophy (Shelley)—Recorded 7th December, 1934 (CAX.7380—SDX.7)
4. "Delius" Biography—BBC TV Monitor Programme (Sir Thomas Beecham interviewed by Edmund Tracey)—Recorded 22nd November, 1959 (First published 1976)
By arrangement with BBC Records and Tapes

1 & 2. DORA LABBETTE (Soprano); SIR THOMAS BEECHAM (Piano)

3. HEDDLE NASH (Tenor); GERALD MOORE (Piano)

Side Two:

"A MASS OF LIFE"

- + 1. Radio talk by Sir Thomas Beecham—Recorded 5th June, 1951 introducing:
- * 2. Prelude to Part 2—Recorded 8th May, 1948 (2EA.13033—un-issued)
- 3. Prelude to Part 2, No. 3—Recorded 11th February, 1938 (CAX.8188—un-issued)

2. w/ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

conducted by SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, Bart., C.H.

Solo Horns: DENNIS BRAIN, IAN BEERS & RAY WHITE

3. LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

conducted by SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, Bart., C.H.

+ By arrangement with BBC Records and Tapes

* Recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust

I little thought when sitting with Delius a few days before he died in June, 1934, waiting in vain for the post to bring the promised recording of Paris which Sir Thomas Beecham had made that April, that instead of the heavy old 78 discs of Brigg Fair, On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring and The Walk to the Paradise Garden which had given Delius such infinite pleasure being the sum of his Beecham recordings, the time would come when I would be asked to introduce the bulk of his work recorded by Sir Thomas himself and reissued with undreamt-of skills.

It seems to me appropriate that this retrospective Delius anthology should open with that recording of Paris. It is good to hear those once familiar personal qualities of sound again, now belonging to the past, yet fully alive in artistry today—the exquisite oboe of Leon Goossens in the Intermezzo from Fennimore and Gerda; the haunting horn calls of Dennis Brain, Ian Beers and Ray White with Sir Thomas hovering in magical flow in the prelude to Part II of A Mass of Life; the charming voice of Dora Labbette . . . It was a happy thought, too, to include also Sir Thomas's inimitable BBC talks and his eloquently authoritative biography of Delius with its new introduction by Felix Aprahamian to place the recordings in historical context.

This celebration of half a century of devoted championship of Delius by the greatest exponent of his work unites the felicitous artistries of two of the most remarkable figures in music.

ERIC FENBY

THE BEECHAM-DELIUS RECORDINGS

It was inevitable that in the course of time LP transfers of the 78 rpm recordings which Sir Thomas Beecham made of the music of Delius would appear. These 78's were made principally for the Columbia Graphophone Company, later part of EMI, and most of this collection forms part of what was originally called the Delius Society. This was first founded as a private organisation for recording the music of Frederick Delius. At the request of Sir Thomas Beecham and the Delius Society Committee, Columbia took over the entire control of the Society and the first volume appeared in 1934. The object of these 'Society' recordings was "... to make available, on a subscription basis, works or groups of musical works that appeal in the first instance more to the cultivated than to the general musical taste, and may therefore be regarded as being outside the normal productions issued in the monthly supplementary lists". Among outstandingly successful Society projects were those devoted to Hugo Wolf Lieder, the 32 piano sonatas of Beethoven (played by Artur Schnabel), the Mozart operas from Glyndebourne, the Sibelius recordings, which included all seven symphonies, and the three volumes of the Delius Society. The particular object of the Delius Society was to form a permanent memorial to Delius by making records available of the highest artistic standard and to spread the knowledge of this great English composer's finest works. A few weeks before he died, Delius said that this project was "The greatest interest I have in life—that those who admire my music should have good records of my works conducted by Beecham".

The bulk of the Delius Society recordings was made by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under their founder and artistic director, Sir Thomas Beecham. Walter Legge, who created these Society editions, was also the producer for many of the recording sessions.

The songs recorded by Heddle Nash appeared in Volume 1; some of those sung by Dora Labbette were originally published on the Columbia label but the present anthology includes several which remained unpublished and therefore appear for the first time. It was hoped that previously unpublished recordings of Leeds Festival performances of the Songs of Sunset and An Arabesque would also appear, but this has unfortunately proved impossible.

A subject of interest and merit are the very earliest of the electric recordings of Delius's orchestral music made by Sir Thomas before 1930. They include a magical account of Brigg Fair, with an orchestra drawn from London's leading musicians of that period. Technically the recording, although somewhat cramped at the climaxes, was remarkably truthful. As for these performances we do well to recall that Delius himself felt that Beecham alone grasped the inner meaning of his music. Eric Fenby has written—"If there was to be a future for his music. . . it could only live in the tradition which Beecham had been at such pains to create".

Of course, Sir Thomas later re-made for the gramophone several works of Delius, mainly in the monophonic LP process. These included Paris, Appalachia and Sea-Drift. Furthermore, he had in 1948 conducted the premiere recordings of A Village Romeo And Juliet* and some years later A Mass Of Life.

Meantime, special thanks are due to Lady Shirley Beecham, whose co-operation was willingly forthcoming, especially for the necessary permissions enabling the issue of previously unapproved and unpublished recordings by Sir Thomas. The remarkable transfer work was supervised by Anthony Griffith, whose achievement cannot be too highly praised. We know that he would like to acknowledge the skill of Edward Gadsby-Toni, himself a former member of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, in matters of pitch correction and 'join-up' of sides.

Fortunately, the music of Delius continues to be performed and recorded in the land of his birth. This is due in the main to the Delius Trust, with such persuasive advocates as Felix Aprahamian and Robert Threlfall. There is also the present day Delius Society, an organisation of music lovers devoted to this composer.

Live performances, broadcasts and recordings come through the efforts of such dedicated conductors as Sir Charles Groves, Meredith Davies and Vernon Handley. They follow the trail blazed by Sir Thomas Beecham, whose unique performances of this unique composer are enshrined in these invaluable recordings.

DOUGLAS PUDNEY



*It is hoped to include this important performance in a second anthology to be published in due course.

PARIS—A Nocturne (The Song Of A Great City)

Before settling down permanently in the lovely village of Grez-sur-Loing, Delius lived in Paris from 1888 to 1897. For most of this period he lodged close to the Montparnasse district where the artistic attractions of the Latin Quarter resulted in the composer becoming closely associated with a circle of painters and writers. Delius numbered among his friends and acquaintances Gauguin, Munch, Strindberg and Verlaine. Here he also met Jelka Rosen, an art student from Belgrade, who was destined to become his deeply devoted wife. He did not seek out the company of fellow composers although such diverse figures as Messager, Florent Schmitt and Ravel showed Delius both friendship and admiration.

As for the great city itself, its sights and sounds were a source of curiosity and interest to Delius. Apart from the artistic milieu, he knew the high-life of its salons and savoured to saturation point the repertoire of concert hall and opera house. Nor did he ignore the seamer side of Parisian life, and it is obvious he enjoyed the atmosphere of Paris by night, with its teeming, colourful crowds seeking pleasure under myriad glittering lights. And it is the latter scene which is one of several which Delius so strikingly evokes in his large-scale tone poem.

Sketches for Paris can be traced back to 1897 (Delius was then 35) but the score was not completed until 1899, and as such represented the composer's most substantial orchestral work up to that time. A Straussian size orchestra is employed, with six horns, three flutes otherwise quadruple woodwind, two harps and a large percussion section. Undoubtedly the Bavarian master influenced Delius at this period, and there are obvious stretches which recall the Strauss tone poems. Paris received its first performance in Germany at Elberfeld in 1907, where the local director of music, Hans Haym (1860-1921), was to become the first of Delius's champions in his country. The British premiere took place in January, 1908 at London's Queen's Hall where the New Symphony Orchestra played under the baton of one Thomas Beecham. He had encountered Delius the year previous (see notes on *Appalachia*); thus began an association, or rather an identification of composer and conductor virtually without parallel in musical history.

The original sketches for Paris contained, apart from the Whitmanesque sub-title, three other sub-headings, namely: '*Scenes Parisiennes*', '*L'Heure Absinthe*', and '*Heureuse rencontre*'. Although these were not carried forward to the final version of the score, it is not stretching the imagination too far to find the impressions and moods conjured up by these references mirrored in the music. As for the orchestration, it is both subtle and flamboyant and there are passages of virtuoso writing, especially for the brass, which one does not usually associate with Delius. The very opening creates the atmosphere of the piece immediately, with a deep-rooted pedal point of Sibelian length suggesting the slow awakening of the big city. Later the cries of street vendors are heard in the woodwind and one of the most memorable passages Delius ever wrote, is reached with the appearance of a solo oboe playing, very quietly, the haunting motive from which so much is developed. More animated sections of the music contrast with rhapsodic episodes, the former suggesting the bustling activity of the city by night. However, it is the poetry and mystery of nocturnal Paris which forms the mainspring of this orchestral *tour de force*. The huge principal climax disintegrates and the solitude of the night, with its half-lights and noises from afar, becomes the all-pervading mood.

SUMMER NIGHT ON THE RIVER

Summer Night On The River, one of the most exquisite of the several miniatures Delius composed, dates from 1911. Doubtless inspired by the natural beauty of the surroundings at Grez-sur-Loing, it is the nearest Delius comes to Debussy; whether or not its pointillism owes anything to the French composer is arguable. Eric Fenby has said that it is "the most difficult of all Delius's orchestral pieces to realise in performance". Sir Thomas thought that the music touched perfection but expressed doubts that the orchestration represented Delius at his best. Nonetheless the composer achieves a near miracle of musical imagination with his delicate balancing of small orchestral forces—two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns, with strings. The listener can allow his or her imagination free rein but gnats, dragonflies and bullfrogs are never far from the scene.

SEA DRIFT

Concerning Sea Drift, Delius told Eric Fenby: 'The shape of it was taken out of my hands so to speak as I worked, and was bred easily and effortlessly of the nature and sequence of the particular poetical ideas of Whitman that appealed to me.' This master work, a setting for baritone solo, chorus and orchestra of the central section of *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking**, was begun in 1901 and completed in 1903, being first performed in Essen under Georg Witte. Present on that occasion was Carl Schuricht, destined to become a conductor of international stature especially associated with outstanding performances of Beethoven, Brahms and Bruckner. He cherished Sea Drift, however, and performed it whenever the opportunity arose, giving it for the BBC a few years before his death in 1962. This was the time when the works of Frederick Delius were much performed in Germany and, in terms of popularity, the Bradford-born composer was second only to Richard Strauss among his contemporaries. Unfortunately, all this ceased with the outbreak of war in 1914 and the position for the music of Delius remains unretrieved in Germany, although some performances took place in the early thirties. Another German association with this work was its dedicatee, Max von Schillings (1868-1933), a prominent composer and conductor and one-time director of the Berlin State Opera. In 1908 Sea Drift reached England when Sir Henry Wood introduced it at the Sheffield Festival, with Frederick Austin as soloist. Beecham took it up shortly afterwards, giving it subsequently in Hanley, Manchester and London. It remained close to his heart for the remainder of his life and, in addition to concert performances, he recorded it for the gramophone on two occasions. It is gratifying that this most noble and personal of Delius's music retains its hold. At the Last Night of the 1976 Henry Wood Promenade Concerts, Sir Charles Groves, one of the most dedicated of living Delius conductors, directed a performance which kept the vast audience enthralled, not least the young Promenaders.

Whitman's text relates a simple but poignant story. By the sea-shore a boy bird-watcher discovers a gull's nest and watches the he-bird and she-bird as they sit in turn on their eggs. A tragic situation ensues when the hen flies away and does not return; the he-bird's increasing loneliness, exhaustion and grief are shared by the sympathetic boy. The story is told alternately by the chorus and the baritone who impersonates the boy and the birds. Delius's writing for the chorus is sometimes ungrateful, although the solo part is highly rewarding for the sensitive artist, but the sum total of baritone, chorus and a large orchestra is a continuous outpouring of sound which matches Whitman's lyrical tragedy to perfection. The orchestra is employed with a wonderful feeling for the soloist's line, often with chamber music delicacy, e.g. a solo violin weaving arabesques, or each of the woodwind alternating with solos of deeply expressive beauty. (The oboe and cor anglais are especially effective). Few works in the entire repertoire so movingly portray the feelings of anguish, grief, nostalgia and separation as does Sea Drift.

Chorus:
Once Paumanok,
When the lilac scent was in the air and fifth-month grass
was growing,
Up the seashore in some briers,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,

Baritone:
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent,
with bright eyes,
And every day, I, a curious boy, never too close, never
disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Chorus:
Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together,
Two together,
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,

Baritone:
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,

Chorus:
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

Baritone:
Till of a sudden,
Maybe kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appear'd again.
And thence forward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

Chorus:
Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Baritone:
Yes, when the stars glisten'd,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer, wonderful, causing tears.
He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.
Yes, my brother, I know,
The rest might not, but I have treasure'd every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with
the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds
and sights after their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long,
Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you my brother.

Chorus:
Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me,
Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

Baritone:
O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love,
O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?
Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!
High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love.

Chorus:
O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you
O throat! O trembling throat!
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.

Baritone:
Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!

*O reckless despairing carols,
But soft! sink low!
Soft! let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment you husky voice'd sea,
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately
to me,
Hither my love!
Here I am! here!
With this just sustain'd note I announce myself to you,
This gentle call is for you my love, for you.*

Chorus:
*Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the dark shadows of leaves,
O darkness! O in vain!*

Baritone:
*O I am very sick and sorrowful,
O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.
O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more!*

*Whitman's poem also inspired an orchestral work from the American composer, John Alden Carpenter and part of it was set by Vaughan Williams in "A Sea Symphony".

IRMELIN—Prelude

The story of Eric Fenby's role as Delius's amanuensis does not need re-telling here: Fenby's own poetic account of this remarkable relationship is fully related in his famous book, *Delius as I knew him*. Suffice it to say that a number of works resulted from the dictation of the blind and paralysed Delius to the intensely musical young Yorkshireman whose patience must have been literally 'Jobian'. Irmelin, the first of the half dozen operas written by Delius, was composed between the years 1890 and 1892. In 1931 Delius decided that something ought to survive from the then, as yet, unpublished and performed opera*. With Fenby's help he fashioned another of those exquisite lyric miniatures which are so thoroughly characteristic of his art, using material from the fairy-tale opera based on a Nordic legend. Unfortunately, sensitive though he was to literature and poetry, Delius was a most ineffective librettist. This factor and the plot's naivety, plus a lack of visual action, stood in the path of actual production.

*Sir Thomas Beecham conducted several performances of Irmelin at Oxford in May, 1953.

FENNIMORE AND GERDA—Intermezzo

Delius's last opera, although not his final work for the stage, comes from 1909 and 1910, and was dedicated to Sir Thomas Beecham. The libretto is based on Niels Lyhne, a novel by the Danish writer Jens Peter Jacobsen, whose work Delius much admired. It was Jacobsen's writing which also gave rise to one of the strangest but most original of Delius's works, *An Arabesk* for baritone solo, chorus and orchestra which dates from 1914. *Fennimore and Gerda* (which are the names of the women in the life of Lyhne) has the unusual form of "eleven stage pictures with orchestral interludes". Beecham found the piece lacking in true dramatic character and "of genuinely vocal melody

scarcely a trace". Certainly the orchestral music is of a very high order, not least the celebrated *Intermezzo* which speaks so eloquently of a coming spring, a Nordic spring which will soften the tragedy that has entered Lyhne's life. As ever, one is compelled to remark on the matchless quality of this composer in his writing for instruments like flute and oboe.

APPALACHIA—Variations On An Old Slave Song

England, North America, Germany, Scandinavia and France—these were the geographical areas which influenced Delius during his career. Reflections of this cosmopolitan background are to be found in compositions as diverse as the *North Country Sketches*, *Appalachia*, *A Mass Of Life*, *The Song Of The High Hill* and *Paris*. The young Delius found himself in Solano Grove, Florida ostensibly to manage an orange plantation, but within a year he had moved upstream to Jacksonville. There he taught music and met Thomas Ward, the Brooklyn organist who in turn instructed Delius in the basic techniques of composition. Important as this was, of equal significance was the effect on the young musician of hearing the Negroes on the plantation singing in the distance on a summer's evening. From this simple experience derived Delius's Negro opera, *Koanga*, the *Florida Suite* and *Appalachia*. This latter is possibly the finest of these Negro impressions. There exists an earlier version dated 1896, with the sub-title, *American Rhapsody*, but it was much shorter than the work we know today. No vocal parts were included and although the opening was substantially the same, there was a climax derived from Dixie and Yankee Doodle! The revised *Appalachia* of 1902 was first performed at Elberfeld under Haym in 1904 and another German protagonist for the music of Delius, Fritz Cassirer (1871-1926) from Berlin, gave the first British performance at Queen's Hall on November 22nd, 1907. Cassirer had visited London at the time of the British premiere of the Delius Piano Concerto at a Promenade Concert, with the indefatigable Wood conducting and Theodor Szanto as soloist. Delius also came over for what proved to be a highly successful event and agreed to help the German conductor find a suitable orchestra for a concert he planned to give in London. This was the chance circumstance that led Delius to Beecham, for that greatly gifted young conductor and musical entrepreneur gave a concert of "modern French and English music" at Queen's Hall with the recently formed New Symphony Orchestra. Beecham's oft quoted reaction—"He must be a cardinal or at least a bishop in mufti"—indicates that he found Delius a rarity among men, certainly among musical artists, but undoubtedly these first impressions were to be profound and lasting. Cassirer's London concert took place on November 22nd, a programme which combined Wagner, Richard Strauss and Delius—his *Appalachia*. The effect on Beecham was such that he later rated it as "one of the half-dozen momentous occasions I have known over a period of more than fifty years." He goes on to say, and I quote from Sir Thomas's biography of the composer—"Like every other musician under thirty years of age who was present at the performance of *Appalachia* in November, I was startled and electrified. Here at last was modern music of native growth in which it was possible, with uninhibited sincerity, to take pride and delight. I formed the unshakeable resolution to play as much of it as I could lay my hands on whenever I had the opportunity, and at once included in my coming programmes for the New Year, *Paris* and *Appalachia*".

The "old slave song" upon which Delius fashioned his variations, was a tune he had heard negro workers singing in the tobacco factories (known as "stemmeries") at Danville, Virginia. Apparently, the practice was for a song leader to begin the ditty which would be taken up and freely harmonised by the other workers as they shredded the tobacco leaves. This theme has a curious resemblance to the melody of 'Bella figlia dell'Amore', the celebrated quartet from the third act of Verdi's *Rigoletto*. It actually appeared in the 1896 version, but there the context was much more light-hearted than its use in the haunting masterpiece he brought forth six years later. Delius uses a large orchestra and a chorus whose role is confined for part of the work to wordless interjections and colouristic touches. The chorus proper enters at the climactic point with the words 'After night has gone comes the day', but as Christopher Palmer has pointed out in his masterly study *Delius—Portrait of a Composer* (Duckworth) "... the words are of no consequence. What matters is the sound of the close harmony singing". Delius is here recalling the sights and sounds of the coloured workers, (the former slave population of North America),

who lived and worked in the plantations near the Mississippi swamps. As for the variations themselves, these are masterly in the clarity of their projection—they include a march and a waltz—and follow the announcement of the 'slave song' on the cor anglais in the 100th bar. Up to this point there is a magical and sustained introduction which seems to take the listener slowly down river, passing the tropical forests and swamps and catching in the distance the sounds of the negroes dancing and singing (there is a very obvious banjo imitation in the orchestra!).

A baritone soloist from the body of the chorus begins his popular-style song—"O honey, I am going down the river in the morning" and is rewarded by a response from the rest of the singers whose final words—

*'T'ords the morning lift a voice,
Let the scented woods rejoice
And echoes swell across the mighty stream'.*

repeat the opening stanza which had been introduced *a capella*. Now the full orchestra is in support, and the vision fades slowly as the chorus adds wordless 'aahs' to the orchestra's touching recollection of things past.

Chorus:
*After dark night has gone comes the day,
The dark shadows will fade away.
'T'ords the morning lift a voice,
Let the scented woods rejoice,
And echoes swell across the mighty stream.*

Soloist:
O Honey, I am going down the river in the morning,

Chorus:
*Heigh ho, heigh ho, down the mighty river,
Aye! Honey I'll be gone when next the whippoorwill's acalling*

Soloist:
*And don't you be so lonesome love,
And don't you fret and cry*

Chorus:
*For the dawn will soon be breaking,
The radiant morn is nigh,
And you'll find me ever waiting
My own sweet Nelly Gray!
'T'ords the morning lift a voice etc.*

LA CALINDA from Florida Suite

Florida Suite, the earliest of Delius's negro evocations, dating from 1887, was the first work of the composer to be performed. It was latterly a particular favourite with Sir Thomas Beecham who made a most affectionate recording of it. Beecham actually revised and edited these "Scenes from Tropical Life"; the opening movement 'Day Break' is noteworthy for the first appearance of the popular Creole dance, La Calinda. Actually, the music Delius provides for this dance is far removed from the frenzy of the original dance of this name, which was banned in Louisiana owing to its obscene nature.

LA CALINDA from Koanga

The title here is something of a misnomer as this is an orchestral arrangement by Eric Fenby from the version of *La Calinda* which Delius incorporated into his opera, *Koanga* (1897). During the course of the second act it is used as a choral dance at the wedding feast of Koanga and the slave-girl, Palmyra. In its orchestral dress it has become one of the best-known pieces by Delius, although it is scarcely representative of his true nature as a composer.

FINAL SCENE from Koanga

Koanga was first staged at Elberfeld under Fritz Cassirer in 1902. It was the third of the Delius operas, and this production brought Delius and Cassirer together, leading to the significant London premiere of Appalachia in 1907, referred to earlier. Koanga was not performed professionally in Britain until Sir Thomas gave it at Covent Garden in 1934. In 1972 the opera was performed as part of the Camden Festival, this further production having been stimulated by some performances in Washington D.C. There, two Negro singers took the principal roles which they repeated in London and, in 1973, they participated in the premiere recording under Sir Charles Groves. (available on HMV SLS 974). Fenby tells us that Delius maintained an interest in this early composition and in his old age deplored the fact that he would never hear it again. It has a more convincing plot than most of its fellows and Delius here shows to what truly dramatic heights he could rise, given the right circumstances. The orchestral writing is magnificent although not all the solo roles are convincingly projected. But the leading characters have music of intense lyrical beauty and the choral writing is more rewarding than is sometimes the case with this composer, as well as being most effective in the action. Characteristic is a wonderful orchestral interlude leading to the final choral section from the opera's epilogue, which follows the deaths of Koanga and Palmyra. The old servant Uncle Joe has told his story to the young daughters of the sugar-cane planters and as day breaks, the girls sing to welcome the coming of the dawn.

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

The orchestra brings the opera to an upliftingly optimistic close.

EVENTYR (Once Upon A Time)

The countries which comprise Scandinavia—Sweden, Denmark and Norway—fascinated Delius and were deeply loved by him. Norway especially, with its picturesque fjords and the wonderful mountain ranges, impressed him to the very depths of his soul. As a young man in 1882 he was sent by his father on a business trip to Scandinavia. He returned the following year to Norway and on later visits met and was befriended by Grieg and Sinding, who accompanied Delius on a walking tour. In subsequent years he returned to visit these beloved hills and on one such excursion his companion was the then Mr. Thomas Beecham. Even after the paralysis had set in and incapacitated his legs, Delius continued to visit Norway. On the last of these visits, with his eyesight now also impaired, he was carried on an improvised chair by Jelka and Percy Grainger in order that he could experience yet again the marvels of the sunset over the distant mountains.

The North and the wonders of its natural scenic beauties inspired Delius to a succession of works—Paa Vidderne ('On the heights'), Over The Hills And Far Away, Eventyr, Arabesk and The Song Of The High Hills. Each of these has its roots firmly in Scandinavian scenery, literature, folklore and culture. Eventyr, which is described as "A Ballad for Orchestra" and has the sub-title "Once upon a time", was completed in 1917 and is dedicated to Sir Henry Wood. It was Sir Henry who conducted its first performance in 1919, in London, with the Queen's Hall Orchestra but it was Beecham who later made the piece very much his own. The music derives from Norwegian folklore and particularly from a collection of fairy tales by Asbjornsen. Jelka Delius recalled how she and her husband had read these fairy tales during a winter of the war years. Years later the composer spoke of "The under-earthly ones. Giants, horrid creatures trotting thro' the forests at night, frightening and weird. Uncanny. But also 'dear little folk' who help good people and bring them luck". There is nothing far removed here from the fairy-tales known to people all over the world, but Delius expresses the scene and mood with uncanny skill in Eventyr. There is a curious touch with some shouts from men's voices and although a small male chorus is suggested, it has sometimes been the practice for the members of the orchestra to supply these brief but

telling moments of vocalism. Possibly on this recorded performance, and in the later one he made, Sir Thomas helps out. His admirers will recall his own active vocal encouragement to his players when conducting.

IN A SUMMER GARDEN

This could well be Delius's masterpiece for orchestra. Certainly no other work so distills the quintessence of his genius. Here the lovely garden and the river at Grez come to life, and the dedication to Jelka with the Rossetti quotation:

*'All are my blooms and all sweet blooms of love,
To thee I gave while spring and summer sang'.*

indicates that the music was intensely personal. The garden at Grez was Jelka's responsibility and the joy it gave the ailing Delius was beyond words—but not beyond music.

A sizeable orchestra is used but the effect is frequently more akin to chamber music and the entire piece is developed from a succession of brief fragments of themes which undergo subtle change and variation. A section of immediate appeal is the long melody for the violas, which Beecham phrased to perfection.

In A Summer Garden was written in 1908 but extensively revised after its initial performance in 1909.

OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY

Dating from 1894, and described as a "Fantasie Overture", Over The Hills And Far Away was also first performed at Elberfeld under Dr. Hans Haym, on November 13th, 1897. It was also the opening item in a London concert devoted entirely to the music of Delius, promoted by the composer—and conducted by Alfred Hertz at St. James's Hall on May 30th, 1899:

There are two quite distinctive moods, the one vigorous, the other serene; the faster sections are some of the most successful to be found among the *oeuvre* of one who really excelled in music like the slow-moving opening with its evocative horn-calls. The musical structure depends on rapidly changing variations of the basic thematic material. There are weaknesses here, perhaps the main theme is overworked but, it is an effective and affecting piece, well worth a place in the orchestral repertoire. The overall impression is one of a bracing freshness tinged with gentle poetry.

HASSAN—From the incidental music to the play by James Elroy Flecker

Hassan, or The Golden Journey to Samarkand is the work of the English poet, James Elroy Flecker (1884-1915) whose outstanding lyrics include A Ship, An Isle And A Sick Moon and The Old Ships; he also wrote another play, Don Juan. His early death from tuberculosis was a tragedy for English literature, but fortunately, the foresight and enterprise of the British producer and impresario, Basil Dean, in the year 1913, rescued Hassan from oblivion. The manuscript of the original play had lain in Sir Herbert Tree's office unread but was passed on to Dean by Tree's daughter with a plea for him to "give this wonderful play special attention". Dean did just that and persuaded the young poet to revise and shorten it with a view to production. Unfortunately, the war years intervened; Flecker died in Switzerland without completing everything that he set himself in order to ease the way for Hassan to be staged. Dean planned a sumptuous production and sought incidental music from a leading composer of the day. Ravel declined his invitation, but fortunately for posterity Delius accepted it. What the stricken composer produced was, to

quote Dean, "a musical score that will remain as closely identified with the work as is the music of Grieg with Peer Gynt". Few would quarrel with that verdict. Delius originally scored the music for a conventional theatre orchestra comprising solo wind, harp, percussion and eleven strings, but both Sir Thomas Beecham and Eric Fenby prepared suites for concert performance using the resources of a symphony orchestra. The composition of the Hassan music was not an easy task for Delius. The marked deterioration in his physical condition was such that he could no longer write down the musical notation. Jelka Delius had not only to interpret his dictation of the music, but also to copy the complete orchestral score. He was able to attend the rehearsals and be present at the first London production at His Majesty's Theatre on September 20th, 1923. The distinguished cast included Henry Ainley, Cathleen Nesbitt, Leon Quartermaine, and Esme Percy. The ballets were arranged by Fokine, Eugene Goossens conducted and the production was supervised by Basil Dean. It ran for 281 performances both in London and the provinces. A New York production took place the following year.

The success of Hassan in the theatre was due to a variety of reasons, not least the intrinsic worth of Flecker's play and the painstaking production by Basil Dean. That this production also included some incidental music of apposite and memorable quality is clearly established, and although his compositional powers were slowly waning, Delius was inspired to give of his best. The Intermezzo and Serenade is the best-known number from Hassan. In Beecham's arrangement the folk-song-like theme of the Serenade is played by a solo viola, whereas in the play it is sung as a vocalise by a solo tenor voice. The brief atmospheric unaccompanied chorus, once again wordless, is sung off-stage between the second and third scenes of Act 1. The music of the Closing Scene is representative of Delius at his most approachable. By moonlight at the Gate of the Moon in Baghdad the merchants and the camel-drivers prepare for their imminent journey. The caravan has its usual tally of followers, among them Hassan and his friend Ishak, former minstrel to the Caliph, Haroun Al Raschid. Sickened by his master's cruelty to Rafi and Pervenheh, the two lovers whom he has tortured to death, Ishak persuades the humble confectioner to join him and "take the Golden Road to Samarkand".

BRIGG FAIR—An English Rhapsody

Brigg Fair has always enjoyed popularity among the purely orchestral pieces. It fits readily into a concert programme, being of about the same duration as Don Juan or Till Eulenspiegel of Richard Strauss. Completed in 1907, it was first given in Basel in January, 1908 under the Swiss conductor-composer, Hermann Suter (1870-1926) and received performances in England shortly afterwards under Landon Ronald and Granville Bantock.

The starting point of this masterpiece was the setting of 1905 by Percy Grainger of a folk-song he had collected in Lincolnshire called Brigg Fair. He drew the attention of Delius to this song whose words run thus:

*It was the fifteenth of August,
The weather fine and fair.
Unto Brigg Fair I did repair
For love I was inclined.*

*I rose up with the lark in the morning
With my heart so full of glee
Of thinking there to meet my dear
Long time I wished to see.*

*The green leaves they shall wither,
And the branches they shall die.
If ever I prove false to her,
To the girl that loves me.*

After a characteristic introduction with a prominent flute solo, the theme is given out by the oboe and there follows a series of intriguing variations with ever-changing harmonic and rhythmic patterns. No where is Delius's handling of the orchestra more confident and sure-

footed and the highly original harmonic invention displayed here has the touch of genius. Beecham suggested that Brigg Fair has less to do with the English countryside than most commentators imagine. He found that it evoked the atmosphere of a Virgilian Pastoral. Whatever one sees into this music, its appeal is lasting and no performance known to this writer has ever equalled this of the 1928 recording, the first of three which Sir Thomas made over the years. In spite of the dated recorded sound, the beauty of Delius's orchestration, and especially the succession of lovely solos, are ideally realised.

ON HEARING THE FIRST CUCKOO IN SPRING

This is the first of the "Two Pieces for Small Orchestra" which received their first hearings at a concert of the Royal Philharmonic Society in London on January 20th, 1914, under the direction of the famed Willem Mengelberg, the conductor who made the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra into a world class ensemble. In time it became the most frequently played of all Delius's compositions and the title, plus the varying parodies of it, is known to most music lovers in English-speaking countries. Composed in 1912 it draws on an old Norwegian melody *I Ola-Dalom* (In Ola Valley) which Grieg also utilised in his Op. 66, the *Nineteen Norwegian Folk Songs* for pianoforte. Although this miniature seems to most listeners to reflect the very soul of the English countryside, the cuckoo really has a French accent originating as it does from that lovely garden in Grez. But the beauty of nature is truly international and it was that most international of tone poets, Frederick Delius, who was best able to express the loveliness of the seasons in musical terms.

THE WALK TO THE PARADISE GARDEN from A Village Romeo and Juliet

Based on a story from *People of Seldwyla* by the Swiss poet and novelist, Gottfried Keller*, *A Village Romeo And Juliet* was written at Grez-sur-Loing between 1900-1. It is the fourth of Delius's operas and was first staged in Berlin under Fritz Cassirer in 1907. Sir Thomas Beecham directed the first British performance in 1910, revived it at Covent Garden in 1920 and supervised a remarkable student production at the Royal College of Music in 1935. Beecham also conducted several broadcasts of the opera and recorded it for His Master's Voice under the auspices of the Delius Trust in 1947.

The orchestral intermezzo *The Walk To The Paradise Garden* is a tone poem in its own right and was actually composed in its present form some years after the opera itself, being, at Beecham's suggestion, an extension of the interlude which is heard before the final scene of the opera. Sali and Vrenchen, the "Romeo and Juliet" of *Seldwyla* village, walk hand in hand to the "Paradise Garden", which is a beautiful garden run wild belonging to a dilapidated little old country house with a high verandah. The music which accompanies them is shot through with poignant contemplation as the orchestra recapitulates earlier thematic material of the opera, with the glorious principal melody reaching a climax of ravishing beauty.

*Both Brahms and Wolf set some of Keller's poems.

THE SONGS

If any aspect of Delius's output as a composer can be counted as neglected, it is certainly the songs. He composed some sixty in all, although a dozen or more have never been published. In addition to songs with pianoforte accompaniment, Delius, like Sibelius and Richard Strauss, set several with orchestra. Other hands, including Sir Thomas Beecham and Norman del Mar, have also orchestrated various songs. Most of these songs originated from the earlier part of his career and many were inspired by Scandinavian authors. There are settings of Hans Christian Andersen, Bjornson, Ibsen and Jacobsen.

Four settings of Heine from 1890-1 remain unpublished and there are, not surprisingly, songs to texts by Nietzsche. English literature is represented by Ben Johnson, Shakespeare and Shelley, and Verlaine is the favoured representative from France.

The three songs to words by Bjornstjerne Bjornsen (1832-1910) come from *Seven Songs From The Norwegian* written between 1889-90. *Evening Voices*, possibly better known under the title *Twilight Fancies*, is the most popular of all Delius's songs and was the special favourite of his wife from the time of their earliest encounter in Paris. It was also set by Grieg. *The Violet*, to words by the Danish poet, Ludwig Holstein, was written in 1900 and orchestrated by the composer eight years later. *I Brasil* uses a poem by Fiona MacLeod and was also orchestrated by the composer. Delius shows his uncanny knack of striking the right mood by producing a virtually authentic Gaelic song. As for the Ibsen song, *Cradle Song*, this was the first of the Norwegian songs already mentioned. It was through Ibsen that Delius first met Grieg, and the influence of the great Norwegian nationalist is to be discerned in several of these early songs. *The Nightingale*, to words by Wellhaven, comes from an earlier group of Norwegian settings (1888). It could well be that this was one of several compositions which Delius sent to Grieg and which encouraged the older composer to tell Delius in a letter that he recognised in his music "a very great talent of vast resource". Irmelin Rose derives from a set of seven Danish songs which date from 1897, six of them to lyrics by Jacobsen. This well-known song is one of the most immediately attractive and is thematically related to Delius's first opera, *Irmelin*.

So Sweet Is She is one of the comparatively few original English settings by Delius and comes from the year 1915. Of great appeal to the composer was the French poet, Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), with whom Delius became personally acquainted during his time in Paris. *Le ciel est par-dessus le toit* (1895) and *La lune blanche* (1910) were both orchestrated, and, as songs, are successful enough to make one regret that Delius did not choose more French texts for his vocal writing.

The two Shelley songs, from 1891, *To The Queen Of My Heart* and *Love's Philosophy*—there is a third, *Indian Love Song*—have also achieved a measure of popularity, particularly with English lyric tenors. Although these are rather conventional settings, they are beautifully made and obviously rewarding to sing.

Possibly the neglect of the Delius songs is due to their, generally speaking, rather unrepresentative character of the master musical nature-poet whose best vocal efforts are surely to be found in large-scale outpourings like *A Village Romeo And Juliet* and *A Mass Of Life*. Perhaps most of the songs lack originality, the hallmark of so much of Delius's music. Be that as it may, it is time for a re-appraisal of a far from unimportant branch of the composer's work. What has been encouraging is the appearance of an edition of the songs by no less an artist than Peter Pears. Furthermore, some of the previously unpublished songs are due to appear in print shortly. Let us hope that some of the fine young singers, both British and international, now before the public will be persuaded to turn their attention to this unhackneyed source of music.

SIR THOMAS SPEAKS and A MASS OF LIFE excerpts

It was a happy thought to seek the co-operation of the BBC to use the actual voice of Sir Thomas Beecham in this anthology. Truth to tell the great man did not always take to "talking about music on the wireless" too seriously. There was an occasion when he was supposed to give the listeners the benefit of his views of the *Eroica* Symphony. Most of "the learned address" was taken up by an appraisal of the superior merits of Schubert's 'Great C Major' Symphony. But with Delius, despite the insertion of some typically impish humour, Beecham took his subject to heart. We are fortunate to be able to listen again to his somewhat exaggerated but picturesque English, with its heavy use of archaic words, and to rejoice in the celebrated drawl. This, in spite of its upper-class tone, could never quite disguise the native-born Lancastrian. We can be quite sure that this was the baronet's deliberate intention. Sir Thomas Beecham had many striking and

remarkable qualities. Deep humanity would not normally be catalogued among them but, when talking about the music of Frederick Delius, this underplayed side of his true nature was fully revealed.

A Mass Of Life or *Eine Messe des Lebens*, to give the work its original title, is a setting of a text drawn from *Also Sprach Zarathustra* by Friedrich Nietzsche. It is laid out for soprano, contralto, tenor and bass soloists, a double chorus and a very large orchestra. The first complete performance took place in London in June, 1909 when the conductor was Sir Thomas Beecham. He championed it throughout his lifetime and also recorded it for the gramophone. The veneration he had for this powerful and impressive music is clearly indicated in the radio talk which occupies a substantial part of the final side in this anthology. Two previously unissued recordings have been used to illustrate points made by Sir Thomas. The first of these, which is the *Prelude* to Part 2 of the *Mass* prefaces the section entitled *On The Mountains*. The horns echo around the valleys as Zarathustra stands alone with his thoughts in the vast solitude of the mountains. The recording, the only one in this collection from after World War II, features the artistry of the ever-lamented Dennis Brain, with two of his colleagues from the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of that time as the other horn soloists.

The second excerpt is the orchestral prelude to the third section in Part Two called *The Dance-Song*. Zarathustra wanders in the forest at eventide and reaches a beautiful meadow where young girls are seen dancing together. Delius conveys the hidden mystery of nature in the peaceful opening of this section but the music takes on a more vigorous character as Zarathustra's vitality and thirst for love fights within himself against the philosopher-poet.

DOUGLAS PUDNEY, 1976.

It is regretted that, owing to copyright difficulties, World Records is unable to print the texts of the Delius songs.

The unpublished recordings are being issued by kind permission of Shirley, Lady Beecham and Miss Dora Labbette. Compiled and transferred from 78's by A. C. Griffith Box Front designed by Frank Watkins

THE LEGENDARY PERFORMANCES OF
SIR THOMAS
BEECHAM
Previously released on ML 4915, ML 4937

A



Sir Thomas Beecham was one of the most forceful and dynamic personalities in the music world of the first half of this century. He was born into a wealthy English family in 1879. After attending Oxford University, he embarked upon a career as a conductor, leading a variety of local orchestras. In 1908, he formed his own Beecham Symphony Orchestra and, two years later, directed a historic opera season at London's Covent Garden that featured notable performances of works by Debussy, Delius, Mozart and Richard Strauss. In the following years, he brought the famous Hallé Orchestra of Manchester to prominence and, in 1932, was a prime mover in the creation of the renowned London Philharmonic.

During World War II, Beecham lived in the United States, where he conducted many major orchestras, became conductor of the Seattle Symphony, and directed the orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera in many productions. After the War, he returned to England where, in 1947, he organized the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He died in London in 1961.

In his book *The Great Conductors*, Harold Schonberg wrote of Beecham: "He put his mark on twentieth-century conducting. But he did it differently from anybody else. He was musically different, personally different, sociologically different, intellectually different. . . . Among conductors, he was the Renaissance Man."

Beecham's authority as a Delius interpreter was best recognized by the composer himself, who once said: "I have only one wish for my music—I want Thomas to record all of it."

"Every artist should go out into the wilderness. Only in that way have I been able to learn complete emotional expression."

As usual, Frederick Delius (1862-1934) spoke from his own experience: For him, a "wilderness" was not an arid, lonely desert, but a fruitful oasis, where he could attune himself to his deepest creative impulses. He was variously inspired by the dark beauty of the Brontës' Yorkshire moors, near his birthplace; the glittering impersonality of the Paris of his early maturity; the enchanted garden at Grez-sur-Loing; the home of his most productive years; the fjords of his beloved Norway; or the moss-hung swamps and forests of Florida, where his destiny was revealed.

Delius' was a life of almost psychedelic contrasts. Biographical detail, though copious, is unreliable. The memoirs of his sister Clare and

three close friends, Sir Thomas Beecham, the composer Peter Warlock and his devoted amanuensis Eric Fenby are all charged with emotion but often contradictory as to motive and incident.

Fritz Théodor Albert Delius was born in Bradford, Yorkshire, second son of twelve children of a German-born wool tycoon, on January 29, 1862. The father, Julius—dubbed by his own daughter Clare, "a domestic Hitler"—ruled his large household autocratically, envisioning his sons as textile millionaires and musical amateurs. When his older brother escaped to a New Zealand sheepfarm, heir-apparent Fritz, a high-spirited, attractive youth, star cricketer of his school as well as a gifted violinist and pianist, tried to conform. "My brother was just eighteen when he was engulfed in the family business," Clare wrote. He rapidly proved himself unfit for commerce, in England, France, Germany and Scandinavia, finally bolting to the casino at Monte Carlo. His winnings paid for violin lessons and concert tickets, until a summons came to Bradford, and further drudgery. Then, inspiration struck. According to Clare:

I do not know how Fred got the absurd notion of pretending to be an orange-planter. He wanted a climate where nature lent herself to peace and contemplation; where he could be engaged nominally in an occupation of which Papa would approve, but which would take up none of his time. So the conjunction of Florida and orange-planting came before his mental vision. Planting, of course, was a misnomer. He had no intention of planting anything.

"Nature" meant Solano Grove, a 120-acre tract rented for him by his father, with a run-down shanty overlooking the river, surrounded by palmettos and live oak. This had been glowingly misrepresented as a "plantation" on which the younger Delius could make his fortune. "I was demoralized when I left Bradford for Florida," Delius told Eric Fenby. "Through sitting and gazing at Nature, I gradually learnt the way in which I could eventually find myself."

"How he found himself so suddenly is a mystery. That it was the effect of some strange inner happening or revelation seems the only reasonable explanation," asserts Fenby. Listening to the songs of the local Blacks (notably one Elbert Anderson) Delius absorbed the pentatonic scales, novel harmonies, and strange syncopations, so expressive of exotic surroundings, and reminiscent of their African heritage and the laments of slavery, which he was later to use in his opera *Koanga*. In Jacksonville, he rented a piano, and persuaded Thomas Ward, a consumptive organist from Brooklyn, to come to Solano Grove to tutor him in musical theory. Meanwhile, Julius, perturbed by his son's silence, sent an emissary, who found Delius "bubbling over with a furious energy, immensely

vital and completely absorbed—but not, alas, in oranges!" If he was not playing the piano, or working at his musical studies, he was on the river, in his boat, listening to Anderson playing old slave songs on his banjo. Evenings, on the porch, Anderson would sing other melodies, one of which forms *Appalachia's* final chorus. For recreation, they went alligator-shooting.

Upon the sudden appearance of his brother Ernest, Delius left Solano in his care—(after an abortive attempt to grow tomatoes, Ernest retreated to Sumatra)—and set off on wanderings to Virginia and points north, earning his living as a synagogue cantor, as "Professor Delius, eminent European teacher of music and languages" to nubile Southern belles, and possibly as a church organist in New York City. Julius' detectives finally tracked him down on Long Island, with an offer of subsidized study at the famed Leipzig Conservatory.

The beginnings of *Appalachia* date from the following years of *vie de bohème* in Paris—friends were hearing bits of it on the piano as early as 1896, before his second brief visit to Solano, where the idea undoubtedly germinated. Early versions incorporated "Dixie," "Yankee Doodle," and Cracker folk-songs, which disappeared, in the final form of 1902, a product of the fertile six-year period that also yielded *Paris, A Village Romeo and Juliet, Sea Drift, and A Mass of Life*, the first great works of his maturity.

Subtitled, "Variations on an old slave song for full orchestra, with final chorus," the score bears the following note:

"Appalachia" is the old Indian name for Northern America. The composition mirrors the moods of tropical nature in the great swamps bordering on the Mississippi River, which is so intimately associated with the fate of the Negro slaves. Longing melancholy, and intense love of nature, as well as the childlike humor and a native delight in dancing are still, to the present time, the most characteristic qualities of the race.

Eschewing classical form, Delius strives for continuity—it is often difficult to state where one section flows into another. He achieves the blurred effect of emotions past, by his constant shifting of key and mode, and a chromaticism that never becomes atonality. He uses orchestral colors like an impressionist painter—to suggest rather than to depict. Much has been written of his music's sensory quality, but one must remember that Delius never saw the Mississippi—he uses it as a symbol of life's impermanence and love's inevitable separation, themes often encountered in his work.

The text for the final section is as follows:
O Honey, I am going down the river in the morning

Heigh ho, heigh ho, down the mighty river,
Aye, Honey, I'll be gone when next the
whippoorwill's a-calling
And don't you be too lonesome love and don't
you fret and cry;
For the dawn will soon be breaking, O the
radiant morn is nigh;
And you'll find me ever awaiting, He Ho,
He Ho!
And you'll find me ever awaiting, my own
sweet Nelly Gray!
T'ords the morning lift a voice
Let the scented woods rejoice
And echoes swell across the mighty stream.
Ah!

The idea for *North Country Sketches* occurred to Delius on a visit to Clare in Yorkshire in 1912. On their walks together, Clare remembered him:

. . . pausing every now and then to listen to some natural sound. He would stand quite still, as if drinking something in, his expression becoming rapt and attentive. Although of alien stock, he retained to the day of his death a great affection for the West Riding and its people. The color of the moors, the life of the heather, exercised an extraordinary fascination on his mind. . . . He soaked himself in the wild stories of the countryside. . . . The whole Bronte legend took hold of him.

In these four orchestral vignettes, Delius mirrored the changing moods of nature in Yorkshire. The listener to *Appalachia* may note the greater harmonic and melodic daring displayed in this later work. "The Wind Soughs in the Trees" evokes a northern autumn, with Delius conveying desolation by "empty" harmonies, flirting with atonality. "Winter Landscape" suggests snowflakes, and "Dance" recalls winter festivities, in a vigorous mazurka. "The March of Spring—Woodlands, Meadows, and Silent Moors" chronicles Spring's triumphant progress.

—Audrey-Cecelia LeLash

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Delius: Paris; Eventyr; Koanga (closing scene) Y 33284
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Berlioz: "Roman Carnival" Overture; "King Lear" Overture; "The Corsair" Overture; "Les Francs-Juges" Overture; "Waverley" Overture Y 33287
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THE LEGENDARY PERFORMANCES OF
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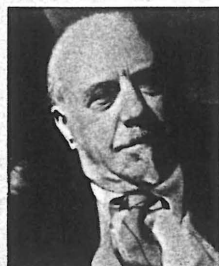
SIR THOMAS BEECHAM
conducts
DELIUS
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Side 1
PARIS (The Song of a Great City)

Side 2
EVENTYR (Once Upon a Time) (ASCAP)
KOANGA (closing scene)

Recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust

Y 33284



Sir Thomas Beecham was one of the most forceful and dynamic personalities in the music world of the first half of this century. He was born into a wealthy English family in 1879. After attending Oxford University, he embarked upon a career as a conductor, leading a variety of local orchestras. In 1908, he formed his own Beecham Symphony Orchestra and, two years later, directed a historic opera season at London's Covent Garden that featured notable performances of works by Debussy, Delius, Mozart and Richard Strauss. In the following years, he brought the famous Hallé Orchestra of Manchester to prominence and, in 1932, was a prime mover in the creation of the renowned London Philharmonic.

During World War II, Beecham lived in the United States, where he conducted many orchestras, became conductor of the Seattle Symphony, and directed the orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera in many productions. After the War, he returned to England where, in 1947, he organized the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He died in London in 1961.

In his book *The Great Conductors*, Harold Schonberg wrote of Beecham: "He put his mark on twentieth-century conducting. But he did it differently from anybody else. He was musically different, personally different, sociologically different, intellectually different. . . . Among conductors, he was the Renaissance Man."

There is no one else in music quite like Frederick Delius, and the ever-increasing audience that knows his compositions is intensely devoted. A Romantic spirit who worked within the framework of Impressionism, Delius was an extraordinarily sensitive and poetic and individual artist. "The rhythm of Delius," writes Neville Cardus, "is a flowing and interchanging of tonal currents; it is like a rhythm of changing light; it is not the rhythm of a solid but of an essence. And it takes no shape or form except the shape and form instinctively chosen by Delius, as the music

was awakened in him by no prompting in the world except that of his own feeling."

Frederick Delius was born in Bradford, England, in 1862, the son of German parents. Although he was musically precocious, a business career was planned for him. During years of residence in Germany, Delius made frequent trips to Scandinavia—ostensibly for business reasons but actually to further his musical career, which he held to despite his parents' stubborn opposition. Delius managed to escape his family's restrictions by coming to the United States and settling in Florida as an orange grower. It was there he met an organist from Brooklyn who had come South for his health, and from him Delius received further instruction. In time, Delius moved to Danville, Virginia, where he taught piano and violin. His retreat was discovered by his family and Delius was summoned home but granted permission to study music in Leipzig.

Delius made his public debut as a composer with his suite *Florida*, in 1888 in Leipzig. The following year, a program of his music was presented in London, but Delius did not come into his own in England until Sir Thomas Beecham espoused his cause and, through his magnificently understanding interpretations, revealed the full beauty of Delius' music.

From his mid-thirties until his death in 1934 at the age of 72, Delius spent the greater part of his time in France—in Paris and on an estate he acquired near Fontainebleau. His later years were made tragic by a long-term syphilitic infection that left him blinded and crippled and forced to dictate his music to an amanuensis, the devoted Eric Fenby.

In 1890, Delius came to Paris where he took rooms in the Latin Quarter and became the intimate friend of literary men and painters, such as Strindberg and Gauguin. After seven years in the city, Delius settled in Grez-sur-Loing, his final home. *Paris*, then, is a recollection, for it was not written until 1899.

The full title, given in mixed German and English, is *Paris, Ein Nachtstück* (The Song of a Great City), für grosses Orchester. It was first performed in 1901.

It is Paris seen as Nature, almost without people, and with Delius' constant sense of the emotional atmosphere. R. A. Streatfield, a friend of

the composer, described it as "a personal record of the feelings engendered by the contemplation of the sleeping city."

It is not a happy piece; there is an ominous sound to it, and the gaiety of the middle part comes to grief near the end. There is the Delius remoteness, too, and the Delius longing and sense of space. There is also tremendous excitement in the dark air he paints, and dramatic vision, and considerable tenderness.

The score is prefaced with these lines:

"Mysterious city—
City of pleasures,
Of gay music and dancing,
Of painting and beautiful women—
Wondrous city,
Unveiling but to those who
Shunning day,
Live through the night
And return home
To the sound of awakening streets
And the rising dawn."

Sir Thomas Beecham wrote in his autobiography *A Mingled Chime*: "This extraordinary work, wrought in the form of a colossal nocturne and the greatest experiment in musical impressionism yet made, won more immediate and general acceptance than any other of the composer's works played during this period, and thirty-three years later in the spring of 1941, when I gave it at Carnegie Hall, the boldest and acutest of American critics declared that Delius wrote better for orchestra than anyone else."

Eventyr was inspired by a collection of Norwegian folk stories published in 1841. This collection was made by Asbjørnsen and Moe, who traveled throughout Norway annually, taking down traditional stories from the lips of country people and then editing and publishing them in literary form. *Eventyr* is dedicated to Sir Henry Wood and was first performed in 1919 by that conductor. It is a kind of tribute to the folklore of a country that Delius found most congenial and to a composer that was both friend and influence, Edvard Grieg.

The third of Delius' six operas, *Koanga*, composed 1895-97, is based on Charles F. Keary's adaptation of "Bras-Coupe," a narrative within the novel *The Grandissimes* by George Wash-

ington Cable. *Koanga* is a Congo word meaning "arm" and is the name of the hero of the narrative; an African prince who has been sold into slavery in Louisiana. *Koanga* belongs to a planter named Don José Martinez. The planter's wife has a mulatto half-sister, Palmyra, with whom *Koanga* falls in love. Rivalry for Palmyra's affections ensues between *Koanga* and the overseer of the plantation. In a battle spurred by jealous treachery, the overseer is killed by *Koanga*, who escapes into the forest. In a vision, *Koanga* hears Palmyra calling to him to return. He does so and is instantly killed in a carefully planned ambush. Overtaken by anguish, Palmyra stabs herself.

The story is told by Uncle Joe, in reminiscence, and the first and last scenes show Uncle Joe and a group of young girls on the steps of a plantation house.

After an expressive passage for the orchestra, one of the girls sings, in the last scene:

"Alas! Uncle Joe, you made us weep by telling us so sad a tale."

All the girls: "Alas! Alas!"

Girl: "Nay, but our vigil we perform must keep, for the light of the stars begins to pale."

"Like ghosts our haunted thoughts will creep away as soon as the sun's bright beams we hail."

(The dawn begins to break.)

Voices together: "Yes, now once more both fields and farm his rays with gold's adorning."

"For all lost lovers let us pray this soft May morning."

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Other Legendary Performances by Sir Thomas Beecham and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra:

Delius: *Appalachia*; North Country SketchesY 33283
Handel-Beecham: The Faithful Shepherd Suite; Haydn: Symphony No. 93 in D MajorY 33285
Berlioz: *Harold in Italy* (William Primrose, Viola)Y 33286
Berlioz: "Roman Carnival" Overture; "King Lear" Overture; "The Corsair" Overture; "Les Francs-Juges" Overture; "Waverley" OvertureY 33287
Berlioz: Overture and March from "Les Troyens"; Sibelius: March from "Karelia Suite"; Incidental Music to "The Tempest"; Rimsky-Korsakov: March from "Le Coq d'or"Y 33288

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SIR THOMAS BEECHAM

Music of Delius

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

The late Sir Thomas Beecham's love and admiration for Delius' music went far beyond mere acts of reverence to a man who was his close personal friend. They were, indeed, a heartfelt tribute to an improvisatory genius — a sensitive composer through whose eyes and pen nature found a new and wonderingly-introspective voice.

SIDE ONE

BRIGG FAIR (15:49)

A SONG BEFORE SUNRISE (6:08)

MARCHE-CAPRICE (3:49)

SIDE TWO

ON HEARING THE FIRST CUCKOO IN SPRING (7:00)

SUMMER NIGHT ON THE RIVER (6:41)

SLEIGH RIDE (WINTER NACHT) (5:28)

INTERMEZZO FROM "FENNIMORE AND GERDA" (5:17)

The boyish qualities of Delius' early music, despite obvious influences, were as irresistible to Sir Thomas Beecham as the challenge of the later works. Delius believed in working through his influences, not avoiding them. "Marche-Caprice" (No. 1 of "Two Pieces") and "Sleigh Ride" (No. 2 of "Three Pieces") written in 1888, are reminders that until 1900 there is little in Delius' music to foretell the rapt nature mystic we know today, nor the loaded richness of his subsequent art. The sudden flowering of his genius that year in his opera "A Village Romeo and Juliet" and the astonishing series of works that ensued is without precedent in music. These apprentice pieces are pleasant trifles on which Delius set no store. (Young composers will find in them the importance of keeping their basses moving, a weakness to which Delius was prone.)

In 1907, moved by his friend Percy Grainger's choral and instrumental setting of a folksong, "Brigg Fair," which he had collected in Lincolnshire, Delius now wrote his own "English Rhapsody" on the tune. Following a period of prodigious composition in large scale forms of his own devising, Delius was compelled to center his musical thought within the contours of the folk tune and its formal and spiritual projections in a smaller time-scale than that of his previous set of variations—"Appalachia." But for that propitious necessity the exquisite idylls such as "On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring" (No. 1 of "Two Pieces for Small Orchestra") and "Summer Night on the River" (No. 2 of "Two Pieces for Small Orchestra") on which his fame may ultimately depend, might never have been written. Some critics maintain that from "Brigg Fair" onwards Delius merely repeated himself. This view, I think, is mistaken. The new simplicity of the final phase (1928-34), including "A Song of Summer," Violin Sonata No. 3 and the choral work "Songs of Farewell," was the climax of this growing concentration dating from "Brigg Fair."

Verses from the old country song run:

It was the fifth of August	I rose up with the lark in the
The weather fine and fair	morning
Unto Brigg Fair I did repair	With my heart so full of glee
For love I was inclined.	Of thinking there to meet my dear
	Long time I wished to see.

The green leaves they shall wither
And the branches they shall die
If ever I prove false to her
To the girl that loves me.

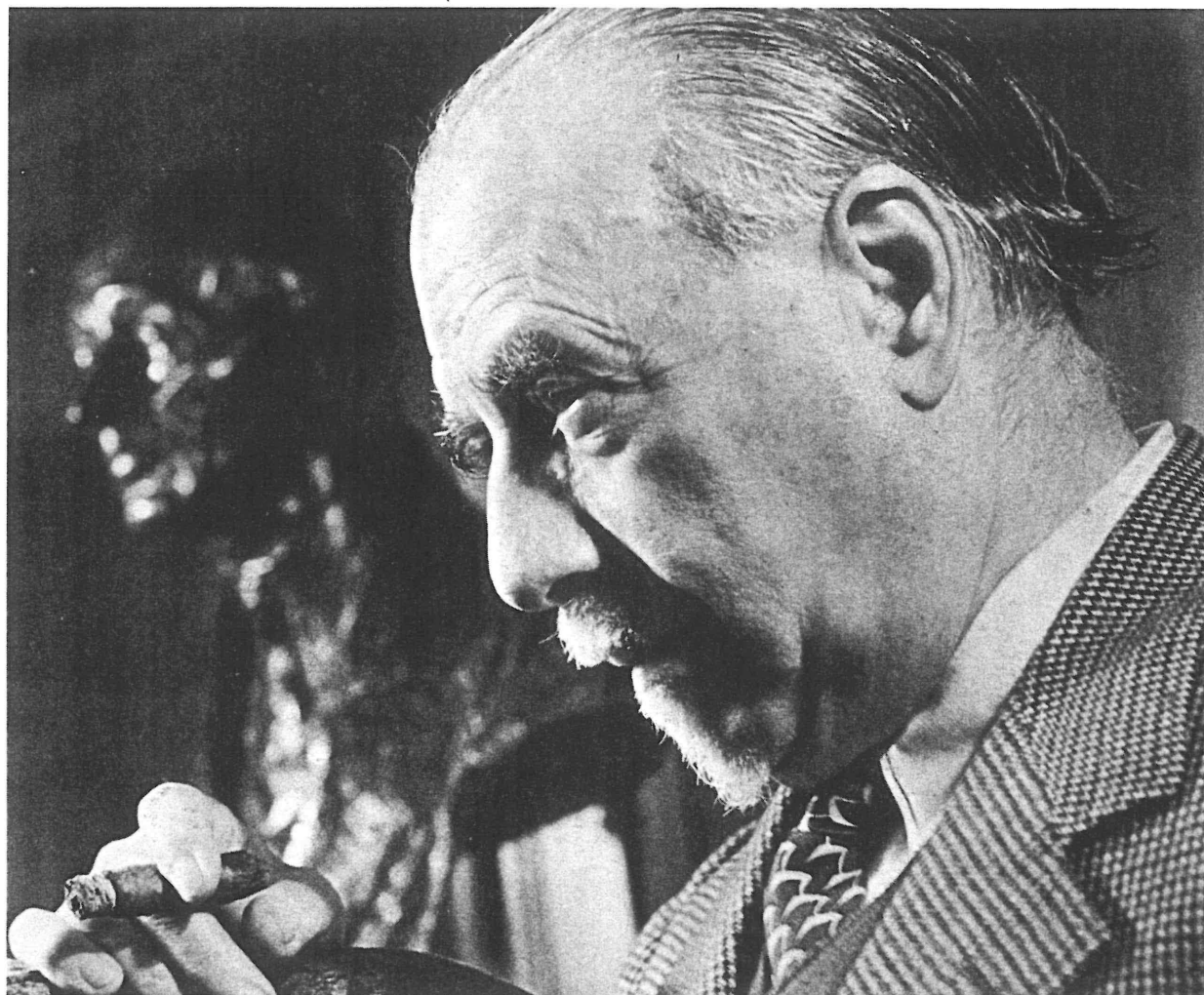


Photo: Derek Allen

As usual Delius goes his own way—an evocative introduction; the folksong from the oboe with woodwind accompaniment; repetitions that call to mind the early English manner of Byrd's "The Woods So Wild" (though doubtless Delius had never heard of it); a beautiful meditation unmindful of the tune but akin to it; more variations in which the reins are loosened in pure rhapsody and finally, after the clamor of the fair, the melting music of the lovers mirrored in Nature. The harmonic and rhythmic changes on the tune ring like varying aspects of the same type of countryside, and Delius was never more English in his feeling for orchestral color than here. Rarely has he used the dry tones of the bass clarinet to more imaginative effect.

From the vast forces including six horns employed in "Brigg Fair," we turn to the later and more intimate music for small orchestra. Next in order of composition is the "Intermezzo" from the opera "Fennimore and Gerda" (1908-10), based on episodes from the life of Niels Lyhne by the Danish writer Jacobsen. This work is dedicated to Sir Thomas Beecham. The "Intermezzo" consists of the interludes linking Niels' soliloquy with the rest of the story. It is harvest time, towards evening. Niels, a young poet, just returned from the fields rests thoughtfully on the farmyard wall. He has been unfaithful with Fennimore, his friend Erik's wife. News has come that Erik has been killed and he is stricken with remorse. Friend and lover gone and his poetry come to naught, Niels looks beyond the fields to the distant fjord calmed in the hope of another spring. The music speaks for itself in regretful ebbings and flowings in

which time is lost in memories, a quickening of the pulse in a moment of passionate repining, and the heart is stilled in the promise of the Earth.

"Summer Night on the River" (1911) is unique in all Delius' music in the power of its sense of depicting as well as evoking the spirit of the scene. Moments, too, in the Forest Scene in Act III of "Koanga" and in "North Country Sketches" have strong visual suggestiveness, but these are less sustained. Listening to "Summer Night on the River" one can almost see the gnats and dragonflies darting over the waterlilies and the faint white mist hovering over the willow-tressed banks and overhanging trees. Many a night at Grez-sur-Loing have I lolled over the oars silent with Delius lost in that music. No orchestral work by Delius demands such deep insight and sensitive skill in performance as this. The balance and shading of woodwind timbers in this musical chiaroscuro is imperative to a visionary interpretation of the score.

"On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring" (1912) and "A Song Before Sunrise" (1918) are less exacting. Here the impetus is contained in the chordal flow of many-voiced strings, never turgid but luminous, the woodwind adding their arabesques or pointing the melodic line, which, the former, is derived from a Norwegian folksong.

In the best of Delius we are made one with Nature. No man has given musical utterance to all her moods, but in the expression of her tranquilities he excelled all others.

Art Direction: Marvin Schwartz

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MUSIC OF DELIUS, ALBUM 2 / FLORIDA SUITE

Since Frederick Delius died in 1934 there has been little or no research into his music. But during this period, as during the last quarter-century of the composer's own lifetime, its fate largely depended on one man, the late Sir Thomas Beecham. For half-a-century Sir Thomas was not only its incomparable interpreter but also its virtual guardian, and it is thanks to him that the two early works included on this record were finally published.

The first of these, the *Florida Suite*, has an interesting history. In March 1884, the twenty-two year-old Frederick Delius left England for Florida, more to escape the family wool business in Bradford than to follow the vocation of orange-planting. Until the following year he lived on the Solano Grove plantation "absorbing, translating" the sights and sounds of nature and of the Negroes. Then, leaving the plantation to the care of a brother who put in a timely appearance, Delius taught and played the violin in Jacksonville and in Danville, Virginia; he then stayed in New York until June 1886, after which he returned to Europe. In August 1886, he was installed as a music student at Leipzig. The score of the *Florida Suite* was finished at the beginning of 1888 and revised in 1890, so that it is among his earliest compositions, certainly the first of his orchestral works which he heard performed. The circumstances of its premiere were not only unusual but also had a decisive influence on his career as a composer.

At Leipzig, Delius became a friend of Christian Sinding. Through him, in 1888, he met there Sinding's compatriot Grieg. The friendship which began between the senior Norwegian composer and the young Englishman lasted for nearly twenty years, and was ended only by Grieg's death in 1907.

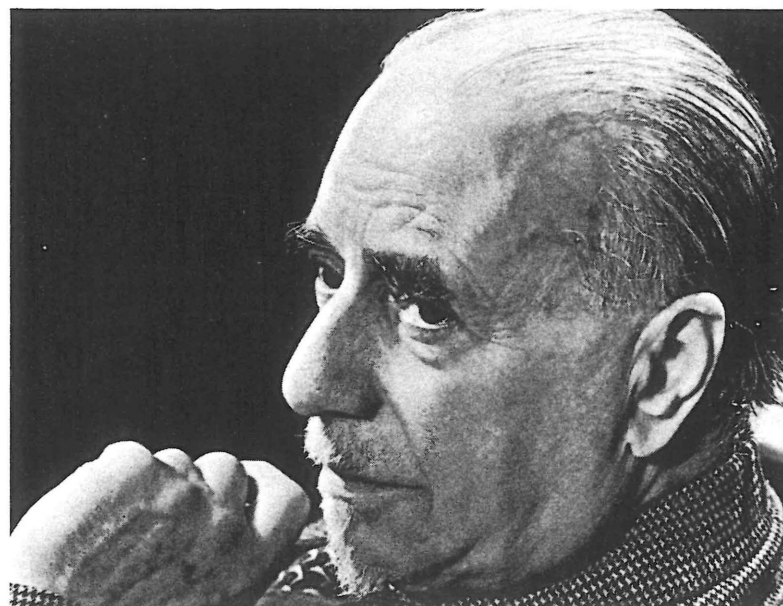
According to Delius' sister Clare, Grieg arranged a party to which Delius, Halvorsen and Sinding were invited. "They were each to bring a composition with them which was to be performed after the supper. The supper, however, was too good, and neither the musicians who were to perform nor the musicians who were to criticize were in a fit state to play their respective parts. A few months later, however, Grieg was to hear one of Fred's compositions performed under conditions almost as bizarre as the unsuccessful performance. In the first part of his student days Fred had composed a suite for orchestra to which he gave the title 'Florida.' By raising the wind he managed to purchase a barrel of beer. In return for the contents of the barrel an orchestra of sixty performers offered their services. The performance took place in the beer hall of one of the big restaurants in Leipzig. Hans Sitt, who, besides being his instructor at the Conservatorium, had given him lessons in the violin while he was studying the woolen trade at Chemnitz in Saxony, conducted. Grieg... was confirmed in his belief that Fred, given the chance, would go far as a composer. That opinion stood my brother in good stead almost immediately afterwards."

When parental patience had been exhausted and Frederick Delius had been ordered back by his father to Bradford and the family wool business, it was Grieg who, dining Delius *père* at the old Hotel Metropole in London, successfully persuaded him that his son should be allowed to follow his musical inclinations, presumably basing his advice on his high opinion of "Florida." It was soon after this that the emancipated Delius went to live in France, which became his home until he died.

So much for the early history of this Suite, Delius' first orchestral work, inspired by memories of his sojourn in Florida. It waited

Dance Rhapsody No. 2 / Over the Hills and Far Away

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM
 conducting the
 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra



SIDE ONE
Florida Suite
 (REVISED AND EDITED BY SIR THOMAS BEECHAM)
 (27:25)
 I. Daybreak — Dance
 (9:43)
 II. By the River
 (10:27)
 III. Sunset — Near the Plantation
 (7:05)

SIDE TWO
Florida Suite
 (CONCLUSION)
 IV. At Night
 (8:10)
Dance Rhapsody No. 2
 (7:40)
Over the Hills and Far Away
 (EDITED BY BEECHAM)
 (12:50)

long for its second performance, and even then one movement was not given. When Sir Thomas Beecham conducted the *Florida Suite* in the Royal Philharmonic Society's Coronation Concert on April 1st, 1937, the Prelude to Delius' opera *Irmelin* (1890-2) was substituted for its second movement. At that time it seemed improbable that the opera would ever be published or performed, and the Prelude was issued separately. In 1953, however, *Irmelin* was both printed and staged, and so Sir Thomas has now restored Delius' original second movement to the *Florida Suite*.

The score, described as "Tropical Scenes for Orchestra," bears the inscription "Dedicated to the People of Florida." Two of its six component sections are linked together in pairs, making up the following four movements:

1. Daybreak — Dance
2. By the River
3. Sunset — Near the Plantation
4. At Night

It will be seen that Delius' Suite depicts a day in Florida from dawn 'til nightfall. The work is frankly pictorial in the manner of Grieg, yet some of its melodic and harmonic formulae as well as an evident sense of orchestral color herald the more mature Delius.

1. An oboe solo emerges, as if in relief against a distant horizon. Its last segment is heard again in three different tonalities before the whole melody is repeated. With the rising sun the scene gradually awakens to life and provides a background to the Dance. This proves to be the first version of "La Calinda," which Delius later adapted for his opera *Koanga* (1895-7). Yet a third arrangement of it has become popular as a separate piece.

2. Rippling flutes in a characteristic twelve-eight time introduce a violin melody as meandering as the Mississippi. A middle section presents a viola tune to harp accompaniment soon taken up by all the strings in unison. An extension of the initial tune leads to a recapitulation of the opening.

3. Delius' "Sunset," like Grieg's "Morning," is almost monothematic. The big tune heard at the beginning is modified, extended and repeated in sequence through several keys. "Near the Plantation" is another Negro dance, in two-four time like "La Calinda." Starting gently, it becomes more animated and rises to a strong climax subsiding into the "Sunset" music and a quiet ending.

4. The oboe melody of "Daybreak" returns to introduce "Night." It is followed by a long theme for the horn quartet. This, in its turn, introduces surging melodies for the strings

which flow on until horn chords and *pizzicato* strings dissolve into silence the first of Delius' orchestral nocturnes.

The *Second Dance Rhapsody* is a late work, composed in 1916 but not performed until 1923, when Sir Henry Wood first gave it on the last night of that year's Promenade Concerts. The dedication is to Norman O'Neill, a close friend of Delius from 1907.

In its predecessor, the *First Dance Rhapsody* (1908), Delius had used the variation form in which *Appalachia* (1902) and *Brigg Fair* (1907) had already been successfully cast. The *Second Dance Rhapsody* is somewhat closer-knit in form. An eight-bar theme in mazurka time, first played by the flute, is developed, but not as a complete phrase. Delius treats its constituent segments separately, interrupting this development at intervals by a brisk, rhythmic phrase in chords at a quicker pace. A repetition of the main theme, entire and in its original key, leads to a middle section. This is based on a four-bar tune hovering closely around its starting note and first sung by the oboe. The tune mounts higher and higher in sequence, accompanied by downward plashings on celesta and harp. On a slackening of tempo, the brisk, chordal phrase breaks in, followed by a brief recapitulation of the mazurka. After a powerful climax, this wanes to a strange calm before the final chord.

Various entitled *Fantasia*, *Fantasy-Overture* or *Tone-Poem*, Delius' *Over the Hills and Far Away*, although ascribed by Max Chop in his early monograph on the composer to 1893, and by Philip Heseltine to 1895, was actually sketched in 1895 and completed in September 1897, and first performed two months later at a concert in Elberfeld, under Dr. Hans Haym. It was also included in the all-Delius concert conducted by Alfred Hertz in London, in May 1899.

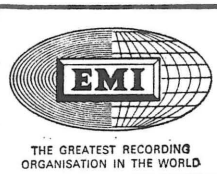
According to its first commentator, the piece is inspired "by contemplation of the moors and uplands of the composer's native Yorkshire, an impression of open country." In this it anticipates the later *A Song of the High Hills* (1911-12). The music, however, is hardly impressionistic; the form is unusually clear-cut for Delius. And yet, at Elberfeld, where the audience was certainly familiar with the earlier tone-poems of Richard Strauss, "protests were made against the inclusion in the Society's programmes of a work so 'revolutionary' in nature," and "the work offended sundry members of the Town Council—who, it is said, threatened to dismiss Dr. Haym from his position if he repeated the offence."

Over the Hills and Far Away has a distinct formal symmetry of seven sections arranged thus ABCDCAB. A, the opening section, *andante molto tranquillo*, sets a mountain mood with its rising theme for strings, answering horn motif and the expressive chromatic passage which follows. B is a vigorous *allegro ma non troppo* enclosed by the horn motif. C is a short, episodic *a tempo moderato* in a swaying rhythm. This leads to D, the central *lento molto tranquillo*. Its melody passes from woodwind to strings and back before being developed *vivo con vigore* to a climax which subsides into a recapitulation of the previous sections in the different order noted above: CAB, with the melody of D, the *lento* rhythmically altered from triple to common time, furnishing B, the final *allegro ma non troppo*, with its peroration.

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Recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust
 Art Direction: Marvin Schwartz/Design: Tri-Arts





THE BEECHAM LEGACY • VOL. 9

HQM 1165


Photo: Houston Rogers

Apart from a vast survey of Delius and much Handel, Sir Thomas Beecham's recorded output of British music is sparse. Considering the attention he gave it in the concert room and the length of his discography, this is difficult to understand. Fashion, which haunts all art and dictates its presentation, could explain this in part. Also, before the First World War, when orchestral recording was inadequate, the desire to free programmes from Teutonic emphasis led to a wave of endeavour on behalf of many national works of doubtful quality. The phase passed, recording processes improved, and the whole canvas of international music lay open for presentation in recorded form—thus many items from those early days were lost.

Sir Thomas' predilection for certain members of his composing compatriots of this time remained constant—Bantock, Bax and of course Delius, Holbrooke, Ethel Smyth and Vaughan Williams. He expressed one golden afternoon his desire to record some of this music and showed a marked penchant to include operas from the Gilbert and Sullivan canon. He suggested that long after music by Elgar—"dear chap, never forgave me for cutting his First Symphony"—Parry, Stanford and some contemporary figures had passed into neglect Gilbert and Sullivan would stand as the most remarkable and truly representative legacy in British musical culture. Food for thought indeed!

Bantock's *Fine at the Fair* (1902) appeared in Sir Thomas' programmes throughout the years. Inspired by Robert Browning's poem, this orchestral drama muses upon man's inconstancy dictated by a resistless love of things beautiful. Our hero swims in the sea of life ("Amphibian"—Prologue; strings) the constant love of his wife, Elvire (whose motive is heard here) seeming like the waves of the sea to engulf him. *Fine*, alluring and vivacious, flutters like a butterfly above the ocean. Suddenly we are cast into the revelry of the Fair (The World—a reference is made to "Carnival of Venice") where the hero meets *Fine* who captivates him with her dancing (clarinet and cello). Eventually the temptress seduces our hero (a clarinet cadenza of extreme length) and Elvire departs heartbroken. The man's struggle and dilemma is shown by the discussion of the two motives associated with the female protagonists. Alone and unhappy, the hero yens for the love of his wife (Epilogue) and Elvire returns with forgiveness. Presented at Birmingham where Bantock was Principal of the Music School of the Midland Institute in 1912, Beecham introduced the work to Royal Philharmonic Society audiences in November, 1917. This present performance was the first and only recording.

Sir Thomas was undoubtedly misunderstood over the years by some of the composing faculty—"often somewhat unintelligent and ignorant fellows"—and poor old Arnold Bax took strong exception to Beecham's superb dismissal after a lengthy and ill-chosen programme of British music he consented to direct after much persuasion during the First World War, "Well, I think we have successfully paved the way this afternoon for another quarter of a century of German music!" About this time and later Beecham

BANTOCK-Fine at the Fair BAX-The Garden of Fand DELIUS-Dance Rhapsody No. 1

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, Bart. C.H.
ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Side One:

Bantock (1868-1946): FINE AT THE FAIR
(Clarinet cadenza: Jack Brymer)

Solo Viola: Albert Cazyer

Recorded under the auspices of the British Council, in July 1949.

Side Two:

Band 1—Bax (1883-1953): THE GARDEN OF FAND

Recorded under the auspices of the British Council, in Dec. 1947.

Band 2—Delius (1862-1934) DANCE RHAPSODY No. 1

Recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust, in Oct. 1952.

was responsible for introducing several works by Bax—*Into the Twilight*, *The Tale the Pine Trees Knew*, *In the Fairy Hills* and the Fifth Symphony. *The Garden of Fand* (1913-1916) was premiered by Frederick Stock and his Chicago Symphony Orchestra in October, 1920. It appeared two months later in London when Adrian Boult gave it at the Kingsway Hall, and was taken up by Coates, Goossens, Godfrey, Hartly and Beecham, who presented it at the Exposition Internationale at Brussels, 1935. It is based on the saga "The sick-bed of Cuchulain", champion of the heroes of Irish mythology, who sets sail upon an enchanted Atlantic lured from the mortal world by Fand, daughter of Manannan, god of the ocean. The ship is cast upon Fand's Island whose garden is the sea. After much revelry the goddess sings her songs of love which ensnare the hearts of all who hear them. A mighty wave overwhelms the Island, casting the mortals unto the depths. The sun sets, the sea is becalmed and the enchanted picture fades from sight. The dance section reveals Bax as a master of orchestration and the music of Fand's song must rank as one of the most richly evocative melodies in the literature of British music. Certain pencilled cuts marked in the short score at Cork, Ireland, were not detailed in the published edition. Beecham's was the first recording of the work.

"How the piece ever came to be played at all in a sacred edifice remains a mystery to this day; nothing except possibly the anarchic operations of a swing band would have been less appropriate". Thus Sir Thomas in his autobiography "*A Mingled Chime*" (Hutchinson & Co., London, 1944) commences his relation of the first performance at Hereford Cathedral in 1909 of the First Dance Rhapsody (1908) of Delius. He continues, "Then the composer chose to incorporate into his score an important part for an instrument which, like Lucy, there were few to praise and very few to love, the bass oboe. As if these two errors of judgment were not enough, he must needs be persuaded into accepting the services of a young lady of semi-amateur status who had volunteered at short notice to see what she could do with it. . . . The public . . . was confounded by the frequent audition of noises that resembled nothing so much as the painful endeavour of an anguished mother-duck to effect the speedy evacuation of an abnormally large-sized egg. Had the composer-conductor not been a figure of renown, of middle age, and of outward sobriety, I have often shuddered to think what might have happened".

This enchanting work is a remarkable essay in harmonic invention cast as a set of variations prefaced by some quiet pages. The oboe announces the main dance theme which pervades the entire work. The climax—a serene moment for solo violin supported by divided strings—leads to a coda in which the principal subject drives the Rhapsody to a blazing conclusion.

Once when thanking Sir Thomas for bringing us music worthy of hearing and presented in matchless performances he reacted with some distress; he loathed flattery in any vein but his emotion, as soon became clear, was dictated by the knowledge that with him would pass concern and interest in many musical personalities. The present record atones a little, perhaps, for those never realized dreams of a halcyon summer afternoon. Bantock

and Bax are here—and his beloved Delius. What a pity we could not have had some more.

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The Beecham Legacy

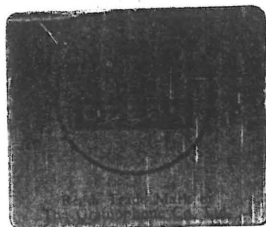
conducted by SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, Bart., C.H.

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DELIUS

SEA DRIFT Bruce Boyce, *Baritone*

HASSAN Leslie Fry, *Baritone*; Arthur Leavins, *Violin*;
Frederick Riddle, *Viola*

THE B.C.C. CHORUS

Leslie Woodgate, *Chorus Master*

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

conducted by SIR THOMAS BEECHAM

Recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust

Side One

Delius/Whitman : Sea Drift

Side Two

Delius/Flecker : Hassan (Incidental Music)

Introduction - Serenade (violin solo) - Short interlude - Un-accompanied chorus behind scene - The Beggars of Bagdad (solo Baritone and male chorus) - Chorus of Women - Prelude to Act III (female voices behind scene) - Chorus of soldiers - The Procession of Protracted Death - Serenade (viola solo) - Closing scene: The Golden Road to Samarkand.

Sir Neville Cardus has written: "Delius put some of his finest conceptions into the forms of vocal music: his opera 'The Village Romeo and Juliet'; the 'Mass of Life'; 'Sea-Drift'; and 'Appalachia'."

Sea Drift composed in 1903, uses the poem by Walt Whitman which begins: "Out of the cradle endlessly rocking." Delius, however, clips from it the first and final sections, which are philosophic statements, and sets only the middle lines, a reminiscence concerning two birds the speaker saw when a boy, how they kept together until one failed to return, and how the other mourned.

It is one of Whitman's most admired poems; Gay Wilson Allen calls it "probably the next to the best poem he ever wrote" and Swinburne admired this poem greatly.

The choice of texts is very right for the composer. Hutchings writes: "The lines should be quoted to show what a perfect choice this writing was for Delius' music; its recapitulation of imagery, its echoing and rocking to and fro of single words and phrases, are almost a musical technique . . . This tireless apostrophising and recalling, hardly found in English-writing poets except Whitman, shows the use for deliberate effect of a method which has hitherto been a necessity to musicians . . . Nothing but emotional recapitulation could have imbued Delius' ending with the mixture of remembrance, despair and resignation to the words 'O past! O happy life!'"

Whitman experts are undecided as to which of several possible incidents in his life might have given rise to this despairing poem. On the side of Delius, there is no bereavement, no personal loss through death to point to, unless, however unlikely, it could be that of his father, who died October 3, 1901.

Sea Drift (Whitman)

Chor. Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this seashore in some briers,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,

Solo. And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Chor. Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together.
Two together!

*Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,*

Solo. Home, or rivers and mountains from home,

Chor. Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

Solo. Till of a sudden,
Maybe kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appear'd again.
And thence forward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea.
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

Chor. Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
I wait and wait till you blow my mate to me.

Solo. Yes, when the stars glisten'd,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.
He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.
Yes my brother I know,
The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights after
their sorts.

The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long.
Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you my brother.

Chor. Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me.
Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

Solo. O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love.
O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?
Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!
High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love.

Chor. O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.
O throat! O trembling throat!
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.

Solo. Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!
O reckless despairing carols.
But soft! sink low!
Soft! let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment you husky-nois'd sea.
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.
Hither my love!
Here I am! here!
With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you,
This gentle call is for you my love, for you.

Chor. Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the shadows of leaves.
O darkness! O in vain!

Solo. O I am very sick and sorrowful.
O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.
O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.

Hassan was the first work that Delius, because of his illness, was forced to dictate rather than pen himself. It was dictated to his wife—this was before Mr. Fenby began his heroic services—while he still retained some sight and, Fenby added, "could therefore correct the score, even though he could not do it with his own hand."

The music was composed three years before the production of the play in London, in the season of 1923-24. The London performances were followed by performances in New York, at the old Knickerbocker Theatre, in September, 1924.

James Elroy Flecker was one of a group of English poets lumped together as "war poets" and is reported to have belonged in the group of Rupert Brooke. Like Brooke, he died in the war, but he died in the Near East, where he was in the British consular service, and of consumption. It was from the Near East that more than one of his poetic subjects were taken.

The story of *Hassan*, briefly, concerns a poor confectioner of Bagdad, Hassan, and his short career as advisor to the Caliph. In the opening act Hassan has an amorous misadventure which leaves him distraught. He is lying on the ground stunned with grief and frustration when the Caliph and his party come on the scene. The Caliph is seeking sport and gains entry to a hide-out of Bagdad beggars by disguising himself as a merchant from Basara. With him are his executioner and his minstrel, Ishak. The Caliph and his headsman are hoisted in a basket into this stronghold by Ishak, who, seeing a chance for a night's freedom from his master, substitutes the inert body of Hassan in the basket when it returns for him.

When the Caliph realizes he is the captive of Rafi, king of the beggars who are planning an imminent revolution, it is Hassan who devises a way to slip a parchment through to the Caliph's police and save them. Ishak, the irresponsible minstrel, is apprehended and doomed but versifies his way out of it.

Hassan is made the Caliph's advisor but is in trouble almost at once for criticism of the royal bloodthirstiness. Rafi is brought before the Caliph for trial and is steadfast until his beloved, Pervaneh, is brought in and her life is also threatened. The Caliph offers Rafi his freedom if Pervaneh, who is surpassingly beautiful, will become his wife. He gives the lovers a choice: both shall live, she as his harem wife and Rafi banished forever, or, after one day together, they shall both be put to death. They choose to die.

When they are, indeed, put to death, Hassan reviles the Caliph and loses his position of favour. Disgusted, he lends a willing ear to Ishak's suggestion that they join "the great summer caravan to the cities of the Far Northeast, divine Bokhara and happy Samarkand. It is a desert path as yellow as the bright seashore: therefore the Pilgrims call it the Golden Journey."

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Sir John Barbirolli

IRELAND: *A London Overture*

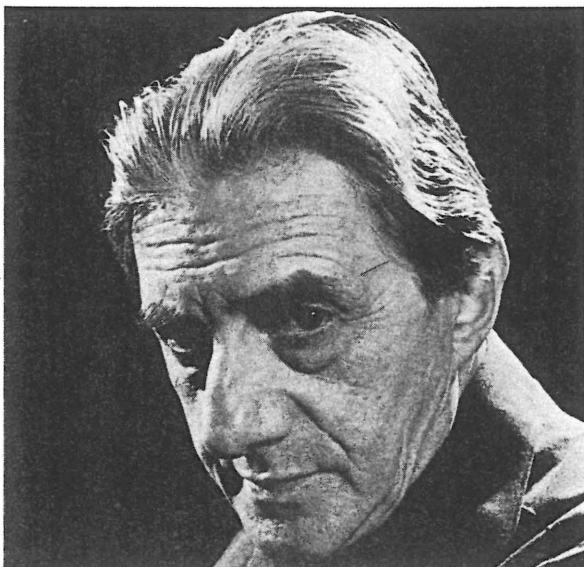
BAX: *Tintagel*

DELIUS: *The Walk to the Paradise Garden*

DELIUS: *Prelude to Irmelin*

DELIUS: *A Song of Summer*

London Symphony Orchestra



David Farrell

SIDE ONE [27:19]

Ireland: *A London Overture* band 1 [12:15]

John Ireland (1879-1962) was one of the most gifted composers of the English "Renaissance" though he followed a path of his own and owed little to either of the two major influences, Elgar and Vaughan Williams. A pupil of Stanford at the Royal College of Music (where he was subsequently for many years professor of composition), he was at first a disciple of Brahms, from whom he learned mastery of musical form and structure; but close study of Debussy, Ravel, and Stravinsky gave him a sense of clarity and economy, as well as rhythmic incisiveness and harmonic flavor. He thus developed a highly personal style, and for the rest of his life he pursued his own ideal with uncompromising integrity.

Ireland wrote much music in many forms, his pieces for piano solo being particularly notable. With the orchestra he was, as in all else, the poet-craftsman, never flamboyant or spectacular, yet always one who matched means to ends with unfailing skill and aptitude. *A London Overture* is one of his most engaging works. It was composed in 1936, and made use of material previously employed in *A Comedy Overture*, commissioned for the Crystal Palace Brass Band Contest in 1934. Though he had a deep feeling for the English pastoral tradition and was strongly attracted to the Channel Islands which inspired some of his best piano music, Ireland had an enduring love for London where he lived for most of his life. The *London Overture*, which he regarded as a sequel to his

London Pieces for piano, owes something to Elgar's *Cockaigne* in its contrasting moods of gay extroversion and brooding melancholy. It opens with a slow introduction, *Andante moderato*, which persists through varying textures until the main section takes off, *Allegro brioso*, with a perky theme suggested by a bus conductor's cry of "'Dilly: Piccadilly!'" There is also a hint of an old London song about church bells. The continuation brings a further reflective theme and a delicate oboe solo; and then the opening material is again alluded to, first quietly then with ferocity. A personal note intervenes when a solo horn over wind and muted strings intones an elegy for the death of a friend. But gaiety and vigorous tunefulness soon return and the overture moves to its ebullient conclusion with much ingenuity and resourcefulness.

Bax: *Tintagel* band 2 [15:04]

Arnold Bax (1883-1953) confessed himself "a brazen romantic," yet his romanticism was as much intellectual as purely emotional, and though his music is full of personal feeling he was not an emotionally self-indulgent composer. Unlike Ireland, his imagination was often flamboyant and his technique spectacular. He would set himself tasks of formidable difficulty, and invariably solved them with quite remarkable brilliance — so much so that quite early in his life he found it necessary to place a severe curb upon his natural virtuosity lest his music become altogether too complex.

In orchestral music Bax began with symphonic poems, the first of which, *In the Faery Hills* (1909), to gain recognition was based upon W. B. Yeats's "The Wanderings of Usheen," the poem which he had first read at the age of nineteen, when, as he himself put it, "the Celt within me stood revealed." He was not Irish by birth, but his association with the "Celtic Twilight" caused some people to think that he was. For a number of years he concentrated on symphonic poems before turning to full orchestral symphonies, of which he composed seven in all, and *Tintagel*, written in 1917, is one of the most successful and popular of the series. In a note prefacing the score Bax disclaims a definite program but says he wished to "evoke a tone-picture of the castle-crowned cliff of Tintagel, and more particularly the wide distances of the Atlantic as seen from the cliffs of Cornwall on a sunny but not windless summer day." The more tumultuous middle section brings to mind the legendary associations of the place, "especially those connected with King Arthur, King Mark, and Tristram and Isolde." Towards the end of this section there is a reference to the music of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. The whole piece is a masterful translation into music of impression and emotion, both subjective and objective.

SIDE TWO [26:55]

Delius: *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* band 1 [9:44]

Though Delius was born in Bradford, Yorkshire, his family was not of English descent; and he lived most of his life in France, in a house by the river at Grez-sur-Loing. Yet the spirit of his most characteristic music is unmistakably English, in the true line of the English nature poets; and it remains so even when he is dealing outwardly with a foreign landscape — *Appalachia* (America), or *A Song of the High Hills* (Norway) — or with a foreign subject, as is his best known opera, *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, based upon a story from Gottfried Keller's "People of Seldwyla." Delius was essentially a contemplative and not a dramatic composer, and in general his operas have not held a place upon the stage, though this one has proved an occasional exception. It has a largely static plot and is very romantic, having some affinity in type with Wagner's *Tristan*, yet quite unlike that masterpiece in its music. The best known excerpt, the

orchestral Intermezzo entitled *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* was actually written five years after the opera itself, though it used material from the main source, and is one of Delius's most perfect and beautiful tone poems, absolutely characteristic in its tender, contemplative beauty and in the interaction of melody and harmony.

Delius: *Prelude to Irmelin* band 2 [5:48]

Irmelin was the earliest of Delius's operas, composed in 1890-92, and is unpublished, though Sir Thomas Beecham produced it at Oxford in 1953. Its music in general is still hardly known, yet the Prelude is another of Delius's uniquely evocative tone pieces and is much played. It is musically built upon the figure heard at the outset from solo woodwind, beginning with the flute.

Delius: *A Song of Summer* band 3 [11:23]

At the end of his life Delius became blind and paralyzed, and his last works had to be dictated to his loyal friend and amanuensis Eric Fenby. *A Song of Summer* was one of these. When Fenby arrived at Grez-sur-Loing he was told to look through unused material, and it is likely that it originated from this source. What is astonishing is that this music, written under such arduous conditions, a few bars at a time, shows no diminution of creative power or lack of structural grasp. *A Song of Summer* is a quiet piece, of great tenderness and serenity, the natural flow more equitable than ever as though at the end of his days Delius was content to reflect without question upon the beauty he could no longer see but preserved in his artistic inner perception, and that ripeness for him had indeed become all, mellow acceptance in everything.

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DELIUS

Sir John Barbirolli
conducting
The Halle Orchestra



Side One

IDYLL: "I Once Passed Through a Populous City"
Sylvia Fisher, *soprano* — Jess Walters, *baritone*

Side Two

1. PRELUDE TO "IRMELIN"
2. ON HEARING THE FIRST CUCKOO
IN SPRING
3. INTERMEZZO from "FENNIMORE AND
GERDA"
4. THE WALK TO PARADISE GARDEN
from "A Village Romeo and Juliet"

Delius wrote six operas, although Foss mentions a mysterious seventh, and this record, with the exception of *On Hearing The First Cuckoo In Spring* contains music drawn from four of them. During his lifetime, three of the works, *Village Romeo and Juliet*, *Koanga* and *Fennimore and Gerda* reached the stage, while his earliest opera, *Irmelin*, was not produced until 1953.

As we learn from Eric Fenby's "Delius as I knew him", the composer in his old age decided to re-examine some of his earlier output. The young assistant played through the neglected scores of both *Irmelin* and *Margot-la-Rouge*, and from them the short prelude *Irmelin* and the *Idyll* for soprano, baritone and orchestra were dictated and composed.

Margot-la-Rouge, Fenby notes, appeared in 1902, and this one act opera immediately preceded *Appalachia*, *Sea-Drift* and *A Mass of Life*. Delius had written the opera for a publisher's competition, but the libretto provided for him written by a Mme. Rosenval was never to his taste. It was a tale of sordid passion and murder in Paris, and when he re-heard the music from Fenby at the piano, it was decided to salvage for re-use as much material as possible.

Robert Nichols, a poet and friend of Delius was asked for a new story, but instead made a selection from Walt Whitman whose works had already been used by Delius in *Sea-Drift* and the late *Songs of Farewell*.

The *Idyll* was completed in 1932, two years before the composer's death, and was first heard at a Promenade Concert under Sir Henry Wood in October 1933. Delius and Fenby decided to retain the original prelude from *Margot-la-Rouge* to open the new piece, and following this evocative beginning, the baritone enters with these lines:

*Once I passed through a populous city,
Imprinting my brain with all its shows.
Of that city I remember only a woman,
A woman I casually met,
Who detained me for love of me.
Day by day and night by night we were together
all else has been forgotten by me.
Again we wander, we love, we separate,
Again she holds me by the hand, I must not go.*

Day by day and night by night together!
and the soprano echoes:
Day by day, night by night we were together,
he interjects:
I here her whisper,
as she resumes:

*I love you, before long I die.
I have waited long merely to look on you,
For once I could not die till I had once looked on
you.*

and now in duet as the music reaches its climax:

*O to speed where there is space enough and air
enough at last!
We are two hawks, we soar above and look down.
What is all else to us, who have voided all but
freedom and all but our own joy?*

*They are not long, the days of wine and roses,
A darker more presaging mood now develops:*

*Face so pale with wondrous eyes, gather closer
yet, closer yet,
Perfume therefore my chant, O love, immortal love.
Make me a fountain
That I exhale love wherever I go.*

The closing moments remind one again of the uniqueness of Delius' poignant vision, with the baritone:

*Sweet are the blooming cheeks of the living.
Sweet are the musical voices sounding,
But sweet, ah, sweet are the dead
With their silent eyes.*

and the soprano:

I ascend, I float to the regions of your love, O man.

and in duet, the work closes:

*All is over, and long gone, but
Love is not over.*

Immediately preceding the *Idyll*, Delius and his young assistant had examined his early fairy opera *Irmelin*, and this short prelude was compiled from a few ideas extracted from the three-act work. This tender and lyrical miniature dates from 1930. Before it became known as a short and evocative concert piece, Beecham has used it as an interlude in his 1935 revival of *Koanga*.

A Village Romeo and Juliet, which is usually regarded as Delius' operatic masterpiece was based upon a short novel by Gottfried Keller. It tells of the poignant and hopeless love of a young Swiss couple who flee from parental strife and a world they can no longer face. The *Walk to the Paradise Garden* provides the work with its climax, when in the gardens of a rather seedy riverside inn, (the Paradise Garden) Delius provides this powerfully tender climactic tone-poem. It may be regarded as an orchestral Liebestod for the doomed pair, for its material is all built from earlier material.

Fennimore and Gerda, Delius' last opera was completed in 1910, nine years after *A Village Romeo and Juliet*. Like that work the stage action is unfolded in a series of 'pictures' rather than the usual acts and scenes, and this intermezzo is built from two of the short linking entracts.

Fennimore and Gerda are two women in the life of Niels Lyhne, and their tale is extracted from the very 'modern' Scandinavian novel of Jens Peter Jacobsen. This intermezzo, more affirmative than the *Walk to the Paradise Garden*, suggests the poet Niels gazing into the Northern landscape after he has involved himself in tragedy. The music originally distills his feelings of regret which are ultimately lightened by a realisation that renewal is possible once more with the approach of springtime.

There are no people in the only non-operatic piece on this record, *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, but no one could quarrel with Warlock's assertion that this is the

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epitome of Delius. It was first heard at a Philharmonic concert in 1914 under Mengelberg, and it summarises in Delius' most concise form, his attitude to the orchestra and to life. The chordal opening is fully the composer's own and is then built into a harmonisation of the Norwegian folk-song *Ola dalom* (In Ola valley.) (This had already been used by Grieg in his opus 66, and was clearly meant by Delius as a grateful tribute to a composer who had encouraged him.) Warlock too has provided the finest commentary on this piece by suggesting that it 'portrays the emotions of one for whom spring is not so much a season of riot and exuberance, fresh hopes and renewed vitality, as a vision of sweet and tender loveliness that the heart stands still in contemplation . . . and the old unrest of the soul is put to sleep.'

David Simmons

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*Stereo

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STEREO

**Side One**

26:30

In a Summer Garden

band 1 — 14:55

In the spring of 1908 Delius projected his imagination in a musical impression of his garden at Grez-sur-Loing, the tiny French hamlet where his life's work was done. His reverie induced eventually a masterpiece of orchestral fantasy (for he revised it drastically after the first performance in 1909) — "In a Summer Garden." Delius's house stood on the village street between an old church and a ruined keep, the high stone walls of his garden sloping down beyond the orchard to the river. He must often have longed for the summer change of a landscape swamplike from autumn to spring (his work time), for he would lie fallow in the summer. Then the white courtyard would blaze with myriad flowers, and Nature rim his little world by the great trees at the water's edge. Indoors, apart from works by his friends Gauguin and Munch, all the paintings on the walls revealed colorful studies of the garden in summer mood from the brush of his talented wife, Jelka. But the garden itself was her masterpiece, and the musical imagery it worked in her husband's mind was dedicated fittingly to her.

The texture of "In a Summer Garden," despite the full forces employed, has the quality of chamber music, and suggests with exquisite subtlety the sounds and colors of the scene. It opens quietly in chant-like tones for the wind quintet, echoed in the strings, with a flitting figure from the oboe. To hear this and no more, we are caught up in the composer's dream. Memorize the rhythm of that flitting figure for it, not the opening phrase, is the mainspring of much of the musical action. The development of the salient rhythmic features of this delicate poetry is as masterly as its melodic shaping. For instance, the rhythm at the peak of the flute phrase (following immediately upon the oboe at the beginning of the work) expands in joyous outburst at the first entry of the full orchestra. There is more invention in this man's music than is conceded; it never boasts itself, but mingles naturally in its flow. Delius is rarely given credit for the new type of prose melody he contrived against varying tensions of chromatic harmony. In this work the line is firm, clear and lyrical as in song. A more spacious singing is heard in the middle section from the violas; then as the current of the passing river deepens, horn and trumpet join in turn with the murmuring of the woodwind till the more animated music of the garden reaches rapture. Gradually the exultant mood relaxes, the opening phrase in the strings brings moments of yearning and reluctance, and the vision of the garden fades.

Intermezzo and Serenade from "Hassan"
(arr. Beecham)

(with Robert Tear — Tenor)
band 2 — 5:16

Delius's brilliantly effective incidental music to James Elroy Flecker's "Hassan: The Golden Journey to Samarkand" was written for Basil Dean's production staged at His Majesty's Theatre in 1923. The original

In a Summer Garden

Music of Frederick Delius

Sir John Barbirolli
conducting the Hallé Orchestra



Angel is now [also] releasing an anthology conducted by Sir John Barbirolli under the album title "English Tone Poems" (S-36415) . . . I am glad to welcome this Angel disc. The Walk to the Paradise Garden from Delius' opera A Village Romeo and Juliet shows the composer at his best, the customary gorgeous orchestral tints strengthened for once by a purposeful sense of line. Barbirolli and the London Symphony give it a loving and iridescent performance. The other two Delius pieces included here (Irmelin: Prelude and A Song of Summer), equally redolent of the composer's prevailing state of mental *andante*, have less character, but make good relaxed listening and are splendidly played. [Tintagel by Bax and A London Overture by Ireland] are well served by Barbirolli's affectionate performance.

Bernard Jacobson, *High Fidelity Magazine*

score is for solo wind, harp, percussion and eleven strings, whereas Sir Thomas Beecham's arrangement of the Intermezzo and Serenade employs the normal complement of strings, with the Serenade in the rarely heard version for tenor solo.

A Song Before Sunrise
band 3 — 6:09

"A Song Before Sunrise" for small orchestra (1918) is dedicated to Philip Heseltine whose early advocacy of Delius in England is apt to be forgotten. As in the better known "On Hearing the First Cuckoo in

Spring" for similar forces (1912), the impetus in "A Song Before Sunrise" is contained in the chordal flow of many-voiced strings, never turgid but luminous, the woodwind adding to their arabesques or pointing the melodic line.

Side Two
30:00

La Calinda from "Koanga" (arr. Fenby)
band 1 — 4:26

The dance "La Calinda" first appeared in Delius's orchestral suite "Florida" (1886-7). Later he included it in the score of his third

opera, "Koanga," as a choral dance to enliven the wedding festivities of Koanga and Palmyra. This arrangement, made at the request of the late Ralph Hawkes, the publisher, for a popular piece by Delius, incorporates the vocal parts on orchestral instruments.

On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring
band 2 — 7:24

"On Hearing the First Cuckoo" is more obviously evocative than "A Song Before Sunrise" (with which it is often compared). Its brief introduction in itself is a masterpiece, an epitome of Delius's mature art and, if unfolded imaginatively on the ear, captures in felicitous lyricism his sense of the awakening countryside. But to Delius, musing on the Norwegian folksong on which his music is based, there is also sadness that the spring of life passes all too soon. The cuckoo notes on the clarinet (in the middle section) do not depict, so much as kindle afresh something of that yearly delight which few outgrow.

Summer Night on the River
band 3 — 7:03

The nearest that Delius ever comes to depicting is in "Summer Night on the River," also for small orchestra (1911). Moments in the Forest Scene of Act III of "Koanga" (1897) and "North Country Sketches" (1914) too have strong visual suggestiveness, but these are less sustained. Listening to "Summer Night on the River" one can almost see the gnats and dragonflies darting over the waterlilies, and the faint white mist hovering over willow-tressed banks and overhanging trees. Here Delius's imagination leads him to an orchestral pointillism unique in his output, but saved from mere artifice by its dependence on melody. For this reason "Summer Night on the River" is the most difficult of all Delius's orchestral pieces to realize in performance.

Late Swallows (arr. Fenby)
band 4 — 10:52

When Delius and his wife were forced to flee from France to England during the first World War, the composer put aside his major projects for a time and busied himself with chamber music. The second string quartet (1916-17) dates from this period and, incidentally, contains no material from the rejected string quartet of 1893 as has often been supposed. "When we were away from home" Mrs. Delius told me, "Fred missed the swallows most!" Thus the third movement of the later quartet which Delius called "Late Swallows" is a beautiful autumnal soliloquy in sound conjured up by thoughts of the swallows darting to and fro from the eaves of the house and studios at Grez now that they were abandoned to the military authorities. This movement, little-known hitherto owing to neglect of the quartet, suggested itself to an arrangement for string orchestra.

ERIC FENBY, ©1969

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 77-750053



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S-36756

DELIUS APPALACHIA

Variations on an Old Slave Song for Chorus & Orchestra
(ed. & rev. by Beecham) with Alun Jenkins, baritone

BRIGG FAIR

An English Rhapsody

Ambrosian Singers & Hallé Orchestra

John McCarthy, Chorus Master

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Side One (26:41); Delius: Appalachia (beginning).
Side Two (30:04); Appalachia (conclusion) (band 1, 11:44);
Brigg Fair (band 2, 18:15).

Recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust

The Musical World of Frederick Delius: Magic and Mystery By John Coveney

THE CRITICISM of music (perhaps the better phrase would be "audience acceptance") is at least fifty years behind that of painting. I know of no one whose enjoyment of Renoir is diminished or made impossible because Renoir painted unlike Rembrandt. Yet as long as Beethoven, Mozart, and Brahms are touchstones of evaluation in the concert hall and Verdi, Wagner, and Puccini serve that purpose in the opera house, the music of Delius will occupy a very narrow niche—even, with many people, a vacant one.

Still, the special magic and mystery of Delius's music and the romantic-tragic story of his life have enthralled a sufficient number of people to justify the publication of five biographies in English (and a superb motion picture based on one of them) since his death only 36 years ago. Add to this impressive statistic a sixth biography, written 11 years before the composer's death, and one must deduce that there is a substantial reason for such attention.

Yet any attempt to convey the effect of his music on the receptive listener must almost necessarily be less than satisfactory. After paragraphs "describing" the works of this most poetical of all composers we end, like Monsieur Jourdain, realizing we have been using prose all along. And for those readers who have no knowledge of Delius's music, or whose acquaintance with Delius is limited to his popular *morceaux*, the literalness of words may even hinder further interest. The situation is somewhat reminiscent of tests run on newly-developed translating computers several years ago. As the story goes, the expression "Out of sight, out of mind" was fed into one—and was promptly transformed into another language as "blind and insane."

In the best of Delius's larger works we enter a world of dreaming, fantasy, and idylls. It is essentially a quiet and reflective world, not alien to melancholy; but above all it is a supremely sensuous one, allied to a pantheism that finds its most intense expression in a love, almost a worship, of nature. Just as surely as Schubert's C major Quintet probes the soul, Bach's *Art of Fugue* engages the cerebral listener, and Puccini's operas arouse the emotions, Delius's broad melodic lines and harmonic structures produce not only ravishing sounds but color and fragrance as well. At times a levitating, floating, almost tactile quality seems to give it an existence independent of the score or its performers, in somewhat the same way as a painting exists apart from its creator and its pigments. Perhaps it is this elusiveness that prompted Sir Thomas Beecham (in an interview years ago in the New York *Sun*) to observe that although he could write many pages of scores by Beethoven, Mozart, etc., even Richard Strauss, from memory, he could not do so with even one page of Delius.

Delius was a musical solitary *sui generis*, and had little interest in music other than his own. He is numbered among the handful of composers who are almost entirely undervived and who have had few, if any, followers.* Nowhere in his masterpieces do we find a polarity dependent upon the shattering orchestral *tutti*, ear-splitting *fortissimi*, and hurtling *allegro molto vivace* movements so dear to the virtuosos conductor and upon which the strenuously emotional listener feeds. Instead we experience a tension from different causes, particularly Delius's extraordinarily personal harmonic idiom. One of his most readily identifiable characteristics is the manner in which he concludes so many of his scores, with dying-away cadences that linger to haunt the listener's thoughts long after the piece itself has finished. The muted sorrow in the last bars of *Sea Drift* was written a full five years before the equally unforgettable finale of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*.

In my experience the most pithy summary of what Delius's music can mean to the unprejudiced listener was uttered by a friend, totally blind since four, who is now in his fifties, a sophisticated musician, and an accomplished performer on the French horn. He once told me that he treasures the scores of Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms, Schumann, Richard Strauss, etc., but that only the music of Delius can convey to him some idea of what it must be like to see a glowing sunset.

From The American Guide, May 1970,
reprinted with kind permission of the publisher.

*Irving Kolodin, in his study of the influence of composers on their successors (*The Continuity of Music*, Alfred A. Knopf), omits any reference to Delius.—J.C.



In the annals of art and literature, parental hostility has almost been traditional. Perhaps the most extreme example was Elizabeth Barrett Browning's father who so resented her marriage that not only did he never forgive her, but sent an accounting for her upbringing and education to her husband, including a bill for her mother's accouchement. Although Julius Delius, a very successful wool merchant of Bradford, England, did not quite achieve this exquisitely refined sense of civilized torture, he is nonetheless in history's vanguard of iron-willed fathers determined to thwart the ideals and unrecognized genius of their progeny.

Aghast at the notion of a musician in the family, he sent his son, Frederick, to America in March 1884 to manage 120 acres of orange groves he had acquired in Florida on the St. Johns River, some miles south of Jacksonville. (The little four-room cottage where he lived has been rebuilt and moved to Jacksonville where it now can be seen on the campus of the University.) Delius arrived in Florida with a sense of relief at the prospect of solitude in the midst of a luxuriant natural landscape, following a miserably unhappy turn in his father's Manchester office. In all he lived not quite two years in America, the first eighteen months on the Solano property and in Jacksonville, and the remainder as a music teacher, mostly to the daughters of wealthy tobacco growers, in Danville, Virginia.

It is unfortunate that the image most people have of Delius is the waif-like, ascetic figure in the famous portrait by James Gunn, painted in the last years of his life when he was a blind paralytic. When Delius left for America he was an exuberant, sensitive young man of twenty-two and to settle in Florida, entirely within the temperate zone and surrounded by tropical waters, must have been an extremely exotic experience for one so recently from the manufacturing midlands of England (although he had been to London and on one short visit to Paris). That he became fascinated by the landscape and the music he heard on all sides from the American Negro, and all but forgot his responsibilities to the oranges, is not surprising. Music again became his total preoccupation more than it had ever been, and he started serious studies in harmony and counterpoint with Thomas F. Ward, organist of the Catholic cathedral in Jacksonville.

The years were 1884-86 and the American Civil War had ended only nineteen years before his arrival. The "Reconstruction Era," which was almost as ruinous as the War itself, had officially ended only seven years earlier. In Florida alone there were at least 25,000 Negroes who were either freedmen or first generation descendants. Delius had not yet composed anything beyond a few exercises, nor would he until he returned to Europe. When he died nearly fifty years later he left published works comprising six operas, incidental music for two plays, eight choral works with orchestra, five unaccompanied choral works, six compositions for orchestra and solo voices,

forty-eight songs, ten chamber works, five instrumental concertos, fifteen large orchestral works, five pieces for small orchestra, and eight miscellaneous items plus various piano transcriptions of orchestral works.

An opera, "Koanga," and an orchestral set of variations with chorus and baritone soloist, "Appalachia," are his American musical memoirs. He started "Appalachia" in 1896 ten years after he left America and finished it in 1902. Its earliest drafts included musical allusions to "Dixie" and "Yankee Doodle" which were wisely eliminated later. To anyone hearing the work in its final form, it seems incomprehensible that Delius ever considered such intrusions. In choosing the title Delius acted in much the same way Dvořák did in subtitled his fifth symphony, "From the New World." Appalachia was the name North American Indian tribes gave to the American continent, such as they knew it. In modern times it is also the name of the enormous belt of mountain ranges extending from Newfoundland south by southwest to central Alabama, and more specifically the name of an area of 165,000 square miles from Pittsburgh to Birmingham noted for its beauty, inaccessibility in many places, and poverty.

Delius of course used it in its first and oldest sense, and subtitled his score, "Variations on an old Slave Song, with Final Chorus." In reality, the composition contains two distinct "songs." The theme itself is taken from a Negro hymn, "No Trouble in that Land Where I'm Bound." The other, a tragic song, "Oh, Honey, I am Going Down the River in the Morning," is introduced in its entirety as a *finale*, and was taught to Delius by his Solano overseer, Elbert Anderson. After an introduction of 99 bars, suggestive of daybreak over streams, rivers and woods, the theme itself is announced in bar 100 by the English horn. Listeners hearing it for the first time may be startled by its resemblance to the opening measures of Verdi's Rigoletto Quartet. Seven groups of variations follow. They are very free and linked without breaks. The theme or a variant is easily discerned at the beginning of each, and the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth groups finish with short, wordless passages by the tenors and basses of the chorus.

For the technically interested, the groups start as follows: No. 1, bar 115, *Moderato sempre* the clarinets and bassoons in variations of suspicious cheerfulness; No. 2, bar 143 *Moderato* the cellos begin a section of pastoral peace; No. 3, bar 261 *Giacoso* again the cellos but this time aggressive in a sort of awkward 4/4 dance; No. 4, bar 314 *Lento molto tranquillo* the horns introduce a passage of extreme but mysterious calm; No. 5, bar 375 *Andante con grazia* the strings play a graceful waltz variation in 6/8; No. 6, bar 416 *Lento* flutes, oboes, and clarinets introduce a passage of reflective tranquility; No. 7, bar 453 *Allegro con moto* a tumultuous outburst for the whole orchestra subsiding into an atmosphere of mystery and foreboding.

A sense of melancholy coupled with a pervasive pantheism is felt throughout the variations, and the attempts at gaiety have a sort of sadness and a purposeful naivete. The *finale* begins in bar 517 and concludes the work in bar 654. It is marked *Marcia, Molto lento maestoso*, and is more like a dirge than a march, forecasting the desolation of the conclusion. The full chorus finally enters unaccompanied:

After night has gone comes the day;
The dark shadows will fade away,
T'wards the morning lift a voice,
Let the scented woods rejoice,
And echoes swell across the mighty stream.

A short interlude follows, and the baritone with chorus finishes the song:

O Honey, I am going down the river in the morning,
Heigh ho! heigh ho! down the mighty river.
O Honey I'll be gone
When next the whippoorwill's a-calling,
And don't you be too lonesome,
And don't you fret and cry,
For the dawn will soon be breaking,
The radiant morn is nigh;
And you'll find me ever awaiting,
Heigh ho! heigh ho!
T'wards the morning lift a voice,
Let the scented woods rejoice,
And echoes swell across the mighty stream.

The music swells to a climax and then in typical Delian fashion hauntingly fades away. It is a song of separation and heartbreak. The river of course is the Mississippi, one of the great symbols of suffering to the American Negro, and "going down" was to be sold. The closing orchestral coda leaves no doubt that the parted lovers will never see each other again.

"Brigg Fair," like "Appalachia," is scored for a large orchestra. For it, Delius specified 68 strings (16-16-12-12-12), 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 1 English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 6 horns, 3 trombones, 3 tenor trombones, bass tuba, harp, 3 timpani, and percussion, including tubular bells, for a grand total of 98 players. Yet in many sections of the work, the impression is of a smaller orchestra, somewhat in the same fashion as Ravel's deceptively large instrumentation for his "Mother Goose."

Also like "Appalachia," it is a set of 17 variations in four sections connected by transitional passages, and concluding with a coda. However the treatment of the variations is so free that the music is perhaps more enjoyed in the form mentioned in its subtitle, "An English Rhapsody."

The melody from which the theme was taken was brought to Delius' attention by his friend Percy Grainger in 1907, and the score was subsequently dedicated to him. Delius was happily married and already living in Grez-sur-Loing near Fontainebleau where he spent almost the entire second half of his life. Grainger had heard an elder in the Lincolnshire village of Saxby-all-Saints, Joseph Taylor, sing about a lovers' meeting at Brigg, a nearby town. Soon afterwards he used it in his own "Green Bushes," a *passacaglia* written in the English tradition of repeating the melody often with harmonic and instrumental variants. This is basically what Delius has done in his setting, and in doing so has produced a sort of landscape of the mind, an extended pastoral of emotions remembered in tranquility with a ravishing, mostly gentle, sensuous sound.

As in many of his compositions, the music simply "fades out" at the conclusion (as it may be said to "fade in" at the beginning). On this point Grainger has written in his reminiscences (published in "Frederick Delius" by Peter Warlock, The Bodley Head, 1952), "Indeed much of Delius' music has the quality of sunsets and sunrises. When asked why so many of his compositions 'faded out,' rather than closing with some more definite ending, Delius would answer, 'Most things in nature happen gradually, not abruptly.' He wanted his musical forms to tally the process of organic change so prevalent in nature as we see it."

Although the music of "Brigg Fair" should not be taken as a literal reflection of the folk song from which its theme melody was taken, the words are given here for the curious:

It was on the fift' of august
The weather fine and fair
Unto Brigg Fair I did repair
For Love I was inclined.

I rose up with the lark in the morning
With my heart so full of glee,
Of thinking there to meet my dear
Long time I wished to see.

I looked over my left shoulder
To see whom I could see,
And there I spied my own true love
Come tripping down to me.

I took hold of her lily white hand
And merrily was her heart,
And now we're met together
I hope we ne'er shall part.

For it's meeting is a pleasure
And parting is a grief,
But an unconstant lover
Is worse than a thief.

The green leaves they shall wither
And the branches they shall die
If ever I prove false to her,
To the girl that loves me.

John Coveney

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number
74-751872 applies to this recording.



THE FENBY LEGACY

Music of Frederick DELIUS (1862 – 1934)

It was with delight and surprise that I accepted the invitation from John Goldsmith of Unicorn-Kanchana to conduct the music of this 2-record album, mostly comprising works that I took down from Delius's dictation some 50 years ago. The idea for the project originated with Christopher Palmer and was made possible by generous support from the Delius Trust. My sincere thanks to them all.

I am grateful no less to the artistes, vocal and instrumental, for their splendid co-operation and, again, to Christopher Palmer for his commentaries on the music, for his appreciative biographical sketch of me and his invaluable help as producer. My thanks also to the very fine recording team.

The spontaneous enthusiasm of Dr Donald Mitchell of Faber and Faber, and of his Editor, Patrick Carnegy, in preparing a new and extended edition of my book *Delius As I Knew Him* – long out-of-print – in time to appear with the issue of these records has added immeasurably to my pleasure.

© Eric Fenby, 1981

THE FENBY LEGACY

"Wide apart as the Poles in every other respect", observed Sir Thomas Beecham in an *Evening Standard* article published in 1927, "these two composers (Delius and Handel) meet on the common ground of affliction, for the same physical calamities which darkened Handel's declining years have overtaken Frederick Delius. Well over sixty years of age, he, too, lies helpless, paralysed and blind; and unless the gods intervene to restore his sight, the voice of this sweet singer will now be mute until the day of his death." Well, the gods did intervene, not to restore Delius's own sight but to grant him the use of another's: that of a young Yorkshireman who, probably around the very time that Sir Thomas was writing the above-cited words, was undergoing his first experience of the music of Delius. This music moved the then 22-year-old Eric Fenby no more than any other ever had, or ever would; and his encounter with it was to have incalculable consequences, for himself, for Delius, and for all who love Delius's music. He wrote to the blind and paralysed composer, then living as a recluse in rural France, offering his services as amanuensis. Many others, before and since, have made the pilgrimage to Grez-sur-Loing, a tiny hamlet a few miles from Fontainebleau on the outskirts of the Forest: a place still haunted by memories of the Impressionist painters whose tranquil moods of nature Delius rendered so exquisitely into music. Many have made this journey, but none with a mission of such moment as this nervous, sensitive young man from Scarborough who, in the middle of one night, had received a "call", as Sir Malcolm Sargent put it, "as vivid and real as that of the infant Samuel".

"Come in, Fenby!" Forty years later Fenby re-lived the moment of that first greeting from Delius on the set of Ken Russell's television film of the composer's last years, *A Song of Summer*. "I had mimicked Delius weeks before as a guide to Max Adrian learning his lines and behaving like Delius, but this was too much for me – the voice, the inflection, the image of Delius sitting there, a rug over his knees, with a great screen about him, slowly extending his hand in welcome." The "welcome", in actuality, was into one of the strangest and most intimidating households on record. Everything revolved round Delius who, having held ordinary people in a Nietzsche-inspired contempt for most of his life, found himself now, ravaged by syphilis in its irremediable tertiary stage, pathetically dependent on ordinary people around him for every facet of rudimentary existence. Being a proud and a hard man – his parents were Prussian – he resented this dependence, and naturally those who were in closest contact with him (above all his selfless and devoted wife) were the primary recipients of his ire. Yet despite the constant tension, despite the many and varied practical difficulties (Delius could only work sporadically and for short spells, and frequently demanded the technically almost impossible of his young assistant), Fenby managed to extract from the ailing composer a body of music that defies credibility. This is the 'Fenby Legacy', the greater part of which is represented on these records, conducted by the man who was jointly responsible with the composer for its coming into being.

Eric Fenby was born in Scarborough in 1906. He was basically self-taught as a musician; as a child blessed with a fine ear, perfect pitch (he always knew when the 'thunder was in E flat') and the rare ability to read orchestral scores at sight, he virtually taught himself to compose through the study and assimilation of great music. His initial training was as an organist and he also prepared performances for the many local amateur choirs, choral societies, madrigal groups and amateur orchestras directed in those days by his mentor Claude Keeton. As a young man Fenby's health was rarely good (today, paradoxically, it has never been better) and he early harboured thoughts of entering a Benedictine monastery. Instead he entered, in his own words, "another kind of monastery – the Delius household". After Delius's death he settled in London, having laid the composer's ghost (temporarily) to rest in *Delius As I Knew Him* (written in 1935 during a three-month period of isolation self-imposed for the purpose in Yorkshire), and worked for Sir Thomas Beecham in a variety of musical capacities. From 1936-39 he was a music adviser to Boosey & Hawkes, the firm which, on the initiative of Ralph Hawkes, had acquired for publication all the Delius compositions brought into being with Fenby's aid. Meanwhile through his friend Tom Laughton (one of the great hoteliers of the time) he had come to know the latter's actor brother Charles, and this led to his being asked to compose the music for the Alfred Hitchcock film *Jamaica Inn*, in which Laughton played a leading role. It was planned that Fenby should travel with Laughton's company to Hollywood in order to score his next picture *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, but the outbreak of war intervened and

the authorities were adamant that Fenby be conscripted. For three years he ran courses at the Royal Army Education Corps at Cuerdon Hall, Lancashire; he also conducted the Southern Command Symphony Orchestra, wrote several pieces for military band and composed incidental music for the Army Bureau of Current Affairs Play Unit productions. He has recounted his wartime experiences in *From Bach to Barracks* in which, were we ever to see it in print, we would read of rabbits being smuggled home for supper in the bell of a tuba, and other tales both more and less bizarre.

After the war, feeling himself to be a 'very different kind of person', he destroyed a large-scale choral work (*The Hound of Heaven*), a Symphony and a String Quartet; of his surviving compositions the best-known is certainly his witty overture *Rossini on Ilkla Moor*. Having married in 1944 he returned to his native Yorkshire, where he was requested to found and direct the Music Department of the North Riding Training College. He held this post for fourteen years (1948 – 62) and lived happily with his devoted wife Rowena and their two young children on the Yorkshire moors not far from the sea. In 1962 his interest in Delius, quiescent for many years, began to revive when he was appointed Artistic Director of the Delius Centenary Festival in Bradford, for which he was awarded the O.B.E. Then came a late turning-point in his life: an invitation from Sir Thomas Armstrong to join the staff of the Royal Academy of Music in London as a Professor of Composition. From then till now his re-involvement with Delius has developed apace: he returned to Grez for the first time in 30 years, visited Florida and saw the orange-grove where the young Delius had lived some 80 years before "and where so much in my life that mattered began". His achievement has been recognised in the form of honorary doctorates conferred on him by the universities of Jacksonville, Warwick and Bradford. He continues to be active with a large Delius correspondence, and is still making sundry arrangements of the composer's music. He is in constant demand for lectures, broadcasts, interviews and recitals both here and in America. He has written a book on Delius for Faber's 'Great Composer' series; acted as consultant to Ken Russell on *A Song of Summer*; recorded the three Delius Violin Sonatas, first with Ralph Holmes, then with his friend and neighbour Yehudi Menuhin (for whom, in 1969, he also wrote the text of *Menuhin's House of Music*, a pictorial account of the Yehudi Menuhin School at Stoke d'Abernon). At present he is working on the last stages of a definitive account of the technique and interpretation of Delius's music which will represent, he says, his 'last word' on the subject.

Nothing however can supersede his 'first word', namely *Delius As I Knew Him*, a small book but one with the quality of radium, and which has now attained the status of a classic. In it Fenby describes the cataclysmic effect of the young Delius's first encounter with Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*; it acted on him as a moral, mental and spiritual earthquake. I could describe in similar terms the effect on me of my first reading, as an undergraduate, of *Delius As I Knew Him*. I am reminded of Arthur Machen's account of his discovery of Swinburne: "... there was the tremendous boldness of it all, the denial of everything that I had been brought up to believe most sure and sacred; the book was positively strewn with the fragments of shattered altars and the torn limbs of kings and priests ... clearly this was a terrible, a tremendous fellow, an earth-shaking, heaven-storming poet ...". Through Fenby one feels drawn into the immediate, tangible presence of genius, and the power of its personality is such that it continues to exert its influence even from beyond the grave. In essence, however, the doctrine Delius preached was simple enough: that life should be thought of not as a penance to be endured, but as a pleasure to be enjoyed. Had I no other reason to feel gratitude to him, for this alone I should bless Delius's name all the days of my life.

One is tempted to ponder on the long-term effects Fenby's self-imposed incarceration at Grez may have had on him. Surely it must have marked him for life, perhaps even scarred him. Anyone who has been obliged to care for an elderly invalid knows what an exhausting experience it can be, both mentally and physically, even for a short time and if the patient is an 'easy' one. Fenby spent some six years at Grez, and Delius, even when he was well, can never have been in any way an 'easy' man to live with. Remember too that the six years were those of Fenby's early manhood, a time when emotions of all kinds still register with painful sharpness and immediacy. No doubt his moral integrity, his selflessness, and a certain North Country toughness of fibre, enabled him to endure trials which would have broken a weaker spirit, to maintain his independence of outlook, and to survive into a vigorous, victorious old age.

Fenby's career as it might have developed independently of Delius is another matter for speculation. He is variously gifted. His early compositions were commended by Delius himself, never one to bestow praise indiscriminately. Delius likewise much admired his prowess as a pianist, and this indeed proved crucial to the successful continuation of their working relationship. Ivor Newton thought Fenby would have made a first-class accompanist, and he may be heard in this capacity on Unicorn UNS 258; here he accompanies Ralph Holmes in the three Delius violin sonatas playing the composer's own lbach piano and precedes the performances by a spoken introduction. As a writer his prose is as rich in poetry and imagination as in technical insight (witness the many splendid sleeve-notes he has contributed to Delius recordings), and his essays carry the more weight inasmuch as they are self-evidently the work of a thoroughly schooled and practised musician. His abilities as a teacher and administrator are widely appreciated, and this album itself celebrates his art as arranger/transcriber and conductor.

It is a happy coincidence that Eric Fenby's Christian name should be contained within that of Frederick Delius, since for that memorable six-year period the two Yorkshiremen became fused, in a sense, as a single entity. But those who become intimately associated with great

men must always be prepared to subordinate some part of their own personalities, and if Fenby has sacrificed any part of his – and he admits that over the years Delius's grip has never really relaxed – we are all the richer for his altruism. Arthur Hutchings once said that one of the most inspiring qualities of Delius's music is the feeling it gives us that the world is ours to roam. Eric Fenby deserves our undying gratitude for having materially increased its circumference.

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SIDE 1

SONGS OF FAREWELL* (Chorus and Orchestra)

- I **How sweet the silent backward tracings** (4:19)
- II **I stand as on some mighty eagle's beak** (4:55)
- III **Passage to you** (4:03)
- IV **Joy, shipmate, joy!** (1:42)
- V **Now finallè to the shore** (4:04)

Although signs and portents of Delius's eventual physical collapse had started to manifest themselves even before the First World War, not until the early 1920's did systematic work become an impossibility. It was probably in 1920, during his last walking-tour of Norway, that he first began to ponder a new choral work to words by Whitman, but the *Hassan* commission intervened after little progress had been made beyond sketches consisting of groups of chords riddled "good" and a few strong melodic ideas. From this minimal seeding, and from the texts which had already been selected and copied out by Mrs Delius, there flowered, incredibly, the *Songs of Farewell* for double chorus and large orchestra, "the last great choral legacy of the composer of the *Mass of Life*" (Arthur Hutchings). Faced with an orchestral texture that is concentrated rather than complex, and a style of vocal writing that permits little or no rhythmic articulation in individual parts, the listener may well despair of being able to distinguish many words. In Delius this is of little consequence, since he was always more interested in the sound and colour of voices than in the words they were supposed to be singing. As Gerald Abraham put it "when words have struck music out of him he wants to have done with them". And the sound of Delius's choral writing is unique, for in it he tries ever to recapture a moment of transcendent bliss experienced in his youth. The hushed awe of the first choral entry in 'I stand as on some mighty eagle's beak', for instance, could have been imagined by no other composer.

The beginning of the first song, 'How sweet the silent backward tracings', hovers like a haze or drift of memories before the mind's eye of the blind composer. Horn fanfares sound from out the far distance; gradually the mists disperse, the memories assume coherent outline and form ("Apple orchards . . .") and the music urges towards a moment of release finally achieved at "the eternal exhaustless freshness . . ."; thence to a flooding climax of summer and sunlight whose almost hymn-like character is reminiscent of other peak moments of Delian choral emotion (e.g. *Appalachia* and *The Song of the High Hills*) and may well be ultimately derived from those improvised Negroid transubstantiations of Victorian hymnody by which Delius was so overmasteringly influenced as a young orange-planter in Florida.

Henceforward, perhaps surprisingly, nostalgia is banished from the score: masculine austerity mingles with feminine sensuousness. The guiding impulse now is to look forward, not back, and, where Whitman is concerned, any visionary spirit of quest or excitement is sure to involve the sea. The second movement, 'I stand as on some mighty eagle's beak', is one of the finest of Delius's seascapes. The dipping theme announced by the horns in the tenth bar is the first of the score's several sea-motifs; in this case it runs through the entire movement, advancing, retreating, cleaving the breakers and suddenly leaping into prominence with thrilling effect at "that inbound urge and urge of waves" (horns) and returning in the last two bars of orchestral postlude. Subtle details of colouration abound: tiny flute interjections "to suggest the tints of white on the crest of the waves" (Delius's own words); a single trumpet note at 'the foam' "to add a touch of fire to the colouring" (Delius again); a stopped horn 'sting' at "the wild unrest". Of the elemental climax of this movement Eric Fenby has written: "the combination of passing notes and arpeggio-notes is a device known to students of elementary harmony. But the combination of passing notes and arpeggio notes at 'Seeking the shores forever' is transmuted by genius beyond the sense of words, of voices and orchestral timbres to the frontiers of Illumination."

'Passage to you' takes the form of a paean to the forces of nature ranging in time from the cold clear light of dawn (muted strings *divisi*) through the high blaze of noon (cymbals) to an evensong in calm waters; the arpeggiated *ostinato*-like figure in the cellos which supports the chorus's first entry gains recognition at the movement's close as another sea-motif. This is the turning-point: by now the sea has become symbol and agent, not of parting and sorrow and loss (as in *Sea-drift* and like the mighty river in *Appalachia*) but of man's ultimate journey, his "free flight into the wordless".

In 'Joy, shipmate, joy!', one of the composer's proudest utterances, the sea-imagery becomes even more explicit. Here, surely, is a final incarnation of the great spirit which ignited the incandescent, yea-saying apostrophes to the will in the *Mass of Life*: "O thou my will! Dispeller thou of care! Preserve me for one great worthy final destiny!" The music marches forth as if in intrepid exploration of the deepest waters; clarion calls ring out (trumpet and trombones) and the final bars sound like an apotheosis of Delius's all-time favourite chord, the added sixth.

'Now finallè to the shore' depicts the final moments of leave-taking and the start of the spirit's journey into the beyond. A strange text, one may think, for a man whom Cecil Gray described as a "violent, bigoted and doctrinaire atheist" to be setting; but then Delius actually was, as I believe, an intensely religious man. Not in the limited sense an orthodox churchman might understand, for Delius had little time for orthodox churchmen; he maintained that for too many of them 'religion' meant simply the despising of the things of the earth and a reader belief in the Devil than in God. Whereas the man who, like Delius, apprehends and gives expression to earthly beauties and delights does so because, whatever he may outwardly profess, he sees in them, veiled, the beauties and delights of the everlasting. If he did not he would be unable to apprehend or express them in the way he does. Delius's was one of those rare uncorrupted minds that see the divinity latent in every form of life. He was a supreme poet, and therefore an ecstatic and a visionary; and in the *Songs of Farewell* he gave form to his vision in an intoxicating and perhaps immortal music. Never, surely, was a G-major chord sounded with such exultant finality as at the climactic "Depart!" in this last song; all that remains is for music which spans an infinity of sea and sky to shimmer into silence, its only movement the sea-swell of the cellos. A final "Depart!", *pianissimo possibile*, sounds as if from beyond the farthest horizon, the last faint echo from the vanishing earth.

Songs of Farewell, completed in 1930, was first performed by Sir Malcolm Sargent and the Royal Choral Society in the Queen's Hall, London, at a Courtauld-Sargent concert in March 1932.

with **FELICITY LOTT** (Soprano) **ANTHONY ROLFE JOHNSON** (Tenor) **THOMAS ALLEN** (Baritone) **JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER** (Cello)
THE AMBROSIAN SINGERS (Director – John McCarthy) and the **ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** (Leader – Barry Griffiths) conducted by **ERIC FENBY, OBE**

SIDE 2

1. IDYLL* (Soprano, Baritone and Orchestra) (23:52)

The music of the *Idyll* (1930–2) is based on that of *Margot la Rouge*, an unpublished and unperformed one-act melodrama written in 1902 and submitted (unsuccessfully as it turned out) in an international competition sponsored by a Milan publishing house. According to Eric Fenby, when Delius commenced salvage operations on the score in 1930, his first idea was to ask his English friend and admirer Robert Nichols to prepare an alternative libretto, and Fenby was dispatched from Grez to Winchester to play the music to Nichols and set him to work. But despite the unbounded enthusiasm of E. J. Moeran, no new ideas were forthcoming, and just as it seemed that Fenby would have to return to Grez empty-handed, Nichols hit on the notion of selecting passages from Whitman (a lifelong favourite poet of Delius), constructing a scenario of sorts, and setting it to music derived from the more lyrical portions of the score. Delius was delighted and immediately began dictating entirely new parts for two voices, soprano and baritone; and in this way the *Idyll* gradually came into being. It received its first performance in 1933 at a Queen's Hall Promenade Concert which the Deliuses heard on the wireless at Grez-sur-Loing. But even now the saga of *Margot la Rouge* is not quite complete, for Eric Fenby has recently completed a reconstruction of the original orchestration; which means that, for the first time, Delius's fifth opera is now ready to be given a hearing in its entirety and in its original format.

The important feature of *Margot la Rouge* in its relation to the *Idyll* is not the former's libretto *per se* but its setting – Paris. This explains the profound relationship borne by the music to the great symphonic poem *Paris – the Song of a Great City* (1899) – the first big-city night-piece in music (an innovation for which Delius has rarely received credit) and in every way a turning-point in the composer's life: a farewell simultaneously to the city, to youth, and to stylistic immaturity. A link with *Cynara* (q.v.) becomes apparent: Delius in the *Idyll* is re-living some momentous adventure of the human spirit, more specifically some chance, brief but never-to-be-forgotten *liaison amoureux* contracted presumably in the midst of the great city of Paris. Thematically the *Idyll* looks not only backwards to *Paris* but also forwards to the *Requiem*, significantly to the movement entitled 'A la grande amoureuse', as fresh, poetic and un-prurient a celebration of the ideal of free love as can be imagined. The *Idyll* is another big-city nocturne in its way, but of a totally personal and involved kind; for the two lovers all has ceased to exist save the night, the city, and "we two together". A few choice details as *agents évocateurs* meet Delius's case admirably: a long brooding pedal point to draw the profile of a distant metropolis (as in *Paris*), over which the two main thematic ideas take shape, flight and mingle effortlessly in counterpoint: little rhythmic woodwind cries like distant street sounds; a solo horn over throbbing timpani, stirring shadows in amber-lit gloom; harps glittering in starry night-sky arpeggios as the coda steals in ("Sweet are the blooming cheeks of the living"). The upward-thrusting *Parade Garden* triplet which lies at the nerve-centre of Delius's deepest emotions makes a relatively early appearance here in one of the score's finest soaring passages ("We two, how long we were fooled"); here, as elsewhere, the re-modelled vocal lines revealing in their lyrical span of arch and curve the enormous distance their composer had travelled in terms of melodic invention between 1902 and 1932. The climax, with the two voices carrying their power in waves of ecstatic abandon over the full flood of the orchestra, is one of Delius's most glorious; and Arthur Hutchings has well said, with respect to the *Idyll* as a whole, that "no other composer would catch us up so easily into the undying, unspent summer of romance".

2. FANTASTIC DANCE (Orchestra) (3:50)

According to David Tall (to whose article 'The Fenby Legacy' [published in the Delius Society Journal, October 1978, No. 6] we are indebted not only for the title of this album but also for much of the factual information incorporated in these notes) this short piece came to light originally as a fragment of some 20 bars, complete in full score. A shape was evolved, new music dictated, and the whole completed in 1931. The dedication is to Eric Fenby, and the first performance was given by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Adrian Boult in January 1934.

As in all Delius's dance-poems the form of the *Fantastic Dance* is clear-cut (ABA). The scoring is deft: strings and woodwind entwine in graceful, though muscular, melodic limbs pointed by arabesque. Listeners may note resemblances to the *Second Dance Rhapsody* of 1916, not least in the mazurka-like rhythmic tendencies; but the coda, with its downward chromatic stampede of brass and sudden, startling use of cymbals, glockenspiel and the harp *glissando*, suggests a much earlier prototype, namely the more boisterous parts of *Paris – the Song of a Great City* – an incessant refrain, it seems, in the works of this Indian Summer. Here is surely the effervescence of irrepressible youth, and it implies *joie de vivre* – which is a very valuable and not at all common quality, above all scarcely one we would expect to find in a blind, paralysed and pain-racked composer.

SIDE 3

1. A SONG OF SUMMER (Orchestra) (10:08)

The first score which Delius attempted to overhaul with Fenby's help was the 1918 *Poem of Life and Love*, a work so unsatisfactory that according to the latter it might easily have been composed by a student in Delius's manner. Creating a new work proved a laborious process which spread itself over several years and overlapped with other projects; as might be expected, the best passages in the old score were retained, where necessary re-shaped and interspersed with new material composed by dictation. The marvel is that no trace of this protracted and piecemeal partition remains in the seamless flow and total stylistic unity of *A Song of Summer*, as the new work was called. One may wonder, incidentally, whether the change of title was altogether an advantage. *A Poem of Life and Love* is perhaps a little on the grand side, yet it implies a certain epic quality which is unmistakably present in the music. Another point is that *A Song of Summer* as a title is too reminiscent of other Delius works. However this may be, there is no mistaking the high-summer bloom of the music. As a young man the nature-poet in Delius wrote on occasion music of fabulous beauty; perhaps the best example is the Floridian everglades music in the last act of his opera *The Magic Fountain*. But it is always a vernal, virginal beauty, whereas that of *In a Summer Garden* or *A Song of Summer* is the splendour of the full-blown rose. The spirit of summer is certainly enshrined in the unique orchestral coloration Delius contrived for the opening: the *sound* is somehow that of the *sight* of the summer sea, deep blue and foam-flecked, mingling in a haze in the distance with the clear sky and shining air. New too is an intricacy of texture in which vulnerably exposed woodwind solos are meshed in a contrapuntal filigree whose every component part must sing with conviction as well as expression. Eric Fenby recalls how, exceptionally, Delius thought out this entirely new opening away from the piano (at which he now composed vicariously, through Fenby's agency): moreover, he was unusually explicit as to the visual significance of what he had conceived. "Imagine that we are sitting on the cliffs in the heather looking out over the sea", he said before he began to dictate. "The sustained chords in the high strings suggest the

clear sky, and the stillness and calmness of the scene." A figure down below on 'cellos and basses – at the base of the cliffs, as it were – "suggests the gentle rise and-fall of the waves". A flute motif depicts "a seagull gliding by"; these, plus a horn-call and, somewhat later, a 'tune' (as opposed to a motif) incorporating Delius's favourite 'Scotch Snap', complete the roll-call of materials from which *A Song of Summer* is expertly and beautifully crafted – for instance, what can legitimately be described as 'symphonic' development of the horn-call motivates the first climax, whereas the second grows from the 'seagull' motif and from the melodic fragment with the 'Scotch Snap' which now deploys a hitherto unsuspected lyrical fullness and strength. Now 'strong' is not an epithet one normally finds applied to Delius's work which, it seems, is for the most part a matter of orange afterglows, lilacs and cherry blossom, scents of the summer night, falling leaves in autumn and all the rest of the paraphernalia familiar – and usually dismissively – associated in the popular mind with the 'romantic' image. But if we are moved by Delius's music to an in-depth response we quickly find that these things are only signs and symbols employed by the artist to communicate *ecstasy* to us. If we concede that it is the business of all true art to transmit and recreate feelings of ecstasy in the beholder, reader or listener as the case may be. And for 'ecstasy' read 'reality', for here we are at the heart of the Delius matter. Delius was a complete man, physically aware and of a sensuous and passionate temperament. He believed that life was there to be lived, savoured and enjoyed and that music should express this savour, enjoyment and vitality – vitality not in the superficial sense of indefatigable movement but in the fuller, truer sense as it is experienced by artists like Delius. *Feeling* is the keynote of his music: real feeling which means strength, truth, beauty, yea-saying to life. The music of Delius is saturated in this strong intense feeling. Of course not all composers feel as deeply: sentiment can easily tetter over into sentimentality, and the surface glamour of Delius's textures can easily be exploited by those in search of cosmetics or narcotics. As a corrective we have only to listen to the two major climaxes in *A Song of Summer*, music which expresses his essential spiritual fortitude as well as anything he ever wrote – and the more movingly when one recalls the quite exceptionally adverse physical circumstances under which it was conceived. Delius is a truly hard-core composer, the prime qualities of his music being virility and passion: virility understood not as a display of aggressive masculinity, but as the kind of response to life and love which issues creatively in something as fine and rich and strong as *A Song of Summer*. Sir Henry Wood (whose early advocacy of Delius, and personal friendship with the composer, have tended to be overshadowed by Beecham's) gave it its first performance in 1931 and played it frequently thereafter.

2. CYNARA* (Baritone and Orchestra) (10:48)

A few minutes' walk from where I am writing these words, in London's Maida Vale, would bring me to Bristol Gardens, where Ernest Dowson, one of the finest lyric poets of the fin-de-siècle (*Cynara*: "You would have understood me, had you waited", *In Tempore Senectutis*) lived with his parents from 1889 to 1892. At the time of writing it looks to be the last, extremities of seediness and dilapidation and has been all but taken over by squatters (in this there is an ironic appropriateness: Dowson would probably have felt more at home here now than when he lived there, for he was the archetypal hippie, "never quite comfortable, never quite himself", as his friend and contemporary Arthur Symonds recalled, "without a certain sordidness in his surroundings"; his death from tuberculosis in 1900 at the age of 32 was undoubtedly hastened by debauch and chronic self-neglect. In this respect he would have drawn scant sympathy from Delius, who, though in no way prudish, was nevertheless personally fastidious in the highest degree, loathed uncouthness of speech, dress or manner; and set an almost maniacal store by routine and self-discipline. They were however both quite Latin in their feeling for youth and death and 'the old age of roses', and in their passion for the type of artistic camaraderie found nowhere but in Paris. Dowson lived on and off in the French capital from 1895-99, while Delius had been settled there from 1888. Both were habitués of the Latin Quarter; consorted freely with men-of-letters (although it seems that for the most part they moved in different circles) and it is tempting to wonder if their paths ever crossed in the whirl of the city streets or in the convivial context of a favourite café or brasserie. Dowson was a great admirer of Verlaine and made some exquisite translations of those *fêtes galantes* which Delius was only one of a number of composers to set to music (e.g. *Il pleure dans mon cœur* and *Chanson d'automne*). It was not however till 1907, seven years after the poet's death, that Delius completed his Dowson song-cycle *Songs of Sunset* for soloists, chorus and orchestra. *Cynara* was originally designed to be part of this cycle, which explains the fact that the theme first heard in bar 28 of the former (clarinet), and frequently thereafter, is the very one which serves as a connecting thread between the component sections of the larger work. However, at the time *Cynara* was left unfinished and forgotten for over 20 years until Fenby discovered it. He found the composition sketch complete as far as the words "but when the feast is finished and the lamps expire"; at which point the music also expired. Delius and Fenby awakened it to new life, and *Cynara* was given its première performance by John Goss and Sir Thomas Beecham during the 1929 Festival. Subsequently, at Fenby's suggestion, Delius added the present ending with its reference to the opening violin solo.

Who was Delius's *Cynara*? Dowson's was the teenage daughter of a Polish restaurateur in Soho, who "smiled charmingly, under her mother's eyes, on his two years' courtship, and at the end of two years married the waiter instead" (Symons). One trusts that Delius's *grande passion* was doomed less unconditionally to frustration: According to Eric Fenby there had been a wild and adventurous youth spent in Paris, with many love-affairs, and "one – the affair of his life – that had come to nothing". More than this we may never know, but at least there is in the score of *Cynara* one piece of incontrovertible musical evidence to establish Paris as the location of this experience: namely, the final chord, which in tonality, orchestral colour (dovetailed bassoons and low horns) and voicing is identical with the one which, in *Paris – the Song of a Great City*, marks the end of the poet's journey through the city of night, and creates the same extraordinary illusion of the sound of distant men's voices singing to 'Ah'. In other words we may regard *Cynara* as yet another *nocturne parisien* (to use Verlaine's term). A more general kinship with Paris reveals itself in the brooding quality of the opening, in the dark instrumentation, and of course in the flaring black-and-gold of the central section ("I have forgot much, *Cynara*") where Delius makes a desperate stab at gaiety by setting in motion a waltz-like rhythm embellished with tambourine and triangle. The hollow notes of the xylophone, however, sound an intimation of mortality and the flames die quickly down. Illustrative detail is not wanting elsewhere: a siren song sung by solo violin, sinuous and seductive; a low-breathed *frisson* of flutes, wraith-like ("there fell thy shadow, *Cynara*"); horns, then strings, throbbing through the night of love and sleep in syncopated ardour; the ashen muted trombone chord at the baritone's final sighing "*Cynara*"; the G-natural then moving to a G-sharp ("in my fashion") and transmuted sorrow into gladness, the same gladness as is implicit at the close (or should one say 'recession'?) of the *Idyll* ("Dearest comrade, Love is not over"). It is worth remarking that the *Idyll*, *Sea-drift* and *Cynara* (the last named chronologically speaking a close relation of the second), all poems of love and loss, all begin and end in E major, traditionally bespoken by composers through the ages as the key of Eden or Paradise Lost.

Cynara was dedicated to the memory of Philip Heseltine, writer, editor, composer and one of Delius's most ardent advocates; like Dowson he had powerful self-destructive tendencies and died prematurely. The ninetyish temper of the poem serves them both as a fitting epitaph.

3. IRMELIN PRELUDE (Orchestra) (5:40)

The products of Delius's abnormally protracted apprentice period are informed with a certain innocence of spirit which Beecham, among others (as an over-sophisticated man) found irresistible. He it was who gave the early fairy-tale opera *Irmelin* its premiere in 1953; but during the composer's lifetime there seemed little prospect it would ever be published or performed, and so Delius in 1931 salvaged some material from Acts I and II and re-composed it (through Eric Fenby) in the form of this, the last to be added to his collection of exquisite small-orchestra miniatures. Here we have the best of two worlds: the pristine quality of the youthful composer's melodic invention, and the hand of the master-craftsman now perfectly subdued to the medium in which he is working. When Philip Heseltine, in a 1923 review of the *Hassan* music, wrote of its "lovely miniatures . . . subtle and tender things of that magical simplicity that only a great master can achieve" he might well have been describing the *Irmelin* prelude – which, sadly, neither he nor its composer lived to hear.

SIDE 4

1. A LATE LARK* (Tenor and Small Orchestra) (6:18)

On the evidence of this work and the *Songs of Farewell* Delius was a yea-sayer to death as well as to life. The Whitman settings envision the former as the prelude to a great adventure; *A Late Lark* distils a mood of serenity and fulfilment. No trace here of the unappeasable yearning, the cosmic despair, which inflames Mahler's *Lied von der Erde* or Britten's *Death in Venice*. Scored for tenor and small orchestra, in its clarity and simplicity *A Late Lark* is oddly reminiscent of early Delius, and certainly more suggestive of a Cotti than the Sisleys or Pissarros generally evoked by *In a Summer Garden*, *Summer Night on the River* and other works of that ilk. By a coincidence, the central image of *A Late Lark* is also expressed in some Verlaine-like lines by the poet of *Cynara*, Ernest Dowson:

*In the deep violet air,
Not a leaf is stirred;
There is no sound heard,
But afar, the rare
Trilled voice of a bird.*

Delius, it seems, imagines the trilled voices of two birds: their chosen instruments being not the expected flutes but a solo violin and oboe. He may thus bequeath the flutes to Richard Strauss who bade the world a valediction of heart-subduing loveliness in the form of Eichendorff's *Im Abendrot* in which, by another extraordinary coincidence, the central image is again one of two larks soaring aloft in the evening sky, "nachträumend in den Dufte". Delius enhances other visual details of Henley's picture with his customary subtlety and always in the interests of concentrating the poetic mood: the sun goes down to the sound of distant horn calls; the smoke ascends in upward-curling cello arpeggios; a dark-glowing refulgence of lower strings playing *tremolo* heralds the approach of darkness. The change of stance at "So be my passing" is movingly reflected in a simple modulation into a new tonality, and the last chord so disposed as to negate any sense of absolute finality: *omnia exeunt in mysterium*.

There is poignant irony in the fact that Delius in 1924 was struggling to complete *A Late Lark* – a hymn to the oncoming of night – against the failing of his own light. He all but won: blindness apparently overtook him as he reached the words "splendid and serene" leaving only some half-dozen bars to be completed by dictation. The work was ready in time for Beecham to perform during the 1929 Delius Festival.

2. LA CALINDA (Orchestra) (4:02)

Neither this nor the *Two Aquarelles* belong strictly speaking to the dictated 'legacy'; Eric Fenby's role in their regard was merely that of an arranger or transcriber. Nevertheless he has never before recorded either, so *La Calinda* is here presented in the guise of a Beechamesque 'lollipop'. The piece started life in the first movement of the orchestral *Florida Suite* (1887), re-appeared some 10 years later in a revised form in Act II of the opera *Koanga* as part of an elaborate scene of 'Negro celebrations', and was finally extracted for concert use in this arranged version by Eric Fenby, a third incarnation. *La Calinda* is early Delius. The stuff of the music is still quite conventionally melodious and picturesque in the manner of Grieg; but in terms of orchestration it is worth noting that that element of the exquisite, of poetry-in-sound, which was to confer such distinction on the orchestral masterpieces of Delius's maturity, is strongly in evidence already.

3. CAPRICE AND ELEGY (Cello and Small Orchestra) (8:07)

The rich full-blooded singing quality of the cello inspired Delius to create for it two of the best of his 'abstract' compositions, the Cello Sonata and the Cello Concerto. Then in 1930 the English cellist Beatrice Harrison asked for a work to play on her forthcoming American tour, specifying a chamber orchestra accompaniment to accord with the modest resources that promised to be available to her. Delius complied with the *Caprice and Elegy* which he dictated virtually *ab initio*, a few fragments of sketches serving as departure-points. In the *Caprice* quasi-improvisatory harp arpeggios induce protracted musing on a single phrase in which the 'Scotch Snap' is prominent; while the *Elegy* sets the soloist to a lyrical line of more sustained expressive intensity. It was with this piece that Eric Fenby made his recording début in 1930, with Beatrice Harrison as soloist.

4. TWO AQUARELLES (String Orchestra) (2:29, 2:15)

In 1932 the violinist Albert Sammons, who in 1919 had given the first performance of Delius's Violin Concerto, asked for a new piece for his string orchestra. Delius was too ill to work at the time, but Fenby remembered the two unaccompanied choruses *To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water* and proposed that he transcribe them for strings, the one instrumental medium that can sing, i.e. that can approximate to the sound of the human voice. The transcriptions were published as *Two Aquarelles* and miraculously preserve the midsummer-night sensuousness of the originals. The one is dreamy, the other quietly exultant: both recall these lines from *The Open Air* of Richard Jefferies (whose nature-mysticism is in many respects akin to Delius's) in which he asserts that "those thoughts and feelings which are not sharply defined, but have a haze of distance and beauty about them, are always the dearest".

delius

Sonatas for violin and piano

Ralph Holmes

Eric Fenby



delius

Sonata number 1 for violin and piano (1914)
 Sonata number 2 for violin and piano (c 1923)
 Sonata number 3 for violin and piano (c 1930)

Eric Fenby piano Ralph Holmes violin

Side 1 Band 1 Spoken Introduction by Eric Fenby
 Band 2 Sonata No 1 for violin and piano (1914)

Side 2 Band 1 Sonata No 2 for violin and piano (c 1923)
 Band 2 Sonata No 3 for violin and piano (1930)

Delius wrote, in all, four sonatas for violin and piano, the earliest in 1892 and the last in 1930. The sonata of 1892, a work in three separate movements, remained in MS being rejected as derivative and immature. Thus we are left with three sonatas numbered as on this record in order of composition and publication. No 1 was begun in 1905 and put aside (as was his habit) when the music did not come naturally. It was not until World War I, however, when major projects were abandoned, that he took up the sonata again. Like No 2 it plays without a break; there are traces of influences not yet absorbed, but there is a bigness and spaciousness of design not to be found in Nos 2 and 3.

No works by Delius have been more maligned; they are treated as oddities unworthy of notice. They belong to a time when the term *sonata* still aroused certain expectations of dramatic interplay of themes. These expectations are not fulfilled in Delius's conception of sonata. Pedantry is much to blame in presenting sonata form as a blue-print which is sacrosanct. Haydn and Mozart would have scoffed at this notion! Delius, approaching and withdrawing as he pleased from the periphery of this enclosure of thought, is obviously not to every taste. Whereas classical composers have sometimes replaced development of themes by bringing in completely new subject matter in movements purporting to be sonata, Delius relies almost *entirely* on a succession of episodes to give continuity. This, and the element of surprise in some of these lovely byways of music make these sonatas, to my mind, unique. It has been said that 'it is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it affecting to the imagination.' Now there are innumerable sonatas with clear ideas,

but how many are affecting to the imagination? This, I feel is where Delius excels. We may tire, perhaps, of his oneness of mood. But if we ourselves are in that mood, he never fails to project that mood in sounds so unmistakably his own that by his very genius he makes them our own. All these sonatas reveal his gift in sustaining lines of lyrical flow, more akin to prose than verse. His melodic direction is sure and firm and moves with that unconscious skill which comes when genius has found itself. There are passages of weak invention, but the cumulative effects of his paragraphs evoke a genuine musical experience of differing quality in each sonata. We hear, too, as in No 3 that he could write a good tune when he chose. The 3rd sonata is interesting in the key relationships of the movements. I remember thinking as he finished dictating the final bars of the first movement, 'Surely he has ended in the wrong key!' Not till we came to the close of the last movement did I sense the truth of his intuition centering, diverging, then centering again on two adjacent notes — D and E! The juxtaposition of keys is less elusive in No 2 and radiates from a central C. There is even a hint of recapitulation in his harking back to the opening theme at the close of this single movement work. The slow sections, to me, are sheer magic; simple and telling in exquisite play with reiterated notes and the leap of a fourth! And they say that Delius was lacking in craftsmanship!

Never-the-less, the lay-out and figuration of his piano parts can be exasperating to performers. I saw that his own, long, elegant fingers must have had an enormous stretch. This probably accounts for the particular problems to be faced in No 1. Tactful suggestions (prompted by the

smallness of my own hand-stretch) induced him to shape more manageable arpeggios at awkward places in No 3. Delius was not a pianist — nor am I — but had been an accomplished violinist in his youth. Apart from some terrifying leaps from the depths to the highest reaches of the instrument, the writing for violin is deftly placed. Great players of the past — Sammons and Tertis — have told me of their love of the purely musical qualities of these sonatas and how, on returning to them again and again, they have always found them fresh.

It was typical of Delius that he felt it rather an insult to players to plaster his scores with dynamics or bowings; provided they played the notes he had written he preferred to leave such matters to them. There is no one way of playing his music, but I have often heard him condemn a performer as having no feeling for his phrasing. In this he must bear some blame himself for he gives little guidance to the player in making his sense of flow as clear and meaningful as he intended it. "But, surely," he would say, "a really musical person *must* feel it *my way*!" Inflection is the secret of phrasing in Delius as Beecham discovered to our delight. Moving to the operative note in a phrase; a little lingering without breaking the continuity and the poetry at once begins to bloom.

These three most singular sonatas would themselves, in my opinion, have made the reputation of a lesser composer. There is a peculiar power about them — for instance, the sweep of the opening of No. 1 — which could only come from a mind that had already achieved excellence in the larger forms of composition.

Eric Fenby Authors copyright 1972

Biographical note

Eric Fenby, like Delius a Yorkshireman, was trained as an organist. He acted as Delius's amanuensis from 1928-34 and was Artistic Director of the Delius Centenary Festival in Bradford in 1972.

That year he was made an OBE for "services to music" and is now a Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music.

Ralph Holmes is one of Britain's leading virtuoso violinists. His high reputation is based upon fine performances in many capitals of the world. In Vienna, his playing of the Berg Violin Concerto was rapturously received by the critics, and his debut in Carnegie Hall, New York, prompted a critic to describe him as 'a concert violinist to be reckoned with the upper echelon of the international string set.'

Born in London in 1937, Ralph Holmes began playing the violin at the age of four, and made his London debut at thirteen, playing the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London, with David Martin, subsequently becoming a pupil of George Enescu in Paris and of Ivan Galamian in New York. Awarded the coveted Arnold Bax Memorial Medal in the Harriet Cohen International Music Awards for 20th Century Music, he was also a prize winner in the 1957 Concours International Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud in Paris and in the first George Enescu Competition in Bucharest.

Ralph Holmes plays on a Stradivarius violin loaned to him by the Royal Academy of Music where he is a Professor of Violin.



Session photograph of the Soloists with the producer by John Goldsmith

Cover photograph: Max Adrian as Delius and Christopher Gable as Eric Fenby from the BBC Ken Russell film 'Song of Summer'. The piano used in this recording originally belonged to Delius and was bequeathed to Eric Fenby.

Producer: Gavin Barrett
Recording Engineer: Bob Auger
Recording Location: St Giles Church, Cripplegate, London
Recording Date: 20 and 21 March 1972
Sleeve Note by Eric Fenby (Authors copyright)
 A Dolby Sound System Recording.

Sleeve design Fulcrum



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7 LA LUNE BLANCHE

La lune blanche
Luit dans les bois;
De chaque branche
Part une voix
Sous la ramée. . .
Ô bien-aimée.
L'étang reflète,
Profond miroir,
La silhouette
Du saule noir
Où le vent pleure. . .
Rêvons, c'est l'heure.
Un vaste et tendre
Apaisement
Semble descendre
Du firmament
Que l'astre irise. . .
C'est l'heure exquise.
Paul Verlaine

The pale moon
Shines in the woods;
From each branch
A voice arises
Beneath the boughs. . .
O beloved one.
The pool reflects,
Deep mirror that it is,
The outline
of the black willow
Where the wind weeps. . .
Let us dream: the hour has come.
A great and tender
Peacefulness
seems to descend
From the firmament
Made iridescent by the stars. . .
The exquisite hour has come.
English by: Susan Bottomley

8 TO DAFFODILS

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the evensong;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.
We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring:
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.
Robert Herrick

9 I-BRASIL

There's sorrow on the wind, my grief,
There's sorrow on the wind,
Old and grey, old and grey!
I hear it whispering, calling
Where the last stars touch the sea
Where the cloud creeps down the hill,
And the leaf shakes on the tree,
There's sorrow on the wind
And it's calling low to me
Come away, come away!
There's sorrow in the world, o wind
There's sorrow in my heart
Night and day, night and day: –
So why should I not listen
To the song you sing to me? –
The hill cloud falls away in rain,
The leaf whirls from the tree,
And peace may live in I-Brasil
Where the last stars touch the sea,
Far away, far away.
Fiona Macleod (William Sharp)

French Songs

1 IL PLEURE DANS MON COEUR

Il pleure dans mon cœur
Comme il pleut sur la ville;
Quelle est cette langueur
Qui pénètre mon cœur?

Ô bruit doux de la pluie
Par terre et sur les toits!
Pour un cœur qui s'ennuie
Ô le chant de la pluie!

Il pleure sans raison
Dans ce cœur qui s'écœure.
Quoi! nulle trahison? . . .
Ce deuil est sans raison.

C'est bien la pire peine
De ne savoir pourquoi
Sans amour et sans haine
Mon cœur a tant de peine!

Paul Verlaine

Tears fall within mine heart,
As rain upon the town:
Whence does this languor start,
Possessing all mine heart?

O sweet fall of the rain
Upon the earth and roofs!
Unto an heart in pain,
O music of the rain!

Tears that have no reason
Fall in my sorry heart:
What! there was no treason?
This grief hath no reason.

Nay! the more desolate,
Because, I know not why,
(Neither for love nor hate)
Mine heart is desolate.

English by Ernest Dowson

2 LE CIEL EST, PAR-DESSUS LE TOIT

Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit,
Si bleu, si calme!
Un arbre, par-dessus le toit,
Berce sa palme.

La cloche, dans le ciel qu'on voit,
Doucement tinte.
Un oiseau sur l'arbre qu'on voit
Chante sa plainte.

Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, la vie est là,
Simple et tranquille.
Cette paisible rumeur-là
Vient de la ville.

— Qu'as-tu fait, ô toi que voilà
Pleurant sans cesse,
Dis, qu'as-tu fait, toi que voilà,
De ta jeunesse?

Paul Verlaine

The sky is up above the roof
So blue, so soft!
A tree there, up above the roof,
Swayeth aloft.

A bell within that sky we see,
Chimes low and faint:
A bird upon that tree we see,
Maketh complaint.

Dear God! is not the life up there,
Simple and sweet?
How peacefully are borne up there
Sounds of the street!

What hast thou done, who comest here,
To weep away?
Where hast thou laid, who comest here,
Thy youth away?

English by Ernest Dowson

3 LA LUNE BLANCHE

La lune blanche
Luit dans les bois;
De chaque branche
Part une voix
Sous la ramée . . .

Ô bien-aimée.

L'étang reflète,
Profond miroir,
La silhouette
Du saule noir
Où le vent pleure . . .

Rêvons, c'est l'heure.

Un vaste et tendre
Apaisement
Semble descendre
Du firmament
Que l'astre irise . . .

C'est l'heure exquise.

Paul Verlaine

The pale moon
Shines in the woods;
From each branch
A voice arises
Beneath the boughs . . .

O beloved one.

The pool reflects,
Deep mirror that it is,
The outline
Of the black willow
Where the wind weeps . . .

Let us dream: the hour has come.

A great and tender
Peacefulness
seems to descend
From the firmament
Made iridescent by the stars . . .

The exquisite hour has come.

English by Susan Bottomley

4 CHANSON D'AUTOMNE

Les sanglots longs
Des violons
De l'automne
Blessent mon cœur
D'une langueur
Monotone.

Tout suffocant
Et blême, quand
Sonne l'heure,
Je me souviens
Des jours anciens
Et je pleure;

Et je m'en vais
Au vent mauvais
Qui m'emporte
Deçà, delà,
Pareil à la
Feuille morte.

Paul Verlaine

The long-drawn sobbing
Of the violins
Of Autumn
Wounds my heart
With monotonous
Languor.

All stifled
And pale, when
The hour sounds,
I call to mind
Former times
And weep.

And I depart
On the evil wind
Which bears me away
Here and there,
As it does
A dead leaf.

English by
Susan Bottomley

5 AVANT QUE TU NE T'EN AILLES

Avant que tu ne t'en ailles,
Pâle étoile du matin,
— Mille cailles
Chantent, chantent dans le thym. —

Tourne devers le poète,
Dont les yeux sont pleins d'amour,
— L'alouette
Monte au ciel avec le jour. —

Tourne ton regard que noie
L'aurore dans son azur;
— Quelle joie
Parmi les champs de blé mûr! —

Puis fais luire ma pensée
Là-bas, — bien loin, oh! bien loin!
— La rosée
Gaiement brille sur le foin. —

Dans le doux rêve où s'agite
Ma mie endormie encor . . .
— Vite, vite,
Car voici le soleil d'or. —

Paul Verlaine

Before you fade away,
Pale morning star,
— A thousand quails
Sing, sing in the thyme. —

Turn towards the poet,
Whose eyes are filled with love;
— The lark
Soars skyward with the break of day. —

Turn your gaze which dawn
Suffuses in its azure blue
— What joy
Amid the fields of ripened corn! —

Then cause my thoughts to shine
Yonder — far, far away!
— The dew
Sparkles gaily on the hay. —

Into the sweet dream which
Envelops my sleeping love . . .
— Swiftly, swiftly,
For here is the golden sun. —

English by Susan Bottomley

English Songs

6 TO DAFFODILS

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the evensong;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

Robert Herrick

7 SO WHITE, SO SOFT, SO SWEET IS SHE

Have you seen but a white lily grow
Before rude hands have touched it?
Have you marked but the fall of the snow
Before the soil hath smutched it?
Have you felt the wool of the beaver?
Or swan's down ever?
Or have smelt of the bud of the briar?
Or the nard in the fire?
Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
O so white, O so soft, O so sweet is she!

Ben Jonson



RECORDED UNDER
THE AUSPICES OF THE
DELIUS TRUST

8 I-BRASIL

There's sorrow on the wind, my grief,
There's sorrow on the wind,
Old and grey, old and grey!
I hear it whispering, calling
Where the last stars touch the sea
Where the cloud creeps down the hill,
And the leaf shakes on the tree,
There's sorrow on the wind
And it's calling low to me
Come away, come away!

There's sorrow in the world, o wind
There's sorrow in my heart
Night and day, night and day: —
So why should I not listen
To the song you sing to me? —
The hill cloud falls away in rain,
The leaf whirls from the tree,
And peace may live in I-Brasil
Where the last stars touch the sea,
Far away, far away.

Fiona Macleod (William Sharp)



Scandinavian Songs

FREDERICK
DELIUS

(1862 – 1934)

English, French
& Scandinavian Songs

1 TWILIGHT FANCIES

The Princess look'd forth from her maiden bow'r.
The horn of a herd boy rang up from below.
Oh, cease from thy playing and haunt me no more,
Nor fetter my fancy that freely would soar
When the sun goes down.

The Princess look'd forth from her maiden bow'r,
But mute was the horn that had call'd from below.
Oh, why art thou silent? Beguile me once more.
Give wings to my fancy that freely would soar
When the sun goes down.

The Princess look'd forth from her maiden bow'r.
The call of the horn rose again from below.
She wept in the twilight and bitterly sighed:
What is it I long for, what is it I long for?
God help me! she cried
And the sun went down.

From the Norwegian of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson
English by F.S. Copeland

2 THE VIOLET

Mein Blümchen klein, mein Vögelein,
In meinem Dunkel denk' ich dein.
Ich will dir ja nichts antun, nein!
Dir weh zu tun müsst' Sünde sein!
Und hätt'ich mich auch schon gebückt,
Ich habe dich doch nicht gepflückt;
Die klare Sonne lass'ich dir,
Oh Veilchen, Veilchen!

Mein Blümchen klein, mein Vögelein,
In meinem Dunkel denk' ich dein!
Ach, nur betrachten möcht'ich dich,
Du darfst auch gern verachten mich!
Nicht grausam brechen werd'ich dich
Nur an dir freuen will ich mich
Und athmen in derselben Luft
Wie du, mein Veilchen!

From the Danish of Ludwig Holstein
English by Frederick Delius

Sweet flower mine! My little bird!
I see you from my lonely shade!
No harm to thee I'd ever do!
T'would be a sin to sadden you;
And even had I but to stoop,
To pluck you I would never dare
And rob you of the sunny air,
Beloved flower!

Sweet flower mine, my little bird!
I see you from my lonely shade.
If only I may look at you,
You may despise or frown on me.
I would not ever trouble you!
I want to gladden and rejoice
And breathe the same sunshiny air
As you, sweet flower.

3 IN THE GARDEN OF THE SERAGLIO

Die Rosen senken die Köpfchen schwer
von Thau und Duft,
Die Pinien schwanken so still und matt
in schwüler Luft,
der Springbrunnen Silber langsam spielt
in träger Ruh'!
Minarette streben feierlich dem Himmel zu.
Auf tiefem Blau zieht der Halbmond hin
mit sanftem Schein,
Und er küsst der Rosen und Lilien Heer
Und alle die Blumen klein,
In des Serails Garten!

From the Danish of J.P. Jacobsen
English by Frederick Delius

With perfume heavily laden
The roses droop their heads,
The pine trees are swaying so silently
In drowsy air,
And silvery fountains are playing
So dreamily!
The minarets raise towards heav'n in faith
Their Turkish towers,
The crescent moon glides on her lonely way
O'er the dark blue sky,
And she kisses clusters of lily and rose
And other rare flowers too,
In the seraglio garden!

4 SILKEN SHOES

Seidenschuhe mit Sohlen von Gold!
Mir ist eine Jungfrau hold! Die schönste
Jungfrau harret mein!
Keine ist wie sie auf Gottes schöner Welt,
keine Einzige, nein.
Wie im Süden der Himmel, im Norden der
Schnee ist sie rein.
Doch irdisches Glück ist in meinem Himmel,
Flammen entsprühn meinem Schnee.
Keine Sommerrose ist röter als schwarz
ihr Augenpaar.

From the Danish of J.P. Jacobsen
English by Frederick Delius

Silken shoes upon golden lasts!
I've won a maiden fair!
The fairest maiden waits for me!
None is like her, none, on God's bright sunny earth!
Alone she stands, alone.
Not the sky in the south nor the snow in the north
is more pure.
But my heaven is filled with earthly bliss
And flames flare out of my snow.
No red, red rose of summer is redder
Than her black eyes are deep.

5 AUTUMN (Sometimes entitled 'Whither')

Father, whither fly the swans?
Away, away!
With glittering wings, with outstretched necks
Singing they hasten away, away!
No-one knows whereto!

Father, whither sail the clouds?
Away, away!
Hunted by winds across the wide ocean
Shining they race away, away!
No-one knows whereto!

Father and we, say whither do we go?
Away, away!
We close our eyes and bow our heads,
Sobbing plaintively
Away, away!
No-one knows whereto!

From the Danish of Ludwig Holstein
English by Frederick Delius

6 YOUNG VENEVIL

Young Venevil ran with her heart on fire
To her lover so dear, to her lover so dear.
She sang till she made all the church bells ring:
Good day, good day, good day, good day!
And all the little song birds made answer

to her song:
Midsummer day's for laughter and play.
Take care, little Venevil, your garland's
going astray.

She wove him a garland of flowers blue:
As my eyes so blue, my love, for you.
He took it, and tossed it o'er the hill:
Farewell, my sweet, my sweet, farewell.
He laughed and ran like lightning,

you hear his laughter still:
Midsummer day's for laughter and play.
Take care, little Venevil, your garland's
gone astray.

From the Norwegian of
Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson
English by Peter Pears

7 IRMELIN ROSE

There was a King in days of old,
Many treasures rare he owned;
He knew his daughter Irmelin
Of all to be the rarest one,
Irmelin rose, Irmelin sun,
Irmelin, loveliest of all.

Her bright image was reflected
In the helmets of all the knights,
And with every rhyme and rhythm
Her fair name had been entwined:
Irmelin rose, Irmelin sun,
Irmelin, loveliest of all.

But the Princess would not listen,
Cold her heart was, cold as steel,
Of some she mocked the clumsy bearing,
And laughed at others' ugly forms.
Irmelin rose, Irmelin sun,
Irmelin, loveliest of all.

From the Danish of J.P. Jacobsen
English by Frederick Delius

8 LET SPRINGTIME COME

Let springtime come then, when it will,
With verdure greenest, with flute-like song of
myriad birds,
When all that blossoms and all that is freshest,
loveliest, fairest,
Waves and flutters away over meadows,
away over fields,
Budding in gardens and hiding in woodlands,
Shedding its fragrance on waters and waves.
Yet not for me!
My heart is neither leaf nor blossom, and
springtime cannot bring me joy:
I must await my own spring —
When? When?

From the Danish of J.P. Jacobsen
English by Frederick Delius

FREDERICK DELIUS (1862-1934)

The Song of the High Hills

AMBROSIAN SINGERS (Director: John McCarthy)
ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
conducted by ERIC FENBY

First orchestral recordings of Songs

FELICITY LOTT, Soprano SARAH WALKER, Mezzo Soprano
ANTHONY ROLFE JOHNSON, Tenor

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA conducted by ERIC FENBY

SIDE I: THE SONG OF THE HIGH HILLS (1911) 29:43
Ambrosian Singers (Chorus Soloists: Maryetta Midgley,
soprano Vernon Midgley, tenor)

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Eric Fenby

SIDE II: SONGS

1. **Twilight Fancies** (1889) 4:09
SARAH WALKER
Norwegian: Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson
English: F. S. Copeland
2. **Wine Roses** (1897) 2:30
SARAH WALKER
Danish: J. P. Jacobsen. English: Delius
3. **The Bird's Story** (1889) 4:13
FELICITY LOTT
Norwegian: Ibsen. English: W. Grist
4. **Let Springtime come** (1897) 2:28
FELICITY LOTT
Danish: J.P. Jacobsen. English: Delius
5. **Il pleure dans mon cœur** (1895) 2:35
ANTHONY ROLFE JOHNSON
French: Paul Verlaine. English: Ernest Dowson
6. **Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit** (1895) 3:04
FELICITY LOTT
French: Paul Verlaine. English: Ernest Dowson
7. **La lune blanche** (1910) 2:37
ANTHONY ROLFE JOHNSON
French: Paul Verlaine. English: Susan Bottomley
8. **To Daffodils** (1915) 2:41
SARAH WALKER
Robert Herrick
(orch. Eric Fenby)
9. **I-Brasil** (1913) 3:38
ANTHONY ROLFE JOHNSON
Fiona Macleod (William Sharp)
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by Eric Fenby

sketches for **The Song of the High Hills** appear in a notebook he began to keep in 1887. For many years he spent all his summers in Norway (one ironic exception was that of 1911 when he remained in his home in rural France in order to wrestle with the unaccompanied chorus in **The Song of the High Hills**) and shortly after the Great War built a summer home at Lesjaskog, Gudbrandsdal. In a letter to Grainger he sums up his feelings: 'I should never think of settling too far from my beloved Norway and the light summer nights and all the poetry and melancholy of the Northern summer and the high mountain plateaus where humans are rare and more individual than in any other country; and where they also have deeper and more silent feelings than any other people.'

Although Delius implicitly evokes the Northern landscape in many works, **The Song of the High Hills** is a direct tribute. Delius wrote that in it he had tried to express 'the joy and exhilaration one feels in the mountains, and also the loneliness and melancholy of the higher solitudes, and the grandeur of the wide, far distances . . .'. The sectional form, unusually well-defined for Delius, has a precedent in an earlier hillscape, **Over the Hills and Far Away**: which suggests a relationship with the shape and outline of the hills themselves, the successive unfolding of new vistas, planes and perspectives as we make the ascent. As in most of Delius's nature-scenes, deft pictorial strokes are in evidence: an original use of timpani with three players to create a kind of huge cavernous resonance, particularly awesome in the coda; Alpine horns yodelling from one peak to another, chimingly punctuated by celesta (here, as with the voices, we have tried on this recording faithfully to reproduce Delius's prescribed effects of distance and echo); thunder and lightning (the three timpanists again, and cymbals); music of snowfields and rainclouds (dripping, trickling harps) and of obscuring and obstructive mists (dense-packed high violin ostinati). There is walking or striding music of much vigour, in which muscular three-part counterpoint replaces the kaleidoscopic, dissolving harmonies of the more self-indulgent Delius. So: another mountain travelogue like Richard Strauss' **Alpine Symphony**, a show of the outward world? No, since Delius's music is of the real secret world of the spirit of truth. He was a man with the true sense of sight, of insight. Here the hills are evoked not for their own sake (as in Strauss) but because they are signs and tokens of the universal human passion, they both veil and reveal the composer's ecstasy and inspiration. Delius had no belief in the 'God' of popular religious contrivance; yet he was profoundly religious in the sense that his music aspires and looks through nature to some immanent spiritual reality, unseen and unknown. In the **High Hills** the voice of this 'spiritual reality' is—the voice, human voices which, singing to no words, sound paradoxically un-human, an embodiment of 'man-in-nature' as Delius called them. Above their first entry—so ethereal that the ear may momentarily wonder if it's imagining them—Delius inscribes in the score: 'the wide far distance—the great solitude'. Listen to the song they sing, patently folk-song derived: the regular occurrence of modal and pentatonic melodic shapes within a Wagnerian 'curse-of-consciousness' chromatic context is all part of Delius's quest for renewal of the springs of life in youth and innocence—a quest the positive outcome of which is, as Wilfrid Mellers has pointed out in a crucial insight, all part of Delius's appeal to modern urban man. Eventually these super-natural voices (Percy Grainger's 'moaning nature voices?') steal in unaccompanied, disembodied, and draw us toward the

summit: the sheer sound, the sonority, of this moment is unique, literally out-of-this-world, of heaven, heavenly. Then the full orchestra combines with the chorus in achieving the climax. Delius would probably have derided as much my 'vision of the Divinity' as Mellers's 'losing of consciousness in identification with the eternal non-humanity of nature'. Both are to the point, both merely different ways of expressing, or interpreting, the same transcendental experience. Patrick Hadley simply wrote: 'words are idle to express the grandeur of this moment, as they are to express all the great moments in music; therefore the listener is advised to recall or imagine his feelings upon gaining the summit of the ideal mountain-range of his dreams'. Of course the intensity cannot be long sustained and the music of descent (abbreviated and condensed recapitulation of the first part, prior to the first entry of the chorus) supervenes; but — a telling stroke—the voices do not immediately abandon us, but for a while contrive to make a descant to our dimmer, wearier song-of-earth. Inevitably they grow fainter and are gradually lost to perception.

The orchestral songs, here recorded for the first time, are a distinct rarity. They, too, bear witness to Delius's Scandinavian sympathies, and the first group are all settings of Norwegian and Danish texts. **Twilight Fancies** (Bjørnson) and **The Bird's Story** (Ibsen) both date from 1889. The former is powerfully expressive, characteristic both in its appoggiatura-laden harmony and upward-thrusting triplet, ('freely would soar') both echt-Delian symbols of yearning. It had poignant personal significance for Delius's devoted wife-to-be Jelka Rosen: 'even now when this song is so popular and hackneyed I cannot think of it without a pang of the old passionate longing. For it symbolised my fear that such a poet as Delius could not find anything in me; that his evident interest and friendship would soon be over and that the world would then be a blank—the sun gone down for ever'. (As it turned out Jelka's fears were groundless). Delius orchestrated **The Bird's Story** in 1907 and made some lovely spring-sounds of dappled sunlight, chirruping birds and forest leaves rustling in the breeze; the musical substance with its naive folksong-like inflections is unexpectedly redolent of the Mahler of **Des Knaben Wunderhorn**. **Wine Roses** and **Let Springtime come**, both composed in the mid-to-late 1890s, are settings from the Danish of J.P. Jacobsen, one of Delius's favourite poets. Delius thought particularly well of the former song, as did Philip Heseltine/Peter Warlock. The blood-redness of roses as symbol of the life-force is a recurrent image in Jacobsen, and bitterly sweetly rendered here; the horn-chord at 'roses wild on the great highway' is authentic Delius, one of his unpredictable, inimitable brush-strokes of pure colour. Small wonder that after such a **memento mori** the efforts of the toppers to resume their carousing are doomed to early failure. The change of mood in **Let Springtime come** is similarly death-struck: spring invades and pervades the land in soft colours and airborne rhythms, but cannot lift the melancholy in the poet's own heart. A revised orchestration of the ending was dictated to Eric Fenby by Delius in 1929.

The first two of the three Verlaine settings belong (1895) to the composer's years of living in Paris: which, in **Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit**, doubtless explains the presence (at the words 'Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, la vie est là') of the syncopated pedal-point which is so striking a feature of the opening of the tone-poem **Paris — the Song of a Great City**. For Jelka Delius the opening lines of the poem (see insert) were forever linked with the view from the window of Delius's flat in the Montrouge area of Paris. **Il pleure dans mon cœur** is another minicityscape, with the sound of the rain quietly persisting in an even quaver ostinato until the passionate outburst at 'pourquoi'. **La lune blanche** came later (1911) when Delius was long settled in Grez-sur-Loing, near Fontainebleau, in the heart of the Impressionist country. It is a song-of-the-night, one of Delius's many, exquisitely veiled and remote, the noiseless passage of the moon across the sky beautifully reflected in the muted *divisi* strings at 'Un vaste et tendre apaisement'. Eric Fenby himself made this evocative orchestral transcription of **To Daffodils** at the request of Sarah Walker, who was determined to sing it. Delius surely would have approved the sound of the daffodils quivering in the spring breeze (tremolo strings) and the strategy of the woodwinds in lighting and shading the strings throughout. Finally **I-Brasil**—the title refers to one of the earthly paradises of Celtic mythology—is one of two works in which Delius limns that horizon which is an abiding poetic presence in all his music; the other is **The Song of the High Hills**. Their endings are more a recession, a dissolution into extremes of register, into a vast all-embracingness of earth and sky, into Nirvana. *Omnia exeunt in mysterium.*

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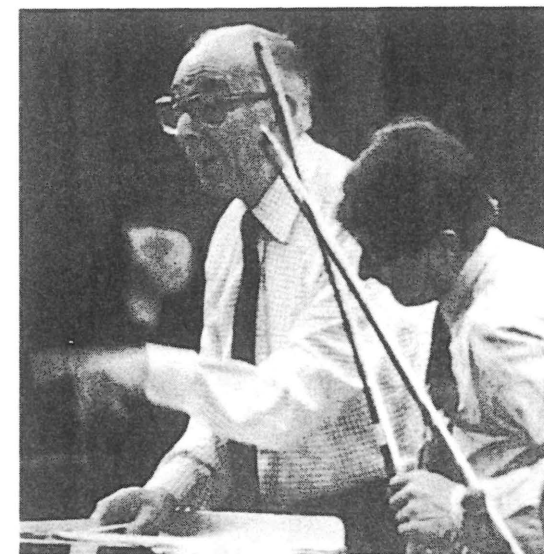
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In 1936, after writing his book **Delius as I Knew Him**, Fenby was engaged by Boosey and Hawkes to muster a body of new works for the firm. At the outbreak of the war he was commissioned in the Royal Army Education Corps, conducted the Southern Command Symphony Orchestra, and finally gave courses to help music students and teachers in the Forces take up civilian life again.

After demobilisation he returned to Yorkshire as director and founder of the Music Department of the North Riding Training College, a post which he held for 14 years. In 1962 he returned to London to become professor of composition at the Royal Academy of Music, London, (a post he held until 1978), and at the same time began to re-involve himself with the life and music of Delius as conductor, lecturer, broadcaster and recitalist both in Britain and Florida where Delius lived for a period of his life.



Eric Fenby with RPO leader Barry Griffiths at one of the sessions. Photo: © Francis Auger

The Song of the High Hills is published by Universal Edition. Songs 1, 3–7 and 9 published by Oxford University Press. Song 2 published by Stainer & Bell and 8 by Boosey & Hawkes. Recording Producer: Christopher Palmer
Recording Engineer: Bob Auger
Recording Location: *The Song of the High Hills*: Walthamstow Assembly Hall, 5 & 6 April 1983
Songs: Barking Assembly Hall, 2 December 1983
Front Cover: Norwegian lake and landscape by Jelka Rosen Delius, by courtesy of the Percy Grainger Home, White Plains, New York.
Photographer: Marty Merchant, New York.

Other Delius records on Unicorn-Kanchana:

DKP9008/9: (cassette RT9008/9B)

The Fenby Legacy—Music of Delius

Felicity Lott, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Thomas Allen, Julian Lloyd Webber, The Ambrosian Singers, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Eric Fenby, **Winner of the Gramophone Choral Award, 1981.**

UNS258: **Delius Sonatas Nos. 1-3** for violin and piano with introduction by Eric Fenby.

Ralph Holmes, violin, Eric Fenby, piano.

DKP 9021: **Frederick Delius/Lili Boulanger Piano and Chamber Music**, Julian Lloyd Webber, Eric Fenby, Eric Parkin, Barry Griffiths, Keith Harvey.

DKP 9022 (cassette DKP(C) 9022)

Frederick Delius: English, French and Scandinavian Songs

Felicity Lott, Sarah Walker, Anthony Rolfe Johnson
Eric Fenby, piano.

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FREDERICK DELIUS

(1862 – 1934)

English, French & Scandinavian Songs

**Felicity Lott, Soprano, Sarah Walker, Mezzo Soprano,
Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Tenor, Eric Fenby, Piano**

'I have always felt a compulsion to set words to music' – thus remarked Delius to me in 1931. The first phase of that compulsion – from the mid eighteen-eighties in Florida to the end of the century in France – saw the completion of three operas and miscellaneous instrumental works, and the bulk of some sixty cosmopolitan songs to Norwegian, Danish, English, French and German poems, a selection of which is presented here. Delius, though fluent in Norwegian and Danish, set many of these Scandinavian poems in German in which they were known in translations throughout Europe. In effect several songs are more singable in German than in the published English versions, and are so sung here.

SIDE I SCANDINAVIAN SONGS

1. **Twilight Fancies** (1889) 3:44
From the Norwegian of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson
English by F. S. Copeland Sarah Walker

A young princess sits alone in her summerhouse. Stirred by the horn calls of a boy minding sheep, she dreams of love as the sun goes down. Perhaps the most popular of Delius's songs, certainly one of the best of his earlier works, it was also a favourite of his wife, Jelka, who herself translated his songs into German from 1900 onwards.

2. **The Violet** (1900) 2:12
From the Danish of Ludwig Holstein
English by Frederick Delius Felicity Lott

This ditty makes a charming effect: its overall curve is skilfully shaped, and its harmonies still hold surprising freshness especially at the cadences.

3. **In the Garden of the Seraglio** (1897) .. 3:10
From the Danish of J. P. Jacobsen
English by Frederick Delius Felicity Lott

An Eastern fancy notable chiefly for the phrase in the accompaniment which Delius quoted four years later in the third movement of his *Mass of Life*, in which female voices float in rapt wordless adoration of life on "night's still silent waters". J. P. Jacobsen was one of Delius's favourite poets and inspired one of the masterpieces of his later 'Scandinavian' period, the choral-orchestral *An Arabesque*.

4. **Silken Shoes** (1897) 1:41
From the Danish of J. P. Jacobsen

English by Frederick Delius Anthony Rolfe Johnson
Delius incorporates melodic verse with lines of sequential melodic prose in keeping pace with this poem's emotion. It was this type of melody Grieg had in mind when he warned young Delius against Wagner's influence.

5. **Autumn** (sometimes entitled "Whither") (1900)
From the Danish of Ludwig Holstein ... 3:23
English by Frederick Delius Sarah Walker

There is verve and imagination in this song, and a sense of intuitive depth; and with it a prediction of the poignancy we find in Delius's later works, suggested here in the moving sequel with its questioning of the unknown.

6. **Young Venevil** (1889-90) 2:03
Poem by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson
English by Peter Pears Felicity Lott

This lively yet callous little episode, neatly told in two verses and as skilfully dramatised, is too often sung like a dirge. The singer almost needs to act the song.

7. **Irmelin Rose** (1897) 3:32
From the Danish of J. P. Jacobsen
English by Frederick Delius Felicity Lott

Jacobsen's narrative poem wherein bold medieval knights vie in wooing Princess Irmelin is based on a similar legend to that of Delius's opera *Irmelin* for which he wrote both music and libretto in 1890-2. Inevitably there are echoes of Irmelin's theme from the opera in the course of

this song and as late as 1930 Delius still thought well enough of it to make, with my help, an exquisite lyric for small orchestra; the *Irmelin Prelude*. The girl with the snow-cold heart is, incidentally, a major part of the complex imagery in the same poet's aforementioned *Arabesque*.

8. **Let Springtime come** (1897) 2:36
From the Danish of Ludwig Holstein
English by Frederick Delius Sarah Walker

This joyous evocation of the coming of spring suggested in the accompaniment is not for the singer. 'Springtime cannot bring me joy. I must await my own Springtime. When? When? Delius thought well of this song, and voiced precisely the same sentiment in the sixth song of his superb Dowson sequence *Songs of Sunset*.

SIDE II FRENCH SONGS

Delius's sensitively wrought French songs are French in spirit, without affectation, yet truly Delian. They were written at intervals between 1895 and 1919 when the last song *Avant que tu ne t'en ailles* was left unfinished and completed eventually by dictation in 1931. The songs are all to poems by Verlaine and evoke, with unusual precision in Delius, a correspondence in sound and mood implied in the poet's imagery.

1. **Il pleure dans mon coeur** (1895) 2:30
Anthony Rolfe Johnson

2. **Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit** (1895) .. 2:47
Felicity Lott

3. **La lune blanche** (1910) 2:07
Anthony Rolfe Johnson

4. **Chanson d'automne** (1911) 1:45
Sarah Walker

5. **Avant que tu ne t'en ailles** (1919) 3:26
Felicity Lott

ENGLISH SONGS

It was not Philip Heseltine, as supposed, but Lady Cunard who in 1914 introduced Delius to Elizabethan verse by giving him her own American editions of the *Queen's Garland* and the *King's Lyrics* with suggestions of those he might care to set. The ones he chose were by Shakespeare, Jonson, Nashe and Herrick, two of which follow.

6. **To Daffodils** (1915) 2:44
Poem by Robert Herrick Sarah Walker

This lyric laments the transience of life – an overmastering obsession with Delius – here mirrored in Nature in the fleetest of flowers, and in music which suggests the swift, almost march-like inevitability of time passing.

7. **So white, so soft,
so sweet is she** (1915) 1:47
Poem by Ben Jonson Anthony Rolfe Johnson

If an indispensable quality in a lyric is that smoothness without which there can be no enchantment, it is to be found here in this exquisite tribute of love.

8. **I-Brasil** (1913) 3:29
Poem by Fiona Macleod

Anthony Rolfe Johnson

The Celtic *I-Brasil*, surely Delius's most haunting song, evokes the sorrow on the wind calling us far away to the legendary islands of peace. The key of D and the long-drawn cadence with its deep pedal-point irresistibly recall the end of the *Requiem*, whose paeon to the eternally renewing power of nature – similarly Nordic-Celtic in tone – fades, likewise, beyond all horizons of mortal perception. D major, a long pedal-point and a gradual sinking deep into a dim distance are also common to Delius's ultimate musical statement, 'Now finale to the shore' in *Songs of Farewell*. Coincidence? There are depths of the creative unconscious which lie past the range of plummet. © Eric Fenby 1983



Eric Fenby at Delius's own Ibach three-quarter grand bequeathed to him by the composer, and used in this recording.

THE FENBY 'TOUCH' – A NOTE FROM THE PRODUCER

It was only through the timely and selflessly-rendered services of Eric Fenby that Delius, in his comparative old age, was able to enjoy a remarkable Indian Summer of the creative spirit. Now, in a different way, it is Dr. Fenby's turn. It is over 50 years since he first went out to Grez-sur-Loing, but only in recent times has he come into prominence not only as a *commentator* on Delius, but also – and in many ways even more significantly – as a *performer and interpreter* of the music which means more to him than any other.

Dr. Fenby is the first to protest 'technical deficiencies' and the fact that what he is now being called upon to do he "could have done much better 30 years ago but wasn't asked." But it can be argued that his powers have matured and strengthened past all telling as time has gone by, and that 30 years ago he would not, *could* not have produced the equal of the performances he has now committed to disc, braced as they are by authority and lit by imagination.

This 'legacy' is the more invaluable in that few composers are more reliant than Delius on the sympathetic musicianship, as opposed to merely technical expertise, of their interpreters. Particularly in respect of his chamber music and songs, where the piano is heavily involved: for Delius was no pianist, disliked the piano, and had not the slightest interest in exploiting piano sonority, texture or colour *per se*. He made constant use of the piano in composing, for the physical sound of sound was for him a *sine qua non*: but his timbral palette was the orchestra, that was the goal of his imaginative journeymen, and the piano merely a means to this great end, a stopping-place along the way. Small wonder, then that the piano parts in his songs and instrumental sonatas tend to make a frequently not-very-good-best of what was evidently for Delius a bad job. Internal evidence suggests that, in the case of the songs, Delius had an orchestral version not so much at the back of his mind as quite near the front, and in fact such versions do exist of several of the songs on this record. So the pianist is faced with the task not merely of encompassing all the notes – and in songs like 'Autumn' and 'Avant que tu ne t'en ailles' this alone takes some doing – but also of realising the unwritten, quasi-orchestral intention *behind* the notes; a whole, as it were, unvoiced range of colours which shift and reflect in that prismatic blend of chromatic and diatonic harmonies which constitutes part of Delius's uniquely personal testament of beauty. This requires poetic and imaginative qualities of a high order; and we must recall that the young Eric Fenby played many of these piano parts to Delius himself, often accompanying the greatest artists of the day, and won the composer's unstinted praise – rarely awarded, and never undiscerningly. This way – 'Fenby's way' – is assuredly how Delius wanted his piano accompaniments to sound; and the miracle of recording – and one is constantly struck afresh by its miraculousness – has enabled the tradition to be preserved, not by word-of-mouth, but in terms of living, pristine sound.

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Songs Nos. 1, 6 and 8 on Side I and Nos. 1-5 and No. 8 on Side II published by Oxford University Press.

Songs Nos. 2-5 and No. 7 on Side I and Nos. 6 and 7 on Side II published by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd.

Recording Producer: Christopher Palmer

Recording Engineer: Bob Auger

Recording Location: Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel on 28 and 29 September 1982.

Front Cover: Photograph by Nigel Brandt.

Sleeve layout: Arran Studios, Leicester.

Other Delius records on Unicorn-Kanchana:

DKP9008/9: (cassette RT9008/9B)

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UNS 258:

Delius Sonatas Nos. 1-3 for violin and piano with introduction by Eric Fenby.

Ralph Holmes, violin, Eric Fenby, piano.

DKP 9021:

Frederick Delius/Lili Boulanger

Piano and Chamber Music. Julian Lloyd Webber, Eric Fenby, Eric Parkin, Barry Griffiths, Keith Harvey.

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DKP 9022

Digital/Stereo (Full Texts enclosed)

Sleeve printed in Holland (P) 1983

DELIUS SEA DRIFT



A SONG OF THE HIGH HILLS

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic
Orchestra &
Liverpool Philharmonic Chorus

conducted by

Sir Charles Groves

(Chorus Master: Edmund Walters)



SIDE ONE
(24:54)

SEA DRIFT

John Noble
(baritone)

SEA DRIFT (1903), one of the great choral masterpieces of this century, is a setting of the middle section of Walt Whitman's poem *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*. A young birdwatcher by the sea, the she-bird that never returns, the he-bird's cries for its mate, and the boy's share in its grief—these everyday experiences Delius pondered and transmuted into deeply moving lyrical music symbolizing the boy's first awareness of the mystery of separation and death. The soloist identifies himself in turn with the boy-narrator and the anguished bird, while the chorus intensifies the drama by sharing the narration or in poignant re-echoings of the text:

CHORUS:

Once Paumanok,
When the lilac scent was in the air and
fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this seashore in some briers,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama,
two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs
spotted with brown,

BARITONE:

And every day the he-bird to and fro
near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouch'd on
her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too
close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing,
translating.

CHORUS:

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together,
Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black.

BARITONE:

Home, or rivers and mountains from
home,

CHORUS:

Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

BARITONE:

Till of a sudden,
Maybe kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not
on the nest,
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appear'd again.
And thence forward all summer in the
sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon
in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining
one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

CHORUS:

Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's
shore;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate
to me.

BARITONE:

Yes, when the stars glisten'd,
All night long on the prong of a moss-
scallop'd stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer, wonderful, causing
tears.
He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of
all men know.
Yes, my brother, I know,
The rest might not, but I have treasur'd
every note,
For more than once dimly down to the
beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams,
blending myself with the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the
echoes, the sounds and sights after
their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers
tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind
wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long,
Listen'd to keep, to sing, now
translating the notes,
Following you my brother.

CHORUS:

Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave
behind,

And again another behind embracing
and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me.
Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with
love, with love.

BARITONE:

O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love.
O night! do I not see my love fluttering
out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there
in the white?
Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!
High and clear I shoot my voice over
the waves,
Surely you must know who is here,
is here,
You must know who I am, my love.

CHORUS:

O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise,
will rise with some of you.
O throat! O trembling throat!
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must
be the one I want.

BARITONE:

Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow,
waning moon!
O under that moon where she droops
almost down into the sea!
O reckless despairing carols.
But soft! sink low!
Soft! let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment you husky
voic'd sea.
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate
responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she
might not come immediately to me,
Hither my love!
Here I am! here!
With this just sustain'd note I announce
myself to you,
This gentle call is for you my love,
for you.

CHORUS:

Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not
my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of
the spray,
Those are the dark shadows of leaves.
O darkness! O in vain!

BARITONE:

O I am very sick and sorrowful.
O brown halo in the sky near the moon,
drooping upon the sea
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!

And I singing uselessly, uselessly all
the night.
O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more!



SIDE TWO
(25:00)

A SONG OF THE HIGH HILLS

Miriam Bowen
(soprano)

Peter Bingham
(tenor)

Delius's sojourns in Florida and Norway, where for some years he had a cottage in the hills, twice led him to try his skill in expanding his feeling for nature-music in works on a grand scale. His first, *Appalachia* (1902) achieves continuity through variation form. His second, *A Song of the High Hills* (1911-12) rises and falls in a series of episodes, apt in imaginative instrumental textures describing an ABA contour in sound. Human voices eventually emerge as additional timbres of the orchestra. From a marvelous, hushed, unaccompanied entry they exalt briefly only to fade "as man's coming and going he knows not why, he knows not where!" A naive conception, it may be thought, but Delius's intention, certainly, as he intimated to the writer.

Eric Fenby

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Recording Producer: Christopher Bishop
Engineer: Stuart Eltham

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Art Direction: Marvin Schwartz
Design: Mizue Hamilton

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number
74-750070 applies to this recording.

SIR CHARLES GROVES CONDUCTS
THE MUSIC OF FREDERICK DELIUS
ON ANGEL RECORDS

A Mass of Life. With Heather Harper
(soprano), Helen Watts (contralto),
Robert Tear (tenor), Benjamin Luxon
(baritone); the London Philharmonic
Choir & Orchestra.
(Complete on two discs) SB-3781

Paris (The Song of a Great City), Eventyr
(Once Upon a time), Dance Rhapsody
No. 1. With the Royal Liverpool
Philharmonic Orchestra. S-36870

Songs of Sunset, Cynara, An Arabesque.
With Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano),
John Shirley-Quirk (baritone);
Liverpool Philharmonic Choir &
the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic
Orchestra. S-36603





DELIUS

SIDE ONE
(20:12)

Paris

The Song of a Great City
(Nocturne)

SIDE TWO
(27:20)

Eventyr

Once upon a Time
(Band 1, 15:30)

Dance Rhapsody No. 1

(Band 2, 11:45)

Royal Liverpool
Philharmonic
Orchestra
CHARLES GROVES
conductor

Recorded in the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool

Of the three works presented here, "Dance Rhapsody No. 1" belongs to a phase in Delius' art midway both in date and style between the two others—"Paris" and "Eventyr." An unaccountable inner change in the musical essence of his mind had slowly asserted itself in his music round about the turn of the century, and brought into play a mode of composing, intuitive and of singular character. Before the end of the first decade of such originals as "Sea-Drift," "Brigg Fair," "In a Summer Garden" and "Dance Rhapsody No. 1," there was little trace left of the mind that once had occupied itself with "Paris." A doubtful reaction to this opinion would not be surprising, nevertheless. The dates of Delius' early works—and even of some later ones, too—are sometimes misleading. Delius seldom altered a detail; revision to him meant expanding a work. These revisions were pondered well; more often than not they were put in hand leisurely long after first performances; then, and then only, were manuscripts offered to publishers. There were always several scores on the stocks; but the summer months were kept for reflection usually in the hills of Norway.

"Paris" certainly had its share of this improving course of action at this stage of Delius' development. The version produced by Dr. Hans Haym at Elberfeld in 1901 and Busoni in Berlin the following year was insufficiently realized compared to that published by Leuckart of Leipzig in 1909. This revised (expanded) version is now assigned to Universal Edition. Delius had made his bachelor home in the Paris of the 1890s. Eventually he settled at Grez-sur-Loing where, after writing the opera "Koanga," he indulged in this musical reverie of Paris. This was a crucial work for Delius. The dominance of Strauss, the vast orchestras of the day, and the urge to make his mark in Germany led him to prove his equal skill in instrumental counterpoint. The score includes six horns, three trumpets, with English horn, bass clarinet, double bassoon in addition to triple woodwind. Delius offers no program other than hints made privately in a letter dated 10th December 1910. "It is a Nocturne and describes my impressions of night and early dawn with its peculiar street cries and Pan's goatherd, etc. These cries are very characteristic of Paris and the piece begins and closes with them." Delius rarely depicts in music; but his opening depicts as well as evokes the sense of his own word-picture. The murmur of timpani, the darkness of double bassoon and basses tuned to low D; the eerie, brooding bass clarinet, the fitful stirrings of cellos—a few such strokes were all that were needed. One feels the city gradually awakening and stretching its limbs at the first light of day. Such fancies, however, at best are short-lived. The musical interest soon takes over as mood follows mood in continuous transition with metamorphosis of theme in episodes of lyrical beauty and brilliant invention in scherzo-like incidents. "Paris" is a man's music, virile, imaginative, as-

sured, with a painter's sense of orchestral color. The Delius of "Paris" was the handsome adventurer, the artist, bohemian and man-about-town with something of the recluse in him even then. The music derives not, as would seem, from his isolation as an artist, or his cosmopolitan way of life, but from the secret adventures of his spirit.

"Dance Rhapsody No. 1" was written in 1908. The composer was persuaded to conduct it initially at the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford a year later. It follows variation form, English in style, with a middle section as relief. The instrumentation is the same as in "Paris," except for the inclusion of a bass oboe, heard in the opening dialogue with English horn, then clarinet. Immediately after the French horn entry the conversation is halted abruptly! The dance tune trips from the tongue of the oboe to the pulse of a plucked, rising bass. Note the answer from the flute—a reiterative phrase with a quip from the oboes. Changing facets of this material act as links in the chain of variations. The English disposition of the music yields suddenly to alien rhythms as if some Spanish influence from Florida had lurked inert since Delius' youth. Eventually the music loses its fire and the variations are resumed with the dance tune in octaves in flute and clarinet. The emotional peak of the work is reached in the slow, penultimate variation for solo violin and muted-string harmonies of a beauty such as a poet recalled—"Once, in finesse of fiddles found I ecstasy." The bass oboe casts its spell and brings the action to a standstill. Strings in unison whirl the dance tune through a labyrinth of chromatics to emerge triumphant in the end.

Norway was second home to Delius. He loved its hills and countryside, its people, its literature and its language in which he was fluent from his early twenties. He made lasting friendships with its artists and writers; he fled to his cottage there in the Great War; he spent his summers there lying fallow, and when illness prevented his travelling there he kept in touch through Norwegian newspapers read aloud to him by his wife up to a month before his death. No wonder he relished the folk-tales of Norway taken down by word of mouth and collected by two enthusiasts—Peter Cristen Asbjørnsen and Jorgen Engebretsen Moë over a period of several years. These were published in 1841 under the title "Eventyr" at a time when national feeling in Norway was gathering strength to assert itself after centuries of dominance by Danes and Swedes in the tangled history of Scandinavian literature. No one has yet attempted to trace which of the tales, indeed, if any, had influenced Delius in 1917 when he came to write his own "Eventyr." This is his only orchestral piece that clearly suggests narrative, but its musical imagery much more subtly brings out the spirit of the tales. Delius reduces the brass to four horns, but adds to otherwise very large forces, bells, xylophone, and celesta. The musical interest turns on

the play and interaction of the two groups of themes. The one, expressing the idea in the strings of the warm-hearted superstitious country folk; the other, ideas in woodwind and brass of the weird interventions in their lives by the frightening creatures of these legends—the trolls, the giants, demons, pixies. Delius' textures in "Eventyr" are more terse than those in "Paris" and "Dance Rhapsody No. 1." There is also the surprise of attractive new matter as in "Paris" in the reprise. Two powerful climaxes end in shouts which are sometimes omitted in performance. The music moves forward with more compulsion than that which propels the dream-like structures by which he is more widely known. This, and the graphic character of the piece—with its instant feeling of "Once upon a time . . ."—may account for its clamorous reception abroad in places where hitherto Delius' music has met with some bewilderment. "Eventyr" was first heard in London in 1919. It was conducted by Sir Henry Wood, whose promotion of Delius, now forgotten, earned him its dedication.

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THE MUSIC OF FREDERICK DELIUS ON ANGEL RECORDS

Concerto for Cello & Orchestra • A Song Before Sunrise • Songs of Farewell for Double Chorus & Orchestra. With Jacqueline du Pré (cello), Royal Choral Society, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. S-36285

English Tone Poems—Ireland: London Overture • Bax: Tintagel • Delius: Walk to the Paradise Garden • Prelude to Irmelin • Song of Summer. With the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli. S-36415

In a Summer Garden • On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring • Summer Night on the River • La Calinda from "Koanga" • Intermezzo & Serenade from "Hassan" • Late Swallows • A Song Before Sunrise. With Robert Tear (tenor) & the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli. S-36588

Appalachia (Variations on an Old Slave Song for Chorus & Orchestra) • Brigg Fair (An English Rhapsody). With the Ambrosian Singers & the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli. S-36756

Songs of Sunset • Cynara • An Arabesque. With Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano), John Shirley-Quirk (baritone), Liverpool Philharmonic Choir & the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Charles Groves. S-36603

A Mass of Life. With Heather Harper (soprano), Helen Watts (contralto), Robert Tear (tenor), Benjamin Luxon (baritone) & the London Philharmonic Choir & Orchestra conducted by Charles Groves. SB-3781

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 72-750485 applies to this recording.

Art Direction & Design: Marvin Schwartz
Cover painting photographed by Giraudon, Paris.





Delius loved the northern scene. There were years when he seemed possessed by it whenever he took up his pen to compose. A perusal of a catalogue of his works will show the extent of this passionate interest, notably from 1908-14, when his mind ranged in musical accord with the nature poetry of the Dane, J. P. Jacobsen, in the opera *Fennimore and Gerda*, the choral *Arabesque*, and wordless *Song of the High Hills* of Norway.

It will also hint at his working habits. The moment he felt intuition wane he would put aside the main task in hand and take up something entirely different — *Summer Night on the River*, for instance, an exquisite parenthesis to the *Arabesque*; or he would work at the seemingly intractable *Life's Dance* which had defied his efforts at convincing solution ever since 1899 when the first version, *The Dance goes on*, had been based on an extravagant Danish drama, *Dansen Gaar*, by Helge Rode.

It was England, not Scandinavia, however, that impelled his major orchestral impressions of the northern scene he had known as a boy when riding his pony on the Yorkshire moors — *North Country Sketches*, written at his home in rural France between 1913-14. There were yet to be two more northern tokens — the strangely improbable Ballad for orchestra, *Eventyr*, (Once upon a time: after Ashjörnsen's Norwegian folk-tales) which had occupied Delius during World War I while living at his cottage in Norway, and the physically improbable English epilogue which brought this northern phase to a close—the gentler *Song of Summer* which followed in 1929.

I cannot pretend to know what Delius sought to convey precisely beyond the purely musical content of his *North Country Sketches*. In the six years that on and off I was his musical amanuensis and one of his household, I doubt if his conversation about music exceeded twenty minutes all told; and this mostly at my initiation. Otherwise talk about music was taboo. What insight I have into Delius' music I learned through his dictations; by noting his reactions when I played them to him with varying accent or phrasing; from his comments on radio performances of his music, or the rare remark about his ponderings. There is no program as such to *North Country Sketches*. The clues, I think, to his mind here, apart from those given in the titles of the movements, are in his observations on life. "Man is nothing! Nature alone recurs!" This was the nub of his thought at all times. Despite a degree of pictorial suggestion unusual in Delius in the first two movements, we surely hear the *spirit* of the wind sighing at the falling of the year and man's irremediable hold like a leaf.

The marvelously imaginative colourings of texture enclosed in the familiar 'Delius sound' are projected with aptness and acute sensitivity. The Mazurka-like Dance, characteristic of Delius, is again, I feel, a dance of the spirit rather than feet; fitful, wayward, changeable in turn, as if only with thoughts of recurring Spring can the heart in Winter exult in dance. The last impression, The March of Spring, throbs to the rhythms of 'Spring's awakening'; the original title of this movement. The downward progression of drooping lines that shape

DELIUS

SIDE ONE (26:39)

NORTH COUNTRY SKETCHES

1. Autumn — The Wind Soughs in the Trees
2. Winter Landscape
3. Dance
4. The March of Spring — Woodlands, Meadows and Silent Moors

SIDE TWO

1. LIFE'S DANCE (Lebenstanz)
(15:14)
2. A SONG OF SUMMER
(9:39)

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTED BY

SIR CHARLES GROVES

the impression of languishing Autumn and the static bareness of Winter are gone. The impression of Spring is of upward movement exhilarating in bravura passages with meadowland dalliings in oboe arabesque which lead to rapture in the strings until the march ends in serenity. The score, inscribed to Albert Coates, was first performed by Sir Thomas Beecham at a London Symphony Orchestra's Concert in London in 1915.

Delius made three versions of *Life's Dance* before he was finally satisfied. The first, *La Ronde Se Déroule* (*The Dance goes on*) symphonic poem, based on the drama already mentioned, began its course under Alfred Hertz at St. James' Hall, London, in 1899. The development section was not convincing so Delius, preserving the original opening, set about revising and expanding it. The second version, entitled *Life's Dance*, by now dissociated from the drama, was introduced by Julius Buth in Düsseldorf in 1904 and met with success in Germany — even more than did *Paris*, it seems. But Delius found the coda weak and reorchestrated several passages. The third version, with the same title, was brought out by Oscar Fried in Berlin in 1912. Delius was delighted with the result and dedicated the work to Fried. He wrote to his publishers Tischer & Jagenberg: "I think the Dance of Life (Life's Dance) is my best orchestral work. I have had it in my file for some years for the ending did not please me very much but at last I have found what I was looking for and it is now complete." Though Tischer & Jagenberg published it at once, the work still remains almost unknown. In the hope

of a performance in 1933, Delius told me: "I wanted to depict the Turbulence, the joy, energy, great striving of youth — all to end at last in the inevitable death."

Whereas in *North Country Sketches* Delius uses double woodwind and sub-divides his strings throughout, often into as many as twelve parts, in *Life's Dance* he has triple woodwind but rarely divides the strings. The score of *Life's Dance* is an immediate rebuke to those who accuse him of lack of skill in manipulating traditional counterpoint. If anything he is too inventive at times for the rapid pace of his figurations. These, when chromatic and widely spread provide as severe a test for players as any tone-poem by Richard Strauss, whose scores Delius had carefully studied. The rondo-like form of *Life's Dance* certainly owes much to this attention. The work is not without idiosyncrasy. The reflective passages in compound time beginning in the duet for violas and cellos call to mind the *Mass of Life*, but the affinity between the opening phrase of the dance and that of Elgar's Violin Concerto is indeed a remarkable coincidence. *Life's Dance* is the culmination of Delius' power in this type of invention before he found the unique and unmistakable voice of his own.

In *A Song of Summer* the same large forces are deployed as in *Life's Dance*, but how differently the ear can tell. The work is based on material salvaged from an earlier tone-poem *A Poem of Life and Love* dating from 1918 with transitions and new material dictated to the writer by Delius, now blind and paralysed, in 1929: "I want you to write down this new opening for the new work. Bring your score-paper and sit beside me . . . I want you to imagine that we are sitting on the cliffs in the heather looking out over the sea. The sustained chords in the high strings suggest the clear sky and calmness of the scene . . . 7/4 in a bar (four and a three; divided strings, chord of D major — A, D, F# doubled at the octave, lowest note the A string of the violas . . .)" The work was heard for the first time under its new title at the Promenade Concerts in 1931 conducted by Sir Henry Wood.

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Recording Producer: John Willan

Engineer: Stuart Eltham

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 75-750619
applies to this recording.

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A Mass of Life. With Heather Harper (soprano), Helen Watts (contralto), Robert Tear (tenor), Benjamin Luxon (baritone); the London Philharmonic Choir & Orchestra. (complete on two discs) SB-3781

Paris (The Song of a Great City), Eventyr (Once Upon a time), Dance Rhapsody No. 1. With the Royal Liverpool Orchestra. S-36870

Sea Drift*, A Song of the High Hills. With John Noble (baritone)*, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra & Liverpool Philharmonic Chorus (Chorus Master: Edmund Walters). S-37011

Songs of Sunset, Cynara, An Arabesque. With Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano), John Shirley-Quirk (baritone), Liverpool Philharmonic Choir & the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. S-36603



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PRINTED IN U.S.A.

S-36603

STEREO



JANET BAKER
(mezzo-soprano)



JOHN SHIRLEY-QUIRK
(baritone)

DELIUS

Songs of Sunset

Cynara · An Arabesque

Liverpool Philharmonic Choir
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
CHARLES GROVES (conductor)

Side One 29:33

Songs of Sunset

Janet Baker, John Shirley-Quirk,
Liverpool Philharmonic Choir
and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

Writers on art are constantly drawing attention to the preoccupation of certain artists with some central theme which recurs throughout their work. For instance, the Mother and Child theme which dominates the inspiration of Henry Moore. Similarly with Delius. This record contains music which illustrates varied aspects of the theme from which he rarely strayed whenever he set words to music; a theme which obsessed him increasingly from his early opera *Koanga*, through the choral works *Appalachia*, *Sea-Drift*, *Songs of Sunset* to *An Arabesque*—the transience of creaturely love, its partings, frailties and separations. The two poets on whom he has drawn here are Ernest Dowson, who like Delius was happier in France than in England, and the Dane, Jens Peter Jacobsen, who assuaged Delius' passion for what he regarded as his spiritual home—Norway and its mountains where, in his prime, so much of his final music was contemplated before being written down on his return to his rural retreat in France.

It is doubtful if Dowson is much read these days, but his poetry, perhaps now as faded as the pressed flowers in Delius' well-thumbed copy of his verse, lives in *Songs of Sunset*. Delius' own musical poetry penetrates far beyond the verbal imagery to the very essence of the mood which is the singular quality of the music itself, even without the use of words. The work, which is continuous, is unified by an inner compulsion difficult to define but inevitable in effect. Its texture is relatively simple; the choral writing is duplicated in the orchestra more than is usual in Delius, particularly in the opening choruses where the downward pull of chromaticism combined with pace and tone does not make for ease; yet the orchestration is an object lesson in the sparing and imaginative coloring by the instruments. The trombones and tuba make only five short entries in the whole piece.

A dominant pedal—(Delius began *A Village Romeo and Juliet* in exactly the same way)—then the chorus enters on the second beat and sings of the day that is almost done for lovers. On the word "lies," (at the cadence "Faded it lies in the dust") a little love-call can be heard from flute and English horn which is never absent from one's ear in some form or another throughout the invention. This is followed by a pas-

sionate duet, paraphrased from Propertius, "Cease smiling, dear, a little while be sad," and the chorus sighs of love, the twilight of the heart in dreamful autumn. The mood is sustained in the beautiful soprano lyric, "Exceeding sorrow consumeth my sad heart" and the baritone's song of the "waters of separation." Gaiety is restored momentarily in the lovers' hearts in the ensuing chorus which extols the blitheness of nature in full bloom. But the lovers realize that the spring of the soul for them is over; their love can never bloom again. The baritone then reflects on the weariness of love—"I was not sorrowful, but only tired of everything that ever I desired," and the work closes in a choral epilogue "They are not long the days of wine and roses," and fades characteristically "within a dream."

Side Two 21:06

Cynara

Band one 9:28

John Shirley-Quirk and the Royal
Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

In the spring of 1929, Sir Thomas Beecham wrote to Delius asking if he had an unpublished work for voice and orchestra to include as a novelty in the programs of the festival of Delius' music which he was proposing to give in the autumn of that year. I was instructed accordingly to look through the piles of faded pencil sketches (all in full score) that had accumulated from a lifetime's work. Along with the sketches of *Songs of Sunset* was one I could not place. On playing it over to Delius, he recognized it immediately as a setting for baritone and orchestra of Dowson's best-known poem *Cynara* which he had abandoned, indeed quite forgotten, after judging its inclusion inappropriate in the scheme of *Songs of Sunset* for which it was intended initially. It was quite complete in every detail up to the words "Then Falls thy shadow, Cynara," at which there was a blank. Delius decided to fill it, and, after some painful and frustrating hours of work, managed to complete the remaining bars by dictation. I shall never forget my thrill when I took down the telling chord on the trombones on the final word "Cynara!"

The success of this dictation was as crucial to Delius as to me. If it failed to sound well in performance he would give up trying to compose altogether. When at last I sat beside him somewhat apprehensively in Queen's Hall at the orchestral rehearsal, I had no idea that before leaving Grez-sur-Loing for England he had told his wife, Jelka, to sew three fivers into the lining of his jacket "for Eric, if it comes off well." I got my fivers

and Sir Thomas his novelty, which was first sung by Roy Henderson at one of the festival concerts. Subsequently, before it was published, Delius added the present ending with its reference to the opening bars.

An Arabesque

Band two 11:33

John Shirley-Quirk, Liverpool Philharmonic Choir
and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

This superb work, first performed at Newport, Wales, in 1920, was completed while Delius was staying at Sir Thomas Beecham's house at Watford in 1915. He had been compelled to leave his home at Grez before the German advance; had fled to England with his wife and was awaiting permission to cross the North Sea from Newcastle to Bergen and remain in Norway at his cottage in the hills until the end of the war. Jacobsen's poem is a strange utterance in which human passion is personified in the god Pan; a lover's rhapsody on the briefness of bliss. Philip Heseltine's English translation, I suspect, is a little extravagant here and there: Jacobsen, apparently, was very much the countryman, a botanist whose translation of Darwin's *Origin of Species* won him far greater renown than his poetry. There is ample power here in Delius' music; an effortless virtuosity in deploying his voices and orchestra in a refined and masterly means of expression. The opening sounds, reminiscent of the last movement of the first violin sonata, rise mysteriously from the depths in divided violas and cellos to flower in an expressive, descending, sequential figure in the violins which plays an important role in the eventual course of the music. Delius delights in arabesques in the woodwind and maintains independent divided string parts in great freedom throughout, so that the chorus has its own autonomous life in the texture, and breaks the convention that the chorus basses must double the orchestral basses. The same size orchestra is made to produce richer and full sonorities in more copious designs than those of the more intimate *Songs of Sunset*, while the role of the chorus is reduced to effective commentaries on the sentiments expressed by the baritone soloist. Yet Delius never surpassed the sheer magic of the final pages evoking a musical image of the death of love mirrored in the bleakness of a Northern winter landscape.

from notes by Eric Fenby

ENCLOSED: BOOKLET WITH COMPLETE TEXT

Janet Baker and John Shirley-Quirk are S. Hurok Artists

Recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust.

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 76-750235 applies to this recording.

Side One

Songs of Sunset

for Soprano and Baritone Soloists, Mixed Chorus and Orchestra

CHORUS

A song of the setting sun!
The sky in the west is red,
And the day is all but done:
While yonder up overhead,
All too soon,
There rises so cold the cynic moon.

A Song of a Winter day!
The wind of the north doth blow,
From a sky that's chill and gray,
On fields where no crops now grow,
Fields long shorn
Of bearded barley and golden corn.

A song of a faded flower!
'Twas plucked in the tender bud,
And fair and fresh for an hour,
In a Lady's hair it stood.
Now, ah! now,
Faded it lies in the dust and low.

BARITONE AND SOPRANO SOLOISTS
Cease smiling, Dear! a little while be sad,
Here in the silence, under the wan moon.
Sweet are thine eyes, but how can I be glad,
Knowing they change so soon?
O could this moment be perpetuate!
Must we grow old, and leaden eyed and gray
And taste no more the wild and passionate
Love sorrows of today?
O red pomegranate of thy perfect mouth!
My lips' life fruitage might I taste and die,
Here in thy garden where the scented south
Wind chastens Agony;
Reap death from thy live lips in one long kiss,
And look my last into thine eyes and rest:
What sweets had life to me sweeter than this
Swift dying on thy breast?
Or, if that may not be, for Love's sake, Dear!
Keep silence still and dream that we shall lie,
Red mouth to mouth, entwined, and always hear
The south wind's melody,
Here in thy garden, through the sighing boughs,
Beyond the reach of time and chance and change
And bitter life and death and broken vows,
That sadden and estrange.

CHORUS

Pale amber sunlight falls across
The reddening October trees,
That hardly sway before a breeze
As soft as summer: summer's loss
Seems little, dear! on days like these!
Let misty Autumn be our part!
The twilight of the year is sweet:
Where shadow and the darkness meet.
Our love, a twilight of the heart
Eludes a little time's deceit.
Are we not better and at home
In dreamful Autumn we who deem
No harvest joy is worth a dream?
A little while and night shall come,
A little while then let us dream
[. . . dream . . . dream].

SOPRANO SOLOIST

Exceeding sorrow consumeth my sad heart!
Because tomorrow we must depart,
Now is exceeding sorrow all my part.
Give over playing, cast thy woe away:
Merely laying thine head my way:
Prithee give over playing, grave or gay.
Be no word spoken; weep nothing; let a pale
Silence, unbroken silence prevail!
Prithee, be no word spoken, lest I fail!
Forget tomorrow! weep nothing: only lay
In silent sorrow thine head my way!
Let us forget tomorrow this one day.

BARITONE SOLOIST

By the sad waters of separation
Where we have wandered by divers ways,
I have but the shadow and imitation
Of the old memorial days.
In music I have no consolation,
No roses are pale enough for me;
The sound of the waters of separation
Surpasseth roses and melody.
By the sad waters of separation
Dimly I hear from an hidden place
The sigh of mine ancient adoration:
Hardly can I remember your face.

If you be dead, no proclamation
Sprang to me over the waste, gray sea:
Living, the waters of separation
Sever for ever your soul from me.
No man knoweth our desolation;
Memory pales of the old delight:
While the sad waters of separation
Bear us on to the ultimate night.

CHORUS

See how the trees and the osiers lithe
Are green bedecked and the woods are blithe,
The meadows have donned their cape of flowers,
The air is soft with sweet May showers
And the birds make melody:

BARITONE SOLOIST

But the spring of the Soul, the spring of the Soul
Cometh no more for you or for me.

CHORUS

The lazy hum of the busy bees
Murmureth thro' the almond trees;
The jonquil flaunteth a gay, blonde head,
The primrose peeps from a mossy bed,
And the violets scent the lane,
The violets scent the lane.

SOPRANO SOLOIST

But the flowers of the Soul, the flowers of the Soul,
For you and for me bloom never again.

CHORUS

Bloom never again, bloom never again, bloom never
again.

BARITONE SOLOIST

I was not sorrowful, I could not weep
And all my memories were put to sleep.
I watched the river grow more white and strange,
All day till evening, I watched it change.
All day till evening I watched the rain
Beat wearily upon the window pane.

I was not sorrowful but only tired
Of everything that ever I desired.
Her lips, her eyes, all day became to me
The shadow of a shadow utterly.
All day mine hunger for her heart became
Oblivion, until the evening came
And left me sorrowful inclined to weep
With all my memories that could not sleep.

SOLOISTS AND CHORUS

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate:
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.
They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream our path emerges for a while,
Then closes within a dream, within a dream.—

(Ernest Dawson)

Side Two

Band One

Cynara

for Baritone Voice with Orchestra

BARITONE SOLOIST

Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine
There fell thy Shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

All night upon mine heart I felt her warm heart beat,
Night long within mine arms in love and Sleep she lay;
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth were sweet;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
When I awoke and found the dawn was gray:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I have forgot much, Cynara! Gone with the wind,
Flung roses riotously, riotously with the throng,
Dancing to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, all the time because the dance was long:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I cried for madder music, and for stronger wine.
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

(Ernest Dawson)

Band Two

An Arabesque

for Baritone Solo, Mixed Chorus and Orchestra

SOLOIST

Hast thou in gloomy forests wandered?
Knowst thou Pan?
I too have known him,
Not in gloomy forests,
When all the silence spake:
No, no, him have I never known,
Only the Pan of Love have I endured,
Then was hushed all that speaketh.

In a sunbathed meadow grows a wondrous herb;
Only in deepest stillness
Under the beams of the burning sun
Its blossom unfolds itself
For a fleeting moment.

CHORUS

Ah!—Ah!—

SOLOIST

It gleams like the frenzied eye
Of one enchanted,

CHORUS SOPRANOS

. . . like the frenzied eye of one enchanted.

SOLOIST

Like the glow of a dead bride's blushes.
It is this flow'r I have gazed on
As a lover.

CHORUS

She was like the Jasmin's sweet-scented snow,
Red blood of poppies circled in her veins,

SOLOIST

Red blood of poppies circled in her veins!

CHORUS

Her death cold hands and white as marble
In her lap reposed
Like waterlilies in deepest lake.
And her words they fell as softly
As petals of appleblossom
On the dewladen grass, on the dewladen grass;

BARITONE

But there were hours.
When they rose upleaping cold and clear
As the jet of a silvery fountain.

CHORUS

Cold and clear, cold and clear.

SOLOIST

Sighing was in her laughter,

CHORUS

Sighing was in her laughter,

SOLOIST AND CHORUS

Gladness was in her pain;
By her all things were vanquished,—

SOLOIST

And nought e'er dared gainsay her
But the spell of her own two eyes.

CHORUS

But the spell of her own two eyes.

SOLOIST

From the poisonous lilies' dazzling chalice
Drank she to me, to me,
To him too that hath perished
And to him who now at her feet is kneeling,

CHORUS

She was like to the Jasmin's sweet-scented snow.

SOLOIST

With us all she drank,
Yea she drank and her glance then obeyed her,
From the bowl of troth to eternal plighting
From the poisonous lilies' dazzling chalice!

All now is past!

CHORUS

All now is past! is past!

SOLOIST

On the bleak heath snow-bestrewn,
In the bare brown wood
Stands a lonely thornbush,
The black winds they scatter its leaves!
One after another,
One after another
Shedding its blood-reddened berries
In the white, cold snow,
Its glowing red berries in the cold, white snow.—

Knowst thou Pan?

CHORUS

Knowst thou Pan?

SOLOIST AND CHORUS

Knowst thou Pan? Knowst thou Pan?

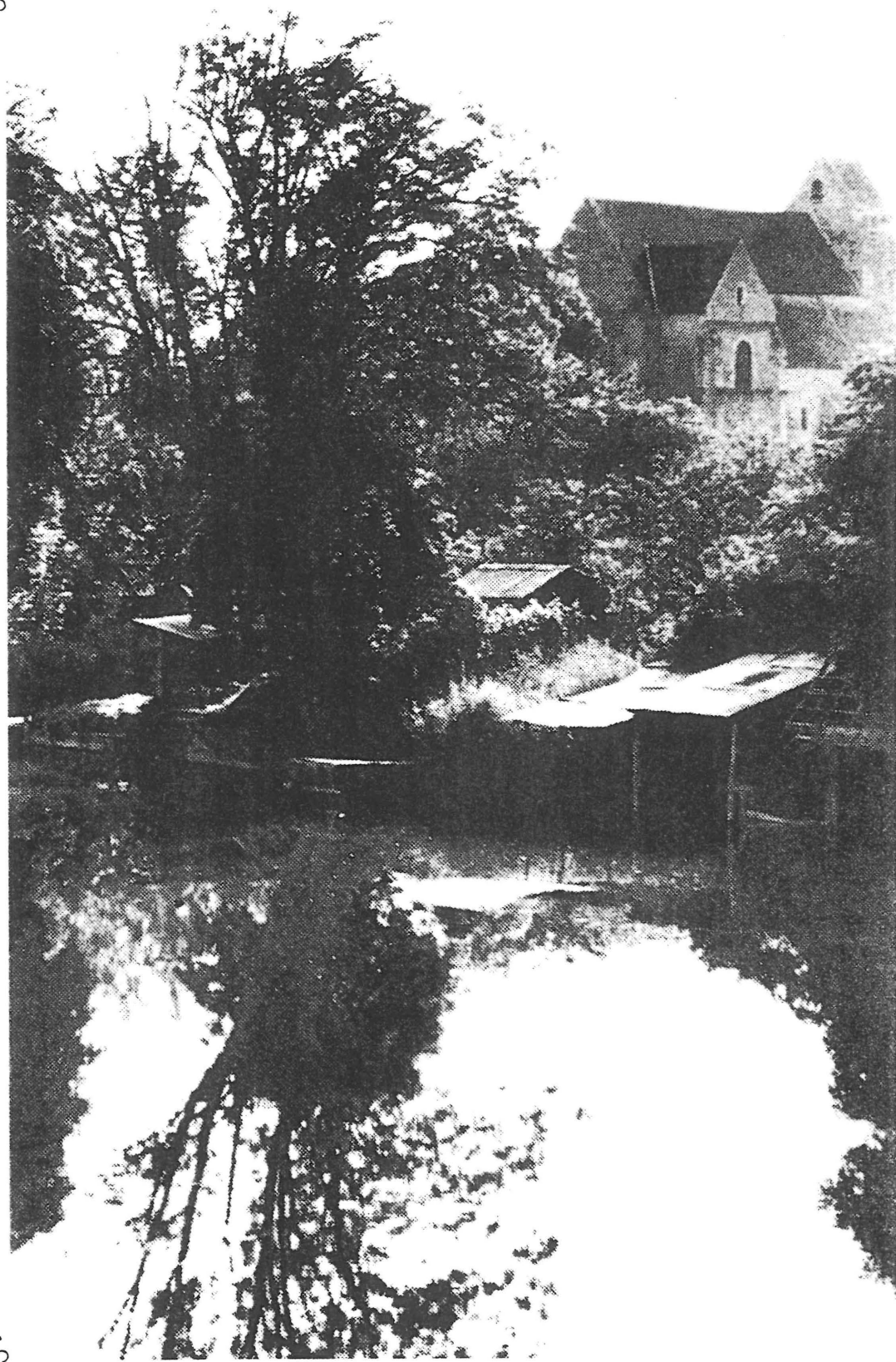
Jens Peter Jacobsen
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S-36603





DELIUS GARDEN AT GREZ-SUR-LOING



Delius

side one (26:56)

DELIUS:
Violin Concerto
With moderate tempo -
Vigorously - Allegretto

YEHUDI MENUHIN
(violin)

side two (21:42)

DELIUS:
Double Concerto
Quietly - With
moderate speed -
Molto tranquillo

YEHUDI MENUHIN
(violin)

PAUL TORTELIER
(cello)

Royal Philharmonic
Orchestra

MEREDITH DAVIES
cond.

Frederick Delius is commonly thought of above all as a poet of nature in her tranquillities, and nearly all his best-known works draw their inspiration from some aspect of the natural scene around him — be it the moors of his native Yorkshire, the mountains of his beloved Norway, the magnolias and everglades of Florida, or the country around the Ile de France where he made his home for some 40 years.

Yet he also wrote a surprisingly large quantity of so-called "pure" music, music composed apparently independently of any external stimulus. Apart from the two concertos presented on this record, there are sonatas for violin and piano (three); a concerto, sonata and *Caprice and Elegy* for cello; a piano concerto; a string quartet; and a considerable amount of juvenalia.

Still, the essential stuff of his music remains the same, however its outward

forms of presentation may vary: It is all a song of the earth, a rhythm of natural ebbings and flowings, a glorification of the passing moment mingled with regret at the brevity of its passage, ecstasy and the memorial after-ring of ecstasy, the full-blown flower of human passions and the handful of sweet-scented petals strewn the ground in its wake. This is Delius's overriding preoccupation in all his mature work and one which we would be justified in considering ill enough suited to the expressive limitations of concerto and sonata form, presupposing as they do both a classically orientated structural framework and a certain displayed expertise in the style of writing for the solo instrument.

Delius looked upon both formal dogmatism and technical virtuosity *per se* with extreme disfavor, and as usual he goes his own way. He allows the substance of the music to dictate its form; and the myth of his alleged "formlessness" was exploded once and for all (and apropos the Violin Concerto in particular) by the late Deryck Cooke in a detailed analysis printed in *A Delius Companion* (ed. by Christopher Redwood, London, 1976) to which all interested in the workings of the composer's subliminal creative mind are referred.

As for the question of technical virtuosity, none of the three concertos of Delius's maturity (those for violin, cello, and violin and cello) offer scope for display in the conventional sense. If the solo parts are fraught with difficulties, more often than not they are kind of involuntary difficulties that result from Delius's habitual disregard of the human agency in performance. No, Delius requires of his soloists not that they be virtuosos but that they be musicians. Delius was one of the most *musical* composers who ever lived and he demands a commensurate degree of musicianship in those who would interpret him.

Delius's three string concertos are generally accounted superior to his Piano Concerto, nor was he ever a master of the keyboard medium. The reason is not difficult to find. One of the salient characteristics of his work is its well-nigh seamless sense of flow, a quality which he himself prized above all other in music. In melodic terms, this means a sustained *cantabile* of line which lies outside the scope of the piano.

The saturated lyricism of Delius's music is basically a free flowering from folk song, because folk song is the music of "nature" in both a general and specific sense; and of manmade instruments, only the strings can approximate to the legato of the human voice with its infinite range of expressive subtleties and nuances, its passion and vibrancy, its communicative directness. Add to this the fact that the violin was Delius's own instrument (as a young man his technique was sufficiently assured to permit of his playing the Mendelssohn concerto in

public) and we need not be surprised to find the Violin Concerto the best of his concerti, his most totally satisfactory "abstract" composition, in fact one of the finest of all his works.

The Violin Concerto was composed at Grez-sur-Loing, the composer's home in rural France, in 1919. It received its first performance in London's Queen's Hall that same year with Albert Sammons (the dedicatee) as soloist and Sir Adrian Boult conducting. It is in one continuous movement which may fairly be described as rhapsodic, using the term as an expression neither of disparagement nor approbation. As Deryck Cooke has said, it merely conveys some idea of Delius's "wonderful spontaneous poetic flow, that miraculous freedom from all the clanking machinery of traditional formal methods . . . the Concerto . . . is a superb example of germination and rigorous thematic development but of a uniquely plastic kind, far removed from the traditional hammer-and-chisel type."

The "continuous movement" may be realistically subdivided into three linked sections. The first is a kind of sonata exposition in which the main theme of the entire work, impassioned and distinctive in contour, is presented by the soloist in the third bar. Complementary motifs of a more feminine nature follow and all are juggled and shuffled at will, the process being punctuated at intervals by strong statements of the main theme *in status quo*. The last of them leads to a markedly contrasting motif, a kind of peremptory brass fanfare which at this stage has little chance to assert itself since the slow section is now all set to interpose. This is a moonlit romance of sustained poetic inspiration, as it were a love scene from *Romeo and Juliet* with a dialogue magically distilled into the most ravishing music.

The main theme predominates, lyrically transfigured and developed, but now it is answered (a theme for Juliet, to continue the metaphor) by a melody incorporating a very Delian hallmark, the so-called "Scotch Snap." Here it evokes the composer's almost contemporaneous setting of Fiona MacLeod's *I-Brasil* in which the sorrow on the wind is heard calling us away to the legendary islands of peace. A cadenza based on material which will recur in the coda leads into the third section, heralded by an exultant full-orchestra delivery of the main theme. The brass fanfares return to the fray with renewed vigor. Eric Fenby has said of this climactic passage that "the whole orchestra seems to be shaking its angry fist at you" — a comment which implies much about Delius the man as revealed in his music. Delius had an exquisite sensibility; he vibrated in harmony with every delicate emotion. But he also had the escape of intellect and of a well defined and singleminded outlook on life. He conceived a great end, and worked

towards it without deviating and without tiring; but this ruthlessness and self-willfulness shows through in his music on rare occasions only, this being one of them.

The upshot of this outburst, however, is unexpected: a kind of interpolated mini-scherzo in Delius's favorite light dancing 6/8 meter. It never pretends to be more than a temporary foil to the main theme and that of the slow section, and before long the clouds are clearing for the sunset and for the apparition of the evening star. In this, the coda, haunted memories of lovely and loved things past — primarily the main theme and that of the cadenza of the slow section — are all wrought into a faultless strain of poetry. Flute, horn and solo violin have the last words as the music finally sinks to rest in the kind of ineffably tranquil, lingering cadence that Delius made peculiarly his own.

The Double Concerto was written in 1915 and is dedicated, like the *Requiem*, "to the memory of all young artists fallen in the war." Like the Violin Concerto, it is in one continuous movement with links between the component sections, the structure basically ABA with B a kind of dream interlude. But if the overall shape of the Violin Concerto pays lip service to formal tradition, the first section of the Double Concerto falls with uncommon readiness almost into conventional first-movement sonata form.

It opens somberly with a theme that is abruptly dismissed as the main *moderato* begins, not to be re-called until considerably later. The first subject is of a rather strenuously lyrical character, especially when passed from the violin to the middle and upper reaches of the cello compass. Soft drum beats announce the second subject which Ronald Stevenson has perfectly summarized as "a rough kind of tramping quick march on strings . . . it may be a reminiscence of Delius's tramping of his Yorkshire moors in youth or of the Norwegian mountains in early manhood; or it may have sprung from thoughts about the 1914 War." When the march tune returns with added brass, it certainly brings to mind passages in *The Song of the High Hills*.

As the development proceeds, Delius cannot sidestep the need for interplay between soloists and orchestra in the form of contrapuntal figuration, a style of writing to which his technique did not lend itself willingly; but he sustains a momentum and the movement builds well to a sturdy chordal climax in which a note of martial tension is pronounced.

Solo horn and English horn now anticipate the melody of the slow section which is sung first by the cello and is one of Delius's most deeply felt inspirations. Again Ronald Stevenson has speculated interestingly on its origin: "It may be a reminiscence of a Negro spiritual which

Delius heard on his orange plantation in Florida; or a memory of some Scottish croon; or of a North Country song; or it may be a compound of all these elements." Its close resemblance to the solo baritone's "O honey I am going down the river in the morning" in *Appalachia* suggests a hybrid origin, American Negro music having been much influenced by Anglo-Celtic prototypes.

Halfway through the movement the introductory theme of the first section appears on the horizon (flute) but now a new *molto espressivo* theme is established by the violin over cello arpeggios. This theme, chromatically drooping in a way Percy Grainger would probably have categorized as pertaining to a "moaning nature-voice," is to become the emotional crux of the finale and is typical of the subtle process of thematic cross-indexing that informs the entire work.

The recapitulation begins after an accompanied cadenza for the solo instruments. Both first and second subjects are safely delivered, and the climactic return of the "nature-voice" is preceded, highly effectively, by a rhythmically transformed variant of the luscious *Appalachia*-like tune, here heard as a kind of horn fanfare. In the coda the introductory theme to the first section, now serene and trouble-free, is combined with the "nature-voice"; and in a limpid C-major cadence, the songs and the sighs are over, the music falls mute.

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OF RELATED INTEREST ON ANGEL:

DELIUS: Concerto for Cello and Orchestra; Song Before Sunrise (1918); Songs of Farewell. *Jacqueline Du Pré (cello); Royal Choral Society; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Malcolm Sargent cond.

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ELGAR: Concerto for Cello, Op. 85. (With Introduction & Allegro for Strings; Serenade for Strings). Paul Tortelier; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult cond.

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WALTON: Viola Concerto; Violin Concerto. Yehudi Menuhin (violin & viola); New Philharmonia Orchestra, William Walton cond.

S-36719

Recording Producer: JOHN MORDLER
Engineer: NEVILLE BOYLING
Art Direction: Marvin Schwartz
Cover Photo: Editions Mago
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Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. 77-750249 applies to this recording.
Recorded in England under the auspices of the Delius Trust.

The producer of this record wishes to acknowledge his gratitude to Eric Fenby for his invaluable advice during the recording sessions for these two concertos by Delius.

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PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Frederick Delius

(1862 - 1934)

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1916) Suite for Violin and Orchestra (1888) Légende for Violin and Orchestra (1895)

RALPH HOLMES, Violin
ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
conducted by
VERNON HANDLEY

SIDE I:

Violin Concerto 26:15

SIDE II:

Suite for Violin and Orchestra

- i Pastorale (Andante quasi allegretto) 5:22
- ii Intermezzo (Allegro molto vivace) 3:04
- iii Elegie (Adagio cantabile) 6:00
- iv Finale (Allegro moderato) 4:23

Légende for Violin and Orchestra 8:21

here given with the full power of the orchestral strings and brass. A fairly regular review in sequence of all the material of the first section now follows; after the brass sound their fanfare even more insistently a contrasting, lightly dancing, new section follows, outlined by violin arabesques. When this has run its course a broad but gradually receding recollection of the soloist's opening theme, now in the mood of the central section, carries the melody on and away in a characteristic close.

A few modifications to the solo violin part were suggested by Albert Sammons, in order to enhance the effect and to render the technical difficulties more practicable. These were accepted by Delius as improvements which in no way violated his original conception and were incorporated into his original MS and all the published editions.

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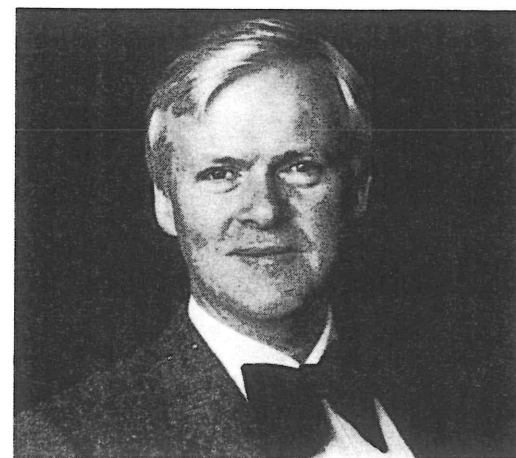
VERNON HANDLEY

VERNON HANDLEY is one of Britain's most distinguished conductors and is currently Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Associate Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. The latter position has been specially created for him in recognition of his long and enormously successful association with the orchestra. In September 1985 he takes up two new appointments as Principal Conductor: The Malmö Symphony Orchestra and the Ulster Orchestra. He is also Director of the 1985 Norfolk and Norwich Triennial Festival.

An increasing amount of Vernon Handley's career is spent working abroad and he has developed close links with a number of European orchestras, including the Amsterdam Philharmonic and the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra.

He has made many memorable recordings, and in 1981 was the recipient of the annual Audio Award presented by *Hi-Fi News*. His records range throughout the orchestral repertoire, from Dvorak and Tchaikovsky to Vaughan Williams and Tippett.

Vernon Handley is a Fellow of the Royal College of Music and a Doctor of the University of Surrey. However, in spite of his busy schedule, he still manages to follow his keen interest in ornithology.



Photo, Jeremy Grayson

RALPH HOLMES

When RALPH HOLMES died in September of 1984 the musical world lost a unique personality. If virtuosi of the violin are quite common nowadays it is because of the ready ability of young performers to absorb the styles and mannerisms of those great violinists who have gone before. But in their time, those great ones established their pre-eminence by reason of individuality and their individualities became mannerisms after they had gone.

Ralph Holmes was unique not only as a fiddle player but as a man. No fiddle player of his time can have had as great a repertoire as Ralph, witnessed as many broadcasts and public performances of unfamiliar concerti and a staggering list of first performances. His recording of the Hamilton Harty Violin Concerto with the Ulster Orchestra gives us not the voice of a violinist who simply learnt an unfamiliar concerto for the sake of a performance or two and a recording. He plays it as if he had learnt it when a boy. When I accompanied him in the same work with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra a few years ago, the orchestra and I were taught the work as by an artist twice his age.

What the public cannot know, although may have glimpsed in the warm friendliness of his platform manner, was that Ralph Holmes with great humility remained always a complete professional, preparing his 400th Beethoven Concerto with the same freshness and warmth as he would approach the Richard Rodney Bennett, the Bliss, the Panufnik or the Hamilton Harty. The recording of the Delius Violin Concerto was his last and with it he fulfilled one of his life's ambitions. He is irreplaceable and all of us players and audiences have lost a wise friend.

© 1985 Vernon Handley

Ralph Holmes played a violin made in 1736 by Antonio Stradivari and loaned to him by the Royal Academy of Music, London.

Violin Concerto published by Stainer & Bell Ltd.

Suite and Légende published by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd.

Recording Producer: Antony Hodgson

Recording Engineer: Bob Auger

Recording Location: Henry Wood Hall on 21st and 22nd May 1984.

Front Cover: 'The Water Lily Pond' by Claude Monet (1840-1926)

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Layout: Terry Shannon

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Felicity Lott, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Thomas Allen, Julian Lloyd Webber, The Ambrosian Singers, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Eric Fenby. Winner of the Gramophone Choral Award, 1981.

UNS258: Delius Sonatas Nos. 1-3 for violin and piano with introduction by Eric Fenby. Ralph Holmes, violin, Eric Fenby, piano.

DKP9021: Frederick Delius/Lili Boulanger

Piano and Chamber Music. Julian Lloyd Webber, Eric Fenby, Eric Parkin, Barry Griffiths, Keith Harvey.

DKP9022 (cassette DKP(C) 9022)

Frederick Delius; English, French and Scandinavian Songs Felicity Lott, Sarah Walker, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Eric Fenby, piano

DKP 9029 (cassette DKP(C) 9029, compact disc DKP(CD)9029)

Delius: The Song of the High Hills

First orchestral recordings of Songs
Felicity Lott, Sarah Walker, Anthony Rolfe Johnson
Ambrosian Singers, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by Eric Fenby

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Unicorn Records Ltd.

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Frederick Delius was born in 1862 in Bradford, Yorkshire and died at his home in France, at Grez-sur-Loing near Fontainebleau, in 1934. His parents were German immigrants and he was the second son of a family of 14. He received violin lessons during his boyhood and later, while travelling in Germany on behalf of his father's wool business, he continued to study this instrument — the only one on which he ever became moderately proficient. After a period spent in the USA, first on an orange plantation in Florida and then as a music teacher in Danville, Virginia, he at last received parental permission to study composition in Leipzig. Here also violin studies continued. In 1888 he moved to Paris and settled down to an intensive period of composition, chiefly of orchestral and dramatic works; it is to this early period that the Suite and Légende for violin and orchestra belong.

Although the MS score of this four-movement Suite is now undated, it was probably commenced in 1888; the present second movement is a slightly later insertion. The work evidently received a private read-through and in 1907 Beecham offered to produce it in London with Marie Hall as soloist; however no public performance took place until 24 March 1984, when it was given at St. John's, Smith Square by Ralph Holmes and the YMSO under James Blair. A broadcast by the same soloist but with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Vernon Handley had taken place a month earlier.

1. *Pastorale* (Andante quasi Allegretto). The predominant influence in this melodious section is the composer's close friend Grieg. As often with Delius the violinist explores the highest registers in decorative passages which are frequently supported by a slow-moving harmonic background.

2. *Intermezzo* (Allegro molto vivace). The light, dancing character of this movement supports a moto perpetuo-like figure, maintained almost continuously by the soloist.

3. *Elegie* (Adagio cantabile). A sustained melody, accompanied by throbbing string chords, returns after a broader central episode; it is then contrasted with prominent horn and trumpet solos before a powerful climax leads to a quiet conclusion.

4. *Finale* (Allegro moderato). In a structure as simple as the first movement's, the influence of Mendelssohn rather than that of Grieg is here reflected. Towards the end the soloist's virtuoso double-stopping rides above a broadly-scored passage which draws the last two movements together in a majestic ending.

The autograph orchestral score of the *Légende* is inscribed *Paris, 1895* although it is quite possible that its original form was for piano and violin. Delius valued the work sufficiently to include it in the comprehensive programme of his own compositions which he arranged in London on 30 May 1899, when the solo part was played by John Dunn. Fifteen years later the composer released it for publication (with piano accompaniment) and in this form it has become quite well known. The failure of the original orchestral parts to come to light has had the corresponding result of condemning the orchestral version to temporary oblivion for many decades. To remedy this state of affairs the Delius Trust has caused new orchestral parts to be prepared, thus enabling the present recording to take place, and this material will now be available for future performances.

The melodious opening section, with the violinist leading from the very first note, grows to a characteristic climax, after which a contrasting section sets a fragment of woodwind melody against the soloist's to-and-fro semitones. Roles are exchanged; the first melody returns more vigorously, the contrasting section follows, now with elaborate backing from strings and harp, then the opening melody is resumed in its original simplicity. Instead of a further climax, a closing page of completely different character features light and fast figuration by the soloist, now muted. Only in the very last bars do oboe and horn solos recall the opening theme.

Delius's next work for a solo instrument with orchestra was his Piano Concerto in C minor, commenced in 1897 but not to reach its final form for another decade. This work, which followed the Lisztian conception of a three-in-one movement structure, was extremely successful at its early performances in England and Germany and did much to place the composer's name before the public in the early years of this century.

Late in 1914 Delius temporarily left his home in France and spent some time in England. In the December he attended a Hallé Concert (in Manchester) at which Beecham conducted excerpts from the opera *A Village Romeo and Juliet*; the programme also included the Brahms Double Concerto, played by May and Beatrice Harrison. Delius was so impressed by their performance of this most subtle of 19th Century concertos that he at once decided to compose a similar work himself for the same two gifted soloists. This was far from exhausting his interest in the form, for a Concerto for Violin followed in 1916 and one for Cello in 1921. Although the first performance of the former was given by Albert Sammons (in 1919) and of the latter by Alexandre Barjansky (in 1923) these works of Delius's full maturity may all be considered to owe not a little to his friendship with the Harrisons, that remarkable family of musicians who were each, at one time or another, associated in performance with these three concertos for string instruments. In form, all three works follow the lines already practised in the Piano Concerto, to which Delius now added the interpolation of a fresh contrasting movement before the final section. The closely reasoned argument of the classical concerto is here exchanged for a stream of almost continuous rhapsodic melody backed by a modest-sized orchestra of a sensitivity and response all Delius's own.

In the *Violin Concerto*, a mere two bars of string chords, in a characteristic rhythm, suffice to send the soloist aloft as free, but as controlled, as the flight of any bird. Punctuation at the end of the lengthy paragraphs is given by the orchestra, whose contribution gradually broadens; when the brass instruments play a new version of the opening bars, the soloist's brilliant octaves are called to a halt. A slower movement, in a different and lilting rhythm, then takes over and this in turn leads to an improvisatory cadenza, later accompanied by the strings — plus two magical horn notes. The soloist's final trills lead straight to the reprise of his opening phrases,

FREDERICK DELIUS

Side 1

SONATA IN B (1892)

1. Allegro con brio
2. Andante molto tranquillo
3. Allegro con moto

Side 2

SONATA No. 1 (1905-14)

1. With easy movement but not quick—
2. Slow
3. With vigour and animation

DAVID STONE, violin
ROBERT THRELFALL, piano

Our front cover: reproduction of a bust of Delius by his wife Jelka, c. 1903. (Coll. L. Carley)

Frederick Delius, one of the most distinguished composers and colourful figures in the world of music of his day, was born in 1862 in Bradford, Yorkshire, of German parents. Once he had left the family home and wool business (in 1884) he first visited America, where the tropical surroundings of Florida and Negro music made a lifelong impression on him. Next came a period of study in Leipzig (from 1886 to 1888); followed by longer residence in or near Paris, where he lived from 1888 to 1897, mixing freely with the many gifted artists of various nationalities then centred there. A background to this cosmopolitan milieu was a love of Scandinavia, which he visited frequently from 1882 until 1923, when increasing paralysis, shortly followed by blindness, made further such journeyings impossible. Most of his life from 1897 onwards was spent in France, at Grez-sur-Loing near Fontainebleau, where he died in 1934.

Whether in England, Florida, Norway, Paris or Grez, Delius's life was at almost all times far removed from the routine and disciplines of musical performance and organized teaching. During the years of his full maturity as an artist (roughly the first two decades of this century), his compositions were frequently cast on the largest scale, involving full orchestral and choral forces as well as solo voices. The purely orchestral works concentrate equally personal features within a smaller frame, yet without any loss of formal skill; while the best of the chamber music works reduce to masterly line and monochrome those thoughts previously expressed in full colour.

The only instruments Delius ever mastered to any extent himself were violin and piano, on both of which he first received lessons during his early school years, serious study of the violin continuing under Hans Sitt in 1881, and later during the years in Leipzig. At the piano, Delius's study was less systematic: though disdaining traditional performer's technique, all his compositions up to the 1920s were first sketched at the keyboard; and the "feel" of his characteristic harmonies — their colour, spacing and "bite" — were conceived and immediately tested there. His piano parts, although usually lacking in accepted figuration and often as unconventional as his playing, being shaped by the exceptional span of the long fingers so noticeable in all portraits of the composer, are hence as rewarding in their way as is his writing for the violin.

The four violin and piano sonatas not surprisingly, then, form a core of special value and strength among the comparatively small amount of chamber music Delius has left us, spanning as they do almost the whole of his composing career. Their dates are as follows:

Sonata in B (1892)

Sonata no. 1 (partly sketched in 1905, finished 1914-5)

Sonata no. 2 (1923)

Sonata no. 3 (1930; using some fragmentary sketches dating from the 1920s)

The composition of the Sonata in B falls in the middle of Delius's Paris period, between the operas *Irmelin* and *The Magic Fountain*. It was apparently played at the lodgings of the young pianist Harold Bauer in Paris in 1893. Refused by the publisher to whom it was offered shortly after, and later passed over by Delius's own increasingly critical eye (though he carefully preserved the manuscript of this, as of a good number of other early works), the sonata has not yet been printed. No more recent performance appears to have taken place until Sir Thomas Beecham, then musical adviser to the Delius Trust, made a copy of the score available to Wilfred and Bernice Lehmann who broadcast the work on BBC Radio's Third Programme in the late 'fifties.

The Sonata is in three movements, quite orthodox in form and key sequence, and the ardour of its soaring phrases forms a convincing "portrait of the artist as a young man". After the confident strides of the opening, a phrase from Delius's just-completed first opera *Irmelin* is embedded into the second group of themes; notable also is the natural growth with which

the development section unfolds. In the second movement, sections devoted to the finely-controlled rise and fall of the opening melody enclose a processional central episode; a fading reminiscence of this middle section ends the movement. Another work then recently finished (and performed), the symphonic poem *Paa Vidderne*, is recollected at the start of the last movement. Here, wider varieties of mood and tempo are added to the breadth and power of the first two movements; increasing elements of virtuosity characterize the vigour and brilliance of the exciting close.

To turn the record is to enter another world: here, instead of the confident young man of 30, we meet the more troubled artist of over 50. Although the first two movements were sketched in 1905, in the greatest possible contrast to the gigantic *Mass of Life* then being composed, it was not until 1914, in the shadows of War and ill health, that they were taken up and completed, the third movement apparently being then added.

The first movement alternates closely-reasoned paragraphs of a narrative style with dancing sections and with a rhapsodic theme which returns to lead without break into the slow movement. Here, a bird song-like melody (not found in the 1905 sketches but later used again towards the end of the Cello Concerto of 1921) hovers above chords resembling those in the central section of the Violin Concerto composed a couple of years later. Reaching a close of whispered stillness, the contemplative mood is broken by the B minor entry of the last movement's rhythmic theme. Several pages evolve in masterly sequence from this pithy motive with kaleidoscopic changes of mood; gradually a 5-note theme of an almost Elgarian warmth begins to dominate but leads to a restless section, twisting and turning as it were in sleepless worry. The slow and mysterious interlude which follows rises with relentless tread to an almost terrifying climax: a moment of sweetness, then comes a full recapitulation of the movement's opening section. The Elgarian phrase bids fair to crown the whole work; but a hasty recalling of the opening themes of the third and first movements drives implacably on to the final B major chord, with which Delius closes this intimate portrait of his manhood on a last thought of the dreams of his youth.

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Recording made in association with The Delius Society
Further details of the Society's aims and objects can be obtained from The Chairman, 5 Westbourne House, Mount Park Road, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middlesex.

Recording producer: Stephen Plaistow
Balance engineer: John Borwick

Recorded under the auspices of The Delius Trust

FREDERICK DELIUS (1862-1934)

"The last great apostle in our time of romance, emotion and beauty in music" —Sir Thomas Beecham

CONCERTO FOR CELLO AND ORCHESTRA A SONG BEFORE SUNRISE SONGS OF FAREWELL, for Double Chorus and Orchestra

Jacqueline du Pré, cello • Royal Choral Society

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent

SONGS OF FAREWELL

[side one, bands 1-4—19'18"]

[I—3'44", II—4'43", III & IV—6'22", V—4'29"]

Songs of Farewell was first performed by Sir Malcolm Sargent and the Royal Choral Society in Queen's Hall, London, at a Courtald-Sargent concert in March 1932. 'Concerning the proud spirit of these Whitman settings,' observed Professor A. Hutchings in his biography of Delius, 'there is little to say, except that they were the last choral legacy of the composer who wrote *The Mass of Life*, and that, when the arrival of his amanuensis made possible an Indian Summer after the main musical harvest, nobody could have dared hope for grain so rich and vital as *Songs of Farewell*.'

Least of all me. In 1928 Delius had accepted my offer to try to help him find a way to resume composition after two years inaction through blindness and paralysis. The orchestral work *A Song of Summer* and the Sonata No. 3 for Violin and Pianoforte were the chief fruits to date of that collaboration. When, however, I had read the text that Mrs. Delius had selected and copied out previously from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and seen the paucity of musical material Delius proposed to use as a basis for a work for double chorus and orchestra—a few odd phrases jotted down on billheads on his last walking-tour of Norway, and groups of chords ringed 'good'—my heart sank.

He had already insisted on dictating orchestral music directly into full score without a preliminary piano draft. Yet, realising his dislike of treating the choir and orchestra as separate entities complete in themselves, I could not conceive how eight vocal parts were to be shaped and threaded into the orchestral texture in a balanced whole. Nor how, working so slowly from bar to bar, he would prevent disorder and lack of tension between the parts.

Instinct gradually led the way. After months of trial and error, with never more than a few bars to show for hours of work, and only then when Delius felt well enough to be carried up to the music-room to dictate, the score was finished.

The combination of passing notes and arpeggio notes is a device known to students of elementary harmony. But the combination of passing notes and arpeggio notes at the line 'Seeking the shores forever' (II) is transmuted by genius beyond the sense of words, of voices and orchestral timbres to the frontiers of Illumination.

A SONG BEFORE SUNRISE

[side one, band 5—6'12"]

A Song before Sunrise, a delightful miniature scored for small orchestra, was written in 1918 and dedicated to Philip Heseltine. As Nature music it eschews analysis. Delius abhorred such pedantry. Its title is explicit enough. The song, prolonged in refreshing tunefulness, subsides in vaguer musings, then revives to await the dawn. Apparently there is one piece of characterisation. After listening to a broadcast performance with the composer, he asked if I had heard the cock-a-doodle-doo in the the clarinets at the end!

CONCERTO FOR VIOLONCELLO AND ORCHESTRA

Lento—Con moto tranquillo—Lento—Con moto
tranquillo—Allegro (side two—24'40")

Delius's Violoncello Concerto, completed in 1921, received its world première in Frankfurt in 1924 by the Russian cellist, Alexandre Barsky. Both he and Beatrice Harrison were its chief exponents in the twenties and thirties, since when it has suffered neglect. It is the last of Delius's four concertos. Of them, by his own rather than traditional standards, that for violin is considered the best, a view not shared by the composer. Asked why he preferred his cello concerto—'Melodic invention' was the laconic reply.

Though regarded primarily as a harmonist, Delius was drawn in later years to the problems of developing lyrical line in terms of extended melody. His flights of melodic prose, notably in the Sonata for Cello and Piano composed in 1917, aspire to a long-spanned freedom of phrase rare in British music. Again, in the cello concerto, he came nearer fulfilling that ideal than in his other works labelled 'concerto'. He never surpassed in craftsmanship the glorious sweep of D major melody (announced by the cello against climbing strings) at the *Allegro* sequel. Yet he hardly sustains its promise for more than a dozen bars. Apart from florid passages for the soloist, Delius makes little concession to the usual devices of Concerto. The effect is an idyll for cello and orchestra played without break, with no cadenza. A brief preamble, then an A-B-A scheme with an interlude of slower song braced by thematic interplay of woodwind arabesque. No composer but Delius would have relied on means so similar to provide his contrasts of texture. The basic pulse is slow throughout. It is the rhythmic detail within the pulse that changes with each episode, often in trochaic movement (— — — — —). Adventure gives place to felicity in this luscious Autumnal reverie. The solo part played in this recording was edited and revised by Herbert Withers with the approval of the composer

Note © Eric Fenby, 1965

ERIC FENBY



JACQUELINE DU PRÉ was born in 1945 of Norman stock living in Surrey. Her mother, a pianist, encouraged the girl's first cello studies at the age of five. Advanced study in London and six months' tuition with Paul Tordella preceded Miss du Pré's debut at Wigmore Hall in 1961, playing a 1673 Stradivarius presented to her by an anonymous admirer. A celebrity overnight, she received offers for concerto appearances with leading orchestras for the following season. After an early collaboration with Sir Malcolm Sargent, the eminent musician said, 'I have conducted all the great cellists but have never enjoyed a performance as much as tonight's.' Near her 20th birthday a second anonymous admirer enabled her to purchase the famous "Davidoff" Stradivarius (1712), which she used officially for the first time in the present recording.

In the spring of 1965 Jacqueline du Pré made her American debut with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. Raymond Ericson wrote in *The New York Times*, "A tall, slim blonde, Miss du Pré looked like a cross between Lewis Carroll's Alice and one of those angelic instrumentalists in Renaissance paintings. And, in truth, she played like an angel, one with extraordinary warmth and sensitivity."

Library of Congress Catalog Card Numbers R 65-2631 and R 65-2632 (mono) and R 65-2633 and R 65-2634 (stereo) apply to this recording.

Can Be Filed Under: Cello / Concertos / Choral / Contemporary

STEREO
S 36285



SONGS OF FAREWELL (from Walt Whitman's 'Leaves of Grass')

I

*How sweet the silent backward tracings!
The wanderings as in dreams—the meditation of old times resumed
—their loves, joys, persons, voyages.
Apple orchards, the trees all cover'd with blossoms;
Wheat fields carpeted far and near in vital emerald green;
The eternal, exhaustless freshness of each early morning;
The yellow, golden, transparent haze of the warm afternoon sun;
The aspiring lilac bushes with profuse purple or white flowers.*

II

*I stand as on some mighty eagle's beak,
Eastward the sea absorbing, viewing, (nothing but sea and sky),
The tossing waves, the foam, the ships in the distance,
The wild unrest, the snowy, curling caps—that inbound urge and
urge of waves,
Seeking the shores forever.*

III

*Passage to you!
O secret of the earth and sky!
Of you O waters of the sea! O winding creeks and rivers!
Of you O woods and fields! Of you strong mountains of my land!
Of you O prairies! Of you grey rocks!
O morning red! O clouds! O rain and snows!
O day and night, passage to you!
O sun and moon and all you stars! Sirius and Jupiter!
Passage to you!
Passage, immediate passage! The blood burns in my veins!
Away O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!*

IV

*Joy, shipmate, joy!
(Pleas'd to my soul at death I cry),
Our life is closed, our life begins,
The long, long anchorage we leave.
The ship is clear at last, she leaps!
She swiftly courses from the shore,
Joy, shipmate, joy.*

V

*Now finale to the shore,
Now land and life finale and farewell,
Now Voyager depart, (much, much for thee is yet in store),
Often enough hast thou adventur'd o'er the seas,
Cautiously cruising,—studying the charts,
Duly again to port and hawser's tie returning;
But now obey thy cherish'd secret wish,
Embrace thy friends, leave all in order,
To port and hawser's tie no more returning,
Depart upon thy endless cruise old Sailor.*

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DELIUS

PROKOFIEV

ZRG 727

Side One

Cello Sonata

Three Preludes:

Scherzando

Quick

Con Moto

Five Piano Pieces:

Mazurka

Waltz

Waltz

Lullaby

Toccata

Side Two

Cello Sonata Op. 119

1st. Mov. Adante grave

2nd Mov. Moderato

3rd Mov. Allegro ma non troppo

GEORGE ISAAC cello
MARTIN JONES piano

Recorded in association with the Music Department, University College, Cardiff

Delius's most refined textures and his greatest visionary and poetical flights are to be found in the series of choral and orchestral masterpieces which opened with *Sea Drift* and closed some thirty years later with the late flowering of *Songs of Farewell*. In all these works, form depends on a subtle ebbing and flowing of harmony, the tensions and relaxations of the chordal structure intensified by the deployment of choral and orchestral colour. Melodic writing as such remains simple and is only sewn into the texture to point the larger harmonic flow — the harmony itself is, so to speak, eternally singing.

On a handful of occasions, however, we find Delius expanding the scope of his melody, and the *Cello Sonata* of 1916 provides the most expansive instance of this. It was composed at a time when the composer was rather unpredictably preoccupied with traditional media — the String Quartet and the Violin and Double Concertos are its contemporaries — and the combination of melody instrument and monochromatic harmony instrument could not have prompted any other solution to problems of form and texture, given Delius's idiosyncratic style. The balance and interpenetration of forces established by the traditional sonata were not compatible with his poetic vision. What we get is a typical Delian structure in which melodic interest is developed to compensate for the want of instrumental colour to clothe the harmony. On paper the work looks unenterprising even unidiomatic in its treatment of the instruments. The pianist has to be satisfied with endless chordal clumps only occasionally varied by simple figuration, while the cello sings with barely a pause and without concession to virtuosity. Yet in performance there is a majestic sweep which can not be gainsaid.

The apparently seamless melody with its continuous quasi-improvisatory extensions manages to encompass sonata development of a sort as well as the traditional scheme of quick — slow — quick within a single movement span. The big opening sweep of cello melody supplies the material for much of what follows, most importantly the initial upward striving figure and the oscillating major third that caps it. A six-bar piano phrase in octaves (the instrument's only solo in the work) sets off a new melodic flight, the intensity and vigour increasing. There is an analogy here with the sonata second subject, although we feel that melody is in a continuous state of evolution. Similarly an increasing recourse to the opening head-motive a few pages later sounds developmental. The centre of the work is taken up with a slowly unfolding song in two spans, after which the opening pages are recapitulated with very little variation, leading to a triumphant coda — rare device in Delius.

Needless to say, the composer's textural and structural methods were hardly suited to the solo piano, and he produced only a handful of pieces for the instrument. Harmonically they are completely characteristic, however even if the keyboard layout is conventional. The *Three Preludes* take most account of the piano's sonority and capabilities with their delicate colours, although the third of the *Five Pieces*, a vivacious little waltz, and the haunting *Lullaby for a Modern Baby* are instinct with Delius's unforgettable personality.

Just as Delius's *Cello Sonata* eschews traditional processes, so does Prokofiev's accept them in every respect, relying structurally on the sonata matrix, sharing the musical interest equally between the two instruments, and writing brilliantly idiomatic music for both players. The cello, for instance, is treated lyrically, as well as colouristically and percussively, unlike in the Delius. Composed in the Spring of 1949 from sketches made two years earlier, it is characteristic of the composer's late manner in its combination of classical grace, warm romanticism and piquant humour.

The work's prodigal invention depends not so much on the exploitation of a limited set of motives as upon lyrical transformation and the invention of new melodies. The lyrical richness that results is immediately evident in the succinct opening sonata form movement. Each of the two subjects in the short exposition, for instance, consists of two fully formed melodies. A cello recitative with attendant piano tune over declamatory cello phrases and thrummed pizzicatos is followed by a second group consisting of a serene melody that works in canon and a darker counterpart for the two instruments in octaves. The development transforms and juxtaposes these four elements leading to a peak where the second limb of the second subject is dramatically proclaimed by the cello over big arpeggios.

The central movement provides a gay contrast to the lyrical serenity of the opening. Again there is an abundance of subject matter, for the main section comprises no less than three independent subjects, the third of which uses brilliant percussive effects across the four cello strings. The trio to this scherzo provides a passionate lyrical invention in the manner of the love music from the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, and it is followed by the briefest of recapitulations. The finale counterbalances the first movement by returning to a broadly melodic sonata structure, developing the concept by introducing an expressive new theme in the working out section. The coda brings back the sonata's opening theme in grand piano octaves and this is richly embellished by the cello with finale material.

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Anthony Payne.

Recorded in the Music Dept. of University College, Cardiff.
Cover Photograph: George Isaac and Martin Jones, by Barda, London.
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HODDINOTT: Cello Sonata
BANKS: Sequence for Solo Cello
GEORGE ISAAC, cello and VALERIE TRYON, piano
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DELIUS · PIANO CONCERTO in C minor
DEBUSSY · FANTAISIE for Piano & Orchestra

JEAN-RODOLPHE KARS

The London Symphony Orchestra

conducted by

ALEXANDER GIBSON

SIDE ONE

DELIUS: PIANO CONCERTO in C minor

Allegro non troppo – Largo (22:00)

SIDE TWO

DEBUSSY: FANTAISIE for Piano and Orchestra

First movement: Andante ma non troppo (7:05)

Second movement: Lento e molto espressivo –] (16:05)

Third movement: Allegro molto

DELIUS: PIANO CONCERTO in C minor

This work had its first performance at Elberfeld in 1897, having been completed a year or so earlier. It was then in three separate movements. Later the composer recast it into the form heard on this recording – one continuous movement, falling into three distinctly recognisable sections. This version won considerable acclaim and helped materially in the establishment of Delius's international reputation. Later it came to be regarded as untypical of the composer's main style, and it is presumably because of this that it has been heard much less frequently in recent years.

Certainly, we look in vain in its course for the Delius of nostalgia and reverie. This is not music of the same mould as *Sea Drift*, or even the *Violin Concerto*. The shadow of Grieg – a figure much admired by the young Delius – is never far away, but the music has a refreshingly direct impact, is full of strongly melodic ideas, and has enough excitement in the solo part to interest pianists of stature. Further, it is brilliantly scored and constructed succinctly. No section is out of proportion with the rest and the declamatory idiom of the work's more forceful passages is a healthy corrective to the usual image of Delius, derived from his later years of physical decline. This is no withdrawn dreamer that we meet here, but the vigorous Anglo-German who worked hard under Southern suns, travelled widely and had cosmopolitan interests.

The work has a pronounced tonal character. C minor is the principal key of the first section, the modulation to E flat for the second subject group is thoroughly orthodox, and so is the resounding conclusion in C major. Some have it that the piano part smacks somewhat of an *obbligato*, but this is surely too strong a verdict: this is certainly not a display concerto, but there is plenty of thematic argument allotted to the soloist and Delius has found his own, organic, solution to the cadenza problem.

The feeling for quietude, so marked a feature of the mature Delius, makes its presence known in the moving conclusion to the first section, and it is worth noting the skill with which we are prepared for the D flat tonality of the eloquent *Largo* episode which supplies a central focus of poetic meditation to the work. The main theme, announced by the soloist, has the direct appeal of inspired simplicity, but we are soon reminded by woodwind and brass of the idea which began the first section – a unifying factor throughout the concerto. Delicate passage-work for the piano accompanies a string exposition of the D flat tune before the composer leads us to a change of mood – *scherzando allegretto* – a delightful interlude which is again cut off in its turn for a return to the *Largo* theme and tempo. Soon a brief cadenza for the soloist presages the final section, based on the original theme, now proclaimed by the soloist in extended form. Once again we are in C minor, and, except for a brief slackening of tension in a passage of much beauty marked *molto tranquillo*, the music proceeds with mounting excitement to a resounding conclusion in C major.

DEBUSSY: FANTAISIE for Piano and Orchestra.

This work was composed between 1889 and 1890, but was withdrawn by the composer, just as its first performance was about to take place – under the direction of Vincent d'Indy. Few of Debussy's works from around this date survive: it was the period when, after his return from Rome, he was seeking to establish himself, not only with the French public but, more importantly with a style which he felt adequate for the promptings within him. This he found difficult and the *Fantaisie* was one of the pieces which he considered unrepresentative of his true vision. It was eventually published posthumously, but is rarely played. This recording, then, is something of an event.

The *Fantaisie* has little of the *pointillisme* and whole-tone systems so characteristic of the mature Debussy, but it marks a necessary stage in the composer's development, and the piano writing, together with the lucid scoring – with woodwind very prominent – make the work thoroughly attractive listening. This is the easefully exuberant Debussy of *Printemps* – another work of the same era, and one which did receive the composer's accolade. It is rather surprising that a composer so much in love with the piano and so expert with the orchestra should have composed so little concerted music. Had he proceeded to build upon the foundations established in this *Fantaisie* Debussy could have composed something pretty memorable in the concerto line.

In addition to the usual string complement the score calls for 3 flutes, 2 oboes, cor anglais, 2 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 harps and percussion. The competitive argument characteristic of the traditional concerto is forsaken in favour of an equal partnership, with the piano reinforcing the orchestral tissue and only rarely stepping into the limelight.

There are three movements, the last two being linked. The work opens and closes in G, and the middle movement is in F sharp. This unequivocally tonal basis is itself untypical of the Debussy in full flight, and it serves to remind us that even so original a genius as he had to build in the first place upon conventional foundations. The main theme of the first movement is first heard on flutes and oboes and it is not given to the piano for some while. The triplet figure within it and a leap of a fifth in its second bar become vitally important in subsequent developments. A subsidiary theme, hovering around a major second is skilfully wedded into the general fabric and the movement ends with a livelier version of the main theme forming the basis for a brisk coda.

The gently lyrical second movement – *Lento e molto espressivo* – consists of a smoothly flowing dialogue between piano and orchestra. The writing for woodwind and strings is eloquent, and the piano part is most effectively laid out. Some inspired modulations take us back to the key of G for the final movement – *Allegro molto* – with the oboes chirping out the perky main theme. In this part of the work there is much piquancy in the orchestral activities and there are some fascinating excursions into remote keys, notably a slower, withdrawn episode in A flat.

Geoffrey Crankshaw

Cover: *Evening in the Hills* by W. F. Davidson, Penrith

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STEREO
S-60147

DELIUS: REQUIEM

"To the memory of all young artists fallen in the war"

& IDYLL, "Once I passed through a populous city" (Whitman)

Heather Harper, soprano • John Shirley-Quirk, baritone
Royal Choral Society • Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by Meredith Davies

SIDE ONE
(30:34)

REQUIEM

for Soprano and Baritone Solo,
Chorus and Orchestra

Half a century has passed since Delius completed this choral work. In the 44 years since its first performance at a Philharmonic Concert in London conducted by Albert Coates, it has proved to be the most neglected of all Delius' major compositions. The reason is not far to seek. This is not a Requiem in the traditional sense as understood in Latin Christianity, but Delius' own singularly personal lament for all that in his judgment cramps the human spirit on its all too brief, meaningless life here on earth—the "tale of falsehoods and golden visions," the "house of lies" of religion as Christian and Mohammedan cry in vain for God.

The love of woman, courage to live fearlessly and then, still more, to die fearlessly though death be total extinction: this for Delius is the crown of life. Man, he always insisted, is a mystery; Nature alone is eternally renewing.

It has taken another World War and a revolution in insights into the meaning and purpose of life without parallel in our culture to admit a more tolerant attitude to such notions through the medium of music and his own text of biblical quotation and characteristic outspokenness.

In the 14 years between the composition of *Margot-le-Rouge* and the Requiem, Delius had developed unpredictably. The Requiem, the strangest in the line of non-conformity, stems from the almost equally neglected *Arabesque* rather than *Sea-drift*, notably in such passages of evocative beauty as "The snow lingers yet in the mountains." Such moments as these win Delius lovers invariably in the remotest parts of the globe!

Delius deploys his huge orchestral forces in a manner unique in his entire output. Triple woodwind often sound in pairs, and six horns are used with more restraint and discrimination than, for instance, in *Brigg Fair*. He mixes his orchestral timbres where normally he prefers pure color, and disposes his melodic and harmonic strands, especially in the strings and brass, with telling acuity, sureness and skill. There is a sudden as-tringency in his harmonic thought from which he was to recoil in later works. He was deeply seared by the wastage of youth in the carnage of the First World War, which involved him painfully in conflicting loyalties when relatives and the sons of friends faced each other as unwilling foes.

The vocal lines of his soloists are less memorable than in the *Idyll* with its immediate surface appeal, and the angular phrases of the baritone part when restricted in lower levels of pitch are often difficult to project above the orchestra. Delius is particularly hard on his tenors when called upon to sing, as it were, against the musical grain of a progression in the lyrical commentary of the chorus: "Among her fragrant blossoms . . ." The mystery of Delius will always remain that, despite such asperities, his choral writing is supremely imaginative in original sounds, and often thrilling in effect.

In no other work is the character of the man Delius more clearly revealed — even betrayed — than in this curious Requiem.
© Eric Fenby

PART ONE
(band 1/14:04)
I

CHORUS
Our days here are as one day;
for all our days are rounded in a sleep;
they die and ne'er come back again.
BARITONE SOLO
Why then dissemble we with a tale of falsehoods?
We are e'en as a day, that's young at morning
and old at eventide, and departs
and never more returns.
CHORUS
We are e'en as a day
that's young at morning and old at eventide,
and comes again no more.
BARITONE SOLO
(AND CHORAL INTERJECTIONS)
At this regard the weaklings waxed sore afraid,
and drugged themselves with dreams and golden
visions, and built themselves a house of lies
to live in.
Then rose a storm with mighty winds and laid it
low.
And out of the storm the voice of truth resounded
in trumpet tones:
"Man, thou art mortal and needs must thou die!"
CHORUS
Our days here are as one day;
for all our days are rounded in a sleep;
they die and ne'er come back again.

II

CHORUS
Hallelujah!
Allah, il Allah.
BARITONE SOLO
And the highways of earth are full of cries;
the ways of the earth bring forth gods and idols.
Whoso a-while regards them turns from them,
and keeps apart from all men:
for fame and its glories seem but idle nothings.
(AND CHORUS)
For all who are living know that Death is coming,
but at the touch of Death lose knowledge of all
things, nor can they have any part in the ways
and doings of men on the earth where they were.
BARITONE SOLO
Therefore eat thy bread in gladness
and lift up thy heart and rejoice in thy wine,
and take to thyself some woman whom thou
lovest, and enjoy life.
What task so e'er be thine, work with a will,
For thou shalt know none of these things,
when thou comest to thy journey's end.
CHORUS
For all who are living know that Death is coming,
but at the touch of Death lose knowledge of all
things.

PART TWO
(band 2/16:30)
III

BARITONE SOLO
My beloved whom I cherished was like a flower
whose fair buds were folded lightly,
and she open'd her heart at the call of Love.
Among her fragrant blossoms Love had his dwelling
and to all who longed, her love she gave.
CHORUS
Among her fragrant blossoms Love had his
dwelling.
BARITONE SOLO
I praise her above all other women
who are poor in possessing,
and so are poor in giving too
Were not the world the abode of dissemblers,
and were not men's hearts so impure,
then all the world would join me
in praising my beloved.
She gave to many, and yet was chaste
and pure as a flower.
My beloved whom I cherished was like a flower.

IV

SOPRANO SOLO
I honour the man who can love life,
yet without base fear can die.
He has attained the heights
and won the crown of life.
CHORUS
The crown!
SOPRANO SOLO
I honour the man who dies alone
and makes no lamentation.
His soul has ascended to the mountain top,
that is like a throne which towers
above the great plains that roll
far away into the distance.
The sun goes down and the evening
spreads its hands in blessing
o'er the world, bestowing peace;

And so creeps on the night that whelms
and quenches all; the night that binds
our eyes with cloths of darkness;
binds them in long and dreamless sleep;
Dreamless sleep, thou that art death's twin brother.
CHORUS
Long, dreamless sleep.
SOPRANO SOLO
And the passing spirit sings—but this only:
"Farewell, I loved ye all!"
And the voices of nature answer him:
CHORUS
"Thou art our brother!"
SOPRANO SOLO
And so the star of his life sinks down
in the darkness whence it had risen.

V

BARITONE SOLO
The snow lingers yet on the mountains,
but yonder in the valleys the buds
are breaking on the trees and hedges.
SOPRANO SOLO
Golden the willow branches
and red the almond blossoms.
The little full-throated birds
have already begun their singing.
But hearken, they cannot cease for very joy
from singing a song whose name is Springtime.
CHORUS
Springtime! Springtime!
BARITONE SOLO
The woods and forests are full
of coolness and silence,
and silv'ry brooklets
prattle round their borders.
CHORUS
The woods and forests are full of silence.
BARITONE SOLO
The golden corn awaits the hand
of the reaper, for ripeness
bids death come.
CHORUS
Ripeness bids death come.
BARITONE AND
SOPRANO SOLI, CHORUS
Eternal renewing; everything on earth
will return again.
Everything on earth will return again,
ever return again.
Springtime, Summer, Autumn and Winter:
And then comes Springtime—
and then new Springtime.

Words collected by Frederick Delius, based on
passages from the Bible.
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SIDE TWO
(21:40)

IDYLL

for Soprano, Baritone and Orchestra
(Words by Walt Whitman)

"... Now that his unfinished manuscripts were completed, Delius said there was one more thing he would like to do. Would I play him the score of his unpublished one-act opera, *Margot-le-Rouge*? Perhaps something might yet be made of it. He had been badly in need of money and had written this work in 1902 for a competition (the Sonzogno prize), one of the principal conditions of which was that the libretto must be of the French or Italian dramatic type, which he loathed. There had been very little time, and a French authoress had offered him a libretto which, *faute de mieux*, he had accepted. When one remembers that *Margot-le-Rouge* is a product of those six magnificent years of passionate and vigorous creative activity when the composer was at the very height of his powers — 1900-1, *A Village Romeo and Juliet*; 1902, *Appalachia*; 1903, *Sea-drift*; 1904-5, *A Mass of Life*—it is not to be wondered at that now, those creative powers spent, he should turn back rather wistfully to this unfortunate work. His first intention, on hearing the music again, was to discard the original story—a sordid affair about a young French soldier's terrible vengeance when he finds his boyhood sweetheart Margot flaunting herself as a *fille de joie* in an infamous Paris cafe—and to ask his young friend Robert Nichols to write a new story so that he might drastically revise the score. Later, however, he decided to retain only such sections of the work as particularly appealed to him, and to adapt them to a selection of

words from Walt Whitman that Nichols had compiled for him. The prelude to *Margot-le-Rouge*, evoking, as it does, the presence of a distant metropolis, suggested the retrospective line, 'Once I passed through a populous city', and the work gradually assumed its present form, an Idyll for soprano, baritone and orchestra."

(Extract from "Delius as I Knew Him"
by Eric Fenby. Icon Books, Ltd., London, 1966.)

MAN
Once I passed through a populous city,
Imprinting my brain with all its shows.
Of that city I remember only a woman,
A woman I casually met,
Who detained me for love of me.
Day by day and night by night we were
together—all else has been forgotten by me.
Again we wander, we love, we separate,
Again she holds me by the hand, I must not go.
Day by day and night by night together!
WOMAN
Day by day, night by night we were together.
MAN
I hear her whisper:
WOMAN
I love you, before long I die,
I have waited long merely to look on you,
For I could not die till I had once looked on you.
MAN
I see her close beside me with lips sad
and tremulous.
WOMAN
A long while amid the noises of coming
and going,
Then we two content, happy in being together,
speaking little, day by day, night by night
together.
MAN
Behold me when I pass, hear my voice,
approach, draw close, but speak not.
Be not afraid of me.
For you and I, what is it to us what
the rest do or think?
WOMAN
I am she who adorned herself and folded her
hair expectantly,
My lover has come and it is dark.
MAN
We two, how long we were fooled,
Now transmuted we escape as Nature escapes;
We are Nature, long have we been absent
but now we return.
Ah, love and perfect equal!

MAN
How calm, how solemn it grows to ascend
to the sphere of lovers.
WOMAN
I ascend, I float in the regions of your
love, O man.
Ah, love and perfect equal
O power and liberty at last!
WOMAN
We two we, two together.
MAN
We two together.
WOMAN
Double yourself and receive us,
darkness . . .
We two content, happy in being
together.
MAN
We two together.
MAN
This is thy hour . . . O soul, thy free flight
into the wordless.
Thee, fully forth emerging, silent, gazing,
pondering the themes thou lovest best:
Night, sleep, death, love and the stars.
O to speed where there is space enough and
air enough at last!
We are two hawks, we soar above and look down.
What is all else to us, who have voided all
but freedom and all but our own joy?
WOMAN
O you and I what is it to us, what the rest
do or think? What is all else to us, who have
voided all but freedom and all but our own joy?
BOTH
As nearing departure, as the time draws nigh
A cloud—a dread beyond I know not what—
darkens me.

MAN
Face so pale with wondrous eyes, very dear,
gather closer yet, closer yet.
WOMAN
Dearest comrade all is over and long gone,
But love is not over.
Dearest comrade, all is over and
long gone,
But love is not over.
MAN
Perfume therefore my chant, O love, immortal love.
Make me a fountain
That I exhale love wherever I go.
Sweet are the blooming cheeks of the living,
Sweet are the musical voices sounding,
But sweet, ah sweet, are the dead
With their silent eyes.
WOMAN
I ascend, I float to the regions of your love,
O man,
All is over and long gone, but love is not over.
MAN
Dearest comrade, love is not over.

Recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust.



**ALAN BUSH: VARIATIONS, NOCTURNE AND FINALE
ON AN OLD ENGLISH SEA-SONG, OP. 60****DAVID WILDE** Piano**JOHN SNASHALL**

Conducting the ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

This work glorifies the piano. In the dearth of truly virtuosic modern British works for piano and orchestra, it is almost unique apart from the same composer's Piano Concerto Op. 18. Its piano style is full-blooded. It is free from current inhibitions about poetic content in music. In an age when much music is convoluted and incommunicable, Bush dares to let his music 'talk straight'. Its utterance is direct because its technique is consummate.

After an arresting introduction on brass, winds and drums, the piano states the theme, a bold whaling-song. The verse is given in octaves on the piano. The chorus is given in full chords; the first phrase on the orchestra, the second on the piano.

There are 13 variations. They are thematic in so far as the figuration of each variation is derived from some motif of the theme itself (as with Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*): harmonic and phrase structure are maintained in each variation, as is the verse/refrain contrast.

Var. 1 begins with a kind of 'hauling' movement and adds a contrasting pattering figure.

Var. 2, on piano, then orchestra, sets off an arch-like tune against a steadily descending scalic bass.

In *Var. 3* a 'cello solo meditates passionately to the piano's accompaniment and introduces a chamber music element into the orchestral setting.

Var. 4 is a staccato ostinato argument between piano and brass.

Var. 5 is canonic, based on the opening of the theme. Woodwind take the antecedent phrase; the piano takes the consequent.

Var. 6 is an orchestral treatment (without piano) of the theme's insistent element, heightened by percussion.

In *Var. 7* horn, low winds and 'cellos add melodic comments to the piano's lyrical figuration.

Var. 8 is a hornpipe, with piano and woodwind in colloquy. The piccolo suggests the 'bosun's whistle'.

Var. 9 is a majestic canon in which soloist contends with orchestra.

Var. 10 is a meditation for strings, with the piano entering only at the close, playing a few 'harped' chords in low register: an eloquent laconism of utterance which impassions the climax of the variation. In these few bardically-strung chords, the texture of the Nocturne finds its inception.

Vars. 11, 12 and 13 take the unusual form of piano studies with orchestral accompaniment.

The *Nocturne* is cast in ternary form; the piano's soliloquy framing the note-swarm of the central section, with its scurrying phrases goaded on by side-drum and cymbal. In the meditative opening and close, the composer has sought to evoke the nostalgia of a long voyage.

The *Finale* seems to evolve from the Nocturne's middle section. Its main theme is derived from an inversion of the theme of the opening Variations. The second subject is in the character of a 'haul-away' chorus. A central episode on low brass glooms and gleams somberly amid a movement which effervesces orchestral sonority. The second subject is recapitulated before the first. Just as the plain men of the sea find themselves in a turbulent, symphonic setting of waves and wind and hard work, the plain musical motifs of the Finale are made to work hard and are set in a full-blown symphonic movement.

In this work, the composer, as well as glorifying the piano, has paid tribute to the glory of man's courage and intelligence in the struggle to understand and control nature. This work is dedicated to Sir Thomas Armstrong.

**DELIUS: DOUBLE CONCERTO
FOR VIOLIN, 'CELLO & ORCHESTRA (1915)****RAYMOND COHEN**: Violin**GERALD WARBURG**: 'Cello**NORMAN DEL MAR**

Conducting the ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Delius wrote his Double Concerto contemporaneously with his Requiem "to the memory of all young artists fallen in the war".

The Concerto begins in C minor, with an introductory motif on strings, suggestive of the tolling of the passing-bell. After a brief rhapsodic flight on the violin, the work gets under weigh.

The first main theme, which alternately droops and aspires, is presented in moderate tempo on solo violin, with the 'cello playing a broad arpeggio accompaniment and the orchestra etching in a delicate background.

A subsidiary theme, in quicker tempo and in B minor, is played in a rocking rhythm by solo violin against 'cello octaves and pizzicato string bass and woodwind.

A bridge passage, based on the first main theme, is developed between the two soloists with orchestral accompaniment.

The second main theme is a rough kind of tramping quick march on strings, which relates to the introductory motif, whose tolling is repeated in a bass which rings out changes below the sturdy march tune. This march may be a reminiscence of Delius's tramping of his native Yorkshire moors in his youth, or of his beloved Norwegian mountains in early manhood; or it may have sprung from thoughts about the 1914 War. The marching song is echoed in subtly changed harmony.

A lengthy development ensues. There is mastery of ingenious detail here, deployed with a naturalness which, as so often in Delius, has hidden it from the hearing of musicians whose taste favours displayed expertise.

The first part of the work comes to rest on an unresolved chord.

Horns introduce the central slow section, which opens with a beautiful pentatonic melody on 'cello. This may be a reminiscence of a negro spiritual which Delius heard on his orange plantation in Florida as a young man; or it may be a memory of some Scottish croon; or of a north country song (it resembles a tune in his North Country Sketches); or it may be compound of all these elements.

The violin lovingly joins in with this melody, with the naturalness of a girl who adds her voice to a favourite phrase hummed by her lover.

There is a moment of suspense. Drum taps are heard. A flute - then an oboe - recalls the introduction, with something of the unconscious pathos of a lonely bird singing above a scene or mood of ineffable poignancy.

Then the violin breaks into one of those elegiac cries of Delius, which seem to suggest an epic aspiration within a fragile lyric line.

The opening pentatonic melody of the central section returns with quiet reassurance and brings this part of the work to a gentle close.

A brief cadenza - with no striving after effect - leads to a recapitulation of the opening main themes; this time with the soloists reversing their roles from what they played at first.

Brass is added to the march tune and it is developed in variation on the solo instruments.

The solo writing becomes more virtuosic, which serves to throw the tranquillity of the recollected elegy into greater relief; making its beauty almost unbearable in its quietude. And indeed the beauty cannot be borne, for the phrase is repeated louder and louder still, as if crying out for release from the pent-up streams of emotion, distilled from a lifetime. This great cry is made greater on the strings of the orchestra. Suddenly the cry drops to a whisper; all emotion spent. And we are left with a reminiscence of the passing-bell motif from the introduction, with the solo strings inscribing a long drooping arc of melody above it. The last phrase is from the sweet elegy, now no longer aspiring, but quiescent, dying peacefully, as all things in nature die.

RONALD STEVENSON.





This is a STEREOGRAPHIC recording

WST-17045

SIDE ONE

SAMUEL BARBER

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 14

1st movement: Allegro moderato (10:38)
2nd movement: Andante (9:51)
3rd Movement: Presto in moto perpetuo (3:47)

ROBERT GERLE, violin

VIENNA STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA

THE COMPOSERS—Rare indeed is the record which, in bringing together two works by different composers, nevertheless results in a match so compatible as in these violin concertos of Samuel Barber and Frederick Delius. Aside from the coincidence that each was first performed by a violinist named Albert (Spalding and Sammons respectively), they share the value of music called aristocratic, with a sovereign disdain for exhibitionism, self-advantage or the coarser attributes of virtuosity.

In this, of course, they reflect acutely the nature and artistry of the individuals who brought them into being. Few details of their personal lives could be matched were they to be ranged in parallel columns, but from their vastly different environments and backgrounds emerged an attitude of mind curiously similar. In one respect, at least, they were alike: Delius' father would have preferred his son to follow his own mercantile career, as Barber's would have wanted him to be a doctor also. But Barber's mother was the sister of the celebrated mezzo Louise Homer, and once his preference was apparent, there was no effort to deny his blood's will. Delius had a much harder time.

Once launched, their careers were set on courses clearly determined by the goal of self-expression, without respect for the channels chosen by others or a fashionable inclination to short cuts. To one with a reasonable familiarity with the output of each, there is a Delius quality in everything he wrote as there is a Barber quality in the mounting entries of a catalogue which totals nearly forty opus numbers. There have, in each case, been transformations in detail as there have been evolutions in scope and resource. But the early objective of pursuing an individual way wherever it might lead remained unaltered. What is "new," then, in both Delius and Barber is not a manner of procedure or a posture of style which may startle one year and bore the next. Rather it is a singularity of mind and impulse which belonged to each alone and is thus not exactly like anything ever done by anyone, before or since.

BARBER: CONCERTO, OPUS 14—In terms of chronology and method, Barber's only violin concerto (he has similarly written one for cello and one for piano) might be called late-early or early-middle. It was begun in 1939 when the twenty-nine-year-old composer had retired to a refuge in Switzerland to fulfill its commission by a Philadelphia patron for a young violinist in whom he was interested. The imminence of war influenced Barber's return late in the summer, and he finished the work in this country. However, the violinist for whom it was intended complained, first, that the opening movement and slow movement were not showy enough; and, later, that the finale was unplayable. The consequence was that Barber bought back the rights for the first performance, which eventually (in 1941) went to Albert Spalding and the Philadelphia Orchestra with Eugene Ormandy conducting.

From the opening of the first *allegro*, the violin and orchestra are partners to a discussion rather than contestants in a battle of musical wills. As in any thoughtful discussion, the interest accumulates through statement and counterstatement, observation and rebuttal, to a logical culmination. Sometimes the discussion may lead to an agreement to disagree, but here it terminates in a meeting of minds reverting to the theme as first broached. Along the way there are digressions and returns, a counter thought poised by the clarinet, then taken up by the violin, a flash of spirit and agility. There is a suggestion at one point that tempers may have flared, but the original equanimity is soon regained. Throughout all the voices speak with a beautiful suitability to their true character. The brief cadenza is written out.

For his *andante* Barber invokes the oboe in a Wordsworthian mood of "old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago." Indeed, the temptation of its song is so strong that the listener might well wonder which the soloist really is. However, the violinist's turn, when his opportunity comes, is sufficiently generous to adjust any sense of *l'es-majesté*. It carries over into the restatement of the opening in the richest range of the G string (upper octave). Unlike most such simple formula-

tions (A-B-A) the reprise is subtly elaborated, expanded and sustained to an eloquently varied conclusion. Barber's sense of fitness decrees that there shall not be a symmetrical recurrence of the oboe solo, a choice in which one can only concur.

Presto in moto perpetuo is Barber's designation for the finale, and it describes it both succinctly and accurately. As previously noted, part of its intent was to provide an instrumental latitude hitherto excluded, and this it achieves deftly and with an overtone of urbane humor. It would, however, better finalize something other than the two movements which preceded.

DELIUS: CONCERTO (1916)—If the Barber concerto inevitably includes the Delius among its antecedents, the latter has its own ancestors as well. This is not the family tree that produced the muscular works beloved of the bravura brotherhood, but the more introspective as well as insinuating favorites of the reflective musicians. It would include Beethoven's Romanzas, the fantasies of Schubert and Schumann, with a memorable landmark in Chausson's Poeme. The late Sir Thomas Beecham (whose affection for Delius was celebrated) quoted an eminent violinist as saying of this work "It may not be quite a concerto but it is a lovely poem."

The poetry suffuses the whole of its twenty-five minute length, unbroken by pause. However, it is plainly composed in three sections, the first marked "with moderate tempo," the second approached by a *rallentando molto* but otherwise lacking a definitive tempo indication, and the finale *allegretto*. The uninterrupted succession permits Delius to preserve a community of thematic matter among the sections, with one glowing moment in which the clarinet and violin exchange confidences whose subject might be "On Rehearing the First Cuckoo of Spring." The finale is preceded by what Beecham has described as "an accompanied cadenza," written with the assurance and idiomatic command that derive from Delius' own youthful training as a violinist. The finale follows the composer's will back to a retrospect of the slow section (it is marked "Broadly") rather than taking any more dynamic course in the interest of the instrumentalist. Throughout there is a wealth of finely drawn detail in the orchestral elaboration which for all its four horns, three tenor trombones and bass tuba is, essentially, *room music* rather than of conventional concert hall expansiveness.

IRVING KOLODIN

Music Editor, SATURDAY REVIEW

THE ARTISTS—Born of Hungarian parents in what is now Italy, Robert Gerle received his early training at the Budapest Conservatory, where he won the Hubay Prize. His studies were interrupted during the war in Budapest, during which he bore the many vicissitudes and misadventures which, Mr. Gerle reflects, "would seem unbelievable even now on a motion picture screen." After miraculously surviving the war he finally managed to make his way to America.

Robert Gerle made a widely acclaimed New York debut in 1958 and, since, won the highest praise in many seasons at his London debut, establishing himself firmly in the front rank of the younger generation of violinists. Following his recent Carnegie Hall recital, to a wildly enthusiastic audience, Mr. Gerle toured Europe giving 23 performances in the concert hall, on television, and recording. Besides concerts in Italy, the tour covered France and England, where Mr. Gerle performed at Albert Hall. Next, a return to Hungary (Mr. Gerle's first in 17 years) for two performances in Pécs in three days, in addition to the planned Budapest concerts. The violinist played three encores, a rare event for an orchestral program. An added thrill came with the presence of Zoltán Kodály at the first concert. Gerle had studied Hungarian folk music with the composer at the conservatory and was greatly honored that he should choose this opportunity to make one of his rare public appearances. "He even stayed through the encores!"

Directly preceding this concert Mr. Gerle was invited via telephone to

SIDE TWO

FREDERICK DELIUS

Violin Concerto (1916)

(26:07)

ROBERT ZELLER, conducting

Paris to take over on the following night with the Berlin Philharmonic, under Karajan. The violinist surmounted the difficult transportation from Budapest to Paris, arrived in time for rehearsal the next morning and filled the engagement. He found working with the famed conductor a wonderful experience.

Gerle has the distinction of having introduced the Samuel Barber Violin Concerto in several cities. The composer, on hearing Mr. Gerle play his work, approved enthusiastically and urged the violinist to record it. The results are contained herein. Robert Gerle's instrument is the famous Hubay Stradivarius of 1726, shown on the cover of this album.

Robert Zeller, American conductor, started his career with the world's outstanding ballet organizations. Since, he has achieved international recognition as guest conductor in the United States, Canada and Europe with leading orchestras, including the Lamoureux Orchestra of Paris, The RAI of Rome, Florence Festival Orchestra, Trieste Philharmonic, the Copenhagen National Symphony, among others. Mr. Zeller often appears as commentator on the podium and on radio and television analyzing and describing symphonic music on programs written and directed by himself.



ROBERT ZELLER

THE RECORD—The original tapes for this recording were produced with the latest and most natural microphone techniques available, and were then transferred to a master disc without changes, the original sound preserved as performed. Pressings from the master disc were compared with the original tape and only when a comparable match was effected was actual production approved. This recording follows the R.I.A.A. characteristics.

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PRODUCED BY JAMES GRAYSON MASTERING: CLAUDE RIE
ENGINEERING: H. ZEITHAMMER/P. CURIEL
COVER PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN ARDOIN
COVER DESIGN: HARRY FARMLETT
LINER PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY UPI MADE IN U.S.A.
RECORDED IN MOZART HALL, VIENNA, JUNE, 1963

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GUARNIERI: Choro
Parisot, cello;
Vienna State Opera Orch.; Meier, Cond.
XWN-19037/WST-17037

COATES: London Suite;
London Again Suite
Eric Johnson & His Orchestra;
XWN-18951/WST-14132

GRIEG: Piano Concerto, Op. 16;
Peer Gynt Suites
Nibley, Piano;
Utah Symphony, Abravanel, cond.
XWN-18951/WST-14132

DELIUS

THREE SONATAS FOR VIOLIN & PIANO

Wanda Wilkomirska

David Garvey

"The last great apostle in our time of romance, emotion and beauty in music" is what the composer Frederick Delius was called by his friend and devoted champion, Sir Thomas Beecham. Though he was born in England, Delius lived in a number of different countries in his early years—including the United States, where he spent his early twenties as manager of an orange grove not far from Jacksonville, Florida. In 1890, when he was not yet thirty, Delius settled in Paris and then in the small French country town of Grez-sur-Loing. From then until his death in June, 1934, at the age of 72, Delius resided in Grez and produced a rich and diversified outpouring of music in all forms. Among his published works are six operas; eight choral pieces with orchestra; six scores for orchestra with solo voices; fifteen large orchestral works; five scores for small orchestra; incidental music for two plays; four instrumental concertos (including the only other viable Double Concerto for Violin and Cello to place alongside the masterpiece by Brahms); and songs, solo piano pieces, a string quartet, two works for cello and piano and four for violin and piano. These works share a common freshness and elegance, a naturalness of expression; but perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of the music of Delius is its soaring, rhapsodic nature.

Even during the composer's lifetime the music of Delius was a special and rarified taste, one passionately espoused by the Delius adherents but quite unknown by the public at large. Unpredictably—indeed, surprisingly—the music of Delius seems today to be enjoying its greatest vogue. Some of the reason for this derives undoubtedly from the same impulse that accounts for the Romantic Revival in music generally. But surely some of the reason also derives from the individuality of the music itself, the stern and heroic isolation of its composer, and the physical tragedy of his last ten years on earth.

It was in 1924 that Delius fell victim to a disease that produced quick and progressive paralysis and blindness. Though his mind remained alert and unclouded, he soon became a helpless invalid. His wife provided loving care but the creative life of Frederick Delius seemed to have come to a cruel end.

It was in these circumstances that a 22-year old English composer named Eric Fenby wrote to Delius in 1928 suggesting that he, Fenby, might be able to serve as a musical secretary to the older man, taking down in dictation compositions that might not otherwise be born because of Delius' affliction. Fenby's offer was accepted, and in October of 1928 he presented himself to Delius at Grez. The two of them proceeded to work out, slowly and painstakingly, a method whereby the product of Delius' continuing genius could be taken down in coherent and fully orchestrated notation. During the five and one-half years of life that remained to Delius, he dictated to Fenby seven new works that surely could never have come into being without the extraordinary means devised by the two of them. Included in the output of these years were three works for orchestra (*A Song of Summer*, *Fantastic Dance* and the *Prelude* to "Irmelin"); the *Caprice and Elegy* for cello and chamber orchestra; the *Songs of Farewell* (to poems from Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass") for double choir and orchestra; the *Idyll* (again to words by Whitman) for soprano and baritone soloists and orchestra; and the *Sonata No. 3* for Violin and Piano.

The numbering of the Delius sonatas for violin and piano is misleading. There are four such works in all, but the first of them, composed in 1892 when Delius was thirty, remains unpublished. Thus the three Sonatas published as numbers 1, 2 and 3 should really be numbered 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Felix Aprahamian, the

British musicologist and critic, visited Delius in 1933 and was informed that the early, unpublished violin and piano sonata manuscript was still in the composer's possession at Grez. Years later, according to Aprahamian, the manuscript was among other Delius effects contained in a tin trunk in a basement in London's Bloomsbury Square. It has since disappeared, though a copy of it remains in the possession of the violinist who was allowed to perform it by Sir Thomas Beecham, the musical advisor to the Delius Trust.

Delius began the composition of the work that now bears the official designation Sonata No. 1 in 1905. It was not completed until a decade later, Delius in the meantime having produced many of his most distinguished and characteristic works. Included in the music of this ten-year period were his last opera (*Fennimore and Gerda*); three of his largest works for chorus and orchestra (*Songs of Sunset*, *Arabesque*, and *A Song of the High Hills*); and many of his best-known orchestral scores (among them *Brigg Fair*, *In a Summer Garden*, the *Dance Rhapsody No. 1*, *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, *Summer Night on the River* and the *North Country Sketches*).

The Sonata No. 2, composed in 1924, was the last work Delius himself was able to write down. Interestingly, the renowned British viola virtuoso, Lionel Tertis, made a transcription of the Second Sonata for viola and piano and recorded it in that form in 1929 for English Columbia.

The Third Sonata, of 1930, as has already been mentioned, is one of the works dictated by Delius to Eric Fenby. Formally, it is the most classically-structured of the three. Though lasting something less than eighteen minutes' duration, it is in three distinctive movements—a highly lyrical *Slow* first movement, a fanciful *Andante scherzando* middle movement; and a concluding movement that begins with a *Lento* introduction and then moves quickly to a propulsive and exciting *Con moto*. Characteristically, the Sonata concludes with music marked *tranquillo* that gradually subsides in dynamics from piano to pianissimo to a concluding triple piano chord.

The Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2 are painted in broader strokes and offer some genuine dramatic confrontations between the two instruments. In the main, however, it is Delius in his accustomed voice as lyrical rhapsodist who speaks to us in all this music.

Notes by MARTIN BOOKSPAN

SIDE ORDER AND TIMINGS

SIDE 1

Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano (1905-15)	23:00
With easy movement but not quick; with vigor and animation.	

SIDE 2

Band 1. Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano (1924)	13:11
Con moto	
Band 2. Sonata No. 3 for Violin and Piano (1930)	17:56
Slow; Andante scherzando; Lento	

TOTAL 31:07

Producer: E. Alan Silver/Recording Engineer: Marc Aubort
Piano: Steinway/Cover Photograph: Christian Steiner

WANDA WILKOMIRSKA

Since her first triumphant appearances in North America with the Warsaw Philharmonic in 1961, Wanda Wilkomirska has enchanted a continually expanding audience with her superb artistry each time she has returned to this country. Overseas the beautiful violinist is a favorite soloist with the major orchestras of the continent. Praised by critics for her unusual lyricism, purity of tone and remarkable powers of communication, she is today recognized as one of the truly unique European artists of her generation.

DAVID GARVEY

Pianist David Garvey has for the last 20 years been the choice of nearly every major violinistic talent for their debuts, concert tours, and chamber music appearances. Also for the better part of her illustrious career, he has been the exclusive partner in music of the noted Leontyne Price.

Mr. Garvey graduated from the Juilliard School of Music, winning both the Damrosch award and the Rosenberg award for highest academic and pianistic achievements. His career has taken him to Europe, the Far East, South America, Australia, as well as almost everywhere on the North American continent.



Connoisseur
Society



A tribute to and in memory of Bernard Herrmann (1911-1975)

Despite the fact that two of the works comprising this 'musical garland of the seasons' were composed by an American, the common denominator is England. The texts set are all the work of English poets; the sole instrumental piece ends with a prominently-featured quotation from the most famous of all English oratorios; and in idiom and sensibility all the music is a product of that period in 20th century English music when the related areas of romanticism, impressionism and folksong met and intermingled freely – the result being a style of musical expression which in the hands of its most expert practitioners took firm root in a tradition whence much of the finest English poetry and painting had sprung.

Bernard Herrmann's Anglophilia is well-known. He lived a life steeped in the riches of English literature, painting and music, and the works of such figures as Beddoes, Lefanu and Arthur Machen, Samuel Palmer, and Whistler, John Stanley, Delius and Warlock were his constant companions. He actively promoted the works of English composers during his years as conductor-in-chief of the CBS Radio Orchestra; and he succeeded where Delius failed in producing a full-length opera on **Wuthering Heights** (1944). Before that, however, several works had testified to a love of English poetry, among them the song-cycle here recorded, **The Fantasticks**, to words by one of the most popular and prolific poets of Elizabethan England, Nicolas Breton (1545–1626). **Fantasticks** is the title of his last published work, a series of prose-poems or pictures describing months, hours and Christian festivals. In these pieces, writing with the quaint simplicity of the period, Breton records many little items of information that throw light on its ways and customs. In January the fruit of the grape is prescribed for the aged; down beds and quilted caps are in the pride of their service, and the cook and the pantler are men of no mean office. In February we learn that a lamb-skin is good for a lame arm, and in March merry football-matches continue good-fellowship. April finds the youth of the country making merry for the morris-dance, and in May the apothecary gathers the dew for a medicine.

Herrmann selected five of these prose-pictures, progressing from the drear mid-winter of January through to the joyous springtime of May. The first four are set for one solo voice apiece, the fifth for a small mixed chorus. In the first song, 'January', black winter freezes and holds both harmony and melody in its merciless grasp. The vocal line (bass) is the barest recitative: bleak, benumbed chords of differing shapes and sizes shift and turn sullenly and with the greatest reluctance, and there is only one ray of hope – the soft horn fanfare which sounds just after "the proud oak must stoop to the axe" and returns before "Farewell". In 'February', a winter landscape in sound, "there is hope of a better time not far off" as we can hear in the new element of motion introduced by the harp into an aching void. Woodwinds and vibraphone are the only other instrumental colours, and again the vocal line (contralto this time) is very close to recitative. By contrast 'March' is a mad galeforce scherzo sweeping the orchestra off its feet in a blustering, blistering 6/8 against which the tenor soloist has to hold his own in 2/4. A solo violin coyly comments on the nosegay-present for a lady, and a few bars later the textures (though not the pace) begin to broaden and relax to admit a burgeoning lyrical element ("now beginneth nature as it were to wake out of her sleep"). But the North Wind comes roaring back for a **presto** coda, and the soloist's "Farewell" is this time defiant and dismissive. 'April' is as feminine as 'March' was masculine. It is an exquisitely-fashioned duet for solo soprano and solo violin with liquid harp ostinato, as utterly English in its sensuous sweetness as anything in the music of Quilter, Armstrong Gibbs or Warlock. So too is 'May', a lovely paean to the prime of the year. All the softness and freshness of early summer is here: a gentle rhythmic lilt, harmony fragrant but never-doying, voices wreathing and twining themselves around the instruments and creating a myriad felicities of texture and timbre. Like the best of Warlock, the music sounds both wholly contemporary and wholly Elizabethan. Something of Herrmann's own tender-heartedness towards animals may perhaps be perceived as he sings of the male deer putting out the velvet head and the pagged doe near her fawning; but eventually the voices must needs dispense with all words in the sweetness of their ecstasy, and the climax is full-throated. Yet the final "Farewell" is regretful and nostalgic; in it we can sense the Delian awareness that, in the words of the Webster dirge sung in Warlock's setting on side 2, "all the flowers of the spring/meet to perfume our burying" and that all things in nature must fade and die.

Herrmann's music now takes us from early to mid-summer. **For the Fallen** was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and the League of Composers as part of a series commemorating the dead of World War II; it is a berceuse for those who lie asleep on the many foreign battlefields of the world. We should imagine a hot summer's afternoon in late July; a light breeze is astir and plays about the innumerable graves of a war

cemetery in the hills. Here the orchestral colours are all muted greys and greens; strings establish the waving rhythm of the breeze while a solo bassoon sounds the main melody of the berceuse. Muted horns and timpani introduce a secondary motif, and soon the two ideas are combined in the woodwinds. But gradually the sky begins to darken and the music goes forward to a climax in which is recalled something of the sufferings undergone by the millions of dead. Ultimately the calm of the opening prevails, and a final promise of consolation and **Requiem Aeternam** is vouchsafed by the two flutes singing a phrase from Handel's 'He shall feed His flock like a shepherd'.

The gentle barcarolle-like swing of **For the Fallen** was one of the favourite rhythmic patterns of the composer of **A Late Lark**, one of the last works of Frederick Delius and certainly one of his most flawless. As in Henley's poem, many a late lark continued to sing in Delius's heart long after he had lost the use of his eyes and limbs, and but for the timely and devoted assistance of the young Yorkshirer who became his amanuensis, Eric Fenby, they would have sung in vain. In his **Delius as I knew him** Fenby recalls how he unearthed **A Late Lark** for the 1929 Delius Festival in London. "The score had been misplaced, though not forgotten, and the old man was most anxious that I should turn the place upside down, if need be, to find it, for he had a rare affection for it, and, once it was found, was continually asking me to play it over to him. Together with **A Poem of Life and Love**, which later became **A Song of Summer** he had sketched it out just before his sight failed him. There were one or two minor adjustments to be made before it finally satisfied him, and several lines in the voice part which needed to be filled in; this he did by dictation." Like the **Songs of Farewell**, **A Late Lark** is both a looking-back in quiet content and a looking-forward "luminous and serene"; the image of the lark which sings on regardless of the lengthening shadows recurs in an almost identical context at the very end of Richard Strauss' **Four Last Songs**. Such music almost lies beyond the reach of commentary, but it may not be out of place to mention the simple but nerve-tingling modulation which points the change of stance in stanza 3 ("so be my passing"); the climax of sundown is splendid indeed and serene, and the final chord so disposed as to negate any sense of absolute finality – **omnia exeunt in mysterium**.

Delius had no more devoted disciple in England than Peter Warlock (or Philip Heseltine as his real name was) whose death in 1930 at the age of 36 deprived England of a musical scholar, editor, writer and composer of great distinction. In the latter capacity he is best known for his many songs and choral pieces, and three of the four motets here performed take us as far as Christmas and the merry close of the year. First however the dirge **All the Flowers of the Spring**. Like **A Late Lark** it is autumnal, but here is no "rosy-and golden haze" or "shining peace"; rather is it that other autumn of bitter disillusion and decay. Warlock's harmony is intensely chromatic and dissonant, almost expressionistic in character, although the sensitivity to vocal colour is ever on the watch for undue density of texture. This is one of a number of choral pieces which take Delian experiments in the expressive use of the wordless chorus a stage further. The last word, 'wind', is prolonged over a total of twenty-one slow-moving bars, the 'd' being enunciated only on the twenty-first. The singers are directed gradually to close their lips and sustain the 'n' sound: the effect is almost mesmeric, as if the singers had picked up the sound of the low-singing wind and had identified themselves with it. In the **Corpus Christi Carol** the chorus are wordless for almost the entire length of its duration, singing to 'ah' or 'mm'; theirs is a kind of subdued ritual keening, a frieze of monochrome sound out of which contralto and tenor soloists rise at intervals to declaim the text of the Old English carol to long melismas. At only one point does the chorus itself advance the story: when the presence of the Crucified is first mentioned ("And in that bed there lieth a knight").

At this point the harmony is suddenly deprived of its earlier stability and becomes chromatic, plaintive and desolate; then a reversal to the **status quo** until just before the end when again the soloists fall silent and the chorus spell out the text on a monotone, **senza espressione**. In the gem-like **Carillon Carilla** the verses ring changes on the harmony in accordance with the text, but there are two landmarks which come constantly into view – the refrain which gives the carol its title and which in the music suggests bells heard faintly in the distance, and the warm glow at the end of each verse ("And the small child Jesus smile on you") when the music seems literally to smile. Finally **What Cheer? Good Cheer!** is a rousing hymn to the New Year, strong and direct in expression; the refrain is set to a splendid sequence of chords in which can surely be heard the swinging of the bells as they ring out the Old and in the New.

Christopher Palmer *Author's Copyright 1976*

Producer: Gavin Barrett
Recording Engineer: Bob Auger
Recording Location: Church of St Giles, Cripplegate, Barbican, London, on 26th June 1975
Cover Illustration: "Winter Scene" contemporary Limoges enamel painting by Jean-Paul Loup
Sleeve design and illustration: Shirley Oates
Printer: Richard Davis Ltd
Other records on Unicorn of music by Bernard Herrmann: UNS 237 (The Devil & Daniel Webster/Welles Raises Kane, London Philharmonic Orch. cond. Herrmann), UNS 255 (Cantata "Moby Dick" – Soloists, Chorus, London Philharmonic Orch. cond. Herrmann), RHS 331 (Symphony – National Philharmonic Orch. cond. Herrmann), RHS 332 (Clarinet Quintet/String Quartet – Robert Hill, clarinet, Ariel/Amici Quartets), RHS 336 ("Psycho", complete music for Hitchcock film –

Side 1

HERRMANN *The Fantasticks*

song-cycle to words by Nicolas Breton (1545–1626) with Michael Rippon – bass, Meriel Dickinson – contralto, John Amis – tenor, Gillian Humphreys – soprano, and The Thames Chamber Choir.

Side 2

HERRMANN *For the Fallen*

DELIUS (1862-1934) *A Late Lark*

with John Amis – tenor,

WARLOCK (1894-1930) *Motets*

All the Flowers of the Spring, Corpus Christi Carol, Carillon Carilla, What Cheer? Good Cheer! Thames Chamber Choir, conductor Louis Halsey with Stephen Hicks organ

NATIONAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTED BY BERNARD HERRMANN

January

It is now January and time begins to turn the wheel of his revolution; The woods begin to loose the beauty of their spreading boughs, and the proud oak must stoop to the axe. The squirrel now surveyeth the nut and the Maple, An Apple and a nutmeg make a gossip's cup, and the Northern black dust is the during fuel. The currier and the limerod are the death of the fowl, and the falcon's bells ring the death of the mallard; The blackbird leaveth not a berry on the thorn, and the garden earth is turned up for her roots. The waterfloods run over proud banks, and the gaping oyster leaves his shell in the street. To conclude I hold it a time of little comfort, the rich man's charge and the poor man's misery. Farewell.

February

It is now February, and the valleys are painted white. The waters now alter the nature of their softness and the soft earth is made stony hard. The air is sharp and piercing, and the winds blow cold. The taverns seldom lack guests, and the ostler knows how to gain by his hay; The hunting horse is at the heels of the hound, while the ambling nay carrieth the physician and his footcloth. There is hope of a better time not far off. Farewell.

March

It is now March, and the northern wind drieth up the southern dirt. The tender lips are now masked for fear of chapping, and the fair hands must not be ungloved. The air is sharp, but the hay begins to lengthen, and a nosegay of violets is a present for a lady. Now beginneth nature as it were to wake out of her sleep and send the traveller to survey the walks of the world. The tree begins to bud and the grass to peep abroad, while the thrush with the blackbirds make a charm in the young springs. It is now March!

April

It is now April, and the nightingale begins to tune her throat against May; The sunny showers perfume the air, and the bees begin to go abroad for honey. The dew, as in pearls, hangs upon the tops of the grass, while the turtles sit billing upon the little green boughs. The trout begins to play in the brook, the salmon leaves the sea to turlie in the fresh water; The garden banks are full of gay flowers, and the thorn and the plum send forth their fair blossoms. The March colt begins to play and the cosset lamb is learned to butt; The poets now make their studies in the wood, and the youth of the country make ready for the Morris dance. It is now April, and the nightingale begins to tune her throat against May; The aged hairs find a fresh life, and the youthful cheeks are red as a cherry. It were a world to set down the worth of this month; I hold it the heaven's blessings, and the earth's comfort. Farewell.

May

It is now May, and the sweetness of the air refreshed every spirit. (Heigh ho, Heigh nonny nonny) Sunny beams bring fair blossoms, and dripping clouds water Flora's Garden. (Heigh ho etc) The male deer puts out the velvet head, and the pagged doe is near her fawning; The Lark sets the morning watch, and the evening the nightingale. Barges like bowers keep the streams of the sweet rivers. (Heigh nonny no etc) The tall young oak is cut down for the Maypole It is now May etc Farewell. Nicolas Breton (1626)

A Late Lark

A late lark twitters from the quiet skies; And from the west, Where the sun, his day's work ended, Lingers as in content, There falls on the old, grey city An influence luminous and serene, A shining peace.

The smoke ascends In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires Shine, and are changed. In the valley Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun, Closing his benediction, Sinks, and the darkening air Thrills with the sense of the triumphing night – Night with her train of stars And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing! My task accomplished and the long day done, My wages taken, and in my heart Some late lark singing, Let me be gathered to the quiet west, The sundown splendid and serene.

All the Flowers of the Spring

All the flow'rs of the spring Meet to perfume our burying; These have but their growing prime, And man does flourish but his time . . . Survey our progress from our birth We are set, we grow, we turn to earth.

Courts adieu, and all delights, All bewitching appetites! Sweetest breath and clearest eye Like perfumes go out and die; And consequently this is done As shadows wait upon the sun.

Vain the ambition of Kings Who seek with trophies and dead things To leave a living name behind, And weave but nets to catch the wind.

John Webster (1623)

Corpus Christi Carol

Lully, lullay, lully, lullay
The faucon hath borne my make away
He bare him up, he bare him down,
He bare him into an orchard brown
Lully, lullay, lully, lullay,
The faucon hath borne my make away.
In that orchard there was a hall,
That was hanged with purple and pall.
And in that hall there was a bed:
It was hanged with gold so red.
And in that bed there lieth a knight,
His woundes bleeding day and night.
By that bedside there kneeleth a may,
And she weepeth night and day.
By that bedside there standeth a stone:
CORPUS CHRISTI written thereon.
Lully, lullay, lully, lullay!

Old English

Carillon, Carilla

On a winter's night long time ago
(The bells ring loud and the bells ring low)
When high howled wind, and down fell snow,
(Carillon, Carilla)
Saint Joseph he and Nostre Dame
Riding on an ass, full weary came
From Nazareth into Bethlehem.
And the small child Jesus smile on you.

And Bethlehem inn they stood before,
(The bells ring less and the bells ring more)
The landlord bade them be gone from his door.
(Carillon, Carilla)
"Poor folk!" (says he) "must lie where they may,
For the Duke of Jewry comes this way,
With all his train on a Christmas day".
And the small child Jesus smile on you.

Poor folk that may my carol hear
(The bells ring merry and the bells ring clear)
See! God's one child had hardest cheer!
(Carillon, Carilla)
Men grown hard on a Christmas morn;
The dumb beast by and a babe forlorn.
It was very, very cold when our Lord was born.
And the small child Jesus smile on you.

Now those were Jews as Jews must be,
(The bells ring merry and the bells ring free)
But Christian men in a band are we.
(Carillon, Carilla)
Empty we go and ill bedight,
Singing Noel on a winter's night.
Give us to sup by the warm firelight
And the small child Jesus smile on you.

Hilaire Belloc

What Cheer? Good Cheer!

Lift up your hearts and be ye glad
In Christ his birth, the angel bade.
Say to each other, if any be sad:
What cheer? Good cheer!
Be merry and glad this good New Year!

The King of Heav'n His birth hath take:
Now joy and mirth we ought to make.
Say each to another for His dear sake:
What cheer? (etc)

I tell you all with heart so free,
Right welcome ye be all to me;
Be glad and merry for charity.
What cheer? (etc)

Anon. (of medieval origin)

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FREDERICK DELIUS (1862-1934): THE MAGIC FOUNTAIN: The World Premiere Performance

CAST

Solano, a Spanish Nobleman John Mitchinson, tenor
Watawa, a young Indian girl Katherine Pring, soprano
Wapanacki, an Indian chief Norman Welsby, bass
Talum Hadjo, a Seer Richard Angas, bass
A Spanish Sailor Francis Thomas, bass
Chorus of Sailors, Indian Warriors,
Indian Women, Night-Mists and
Invisible Spirits of the Fountain The BBC Singers (augmented)

Giles Swayne, coach

THE BBC CONCERT ORCHESTRA
NORMAN DEL MAR, cond.

The Magic Fountain and Its World Premiere

The BBC has for many years been mounting in its own studios, recordings of operas which would otherwise remain unheard. The unknown operas of otherwise great composers are an obvious point of enquiry for our activities: thus the BBC Radio Opera Section has mounted productions of, for instance, *Die Feen* and *Das Liebesverbot* of Wagner, numerous Handel operas, the original (often substantially different) versions of Verdi operas—*Macbeth*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *La Forza del Destino*—and at the time of writing we are broadcasting a complete cycle of the operas of Richard Strauss, which has meant special recordings of four of the unrecorded works—*Güntram*, *Friedenstag*, *Die Liebe der Danae* and the original *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

It was only a question of time (and money, since periodic freezes of our studio opera recording program have occurred in recent years) before we came to the question of the so far unperformed Delius operas, *Margot la Rouge*, which we hope to record in 1981, and *The Magic Fountain*. How could we not bring to the world's ear an opera described by Sir Thomas Beecham in his autobiography as 'a truly remarkable work of which no one living knows either a word or a note'?

We had a very happy collaboration with the Delius Trust, which provided us with the Eric Fenby piano reduction and Delius' full score, from which Norman Del Mar conducted. The BBC music copying section prepared the orchestral parts after quite a hefty editing job on the score: since Delius never came up against a performance and consequently presumably never had parts made, he never checked his own inconsistencies.

The casting of the two main roles was not easy because Delius, still under the Wagner spell, wrote for a baritone tenor and a rich mezzo with strong high notes. After initial private coaching, the soloists and chorus had three days of piano rehearsals with the conductor, who then spent a day alone with the orchestra. Three days of full rehearsal preceded the recording, which was given as a public concert in view of the interest in the occasion. The location was the Golder's Green Hippodrome, a former theatre now used as a studio by the BBC Concert Orchestra. Once called the Opera Orchestra, it nowadays plays for only two or three operas a year, and specializes in the lighter orchestral repertoire. For this recording, its forces were substantially augmented.

A capacity audience of about five hundred (of whom at least four hundred seemed to be members of the Delius Society!) attended the performance, which took place on July 30, 1977. The five hundred were beseeched not to betray their presence by so much as a cough or sneeze, but such a warning was scarcely necessary: they listened to *The Magic Fountain* with rapt attention, thrilled that theirs were the first ears on which these unknown words and notes were falling for the first time. There was time afterwards for only two or three brief retakes to cover obvious mistakes, and the recording was complete.

The producer's problem of how to present the opera to a radio audience now arose. Every opera offers its own solution, and with *The Magic Fountain* it lay in Delius' own vivid and striking scenic descriptions. He conceived *The Magic Fountain* during that most decisive period of his life when he lived in the orange grove in Florida, surrounded by the sights and sounds of a luxuriant foreign landscape—the very shores, swamps and everglades where Solano and Watawa act out their story. He had so carefully penned his descriptions of the storm at sea, the calm dawn after, the fireflies dancing among lush tropical flowers, that it seemed to me that I must translate such of these as were possible from visual into aural effects, to try and supply that dimension of atmosphere of place that was obviously so important to him.

ELAINE PADMORE
Chief Producer Opera for BBC Radio

Katherine Pring joined the Sadlers Wells Opera/English National Opera in 1968. Her repertoire includes *Dorabella*, *Azucena*, *Eboli*, *Niklaus (The Tales of Hoffman)*, *Carmen* (which she performed on BBC television), *Waltraute*, *Fricka*, *Jocasta (Oedipus Rex)*, *Agave (The Bassarids)* and *Amneris*. She sang *Dalila* in the opening ENO North production of *Samson et Dalila* which has since toured to Dortmund. She has also sung *Preziosilla (La Forza del Destino)*, *Kate (Owen Wingrave)* and *Thea (The Knot Garden)* at Covent Garden, and *Baba the Turk* at Glyndebourne. She has appeared in Frankfurt, Bayreuth, Düsseldorf, Paris and San Diego.

Photo: Donald Southern



Photo: Frederick Bass



Richard Angas spent the seasons 1977-1980 attached to the Stadttheater, Krefeld, West Germany, where he sang the roles of König Mark, König Heinrich, Rocco, Ochs, Kecal, Osmin and Alfonso. He has also sung with Scottish Opera and the Welsh National Opera. He made his Covent Garden debut in *Wozzeck* and returned to take part in Henze's *The River*. He has worked extensively with the BBC, and toured Israel (with Antal Dorati and the Israel Philharmonic), Australia (with the English Opera Group) and South America for *Les Noces*. Recordings include the Priest (*Moses and Aaron*). In 1980 he became a principal bass at the English National Opera, London.

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Norman Welsby studied at the Royal Manchester College of Music, and in 1967 he was a prize-winner in the BBC North opera competition, which launched him into a singing career in the concert hall, and on stage and radio. In 1968, after two seasons with Glyndebourne Opera, he joined Sadlers Wells Opera—now English National Opera—as a principal baritone. He remained with the company for nine years, singing many roles in both classical and modern opera—these have included *The Marriage of Figaro* (Figaro), *Salome* (Jocanaan), *Carmen* (Escamillo), and *Die Meistersinger* (Hans Sachs). It was in the world premiere of the Henze opera, *We Come to the River*, in which he played the leading role of the General, that he made his debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in July of 1976. In 1977 he became a member of the Royal Opera House, appearing in such roles as Prince Ottokar in *Die Freischütz* and Ned Keene in *Peter Grimes*. His appearances on the concert platform include the majority of the bass/baritone roles in oratorio.

Norman Del Mar, internationally recognized as one of Britain's most distinguished conductors, began his career as second horn to Dennis Brain in the legendary wartime RAF Orchestra, afterwards following Brain into Beecham's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Beecham soon recognized Del Mar's potential as a conductor and thus Del Mar became a leading figure in music-making, conducting not only the Royal Philharmonic but his own series of concerts at Chelsea Town Hall. Apart from his busy concert schedule, Norman Del Mar is Professor of Conducting at the Royal College of Music. He is also regarded as one of the world's leading authorities on Richard Strauss, following his definitive three-volume study of the composer. He is currently Artistic Director of the Norwich Triennial Festival and Musical Director of the Portsmouth Festival. In 1975, he was honored by the Queen with a CBE. He has recently received the Hi-Fi News Audio Award for services to the recording industry.

Photo: Clarion



Photo: Courtesy of Welsh National Opera



John Mitchinson studied at the Royal Manchester College of Music with Frederick Cox and Heddle Nash. He was awarded the Curtis Gold Medal, The Imperial League of Opera Prize, Sarah Andrew Scholarship, and on finishing his course of studies, he won the Royal Philharmonic Society Kathleen Ferrier Prize and the Queen's Prize. He has travelled widely in pursuance of his concert career and his repertoire includes such diverse works as Monteverdi *Vespers*, Bach *Cantatas*, and Mahler's *8th Symphony* and *Das Lied von der Erde* (both of which he has recorded). He broadcasts frequently with the BBC. Recently, he has performed the title roles in *Oedipus Rex*, *Idomeneo*, *Peter Grimes*, *Dalibor*, and most recently in the celebrated Welsh National Opera production of *Tristan und Isolde*, conducted by Reginald Goodall, soon to be released on a Decca recording. Another new recording is the *Missa Glagolskaja* of Janáček on EMI. Performances in the U.S. include Washington, San Francisco, Boston, New York and Denver.

Original Radio Production by Elaine Padmore
Record Production by Sylvia Cartner
Sound Balance by John Rushby-Smith
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An original BBC recording produced in association with The Delius Trust
Cover Illustration: Diane Goode

Demo: Side 1, opening

FREDERICK DELIUS (1862-1934): MARGOT LA ROUGE: THE WORLD PREMIÈR PERFORMANCE

ARABESQUE
RECORDINGS
8134-L

CAST

Margot La Rouge Lois McDonall, soprano
Sergeant Thibault Kenneth Woollam, tenor
The Artiste Malcolm Donnelly, baritone
Lili Béguin Ludmilla Andrew, soprano
La Poigne Richard Jackson, baritone
Totor and the Police Inspector Dennis Wicks, bass
The Licensee and the Third Woman Ann Collins, contralto
Nini and the First Woman Margaret Field, soprano
Second Woman Phyllis Cannan, mezzo-soprano
First Drinker and First Soldier David Wilson-Johnson, baritone
Second Drinker and Second Soldier Alan Watt, baritone

Pamela Stirling, coach
THE BBC CONCERT ORCHESTRA
NORMAN DEL MAR, cond.

When Frederick Delius left Leipzig Konservatorium as a student in the late eighteen eighties he was destined to spend eight years in rented rooms in the little villages on the outskirts of Paris. Practical support from his father was to cease, and but for the foresight and generosity of his uncle Theodor, a well-to-do, art-loving bachelor resident in Paris, his heart's desire to be a composer would have languished in an unthinkable return to the servitude of the family wool business in Bradford, the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Though he found Paris 'ten times more beautiful than London' he was drawn instinctively to the countryside for inspiration in his work, as other young artists were seeking to do in that period of vision and extravagance that was stirring the arts of the day in France. From the hamlet of Ville d'Avray he wrote to Grieg in the autumn of 1888: 'So I am at work again. Next door is a little restaurant where I eat. It is really wonderful here. Nobody comes and all around are woods and hills. One would think one is a hundred miles from Paris!'

Yet the attractions of Paris were not far from mind. He would drop his pen and enjoy to the full the high life of his uncle's salons, then change to old clothes and romp with the friends he had made amongst young painters and writers.

These diverse experiences were eventually to yield some fragmentary sketches, *Scènes Parisiennes* and *Episodes et Aventures*—and the tone-poem *Paris* (The Song of a great City) dated 1899 which, incredibly, has never been heard in France at all!

Again the French phase erupts surprisingly in the composition of Delius's fifth opera *Margot la Rouge* (1901-2) and continues fitfully in

his settings of the French orientated English poems of Ernest Dowson in *Cynara* for Baritone and Orchestra (1907) and *Songs of Sunset* for Soprano, Baritone, Chorus and Orchestra (1906-8), ending in 1919 in the last of the Verlaine songs for voice and piano *Avant que tu ne t'en ailles* which appear intermittently in the Delius canon from 1895.

Delius describes *Margot la Rouge* as a lyric drama in one act to words by Rosenthal. Who Rosenthal was nobody seems to know, nor is there any evidence of any other work attributable to him. It has been established, however, that Rosenthal was the pen-name for a certain Berthe Gaston-Danville, presumably long since dead. (It would have been useless my asking Delius even if I had thought of it. He would have said 'Don't ask questions!' To explain is weak!')

Thus what I know of him he told me of his own accord. The opera, it is affirmed by Delius researchers, was written for and submitted as an entry in the 'Concorso Melodrammatico Internazionale' of 1904 sponsored by the publisher Sonzogno of Milan. Delius never referred to it even when, in 1932, he based his *Idyll* for Soprano, Baritone and Orchestra on words adapted from Walt Whitman's 'Leaves of Grass' by reworking with my help selected lyrical passages from *Margot la Rouge*! In this reworking process we used Delius's original full score, beautifully written in his own hand, maintaining the initial orchestration, but reshaping the vocal lines when required appropriate to Whitman's verse in accordance with the scheme Robert Nichols had drafted, after he had heard the selected music played over and over again to him. Since then I have never seen Delius's MS and when, in 1980, the Delius Trust commissioned me to make a new orchestration of those passages not contained in the *Idyll*, using Ravel's vocal score which he made for Delius in 1904, I wished I had read through Delius's autograph score of *Margot la Rouge* more often. But that was fifty years ago. My task now was to reproduce on paper as faithfully as I possibly could the sounds Delius had in mind when first conceiving the music. Music, he told me, invariably came to him complete in timbres and thus I pondered each progression until I felt sure I was near the truth. It may be that my use of the brass in the storm scene and later excitements may be more dramatic than Delius's original, but my zeal might be heard as a pardonable liberty!

The opera opens with a prelude which is one of the most perfect and inevitable pieces of music, in that not one note is more than is needed to convey its direct simplicity in expressing the mystery of Nature's nightfall, and what that nightfall might bring in the tale we are about to hear. Those who know the *Idyll* may find interest in the way Delius turns the same music to different account in *Margot la Rouge*. This is most obvious in the prelude which in the *Idyll* is taken at the slow speed of an old man's reverie of a past love affair; whereas in the opera the prelude has the speed and expectancy of youth. As might be expected, the love-duet is the most sustained piece of lyrical invention in both works, and it will be noticed that Delius gives the male part in the *Idyll* to a baritone rather than to a tenor as in the opera. The duet is thus the nub of each work. In *Margot la Rouge*, which concerns us most here, it reveals the chance meeting of a man and a woman who were once lovers, and their brief bliss in being reunited.

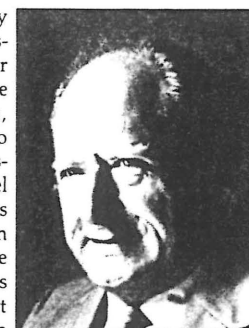
There is much fine music in this singular opera which belongs to

what many would consider to be 'Delius's best period'. It follows by one year *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, was finished in 1902 with *Appalachia*, and predates *Sea Drift* also by one year. Such weaknesses as there are occur in the vocal lines of the narrative, but these are more than offset for me by this melodramatic aspect of Delius, then forty years old, and settled in the village of Grez-sur-Loing, some forty kilometres south of Paris on the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau where *Margot la Rouge* was written.

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Photo: Clarion

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Cover: © 1982 Diane Goode
Original Radio Production by Elaine Padmore
Technical Presentation by John Rushby-Smith
Editing by Peter Sidhom

Record produced by Sylvia Cartner from the original recording for Radio 3 in the Golders Green Hippodrome, London, on October 9, 1981.
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Library of Congress #: 82-743438