

FREDERICK DELIUS

by

BETTY JANE ZWICKY

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Chapter I

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is not only to study Delius and his music, but to establish his relative position among composers from all countries. It will enable us to form a truer perspective of Frederick Delius if we deviate from the well-trodden path and delve into what other British composers have done.

Although other countries have gone through periods of quite normal musical development, England's musical history has formed a notable exception. There were spasmodic rises and falls--extremes resulting in excellent work and the reverse.

Before the days of Handel, England was regarded as a great musical nation. Her composers were men without peers--such as Byrd, Bottishill, Tallis and Purcell. During the madrigalian era all of England, from the noble lord to the kitchen-maid, participated in music, that great essential in the lives of these people.

The invasion of the foreigner, Handel, suppressed what might otherwise have resulted in the establishment of a true school of English music originating from Purcell's genius.

In the Eighteenth Century there was a decline in composition and also in the amateur cultivation of music. Music was looked upon as a mere accomplishment and rel-

egated to the females of the wealthier class. The English people worshipped the foreign virtuoso and, in so doing, lost sight of their own past productiveness. They became an importing nation in music. This tradition, once established, was hard to abolish.

By the early part of the Nineteenth Century the influence of Handel waned before the prevalent approval of Mendelssohn. Composers were second-rate artists who were only too willing to imitate their European idols. If these English men had assimilated what they learned from European composers a national character probably would have appeared in their music-- no matter what style they used. The English musical tradition of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries was undoubtedly Germanic. Van Dieran stated:

"An English composer could have no higher aim than the approbation of the Germans. And the Germans were contemptuous in their conviction of superiority." 1.

However, during these years certain institutions were established which were to further the growth of a British school. One of these, the Festival, (which eventually brought to the English people the music of Delius) had its beginning at Birmingham where some of Handel's works were produced. The subsequent establishment of a Philharmonic Society in 1813 encouraged instrumental music. In 1822 the Royal Academy of Music was founded. All of these were contributing factors which influenced British music and musicians.

1. Frederick Delius (in: The Musical Times, P. 598, July 1934)

By the middle of the Nineteenth Century Sterndale Bennett, a writer mainly of piano works, but who also left some songs and orchestral music, proved to be one of the most stylistically individual and original of the English composers since the era of Purcell. Unfortunately his productivity ceased before any predominant influence could be established.

The Renaissance period in British music occurred during the last half of the Nineteenth Century. Pioneer work was done by Mackenzie, Parry, Cowen and Stanford. While we cannot attribute any great genius to these men, they at least paved the way for the modern British school. As a result we find increasing creative activity, and studies were also made of the musical history of England, including a study of folk song. Benjamin Britten tells us that Parry and his followers emphasized the amateur idea and

"... encouraged folk-art, its collecting and teaching." 2.

"From Parry and his associates there arose a school of composers directly influenced by folk song." 3.

These four men attempted to seek out something of the intrinsic English spirit. McKinney and Anderson state:

2. Benjamin Britten, England and the Folk Art Problem (in: Modern Music XVIII, P. 71, Jan. 2, 1941)

3. Ibid. P. 71

"... each contributed a freshening spirit, according to his nature, that did much to bring Britain out of the doldrums in which she had so gently rocked since the time of Purcell." 4.

At last some English composers proved to be individual enough to rise in protest against the virtual dictatorship of foreign musicians and composers.

It was preceding, and also during this period, that the Industrial Revolution occurred. This was a vigorous and enterprising era, but the artistic aspect was still that of romance, which afforded some relief to the people in a too materialistic world.

As England, toward the end of the Nineteenth Century, freed herself to a large extent from foreign influence, this step enabled a group of composers to appear who would establish a British school. This large group manifested itself in men such as Elgar, Delius, Bantock, Williams, Holst, Coleridge-Taylor, Bridge, Scott, Ireland, and a little later, Bax, Berners, Bliss, Goossens and others. There was a tremendous diversity of styles among this group.

The first great composer of this period, sometimes called the Dean of English Composers, was Edward Elgar.

Elgar, who was born in 1857, was virtually self-taught.

"His music is a transition between the old order in

4. Howard McKinney and Anderson, Music in History, New York, 1940, P. 755

which he was brought up and the new to which it gave place." 5.

Elgar was able to assimilate the foreign influences of Wagner, Franck, Brahms and Tschalkowsky. However, he eventually broke away from what Mason calls the

"... limitations of inherited style, an escape from habit to initiative, from formality to eloquence, from insularity to cosmopolitanism." 6.

In the earlier works there was a touch of the commonplace-- a sort of "smart society music"--but by 1899 Elgar had established his own style when his "Sea Pictures" appeared. From then on there was an ever-increasing variety of style and expression.

Elgar, like Delius, was recognized and encouraged first by men from foreign localities: Hans Richter and Richard Strauss. There was an English flavor in Elgar's music, but it was, as Mason said:

"... cosmopolitan in sympathies, style, and workmanship. In other words, while retaining the personal and racial qualities natural to all sincere art, he has been magnanimous, intelligent and unconventional enough to break through the charmed circle of insularity which has kept so many English composers from vital contact with the world." 7.

The English element in Elgar's music was not derived

5. W. H. Hadow, Ed. Lee & Squire, English Music, Pub. Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1931, P. 159

6. D. G. Mason, Contemporary Composers, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1929, P. 100

7. D. G. Mason, Contemporary Composers, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1929, P. 97

from the use of folk tunes. Elgar thought a composer should compose, and not copy. He seemed to have a fine understanding of English character and sought inspiration from incidents, people, and the English countryside. The English scene was found in much of Elgar's music. It appears in "Falstaff", the Symphonies, the Piano Quintet, Op. 84, and the slow movement of the Violin Concerto which is quite similar in spirit to Vaughan William's "Pastoral Symphony", and to much of the music of Delius.

Elgar also had a love for humanity, a feeling quite the opposite to that of Delius, who disliked the common man and abhorred the "herd". Delius excluded himself, as Hutchings states,

"... from the category of inferior humanity, though retaining in that category the company he addresses." 8.

Hutchings also wrote of Elgar as the poet who,

"... identifies himself with humanity in general and is lost in the suffering crowd. When Delius is at his greatest... the reverse process happens; his potency is such that the listener is held as in a spell, and must temporarily identify himself with poet and composer, whatever their outlook." 9.

Elgar was a pioneer in harmonic invention, evidenced in the opening chords of the "Dream of Gerontius".

Elgar's musical form was derived from exhaustive study and from the evolving of his own ideas through experimen-

8. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan & Co., London 1949
P. 176

9. Ibid. P. 40

tation. He had a feeling for color, both subtle and intimate. He took pride in his workmanship. In the symphonic works Elgar usually began with an abundance of ideas and worked toward their reunion. However, no theory was ever the precursor of any of his major works.

Elgar was a great orchestrator; Holbrooke states that in brilliance he represented the nearest approach to Richard Strauss. His knowledge of the instruments was thorough and this helped to raise the standard of playing in England. The instrumentation was partly derived from Berlioz. To a lesser extent, he was indebted to Tschaikowsky for the color in brass and wood-wind.

Some of Elgar's works were more complex than others. He had certain mannerisms which were apparent in his use of a series of melodic and harmonic sequences. There was a tendency to keep rambling on long after the music had reached the point of logical termination. An example of this is found in the second movement of the Violin Concerto.

As was true of many other English composers, his choral music had distinction. He reached, in his music, the essence of the words expressing emotional drama or religious feeling. The high points in Elgar's music were the two symphonies and the "Dream of Gerontius". His most characteristic music was imbued with a feeling of devotion and introspection.

In 1933 Elgar visited Delius at Grez-sur-Loing. Elgar thought his music would be of little interest to the latter

because Delius was too much of a poet for a workman like him. Delius said later:

"I replied I thought there was some fine stuff in his "Introduction and Allegro" for strings, and that I admired his "Falstaff", but I thought it was a great pity that he had wasted so much time and energy in writing those long-winded oratorios." 10.

Elgar attributed this defect to his English environment.

"He has remodelled the musical language of England: he has enlarged its style and enriched its vocabulary." 11.

It is a curious fact, however, that Elgar has never been popular except in England despite his picturesqueness, color, pageantry and display, and the eloquent expression of his music.

In chronological order Delius followed Elgar, but in this instance an analysis of the music of Delius will be deferred until the third and fourth chapters of this thesis.

Bantock, who was born in 1868, showed national tendencies in his style, although dissimilar in nature to that of Vaughan Williams. He was one of the earliest leaders who tried to help other English composers to write as they felt and not merely imitate either the Mendelssohn style, which had been in vogue for a long period, or the new kind of Brahms classicism. Bantock gave organ concerts of British music. He tried to create opportunities for the performance of works of younger British composers. He also

10. Eric Fenby, Delius as I Knew Him, Bell & Sons, London, 1936, P. 124

11. W. H. Hadow, Ed. Lee & Squire, English Music, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1931, P. 159

made worthy collections and studies of folk music.

Actually, Bantock's style was cosmopolitan. He had a keen sense of color, sometimes tinged with sensuous harmony, and an oriental color flavored his music. Hadow said of Bantock,

"... a cultivated mind, a keen student of eastern poetry and philosophy, and a composer of strong forcible eloquence who moves by predilection in the great spaces and breathes most fully in the open and larger air." 12.

In his later works, Bantock's style became more diversified. He was non-British, which means that he was never dull. Newman said of him,

"He has the genuine architectonic mind--the mind that spans at a leap a great structural scheme: the mind that, as Pater says, "foresees the end in the beginning and never loses sight of it." 13.

Bantock was a prolific composer, arriving at his best in the choral works, "Atalanta in Calydon" and "Vanity of Vanities". "Omar Khayyam" was possibly his most original expression.

Four years later, in 1872, Ralph Vaughan Williams was born. He studied with Max Bruch, Parry, Stanford, and Ravel.

"Through study with Maurice Ravel the Englishman found his way in the use of medieval modes which the impressionistic composers were advocating. His melodic line shows the influence of folk song and his harmonic scheme that of impressionism. He uses the common chord but the basis is

12. W. H. Hadow, Ed. Lee & Squire, English Music, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1931, P. 163

13. Joseph Holbrooke, Contemporary British Composers, Palmer, London, 1925, P. 50

often the twelve tone scale." 14.

Williams was foremost among composers in the revival of the English Tudor music and folk song. However, he very seldom drew from the folk song itself. Rather, he created music of his own which gave the illusion of being English folk music.

In writing about himself, Williams said that even though the musician did not have the scope or talent necessary to create a universal message, he at least had one for his own country.

"Those who share our life, history, customs, climate, and food have some secret to impart to us which the foreign composer is not able to give us although equipped as well or better in music. The composer has to find out the real message he has to convey to the community and say it directly and without equivocation." 15.

". . . Art for art's sake has never flourished among the English speaking nations. We are often called inartistic because our art is unconscious. . . . The composer must not shut himself up and think about art; he must live with his fellows and make his art an expression of the whole life of the community. If we seek for art we shall not find it. There are very few great composers, but there can be many sincere composers." 16.

Williams was a careful worker whose style was usually severe and noble, never revolutionary. He admired the music of Bax, Lambert, Walton, Sibelius, and Stravinsky. Almost all of his music was written after his thirtieth year. His

14. M. Bauer, Twentieth Century Music, Putman's Sons, N.Y. 1933, P. 66

15. David Ewen, The Book of Modern Composers, Alfred A. Knopf, N. Y., 1942, P. 288

16. Ibid, P. 289

best works include the Quintet in C, "Bredon Hill" (song), "On Wenlock Edge" (song cycle), "Bucolic Suite", "London Symphony", the "Sea-Symphony", and the "Pastoral Symphony". His earliest music revealed the influence of French impressionism, but his later works were fused with an English nationalism. Slonimsky says of William's music,

"... the main idiom appears old and they belong to the romantic school." 17.

Williams loved the English countryside and he also had a deep fondness for humanity.

In orchestration, Williams more nearly resembled Brahms than Mozart. He often altered his scores even after they had been published. Williams is an excellent melodist, and has a gift for handling great choral masses. Hadow said of him,

"The present age has been largely preoccupied with problems of technical skill, a 'period of eager experiment' in which the poet has sometimes been subordinated to the craftsman. Vaughan Williams has all the craftsmanship and all the spirit of adventure in its use, but to him as to every supreme artist the poet comes first." 18.

Gustave Holst, who was influenced by Vaughan Williams, was two years his junior. Both had been students of Stanford, and both were interested in English folk music. Holst seemed to have an excellent comprehension of the national spirit of England. Like Williams, he started writ-

17. N. Slonimsky, Why Modern Music is Modern (in: Etude P. 396, 1931)

18. W. H. Hadow, English Music, Ed. Lee & Squire, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1931, P. 169

ing his better works at a later period in life. He was an ardent propagandist of Tudor music and, with Williams, helped establish a tradition in English music based on this together with folk song, rather than on an imitation of the music of European composers.

As Williams' early works were influenced by the impressionistic music of the French, so also were Holst's "Planets" and the "Perfect Fool".

"At the time the growth of the English folk-music school led to an often incongruous mixture of the two elements, and one can say that in their later works Holst and Williams have turned away from the French, while composers like Ireland and Moeran have hardly been affected by them at all, except perhaps in some rather Debussyan harmonic mannerisms." 19.

This conscious attempt of Williams, Holst, Bantock and others to create a national art in England had its birth in a refusal by these men and humanity in general, to accept the destruction of the "community" by the machine. However, to consciously cultivate a national idiom was often to solicit the danger of artificiality. Yet, these men were sufficiently individual, sincere, convincing, and self-reliant to by-pass this danger.

Holst's range of expression was rather wide. In the "Creation" there is an excellent example of a half-accompanied song, "solo voice". He was a clever orchestrator.

"Holst begins and ends his work in broad daylight and often in brilliant sunshine. It may seem strange to group Holst, Berlioz and Strauss together, but they are like each

19. Forecast and Review, (in: Modern Music, P. 200, May, 1937.

other in this outstanding respect; all three have the ability to express anything which they can possibly conceive-- and they all conceive first and afterwards proceed deliberately to the carrying out of their ideas. It is this power in Holst which makes him, with the other two, a master of orchestration; there is genius in his work. . . ." 20.

There was an originality in his work which was uncompromising in style. Holst was one of the pioneers who helped open up new paths for the ensuing English composers.

Of Coleridge-Taylor, who was of this same period, books have very little to say. His cantata, "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast" is probably his best known work. There was a strength and passion in some of his music which received commendation.

Joseph Holbrooke, a romanticist and versatile composer, used the poems of Poe for inspiration as evidenced in his "Choral Dramatic Symphony". He also wrote some fine piano works and chamber music.

The last year of the 1870's produced Frank Bridge, Cyril Scott and John Ireland.

Bridge, who was of a poetic nature, was naturally attracted to impressionism, but there were also recognizable English elements in his music. He used the modern idiom, but conservatively. Bridge was a fine viola player, loved chamber music, and wrote excellent chamber music. There is a wealth of charming melodic and harmonic invention in his music. "The Lament" for string orchestra is notable for its beauty.

20. Forecast and Review, (in: Modern Music, P. 24, Jan. 1925.

Cyril Scott, born in 1879, received training in Germany, but there is no Teutonic influence in his music. He was one of the first English impressionists who helped pave the way for the young English composers. Cyril Scott might be called a mystic impressionist. While studying in Germany he became interested in the symbolist poet, Stephen George, and in the mystic artist, Melchior Lechter. Scott was a student of occultism, which probably accounts for the distinctive exoticism in most of his work.

This composer used daring harmonies and frequently indulged in chords harmonized in fourths. He also made many interesting experiments in modern rhythms, employing the frequent and sudden use of changing time-signatures and keys. Dr. E. Hull refers to one of the patterns Scott often used, an inverted pedal figure with shifting tonalities beneath.

There was a certain kinship between Scott and Debussy. McKinney and Anderson tell us that impressionistic ideals were revealed in a

"... number of slight piano pieces à la Debussy, as well as works in larger forms which did not deviate from the same style." 21.

His structure was often quite unique as evidenced in the "Elephant Dance" from the "Jungle Suite". Scott started with various ingredients which were expanded as he progressed. The composition grew out of smaller components.

21. McKinney and Anderson, Music in History, New York, 1940, P. 810.

There is charm in his weaving of patterns in the orchestral scores, and a delicacy in his woodwind writing. Scott's music could best be described by the word "exotic". However, some of his work is over-sweet and sentimental. This has proved detrimental to Scott, because most people of today seem to know him only by these works.

John Ireland, similar to Bridge, was influenced slightly by impressionism. In common with Bantock, his songs are refreshing in variety of mood--songs such as "The Adoration", "My True Love" and "Sea Fever". Ireland wrote excellent piano works. His violin sonatas and orchestral music have notable melodic significance. He was a composer of the Romantic order, a fine tone poet.

Two composers who held opposite views on music, and whose styles were consequently the antithesis of each other, were born four years later--Bax and Berners.

McKinney and Anderson said that Bax was caught between the ages. He

"... holds by the Romantic spirit, however strongly he laces it with later rhythmical and harmonic pungencies." 22.

Bax has a decorative style. His stirring impressionism finds expression through melody embellished with a definite harmonic design. Such harmonic abundance may have been due to his Celtic temperament. Holbrooke gave Bax's style the title of "Romantic Chromatics".

Bax is poetic by nature, and his music has lyrical

22. McKinney and Anderson, Music in History, New York, 1940, P. 695

beauty. His set of Irish songs proved him to be one of the most sensitive of song writers. He wrote some good piano music, and his orchestral works reveal a wealth of harmony and color. Someone said of Bax, "He feels and therefore he sings." Bax is a weaver of dreams---there is no sarcasm or smartness in his music. This tendency placed him at opposite poles from his contemporary born in 1883, Lord Berners.

This composer was influenced less by Debussy than he was by Stravinsky. His manner of expression was more international, although the English trait of humor appeared in some of his music. Trained in foreign countries, he broke away from what he regarded as an antiquated manner of writing. Berners might be termed a musical cartoonist or caricaturist. The titles of some of his compositions are indicative of this, for example, his "Funeral March for a Pet Canary". Lord Berners composed in the modern idiom.

Another modern who could be mentioned here was Arthur Bliss, born in 1891, and another of Stravinsky's admirers. He has a keen perception of what instruments can do and uses them in unusual ways. Bliss started composing at a period when the influence of impressionism was diminishing. Good taste was his only rule,-- he never restricted himself to any hitherto fixed standards. "Madame Toy", "Raut", and "Conversations" were in this modern, experimental style. In his "Colour Symphony" Bliss followed his own ideals in sound. There was, however, an inclination toward modern romanticism

in his style. Some of his music has a comic aspect.

Goossens, born in the same year as Bliss, combines humor and seriousness in his music. In his early period his music was influenced by impressionism. In later works he proved to be more of an experimentalist, especially in the very excellent chamber and orchestral music. The songs fared less well if we are to judge from their rather monotonous sameness. Some of his best works are the "Symphonietta", the "Prelude to Ossian" and the "Overture to Philip II". Goossens laid great stress upon the use of "effects".

Thus England, after a comparatively long period of passive creative activity, awakened to something more significant with the advent of the group of composers just discussed. During the thirty years between 1860 and 1890 a larger number of composers was born in England than in any other thirty years of her history. True Romanticism had its exponents, as did Nationalism and Impressionism. Toward the end of this period the modern note found expression through composers who were more daringly experimental. The variety of outlook among them was notable.

Although it is quite impossible to specifically label any composer as belonging to any one of these movements alone, the true Romanticists could include Elgar, with his love of humanity and the English country, Holbrooke, Delius, also a lover of nature and beauty, Coleridge-Taylor, Ireland, and Bax, who was essentially Romantic, but in a more modern sense. The men who were most instrumental in fostering the

study and use of English Tudor music and folk song, thus creating a Nationalistic group, were Vaughan Williams, Bantock and Holst. Williams and Holst were influenced in their earlier works by impressionism, but turned to the English idiom later. Bantock was also somewhat of a cosmopolitan; there was an oriental color in some of his music which he had in common with Cyril Scott, the real impressionist of the group.

Bridge was the conservative modern. The three other composers, Berners, Bliss, and Goossens also expressed the modern note, but they were distinct experimentalists as well. There is, of course, much overlapping in these classifications. With the exception of Ireland, Elgar, Williams and the later composers, the integral part of their works is not contrapuntal, but chordal.

This period also witnessed a veering away from German imitation and influence to that of the French, especially near the turn of the century. English composers who were influenced, at least in their earlier works, by this French impressionism, were Vaughan Williams, Holst, Bridge, Ireland, Scott, and Goossens. Later the influence changed from Debussy to Stravinsky, who was admired by Berners and Bliss.

The first World War deprived Britain of men like Ernest Farrer, George Butterworth and Ivor Gurney who had seemed destined for notable careers in composition.

Thus, during this period in the musical history of England, Romanticism reached its peak, but as the materialistic life which the machine age made possible became

more and more important, humanity realized that it must search for beauty and knowledge in some other way and in some other place. This brought about a shift of emphasis in music from Romanticism to realism.

This, then, was the era in which Delius lived and composed; these men were his contemporaries.

Chapter II

Biography of Frederick Delius

From Bielefeld in Westphalia in the year 1850, Julius Delius set out for Bradford, England. Here he established a wool business, contrary to the tradition of his ancestors who had been either professional men or pastors for many years.

Frederick, who was the fourth child of these naturalized English citizens, was born on January 29, 1863. Father Delius was the prominent figure in this large family, a stern man who maintained rigid discipline within the family circle. The picture which Eric Fenby paints of the older Frederick in his book, Delius as I Knew Him, vividly portrays these harsh characteristics.

The choice of Bradford was a happy one for this family which knew and enjoyed good music. During the last part of the nineteenth century Charles Halle's orchestra frequently played in Bradford; and visiting musicians, such as Piatti and Joachim, were entertained in the home of Julius Delius. To have chamber music at home was no unusual event, so for Frederick, or Fritz, as he was called, there was no dearth of good music.

In his very early years Fred exhibited a gift for improvisations, which was to form the material source for much of his later composing. At the age of seven violin lessons were begun. After attending Bradford Grammar School, Fred entered the International College at Spring

Grove where good pianos and fine music rooms were to be found, even as early as 1877. Fred enjoyed his years here and was reluctant to leave this atmosphere for that of the business world; but Julius, although he loved music, thought it no career for a respectable gentleman.

Fred hated the wool business and, for him, the very provincial Bradford. Finally Julius decided to send his son to Germany as a representative of the firm. Traveling furnished change and diversion, and Delius's pleasant manners and personality obtained orders for the firm, but he quickly tired of this work. Concerts and musicians claimed his attention, and, as a result, orders from his father to come home were soon forthcoming.

Julius relented, however, and in the summer of 1881 Fred traveled for the firm in Scandinavia. For a while he was very successful, but the pattern seems to have been established after his first experience and he was again called home because of insufficient business results.

The next trip was to France, but Fred had thoroughly convinced himself by this time that he was not meant for the business world. How to also convince his father of this was the problem.

Julius, contrary to his nature, endured for a long time Fred's indifference until finally the latter bluntly stated his determination to abandon the wool business. In the effort to frustrate music as a career for his son, Julius acquired an orange plantation in Florida. In March of 1884

his son left Liverpool for Solano Grove on an adventure which would at least provide an escape from his present distasteful occupation. Fred, in probably the most impressionable period of his life, found the old Spanish plantation of some one hundred and twenty acres a tropical wonder of beauty. Here he lived alone for three months with nothing to distract his thoughts from the music.

"It was at this time that Delius first saw clearly where his life's work lay. His vision was no longer blurred by the artificialities of modern life. In his solitary communion with Nature he had found himself and realized that he could trust his own intuition against others' reason." ¹

Fred had attempted a few small compositions and now felt the necessity for a piano. It was in a small music store in Jacksonville, Florida, that Delius met Thomas F. Ward. Ward had been a teacher of music in Brooklyn, but ill health had made him seek the warmer climate of Florida. Both men now returned to Solano Grove with two pianos.

Ward, realizing Delius's natural gift for harmonic expression, confined his teaching to counterpoint. Delius, at a later date said:

"As far as my composing was concerned, Ward's counterpoint lessons were the only lessons from which I ever derived any benefit. Towards the end of my course with him--and he made me work like a nigger---he showed wonderful insight in helping me to find out just how much in the way of traditional technique would be useful to me. . . and there wasn't much. A sense of flow is the main thing, and

1. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, John Lane, London, 1923, P. 14

it doesn't matter how you do it so long as you master it." 2.

Professor A. J. Hanna, in his pamphlet, The Music Master of Solano Grove, tells us that Delius studied the melodies and harmonies of the Florida Negro. He marveled at their subtle harmonic improvisations, and at the instinctive treatment each melody received. Delius was also inspired by the tropical luxuriance of the St. Johns River which flowed northward past Solano Grove.

"Florida" was the title given to Delius's first orchestral composition, acknowledging his indebtedness to this place of beauty. Other Florida and negro influences are found in the opera, Koanga, and in the Piano Concerto, which was conceived in Florida. The middle portion was influenced by the singing of the negroes. "Appalachia" contains the negro folk songs of the Creoles, inhabitants of the Appalachian mountains.

Soon, however, Delius felt the necessity of a more musical environment and asked his father for permission to attend the Leipzig Conservatory. This request was promptly refused, but Fred decided to attend this school anyway. In order to acquire funds for this venture Delius went to Jacksonville, and then to Danville, Virginia as a music teacher. Although successful, the older Delius had become anxious about him, and rather than have his son make a living as a music teacher, decided to grant the request.

2. Eric Fenby, Delius as I Knew Him, G. Bell & Sons, London, 1936, P. 168-69

In August of 1886, Delius arriving in Leipzig. Here he studied with Hans Sitt, Reinecke, and Jadassohn. There were many fine concerts to attend and much discussion about music. Wagner performances were conducted by Nikisch and Mahler. Tschalkowsky and Brahms each conducted some of their own works. It was here also that Delius met Busoni.

The summer of 1887 was spent on a walking-tour in the south of Norway. Autumn found Fred in Germany again, and during that winter he met Grieg. Clare Delius writes that Grieg, whose reputation was already established at that time, seemed to have confidence in the genius of her brother. These men established a friendship which lasted until the death of Grieg in 1907. Christian Sinding, another Scandinavian composer, was often with Grieg and Delius. These three gentlemen comprised the audience for the first orchestral performance of a Delius composition. The Florida Suite was performed in the spring of 1888 by sixty musicians, and a large barrel of beer was received in payment.

Grieg, who was to attend concerts in London, persuaded Delius to accompany him. Again we discover the influence of Grieg in the life of Delius. When they met Julius Delius in London, Grieg persuaded the latter to let his son continue with music. Julius acquiesced because of his great regard for Grieg, but cut Fred's allowance to a minimum.

The Latin Quarter of Paris was to be the home of Delius from 1888 to 1896. He was, however, more interested in working than in the gay life which Paris offered young

artists. As a result, his sonata for violin and piano, three operas, two orchestral works, and other smaller numbers gave eloquent proof of his concentrated efforts.

"He was technically proficient and sure of his own imaginative powers. But his admirable faculty of self-criticism did not allow him the luxury of mistaking the exuberance that comes with the first consciousness of creative ability, well equipped for its executive task, for a complete and absolute manifestation of mature genius; and, with the exception of a few of the songs, scarcely any of the compositions of this period have been published or indeed performed--though many musical reputations of the present generation have grown up on a far less worthy foundation." 3.

In Paris, Delius's friends were mostly men like himself, who disregarded tradition and set artistically high ideals to which they strictly adhered. They were strugglers to whom material success meant nothing--men like Gauguin, Leclerc, the poet, Strindberg, Slivinsky, the Polish painter, and later Delius's future wife, Jelka Rosen, also an artist.

In the winter of 1893, Fred's Uncle Theodore secured the first public performance of Delius's Sur les Cimes at Monte Carlo. Another example of the remarkable degree of self-criticism Delius possessed is shown in his withdrawal of his second opera, The Magic Fountain, which had been accepted for production at the Weimar opera house. Evidently Delius thought it inferior to his best work.

Delius traveled back to Solano Grove in the spring of 1897, and it was here that he sketched some of the music for his Piano Concerto.

3. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, John Lane, London, 1923, P. 29

By this time he was anxious to hear some of his more extended compositions performed. With the help of Alfred Hertz--the same Hertz who was later to conduct at the Metropolitan Opera House, and then the San Francisco Orchestra--and with Halldan Jebe as conductor, the concert was given at St. James Hall, London on May 30, 1899. The program included the "Legende" for violin and orchestra, "Over the hills and far away", parts of the "Folkeraadet" suite, five Danish songs, "The Dance goes on", "Mitternachtslied", and excerpts from his opera, "Koanga". Although there was much discussion concerning Delius and his music immediately after the concert, it had no effect on the spread of performances in England. It was to be eight years before England was to again hear his music.

Very soon after the St. James Hall concert, Delius purchased the house at Grez-sur-Loing which was to be his home for the next thirty-five years. In this same year he married Jelka Rosen, that wonderful woman who was to be his constant helpmate.

"Through the peace of this old house--still more through the devotion and understanding companionship of his wife--Fred secured at last the atmosphere in which his genius could bear its full harvest of fruit." 4

During this period in which England heard no Delius music, German conductors were introducing his works. Germany probably accepted Delius because of the post-Tristan harmonic technique, and also because of the Nietzschean philosophy

4. Clare Delius, Memories of My Brother, Nicholson & Watson, London, 1935, P. 139

about which young Germans were enthusiastic at this time, and which had inspired some of Delius's work. German performances were given between 1901 and 1907 at Elberfeld and Düsseldorf with Hans Haym and Julius Butts conducting such works as "Paris, the Song of a Great City", the "Concerto for Piano and Orchestra", "Life's Dance", "Appalachia", "Sea Drift", "Koanga", and in 1907 a performance of the opera, "A Village Romeo and Juliet".

It took England a long time to recognize the genius of Delius. Even in Germany where Delius had been accepted, attention dwindled as his music became more and more English in character.

It was during these same years that some of Delius's most important works were composed, such as "A Village Romeo and Juliet" in 1900-01, "Appalachia" in 1902, "Sea Drift" in 1903, and "A Mass of Life" 1904-05.

Delius was reintroduced to the English public at the Queen's Hall concert of 1907. It was at this time that a young British conductor undertook the championship of Delius and worked unwearily to establish Delius's reputation in England.

"He was not content with giving single performances, realizing that the musical public in England must have their attention directed to a new composer times without number before they become aware of his existence, he never let a concert season go by without introducing one or more works of Delius into his programme." 5.

Other English conductors who also gave excellent per-

5. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, John Lane, London, 1923, P. 51-2

performances of Delius works were Granville Bantock, Balfour Gardiner and Sir Henry Wood, but to Beecham alone belongs the credit for establishing the reputation of Delius in England. Later, Charles Kennedy Scott was to perform the same service with the choral compositions that Beecham had done with the orchestral music.

"Appalachia" was the first Delius composition to really capture the hearts of the English people.

The life of Delius was uneventful from here on. He spent most of his time at Grez-sur-Loing, occasionally taking short trips to Norway, England and Germany. In 1911 the correspondence between Delius and Heseltine began. If young artists showed distinctive talent, Delius was always willing to help with money as well as advice.

Delius went to London in September of 1923 to see "Hassan", for which he had composed the incidental music. It was after his return that the first signs of paralysis were noticed. When Clare Delius saw her brother two years later he had changed a great deal and resembled very much the portrait James Gunn had made of him. Gradually the illness became worse. Delius could no longer walk or see.

In the summer of 1928, Eric Fenby, a young Yorkshire musician, acting on a noble impulse, offered his assistance to Delius. This was gratefully accepted, and enabled Delius to work out a technique of dictation whereby projects which had been started years ago could be completed and some new music written. Fenby tells us that this technique of dictation varied with each work.

"Much depended on the extent to which Delius had already arranged and sifted in his mind the musical matter of what he was going to say before calling for me to note it down. Sometimes he had no more than the roughest idea of what he wanted until that rough idea had been played over to him at the piano." 6.

This process must have been a difficult one, especially the problem of continuity in this music, for the work proceeded very slowly--sometimes limited to only a few measures at a sitting. Compositions which dated from this period were "A Song of Summer" which included material from the earlier, "A Poem of Life and Love", the completion of two works, "Cynara" for baritone and orchestra, and "A Late Lark" for tenor and orchestra, the Sonata for Violin and Piano (No. 3), "Songs of Farewell" for double chorus and orchestra, "Idyll: Once I passed through a populous city" for soprano and baritone with orchestra, and the "Irmelin Prelude". Although most of these compositions cannot be classified as among the best of Delius, certainly they stand as a monument to his courage during the last trying years.

During this period Delius delighted in the visits of some of the other English composers--men like Balfour Gardiner, Norman O'Neill, Howard Jones, Roger Quilter, and on one occasion Edward Elgar. Sir Thomas Beecham also came to Grez-sur-Loing, as did Percy Grainger. Heseltine was a frequent visitor in the Delius household, and artists of such caliber as Lionel Tertis, May Harrison, and

6. Eric Fenby, Delius as I Knew Him, G. Bell & Sons, London, 1936, P. 131

Barjansky, the 'cellist, came to play through some of Delius's works for him.

In October of 1929, the memorable Delius Festival took place at Queen's Hall in London. This was a crowning achievement for Sir Thomas Beecham as well as for Delius. Seats were sold out for the entire series of six concerts. Delius thought he would be unable to attend, but through the persuasion of Beecham and Fenby, and with the help of his wife, he went to London and proclaimed it the most impressive event of his life.

In the same year Delius was made a Companion of Honor by the King of England. Another tribute probably gave him even more satisfaction—that of the Freedom of the City of Bradford.

Thus we find Germany the first to recognize his genius. The English response came later, while the French, among whom Delius spent his last forty-five years, almost completely ignored him.

Delius made a remarkably practical will before his death in 1934. He realized that his larger works especially would gain popularity very slowly because of the expense involved in producing them, so he provided that after the death of his wife his estate was to be used for furthering this music.

Delius died on June 10, 1934.

I would like to conclude this biographical chapter with a brief sketch of Delius written by Eric Fenby.

"The musician Delius was greater than the man. . . . What was extraordinary in the man as I knew him was not so much that which was inherent in his nature, but that which was largely the fruit of his unbelief and the secluded life he found it necessary to lead in order to perfect his art; namely, his intellectual isolation, his inhuman aloofness, his penetrating truthfulness, wholly indifferent thereby whether he hurt people or not, his utter contempt for the 'crowd', and his all-embracing self-sufficiency. To these were added his colossal egotism, his dreadful selfishness, his splendid generosity (particularly to those of his old friends who had fallen on hard times), his equal indifference to money and honours, his exceptional refinement, and his noble triumph over an almost total physical incapacitation.

That he was a true artist if ever there was one, none can deny. Everything and everyone was subservient to the chief business of his life. . . his music." 7.

7. Eric Fenby, Ed. David Ewen, The Book of Modern Composers, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1942, P. 105.

Chapter III

The Vocal Music of Delius

Delius's first composition, the song "Two Brown Eyes", was written in 1885. Although Delius did not write enough songs to be classified basically as a song-writer, those he did write were interspersed between that year and the end of his life.

Delius was an eclectic in taste. Hutchings states that he was never, however, a "nondescript-cosmopolitan".

"When he chose Norwegian verse, his heart was in his beloved Norway; he was no dabbler in the language; he was well steeped in its atmosphere and culture and, in consequence, his first sets of songs, the Five Songs from the Norwegian of 1888 and the later Seven Songs, are those in which whole passages show direct inspiration from Grieg while others might be Grieg's own. The songs from Shelley, Verlaine and Nietzsche show the same exclusive enthusiasm for the chosen poet and the 'overtone' of his verse. Delius's writing is always in agreement with the poetic inheritance of country, time and poet... the French songs being highly French, the English obviously English in spirit. The Nietzsche texts, as indeed that of the 'Mass of Life', are treated in a way which reveal an English musician, but one absorbed in the German prose-poet. That words fully filled his mind when setting them may be shown from the fact that the verses he chose were always those of contemporary, or very nearly contemporary, poets, men whose sentiments spoke for his own at this or that stage of his aesthetic growth and imagination." 1.

Delius seemed to prefer the poets who were among the acknowledged best-- Verlaine, Nietzsche, Shelley, Bjornson, Ibsen and also some Scandinavian poets who were not as well known. One, a favorite of Delius was the Danish poet, Ludwig Holstein.

Fenby states, however, that with the exception of the

1. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London 1949 P. 156

text of the "Mass of Life" Jelka Delius selected almost all of his words after 1885. He felt that Delius worked carefully, but had very little feeling for words and line. Of the English words Fenby said,

"... the words are almost like an unnecessary commentary on the mood which the composer has drawn up from the depths of their meaning. The melodic accent he imposes on them is wholly at variance with their verbal accent." 2.

Herman Ould regarded the translations from the Norwegian, Danish and German songs into English as stilted, thus creating an obstacle for Delius.

A. K. Holland, who made a thorough study of the songs, had this to say about Delius's words:

"His aim is to distil just that poetic essence which resides not only in the immediate images of the text but in the very character of the language. . . his musical approach is, therefore, at the opposite pole from that of such a song-writer as Hugo Wolf, for whom the whole shape and method of the song are often dictated by the literary features of the poem and whose musical images seek their justification in their absolute congruence with the immediate verbal imagery. . . . Delius is more concerned with creating a new psychic and emotional experience, for which the words of the poem are merely the framework. The justification of his songs lies frequently not in the words so much as in the emotional echoes to which they give rise. In Wolf the poetic and musical elements are organized on the basis of parallelism and they only "appear to meet", to use an optical analogy. In Delius they actually do meet, indeed, they are one. Wolf's accompaniments, for example, are often complete in themselves. Delius's never are."

Holland continues:

"This does not mean that Delius was indifferent to questions of verbal expression. . . . He did, in point of fact, take considerable pains to achieve a declamation that was at once accurate and expressive. It will be seen

2. Eric Fenby, Delius as I Knew Him, Bell & Sons, London, 1936, P. 202

that, in his early songs, he was sometimes swayed by a purely musical idea or rhythm which acted to the detriment of his word-setting. But in his later songs he is often extraordinarily successful in achieving a balance between strictly musical and declamatory values. . . . The greater part of his word-setting is syllabic and follows the verbal stresses carefully; only, the phrase as a whole is governed rather by the poetic sentiment he desires to enforce than by the strict pace and stress of the spoken phrase. It is only composers of excessively literary mind who confuse musical with verbal declamation." 3

The five Norwegian songs of 1888 displayed the influence of Grieg. Some critics think Delius progressed farther than his Norwegian contemporary. In much of Grieg's piano music and in some songs, there is expressed either a nature scene or a "mood of nature itself". Delius composed songs,

" . . . in which a human emotion is set against a background of nature-symbolism." 4

Grieg's influence is displayed in the quiet moods, as well as in the harmonies of these earlier songs.

Various opinions have been expressed on the songs set to the lyrics of Shelley. Holland does not find enough restraint in either the lyrics or the music and describes them as "tawdry". Hutchings, however, states,

"The glorious Shelley lyrics, owing nothing to Grieg, are the apotheosis of popular love songs of the most tempestuous kind. . . . (I) find the songs thrilling, and cannot understand why they should not seem so to anybody who recognizes the level of their sentiment and seeks neither the rich restraint of Brahms nor the refinement of Fauré. For one cannot hold that Delius 'writes down', or makes the

3. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 156-7

4. Ibid, P. 157

unusually exuberant accompaniments out of other music than his own- - - not even in those climactic sections where the voice soars at full throat and the piano throbs its repeated chords and wide-flung arpeggios in honest-to-goodness ballad style." 5.

Auld thought there was a rhapsodic luxuriance in the Shelley songs.

Delius's individuality is distinctly displayed in the four Nietzsche songs and in the later English ones. The latter were particularly interesting because many composers had used the verses of Herrick's "To Daffodils", Johnson's "So white, so soft, so sweet is she", and Nashe's "Spring, the sweet Spring". However, unlike most of the others Delius did not try to express the Elizabethan spirit of these lyrics, rather they became pure and effective Delian in treatment.

The Seven Songs from the Norwegian were written from 1889-90, four years after Delius had composed his first song. There was a tendency toward simplicity in the words. Hutchings states,

"... (a) characteristic to persist even in the best later songs, as indeed of greater works, was the approximation, in both literary sentiment and music, to plebeian songs and ballads, which seem only slightly more naïve and melodramatic in the kind of ditty sung at smoking concerts or musical family gatherings, such as may be overheard in passing down the street on New Year's Eve." 6.

Delius enjoyed Scandinavian verse with its wealth of romantic legend.

5. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P.160

6. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 158

The first song to be analyzed, "Secret Love", (or, as it is sometimes translated, "Love Concealed") is one of the Seven Norwegian Songs and is essentially of the ballad type. Bjornson, who wrote the words, relates the story of a maiden who dies from frustrated love "das hat niemand erfahren".

A three-measure chordal introduction by the piano opens the song on a D major chord and ends with a half-diminished seventh chord on E as a preparation for the verse starting in the key of D minor. Written in song form, part B, which starts in G minor, contains a portion of the rhythmic pattern established in part A. The return is an exact repetition in D minor of the original statement for six measures, after which new material is used, and the song ends in F, the relative major.

As is typical of Delius, there is a constant shifting of tonality. Rarely does he continue in one key for more than two or three measures.

In the allegro section (part A), there is little "give and take" between the voice and piano. Everything seems to be centered in the vocal part. This represents the very antithesis in style to that of Ravel and even Rachmaninoff where the voice part intermingles with the piano, thus producing an ideal ensemble.

The eighth-note triplet-figures which Delius uses in the accompaniment seem to revert back to the days of the spinet and harpsichord which had no sustaining pedal and

required such treatment.

Er schlick sich die Wind- a ent- lang

etc.

Certainly there was no excuse for presenting material in this manner during the period in which Delius was writing. The continual reiteration of the triplet figure seems trite and betrays a lack of inventiveness.

In only a few places is there any thematic correlation between the voice and piano.

ihm woll- te das

The repetition in "Love Concealed" is easily found, and gives us a glaring contrast to the subtle treatment employed by Debussy.

In this song, as in many later works, Delius builds to an effective climax and then, seemingly loath to leave his lovely harmonies, gradually diminishes the volume, decreases the tempo and uses a descending melodic line to end each of the three sections.

Another mannerism which Delius continued to use throughout his creative period was the application of "echo-like refrains".



Here the words "doch das hat niemand erfahren" and music are repeated at the end of each part, but with harmonic and melodic changes in the latter.

Doch das hat nie-mand er-seh-en Doch das hat nie-mand er-seh-en etc.

The vocal line employs no awkward intervals, although Delius has no aversion to leaps of a minor seventh and uses them five times in this comparatively short song. He uses minor chords, chords of the diminished and half-diminished seventh, and the dominant seventh. He had not yet attempted the use of dominant eleventh chords to which he became partial in his later years. There seems to be no real tonal center even in this early work. Delius has some effective and lovely modulations. One is given here.

etc.

Contrasts are achieved through changes in tempo and dynamics and not through variety. There is very little polyphonic writing. In this song, at least, we must re-

gard Delius's composing as basically vertical--lovely harmonies and shifting tonalities.

The song is weak, not worthy of further notice.

On the contrary, in the song called "The Violet" a definite advance is shown. This is one of the collection of Danish songs. Hutchings attributes the fact that they are not very well-known

"... to Delius's efforts to make new departures in song form. He shuns former strophic methods except in two settings," 7.

one "The Violet" and the other "Irmelin".

"The Violet" was written in 1900, ten years later than "Love Concealed". The words were translated from the Danish verse of Ludwig Holstein, who was one of the minor nature lyricists and a favorite of Delius. Holstein also wrote Niels Lyhne, the story which Delius used in his opera, Fennimore and Gerda.

The strophic method is used in this song--two verses in which the vocal line and accompaniment coincide. Only in the words does a change occur. Even the dynamics and tempo changes are kept intact in the second verse. There is, however, sufficient variety in the first part to warrant exact repetition. Grieg often follows this plan in his piano works.

Unlike the "Love Concealed" there is no piano introduction or interlude. The accompaniment is chordal. An advance over the previous song is at once apparent in the

piano which now asserts itself against the voice. Even when the piano occasionally follows the vocal line, it is done in a more subtle way.

The first verse ends with a *pp* and creates a blocked-in section. This plan also contributes a feeling of inevitability to the final ending. The second to last note in the voice is on the second degree of the scale and one expects it to resolve downward. Delius has a descending part in the piano, however, and resolves the vocal line upward to the third of the scale, creating a lovely effect.

Delius uses his favorite dominant ninth and half-diminished seventh chords, giving us harmony which is more typically Delian.

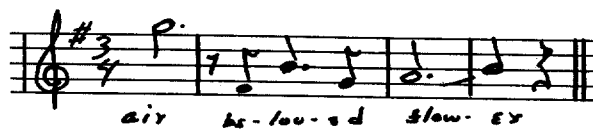
A favorite mannerism is displayed in this work making use of a descending chromatic bass line. A typical example of this is:



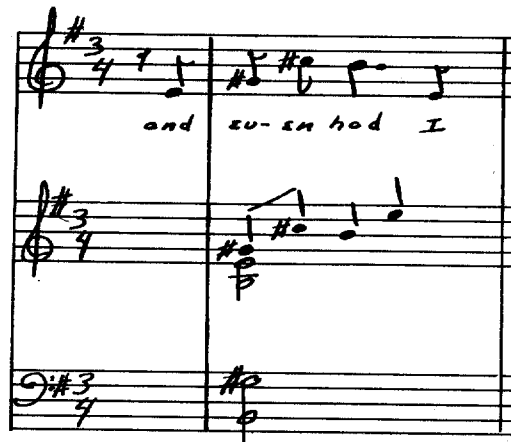
Constantly changing harmonies, chromaticism, and the use of diminished, half-diminished and dominant ninth chords are typical in "The Violet".

The original German words are much better than the English translation. The song has a lovely quality, and although it seems to "spill over" and become a bit sentimental at times, the prevailing quality far outweighs this.

There is one interval leap in the vocal line which is awkward (interval of a minor ninth).



The following trite measure will illustrate Delius's occasional unevenness.



Ould states that "The Violet" is

"... delightful in its naïvete and directness". 8.

Although written three years earlier than "The Violet", the song entitled "In the Garden of the Seraglio" marks an advance over the former. The beginning vocal part seems more harmonic than melodic.

8. Hermand Ould, The Songs of Frederick Delius, (in: English Review 47: P. 604 Nov. 1928)

Handwritten musical score for a song in 6/4 time, key of E-flat major. The score consists of three staves: a vocal line, a piano accompaniment in the right hand, and a piano accompaniment in the left hand. The vocal line has lyrics: "with psy-sums hseu - i - ly la - sen". The piano accompaniment features a recurring pattern of chords and eighth notes.

There is more real integration between voice and piano than occurs in earlier songs where Delius too often merely supports the voice with a piano accompaniment.

As the song continues, the voice asserts itself. We associate this type of thing with Brahms' vocal music.

Because it is binary in structure and the evolution is subtle, blocked-in sections are less conspicuous than in some of Delius's other works. The song begins in Eb and, what is very unusual for Delius, remains in Eb for seven and a half measures. Part B, through the modulating dominant seventh chord on Db, opens in the key of Gb, but eventually returns and ends in the original key of Eb.

Again there is no real thematic correlation between the voice and the piano. The oriental atmosphere is derived through repeated accompaniment patterns and chords. The impression predominates that Delius has discovered chords which fascinate him and which lead him into their excessive use. This is quite the opposite of the restraint

we associate with composers such as Debussy or Ravel. Delius achieves, through these repetitious chords, the mystic, eastern atmosphere of the song. Ould states that this eastern flavor is

"... more delicately transmitted than is usual with songs of this type." 9.

Hogarth says that Delius is

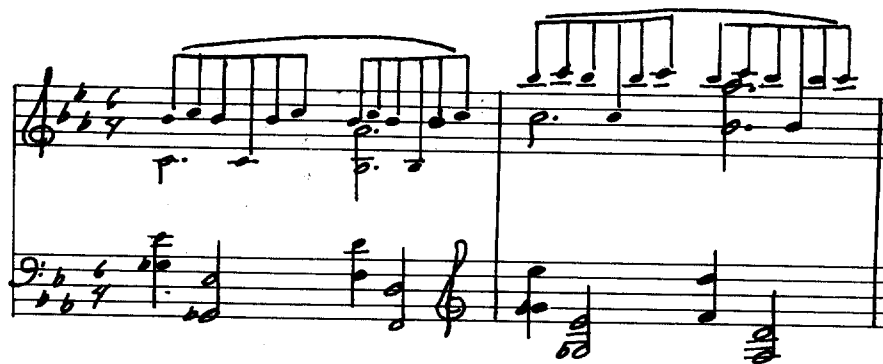
"... not deceived by external trappings: in that Eastern lyric, 'The Garden of the Seraglio' ... he carefully eschewed that cheap 'local Colour' so dear to the hearts of the lesser composers." 10.

There is no taint of sentimentalism, as is found in MacDowell's "By Smouldering Embers" from the Fireside Tales. The quality is lovely, and bears favorable comparison with that essence to be found in the songs of Rachmaninoff.

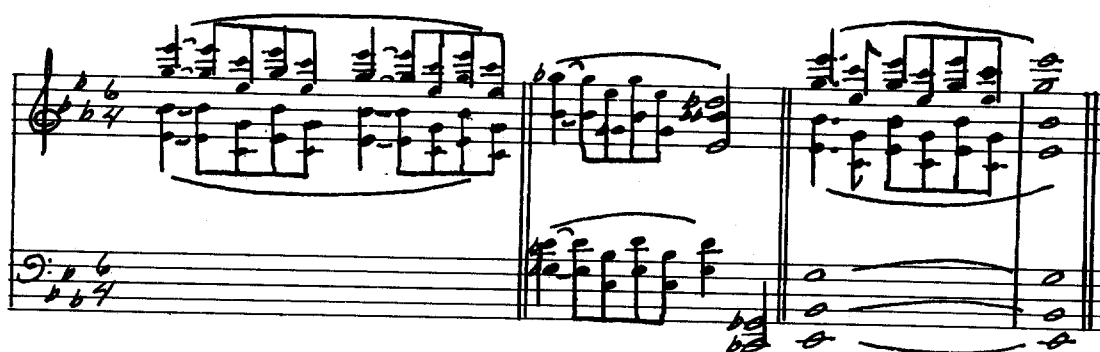
The changing vocal part provides an element of relief to the repetitions encountered in the piano. In the fifth measure of part B, the piano lapses into a figuration characteristic of accompaniments; even then it holds far greater interest than the reiterated triplet pattern in "Concealed Love".

9. Herman Ould, The Songs of Frederick Delius, (in: English Review 47: P. 604 Nov. 1928)

10. Basil Hogarth, Fred Delius: A Critical Estimate, (in: English Review, 59: P. 157 Aug. 1934)

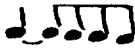
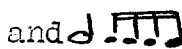


Delius employs the opening figural pattern in part B and again repeats it at the very end of the song. Unity is thus achieved.



The harmony consists mainly of major, diminished and half-diminished, and dominant seventh chords. A good example of his descending chromatic line with resultant shifting harmonization is given here.



Delius also shows a preference for rhythmic patterns such as  and . They are scattered everywhere.

The words, which are a translation from the German, are acceptable but not outstanding. Delius uses predominantly intervals of the perfect 4th, diminished 4th, perfect 5th and minor 3rd. The voice range is excellent, and the colorful background in the piano provides a tender, exotic and lovely oriental quality.

Hutchings thinks that of the five Danish songs,

"... only 'Irmelin' and the exquisitely languorous and perfumed 'In the Seraglio Garden' are likely to become established in the repertory." 11.

Another song written in 1897 is the lovely "Silken Shoes", one of the Danish songs which also contains an orchestral accompaniment. Jacobson wrote the words for this as well as the preceding song.

The piano introduction is a typical one. The thematic material in this one measure permeates the entire song.

11. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949
P. 163.



Delius again uses the triplet figure, a rhythmic feature which we find in abundance in most of his music.

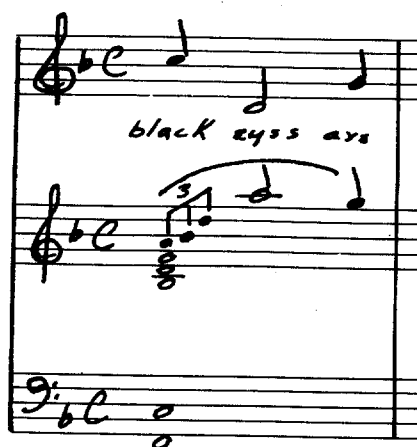
In this song, more than in the other three already analyzed, Delius's growing powers are in evidence and foreshadow the finely independent treatment between voice and orchestra found in "Sea Drift". In none of the present songs, however, can the accompaniment stand alone as a musical entity.

Again there is no correlation between the thematic material of the voice and the accompaniment. The first piano chord is a G-minor eleventh, the supertonic chord of F major, which is firmly established in the fifth measure. A series of modulations then takes place until the closing measures of the song when F major returns.

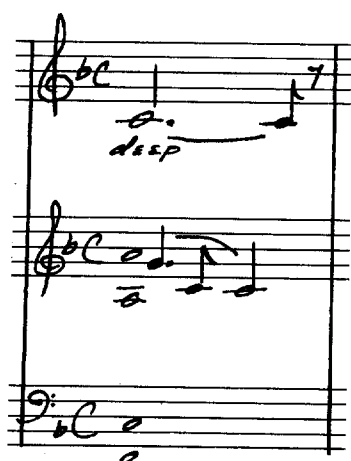
The style of the accompaniment changes to a purely chordal one toward the end of the song, affording relief from the previously reiterated triplet figure. There is no exact repetition of thematic material in the vocal part, but subtle hints of the opening measure are apparent here and there and serve the same purpose in a far more artistic way. In the piano there is the very obvious repetition of the triplet figure by contrast.

Delius again employs a tranquil passage after build-

ing to an anti-climax. This climax is constructed from rising sequences of a triplet pattern in the accompaniment. The voice line also progresses upward. After the main climax is reached the tempo and volume decrease and give color to a lovely, tranquil descending passage. The next to last measure repeats the pattern of the first measure with a change of harmony.



A suspension on the second degree of the scale is unresolved in the last measure of the accompaniment.



The form of the song seems somewhat rhapsodic due to the free use of material. There are continuous flowing lines. Their harmonic and melodic flavoring are typical of Delius. There is no taint of sentimentalism. Ould says of "Silken Shoes" as he did also of "The Violet" ". . . (it is) delightful in its naïvete and directness." 12.

Hutchings, however, feels that it is not as well-knit as some of Delius's other works. The music seems to meet the requirements of the verse--tranquil loveliness in portions and more exuberant vitality in others.

"Autumn" is also from the Danish verse of Jacobson and was composed in 1900. There are fine dramatic moments in this ballad which express wonder at the transience of life and what happens after life. "Father, whither fly the swans? . . . Away. No one knows where to". "Father, whither sail the clouds? . . . Away. No one knows where to". "Father, and we, say whither do we go? . . . Away. No one knows where to."

The structure follows the structure of the poem; the music to the second verse being an exact repetition of the first. The third verse uses new material, thus producing an A A B design. The opening of the first two verses seems to hover around Eb, but shifts into different tonalities until the last few measures, which are in Gb minor.

12. Herman Ould, The Songs of Frederick Delius, (in: English Review, 47: 604, Nov., 1928)

The piano part reverts to an accompaniment. However, this one has more diversification, a far cry from the common place setting in "Concealed Love". Delius adopts the following figuration.



This presently expands beyond its initial statement. Later on he achieves relief through the insertion of sustained chordal passages. The sustained passage at the end of the first verse gives us a subtle return to the beginning, but now presented in a new light. Delius, in this work as well as in the "In the Garden of the Serraglio", tends to let the piano part follow its own course, quite independent of the vocal line. The latter emerges from the accompaniment at the beginning similar to the treatment in "In the Garden of the Serraglio". Everywhere in the piano the music conforms to the upward leaps in the voice part. Again Delius uses some of his favorite minor and diminished intervals in the vocal part and a predominance of diminished, half-diminished seventh and minor chords in the piano.

This song has more rhythmic variety than the previous ones.

Delius uses various methods to draw his music to-

gether. The "echo-like refrains" which were used in "Concealed Love" are found again in "Autumn" to the words, "No one knows where to".

A musical score for the song "No one knows where to". It consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef, a piano accompaniment in treble clef, and a bass line in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics "No-one Knows where - to" are written under the vocal line. The score shows a vocal melody with a long note on "where" and a short note on "to". The piano accompaniment features a series of chords, and the bass line provides a steady harmonic foundation.

The end of the song is colored with a different harmonization.

A musical score showing the end of the song "No one knows where to". It consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef, a piano accompaniment in treble clef, and a bass line in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics "No-one Knows where - to" are written under the vocal line. The score shows a vocal melody with a long note on "where" and a short note on "to". The piano accompaniment features a series of chords, and the bass line provides a steady harmonic foundation. The final measure shows a different harmonization for the ending.

These measures help to hold the song together.

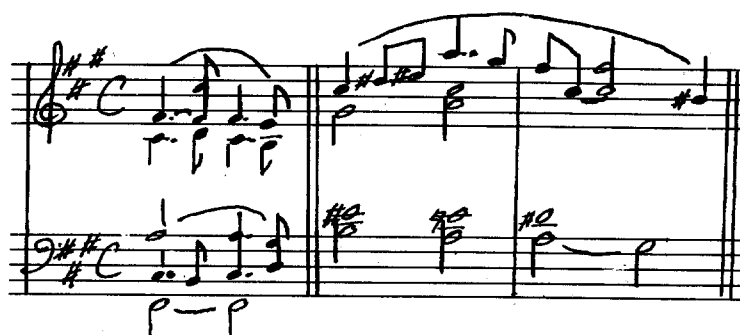
At times one feels that Delius shows a lack of inventiveness when he attempts to elaborate his ideas. He has a tendency to merely repeat sections with very little change of rhythm or harmony.

"Autumn" might be called a symbolic song. The transitoriness of beauty and life is one of Delius's favorite themes and he imbues it with dramatic passion or lovely tranquillity as the case may require. There is an effective flowing quality in "Autumn".

"Irmelin Rose", another Jacobson verse, was written in the same year as "Silken Shoes" and "In the Garden of the Serraglio". It is a ballad which tells of a King's daughter who was courted by all the knights. "Irmelin rose, Irmelin sun, Irmelin, loveliest of all."

Delius suggests the words in his music through the use of consecutive fourths in the accompaniment, the use of intervals of the 4th and 5th in the voice part, and in the absence, for the most part, of the raised leading tone. All of these combine to give the effect of something from the past--an archaic flavor. Sometimes, however, this illusion is shattered through harmonic uses which do not suggest this archaic atmosphere.

"Irmelin Rose" gives us an accompaniment through repetition of a figure, a great advance over the primitive attempt found in "Concealed Love". In contrast to the figural treatment in "Autumn" the accompaniment here is chordal. The following patterns predominate in the accompaniment to verse I.



The accompaniment to the second and third verses is chordal and material for the fourth verse is taken from the first and second ones. The five-measure refrain at the end of each verse has a changed harmonization.

This refrain, through repetition knits the song together. The opening measures in piano are also repeated at the end of the first verse and at the end of the song with harmonic change.



There is a more subtle correlation of thematic material between the voice and piano in this song than in the others. The vocal part emerges from its accompaniment, and together they achieve the archaic flavor. The chords are predominantly minor, the minor ninth, diminished and half-diminished, although a few augmented and major chords are to be found also. "Iremelin Rose" starts in F sharp minor, but the tonality shifts continually until the first interlude is reached. Here, F sharp minor is firmly established, and this again occurs at the end of the song.

An interesting and effective use of intervals to portray word pictures is found in the use of awkward intervals in this example.



A more subtle element seems to permeate this song than was encountered in the previous ones. Hutchings calls it "exquisite".

In Delius's earlier compositions, he is concerned only with the singer whom he supports with an accompaniment. In these songs, however, the piano part cannot be severed from the vocal line. In the songs, more than in other works, the influences on Delius by other composers can be more easily recognized--the use of chords which Delius probably just "lifted" from the contents of some of Grieg's or Chopin's music, and to a small extent the chromaticism of the later Wagner. Hutchings says,

"We cannot always tell the effect of Delian vocal line by singing it to ourselves. His treatment of words is not so cavalier as some people suppose; he rarely violates their just accentuation in his mature work, and he is meticulous in the matching of musical to literary sentiment. The undulations of the vocal line must be judged in combination with what is going on in the orchestra or other accompanying media." 13.

Delius displays no great diversity in either rhythm or counterpoint. His work is melodic, and more than that, harmonic. It is music which makes no primary appeal to the intellect, but rather to the emotions. Delius stated,

"I believe that harmony is entirely a matter of instinct, and that exercises in harmony are quite useless." 14.

There are many accidentals in Delius's writing,

13. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 115

14. Orr, Frederick Delius: Some Personal Recollections (in: Musical Opinion, P. 945, Aug. 1934)

"... but Delian harmony differs from that of most previous composers in that the sharps and flats are not accidentals, and that his music is chromatic only in the liberal sense--'coloured'.

"... the chords, or rather the various placings of the same chord are used for their own effect; they are not connected by any harmonic progression. . . . Delius does not 'modulate' (that is, pass from one basic home-key to another) so often as does many a composer whose music paper contains a far smaller number of sharps and flats, but as Heseltine said, 'the chord becomes in Delius what the note was to older masters, and a chain of chords are often used like a chain of notes.' "15.

Delius learned his harmonic materials by improvising at the piano.

In the songs, as in other compositions, Delius displays mannerisms. One of the most predominant is his use of triplet figures. Delius

"... can seldom write a dozen bars in common time without contradicting the true rhythm with triplet figures and dotted crotchets. . . . This, of all rhythms is most apt to become a tiresome jog-trot, and Delius is not the man to avoid this pitfall. His short melodic phrases of even lengths, his avoidance of syncopation, and the lack of contrapuntal interest all combine to emphasize the poverty of rhythmic invention, which becomes most conspicuous in the dotted motion of compound time." 16.

The Danish songs seem uneven in quality. The piano writing is sometimes a bit awkward.

There is no extreme ranging of the voice.

These songs contain some of those shifting chords typical of Delius, the descending chromatic lines, and a few figurations one readily associates with Delius.

15. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 167

16. Delius Again, (in: The Sat. Review, 148:610 Nov. 23, 1929)

The English translations, in all cases, are acceptable, but do not cover the expressiveness of the original German words.

Structurally considered, a few of the songs, notably "Concealed Love" and "The Violet" still seem rather sectional in character. There is very little correlation of thematic material between voice and piano in any of the songs. Definite progress is portrayed in the accompaniment--starting with the rather trite triplet figure of "Concealed Love"--through the more diversified accompaniment type in "In the Garden of the Serraglio" and "Autumn". The accompaniments for "The Violet", "Silken Shoes" and "Irmelin" are more chordal in nature, and in many cases the piano is lifted out of the mere accompaniment to a vital part of the ensemble. The harmonies are lovely and the tranquil passages especially display Delius at his best.

Chapter IV

Chamber Music

A brief history of the sonatas of Delius is contained in Heseltine's quotation,

"In looking through the manuscripts of Delius's early works, one is particularly struck by the fact that they display virtuosity of technique in the academic sense of the word. . . . The realization that the form of a well-made work must necessarily be latent in its initial conception, even as the form of a flower is latent in its seed, is a slow and arduous process; in the meantime the young artist learns to build with imitative scaffolding. Through formality he attains to form." 1.

Delius's chamber music includes three violin sonatas, one cello sonata, one string quartet, eight piano pieces, including three preludes, and a dance for harpsichord.

"The essential character of a Delius sonata is that the solo melody becomes the first cause and final arbiter, decreeing all shades of dynamic intensity to an accompaniment which paces, reflects and colours, but does not converse as with an equal. There is little evidence of approach to this uniquely personal conception among duo-sonatas of the nineteenth century. Even Grieg wrote sonatas in which melody and accompaniment work together to make some interplay; the most to be found of interplay in a Delius sonata exists in a few echoes or ritornels, or a few chords leading from one flight of solo rhapsody to another." 2.

Delius employs a new type of melodic line which exemplifies his improvisational thought processes over long stretches. Many of these themes, however, reveal only a slight capacity for development, and must fall back upon either sequential repetition or harmonic changes for successful continuation.

1. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 145

2. *Ibid.* P. 136

There is so little in the mature work of Delius that bears any resemblance to the music of other composers, that one could easily presume him to be without any "musical ancestry". After analyzing the chamber works one discovers that Delius was faced with many problems of structure and form. In place of a thorough grasp of form, we find a forced reversion to his favorite devices--those of repetition and sequence, the descending chromatic lines, the sliding sevenths and ninths, the sudden shifting tonalities, and the "jog-trot rhythm in 6/4". Cecil Gray states that the English composer has almost always been a melodist rather than a symphonist. Delius, however, does not endeavor to be symphonic but adheres to his flowing melodies- - - to rhapsodic flight.

Hutchings says,

"Delius's ideal chamber form is pure melody, though not in the Mozartian conception of the term. . . Rhapsody has a different conception of rhythm- - it alludes to the old devices of balance and sequence, but doesn't rely on them for cohesion which is felt rather than observed." 3.

In some of his earlier sonatas Delius uses the old Grieg-like themes. They are not as interesting as his later ones but prove more useful for thematic development.

The Sonata No. 3 for Violin and Piano was written in 1930. Fenby writes that Delius had been ill after attending the Delius Festival in London during the latter

3. Arthur Hutchings, The Chamber Works of Delius, (in: Musical Times, January, 1935.)

part of 1929. However,

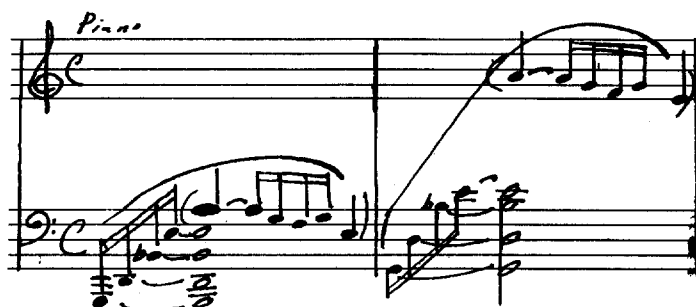
"By the end of March, Delius had been well enough to dictate his Third Sonata for violin and piano. This was a comparatively easy task, and the composer dictated it with astonishing rapidity. The few odds and ends of sketches-- the opening bars, a subsidiary theme and the germ for the second subject of the first movement, a few bars of the second movement and the themes for the last movement-- dated from the war years when concentration in Grez on a large work was impossible." 4.

The third violin sonata was separated into three movements in contrast to the second one which was confined to one movement only. Hutchings says these movements sound better than they look. This is probably true of most of Delius's music.

As there are definitely stated first and second themes and a middle section, the design of the first movement could be labeled "sonatine form". Instead of developing themes Delius repeats them with changed keys, accompaniments, and harmonies. There are also slight rhythmic changes.

There is an ingenious overlapping of thematic material in the first five measures of the piano where the violin enters with the latter part of the statement of the first theme.

4. Eric Fenby, Delius as I Knew Him, Bell & Sons, London, 1936, P. 91



The first three measures are built on a broken half-diminished 11th chord on E. Any feeling of a tonal center would be toward D minor, but this is very transitory. Delius continually employs shifting tonalities. The first theme, given to the violin, consists of a twelve-note upward progression which continues with material drawn from the piano introduction.



Gradually the theme dissolves into a transition which makes use of natural upward leaps in triplets, anticipating what is to occur in the accompaniment against the second theme in the violin. This plan effectively conceals the passage from the first to the second theme.

The latter, found at measure 19 in the violin, is presented as a descending progression employing a triplet figure.



The piano part continues with the ascending triplet accompaniment until measure 29 where we find two measures of blocked-in half-note chords leading to the middle section of measure 31. Here the piano hints at the real middle section theme which occurs in the violin part at measure 34.



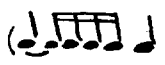
This middle section, more than the portions which include the first and second themes, seems to have a tonal center, in this case D major. Furthermore this section contains one of Delius's favorite time signatures- - 6/4, and his use of the  rhythmic pattern which also occurs frequently in some of his other works.

Immediately after the middle section there is a recapitulation of the first theme, but now appearing a major second higher than it did originally. The piano deviates into chordal material after using four measures of the introductory idea. The recapitulation of theme two occurs a fifth higher at measure 65. In the initial statement the piano employs an upward progression of triplets. Here the upward progression remains, but the rhythmic figure is

constricted. () Again, after four measures, the accompaniment changes to chordal material which leads us to measure 76 and a recapitulation of the middle section in the key of E major. The first appearance of this section employed a chordal piano part. In the second statement Delius again uses the upward triplet progression. From measures 87-95 Delius hints at material from the first theme. Although there is no cadence this section still takes on the character of a codetta. In Delius we rarely find a well-defined cadence due to his continually shifting chords.

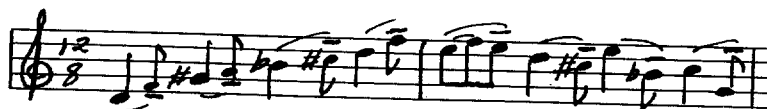
The form of the first movement is given below.

Theme I.	(1-12) (Theme actually starting in measure two)
Transition	(13-18)
Theme II	(19-30)
Middle Section	(31-42) (Real theme at measure 34)
Theme I - Recapitulation	(43-64) (Some diversity)
Theme II -	" (65-75) (" ")
Middle Section	" (76-86) (Real theme at measure 78) Changed accompaniment
Codetta	(87-95)

There is very little correlation between the violin and piano parts. Occasionally the accompaniment uses part of the first theme () and in a few places hints at the theme of the middle section, but otherwise is quite independent of the violin part.

The climax of the movement occurs at the end. The traditional Delian descending chromatic lines, and also the diminished, half-diminished sevenths, ninths, and elevenths; the dominant ninth, seventh, and thirteenth chords are found in abundance. There is colorful harmonization and flowing melodic lines. As Hutchings stated, this sonata should be heard if it is to be truly appreciated.

The second movement contrasts a song with a dance and falls into 3-Part Song-form. The themes for the dance and the song appear as ascending lines. The movement starts with the dance theme in the key of D minor.

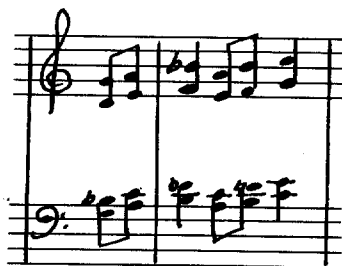


At measure 11 the theme is repeated an octave higher in the violin, but with a changed accompaniment.



The accompaniment at this point is typically Delian- - employing the descending chromatic line. Measures 21-2 and 25-6 in the piano part prove interesting as examples of reverted and also enharmonic writing.





nor this.



"The difference lies in the intention. The impressionists, the sheep school, and the watercress school aimed at picturesqueness; 'atmosphere' and scenic suggestion are pleasant in short spells, but Delius has the extra utterance which comes from the human heart. With him is no musical vegetarianism; he belongs to the romantic main stream. The whole-tone chord may occur, a passage may proceed by parallel fourths, but there are no consistent limitations. He revels full-bloodedly in his musical materials." 5.

The violin enters at measure 37 with this theme while the accompaniment changes to descending chords. At measure 49 the dance returns with the original accompaniment written a fifth higher. There is a deviation at measure 58, and in the next measure both the dance theme and the accompaniment occur as they did during their first appearance. The dance which started the movement in D minor,

5. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 147-8

ends it in D major. The song is in G minor. The chords are predominantly minor, diminished and half-diminished sevenths, and dominant sevenths and ninths. The second movement serves as an interesting contrast to the first and third ones.

The third movement, which is marked *lento*, is in hybrid form.

Introduction	(1-18)
Theme I	(19-43)
Theme II	(44-54)
Middle Section	(55-79)
Theme II - Recapitulation	(80-91)
Middle Section-Recapitulation	(92-103)
Theme I - Recapitulation	(104-107)
Coda	(108-117)
	(Using introductory material)

There is an eighteen-measure introduction containing the introductory theme in the violin in measure 4.



The first theme appears at measure 19, also in the violin, and in the key of E minor.



New material is added which seems relatively unimportant. This is apparently one of the places to which Heseltine refers when he says,

"Occasionally, as in the Violin Sonata (a work laid aside for a number of years and completed long after its conception) there are redundancies that seem due rather to anxiety to fill up the form than to any necessity of musical logic." 6.

Theme two which occurs in measure 44 in the violin, starts in G major but changes its tonality almost immediately.



As it continues, the use of part of the rhythmic figure of theme one is apparent. The triplet figure is found in theme two, and also in the middle section which starts in measure 55 in the key of G major.



This is one of the few places in this sonata where Delius allows the piano a little interplay with the violin. In measure 57 the piano states the violin figure of measure 56 in augmentation. The middle section theme is altered melodically and also contains a different piano part at

6. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, Lane, London, 1923, P. 136

measure 65. Instead of returning to theme one, as is usual in sonata form, Delius employs the second theme at measure 80. The violin part is transposed upward a major second, and its register is now two octaves higher than that of its first presentation. The accompaniment resumes its original scheme after a two-measure deviation.

The recapitulation of the middle section appears in measure 92 with a changed piano part. As we near the end, one statement of the first theme is heard in measure 104 which leads to the coda in measure 108. The latter uses introductory material and ends in D minor. Delius knits the movement together by using the introductory piano material against the introductory theme in the violin in the last five measures of the coda.

Delius again uses a great deal of triplet figuration in this movement. Ascending progressions are numerous. The harmony is "melting", which the critics term "lush chromaticism".

There seems to be a rambling tendency in the third movement. Heseltine states

"Delius is not seen at his best in those works whose form is dependent upon the development of contrasted themes in a certain relation preordained by tradition." 7.

Only in music of a rhapsodic nature do we feel the real Delius. The third movement does not have as firm a grasp on form as do the other two. Each one starts with a theme built on a rising progression. There is no visible

7. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, Lane, London, 1923, P. 136

cyclic treatment, but the triplet figures of the second theme of the first movement and the middle section of the third one bear a slight resemblance.

Delius was an excellent violinist and wrote effectively for the instrument. This is evident in his sonata. Hutchings states,

"The technique here happens to be more clear and economical than in previous violin sonatas, but the fire burns lower. Its beauty is of mellow reflection, not of impassioned rapture. The dictated works-- the 'Idyll', the 'Songs of Summer' and this sonata, for example-- can now be seen as the last utterance of a master whose life's tasks were drawing to their close; no longer is he troubled with problems of form; the pieces live on their intrinsic merits, but their glory is of an autumnal hue." 8

Concluding remarks on this sonata may well include Delius's own thoughts. Fenby writes,

"Easter brought May Harrison, and now we were able to hear the new Sonata. Delius was obviously very pleased with his achievement, and so delighted was he with May Harrison's musicianly interpretation that he dedicated the work to her. 'It seems a younger, fresher work than either of the other two sonatas', and in some respects I like it better." 9.

String Quartet

The first string quartet Delius wrote was not published. The one to be analyzed was written in 1916.

Hutchings says,

"The opening of the quartet is no static affair; it is rhapsodic and cannot be isolated. It presages a long

8. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 146

9. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, Lane, London, 1923, P. 96-7

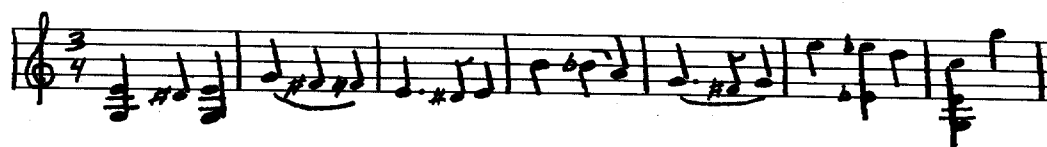
flight of flowing texture." 10.

The first movement is in sonatine form. There is variety in the melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic material, but no real development.

The quartet opens with the first theme in G major.



The second violin announces the first five notes of the theme after which the first violin continues with the rest of the theme. A cadence on a dominant 4/2 in G leads into the second theme in the key of C six measures after 4. (numbers are used as indications for locating places in the music)



After number 6, parts of the second theme are frequently tossed from first to second violin. A triplet figure is used against this theme much of the time. This passage is more improvisational than developmental, however. Four measures before number 11 Delius employs new material, portions of which return later.



Because it cannot be labeled as thematic, it is simply designated here as new material.

The middle section, or third theme, which incorporates the rhythmic pattern of the new material, enters three measures after number 12.



It gradually becomes quieter and slower and leads to the recapitulation of the first theme in its original key four measures after 14. The second theme returns one measure after number 19 - also in the key of G. The recapitulation of the third theme is found three measures after 23, this time leading through the slower and softer part to an animated coda one measure before 25. The movement ends in E minor, the relative minor of G major in which the movement started.

Thus, in this movement Delius has two definitely stated themes and a third one, all of which appear in the recapitulation. The movement ends with a short coda. The first theme appears each time in the key of G major, while the second theme's first appearance is in C and the return is in the tonic key of G. The movement ends in the relative minor, E. Delius employs frequent changes of tempo

and time signatures. The four instruments play continuously except for the insertion of a brief rest here and there in the second violin, viola or cello.

There is a variety of interest in all parts- - viola, as well as the other instruments. Occasionally the parts cross. This movement contains the usual orthodox scoring. In places this scoring is heavy, unnecessarily so. "Sensuous music" might best describe the material itself with its continuous, flowing passages.

In the second movement we again have a dance placed in contrast to a song (as we found in the second movement of the violin sonata). Hutchings says of this movement,

"The most satisfying parts of the quartet are those wherein Delius is true to his own fluid idiom. The scherzo departs from this. . . . The composer once more becomes traditional rather than personal, but without any sign of incompetence. He does not fall into the snare of over-spaced or over-thick chords, which would spoil the tone of four instruments in their endeavours to get too many notes at a time. All is 'apt for viols'." ll.

The scherzo is marked "quick and lightly". The form is basically- - A B A Coda with hints of part A used contrapuntally in part B. The first violin starts the six-note theme followed immediately by the viola, and then the cello in exact imitation.



ll. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 151-2

The scherzo begins in G minor. Three measures before number 6 the theme is heard again in strict imitation in E minor, leading to the lovely contrasting song theme.



This appears three measures before number 7 in C major in the first violin, with the second violin, viola and cello providing a harmonic accompaniment. The three accompanying instruments employ double-stops here, but the fusion is excellent and does not sound as heavy as it appears from the printed page. The scherzo theme returns three measures after number 9 in the three upper instruments against the song theme in the cello. Three measures after number 15 the song theme is heard in E minor and at 18 in C major. The scherzo theme returns once more six measures after number 20 in its original form in G minor-- and provides the material found in the coda five measures after 26. The movement ends in E minor.

There are excellent contrasts, the writing for strings is effective and provides just the right contrast for the other movements of the Quartet.

The slow movement is marked "Slow and wistfully" and is entitled "Late Swallows". Of the third movement, Hutchings states,

'Late Swallows', though pure chamber music, has the effect of a tone-poem. Between a prelude steeped in autumnal atmosphere, which returns at the conclusion of the piece, is a masterly stretch of vision and aural

suggestion, comparable with 'Summer Night on the River'. This has been called 'a sort of musical pointillisme', the tune riding above and below the shimmering chords as in the work for small orchestra just mentioned. To this type of texture we have seen that Delius was very partial - the quiet middle section of 'Brigg Fair', for instance, translates, in different mood, the 'Late Swallows' texture into orchestral terms; in the quartet as will be seen from the example, the harmony is satisfactory without the first violin, whose thin muted waving gives it what the title demands." 12.

This movement is in three-part song form - - Prelude-Middle section - Prelude. The prelude starts with the theme in the first violin in the key of D major.



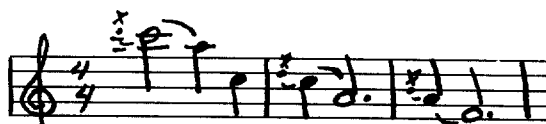
It appears again one measure after number 1 with changed tonality, and subsequent reiterations occur in F minor, D, and C major, each time in the first violin. The middle section enters four measures after number 3 with a "thin muted waving" of eighth notes in the first violin. The second violin assumes this task one measure before number 4 and the viola five measures after 4, setting the stage for the appearance of the middle-section theme six measures after number 4.



12. A. Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 152-3

This theme occurs in the first violin as the viola continues the waving eighth-note pattern; the second violin has an independent line, and the cello provides the bass. Four measures after number 5 the first violin again takes up the waving pattern and the second violin is given the theme. The antecedent remains exactly the same, but the consequent is transposed down a perfect fourth. Three measures after number 6 the theme, now transposed one-half step lower, appears in the viola. The prelude reappears seven measures after number 8 with the theme again in the first violin. This section is similar to its initial appearance except for a slight change in the accompaniment. The movement ends in D minor. We now find Delius scattering the thematic material more evenly between the different instruments. This is pure Delian music--music whose texture is iridescent.

The last movement, in broad terms, includes the introduction, themes I and II, and a middle section. A recapitulation of these themes and a coda, using material from the middle section and introduction, gives us a sonatine form. The last movement opens with an introduction of 26 measures. The grace note passage, starting one measure before number 1 in the first violin, is the introductory theme.

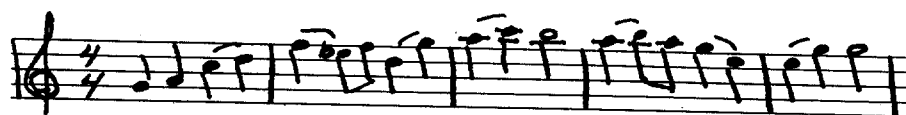


The passage is almost entirely chordal and of a quiet nature. Theme one enters four measures before number 3 in the cello.



The key is Bb. Five measures after number 4 the violin joins the cello with the same theme and in the same key.

The second theme appears in the first violin four measures after 5.



From this point until one measure before 11 there is an interplay of this theme between the first and second violin and the viola. The theme is not developed but has changing registers, keys, and accompaniments. The first theme appears briefly in the first violin five measures after 8.

The middle section occurs one measure before 11, using material that hints of the introductory theme with its passages of grace notes. The recapitulation of theme one is found one measure after 13 in the viola, and one measure after 17 in the first violin and cello parts. The first violin contains a recapitulation of the second theme two measures after 18 which brings us

finally to the coda, three measures after 21. The coda uses material from the middle section and ends in D major.

This movement, also similar to the first one but in a greater degree, has a definite tendency to ramble. There is no development. Delius did not think in terms of form while composing. His best works are those which are fluid in character- - flowing, rhapsodical. The last movement of the quartet falls short of these characteristics.

Hutchings states,

"Excluding the finale, there is not one incompetent piece of writing, one dubious or uncomfortable bar. If all quartets must be architectonic, then Delius has not written one. He has no mould; the significant form is in the flower and foliage during its unfolding before us. A romantic, still more a rhapsodic composer who triumphs over formal problems should have more credit than his classical brother who works to a model- - unless that brother be one of the giants." 13.

Heseltine feels that the string quartet- - which is essentially a "polyphonic medium" - - is weighted down by Delius's massed harmonic formations. Delius, however, knew the capabilities of stringed instruments and the scoring, although conventional and never sensational, is still adequate for his purposes.

The loveliness, the sensuousness, and free luxuriance of at least the first three movements make us less conscious of limitations in form. His work is intimate, never sensational. Cecil Gray states,

13. A. Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 153

"The direction in which music's greatest strength lies consists in the expression of emotion rather than of thoughts, in the realization of intangible moods rather than concrete forms." 14.

Dance for Harpsichord

The "Dance for Harpsichord" was written in 1919. Delius's treatment of solo piano writing is almost entirely harmonic. This work is written in 3-part song form. There is no introduction. The principal theme: (Measure 1)



The harmonic treatment of the first nine measures is fairly simple. In measures 10 to 15 the music is transitional in tendency, leading to the second theme or B at measure 15.

14. Arthur Hutchings, The Chamber Works of Delius,
Musical Times, May 1935, P. 404



Unity seems to be achieved through the rhythmic line. There is also melodic unity through sequential treatment. The *molto tranquillo* section in measures 28-30 contains the triplet figure and provides transitional material before the recapitulation of the first theme in measure 32. The second time A appears the melodic line remains unaltered, but there is more chromatic and harmonic treatment. The rhythm, however, remains quite the same during the entire work. Hutchings says,

"The harpsichord gives no opportunity for lingering chords or for the glowing and fusing of colour; Delius therefore does not break, tie or arpeggiate his chords, but presents them complete on every accent. They do not stand alone; sometimes the upper fingers of the right hand provide a melody, sometimes the chords make the equivalent of a melodic sequence." 15.

However, if Delius, while writing this composition actually had the harpsichord in mind, he was not very consistent as it concerns the music. The dance is saturated with over-harmonization. He seems to avoid the tonic flavor, which we associate with music written

15. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 149

originally for harpsichord. A lack of artistic restraint is evident here. Heseltine says,

"In writing for the pianoforte Delius has never been particularly happy. The limitations of the keyboard seem to have hampered him; his figuration is often somewhat perfunctory and the long sequences of chords, lacking the glow which the individuation of the varied voices of the orchestra would impart to them, tend to become a trifle square-faced and monotonous." 16.

Delius's piano writing also discloses a mannerism of moving in "blocks of harmonies".

16. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, Lane, London, 1923, P. 145-6

Chapter V

Orchestral Work --- "Brigg Fair"

"Brigg Fair" is one of the most frequently heard orchestral works of Delius. Its title is taken from a folk tune employed by Percy Grainger, who had heard it sung by an old Englishman at the village of Saxby-all-Saints in Lincolnshire, England. Grainger used this folk song in "Green Bushes", also in a choral work, and it was incorporated by Delius in "Brigg Fair". The latter was written in 1907 and dedicated to Percy Grainger.

Benjamin Britten, in writing about folk songs states,

"The failure of folk-song to provide contemporary England with an adequate basis for organized music is due to many factors, some general, some local. The chief attractions of English folksongs are the sweetness of the melodies, the close connection between words and music, and the quiet, uneventful charm of the atmosphere. This uneventfulness, however, is part of the weakness of the tunes which seldom have any striking rhythms or memorable melodic factors. Like much of the English countryside, they creep into the affections rather than take them by storm." 1.

"Whatever its origins, there are, moreover, serious difficulties in the way of making folksong the basis of contemporary art-forms. Since the form of a work is dictated by the material, the characteristics of English folksong mentioned above are bound to have a weakening effect on the structure of music founded directly upon it. When used as raw material they tend to obstruct thinking in the extended musical forms. Works founded on them are usually little more than variations or potpourris. Again each folksong has a completely suggested harmonic scheme--so that it should sound satisfactory when sung unaccompanied--and much deviation therefore tends to produce a

1. Benjamin Britten, England and the Folk Art Problem, Modern Music, Jan. 1941, P. 72

feeling of irritation. All these characteristics tend to make folksong a most restricting influence. . .". 2.

The aptness of this tune for the treatment Delius employs, however, does not produce this "feeling of irritation." Delius probably would not have written a work based on the tune if it had not embodied the real essence of his own music.

Heseltine notes the interesting fact that Delius has unconsciously used the same form which the Elizabethan composers employed for the "popular melodies of their day". John Bull, Farnaby, William Byrd and many others used this

". . . cumulative variation form which afterwards grew formal in the passacaglia, in which the theme is repeated, intact or with very slight rhythmical modifications, in each variation, always surrounded with a new harmonic, contrapuntal or rhythmic embroidery." 3.

Delius, however, deviated by inserting an interlude, thus achieving contrast from the reiterations of the folk song.

He does not call this work a set of variations, but "An English Rhapsody". We are fortunately engrossed by its emotional content and not by the variation form which seems to be thrown into the background as only a means of expression. The approach is musicianly and finely poetic.

This folk-song is a happy one in praise of true love. The swain tells us how

2. Benjamin Britten, England and the Folk Art Problem, Modern Music, Jan. 1941, P. 73-74

3. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, John Lane, London, 1923, P. 128

"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."

He proceeds to Brigg Fair and meets his love.

"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 slow, pastoral section establishes the atmosphere in the opening measures. Here Delius uses a smaller orchestra: strings, harp, flute, clarinet and French horn, to portray a picture of pastoral England. Fenby says the first few pages

"... evoke the atmosphere of an early summer morning in the English country, with its suggestion of a faint mist veiling the horizon, and the fragrant scent of the lawn in the air." 4.

At no place in this section do the strings, which provide a chordal background, play above a pianissimo. The chords given out by the strings are a D half-diminished, Bb major 7th, Eb dominant seventh (enharmonic C# for Db) D major, Bb major seventh, and Bb dominant seventh. In two places the horns are substituted for the string background, each time with a Bb dominant seventh chord in its third inversion. Life is given to the flute and harp, and later the clarinet with moving and well-contrasted parts.

4. Eric Fenby, Delius as I Knew Him, G. Bell & Sons, London, 1936, P. 208



The use of a very small orchestra, especially the treatment of wood-wind and harp parts, is all reminiscent of Debussy. Hutchings states

"... harp and wood-wind figurations, often remind one of Debussyist technique but sound quite unlike anything from that school." 5.

The oboe introduces the folk song at measure 20.



Cecil Gray states that, unlike the themes of Beethoven which seem insignificant until their transformation, Delius's subject in "Brigg Fair" is at once highly organized and distinctive for its melodic beauty. The theme itself is practically unaltered throughout the work.

5. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 87

The main interest lies in the harmonic treatment which enhances the beauty of the folk song.

Simon writes of Delius,

"... he was able to single out the natural freshness of the folk-song and lay his finger on the invisible thread which winds it so closely to the great elemental events in the march of Nature. . . . But being a genuine lyricist, he never degenerated into a tone-painter, a mere illustrator.

. . . He was never content to describe the rustic scene: it was the very heart, the vital principle, the passion of the countryside, which he endeavored to conjure up in almost every work." 6.

This folk song is modal-- a Dorian tune with a flatted 3rd and 7th. However, Delius employs the same treatment "he would have given to a diatonic tune."

In the first statement of the theme Delius uses the clarinet, bassoon, second violin, viola and cello as harmonic background. The strings play pizzicato during the antecedent phrase of the theme and rest during the consequent, leaving the oboe solo with one clarinet and three bassoons. The chords used in the antecedent are: D minor, F major, G major. A dominant seventh (with lowered fifth), D major, F dominant seventh, G major in its second inversion. In the consequent the chords are: C minor seventh, F dominant seventh, Bb major, F major, G minor, C major, Bb augmented, and G minor. The question will always present itself whether the folk tune is dignified by such a rich harmonization, or its innate

6. Heinrich Simon, Frederick Delius, (in: Musical Opinion, P. 503, March, 1935)

simplicity marred through such means.

In Variation I (measures 36-51) the original melody is kept intact except for one raised seventh. It is played by the flute with second violin, viola and cello providing the chordal background.

In order to exhibit Delius's varied harmonic treatment, an analysis of the chords in this variation are given as follows: the chords in the antecedent are: D minor seventh (over pedal G), G minor seventh, C dominant seventh (with lowered fifth), F minor eleventh, Bb dominant seventh, E half-diminished seventh, A dominant seventh (with lowered fifth), an enharmonic Eb half-diminished seventh, G half-diminished seventh, G diminished seventh, A diminished seventh, G half-diminished seventh. Those chords employed in the treatment of the consequent are: A dominant seventh, Eb minor with bass passing tone, D dominant seventh (with lowered fifth), G dominant ninth, G dominant seventh, G minor seventh, D dominant seventh, B dominant seventh (with enharmonic seventh), A# half-diminished seventh (enharmonic Eb), A half-diminished seventh, D augmented with minor seventh, Eb major. The consequent ends with a deceptive cadence on Eb in place of the tonic G which one expects. Thus we discover, in the antecedent, seven chord changes in the original statement and twelve of them in Variation I. The original consequent had eight chord changes. Variation I has twelve. The chords of the theme as it originally appeared are also

more simple in character than those of most of the succeeding variations.

Variation II (measures 52-67) is confined to the strings. The theme, which is in the first violin, has one rhythmic change and differs in its phrasing. Toward the end of the consequent Delius uses the descending chromatic passage and ends this variation on an Eb dominant ninth chord.

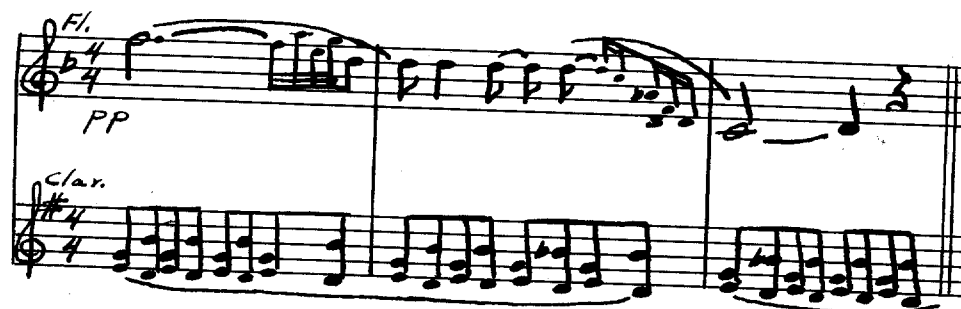
In Variation III (measures 68-83) the flute and clarinet have the theme in octaves and maintain the same rhythm which appeared in Variation II. There is a change of harmony, however, in the string section. A transitional three-measure phrase connects this Variation with the following one.

In this 4th Variation (measures 87-108) Delius hints at the theme by using part of the rhythmic figure and harmonization, but there is no direct quotation of the folk tune. The orchestra is larger, employing the complete string and woodwind sections together with horn and harp. The first and second violins contribute with a continual light, running ornamentation in sixteenth notes played in octaves.

Variation V (measures 109-124) employs a horn solo against a background of legato chords in the strings. The running sixteenth-note pattern is now shifted to the flute and clarinet. The theme itself departs from the original presentation only through one rhythmic change.

In Variation VI (measures 125-147) the theme, containing a slight change in rhythm, is given to the trumpet. The strings continue with approximately the same type of accompaniment, while the light, running figure is assigned to the flute, oboe, bassoon and harp. The horns, clarinet, contra-bassoon, English horn and timpani are added before the end of the variation. At measure 142 a *ritardando* occurs, the instrumentation is less full and the volume decreases, thus creating the necessary atmosphere for the impressive interlude (measures 148-193).

This middle section is marked "Slow and very quietly". Measures 148-9 are reminiscent of the opening pastoral introduction, with its flute pattern against muted strings, but now colored with a continual eighth-note accompaniment pattern in two clarinets.



The main theme of this interlude is played *con sordino* by the first violins.



Hutchings says,

"The loveliest part of 'Brigg Fair' is the interlude which corresponds with the tranquil 'river' section of 'In a Summer Garden'; it resembles that section in texture. . ." 7.

In measures 161-172 the first violins repeat the theme *divisi* in octaves. The clarinet and flute are presently added to the eighth-note pattern and eventually joined by the bass clarinet. The strings continue the same basic harmony used in the initial statement, but this treatment is now fuller and transferred to a higher register.

Delius uses the rhythmic pattern (, which is taken from the antecedent of the Middle theme, in measures 172-191. This pattern appears twice in the English horn, once in the clarinet, and viola, followed by six repetitions in the French horn, each one becoming softer until the last one which is marked *ppp* has the effect of an echo. Flute, English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, and horn provide the harmonic background which is expanded, at measure 178, to include the strings. The last three measures of the interlude are marked "*morendo*" and are again reminiscent of the pastoral beginning. The end of the section is rather extravagantly marked *pppp*. Almost the entire middle section hovers around the key of F major. Effective contrast for the work is achieved in this interlude.

7. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 85

In Cecil Gray's Survey of Contemporary Music there is a paragraph which is unusually pertinent.

"Delius, 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 purists 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 great musicians England has produced. It is the very quintessence of the English spirit in art." 8.

Delius made very few changes in the folk song in the first six variations. After the middle interlude, however, the alterations and variety are notable. He has presumed upon the listener's familiarity with the theme to make his departures.

Variation VII (measures 194-202) employs wood-winds (English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoons and horns). The rhythm of the theme is completely changed.



The time signature is now 3/4 instead of 3/8. A weaving of patterns which consist predominantly of eighth notes characterizes the background. Some syncopation is also in evidence.

In Variation VIII (measures 202-213) Delius uses

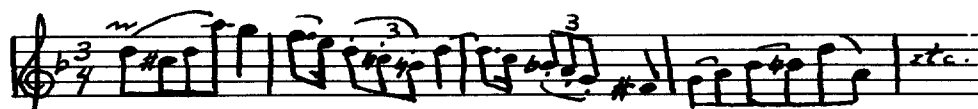
8. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 83

practically the entire orchestra with the exception of trumpet, trombone and tuba. The folk tune which occurs in the flute and clarinet is similar to the one found in Variation VII, but the background is much fuller. There is some chromaticism but the key center is definitely F. Delius is beginning here to create more diversity in the rhythm in the accompanying instruments. With all this variety, a definite return to a familiar figure from the original statement of the theme is note-worthy as a necessary identifying touch.

Variation IX (measures 214-229) is marked "Allegretto leggiero". The theme is in flute, oboe and clarinet, but now presented in augmentation.



The accompaniment is entirely different. (First violin part given)



A fuller orchestra is employed at measure 221 and the accompaniment now consists almost entirely of running eighth-note passages. The tempo is "rather quicker" and four measures later "becoming rather slower."

In Variation X (measures 229-253) Delius subtly hints

at the theme. The strings open this variation as they did Variation IX, but the music is now transposed a fifth lower. The entire orchestra, except for the percussion, is used. There are changes of tempo, mood and volume. The climax is reached at measure 238, followed by a gradually descending passage. At measure 246 the accompaniment pattern of the interlude occurs in oboe, English horn and first clarinet; it is then shifted to the second clarinet, bass clarinet and bassoon; next in first clarinet and bass clarinet, the latter continuing for the last two measures in its chalumeau register and thus achieving a very effective modulation into D minor. During this section the contra-bassoon, horns and strings are reduced to soft, dotted half-note chords.

Variation XI (measures 254-264) is marked "Lento".

Heseltine says

"... the average conductor takes the variation twice too fast, for which he may perhaps be excused since Delius intends the beat to be doubled - he has directed the passage to be played 'slow, with solemnity' - and should have written 4/2 for 4/4. The right tempo is quaver equals 80, beating eight quavers to the bar." 9.

The rhythm of the theme takes on a complete transformation and is now assigned to the trumpet and trombone in octaves.



9. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, John Lane, London, 1923, P. 129

Hutchings says of this variation,

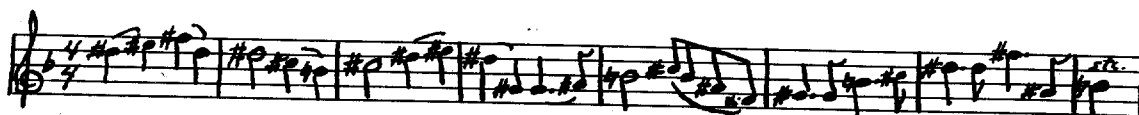
" . . . one cannot join those who cavill at the naivety of the slow variations. . . . There is mystery in the distant song played by trumpets and trombone in octaves, and enhanced by the effect of the solemn bell-strokes and the off-beat chords on richly divided-strings; we feel that the lovers stand together contemplating the night landscape after they have walked away from the fair-ground, and that their thoughts are set on life's mystery and on the prospect of their own life together." 10.

There is an effective modulation in the brass at the end of the variation.



This leads to Variation XII (measures 265-273). Here the folk tune, which is heard in the English horn, clarinet, horn, first and second violins, opens similarly to its appearance in Variation XI, but deviates after the fourth beat of the second measure.

10. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 84

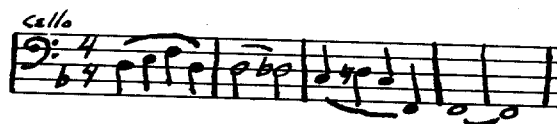


The remainder of the orchestra continues with the same type of accompaniment used in Variation XI. There is an effective descending chromatic modulation by full orchestra at measure 273.

Transitional material occurs in measures 274-288. Delius again hints at the opening pastoral section.



Subtle uses of the folk-song also occur.



His writing for those instruments which sound the lower registers is notable. He can be likened, in this respect, to Sibelius. After this winsome, charming, soft music, Delius achieves the necessary contrast with the gay Variation XIII (measures 289-306). The tempo is marked "Piu vivo". The clarinet has the melody in an ensemble with flute. The theme is still in the Dorian mode, but Delius uses four sharped thirds (C# in the clarinet).

Basically, the rhythm and melody are approximately the same as in the original theme. The time signature 3/8 again recurs for the first time since Variation VI.

Bassoons, contra bassoon, horns, timpani and triangle provide the harmonic background. In measure 304 the cello and harp execute pizzicato chords on the first and third beats of the measure.

Variation XIV (measures 307-322) is confined to the strings. The theme, which appears in the cello, is similar to the original one, melodically and rhythmically. A more simple accompaniment is employed except for the first violin which introduces an ornamentation figure in sixteenth notes.

The ensemble in Variation XV (measures 323-339) approaches the full orchestra. The trumpet, trombone and tuba are alone excepted. The folk-tune, which is similar in rhythm and melody to its treatment in Variations II, III, V and VI, is heard in the oboe, clarinet and lower desks of the first violins. The rest of the orchestra provides a chordal accompaniment. A new rhythm occurs in downward sequence patterns in flute and first violin at measure 335, leading, through a ritardando, to Variation XVI (measures 340-359).

The brass dramatically announces the opening of Variation XVI at measure 340. The strings and low woodwinds are added in measure 344, and this scoring expands to include the entire orchestra at measure 345. Concern-

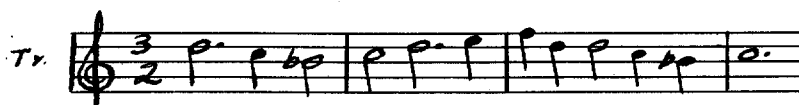
ing this introduction by the brass Hutchings states,

"Only a very censorious person. . . would deny Delius's right to use brass alone, even in such a metre and at that brisk pace, for the high spirits of a fair day." 11

The theme, which is played in octaves in first and second violin, viola and cello, is melodically and rhythmically similar to its treatment in the second variation. This section is brighter and more boisterous, displaying the gay spirits of fair-day.

A transition passage occurs at measure 359 in a "rather quicker" tempo, using various rhythmic excerpts from the theme. (♩♩♩|♩♩♩|♩♩♩) The strings have a slightly different pattern. (♩♩♩|♩♩♩:||) At measure 360 the time signature changes to 3/4. Here the higher woodwinds and strings have an interplay of triplet patterns against chords in the lower woodwinds and brass.

Variation XVII (measures 373-390) is marked "Maestoso, (very broadly) (Largamente)". Delius employs the full orchestra. Hints of the theme, which is melodically and rhythmically changed, are found in the flute, oboe, clarinet and trumpet.



The trombone and tuba give out an augmentation of material taken from the opening pastoral section.

11. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1940, P. 84



Hutchings states:

"In only one place is the scoring a little coarse, though a staunch Delian may say that this short section gives a glimpse of the more garish things seen under flares at the fair. The passage comes just before the lovely closing pages, but one feels that the scrappet used, taken from the opening (where it suggested the sound of field and hedgerow into which the lover's song breaks), is too slight a matter for blaring augmentation by trombones and tubas." 12.

The music becomes gradually softer and slower, leading to the coda at measure 390. This is a very lovely, quiet section. The theme is heard in the oboe, as it was in the original statement; the time signature, however, is 3/4 instead of 3/8. Delius employs a smaller orchestra: flute, oboe, English horn, French horn, timpani and strings. The flute has passages which are reminiscent of the pastoral beginning, the interlude, and the transition preceding variation XIII. This knits the work together in a unique and subtle way. The last ten measures are "rather slower and dying away to the end". The work ends with pppp in the key of Bb major.

"Brigg Fair" is finely diversified. Heseltine says,

"The work is not intended as a mere illustration of the poem. Delius calls it 'an English Rhapsody' and the

music is redolent of the English countryside." 13.

Hutchings states,

" 'Brigg Fair' and 'On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring'. . . evoke the spirit of our English countryside. Many musicians, including Beethoven and Dvorak, have left a record of their feelings when afield. Delius has an effect upon us different from theirs, in that there is always a horizon in his canvas, or beyond it, so to speak; with Delius, we feel as we do when reading Jefferies or Hardy, English writers who identify our thoughts with those of a human pilgrim contemplating and aspiring to such a horizon. In the choral settings of Nietzsche and Whitman the horizon and quest are partly mystical and spiritual. In these favourite orchestral poems they are unmistakably the beloved skyline of our English fields, woods, rivers, hills, dawns and sunsets." 14.

" 'Brigg Fair'. . . is music which utters the precise note of blended ardor, naivete, and pastoral romance that is requisite-- music which recalls the meditation of Charles Lamb: "I am in love with the green earth. . . I do not want to be weaned by age, or drop, like mellow fruit, as they say, into the grave. . . Sun, and sky, and breeze, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields. . do these things go out with life?" 15.

Katherine Stanley says,

"The dream-like atmosphere beloved by Delius in no way conflicts with or hinders the free expression of those concepts portrayed in compositions such as 'Brigg Fair,' in which the motif is supported by variations of tone so subtle as to refute finally and for all time any suggestion as to a static quality of thought or treatment on the part of the composer." 16.

13. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, John Lane, London, 1923, P. 127
14. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 82
15. Lawrence Gilman, Two British Composers, Harp. Weekly, Nov. 26, 1910, P. 19
16. K. P. Stanley, Frederick Delius, Musical Opinion, Sept., 1935, P. 1004

Hogarth states that only Delius transplants "the specifically English emotion into the realm of music".

Delius wanted to

"... evoke the subtle overtones of nature by means of an extremely sensitive orchestral palette." 17.

Delius displayed a rich harmonic fluidity and sustained melodic interest in this work introduced by the Liverpool Orchestral Society on January 18, 1908, with Granville Bantock conducting.

"In 1910 'Brigg Fair' had its first Continental performance at the Tonkünstlerfest at Zurich and so great was its success that in that year alone it was played by thirty-six different orchestras in Germany." 18.

Fenby records Delius's reactions to a broadcast of the work by Beecham.

"We heard it to perfection, and only once did it show signs of fading. When the music had ceased, Delius called out, 'Splendid, Thomas'. That is how I want my music to be played. Beecham is the only conductor who has got the hang of it! That was a beautiful performance!" 19.

17. Basil Hogarth, F.D.: A Critical Estimate, Eng. Review, Aug., 1934, P. 156
18. P. Heseltine, Frederick Delius, John Lane, London, 1923, P. 63
19. Erick Fenby, Delius as I Knew Him, Bell & Sons, London, 1936, P. 25

Chapter VI

Sea-Drift

"Sea-Drift", written in 1903 during the "golden period" of Delius, is based on the text from Walt Whitman's "Out of the cradle endlessly rocking". The first performance was given on May 24th, 1906 at the festival of Allgemeiner Deutsche Musikverein at Essen. It was not until 1908 that "Sea-Drift" had its first English performance at the Sheffield Festival under the baton of Sir Henry Wood with Frederick Austin as baritone soloist.

An interesting anecdote is told of a later performance conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Heseltine says,

"Between the last rehearsal and the time fixed for the performance the score vanished- - and such conclusions as can explain the phenomenon may be drawn from the fact that this particular copy has never yet been found. But Beecham, not a whit disconcerted, went ahead with the performance and, in the presence of the composer, gave as fine a rendering of the work as he has ever given with the score in front of him." 1.

Delius's works have been attacked, at times, as lacking in form. Delius states,

". . . take Sea-Drift, which, I think, is one of my best works. 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 my particular musical ideas, and the nature and sequence of the particular poetical ideas of Whitman that appealed to me." 2.

1. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, John Lane, London, 1923, P. 55
2. Eric Fenby, Delius as I Knew Him, Bell & Sons, London, 1936, P. 35-6

Blom says of this,

" . . . (Sea-Drift) has been thoughtlessly described as vague, rhapsodical, shapeless and what not. Nothing could be farther from the truth, though there is some excuse for such views if the approach to the work is made, according to the prevalent critical habit, from the angle of formal analysis. What gives this score its exquisite poise is not so much musical structure, as an extraordinary imaginative grasp of the whole poetic implication of the words. Delius achieves an almost incredible feat of penetration in his treatment of the poem both from within and from without. That is to say, he pierces to the very core of Whitman's meaning while at the same time he paints with the subtlest strokes the outward setting, the grey seascape which makes the soul homesick with its desolate loveliness. He does not proceed in the meticulous manner of the illustrator: it is the mood as a whole which he reproduces, not the particular word-strokes which imperceptibly build up that mood. Thus the heaving bass figure of the opening, which often recurs and also characterizes the close, had better not be interpreted as the surge of waves which first and last accompanies the poet's words; it is rather a symbol for the oppression of the soul by the insoluble riddle of separation following sharply upon companionship - why this day or this moment rather than the next, and why at all? - by the mystery of existence for a measured space, and of extinction or another way of being for the rest of time, and then again the enigma of time itself. 'We two together,' that is the beginning: 'We two together no more,' the end. The words, you observe, are almost the same. The music is nearly the same. A bitter little tragedy is enacted upon an impassive background. Two birds nest together and sing, exulting in their union, not knowing that any other state is possible, until one day the he-bird waits in vain for his mate and finds with heartsick astonishment that it is to be alone. Delius does not dramatize the situation; he does not divide his score into two acts, one glad and one sad. . . . The composer knows, as the poet knew, that the tragedy was as real before it happened, because of the certainty that it must happen. It was only the birds' ignorance that left them blithe, unmixed happiness while it lasted."

Blom continues,

"The expectancy of separation is as sorrowful as the state of separation itself, except for a merciful respite of time. But what is time to one who contemplates the sea? The relics of the past washed ashore in the ever lasting round of the tides will be a few sticks to-day: tomorrow or next day it will be the body of the she-bird. It is

all one to the sea and the universe; the only creature to whom it makes a world of difference will himself drift there soon, and it will be all one again.

Delius rightly assumes this superhuman, or rather superavian standpoint of indifference. He does so not because he is unconcerned with the birds' fate, but because he is prepared for it through foreknowledge. Hence there is no perceptible intensifying of sympathy after the catastrophe. It is at this more apparent than real turning-point especially that Delius shows his profound understanding of the poem. . . . Delius can afford to remain serene because he has no need of woe's outward trappings to make the hearer ache with the consciousness of the eternal sameness of things." 3.

Human sorrow in love and separation is accepted as irresistible. Heseltine says

" . . . in the tragic annihilation of all that life has seemed to offer is found in the end a deeper truth and a more lasting beauty." 4.

In "Sea-Drift" the orchestra opens with a tranquil section of forty-five measures. The wood-winds have descending arpeggiated figures above quiet, sustained chords in the strings. At measure 46 the chorus begins the story with the description, "Once Paumanok, when the lilac scent was in the air and fifth month grass was growing, Up this sea-shore in some briers two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together, and their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown". Here Whitman recalls his childhood on Paumonok (The Indian name for Long Island).

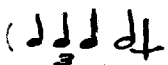
Delius's judgment for appropriate expression is unerring. Either the baritone solo or the chorus tell the poignant story when other means would fail.

3. E. Blom, Delius and America, (in: Musical Quarterly, P. 441-3, 1929)

4. P. Heseltine, Frederick Delius, John Lane, London, 1925, P. 105

Hutchings says

"Delius's aim is not a sea symphony, nor, directly, the evocation of any mood of the sea which affects the on-looker. The positions of man and ocean are reversed. The composer is concerned with a boy's first contact with the drama of separation, his first awareness of the fact of death. . ." 5.

The baritone solo takes up the story of the two birds at measure 74, and at measure 92 displays Delius's concern for the boy- ". . . and every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them cautiously peering, absorbing, translating. . .". Even in this excellent dramatic work, one which maintains a consistently high level, traces of Delius' mannerisms are apparent. However, he is more sparing, almost to the point of austerity, in the use of some of his "favorites". The rhythmic figure () is found in the oboe part in measures 59 and 61, in the English horn and clarinet in measure 63, in clarinet and bassoon in measure 65, and in cello in measure 198. Continuous triplet patterns are found in harp, flute, solo violin and solo cello from measures 65-91, but are part of the background and do not intrude.

As is quite typical of Delius, a slower and softer part leads to a change of mood- - a more animated section at measure 108 in which the chorus sings the glorious "Shine! Shine! Shine! Pour down your warmth great sun!"

S
 shine! shine! shine! Pour down your warmth, great sun! ———
 A
 shine! shine! shine! Pour down your warmth, great sun! ———
 T
 shine! shine! shine! Pour down your warmth, great sun! ———
 B
 shine shine! ——— Pour down your warmth, great sun ———

Another Delius favorite- - the 6/4 time signature- - appears at measure 136. Here the type of accompaniment has also changed.

"Sea-Drift" abounds in excellent wood-wind writing- - especially for the clarinet and bass clarinet. An example is found in the flowing line of the second clarinet over simple chords in the strings.

2
 clar.
 1 & 2
 violins
 viola
 and
 cello

Again at measure 153 Delius portrays a change of mood with two abrupt chords in the strings. The baritone solo portrays a simple pathos in "Till of a sudden, maybe killed, unknown to her mate, one forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest nor returned that afternoon, nor the next, nor ever appeared again."

The more sustained orchestral accompaniment from measures 153-208 comes as a relief to that which preceded. The chorus enters at measure 206 as an integral part of the accompaniment and returns four measures later to the 6/4 rhythm. Here the texture in voices is momentarily canonic. The chorus takes up the chant of the he-bird crying to the wind, "I wait till you blow my mate to me". The baritone is heard again from measures 230-294 narrating the tale of the boy: "I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair listen'd long". The chorus enters at measure 294, echoing the soloist at times and also helping to achieve an emotional atmosphere. The soloist, chorus and orchestra continually build to and reach an effective climax at measure 334. This climax, with its tremendous burst of emotion, is reminiscent of Richard Strauss. Upon hearing some of Delius's music, Strauss is reported to have marveled at the fact that there was someone other than himself writing such excellent music.

The climax is followed by a section marked "slargando e diminuendo molto", the time signature changes, and a

short orchestral passage establishes the mood for the glorious A Cappella section (measures 344-369).

O ri-sing stars, per-haps-the one I want so much

O ri-sing stars, per-haps-the one I want so much

Hutchings states,

"Perhaps the most beautiful part of the work is reached when, without orchestra, the chorus begins 'O rising stars' and the soloist breaks through with 'Shake out carols!' The lines should be quoted to show what a perfect choice this writing was for Delius's music; its recapitulation of imagery, its echoing and rocking to and fro of single words and phrases, are almost a musical technique:

'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!'

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, whether they think they are rid of the older imitative 'development' or not." 6.

6. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949,
P. 107-08

The baritone solo now portrays the anxiety of the bird who is continually seeking and calling his mate; while the chorus with its emotional background, has already accepted the inevitable. The orchestration is light, employing only strings and wood-winds plus the horns. At times Delius limits his scoring to only a few instruments as an accompaniment to the solo. An excellent example is:

Handwritten musical score for three staves:

- Staff 1 (Clarinet):** Treble clef, key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), time signature of 6/4. The notation shows a half note followed by a quarter note, then a half note.
- Staff 2 (Clarinet):** Treble clef, key signature of three flats, time signature of 6/4. The notation shows a half note followed by a quarter note, then a half note.
- Staff 3 (Baritone solo):** Bass clef, key signature of three sharps (F-sharp, C-sharp, G-sharp), time signature of 6/4. The notation shows a half note followed by a quarter note, then a half note. Below the staff, the lyrics "But soft! sink low!" are written.

There is more diversity in rhythm than is usual in Delius. He frequently employs another pattern in which this element is apparent, especially from measures 392-404.

Handwritten musical notation for a Horn part, showing a series of eighth and sixteenth notes.

This melodic design also occurs again later in the cello and horn in measure 442, and in cello and bass in measure 453.

A descending minor or major 2nd interval is prevalent throughout much of the composition. In the section, starting at measure 407, almost the entire orchestral accompaniment consists of the use of this device. In the passionate declaration, "O darkness! O in vain!" the bird finally accepts the inevitable. Delius employs full orchestra, chorus and soloist when building to another tremendous climax in measures 411-12. A dramatic contrast is achieved in the next measure where the bass and timpany alone are heard against the baritone solo, "O I am very sick and sorrowful". This abrupt change of volume is found after almost every climax. The scoring again abounds with the interval of the descending 2nd. At measure 436 a section marked "And ante semplice" appears in a major key (E). Hutchings calls this an emotional recapitulation and says that nothing but this

"could have imbued Delius's ending with the mixture of remembrance, despair and resignation to the words 'O past! O happy life!'" 7.

Heseltine states,

"The soul distracted by doubt, rises in impassioned protest against the unheeding stars, but confronted at every turn by darkness and silence, it sinks down into a

7. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 108

sort of numbness of endurance, and, when all that it has loved and hoped for seems to have fallen away, it rises again to re-create the past, to clothe it in a vesture of imperishable reality." 8.

The opening words-- "Two feather's guests from Alabama, two together"-- in contrast to the last words-- "We two together no more"-- portray the poignancy of grief in "Sea-Drift". There is no sham consolation for this grief. Delius employs the same chords in the last ten measures as he did in the first fourteen measures of the composition. The ending is typical Delian music-- becoming softer and dying away after a long held marked pppp. Heinrich Simon says,

"Almost all of his music opens with a peculiar sense that something is gradually coming into being; his endings almost always die gradually away." 9.

There is a personal character in Delius's scoring of "Sea-Drift". It is rich and colorful but there is also present an apparent restraint in the use of the "luscious harmony" which permeates so much of his music. Someone has said that there is a certain monotony apparent in "Sea-Drift", but "Whitman will have only one mood".

Delius treats the orchestra, chorus and soloist as "organically related members" of the "whole"-- not as

8. Philip Heseltine, Frederick Delius, John Lane, London, 1923, P. 104-5

9. Heinrich Simon, Frederick Delius, (in: Musical Opinion, P. 504, April, 1935)

separate parts. All are skillfully woven into the general scheme. "Sea-Drift" exemplifies the compactness of Delius's thought in the association of music and poetry.

There is no stereotyped form in "Sea-Drift". McKinney and Anderson say that though "Sea-Drift" is rhapsodic it is

"... knit together with surety and freedom of technique, their shape and articulation... evolving from the inside instead of being the result of standardized schemes applied exteriorly." 10.

Fenby quotes Delius as saying:

"Music is an outburst of the soul. It is addressed and should appeal instantly to the soul of the listener. . . . Music, he thought, should be a simple and intimate thing, direct and immediate in its appeal from soul to soul, a thing of instinct rather than of learning, of the heart rather than of the head. It should never be complicated, or, in other words, the intellect should keep its proper place, for with complication music lost its power to move." 11.

Fenby continues,

"It has always been my opinion that Delius had well-nigh perfect sense of form for what he had to say. In his mature works he said things as lucidly and expressively as he could. There is no 'passage-work,' no 'working-out,' no meaningless repetition, and in the sustained intensity of the rhapsodic flow of his music the decorative detail is caught up and transformed into the framework of his own particular sense of architectural design." 12.

10. McKinney & Anderson, Music in History, American Book Co., N.Y., 1940, P. 784

11. Eric Fenby, Delius as I Knew Him, Bell & Sons, London, 1936, P. 197-8

12. Ibid. P. 198-9

Delius's judgment of effect is notable--the music a perfection of lyrical utterance. "Sea-Drift", acclaimed by modern critics as one of Delius's greatest master-works, was one of his tributes to America.

Sea-Drift

- C 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,
- B And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
 And every day the she-bird crouched on her nest, silent,
 (with bright eyes),
 And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never
 disturbing them,
 Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.
- C 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,
- B Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
- C Singing all time, minding no time,
 While we two keep together.
- B 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,
 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.
- C Blow! Blow! Blow!
 Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
 I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.
- B 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 treasured 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.
 C&B interweaving--
 Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
 Following you my brother.
 C Soothe! soothe! soothe!
 Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
 And again another behind embracing and lapping, every
 one close,
 B But my love soothes not me, not me.
 (end of interweaving)
 C Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
 It is lagging--O I think it is heavy with love, with
 love.
 B 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! (Chorus intermingling)
 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.
 C O rising stars!
 Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise
 with some of you.
 C&B simultaneously--
 C 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.
 B 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!
 (end of simultaneous phrase)
 B 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.
 B 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.
 C 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.

B O darkness! O in vain! (Chorus repetitions)
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 throat!
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. *

* C--chorus
B--baritone soloist

Chapter VII

The Music of Delius

The harmonic period in our musical history, which reached its culmination in the works of some of the late romantics such as Mahler, Strauss, Bruckner, Reger, Delius, and the French impressionists, exploited vertical construction. Musical compositions revolved around harmony, with a resulting detriment to rhythm, and, to a certain extent, to polyphony. This is true especially of the music of the impressionists. The chord was exploited for its tonal color. The degree of tension guided the composers' harmonic technique--"novel chord formations" were employed as notes had been previously. This degree of tension also explains the abundance of dissonances and chromatic alterations.

Simon says of Delius's harmonic style,

"His feeling for harmony gives the clue to another element in his form: sound as form. . . . In the case of Delius, it is almost possible to speak of a counterpoint of sound. He assembles blocks of sound, as the masters of polyphony assembled sequences of notes. This entirely in obedience to purely musical demands, and not in order to paint mood pictures or actual happenings." 1.

Possibly Delius, more than any other composer, moved in these blocks of chords. He maintained that harmony, however, was a thing of instinct alone. It was to him a "result rather than a process of expression." His was the homophonic conception of harmony, responsible, to a

1. Heinrich Simon, Frederick Delius, (in: *Musical Opinion*, March 1935, P. 504)

large degree, for the lack of development he displays. As has been stated in earlier chapters, improvisation at the piano was the material source of his music, the melody involved in the harmony.

Delius felt that no "set of theories" could give birth to beautiful music. He would have agreed with Verdi, who wrote:

"I believe in inspiration; you in workmanship. . . I want art in all its manifestations- - not amusement, artifice, system, which is what you prefer. . My backbone is not supple enough for me to yield and deny convictions which are so deeply rooted. If artists could understand the meaning of truth, there would be no longer music of the past and music of the future, realistic and idealistic painters, classical and romantic poetry- - but true poetry, true painting, true music." 2

Delius enjoyed the music of Chopin, Wagner and Grieg, and these three are undoubtedly his "musical ancestors". In the early works the more quiet moods displayed the influence of Grieg. Delius is reported to have extracted chords from the music of Chopin and Grieg. His conception of harmony as a "fluid medium" is also, to a small extent, derived from them. Later works might remind one of textures from the later Wagner. Some critics feel that Delius represents Wagner carried to his last decadence. Delius continues with the new rhapsodic technique exemplified in "Tristan". Some of Wagner's chromaticisms are used also, but Delius does not resolve them. A delight in

2. Eric Fenby, Delius as I knew Him, G. Bell & Sons, London, 1936, P. 210-11

orchestral color might also have been acquired from Wagner. Delius was accepted by the followers of Wagner in Germany before his own country accepted him.

Delius took what he liked from these composers, and guided by instinct and intellect, improvised on the music until he surmounted it and achieved his own musical idiom--one which is readily recognized as pure Delian.

The personal quality in his music is more akin to painting and poetry than to abstract music. Delius's method of composition is very different from that of the "formalists". He is unable to write other than the way he feels, and instinctively he seems to do the better thing almost every time. Delius's way is complete naturalness. There is no self-conscious design. Because of this, his music at times lacks shape, but it is ideally free from the formality to which Delius was so adverse. Mendle says that Delius's form is taken from the "innermost needs of the musical thought or feeling itself". Delius said,

"One can't define form in so many words, but if I was asked I should say that it was nothing more than imparting spiritual unity to one's thoughts. It is contained in the thought itself, not applied as something that already exists." 3

Slonimsky states,

"His style is indefinite, vague, mystical but not strictly modern. He, like other diatonic composers,

3. Eric Fenby, Delius as I Knew Him, Bell & Sons, London, 1936, P. 200

uses parallel progressions, but they have a strong movement toward the tonic or tonal center. Of course, there are many dissonances 'enroute', but they are swept in, as it were, by the general movement." 4.

There is a delicacy in many of his works based on a chromaticism which Delius worked out for himself, which was not influenced by the French models.

There is a diversity of opinion among even well-known critics as to whether Delius should be classified as an impressionist or not. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to decide the question. It is only reported, and to quote a cliché, there is possibly "more than meets the eye". Long quotes have been found a necessity.

Marion Bauer feels that Delius is the last great representative of impressionism. McKinney and Anderson say of Delius,

"No one else, not even Debussy, has made his art so completely suggestive of sensations and emotions without the necessity of the intervention of thought and judgment, has allowed the ear so completely to 'Devour the brain'. What matters with Delius is not technically calculated effect; rather does he strive for illusions and so almost more than any of his generation, he should be called an impressionist." 5.

In contrast to these opinions, Cecil Gray states,

"The music of Delius belongs essentially to the same phase of romanticism as the art of Flaubert, Gauguin, Verlaine, and Baudelaire. They are all alike possessed by the nostalgia of the infinite and the

4. N. Sloninsky, Why Modern Music is Modern, (in: Etude, June, 1931, P. 396)
5. McKinney and Anderson, Music in History, Am. Bk. Co., NY, 1940, P. 804

unappeasable longing for an impossible bliss." 6.

Percy Grainger, who was an intimate friend of Delius writes,

"Delius, in his artistic vision, views the world through eyes that look through the personal into the general, from the actual into the imaginary, through the present into the far past." "Thus when Delius is artistically inspired by a river. . it is not merely a momentary mood, aroused by personal contact with that river that he records in his art-work, but a whole train of thoughts, emotions and imaginings connected with that river, embracing the remote past no less than the present. In other words, he is no 'impressionist' but rather a reflective emotionalist summing up in great richness, in even his smallest works of art, numberless moods, memories, reactions, impressions, sensations." 7.

Another critic, writing for A Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians, calls Delius a retrospective artist whose

". . . emotion is recollected in tranquility" and who therefore is "the reverse of impressionistic. Nature is interpreted not as a series of external phenomena, but rather as an integral part of the soul itself.. Neither in his orchestral works nor in his operas and other compositions constructed upon a poetic basis is there any programme other than a purely spiritual one. Taking his text as a starting point, Delius extracts what is universal from the particular details of his subjects and leaves one wondering at the ways in which minute particulars seem to be contained and individually expressed in an all-embracing synthesis." 8.

Arthur Hutchings, Delius's latest biographer, says that while Debussy and Strauss set out to depict,

6. The Concert Companion, Bagar & Biancolli, Whittlesey House, NY, 1947, P. 219

7. P. Grainger, Glimpses of Genius, (in: Etude, Nov. 1921, P. 707)

8. A Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians, Ed. A. E. Hull, J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1949, P. 178-9

". . . Delius does not set out to depict but to communicate. He is not a painter in sound, despite the titles "Summer Night on the River", "A Song of the High Hills", etc. What he evokes comes incidentally to our minds while we are receiving what he has to communicate. Much of the evocation is done by the listener. . . .

In other words, Delius had the temperament of a mystic, one who uses symbols. It seems strange to stress the religious nature of a man who attacked orthodoxy and institutional religion, and there may be musicians who, responding to the mystical symbolism of Palestrina or Bach, or to the associations of Gregorian chant, are unwilling to call Delius mystical, even though they use the word Cecil Gray applies to his muse- - 'dionysian'."9

Hutchings continues,

"England has been insular in her mysticism." ". . . of nature mystics she claims some of the greatest, in a succession which includes not only poets, although few of her poets have failed to show some streak of nature mysticism. Many an Englishman who may be an orthodox churchman, who may regard as nonsense Wordsworth's theory that contemplation and communion with nature can make a man good, secretly finds granted to him when in quiet communion with nature a revelation which is denied him in the liturgy and symbolism of orthodox practice. Such a man, I believe, was Delius; and such he remained when the tenets of Nietzsche seemed to voice his own ideas." 10

"In Delius, we are aware of 'boundless distance', of a human mind at one with the life in nature, seeking the horizon. Since his attitude to nature was hedonistic, since he followed no discipline of mystical vocation, his expression of 'the boundless' more often takes the form of voluptuous longing for the beyond, than of a Wordsworthian vision of the beyond, but the words of Nietzsche or Whitman made him seek the vision with an aggressive and adventurous masculinity." 11.

We see Delius the visionary in the "Mass of Life", in "Songs of the High Hills" and in his last great

9. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London 1924, P. 116-17

10. Ibid., P. 180

11. Ibid., P. 181-2

"Songs of Farewell".

The epitome of Delius's art is rhapsody, the soaring melody which seems to be derived from his shifting chromatic harmonies. William McNaught states,

"His orchestral and harmonic imagination were one, and from their fusion sprang the very terms of his musical language. It was not a language that lent itself to the articulate phraseology and designs of symphonic music; nor did it promote rhythmic invention as ordinarily understood; and in the setting of words it tended to deny the activities of speech. . . His music is a world in itself, limited when one regards all that is excluded from it, but limitless in its height and depth of visionary effect and suggestion." 12.

Hutchings list of the range of Delius's best music includes:

". . dawn, sunset, the hills, the sea, with humanity as the sapient and feeling crown of nature, the longing of men and women to be always their "higher", more mystical, more dionysian, more clairvoyant selves, their yearning to fulfil their love passions and their craving for beauty, for identity with the strength and glory of creation, together with their mastery of its pain and evil, or as Delius would have said, their longing to be able sincerely to 'yea-say' nature and their own beauty. . ." 13.

Delius has a keen perception of orchestral timbres. There is a personal character in his scoring for orchestra, though his scores were often published with inadequately marked parts. Being an excellent violinist, Delius knew the capabilities of the instrument. In many works Delius employs twelve lines for the strings which follows a method adopted by Wagner, Debussy and Respighi.

12. A. Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 110

13. *Ibid.*, P. 176

It is in the wood-wind writing, however, that Delius really excels. Possibly no other composer writes for wood-winds in a more exquisite or sensitive manner. Delius seemed to have a peculiar intuition in writing for these instruments. The strings and wood-winds are collectively used more by Delius than any other combination. Some of Delius's scores, however, employ an orchestra of "Straussian dimensions", including full orchestra plus unusual instruments such as bass flute, glockenspiel, celesta, drums needing two players, and "full percussion". Even with an orchestra such as this, however, Delius never expresses coarsely any "passing ecstasy".

Delius's writing for full chorus was also excellent. In some works one might classify his use of the chorus as part of his instrumentation- - as a new orchestral color. His greatest work is displayed in the pantheistic choral works.

The defects in Delius's writing might include weakness of rhythmic construction, and lack of development in those selections which require craftsmanship in exterior form (such as sonatas, chamber works, etc.) Certainly Delius chose one of the most difficult mediums for composing- - rhapsodic flight- - one which requires unflagging inspiration. When Delius's inspiration does leave him momentarily he resorts to the use of mannerisms such as the lulling 6/4 or 6/8

passages, or the "sliding chromatics". Every jazz pianist knows the rich sequences of dominant 9th, 11th, and 13th chords which are so prevalent in the music of Delius. However, as Hutchings states, "Delius technique without Delius is a snare, seeming to lose even its characteristic voluptuousness."

Other mannerisms frequently found in Delius's music are the added 6th and 2nd in his chords; the endings, which occasionally seem too prolonged, as if loath to leave the loveliness he has created; and the holding of chords of a quivering texture caused by alternating between notes by different instruments. Against these defects, however, we have Delius's tremulous harmonies and melting discords of delicate sensitive beauty, wealth of imagination, innate refinement, a fluid flowing quality, personal poignancy, "a revelation of the spiritual bond between man and nature" and an illusive quality. Eric Blom writes that Delius has

"an individual flavor that is to be found nowhere else in music and without which music would be vastly poorer, artistry as sensitive as Debussy's, contrivance as distinctive as that of Strauss or Elgar or Sibelius at their best, and an inspiration more consistently on a high level than that of any of these." 14.

A great deal of Delius's music has not been mentioned in this thesis. A complete list of his works is given at the end of this chapter. Probably one of

14. E. Blom, Delius and America, (in: Musical Quarterly, 1929, P. 447)

Delius's most beautiful tone pictures and well-known works is the exquisite "On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring"; "Appalachia", (the old Indian name for Northern America) about which Heseltine says,

"Here the deep impression made on Delius by his life in Florida, which colours many of his early works, finds its mature utterance." "The composition mirrors the moods of tropical nature in the giant swamps bordering on the Mississippi River which is so intimately associated with the life of the old Negro slave population". 15.

The "Mass of Life" for which Delius went to Friedrich Nietzsche's "Ode to the Superman" - - "Thus Spake Zarathustra" - - as Richard Strauss had done also, requires four solo singers, a huge chorus, and a full symphony orchestra. At its United States premiere in January, 1938, Time magazine claimed it one of the outstanding events of the concert season, one "so perfectly formed and climaxed that the listener's interest never lags - - a pretty sure sign, in a piece of that size, that a great musical mind has been at work". 16.

Delius also composed six operas, of which only two have been successful - - "A Village Romeo and Juliet" and "Koanga". "The Magic Fountain", which was to have been performed at Weimar in 1893, was withdrawn by Delius. Hutchings calls this "an almost unparalleled act of self-criticism". A quiet intensity marks "A Village Romeo and Juliet". Cecil Gray writes that its lack of moving

15. P. Heseltine, Frederick Delius, John Lane, London, 1925, P. 125

16. Posthumous Mass, (in Time 31: Jan. 24, 1938, P. 59-60)

climaxes or stirring scenes

"... makes for bad theater; but the quality of Delius's music is so finely sensitized, that the opera remains one of the most moving written since Debussy's 'Pelleas et Melisande'. 17.

Delius's musical materials were eclectic, but many of his works were insular in their utterance. Delius had an English temperament-- "a horror of exaggeration both in art and life". Again we discover disputes concerning whether Delius's music is essentially English or not.

The Yorkshire Post, writing about one of the Delius festivals, said,

"... There is nothing provincial or even specifically English in the art of Delius. It is the glory of music to speak a language common to all Europeans. But environment will tell, and one can trace throughout the history of music in our country a peculiar simplicity, a directness which has persisted through the various schools from Byrd through Purcell to our own day. Sir Edward Elgar is a child of common European tradition, yet he sings in unmistakably English accents, and Dr. Vaughan Williams, also a good European, wears the mantle like a true Englishman. Frederick Delius, though he has not remained uninfluenced by the native strain in him-- witness 'Brigg Fair'--stands a figure apart. . . . Those who are acquainted with even the fringe of his work know how widely he differs from any of his contemporaries here or abroad." 18.

However, the majority of the critics concur with Delius's essential Englishness. Wordsworth's dictum that poetry is "emotion recollected in tranquillity" has often been applied to Delius. Mendle says that

17. Cecil Gray, Music for Millions, Ed. Ewen, Arco, NY., 1944, P. 184

18. Clare Delius, Memories of my Brother, Nicholson & Watson, London, 1935, P. 217-18

behind the outward characteristics of Delius's music there is a remote tranquillity, closer perhaps to the essence of the greatest poetry of Wordsworth than to anything else in art. Basil Hogarth states that in Delius there is an

"... attempt to fix in words the nostalgia of a natural scene, an attempt to recapture something of that pang of almost envious sorrow that stirs the imagination of the Englishman and renders him sensitively aware to the transience of human life." 19.

"Only Delius transplants the specifically English emotion into the realm of music." 20.

Hadow says the characteristics of British music are strength, sanity and tenderness.

"We have our own vision of beauty; a vision of English skies and English woodlands, of Gainsborough and Constable, of Chaucer and Milton and Wordsworth. So far as our music can embody and express this ideal so far will it advance, firmly and confidently, along the lines of its great tradition as a living language." 21.

Hutchings writes that Delius

"... knew the joy of living more than have others. He sings more than they of the transience of beauty, of the sad, sweet landscapes of recollection, because he drank more than they of the earth's beauty and riches." 22.

19. Basil Hogarth, Frederick Delius, (in: English Review 59: Aug., 1934, P. 155

20. Ibid., P. 156

21. Hadow, English Music, Lee & Squire, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1931, P. 174

22. Arthur Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1948, P. 24

However, it is not because Delius

"... evokes a specifically English countryside, that Delius appeals so much to English folk, it is because he has a specifically English vein of mysticism." 23.

Among the English composers, Hutchings thinks that Delius and Elgar are much greater than their contemporaries. (He also feels that Delius was a greater artist than Elgar). They had in common, a "quality of spirituality", a "literary enthusiasm rather than literary taste", they both remained uninfluenced by the "new music" and both were very fortunate in their wives. The two were both mainly self-taught, and had musical idioms which were markedly individual in style. Delius's, however, was the more intensely personal idiom. Of the two, Elgar expanded the traditional methods to a greater extent. Delius made his music so much his own that casual listeners could think him to be without musical ancestry. There is also a genuineness in the art of the two composers, but

"Elgar, though he could be as subtle and delicate as anybody when the occasion demanded it, was on the whole a forthright composer, in whose art there is something positive and decisive. Delius, on the other hand, lived in a world of shifting, evanescent harmonies." 24.

Mendle continues,

23. A. Hutchings, Delius, Macmillan, London, 1949, P. 181

24. Mendle, Three English Masters, (in: Musical Opinion, Dec., 1935, P. 212)

" . . . compared with the elusive, haunting beauty of Delius's melting harmonies, the art of Elgar is, on the whole, much more direct, more positive, more the product of a man who has lived definitely in the world and moved among his fellow-men. . . . (Delius) was a dreamer of dreams, whereas Elgar, if one may use such an expression as applied to a creative musician, was a man of action." 25.

A quality present in three English contemporaries-- Delius, Elgar and Holst-- is a certain mysticism, although Delius is more predominantly and consistently mystical than the other two. Although each of them was intensely individual, their work had its roots in the past. Their originality seemed to be more genuine than that of later composers who made deliberate and conscious efforts to use a new style. Delius was, however, the "most personal, the least derivative of our composers."

Delius had respect rather than admiration for both Elgar and Strauss. Some critics have compared his music with that of Sibelius. There is some of the same "fluidity of form", and rhapsodic tension and an "eclectic musical vocabulary".

Delius's music may have an affinity with that of MacDowell's also. The lyricism of "A Village Romeo and Juliet" is like some of MacDowell's smaller piano pieces. The music seems to have somewhat the same type of atmosphere.

Deems Taylor writes,

" . . . while he has been compared to Debussy in his

25. Mendle, Three English Masters, (in: Musical Opinion Oct., 1935, P. 21

harmonic scheme, he speaks with more clarity, with much less reticence, than the French master. And while there is a certain British austerity about his style that occasionally reminds one of Vaughan Williams, the warmth of his orchestral coloring is much more suggestive of Florida than Yorkshire. In short, he is a cosmopolitan in music. You can't describe him accurately beyond saying that he is Delius." 26.

McKinney and Anderson state

" . . . the passing of this unique figure marks the end of a chapter in music. These works, charged as they are with the sadness of a transitory and evanescent world, give the listener a peculiar sense of finality: for it seems as if with them the spirit of Romance has passed from the world." 27.

Delius was an artist first, then a composer. He listened to the music in him and said vital and beautiful things in a way which was characteristic only of him.

26. Deems Taylor, Of Men and Music, Ch. 8, P. 39

27. McKinney and Anderson, Music in History, American Book Co., N. Y., 1940, P. 808

CATALOGUE OF WORKS

Dramatic Works

Date of
Composition

1890-92	Irmelin
1893	The Magic Fountain
1895-97	Koanga
1900-01	A Village Romeo and Juliet
1902	Margot la Rouge
1908-10	Fennimore and Gerda

Incidental Music

1897	Folkeraadet (Parliament)
1920	Hassan; or the Golden Journey to Samarkand

Choral Works

1902	Appalachia
1903	Sea Drift
1904-05	A Mass of Life
1906-07	Songs of Sunset
1907	On Craig Dhu
1908	Midsummer Song
1911	Wanderer's Song
1911	Arabesk
1911-12	A Song of the High Hills
1914-16	Requiem
1917	To be sung of a summer night on the water
1924	The Splendour falls
1930-32	Songs of Farewell

Voice and Orchestra

1888	Paa Vidderne
1889	Sakuntala
1898	Nachtlid Zarathustras
1907	Cynara
1925	A Late Lark
1930	Idyll: Once I passed through a populous city

Songs

- 1885 Two Brown Eyes
 1888 Five Songs from the Norwegian
 Sluber Song
 The Nightingale
 Summer Eve
 Longing
 Sunset
- 1889-90 Seven Songs from the Norwegian
 Cradle Song
 The Homeward Journey
 Twilight Fancies or Evening Voices
 Minstrels
 Secret Love
 The Bird's Story
- 1891 Song cycle from Tennyson's "Maud"
 Come into the Garden
 Go not, happy day
 I was walking a mile
 Birds in the high-hall garden
 Rivulet crossing my ground
 Three Shelley Lyrics
 Indian Love Song
 Love's Philosophy
 To the Queen of my Heart
- 1895 Two Verlaine Songs
 II pleure dans mon coeur
 Le ciel est par-dessus la toit
- 1897 Seven Songs from the Danish:
 Let Springtime come
 Irmelin Rose
 In the Seraglio Garden
 Silken Shoes
 Wine Roses
 Through the long, long years
 On the seashore
- 1898 Five Songs, including the Nietzsche settings:
 The Wanderer and his Shadow
 The Lone-ganger
 The Wanderer
 With Joy we journey laughing
- 1900 Two songs from the Danish:
 The Violet
 Autumn
- 1901 Black Roses
 1908 The Nightingale has a Lyre of Gold
 1910 La lune blanche
 1913 Hy-Brazil
- 1915 Two songs for a children's album
 Three Songs:
 Spring, the sweet spring
 Daffodils
 So sweet is she

1916 It was a lover and his lass
1919 Avant que tu ne t'en ailles

Chamber Music and Piano Solo

1892 Sonata for violin and piano (unpublished)
1893 String quartet (unpublished)
1896 Romance for 'cello and piano
Romance for violin and piano
1915 Sonata for violin and piano (No. 1)
1916-17 String quartet
1917 Sonata for 'cello and piano
1919 Dance for harpsichord
1924 Sonata for violin and piano (no. 2)
1930 Sonata for violin and piano (No. 3)

Orchestral Works

Concertos:

1890 Legendes (for piano and orchestra)
1906 Concerto for piano and orchestra
1915-16 Double concerto, violin, 'cello and orchestra
1916 Concerto for violin and orchestra
1921 Concerto for 'cello and orchestra

Tone-poems and rhapsodies:

1888 Hiawatha
1892 Sur les cimes
1895 Over the hills and far away
1899 Paris: The song of a great city
1907 Brigg Fair
1908 Fantasy: In a summer garden
A Dance Rhapsody (No. 1)

1911

Life's Dance

1913-14

North Country Sketches:

Autumn: The wind sighs in the trees

Winter Landscape

Dance

The March of Spring--woodlands, meadows
and silent moors

1916

A Dance Rhapsody (No. 2)

1917

Eventyr (Once upon a time)

1918-19

A poem of life and love

1930

A Song of Summer

1932

Irmelin Prelude

Small Orchestra

1912

Two pieces for small orchestra:

On hearing the first Cuckoo in Spring

Summer Night on the River

1915 Short piece for string orchestra
1918 A song before sunrise
1925 Air and Dance, for string orchestra

Miscellaneous

1886 Florida (Suite for orchestra)
1888 Two pieces for orchestra
 Marche caprice
 Schlittenfahrt
 Pastorale, for violin and orchestra
1889 Little Suite for orchestra (March, Berceuse,
 Scherzo, Theme and Variations)
1893 Legend for violin and orchestra
1897 Norwegian Suite for orchestra (incidental
 music to Heiberg's play Folkeraadet)
1925 Caprice and elegy, for 'cello and orchestra

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APPROVED Cecil Burleigh

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