

## FREDERICK DELIUS

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LESS than twenty years ago I could still begin an article with these words: 'Very few people have more than a vague notion who Delius is. Most musicians know no more than the editor of a magazine, who last month described him as a peculiar composer.' 'Peculiar' was a thoughtful euphemism; the actual thoughts about him were not quite so kind. Many Germans were unwilling to accept Fritz Delius as a German. Yet, unless a composer were more or less a German he could not be a real composer.

English composers were said to have existed once. But very long ago. And besides, they were sorry old sticks or just simply period pieces. But a modern English composer? A contradiction in terms. The atmosphere in which Delius had to grow a reputation was one which younger musicians to-day will find difficult to evoke. England had practically abandoned claims to musical culture. The time when a gentleman's accomplishments comprised a capacity for singing tunes from notes was far away. It was a disposition lost in the mists of legend. The one reality was that a musician was a fiddler or a dancing master. If there were musicians left among the gentry, they were what one might describe as owner-musicians. A professional musician, if he would retain any human dignity, could only be a musical Don. But this species was not welcomed outside academic circles. English musicians of the two kinds lived alongside each other like Moslem and Hindu in India. The latter provided material for the Brahmin caste; they were the pundits. Still, a curious anomaly was that Moslems could not have looked with greater fanaticism towards the German Mecca of the musically faithful than the pundits did. An English composer could have no higher aim than the approbation of the Germans. And the Germans were contemptuous in their conviction of superiority. Delius was in a particular position. He shared the belief in the reliability of the German precepts; yet there was something in his character that was most unmistakably English, and his few English admirers could hear it in every note. The English lawn and the English ale, the green pleasant land, and the exquisite harmony of rural life reappeared in his music. Chances of performance for English composers, after the Crystal Palace days, when German conductors decided the tone, had become very

uncertain. To achieve any reputation one had to rely on what Germany had to offer. In Germany this was the time of the modern festivals. All music that seemed to subscribe to the ideals of German musical reform, which was after all only the reaction against the old German beliefs (another side of the same thing), was welcome there.

Here was something that ought to impart a new tone to music. Instead of the outlived formalism of old musical manifestations, he would sing the return to healthy, pagan, assertive life. No monumentalism, like that of Bach, and no twilight dreams of religious meditation. No airs and graces like those of the 18th century. And no leonine heroics mixed with obtrusive joviality, such as the revolutionary fervour of a Beethoven had made achingly familiar. This in particular was the faded modernism which irritated him in his young days. He was eager to discard this load of memories that pinned music to forgotten ideals, and to the personalities of equally forgotten strife around them. The classic canons, and the sophisticated elegances of the three-cornered-hat period were to be ruthlessly rejected. The fury of the battles for political freedom, adopting the arts as so many helpful banners, was particularly distasteful to his fastidious spirit. To-day's pains and joys are to be the two motives of to-day's music, and its language was to be shaped by his own pervading sincerity, his unalterable faith in himself, his gay independence and the lyrical power of his youthful, fresh emotions. But while he had no patience with the humanitarian solemnity that made composers prolong in vast scores the puny squabbles about the Contrat Social, he was not so free of Rousseau as he imagined. He had too much in him of the 'promeneur solitaire.' Although, under the influence of Walt Whitman, his meditation sought escape from the cool shades into the blaze of full sunlight and the brave glitter of the naked word, he returned to the romantic, quiet spots again and again.

He intended to throw a proud, defiant challenge at the sleepy head of tradition-doped humanity, and more often he soothed us with the sweetest of lullabies. When he meant to shake us with an insolent assertion of nihilistic contempt, he could not help moving us all to tears with the tenderest song of forlorn hopes and dead love. The arrogantly

joyous Delius of the Zarathustra attitude does not succeed in masking the yearning lover seeking the fragrance of remembered kisses in the stillness of a Summer Garden.

He certainly succeeded in restoring life to music at a time when this was a rare achievement. But, contrary to what his own expectations must have been, and to those of the majority of his admirers, it was a characteristic English form of life impressed on music of strangely, almost mystically convincing Englishness. This is all the more curious in view of the preparations he made for the shaping of his own spiritual maturity. When he was dissatisfied with the desultory musical education he had received in provincial cities and orange groves, he hoped for musical salvation from the firm traditions of Leipsic. Quickly disgusted with the endless puzzling together of the dead bones of old masters that appeared to be the constant delight of his German teachers, he turned for relief to the spiritual cosmopolitanism of Paris, and to the parochial loyalties of such minor bards of the village green as Grieg. But the more he strove to emancipate himself from the Johnsonian danger on the one hand and from the Tales of the Hall on the other, the more inevitably he seemed to attain to pure expression in the one idiom which suited the deepest affinities of his soul.

This was not an easy path to tread for Delius where he had abstract convictions that patently ran counter to what his emotions prompted. If this dualism was tormenting for himself, it was frequently disconcerting to his most determined followers. For every new disciple he gained he was almost certain to lose another one, because (especially in the earlier years, before his essential personality had come to be understood) he attracted musicians of very different opinions and tastes, for opposed reasons.

The apostles of modernism had hailed him as a welcome new fighter on the battlefield of the Rhenish musical tournaments. His bold harmonic colour schemes, his superb sonorities, obtained from an immense orchestra, the ruthlessness of his choral style and the liberty of his formal construction were qualities which at once endeared him to the contemporaries that expected the greatest glory of music from developments in this direction.

But when they heard the 'First Cuckoo in Spring' they felt that he had deserted them. He had become too modern. The other moderns did not foresee that this simple polyphony for a small orchestra was going to be their latest word twenty years afterwards.

Again, the determined anti-Christians and New-silver Pagans that had been delighted with his 'Mass of Life' and 'Requiem,' utterances which sounded the clarion call of

their own creed, were crestfallen when he became autumn-tinted in his sentimental allusions and in his literary associations.

All the fervent believers in ever-bigger orchestras and ever-bigger operas, more colour, louder voices, were unutterably disappointed to see Delius develop into a mournful singer of faded loveliness and the snows and the ladies that are gone.

By the time when his work became better known in England, the fashions that raged in Germany ten years earlier had captured the imagination of the advanced native musicians. But as Delius's later works had already been written and a number of scores were presented in quick succession, there was bound to be much bewilderment. Within a few years the earliest and the latest works were heard, often in one concert. Not, as had happened in Germany, a new work in every festival season, to be discussed in every Festspielhaus Beer-garden, and to set new flames roaring under 'artists' soft hats' ('Des Künstlers Schlapphut!') for the next half-year.

This country heard his earliest symphonic poems together with his later chamber music. His huge orchestral apparatus appealed to people who had no use for miniature art, and his delightful little sketches charmed people who were repelled by his Veronesque frescoes. And the exact opposite happened at the same time. This is how it came about that after hasty impressions of numerous works, superficial opinions were riotously clashing with very little illumination. Hence also the now proverbial saying about the futile word-contests between musicians who knew his works and those who did not.

There was at every time and in every country a small band who knew a few pieces well enough to have divined the personality behind the music. And these were, almost from the first, convinced admirers, for they surrendered without hesitation to his evident, profound truthfulness, his convincing artistic integrity and the frank emotional directness of everything he wrote. A significant feature of the great affection he inspired in many hearts was that he was never a musicians' composer only. All poets caught something of the strains of Cowper and Wordsworth in Delius's music. All painters were thrilled to recognize something of the rich, generous tints of Constable and Crome. And every Englishman who ever drank in the incomparable loveliness of his country's lanes and meadows, who had ever felt the enchantment of the skies over the Downs and the luscious shadows of its fields and woods, was conquered by music which brought so much of all this to mind. The means by which this miracle was achieved are not the least part of it. There was no self-conscious design. On the contrary, the declared intentions of the music are often

far removed from the emotion it rouses. Yet, though it may start with Nietzsche, and invite us to the fjords, it leads us nearer to the heart of what is most English in England than ever did Morris-dancing, shepherd-piping, sea-shantying, folk-singing tone-poems, with evocative titles and quotations to emphasize the over-local-coloured ambitions of other composers. We should not forget how remarkable this is when we consider that Delius had so long written for a public with completely different tastes and desires. A composer who is fairly regularly performed in one country and who has obtained numerous friends there, can hardly escape the influence of their expectations. Delius's unique independence and originality alone made this possible. The War, and his long absence from Germany do not account for it. That there had been a certain parting of ways had become noticeable before.

In 1913 I heard in Berlin the first performance of an old work. It had been largely revised for the occasion and appeared under the title of 'Ein Lebenstanz.' Although the retouching had been done by the sure hand of the later Delius, the form and the mood had remained characteristic of the earlier work. Two things were at once remarkable. The old, somewhat consciously spirited rhythms sounded almost lame compared to the quietly flowing, unadventurous lines to which Delius had since made us used, and the gorgeous splash of contrasted colour of the big orchestra lacked the glowing depth and richness which the later scores achieve with more modest means.

Most striking of all was that the brave show of formal elasticity stood revealed as a rather loosely controlled series of variations.

The unpretentious symmetries, and the unblushing improvisations of Delius's later work, had taught us to prize his complete naturalness. It was hard now to relish the full-dress distinction of a work which did not, like the others of its period, hold us by the power of many memories.

His oldest friends among the younger musicians could not overcome a certain embarrassment. It reflected the suggestion of embarrassment in the gait of the music itself. We had almost forgotten the Delius who could look so imposing for the one who is simply lovable. It was like seeing one's father as a bridegroom.

Our usual experience with composers we know intimately is that they do not gain on our hearts as one work succeeds the other. Mostly, when we hear the latest we think with melancholy of the freshness of the earlier ones. If one felt something entirely different about the first and the later works of Delius, it was because his unadulterated honesty was

remarkable above every other quality. One could say of his works what one felt of the man—that the better one knew them the more one loved them.

Everyone who knew Delius personally loved him. I have never heard an anecdote told about him which did not illuminate anew this one undoubted fact. At times the telling might reveal the slightest tinge of critical acidity, to remind one of Delius's own bluff outspokenness. But it is remarkable that with whatever tendentiousness a story about him was told, it invariably left the impression that here was a man of whom someone might disapprove, whom yet no one could hate. Delius, in spite of the many difficulties he had had to contend with, never was embittered, and never encountered bitter antagonisms. One has heard musicians call Sibelius vulgar. One has heard of others who detested Busoni, or who could not bear to have Strauss named. I have seen people turn pale at the mere mention of Mahler.

With Delius, such disparaging and such violent feelings did not occur. There was sufficient personality in his work, and he had enough genius to rouse envy. Still, in many respects he held a place apart. There was something irresistibly affecting and touching about everything he wrote. The most refractory traditionalist or the grimmest anti-modernist could not summon the harsh feelings their principles demanded for really powerful denunciation of Delius's æsthetic sins.

Some of his German critics used to describe him as an iconoclast. They said he was uncompromising, ruthless, and inclined to be sacrilegious. 'Delius,' someone said to Mahler, 'has no respect for the great composers. He does not care whether a work is written by Bach, or by a conservatoire student.' 'Delius is right,' replied Mahler, who regarded such wholeheartedness and such admirable frankness about old music, as excellent examples for younger men who heard quite enough of the respect due to the Great Masters.

But Delius was not reckless in his judgments. He had a very precise notion of the value of belief derived from a venerable tradition. In an interview shortly after the war he declared his emphatic disapproval of the fashionable contempt for established masters as preached by the Diaghilev clique. He strongly insisted on the need for reverence in the artist's attitude towards his art. He may have held radical philosophical doctrines, but they were aristocratically pagan. There was nothing of the morose sans-culotte in him. He never felt any vocation for the barricades, and for battles for the proletarian's right to a bowler hat. Suburban heroism was as uninteresting to him as the intrigues of amorous duchesses, the two poles between which the imagination of many of the bold thinkers of his early days turned.

More than anything, however, he loathed the determined facetiousness of the French Russians and the Russian Frenchmen who, in his later days, had the ear of the wide-awake modernity-hunters and the highbrow-mongering snobs. 'As if a man walked into Church without his trousers . . .' was one of the phrases his indignation inspired.

On the other hand, he was, and remained to the end of his life, cheerily unrepentant in his rejection of studied formality. No hoary tradition impressed him by its long history, and no technical proficiency filled him with submissive awe. Academic correctness alone seemed to him as futile as the legendary dinner jacket of the public schoolboy on safari among the savages. No white man's burden ever troubled him. His conceptions of *noblesse oblige* were of a different order altogether.

He looked for the appeal of simple humanity in every composer's language. If it failed there, the other qualities counted for nothing. In his fervour for this one thing, he perhaps overstepped his usual line of pleasant common-sense now and then. He was liable to under-rate the value of achievements which cannot rouse our emotions. Intellectual appeal by itself seemed to him an unworthy object. Any musical utterance which addressed the intellect more than accidentally would irritate him very soon. Therefore he found it far from easy to believe that a genuine musician could be moved by organic perfection unless it was unreservedly put to the service of lyrical expression. He distrusted the artistic honesty as well as the æsthetic susceptibility of those who professed to feel otherwise.

Technical devices and constructive ideals for which he had no personal use appeared to him factitious. He readily detected pedantry of purpose and aridity of imagination behind the desire for their employment. He could say to one of his disciples, 'My dear fellow, there is nothing in counterpoint. I have done all that stuff myself. You may take it from me that it leads nowhere.' When he described his conservatoire exercises, he candidly believed that he had experimented with the idiom of Bach, and found it ineffective. Apparently he did not reflect that he had only examined a few primitive rules of grammar, and that this did not yet amount to any very useful attempt to discover what ingredients might be abstracted from them which could prove of value to his own musical speech.

Delius, throughout his career, had a very shrewd perception of his limitations. Although, possibly, he might have made a more liberal use of the ready-shaped formulas of music, nothing could better demonstrate the reliability of his artistic instinct than his avoidance of them. He never over-reached himself as so many lesser composers continually do. He may be said to have attempted too little: he

could not be said to have ever attempted too much. If he deprecated the use of conventional contrapuntal technique in conversation, his object mostly was to warn an immature artist against the blind worship of cerebral profundity.

Where his own work was concerned, Delius knew exactly what he wanted, and he rarely failed to convey the essence of his message. Towards the end of his life, amidst protracted suffering borne with unflinching self-command and philosophic detachment, his musical ecstasy lost some of its incandescence. When every bar was no longer so intensely felt as in the music of his full manhood and his greatest artistic maturity, he may even have descended to the application of mechanical devices for the completion of a basic design. Here, by the submission to one weakness, he revealed another. He had never learned how to achieve the appearances of successful artistic performance when inspiration was flagging. He had never needed to cultivate that kind of technique, and where he had recourse to it, a certain lack of versatility in the range of his resources became evident. But if he had been able to mask the absence of the old emotional depth he would no longer have been the same unified personality. He had made us too certain of what we might expect from him.

In every one of his works we see the whole man. Within its limits his very weaknesses are charms.

One of the most stupid criticisms of Delius was that he remained all his life an amateur. From the narrowest professional angle there may be perceived a glimmer of truth in the saying. But only negatively. Only because he loved music, and because he loved composing music with a most unprofessional affection.

Exclusive professionals felt doubtful about a composer who did not 'move' amongst them, who held no appointments, who never sat as an examiner and played no instrument. To them, in short, he was a somewhat distant figure living in seclusion in a foreign land in more than one sense.

It is probably true that Delius would not have passed any set examination. The same is indubitably true of many an examining professor. Delius at least never tried to examine others.

But he could do things which very few of those who pride themselves on their professional *savoir-faire* could approach. So far from being a fumbler, as in their polished imbecility a few wiseacres have decreed, he was a virtuoso. He was a virtuoso who knew hesitations, but a virtuoso none the less. He solved with sovereign ease problems for which no conservatoire can prepare a man, and for which no indications are to be found in any text-book.

The subtlety of his perception in orchestral timbres was as astonishing as the assurance with which he applied it. He relieved the simplest orchestral texture by masterstrokes of unexpected colour. He added original tints to the most familiar combinations. To a glaring chorus of brass he knew how to give a softly glowing shade of deep browns and purples. And to the brutally sharp-edged screeches of the wood-wind he could lend a silvery profile which made it more dazzling while toning down the obtrusive angularities.

These are high peaks of achievement. It is foolish to denigrate the technical mastery of a man who can perform such feats.

A conductor told me that a certain passage for the violoncelli in 'Appalachia' sounded marvellously witty, although it was 'all wrong for the instrument.' He did not seem to think it possible that Delius might have brought off an effect at which he had been aiming. He probably did not realise that such things do not at the right moment fall into the right place by accident. The infatuation of devout professionals can reach a depth and an extent where they become blinded to the most obvious evidence. When they see a composer walk through lanes which they themselves have never trod, and which are not marked on their maps, they refuse to believe that he can know where he is going.

When every possible criticism is made and met, when every possible praise has been reviewed together with the contradiction it has received in other quarters, there remains the certificate that Delius was one of the most remarkable figures in the history of music. In the narrower frame of our own time he was without question one of the three or four composers of such pronounced individual merit that they will be personally remembered. Among these again he is the one whose characteristics run least danger of becoming dissolved in the stylistic commonplace by which our period may be one day identified. It is unthinkable that at some future date any work of Delius's should be described as 'just' typically 20th century. It is highly probable on the contrary that later generations will, even as many of us do to-day, at once recognise a couple of bars as pure Delius.

While this is admittedly a rare distinction, its exceeding rarity is not always realised. Only the most assiduous students of Bach can distinguish his minor compositions from those of his contemporaries with anything like certainty. How many connoisseurs have the pluck to say, 'Here is a piece of Bach; under whatever name it may pass, it shows traits of genius which make clear that only Bach could have written it'? With Mozart and Beethoven the same thing happens. Their works are so familiar that every informed critic has his pen loaded with the right sort of

phrases to apply to them. But when it comes to music that might, and that again might not—it isn't fair. We need only think of the judicious elucubrations and the conscientious prevarications of musicologues (or whatever a man calls himself when he knows more about music than of it) when a symphony was unearthed, some years ago, and presented to us as 'almost certainly Beethoven.' Or, of the carefully non-committal hm-ing and haw-ing which is perennially brought to bear on the exact degree of Süssmayer's contribution to Mozart's uncompleted 'Requiem.' Very few critics dare be frankly cynical about doubtful sections. But every one had very decided opinions about the recent prize-winning completion of Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony. But this time they knew precisely where the one left off and where the other began. They don't risk such definite verdicts otherwise.

It is relatively easy to copy a Delius piece, especially on a small scale. But that is just because copying alone is feasible. It is out of the question that anyone should work successfully on similar lines. One can copy Egyptian drawings for precisely the same reasons. Their determining characteristics are so unmistakable that they may be indicated with a few strokes. But now let the imitator try to repeat the distinguishing features of Greek sculpture: the result will be the ordinary anæmic reminiscence, however much we may try to dignify it by calling it an evocation of Græco-Roman style.

When we are asked to say whether a work is 'authentic,' we must know exactly by whom it was made, and where, and when—otherwise we might as well be invited straightaway to give a critical opinion that takes account of nothing but its abstract merits. That is how experts are caught, as are foxes when they remain in full view. Then the nose of the hound is not even needed; the huntsman can direct the pack, although he himself does not know 'the brave smell of a stone' from garlic.

On such points the waverings of erudite critics constitute, by contrast, a most interesting counterpart to the unhesitating, fearless certitude of a Delius. He was securely armed against the insidious influences of enthroned prestige. He had the courage to say: 'It may be Mozart for all I know, but I don't think much of it.'

A composer's vaunted technique might be compared in considerable part to that of the 18th-century purveyor of poetry for all occasions. The composer, too, must have the fitting turn of phrase available for every emergency. The high-class tool-bag of the poet contained a select range of guaranteed and finely tempered classical allusions. He had Amor's Darts, and Aurora's Rosy Fingers, and

Jove's Thunder, all neatly packed for immediate use. The composer also has several sizes of threaded screwline ready on all thicknesses of melodic bolts to take every harmonic nut, and vice-versa. With such an outfit one rises to the fantastic heights of a plumber who should dispense with a mate.

Delius dispensed with the whole bag of tricks. All plumber-composers were convinced this could only mean that he did not know what use to make of the approved tools. It did not occur to them that he might do a better job with those he had designed for himself.

There cannot be many scores in existence which are as full of skilful ingenuity and dexterity of craftsmanship, combined with such felicity of invention as Delius's 'Village Romeo and Juliet.' The average music-maker, when he looks at this strangely quiet work which burns with such white heat at the centre, sees little else than a bewildering number of lost opportunities. He is pained to see what chances for display Delius can let pass. He cannot believe they could have been deliberately missed by a man who would be able to exploit them at all. At a hundred points there occur situations which, musically and dramatically, simply seem to clamour for the effective application of some of the standard expedients. But Delius, instead of writing the many pages which the barest routine could dictate to almost any composer, insists on making a fresh effort every time. He condenses the whole of his exquisite musical sensibility in a few brief phrases which owe nothing to the helpful formulas that, like so many faithful dogs, almost beg to be taken out for the occasion.

Delius, when he obeyed his intuition, found it easier to be original. Quite conceivably he would have found it difficult to do the obvious thing. But he did the better thing every time.

Can a composer hope to attain a higher degree of technical perfection? What could be more desirable than that he should be able to appear most convincing and most complete in his every utterance, just there where he follows the line of least resistance? An imposing exhibition of abstract knowledge might hold our interest. But it does that because it recalls to our mind the earlier successful exploitations of a similar procedure. It does not touch us directly, as a few heartfelt notes of Delius can do.

Every situation and every inflexion in the course of its exposition squeezes music out of Delius's heart. He is not concerned with that particular dramatic development of the theme which procures a maximum of effect with a minimum of effort. His sole object is to communicate the intensity of his musical emotion at any given moment. The reactions of his entire being transformed every sentiment

into tones, melodic curves, and orchestral colours. Whether at the same time these conformed to some principle or other was frankly a matter of complete indifference to him. Should they do so, all the better; should they not, none the worse.

He did not subscribe to any doctrine of symphonic or operatic righteousness. If ever he developed theories he kept them to himself. Those he discussed were obviously improvised. The trend of an argument might lead him into contradictions or into vaguely extravagant assertions. But this was just because he need never bother his head about theories and their logical application. One thing mattered to him, and that was that he knew no uncertainties when he was at work. He listened to the music in him, and it sufficed. He could trust it. He had the wisdom which science can only destroy.

He did not attempt to prove a system by experiment. He did not try reasoned conclusions with one opera after another. He anyhow knew only one way—his way. The relative crudity of 'Margot la Rouge,' and the mildly decadent refinement of 'Fennimore and Gerda,' are two forms of discharge of the same obligation. Yet always identical. Delius pays in specie. Unlike those dramatists who pay one part in kind, one part in small change, and the rest in sight drafts and very long term bills, Delius gave good red gold all the time. It matters little, then, if he gave gold-dust and nuggets first, hall-marked bars and minted coin afterwards.

But, for this very solvency he had to suffer. Such protracted integrity was too good to be believed in. He never troubled to find extraneous means of telling the world about it. He did not advertise how much he had already given and how much more he proposed to do, or in what forms. It satisfied him to know that he had been reliable, and lavish even to the bounds of generosity. He no more attempted to draw attention to his achievement than to his theories, if he ever postulated any. He was no more a *raisonneur* than a demagogue.

He was resolute in his convictions, but they were his own concern. His public had only to deal with his finished works, and he had in fact no desire for other contacts with them.

If one has to state briefly what is most remarkable in Delius, wherein lies the distinction that obviously separates him from all others, a few points may at once be singled out as suitable for aphoristic statement. For all his intensively individual views and sensations, Delius never becomes morbidly subjective. He never had to fight the temptations of the grandiose and of the superb gesture which would present intimate personal experience in terms of universality. This saved him from the fate of the self-analyzing,

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

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

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

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

BERNARD VAN DIEREN.

## DELIUS'S LAST YEARS

*By* ERIC FENBY

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

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



DELIUS'S HOUSE AT GREZ-SUR-LOING

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

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

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