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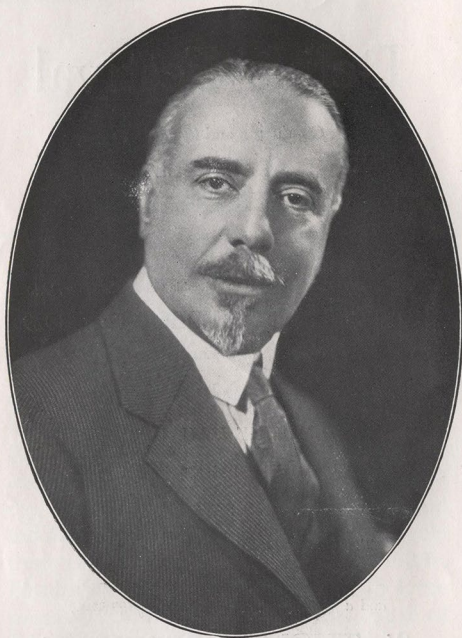
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CONDUCTOR AND ORGANISER
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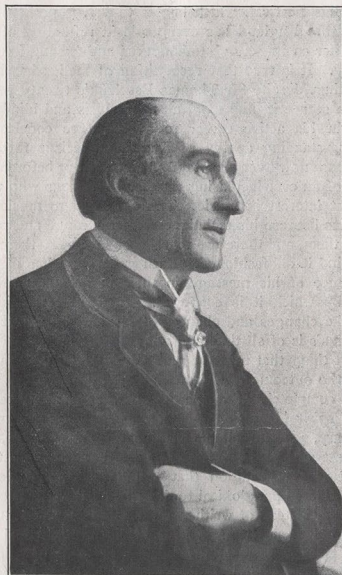
PROGRAMME

Saturday, October 12th,

1929



Sir THOMAS BEECHAM, Bart.



FREDERICK DELIUS

INTRODUCTION TO DELIUS

The Delius Festival, which begins to-day, is perhaps the greatest gesture England has ever made in refutation of the charge that her composers go unhonoured and unused in their own country. It is true that recognition of Delius has been long in coming, despite Sir Thomas Beecham's twenty years' campaign to secure it, and now, alas, paralysis and blindness have brought his active career to a premature conclusion. But the long-standing apathy of English musicians towards his work has now very certainly given way before the enthusiasm of an ever-increasing number of persons who take an intelligent interest in music. Thirty years ago musicians decried Delius because his technique seemed strange and revolutionary to them, and therefore reprehensible; to-day there are those who find it old-fashioned. Each generation has missed the significance of his message in their preoccupation with the means by which it is conveyed. Taste in technique is subject to the changes and chances of fashion, but great art such as Delius's is of all time and none.

The first thing that must be realised about Delius's music is that it is the outcome of a profoundly religious nature, and is therefore completely at variance with what is glibly called the modern spirit in music. Blake has been dead for more than a century, yet, for all his passionate denunciations, we are ever beset with "the pretence of art that would destroy art, the pretence of religion that would destroy religion."

It is considered paradoxical to describe as a religious composer one who, instead of writing anthems and services, turns to Nature (and even Nietzsche) for his inspiration; and yet most irreligion is mere reaction against a pretence of religion that would destroy religion, a misconception of the very nature of religion, a confusion of ideas which is of the same order as the credulity of the senses in regard to the sun's apparent motion round the earth.

Delius is the great "unconscious philosopher" of modern music, and a right understanding of the essential mysticism of his outlook on life is a most necessary introduction to the study

of his works. In the materialistic religion of the nineteenth century, against which Delius in his early youth rose in angry revolt (an attitude he has maintained ever since), there was much talk of *this world* and *another world*, just as one might talk of England and Tibet. Now Delius always plumped for England as against Tibet; he would have no truck with the Grand Lama, and ordered his life according to the admirable maxim of Herman Melville:—"Feed all things with food convenient for them—that is, if the food be procurable. The food of thy soul is light and space; feed it then on light and space. But the food of thy body is champagne and oysters; feed it then on champagne and oysters; and so shall it merit a joyful resurrection, if there is any to be." And what is this joyful resurrection if it is not the gradual becoming-aware (as Donne and Traherne and many another spiritual ancestor of Delius became aware) that "into another world no man is gone, for that Heaven, which God created, and this world is all one world," and that "you never enjoy the world aright till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars, and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world?" And so it is this realization that Man is not merely a part of Nature, but that all external things are only aspects of himself made manifest to his senses, which informs Delius' nature-music with its rare quality of spiritual adventure. It is evident that, so far from disparaging this world in expectation of another, Delius can never have enough of it; its loveliness, indeed, is so overwhelming that its very excess engenders a feeling of sadness at the imperfection with which even the greatest art can capture an image of it. Far away, upon the horizon, there is always a Hy-Brasil, beyond the sunset lie the Hesperides; there is no end to beauty and delight—"for all joy craves eternity," as Delius sings in that last triumphant chorus in the *Mass of Life*, and the limitations of temporal existence breed in the soul a sense of spiritual exile. But Delius is never pessimistic; beneath his sadness there is always assurance of the unreality of all such limitations, and when he broods in the twilight, he seems to say with Zarathustra: "Ah, my friends, it is the evening that questions me thus. Forgive me my sadness, forgive me that evening has fallen upon me." His best work should be viewed as a whole,

and it will be found that it composes harmoniously into a coherent picture of the spiritual life in its diverse aspects. In *A Village Romeo and Juliet* we have the drama of disillusion and despair, of renunciation of the world and its ways; in the *Mass of Life* an all-embracing acceptance and "yea-saying" to life, a sense of unification and fulfilment; in *Sea-Drift* and *Appalachia* and *Songs of Sunset* separation is the dominant note; the *Violin Concerto*, and the song *Hy-Brasil* give us golden visions of a far-off country; and in the *North Country Sketches* and those exquisite pieces, *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* and *Summer-night on the River*, are mirrored the moods evoked by the changing seasons of the year.

From the point of view of technique, Delius's chief strength lies in his wonderful harmonic resources; he is seldom contrapuntal, his harmony being as a rule a kind of higher-dimensional view of his melodic outlines—though sometimes, as in *Brigg Fair* and the first of the *Dance Rhapsodies*, a given melody winds more or less contrapuntally in and out of a moving phalanx of harmonies. But he has no such harmonic system as Scriabin, for example, evolved, only to become entangled in it himself. He maintains that harmony is almost entirely intuitive, that a true harmonic sense cannot be intellectually acquired when the intuition is lacking; and the unanalysable magic of his music gives colour to this view. His harmony is always within the boundaries of tonality never beyond them like that of Schönberg or Bartók. The principle of modulation, though not discarded, is stretched to the extremity of chromatic licence, along the lines indicated in the works of Gesualdo (whose madrigal *Moro lasso al mio duolo* it is extremely interesting to compare with Delius's part-song *On Craig Ddu*, written three hundred years later), Chopin, Wagner, Liszt, and Grieg; and it is the continual shifting of tonal centres that imparts to his music a peculiar elusiveness, so that many a phrase seems to have a hidden significance that lies just beyond what is actually uttered in sound. In the orchestra the harmonic tissue is split up into a number of interweaving strands of melody, and this gives the music a good deal of inner vitality which is necessarily lost when it is transferred to the pianoforte. On the other hand piano scores of his work are almost indispensable if we

are to appreciate to the fullest extent his wonderful instinct for the proper disposition of the notes that compound each chord, as well as the extraordinary variety and subtlety of his harmonic invention; for there is something that remains definite and constant in the mere disposition of the notes of a chord, as distinct from the differences of *timbre* the chord may acquire when it is sounded by different combinations of instruments—although, one must add as a matter of historical fact, Delius's orchestral works were not scored from compressed sketches but sketched in full score, the actual stuff and its scoring being notated simultaneously.

But there never lived a composer whom it is less profitable to discuss in terms of technique than Delius. For him technique has never had the smallest interest, save as the means of expressing himself in terms of music; and we cannot do better than approach this wonderful music from a similar angle, and open our hearts to its spirit with the reverence and gratitude that is due to one of the supremely great masters of music.

BRIGG FAIR: *an English Rhapsody for orchestra* (1907).

"Long may you remain with us, to weave harmonies about the folk-songs of old England," wrote JOHN BULL a week or two ago in an open letter to Delius. As a matter of fact, the present work is the only one of Delius's compositions in which any material derived from English folk-song is to be found. *Brigg Fair* owes its origin to Percy Grainger, for the tune on which it is founded was taken down by him at Brigg in 1905, from the singing of Mr. Joseph Taylor, of Saxby-All-Saints, North Lincolnshire. Mr. Taylor, he recalls, though seventy-two years of age at the time, retained the looks of middle-age and a clear, ringing tenor voice. "He was a courteous, genial, typical English countryman, and a perfect artist in the purest possible style of folk-song singing. Though his memory for words was not uncommonly good, his mind was a seemingly unlimited storehouse of melodies, which he swiftly recalled at the merest mention of their titles; and his versions were generally distinguished by the beauty of their melodic curves and the symmetry of their construction." In the same year Grainger composed his *Passacaglia* for

orchestra *Green Bushes*, in which a folk-dance tune is repeated over and over again by one instrument or another, with ever-varying harmonic developments. This composition, and the choral setting of *Brigg Fair* which Grainger made in 1906, greatly interested Delius who adopted something of the same type of cumulative variation form for his own orchestral treatment of the *Brigg Fair* tune a year later.

The practice of building long and elaborate works on the basis of a reiterated theme can be traced far back into the history of English music. In the sixteenth century a whole Mass was frequently composed around a secular folk-song—Taverner's *Western Wynde* Mass is a well-known example—and the variations of the early virginalists, such as Byrd, Bull and Farnaby, were constructed on similar lines.

Prefixed to Delius's score are the following verses, of which only the first two were originally sung by Mr. Taylor, the remainder having been added from other songs. They provide a kind of programme for the work, which may be roughly summarized as a tale of true love that for once ran smoothly; but their simple charm and happy open-air feeling have been transmuted by the composer into something far deeper than the mere tale itself. The emotions of the lovers and the emotions aroused by the quiet, sunny landscape have been fused together into a strangely touching unity: these country lovers seem as ageless and changeless as the fields amid which, generation after generation, they have lived and worked and died.

It was on the fifth 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 inconstant lover
Is worse than any 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.

A short introduction, of a pastoral character, with phrases for flutes and clarinets suggestive of bird-song, evokes the atmosphere of the English countryside on a fine summer morning. The time quickens when the lilting little folk-song is announced by the oboe and repeated several times by various wind instruments against a rich harmonic background in the strings. A climax is reached, and the muted strings give out a new theme that has all the passionate contentment of a happy love-song sung in the fields to the accompaniment of a softly murmuring wind. A return is then made to the folk-song, harmonic and contrapuntal decorations becoming increasingly elaborate until we reach a permutation of the tune into slow quadruple time, given out by the brass. This variation recalls the solemn mood of the dream-wedding in *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, and the return, immediately afterwards, of the pastoral atmosphere of the introduction reminds one vividly of stepping out into the sunshine from the dim, cool aisle of a country church. A gay, dancing variation leads to a tumultuous climax; but when the pealing of the wedding-bells and the noise of merrymaking have died away, we take leave of the lovers and the landscape in a quiet peroration of melting tenderness.

Brigg Fair was performed for the first time at Basle in 1907, under Hermann Suter, and in a few years had made the round of all the principal orchestras of Germany. Its first English performance was given at Liverpool by Granville Bantock in 1908.

FREDERICK DELIUS

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A LATE LARK: a poem by W. E. Henley, set for tenor
voice and orchestra. (1925).

(First performance.)

Tenor solo: HEDDLE NASH.

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, gray 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 a sense of the triumphing night—
Night with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!
My task accomplish'd and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gather'd to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

(Reprinted by kind permission of his publishers,
Messrs. Macmillan and Co., and of his executors.)

Though written in part by dictation, this was the last composition that Delius was able to see complete in full score before his sight failed him. Not counting revisions of earlier work, it is actually his latest composition. The poem was written in 1876 and published some years later with the title: *I.M. Margaritae Sororis.*

A DANCE RHAPSODY (No. 2) *for orchestra* (1916).

This work is an extended mazurka, in triple time throughout save for one page at the end. The chief theme, of eight bars, is stated at the outset by a solo flute, the seventh and eighth bars being given to the first violins. It is developed sectionally; each bar or figure, at some point in the work, is given separate treatment, the seventh bar being particularly important by reason of two dynamic climaxes which are built out of it. A rhythmic chord sequence, interrupting the flow of the dance by a slight quickening of the tempo whenever it appears, and a short middle section, in which a four-bar theme, first announced by the oboe, is repeated in various keys, to the accompaniment of continuous downward arpeggios for harp and celesta, complete the thematic material. The last four pages are unexpectedly sombre in tone.

The rhapsody is dedicated to Norman O'Neill, one of the first English musicians to appreciate the significance of Delius's music, and received its initial performance on the last night of the 1923 season of Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts under Sir Henry Wood's direction.

SEA-DRIFT: *a poem by Walt Whitman, set for baritone solo, chorus and orchestra* (1903).

Baritone solo: DENNIS NOBLE.

[Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child
leaving his bed wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot,
Down from the shower'd halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if
they were alive,
Out from the patches of briars and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
From your memories, sad brother, from the fitful risings and
fallings I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if
with tears,

From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the
mist,

From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
From the myriad thence-arous'd words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such as now they start the scene revisiting,
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again.
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.]

Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass
was growing,

Up this seashore in some briars,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
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.

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,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

Till of a sudden,
May-be 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 thenceforward 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.

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

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.

*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.*

*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.*

*[Low-hanging moon!
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?
O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon, do not keep her from me any longer.*

*Land! land! O land!
Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate
back again if you only would,
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.]*

*O rising stars!
Piercing 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.*

*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.*

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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.

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!
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! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.

[The aria sinking,
All else continuing, the stars shining,
The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing.
With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning.
On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling,
The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the
face of the sea almost touching,
The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair
the atmosphere dallying,
The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last
tumultuously bursting,

The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,
The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,
The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drown'd
secret hissing,
To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul,
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?
For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I
have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer,
louder and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me,
never to die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating
you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me.
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before
what there in the night,
By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there aroun'd, the fire, the sweet hell within,
The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere.)
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then, (for I will conquer it),
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea-
waves?
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?
Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before
daybreak,

Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my arous'd
child's heart,
But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly
all over,
Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray
beach,
With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet
garments, bending aside.)
The sea whisper'd me.]

WALT WHITMAN.

Sea-Drift is the collective title of a section of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* which contains eleven poems dealing with the sea. Three of them are included in the text of Vaughan Williams's *Sea Symphony*, and among the more recent unfinished manuscripts of Delius are sketches of choral settings of other sea-poems of Whitman. The present work is a setting of some three-fifths of the first poem in Whitman's *Sea-Drift*. To facilitate understanding of this wonderful lyric, it is printed above in full. The lines enclosed in square brackets have not been used by Delius. The italics are Whitman's and are used to differentiate the boy's own words from the thoughts aroused in him by the song of the bird. This distinction is not adhered to by Delius in his distribution of words between chorus and soloist, yet the latter remains a dramatic entity in the scheme, the human protagonist in whose soul the drama is enacted. In certain passages soloist and chorus sing different sections of the poem at the same time, notably in the lovely unaccompanied chorus "O rising stars," when the solo voice rings through with its "Shake out carols solitary here, the night's carols," and later when the chorus comments on the

soloist's impassioned entreaties with its muttered parentheses—"Do not be decoyed elsewhere, that is the whistle of the wind . . . those are the shadows of leaves."

The music grows naturally out of the poem, relying but little upon thematic recurrence or development. Its unity and formal balance have been achieved by the sustained intensity of sheer creative power and imaginative insight rather than by any deliberate structural plan; nevertheless, the work falls into certain well-defined sections. First, the orchestra brings to the mind the lonely sea-scape. The long-drawn, falling theme in the upper strings, which the wood-wind embroider, should be noted, together with the rising fifths in the bass which suggest the surge of the sea throughout the work. The chorus enters quietly with the description of the foreshore, and the soloist joins in at the words "And every day the he-bird to and fro, near at hand"; the opening theme recurs again, sinking to a mysterious pianissimo ("cautiously peering, absorbing, translating"), which the chorus break in upon with the rapturous outburst "Shine, shine, shine! Pour down your warmth, great sun." A new melody is introduced at the words "Singing all time," but is not developed, and after a short recitative ("Till of a sudden, may be killed"), the sea-music of the introduction is repeated as the boy describes his vigils "at night under the full of the moon." The chorus "Blow, blow up winds along Paumanok's shore" introduces another new theme which is not heard again, and with the succeeding solo forms the transition to an extended section in which the rising fifth in the bass plays an important part. The hush and suspense that follow that great cry "Surely you must know who is here, is here" are made audible in the succeeding chorus for voices alone; but when the orchestra enters again, the accents of the music grow more and more mournful and despairing, until the heartbroken resignation of "O past, O happy life" is resolved into the loneliness of the sea itself, and the low murmur of the waves' "No more, no more!"

Sea-Drift was first heard at Essen in 1906, and was given two years later at the Sheffield Festival under Wood, Frederic Anstin being the soloist. This was probably the first performance of any of Delius's music in his native county, Yorkshire.

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IN A SUMMER GARDEN: *Fantasy for orchestra* (1908)

The dedication of the score of this work "To my wife, Jelka Rosen," and the accompanying quotation from one of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's sonnets:

*All are my blooms, and all sweet blooms of love
To thee I gave while Spring and Summer sang*

prepare us for music of a peculiarly intimate and personal nature. A footnote brings the scene before us: "Roses, lilies and a thousand sweet-scented flowers. Bright butterflies flutter from petal to petal and gold-brown bees murmur in the warm, tremulous summer air. Beneath the shade of the old trees flows a tranquil river with white water-roses. In a boat, almost hidden, two people. A throstle sings . . ." It is the garden, running down to the riverside, at Grez-sur-Loing, near Fontainebleau, where Delius has lived for many years and where almost all his best work has been written. Yet the summer garden is only the setting for an emotional drama: there is no objective impressionism in the music. This is one of the works cited by Cecil Gray in his fine essay on Delius in *A Survey of Contemporary Music* as being unmistakably English in feeling. "Delius," he continues, "like Keats before him, has often been unthinkingly reproached for the almost excessive sweetness and over-ripeness of his music . . . It is as well to bear in mind that this very sweetness and sensuousness is perhaps the most noteworthy characteristic of English art. The purist who would condemn it in the music of Delius is at the same time condemning a great part of Shakespeare, particularly the early works—Marlowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ford, Herrick, Campion, Dowland, Purcell even, and indeed, most of the greatest musicians England has ever produced. It is the very quintessence of the English spirit in art."

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that, apart from a flowing tune in the middle section, with something of the same mood as the central love-song in *Brigg Fair*, there is not a single theme in the work; yet the effect of a continuous outpouring of melody is achieved by the subtle manner in which rhythmic and melodic fragments are merged together into broad effects of light and colour that suggest the vivid luminous canvases of the gracious and gifted lady who inspired the work.

A VILLAGE ROMEO AND JULIET: *Three excerpts.*

- (a) *The Fair*
 (b) *The Walk to the Paradise Garden*
 (c) *Closing scene*

Soloists: PAULINE MAUNDER and HEDDLE NASH

Delius's fourth opera *A Village Romeo and Juliet* was composed in 1900-1 and performed for the first time in 1907 at the Komisches Oper, Berlin, under the direction of Fritz Cassirer. Sir Thomas Beecham produced it at his Covent Garden season in 1910, and again in 1920. Two years ago it was revived at Wiesbaden. The libretto is based on a tale from Gottfried Keller's *People of Seldwyla* (of which an excellent English translation, by M. D. Hottinger, was published this year). The plot is simple and naive. Manz and Marti, two Swiss farmers, quarrel over a strip of wild land that separates their respective fields. The heir to the disputed property is the Dark Fiddler, but he is a vagabond who has no use for it and views with indifference the rival claimants' bitter feud. The childish friendship of Manz's son Sali and Marti's daughter Vrenchen ripens into love, but long-drawn-out litigation ruins both families and the two young people are left penniless. They decide to spend one long care-free day together, at a local fair, but when they are seen together the village gossips jeer and make fun of them; so they walk on to an old riverside inn called The Paradise Garden, where they hope to meet no one who knows them. The Dark Fiddler, however, is there, with his disreputable associates. He invites them to join his company and take to the roads; but they are too young and innocent for a vagabond life, and they decide to die in each other's arms.

The excerpts played to-day begin with an arrangement for orchestra alone of the music of the Fair scene (very slightly abridged). This leads without a break into the lovely entr'acte *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* which is an impassioned summary of the principal themes in the opera. It was composed some five years later than the opera itself, and is one of Delius's most perfectly organised orchestral works.

The closing scene begins with a chorus sung by the vagabonds in the distance.

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Dance along, dance along!
 With the wind rove we.
 Hey, yo hey! hey, yo hey!
 Ever wild and free.
 Dance along, dance along,
 Through the woods and dales!
 Restless e'er so we fare
 Towards the setting sun.

Their song is echoed by distant horns, and the curtain rises on The Paradise Garden. On the right stands the old dilapidated inn, with a high verandah. The garden has run wild and everything shows traces of bygone beauty. In the background flows a river, and a barge full of hay is moored to the bank; beyond the valley one sees the snow-capped mountains. The Dark Fiddler and his crew are sitting outside the inn drinking. It is twilight in summer and the verandah is lighted by hanging lanterns.

In to-day's performance the Fiddler's sardonic narration to his companions of the family feud and its consequences, the entry of the ill-fated pair, and the quintet in which the vagabonds sing of the delights of a roving life will be omitted, and we pass on to the point where Sali and Vrenchen have been invited to throw in their lot with the jovial crew.

SALI: What say you, Vrenchen? Shall we follow these good people to the mountains?

V.: What that woman said was true. *That life is not for us, we could never live as they do.*

S.: You are right, Vreli. *That life is not for us.*

V.: I knew you would not go. *(She kisses SALI).*

(Whilst VRELI kisses SALI a change comes over the Paradise Garden. The rising moon floods the distant valley with a soft and mellow light. It seems as if something mysteriously beautiful has touched the garden with enchantment.)

BOATMAN *(in the distance, gradually drawing near):*

Halleo! Halleo! in the woods the wind is sighing.
 Halleo! Halleo! down the stream our bark is gliding.
 Heigho! wind, sing low,
 Sing long, sing low!

VRENCHEN: Oh, hark! now I understand. This is the Garden of Paradise. Listen, the angels are singing.

SALI: Nay, 'tis boatmen on the river.

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BOATMAN (*nearer*):

Homesteads round about us scattered
Where folks live until they die.
Our home is ever changing—
Travellers we a-passing by.
Ho, travellers we a-passing by.

S.: Travellers we a-passing by! Shall we also drift down the river?

V.: And drift away for ever? Oh, Sal! how I love you! I've had that thought this many a day, but never dared to tell it you. We can never be united, and without you I could not live. Oh, let me then die with you!

S.: Aye, let us die together: to be happy one short moment, and then to die—were not that eternal joy?

S. and V.:

See, the moonbeams kiss the meadows,
And the woods and all the flowers,
And the river softly singing
Glides along and seems to beckon.
Listen! far-off sounds of music
Waken trembling echoes, moving,
Throbbing, swelling, faintly dying
In the sunset's fading glow.
Where the echoes dare to wander,
Shall we two not dare to go?
See, our marriage bed awaits us!
Come, Vreli darling!

(*He stretches out his arms to Vrenchen, who rushes into them. They then go towards the boat. The Dark Fiddler appears upon the verandah of the inn, playing wildly on his fiddle.*)

V.: Look, my garland goes before us!

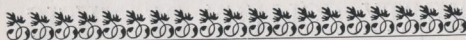
(*She plucks the nosegay from her bosom and casts it into the River. Sali jumps into the boat and casts loose.*)

S.: And I throw our lives away!

(*Sali withdraws the plug from the bottom of the boat and throws it into the river; then sinks down upon the hay in VRENCHEN'S arms.*)

BOATMAN (*in the far distance*): Ho, travellers we a-passing by!

And to music hauntingly suggestive of deep waters, the story comes to its tragic conclusion.

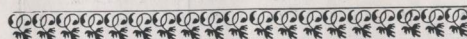


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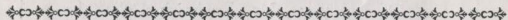
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