

Department of Music
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A QUEST FOR INNOCENCE

The Music of Frederick Delius - 1885-1900

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of
Frederick
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Summary

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In this study, a close examination of all the music of Delius's first fifteen years of creative work is undertaken for the first time. The author's aim has been to assess the intrinsic qualities of Delius's compositions in this period, while tracing through the works the stages by which his mature style emerged. Much of the music examined is unpublished.

The findings of this research add to the existing body of literature on the development of Delius's style in three principal ways:

(1). It is shown that, even in his earliest works, the composer drew upon personal experiences which had made strong impressions on him as the primary source of his inspiration. Negro folk music, heard in Florida, played a very significant role in his development. His impressions of mountain nature and sunsets are also important.

(2). The influence of other composers is assessed. Although it is known that Chopin, Wagner and Grieg contributed to Delius's technique and style (he freely acknowledged his debt to them), the extent and importance of this influence in releasing and guiding his musical imagination is examined here for the first time. The less well known influence of Richard Strauss is also considered significant.

(3). A large proportion of Delius's music in the 1890s was connected with the twin concepts of longing and innocence. It is with his merging of the two concepts into one around the turn of the century that the period of his finest work commences.

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"I should never think...." - Unpublished letter from Delius to Henry Clews,20 June 1918 (Delius Trust archive).

Plate 4. Aulestad,the home of Bjørnson,Norway's national poet.(This photograph,which recently came to light at Troidhaugen,Grieg's home in Bergen,is reproduced here for the first time).

Plate 5. Halfdan Jebe

"I hope very much...." - Unpublished letter from Jebe to Delius, 24 April 1905 (Delius Trust archive).

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"As soon as I come out...." - Unpublished letter from Delius to Jelka Rosen, 1 October 1897 (Delius Trust archive).



Preface

Over the next few years a complete edition of Delius's works is to be published. The initiative behind this venture has been taken by The Delius Trust, London, in whose archives the bulk of the composer's surviving manuscripts and letters is preserved. With the publication of the Collected Edition (some thirty volumes are planned) a large number of Delius compositions will become widely available for the first time; for, while all his music dating from 1899 and later (his period of creative maturity) have been in print, many of the works of his years of development (1885-1900) have generally been ignored by Delius scholars.

Until relatively recently it had been assumed by writers on Delius that the music of this early period did not merit serious consideration. A few important performances of key works in the composer's development have shown that this attitude is fairly wide of the mark. It is true that the mature Delius style emerged only around the turn of the century: earlier, his music is marred by structural weaknesses and harmonic derivativeness. But the premières in the past few years of his second opera The Magic Fountain (largely due to Robert Threlfall, musical adviser to The Delius Trust) and of the melodrama Paa Vidderne and parts of the tone poem Hiawatha (instigated by the present writer) revealed that, despite their defects, some of the composer's early works lacked nothing in inspiration and imagination. Indeed, there was a large amount of music which was worthy of performance on its own merits - not merely as a curiosity shedding dim light on Delius's mature style.

In this study, a close examination of all of the music of Delius's first fifteen years of creative work is undertaken for the first time. The author's aim has been to assess the intrinsic qualities of Delius's compositions in this period, while tracing through the works the stages by which the mature style emerged.

The findings of this research add to the existing body of literature on the development of Delius's style in three principal ways:

(1). It is shown that, even in his earliest works, the composer drew upon personal experiences which had made strong impressions on him as the primary source of his inspiration. Surprisingly, Negro folk music, heard in Florida, played a very significant role in his development. His impressions of mountain nature and sunsets are also important. Idiomatic features of his music arising from his associations with these experiences, which are present throughout his output, were evident from his earliest compositions.

(2). The influence of other composers is assessed. Although it is known that Chopin, Wagner and Grieg contributed to Delius's technique and style (he freely acknowledged his debt to them), the extent and importance of this influence in releasing and guiding his musical imagination is examined here for the first time. The less well known influence of Richard Strauss is also considered significant.

(3). A large proportion of Delius's music in the 1890s was connected with the twin concepts of longing and innocence. It is with his merging of the two concepts into one around the turn of the century that the period of his finest work commences.

The highly individual, idiosyncratic language in which Delius wrote his mature music is made much easier to understand by an appreciation of his years of development.

A list of the unpublished works of the composer is given after this preface. All of the scores are contained in the archive of The Delius Trust. When these works are described in the text, or extracts quoted, the following information is provided:

- (i) the volume number of the Delius Trust archive which contains the work (Delius Trust is abbreviated to DT);
- (ii) the folio number of the extract. The archivist has numbered each page, with the recto being termed 'a' and the verso 'b'.

The details of unpublished scores are as given in Rachel Lowe: Frederick Delius 1862-1934: A Catalogue of the Music Archive of the Delius Trust, London (London, 1974). In the text this is abbreviated to RL. Two further abbreviations are utilized:

RT Robert Threlfall: A Catalogue of the Compositions of Frederick Delius. Sources and References (London, 1977)

CLL/1 Lionel Carley: Delius: A Life in Letters (Vol.1) (London, 1983). A second and final volume is under preparation.

In accordance with Lionel Carley's practice, no attempt has been made to correct eccentricities of spelling and punctuation in Delius's letters.

Where translations of song texts are quoted, the translator is identified only when the given version of the poem is unpublished.

Grateful acknowledgement of assistance with this thesis is extended to Professor Edward Garden (Head of Music Department, University of Sheffield), who has supervised its preparation, and provided necessary encouragement; to Lionel Carley (archivist to The Delius Trust), whose willingness to exchange ideas, and to provide access to materials, was of inestimable value; to the Delius Trustees, for permission to quote extensively from the music and correspondence in the Trust's archives; to Mr. and Mrs. A. Boyle, whose unfailing support was the best possible assistance; and to Lindis Hallan, for the generous way in which she put her linguistic skills at the disposal of the author.

List of Unpublished Works

[A complete list of all Delius's compositions in the years 1880-1890 is given in Appendix II]

1885

Over the mountains high, song

Zwei bräune Augen, song

Zum Carnival Polka, piano solo (date?)

Lorelei, part-song (date?)

1886

Der Fichtenbaum, song

Oh! Sonnenschein, part-song (date?)

Durch den Wald, part-song (date?)

1887

Sonnenscheinlied, part-song (date?)

Frühlingsanbruch, part-song (date?)

Ave Maria, part-song

1888

Hiawatha, tone poem

Paa Vidderne, melodrama

Hochgebirgsleben, song

Zanoni, incidental music

Suite for violin and orchestra

Rhapsodische Variationen

String Quartet

1889

Sakuntala, for tenor and orchestra

Romance for violin and piano

1890

Petite Suite d'Orchestre

Légendes (Sagen), for piano and orchestra

Four Heine Songs

1. Mit deinen blauen Augen

2. Ein schöner Stern geht auf in meiner Nacht

3. Hör' ich das Liedchen klingen

4. Aus deinen Augen fließen meine Lieder

Paa Vidderne, symphonic poem

1891

Maud, for tenor and orchestra

1. 'Birds in the high Hall-garden'
2. 'I was walking a mile'
3. 'Go not happy day'
4. 'Rivulet crossing my ground'
5. 'Come into the Garden, Maud'

1896

Appalachia, American Rhapsody for Orchestra

Badinage, piano solo (date?)

1897

Piano Concerto (early version)

Folkeraadet, incidental music

1898

Mitternachtslied Zarathustras, for baritone, male chorus and orchestra.

Im Glück wir lachend gingen, song

La Ronde se déroule, symphonic poem

+ + +

Irmelin, opera (1890-2), and The Magic Fountain, opera (1894-5), have been published only in vocal score.

Chapter One

The Formative Years - 1885-1892:

(I) The Individual Voice

Section One - "Alla Negra"

Delius's career began in Florida. He arrived there in March 1884 with the intention of cultivating grapefruit and oranges, but when he left Florida a year and a half later it was in order to become a composer. His experiences there were to become the roots that supported the growth of his powers. While in Florida, Delius nurtured in himself the will to compose, and later, in Europe, his memories of Florida provided constant creative stimulus.

The powerful impression which Solana Grove¹ made upon the twenty-two year old Delius is probably best understood in terms of the extreme contrasts it formed with his earlier life. First of all, Delius was now distanced from the scrutiny of his father and the pressure of obligation. In the three years he had worked for the family firm, his reluctance to pursue his father's trade in wool had soured their relationship and finally made his life almost intolerable:

"I was demoralized when I left Bradford for Florida....you can have no idea of the state of my mind in those days."²

Though still reliant on his father for financial support, Delius was some eighteen days' travel removed from his influence and wrath. He had been released on trust from what he seemed to have regarded as some form of bondage into circumstances where his responsibilities were primarily to himself.

1. Until recent researches revealed the error, the name of Delius's plantation was thought to be Solano Grove. This version of the name is used in older commentaries quoted in this study.

2. Eric Fenby: Delius as I Knew Him (London, 1937), p.164.

If the sense of independence was intoxicating for Delius, it could hardly have been more so than the natural exoticism by which he was surrounded:

"The banks [of the St. John's river] are low and flat, but bordered with a wealth of exquisite foliage to be seen nowhere else upon this continent. One passes for hundreds of miles through a grand forest of cypresses robed in moss and mistletoe; of palms towering gracefully far above the surrounding trees, of palmettoes whose rich trunks gleam in the sun; of swamp, white and black ash, of magnolia, of water oak, of poplar, and of plane-tree....

[The river] affords glimpses of perfect beauty. One ceases to regret hills and mountains, and can hardly imagine ever having thought them necessary, so much do these visions surpass them. It is not grandeur which one finds on the banks of the great stream, it is nature run riot."³

Here was a second area of experience which contrasted violently with Delius's past. Having grown up in a mill town and worked in cities, having taken his recreation on moorlands and mountains, Delius seems to have been overwhelmed by the semi-tropical climate, the luxuriant plant life and the great St. John's river (some four miles wide at Solana Grove). His cottage stood only fifty feet from the bank. In a letter written on a later trip to America he said of Solana Grove:

"[I] am sorry I cannot bring [back] some of the flowers or a piece of the moonlight nights or some of the magnolia blossoms and orange blossoms. The sunsets here are something remarkable and always different varying between the most delicate colours on some nights to the most lurid and ferocious hues on others.... There is a nice little house on the place with a broad verandah facing the St. John's river and standing in the middle of the orange trees."⁴

Comparable to the extreme shifts in Delius's personal responsibilities and daily surroundings was the change in social demands. The middle-class morality of his family, the

3. Edward King: The Great South (New York, 1874), pp. 383-4.

4. Letter from Delius to Jelka Rosen, April 1897. CLL/1, p. 114.

studied ingratiating of the businessman, the social graces and mannered courtesies of the Victorian gentleman - these were more or less valueless currency in his new lifestyle. Much of Delius's daily business and social intercourse on the plantation was with his Negro workers. From the beginning it would seem that he found the character and simple lives of the Negroes refreshing and charming.

The impact of these transformations in his life was undoubtedly powerful. So many of the social and familial pressures which had previously kept him from pursuing a musical career were removed. And as the world of filial duty receded in importance, so was the subjective, poetic life of the self encouraged and flattered in inverse proportion. The choice of a future path was thereby made much easier for Delius:

"Sitting....on the verandah after my evening meal I used to listen to the beautiful singing in 4 part harmony of the negroes in their own quarters at the back of the orange grove. It was quite entrancing...."⁵

"...hearing their singing in such romantic surroundings, it was then and there that I first felt the urge to express myself in music."⁶

It is tempting to read into Delius's description of his decision to become a composer a moment of illumination or, as one commentator has called it, "a kind of ecstatic revelation which may only last for a split second of time."⁷ This image of Delius experiencing a Saul-like revelation of his vocation has been misleading. It was not at Solana Grove

5. Letter from Delius to Elgar, 4 January 1934. Quoted in Lionel Carley and Robert Threlfall: Delius. A Life in Pictures (Oxford, 1977), p.12.

6. Quoted by Eric Fenby, op.cit., p.25.

7. Cecil Gray, Musical Chairs (London, 1948), p.191. His idea of a mystic, revelatory experience has recently been favoured also by Christopher Redwood and Christopher Palmer, the former in his article 'Delius as a Composer of Opera' in A Delius Companion (London, 1976), and the latter in his Delius: Portrait of a Cosmopolitan (London, 1976).

that Delius's wish to devote himself to music was formed: this had long been his heart's desire. Nor was it disclosed to him, in his supposed moment of ecstasy, how he should express himself: the full development of his individual style would take many years. In his months of comparative seclusion, spent - in his reported words - "sitting and gazing at Nature"⁸, the principal outcome was probably Delius's faith in himself. This seems to have been the result of a process of resolution, rather than a flash of revelation.

Delius studied with vigour the basics of composition theory during his stay at Solana Grove. According to Delius, his tutor Thomas Ward (an organist from Jacksonville, three hours downriver) worked him "like a nigger"⁹. One manuscript book which has survived from this time bears witness to rigorous practice in harmony and counterpoint. Two songs, dated 1885 and probably written at Solana Grove, have also survived. They are settings of Scandinavian poems.

In the autumn of 1885 Delius put all notions of citrus farming behind him and moved to Jacksonville and later to Danville, Virginia, as a teacher of music, before returning to Europe in mid-1886 to commence his course at the Leipzig Conservatorium.

Both the timing and the nature of Delius's experiences at Solana Grove were such that, together, their effect on him was life-altering. His confidence in the validity of his emotions and his creative will was established.

+ + +

Delius was probably into his second academic year at Leipzig before the musical potential of his American impressions became clear to him. His first America-inspired work, and his first orchestral score, is the Florida suite, probably dating from September/October 1887. A second American score followed soon afterwards - the tone poem Hiawatha, completed

8. Quoted by Eric Fenby, op.cit., p.164.

9. ibid., p.168.

in January 1888. The Rhapsodische Variationen (September 1888), the now-lost La Quadroone (Rapsodie Floridienne) (1889), and the Légendes variations (1890) for piano solo and orchestra make up an early group of works with American connections. A second group, including the operas The Magic Fountain and Koanga occupied the composer from 1894.

A direct link with his exotic experiences is achieved by Delius in these works through his use of idiomatic musical features characteristic of Negro folk music. Evidence of the influence of Negro music takes two principal forms, one common in early Delius scores, the other a later development: the lively dance, and the a cappella choral song. The dance sections of the Florida suite's first and third movements illustrate the former, while the latter is seen in the songs "Now once in a way" and "He will meet her" in Koanga and "After night has gone" in the Appalachia variations.

Two of Delius's America-inspired compositions, Hiawatha and The Magic Fountain, are based on stories of Red Indian life. It will be seen, however, that Delius had little or no first-hand experience of Indian music. In fact in these works he evidently adapts and transfers to the Indians musical features characteristic of his imitations of Negro music. The bulk of this section, therefore, will be devoted to considering the impact upon Delius's music of the songs and dances he was fortunate enough to witness on or near his plantation.

The Appalachia variations of 1902-3 is the final work with an overt American connection (if those pieces using poetry by Walt Whitman are excepted). However, by the turn of the century Delius had established the personal style in which most of his mature compositions are written, and into this style had been absorbed elements of Negro folk music. In a sense, the sound of Solana Grove echoes on throughout Delius's career. In view of the significance it assumes in his career, the relationship between Negro folk music and Delius's art music should be understood from the outset. Without any precise record of how the music in the precincts of Solana Grove in the 1880s sounded, any attempt to clarify

this special relationship must remain informed speculation. However, drawing upon the aid of Delius's own testimony and source material and literature about the period, it is possible to suggest the forms of folk-expression which filled the evening air at Solana Grove.

Helpful though all these sources are, certain qualifications apply to them which should be kept in mind. Delius's own memories of his stay in Florida are, of course, of great value. But all of his recorded utterances on the subject date from the end of his life, over forty years after he had left Florida. This accounts, perhaps, for the fact that, while it was the Negroes' dances which had been most evident in his early American scores, Delius's recollections are exclusively concerned with a different aspect of Negro expression - the harmonized song - which had preoccupied him in later years. For their part, commentators on Negro music have differed widely in their opinions as to what degree an African musical heritage was extant in Afro-American music. Their arguments may usefully be summarized.

The earliest substantial collection of Negro folk music was that of Allen, Ware and Garrison, Slave Songs of the United States (1867). The editors maintained that many African traditions had survived in the songs and dances to be heard and seen among the American Negroes. Likewise, H.E. Krehbiel, the author of the first far-reaching study of the subject, Afro-American Folksongs (1914) believed that "while their combination into songs took place in [America], the essential elements of [Negro folk-music] came from Africa" (p. ix). In a foreword to The Book of American Negro Spirituals (1925), J.W. Johnson reinforces this viewpoint with his first-hand knowledge of a living oral tradition among Negroes in the late nineteenth century and of the survival of elements of African language. (By a happy coincidence, Johnson's boyhood was spent not far from Solana Grove. He was fourteen years old when Delius arrived in Florida).

Newman I. White's analysis of song texts, American Negro Folk-Songs, appeared in 1928, arriving at the "inevitable conclusion that the Negro spiritual is simply a continuation

and development of the white spiritual"(p.50). What he argued for the texts,George Pullen Jackson also argued for the music in his White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands(1933). These writers see little evidence of surviving African traditions, and suggest rather that the Negroes' particular talents for imitation were turned towards absorbing the Gospel music of the white men and using it to their own ends.

In recent years the pendulum has swung once again and commentators have favoured the opinions of the earliest collectors and scholars that the Negro slaves had adapted their ethnic traditions to the new culture,not abandoned it in favour of the white man's music. The most eloquent advocate of this view has perhaps been Gunther Schuller in his Early Jazz (1968). To his advantage Schuller had at his disposal the first in-depth study to be made of music among African tribes.¹⁰

It was noted above that the influence of Negro music on Delius was manifested in two distinct ways: in a cappella songs,and dances. This general division seems to reflect the two areas of musical expression which Delius heard among the Negroes - "It was mostly religious or gay music".¹¹ For the purposes of clarity it is helpful to maintain this division,and to consider harmony and melody primarily in terms of religious song and rhythm in terms of dance.

Ironically,the characteristic of Negro singing which seems to have made the most abiding impression on Delius was the one which was almost entirely non-Negro in origin: harmony. Schuller points out that African tribes have only a linear concept of harmonization,singing in continuous organum at the third,fourth or fifth. The European vertical harmonization of melody was gradually assimilated by the Negro,but "the particular harmonic choices Negroes made...

10. A.M.Jones:Studies in African Music,two volumes (London, 1959).

11. Quoted in The Daily Telegraph,5 October 1929. Reprinted in Redwood (ed.): A Delius Companion (London,1976),p.42.

were dictated....by their African musical heritage".¹² In the preface to the pioneering Slave Songs of the United States Allen writes:

"There is no singing in parts, as we understand it, and yet no two appear to be singing the same thing; the leading singer starts the words of each verse, often improvising, and the others, who 'base' him, as it is called.... seem to follow their own whim....striking an octave above or below....or hitting some other note that chords, so as to produce the effect of a marvellous complication and variety and yet with the most perfect time and rarely with any discord."¹³.

By the time Delius set foot in Florida the process of assimilation was in an advanced stage - "the native voices, always in harmony, sounded very lovely"¹⁴ - but the resultant harmonic style was evidently something quite peculiar to the Negro:

"Their harmony was not that of the hymn-book... but something far more rich and strange which aroused the enthusiasm of Delius and baffled Tom Ward's attempts to analyse it by any methods known to the theorists."¹⁵

J.W. Johnson describes how the love of harmonic sonorities was common among the Negro youth in Jacksonville at the time Delius was a frequent visitor and lived a few miles upriver:

"When I was a very small boy one of my greatest pleasures was going to concerts and hearing the crack quartets made up of waiters in the Jacksonville hotels sing....[E]very barber shop had its quartet, and the men spent their leisure time playing on the guitar - not banjo, mind you - and 'harmonizing'. I have witnessed some of these explorations in the field of harmony and the scenes of hilarity and back-slapping when a new and peculiarly rich chord was discovered. There would be demands for repetitions, and cries of 'Hold it! Hold it!' until it was firmly mastered."¹⁶

12. Gunther Schuller; Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development (New York, 1968), p. 39.

13. Allen, Ware and Garrison, op.cit., p. v.

14. Delius in The Daily Telegraph

15. Philip Heseltine; Frederick Delius (London, 1923), pp. 20-21.

16. Johnson, op.cit., pp. 35-6.

The harmonization of songs which Delius heard was probably based on a simple scheme. The typical blues progression of I - IV - I - V - I is, according to Schuller, the inevitable outcome of the meeting between European harmony and the linear fourth and fifth organum of African origin.¹⁷ But the linear style which improvising Negro part-singers adopted in finding their way between these primary chord harmonic pillars was probably very fluid, and would have produced incidental combinations of tones which sounded exotic to the European ear.

On the subject of the Negro melodies Delius heard, no first-hand reminiscence has been recorded, but Delius's sister has indicated that he may have been familiar with a sizeable body of such melodies:

"....when Fred was not playing the piano or engaged in the study of counterpoint, he spent most of his time on the river in his boat, accompanied by his old nigger servant, whose duty it was to play to him on the banjo some of the old slave songs."¹⁸

The sister-in-law of this servant has also reported that Delius took an interest in the songs they knew:

"I was nothin' but a child, hardly, when we sing to him first....I disremember what I sang to him except the hymns....It was Albert mostly he wanted to hear."¹⁹

"African melody tends to emphasize pentatonism",²⁰ writes Schuller. In the convergence between African and American musical cultures it was no doubt melody which caused least friction, for a pentatonic tradition might both survive alongside a diatonic tradition and also be easily expanded into an eight-note scale. Of a survey of 527 songs in various collections, Krehbiel discovered that 1 in 5 Negro melodies was built on a pentatonic series.²¹

17. Schuller, op.cit., pp.42-3.

18. Clare Delius: Frederick Delius (London, 1935), p.76.

19. Quoted in Gloria Jahoda: The Other Florida (New York, 1967), pp.266-7.

20. Schuller, op.cit., p.44.

21. Krehbiel, op.cit., pp.43 and 73.

Certain other melodic features of African origin baffled early collectors of Afro-American songs:

"....what makes it all the harder to unravel a melody out of this strange network is that, like birds, [the Negroes] seem not infrequently to strike sounds that cannot be precisely represented by the gamut."²²

"....tones are frequently employed which we have no musical character to represent. Such, for example, is that which I have indicated as nearly as possible by the flat seventh."²³

The partially flattened seventh in Negro song, and its common counterpart, the partially flattened third, seemed "wild notes" (Krehbiel's phrase) to ears accustomed to diatonic intervals. In due course they would be written and sung as chromatically flattened thirds and sevenths; they have also gained the general title of blue notes. Schuller's researches into early jazz lead him to advance the theory that a 'blues scale' had been in existence since before the Civil War (1861-1865). The scale was an eight-note series, the division of which into two identical tetrachords "stems directly from (1) the quartal and quintal 'harmony' of African singing, and (2) the tendency of African melodies to shift around a central tone"²⁴:



22. Allen, Ware and Garrison, op.cit., p.v.

23. Thomas Fenner, quoted by Schuller, op.cit., pp.50-51.

24. Schuller, ibid., p.44.

It is likely, then, that the songs Delius heard were hymns, with simple melodic lines. American Negro spirituals appearing in well-known collections probably give a fair indication of the type of melody. Flattened thirds and sevenths, a tendency to approach the key-note from a tone a minor third lower (as in the blues scale), as well as pentatonic colouration were probable melodic elements of the singing.

The characteristics of Negro song would show their most obvious influence on the music of Delius in the second group of America-inspired works, which appeared between 1896 and 1903. Especially when turning his hand to writing the Negro opera Koanga, he allowed his knowledge of their music to pervade his music:

"It will make a strange effect on the stage - .
I am keeping the whole in the character of
the negro melody."²⁵

The works of this group are discussed in chapter five.

Previously, it had not been in song so much as in dance that Delius's experience of Negro music had found an outlet in his own writing. Dance elements continue to be an important feature of his later American scores, though gradually Delius would give prominence to the melodic/harmonic parameters of his language at the expense of rhythmic considerations. Nevertheless, the Negro dance was undoubtedly a primary catalyst in Delius's transition from music-enthusiast to totally committed composer.

The most common Negro dance form, widespread among the Southern states in the mid-1800s, gained the name ring shout - the 'shout' being the type of dance, not a reference to a particular use of the voice. Although the 'shout' came to be banned by clergymen and had already disappeared by the end of the century, Johnson remembers it thriving in Florida in his childhood (and therefore in the period of Delius's stay there).²⁶

25. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 9 February 1896. CLL/1, p.98.

26. Johnson, op.cit., p.33.

The following description of the dance is quoted by Krehbiel:

"....the true 'shout' takes place on Sundays, or on 'praise' nights through the week, and either in the praise-house or in some cabin in which a regular religious meeting has been held. Very likely more than half the population of a plantation is gathered together.... [A]t regular intervals one hears the elder 'deaconing' a hymnbook hymn, which is sung two lines at a time and whose wailing cadences, borne on the night air, are indescribably melancholy.

But the benches are pushed back to the wall when the formal meeting is over, and old and young, men and women.... all stand up in the middle of the floor, and when the 'sperichil' is struck up begin first walking and by and by shuffling around, one after the other, in a ring. The foot is hardly taken from the floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching motion which agitates the entire shouter and soon brings out streams of perspiration. Sometimes they dance silently, sometimes as they shuffle they sing the chorus of the spiritual, and sometimes the song itself is also sung by the dancers. But more frequently a band, composed of some of the best singers and of tired shouters, stand at the side of the room to 'base' the others, singing the body of the song and clapping their hands together or on the knees. Song and dance are alike extremely energetic, and often, when the shout lasts into the middle of the night, the monotonous thud, thud of the feet prevents sleep within half a mile of the praise-house."²⁷

Johnson can add that the foot which beats the rhythm does so to "a decided accent in strict two-four time."²⁸

Examples 1 and 2 come from two shouts notated around 1910 by Lydia Parrish and published in Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands.²⁹ These convey some impression of the rhythmic impulsion of the dance.

27. From The Nation, 30 May 1867. Reprinted in Krehbiel, op. cit., p. 33.

28. Johnson, op. cit., p. 33.

29. Lydia Parrish: Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands (Pennsylvania, 1942).

Ex.1. From 'Do Remember',
Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands, p.230.

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It contains the melody with lyrics: "me. Do re-mem-ber" in the first measure, "Do re-mem-ber" in the second, and "Do re-mem-ber" in the third. The middle staff is also a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, containing the lyrics: "me." in the first measure, "Do re-mem-ber me" in the second, and "Do re-mem-ber" in the third. The bottom staff is a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, containing the lyrics: "me." in the first measure, "Do re-mem-ber me" in the second, and "Do re-mem-ber" in the third. Below the staves are three systems of rhythmic notation, each consisting of three staves with notes and rests, indicating the timing of the lyrics.

The second system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It contains the melody with lyrics: "Do re-mem-ber" in the first measure, "Do re-mem-ber" in the second, and "Do re-mem-ber" in the third. The middle staff is also a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, containing the lyrics: "me" in the first measure, "Do re-mem-ber me" in the second, and "Do re-mem-ber" in the third. The bottom staff is a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, containing the lyrics: "me" in the first measure, "Do re-mem-ber me" in the second, and "Do re-mem-ber" in the third. Below the staves are three systems of rhythmic notation, each consisting of three staves with notes and rests, indicating the timing of the lyrics.

Ex.2. From 'Ha'k 'e Angels',

Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands, p.60.

win-dah Oh
Ha'k e an-gels

Lord Look out de win-dah Oh
Ha'k e an-gels

win-dah Oh
Ha'k e an-gels

The first system of the musical score consists of three measures. Each measure has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first measure contains the lyrics 'win-dah Oh' and 'Ha'k e an-gels'. The second measure contains 'Lord Look out de win-dah Oh' and 'Ha'k e an-gels'. The third measure contains 'win-dah Oh' and 'Ha'k e an-gels'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern with a melodic line that moves in parallel motion with the vocal line.

Lord Call my moth-er Oh
Ha'k e an-gels

Lord Call my moth-er Oh
Ha'k e an-gels

The second system of the musical score consists of two measures. Each measure has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The first measure contains the lyrics 'Lord Call my moth-er Oh' and 'Ha'k e an-gels'. The second measure contains 'Lord Call my moth-er Oh' and 'Ha'k e an-gels'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note pattern and melodic line as in the first system.

Lord Throw off de co-vah Oh
Ha'k e an-gels

Lord Throw off de co-vah Oh
Ha'k e an-gels

The third system of the musical score consists of two measures. Each measure has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The first measure contains the lyrics 'Lord Throw off de co-vah Oh' and 'Ha'k e an-gels'. The second measure contains 'Lord Throw off de co-vah Oh' and 'Ha'k e an-gels'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note pattern and melodic line as in the previous systems. A 'cresc.' marking is present below the piano accompaniment in the second measure, and a fermata is placed over the final notes of the piano accompaniment in the second measure.

Schuller points out that the rhythmic complexity of African drumming, which was "wholly contrapuntal and basically conceived in terms of polymetric and polyrhythmic time relationships",³⁰ was still evident in Afro-American music.

One minor rhythmic characteristic of Negro music, but one which is universal among varying forms of expression, is the so-called 'Scotch snap' (♩♩. or equivalent). It is possible that the slaves learnt this from Scottish singers, for many indentured men had been sent to work in North Carolina and Virginia after the Jacobite uprising.³¹ Krehbiel, however, attributes it to a peculiarity of African speech-patterns.³²

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Delius arrived in Leipzig in early August 1886, to commence what he expected to be a three-year course at the Conservatorium. The first year seems to have been devoted to absorbing what might be learnt from "6 hours a day Composition & Bach".³³ The handful of songs which has survived from this period is perhaps the outcome of his student exercises. Not before late in 1887, after Delius had begun his second academic year, does he venture to compose for the orchestra, encouraged by his tutor:

"I was working at the time with Hans Sitt at orchestration and was working at an orchestral suite, which I called 'Florida', and it was arranged that it should be played at a rehearsal of a military orchestra in the coming spring."³⁴

30. Schuller, op.cit., p.11.

31. See White, op.cit., p.22.

32. Krehbiel, op.cit., pp.92-5.

33. Letter from Delius to Gertrude Rueckert, 11 December 1886. CLL/1, p.9.

34. Delius: 'Recollections of Grieg'. Given in Appendix IV of CLL/1, p.395.

In the manuscript the suite has the sub-title Tropische Scenen für Orchester, and the four movements are as follows:

<u>Manuscript</u>	<u>Published score</u>
1. Tages Anbruch	Daybreak
2. Am Fluss	By the River
3. Sonnenuntergang - Bei der Plantage	Sunset
4. Nachts	At Night

The original third movement is no longer extant, all but the first and last pages of it having been removed from the manuscript. The missing pages were perhaps taken out in 1889 when Delius revised all or part of the suite. Of these revisions, however, only that of the third movement has survived, and thus it is incorporated into the published score alongside the other three original versions.³⁵ The manuscript of the revised third movement bears the French title Le coucher du Soleil and the sub-heading Auprès de la Plantation (Danse des Nègres).³⁶

Delius took a positive and bold step in his early career with his first orchestral score, filling its pages with exuberant and strongly individual music. It is a significant achievement, not merely because - as Beecham points out - "there is little in it for hardly any composer under thirty years of age to be ashamed of",³⁷ but more because it is the product of a composer completely inexperienced in writing for the orchestra. In the succeeding years of his creative development Delius would write many works which have since been rarely performed, if at all. In his first orchestral work Delius captures a charm which has remained fresh and preserved for the suite a place in the concert repertoire.

35. It is likely that this updating mostly affected the original orchestral writing: "It was clumsily done with many unnecessary orchestral brutalities in it." (Letter from Delius to Grieg, June 1889. CLL/1, p.42).

36. These manuscripts are described by Robert Threlfall in 'Delius Music Manuscripts in Australia', Studies in Music, (1973), pp.69-76.

37. Thomas Beecham: Frederick Delius (London, 1959), p.38.

Ex.4. Florida, 1st movement, 6 bars before fig.5.

The image shows a page of a musical score for the first movement of 'Florida'. It is a full orchestral score with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are: Picc (Piccolo), Fls I & II (Flutes), Obs (Oboes), Cls I & II (Clarinets), Bsns (Bassoons), Hns I & II (Horns), Trbns I & II (Trombones), Timp (Timpani), Harp (Harp), Vln. I & II (Violins), Vla (Viola), Cello, and B. B. (Double Bass). The score consists of 6 bars of music, with various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The folk-like simplicity of a pentatonic series is implied by these patterns, which are, however, no more than figuration on a wholly diatonic foundation. (While the sub-mediante tone is prominent in each of these melodic motifs, it is not introduced into the supporting harmony. It will be seen in section three of this chapter that the added sixth is employed by Delius within well-defined and narrow limits). This colouration is spread throughout the score, but the dance sections of the first and third movements can be regarded as concentrations of ideas influenced by Negro music.

The heavily syncopated rhythm which announces the 'Allegretto' of the first movement ($\frac{2}{4}$ $\text{♩} \text{♩}$ | $\text{♩} \text{♩}$) is present in all but 21 of the dance's 223 bars. A relentless momentum is thus sustained, and by the addition of motifs of shorter note-values to this basic cell, a climax accumulates in stages:

(A) Principal melody presented (fig.6):

Ex.5.

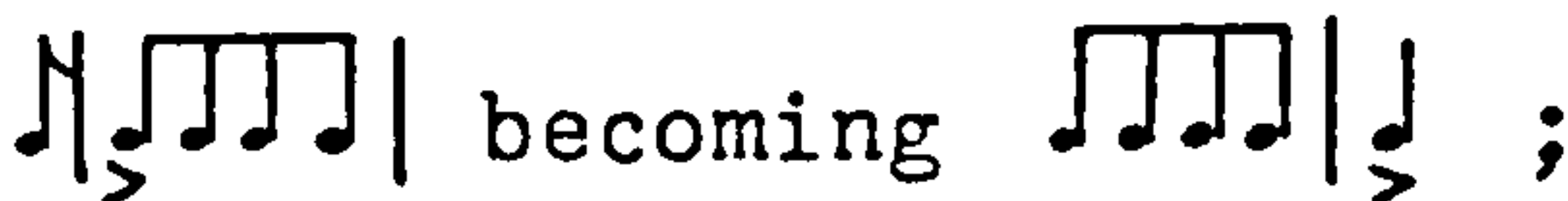

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system is for Violin (vi.) and Cello/Double Bass (Cb.). The violin part starts with a p dynamic and a $>$ accent, playing a syncopated melody. The cello part starts with a pp dynamic and a $>$ accent, playing a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system continues the same parts, with the violin part reaching a $tr.$ (trill) and the cello part continuing its accompaniment.

- (B) Principal melody combined with semiquaver runs (7 bars after fig.9);
- (C) Semiquaver triplets combined with leaping dotted-note figure (7 bars after fig.10);
- (D) Central climax, with entry of trombones (4 bars after fig.12).

It seems likely that Delius has written here a highly stylized 'shout', employing its principles of a pounding, relentless syncopated rhythm, and cumulative rhythmic tension impelling a frenzied climax. It may also be recalled that a 'shout' in Delius's neighbourhood was performed, according to Johnson, with one foot beating "a decided accent in strict two-four time".

The compulsive gaiety and impulsive rhythms of the dance have made it one of Delius's most popular pieces, although it is most widely known under the title La Calinda and in a slightly altered version. The circumstances behind the belated christening are worth noting. Delius's opera Koanga, written in 1896-7, was based on George W. Cable's story of life on a Louisiana plantation, The Grandissimes (1880). For the marriage ceremony of the Negro slave Koanga in Act II, Delius

Concentrated into these opening bars are most of the idiomatic elements of Negro music which attracted Delius:

- a. quasi-pentatonic melody; with the exception of
- b. a flattened third, a stylization of the Negroes' 'blue' note (see also ex.7, bar 5);
- c. the melodic progression dom. - submed. - tonic;
- d. 'Scotch snap';
- e. rhythmic ostinati - in this instance Delius seems to have imitated the strumming sound of a plucked banjo or guitar; and
- f. alternating rhythms,  becoming  ;
in his extension of the theme Delius revels in playful syncopations:

Ex.7. 4 bars after fig.4 (strings only),



In common with the earlier dance, this 'Danza' is carried by its rhythmic impulse to a powerful climax. From the second stage of the build-up ('Più animato', fig.5) the rhythmic cells of the first movement are also called into play.

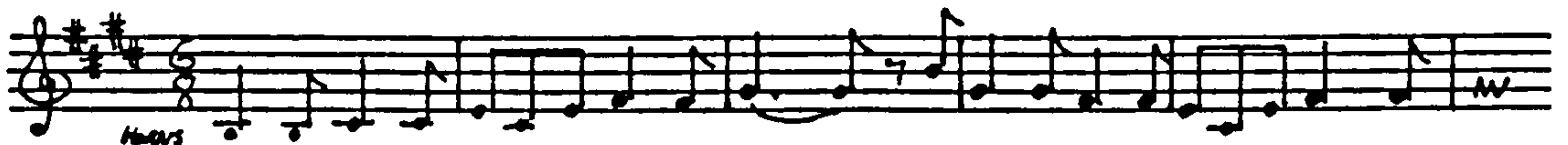
The process of assimilating these characteristics of Negro folk music into his language had already reached an important stage in 1888, a year after Florida, when Delius wrote his Rhapsodische Variationen.³⁹ His first essay in a form in which he would later write several of his finest works is rather half-hearted. Composed in September 1888

39. Unpublished. DT vol.3 (RL p.25).

during a holiday in St.Malo,these variations have in several ways the appearance of an exercise or first draft: the theme is declared immediately in octaves by horn and trumpet,and is not otherwise harmonized or accompanied; all six complete variations remain anchored to the key of E major; there are frequent signs of unchecked work; the longest variation has 46 bars,and the shortest only 16; the work is incomplete, sketches for the 7th variation evaporating after 6 bars. Within these severely restricted parameters of length and tonality,the last thing these variations were likely to be was rhapsodic. It is probable that Delius applies the title in the sense that he uses the theme with considerable licence,in some variations employing it more 'in spirit than in letter'.

The Rhapsodische Variationen are of interest because they show a deliberate attempt by Delius to import a Floridian flavour into an otherwise conventional formal model and abstract context. He chooses to write his variations on a theme into which he has injected elements of the Negro folk idiom:

Ex.8. Rhapsodische Variationen,theme.



The quasi-pentatonic pattern of the melody,and especially the opening progression,are features familiar from Florida.

The degree to which the pentatonic shadings of the melody are allowed to dominate the tiny movements differs from variation to variation.The free manner in which Delius treats his theme is not unconnected with the fact that the melody is - for all its pentatonism - undistinguished and unyielding. However,at those moments when the theme is graced with a lively rhythmic impulsion,the smiling idiom of Florida charms briefly again. In this respect,the shortest movement,variation 3,is the most notable. The theme of this playful dance is in octaves in the four upper strings,while the trombones carry the harmony. And over the music Delius writes the extraordinary,if appropriate,instruction - 'Alla Negra':

Ex.9. Theme of var.3, f.58b.



The notion of a 'rhapsody' composition embodying impressions of his American experiences - in particular what he considered to be the many contrasts in the Negro character - was to stay with Delius for a decade and a half. In a foreword to the work which represents the culmination of his efforts in this direction, the Appalachia variations (1902-3), Delius writes:

"The composition describes the natural coloring of the distant tropical districts of the powerful Mississippi-River, which is so intimately connected with the fate of the negro-slaves. Longing melancholy, an intense love for nature, as well as the childlike humour and a native delight of dancing and singing are still to the present time the most characteristic qualities of this race."

The America/Negro rhapsody idea seems to have given rise in 1889 (the year after Rhapsodische Variationen) to La Quadroone (Rapsodie Floridienne). This work has unfortunately not survived.⁴⁰ In 1890 the variations experiment was tried out again - in Légendes for solo piano and orchestra.⁴¹ This work, like the Rhapsodische Variationen, exists only in an incomplete draft. One of the variations which is relatively fully worked out employs a pentatonic 'alla Negra' variant of the theme (see p. 123).

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40. For further information on this work, see RT p.128.

41. Unpublished. DT vol.39 (RL p.138-9).

"Ye who love the haunts of Nature
Love the sunshine of the meadow,
Love the shadow of the forest,
Love the wind among the branches,
And the rain-shower and the snow-storm,
And the rushing of great rivers
Through their palisades of pine-trees,
And the thunder in the mountains,
Whose innumerable echoes
Flap like eagles in their eyries;-"

This stirring, open-ended invocation,⁴² extracted from Longfellow's 'Introduction' to his set of poems The Song of Hiawatha (1855), stands on the title-page of Delius's tone poem Hiawatha. Dated January 1888 on the manuscript, the work was probably begun shortly after the completion of the Florida suite, and before the informal performance of the suite mentioned above (see p.15).⁴³

The idiomatic elements Delius uses to achieve ethnic character in the two scores are strikingly similar. Although, in Hiawatha, such alterations and extensions are made to the elements of the earlier score influenced by Negro music that Delius's Negro plantation and Indian reservation are usually distinguishable, these changes are insignificant in comparison with the common ground shared by the works.

On the melodic side it will be recalled that the influence of folk music had been evident in three main ways: in the pentatonic basis of themes and motifs, the frequency of the melodic motif dom. - submed. - tonic, and the occasional colouration of the melody with flattened thirds. The melodies given in Table I (p.25) represent the main thematic content of Hiawatha. It will be seen that themes (a) to (d) derive their melodic character from the predominance of notes in

42. The following two lines of the poem are as follows:

"Listen to these wild traditions,
To this Song of Hiawatha!"

43. Hiawatha is unpublished. DT vol.1 (RL pp.17-19). Unfortunately, some pages of the manuscript have been lost. The composer numbered the pages, so it is possible to assess the extent of the missing material.

Table I Thematic material of Hiawatha

(a) f.1b *Lento, molto tranquillo*
VLN.
 VIOLA, MOEN
p

(b) f.5a
(con vigore)
f CELLO

(c) f.11a
Andante con molto espressione
 OBOE *mp*

(d) f.26a
 OBOE *mp dolce*
p MOEN

(e) f.17a
 FL. + 9th
p BASO
 PIZZ. OBOE/BASS

pentatonic patterns. The cantilena oboe theme (d) floats down to Delius's common motif, to be echoed by a solo horn. These three notes are repeated in several guises in this section of the tone poem. Most interesting of all is (c), one of the most attractive themes in Delius's early music.⁴⁴ It is confined to the five notes G - A - C - D - E, with one additional Bb. This tone is the common Negro 'blue' note alteration to the seventh. The wide-ranging, eminently vocal melody is like some spontaneous, improvised song Delius might have heard on the evening air at Solana Grove.

On the rhythmic side, the 'Scotch snap' is in evidence also in Hiawatha, as are rhythmic ostinati, both in flowing multiple patterns, as at (a), and in impulsive syncopations, as at (e). The similarities to the dances in Florida do not end with the use of the Calinda rhythm here. As earlier, a climax is achieved in this Indian war dance by degrees, with momentum accumulating from a combination of driving rhythms and the gradual use of quicker note values.

Delius's ethnic Indian writing differs from his Negro music principally in its character. The exuberant, often humorous, music which gives Florida its special charm has given way to more sober themes. In themes (a) and (b) the composer has evoked a sense of grandness and nobility. Theme (a) comes at the opening of the tone poem, where Delius has probably intended a musical depiction of an Indian campfire meeting, with the low chanting of assembled braves represented by the slowly swelling pentatonic melody. Indeed, when he composed the music for just such a scene in his Red Indian opera The Magic Fountain, he hit upon a similarly sustained, brooding pentatonic theme (see p. 225, ex. 1). In keeping with the noble seriousness of his Indians, Delius makes little use of the cross-rhythms which enliven Florida.

44. This theme reappears in the orchestral work Paris, some ten years later (2 bars after fig. 13).

Delius may actually have heard the music of the Indians while in America, since he did have some contact with them:

"Though there were no Red Indians living near Solano, he spoke to several of them in other parts and was struck by their extreme courtesy and good breeding. If left alone, he always declared, the Redskin would be a gentleman."⁴⁵

It is prudent, therefore, to note that there is some historical justification for the common ground in the music of Delius's Indians and Negroes. The ritual music of the many North American tribes varies greatly, but, if Delius had witnessed a performance he might have heard that "[s]cales are most frequently tetratonic, pentatonic or hexatonic".⁴⁶ As well as the modal similarity between Indian and Negro music, both also favour continuous percussive rhythms in accompaniment to their singing. Beyond this point, however, Delius's stylizations can not be said to bear any relation to traditional Indian music, lacking its characteristic descending melodic contour, primitive simplicity, and monophony. The syncopation of the dance section in Hiawatha is essentially dissimilar to the equispaced rhythmic formulae universally employed by Indian tribes.

In other words, in his Indian music Delius was probably much more dependent on the popular idea of what constituted the ethnic idiom than he was in his Negro music, and, indeed, thought it valid to extend his stylized Negro features to Hiawatha. In doing so, and masking them in Indian nobility, he doesn't fail to create a sense of ethnic colour. But it is much more in keeping with a stereotypical image of Indian culture (probably that of popular literature and music-hall parody) than with the historical reality.

Although his musical characterizations of the Indian and the Negro are technically very similar, the fact that Delius had a personal relationship with one of the groups and not the other gains in importance in his career. Delius's

45. Clare Delius, op.cit., pp.72-3.

46. Bruno Nettl and Gertrude Prokosch: entry on Indian music in The New Grove Dictionary of Music (London, 1980), vol.13, p.298.

version of the Indian, based on character stereotype and drawn from a 'pool' of ethnic musical formulae, had little potential for development. His attempt to write an opera based on Indian life would prove only partly successful. The Indians play, in the end, only a subsidiary part in The Magic Fountain and their characterization often approaches the border line with parody. (It is in The Magic Fountain, incidentally, that the small differences Delius had made in delineating Negro and Indian actually vanish. An Indian war dance in Act II reaches its culmination when Delius transfers to it, of all things, part of the 'Danza' - the "noisy nigger dance" - of the Florida suite).

Delius's personal understanding of, sympathies with and admiration for the Negroes were, on the other hand, to have a very positive influence on his creative development. He attempted to emulate and assimilate the musical style he had heard, both its folk charm and exotic harmonic procedures. The depth and range of the Negro personality, with which he considered himself intimately acquainted, was the subject of two orchestral works and an opera later in his development period.

The full effect of this influence would only slowly become evident. That Delius, already in his earliest scores, had achieved an eminently workable synthesis of Negro and European music may, therefore, seem surprising. It is probable, however, that Delius was enamoured of the folk-simplicity of Negro music before he arrived in Florida. Just like the Indian, the Negro was a stock music-hall character. As a child Delius had enjoyed imitating the shows given by touring companies of American and American-styled minstrels. Though Negro caricature was their trademark, these shows did trace their heritage back to the Southern plantations. (It was a heritage derived more from idiosyncrasies of dialect and behaviour than musical traditions, for the actual musical content of the minstrel show was based on the forms and styles of the nineteenth century drawing-room ballad and music-hall

song).⁴⁷ Delius would also have been familiar with the folk music of Scotland and Ireland, which shared with Afro-American music not only pentatonic melody and the 'Scotch snap', but also an underlying tendency towards wistfulness. This would partly account for the fact that, once Delius had accepted the challenge in his Leipzig period of combining ethnic colour and a European technique, he revealed a striking facility in adapting exotic music to his own needs.

That the fiction of Negro parody disposed Delius favourably to Negroes in advance, does not invalidate the overawing experience of the Negro reality at Solana Grove. Delius was profoundly affected. Pentatonic colouration and other Negro music traits became, therefore, genuine means of self-expression; they reflected fundamental sympathies. Works by Delius influenced by Negro music never suggest minstrelsy.

The beauty inherent in Delius's synthesis is well illustrated by the fluid $\frac{12}{8}$ section which follows the dance in Hiawatha. The thematic material and accompanying string arabesques are tinted with pentatonic colour - enough to lend this most ornate passage of Delius's early career an air of artless innocence (ex.10, p.30).

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The period Delius spent at Solana Grove, it was noted above, has commonly been regarded in a highly romantic light - it was then that the composer, through contact with the Exotic and Primitive, is supposed to have had a moment of illumination, an artistic ecstasy. Delius established this image of his experiences there in the nostalgic reminiscences he was increasingly given to voicing in his later years. It has since been enlarged upon by those commentators whose criticism has perhaps tended towards the sensational or sentimental.

47. Surveys of the history of minstrelsy can be found in Dailey Paskman: Gentlemen, Be Seated! (New York, 1976), and Richard Jackson (ed.): Popular Songs of Nineteenth-Century America (New York, 1976).

Ex.10. Hiawatha, copyists MS corresponding to
f.27a (bar 4) - f.27b (bar 3) of original MS.

Handwritten musical score for Hiawatha, measures 4-6. The score is arranged in a system of staves for various instruments and voices. The instruments listed on the left are: FL., 2/3 FL., CLAR., BSN., 1/2 HNS., 3/4 TRPS., 1/2 TRNS., TRUMP/TUBA, HARP, V.1, V.2, VLA., CELL., and BASS. The music is written in a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as *pp* and *mf*. There are also some handwritten annotations and corrections in the score, including the number '12072' in the top right corner. The score is divided into three measures by vertical bar lines.

The facts of life at Solana Grove were, no doubt, much less idyllic and perfect than they have subsequently been pictured, and the young composer was far from tardy in leaving the place behind him. William Randel, an authority on Delius's Florida years, writes:

"But something made Fritz quite willing to leave what may have seemed an earthly paradise....When we recall that he abandoned an attractive cottage with a new piano inside and an exciting vista outside, we may well wonder about the reason. It would not have been mere wanderlust....Likeliest of all was a determination to make his own way, and to free himself from the constant pall of his father's financial tyranny."⁴⁸

Earthly paradise? In a letter many years later Delius - in a practical frame of mind - gave further clues as to his reason for leaving. Philip Heseltine had written to him in November 1915 on behalf of D.H. Lawrence, who wished to spend the winter in Florida "since he is, I am afraid, rather far gone with consumption. I write....to ask whether it would be possible to go and live in your orange grove."⁴⁹ Delius replied:

"Even if the house had been inhabitable I should not have advised Lawrence to live in it. The place is five miles from any house or store. Life is frightfully expensive on account of the isolated situation. One lives off tinned food, and a servant costs one dollar fifty cents a day....⁵⁰ I should have loved to be of use to Lawrence whose works I admire, but to let him go to Florida would be sending him to disaster."

48. William Randel: 'Delius in America' in A Delius Companion (ed. Redwood, London, 1976), p. 157.

49. This letter and Delius's reply are quoted in Cecil Gray: Peter Warlock (London, 1934), pp. 106-7.

50. That the expense of living there had hastened Delius's departure from Solana Grove is also suggested by the fact that he left without paying several bills!

Percy Grainger has been the main protagonist of a version of events which provides another possible reason. "The 'Negress' story is quite true, for Delius told it to me himself, several times. He had a negro mistress while in Florida & she had a child by him." (CLL/1, p. 112).

Memory frequently interprets the past in ways appropriate more to the present viewpoint than to the original circumstances. In his later years Delius looked back upon the experience of hearing Negro song at Solana Grove as the peak of youthful enlightenment. In Leipzig in 1887, one year after leaving the New World for the Old, Delius called upon a narrow part of the Negro character to represent the race among the American impressions recalled as his Florida suite. He sought to capture, in the first instance, the naivety of the people, in their exuberant, even passionate, dancing and guitar playing. His perspectives seem to have broadened greatly when he wrote the Appalachia variations in 1902-3 (see the 'programme' of the work on p.23), and to have shifted entirely by the time he began to publicly reminisce. The sadder side of the Negro, the singer of melancholic longing, was to come later: inevitably, Delius would place more value on it as his own creative personality developed in the same direction. And, as it did so, the original impressions of ingenuous passion and naivety would gain a new poignance - a poignance which Delius was probably not fully aware of earlier.

Despite this process of deepening understanding and shifting perspective, his first work influenced by Negro folk music realized a part of him, opening up a workable seam of emotional responses as sincere as later ones. Because of, rather than in spite of, its essential naivety, Florida was to contribute substantially to much more mature American scores, the operas The Magic Fountain and Koanga:

Table II

Borrowed from <u>Florida</u> :	Transferred to:
1st movement, melody, bar 10-20	<u>Mag. Fount.</u> , opening of Act I and later
1st movement, dance section	<u>Koanga</u> , 'La Calinda' dance, Act II
2nd movement, 2 bars before fig.4	<u>Koanga</u> , Act II, fig.12, bars 17-18.
3rd movement, fig.1	<u>Mag. Fount.</u> , Act II, conclusion
3rd movement, fig.4 (oboe)	<u>Koanga</u> , theme of 1st Negro song
3rd movement, fig.7	<u>Mag. Fount.</u> , Act II, war dance

This section has been primarily concerned with the influence of Negro folk music on melody and rhythm in Delius's early compositions. Yet, as noted earlier, his reminiscences dwell almost exclusively on the impression Negro harmony made upon him. The questions of whether, and to what degree, Delius was indebted to Negro singing for his own harmonic style will be taken up in chapter 2, and again in the discussion of his transitional works, Koanga and Appalachia (American Rhapsody) in chapter five. For the time being it is worth noting that Delius's mature chromatic style, with its highly fluid movement and linear smoothness, came to fruition in his music around 1896-7. It appeared first in the scores of that period utilizing Negro song.

+ + +

Section Two - "Neighbours of the Eagles"

[July 20th:] "The sun for a few moments flashes a few rays over the long valley. I, from amongst the clouds, look now on almost a fairylike scene - the light & shade effects I never saw before".⁵¹

[July 23rd:] "The scenery up the Eidfjord is wild & romantic....the whole mass of mountains looked bluish black, the tops made invisible by the clouds. The sight was the weirdest I have yet seen here."

[Aug. 4th:] "Presently come to a hill overlooking the fjord on the other side. Such an expansive & exquisite view I never saw before. We sat on a hill almost like in a panorama - all round us the lovely scenery extended for 100s of miles, the sun shining, the fjord dyed a deep blue, & only a few fleecy clouds hanging afar off over the highest peaks. Decidedly the most beautiful place in Norway in my estimation."

51. Delius: 'Summer Diary 1887', Appendix III, CLL/1, p. 383 et seq.

These extracts are from the diary Delius kept of his holiday in Norway in 1887. They are typical, in their search for superlatives, of entries he made throughout the six-week tour. This journey can be regarded as establishing the special relationship between Norwegian scenery and Delius's art which was to continue unflinching through his life.

It has already been noted that Delius's first year at the Leipzig Conservatorium was not productive. The twelve months which followed his return from Norway, however, would be amongst the most fruitful of his career, with an impressive list of compositions headed by Florida and Hiawatha. In the matrix of circumstances which released Delius's talents at this time, Norway and Norwegians are very prominent. Delius's music was to draw much of its individuality from his endeavours to present his reactions to the character of Norwegian mountain scenery. It seems likely that the overpowering experiences of the 1887 holiday were a contributory factor in this process. Indeed, if the belief in his powers gained in Florida, through a solitary existence amid magnificent exotic nature, was in need of reinforcement, the solitude and magnificent wild nature of Norway may well have provided it.

In the same way that his knowledge of minstrel songs and pentatonic folk idioms would have prepared him in part for the Negro music he experienced at first hand at Solana Grove, Delius had long been favourably disposed towards this mountainous country. From an early age he had accepted an image of Norway exported in the music of its leading composer:

"I had as a child always been accustomed to Mozart and Beethoven and when I first heard Grieg it was as if a breath of fresh mountain air had come to me."⁵²

A brief trip to Norway was probably taken in the summer of 1881 by the nineteen year old Delius, in defiance of his father, who had sent him to Sweden on wool business; but it is unlikely that Delius made any tours in mountain areas on this occasion.

52. Delius: 'Recollections of Grieg', CLL/1 p. 394

While in Florida, Delius's interest in Norway was sustained by contact with his nearest neighbour and close friend, Jutta Bell, a young Norwegian émigré with considerable musical talent. Many years later her sister recalled that "Delius's love of Grieg was formed in Jacksonville under the influence of Jutta Bell."⁵³ Exaggerated though this claim may be, Delius's choice of Scandinavian poems for songs he wrote during his stay in America probably betrays her influence.

In his first year at Leipzig, Delius's circle of friends seems to have been predominantly Norwegian, and it would be surprising if those acquaintances had not spoken of their country and invited their mountain-loving, Grieg-influenced friend to come and see it for himself. Indeed, on his long summer tour Delius stayed with several of his Norwegian friends from Leipzig.

If Delius's first intimate contact with Norway had, in a sense, been prepared over a period of years, a special bond to the country was cemented by an extraordinary turn of events in a period of a few weeks following his return from the North. His Norwegian student circle included now the composers Johan Halvorsen and Christian Sinding, and through the latter he was introduced to the man whose music had greatly affected his own creative inclinations - Edvard Grieg.

The close friendship between Delius and Grieg is well known and well documented.⁵⁴ Its importance to the fledgling composer cannot be overestimated, however:

"My friendship & sympathy you have already taken long since & I tell you frankly, never in my life have I met a nature which has won all my love as yours has. In my life I have been left so much to my own resources that I have become egotistic without realizing it & have really only cared about myself & worked for myself. You are the

53. From unpublished reminiscences of Mrs Andrew Mencke, 1938-1942, contained in the Delius Trust archive.

54. A selection from the correspondence is given in CLL/1, with Delius's 'Recollections of Grieg' - already cited on several occasions in this chapter - published as Appendix IV, pp. 394-6.

only man who has ever changed that & drawn my whole attention to you yourself & awakened the feelings which I now have for you." ⁵⁵

An assessment of Grieg's musical influence on Delius will follow in the next chapter. For present purposes it is the timing and consequent psychological impact of Grieg's friendship and artistic encouragement which should be kept in mind.

During the spring term in Leipzig (1888) Delius turned to Grieg for criticism of his compositions. In April, having completed only two of his planned three years at the Conservatorium, Delius left Leipzig and settled in Paris. Nevertheless, he would send newly-completed scores to Grieg in Norway for a couple of years afterwards. In the summer of 1888, letters from Delius show him to be already looking forward to the planned meeting with Grieg a year later, as he will be able to discuss his music with him - "so much do I attach to your criticism". ⁵⁶

While Delius had concentrated on writing America-inspired compositions during his final months in Leipzig, a batch of Norwegian works followed in a short period after he had settled in Paris. In this context it is perhaps significant that he could not afford to make a trip to Norway this year, and his letters to Grieg from now until their joint tour of the Jotunheim in the summer of 1889 are filled with longing for the mountain landscape - "For months now our meeting in Glorious Norway has been my be all & end all" (early June 1889). ⁵⁷ Among his works from the period are a handful of settings of Norwegian poetry and his first large-scale mountain-piece, a setting for tenor and orchestra of Ibsen's epic poem Paa Vidderne. Later in the summer he revised the work as a melodrama.

The summer tour of 1889 took Grieg, Delius and Sinding into Norway's wildest mountain regions, an experience Delius would recall with fondness all his life.

55. Letter from Delius to Grieg, mid-August 1888, CLL/1, p.22.

56. Letter from Delius to Grieg, 19 October 1888, CLL/1, p.25.

57. Letter from Delius to Grieg, early June 1889, CLL/1, p.41.

A less strenuous Norwegian holiday was undertaken by Delius and Grieg in 1891. This year Delius was to remain especially long in the North in order to hear his own music performed publicly for the first time, at a concert in Christiania (as Oslo was called then) in October. The work in question, sharing the same source of inspiration and title as the 1888 melodrama, was the symphonic poem Paa Vidderne.⁵⁸

Delius lived in Paris for most of the 1890s, forming circles of friends among both the aristocracy and the leading artists (particularly Scandinavians) working there. The friendship with Grieg seems to have faded, and it is unlikely that the two composers met again in Norway.

The mountain scenery of the country and its cultural life continued to fascinate Delius, however, and his excursions to Norway only ceased with the advance of his final illness.

+ + +

In the mountain scores of his early musical development Delius established several of the permanent features of his individual language. Though initially associated with his responses to the Norwegian mountain-scape, these features were also soon absorbed into abstract compositions and other works where their terms of reference were less obvious.

58. 'Paa Vidderne' can be translated as 'In the Mountain Wilderness'. There is no single word in English which conveys the meaning of the Norwegian noun vidde. The word is used to describe the mountain plateaux of Norway, and implies vast tracts of mountain wilderness, with peaks, glaciers and deep glacial valleys breaking up the high-level moorland.

Delius had a particular love for the Hardanger mountain plateau in South Norway, and was therefore known to Grieg and his Norwegian friends by the affectionate nickname 'Hardangerviddemannen' - the Hardanger-vidde man.

In later years Delius employed the word 'Solitude' in an idiosyncratic way, as if it had come to mean, in his mind, the Norwegian 'vidde' (see quote from the letter to Norman O'Neill, p.38).

The two longest non-operatic pieces of Delius's development were mountain-inspired - the symphonic poem Paa Vidderne (1890-2) and the overture Over the Hills and Far Away (mid-1890s) - as was the longest composite work of his development - the Paa Vidderne melodrama (1888). These facts suggest that the mountain associations the composer drew on creatively were not narrow or few, but were, rather, sufficiently varied to inspire the musical material of large-scale compositions. Indeed, in much of Delius's mountain music, two approaches to his subject fundamentally in opposition to each other are consistently present. These two poles of contrasting experience were once described by him as, on the one hand, "the joy and exhilaration one feels in the Mountains", and on the other "the loneliness and melancholy of the high Solitudes".⁵⁹ He would gradually learn to exploit the duality of those opposing forces to ensure a degree of contrast and balance in his larger works.

A. "the loneliness and melancholy"

"The poignance of the first tryst
 is like a song among the trees,
 is like a song across the fjord
 at twilight's dying glow,-
 those sweet resounding moments,
 like horns in mountain echo,
 unite us, in a miracle,
 with nature." ⁶⁰

(Bjørnson)

It has become a rare event to hear a horn sounded outdoors. With the disappearance of the horn as a device for communicating over distances has also vanished the opportunity to enjoy what, to many late-eighteenth and nineteenth century poets, was a most poignant confluence of man and nature. The sounding of a horn across open spaces, and its fanfares echoing around hills and cliffs, embodied for the Romanticist the sense of oneness with

59. Unpublished letter from Delius to Norman O'Neill, 10 February 1920 (Delius Trust archive).

60. 'Det første møte' from Fiskerjenten (1868). Given in Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson/Digte og sange (Oslo, 1957), p. 81. Translation by the present author.

nature and freeing of the self he yearned for. Tennyson captures this semi-magical effect in the following poem:

"The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow,bugle,blow,set the wild echoes flying,
Blow,bugle;answer,echoes,dying,dying,dying.

"O hark,O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner,clearer,farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow,let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow,bugle;answer,echoes,dying,dying,dying.

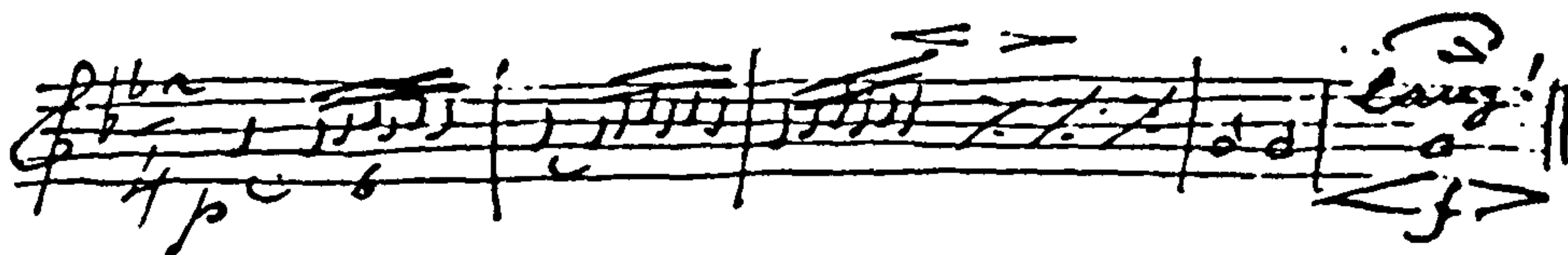
"O love,they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow,bugle,blow,set the wild echoes flying,
And answer,echoes,answer,dying,dying,dying."⁶¹

What, today, seems a fairly exotic poetic symbol would have seemed a commonplace, universal image bordering on cliché until the end of the last century. Hunting-horns had belonged to all previous ages. Coaching horns were still being sounded in approach to postal stations and inns at the end of the nineteenth century. In many countries, particularly mountainous regions, simple horns were used by shepherds and goatherds. The call of a horn across alpine pastures was no doubt one of the most enchanting experiences known to travellers. One of the most vivid and haunting descriptions of such an occurrence comes from Edvard Grieg who, in 1887, was touring with his friend Frants Beyer in the Jotunheim:

"I must tell you about one marvellous blue-skied August day, up among the Skagastøl peaks. We intended to cross a mountain called 'Friken', but couldn't find a guide But on the farm were two charming milkmaids, one an adult, and the other a young pretty blonde girl called Susanne. They offered to lead us over the mountain. The ascent was made amid songs and high spirits

61. From The Princess (1847). Given in The Penguin Book of Victorian Verse (Harmondsworth, 1969), pp. 71-2.

and, at the summit, we sat down and celebrated with all that our rucksacks had to offer. Cognac with glacier water lifted our mood to truly ethereal heights. But the best was still to come, for Susanne had a little folk instrument with her, a sheep horn which managed but three tones. And when the girls had bid us farewell up on the peak, because they had to return to the cows, and when Frants and I simply stood and marvelled at the lovely sight of the two girls - blonde, pretty and strong - making their way towards the mountain edge with the blue horizon as background, then all at once - the girls stopped - Susanne put the horn to her mouth - I will never forget her posture, her silhouette against the sky: then it sounded - mildly melancholic, as if out of the very mountain-nature that surrounded us:



When that last G had died away, we turned to each other - and wept!"⁶²

In music, the use of horn-calls might be regarded as one of the earliest forms of tone-painting, the hunting call and trumpet fanfare being the bases of the Renaissance 'caccia' and battle-piece. The identification with nature sought by many nineteenth century composers resulted in a gradual extension of the horn-call to other areas of association than the hunt.

From boyhood, when he had been attracted to the hunt by the horn fanfares, Berlioz had enjoyed hearing instruments sounded outdoors. Jacques Barzun writes:

"The hunts met frequently and observed the ancient and complex ritual of horn calls - a rich source of melody, echoes of which will be found in later Berlioz scores.

62. Letter from Grieg to Niels Ravnkilde, 17 October 1887. Given in Benestad and Schjelderup-Ebbe: Edvard Grieg - mennesket og kunstneren (Oslo, 1980), p. 247. Translation by the present author.

Again, shepherds in the mountains could be heard singing or piping to their flocks."⁶³

With the plaintive pipe tunes of the shepherds in 'Sur Les Champes', the slow movement of the Symphonie Fantastique, Berlioz revealed the Romantic potential in the age-old Pastorale. Among the number of leading composers who exploited this potential may be counted Wagner (the shepherd's pipe theme in Act III of Tristan und Isolde) and Grieg (in numerous character-pieces and miniatures influenced by folk music).

Mountain associations - already implied in Berlioz' pastoral calls, which he had connected with alpine pastures - were also seized on by a line of Romantic composers. The intention of a composer employing the poetic symbol of an alpine call was not to depict mountains, but (to cite Berlioz) "to reproduce the melodic style and forms of singing common among certain mountain populations, while at the same time imparting the emotion felt by the soul in certain circumstances at the sight of those imposing heights."⁶⁴ The notion maintained its appeal from the early-Romantic Rossini (overture to William Tell) to the late-Romantic Strauss (Alpine Symphony). Unlike the hunting call, which was most commonly introduced into a composition to suggest the vigour of the hunt, the occurrence of calls in both pastoral and mountain contexts seems to have been motivated by the imagery of distance. By Debussy's time the power of evocation residing in the horn-call could effect an impression almost of three-dimensional depth to the music (see ex.11, next page):

63. Jacques Barzun: Berlioz and the Romantic Century (Vol.1) (New York, 1969), p.40.

64. Quoted by Barzun, ibid., p.198.



Ex.11. Debussy: Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir (1910), conclusion.

From the outset of Delius's career, the horn-call forms a constant part of his mountain prospect. Already in the introduction to his setting of Bjørnson's Over the mountains high (1885),⁶⁵ his earliest surviving work, Delius had made the association between mountains and horn-calls (although the latter are not mentioned in the poem):

Ex.12: Over the mountains high, piano introduction.

The fanfaric pattern and bare fifths are recurring characteristics, as is the distancing effect of the quiet dynamic of the call.

65. Published in facsimile in RL pp.116-7.

The 1888 song Hochgebirgsleben (Ibsen),⁶⁶ adds another element: a repeating, rolling call around an anchor-note - a melodic pattern not dissimilar to that Grieg noted on his mountain tour in 1887 (see p.40).⁶⁷ The change to the horn-call style occurs in the song at the mention of the majestic glacier:

"Along the valley summer evening
trails its sheet of shadows;
billowing around the cliff-face,
waves of grey mist lie -
a sea the evening wind has ruffled.
The glacier, now concealed from sight,
had scanned by day
the wide horizons of his realm,
with sun-gold in his crown."⁶⁸

Ex.13. Hochgebirgsleben, bars 17-18 (piano only).



Ibsen's mountain poetry preoccupied Delius for much of 1888, for his version of the epic Paa Vidderne was also composed then, first for a solo tenor voice with orchestra, and then, after some revision, as a melodrama.⁶⁹

66. Published in facsimile in RL pp.118-9.

67. Grieg recorded his impressions in a letter of October 1887 - around the time he first became acquainted with Delius. The probability that he retold this tale to his Norway-loving English friend also allows for the possibility that Delius's use of calls similar to that of the milkmaid Susanne is not coincidence.

68. Translation by the present author.

69. The version for tenor has not survived. The melodrama is unpublished. DT vol.2 (RL p.21). Partly because Grieg convinced Delius that the orchestral writing was too powerful to accompany a reciter's voice, the work was not performed until 1980, when electronic amplification of the soloist's voice made an adequate balance possible.

Ibsen wrote Paa Vidderne in 1859 at the age of 31 during a period of personal and professional crisis. He sought relief from the enormous pressures in his daily life through his art: in Paa Vidderne he flees to the fjord country in western Norway and his beloved landscape of the Hardanger 'vidde'. This allegorical poem about artistic idealism tells of a young hunter who leaves his home and fiancée to undertake a reindeer hunt. With steel-strong resolve given him by the mighty wilderness, he turns his back on the warmth and comfort of his past life in the valley.

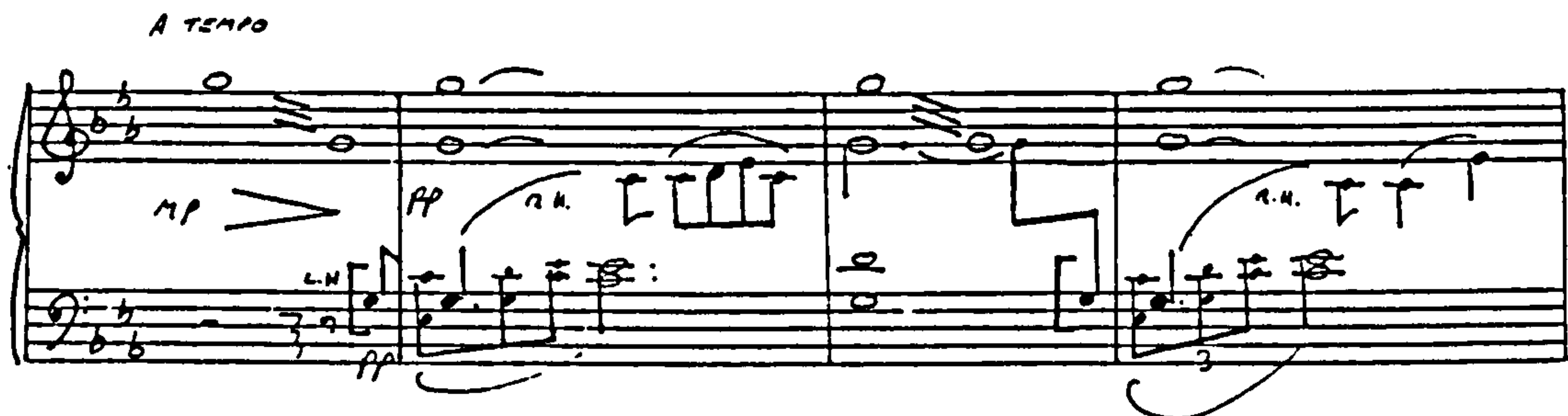
Delius's nine movements (corresponding to the poem's sections) are widely varied. He endeavours, however, to knit the long score together with a series of horn-calls, some of which recur to reinforce appropriate ideas in the poem.

In two places in the expositional Section One, the hero looks back down the valley as he climbs upwards:

"Behind me, clothed in moonlit haze,
lay the fjord and valley".⁷⁰

Soft horn-calls are heard at these points.

Ex.14. Section One, f.3a (bar 6) - f.3b.



In contrast to the quiet mood here, horn-calls in Section Two are the culmination of an exciting, boisterous climax in the coda (ex.15, p.45). The fanfaric, dotted-note call used

70. Delius set a German translation of the poem. The English translation used here is by the present author.

Ex.15. Paa Vidderne melodrama,
Section Two, f.15b - f.17a.

The first system of the musical score features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef. The treble clef part contains a melodic line with various ornaments and rests, while the bass clef part provides a harmonic foundation. Handwritten annotations include "poco RIT." above the staff, "A TEMPO" further right, and "poco" written below the first few notes. A bracket labeled "HORNS" spans a section of the music, and a circled section of the treble clef part is followed by the handwritten word "etc.".

farvel, min viv! Gudsfred, min mor!

The second system continues the piano accompaniment. The treble clef part features a series of triplets and other rhythmic patterns. The bass clef part continues with a steady accompaniment. The system concludes with a double bar line.

Og nu på vidden opl

The third system of the score shows the piano accompaniment. The treble clef part has a melodic line with triplets. The bass clef part has a steady accompaniment. A "dim." (diminuendo) marking is present in the bass clef part. The system ends with a double bar line.

The fourth system of the score features the piano accompaniment. The treble clef part has a melodic line with triplets. The bass clef part has a steady accompaniment. Handwritten annotations include "molto rit." and "Admorzando" in the bass clef part, and "Loco" in the treble clef part. The system ends with a double bar line and a page number "196" in the bottom right corner.

here belongs properly to the group of energetic motifs considered below under the heading "the joy and exhilaration". However, over nine bars (from 'a tempo'), the initial passion is cooled as if by a breeze blowing from the wilderness, and the music all but echoes away into the distance before the final resolute chord. This device of utilizing calls to transform the music from splendour to soliloquy is put to good use again at the end of Paa Vidderne, a brilliant 'fortissimo' entry of the full orchestra in the coda to Section Nine gradually diminishing in volume until, by the close, only horn-calls remain.

In Section Four the poem's hero meets a mysterious hunter in the mountains. This haunting figure personifies the spirit of the wilderness:

"I fear his cold eyes,
cannot plumb their depths,
as if they were blue-black tarns
nestling against the glacier's breast."

Delius introduces a call here which will reappear not only in later sections, but also in other mountain-inspired compositions. It may be termed his Wilderness motif:

Ex.16. Section Four, f.27b (bar 5).

The Wilderness motif plays an important part in Section Six. In an episode depicting Ibsen's words

"Winter in the wilderness
puts steel into feeble minds",

Delius writes the first extended passage of his career based on horn-calls. It is writing of bleak frugality, with the same grim power which would distinguish evocations of the mountain wilderness in A Mass of Life and The Song of the High Hills in the composer's mature period (ex.17, pp. 47-8). Horns and strings call and answer each other,

Ex.17. Paa Vidderne melodrama, Section Six,
 copyist's MS corresponding to
 f.33b (bar 5) - f.35a (bar 1)
 of the original MS.

The musical score is arranged in a system with the following parts and staves from top to bottom:

- WOODWINDS:** Piccolo (Picc.), Flute 1 (Fl. 1), Flute 2 (Fl. 2), Bassoon (BSAS).
- STRING QUARTET:** Violin 1 (V. 1), Violin 2 (V. 2), Viola (VIA), Cello (C.), Double Bass (B.).
- VOICE:** Two vocal staves, labeled 'HNS. 1+2' and 'HNS. 3 + TUBA'.

The score includes the following musical markings and features:

- Tempo/Performance Markings:** 'RIT. FINE' and 'A TEMPO' are repeated across several staves.
- Lyrics:**
 - Original: Vinterliv på vilde vidder sætter stål i veke tanker,
 - English: Winter life in wildest highlands Steels my thoughts and cures my weaknes
- Other Notations:** A 'W' in a box is present above the vocal staves. The vocal staves contain complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes.

(Ex.17.cont.)

WOODWINDS:
FL. 1
FL. 2
OBOE
CLARINET 1 & 2
BASSOON

STRING ENSEMBLE:
Violins I & II
Violas
Cellos
Double Basses

The woodwind section (Flutes 1 & 2, Oboe, Clarinets 1 & 2, Bassoon) and the string ensemble (Violins I & II, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses) are shown with musical notation across six staves. The woodwinds have melodic lines with some slurs and accents. The strings provide a rhythmic accompaniment with various articulations.

intet sagn om fuglekvidder
sygt igennem åren banker.

No one talks of songbirds chirping;
Blood is coursing free from fever.

Er til vær i stål jeg drevet,
henter jeg de to fra dalen.

If by spring my life has steeled me,
I will bring them from the valley.

BRASS SECTION:
V. 1 (Trumpets)
V. 2 (Trumpets)
VLA (Trumpets)
C. (Trombones)
B. (Trombones)

The brass section consists of five staves: two for Trumpets (V. 1, V. 2), one for Trumpets (VLA), and two for Trombones (C., B.). The notation includes melodic lines for the trumpets and harmonic support for the trombones. There are dynamic markings such as *forte* and *molto* throughout the section.

sounding and echoing the same motif across 16 bars in alternating major and minor modes. The harmony is stripped of warmth, the third of the chords occurring only as momentary unaccented tones in the horns. The rolling type of call (see ex.13) is employed, but it is the Wilderness motif which opens and closes the passage, the first section of which is given in ex.17.

The anchored calls, repetitive rhythm and negligible harmonic movement create a sense of stillness and space. In the minor variant of the theme, Delius introduces a melodic mode into his mountain vocabulary which, from now on, is a frequent feature of such episodes. Flattening the 6th and retaining a natural (unraised) 7th, the mode corresponds to the natural minor scale or the Aeolian mode. Bereft of leading-note tension, the melodic line is appropriately neutral in this timeless, featureless landscape.

The evocative power of melody in this mode and manner was exploited by Delius both with the familiar horn-calls and without them - as in the opening of Section Eight (ex. 18). The poem here depicts a desolate winter scene:

"The weeks passed.....
brook and river were covered in ice,
the round moon stood above the snowdrifts
and the stars glistened."

Both harmony and melody are devoid of points of tension (the rocking harmony is nearly static), creating a wilderness mood of "loneliness and melancholy" (ex.18,p.50):

Ex.18. Section Eight, f.41b.

COMODO

FLUTES

p PIZZ. VIOLINS

VIOLAS

Uger gik og jeg vandt mig selv,
min hjemve kom aldrig til orde;

The chill voice of the 'vidde' is heard in several works from this period. In some instances the idiom has been considered suitable for depicting quite different poetic imagery.

In Sakuntala (1889)⁷¹ - a delicate setting for tenor solo and orchestra of the Drachmann love-poem - a momentary glimpse of unwelcoming wilderness calls from the composer the familiar response:

71. Unpublished. DT vol.4 (RL p.29). Robert Threlfall has pointed out that Sakuntala can be regarded as one of the earliest examples of orchestral song (RT p.74).

Ex.19. Sakuntala, f.5b.

Du ew-ige Him-a - Lay — a Du hebst Deine Stirn zum
 Himm-el auf Was spü - let an mein - e Füß - e

The frozen harmony and modal melody of Skogen gir sus-
 ende langsam besked (1891, Bjørnson) might also have belonged
 to a landscape of eternal peaks:

Ex.20. Skogen gir, bars 1 - 5.

LANGSAM BENEEST SKO ... gen gir
 sus-on-de Lang-som be - skjed

This is not the case, however. "Loneliness and melancholy" are in these tones, but it is the plaint of the forest, not of the wilderness which is sung:

"The wood sighs slowly what it knows.
All it saw in lonely ages
and all it has suffered since
is wailed in the wind and lost."⁷²

The song-cycle for tenor and orchestra, Maud (1891, to words by Tennyson),⁷³ removes the composer as far from the Norwegian wilderness as possible. Yet, in the unresolved love-longing of the poet is reflected the timeless landscape of the spirit as effectively as in the vast solitude of the 'vidde' (ex.21, p.53)

B. "the joy and exhilaration"

The other face of Delius's mountain-duality underwent considerable change in the course of his career. Idiomatic features earlier associated with mountain music and expressing what Delius defined as "the joy and exhilaration one feels in the Mountains" altered character in his music of the early 1900s, taking on more abstract, stylized forms. An explanation for this transformation is suggested below. It will also be seen, however, that the earlier style had a prominent place in Delius's music well into his maturity as a composer, attaining its culmination in parts of the great Mass of Life (1904-5).

Three thematic types can be identified in Delius's early mountain scores as agents of a spirit of resolution and affirmation. First, the Energy type. Invariably allied to dotted-note rhythms (or a similar springing alternative),

72. Translation by the present author.

73. Unpublished. DT vol.4 (RL p.31).

Ex.21. 'Come into the Garden, Maud' from Maud song-cycle, f.21a (bar 3).

All night have the ros-es heard the flute, vi-o-lin, bass-
 -oon. And night has the casa-ment jess-a-mine stir'd To the
 danc-ers danc-ing in time. Till a
 sil-ence fell with the wak-ing bird [And a...]

Musical markings: *p*, STINGS, OSN., CEMO, MUTED HORNS, *pp*, LOW W.W., *pp piano*.

this thematic material is imbued with a thrusting, striving energy:

Ex.22. Paa Vidderne melodrama, opening.

Secondly, Grandeur. Broad, 'tenuto' melody, with relatively smooth intervallic movement and, frequently, bold triplet rhythms characterize this type:

Ex.23(a). Paa Vidderne melodrama, Section One, f.5a (bar 6).

(b). Paa Vidderne melodrama, Section Three, f.22b (bar 2).

The recurring features delineating a third group include fanfaric rising melodies covering a wide range with daring leaps, and, again, triplets (usually ascending). These themes always convey great power and purpose, and might be termed motifs of Resolve:

Ex.24. Paa Vidderne melodrama, Section One, f.4b.



It will be apparent from examples 22-24, and from additional illustrations which are given below, that Delius's most affirmative melodic types owe a debt to Wagnerian models. Delius's admiration for Wagner manifests itself in several ways during his development; the influence he had on Delius's music will be considered at various stages of this study, particularly in connection with harmony, orchestral texture and leitmotivic procedures in the operas. But the distinctly teutonic character which permeates his music, at least until the turn of the century, is principally attributable to the recurrence of these masculine melodic types. A comparison of examples in this section and the instances of the genre from Wagner operas given in Table III will sufficiently illustrate this point.

In the course of his development Delius would also find the scores of Richard Strauss valuable to him in the study of orchestration. He would no doubt also have found Strauss's predilection for Wagnerian heroic melody very much to his taste. Eric Fenby has related that the horn theme in Don Juan (ex.25), never lost its appeal for Delius⁷⁴ (see p.57):

74. Fenby suggests that this theme had an influence on Delius's melodic style. This is improbable, for he heard Don Juan for the first time in 1891: though the work made a strong impression on him (see CLL/1 p.55), his own Wagnerian melodic style had long been in evidence.

Delius was indebted to Strauss's tone poems in other ways, which will be discussed in chapter seven.

Table III. Heroic melody in Wagner operas.

(a) **ALLEGRO CON BRIO**


(b) **ALLEGRO**
 (ORTRUD!)


(c) **MOLTO VIVACE**


(d) **ALLEGRO**


(e) **d=80**
 (WOLFRAM!)


(f) **ALLEGRO**


(g) **ALLEGRO**
 (FRISCH!)


(h) **ALLEGRO**


- (a) Der Fliegende Holländer, 'Dutchman' theme.
- (b) Lohengrin, Act II, "Wenn falsch Gericht".
- (c) Lohengrin, Prelude to Act III.
- (d) Tannhäuser, Prelude to Act II.
- (e) Tannhäuser, Act II, "Dir, hohe Liebe".
- (f) Das Rheingold, 'Rhinegold' motif.
- (g) Das Rheingold, "Weisst du nicht offen".
- (h) Das Rheingold, "Heda! Hedo!".

"Forty years later he still revelled in that theme, and rarely missed an opportunity of hearing the work. I never hear Don Juan without thinking of Delius, and of the humorous way in which he used to tilt his head at the pedal G in the violins in preparation for the entrance of his favourite. Then, and at each appearance of the theme, he would all but wag his head off to its rhythm!"⁷⁵

Ex.25. Strauss, Don Juan (1888), 19 bars after fig.N.



Although they have an affirmative spirit in common, the three melodic types of Energy, Grandeur and Resolve are distinctly individual in character. This essential thematic contrast was exploited to the full in Delius's first large-scale orchestral composition - the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem (1890-1).⁷⁶ Indeed, his full repertoire of 'mountain melody' is brought into play, for there are sections of the work consistent with both his affirmative spirit and his wilderness moods. On the title-page of the manuscript Delius quotes (in German) the exultant conclusion of Ibsen's poem:

"Now I'm resolved, I'll answer the call
which bids me wander on the heights!
My valley life is now behind me;
up here in the mountains is freedom and God,
in the valley men lose their way."

The symphonic poem shares almost no other point-of-contact with its earlier namesake, the Paa Vidderne melodrama. An analysis of the work's thematic and formal scheme will be undertaken in chapter two, so it will meet present requirements to give the main outlines and themes of the piece.

75. Fenby, op.cit., pp.192-3.

76. Unpublished. DT vol.5 (RL p.33).

The opening section ('Allegro, ma non troppo') has a noble and restrained melody marked by the modality of the lonely 'vidde' idiom, but also the sweep of a Resolve fanfare:

Ex.26. Opening.



This tentative approach to the foothills is soon discarded and the mountains' challenge taken up. Motif 'x' in ex.26, a typical Energy motif, comes to pervade the first subject group.

In a first bridge passage, Delius brings himself up onto a plateau which, 'molto tranquillo', utilizes the familiar idiom of his "loneliness and melancholy" episodes. Hushed string tremolos, static harmony and a fragmentary call in the horns accompany the two modal melodies (ex.27, p.59).

With the second subject (ex.28), begins a huge climax which concludes the exposition section.

Ex.28. Second subject, f.8b (bar 2).



This fine melody belongs unambiguously in the Grandeur category, boasting an elegance and breadth which, in an Elgar score, would have been marked 'nobilmente'. After its initial statement, ex.28 is pitted in counterpoint against a new countermelody (ex.29, p.61) which levers the music ever closer to the climax and its blaze of Resolve fanfares (ex.30, p.61).

Ex.27. Paa Vidderne symphonic poem,
copyist's MS corresponding to
f.7a of the original MS.

MOLTO TRANQUILLO

FLUTE 1
FLUTE 2/3
OBOE 1
OBOE 2
CLARINET 1
IN A
CLARINET 2
BASSOON
IN A
BASSOON 1
BASSOON 2
HORN 1/2
IN F
HORN 3/4
HARP
TRIANGLE
VIOLIN 1
VIOLIN 2
VIOLA
CELLO
BASS

MOLTO TRANQUILLO

MOLTO TRANQUILLO

MOLTO TRANQUILLO

Ex. 31. Paa Vidderne symphonic poem,
copyist's MS corresponding to
f. 30b of the original MS.

Wilderness motif

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The instruments listed on the left are: WINDS and FLUTES, OBOES, CLARINETS in A, BASS CLARINET in B, BASSOONS, HORN 1/2 in F, HORN 3/4, TRUMPET in F, TROMBONE in B, TROMBONE 3 & TUBA, TYMPAN, HARP, CYMBALS TRIANGLE, VIOLIN 1, VIOLIN 2, VIOLA, CELLO, and BASS. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Above the score, the tempo and mood markings are: PESANTE, Piu Tranquillo, and MAESTOSO. The 'Wilderness motif' is indicated by a bracket above the first three measures. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *ff*, *mp*, and *mf*.

Ex.29. Subsidiary theme, second subject group,
f.9b (bar 4).



Ex.30. Climax fanfare, f.12a (bar 3).



The statement above that Delius's two Paa Vidderne conceptions had "almost no other point-of-contact" than the Ibsen quotation on the title-page of the symphonic poem, gains its qualification from the dying moments of the work. A headlong dash in the coda, dominated by Energy motifs derived from ex.26, is suddenly reined in by a resonant horn-call, at first 'fortissimo', then echoing away into the distance. It is a wonderful effect, achieved by the melodrama's Wilderness motif (ex.31, p.60).

The melodic material of the instrumental music of Delius's development and early maturity can in a great many instances be seen to be a continuation of the line begun in the two Paa Vidderne compositions. A table of themes which serves to illustrate this proliferation of 'mountain melody' is given in chapter two, where its contribution to the element of form in Delius's music is considered (see pp.143-4). The list of works where the melodic substance belongs to the types outlined in this section includes most of the large-scale instrumental works of Delius's development, such as the B minor Violin Sonata (1892), the Piano Concerto (1897, with later revisions) and the symphonic poem La Ronde se déroule (first version 1899). Those works which stand outside this large grouping have either a textual content (the songs and

operas) or utilize borrowed themes in special ways (the rhapsodic treatment of American folk songs in the first version of Appalachia (1896), and the Norwegian National Anthem and folk songs in Folkeraadet (1897)).

In other words, the composer seems to have regarded the 'mountain melody' types as those elements of his melodic vocabulary most suited to symphonic treatment. This may appear rather surprising, for the great majority of themes cited in this section - while sufficiently contrasted in character - have little of the pliability required for symphonic development. Indeed, the "loneliness and melancholy" group, allied to static harmony, is manifestly ill-suited to elaboration, while all the various grades of themes of "joy and exhilaration" are sharp-edged and self-contained rather than rounded and plastic.

The virtue of Delius's 'mountain melody' which recommended its use in large-scale composition - this will also be further considered in chapter two - was the essential contrast it embodied, arising from the composer's own duality. Works as varied in design as the overture Over the Hills and Far Away and the Piano Concerto exploit this duality as a constructive principle, gleaning from it balance and contrast over extensive structures.

The deliberate antithesis of melodic extremes in these scores was used to its most powerful effect by Delius in one of the finest works of his mature period, A Mass of Life (1904-5). Part Two of the Mass begins with an instrumental piece which represents the furthest point the composer ever went in music of "loneliness and melancholy" in reducing his art to its barest essentials. Broad, repeated horn-calls, whispered timpani rolls and protracted, hushed string chords constitute the total material of this 67-bar piece. It is a haunting tone-picture of solitude (ex. 32, p. 63). Delius added the unsurprising title 'Auf den Bergen' to this short movement in a second edition of the score."

77. The title is not given in present editions. Robert Threlfall has pointed out that this prelude was actually an afterthought by the composer; it was added to the MS after the first movement proper of Part Two, 'Herauf! nun herauf', was complete (see his article 'Delius: a fresh glance at two famous scores', Musical Times (June 1984), p. 318).

The piece serves as a prelude to the first movement proper of Part Two, 'Herauf! nun herauf, du grosser Mittag!', a weighty invocation employing to the full the double choir and huge orchestral forces of the Mass. Marked 'Con elevazione e vigore', the movement is the apotheosis of the affirmation common to all Delius's Resolve themes,⁷⁸ employing as it does melodies such as these:

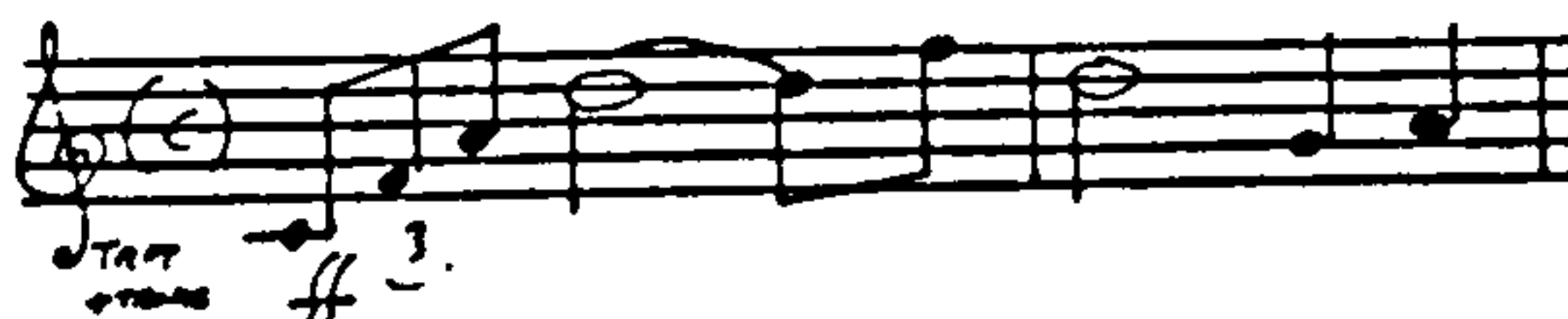
Ex.33(a). Fig.59.



(b). 6 bars after fig.60.



(c). Fig.63.



The peak of the movement is announced, however, in motifs of typical Grandeur, one broad, soaring theme - ex.34(a) - being attended by two noble ideas - (b) and (c):

Ex.34(a). Fig.62.

(b). Fig.62

(c). 4 bars after fig.61.



78. The opening movement of A Mass of Life is nearly as rich in 'mountain melody', Resolve fanfares occurring in the 5 bars before fig.2, and one of Delius's most memorable Grandeur melodies at fig.3.

Ex.34(a) and (c) are taken from the mountain-overture Over the Hills and Far Away. Predictably, mountains are the predominant poetic symbol in the Nietzsche text used in this passage:

"'Tis gone, the lingering sorrow of my springtide. Summer am I become, yea summer's noon-tide, on mountain's high summits, by clear, cool waters, 'mid rapturous stillness. O come, my companions, and the silence shall enrapture our souls. This is now our home, on the heights - neighbours of the eagles, we, neighbours of the snows, neighbours of the sun. Like a sudden tempest comes my bliss, and brings me freedom." 79

The calculated impact of this chorus, following the utter quietude of the prelude with a wonderful flood of sound, is one of the composer's finest strokes in A Mass of Life. Mystery and majesty in nature - the two sides of Delius's mountain-duality - have by this time become as sharply delineated as night and day.

It is the last time such an extreme antithesis is to be found in Delius's music. Indeed, at the time the Mass was written (1904-5) he was moving quickly away from writing music impelled by the thrusting energy of the "joy and exhilaration" idioms of his earlier periods. Possible reasons for this development are not difficult to find. First of all, Delius was now into middle-age, and had settled for good in the French village of Grez-sur-Loing, outside Paris. He had matured into a new period of his life, and out of his youth. Delius might have said of his mountain-exhilaration - as he once said of his Life's Dance - that it described "the Turbulence, the joy, energy, great striving of youth". 80 With the great culmination of youthful endeavour represented by the opening choruses to the two parts of A Mass of Life a part of Delius's life came to a close.

79. From Also sprach Zarathustra. Translation by William Wallace, reproduced in the sleeve notes accompanying the E.M.I. record set SLS 958.

80. Letter from Jelka Delius to Eric Fenby, 27 October 1933. Quoted in RL p.72.

Secondly, the type of theme and treatment in the composer's mature period differed substantially from earlier in his career. A more flexible, flowing line had evolved, and this was dependent on pliable motifs.

A third possible reason is that Delius's breakthrough as a composer in England happened to coincide with his own change of lifestyle and direction in the early 1900s. That Delius, who had been frustrated for many years by his lack of success in his homeland, should now cultivate an impressionistic softness of language at the expense of the teutonic boldness of the earlier period, may not be unconnected with his change of fortune in England.

For all this, the Resolution or Grandeur thematic types are not uncommon in the music of Delius's maturity. But, with the diminishing of the "great striving of youth", their occurrences lack the spontaneity and fire which impelled them through earlier scores. They become a stylized feature of the mature Delius language, betokening a happy thought of a past youth and idealism, rather than instilling heroic affirmation.

The most striking illustrations of this transition are embodied in the music of Delius's opera A Village Romeo and Juliet (1899-1901). The two young lovers who are the main characters here are often associated with a Resolve motif -



- which suits well the youthful zeal and happiness they display in certain scenes. However, the phrase recurs in many other contexts and moods than these - most noticeably as a poignant love-motif.³¹ Examples 35(a) - (c) are some of the forms Resolve motifs assumed in mature Delius scores (see next page):

31. In the famous interlude The Walk to the Paradise Garden (which was added to the opera in 1907), Delius fashions a passionate, emotional climax from this motif.

Ex.35(a). A Mass of Life(1904-5),Part Two/II,
2 bars before fig.69.



(b). Margot la Rouge(1901-2),Scene 5,
"Vous avez les traits..."



(c). The Song of the High Hills(1911),
fig.13.



In 1911 appeared Delius's final great mountain-piece, The Song of the High Hills for large orchestra and wordless chorus. It was in reference to this work that Delius had defined his duality of approach to mountain nature:

"I have tried to express the joy and exhilaration one feels in the Mountains and also the loneliness and melancholy of the high Solitudes and the grandeur of the wide far distances. The human voices represent man in Nature; an episode, which becomes fainter, then disappears altogether."⁸²

By this stage in Delius's career, "joy and exhilaration" was unlikely to be translated in the music into the springing dotted rhythms and heroic fanfares of the Paa Vidderne scores. While some hints of the youthful ardour lie behind the nobly restrained stylized motifs of The Song of the High Hills (see, for instance, the themes at bar 1 after fig.3, and 1 bar before fig.7), the "joy and exhilaration" is here expressed more in terms of an exultant lyricism.

82. Unpublished letter from Delius to Norman O'Neill, 10 February 1920 (Delius Trust archive).

However, it is in its central 'plateau', which ensues after the early exultant sections, that The Song of the High Hills is revealed to be one of the composer's most masterly creations. The essential constituents are all assembled for Delius's "loneliness and melancholy" idiom - slowly-changing harmony, alternating chords, horn-calls and a main theme in the Aeolian mode:

Ex.36. 6 bars before fig.18.



But Delius has now lifted all these elements onto a higher plane of thought than ever suggested before. The horn-calls of early works have been transformed into an endless play of shapes in a rolling, winding ostinato. It is the quiet intertwining counterpoint of horn-calls which prepares and subsequently announces the withdrawn, hushed mood of the 'plateau' (which commences with ex.36), and throughout the central variations on ex.36 the embroidery of their gentle lines - passing from horns to flutes or cor anglais - seems to hang like a mist over the mountains' secrets.

The harmonic pace is at times slowed to a standstill, the music seeming to move outside time altogether onto a level of contemplation. The ethereal mystery with which the wordless vocal texture clothes the mountain-hymn, ex.36, whether as a single disembodied voice or in the mighty climactic statement (fig.30), seems to remove it from temporal existence to the unworldly solitude of the wilderness.

The Song of the High Hills is the most visionary expression of that contemplative awe which runs through Delius's mountain music. The spiritual landscape it describes, by association with its natural counterpart, is wild and lonely. Above the first mystic entry of the choir, Delius has written in the score

"The wide far distance - The great solitude".

+ + +

Section Three - "...und schenkt uns Ruh"

Although dealt with separately here, the final idiom worthy of mention as a founding pillar of Delius's language does share many features with the composer's chosen vocabulary for "loneliness and melancholy" associations described in the previous section. In the present section the recurrence of an idiom conveying a sense of tranquillity, peace and serenity will be considered. The external image most common here is the sunset; this was extended gradually to a more general 'pastoral' frame of reference.

Delius plundered his store of natural symbols for inspiration in all periods of his career. Where, in his mature music, these associations are with tranquillity in nature, he frequently produced the beautiful, delicate tone poems by which his art is most widely recognized. This style prevails for example, in parts of Brigg Fair, A Late Lark, Song of Summer and the opera Fennimore and Gerda. The sense of serenity and complete oneness with nature which these episodes have in common is voiced by Zarathustra in A Mass of Life (Part Two/IV):

"Glowing Noon-tide sleeps on the meadows.
Thou liest in the heather. Soft!...
This is the secret hour of solemn silence
when no shepherd sounds his flute...
Stay thy song - hush! whisper not e'en
a word. The world is grown perfect.
Hush!"

Already in Delius's earliest period such peaceful, tranquil passages are to be found in his music. In their most serene moments, both the Florida suite and Hiawatha share the common symbol of the sunset. The third movement of the suite, 'Sunset', is largely devoted to the energetic Negro 'Danza'. But in the short tone poems which form a prologue and epilogue to the dance a tranquil mood prevails. For the closing bars the muted strings have alternating semiquaver patterns and the horns a repeated call which hangs in the air (ex. 37, pp. 70-1). In these final bars Delius gives prominence to the sixth of the scale (F sharp), adding to the texture a characteristic harmonic warmth.

Ex. 37. Florida, 3rd movement, conclusion.

Più lento

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system includes Oboe I & II, Clarinet A, Bassoon I & II, and Bass II. The second system includes Flute I & II, Bassoon III & IV, and Bass I. The third system includes Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The tempo marking 'Più lento' is present at the beginning of the first system and again in a boxed section at the start of the third system. The score features various musical notations including notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings such as 'p' and 'pp'.

(Ex. 37.cont.)

This musical score page, labeled "(Ex. 37.cont.)", contains the following parts and markings:

- Flute (Flta):** Two staves (I and II) with dynamics *pp* and *ppp perdendosi ppp*.
- Clarinet (Cl):** One staff with dynamics *p* and *ppp perdendosi pppp*.
- Bassoon (Bass):** Two staves (I and II) with dynamics *pp*.
- Violin (Vln):** Two staves (I and II) with dynamics *pp*.
- Viola (Vla):** One staff with dynamics *pp*.
- Cello (Cello):** One staff with dynamics *pp* and *ppp morendo ppp*.
- Double Bass (D.B.):** One staff with dynamics *pp* and *ppp perdendosi ppp*.

The score is written in a common time signature and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

As was noted in section one, Hiawatha was based on Longfellow's poem The Song of Hiawatha. Indeed, at several places in the manuscript it is evident that relevant quotations from the poem had been written above the music, then subsequently erased. For some reason, Delius did not get as far as erasing the final two quatrains, which head the closing bars of the tone poem:

"Westward, westward Hiawatha
Sailed into the fiery sunset,
Sailed into the purple vapors,
Sailed into the dusk of evening."

"Thus departed Hiawatha,
Hiawatha the Beloved,
In the glory of the sunset,
In the purple mists of evening."

The similarity in texture of the peaceful closing pages of Hiawatha - ex. 38, pp. 73-4 - to that of ex. 37 is self-evident. The horn-calls, semiquaver ostinati in muted strings, added sixth harmony and near-static harmony are all present.

Shortly after the completion of Hiawatha in January 1888, Delius again endeavoured to match the serenity of the sunset, this time in response to the poetic imagery of Andreas Munch's Sunset.⁸³ Interestingly in this solo song, the piano writing closely resembles the sunset idiom of the two orchestral scores. The ostinato rhythms of the tremolo (like the haze of string sound), melodic fragments in the left hand (like horn-calls) and frequent added sixth chords give this evocative, delicate song its special character (see ex. 39, p. 75):

83. Though it is not possible to date the song precisely, it was probably written between June and September 1888.

Ex. 38. Hiawatha,
copyist's MS corresponding to
f. 33b - f. 34a of the original MS.

W

Thus departed Hiawatha
Hiawatha thy Beloved
In the glory of the sunset
In the purple mists of evening.

1. Fl.
2/3 Fl.
OB.
CLARS.
BASS.
1/2
HWS
3/4
TIMP.
W
HARP
V 1
V 2
VLA
C. & D.
BASS
DIV.
DIV.

(Ex. 38.cont.)

This musical score is a complex arrangement for a large ensemble, likely a symphony or chamber orchestra. It consists of 14 staves, organized into four systems of four staves each. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The second system features a prominent melodic line in the upper staves, marked with a fermata and a triplet. The third system is characterized by dense, rhythmic patterns in the lower staves, possibly representing a woodwind or string section. The fourth system continues these patterns, with some staves showing more complex rhythmic figures. The score is written in a clear, professional style, typical of a published musical manuscript.

Ex.39. Sunset, opening.

Andante quieto quasi Allegretto.

Nun sinkt hin - ab die Son - ne sacht' in
 Now gent - ly sinks the sun to rest The

fer - nen Wal - des Schat - ten und schenkt uns Ruh in sanf - ter Nacht mit
 woods are draped in sha - dow Eve - ning's night with ra - diance blest Of

The use of an added sixth which has been noted in the tonic chords of these examples is a harmonic feature employed only in music in this idiom. The section on elements of Delius's language influenced by Negro folk music brought to light a penchant for the colour of the sixth in melodic figuration. But the deliberate emphasis placed on chords with an added sixth in these tranquil pieces is not generally found elsewhere. The warm, rich texture imparted to simple harmony by the added sixth seems to have had quite particular associations for Delius.

In the simple forms illustrated here it is not immediately evident how these recurring characteristics could constitute what was earlier described as "a founding pillar of Delius's language". Nevertheless, in these first rudimentary attempts to find in himself the means whereby he might express his sense of serenity and tranquillity, the composer came upon musical ideas which would prove to be valid for him throughout his career. The ostinato rhythm, melodic cell or call and rich added-note harmony coupled to a 'tranquillo' setting return again and again in Delius's music: in Scene III of A Village Romeo and Juliet (1899-1901), in numerous passages in In a Summer Garden (1908), at the end of the song The Nightingale has a Lyre of Gold (1910), and at the end of

the Air and Dance (1915), to name but a few. Example 40 (p.77) shows an episode from one of the works Delius was working on before the illness of his late years put a stop to all writing - A Late Lark for tenor and orchestra (1924, completed by dictation 1929). The given passage is preceded by a setting of these lines:

"A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content....."⁸⁴

The poetic imagery is, here, once more of the sunset. In the years intervening between Florida and Hiawatha and A Late Lark, Delius's language had reached a high degree of sophistication and harmonic complexity. Yet, when - in late life - he would suggest "an influence luminous and serene, / A shining peace", the idiom which he invokes is fundamentally that of the "purple vapors" into which Hiawatha had sailed. Bars 6-7 of ex.40 in particular embody all the recurring features.

Several of the constituent elements of the 'serene' idiom Delius formulated in his early scores were also typical of the 'solitude' music in the mountain-scores discussed in section two. Indeed, the principal and, at times, only difference between the two idioms is their respective harmonic foundations. While rhythmic ostinati, slow harmonic rhythm and horn-call types of fragmented melody might characterize evocations of both the sunset and wilderness, the warm texture of the harmony in sunset music creates a mood wholly distinguishable from its desolate counterpart. In place of the bare 4ths and 5ths and modal shadings, here are full chords, often adorned with the luxury of added submediant or other tones. The difference is small and subtle, yet in Delius's poetic sensibilities the gap between solitude and serenity is evidently crucial. The sense of dissolution appertaining to the timeless, emotionless landscapes of the wilderness clearly contrast with the sense of resolution in the perfected, complete, natural world of his serene episodes.

84. From W.E. Henley: Life and Death (Echoes) (1886).

Ex.40. A Late Lark (1924-29),
2 bars before fig.1 - fig.2.

1

as in con-tent.
die Son-ne noch.

Hn. *mp*

Ob. *L.H.*

mf [add W.W.]

L.H.

falls on the old, grey ci-ty An in-flu-ence lu-min-ous and se-
fällt auf die al-te Stadt ein strah-len-der Frie-de, Ein ver-

Fl. *mp*

Vln. solo

Hn. *p*

p [Strings] *dim.*

There
Es

. rene, A shin-ing peace.
. klär ter, letz-ter Schein.

Ob. *mp sfz* [add W.W. & Hns.]

. rene, A shin-ing peace.
. klär ter, letz-ter Schein.

Vln. solo

Ob. *p*

Cl. *pp*

Basses

The poetic imagery of sunset is a favourite and ideal choice of symbol for Delius. However, as was the case with his bleak wilderness idiom, it is the poetic mood which is the composer's primary stimulus; the associated imagery is incidental and may, in fact, be drawn from a limitless range of appropriate experiences of nature. That Delius's idioms were not dependent on poetic imagery - turned out as stock programmatic formulae for given natural symbols - is well illustrated by one of the composer's early songs.

The poem of the well known Twilight Fancies (1889-90, Bjørnson),³⁵ employs one natural image, which completes each of the three verses. Verse one is as follows:

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

The imagery is of sunset and twilight, but the musical language is not that noted in the sunsets of Florida, Hiawatha and the song Sunset (see ex. 41, next page):

35. Prinsessen in the original Norwegian. Although the manuscript is lost, the song was probably originally composed to a German translation, under the title Abendstimmung. In its first English edition it was given the title Evening Voices, the translator possibly confusing 'Stimmung' (mood) and 'Stimme' (voice).

Ex.41. Twilight Fancies, opening.

Andante tranquillo ed espressivo *mp*

VOICE The

PIANO *pp* *mp*

ad libitum

con Fu

Prin - cess look'd forth from her maid - en bow'r. The horn of a herd - boy rang

There are horn-calls, repeated rhythms and near-static harmony - but the harmonic foundation consists of naked, cold intervals, with an ambiguous tonal centre slipping between B minor and G minor. In spite of the natural imagery in the poem, this is manifestly the solitude music associated with moods of the wilderness. It evokes the chill of human loneliness rather than the serenity which might be deduced to be the human response to sunset. This beautiful expression of solitude and longing will be further considered in chapter two.

On several occasions in the period before he devoted himself to opera composition (around 1890), Delius had tried out the effect of spreading the basic idiomatic colours of the early 'serene' pieces over a larger canvas. Most notable here are the first movement - headed 'Pastorale' - of the Suite for violin and orchestra (1888)⁸⁶ and the small tone poem Summer Evening (1890). As the principal examples of

86. Unpublished. DT vol.3 (RL pp.23-4).

instrumental compositions making substantial use of the idiom before it became a common feature of Delius's mature style, these pieces are of special interest.⁸⁷

Delius's 'Pastorale' seems to bear some relation to the 'pastorale' tradition established by eighteenth century composers: it opens with and makes much use of a 'drone' bass in open 5ths (a common feature of early Delius scores, however), and favours in melodies the reed tone of the oboe. It emerges, nevertheless, that the movement is a miniature tone poem, the music intended by the composer to create a mood poetically associated with pastoral nature.

The opening is oddly out of character with the remainder of the movement, presenting a rather pedestrian modal-tinted theme; it is with the second subject that a relationship with earlier 'serene' scores can be sensed. The tonic major chord is here ornamented with an added sixth, and repeated rhythms pervade both the melody and accompaniment:

Ex.42. Second subject, f.2a (bar 4).

Several repetitions of this material ensue, the last of which introduces perhaps the work's most significant feature. In the woodwind, snatches of melodic figuration are tossed about from one instrument to another (ex.43, p.81). With their

87. A handful of other orchestral works from this period, which have probably not survived, had titles which suggest that the pastoral idiom may have been quite widely used by Delius around 1889-90: Idylle de Printemps (1889, RT p.127), Spring Morning (1890, RT p.129) and Autumn (1890, RT p.129).

Ex.43. Suite for violin, I, f. 3b

(Reproduced with the permission of The Delius Trust)

Ex.44. Suite for violin, I, copyist's MS
corresponding to f.10b - f.11a
of the original MS.

This is a handwritten musical score for a suite for violin I. The score is arranged in systems, with each system containing staves for different instruments. The instruments listed on the left are:

- 3 FLUTES
- OBOE 1
- CLARINET 1
- BASSOON 1
- HORN 1
- SOLO VIOLIN
- VIOLIN 1
- VIOLIN 2
- VIOLA
- CELLO
- BASS

The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings like *pp* (pianissimo). There are also some handwritten annotations and corrections throughout the score, including a circled '3' above a note in the flute part and a circled '1' above a note in the solo violin part. The bottom left corner of the page has the number '(122.)' written in parentheses.

fanfaric configuration and rhythmic repetition, these motifs are evidently related to the horn-calls which cut into the textures of the sunset passages in Florida and Hiawatha. The idea is also an obvious extension of the isolated woodwind calls imitating birdsong in the 'dawn chorus' which opens Florida. As single cells, making abrupt entries and changes of register, and with stress on the submediant tone, such calls are peculiar to Delius's pastoral tone poems.⁸⁸ A further development of this idiom took place in Act III of Irmelin, Delius's first opera; this will be considered in chapter three.

The colouring of the solo violin's rippling triplet runs with the added sixth in primary chord arpeggiation characterizes the whole movement. In the final pages these arabesques have passed into the orchestral violas, the solo violin rises in trills towards the top of its range, a solo horn sinks in contrary motion, cellos fasten down the simple harmonic progression to a quiet tonic/dominant pedal and the woodwind call out their motifs. At this moment - ex.44, p.82 - a sense of tranquil resolution is achieved without equal in the composer's pre-operatic output.

The 'Pastorale' anticipates by many years the development of a similar idiom by composers of the English pastoral school. One work which provides a remarkable parallel to Delius's unknown score, Vaughan Williams' The Lark Ascending, dates from 1914.

While isolated passages of the 'Pastorale' indicate a singular talent in the use of idiomatic colour, Delius is still far from proficient in extending his ideas. Superfluous repetitions of material are needed to give the work any bulk. The same problems face the composer in the composition of his small tone poem Summer Evening. The material,

88. A similar, pentatonically-coloured call associated with birdsong was seen in ex.21 (p.53) in the penultimate bar.

as in the 'Pastorale', has much of the lyrical charm and colour of his 'serene' idiom, and little of the plasticity and energy needed to carry the argument of a work of substance. The material is also scant, comprising basically the following two themes:

Ex.45(a). Opening theme.



(b). Subsidiary theme, bar 16.



These provide, through episodic treatment, the thematic content of a 74-bar A-B-A structure.

Summer Evening is notable for two reasons. First, it attains in its exquisite coda, by combining the essentials of the pastoral idiom, a mood of peace and repose. Secondly, and uniquely in the pre-maturity music of this genre, it includes a powerful lyrical climax. That the main theme - ex.45(a) - contains enough rhythmic tension to spring such a climax, places it somewhat apart from the floating themes of earlier scores. This sacrifice of serenity to rhythmic balance and motion is to become a primary element in Delius's achievement of continuous flow in his music.

The instances of the 'serene' idiom in Delius's early music are numerous, often occurring in brief passages; it has therefore been necessary to limit this discussion to principal examples. One song is worth noting in further illustration, however. Dreamy Nights (Lyse Nætter in the Danish of Jacobsen set by Delius) dates from late in the period under consideration (1891), but is one of the most economical settings in Delius's output. Its poetic text and musical

language bring together the principal elements which have been discussed here:

"On shore how still, all nature seems asleep;
like a silver path now lies the silent deep;
the Heaven softly blending with the waves,
the sunset glow the surface laves."

Ex.46. Dreamy Nights, opening.

The musical score consists of three systems. Each system has a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo/mood is marked 'Quiet and dreamy' and the dynamic is 'pp'. The lyrics are: 'On shore how still, all nature seems asleep; like a silver path now lies the silent deep; the Heaven softly blending with the waves, the sunset glow the surface laves.' The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic ostinato in the bass line and a harmonic pedal in the right hand. The vocal line is simple and follows the natural inflection of the text.

The rhythmic ostinato, harmonic pedal and added sixth colouration are familiar features now in response to the sunset imagery. But the poem also introduces a new idea:

"And gazing thus there seems to float in sight
a vision soft of childhood pure and bright:
How strangely glad that dreamy night."

In its simple way Dreamy Nights bridges the two early periods of Delius's career. For its combination of nature and innocence is to prove the central theme of Delius's music in the 1890s.

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Section Four - Delius in the Era of the Individualist

During the forty years which separate the deaths of Weber and Beethoven and the composition of Tristan und Isolde, the doors of music were thrown wide open to the influence of Romanticism. The Romantic movement, which emerged in the poetry of the late eighteenth century, reflected the convergence of two currents: the social revolution which brought freedom and dignity of the individual into political focus, and the aesthetical reaction to the intellectual bias of the Enlightenment. Bringing with it an increased emphasis on human emotion, senses and imagination, and on their validity in interpreting human experience of the world, the Romantic movement created a climate in which Individualism might thrive in art.

Music, employing a language of abstracted thought and sublimated feeling, was not essentially an ideal medium for the Romanticist who wished to lay bare his individual identity: the composer had to seek assistance in external ideas and symbols to convey Romantic content. At the same time, it had been the tendency of literary arts to aspire ever more towards music's powers of suggestion. The Romantic movement in music can be said to have come into being with the fusion of arts in Romantic opera.

So exciting was the potential, so inflammable the mixture, that this vital period of forty years is probably the most chaotic in musical history, with experimentation in combinations of arts and many new forms of programmatic composition. The possibilities for creative self-expression within the Romantic aesthetic have been explored constantly since then. Yet, because of, rather than in spite of, the fury with which the Romantic fire burned in music, the blaze reached its brightest point relatively quickly, in Wagner.

Broadly speaking, the Romantic movement allowed composers' assertions of themselves as a principal creative goal. Whereas, previous to the cult of the Individual, the composer had been the vehicle for expressing formal musical impulses - the means to that end, so to speak - music now became the

vehicle for expressing the composer's identity. Means and end were, to some extent for each Romanticist composer, interchangeable. Carl Dahlhaus has described this altered function of expressivity in music in the following way:

"Ever since the Sturm und Drang it was a firmly held belief that the essence of genius was originality; meaning, psychologically, that musicians speak of themselves in their music, rather than depict emotions from a detached standpoint, that they 'must be moved themselves, in order to move others' (C.P.E. Bach). In the 19th century, and especially with Wagner, the expressive principle, from being an interpretative aesthetic as it originally was in both opera and keyboard music, became a compositional aesthetic."

For the generation of composers to which Delius belonged - the post-Wagnerian generation - the dominance of Individualism in the creative aesthetic was widely taken for granted. Many of Romantic music's leading figures make their principal contribution to the art precisely in the force with which they express their individual identity; any assessment of the value of their music commonly takes place within a frame of reference which recognizes this fact. The passionately lyrical language in Tchaikovsky, Rakhmaninov and Skryabin, the impressions of external musical and natural forces in Delius, Debussy and Sibelius, and the rhythmic eccentricity of Ives, Scott and, later, Grainger: such individual characteristics are the milestones in the history of Romanticism in music. The more strongly Individualist a late-Romantic work is, the more it is assessed in terms of how far the peculiarities of the composer's personal vision, transformed into music, also expressed a universal vision. A set of values is necessarily applied to works of strong Individualist content which differs in subtle ways from that applied to works of conservative nineteenth century composers. Tchaikovsky, in a penetrating assessment of Grieg, illustrates well the typical shift of perspective:

89. Carl Dahlhaus: 'Richard Wagner' in The New Grove Dictionary of Music (London, 1980), vol. 20, p. 118.

"Grieg's mastery is perhaps considerably less than Brahms', the shaping of his music less sublime, his goals and aspirations not so all-embracing; an unconscious struggle to fathom infinite depths seems to be wholly lacking. On the other hand, he is much closer to us, he is much more kindred and understandable to us, precisely because he is deeply human. When we hear Grieg we instinctively recognize that this music was written by a person driven by an irresistible need to express, with the help of sounds, a deeply poetic, natural stream of emotions and moods - without compromise to theories and rules...but rather giving way to the demands of a living, genuinely artistic feeling. There is no point in searching stubbornly for completeness of form, stringency and faultless logic in thematic argument in the music of the Norwegian....On the other hand, how enchanting, spontaneous and rich is his musical imagination."⁹⁰

The Individualist (Grieg) appeals to the instinctive, "deeply human" side of the critical faculty. Yet the Traditionalist (Brahms) has in his favour his "unconscious struggle to fathom infinite depths". What is this latter, rather mystic, quality, taken to be less characteristic of the Individualist? An answer to this question must, in the end, refer back to a definition of the meaning of music and the problem of what constitutes greatness in music - a problem which, for all its thorns, is grasped instinctively by all critics (represented by Tchaikovsky above) in their undefined, yet assured, assumptions that lesser and greater genius can be classified.

In the literary arts, where a direct relationship may be recognized between the physical world and its representation, the burden of criticism rests on the degree to which an artist has reflected the universal experience of the conflicts of life. This is not the case in abstract arts, such as music and sculpture. The languages of music and sculpture are referential, without concrete links to the material world. (The referential language of music is tonal tension: the reference is to the sphere of emotions, to the experience of emotional tension and release. Sculpture employs a language of contours, having reference to the inflections and lines

90. ed. I. I. Tchaikovsky: Drevniki P. I. Chaikovskovo (Diaries) (Moscow-Petrograd, 1923) p. 370 ff. Quoted in Norwegian in Jon-Roar Bjørkvold's article 'Peter Tsjaikovskij og Edvard Grieg - en kontakt mellom to åndsfrender', Studia Musicologica Norvegica (1976), p. 38, and translated by the present author.

of bodily gesture). Lacking a concrete relationship to universal experience of the material world, these abstract arts are instinctively judged by the criterion of form - for form is the abstraction of human experience. That is to say, form is the embodiment of the simultaneous complexity and unity of human experience, where the complexity is the infinite intricacy of endless challenges, and the unity is the sense of purpose and will by which the challenge is overcome. In this way abstract arts are joined with other art forms: in representing the spiritual odyssey achieved in spite of conditions favourable to spiritual defeat.

Tchaikovsky seeks in music, as a sign of its mastery, "completeness of form, stringency and faultless logic in thematic argument". He looks to form because only there can there possibly be revealed mastery of the flux of simultaneous complexity and unity which is evidence of sublime genius. And is not the "unconscious struggle to fathom infinite depths" (which he feels to be deficient in Grieg) simply a struggle towards this mastery?

The stock of great nineteenth century symphonists, if this criterion of judgement is accepted, stands high. In the masterpieces of Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Bruckner, Mahler and, to a certain extent, Tchaikovsky himself, the struggle towards the ideal of "completeness of form, stringency and faultless logic" went on.

But where does this leave the Individualist composition? Is not the aim of manifesting identity and individuality a creative goal essentially in conflict with the universality appertaining to the mastery of form? In practice, in the great majority of cases, the force of personality which characterizes the music of a composer is manifested in ways with which everyone may identify: the process of abstraction is such that what goes in, so to speak, as rampant individuality comes out as a shading in human nature. Put another way, the personal vision which inspires each Individualist may, when translated into music, correspond to the 'unity' of human experience which, in its relationship with complexity, can yield a successful form. Without having to qualify the

impression of personality/nationalism/eccentricity or whatever, it is possible to speak of greatness in some Individualist compositions (La Mer, The Song of the High Hills, Mahler's Fifth Symphony, Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, and so forth), where the conjunction of a deeply personal, yet unifying, vision and complexity create a valid essay in form.

Where the greatest problems arise in knowing where to apply the aforementioned criteria of judgement are in those instances of Romantic music where excessive Individualism has not readily translated to a universally appreciable vision.

Precisely because the power of the ego is the essence of Romanticism, Richard Wagner is the leading figure of Romanticism in music. A whole cosmos, created by the ego of the composer and conforming to it, exists in Der Ring des Nibelungen. The characters, the actions, the words and the musical characterizations - all are products of one individual. However, the cosmos of associations is self-contained, looking always in on itself; it is not an image of life, but of its creator's will. Like Valhalla, it crumbles at the final curtain.

The majesty of the Ring edifice does not conceal that the work, as a whole, is full of contradictions and puzzles. Deryck Cooke has pointed out that puzzlement over the Ring began even before the music was composed. In response to the poem of the cycle Wagner's friend August Röckel asked, "Why, since the Rheingold is restored to the Rhine, do the Gods still perish?". Wagner did not find this easy to answer, but contended that the complete experience of the opera would allay doubts. The rash of interpretative commentaries which followed the appearance of the opera cycle did not seem to indicate satisfaction, however:

"Evidently, The Ring had not set feeling at rest, and plenty remained for the intellect to search for. Worse still, the intellect found itself incapable of discovering the objects of its search." "

91. Deryck Cooke: I Saw the World End: A Study of Wagner's 'Ring' (London, 1979), p.2.

A unifying vision is not easily identified in this flawed concept.

Enormous though the changes and developments he brought about were, Wagner's contribution to music is difficult to put into perspective. Indeed, it is likely that Wagner can only be termed great within the limitations of the Romantic era, that is to say, in an era when Ego was great in art. It is possible that his most valuable contribution may, actually, be measured in terms of what he made possible for his successors. For the post-Wagnerians, individual vision was assumed as a point-of-departure, but, in being moderated by a traditional sense of the validity of form, did not necessarily disable genius.

A most interesting post-Wagnerian development was the increased importance of the miniature. The intense tonal relationships making up post-Tristan chromaticism can be regarded as a telescoping of complexity - the events of an extensive passage in pre-Wagnerian tonality being implied (though not enacted) in a brief space. Thus, a miniaturist of genius (Grieg, again, for example) can in a song or a piano cameo not attain the formal achievement of a symphonic conception, but suggest and symbolize that greatness.

It is symptomatic of how predominant Individualism had become after Wagner that it has been possible in the examination of Delius's early period in this chapter to identify four idiomatic areas of his language which would serve the composer as basic elements of his art until the end of his career. Even for his period Delius's case is somewhat extreme in this respect. That he devoted himself to composing at a relatively mature age (he was 24 when he enrolled at Leipzig) no doubt played its part. In the preceding years the events of his life had been such as to make him markedly self-reliant and self-indulgent. As noted earlier (p.35), Delius could write in 1888,

"....In my life I have been left so much to own resources that I have become egotistic without realizing it & have really only cared about myself & worked for myself."

In spite of this profession of egocentricity by Delius the four areas of his language considered in this chapter already indicate that the manifestation of Delius's individuality would assume forms universally appreciable. The sense of resolution which his 'serene' idiom captures, the mystic awe of his 'wilderness' and the affirmation of his mountain-exhilaration - these are deeply-rooted parts of his personality, and they are integral parts of his language throughout his career. The acquiring of a technique compatible with the nature of his personality was to take many years: most noticeably deficient in the early works are the means for achieving lyrical continuity, thematic development and formal unity. During this study it will also be seen that much of Delius's language falls into place with the evolution of his chromatic harmonic style. And this brings to the forefront that fourth area of idiomatic colour in the early period - the simple, primitive appeal of Negro music. Paradoxically, it is this most exotic of influences which will eventually provide the composer with his most universal theme. Delius would compose great works three or four times in his life: the roots of that achievement are already planted in these supremely self-indulgent early years.

To conclude this section, mention should also be made of negative side-effects of this essential self-indulgence in the music of Delius and other Individualists. In the fact that all Romantic composers are, to varying degrees, self-indulgent lies the explanation for the frequent juxtaposition among the works of nineteenth century composers of masterpieces and appalling trivia. To the self-indulgent artist, the difference between great idiosyncrasy and idiosyncratic greatness is not easily distinguishable. It is possible to see, even in Beethoven, such errors of judgement. In Verdi's opinion, "[t]he alpha and omega is Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, whose first three movements are sublime, and whose last movement is very badly set."¹² Grieg put his name

92. Letter of April, 1878, given in Letters of Giuseppe Verdi (ed. Charles Osborne, New York, 1971), p. 205.

to bloodless salon pieces as well as the Slåtter(Folk Dances), op.72, the astonishing crown of his later years. Delius achieved, in setting Nietzsche's poetry in A Mass of Life, a spirit of timeless affirmation and aspiration; yet his attempts to convey the same spirit in the Requiem using his own words, resulted in a dreadful self-parody - a sort of doctrine of decadence.

In the titles of these two Delius works is reflected also one of the least favourable aspects of Romantic Individualism. Throughout the period composers were convinced that a great poetic heritage which was altered by or sieved through their personal vision or interpretation could but profit from the conjunction. Shakespeare was endlessly 'interpreted', along with other poets and other poetic traditions. Religious ritual was not deemed too sacred by Wagner for it to be a subject for illustration in a music-drama. In most of these works, what might seem - given a Romantic perspective - "a popular character....without either deliberate condescension or unconscious compromise",⁹³ can appear in a different light as mere tastelessness.⁹⁴

A final negative by-product of the Romanticist's blinkered creative life is the tendency towards mannerism. It is a weakness to which all highly idiosyncratic composers are prone, Delius among them. The idiomatic features characteristic of the four groups considered in this chapter are . . . easily imitated, and might be called upon to buttress flagging inspiration. This is a fairly common trait of Delius's output, not only in the early period, but perhaps more so in the late mature period. By the time he came to write such pieces as

93. Martin Cooper, in reference to the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: Beethoven - the Last Decade (London, 1970), p. 327.

94. Barzun (op.cit., p. 397) argues, however, that "the Romanticist's absorbing of all great poetry as his proper food is a sign of true simplicity and right reason."

On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring (1912) and Air and Dance (1915) he had assembled such a wide vocabulary of idiosyncratic turns of phrase that he could write small tone poems without recourse to the unbridled powers of imagination. It is, nevertheless, a weakness which has been greatly exaggerated by some commentators. In the penultimate chapter of this study some suggestions will be offered as to how this element of his art might be placed in a more realistic perspective (see pp. 336-9).

For the most part, Delius cannot be accused of turning out his idiomatic phraseology in set response to recurrent ideas. As noted earlier, his idioms bridge many types of poetic imagery. And, as with Grieg,

"...we instinctively recognize that this music was written by a person driven by an irresistible need to express, with the help of sounds, a deeply poetic, natural stream of emotions and moods."

Chapter Two

The Formative Years - 1885-1892:

(II) Aspects of Delius's Language

Section One - Main Influences

The idiomatic features of Delius's early music examined in chapter one give his writing an individual, distinctive character. From the first, when his creative skill became clear in Florida, his own stamp is already recognizable in the unusual use of traits of Negro folk music. And in the Norway-inspired compositions of his first years in Paris, Delius drew upon personal experience of mountain-mystery and mountain-majesty in depicting the moods of the wilderness in his tone painting.

Remarkable though it is that his first works should possess a high degree of individuality, it is inevitable that the bulk of Delius's early writing betrays the influence of other composers and his technical inexperience. The discussion in chapter one of individual elements of his language centred on those areas of composition least bound by tradition and technical expertise, and therefore most sensitive to the impression of personality: melody and rhythm. When the layer of idiomatic colour is peeled away from the surface of Florida, Hiawatha and similar early works, much of what remains is clearly the product of an aspiring student composer. In the harmonic language of his early music, Delius's main influences are self-evident; in matters of form and orchestration his efforts are unremarkable, though they do show his determination to master their intricacies.

Nevertheless, just as a composer's expression of personal experience may mark his music with his individuality, so also is it individual taste which dictates both his sympathies with other composers' styles and his choice of means of overcoming technical inadequacies. In the sections on Delius's

harmonic language, orchestration and form which make up the major part of this chapter, reference is frequently made to the influence of three composers in particular who constitute (to use Delius's own words) his "musical parentage": Chopin, Wagner and Grieg. Before the aforementioned aspects of Delius's early technique are examined, it is worthwhile isolating the areas of these composers' music which made the most impact upon him.

"My first great musical impression was hearing the posthumous Valse of Chopin which a friend of my father's played for me when I was ten years old. It made a most extraordinary impression on me. Until then, I had heard only Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and it was as if an entirely new world had been opened up to me."¹

Delius's great affection for the music of Chopin remained constant from childhood to old age. Thomas Beecham has said of Delius's musical tastes that only "Chopin and the later Wagner enjoyed his complete favour, although on a slightly lower level he had an honest affection for much of Grieg."²

Chopin's influence on the course of music in the second half of the nineteenth century was enormous. As Wagner and Grieg can be counted among those whose harmonic styles owed much to that influence, it is futile to try and evaluate how much Delius benefited directly from his knowledge of Chopin's music, and how much indirectly from Chopin's successors. Indeed, there is very little of Grieg's language absorbed by Delius which cannot be traced further back to Chopin. While the Norwegian was a close friend, and his music nearer to Delius, Chopin's music was perhaps dearer to him. That it is impossible to untangle the threads is unimportant here. The crucial point is that Delius was attracted to the harmonic freedom which characterized the music of both men. Primarily, this freedom is evident in a love of chordal sonority for its own sake, but the blurring of chordal function and tonality was a desired side-effect.

1. Quoted by Philip Heseltine in Frederick Delius (London, 1923), p.5.

2. Sir Thomas Beecham: Frederick Delius (London, 1959), p.195.

It is interesting that Delius and Chopin both brought their distinctive sonorities into existence through improvisation at the keyboard; in their music emphasis was placed on the effects of unusual combinations of harmonies, and taken off conventional structural procedures. Gerald Abraham, writing of Chopin's concertos, has pointed out that he

"demonstrates that the beauties of key-relationship and key-balance perceived by all the Viennese classical masters meant nothing to him....Chopin's weakness of key-sense was equalled only by the weakness of his sense of development".³

Among the most significant advances in chordal usage made in Chopin's music may be counted his progressions of unresolving diminished 7th and, more importantly, dominant 7th chords; the resolution of dominant 7ths to unexpected chords; sequences of added-note chords (9th, 11th chords, etc.); and a fluid chromatic style derived from avoiding the resolution of chromatic appoggiaturas and passing-notes. "Pianistic figuration creates chromatic alteration", writes Wilfrid Mellers of Chopin's music,

"indeed, there are so many 'altered' notes that the unresolved appoggiatura may become a substitute for the 'real' note. Far from establishing classical tonality, Chopin's harmony seeks mysteriously to disguise it: the A minor of the second Prelude, for instance, is present mainly by implication. Passing chords flow so rapidly beneath his fingers that they cease to have tonal significance, and become an effect of colour."⁴

The "effect of colour" is a phrase which sums up well the result of Chopin's exploration of chordal sonority. To Grieg and Delius, as also to Debussy and Ravel, it was his most valuable legacy.

Delius's indebtedness to Wagner in his rhythmic patterns and in the shaping of the contours of his melodies was noted in chapter one. In later sections of this study devoted to Delius's stage works, many of Wagner's most characteristic

3. Gerald Abraham: Chopin's Musical Style (London, 1939), p. 36.

4. Alec Harman and Wilfrid Mellers: Man and His Music (London, 1971), pp. 811-12.

music-drama procedures will also be seen to have played their part in the fashioning of Delius's operatic technique. Likewise in the present chapter, Delius's harmonic language and orchestral textures testify to an enormous admiration for Wagnerian precedents. However, in the area of harmonic influence, the shadow of Wagner behind Delius overlaps with those of Chopin, in certain instances, and of Grieg, in very many. It is probable that both Wagner and Grieg contributed to the presence in Delius's harmonic vocabulary of deceptive cadences with unexpected resolution of dominant 7th chords, abrupt and unusual modulation, sliding (often chromatic) sequences of diminished 7th and dominant 7th chords, and the proliferation of half-diminished 7ths (or 'altered' diminished 7ths, as they are also known).

Delius probably had few opportunities of hearing or studying the music of Wagner before he arrived in Leipzig, whereas the sonatas and songs of Grieg had been his musical companion since childhood, and his inspiration in Florida. Once in Leipzig, though, "Wagner had become his musical god. There were sleepless nights upon performances of Tristan."⁵ Delius himself recalled that he and Grieg "often went to the Opera together, for 'Nibelungen', 'Tristan' and 'Meistersinger' were constantly given and of course we never missed a performance."⁶

In the end, the clearest sign of Wagner's direct influence on Delius is the degree to which Wagnerian expressive harmony, including the elements listed above, predominates in his early music. This is particularly noticeable in the microcosm of his songs, where the emotional intensity of his harmony marks an early peak in his development; the intensity arises from the frequency of chromatically altered harmonies and deceptively weighted cadences and progressions.

5. Eric Fenby: Delius (London, 1971), p. 24.

6. Delius: 'Recollections of Grieg'. Given in Appendix IV of CLL/1, pp. 394-5.

The close personal relationship between Grieg and Delius has been mentioned in chapter one. In the course of this chapter it is shown that Delius received from him not only a friendship and much valuable advice, but also many of the materials with which he built a foundation for his own technique. It is clear that Delius held Grieg to be a much more original and important artist than was generally acknowledged:

"At a time....when it was the custom to speak disparagingly of the composer Grieg, Delius had not the least hesitation in expressing his admiration for the genius of this little Norwegian. 'As a harmonist Grieg is particularly excellent,' he would cry, and would then cite passages from his songs."'

As was the case with Chopin, Grieg's value to Delius was principally that he revealed the "effect of colour" in unorthodox harmonic usage. But his influence is noticeable to some extent in practically all aspects of Delius's early technique: some of the more peripheral Griegian traits, which are not dealt with in more detail below, are worth mentioning here.

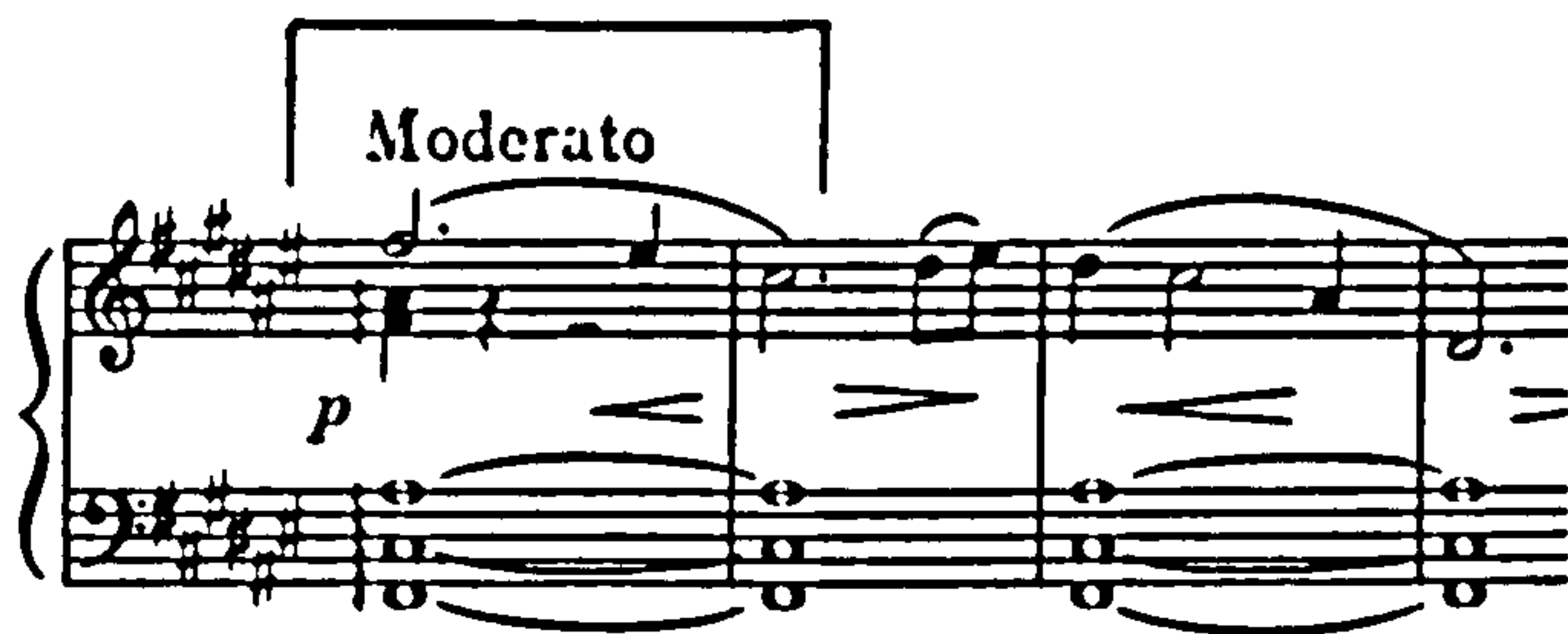
Melodic and rhythmic 'fingerprints' which occur throughout Grieg's output also make their appearance in Delius's scores. Perhaps the most well known of these is the descending melodic cell formed by tonic - leading note - dominant, recognizable in the opening phrase of Grieg's Piano Concerto and in countless other instances in his music. In allowing this phrase the same degree of emphasis which Grieg would have given it himself, Delius begs comparison with his friend. The following are typical examples of the cell in his early compositions:

Ex.1(a). Paa Vidderne, melodrama,
Section Two, opening.




7. Paul Klenau: 'The Approach to Delius' in A Delius Companion (ed. Redwood, London, 1976), p. 34.

(b). Irmelin, Act III, opening of prelude to Sc.2.



(For similar instances in Grieg's music, see his op.29, no.1, bars 4-5; op.33, no.2, bar 24; op.33, no.3, bars 2-3).

More obviously derivative are several features of Delius's writing which belong originally to Norwegian folk music but filtered through to him in the 'Springar', 'Halling' and other dance forms adapted by Grieg for his own use. The influence on Grieg (and perhaps Delius) of Chopin, who earlier employed similar traditional inflections, should also be kept in mind here. Heavily accentuated folk-dance rhythms make their appearance early in Grieg's output. This rhythmic cell, for instance $\frac{3}{4}$  is used in the third movement of the Piano Sonata, op.7; it reappears on two occasions in Delius's early scores - in the Rhapsodische Variationen (1888) and the opening of the third movement of his early string quartet (1888).

While this rhythmic idiosyncrasy is little in evidence after Delius's earliest, most Norway-oriented, period, two further folk music/Chopin/Grieg-derived elements of his language reappear in melodies throughout his career: the use of mordents, and of the Aeolian and Lydian modes. For the most part, the mordent sounds like a distinct echo of Grieg when employed by Delius in his early scores (see, for instance, ex.2(b), p.102). . But in mature compositions he seems to have chosen the contexts for its use with great sensitivity; on various occasions it is employed either in order to instil into a melody a sense of folk-like ingenuousness, as in the first dance-song of A Mass of Life (fig.19), or a timeless spirit, as in the mountain-calls of The Song of the High Hills (between fig.23 and fig.29). The recurrence of the Aeolian mode in Delius's mountain-scapes from Paa Vidderne to The Song of the High Hills has already been commented

on in chapter one (see pp.49 and 68). The fact that Lydian inflections in Delius's melodies become prominent only as he approached the end of his period of development might be partly accounted for by Grieg's sparing use of the mode until a relatively late stage of his career:

"....the use of the Aeolian is particularly characteristic of Grieg's modality in his early music The Lydian is the mode that has been especially and generally associated with Grieg's melodic and harmonic idiom; naturally, on account of its frequency in Norwegian folk music. But in the early stages Grieg does not make such a pronounced use of it as he does later." 8

Finally, special mention must be made of a common device with folk music connections which was to have very wide applications in the development of Delius's style: the 'drone' bass or pedal point. The uses Delius made of tonic and tonic/dominant pedals in his early music have obvious precedents in the music of Grieg, in whose folk-dance compositions they provide a natural, inevitable foundation. In his Study of Grieg's Harmony, Schjelderup-Ebbe writes:

"Pedal point effects (often of the 'drone bass' type) are characteristic of Norwegian folk music....Grieg's style was, as it is well known, strongly influenced by national idioms. Accordingly, one finds a most pronounced use of pedal point effects in his music. These occur so frequently, not only in works that are especially Norwegian.... but also in works of less national character that they constitute one of his major characteristics." 9

The mere presence of pedal points in Delius's works is not, in itself, proof of his indebtedness to Grieg. It is in the manner and contexts in which he applies them that he reveals the extent to which Grieg has guided him. Examples 2(a) and (b)(p.102) illustrate the typical tonic/dominant pedal of the 'Halling' and 'Springar' dances as it occurs in pieces by Grieg and Delius. The final two extracts show

8. Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe: Edvard Grieg, 1858-1867 (Oslo, 1964), p.343.

9. Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe: A Study of Grieg's Harmony. With Special Reference to his Contribution to Musical Impressionism (Oslo, 1953), pp.67-9.

Ex.2(a). Grieg, Homeward, op.62, no.6, opening.

Allegro giocoso alla marcia.

(b). Delius, Summer Eve (1888), opening.

ALLEGRETTO

(c). Grieg, Norwegian Dances, op.35, no.1, bars 90-104.

Cantabile

molto legato

(d). Delius, Winter Night (1888), bars 48-57.

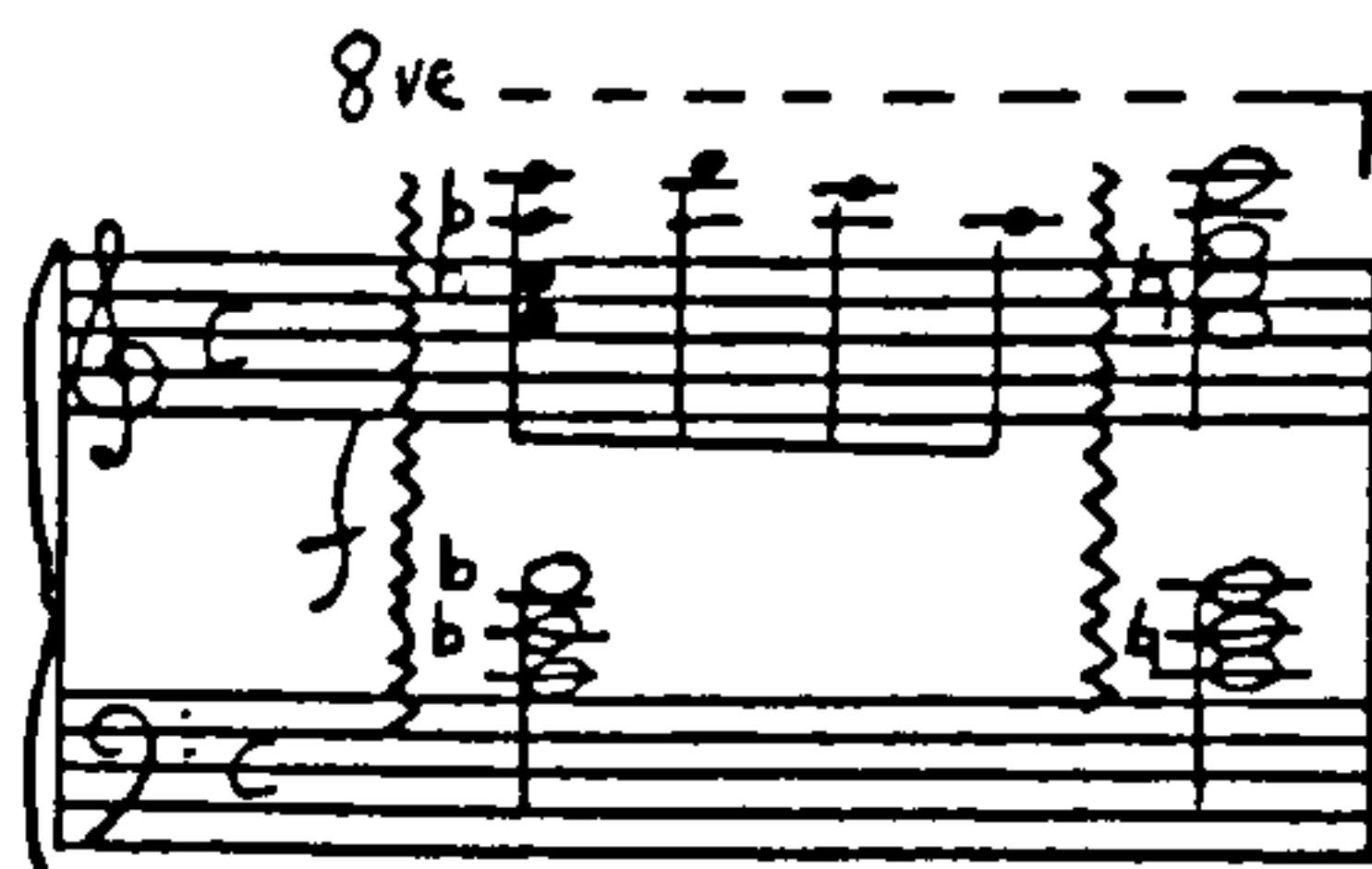
p. dolce

passages comparable in the use of a tonic 'drone' to underpin cantabile folk-melody and fluid inner lines. (Grieg's melodic fingerprint, mentioned above, is also a feature of Delius's melody here, marked 'x').

+ + +

Section Two - Harmony

Ex.3. Over the mountains high (1885), opening.



Over the mountains high, it may be recalled, is the earliest surviving Delius composition, dating from his stay in America. Although otherwise unremarkable, the opening progression of the song (ex.3), with its flattened submediant chord acting as an appoggiatura to the tonic chord, might be regarded as a symbol of the main driving force in Delius's development. Already in these, the first chords which are known to have been written by him, Delius is teasing the aural senses, deceiving the listener's tonal expectations with a colouristic device. The exploitation of ever more sophisticated, subtle and effective means of doing just that is the dominant trend in his progress from the time Over the mountains high was written - 1885 - until he attained a certain fluency in post-Wagnerian chromaticism around 1891-2.

As will become evident later in this study, the course of Delius's musical development after 1891-2, and especially the subsequent evolution of his chromatic style, is influenced more by the dictates of his personality than by Wagnerian or other musical precedents. But the trend which was established in his early years, and the momentum it gave him in the direction of forming a chromatic style, carried over into the years

of late development and maturity; it is this trend which marks him as one of the most adventurous spirits in the music of the period.

The individual harmonic devices used by Delius for colouristic effect - chromatically altered chords, particular applications of suspensions and passing notes, unresolved dissonances, and so forth - had been the property of several generations of composers. As Wilfrid Mellers' reference to the "effect of colour" created by chromatic alteration of harmonies indicated, such procedures were already common enough in Chopin's music. On the same subject, Gerald Abraham writes:

"This multiplication of appoggiaturas, passing notes, suspensions, and anticipations, usually in chromatic forms, produces an extraordinary plasticity, even fluidity, in the harmonic substance, so that at times all the parts are found to be moving by semitones as in Tristan."¹⁰

Though it had passed through many hands in the years between Chopin's time and Delius's, colouristic harmony had lost little of its appeal and expressive power.

In Part A of this section on harmony the most important of the colouristic devices in Delius's music are considered. Though they are for most part commonplace - the nuts and bolts of the harmonic machinery of the late nineteenth century - it is useful to see how they fit into place in Delius's early style. For, even if he would make no original use of a dominant, diminished or half-diminished 7th, it is of great value to an understanding of Delius's more advanced chromaticism to see him seeking out for those chords contexts where their ambiguity is most keenly felt.

It is, of course, reasonable to see (as Abraham does) parallels between the semitonal slide of notes in a colouristic moment in Chopin's music, and the chromatic movement typical of harmonic progression in Tristan und Isolde. However with Tristan (1865), Parsifal (1882) and sections of Die Meistersinger (1868) chromatic alteration came to

10. Gerald Abraham, op.cit., p.81.

be governed by a new aesthetic. Its purpose was no longer a blurring of chordal function in order to achieve a shading or spicing of the basic diatonic harmony. In Tristan, chromatic alteration and cadential deception is carried to such an extreme that "effect of colour" is subsidiary to the effect on the psyche of prolonged emotional tension. Expressiveness, not colour, became the primary function of chromatic harmony. Chromatic passages become gradually bolder and longer in Delius's works of the period 1885-1892. It is possible to see how his confidence grows in his ability to maintain the subtle balance of tensions created between aroused expectation on the one hand, and the fulfillment of expectation and function on the other. These passages, the most important of the composer's early career, are examined in Part B. In them Delius is clearly recognizable as a successor to Wagner.

Part A - Basic Elements

Diminished 7th:

The multiple choice of resolutions of a chord of the diminished 7th arises from the fact that only three diminished 7ths exist. Each, therefore, belongs to at least eight tonalities." Delius, like countless composers before him, seized upon this luxury of ambiguity with enthusiasm, employing the chord to excess in his early scores.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, the diminished 7th was greatly favoured by composers as a means of blurring tonal clarity, being useful both as an effective melodramatic device in opera, and as a pivotal harmony in modulations (in the works of Spohr, Chopin, Liszt and Wagner, among others). Chopin explored the potential of the chord for undermining tonality in sequences of diminished 7ths, often sliding in semitonal progression (see ex.4, next page):

11. An analysis of the chord's ambiguous implications may be found in Deryck Cooke's The Language of Music (London, 1959), pp.189-90.

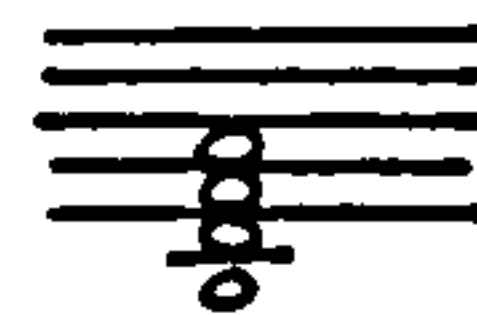
Ex.4. Chopin, Mazurka in A minor, op.7, no.2, bars 20-25.

Similar sequences are common in the music of Delius's earliest period, as in these bars from the Paa Vidderne melodrama:

Ex.5. Section Three, f.19a.

Half-diminished 7th (or 'altered' diminished 7th):

In its most common function, this chord acts as a chord of the dominant 9th with missing root (the 'chord of the leading 7th'); that is to say, it functions as an alternative dominant 7th. (Wagner was particularly fond of its ambiguous sound¹²).



The chord is generally of more interest when introduced in place of a diminished 7th. In the first of the two extracts below (p.107) Delius has employed it as a pivotal harmony in a mediant modulation from B major to Eb(D#) major, where a

12. An inverted form of the same chord is also crucial in Tristan, of course. But the so-called 'Tristan'-chord does not conform to the functional role of the half-diminished 7th.

diminished 7th would have been more orthodox. (Retrospectively, the chord is interpreted aurally as an altered super-tonic 7th). Example (b) presents basically the same progression. However, here the composer has gained the maximum effect out of this equivocal harmony by placing it at the opening of his song. This time, by suspending it over until the dominant (A) is sounded, it is interpreted retrospectively as an altered dominant 11th with missing root and third.

Ex.6(a). Sakuntala, f.8b (bar 2).

(b). O Schneller Mein Ross, piano introduction.

This chord, too, occurs in semitonally sliding sequences.

German 6th:

"[T]he dominant seventh....taken as an enharmonic form of the German sixth [is] Chopin's favourite pun, made some dozens, if not hundreds, of times in his music as a whole".¹³

Gerald Abraham's comment might also have been written of Delius. Again, however, Delius's early music frequently reveals

13. Gerald Abraham, op.cit., p.87.

him making considerable effort to place the chord where its particular colour in harmonic progression seems least faded. The ambiguity inherent in the harmony is used to impressive effect in the song Chanson de Fortunio and the tenor song with orchestra Sakuntala, where it is employed as the opening chord. As both works date from 1889, it would seem that Delius rather enjoyed the idea when it first struck him. Indeed, in the opening of Sakuntala (ex.7) there is much to be pleased with. Here, with the tonic G as a pedal point pivot, both the opening augmented 6th chord and the tonic resolution are dressed with a yearning supertonic → tonic appoggiatura. This is taken up by the tenor at his entry, with the repeated augmented 6th chord as accompaniment. A sense of longing is conveyed in these bars, one of the loveliest moments of the composer's early scores:

Ex.7. Sakuntala, opening.

Andante, molto tranquillo
Tenor *p dolce*

Ich konn-te vor Sehn-sucht nicht schla-fen, Ein
Blum-en-wind wagt - e her - ein

muted strings & wind p

Dominant 7th:

In the emancipation of 7th chords, Chopin is again regarded as the foremost exponent of adventurous progressions in the mid-nineteenth century. His sequential chains of 7ths, as at ex.8(a), are employed in similar fashion on many occasions in Grieg's works (for example, the first movement of his string quartet, op.27, bars 61-64, and op.43, no.4, bars 13-15), and subsequently in the music of Delius, as at ex.8(b).

Ex. 3(a). Chopin, Mazurka in C minor, op. 30, no. 4,
12 bars before the end.

calando e dimin.

(b). Delius, The Nightingale, bars 11-17.

(ALLEGRETTO TRANQUILLO)

Peace in my bosom to rest? ——— Peace in my bosom to rest? ——— Ah! why must I be e - - ver in sad - [ness]?

rit. PULLENTO dim.

This sequential progression may be interpreted as a prolongation of the fundamental principle of resolving the dominant triad onto a chord other than the expected tonic: in other words, it is an extension of the interrupted cadence. At the very heart of nineteenth century harmony are the seemingly numberless ways in which dominant 7th chords might instigate deceptive cadences. The Wagnerian harmonic language became more and more dependent on deceptive cadences the more the composer wished to avoid the finality and resolution of a perfect cadence (see ex. 9, p. 110):

Ex.9. Wagner, Siegfried, Act II, Scene 3.

(MIME) *(kichernd.)*

dann hab' ich mir Ruh', und auch den Ring! Hi-hi-hi-hi-hi - hi-hi-hi-hi-hi!

stacc.

f p cresc. -

più cresc. -

Ossia *stacc.*

SIEGFR.

Im Schla- - fe willst du mich mor - - den?

f p cresc. -

MIME (*Wüthend ärgerlich.*) *(Er bemüht sich den zärtlichsten Ton anzunehmen.)*

Was möcht' ich? Sagt' ich denn das? *Langsam. espressivo* Ich will dem

sf sf p dolce

Added-note harmonies forming chords of the dominant 9th, 11th and 13th were not common in Delius's music of this period. They occur most frequently in the slow, serene pieces, such as the song Sunset, and the 'sunset' episodes of orchestral works. It may be recalled that he also restricted his use of added 6ths to primary chords in music of this type. However, the instances of dominant 9ths in the early string quartet (1888) point towards a much freer use of these, and eventually secondary 9th and 11th chords:

Ex.10. Early string quartet, 4th movement

Mediant relationship:

Since Schubert's period, modulation to tonal centres lying a major third higher (mediant) or lower (flattened submediant) had been a common colouristic device. From Liszt's, Chopin's and Wagner's music Delius would have been able to draw much of the inspiration for his extensive use of mediant relationships. However, as was the case with pedal points, the striking similarity between his and Grieg's manners of employing these modulations seems to indicate that it was primarily to him that Delius was indebted.

Schjelderup-Ebbe writes:

"One of the chief means whereby ambiguity of tonality may be created is by sudden changes of key, which is also a major device for obtaining coloristic effects. As used for both these purposes such key-changes are most characteristic of Grieg's style and are found extensively throughout his

works....The unifying factor in such changes is often the relationship by thirds between the chords or keys involved." 14

Mediant modulation was the natural extension of mediant progressions within a single tonality, as in this cycle of thirds in Delius's early song Hochgebirgsleben:

Ex.11. Bars 25-29.



In a descending sequence in the small tone poem Winter Night (Sleigh Ride), Delius prolongs the cycle through six of the eight transpositions which are possible by dropping first by a major third then a minor (bars 31-39).

Mediant relationship of key centres characterizes substantial episodes in the early orchestral works Florida and Hiawatha. Such passages share a certain naivety through the composer's habit of stating a theme in the tonic key, shifting up or down a major third and repeating the material, then maybe returning to the tonic for a further repetition (see Florida, 1st movement, 6 bars before fig.4; 2nd movement, fig.1; 3rd movement, fig.3-5). Hiawatha also employs on several occasions cycles of thirds identical to that of ex.11, only now extended to modulation: for instance, F major at f.5a, to A major 8 bars later, to C# major 9 bars later, and back again to F major after a further 19 bars.

Delius, like Grieg before him, was adept at introducing the brash colour of a sudden mediant shift in harmony to add a humorous or light-hearted touch to his writing (see ex.12, next page):

14. Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe: A Study of Grieg's Harmony (see f.n.9), p.150.

Ex.12(a). Delius, Zum Carnival, bars 6-10.

A musical score for piano accompaniment, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef). The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. A bracket above the first three bars indicates a specific section. The notation includes various chords and melodic lines, with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) in the fourth bar.

(b). Grieg, Puck, op.71, no.3, bars 45-50.

A musical score for piano accompaniment, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef). The music is in a key with three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab) and a 3/4 time signature. A bracket above the first three bars indicates a specific section. The notation includes complex chords with fingerings (e.g., 2, 4, 5) and dynamic markings of *f* (forte) and *p* (piano).

Mediant relationships are also commonly behind progressions involving either the German 6th or the leading note 7th chord as a pivotal harmony. Deceptive cadences formed by these progressions are widespread in Wagner's late music and became increasingly so in the early works of Delius. In the following extract the cadential chord ('x') is approached as a dominant 7th, and quitted as the leading note 7th chord of the new key. The resultant modulation is between key centres a major third apart:

Ex.13. To the Queen of My Heart, bars 31-34.

A musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment, consisting of three staves (vocal line, treble clef piano, and bass clef piano). The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "cold ray strays O'er thy face, my heart's throned queen! * Wilt thou". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings of *mp*, *mf*, *cresc.*, *f*, and *mf*, and a tempo marking of *rall.* (rallentando).

To conclude this section, three extensive passages typical of Delius's music up to 1891-2 are examined. They have been selected, not to illustrate any particular aspect of the composer's technique at this time, but because they place in context many of the details of the composer's harmonic style considered in isolation above.

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Ex.14.

19 *f* *v* *v* *v*

20 *f* *v* *v* *v*

21 *f* *v* *v* *v*

22 *mf* o! Kommt, Ich stei-ge mit Jes bel-schall wie die

23 *mf*

24

25 Lorch en vor - aus den Gründ en und drüb on dem ro - sig - en

26 *mf*

27 *acc. molto*

28 Himm al all mein Glück

29 *f*

30 *acc.* mein Glück ver - küs [den!]

mf

Ex.14. O Schneller mein Ross (1888). Words by E.Geibel.
Bars 19-31.

Overall harmonic structure. The extract begins at the central bridge passage in the piano, and concludes at the return of the tonic chord (D major) at bar 31. The whole passage may be regarded as an extended dominant preparation, accumulating a high degree of tension at its climax. It is a device common in Wagner's music, and was also used by Delius on numerous occasions in other scores (cf., for instance, the close of the Paa Vidderne melodrama, before the change to $\frac{3}{4}$ -time for the coda).

Points of interest. (i) Bridge passage, 19-22. This tonality-blurring progression, with all lines descending by semitones, is a succession of 7th chords and half-diminished 7th chords. At the deceptive cadences in bars 19 and 20, the dominant A^7 (in third inversion) resolves onto a half-diminished 7th on $F\sharp$, then B^7 (in second inversion) resolves to a half-diminished 7th on F^4 . The progression returns to the dominant 7th at the entry of the voice, although at the introduction of the dominant note the appoggiatura B and suspended D colour the harmony for a half bar. (This resolution will be repeated at bar 24, with the additional spice of the chromatic accented passing note $B - \underline{A\sharp} - A^4$).

(ii) Dominant climax, 23-30. The underlying harmony of bars 23-26 ($\left[\text{II}^7 - \text{V}^7 \right] \left| \right.$) is made more interesting by the chromatic alteration to the fifth of the chord at 23, and the added 9th at 26. The bass note, A, at 27 - properly an extension of the dominant pedal under the supertonic 7th - is heard as the root of a dominant 11th chord, a marvellous pre-climax dissonance.

Ex. 15.

36 *mp* The Prin-cess look'd forth from her maid - en bow'r. *mf*

39 call of the horn rose a - gain from be-low. *mp* She wept in the twi - light and *mf*

43 bit - ter-ly sighed: 'What is it I long for, what is it I long for? God *f*

46 *dim.* help me!' she *p* cried. — And the sun *p* went

49 *pp* down, and the sun *pp* went *ppp* down. *morendo*

Ex.15. Twilight Fancies (1889-90). Words by Bj.Bjørnson.
Conclusion (bars 36-52).

Overall harmonic structure. This extract is immediately preceded by a horn-call figure in the piano identical to that at bar 50: the passage opens and closes, therefore, in B minor, in accordance with the key-signature. However, the voice enters emphatically in G minor before veering back to B minor (at 42). Furthermore, although both voice and piano establish F# minor at 47, the B minor home key is regained only by the piano. The accompaniment closes in B minor, but the melodic line implies F#, the dominant minor.

.As was noted in chapter one (see pp.78-9), this music is a haunting evocation of the chill of human loneliness, and here the unresolved yearning of the poem's Princess is beautifully rendered in this closing tonal ambiguity.

Points of interest. Although G minor is quite clear in the melody at 37, the pivotal harmony of bar 36 (half-diminished 7th on E) is still present in the accompaniment. Only after the German 6th in bar 38 is G minor agreed upon.

Ambiguity marks almost every progression. Heavily accented unessential notes play an important role here - for instance, the appoggiatura C# at bar 41, the suspended E and D in the sequence at bars 44-5 and the unresolved dissonant G# in the plagal cadence at 46-7.

The tension created by continually suspended or deflected harmonic resolution makes for an emotional intensity without precedent in Delius's music before 1890. It is a justly well known song, and may be regarded as the peak of the composer's achievement in this period.

Ex.16.

Più lento,
ed molto tranquillo ♩ = 72

35 *rallentando poco a poco* 37 38 39 40

41 *poco rit.* 42 ♩ = 68 43 44 45

46 47 48 49 50

51 52 53 54 55

Tranquillo

56 57 58 *rit.* 59 60

Ex.16. Opera, Irmelin (1890-2), Prelude to Act III,
bars 35-60.

Overall harmonic structure. The Prelude to Act III of Delius's first opera, Irmelin, is a simple A-B-A structure, with the keys of the three sections in mediant relationship: B major → Eb major → B major. The selected passage commences at the transition from the 'Allegro giocoso' of the opening section to the warmly lyrical slow centre of the Prelude. The harmonic scheme of the extract is fairly unsophisticated: a diversion into the tonic minor at bars 42-6 and a brief call at the flattened mediant minor (Gb) at 47-8 and major at 54-5.

Points of interest. Dominant or tonic/dominant pedals are present practically throughout the extract. This much-used simple device produces several rich sonorities when the pedal clashes with progressing harmonies. In each of the dominant 9th chords marked * (bars 41, 42 and 56), the third has been replaced by the suspended unresolving tonic. The chord is made yet more ambiguous at bars 42 and 56 by the flattening of the ninth.

In bar 46, the persistence of the dominant Bb creates a warm subdominant 9th harmony ('x'). This acts as a pivot to the Db 7th chord (the dominant of Gb, which follows), at which point the suspension gradually sinks to a resolution on Ab.

Richest of all the harmonies arising from the use of pedals is that at bars 54-5. The material is in Gb major, but the obstinate tonic/dominant pedal of the previous Eb major tonality instils an aura of added-note radiance.

+ + +

Part B - The Forming of a Chromatic Style

The most elementary form that fluid chromatic lines took in Delius's early music was that of the bass sliding downwards in semitones from the tonic:

Ex.17. Paa Vidderne, melodrama, Section 8, f.44a (bar 2).



This simple means of colouring the tonic harmony is very common in the composer's works, and can be seen in many of the illustrations of more sophisticated writing which follow in this section. It survived in the mature music of Delius as an idiosyncratic way of commencing a highly chromatic episode (for instance, at the opening of the final choral variation in The Song of the High Hills; here the chromatic slide is in an upper voice).

After about 1887 semitonal slides were occasionally used in inner voices, too, though this is not an important part of his language for several years to come. In the two instances below the chromatically altered chords function merely as an ornamentation of the cadential progression, imperfect at (a) and perfect at (b):

Ex.18(a). Hiawatha, f.29b.



(b). Summer Eve, conclusion (piano only).



(See also ex.13, p.113).

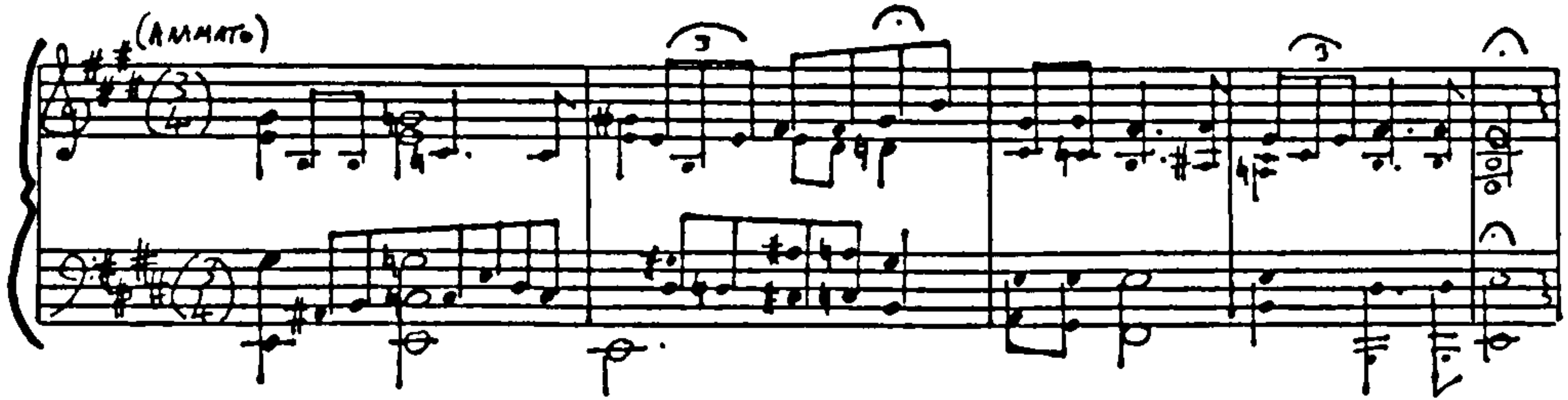
Similar procedures to these may be observed in a great number of Grieg's works. As Delius became steadily more proficient in the prolongation of chromatic passages, however, it was probably the music of Wagner's late operas which guided him most. His first attempts to write slow movements in Hiawatha and the Rhapsodische Variationen mark the beginning of the development of his chromatic style:

Ex.19. Rhapsodische Variationen, var.6, f.65a.



The alteration of primary and secondary chords by chromatic auxiliary notes and passing notes is at an unsophisticated level: the significance of the passage is that it shows that Delius is thinking in continuous phrases and of their individual linear and polyphonic effect. The principle of diatonic melody (here the Negro music-influenced theme of the variations) in conflict with its chromatic accompaniment also assumes great importance in the course of Delius's development. A different application of this idea occurs in variation 2. Here the juxtaposition of a chromatically ornamented cadence and a wholly conventional cadence represents a second strata of diatonic/chromatic conflict (see ex.20, next page):

Ex.20. Var.2, f.58a.



It may be recalled from chapter one that the incomplete sketches for Légendes for solo piano and orchestra (1890) have certain features in common with the Rhapsodische Variationen. One variation in particular seems to have been influenced by Negro music; in it the principle of diatonic/chromatic conflict is further developed. Ex.21, bars 1-8, shows two harmonizations of the same melody, the second one much more chromatic. The piano takes over at bar 9, and its elaborations of the theme put the sense of tonality under considerable stress (ex.21, p.124).¹⁵

An important stage in Delius's shaping of smooth linear movement from chromatic harmony was reached a couple of years earlier than the Légendes in Section Five of the Paa Vidderne melodrama. Delius's experimentation with a more fluid harmonic style is still governed by caution; the tonic E is present more or less throughout the passage (ex.22, p.125):

15. The piano figure at bars 12-15 of this example were later included in Delius's opera The Magic Fountain (see RT.pp. 25-27).

Ex.21. Légendes, f.33a (bar 4).

(MISTEROUSO, ALLEGRETTO)

Handwritten musical score for the first system. The piano part is in the upper staves, marked *piu f*. The orchestra part is in the lower staves, marked *ORCH.*. The tempo is *(MISTEROUSO, ALLEGRETTO)*. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 3/4. The system includes a first ending bracket with a repeat sign and a fermata.

ff

CANTABILE

TRAMANDO

f dolce

ON TUTTI FORZ.

Handwritten musical score for the second system. The piano part is in the upper staves, marked *ff*. The orchestra part is in the lower staves, marked *ORCH.*. The tempo is *CANTABILE*. The key signature has three sharps. The system includes a first ending bracket with a repeat sign and a fermata.

TRANQUILLO, MENO MOSSO

dolce

molto cantabile

HOVV

Handwritten musical score for the third system. The piano part is in the upper staves, marked *dolce*. The orchestra part is in the lower staves, marked *HOVV*. The tempo is *TRANQUILLO, MENO MOSSO*. The key signature has three sharps. The system includes a first ending bracket with a repeat sign and a fermata.

PIANO

ORCH.

Handwritten musical score for the fourth system. The piano part is in the upper staves, marked *PIANO*. The orchestra part is in the lower staves, marked *ORCH.*. The key signature has three sharps. The system includes a first ending bracket with a repeat sign and a fermata.

Ex.22. Paa Vidderne,melodrama,copyist's MS
 corresponding to f.28b of the original MS.

LENTO, MOLTO TRANQUILLO

«Hvorfor længet du om kvelden
 nedad til din moders stue;» «sov du bedre under feldeu,
 end på viddens brune tue?»

“Why do you each night keep yearning
 For your mother's little cottage?” “Did you, under sheepskins, slumber
 Better than in heather thicket?”

LENTO, MOLTO TRANQUILLO

Hjæmme sad på sengestokken
 gamle mor med mig og katten. spandt og sang, til drømmeflokken
 bar mig ud til leg i natten. «Drømme, drømme. — hvorfor drømme?
 Tro mig, dagens dåd er bedre!»

Mother sat on bedside frameboard,
 Mother old, with me and pussy, Span and sang till flocks of dreambirds
 Took me out to play in moonlight. “Dreams are dreams,—why dream and slumber?
 Truly deeds and days are better!”

350

355

The furthest Delius's chromatic style came in his pre-maturity music is seen in the slow movement of the 1892 Violin Sonata. This is dealt with in detail at the end of this section (ex.23),and it is useful to compare ex.22 with it; it will be seen that almost all semitonal movement in the earlier score is downwards,while a much finer balance of ascending and descending motion is apparent in the Sonata extract.

Even before the slow movement of the Violin Sonata has been examined,the trend in Delius's harmonic development may have become evident in the illustrations already given in this section. He is aiming at a subtle balance of opposing forces. One force is 'gravitational' - the pull downwards

of the diatonic progression and tonal chordal function which underpin the music; the other is 'centrifugal' - the urge away from the tonal centre by chromatic tension and semitonal linear flow.

As the anchorage of a tonal centre is loosened, it becomes increasingly difficult to identify the function of a chromatic alteration; indeed, the very term 'chromatic alteration' loses its applicability in direct proportion to the loss of tonal clarity. Carl Dahlhaus has written that,

"if, as is already partly the case in Tristan, the essential element in the association of chords is semitonal connection and not root progression (and it can hardly be disputed that it is the function within the association that determines the harmonic significance of a phenomenon), then 'alteration' is strictly an inadequate term, as it seems to imply that chromaticism is secondary and derivative. Rather, chromaticism has achieved a degree of independence from its origins in alteration."¹⁶

In theory, then, composers employing post-Tristan chromatic harmony draw close to the border with atonality. However, the existence of such a borderline, at which exact point tonality breaks down, is hypothetical. The conflict of emotional tensions was central to the Romantic spirit in general, and crucial to the creative aesthetics of Wagner and Delius. There is always tonal anchorage in the music of these composers, although the strain which their chromatic styles put on this mooring may be large. For Wagner, Delius and other Romanticists, music composed without these tensions would be chaotic absurdity. (Atonal music, in Delius's opinion, revealed that the composer had "an extremely ugly soul"¹⁷).

16. Carl Dahlhaus: 'Richard Wagner' in The New Grove Dictionary of Music (London, 1980), vol. 20, p. 123.

17. 'The Daily Telegraph', 5 October 1929. Reprinted in A Delius Companion (ed. Redwood, London, 1976), p. 43.

For this reason pedal points are very much in evidence in Delius's early music, and remain important in his writing throughout his career. Wagner employs pedals in identical ways to Delius (see, for example, Tristan, V.S. pp. 154-5, and p. 185, 'Immer sehr ruhig'). In several illustrations given earlier in this section it is evident that Delius also favoured the 'safety-net' of tonally unequivocal melody to counterbalance the perils of chromatic harmonization.

Frequently, the melody shows the influence of Negro folk music: the question arises, therefore, of whether Delius was deliberately trying to imitate the style of harmonization he had heard in Florida among the Negroes. Suggestions were offered in chapter one as to how this folk music might have sounded, and it was concluded that "the linear style which improvising Negro part-singers adopted in finding their way between [the] primary chord harmonic pillars was probably very fluid, and would have produced incidental combinations of tones which sounded exotic to the European ear" (p. 9). It appears, indeed, that at the same time as he was adapting the chromatic language of Wagner and of his period to his own ends, Delius's 'own ends' included the desire to recapture a profound musical experience at Solana Grove:

"Delius admits that he is a self-taught musician....and says he owes a great debt to the negro music which he first heard when he was working on an orange grove in Florida in the 'eighties....'I loved it, and I began to write music seriously myself. Night falls quickly there, and the native voices, always in harmony, sounded very lovely. It was mostly religious or gay music, but by no means like the negro spirituals sung by one man or woman, which are so often broadcast from London today. It was much more harmonious. I felt that here was a people who really felt the emotion of music'".

The conflict of diatonic melody and fluid chromatic harmony is an important element in the composer's eventual advance to creative maturity. Its significance in the works of his transitional period, 1896-9, will be considered in chapter five, p. 255 et. seq., and chapter six, p. 279 et. seq.

18. ibid., p. 42.

This section on Delius's early harmonic language concludes with the examination of an extensive extract from the slow movement of the 1892 Violin Sonata. Interesting also for its structural advances (which will be considered in the next chapter), the Sonata is the summit of Delius's achievement in instrumental music in the years up to 1892. Once he had turned to operatic composition in the years that followed, the progress of Delius's powers for several years is best measured by his approach to problems arising from the demands of music-drama: his handling of character, of the orchestra, of rhythmic continuity, etc. The chromaticism of his language makes little advance between the composition of the Violin Sonata and the transitional works of 1896-9.

The Sonata was first published in 1977. Delius's second Sonata for violin (1914) is known as No.1; Sonata No.2 followed in 1923 and Sonata No.3 in 1930.

+ + +

Ex.23.

Andante molto tranquillo

p sempre

6

11 *rall.*

16 *a tempo*

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a piano (right) and bass (left) staff. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is common time (C). The first system is marked 'Andante molto tranquillo' and 'p sempre'. The second system begins at measure 6. The third system begins at measure 11 and is marked 'rall.'. The fourth system begins at measure 16 and is marked 'a tempo'. The piano part features a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics, while the bass part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

(Ex.23.cont.)

21

25

29

33

(Ex.23.cont.)

37

dim. e rall. poco a poco

dim. e rall. poco a poco

42

Molto tranquillo

p

pp

47

pp

pp

Ex.23. Sonata in B major for violin and piano (1892),
slow movement, bars 1-53 (of 157 bars).

General structure. Example 23 constitutes the first A-section of the orthodox A-B-A² structure of the second movement. This section, too, falls into an A-B-A² mould; its harmonic superstructure is equally conventional:

<u>Bars</u>		<u>Keys</u>
1 -17	A	F# major: tonic
18-26	1st bridge passage	C# major: dominant
27-39	B	[F → G# → C# majors]
40-44	2nd bridge passage	C# major
45-53	A ² (corresponds to 9-17)	F# major

Points of interest. (i) Opening, bars 1-9. A gentle chromatic slide from the tonic note (cf. ex.22) begins the tranquil flow of the piece. Bars 5-7 give a typical instance of the polyphonic texture in which Delius had begun to conceive his ideas:

The image shows a musical score for three measures (bars 5, 6, and 7) of the Sonata in B major. The score is written for four staves, likely representing the violin and piano parts. The key signature is B major (two sharps: F# and C#). The time signature is common time (C). The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, along with rests. The texture is polyphonic, with multiple melodic lines moving in parallel motion. The first staff (violin) has a melodic line that starts on B4 and moves chromatically. The second staff (violin) has a similar melodic line. The third staff (piano) has a bass line that provides harmonic support. The fourth staff (piano) has a bass line that provides harmonic support. The measures are numbered 5, 6, and 7 above the staves.

(ii) 1st bridge passage, bars 21-26. Preparation of the dominant 7th which falls on the last beat of bar 26 is made by the repetition of the altered fifth (Gx) and seventh (B#) of the dominant chord in several bars. When it comes, their resolution offers a momentary glow of released tension before the bright F major triad of bar 27 (a mediant relationship, the dominant 7th on C# being quitted as a German 6th of F major).

(iii) B-section, bars 27-39. A new 4-bar phrase in the violin is repeated three times, with variations in the melody and

harmonization. The basic harmony is simple: I⁷ - V⁷ of the three tonal areas the music passes through:



However, all chords are ornamented in some way, apart from the opening triad of each 4-bar repetition. (These chords, marked *, are in second inversion, the most common position for 'resolution' in a Wagnerian deceptive cadence). The bass line of the piano part almost never has the root of the chords, and maintains a constant semitonal sliding motion.

+ + +

Section Three - Form

Until about 1890 Delius's large-scale instrumental scores expose his weakness in matters of form. Beautiful though the writing often is, with the composer's idiomatic traits and sense of harmonic colour creating much individual charm, the material proves to be 'short-winded', and rhythmic continuity is lacking. The Florida suite is made up, to a large extent, of blocks of material, which are often tied down to a tonic pedal. The unsoftened juxtaposition of these episodes is blatantly unsophisticated, but the crude sense of formal balance and contrast which results is not inappropriate to the generally naive spirit of the work.

Hiawatha, described as a 'Tongedicht', shows Delius struggling in his first efforts to manipulate and extend thematic material. The work turns out, however, more like a suite with bridge material, lacking coherent structural unity. It is difficult to imagine, for instance, how the self-contained waltz could ever be integrated into the larger whole. Key-relationships play no part in the unifying of the superstructure; the tone poem opens in A major and ends in E major.

Eventually, the development of his harmonic language would assist the composer in the structuring of his music. In his operatic writing a flux of ebbing and flowing harmonic rhythm was evolved which might be manipulated to sustain rhythmic continuity: longer episodes, intrinsically unified, resulted (these developments will be considered in chapter four). Until then, Delius's most satisfying work was done on a small scale - in songs and chamber works. Longing (1883) and The Bird's Story (1889), for instance, indicate an imaginative approach to the through-composed form, while in the fluctuations of emotional intensity in such love songs as To the Queen of my Heart (1891) and Aus deinen Augen fliessen meine Lieder (1890-1) the breakthrough in continuity in the opera The Magic Fountain is anticipated. Likewise on a limited scale, the Romance for violin and piano (1889) offers signs of Delius's awareness of the subtleties of motivic metamorphosis: in his mature compositions a structural principle based on the evolution of material from motivic cells would be one of his most individual achievements.

With the emergence in the Paa Vidderne melodrama (1888) of Delius's various types of 'mountain melody', some of the difficulty of large-scale composition was lessened. On the one hand, it will be recalled, were three categories of resolute, affirmative motif: these contained, in their springing rhythms, a rhythmic potential which might be exploited in writing lengthy passages. On the other hand, there was the floating, tranquil mood-music associated with "loneliness and melancholy": the strong contrast of this idiom might also have a structural application.

With the aid of these idiomatic parts of his language, Delius was able to write two works between 1890 and 1892 in which structural defects did not seriously undermine the overall effect of the composition. These were the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem (1890-1) and the B minor Violin Sonata (1892).

The table of themes and their role in Paa Vidderne given on p.135 reveals that a few motivic shapes and rhythmic cells serve in a wide variety of situations.

Table IV. Principal themes in the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem.

1. First subject group

ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO

(a) main theme f.3a

 CELLO & BASS *p*

(b) f.4a (bar 3)

 CELLO & BASS *p*

(c) f.6a

 TUTTI *fff*

2. 1st bridge

MOLTO TRANQUILLO

(a) f.7a

 CELLO, BASS & C. *p*

(b) f.7a (bar 5)

 HORNES *p*

(c) f.7b (bar 8)

 HORNES *p*

(d) f.8a

 JOB. *p*

3. Second subject group

TRANQUILLO e PATETICO

(a) main theme f.8b (bar 2)

 VIOLINS *mp*

MOLTO TRANQUILLO

(b) second theme f.9b (bar 4)

 CELLO & BASS *p*

(c) central climax theme f.12a (bar 3)

 TUTTI BASS *ff*

Almost the whole of the material is derived from the opening theme, 1(a), and its continuation, 1(b). However, it should be noted that, while the triplet rhythm of 1(b) bears a kinship with triplet figures in themes 2c - 3c, these later instances of the cell grow directly out of its use in theme 3(a) - the second subject - rather than 1(b). In a 400-bar work such frugality confers cogency and cohesion.

Less easily observed in a thematic table is the contrast which Delius achieves in spite of his self-imposed limits. The passion and resolve of 1(b) and 1(c) give way to quiet reflection ("loneliness and melancholy") for the bridge section, and this in turn leads to the noble second subject theme, 3(a).

Following the extended second bridge which answers for a development section (f.14b - f.18a), Delius begins the reprise of his ideas with a 'verbatim' repetition of the first subject and first bridge. More imaginative is his handling of the second subject, with its altered scoring - the violin theme, 3(a), now forms the subject of a dialogue between the high cellos and horns. The previous Bb - Eb tonalities supporting the theme have been tidily raised a semitone here to prepare the conclusion in the tonic key of E (now major).

Beecham has said of the work that "there is no fault to be found with its architecture and its downright force makes it an effective show-piece".¹⁹ Indeed, with its solid structural blocks of material and its intrinsic thematic unity and contrast, Paa Vidderne stands out as perhaps the most thorough, most effective essay in orthodox sonata form in Delius's output.

At least as important as the motivic unity and structural coherence of Paa Vidderne, however, is the fact that Delius does not manage to develop his ideas to any length or with any conviction. At its heart, in what would have been a development section in a strict sonata structure, the work lacks

19. Beecham: Frederick Delius (London, 1959), p.63.

an argument. Instead of development there is an extended bridge passage - a section which seems to indicate that the direction and limitations of the composer's creative processes were essentially incompatible with strictly applied sonata form. Ex.24 (p.138) shows the first 26 bars of the 70-bar bridge, and it will be seen that the whole passage is involved with the triplet figuration common to several themes. There is little rhythmic or motivic impulsion. The remainder of the bridge concerns itself with restating themes heard before, with no attempt being made to use these as the springboard to thematic development.

The structure of the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem has evidently not been pre-ordained by any extra-musical programme. It is the general mood of Ibsen's epic poem - where the symbols of the mountain's challenge and the freedom of the wilderness represent artistic endeavour and spiritual triumph - which has contributed most to the composition (see also chapter one, p.57).

Like Delius's earlier work for violin and piano, the Romance of 1889, the 1892 Sonata in B anticipates in some ways the process of motif evolution which characterizes much more advanced works in Delius's career. Each of the three movements presents a different approach to structural design. In the first, Delius has handled relatively successfully the demands of orthodox sonata form; as in the symphonic poem, the economic use of thematic material helps to unify the movement. The slow movement is a conventional A-B-A structure, but is imaginatively constructed around a central episode in the "loneliness and melancholy" idiom. The first of the two loosely bound, emotionally intense passages which flank this tranquil episode was considered above (ex.23). Most important is the finale, in which sonata form is modified to suit the composer's individual requirements.

The similarity of the principal themes of the first movement to the material shown in the table of motifs from Paa Vidderne (p.135) is immediately striking (ex.25, p.139):

Ex.24. Paa Vidderne symphonic poem, f.14a (bar 10).

PIU TRANQUILLO

rall. poco

MENO MOSSO

pp

pp

pp

Ex.25(a). First subject (bar 1).



(b). Second subject (bar 54).



In the development section of the Sonata's first movement a third theme appears, closely related to the main subject, into which the triplet rhythms typical of the Paa Vidderne 'mountain melody' are incorporated:

Ex.26. Subsidiary theme (bar 132).



In contrast to the orchestral work, Delius fashions from these ideas a substantial central section (some 112 bars). The thematic material provides both a sense of unity and - in its rhythmic impulsion - continuity. Yet it would be inaccurate to refer to the composer's treatment of his motifs as 'development'. There is, strictly speaking, no argument, no logical expansion of ideas, but rather a continual shifting of perspective. Delius views his material first from that angle, then from this one; and, if a new theme appears - as with ex.26 - it seems to be no more than a variant of the main subject material, so natural an outcome is it of the underlying rhythmic impulse of the movement.

The tendency of the 'development' section of the first movement towards an episodic treatment of material has become in the finale a definite, purposeful method of working.

Once again, the principal material has an intrinsic rhythmic unity in its springing dotted-note figures and elegant triplet runs:

Ex.27(a). First subject: A (bar 1).

Allegro con moto

(b). Bridge passage: B (bar 38).

38

(c). Second subject, main theme: C (bar 59).

(d). Second subject, subsidiary theme: D (bar 92).

90

Meno mosso

It will be noted here that themes A and C are particularly closely related, as are B and D. The sequence of short episodes constituting the central section commences with two new themes, in which these family groupings are extended: E is rhythmically similar to A, F to B :

Ex.28(a). Subsidiary theme: E (bar 108).



(b) Subsidiary theme: F (bar 118).

The simple balance effected by balancing A-type material against B-type material is maintained throughout the movement.

The thematic scheme of the final movement, from the opening of the episodic central section, is as follows:

108 - 117:	Statement of	E
118 - 128:	" "	F
129 - 148:	Variants of	C
149 - 156:	" "	B
157 - 160:	" "	C
161 - 170:	" "	D
171 - 184:	" "	E

Recapitulation

185 - 221:	Reprise of	A
222 - 231:	" "	B

Coda

232 - 255:	Material derived from F, B and A
------------	-------------------------------------

Interestingly, the second subject (C) makes no reappearance in the recapitulation. It had, however, dominated the climax of the central section. Contrast and balance is not forgotten in the endeavour to round off this 'Paa Vidderne'-Sonata in a blaze of mountain-affirmation. In placing the tranquil theme E (a second subject derivative) at the close of the central section, Delius provides a quite adequate foil to the ensuing truncated, but energetic, recapitulation.

In Delius's instrumental works after 1892, including those of his mature years, the episodic working of material is a favoured structural procedure. Some of the works from his late development period will be considered in chapter seven; among mature compositions employing a sequence of inter-related tableaux may be mentioned In a Summer Garden (1908), The Song of the High Hills (1911) and Eventyr (1917).

+ + +

The types of 'mountain melody' evident in the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem and the B minor Violin Sonata would be present in practically all of the instrumental works of Delius's development period. Typical instances have been collected together in Table V (pp.143-4), where it will be seen that the springing, bold rhythms of "joy and exhilaration" are frequently contrasted with the horn-call figures and modality of "loneliness and melancholy".

Once Delius had evolved a more flexible rhythmic technique and a subtler, mellower emotional range, the brashness and angularity of these rhythms became much less evident. (In mountain-scapes - parts of A Mass of Life and The Song of the High Hills, for instance - their reappearance is inevitable; and their occasional occurrence in the scores of the composer's final years seems to indicate a nostalgia for lost youth). At all stages of Delius's later career, however, his habitual use of rhythmic patterns adhering to an iambic accentuation testifies to the love he had for springing 'mountain melody' types during his years of development.

Table V. 'Mountain melody'.

1(a) *[Andante?]*
Solo violin *mf*

(b) *PIU VIVO* *ma vigore*
Solo violin *f*

2(a) *Andante molto tranquillo*
muted violins *p*

(b) *(Andante molto tranquillo)*
Horns *p*

(c) *energico*
cello + viola *f*

(d) *Moderato*
4^o violins

(e) *Lento molto tranquillo*
Flute & Clarinet *pp*

3(a) *Lento tranquillo*
Solo cello *p*

(b) *Molto tranquillo*
2^o cello *p*

The musical score is handwritten and consists of several staves. It includes various musical notations such as clefs, time signatures, key signatures, and dynamic markings. The score is organized into sections labeled 1(a), (b), 2(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), 3(a), and (b). The instruments specified include Solo Violin, Muted Violins, Horns, Cello + Viola, 4th Violins, Flute & Clarinet, and 2nd Cello. Dynamics range from *pp* to *f*. The tempo and mood markings include *Andante?*, *PIU VIVO ma vigore*, *Andante molto tranquillo*, *energico*, *Moderato*, *Lento molto tranquillo*, *Lento tranquillo*, and *Molto tranquillo*. The score features various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and uses a variety of clefs (treble, bass, alto).

(Table V.cont.)

4(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

1. Légende for violin and orchestra (1892?-1895).
 - (a) opening.
 - (b) 10 bars before fig.D.
2. Overture, Over the Hills and Far Away (1895-7).
 - (a) opening.
 - (b) bar 7.
 - (c) bar 45.
 - (d) bar 87.
 - (e) bar 109.
3. Romance for cello and piano (1896).
 - (a) bar 5.
 - (b) bar 24.
4. Piano Concerto (begun 1897; revised version pub.1907)
 - (a) opening.
 - (b) fig.1.
 - (c) 3 bars after fig.3.
 - (d) fig.10.

An important stage is reached in Paa Vidderne and the early Violin Sonata in the evolution of Delius's technique of motivic metamorphosis: it is evident here that a few small motivic seeds germinate much of the subsequent material. A degree of rhythmic continuity and unity results from this procedure.

Rhythmic flexibility is, however, still minimal. These two scores exhibit a constant 4-bar squareness of phrase and rigidity of rhythmic flow quite unlike Delius's mature style. Control over a flux of emotional tension and release of tension - the basis of rhythmic flexibility - would first develop, inevitably, in his operas, where it is demanded by the gradation of a character's moods. The soaring climaxes and flourishes of rhapsody which characterize Delius at his best in the mature scores are the natural extension of an operatic lyrical technique.

+ + +

Section Four - Use of the Orchestra

Throughout the period of his development Delius had very little opportunity of hearing how effective his orchestral writing was. When, on October 10th 1891, in Oslo, the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem became the first Delius work to be given a public performance, the composer had previously had the benefit of only two short sessions with rehearsal orchestras in the course of a six year-long career. It may be recalled that Florida was rehearsed by a military orchestra in 1888. Perhaps as a result of this experience, Delius revised the suite in 1889, explaining to Grieg that it had previously been "clumsily done with many unnecessary orchestral brutalities in it".²⁰ In the summer of 1890 Delius again hired a rehearsal orchestra in Leipzig, but found himself with only enough time to play once through each of

20. Letter from Delius to Grieg, early June 1889. CLL/1 p.42.

the five pieces he had with him.²¹ Since he had so little experience behind him, Delius's colourful and imaginative instrumental textures in the works of his first years must be regarded as one of his earliest achievements as a composer.

Table VI lists the instrumentation of Delius's orchestral scores up to 1892:

Table VI.

Date	Work	Picc.	Wind			Brass	TIMPS. PLUS....	Harp
			Cor ANGL.	BASS CLAR.				
1887	Florida(original)	x	2.2.2.2.			4.2.3.1.	+3	x
	Hiawatha	x	3.2.2.2.			4.2.3.1.	+2	x
1888	Paa Vidd.melod	x	2.2.2.2.	x		4.2.3.1.	+3	
	Rhaps.Variationen	x	2.2.2.3.			4.2.3.1. + 2 CORNETS	+3	
	Suite for violin		3.2.2.2.			4.2.3.1.		
1889	Marche Caprice		2.2.2.2.			4.2.3.1.	+4	
	Florida(revision)	x	2.2.2.2.	x	x	4.2.3.1.	+4	x
	Sakuntala		3.2.2.2.	x	x	4.0.0.0.		x
1890	Paa Vidd.sym.poem	x	2.2.2.2.		x	4.2.3.1. + 2 CORNETS	+2	x
	Irmelin(opera)	x	3.2.2.3.	x	x	4.2.3.1. + 2 CORNETS	+3	x
	Petite Suite		2.2.2.2.			2.1.0.0.		
	Winter Night*	x	2.2.2.2.			4.2.3.1. + 2 CORNETS	+2	
	Summer Evening		3.2.2.2.			4.2.3.1.		
	Légendes	x	3.2.2.2.			4.2.3.1.	+3	
1891	Maud		3.2.2.2.	x	x	4.2.3.1.		x

Numbers of strings are unspecified in early Delius scores

* Winter Night is presumed to be an orchestration of the now-lost piano piece Norwegischer Schlittenfahrt (1887)

As the table indicates, after 1889 the wind texture was frequently extended to include the rich colours of the cor anglais and bass clarinet, the former having also been used in the Paa Vidderne melodrama; a third bassoon is added for the same

21. See CLL/1 p.50, n.2.

purposes to the Rhapsodische Variationen and to Irmelin. The tendency seen here towards amplifying the middle and lower range of his wind textures was fully realized in mature works by the frequent use of triple wind, contrabassoon (or sarrusophone) and occasional bass oboe (in six pieces). The cor anglais and bass clarinet are fairly permanent fixtures of Delius's orchestra, as is the harp. The trend in his development period is towards the grand size of the late-Romantic orchestra. This tendency was undoubtedly encouraged in the composer from the mid-1890s by his knowledge of the music of Richard Strauss. (His mastery of the orchestra in these years will be discussed in chapter seven). In his early period, however, it is not the complex brilliance of Strauss but the instrumental sonorities of Wagner which are the greatest influence.

The string section almost always carries the bulk of Delius's material in this period. The strings are rarely absent, as if the composer had conceived his music first and foremost in terms of that section. Alternation with bodies of different sound (the wind band, for example) is rare. The role of the wind instruments at this stage in Delius's career differs from that which is evident already in The Magic Fountain (1894-5) and subsequently in his development. Each instrument is regarded as an individual timbre, capable of adding colour to the mainstream material in the strings. Delius's conception is that of the painter who adds to the basic colours already on his canvas subtle tints and striking highlights selected individually from his palette.

The flute and piccolo often perform two important roles, either adding special solo timbres to a passage, or embellishing a passage with figuration. The frequency with which the flutes, as a group, are given solo material is surprising, and not typical of later stages in Delius's career. Nevertheless, their use is invariably effective and, in passages such as that from the Paa Vidderne melodrama below (p.148), give very distinct colouration to the mood-painting.

Ex.29. Paa Vidderne melodrama, Section Five, copyist's MS
 corresponding to f.29a (bars 7 - 12) of the original MS.

ALLEGRO MOSSO
MOLTO TRANQUILLO

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

BELLS

Horns

Men jeg hører klokken ringe op fra kirken ud på tængen! Lad det ringe, lad det klinge, bedre klang har fossesangen!

Bells I hear out from the steeple, From the church by river yonder! Let them ring, let bells go swinging, Better songs in falls and rapids!

V. 1

V. 2

VLA

C.

B.

ALLEGRO MOSSO
MOLTO TRANQUILLO

365

370

(A similar example occurs at the opening of Section Eight of the melodrama, see chapter one, ex.18).

The mellow low register of the flute is exploited also at the opening of Summer Evening (see chapter one, ex.45(a)). The unusual, thin tone of the piccolo in its lowest register is chosen to carry the opening melody of two orchestrations of piano pieces in this period - Winter Night (1887) and Grieg's Aus dem Volksleben (op.19, no.2) orchestrated by Delius in 1889.

The oboe is the spokesman of Delius's wind section, having by far the greatest amount of solo writing of any individual

instrument in his orchestra. Clearly, the plaintive tone of the instrument had a direct appeal to the composer, and he is at times very sparing in its use when other wind instruments are playing, in order to set off its tone in relief.

In his first score using the cor anglais, the Paa Vidderne melodrama, Delius gives it thematic material at the expense of the oboe. By the time he came to write Sakuntala (1889), however, the cor anglais had been relegated to a role of adding mellow timbre to individual chords or brief passages, without any soloistic prominence. The instrument was rarely absent from Delius's orchestra after this stage, but assumed a position between the two extremes of these early works.

The clarinet has a more menial role than the upper wind instruments, providing a pivotal point for the section's dual responsibilities as the source of individual colour and as orchestral component. Its position as the tenor of the section is underlined by the clarinet frequently sharing material with the viola. Hence the instrument is discreetly present on many occasions when the upper members of the section are silent, with accompaniment material.

The bass clarinet makes its debut in Sakuntala, where it plays a modest part identical to that of the cor anglais. The increasingly frequent presence of both instruments in the music of this period probably betrays the influence on Delius of Wagner, who had realized the expressive potential of their rich timbres first in Lohengrin, and especially in Tristan. From The Magic Fountain onwards, Delius would give the cor anglais and bass clarinet, as well as the clarinet, much more responsibility in his wind ensemble.

A traditional and modest role is played by the bassoon, which is rarely allowed the luxury of a solo passage. Though the Rhapsodische Variationen and the opera Irmelin do require three bassoons, the contrabassoon - a crucial character in the fully-fledged, rich-toned Delius orchestra - has not yet made its appearance. The use of a sarrusophone in Delius's second opera, The Magic Fountain paves the way for the introduction of the contrabassoon in Koanga (1896-7).

Wagner is regarded as the emancipator of the middle-range of the orchestra, and Delius, in his love of horn tone, is his heir. The part traditionally taken by the wind in amplifying and enriching the middle of the orchestra is frequently transferred to the horns. In the introduction to the first movement of Florida, in the finale of Florida, the war-dance in Hiawatha, Sakuntala and the two Paa Vidderne scores can be seen many illustrations of how essential a pivot in Delius's instrumentation the horns were. The magical impression made by horn-calls in all of Delius's mountain-inspired scores has been dealt with in some detail already. The pervasive presence of the horns as both accompaniment and solo instruments, however, has the disadvantage that the one role considerably nullifies the effect of the other.

Delius seems to sympathize with the opinions of most orchestral horn players that the modern orchestra is one of five, not four, sections. In contrast to the consistently interesting material for the horns, the amount of attention given to the trumpet, trombone and tuba by Delius ranges widely. Most frequent of the two extremes is that represented by the Suite for violin, where their negligible contribution hardly seems to justify their being scored. At the other extreme is Hiawatha, where they have important solos. Some of the most interesting uses of trombone tone occur when Delius is seeking a mellow texture in a quiet passage, probably in anticipation of the tone of the contrabassoon and bass clarinet (see ex. 30, p. 151).

Delius's own ability on the violin served him well, for he had from his earliest period as a composer a facility in writing for strings, and would create some of his loveliest music in string textures. His particular interest in the violin and the string ensemble in general was never more evident than in this early period up to 1892: apart from the Suite for violin, violin Romance, Sonata for violin and string quartet, three pieces for string orchestra are also believed to have been written at this time (though they have not survived).²²

22. See RT p. 127.

Ex. 30. Hiawatha, copyist's MS, corresponding to f.25b (bar 5) - f.26a (bar 2) of the original MS.

The musical score is written on multiple staves. At the top left, there is a circled 'Q' and the tempo marking 'POCO PIU MOSSO'. The instruments listed on the left are: 2 FL., 2 B FL., OB., CLAR., BSN., 1/2 HNS., 3/4 TRPTS., 2 TRBNS., HARP, V. 1, V. 2, VLA., CELLO, and BASS. The score is divided into three measures. The first measure contains the tempo marking 'POCO PIU MOSSO'. The second measure contains the mood marking 'DOLCE' and the dynamic marking 'pp'. The third measure contains the mood marking 'DOLCE' and the dynamic marking 'p'. The score is written in a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs.

A bold and imaginative approach to string texture is seen already in Delius's first orchestral score, Florida, with instances of solo passages (the viola solo in the second movement), simple polyphonic textures (first movement, after fig.10) and splendid strokes of original colour (the banjo or guitar effect of the third movement). Some months later he produced the exquisitely-worked tapestry of the $\frac{12}{8}$ slow movement in Hiawatha (see chapter one, ex.10, and ex.30 above).

Delius's inexperience in orchestration, however, is also most obvious in two recurring weaknesses in his use of the string section: (i) the double bass is used scantily and, as with much of the cello writing, with little subtlety or flexibility (partly because of the composer's harmonic dependence on pedal points); (ii) melodies are over-frequently placed in octave unison on the top three or four strings (for instance, the finale of Florida, before and after fig.3).

Important stages in Delius's progress to an eventual complete mastery of the string section are formed by the two Paa Vidderne scores. Ex.22 (p.125), from the melodrama, shows that Delius's increasing competence as a harmonist - resulting in more fluid, linear textures - had considerable significance for his string writing. It is only with his first symphonic poem that Delius achieves a freedom of movement in the bass instruments (of all sections) equal to that of Wagner's orchestra in his late operas. Even in the thematic table on p.135 it is possible to discern that a new style is present. The most vital section of the work - the accumulation of forces preceding the central climax - gains its dynamism precisely from the restless drive of theme 3(b) in majestic sweeps among the bass instruments. Played against the smooth curve of the main theme of the second subject, 3(a), through some 35 bars, it provides a fascinating counterpoint of a breadth unprecedented in Delius's works. 'Duals of opposites' of this kind occur in several places in the score.

In its orchestration Paa Vidderne is the true successor to the finest moments in Florida and Hiawatha. One beautiful passage is shown in ex.31(p.153). The Straussian cantabile of the

Ex.31. Paa Vidderne symphonic poem,
 copyist's MS corresponding to
 f.27a (bar 7) - f.27b (bar 4)
 of the original MS.

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The instruments listed on the left side of the page are:

- PICCOLO & FLUTES
- OBOES
- CLARINETS IN A
- BASS CLAR. IN A
- BASSONS
- TRUMPETS 1/2
- TRUMPETS 3/4
- TRUMPETS IN F
- TROMBONES IN A
- TRUMPETS & TROMBONES 1/2
- TRUMPETS & TROMBONES 3 & 4
- TIMPANI
- HARP
- CYMBALS & TRIANGLE
- VIOLIN 1
- VIOLIN 2
- VIOLA
- CELLO
- BASS

Key performance instructions and dynamics are written above the staves:

- con brio* (written below the Bassoon staff)
- rallentando* (written below the Bassoon and Timpani staves)
- dim. molto* (written above the Bassoon and Timpani staves)
- Piu Tranquillo* (written above the Bassoon and Timpani staves)

The score shows complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, across all parts. The notation is dense and characteristic of a working manuscript.

upper strings and the vigorous triplets of the lower instruments prepare a perfect cadence at bars 4-5. Here, with the release of harmonic tension, the composer introduces a more gentle texture: the upper wind, violins and violas descend onto a melodious figure, while the harp glistens in arpeggios through its compass. Finely judged contrast between tension and release, in harmony, texture and rhythmic flow: this is the main benefit Delius's technique derived from his concentration on opera in the 1890s. Paa Vidderne represented the furthest point Delius reached before The Magic Fountain.

Chapter Three

'Irmelin' and Nature

In the first five or six years of his career, Delius wrote in a wide variety of styles - products of a many-faceted creative identity. Each of these primary areas of the composer's initial creative language are to be found in the music of the mature Delius, though some were greatly altered in the course of development.¹

It may, therefore, seem surprising that there has been as yet little mention in this study of that characteristic of Delius's aesthetic which must be regarded as the core of his artistic life from around the turn of the century: the musical expression of the affinity between natural beauty and human longing. As with Delius's exploitation of wilderness and sunset imagery, the notion of this affinity is a poetic one, dependent on symbolism external to music - namely on the correlation between an internal emotional or mental state and a state of things in the material world. This poetic relationship between Man and Nature becomes increasingly important to Delius, and is fundamental to such works as Sea Drift, In a Summer Garden, Songs of Sunset, On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring and Summer Night on the River.

In fact, along with most other essential elements of the mature Delius style, the seeds of his absorption in the relationship of nature and longing were, indeed, sown in the first period 1835-1892. The first shoots these seeds sent up were Sakuntala (1889) and Twilight Fancies (1889-90). Consideration of this facet of his development has been left until now because, at the end of the period, in Delius's

1. The scope of Delius's work is still largely unappreciated - this, despite the unprecedented availability of recordings of his music. The persistent popularity of a few pieces of narrow emotional and stylistic range has probably prevented a wider understanding of the composer's work.

first opera Irmelin (1890-2), it suddenly assumes a prominence in his writing not previously evident.

The composer's increased awareness of this poetic affinity during the years 1890-6, is one of two crucial turning-points in these years preparing the emergence of his mature style. (The other is the development of a controlled rhythmic flexibility). In Irmelin the restrained, but deep, passion of solitary love calls from Delius the finest music of his first opera. Subsequently, it is the inflamed passion of two lovers, whose union is prevented by obstacles, that gives the climax of The Magic Fountain its emotional intensity. In both operas the human longing expressed is intimately and inextricably wound together with the natural surroundings in the drama. Nature plays a passive role: the ever-present symbol of a state of perfection and equilibrium. Nature is the foil to emotional chaos.

Before Irmelin is examined in some detail, a brief consideration of Sakuntala and Twilight Fancies will be of value. The presence of two songs among Delius's earliest output expressing the close affinity between longing and nature is not, in itself, of special significance. As intimated above, it would have been more remarkable if this vital element of Delius's creative make-up was not evident in some form in these formative years. What is interesting is that in both songs the chosen nature/longing poetry brings the composer up onto a level of musical imagination rarely attained elsewhere in his contemporary work.

The opening bars of Sakuntala were considered in chapter two in connection with the effective deployment of German 6th chords in the initial moments of the song (see p.108). The ambivalent harmony, with its persistent appoggiaturas (A → G), matches the mood of heavy, almost unbearable love-longing of Holger Drachmann's poem:

"My longing had kept me from sleeping,
 for fragrant winds
 round me had sighed,
 flowing unchecked through my window
 as if a mellifluous tide;
 I heard the exquisite music
 lofty palm trees
 sougled outdoors;
 it sang to me as I paced the floor:
 Sakuntala, Sakuntala."²

Ex. 1 (p.158) reveals a duskily rich orchestral colouration in the opening bars (for a piano reduction of these bars, see ex.7 on p.108). A block of subdued, dark reed tones, including cor anglais and bass clarinet (plus horns), has as its top layer the melody in mellow low flutes. The strings are muted. (They sustain the tremolo for much of the 90-bar song).

The intoxicating fragrances of the evening breeze, the whispering leaves of palm trees, in fact the complete ambiance surrounding Drachmann's love-sick insomniac seems to have been breathed into these few, ostensibly simple bars.

Twilight Fancies has already been fairly extensively described, especially in chapter two, where it was suggested as an unmatched example of the expressive potential in Delius's early harmony. The song will also be seen to be of great importance in the fashioning of Irmelin. Bjørnson's princess watches the progress of the sunset; she is aware of the poignance of a distant horn-call; she is chilled by the stark loneliness in which she suffers her unfulfilled sensual longing: all these elements reappear at crucial moments in the opera.

Additional assistance in conceiving the plot of Irmelin was available to Delius in J.P.Jacobsen's poem Irmelin Rose (1868-75):

(Verse 2)"Her bright image was reflected
 in the helmets of all the knights,
 and with ev'ry rhyme and rhythm
 her fair name had been entwined:
 Irmelin rose,
 Irmelin sun,
 Irmelin, loveliest of all."

2. Translation by the present author.

Ex.1. Sakuntala, opening,
copyist's MS.

ANDANTE, MOLTO TRANQUILLO

2 FLUTES
2 CLARETS
2 COR ANGLES
2 CLARINETS IN A
2 BASSOONS
BASS CORNET IN A

2 HORNS

TENOR SOLO

dolce
p Ich kann-Ge vor Seh-acht nicht schlaf - - en. Ein Blu-men-wind wo-gte her-ein

ANDANTE, MOLTO TRANQUILLO

VOLINS 1
VOLINS 2
VIOLAS
CELLOS
BASSOS

no sordini p

The final musical expression of Delius's fascination with princess-in-distress mythology came in 1896-7 when he set Irmelin Rose. Whether the name of the princess in Delius's opera comes from Jacobsen or from the Norwegian folksong where Jacobsen had himself found it, is impossible to say.³

For the greater part of the remainder of this chapter, discussion of Irmelin is confined to those portions of the opera where the blend of nature and longing pervades the writing. Notable for these sections, Irmelin is otherwise of small importance in Delius's development; as an opera it must be considered a failure. However, some of the musico-dramatic characteristics of the work which have a bearing on Delius's later operatic ventures will be considered in the concluding section of this chapter.

+ + +

Prior to the onset of twilight in Act I, Scene VI, Irmelin has rejected several knights who have come to the castle to woo her. She has coldly refused them all, inciting the anger of her father. No suitor has yet awakened in her the response she expects when the lover of her day-dreams arrives. Alone again in the gathering gloom, she sings of her melancholy and longing.

Delius's sunset idiom is at once noticeable as the transformation commences from dusk (bar 523) to almost dark (bar 681). Added sixths bring a warm hue to the static, tranquil colouristic harmony (see ex.2, p.160, bars 524-536). The element of the familiar idiom initially absent - the most obvious characteristic of the sunsets in Florida and Hiawatha - is the distant call of horns. These are withheld for only a few bars, and enter when the dusk-haze of figuration resumes at bar 546 (p.161). (The gentle contour of their theme is anticipated already in the snatches of melody at bars 527-30).

3. Morten Borup, in his annotations to the poem in volume IV of J.P. Jacobsen, Samlede Værker (Collected Works, Copenhagen, 1928) traces the name back to the song 'Asmund Fregdegævar' in Norske Folkevisar (Norwegian Folk Songs, 1853).

Ex.2. Irmelin, Act I, Scene VI,
bars 524-584.

Scene VI
Molto tranquillo
♩ = 72

524

528 IRMELIN *mp*
How lit - tle they all know of my heart that's beat - ing for

533 Irm. *poco accel.*
him, that's beat - ing for him.

537 Irm. *♩ = 84*
What is wealth and fame? What is pomp and pow - er? Nay

541 Irm. *mf un poco accel.*
what is youth if he be not there.

(Ex.2.cont.)

546 *Poco più vivo* $\text{♩} = 116$
(Horns in the distance)

pp

pp

f

550

ppp

554 IRMELIN
How free ... those horns

pp

558 Irm.
sound: here 'tis so

pp

561 Irm.
lone ly, What

un poco rall.

pp

dim.

ppp dolce

In chapter one it was noted that the poetic symbol of the horn-call would have seemed far from unusual in Delius's youth, when the sound of a horn outdoors was a much more common phenomenon than it is today. When these evocative calls have been introduced into compositions with mountain and pastoral connotations, they have been associated with the imagery of distance, seeming almost to add a spatial dimension to the tone-painting - a lengthening of the aural 'depth of field', so to speak. No intimation is given by Delius of why distant horns are being played in the evening in Scene VI of Irmelin (no hunt is mentioned, for instance). But the validity of the poetic metaphor is not weakened on that account; rather, the vagueness surrounding the horn music helps it to be assimilated into the general mood of serene peace.

In the serenity of the sunset, then, is represented natural beauty. In so many of Delius's mountain scores, horn-calls "sounded....as if out of the very mountain-nature that surrounded us" (Grieg's words). Here, too, the calls become not merely a device for evoking the imagery of distance, but a symbol of the ideal state of nature itself: they are the voice of nature. Interpreted through the unruly emotions of love-longing, "twilight's dying glow", to quote again Bjørnson's words, is one of "those sweet resounding moments" of intense poignance. Irmelin's reaction to the sunset is that of the captive. She finds in the natural beauty before her, not peace, but a poignant reminder of how little peace she possesses. She is not, of course, a captive within her tower, but within her unfulfilled sensuality:

"How free those horns sound:

here 'tis so lonely,

What strange sounds fill the air

When the sun has gone to rest.

I sit alone in my maiden bower

And sigh for the lover that comes not.

I gaze o'er the valley from my room in the tower
whilst the sun sinks lower and lower.

I question the wailing north wind

Will my dream love come to me soon?"

In setting these lines about the north wind, Delius writes a passage of quickly moving harmony and a chromatically sliding, "wailing" melody. In contrast to the pedal point harmony employed earlier in the aria, it is music of restless passion. Immediately afterwards, however, a chorus of young men and women is heard in the distance, and pedal point harmony resumes.

+ + +

In Act II of Irmelin, the young prince, Nils, escapes from menial service to the robber king, Rolf, and continues his search for his princess. At the opening of Act III he arrives at the betrothal banquet for Irmelin, disguised as a swineherd. Irmelin is to be married off by her father to a rich suitor, but when Nils sings one of his swineherd ballads to the assembled company, Irmelin is entranced. At the sound of huntsmen's horns the gathering breaks up, the men to join the chase, their wives to watch. Irmelin is left alone to observe the scene and reflect on how her senses have been disturbed by Nils (who has descended to the kitchens to repeat his performance). The sun is setting.

The affinity between the beauty of nature and a lover's longing is made explicit in the song Irmelin gives voice to (ex. 3, pp. 164-5). In expression of this nature/longing relationship Delius would compose some of the finest music of his career; yet, in its simple way, the writing in this section of his first opera is as delicately felt and subtly coloured as similar moments in A Village Romeo and Juliet, Songs of Sunset, Fennimore and Gerda, etc. The semi-tonal slide from the tonic note (as at bars 392-3) or dominant note (as at 397-9), the shifting C major/Eb major tonal areas and the mediant progressions (as at 401-2) never allow the harmony to settle on its pedal points: the equilibrium between tranquility and unrest is finely judged. It comes as no surprise that elements of Delius's sunset idiom are present - the haze of string tremolos, added sixth

Ex. 3. Irmelin, Act III, Scene I,
bars 391-428.

391 IRMELIN Lento ed tranquillo ♩ = 63

How beau - ti - ful and si - lent all na - ture lies out

395 Irm.

there And the frag - rant per - fumes how they sweet - ly scent ... the

399 Irm.

air The fields and woods lie

espressivo

403 Irm.

blushing in the sun's last rays and the night breeze

407 Irm.

whis - pers love long - ing and bliss,

(Ex. 3. cont.)

411

Irm. love long-ing and bliss. How

415

Irm. strange I feel to - night, .. ne-ver have I felt like

418

Irm. this. Is it love that has come at last.. with that

421

Irm. lone - - ly ragged boy.

con molto espressivo

425

molto tranquillo

harmonies and pedal points. Nevertheless, the passage is not a further instance of that idiom. It belongs to that small family of pieces, described in chapter one, whose poetic association is with pastoral, rather than twilight, serenity. In the 'Pastorale' movement of the Suite for violin (see p. 83), horn-calls were replaced by stylized birdsong. A similar recurring motif accompanies Irmelin's thoughts:



As was the case with Sakuntala, the imagery is not of freedom and space implied in the sunset, but of the lover's immediate ambiance. Through the raised consciousness of love, flowers, fragrances and fields are experienced as never before. Irmelin's awakening to love anticipates in its imagery the magnolia grove at the close of The Magic Fountain, the wasteland of A Village Romeo and Juliet and subsequent 'summer gardens'. The garden, as the sunset, is a symbol of the ideal state of nature. Delius's many Edens reflect his preoccupation with the balance and order of nature.

In his first opera - with its pasteboard figures and fairy-tale plot - the only moments when Delius's characterizations have a feeling of psychological insight are in the passages described above. Irmelin becomes for brief periods a creature of flesh and blood. From these beginnings, Delius's handling of the emotions of his characters developed by leaps and bounds in subsequent operas. But, in the remainder of Irmelin it has to be recognized that the consequences of allowing his lovers the luxury of passions and sensuality are not followed up by Delius. The end of the opera is particularly unsatisfactory. As the mixed and muddled metaphors in the chorus of youths illustrates, a conflict of interests between ordered nature and passion has become apparent to the composer. A credible resolution to this conflict is not forthcoming before his career as a composer of opera has progressed some way.

+ + +

Troubled by neither the mediocrity of everyday life nor the emotional conflicts of Irmelin, the chorus of youths at the end of Act I offers a glimpse of an ideal rustic innocence - of Arcady (ex.4,p.168). Representing an ideal state of being, the youths act as a foil to turbulent emotions. Their function is, therefore, similar to that earlier performed by sunset imagery. The youths' state is that of children of nature, humans living in perfect harmony with nature and, consequently, with each other. It was just such Arcadians that circumnavigating explorers hoped they had found in Africa and the Americas, and whose descendants are depicted by Delius in his Indian opera The Magic Fountain and Negro opera Koanga. As the first children of nature in Delius's output, these youths have a greater significance than their modest contribution to Irmelin suggests. This chorus marks the beginning of a period of some seven or eight years in which Delius was preoccupied with the concept of innocence in humanity. It anticipates the Indian contribution to The Magic Fountain, the work- and dance-songs in Koanga and the vagabond choruses of A Village Romeo and Juliet. In each of these later works the composer explores the dilemma arising out of the choice between the state of nature and the ecstasy of passion. In Irmelin the conflict is clumsily, even naively, handled.

As Irmelin listens to the youths' song, she expresses her desire to be one of the "merry band" who are dancing hand in hand into the woods; but unfortunately she has no lover "to roam with in the twilight". The idea of his lovers forming a part of the carefree, happy group is thrown out by Delius almost as soon as it is stated. For his interest in them resides in their passion. Irmelin now scorns the youths' innocence:

"How different our kisses to their kisses
 His kisses burn like fire,
 deep, deep down into my soul.
 We should not sing but look at each other
 deep, deep into each other's eyes,
 Deep into each other's soul look,
 look and kiss. (cont.p.169)

Ex.4. Irmelin, Act I, Scene VI,
bars 622-625.

Allegretto $\text{♩} = 92$

SOPRANOS *p*

A - way, far a - way to the woods let us

CONTRALTOS *p*

A - way, far a - way to the woods let us

TENORS *p*

A - way, far a - way to the woods let us

BASSES *p*

A - way to the woods let us

Allegretto $\text{♩} = 92$

pp

s. *div.*

stray and dance and play, In the part - ing

c.

stray and dance and play, In the part - ing

T.

stray, Tra la la la and dance and play, tra la la la In the part - ing

B.

stray, Tra la la la tra la la la la tra la la la In the part - ing

CHORUS

Till the springtime glows into summer
and the summer burns itself out.
Till the leaves all fade and wither
And we both wander into the night.
O! glorious night."

The confusion of this section is certainly not lessened by the last-minute effort to imply a resolution of the lovers' passion in "night". Derived from the metaphysical symbolism of Tristan, this notion is meaningless without the emotional chaos caused by separation. This much had been realized by Delius when he came to write his next opera.

As it turns out, the curtain descends on Irmelin and Nils in Act III as they are seen wandering "hand in hand joyfully through the wood wondering at and discovering new beauties everywhere". It makes for a disappointing conclusion. Not only is their apparent adoption of the youths' ideal state of innocence confusing after it had previously been rejected by Irmelin, but it is also a negation of the emotions which had made Irmelin's suffering dramatically interesting and credible. The sensuality of the music Delius wrote for her cannot evaporate at the arrival of a companion; Delius has implied in text and music that her longing is not merely for a friend, but for love and sensual fulfillment. In contrast to the compelling death-urge of an Isolde or the tragic destiny of a Mélisande, Irmelin's pleasant stroll in the woods with Nils is an absurd climax to a tale of (occasionally) heart-felt passion.

+ + +

"Dramatically, 'Irmelin' is a failure. The libretto gives it no chance of life."⁴

Andrew Porter's comment, in his review of the 1953 première of Irmelin, pinpointed the primary weakness of Delius's conception. With its shallow characterization, contradictory details, implausible plot and improbable dialogue, the lib-

4. Andrew Porter: 'Delius's 'Irmelin'' in The Musical Times (June, 1953), p. 275.

retto - written by Delius - reveals that, at the start of his career, the composer had little theatrical sense. In writing his first opera, Delius wished to follow in Wagner's wake, adopting both the 'Durchkomponieren' structural continuity and use of reminiscence motifs typifying Wagner operas.⁵ But, in neglecting the drama element of music-drama, Delius's opera seems to employ much fuel but emit very little heat. This flaw in Irmelin did not escape the notice of Ernest Newman at the première:

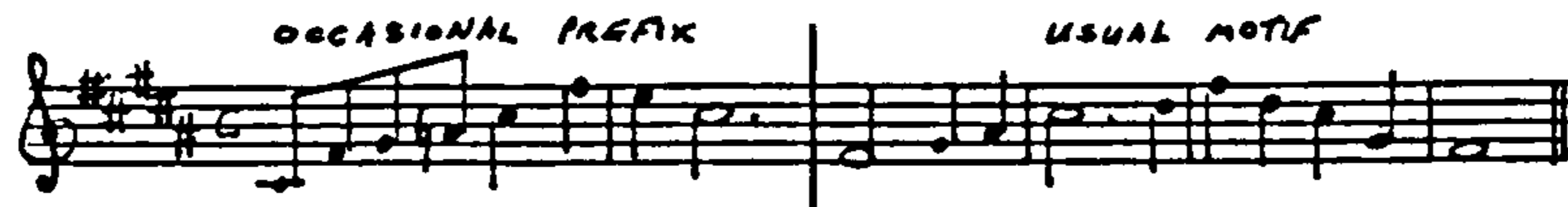
"The simple story had to be padded liberally to make it last out three acts, and Delius, who made his own libretto, lacked at that time the most rudimentary sense of stage technique. Convention is piled on convention, and there is practically no action. Some of the naïvetés are staggering.... The less we think of drama and characterization while listening to 'Irmelin' the better."⁶

Delius eventually came to realize that his skills as a librettist lagged well behind his composing talents (see also chapter five, p.235). Nevertheless, though he would call upon the assistance of others in the shaping of subsequent plots and texts, he never made a point of delegating the responsibility to a poet, dramatist or any artist of more experience than himself in this field. As will become clear in the course of this study, Delius's operatic ventures became increasingly imaginative and individual; the probability increases in direct proportion that his genius as a composer of stage music was prevented from coming to full fruition by never having been matched with a good libretto.

5. It is interesting that Delius's great contemporary, Strauss, held Wagner in similar esteem at the outset of his operatic career (see Norman Del Mar: Richard Strauss (London, 1969), vol.1, p.118). However, with the composition of his first opera Guntram (1893), Strauss went to the opposite extreme from Delius. In contrast to Delius, who wished to explore the combination of Wagnerian methods and a light-weight plot, Strauss penned a libretto out-Wagnering Wagner in ponderous poetic elaboration of Teutonic legend. His main character, according to Del Mar, is a fusion of Tannhäuser and Parsifal.

6. The Sunday Times, 10 May 1953, p.11.

The handful of leitmotifs in Irmelin are, for the most part employed primarily as 'name-tags'. They do not accumulate dramatic significance or reveal psychological insight on the part of the composer, but merely attend their appointed characters like shadows. One exception, which anticipates more sensitive motif-working in The Magic Fountain, is the use Delius makes in Act III of Irmelin's theme:



Throughout the final Act he treats the theme with different harmonizations, more chromatic as Irmelin's passion increases (cf. bars 39-40, 489-90, 519-20, 1047-1048).

The influence of Wagner is also evident in the positive early signs in Irmelin of a rhythmic fluidity in the orchestral writing. This aspect of Delius's evolving technique will be more fully considered in the next chapter, but it is valuable to see how the dramatic need for fluctuating gradations of emotions loosened up Delius's writing more in Irmelin than all the struggles with motifs had done in the previous five or six years of creative work. Ex.5 shows the first half of the love-duet which draws the opera towards its close:

Ex.5. Act III, Scene II, bars 897-951.

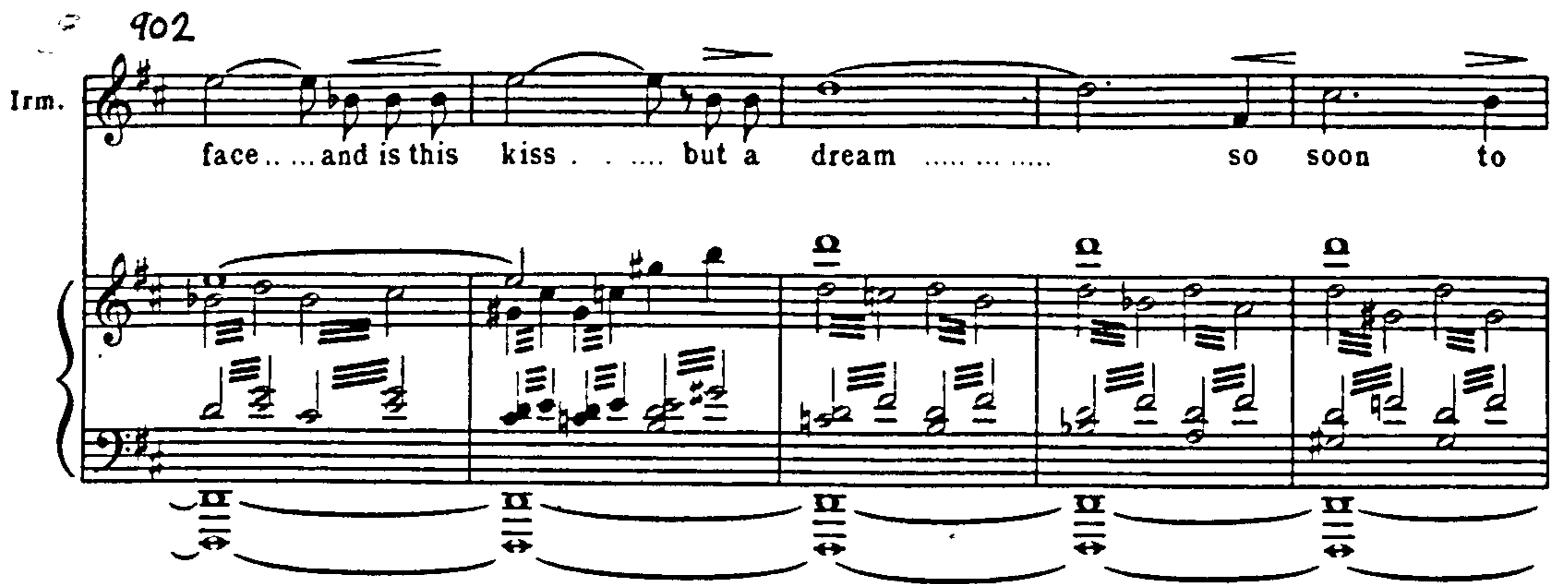
Lento tranquillo $\text{♩} = 68$
 IRMELIN

Am I dream-ing, am I dreaming, Are these moonbeams o'er me streaming. Is this

The image shows a vocal line for Irmelin and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major and 6/8 time. The piano accompaniment features a series of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

902

Irm. face... and is this kiss but a dream so soon to



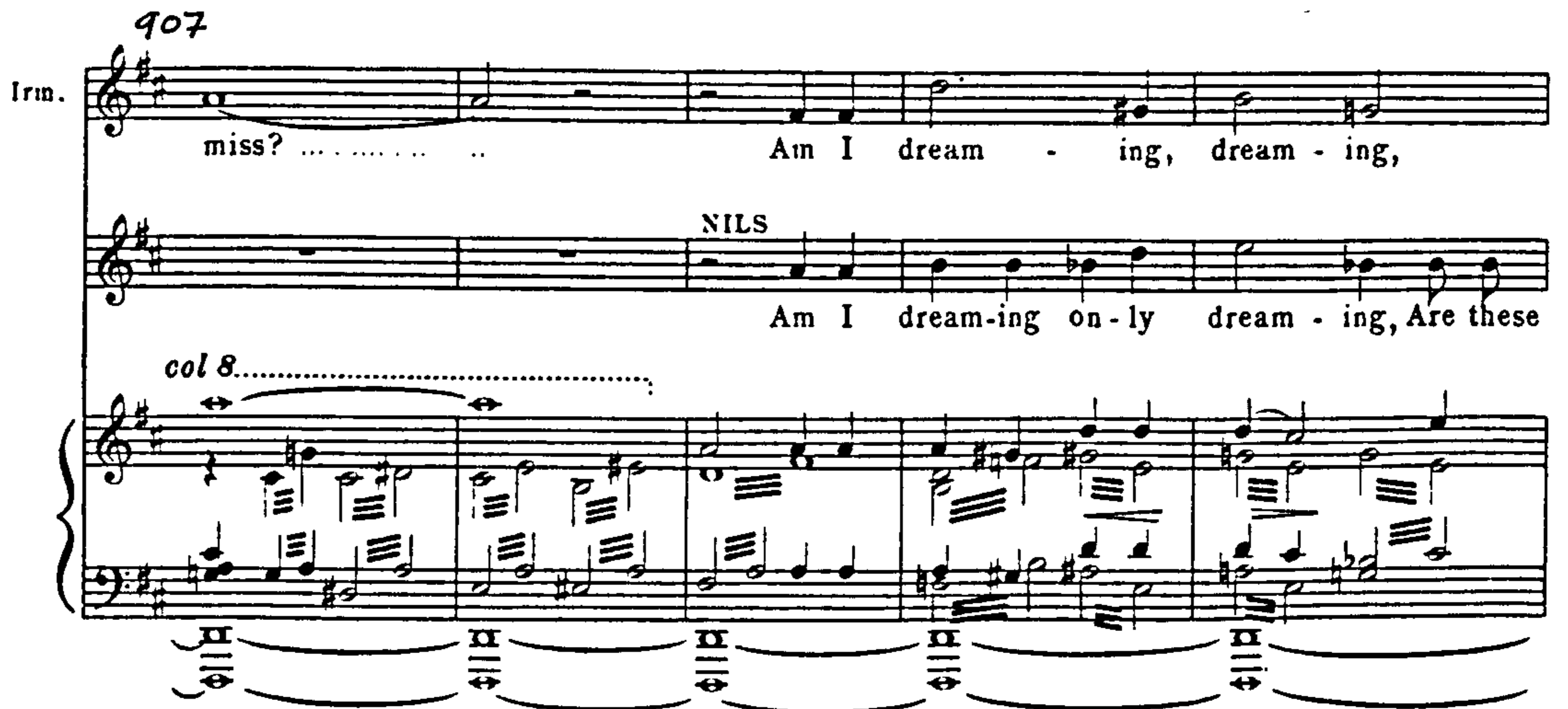
907

Irm. miss? Am I dream - ing, dream - ing,

NILS

Am I dream-ing on - ly dream - ing, Are these

col 8.....



912

Irm. Are. these moon - beams o'er me stream

Nils moon - beams o'er me stream ing? Is this face



(Ex. 5. cont.)

916

Irm. *ing?* Is this face and is this kiss but a

Nlls ... and is this kiss ... but a dream so soon to

col 8.

920

Irm. dream so soon to miss, so soon to miss?

Nlls miss, so soon to miss, to miss?

col 8

925

Irm. *♩ = 80* Are these

Nlls Am I dream - ing, am I dream - ing

(Ex. 5. cont.)

928

Irm. moon - beams o'er me stream - ing?

931

NILS
Are these arms which clasp so

934

IRMELIN
Soon to van - ish with the night?
Nils
tight. Oh!

937

Irm. Oh let me ne - ver more a -
Nils let me ne - ver more a - wake but dream ... and

(Ex.5.cont.)

940

Irm. wake But dream and kiss for

Nils kiss for love's own sake, for

943

Irm. love's own sake,

Nils love's own sake,

947

ff rallentando poco *mp* Più tranquillo ♩:72

Irm. Ne - ver, ne - ver more to part.

Nils Ne - ver, ne - ver more to part.

The composer measures his harmonic and rhythmic pace, leveraging the music onto increasingly 'eventful' levels as the lovers' emotion mounts:

- (A) bars 897-924: An unshifting tonic anchorage in the bass gives a static harmonic foundation to the cautious, stolid rhythms and exploratory chromatic harmony in the upper parts.
- (B) bars 925-936: Fluid inner rhythmic movement (triplet figuration) accompanies well-defined melodic contours. (The melody comes from the Prelude to Act III - see ch.2, ex.16). The bass is more active now, both in its rhythm and in its role as a component of the upper harmony.
- (C) bars 937-942: Melodic appoggiaturas and chromatic inner movement comes to its peak, accumulating a high degree of tension, which will be released gloriously in the climax of the duet.

In Irmelin, the main trends of Delius's creative development throughout the 1890s are established. Control over fluctuating emotional levels is foreshadowed; more significantly, the conflict between nature and passion brought from the composer the best material of the opera. That these elements are couched in a trivial dramatic context is of less importance to this study than the fact that the dramatic context made them possible.



(1) On the St John's River, Florida, in the 1880s

"In Florida, through sitting and gazing at Nature, I gradually learnt the way in which I should eventually find myself, but it was not until years after I had settled at Grez that I really found myself."

Quoted by Eric Fenby in Delius as I Knew Him, p.164



(2)

Leipzig, 1887

Nina and Edvard Grieg, Halvorsen, Delius and Sinding

"This English-American, deeply musical, splendid Hardangerviddeman.... He is like us in nothing except feeling! But in the end that's everything!"

Grieg to Frants Beyer, 20 February 1888

"I tell you frankly, I have never in my life met a nature that has won all my love as yours has done."

Delius to Grieg, August 1888



(3)

Jotunheim mountains, Norway

"Delius is smitten with 'Norway madness'."

Grieg to Frants Beyer, 25 December 1887

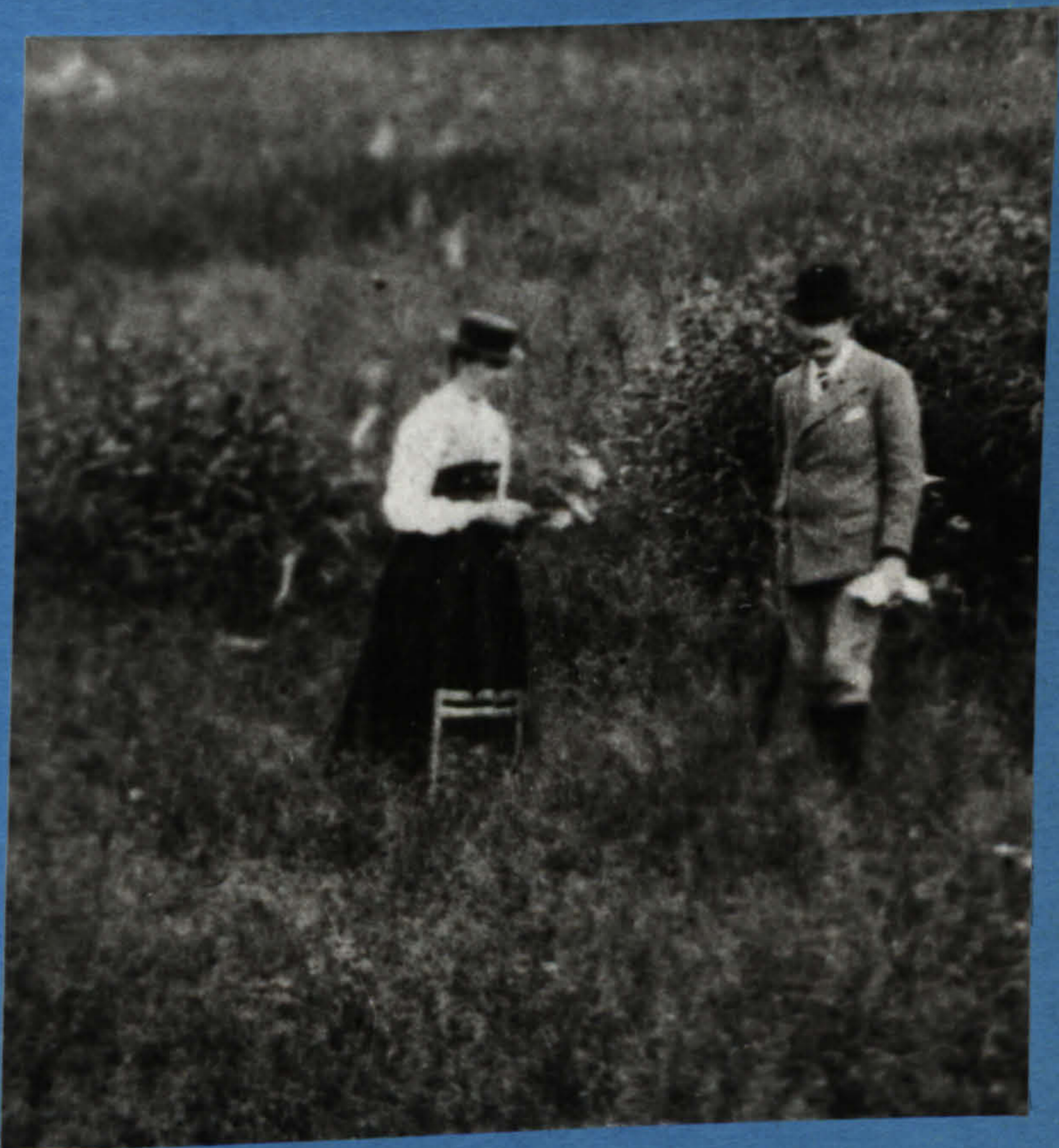
"I should never think of settling too far from a Big Orchestra and Chorus and also not far from my beloved Norway and the light summer nights and all the poetry and melancholy of the Northern summers and the high mountain plateaux where humans are rare and more individual than in any other country in the world."

Delius to Henry Clews, 20 June 1918



(4) Aulestad, the home of Bjørnson, Norway's national poet.

Delius had already set seven of Bjørnson's poems to music before he became acquainted with his daughter in Paris in 1891, and subsequently spent a week with Bjørnson in July.



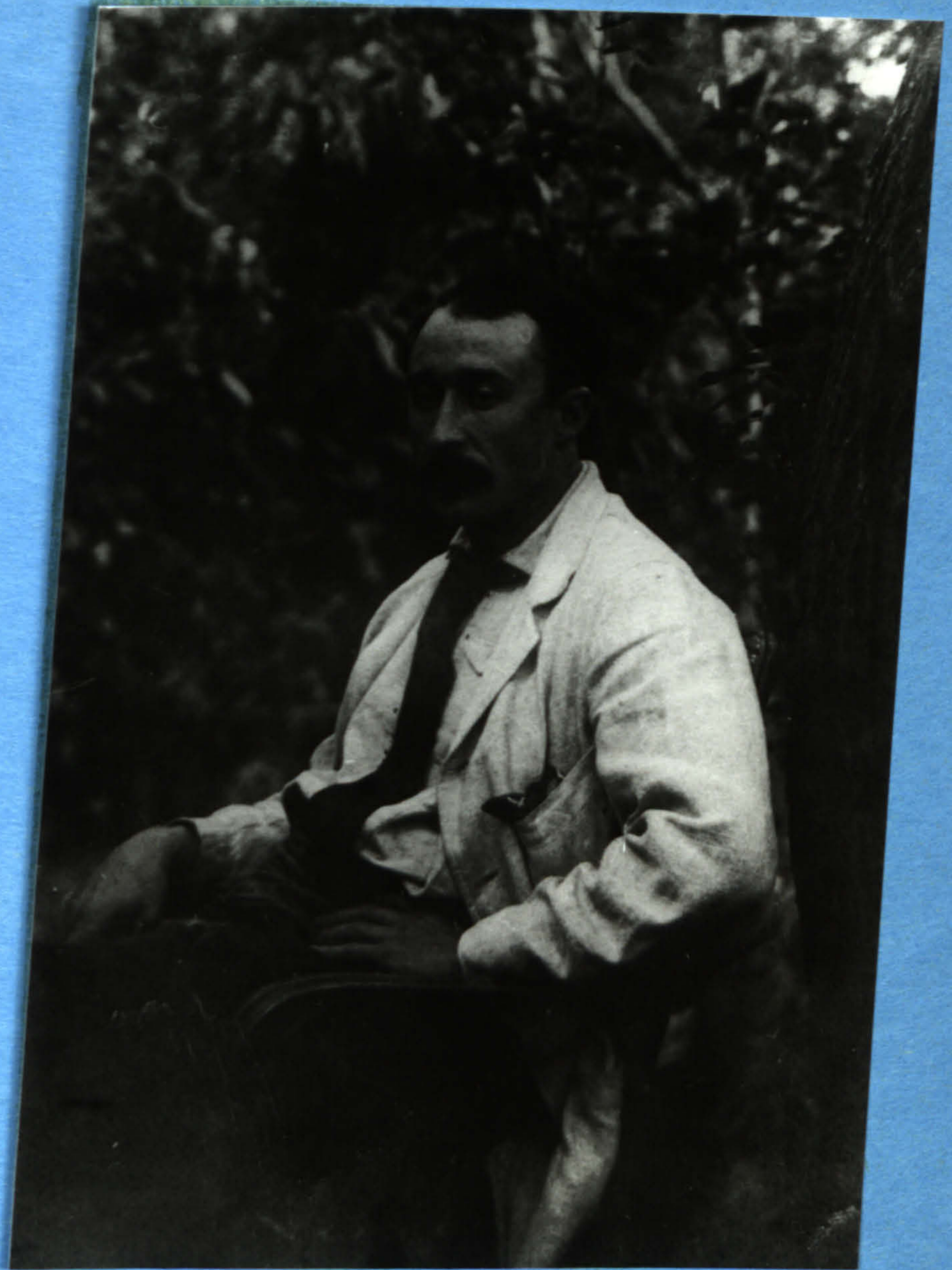


(5)

Halfdan Jebe
(see chapter six)

"I hope very much that we can again seriously consider our great Pacific journey. I have never given it up."

Jebe to Delius, 24 April 1905



(6) Delius in the garden at Grez, 1897

"As soon as I come out of your garden at Grez
everything seems to me to be in an uproar."

Delius to Jelka Rosen, 1 October 1897

Chapter Four

'The Magic Fountain' and Passion

At the time Delius broke off work in the summer of 1894 for visits to the opera in Munich and the Bayreuth Festival, he had prepared the libretto of his second opera, The Magic Fountain, and was ready to begin serious work on the music. This conjunction of events had a positive effect on the direction of his musical development. It is probable that the importance The Magic Fountain has in the composer's career is directly linked to that summer's experiences:

"In Bayreuth I heard 'Parsifal' twice and Tannhäuser once. Parsifal is magnificent: the finest work of Wagner. The orchestra and theatre are perfect. I am really very glad I came [to Munich], it will no doubt be of great benefit to me. Before leaving Munich I shall hear the Nibelungen 3 times, Tristan und Isolde 3 times and the Meistersingers 3 times."¹

This chapter examines three aspects of Delius's second opera which assume a special significance when seen from the vantage-point of his mature style:

- (i) the use of leitmotifs, with particular emphasis on their unifying role;
- (ii) the emergence of controlled rhythmic momentum; which makes more feasible
- (iii) the representation of passion, and its dramatic implications.

Each of these aspects sheds light on Delius's mature music. They represent crucial stages in the evolution of fundamental stylistic features of his individual language. Nevertheless, it is also evident that these elements of the opera have been derived, to a great extent, from Wagnerian methods.

In this discussion of The Magic Fountain an attempt will be made to draw the dividing-line between individuality and derivativeness in the opera (although, in the end, the placing of that line must remain a matter of conjecture). Delius

1. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 12 August 1894, CLL/1, p. 90.

certainly came back from Germany determined to put to good use lessons learnt there; yet Wagnerian techniques are not employed by him in obvious imitation. It seems that he found in Wagner's music much he could adapt, rather than adopt.

Section One - The Added Dimension

Part A - Leitmotifs and Drama

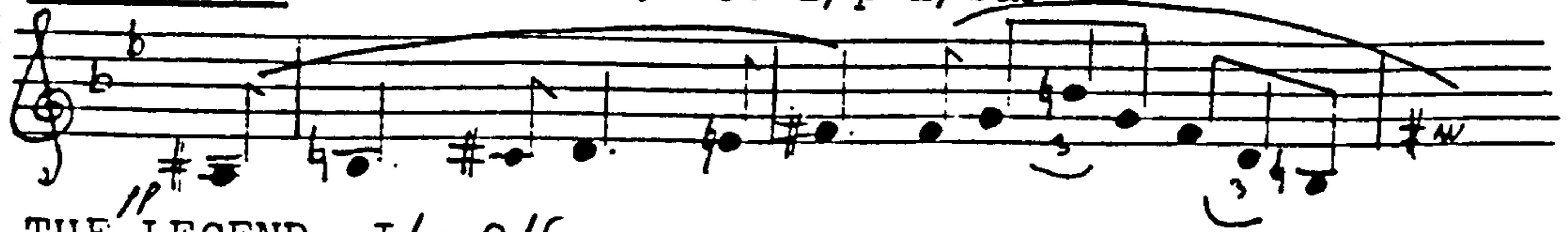
For reference purposes a table of themes and motifs associated with characters and ideas in the opera is given on pp.179-80. In this list, CAPITALS distinguish important themes which are used in a variety of contexts from those confined to a more local function.² In three instances where a harmonic progression contributes greatly to the process of recognition, this too is given. (Page references here and elsewhere in the chapter are for the vocal score published by The Delius Trust in 1979).

The very extent of Delius's response to literary suggestions marks a new commitment on his part to explore, on several levels, the possibilities of music-drama. This array of leitmotifs breathes a life, a dramatic substance, into the simple plot of The Magic Fountain which Irmelin lacked. 'Wapanacki' and 'Wisdom', 'Sailor's' and 'Solana's Longing' - Delius had evidently accepted the challenge not only of things concrete (the places, characters, environment), but also of abstract ideas and ideals which motivate the actions of his characters. It is an added dimension. The use of motivic recall had become, with Wagner, the life-blood of an exciting art form. In The Magic Fountain Delius too reveals a keen perception of the device's potential - something which the light sprinkling of character-motifs over the shallow soil of Irmelin had not suggested.

2. In the application of titles to motifs, the useful lead given by Robert Threlfall in his article 'Delius's unknown opera: The Magic Fountain', Studies in Music, vol.11 (Perth, W.A., 1977), has been followed here. Some alterations and additions to his listing have been made.

Table VII. Leitmotifs in The Magic Fountain

(A) NEW WORLD. Given form: Act I/p.1/bar 16



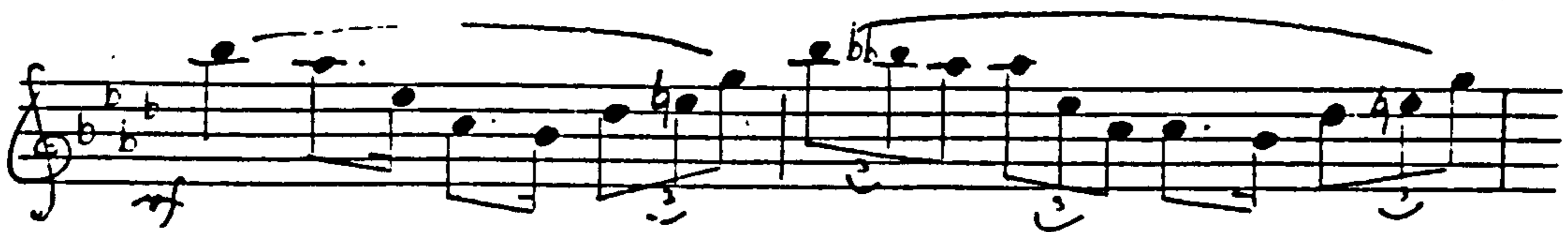
(B) THE LEGEND. I/p.2/6



(C) Sailors. I/p.4/last bar



(D) QUEST FOR FOUNTAIN. I/p.6/4



(E) WISDOM. I/p.6/6



(later) FOUNTAIN. II/p.73/7



(F) Will. I/p.13/3



(G) Sailor's Despair: (i) I/p.16/1 (ii) I/p.17/6



(H) WATAWA. I/p.57/1



(J) Wapanacki. I/p.64/3

Musical notation for (J) Wapanacki. I/p.64/3. A single staff in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The piece starts with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. It features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, and ends with a fermata.

(K) Forest. II/p.67/2

Musical notation for (K) Forest. II/p.67/2. A single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It begins with a half note chord, followed by a quarter note chord, and ends with a half note chord.

(L) INDIANS. II/p.68/10

Musical notation for (L) INDIANS. II/p.68/10. A two-staff piece in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The upper staff contains chords, and the lower staff contains a melodic line. There are several measures with chords and a melodic line, ending with a fermata.

(M) TALUM HADJO. II/p.74/8

(N) STREAM. II/p.104/10

Musical notation for (M) TALUM HADJO. II/p.74/8. A single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It starts with a piano (p) dynamic and features a melodic line with a fermata.

Musical notation for (N) STREAM. II/p.104/10. A single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line with a piano (p) dynamic and a fermata.

(P) HIDDEN DANGER. II/p.111/5

(Q) DANGER OF FOUNTAIN. II/p.116/4

Musical notation for (P) HIDDEN DANGER. II/p.111/5. A single staff in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It starts with a piano (p) dynamic and features a melodic line with a fermata.

Musical notation for (Q) DANGER OF FOUNTAIN. II/p.116/4. A single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line with a piano (p) dynamic and a fermata.

(R) SOLANO'S LONGING.
II/p.120/12

(S) Watawa's Dilemma. III/p.129/11

Musical notation for (R) SOLANO'S LONGING. II/p.120/12. A single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It starts with a forte (f) dynamic and features a melodic line with a fermata.

Musical notation for (S) Watawa's Dilemma. III/p.129/11. A single staff in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line with a piano (p) dynamic and a fermata.

(T) Declared Love.
III/p.146/6

(U) KISS. III/p.150/5

Musical notation for (T) Declared Love. III/p.146/6. A single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line with a piano (p) dynamic and a fermata.

Musical notation for (U) KISS. III/p.150/5. A single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line with a piano (p) dynamic and a fermata.

(V) PASSION. III/p.156/10

Musical notation for (V) PASSION. III/p.156/10. A single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line with a piano (p) dynamic and a fermata.

Musical notation for (V) PASSION. III/p.156/10. A two-staff piece in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The upper staff contains chords, and the lower staff contains a melodic line. It starts with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and ends with a fermata.

Of the many roles assumed by leitmotifs in the opera, there are three which seem to illustrate best the dramatic sensibility Delius brought to The Magic Fountain.

(1). On several occasions the initial association a motif has with an idea is, on the reappearance of the motif, subtly interpreted in a new light. A simple example is provided in Act I by the theme sung by the sailors at their moment of greatest despair (motif G). When, in joyful celebration of the oncoming breeze, they subsequently seize upon the same theme, it is as if in ironic mockery of their earlier lapse of faith:

Ex.1. Act I, pp. 36-7.

(with boisterous joy, some dancing)

The land we shall see once more Hur-rah! Hur-rah! See how quickly it gains the city,

Near the end of the opera comes perhaps the most striking reinterpretation. As the dying Watawa sings her final aria, describing a vision of a paradise everglade, she makes use of the gentle Kiss music which had earlier appeared at the heights of her and Solana's bliss. Watawa quotes bars 5-6 of the theme (motif U), and adopts its general rhythmic and intervallic characteristics (see also ex. 10)

Ex.2. Act III, pp. 189-91

part of motif 'U'

See how the moon - beams flood the sweet mag-no - lia grove

(Fl.) Lis - ten! the

mock-ing bird is warb - ling songs of love.

There I will wait for thee in the sweet mag-no - lia grove. (Sedies)

By implication, it is understood that Watawa's heaven is a garden of bliss, where she and Solana will enjoy a pure, eternal love.

(2). Dramatic implications in the orchestra's music can form a large part of a composer's leitmotivic process. Implied thoughts, for example, are important in the forming of rounded, credible characters. They remove the declaration of intent and motive from the libretto and place it in the wordless voice of the orchestra. Delius illustrates this in his first scene in Act II, where Solana begs Wapanacki for a guide. Without disclosing further details, the chief says he may know who can serve as a guide. Indeed, in the music, as he ponders this question, it is the theme of Watawa (theme H) which is played, quietly, musingly (ex. 3, p. 183).

A rather amusing example in Act I is also worthy of mention. Solana's frustration at having to deal with people of lower aspirations is made abundantly clear in his words:

"With gold I can soothe the common herd,
'tis all they understand.
How many a daring thought would succeed
but for the mass of commonsense beings." (pp. 25-6)

Who he has particularly in mind as the target of these reproaches is revealed by the orchestra in repetitions of the sailor's motif (C).

Delius makes interesting use in The Magic Fountain of two motifs which imply the presence of danger - the Hidden Danger and Danger of Fountain motifs (P and Q). Hidden Danger, at its first appearance, refers directly to the weapon with which Watawa, at one stage of the drama, had intended to slay Solana:

"Hidden close within my belt
lies a poisoned knife." (p. 111)

Later, however, it is also employed in allusion to the danger of the fountain. The Danger of Fountain motif itself accompanies the disclosure by the seer, Talum Hadjo, that the fountain's waters are poisoned. It is immediately snatched up into Watawa's music - it is her new weapon (Act II, p. 117, bar 9). Subsequent appearances of the two motifs underline these dangers (see pp. 139-40 and p. 153, bars 6-7). At the climax of the opera, the fountain-god, Unktahé, materializes. Despite

Ex.3. Act II, p.77.

Wapemacki *(rising quietly)*

Watawa's motif

Wait here a while, maybe I know a

Ex.4. Act III, p.178.

Hidden Danger (motif P)

Watawa's disappearance with the fountain bubbles higher than ever.

Danger of Fountain (motif Q)

words with do. a tempo vivo ma molto forte.

his "attitude of complete repose....seemingly unconscious of all", the covert danger he brings with him is forcefully restated by recurrences of the two motifs in the orchestra - a dire warning unheeded by the headstrong Solana (ex.4, p.183).

3. Finally here, some instances of themes which acquire, through subsequent use, a deeper significance than initially suggested. In each case a theme which had first represented a material object or person takes on abstract associations. The most obvious example is that of theme L, the Indians' theme - a melody in which the noble character of the race seems to be embodied. And it is the virtues of the race - the courage and solemn pride - rather than an image of Indians seated round a campfire, that are to be recalled as Watawa takes her self-sacrificing steps into the fountain's waters at the close of Act III to the accompaniment of motif L (p. 188, bars 3-8). Similar transformations affect the Stream and New World themes (motifs N and A). The first, beginning as a motif for the forest brook, attains the wider meaning of endless, flowing time when it accompanies the meditative words of Talum Hadjo:

(He seems to be absorbed in deep thought
and looks intently down into limpid water)

"Drifting, drifting, down the stream of time
towards the eternal....
Day follows day, year follows year...."(p.105)

With a fine musico-dramatic stroke, the New World theme that had heralded Solana's arrival on the coast of Florida (p.52) is reemployed by Delius at the death of Watawa. As she lies on the verge of another unknown world, it has the poignance of a swan song (p.189, bars 3-10).

Part B - Leitmotifs and Structure

Though essentially a musico-dramatic device, the leitmotif was shown by Wagner to have certain structural applications. Delius explored some of these in The Magic Fountain. Structural unity, for example, was an important and convenient by-product of motivic processes. Convenient, but not coincidental: in the

examples from The Magic Fountain considered below it will be clear that the structural function of the motifs results from deliberate manipulation by the composer.

The important uses of motifs in the opera represent a second stage in the composer's fashioning of a motif-generation technique. Rhythmic cells in the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem and Violin Sonata had effectively knitted practically all of the thematic material in these works into a larger whole. In The Magic Fountain, and subsequently in A Village Romeo and Juliet (see chapter seven), Delius shows himself increasingly aware of the suitability of motivic working to his creative methods.

Two principal methods may be distinguished. First, the constant restatement in any single passage of one motif. In Act II, for instance, the ruminations of Talum Hadjo as he sits beside his 'stream of time' are introduced, then twice interrupted, by the fluent motif of the stream itself (motif N; pp. 104-9). This ritornello effect, and the contrast created with his angular vocal line and mostly slow-moving accompaniment, makes this the most well-balanced passage of arioso in the work. Earlier in Act II, Wapanacki gives his advice to Watawa in a brief arietta built entirely on repetitions of his personal motif (motif J; pp. 82-3). Although the overall effect is rather monotonous here, the motif does serve to unify the arietta. The largest self-contained section in the opera employing motifs to define its structure, and the most impressive, is the love-duet in Act III. This is considered individually in Section Three below.

Secondly, unity is insinuated into extensive passages of music through series of related motifs. Dramatically, the purpose of altering a motif in the course of a section is often to illustrate developments in the emotions of a character. For example, Watawa has one motif peculiar to her agonized soliloquy in Act III which undergoes such changes. The basic shape (motif S) is a sorrowful, drooping idea at its first appearance in the final bars on p. 129. Its reappearances on p. 134 (bar 7) and p. 136 (bar 6) - ex. 5(a) - are in

more thoughtful, questioning moods:

Ex.5(a). Act III, p.136, bar6.



while the forms it takes on pp.137-8, grumbling in the bass instruments, seems to convey the deep-seated anxiety which is Watawa's "gnawing pain":

(b). Act III, pp.137-8.



Hand in hand with the dramatic impact thus created is the effect of the motivic process on the listener's sense of form: a simultaneous effect of unity and development.

Act III provides another example in the simple expansion of motif T during the enchanting love-scene. The initial cell (T) accompanying the lovers' declarations of passion is spun first into a floating, poised Kiss theme (U), then into the urgent Passion motif (V).

Several such instances in the course of the opera point to a growing thriftiness in Delius's use of his material. It was indicated earlier that the same motivic material was extended to different points in the drama, reworked for its fresh context. This principle also applies to subsidiary music outside the influence of motif/drama associations. The orchestral interlude which bridges the first half of Act II (the Indians' camp and war-dance) and the second (the forest retreat of Talum Hadjo) includes the passage given on pp.187-8 as ex.6(b). The theme of the first twelve bars is a transformation of the nervous, excited motif which, almost unnoticed, calls the Indians to the war-dance - ex.6(a).

Even more discreetly, the ensuing horn-call (bar 13 onwards)

Ex.6(a). Act II, p.86.

(. Jnos. (d) r. y r)

Musical score for Ex. 6(a) showing piano accompaniment. The score is written for two systems of staves. The first system includes a treble clef staff with the tempo marking *Con moto* and a piano staff with a forte dynamic *f*. The second system includes a treble clef staff with a piano dynamic *p* and the marking *trucato*, and a piano staff. The music consists of chords and melodic lines in both hands.

Ex.6(b). Act II, pp.99-100.

Musical score for Ex. 6(b) showing piano accompaniment across three systems. The first system is marked *Piu lento molto tranquillo* and includes a treble clef staff with a piano dynamic *pp* and a piano staff. The second system includes a treble clef staff with a piano dynamic *ppp* and a piano staff. The third system includes a treble clef staff with a piano dynamic *pp (Hms)* and a piano staff. The score features complex chordal textures and melodic fragments.

(Ex.6(b).cont.)

Transformation scene to the slowly passing two' luxurious swamps,

18

22

26

p *piu piano* *acc.*

29

suggests a later phrase (ex.7,below) used only at the close of this Act. Not only the contours of the two themes, but also the underlying harmonic progressions are similar:



Ex.7. Act II, p.119.



Delius induces a degree of unity into his material, then, primarily by these two motivic means: repetition of one motif within a section of music, and the alteration of motifs to suit a developing situation. While both play significant roles in Delius's subsequent music, it is the second procedure which

3. This theme is one of several borrowed from the earlier Florida-inspired score, the Florida suite, for use in The Magic Fountain. This and other borrowings were listed in Table II, p. 32.

is of cardinal importance to his creative maturity. In The Magic Fountain thematic relationships are allied to an intuitive process of alteration: the alterations are governed by the fluctuating levels of emotion. In later years this became his principal method of generating material. The themes of the orchestral and instrumental works he wrote at the peak of his career often consist of little more than motivic dynamos, wonderfully productive in his hands, their inception inspired by a fine sense for what was suitably plastic. Writing of the Violin Concerto (1916), Deryck Cooke has suggested that

"the whole material of the work, thematic and rhythmic, is evolved out of its initial two-bar motto - with...entirely unrhapsodic, rigorously organic mastery."⁴

The present writer has expressed elsewhere similar convictions about the economy of thought behind the great Mass of Life.⁵

+ + +

In ways wholly unprecedented in Irmelin, Delius's faith in himself as a composer of opera seems justified by his second work in the genre. The advance from the superficial use of character-themes in Irmelin to the concrete/abstract subtleties and structural implications of motifs in The Magic Fountain was no doubt made possible by Delius's study of Wagner. At Bayreuth and Munich he had steeped himself in Wagner's music, and in letters of this period he frequently expresses a great admiration for Wagner's work. Commentators on this period of Delius's career have spoken of his "Wagner obsession",⁶ maintaining that "Wagner had become his musical God"⁷ and that he "worshipped Wagner".⁸ However, because

4. Deryck Cooke: 'Delius and Form: A Vindication', The Musical Times (July, 1962), p. 465.

5. Andrew J. Boyle: 'A Mass of Life' and its Bell-Motif', The Music Review, vol. 43 (February 1982).

6. Christopher Redwood: 'Delius as a Composer of Opera', A Delius Companion (London, 1976), p. 219.

7. Eric Fenby: Delius (London, 1971), p. 24.

8. Donald Mitchell: 'Delius and Opera', The Listener (23 January 1958), p. 177.

this influence is so obvious, the strength of Delius's individuality is too readily overlooked. In The Magic Fountain, as elsewhere, he strove to give artistic voice, not to a counterfeit Wagnerian spirit, but to his own personality. It is worth keeping in mind that, even when he wrote Irmelin, Delius was very familiar with Wagner's music. Sleepless nights after Tristan were a part of everyday life in Leipzig (see p.98). Yet the sprinkling of motifs in the score of Irmelin can in no way be compared to leitmotivic methods in Tristan. Der fliegende Holländer, where Wagner first began to explore seriously the applications of leitmotifs, is the opera most nearly approached in technique by Irmelin. "While in the Ring", writes Carl Dahlhaus, "the musical development is based on the leitmotifs, the motifs of recollection in Der fliegende Holländer have more the character of interpolation."⁹ Why, then, if more advanced techniques were familiar to the devotee Delius, did he make so little use of them at that time?

The same problem is carried over to The Magic Fountain. Delius had acquired the score of Tristan in 1888, he had made a partial analysis of Wagner's techniques in Die Meistersinger,¹⁰ and he had described Parsifal as "magnificent, the finest work of Wagner". Yet, to what degree do the advanced leitmotivic procedures of these operas influence the score of The Magic Fountain? Certainly, the integration of a network of plastic leitmotivic cells into the opera, some of them with a structural function, represents a great advance on Irmelin; but the multi-layered motivic weaving, the spans of symphonic unravelling of motifs and the saturation of scenes with motifs which distinguish the middle and late Wagnerian style belong to a different world.

Delius's attitude to Wagner's music seems to resemble the attitude he adopted to the music of Grieg. That is to say, an attitude of selective assimilation - a process reliant on a basic self-knowledge, drawing as it does on the composer's critical understanding both of his creative weaknesses and

9. Carl Dahlhaus: 'Richard Wagner' in The New Grove Dictionary of Music, vol.20 (London 1980), p.128.

10. See RL p.135 (f.18a-b).

strengths. In the late 1880s Delius's songs rose suddenly to the high standard of Twilight Fancies, due to the catalytic effect of Grieg's music on his own. Yet, while Delius set many poems first set by Grieg, the two versions never resembled each other. In Delius's operas, it must be assumed that the minor role played by leitmotifs in Irmelin was more a result of an exercise of options - of selectivity, deliberate or intuitive - than of ignorance of options. The shaping of other elements in the work - notably plot and character - with a simple profile appropriate to a 'fairy-story opera' enhances this argument. Alternatively, the choice of a fairy-tale plot for his first opera may have been suggested to Delius by the knowledge that his operatic talents were in a state of infancy. Whichever way it is viewed, the level of motif-working in Irmelin was, by and large, compatible with the degree of dramatic complexity.

In the composition of his second opera, as with the first, it is evident that Delius was exercising control over his options. While planning the libretto, he wrote: "I want to make the poem very concise, not a word too much philosophical or psychological - as the drama - as I have conceived it - requires."¹¹ There can be sensed behind these self-imposed limitations an artist who knew his own measure; is it not then reasonable, even logical, to assume that he tailored both the music and the plot to the shape of his own needs? At the stage of his development represented by The Magic Fountain important, but select, elements of Wagner's art were a stimulus and inspiration, working to move his career forward. He learnt from Wagner; he worked through Wagner's influence. The appearance of an elaborate leitmotif network in The Magic Fountain was not the result of an obsession with Wagner, but with opera. Delius said as much: "For me dramatic art is taking the place of religion".¹²

11. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 12 August 1894. CLL/1 p.90.

12. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 29 May 1894. Quoted in Lionel Carley and Robert Threlfall: Delius. A Life in Pictures (Oxford, 1977), p.29.

In his search for "une note à lui",¹³ which he considered the touchstone of artistic integrity, a crucial stage is reached by Delius with his second opera. The use he made of leitmotifs is indicative of the nature of that search, and of the work's position in it. Hitherto, Delius's individuality had been most clearly voiced in momentary subtleties of harmonic colour and in the evocation of moods. It was evident by the end of the 1890s - and foreshadowed by his rejection of traditional training - that Delius's art relied primarily on an intuitive feel for colour and the balance of emotional tensions. A motif-recall technique of any kind is, of course, a strange bedfellow for this fragile art, imposing as it does from without a web of reminiscences and accumulated responses. While a degree of leitmotif-working evidently seemed appropriate at this point to the composer, the use of more cerebral processes, such as characterize much of Wagner's music, runs quite contrary to his art. Subsequent operatic ventures will bear this out. Once Delius had absorbed the structural advantages of motivic recall into a motif-generation technique, prominent themes and motivic cells no longer had direct associations with well-defined objects or ideas, but performed a more abstract, generalized role. The motivic 'atmosphere' which permeates the score of A Village Romeo and Juliet will be considered in chapter seven.

Section Two - Momentum and Climax

In his rejection of certain contrapuntal and structural tools at the outset of his career, Delius was also rejecting basic means of creating momentum and direction in music: the rhythmic impulsion resulting from the conflict of contrapuntal lines, and the simultaneous gravitational pull and directional push of systematic modulation and subtle progression within functional tonality. Transferring the colouristic, intimate language of his songs to extended formats, in Sakuntala and Section Five of the Paa Vidderne melodrama for

13. See chapter seven, p. 339.

example, merely served to lay bare its intrinsic lack of impulsion. It was only in those scores where this harmonic style was abandoned in favour of a motoric rhythm that continuity was achieved. In the dance sections of the Florida suite and the war-dance of Hiawatha simple harmony and elementary structural models were brought into use, and through a rhythmic 'motor' - a constant, inflexible, impelling cell - momentum was sustained over extensive sections. Likewise in the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem and the Violin Sonata, the dotted-note figures typical of Delius's 'mountain melody' contained great rhythmic drive.

A huge leap is necessary for Delius to reach the style of his maturity. For, in his scores from the end of the 1890s onwards, one of the most individual features, and probably the most compelling, is his control over a superbly pliant and fluid rhythmic motion, a mastery of subtly ebbing and flowing waves of climax and anticlimax. This cornerstone of Delius's art has defied precise description and definition. The fundamental idea of a flexible rhythmic momentum was once referred to by Delius, rather vaguely, as 'a sense of flow':

"A sense of flow is the main thing, and it doesn't matter how you do it so long as you master it." ¹⁴

To describe the climaxes to which this flow is directed, phrases such as "rhapsodic flight" and "soaring lyricism" have, over the years, been called into service.

How Delius was to bridge the 1889-1899 canyon became evident for practically the first time around 1894 with The Magic Fountain. The emotive power of the composer's harmonic language was fused here with the dynamic energy of rhythm. A new technique resulted which enabled him to move his music effortlessly into and out of brief or sustained climaxes. The fluctuating waves of material ride on the energy of rhythmic and harmonic tension: a sort of 'emotional rubato'.

14. Eric Fenby: Delius as I Knew Him (London 1937), p.169.

A visual analysis of such a passage reveals that two main elements are present:

- 1. harmonic tension, particularly in the form of chromatic alteration, and
- 2. rhythmic tension, in the forms of cross-rhythms and flowing or driving runs.

These are elementary musical components - basic tools of the composer. Their fusion in a composer's style would not normally be a matter worthy of special note. What distinguishes Delius's use of these elements is not evident in the notes on the page. These basic tensions, as tools of the craftsman, do not in themselves disclose anything of the nature of the artist's genius. For that, it is necessary to seek out the actual craft, the inspiration with which the craftsman guides his tools.

Delius's inspiration is emotion. It has already been noted that his harmonic language was geared primarily to a personal expressiveness. From the first, Delius's progress relied on the refining of his sensibilities, his intuition, his feelings. Again, so much seems commonplace. It must, therefore, be once more emphasized that subtleties of tonality, counterpoint or structure in which another might have sublimated or diffused his feelings, were not of primary interest to Delius. Emotion had to make up for, and execute, their functions in some way. In later years, when he could view objectively the central threads in his life's work, he would frequently stress that "[o]ne should always feel rather than invent, and feel deeply".¹⁵ Delius's inspiration is emotion, as a sculptor's inspiration is the beauty and balance of lines and curves; Delius's craft is the representation of his inspiration by the control of harmonic and rhythmic tensions, as a sculptor's craft is the representation of his inspiration by the control of mallet and chisel. The extension of his instinctive dependence on feeling from being a means of governing choice of harmonies to governing the flow and rhythm of these harmonies is seen practically for the first time in The Magic

15. Eric Fenby, ibid., p.198.

Fountain. As was suggested at the end of the previous chapter, it was the practical demands of music-drama - the subtly altering moods, fluctuating emotions and developing characters - that brought from the composer a more advanced language.

The first of three examples considered in this section illustrates in a clear-cut way the composer's control over a moment of accumulated tension and its release. In the opening bars of example 7 (p.197) a chromatic slide upwards begins, propelled by a rhythmic ostinato and the vocal cross-rhythm: it is elementary. The slide continues for altogether 6 bars. Harmonically, the progression could continue indefinitely, but in these bars, and especially in bars 5-6, the melodic rhythm greatly increases in tension, caused by cross-rhythms with the ostinato. The music takes flight and is urged on to its goal, which is reached at bar 7. The exultant resolution which is anticipated at this point ($Ab^{\sharp} - Db$) is diverted by Delius in a typical Wagnerian deceptive cadence: $V^{\sharp} - IVc$ (here, $Ab^{\sharp} - Gb^{\flat}$). The music seems to float down from its moment of highest tension to the firm resolution of a $Bb^{\sharp} - Eb$ cadence at bars 10-11. Intuitive though they probably are, the measurement and gradation of harmonic tensions, and the accumulation and release of rhythmic tensions contribute to a neatly poised, balanced effect. Though on a small scale here, these are the characteristics which also function in more extended instances of 'emotional rubato'.

On several occasions in The Magic Fountain, fine climaxes are carefully built up by an additive process, successive layers being added to heighten the tension and impulsion of the music. Of these, by far the most significant is the Act III love-duet. As this will be considered on its own in Section Three, a simple passage from the heart of Act II has been chosen to illustrate this process. Compared with the impressive crescendo of tension in the love-duet, ex.8(b) (pp.198-9) has a charming naivety. It is built on material first heard earlier in the Act in a passage which is included here as the preliminary ex.8(a). The melody consists basically of sequential repetitions of Talum Hadjo's motif (motif M);

Ex.7. Act I, pp.8-9.

5. *mp accel. poco a poco*
But all these mysteries soon will be solved if

5. *mp*
on - by the fountain I near Then

5. *ff*
once having drunk of it we — ter di — vine

7. *pp*
— ter — — — — — ter — — — — —
sv. bd.
mp

10. *pp*
— love — — — — — life — — — — —
sv. bd.
pp

Ex.8(a). Act II,p.74.

(Ex.8(b).cont.)

(Wapenacki) Lento a tempo

ah! His lunk-tar-hés sa - ued spring

f *pp* *ppro rit* *p a tempo*

Detailed description: This musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with the tempo marking '(Wapenacki) Lento a tempo'. The lyrics 'ah! His lunk-tar-hés sa - ued spring' are written below the notes. The middle staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The piano part includes dynamic markings 'f', 'pp', 'ppro rit', and 'p a tempo'. A circled annotation 'A' is present in the middle staff. The piano part features various chords and melodic lines, including a prominent bass line with a 'rit' marking.

Ex.8(b). Act II,pp.103-4.

Molto tranquillo

The scene transforms to Tulema Hadjard woods.
The region forest becomes more dense with more
sombre

The sunlight becomes
obscured.

4

8

Detailed description: This musical score is divided into two systems. The first system features a piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs, marked 'Molto tranquillo'. The piano part includes a circled annotation 'A'. Above the piano part, there are two lines of text: 'The scene transforms to Tulema Hadjard woods. The region forest becomes more dense with more sombre'. The second system shows a vocal line in treble clef with the tempo marking 'Lento a tempo' and the lyrics 'The sunlight becomes obscured.'. The piano accompaniment continues below the vocal line. A large bracket on the left side of the second system is labeled with the number '4'. The third system shows a piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs, with a large bracket on the left side labeled with the number '8'. The piano part includes various chords and melodic lines.

(Ex.8(b).cont.)

11

•(d)t.xii

14

17

when accompanied by little rhythmic movement, as at ex.8(a), the idea seems wooden and heavy. Already in the first 6-bar statement of ex.8(b), on the other hand, there is the gently coaxing rhythmic tension of a counter-melody. The second statement (bars 7-12) adds to this a flow of triplets. Subsequently, with the music now moving smoothly under its own momentum, a lyrical climax is crowned by the harmonic tension of chromatically altered chords and unessential notes.

All the aspects so far mentioned are also contained in ex.9 (pp.201-204), encompassing Watawa's transformation in Act III from being in despair to being in love. In bars 1-10 driving rhythms and chromatic passing-notes pull against the anchorage of clear F minor/Bb minor tonal centres; in bars 11-17 the same dashing rhythmic energy is present, now with profuse appoggiaturas and accented passing-notes tightening up the pitch of tension; a rhythmic climax ensues at 13-14, but without harmonic resolution, and the downward-curving sweep of 14-17 defuses the tension somewhat; in bars 18-23 Solana's distant call is still accompanied by a dual tonality (Eb major/Gb minor) and a gentle rhythmic momentum. But at bar 24 a simple transformation takes place. The harmonic ambiguity and the rhythmic tension vanish. Watawa, 'sotto voce', holding her breath, listening with all her powers, whispers: "Am I dreaming? Again he is calling". A striking dramatic stroke is effected through powerful contrast - a contrast made possible by the energy and tension Delius harnesses in the preceding section.

+ + +

Ex.9. Act III, pp.140-3.

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the treble clef, the middle is the alto clef, and the bottom is the bass clef. The music features several triplet markings and slurs across measures. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The system concludes with a double bar line.

V.

The second system includes a vocal line (V.) and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in the treble clef and contains the lyrics "Still ano - ther night must". The piano accompaniment is in the bass clef and includes triplet markings and slurs. The system concludes with a double bar line.

W.

2

The third system includes a vocal line (W.) and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in the treble clef and contains the lyrics "vanish Still no no - ther day — must wane E'er for". The piano accompaniment is in the bass clef and includes triplet markings and slurs. The system concludes with a double bar line.

(Ex. 9. cont.)

W. *2 - 4* *5* *7* *2* *1* *2* *3* *4* *5* *6* *7* *8* *9* *10* *11* *12* *13* *14* *15* *16* *17* *18* *19* *20* *21* *22* *23* *24* *25* *26* *27* *28* *29* *30* *31* *32* *33* *34* *35* *36* *37* *38* *39* *40* *41* *42* *43* *44* *45* *46* *47* *48* *49* *50* *51* *52* *53* *54* *55* *56* *57* *58* *59* *60* *61* *62* *63* *64* *65* *66* *67* *68* *69* *70* *71* *72* *73* *74* *75* *76* *77* *78* *79* *80* *81* *82* *83* *84* *85* *86* *87* *88* *89* *90* *91* *92* *93* *94* *95* *96* *97* *98* *99* *100*

I can banish from — my heart this gnaw — ing

5

IV. *1* *2* *3* *4* *5* *6* *7* *8* *9* *10* *11* *12* *13* *14* *15* *16* *17* *18* *19* *20* *21* *22* *23* *24* *25* *26* *27* *28* *29* *30* *31* *32* *33* *34* *35* *36* *37* *38* *39* *40* *41* *42* *43* *44* *45* *46* *47* *48* *49* *50* *51* *52* *53* *54* *55* *56* *57* *58* *59* *60* *61* *62* *63* *64* *65* *66* *67* *68* *69* *70* *71* *72* *73* *74* *75* *76* *77* *78* *79* *80* *81* *82* *83* *84* *85* *86* *87* *88* *89* *90* *91* *92* *93* *94* *95* *96* *97* *98* *99* *100*

pain

8

6 tempo

V. *1* *2* *3* *4* *5* *6* *7* *8* *9* *10* *11* *12* *13* *14* *15* *16* *17* *18* *19* *20* *21* *22* *23* *24* *25* *26* *27* *28* *29* *30* *31* *32* *33* *34* *35* *36* *37* *38* *39* *40* *41* *42* *43* *44* *45* *46* *47* *48* *49* *50* *51* *52* *53* *54* *55* *56* *57* *58* *59* *60* *61* *62* *63* *64* *65* *66* *67* *68* *69* *70* *71* *72* *73* *74* *75* *76* *77* *78* *79* *80* *81* *82* *83* *84* *85* *86* *87* *88* *89* *90* *91* *92* *93* *94* *95* *96* *97* *98* *99* *100*

6 tempo

yearn - ing, burn - ing with de - sire —

11

(Ex. 9. cont.)

W. 13

knowing, killing with wild fire

W. 15

Had a love, know no longer

W. 17

1. = 1 of preceding

pp

(Ex. 9. cont.)

(Wetawa places her hands to her breast and listens)

Poleno

Wa - wa - wa - wa

rall.

20

molto adagio 1-2 of preceding

S. Wetawa (sotto voce)

-wa: am I dreaming? a - gain he is

23

W.

call like sweet mu - sic sounds me

27

(Carl Dahlhaus:)

" [F]rom Rheingold onwards, Wagner was inclined to supplant the regular rhythms or bar-groupings that predominate in Classical and earlier Romantic music with irregular formations....The regular movement of strong and weak beats and bars....is not entirely done away with in Wagner's rhythm, but it is thrust so far into the background that its continuing presence is felt only feebly." ¹⁶

+

(Wagner:)

"Now, I recognize that the peculiar tissue of my music (naturally in exactest agreement with the poetic structure) - what my friends now consider so new and significant - owes its texture in especial to that intensely delicate feeling which prompts me to mediate and knit together all the nodes of transition between extremes of mood. My subtlest and deepest art I now might call the art of Transmutation; the whole consists of such transitions." ¹⁷

+

(Wagner:)

" [I]n the musical setting of Tristan not a trace of word repetition is any longer found, but the weft of words and verses foreordains the whole dimensions of the melody, that is, the structure of that melody is already erected by the poet" ¹⁸

+

It was the style that Wagner brought to a peak in Tristan und Isolde - an extraordinary triumph of musical innovation and dramatic vision - which was to make the profoundest impression on contemporary composers and those of the succeeding (Delius's) generation. At least as significant as the much-studied harmonic idiom was the technique Wagner developed for evolving from his material long, fluid, unbroken scenes,

16. Carl Dahlhaus, op.cit., p.124.

17. ed. Albert Goldman and Evert Sprinchorn: Wagner on Music and Drama (London, 1970), p.213.

18. ibid., p.271.

with the musical texture characterized by flexible, dynamic rhythms and the avoidance of cadential interruptions. This Wagner continuum has an exciting appeal. Regarded as an entity (the 'Gestalt' which is heard), it has the immediacy and emotional completeness of a visionary concept, and seems to be the product of a single musico-dramatic impulse.

The forces acting upon the composer, however, which resulted in this individual style, were many and varied. When the late-Wagnerian continuum is broken down, three primary areas of creative motivation can be identified. First of all, the desire for rhythmic flexibility. For the libretto of Der Ring des Nibelungen, Wagner developed a poetic style ('Stabreim') which allowed for an unusual degree of metric licence. It stimulated, or at least corresponded with, a tendency to compose in more prose-like phrases, that is, where the grip upon the musical continuity of a motoric pulsation of weak and strong accents is loosened. A principal agent determining regular four-square moulds for musical thought was also thereby negated; the potential for composing in broader, more freely-ranging concepts was exploited in Tristan and Parsifal. As an alternative to the rhythmic propulsion sacrificed in the weakening of pulse, Wagner concentrated on the linear tension of intricate contrapuntal cross-rhythms.

Both the second and third areas are concerned with the actual effect of long-spanned continuity. The true inspiration behind Wagner's art of Transition is perhaps dramatic. Intuition plays the main part in his knitting together of "all the nodes of transition between extremes of mood" - an intuitive feel for the chemistry, the shifting balances, in human relationships. In a scene where no sudden dramatic action disturbs two lovers, for example, the emotional reactions and evolving climaxes will happen as a gradual - not convulsive - process. Subtle gradations in emotional developments and their overlapping stages prompt, therefore, a musical language capable of breadth and continuity. And this same language results, too, from Wagner's principle of infinite melody. Melody, as he came to define it, was a succession of meaningful

melodic events, devoid of empty, conventional fillings. Cadential formulae, from this viewpoint, were manifestations of conventional empty gesturing and should be bridged or by-passed. The 'art of Transition' and 'infinite melody' have different causes, but are in their effect - that is, the late-Wagner continuum - closely related.

It is probably in these stylistic features that Wagner made his most important contribution to Delius's language. Nowhere is it more clear that the premises upon which the two composers formed their languages are remarkably similar - and nowhere more clear that Wagner's precedent would hold for Delius an irresistible, inevitable attraction. It was commented on earlier that Delius, from the outset of his career, had denied himself the use of what he saw as outmoded composition techniques (at the expense of rhythmic momentum); he sensed that the means to replace them was through dependence on intuition and powerful feeling; he despised music empty of sustained feeling. With so much common ground in their creative temperaments, the sharing of characteristics in their musical styles is hardly surprising. Delius's music benefited enormously from these areas of Wagner's operatic language.

Yet Delius, in crucial respects, was limited in how far his technique could follow that of Wagner. As Delius's own style took shape between 1894 and 1900 it seems that it is the differences from Wagner which arise from these limitations, rather than the derivations, that turn out to be of lasting significance, and in which the thread of his development is traced.

There is little doubt that Wagner's flexible rhythms were of great value to Delius in his advance from rhythmic 'motor' cells in Florida and Hiawatha and the Suite for violin to the arching climaxes and fluctuating tensions of The Magic Fountain. The freedom of Wagner's prose-rhythms and his weakening of the dominance of strong/weak pulsation had a liberalising impact upon Delius's music. Nevertheless, Delius did not imitate Wagner's matured techniques. For Wagner, the consequences of his own modernity was the exploration of elaborate rhythmic techniques. This path was for

him the inevitable course resulting from his attitude to conventional practices. Dahlhaus points out that the "lack of differentiation between bars and sometimes even between beats is compensated for in Wagner...by the extreme subtlety and complexity of the rhythmic detail".¹⁹ Unlike him (and other composers in the Austrian-German symphonic tradition such as Bruckner, Mahler and Strauss), Delius had no grounding in contrapuntal crafts, nor training in abstract symphonic writing. In their place Delius concentrated his powers on the effect of expressive harmony in suggesting mood and emotion. Hinted at in 'The Magic Fountain', Delius's music in his most characteristic scores balances between rhythmic relaxation and highly-charged (emotional) rhythmic tension. The rhythmic energy generated in his 'emotional rubato', though usually for brief passages, was compensation for plateaux of leisurely-paced, weak-pulsed music. It was a soaring arch between solid pillars.'

A form of 'infinite melody' akin to that in Wagner operas may well have been the peak of aspiration for Delius well into the 1900s. He did assimilate much of Wagner's idiomatic vocabulary of progressions for bridging cadence-points. (Indeed, it is probably in the harmonic side-stepping of cadences in Delius's work that Wagner's influence has been most conspicuously evident). But, as with the counterpoint in Wagner's rhythmic techniques, he does not assimilate the symphonic development procedures by which the earlier composer maintained his breadth of melody. To Wagner, the symphonic treatment of his motivic ideas ensured their continual significance; he invoked Beethoven as his forbear. To Delius, both the technique and its early nineteenth century master symbolized a creative ethic incompatible with his own. The motif-metamorphosis processes which emerged in Delius's music of the early 1900s compensated to a great extent for the rejected symphonic basis of Wagner's 'infinite melody'.

19. Carl Dahlhaus, op.cit., p.124.

What, then, of Wagner's 'art of Transition'?

"My greatest masterpiece in this art of subtlest and most gradual transition is assuredly the big scene in the second act of Tristan und Isolde." ²⁰

Without the breadth-giving counterpoint, without the breadth-giving symphonic crafts, Delius was in no position to emulate the majestic conceptual scale for which its creator deemed this art most appropriate. This is not to say that Delius, in turning inwards and seeking an intimate and intense style, did not have use for Wagnerian models. In the discreet fluctuations of emotional levels and the gradations of tension in his brief, but fluid, climaxes, the 'art of Transition' has been of great significance to Delius. But it, too, is serving a new master and new aims.

+ + +

Section Three

"Come Watawa, kill or kiss" - The Love-Duet

[The vocal score of the duet is given as Appendix I.]

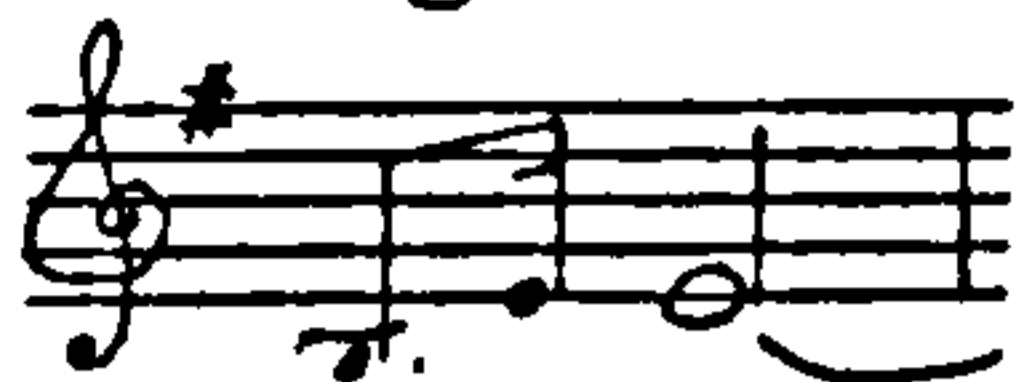
The Act III duet sung by the two lovers, Watawa and Solana, forms the dramatic and emotional climax of the opera. Musically, it presents no notable developments beyond those already discussed in this chapter. Nevertheless, a special place has been reserved for it here. The love-duet assembles, in one close-ended piece, most of these developments, and is characterized by them. Because their primary value has been as elements in the extension and binding of material, the 84-bar duet is principally of interest for its rhythmic momentum and formal unity. Here it represents well the level of Delius's achievement in The Magic Fountain.

(A) Motifs and Drama

The two motifs which predominate in the love-duet have strong dramatic associations. As the piece commences, 'tranquillo moderato', the horns sound a rising-fourth figure which

20. Goldman and Sprinchorn, op.cit., p.213.

has followed the lovers from the first declaration of their love (motif T) through their first kiss (motif U) to this point:



Solana, in an imploring tone, tells Watawa that her love has deepened his own. The first violins add on to the horn motif a chromatic, coaxing extension:



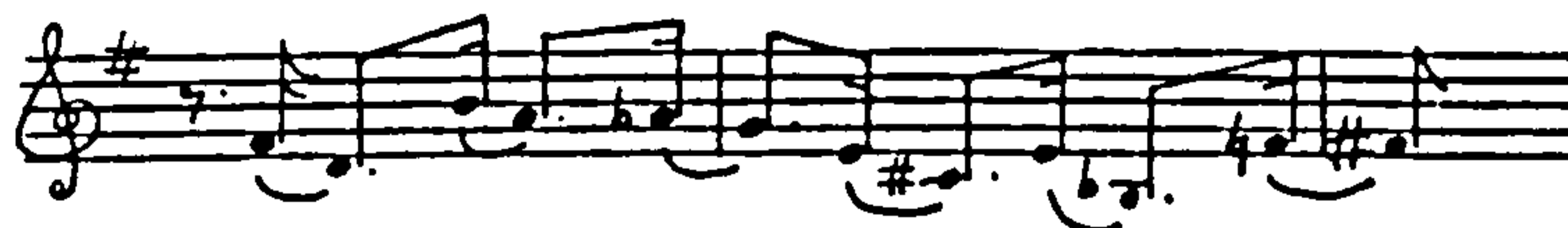
As the music proceeds and the emotional pitch rises, the two apparently independent cells are joined fast together (motif V). Urgent and impulsive, the 'coaxing'-motif now glints with the spark of passion. And passion, it is now sensed from the fused motifs, is the new stage of Solana's love. It is a neat dramatic stroke.

The second motif is associated with the end of Act II, where Solana is suddenly aware of his great longing for Watawa and cries out her name (motif R; see p.120, bar 12). The undertones of strong desire the motif had then are carried in the love-duet to a level of excited passion.

The fusion of these two motifs, Passion and Solana's Longing, in the love-duet has actually been prepared. In the orchestral introduction to Act III, both motifs are given in full in a marvellous climactic passage (pp.128-9).

(B) Motifs and Structure

These motifs, generating some two-thirds of the duet's material, impart a basic formal unity to the piece. Delius makes the most of the effect. A tripartite scheme arises from the use of the Passion motif in the opening section (to bar 22), and then again in the closing episode (from bar 55) as the central strand in a now elaborate tapestry. Both motifs are heard only in hints in the middle section, which turns its attention to a new rhythmic countermotif:



This is the dynamo which drives the piece to its climax. Solana's Longing breaks out in full statements as a bridge idea between the middle and final sections.

(C) Momentum and Climax

When it is recalled that this small, highly-charged duet is the first passionate climax in Delius's music, the control he exerts over every subtlety of emotional tension and energy seems remarkable. The additive process observed earlier is employed, layers of rhythmic and harmonic tension accumulating a driving momentum. But it is far easier to detect and analyse with the eye than with the ear, for the dovetailing of ideas and grading of shades of tension are products of the composer's increasingly finely-tuned intuition for 'emotional rubato'. It is helpful, nevertheless, to list some of the stages of increasing tension which define the character of the piece:

- 1-22 : 'Tranquillo moderato'. Two statements of material derived from the Passion motif are given, the first with a simple chordal accompaniment (1-10) and the second adding gliding triplet runs (from 11).
- 23-54 : 'Piu vivo'. Two statements of material derived from the springing countermotif are given here. After its entry in bar 23 the countermotif is almost always present, its impulsive rhythm and wide leaps instilling a reckless energy.
- With the second statement (Watawa's entry, bar 39), driving, arching triplet runs are added. Eruptions of the longing motif suddenly break the surface at bars 51-54.
- 55-84 : Two statements of the earlier Passion material follow here, the first being pitted against the countermotif and a new chromatic countermelody in the violins and violas, the second (from bar 67) combining all these and the driving triplet runs.

At the crown of his climax Delius reins in the headlong

dash. The passion is channelled into the intense, tightly-clenched longing of bars 71-74 (chromatic sequences of minor triads at 71, 7th chords at 72 and half-diminished 7ths at 73-4). What might have been a towering, almost Tristanesque culmination is broken off: for the goal of these lovers is not an ideal of sustained passion, an unattainable romantic horizon - it is far more concrete, and at hand.

"In close embrace we two shall slumber
merging soul and soul in one long kiss"

(Their lips meet in a long kiss and they
fall to sleep in one another's arms).

Thus, with an intimate rather than a passionate end in view, Delius does check the white heat of his duet. Though this dénouement is rather naive, it is intended, surely, to resolve the tension of the love-duet in a symbolic physical union.

What form can the love of Watawa and Solana take, once their passion has been resolved?

+ + +

Section Four - Passion and the 'Nature-Death'

"Passion is deepened and releases its energies
only in relation to the resistance it meets."²¹

- Denis de Rougemont

Irmelin's secret dreams of "love-longing and bliss" were always expressed, it was noted in chapter three, against a backdrop of tranquil nature. Scene and mood seemed inextricable. Indeed, her aspirations were dependent upon a setting of natural beauty and peace as a frame for her feelings, and as their 'sounding-board'. The suggestion was made that it was by contrast with its implied opposite that Irmelin's state of emotional unrest could be defined and measured. By their resistance to the benign backdrop her vague longings were given meaning.

In accordance with the fairy-tale substance of the opera,

21. Denis de Rougemont: 'Love' in The Dictionary of the History of Ideas (New York, 1973), vol. III, p. 101.

her desires were satisfied when she met her prince, Nils. Upon mutual declaration of affection their longing was at once sublimated into a childlike love and hope.

Passion, as observed in the preliminary quotation, feeds on obstacles. It is love obstructed. In the enchanting love scenes in Irmelin a remarkable instinct for the expression of love's tension can be sensed behind Delius's music. Here, the princess's love-longing belongs to an ethereal, emotional dream-world: material obstacles, on a different plane, cannot affect it. Delius supplies, therefore, the necessary 'resistance' in nature. By implication, the perfection and peace of natural order is an obstacle which the irrational, troubled spirit of Irmelin must, for the sake of her dream, resist.

Happily, Watawa and Solana are characters of more flesh-and-blood reactions, and their love directed by earthier aims. Declaration of love does not, in their case, signal the end to the passion of longing - rather, the exact opposite. Nor, in The Magic Fountain, are the obstacles by which passion is inflamed lacking in concrete immediacy. The passion of the love-duet is initially the passion of Solana: he it is whose love has been unrequited (at the end of Act II), resulting in the pleading motif R, Solana's Longing; he it is who doubts whether his lover will overcome deep-rooted tribal feelings, resulting in the Passion motif. Love rejected is the lover's greatest obstacle. His love is returned, however, and with Watawa's entry into the duet it is a shared passion which raises the emotional tension. Now the obstruction to the fulfillment of their mutual love is, paradoxically, their own passion. The longer the duet continues - the longer they hold back from the symbolic physical union - the higher mounts the emotion.

And so a fundamental problem arises. Delius inevitably presents himself with it upon reaching his emotional goal. How can longing be resolved without dissolving love?

Delius's solution in Irmelin is disappointing. For the childlike idealism of the united prince and princess to be satisfactory, it would have been necessary to have regarded Irmelin's warmly human longings as a spiritual rather than

a physical force. The problem is confronted by the composer in The Magic Fountain. In a crude sense the deaths of Watawa and Solana in the poisoned waters of the fountain is a dramatic convenience, a 'deus ex machina'. The forced termination of a love-affair in death forestalls its inglorious post-passion dissolution. Nevertheless, within this expediency, Delius's intuitive genius offers a redeeming vision. In moments of considerable dramatic power and beauty, the survival of love as a transmuted, edified, positive force is intimated.

First, in Watawa's self-sacrifice, love is seen as devotion. It is devotion and not passion which compels her to her fate: this is a somewhat different form of the 'Liebestod', therefore, than in Tristan.

*(Sol.): Dost thou think that in such pure waters
Death could ever find a place?...
Come then, Watawa. If thou lov'st me,
follow me unto death.

(Wat.): Not afraid is Watawa
she will follow unto death
and whilst drinking of the fountain
bless our love with her last breath."

(Watawa rushes to the fountain, then, turns and looks lovingly, almost joyfully at Solana. Then she stoops over the fountain and drinks, rises, places (as if in great pain) her hands to her bosom, and totters...)

(pp.185-188)

Secondly, and of far greater significance for Delius's subsequent development, love is seen in Watawa's dying vision as being reconciled to, and as part of, nature. The melody and harmony of her cameo-aria, "See how the moonbeams", are of affecting simplicity (ex.10, p.215). Watawa sees for herself and her lover a blissful love in a Garden of Eden, a paradise where she reposes in the embrace of nature. Beyond such ephemerae as passions, the state of pure love which she envisages and in whose grace she dies, is the state of nature, and nature's peace.

It is a personal and intimate ending. In this instance, particularly, it would have been of value to have compared Delius's treatment of love with similar developments in the operas of other composers. Passionate love was not, after all, an uncommon subject in late nineteenth century (post-Grand) opera. It is surprising, therefore, that there seems to be

Ex.10. Act III, pp.189-90.

W.

See how the moon-beams flood the sweet mag-no-lia

W.

groove

W.

his-ten! The mocking bird is war-bling songs of

W.

love There I will wait for thee in the

little scope for comparison. Three main patterns of dramatic development can be distinguished in works where a passionate love plays a part. In the 'declaration'-opera the story finishes at the point where love is declared between the main characters, and a union sealed: Turandot and Arabella are examples of the genre, as is Delius's Irmelin; it is also the stuff of operetta and musical comedy. In the 'separation'-opera love is sustained at a passionate level by enforced separation, which may include death (a sort of 'Romeo and Juliet syndrome'): some of the greatest operas of the era were inspired by this theme, including La Bohème, Pelléas et Mélisande, Delius's A Village Romeo and Juliet and the apotheosis of sustained passion, Tristan und Isolde. Finally, the 'devotion'-opera, in which passionate love mellows into a dutiful devotion, or, conversely, is in conflict with devotion: Madama Butterfly and La Traviata are of the former type, both operas opening with one act dealing with passionate love, then leaping forward in time to relate a tale of how true devotion was wronged; the conflict of passion and devotion is yet more interesting, perhaps, and has prompted two masterpieces in Eugene Onegin and Un Ballo in Maschera. While Watawa's self-sacrifice has an element in common with this third group, the final state of pure, sublimated, desensualized love - fused with nature - to which she aspires, is quite extraordinary.

There is, however, one opera of which a special note should be taken here, although its ending lends itself to diverse interpretations. Der Rosenkavalier presents, on a far grander scale than Delius's operatic concept, a pageant of passion. Throughout its many intrigues a series of obstacles stands in the path of each pair of lovers. Octavian and Sophie, in particular, are kept apart by the former's infatuation with the Marschallin and the latter's unfortunate betrothal to the appalling Baron Ochs. Only towards the opera's conclusion are the obstacles removed. What Strauss does at this point is described in the following way by Joseph Kerman:

"[W]hen the young lovers come together at the end of the opera, all that Strauss can produce is a sort of feeble folk song. By any criterion, I think, it is the poorest thing in the opera. Was it for this minimal level of consciousness that we had to suffer the Marschallin's self-pity and to sacrifice Ochs? for this, the silver rose and the white suit, the Three Noble Orphans and four finicky hours of leitmotives, modulations and program-musical wit?"²²

Reactions to this scene as positive as Kerman's are negative can be offered here. The dramatic problem of passionate love, earlier defined in regard to The Magic Fountain, is relevant here: how can longing be resolved without love dissolving with it?

The melody and harmony of the duet, 'Spür nur dich, spür nur dich allein', is folk song-like because this love can survive in a union of pure (unobstructed) affection: the universal ideal of simple, 'folk-like' marriage. Not that Octavian and Sophie are folk figures; they aspire, however, to such an ideal of simplicity.

Stylistically, the Delius and Strauss solutions have all essentials in common. Conceptually, too, the composers' intuitions lead them to suggest a reconciliation with the unspoilt and pure - in Strauss's case represented by the courtly image of folk-love, in Delius's case by nature.

The role of nature is to become ever more important in Delius's music. At the turning-point of his career at the end of the 1890s it will be seen to assume a central position in his creative aesthetic. By then it is associated with Delius's deepening concern with transience. He is some years yet from this stage, but, as with several other features of his mature style, it is in The Magic Fountain that real progress towards it can first be identified. And, in common with other aspects of the opera, fulfillment of this potential will first come in A Village Romeo and Juliet.

22. Joseph Kerman: Opera as Drama (New York, 1956), p. 260.

The 'love-death' of Tristan may be said to have been extended in Delius's opera to the 'nature-death'. The suicide of Solana and Watawa is, of course, modelled on the end of Wagner's opera. Delius's theme of passionate love is also strikingly similar to that in Tristan. Both composers sought a musical language which would express this passion - the drama of sustained longing. But the climaxes of their conceptions are individual. For Wagner (who could compose a 'Good Friday' opera in his last years), the question of how longing can be resolved without the dissolution of love need not arise: the essence of the 'Liebestod' in Tristan is that longing shall not be resolved, but should survive in, or be sublimated by, death. For Delius (who could write A Mass of Life and a "pagan" Requiem, as it has been called), the longing of his characters should have its fulfillment.

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Theoretically, The Magic Fountain can be regarded as the starting-point of Delius's maturity. With the emergence of the early stages of flexible rhythmic momentum controlled by emotional impulse, all the principal elements of his mature language are present. In practice, however - in the hierarchy of Delius's development - the opera is certainly not the threshold of full creative powers. In the works written between The Magic Fountain and the end of the decade, the three aspects of the opera which will have a bearing on the mature language are not significantly developed further. Only in the real turning-point, A Village Romeo and Juliet, is the potential of The Magic Fountain fulfilled: the structural strength of motivic generation, the dramatic force of the 'emotional rubato' and the powerful drama in passionate love and its relationship to nature. These are not still-born, but enter for a few years a state of suspended animation.

Chapter Five

The Quest for Innocence

(I) 'The Magic Fountain' and 'Koanga'

With The Magic Fountain Delius had also embarked on a much larger project. Indeed, as he envisaged it, the project was of grandiose, even Wagnerian, dimensions:

"I have a vague idea of writing 3 works:
One on the Indians, one on the Gypsies and
one on the Negroes & quadroons. The
Indians I am doing at present."¹

What in mid-1894 might have been a "vague idea" was evidently by early 1896 a real and challenging vision, for Delius was by then composing a work "on the Negroes and quadroons" - his opera, Koanga. By the time Koanga was completed in 1897, he had already settled on Gottfried Keller's story 'Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe' as the basis of his next opera. The finest of the series, A Village Romeo and Juliet was completed around the turn of the century.

The original concept - the "vague idea" which Delius had formed in 1894 - had been modified in the course of these years. A Village Romeo and Juliet bears only a superficial relationship to the notion of a tribal trilogy, for the part played in it by its Gipsy (or, more accurately, vagabond) group, though still prominent, is strictly confined to the level of sub-plot. Its principal purpose in the opera is to define more clearly the attitude of the two peasant lovers, Sali and Vrenchen. This failure of A Village Romeo and Juliet to accord with the initial idea has led commentators on the trilogy to suggest that it had been a passing concern of the composer, an unrealized vision.²

1. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 29 July 1894. CLL/1, p.88.

2. See, for example, Robert Threlfall's comments in 'Delius's unknown opera: The Magic Fountain', Studies in Music, vol.11 (Perth, W.A., 1977), pp.60-1; also Christopher Redwood's observations in 'Delius as a Composer of Opera' in A Delius Companion (London, 1976), p.222.

In this chapter a view of these works is presented which is broader than usual. Through this enlarged perspective, one of the most fundamental and intriguing sources of Delius's art comes to light. By examining the primary literary models and traditions which helped Delius to form the plots and characters of the three works, certain common factors become evident in the relationship between source and libretto. First of all, Delius had been attracted to a cultural group in each case by its literary and popular idealization; and secondly, each group has been credited, through literary idealization, with a natural, unspoilt and virtuous character lost to supposedly more civilized peoples. In a nutshell, the literary image which proved to be of such fascination to Delius is that of the 'Noble Savage'.

The term 'Noble Savage' has been particularly associated with the American Indian, but according to the literary critic H.N. Fairchild (whose work in this area is referred to on several occasions in this chapter), this narrow image has no logical basis:

"Negroes, South Sea Islanders and other sorts of savages are often regarded in precisely the same light as the redman.... a Noble Savage is any free and wild being who draws directly from nature virtues which raise doubts as to the value of civilization. The term may even be applied metaphorically to romantic peasants and children when a comparison between their innocent greatness and that of the savage illumines the thought of the period."³

This "free and wild being" not only prompted in Delius the original vision he had in 1894, but also seems to act throughout these three opera as a unifying link. In other words, The Magic Fountain, Koanga and A Village Romeo and Juliet may, indeed, be considered a trilogy, for common to all three is the motivating image of an ideal innocence.

In support of this assertion, a broad range of literary influences acting upon the operas are considered in this chapter. It emerges, however, that it is the second opera,

3. Hoxie Neale Fairchild: The Noble Savage (New York, 1928), pp. 1-2.

Koanga, which presents most powerfully Delius's concept. In Koanga this ideal innocence moulds not only the drama and its players, but also the character and structure of the music. A Village Romeo and Juliet is a greater work, but its beauty and impact result from crucial modifications to the composer's creative aesthetic and, consequently, to his vision of ideal innocence.

Section One - The Unclear Vision

Delius's plans for The Magic Fountain altered drastically in the course of the opera's composition. Most obviously, what began as an opera "about the Indians" changed course to follow the search of the Spaniard Solana for the Fountain of Eternal Youth. This alteration was reflected in the change of the work's title from Watawa to The Magic Fountain at a late stage of its evolution. In addition, the search for the fountain was itself pushed into the background to accommodate the flourishing of a romance in Act III. The composer's continual reassessment of what the opera was actually about is its principal flaw. In the end the Indian tribe has a part in only the middle third of the opera.

For the purposes of this chapter, then, Delius's early ideas for the opera can be regarded as at least as significant as the final version. It is at this preliminary stage that the idea of a plot centred around the primitive race seemed adequate for an entire opera. Indeed, it was then that the theme of uncivilized peoples struck Delius as being capable of supporting a trilogy.

Two main areas of source material were used by Delius in his opera about the Indians in Florida. First of all, he drew upon the first-hand knowledge he had acquired during his two years in America. While this may have included some familiarity with Indian customs and legends, its principal contributions to the opera are evident in the background of tropical nature, and in the story itself. Tradition has it that Florida was discovered by the Spanish adventurer Ponce de Leon around 1510. He landed at the mouth of the St. John's

river on a search for the island of Bimini where, according to the Indians, the Fountain of Eternal Youth was to be found.⁴ Unlike Delius's hero, Ponce quickly left again, having found neither fountain nor gold. Nevertheless, the Spanish adventurer in Delius's opera is also called Ponce in the early drafts of the libretto.

It is mainly Delius's second source - his reading - which seems to have furnished him with details of the Indians themselves.⁵ In the 1890s, Delius would have become familiar with a literary image of the Indian radically different from that offered to later generations through the mythology of the Wild West.

Already from the earliest descriptions of the Caribbean and American natives which reached Europe, the mould was being prepared for a cultural image with great literary potential:

"They are a people guileless and unwarlike
....not knowing what is evil....a loving
people without covetousness....their speech
is the sweetest and gentlest in the world
....The King is a man of remarkable presence."⁶

These positive impressions, constantly echoed in the writings of explorers, were given added significance from the middle of the sixteenth century when the virtues of the Indian could be contrasted by observers with the cruelty accompanying the Spaniards' lust for treasure. From Montaigne to Rousseau the American Indian was embraced by writers as a common symbol of reaction to all things false - to courtly convention, unnatural habits and, later, industrialization. He was the aristocrat of uncivilized peoples. Following the War of Independence, however (in which the Indian was both ally and foe to both sides), this image began slowly to be modified.

4. This was perhaps a story of special appeal to Delius, who has also disembarked on the St. John's on a journey of adventure.

5. At the time Delius lived in Florida there were very few Indians left in the area. However, in her recollections of her brother, Clare Delius has written of meetings between Delius and Indians in other parts of the country (see ch.1, p.27).

6. From 'The Journal of Christopher Columbus'. Quoted by Fairchild, op.cit., p.9.

Evidently, Delius's background reading was extensive:

"I read the Last of the Mohicans & Lake Ontario⁷ by Fennimore Cooper....I read also, The Natchez, then Atala by Chateaubriand.... I read all I can on the subject which I am treating. And then treat the subject in my own way."⁸

Of these books, the most obvious influence was exerted by The Last of the Mohicans (1859). Delius's Indian chief Wapanacki seems to be modelled on the leading character in the book, Chingachgook. Indeed, in the Cooper story, he is a member of the tribe called the Wapanachki, while also being the final representative of the Mohican people. This notion of a dying tribe is also taken up by Delius, who passes it onto Watawa:

"the last of my kin.
Killed were all, all death have suffered
by the hated paleface." (Act II, p.110)

In the initial stages of the opera's conception, Delius envisaged an important role for an Indian magician named Tamenund - a character surely inspired by the Indian patriarch of the same name in The Last of the Mohicans. Though the magician idea was eventually replaced by that of the hermit seer Talum Hadjo, the wisdom and agelessness of Cooper's chief were preserved in the character. The war-dance in Act II also seems to owe a good deal to the ritual described by Cooper in Chapter XXXI.

From Chateaubriand Delius possibly derived the notion of basing his story on the Seminole tribe.

In addition to the works specifically mentioned by Delius, it is known that he was acquainted with Longfellow's The Song of Hiawatha - this famous poem of Indian life having inspired the 1887 tone poem Hiawatha. It is the probable source of some tribal nomenclature in the opera (see next page):

7. Cooper wrote no book of this title. Delius is most likely referring to The Pathfinder (1860), the action of which is largely centred on and around Lake Ontario.

8. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 29 July 1894. CLL/1, p.88.

Longfellow: (regarding the legends of Hiawatha)
"I repeat them as I heard them
From the lips of Nawadaha,
The musician, the sweet singer."⁹

Watawa: "Nawadaha, Nawadaha
Sweet singer watch and sing with me."
(Act II, p.71)

Longfellow's "Manito the Mighty", "Meda" and "Unktahee, the god of water" are all echoed in The Magic Fountain.

Far more significant than these few pointers, however, is the fact that to all of these books one image of the Indian is common: the noble hero whose natural virtues remain untarnished by civilization. The Seminoles in Chateaubriand's Atala win respect even from their enemies:

"Despite being a prisoner I couldn't help admiring my [captor's] mirth, love and contentment. He is light of foot and his approach is open and serene....his speech is harmonious and fluent. Even age itself cannot rob the Seminole of this joyous simplicity."¹⁰

Cooper is equally fulsome in his praise of the Noble Savage, although he does distinguish between brutal Indians and noble Indians, seemingly caught between "the realism of his own knowledge [and] the cult of the heroic redman handed down to him."¹¹ The Last of the Mohicans has the following description of the Indian youth Uncas:

"....the bold outline of his high haughty features....the distinguished elevation of his receding forehead, together with all the finest proportions of a noble head....an unblemished specimen of the noblest proportions of man."¹²

As mentioned earlier, The Magic Fountain was envisaged as essentially an Indian opera in the early stages of its composition; consequently, the influence of these books is

9. Henry W. Longfellow: The Song of Hiawatha (Boston, 1879), p.145.
10. Chateaubriand: Atala (Paris, 1969), p.40. Translation (unpublished) by Lindis M. Hallan.
11. Fairchild, op.cit., p.161.
12. James Fenimore Cooper: The Last of the Mohicans (New York, 1859), p.65.

more evident in Delius's plans for the opera before the plot was diverted. At one point Delius had stated:

"I want this work to be essentially Indian
I want the Indian Characters to be the most important. For this reason I dont want much of the Spanish element it would complicate the subject....[Solana] in the end almost becomes an indian himself....He and Watawa become one with their surroundings and Nature....the surroundings & the beautiful Watawa make him forget all his past life....He does not want to go back to his native land or people ".¹³

It is unfortunate that the emphasis on the Indians' ideal closeness to nature which this early concept implies was later lost in the effort of sustaining Solana's thirst for wisdom and passion for Watawa. Nevertheless, the literary traditions of the Noble Savage may still be sensed strongly in the opera's remaining Indian element.

As a group the Indians are seen in two lights: first in the nobility which is embodied in their leitmotif-

Ex.1. Act II,p.68.

(MOLTO TRANQUILLO)

The musical score is for a piece titled "Indians Humming". It is marked "(MOLTO TRANQUILLO)". The score consists of four staves. The top two staves are for vocal parts, with the first staff labeled "Indians Humming" and the second staff labeled "Humming". The bottom two staves are for piano accompaniment. The music is in a 4/4 time signature and features a simple, repetitive melodic line in the vocal parts, with the piano accompaniment providing a harmonic and rhythmic foundation. The tempo is marked as "MOLTO TRANQUILLO".

- and secondly, in the fury of their war-dance. They combine "wild grandeur and simple dignity", to borrow Cooper's description of an Indian in "The Pathfinder".¹⁴

13. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 29 July 1894. CLL/1, pp.88-9.

14. Cooper: The Pathfinder (New York, 1860), p.5.

It is in the words of the individual characters, however, that Delius's adherence to type can most clearly be discerned. Wapanacki, the "noble Indian" (as Solana addresses him), is the spokesman for his race and for their ennobling virtues. These include compassion:

(On finding Solana half-drowned on the beach)
"He is unarmed, and much in need.
Come, bear him to the camp." (Act I, pp. 64-5)

fairness:

"But the white man is defenceless,
no Indian harms even for vengeance
a man without arms." (Act II, pp. 81-2)

and prudence:

"The white men like seagulls around us arise
the Indian must reflect, be cautious and wise."
(Act II, p. 84)

One instance of this prudence is that he directs Watawa to the wise hermit Talum Hadjo, whose words and advice she should heed before acting upon her lust for revenge. This second figure, Talum Hadjo, though outside the sphere of the Indians' activities, represents the heights of human aspiration possible to wise men preserved from the sullyng effect of 'civilization'. He is the one person who has found in the waters of the Fountain of Eternal Youth a baptism rather than a fatal poison:

"Fifty years of weary fasting
ere to drink I dared;
fifty years of contemplation
ere I was prepared" (Act II, p. 114)

The virtues of contemplation have been ignored by civilized societies, precipitating their fall into decadence:

"Nations passing away developing to decay
and yet never attaining what so many have dreamt
and still 'twere easy, did they but dare,
in Wisdom and patience, well to prepare."
(Act II, pp. 105-6)

Of Watawa, there is much less that can be said in support of a Noble Savage image. She moves from violent lust for revenge to an equally passionate love for her former enemy. There are practically no intermediary characteristics. One minor deviation from this scheme is significant, however: her leitmotif. When this melody is first heard, immediately

after the shipwreck in Act I, it carries with it a refreshing air of graceful poise and simplicity:

Ex.2. Act I, p.57.



It seems significant that Delius should recall this theme in the closing episode of his masterpiece Sea Drift (1903-4). The words from Whitman's poem at this point (fig.24 of the vocal score) are as follows:

"O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!...
But my mate no more, no more with me
We two together no more."

In this poignant context the melody of Watawa seemed to have a definite association for the composer. It is, here, like a pure beam of innocence cast into a dark room - that innocence which is lost to the sad bird whose song is heard in the poem.

Delius had adhered quite closely to the traditional literary depictions of the Indian in writing The Magic Fountain. However, he does in the end lay more emphasis on the elements of nobility and wisdom as properties of the savage, uncivilized man than on the innocence and purity which are also primary characteristics of the stereotype. Though they were probably an important element in the initial conception, they gave way to the stronger passions of a more romantic plot.

If Delius's shifting perspectives on the central issue in the opera reflect doubt about the suitability of the natural savage as an operatic theme, it seems to have been dispelled by the time he began his next opera, Koanga.

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Section Two - The Noblest Savage

Part One - Literary Background

While Delius had cast his net widely among legends and literary models in the course of his preparations for The Magic Fountain, it is known that Koanga was based on one particular book. In February 1896 Delius wrote to Jutta Bell:

"I am writing another opéra - Please keep this quite to yourself - I am taking the story of Bras-Coupé - in the Grandissimes".¹⁵

George Washington Cable's novel of the Grandissime plantation in Louisiana, called The Grandissimes, was published in 1880, first as a magazine serial, then in book form. The story of Bras-Coupé (who is also called Mioko-Koanga) forms chapters 28 and 29 of the book. With these facts firmly established, it should in theory be easier to be specific about Delius's Koanga in its literary and historical context than was the case with the earlier opera, with its interlinked historical, legendary and literary influences. Surprisingly, this is not so. So many and significant are Delius's digressions from the Cable original that some idea of the literary traditions which probably influenced the libretto can only be gained through reference to the history of the Negro in literature.

Despite, or rather because of, three hundred years of oppression, Negroes turned to literature as a means of protest only at the beginning of this century. The Negro literature discussed here is, therefore, white literature involving Negro characters - this can be considered in four periods. The first main period is that of British literature of the late eighteenth century. In fact, one of the influences acting upon the literature of this period derives from the previous century: Aphra Behn's seminal novel Oroonoko (1688). This story of the royal slave Oroonoko, who was brought to serve

15. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 9 February 1896. CLL/1, p.98.

at the court in Suriname, echoes throughout several generations of Negro literature:

"It is probably due to Aphra Behn that so large a percentage of Negro slaves [in literature] were kings in their own country."¹⁶

"Nothing illustrates the enduring influence of Aphra Behn's 'Oroonoko' better than the stamp it placed upon representations of the Negro's love. Perhaps the physical unattractiveness of the Negro necessitated the ascription to him of passions heroic rather than sentimental."¹⁷

It was the gathering momentum of the anti-slave trade movement in England in the second half of the eighteenth century which helped create the poetic image of the Negro with heroic qualities. The stereotype is evident in poetry well into the nineteenth century. Fairchild points out that the noble, suffering Negroes who were the creations of the time share essential characteristics. Three are worth mentioning here:

(A) The longing of the heroic (often royal) slave for the simple freedom of his land and people. Robert Southey's four slave trade sonnets are typical examples, with their image of an abused and tired slave kept awake at night by the thought that

"....far away
....happy negroes join the midnight song
And merriment resounds on Niger's shore."

(B) The softening of heroic sternness by gentler passions. The Dying Negro of Day and Bicknell, for instance, is an African prince serving as the slave of a sea-captain. His death is brought about by his own hand, for he has fallen in love with a white woman and would rather sacrifice himself than endure separation.

In Latitia Landon's The African Prince it is, in fact, Christianity which bows the pride of the warrior Negro. Fairchild offers the following summary of the poem:

"She describes the life of a young black prince, free, proud and courageous, a mighty hunter and warrior. He is captured and sold into slavery. Being noble, he cannot, like his fellow-slaves, become reconciled

16. Fairchild, op.cit., p.294.

17. ibid., p.402.

to his lot. At last, however, he is converted to Christianity.... and meekly dies in the hope of salvation." 18

(C) The dying Negro sees a vision of Africa.

At least in poetry, the sons of Africa were supposed to be the heirs to virtues bred of primitive innocence. The Negro had joined the brotherhood of the Noble Savage.

The remaining three stages of this short account of Negro literature are American. The second, overlapping with the first, is that of the Colonial era - a period in which the sentimentality of English poetry was almost entirely excluded, the American being, in the view of one literary historian, "too familiar with the black man to transform him into a noble savage".¹⁹ Indeed, it was the aim of the prolific pro-slavery pamphleteers of the Colonial period to degrade the Negro to a different species altogether. A counter-movement was eventually formed among religious groups in the early eighteenth century and humanitarian and egalitarian groups at the end of the century.

The entry of the Negro into the early American novel marks the beginning of the third stage, encompassing the first fifty years of the nineteenth century. With the boom in cotton planting arose a need to emphasize again the advantages of the Southern patriarchal institution, for the Negro was an irreplaceable unit in the agricultural economy. The loyal personal servant and happy plantation slaves who feature in the works of George Tucker, John Pendleton Kennedy, William Gilmore Simms and James Fenimore Cooper (for example, in The Spy), have prompted the comment that

"the composite portrait of the Negro thus developed reveals a figure of perhaps six parts unadulterated loyalty, three parts minor virtues (mainly derived from that same devotion) and one part assorted vices." 20

18. ibid., p.289.

19. Tremaine McDowell: 'The Negro in the Southern Novel Prior to 1850', in Images of the Negro in American Literature (ed. Gross and Hardy, Chicago, 1966), p.56.

20. ibid., p.68.

The final stage begins with, and remains under the influence of, Harriet Beecher Stowe's plantation novel of 1852, Uncle Tom's Cabin. The importance of the novel, in shedding the light of realism on some of the horrors arising from patriarchy, is well known, but the book also helped to establish for the next two generations the stereotypical figures of jovial black 'Mammies', 'Uncles' and 'Aunties' supposed to people all Southern estates.

George Washington Cable belongs historically to this fourth stage. His Grandissimes are successors to Mrs. Stowe's ignoble white families. Cable is considered, however, to be one of the few masters of realism who succeeded in transcending the Negro stereotype. In his study of the Negro in American literature, Sterling Brown writes of Cable's fiction that it

"shows full acquaintance with folk-songs, speech, lore and superstition, but unlike his contemporaries.... he does not use the material to support old traditions.... Cable is one of the finest creators of Negro character in the nineteenth century."²¹

As Cable represents one of the points furthest from the romantic idealism of the Noble Savage reached in pre-protest literature, it appears that Delius's tastes in opera subjects have altered drastically from the romantic to the realistic. The appearance is deceptive. On the one hand, Delius was very discriminating in what he selected from Cable's story; and, on the other, the process of romanticization had been begun by the author. These romantic elements are untypical of Cable, and are in fact confined to the one part of the book which was selected by Delius for his opera.

'The Story of Bras-Coupé' is the legend of a famous slave. It is narrated in the novel by the old Grandissime slave Raoul Innerarity, who tells the story to the Grandissime children around a garden fire after a house ball. In this romantic setting, and in accordance with the demands of storytelling, the narrator weaves into 'The Story of Bras-Coupé' many elaborations - these include a good deal of emphasis

21. Sterling Brown: The Negro in American Fiction (New York, 1969), pp. 66-7.

on the heroic and noble attributes of his legendary main character. He is, for example, "a prince among his people", and the whites are "struck with admiration for the physical beauties of the chieftain", and, indeed, the master of the plantation and the slave "recognized in the other his peer in physical courage, and each was struck with an admiration for the other." Bras-Coupé's death, too, is an echo of past literary traditions. The slave is captive and physically broken:

"To the good father's many tender questions
Bras-Coupé turned a failing eye that gave no
answers; until, at length:
'Do you know where you are going?' asked the
holy man....the answer of the eyes. He knew.
'Where?'
'To- ' the voice failed a moment; the departing
hero essayed again; again it failed; he tried
once more, lifted his hand, and with an ecstatic,
upward smile, whispered,
'To - Africa' - and was gone."²²

The royal slave of great pride and dignity; the hard heart softened; the dying vision of Africa: all these elements of the traditional image of the Negro Noble Savage are present in Cable's story within a story. For him 'The Story of Bras-Coupé' is a little island of romance in his otherwise realistic novel - stark realism tempered by facets of the exotic primitive.

What are compromises to Cable seem to constitute the essential attraction of the story for Delius. It was upon these characteristics that he formed the role of Koanga, at the expense of practically all the elements of realism in Cable's version. The frequently ridiculous postures of Bras-Coupé, for instance, are omitted: his habit of lying face down in the dirt before the mistress of the house, his laughable military-style wedding suit, his two bouts of drunkenness - these are apparently not the images of the warrior prince Delius was interested in. Out also goes the realistic 'Calinda' dance, an orgiastic frenzied ritual, and in comes the Delius 'Calinda', a spirited, but relatively

22. George Washington Cable: The Grandissimes (New York, 1880), p.213.

well-mannered dance suitable for the wedding ballet.

William Randel, in his pathfinding article 'Koanga and its libretto', points out that the opera lacks Cable's modern Louisiana language, subtleties of plot and realistic description, and concludes that Delius had let slip a great opportunity to create a masterpiece. He writes that Delius

"saw no more in Cable's novel than many of its contemporary readers, and unaware of Cable's social conscience.... did with the book precisely what could be expected of an admirer of Wagner."²³

The question of whether or not Delius was aware of Cable's social conscience is surely irrelevant. It seems more probable that Delius was looking out for a story which could serve as a frame for his second Noble Savage opera, and recognized that - with sufficient editing - Cable's legend of Bras-Coupé could be that story. An opera more true to Cable would probably have been less true to Delius. The operatic version has, therefore, not only echoes of the royal slave longing for his homeland, the proud, heroic breast softened by love, and the dying vision of Africa, but even the mannered tone and idealism of the English Noble Savage tradition:

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

"Far, far away, my foes enjoy their triumph;
my vile betrayers jeer and mock at me.
And round their fires at night will run the story
how, in the West, Koanga is a slave.
But vengeance were a poor reward, Palmyra,
if I might linger by your side,
working with you, and find the labour sweet!"

(Koanga's aria in Act II)

All essential qualities of the Noble Savage are present in the opera. If Koanga himself embodies the heroic elements

23. William Randel: 'Koanga and its libretto', Music and Letters (April 1971), p.156.

of the Noble Savage, the lost virtues, then the main body of Negro plantation workers in the opera represent the innate virtues - the oneness with nature and the simple acceptance of circumstance.

The notion of a tribal trilogy and its theme of an ideal innocence seems to have been stronger than ever in 1896 as Delius set to work on Koanga. Indeed, the main difference between The Magic Fountain and Koanga is this strength of vision in the later opera, sustained longer and emphasized with greater power. Of course, this factor of creative vision is more crucial to the success of operatic writing than to perhaps any other artistic medium. Almost every composer who adapts existing literature faces the same problem of transforming the complex (source material) to the simple (libretto). The abridgement involved is justified only on the fundamental premise that the touch of music can enrich broad dramatic concepts with the emotional significance of simple truths. While the success of this transformation hangs upon a fragile thread - namely, the strength of musico-dramatic vision of librettist/composer - there is in works like Verdi's Otello, Prokofiev's War and Peace and Britten's Death in Venice ample proof that new masterpieces can be made of old ones.

With Delius's stage works there is the constant reminder of how fragile this thread is. It has been shown already that the vision Delius had of his theme gradually faded as he wrote The Magic Fountain. The work changes direction from act to act. Yet, with his second opera on the theme of ideal innocence, it is manifestly obvious that Delius's faith in his theme is reaffirmed.

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Part Two - The Libretti of 'Koanga'

In the discussion of the music of Koanga which follows, it is the recently-revised libretto which is quoted, unless otherwise stated. This was first published in 1974, and conforms in all important details to Delius's original ideas. Since the libretto came into being in 1896, it has certainly had a rather contorted history, and some of the turning-points are worth noting here.

(A) The Delius libretto (1896). On 25 February 1896, Delius wrote to Jutta Bell:

"I send you today my libretto of Bras Coupé - I wrote the music and the words at the same time....I find I must really get some one to work with me - My literature is not on a level with my music....I own my style & language is sometimes so vile that it shocks me as a musician".²⁴

At this stage the third act had not been written. This earliest version of the libretto has not survived, but there is presumably a good deal of it in the next version.

(B) The Delius/Keary libretto (1896-7). By the spring of 1896 Delius had become acquainted with the historian and novelist C.F.Keary, and on 15 July he could write to Jutta Bell that the libretto had been rewritten by Keary. In December that year he qualified his statement in a further letter to her:

"I think I told you that C.F.Keary wrote the libretto - We worked together & the result is all that I could wish."²⁵

It is this version which appears on the opera manuscript. At the concert of his music Delius organized in London in May 1899, Act II was performed as a concert piece, with the libretto printed in the programme.

For a full performance Delius decided his best chances lay in Germany and, accordingly, work was begun on a translation in 1899. Early attempts to interest opera houses in Koanga proved fruitless ("There may be something true in the libretto not being quite A.1"),²⁶ but finally it was accepted for production in 1904 by the Opera in Elberfeld.

(C) The German translation (ca.1899). Substantially the work of Jelka Rosen, the translation used at Elberfeld differs in certain important respects from the English version. Originally, Delius had followed Cable in having the heroine,

24. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 25 February 1896. CLL/1, p.99.

25. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 23(?) December 1896. CLL/1, p.109.

26. Unpublished letter from Delius to Jelka Rosen, 3 November 1900 (Delius Trust archive).

Palmyra, lament the absence of her fiancé. All reference to this relationship was removed for Elberfeld, and in addition a wholly new aria was given to Palmyra (Act II, "Heute noch soll ich Ihm angehören"; in the published English scores, "The hour is near").

(D) The Jelka Delius/Beecham version (1935). Around 1935 work was begun on a translation of the revised German version back into English - a task probably begun by Jelka and completed by Thomas Beecham (with Edward Agate) with a view to the British première at Covent Garden in September 1935. It is this version which appeared in the first vocal score.

"By now it would appear that any thought of referring back to the original Keary, let alone Cable, was far from anybody's mind. Nor for that matter were Delius's original note-values given much thought.... Poetic idea followed inverted poetic idea, often with no connecting link and nearly always out of character and/or context.... For the sake of this turgid poesy, all characterisation was lost and any potentially dramatic moments that existed were submerged in this cloying 'poetry'." ²⁷

These strong criticisms were made by the two authors of the most recent version.

(E) The Craig/Page version (1972). A complete overhaul of the libretto was made by Douglas Craig and Andrew Page before Koanga was performed at Sadler's Wells in 1972. This version was a painstaking attempt to make the opera dramatically credible while remaining faithful to Delius's original concept. It appears in the most recent vocal score (1974) and full score (1980). The authors have given a full account of the previous history and defects of the libretto in a 'Preface to the Revised Libretto of Koanga' (see f.n.27).

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27. Douglas Craig and Andrew Page: 'Preface to the Revised Libretto of Koanga' in Koanga (vocal score, Boosey & Hawkes, London 1974), p.v.

Part Three - A Drama of Contrasts

In Acts I and II Delius adheres to a working-principle which gives these sections their strikingly individual character and structure: the two social groupings are contrasted in their actions and in their music.

Dramatic contrast centres on a juxtaposition of the complexity of conflicting motives, desires and wills of the white characters and the Negroes' uncorrupted simplicity. It is, however, in the musical representation of these shadings that the potential of the principle is most evident. On the one hand is the recitative, flexing to moments of high drama or passages of arioso: this is the domain of the whites, Don José Martinez (the master of the plantation), Clotilda (his wife) and Simon Perez (his overseer). On the other hand, there are the choruses and arias: exclusively given over to the slaves, these numbers are, in the case of the body of slaves, cheerful work-songs and dance-songs, and for Koanga several majestic 'heroic' arias. While the two sides meet dramatically in the personal dilemma of the quadroon heroine Palmyra, and musically in the two neutral ensembles, there is practically no crossing of the dividing-line. Koanga, for example, condescends to abandon his splendid aria style for the ignoble recitative in only one 17-bar passage - just long enough to fell Martinez with his mighty fist (Act II, fig. 18).

The effect caused by distinguishing the Negro character from the white in this way carries an impressive power. The dramatic rhythm of complex/simple, the characterization of devious/sincere and the musical styles of chromatic alteration/firm tonality gradually add up to a convincing image of the savage with civilizing virtues and the civilized with savage vices. Clearly, the theme of tribal innocence Delius had fumbled with in The Magic Fountain had much deeper significance for him in the composition of Koanga.

Nevertheless, these observations apply only to the first two acts of Koanga. Act III obeys laws of its own, differing in ways which will be described in the course of the discussion of Acts I and II, and for reasons suggested at the end of this Part.

First, a look at the work-songs and dance-songs. From the earliest stages of its composition, Koanga was envisaged by Delius as drawing special colour from the use of these songs.

"I am getting all the Southern flavor in the music....I am keeping the whole in the character of the negro melody".²⁸

As has been seen in chapters one and two, his personal experience of Negro melody had already been put to use in parts of Florida, Hiawatha, the Rhapsodische Variationen and the Légendes variations, and, as discussed later in this chapter, it would form the basis of his two Appalachia conceptions.

William Randel has pointed out that, of the six choral songs in Koanga, only one is definitely a genuine Negro song of the time.²⁹ This song, moreover, Delius received from the same hand as the story of Bras-Coupé: it forms part of Cable's narrative in The Grandissimes. Nevertheless, as Randel notes, even if Delius wrote the bulk of the songs, they do "suggest actual songs known to collectors and, without being exact reproductions, are loyal to the general character of songs in the Southern slave tradition."³⁰

'O Lawd, I'm goin' away', the slaves' first song, turns out to have an important role in the opera. Following the prologue where the young ladies of the plantation request of Old Joe the story of Koanga and Palmyra, it is the melody of this song which flows throughout the orchestral intermezzo. Three orchestral variations on the theme are played before the scene is set for the opening of Act I with Palmyra's entrance. The first statement achieves all possible contrast with the breezy prologue. In the harmony, orchestration and style of this passage is embodied an unaffected simplicity that sets the tone of the opera (ex. 3, melody in the upper cellos):

28. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 9 February 1896. CLL/1, p.98.

29. William Randel, op.cit., p.150.

30. ibid., p.151.

Ex.3. Prologue to Act I, 12 bars after fig.2.

Dawn is breaking as Act 1 begins. A sad Palmyra witnesses first the break of day, then the rousing of the slaves from their cabins by the overseer, Simon Perez. Delius conveys all the confusion and haste of the assembling work-party in a crescendo of contorted chromatic harmony and melody, the tension accumulating until released by the firm F major tonality of the robust song 'O Lawd, I'm goin' away'. The individual voices, even names, of Negroes which are mixed into the hubbub resolve into one common mood - a sense of cheerful resignation:

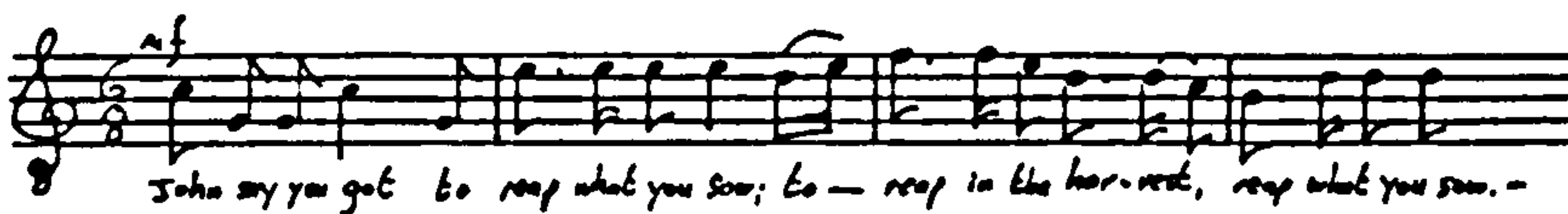
Ex.4. Melody of first choral song, 9 bars before fig.9.³¹

31. This melody had made an enigmatically brief appearance in Florida (3rd movement, fig.4, oboe). Further uses of the theme are traced by Robert Threlfall in his article 'Late Swallows in Florida', Composer (Spring, 1974), pp.25-7.

In the ensuing 15 bars of recitative the vicious arrogance shown by Perez in waking the slaves is turned towards Palmyra. His professions of love, interrupted by threats, are clearly repugnant to her. They are accompanied by a distant rendering of 'O Lawd, I'm goin' away' from the fields ('a cappella', but for a dominant pedal). The counterpoint of character is thereby reinforced.

The master, Don José, enters at the climax of the battle of wills between Perez and Palmyra. Simultaneously, the second choral song is heard from the fields:

Ex.5. Melody of second choral song. Act I, 2 bars after fig.12.



A terse dialogue between Martinez and Perez prepares the entry of Koanga, newly arrived on the slave trader's boat. It is worth quoting here a passage of their recitative, typical as it is of the angular melodic lines and shifting tonality of all the music given to the white characters (see ex.6, p.241).

To accentuate the contrast, the serene 'John say you got to reap what you sow' (ex.5) is repeated in the fields before the mighty slave is brought in.

The third choral song, like the first two, is heard twice. It is introduced ingeniously at the climax of the two ensembles which conclude Act I. The quartet which begins with Palmyra's attempt to soften Koanga's intransigence (Act I, fig.24) gradually becomes more complex. To this, the distant slaves add their weight by degrees, singing to a trivial quaver rhythm. The melody of their song finally bursts in at the climax, along with the Ab resolution of accumulated chromatic tension (ex.7, p.242, melody in the choral soprano and tenor lines).

After a brief recitative a similar procedure is followed in the second ensemble. Here, however, the addition of Martinez's wife Clotilda makes the texture even more cloying, and therefore the eventual emergence of the choral melody (in canon this time) is even more splendid. It provides Act I with a

Ex.6. Act I,fig.13.

a tempo

SIMON PEREZ
To SIMON PEREZ The men are down in the canes.

MARTINEZ
Well, what's the planto day? I want the big field cleared by the

a tempo

mf Cl. 3

They are all in the

week, and if they grumble, use the whip. And the women?

mf w.w. f b₂ Cor. 3 8

In-di-go fields. But we'll get a worse yield than we managed last year.

VI. W.W. Cor. That

mp Timp.

old Di-e-go's ca-ta-ma-ran mo - stly brings us naught but trash, hard-ly worth the ho-nest

mp Ob. 3 Fag. 3 8

Ex.7. Act I, 2 bats before fig.26.

poco rit. *a tempo* *sim*

Fl. 1.2
Ob. 1.2
Cl 1.2 in Bb
Bsn 1.2
D. Bsn 3
Horn in F 1.2
Tr 1.2 in C
Tbnc 1.2
Tuba 3
Timp
Pa.
Perez
Koanga
Martinez
Sops
Altos
Tenors
Basses

sweet - ness that I have ne - ver known). Yes, if you a - gree to work with us. Ko - an - ga. you'll find your
worth his weight in gold! Yes, if you a - gree to work for us. Ko - an - ga. you'll find your
let us be slaves to - ge - ther! Give me this girl to wed and I, Ko - an - ga. will work for
worth his weight in gold! Yes. yes, if you a - gree to work for us. Ko - an - ga. you'll find your
kills three thousand with that jaw! Law - dy was ole Sam-son sore! But Pa he said "Son, you done grieve your Ma's mind Must you
kills three thousand with that jaw! Law - dy was ole Sam-son sore! Sam-son's mo - ther she said to him "Find a girl a - mong our kin!"
kills three thousand with that jaw! Law - dy was ole Sam-son sore! But Pa he said "Son you done grieve your Ma's mind Must you
Samson's mo - ther she said to him "Find a girl a - mong our kin"

poco rit. *a tempo*

Vi. I
Vi. II div
Vla
Vc.
Db

mf *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

unif *div* *marc.*

towering conclusion - though the final moment is reserved for a snatch of the first song, 'O Lawd, I'm goin' away' in the orchestra.

Act II opens with an extensive preliminary section (mostly before the curtain is raised) given over to a celebration of the simple pleasure of the Negroes, who have the day free for Koanga's and Palmyra's wedding. First comes their fourth choral song, sung 'a cappella' (ex.8, p.244). The orchestral interlude which follows builds up the festive atmosphere. It develops appropriate motifs, including an anticipatory glimpse of the 'Calinda' wedding-dance. However, this interlude is particularly remarkable for its instrumentation. Delius, with an inspired sense of colour, writes important parts for on-stage banjos.³² The naive charm they impart throughout Act II amid the orchestra texture is strikingly in keeping with the relationship of Negroes and whites in the drama.

When the curtain rises the Negroes sing perhaps their most lovely song, an unusually wistful mood being introduced with the aid of heavily stressed 11th (+) and 13th (++) chords (ex.9, p.245).

In the subsequent unfolding of the plot the Negro slaves make two incursions into the drama, and on each occasion their cheerful singing and dancing defuses a moment of highly-charged tension. First, in the episode where Clotilda tries to dissuade Palmyra from marrying Koanga by reminding her of her Christian faith: Palmyra's violent response is the cue for a beautifully effective coupling of both 'Now once in a way' (from ex.8) and 'He will meet her' (from ex.9) (see Act II, fig.8). Secondly, following a confrontation between Perez and Palmyra -

Palmyra: "I hate you and always will!"

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

- a dance version of the first choral song, 'O Lawd, I'm goin' away', accompanies a dialogue between Perez and Clotilda

32. It may be recalled that one of the first Negro-influenced melodies in a Delius score, that of the plantation dance in Florida, had been accompanied by a banjo effect in the strings (see ch.1, p.20).

Ex.8. Opening of Act II.

Act II

Songs are heard behind the curtain

Gaily, but not hurried

Musical score for the opening of Act II. It includes vocal parts for Sopranos, Altos, Tenors, and Basses, along with string parts for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Doublebass. The lyrics are: "Now once in a way, We are free for a day, And can lay down our sic-kles and our hoes. Let the Just for to-day, We can lay down our sic-kles and our hoes. Let the".

Musical score for the second part of Act II. It includes woodwind parts for CL I, 2 in Bb, Bassoon I, and Bassoon II, and a Harp. The vocal parts (Sops, Altos, Tenors, Basses) have lyrics: "cane stand high, The sheaves un-gath-ered lie, No girls tread the long cot-ton rows". The score includes tempo markings: *poco rit.* and *con moto*. There is also a marking "1 or more on stage" above the Bassoon II part.

Ex.9. Act II, 12 bars before fig.3.

SOPRANOS
 ALTOS
 Chorus
 TENORS
 BASSES

He will meet her when the sun goes down, When the whip-poor-will sings to the moon: —

Vc.

poco rit. a tempo

Bsn
 1.2
 3

Hn. I
 in F

Banos
 (on stage)

Sops
 Altos
 Tenors
 Bases

When, from mag-no-lia trees, the hea-vy scent is blown, And strange lights wan-der o'er the dark la-goan —


When, from mag-no-lia trees, the hea-vy scent is blown, And strange lights wan-der o'er the dark la-goan.

When, from mag-no-lia trees, the hea-vy scent is blown, And strange lights wan-der o'er the dark la-goan.

When, from mag-no-lia trees, the hea-vy scent is blown, And strange lights wan-der o'er the dark la-goan

VI I
 VI II
 Vla.
 Vc.
 Db.

poco rit. a tempo
 pizz.

(Act II, fig. 10). This is neatly combined with the infectious rhythm of the 'Calinda' dance ($\frac{2}{4}$ ) , towards which the action is rapidly moving.

During the magnificent betrothal aria of Koanga the Negroes in the chorus are moved to respond in their only words suggesting an unwilling resignation. It is perhaps clearer in the 1896 libretto that even the yoke of bondage is bearable while love exists:

" Oh, see he remembers his country
while we, we forget,
But his love is more strong than
the country and the house of a king.
Wherefore, strange in the land of a stranger
and slaves, we may yet
Kiss sweet 'neath the shade of the cypress,
may dance and may sing."

(From the programme of the 1899 Delius concert)

The wedding-dance of Palmyra and the Ballet of Creole Dancers follow. Even though the music is substantially that of the first movement of the Florida suite, already ten years old, it is wholly appropriate to its new context, being marked by the lively rhythms and cheerful simplicity of much of the Negro music of the opera. It is interesting to note that the melody of the choral song 'He will meet her' provides a happy counterpoint to the main theme.

Throughout Acts I and II, then, no matter how tense the drama or how bitter the dialogues, there is a backdrop, a constant reference-point, of disarmingly cheerful Negro songs. What might on paper give the impression of a quaint extension of the Negro stereotype achieves in practice - through the calculated power of each emotional release - a moving and real sense of inherent human virtues.

The occurrence of similar calculated emotional contrasts is common enough in the dramatic and quasi-dramatic works of other composers. A greater example is hardly likely to be found than the impact created by Bach with the placing of his chorales in the Passions, measured to effect the heaviest sense of guilt and contrition. A much closer parallel to Koanga, though with obvious links to Bach's Passions, is the off-stage singing in Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana. As the work was well known internationally by the early 1890s,

it is possible it had a direct influence on Koanga. What might seem a procedure intriguingly similar to that of Koanga - the use of Negro songs in Tippett's A Child of Our Time - is, in fact, closer to Bach's than to Delius's conception. The Negro spiritual conveys a sense of the slaves' heavy burden and of how it may be lightened by Christianity, while the Koanga work-song is imbued with an exuberant, positive life-force. Indeed, while there are numerous instances of calculated emotional contrast being used to suggest religious undertones in a dramatic score, the affirmation of simple human dignity, which is Delius's apparent aim, is most unusual.

In the light of these observations it can only be regarded as a remarkable reorientation of the basic concept of Koanga that Act III should be entirely devoid of the choral backdrop which so characterizes the first two acts.³³ From a purely dramatic viewpoint the work-songs are lacking simply because there is no work done: the Negroes, stricken with the plague and famine caused by Koanga's curse, are unable to toil in the fields. The slaves sing two undistinguished lament choruses, reminiscent of those sung by the becalmed sailors in The Magic Fountain. Nevertheless, if the first two acts were to be considered from the same viewpoint, the frequent interruption of the stage drama by work-songs from the indigo fields is superfluous and irrelevant. Whatever reasons Delius had for initially employing a symbolic level of music-drama are both ignored in, and negated by, the final act.

It is in the second area of characterization that the traditions of the Noble Savage are most clearly embodied: the arias of Koanga. This was the first time Delius had abandoned his previously-favoured tenor voice to write a

33. For the purposes of this discussion, fig.41 in Act III can be considered the conclusion of that act. The orchestral passage from fig.41 to the opening of the epilogue (15 bars after fig.44) is an intermezzo, corresponding to the scene-change before Act I. Like the earlier passage, it stands outside the main flow of the drama.

lead part for the baritone, and it is thus the first of the long series of famous solo parts for that voice which includes A Mass of Life, Sea Drift, Songs of Sunset and the Requiem. For all this, the music of Koanga in Acts I and II, through its muscular harmonic schemes and forceful rhythms, has a sense of uncompromising purpose that is not to be found in any other Delius score. It has been noted earlier that the poetic image Delius envisaged of Koanga was of a majestic, heroic character. The musical realization is its ideal match.

Two clear sections can be distinguished in Koanga's first aria (Act I, fig. 15), the first being an invocation of the voodoo gods to enact Koanga's curse, and the second (from fig. 17) detailing some poignant memories of Africa. The opening phrases, upon which he is immediately launched on his arrival, are as commanding as any in the work.³⁴ They evoke the mighty pride in a combination of thrusting rhythms and a sinewy harmonic movement (giving way to Delius's common third-related sequences at fig. 16). For the second part, though, subtler harmonic colouration supports perhaps the longest lyrical passage Delius had yet written. The sweep of melody from "nor the rocky heights" until fig. 18 is beautifully balanced, corresponding to the tensions of the harmonic rhythm. In the accompaniment, Koanga's personal motif prevails (see ex. 10, p. 249).

After the ensembles towards the end of Act I (in whose heavy textures the character of Koanga is suffocated), Koanga next appears in the middle of Act II. His second aria is another operatic tour-de-force. The stage is set for his wedding: It is indicative of how proud, even aristocratic a bearing he has in Delius's creation that the words which open his second aria ("Far, far away, Palmyra") are the first he has addressed to Palmyra in the opera. The aria divides

34. The dramatic impact of Koanga's entry is one of the most impressive in the operatic canon, comparable in its timing and power to that of John the Baptist in Strauss's Salome.

Ex.10. Act I, 9 bars after fig.17.

-KOANGA

ro - cky heights where lo - fly ea - gles soar; nor the

wa - ter hole where the deer would drink at dusk; nor shall I feel a - gain that pounding in my

veins while stalking it by night. But since I was be - trayed I'm

now a cap - tive; yet ne - ver, tho' my flesh be torn a - way with whip will

I be slave - to those that bought me. Voo - doo, Ko - an - ga vows it, hear his

Vcl.

Viola

lh.

Cor.

mp legato

VI.

Fag

mp Cor & Ingt.

pp Trbs.

Timp.

8Va Bassa

mf VI.

Cor. 2:

Ex.11. Act II, 4 bars after fig.12.

mourn for me. The streams more gen-tly flow be-wait-ing my fate.

poco cresc. Cor Ingl. *mf dim.*

The moun-tains call me, yet I may ne-ver lis-

- ten. No charms my land could of-fer, de-priv-ed of your love! Here I will

work for you, a pa-tient hum-ble slave, and in your ser-vice find the la-bour

sweet! Far, far a-way my foes en-joy their tri-umph; my vile be- VI trem.

rit. molto

ff^{VI} *dim.* *rit. molto*

W. W. Vcl. C.B. B. C. I.

into two parts, the first half extending the lyrical style heard in the Act I aria. It achieves a glowing climax as the fluid harmony settles briefly in A major (ex. 11, p. 250, final two lines). Koanga's words evoke for the chorus "the voice of our homeland": their commentary beneath Koanga's line anticipates one of the most characteristic textures in Delius's mature music - the baritone solo which prompts an accompaniment of choral asides.

Following Koanga's violent clash with Martinez (Act II, after fig. 18), his full majestic detachment is regained by degrees through an arioso of measured intensity, leading to an invocation at fig. 20. Finally, an extended orchestral crescendo is crowned by a bold, almost barbaric arietta for the now-distant, fugitive Koanga, and the act ends in heroic exaltation. Delius's conception of the savage prince sustains its white heat from his first note in Act I to the last of Act II.

It was noted earlier that this conception, when viewed from a literary standpoint, could be summed up as a reversion to literary type. Now though, in its musical realization and its operatic contexts, the figure of Koanga transcends its stereotype as successfully as does the body of slaves. The musical presentation of this larger-than-life character seems to reach out and demand respect, to command the emotions of an audience. The condensing of a complex literary model into simple operatic types is justified, it was suggested above, because music can give to broad dramatic concepts the emotional significance of simple truths. Koanga does not wear the mask of an over-familiar stock figure. In his full dramatic power he has an exciting and immediate presence.

As with the Negro choruses, the premise upon which the role of Koanga has been defined in Acts I and II no longer seems to apply in Act III. This reorientation, too, can be justified dramatically, for now that Koanga has seized his freedom, the motive for an heroic resistance to bondage no longer exists. Nevertheless, the strength and unity of Koanga's role is greatly diminished. Nor is the quality of the musical and dramatic conception at all comparable to that of the

previous acts. Koanga's entry into the ritual sacrifice in the swamps (Act III, after fig.6) is a passage of flat recitative, and though the subsequent arioso (fig.7) is a sustained piece of writing, it lacks the lyrical sweep and rhythmic poise of earlier material. The nicely balanced phrases before fig.18 seem to dry up after that point; a loose, pedestrian episode follows.

It is in Koanga's final aria, however, that the relative feebleness of Delius's inspiration in Act III is most conspicuous. Captive and mortally wounded, the prince manages to gather his failing strength through a vision of his people in Africa. The ingredients for an impassioned, heroic aria are all present, as they were for his first aria in Act I. But the music remains stolid, disjointed, without the earlier impetus and sweep.

Delius's letters of this period prompt speculation as to why the third act should have called from his so little of the fervour achieved earlier. He worked intensively on Koanga in January and February 1896, and late in February he asked Jutta Bell, "Shall I make a 3rd Act or only the 2".³⁵ From subsequent correspondence with Mrs. Bell in June and July there is no evidence that Delius had yet decided to add the third act. On the other hand, work on the first two seemed to be progressing well. In December 1896 he wrote to her:

"I have been working on it for the last 12 months and am about halfway thro', having written and orchestrated the 1st Act and half of the 2nd".³⁶

Though this seems to indicate that he had a third act in mind now, evidently little work had been done on it.

A lengthy interval between the composition of preliminary and subsequent sections of a work need not, of course, result in inconsistencies of approach and quality. In a case like Koanga, however, where large strides seem to have been made quickly at an early stage due to the appeal of an exciting new idea, a year's delay in commencing a culminating act would inevitably modify the artist's perspective.

35. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 25 February 1896, CLL/1, p.99.

36. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 23(?) December, 1896, CLL/1, p.109.

Delius's vision of the work may well also have faded as a result of his coming into close contact with the reality from which it had derived, paradoxical though this might seem. At the turn of the year 1896-7, Delius returned for the first time to his plantation in Florida. From the works he had written, and from his later attitudes to his Florida experiences, it is possible to surmise what his stay there had come to signify for him in the eleven years since he left Solana Grove.

In retrospect, distanced both by land and time, the strange American world in which he had suddenly arrived in 1884 seems to have resolved itself for Delius into idealized images. And in these images he found the stuff of creativity. The natural exoticism and colour of the landscape was the principal force behind the two orchestral works Florida and Hiawatha, written shortly after his return to Europe. Yet again, some years later, it is no doubt the Solana Grove landscape which is evoked in the luxuriant everglades of The Magic Fountain.

The distance between the American reality and its romantic image in Koanga is huge. That Delius never supposed or intended it to be otherwise is suggested by the comment, made at an early stage in the composition of Koanga, that

"I don't believe in realism in opéra
- Fantasy & poetry."³⁷

It was the poetical substance of his experience - what Wordsworth would have termed the "emotion recollected in tranquillity" - which assumed significance in his creative make-up.

All the evidence seems to indicate that it was not actually being in Florida which stimulated his art, but subsequent reflection on experience gained there.³⁸ It seems

37. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 25 February 1896.
CLL/1, p. 99.

38. It is interesting to note that, as far as is known, Delius worked on piano pieces while in Florida in 1897, rather than on Koanga. Similarly, during his first years there, his creative powers were evidently fired more by the poets of distant Scandinavia than by his immediate surrounds.

likely, therefore, that in returning to Solana Grove before writing the third act of Koanga, Delius probably made it impossible to finish the opera in the same spirit in which it had been begun. Renewal of old experiences, reacquaintance with the reality - no matter how naturally beautiful that reality was - might well have dissolved the poetic vision built up over many years' introspection.

For all its originality and its music of unqualified greatness, the second opera in Delius's trilogy is flawed in the same way as was the first. In both Koanga and The Magic Fountain the basic ideas which seem to have motivated composition were not sustained. The virtues associated with uncivilized man receded further and further into the background as work on The Magic Fountain progressed. The innocent and humble, as well as the noble, savage is the foundation of two-thirds of Koanga. But, lacking a consistent dénouement, the opera as an entity also yields a final sense of aimlessness. Not until the third opera in the series does Delius create a successful whole.

It is in A Village Romeo and Juliet that the composer's theme of uncivilized, ideal innocence can first be regarded as having supported a complete, sustained conception. Delius's entire manner of handling his theme was to be modified in the opera (this modification will be considered in chapter six): taken together with the fruition of his motivic technique and orchestral skills, which also occurred at this time, this emergence of Delius's new creative aesthetic marks the border separating development and maturity.

Quite sudden though this transformation was, some indications of its coming are evident in Delius's music by the time he had completed Koanga, both in the opera and in its sister-work, the American Rhapsody, Appalachia.

+ + +

Part Four - The Noble Savage and "longing melancholy"

Once the main drama of Koanga has been played out with Palmyra's death, there follows an orchestral intermezzo. This acts as a bridge to the epilogue, where the scene returns to the storyteller, Uncle Joe. The final section of the orchestral transition, from fig. 43, is a reminder of the intermezzo which opened Act I, being based on material first heard then. This is first and foremost a tidy structural idea. However, Delius achieves a particularly poignant effect here through some striking alterations to the original material. Whereas after fig. 2 in the prologue he had led towards the drama with the melody of 'O Lawd, I'm goin' away' harmonized by the most elementary chordal progressions (see ex. 3), the return of the theme prior to the epilogue - now leading away from the drama - is coloured in a very different manner:

Ex. 12. Orchestral transition, 4 bars before fig. 44.

The musical score for Ex. 12 is presented in three systems. The first system is marked 'Lento molto' and includes dynamics 'ppp', 'rit.', 'f. con sord.', and 'f. con sord.'. The second system includes 'pp' and 'C.B.'. The third system continues the harmonic progression. The music features chromatic alterations and a slow, melancholic mood.

The chromatic alteration of chords adds harmonic richness to the special mood created by muted strings, who play the song 'lento molto' and almost devoid of rhythmic impulse. As for the unaffected simplicity of the Negro song - this has given

place here to a wistful, plaintive spirit. At this stage the discussion must be widened to include a short orchestral work which Delius composed in 1896 - the American Rhapsody, Appalachia.³⁹ It is no surprise, with this title and dating (contemporary with early work on Koanga), to find that the piece has the same positive spirit as is evident in the opera. Delius's enthusiasm for America opened up a productive seam in this year.

The Appalachia Rhapsody is the parent of a far more interesting offspring - the orchestral and choral variations, also called Appalachia, composed in 1902-3. To this, the Rhapsody gave two things. The first is its 'everglade' music - the subtly evocative writing which serves as an opening, an intermediate episode and a conclusion to both works. Secondly, both share a common theme - an old slave song Delius learnt in America. In the early Rhapsody it is the main theme of the central episode, while in the latter score it is the very theme upon which the variations are constructed, and to which the chorus gives poetic expression:

Ex.13. Appalachia, choral variation (melody in the soprano).

Moderato.

Soprano. *pp*
 Alt. *pp*
 Tenor. *pp*
 Bass. *pp*

Seht die Schatten werden schon blass, und vom Tau sind die Blätter nass. - - - singt ein
 After night has gone comes the day the dark shadows will fade a way - - - birds the

Apart from these points of contact, the works can also be said to have a common purpose, though achieved by differing means - that is, a description of the Negro character and the natural surroundings which Delius associated with the Negro.

39. Unpublished. DT vol.9 (RL pp.47-9).

At the head of the Appalachia variations, it may be recalled from chapter one, Delius affixed this 'Notice':

"Appalachia is the old Indian name for Northern-America. The composition describes the natural coloring of the distant tropical districts of the powerful Mississippi-River, which is so intimately connected with the fate of the negro-slaves. Longing melancholy, an intense love for nature, as well as the childlike humour and a native delight of dancing and singing are still to the present time the most characteristic qualities of this race."

These words provide the key to the Appalachia Rhapsody as well. It opens, as already mentioned, with a descriptive episode evoking the "natural coloring of the distant tropical districts". Then comes "the childlike humour and a native delight of singing and dancing": an episode employing first a pentatonic banjo-type melody, then, in counterpoint to this, the Negro melody "After night has gone", all in a most exuberant, robust manner.⁴⁰

Half way through the short Rhapsody a total transformation takes place. Now the tune is played 'Andante, molto tranquillo', first by the string section and then by a wind ensemble. But it is the harmony which is remarkable, the inner parts adhering to sliding semitonal movement to an extent quite unprecedented in Delius's music. The resultant texture, with starkly contrasted triadic melody and melting chromatic harmonization, conveys an overwhelming sadness:

Ex.14. Appalachia Rhapsody, f.59b.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piece 'Appalachia Rhapsody'. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system shows a melodic line in the treble staff with a slur over the first four measures, and a bass line in the bass staff. The second system continues the piece, with a similar melodic line in the treble staff and a bass line. The notation includes various note values, rests, and accidentals, illustrating the chromatic harmonization mentioned in the text.

40. Some bars of this episode are given in RT, plate 17, p.134.

This section, then, might be said to present what Delius later described as the "longing melancholy" of the Negro race. Its similarity to the version of 'O Lawd, I'm goin' away' prior to the epilogue of Koanga (ex.12) is obvious.

After this point the American Rhapsody follows a course without parallels in the mature Appalachia. The musical sadness of the Negroes - of slavery itself, it can be presumed - leads to a musical Civil War! Pitched against each other, with the Negro song sometimes in the middle, are 'Dixie' and 'Yankee Doodle', with an eventual triumph recorded by the latter towards the end of the score.

Each of the episodes in the American Rhapsody is concise, the whole work being less than 200 bars long.

At the end of his Negro opera and as the central pillar in his American Rhapsody, Delius uses songs in a chromatic style which renders them poignant and wistful. This "longing melancholy" is not compatible with the previous image of the Negro he has presented. By definition, this longing is caused by the absence of a desired, probably irretrievable, object or condition. Innocent man, blissful in his ignorance, at one with life and nature, is theoretically a stranger to this longing. It is only when removed from his innocent state that the Noble Savage can learn the power of nostalgia. Within Delius's self-imposed limitations in Koanga, this temperament would conflict with both the "blissfully" resigned slaves and the heroic wrath of Koanga. However, coming as it does as a postscript to Act III, the wistfulness of ex.12 expresses the sentiment more of the audience (here symbolized by the daughters on the plantation who have heard the story) than of the Negro.

In examples 12 and 14 is seen the logical extension of the experiments Delius had made in diatonic/chromatic conflict in earlier scores coloured by elements of Negro music (notably the Rhapsodische Variationen and Légendes). With the deliberate use of diatonic melody and chromatic accompaniment, in Koanga and Appalachia to achieve a nostalgic sentiment, an important stage is reached in the evolution of the composer's style. These are the beginnings of Delius's

move away from the early idealistic and naturalistic fantasy of the poetry of innocence to a more mature, more intimate, more romantic, concept, based on a longing for that simple poetry. This 'fin-de-siècle' perspective in Delius is basically a longing for lost innocence. The more his creative aesthetic in mature works is imbued with a nostalgia for lost innocence, the nearer diatonic/chromatic conflicts stand to the centre of his musical style. A Village Romeo and Juliet will illustrate how the composer manipulates these conflicts to achieve sustained and powerful dramatic effects.

Chapter Six

The Quest for Innocence

(II) A Village Romeo and Juliet

Section One - Delius and Keller

In a letter to Jutta Bell of 20 July 1894, Delius wrote, "I should very much like the Gipsies of Lelande if you can afford to send it to me".¹ His request for this book is one of the few intimations in the surviving correspondence that the third opera in his visualized series would be on the subject of the Gipsies. The idea is not mentioned again after 1894. It was the Negro opera which followed the Indian work in 1896, and when the libretto for a new opera was begun early in 1898 the source was not a tale of Gipsy life, but of youthful peasant love - Gottfried Keller's 'Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe'.

The reason for this change of heart lies possibly in Delius's reaction to "the Gipsies of Lelande", or Leland's The Gypsies, which would seem to be the book he had in mind. If his enthusiasm for the theme was based on the romantic image of an unfettered, uncorrupted vagabond life, Leland may well have blunted it:

"I saw in her smiling eyes, ever agreeing to all, and heard from her voluble lips nothing but the lie, - that lie which is the mental action and inmost grain of the Romany.... Anything and everything - trickery, wheedling or bullying, fawning or threatening, smile, or rage, or tears - for a sixpence. All day long flattering and tricking to tell fortunes or sell trifles, and all life one greasy lie."²

Whatever the cause, Delius eventually allows only a subplot significance to the vagabonds in A Village Romeo and Juliet. Apparently, therefore, the trilogy remained incomplete. At least, this has been the view shared by previous commentators (see ch.5, p.219). In this chapter a different view

1. Unpublished letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 20 July 1894 (Delius Trust archive).

2. Charles G. Leland: The Gypsies (Boston, 1882), pp.114-5.

is offered: it is suggested that the opera shares with its two predecessors the essential elements which placed them in clear relationship to the ideas and traditions of the 'Noble Savage'. This does not mean that Sali and Vrenchen, the two lovers in A Village Romeo and Juliet, may be considered as issuing from the same literary mould as Wapanacki and Koanga. Following the route of the Noble Savage from the plantation and reservation to the Swiss mountain pastures will involve a detour from the main literary highway to an important and parallel byway.

At the end of the eighteenth century there was a strong trend in English letters towards idealizing the relationship between nature and the people whose lives and work are inseparable from it. 'Romantic naturalism', as the movement is usually termed, has as its most influential spokesmen the English Lakeland poets, and among its most recognizable poetic images the figures of the 'Noble Peasant' and the 'Child of Nature'. This is especially true of Wordsworth, according to whose naturalistic principle,

"the excellence of human beings is in proportion to the number and richness of their contacts with nature. Hence the child, with its fresh and lively perceptions.... is to be envied. And of adults, those are most blest who dwell uninterruptedly among beautiful and awe-inspiring scenes."³

The image of the child which has gained its learning, sincerity and contentment from running loose and wild in nature was to have such an appeal that it would become a favourite romantic literary stereotype. By the turn of the eighteenth century, as Fairchild points out, it is possible to distinguish the contours of a literary mould, their outlines clearly defined in such works as Wordsworth's Lucy, Godwin's Fleetwood and Southey's Tales of Paraguay. Fairchild

3. Hoxie Neale Fairchild: The Noble Savage (New York, 1928), p.175.

writes:

"These children usually derive from nature great physical beauty; love of the scenes amid which they live; exquisite sensibilities; and a moral instinct independent of, and often hostile to, analytical reason." ⁴

Both the child of nature and the peasant whose simple philosophy is derived from his closeness to nature's life-powers (Wordsworth's 'Noble Dalesman') draw their motivation from a basic reactionary force common also to the Noble Savage tradition:

"They spring from the same revulsion against corrupt civilization, and preach fundamentally the same gospel of innocent simplicity." ⁵

About the same distance which separates 'romantic naturalism' from the mainstream literature of the Noble Savage, separates Keller's 'poetic realism' from 'romantic naturalism'. The influence of the older school is still evident and of significance, but the premises of naturalism are re-examined in a fresh light. 'Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe' is the most famous story of Keller's collection, Die Leute von Seldwyla (1856). In common with the best of his output, the story is marked by a delicate balance between the reality of a tragic and difficult existence, and the poetic sensibilities this can engender when thrown into relief by natural beauty. It was clearly the latter feature of Keller's art that was of primary attraction to Delius.

In his descriptions of Sali's and Vrenchen's innocent, free natures, and of their relationship to the countryside, Keller will have made a strong appeal to those instincts in Delius which prompted him to write two operas about people with untamed, simple hearts. Sali and Vrenchen are good-looking children, especially their eyes, which are "the most beautiful one could hope to see, and the girl's brown complexion and dark curly hair gave her whole face a lively and innocent expression". ⁶ Their playground is the uncultivated land between

4. ibid., p. 374.

5. ibid., p. 180.

6. Gottfried Keller: Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe. Translated from the Norwegian edition (Oslo, 1948) by the present author. P. 10.

their fathers' properties. It is a wild, natural jungle, "where weeds and bushes and piles of boulders were tangled in a strange and enchanting undergrowth. They wandered about for a while, and amused themselves by swinging their hands over the highest thistles they saw. Later they settled down in the shade and the little girl plucked some long blades of grass and made a green dress for her doll."⁷

The wildland's charm is equally strong for the pair when, years later, they fall in love:

"They crept into the field so artfully and carefully that there was almost no trace of them, and there they built a little hiding-place amid the golden ears of corn which towered over their heads so that they could see only the deep blue sky above them."⁸

They are creatures of innocence, childlike natures free to give expression to their spontaneous and simple emotions. Moreover, Sali and Vrenchen lose little of their youthful charm as they mature. As adults they are still fond of playing games, and Keller speaks of the "oblivious happiness they felt when, like two children, they walked together",⁹ and of how they could fall asleep together "and sleep as sweetly and well as children in a cradle".¹⁰

So much at least do Keller's characters seem to share with the child of nature of the 'romantic naturalist'. The innocence and integrity which nature, and their own instinct, cultivates in them, is in conflict with the cynical mediocrity which is the way of the world. This, indeed, seems to be the moral behind Keller's parting-shot:

"...the papers told about two young people who had sought death together after they had danced and amused themselves for an entire afternoon at a parish fête.... [I]t was further presumed that the two young people had illegally appropriated [a] barge in order to celebrate their base and ungodly wedding - yet another sign of ever-spreading immorality and the moral decline of the times."¹¹

7. ibid., p.13.

8. ibid., p.60.

9. ibid., p.56.

10. ibid., p.71.

11. ibid., p.122.

There is much in the story of Sali and Vrenchen, then, with which the Delius of The Magic Fountain and Koanga could identify. However, for Keller, the ideal method of representing what his characters signified for him was evidently by showing them in contrast to a grey realism. The contradiction of the term 'poetic realism' implies this. For Delius the social and moral issue is replaced in significance by emotional tensions, and the realism of Keller's narrative falls away.

Sections two to four of this chapter are given over to an examination of the alterations Delius made to 'Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe' to make it compatible with his own art, and how, in this instance, his art was motivated by the concept of lost innocence. But first, one further citation from Keller which shows that, in the middle ground represented by the poetic natures of Sali and Vrenchen - like the wild land between the farmers' fields - both author and composer were of one heart:

"But they had not gone far before they stopped again and embraced and kissed one another. The great stillness flowed like slow music through them; only the river could be heard, weakly and muted like a quiet breathing.

'How beautiful it is tonight! Can you hear that there is something sounding far off, like a lovely song or bells ringing?'

'It's the river's flow. There's no other sound.'

'No, there is something else, too! I can hear it from all sides!

'I think it is the sound of blood rushing in our ears!'

They listened for a while to the tones, real or imagined, which came from the great stillness, or perhaps only from the fairy moonbeams which played on the white, wavy night mist."¹²

This distant horizon where music, love and nature (as a sensual and a symbolic presence) melt together, is the mystic essence of Delius's work.¹³

12. ibid., pp. 116-7.

13. This passage becomes the kernel of the operatic lovers' duet in Scene VI.

The opera A Village Romeo and Juliet differs in three principal ways from its original source. Each of these contributes significantly to an understanding of Delius's advance, in this work, to his mature style.

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Section Two - Poetry in the Balance

As had been the case with his treatment of Cable's 'Story of Bras-Coupé', Delius removes from Keller's tale all the elements which he does not consider part of its poetic essence. The balance between the two counteracting forces of realism and poetry in Keller is reweighted by Delius heavily in favour of the latter. The different emphases are as peculiar to his vision of the story as are the various interpolations he makes.

The story of the two lovers' parents is seemingly considered irrelevant by Delius whenever it does not directly influence the relationship of Sali and Vrenchen. Out, therefore must go the pathetic degradation which befalls Manz and wife (Sali's parents) when they have to move to town and run a shabby inn. The farmers' violent quarrel over the wasteland, however, has to be left in; likewise the fight between Sali and Marti (Vrenchen's father) which precipitates Vrenchen's tragedy. More surprisingly, Delius cuts the scene which is the fulcrum in Keller's narration: the meeting of the two farmers, accompanied by their grown children, on a narrow bridge in a sudden storm, and the sudden love which flourishes between the girl and boy. Yet, to Delius, in whose streamlined version of their childhood Sali and Vrenchen had never really been out of love, the scene was superfluous. In addition, its melodrama and almost gothic mood runs wholly against the grain of the sensitive, tentative childlike love which Delius's characters enjoy.

The two confrontation scenes in the later stages of the opera, though not essential to Sali and Vrenchen's story, seem also to be included on the grounds that they help to

resolve and define the poetic nature of the two lovers: at the fairground, where they had come to dance, and at the Paradise Garden, where they had sought anonymity, Sali and Vrenchen are urged ever nearer to the river.

In pursuit of his poetic goal Delius resolves a spectrum of characteristics in Keller's tale into primary colours. It was noted earlier that Koanga was preserved from the at times ridiculous and un-noble attitudes of Cable's Bras-Coupé. Delius's Sali and Vrenchen are also strangers to aspects of prosaic life which infringe upon his idealized, broad-stroke sketches.

Further deviation from Keller's story was necessitated by Delius's extraordinary reinterpretation of the figure of 'Der schwarze Geiger' or 'dark fiddler'. The Bacchanalia over which Keller's figure presides at the Paradise Garden, and the wild dance in which he leads both vagabonds and Sali and Vrenchen down the hillside and through the town, for example, are practically unrecognizable in their operatic forms. However, the role which Delius fashioned for the dark fiddler was created more by the addition of a range of new characteristics than by the subtraction of elements in Keller's narrative. The character is the pivot in Delius's version of the story.

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Section Three - The Dark Fiddler

"And when you care to come
into the world with me,
the woods and dales we'll roam..."
(The dark fiddler, Scene III)

"You spoke of the great world tour, and I
am always in the mood to talk about this.
But what do you mean? Are you serious or
only joking?"¹⁴

There are few more intriguing characters in the operatic canon than the dark fiddler in A Village Romeo and Juliet.

14. Unpublished letter from Halfdan Jebe to Delius, 22 July 1905 (Delius Trust archive).

The achievement which this figure represents in Delius's development as an operatic composer is all the more remarkable in that the role is, to a great extent, a creation of his imagination. It is the differences between Delius's dark fiddler and Keller's which give the role its fascination and depth.

The strength of Delius's characterization lies in the multiplicity of ideas which are gathered into this one person. Threads of the fiddler's motivations intertwine and overlap to create the image of a complex personality. Partly through the poetic language he uses, with its veiled meanings, and partly through his functioning as a bridge from sub-plot to main plot, the dark fiddler seems to move on and between several planes. Four of these seem particularly worthy of comment.

First of all, the level of the literary model. Delius's dark fiddler retains the personal history and some of the seediness of Keller's figure.¹⁵ He is the grandson of the deceased town trumpeter and the heir to the overgrown fields (in the opera, the illegitimate grandson, and thus barred from claiming his inheritance). He is also the leader of a troupe of vagabond musicians who, when not revelling at the Inn of the Paradise Garden, are roaming in woods and hills, enjoying a life free of moral restraint.

Though stopping well short of the facial ugliness, bitterness and ecstatic violin playing of Keller's unlikeable fiddler, Delius does imply some of his earthiness.

There is an air of smugness in the fiddler's pleasure at finding Marti and Manz beggared by their avarice -

"It pleases me to see the havoc
they have wrought " (Scene III).¹⁶

- while the ribaldry of his vagabond friends also reflects on his own morals.

15. No intimation is given in the opera of why the fiddler is "dark". In the novella he is called the "black fiddler" because, working with forest bonfires, he is covered in ash and soot. Though the title "The Black Fiddler" did appear in the first edition of the opera score, it has subsequently given way to the more poetic misconception.

16. The libretto quoted in this chapter is that of the vocal score (Boosey & Hawkes, 1952).

These facets represent a nod to worldly realism, a superficial gesture, and the real substance of Delius's dark fiddler lies elsewhere. Perhaps most of all in the freedom and 'wanderlust' of his restless spirit, led always onwards by the enchantment of natural beauty. This second level of characterization is stressed early on by Delius when, departing from Keller, he introduces the fiddler near the beginning of the story. The fiddler is recognized by Marti and Manz as the heir to the wildland, and they lightly dismiss him (Scene I). Not so their children, however, who encounter him in the woods as they play together. Sali and Vrenchen are awestruck by this exotic, mysterious stranger who offers them his wasteland as a playground -

"Come now my children and do not be afraid.
My land shall be your playground.
So long as you hear the wind singing
thro' the tangle no sorrow will you know."

(Scene I, v.s. pp. 30-1)

- who confides in them his forebodings about the future of his wild paradise -

"Here lies my right,
but a wanderer and a bastard
no redress can claim.
Wherefore, full soon all these thick benested bushes
must come tumbling down"

(Scene I, v.s. p. 32)

- and whose violin playing mingles with and is mistaken for the sound of the wind in the trees. The impression of a footloose wanderer is later reinforced. On his second appearance the dark fiddler interrupts the tryst of the now-grown Sali and Vrenchen on the wildland, and makes them a generous, yet extraordinary offer:

"And now we're beggars all
I bear you no ill will.
And when you care to come
into the world with me,
the woods and dales we'll roam
and your merry guide I'll be.
My guide the sun and moon,
towards the west across the sea.
The waving corn my daily bread
to strange wild music from the stream.
My bed's among red poppies."

(Scene III, v.s. pp. 69-72)

Here, the fiddler is the Individualist figure of the High Romantic - an idealist on a spiritual quest, a loner. The dark fiddler's relationship to nature is both his motivation and his goal, at once both means and end.

On the third and fourth planes of characterization there are close connections with this Bohemian side of the man, but it will be seen that the differences separating each of them from the secondary level are crucial in defining a convincingly subtle and rounded character.

The dark fiddler is, of course, also one of the group of vagabonds. They too are roving "ever on towards the setting sun" (v.s.p.191):

"Vagabonds are we!
fetterless and free,
owning nothing, living nowhere....
Always roaming fearing no one,
lawless merry free....
thro' life we go a singing
towards the setting sun"

(Scene VI, v.s.pp.204-217)

The vagabonds rework the seam of childlike innocence of care which was most consistently exploited in the Negro songs and dances of Koanga. Indeed, the lilting vagabond chorus 'Dance along', sung 'a cappella' before the curtain rises for Scene VI is the clear successor of 'O Lawd, I'm goin' away', 'John say you got' and the off-stage 'Well once in a way'.

The dark fiddler takes part in the choruses of the vagabond troupe and is, by association, to be credited with a temperament as merry as theirs. There is, on the surface, little to distinguish the dark fiddler as a lone wanderer from the dark fiddler who, as part of the vagabond group, revels through the final scene. However, the freedom embodied in the dark fiddler is a freedom from limitations, effecting a largeness of spirit. In the case of the vagabonds it is a freedom from responsibility, effecting a lightness of spirit.

17. It is worth noting that it was the practice of Thomas Beecham to interpret 'Dance along' as a fresh, light-hearted chorus (ca. ♩. = 84). The more recent recording of the work has made familiar a much slower tempo (ca. ♩. = 46), from which arises a wistfulness that would probably have surprised the composer.

As a postscript to these two aspects of his character it is interesting that an alteration to the role first printed in the 1921 vocal score seems to indicate an effort by Delius to underline the distinction between them. Early editions of the opera have the dark fiddler sitting with the vagabonds at an inn table as the curtain rises for the final scene. The altered opening to Scene VI, however, offers one of the opera's most abiding images:

It is evening; the verandah is lighted by lanterns, soft summer twilight. The dark fiddler stands with his back towards the audience and his hands on his back at the back of the stage and looks at the high mountains with the last glow upon them.

Off-stage horn-calls in the far distance evoke - by the device common to all Delius's mountain-pieces - a mood of lonely solitude. The longing of the fiddler to be on the move again is tacitly expressed. Only as the calls are fading does he join his comrades at the inn table.

On the fourth and final level of characterization the dark fiddler might be seen as a Pan-like figure. While it was noted earlier that he found amongst the flowers and birds a pleasure and satisfaction that motivated his journeyings, there is a sense in which a yet closer intimacy with nature is implicit. Though found only in the words and music of his first entry, there is here a complete oneness with nature which seems to assume symbolical or allegorical significance. That is to say, more than being an observer, the dark fiddler personifies human identification with nature. A mysterious zephyr-music is heard from the woods some time before the fiddler appears. But is it the song of the wind, or the song of a man? (see ex.1, p.271). On hearing it, the children and the two farmers take the music to be the wind sighing in the trees. Whether it is or not, there eventually emerges from the tones a human song:

"O piper unfollowed, how thou flingest on
thro' the tangle of trees and the wrangle of shrubs
while I must limp after thy fiddler forsaken,
but are we not comrades, o Vagabond wind!"

(Scene I, v.s. pp.25-6).

Ex.1. Scene I,fig.2I.

The musical score consists of several staves. At the top, there are two staves for Clarinet (Cl. and Cl. I.) with dynamics like *pp dolce* and *con sord.*. Below these are three staves for Violins (Viol. I and II) and one for Viola. The vocal line (Vr) includes the following lyrics:

Die Kinder erscheinen am Waldsaum. Sie scheinen auf etwas zu horchen
The children appear at the edge of the wood, they appear to be listening to something

Wie rauscht der Wald durch die Bäume. Hört, hört! Hört doch auch fern die sie gern
How always the wood sounds, sighing thro' the trees! — List, list! they he! 'tis far-off my me-ow.

The bottom two staves are for Cello and Double Bass (Vcl. and dr.).

The fiddler is one with the wind, he has the same freedom. Delius draws a vague line between what is nature and what is human aspiration. However, being human, the dark fiddler, cannot hope to keep up with his mercurial brother - he is the wind's "fiddler forsaken". Rather ironically, the fiddler is given a limp by Delius - a symbol of his humanity spared him in the original story.

The role of the dark fiddler probably embodies the characteristics Delius would wish in his ideal vagabond. It was possibly just such a romanticized individual he envisaged when he first thought of a Gipsy opera in 1894. In the end, therefore, Delius's dark fiddler is a closer relative of Koanga than he is of Keller's rough-edged reprobate. As Wordsworth had his 'Noble Dalesman', so Delius has his 'Noble Vagabond': a creature of the wilds, not of the civilized town, in intimate communion with nature, with a heart unweighted by responsibility.

+ + +

It has been convincingly argued in the past that the dark fiddler is no less than a representation of Delius's personality. This intriguing idea was taken up most recently by Christopher Palmer:

"He, like the Fiddler, was in a sense an outcast, spiritually isolated, cosmopolitan in outlook and temperament but basically stateless; for routine morality and the standard ethical code of the society into which he had been born he cared not a fig. The mode of life described at the beginning of Scene 6 by the chorus of vagabonds.... 'ever journeying onwards, towards the setting sun' - this was Delius's own philosophy of life."¹⁸

There is here a dangerous misconception. That Delius had enjoyed a cosmopolitan life as a young man, and that he longed for travel, is true; but, once he determined to pursue a creative career, he confined his travels strictly. He was no footloose wanderer.

"I'm no Bohemian, nor ever was. I like my meals at regular hours."¹⁹

That Delius "cared not a fig" for society's ethical code is perhaps true also; but, for the sake of his art, he allowed himself to be bound by it.

It is his artistic ideals which are reflected in the dark fiddler, not his life, and to lay stress on self-personification in the role is to run the risk of misrepresenting the composer. Furthermore, there is good reason to believe that, rather than being a portrayal of himself, Delius had partly modelled the dark fiddler on a close friend.

Delius became acquainted with Halfdan Jebe while in Paris in the mid-1890s. He was a Norwegian violin virtuoso, and was born around 1868. He was also one of the most colourful and eccentric characters to enter Delius's life. In his early forties Jebe settled in Mexico, but for many years prior to that he had been driven by a sense of rootlessness and a thirst for travel to explore many areas of the world. His

18. Christopher Palmer: Delius: Portrait of a Cosmopolitan (London, 1976), p. 113.

19. Quoted by C.W. Orr: 'Frederick Delius: Some Personal Recollections' in A Delius Companion (ed. Redwood, London, 1976), p. 62.

letters to Delius (the return correspondence has not survived) reveal not only Jebe's personality, but also the fact that over a period of years Delius had considered joining him on his travels.

"And now I'm setting off on a journey into the wide world, as suits an old clown. Always onwards, always onwards! it is still far to land of the holy frenzy." ²⁰

(Norway? undated, prob. 1898)

"We have travelled much and are going to stay here until we go to Egypt, but the assumption is that you join us - and for a whole year." ²¹

(Naples, 15 June, prob. 1901)

The assumption proved wrong. But Jebe was not discouraged in his hopes of tempting Delius away to exotic lands - evidently a tour they had discussed together:

"When do we go the Pacific, must I go there alone as well." ²²

(Paris, 26 July 1901)

In 1902-3 Jebe is in the Far East, India and Ceylon:

"It is already some time since I received your kind letter, and I want you to know that only rarely in my life have I been so happy over a letter. Well, to understand this you would have had to have experienced what it is to smell land again after an eternal voyage.... [T]he long adventure story which I have now finished, not on paper but with bleeding footsteps across the world, through still-untouched pits of Bohemian living conditions, this wonderful adventure I bring home alive.... [P]erhaps you will come with me to visit a few beautiful places, and to lead for a year a life just as idyllic, just as ideal as your peaceful life at Grez. More about this later, I know that you are going to want, when I tell you about it all some time or other, you are going to want to trot around the globe a little...." ²³

(Colombo, November 1903)

20. Unpublished (Delius Trust archive).

21. Unpublished (Delius Trust archive).

22. Unpublished (Delius Trust archive).

23. CLL/1, pp. 228-230.

"I burn with a feverish desire once more to see the countries where I felt like a new-born child!" ²⁴

(Oslo, 21 June 1904)

"I hope very much that we can again seriously consider our great Pacific journey. I have never given it up." ²⁵

(Oslo, 24 April 1905)

"[A]bout our world tour at last. I have now two - 2 - three women singers, who are all possible.... I should like to hear from you, even if I don't at all reckon on you joining in." ²⁶

(Copenhagen, undated, prob. 1905)

"You talk of the great world tour, and I am always in the mood to talk about this. But what do you mean? Are you serious or are you only joking....
I cannot stand it here any longer, and I shall certainly leave this autumn for several years....
You go via India, I via America, and when we meet we exchange women I give two for one." ²⁷

(Oslo, 22 July 1905)

Delius described Jebe on more than one occasion in such terms as "the only man I ever loved in all my life". ²⁸

It seems that Delius's relationship to his dark fiddler character is parallel to that with Jebe. The notion of a world tour would have appealed immensely to Delius - its romanticism and Bohemianism. But, unlike Jebe, he would never actually begin on such an adventure. His music - not least in the part of the dark fiddler - is full of the exhilaration and poetry associated with a free, wild spirit and free, wild places.

24. CLL/1, p. 244.

25. Unpublished (Delius Trust archive)

26. Unpublished (Delius Trust archive)

27. Unpublished (Delius Trust archive)

28. Unpublished letter from Delius to Adey Brunel, 27 April 1913 (private collection).

It was possible for him to write thus because he didn't fulfill his desire to experience at first hand an unfettering of responsibilities and ambitions. He didn't dissolve the poetic image in reality.

" [Jebe] seems to be making a reality of his life and living all the music that he has in him - With me it is just the contrary I am putting everything into my music all my poetry & all my adventure."²⁹

The dark fiddler is not the image of Delius, but the image of his longings.

+ + +

Section Four - "Are we not also vagabonds?"

For all the exoticism with which Delius surrounds the dark fiddler, he remains a secondary character. His role in the opera is essentially functional, for he serves as a foil to the frustrated happiness of Sali and Vrenchen. In the end he and his companions define by antithesis for the lovers the course they must pursue, showing them an alternative they cannot accept. But as this was essentially the function of these characters in Keller's novella, why does Delius go to such lengths to develop and deepen the subsidiary roles? The answer lies in the roles of Sali and Vrenchen. These too are expanded by the composer, and in ways which demanded a correlative shift of perspective in the characters with which they interact. The roles of Sali and Vrenchen form the third and most important area of deviation by Delius from his source.

It will be recalled that Keller laid considerable emphasis on the fact that Sali and Vrenchen maintained their childlike outlook on life, despite the tragic events which befell their families. To this end, their unquestioning faith in the virtues of conventional morality is depicted as that of the uncynical innocent. Not so their operatic namesakes.

29. Unpublished letter from Delius to Adey Brunel, 27 April 1913 (private collection).

Delius's characters are, from Scene III onwards, always one step removed from the childlike naivety of Keller's. The weight of their tragedy lies heavily, and has dissolved into memories their blithe, carefree spirits. Their innocence has been lost, and there lives in them, therefore, a poignant sentiment which can be identified both as nostalgia for their childhood and as a longing for the freedom from care which is suggested by the dark fiddler and his friends:

Sali: (about the dark fiddler)
"Fear not, my Vreli,
the man means us no harm;
'twas ever on his land
we used to hide and play.

Vrenchen: "Our childhood's happy days,
they seem so long ago"
(Scene III, v.s. pp. 75-6)

+ +

Sali: "Nay, we will wander together
into strange lands
and leave our past behind us....

Vrenchen: "Oh if it were possible
to wander free and careless
like gipsies on the great road
onward ever onward....

Sali: "Aye, love we'll wander together
thro' the wide world
singing joyfully like larks....

Vrenchen: "Come sit beside me here,
stay by me thro' the night,
We'll talk of bygone days
and so await the dawn"
(Scene 4, v.s. pp. 105-109)

+ +

Vagabonds: "Vagabonds are we
fetterless and free....

Sali and Vrenchen: "Are we not also vagabonds?
homeless outcasts
wand'ers on the earth....
On the mountains let us wander
hand in hand and see the purple mists arise
arise from shadow land"
(Scene VI, v.s. pp. 204-218)

It is perhaps already evident why the role of the dark fiddler had to be reworked by Delius into that of a charismatic wandering Bohemian. Until the point at which the final quotation above occurs (halfway through the final scene), the

story seems to be moving inexorably towards one conclusion, and that a happy one. The lovers are charmed by the vision of freedom painted by the dark fiddler. From early in the opera Delius prepares the ground thoroughly for Sali and Vrenchen to follow the vagabonds into the mountains.

For Delius's lovers, as for Keller's, this is not to be, however. Sali and Vrenchen eventually reject the idea of a vagabond life and choose instead to die in each other's embrace. Despite their dreams of a free, wandering existence they find it impossible to accept the fiddler's offer. Having laid such emphasis on the virtues of a carefree Bohemian life, Delius seems now to make an inconsistent change of direction. This is merely an appearance. In Delius's characterization of the two lovers they are creatures of longing. They long for the freedom of vagabonds, for the simplicity of childhood and, most of all, for each other. Their impoverished lives have a meaning in the love they have for each other, and though children no longer, they retain a simple and sincere faith in each other. They live for that love. To fulfill their longings is to negate their love. If they follow the fiddler on his way, their desire to escape into the world would be resolved - that desire which gives so much colour to their grey existence. Likewise, if their passion is resolved, their love will be extinguished. To entertain this possibility is, for Sali and Vrenchen, to devalue the reality of the love they have. It is to regard love with cynicism, the worldly, experienced attitude which is diametrically opposed to the innocence they look back to. They seek an alternative.

How inevitable and right this eventual rejection of the vagabond life seems in its context in the opera can only be sensed in conjunction with the music. At times it is the music of Sali and Vrenchen's longing for their lost innocence, at times it is the music of their passionate desire. The change of perspective Delius effected here by composing the music not of innocence, as in Koanga, but of human emotions displaced by hard experience from that innocence, brought with it the stylistic maturity in his writing he had been moving towards for a decade.

Some of the music of A Village Romeo and Juliet is examined in the next section; an appraisal of the remarkable way in which Delius resolves the destiny of his two lovers is offered in chapter eight.

+ + +

Delius's version of the story is crucially different from Keller's, but nonetheless the product of a complete vision. He has made the characters quite his own. The decency and honour which Keller's lovers most ardently crave are replaced by innocence and freedom in the opera. While Keller's characters are forced to their death by moral pressure, Delius's are carried there by emotional pressures. In his novella the author reflects the mystical tints which colour everyday life: the poetry of reality. In his opera the composer suggests how dependent life is upon its mystical tints: the reality of poetry.

With Sali's and Vrenchen's rejection of the dark fiddler, Delius's trilogy of operas comes to a symbolic conclusion. At this point the premise underlying The Magic Fountain and Koanga gives way to a new premise. The ideal of a people living in a noble naivety, preserved from cynicism, is replaced by the knowledge that the ideal is unattainable. The Magic Fountain and Koanga are conceived in the image of Delius's Utopia. A spiritual innocence is presupposed in the main characters. Not so in A Village Romeo and Juliet. This is a quest, with innocence as the goal.

It is in the figures of Sali and Vrenchen that Delius can himself be fully identified; and in their motivation, the motivation of his creative power. The vision he had in 1894 of writing operas about the Indians, Gipsies and Negroes was inspired by the same dream which Sali and Vrenchen share:

"Oh if it were possible
to wander free and careless
like gipsies on the great road
onward ever onward...."

Delius's quest took him to an Indian reservation and to a slave plantation: perhaps, like Sali and Vrenchen, he was all the time looking for the distanced land of childhood.

At the time work on A Village Romeo and Juliet began, Delius was settling down in Grez-sur-Loing. The long chapter of travel and new experiences was closed. This turning-point in his life was, not unexpectedly, also the turning-point in his creative career. It is the point at which he put his youth behind him.

+ + +

Section Five - The Music of Lost Innocence

The emergence of Delius's mature style in A Village Romeo and Juliet was the result of some fifteen years of development. His fluency in the ambiguities of harmonic grammar typifying the post-Wagnerian expressive language had not been quickly achieved, but acquired gradually through the need to convey sensual tensions and Romantic longing in his stage works. Nor was the expressive potential of subtle diatonic/chromatic conflicts - a mastery of which so characterizes Delius's mature music - some fresh discovery. In some early scores, particularly in the Rhapsodische Variationen and Légendes, he had endeavoured to recapture the poignance of Solana Grove memories by the delicate balancing of diatonic and chromatic elements of his writing. These modest efforts, it has been seen, anticipated more important instances in the works of 1896-7, where the composer sought a strikingly poignant effect by such means. In the final act of Koanga the tragedy of the drama was summed up in a heavily chromaticized variant of the principal Negro melody. The American Rhapsody Appalachia transformed a humble triadic Negro melody into a song of exquisite longing. The significance of A Village Romeo and Juliet lies in the fact that it was here that Delius first exploited fully the dramatic and poetic potential of this conflict.

Relying not only on momentary conflicts of tension and resolution, but also on the relation of whole episodes to each other (that is to say, on dramatic development), the powerful poetic effect of Delius's music in A Village Romeo and Juliet

can only be fully appreciated in the course of extensive passages. Two of these will be examined below; however, the short extract described in part I below is useful by way of introduction. (Each of these examples uses motifs which have an important role in the opera. The first three motifs of Table IX, p. 333, should be noted in particular).

(I). The rejection of the dark fiddler. It is in the moment of Scene VI shown in ex. 2 (pp. 281-2) that the two lovers Sali and Vrenchen decide they cannot follow the vagabonds to the mountains. The orchestral accompaniment concerns itself with two strongly contrasted ideas, a rising triplet figure (motif B of Table IX) and a rocking figure, which is a version of the vagabond's jovial choral song:



In bars 1-3, between the points of anchorage of an F major tonal centre (marked +), Delius ornaments the vagabond song with chromatic harmony and fluidly moving lines. The simple diatonic phrase is not obscured by the chromatic texture, but contributes to the expressive quality of the passage precisely because it is easily recognizable. Juxtaposed with the intensity of bars 2-3 is the quite unambiguous progression at bars 4-7. The positive, rising motif has accompanied the lovers through all their experiences in the opera. Bars 8-14 repeat the procedure. The emotional balance of insecurity and security, of certainty and uncertainty, of tension and resolution, fluctuates constantly.

Contained in a nutshell, as it were, the emotional conflict the characters face throughout the opera is presented in these few bars.

Ex.2. Scene VI, 7 bars after fig.85.

Sali.

Was meinst du Vren-chen? Soll'n wir fol - gen
What say, you Fre - li? Shall we fol - low

p Cr. Pg Clg. *pp* Timp. *pp* Quart.

die - sen Leu - ten in die Ber - ge?
these good peo - ple to the moun - tains?

Cl. *Cr. solo* *mf* Quart. *ff*

3

(Ex.2.cont.)

Vrenchen.

Vr. Was die Frau ge-sagt, ist wahr; das ist für uns kein
What that wo-man said is true: that life is not for

5

Cl. solo 86 quart. *p* *pp*

Cr. Fg

Vr. Lo-ben, wir könn-ten nie-mals le-ben wie die.
us, we could ne-ver live like they

S. Sali. Du hast
You are

9

dolcissimo Cr. solo *p* I.H. Cl. Pg. Cr.

engl. H. r.H. e Bcl. Hrf. Quart. *red* *red*

S. recht, Vrenchen. Die-sen Le-ben ist nicht für
right Vre-li. That life is not for

12

Ob solo I.H. Cl. Cr. Quart. *red* *red* *red* *red*

(II). Scene IV. The strife between Vreli's and Sali's fathers is finally over. Nobody has won and both families have been ruined by the quarrel. What is worse, Vreli's father, Marti, has lost his senses and been taken to the local asylum. As the curtain rises, the pitiful state Vreli has been brought to is evident.

Ex.3. Scene IV, fig.5.

Interior of MARTI'S house. Everything is bare, only a bedstead and a bench is left. VRELI sits alone before a small fire. It is almost dark. The door remains open through the whole scene so that one looks out into the twilight.

Vrenchen.

Vr. *Vorhang auf. Curtain.* Ach die
 AA the

p Bel. Cfg. Cb. *pp* Via. Vcl.

Vr. Nacht bricht her-ein, ja die letz-te Nacht im al-ten
 night is ap-proa-ching! AA the last night in my old (home)

cr. *p* Clar.

The dark colours of the texture and tonal uncertainty are resolved at bar 7, with an Eb tonic triad and warmer string tones. Vrenchen's song has a direct, unsophisticated appeal. With its melismatic 'wail', modality and simple contours, it has the air of a beautiful folk melody. The vivacious girl who had danced with and dared a first kiss from Sali in Scene III sings now a woman's lament, expressing a personal loneliness and sorrow in a universal idiom of deep feeling.

Sali comes in, unnoticed by Vrenchen. He watches her for a few moments, with mounting emotion, until his feelings can no longer be contained (ex.4):

Ex.4. Scene IV,fig.9.

VI. I. Ob. Cl.

Tr. Ufg.

Sali.

Vren-chen, mein Herz, mein einziges Lieb!
Fre - li, my own, I're-li my own!

Più mosso e con anima.

mp subito

senza Tr. Pos. Tba.

Timp. trem.

senza Tr. Pos. Tba.

Vr.

Vrenchen. Sie fällt ihm um den Hals.
She clasps him round the neck.

Sa - - - - - li!
Sa - - - - - li!

VI. Fl. Cl.

VI. Vla trem.

Cr.

dim. molto

Cr. Fg.

Rel. Fg.
Cfg. Vel. Cl.

The tonal security of Vrenchen's lament is replaced with an exploratory progression in bars 1-8 (employing motif C from Table IX), and the tension rises towards the crisis at bar 9, a chromatic climax. In her immediate joy at having Sali with her again, Vreli steers the harmony finally to the tonic Eb and some momentarily bright progressions (11-13).

A duet follows, where the tender love of the young couple is given expression in an outpouring of lyrical musical thought. Much of the material arises out of the opening phrase, but (as in the dance-duet of Scene II) the principal melodic line is only one of many threads in the polyphonic weaving:

Ex.5. Scene IV, fig.12.

Vrenchen (mit heiterem Ausdruck.) (gaiety)

Sa - li, ich wär' ge - stor - ben
Sa - li, I should have died, —

wä - rest du nicht ge - kom - men. Was auch ge - sehnt, ich lie -
had you not come. My love for you o'er - leaps —
(sehr leise) (very tenderly)

O Vren - chen, lie - ber wär' ich tot, als nicht bei dir. — Ach
O Vre - li, I should have died, had I not come, — the

sempre legato

The chromatic alteration of chords, side-slipping bass and fluid inner lines are all characteristic of Delius's most sensual rhapsodic style. The tonal tensions of this duet remain, to a great extent, unresolved, the ensuing section adhering to a restless, shifting harmonic scheme as Vrenchen describes to Sali the plight of her father.

It is only when the music settles onto Bb major at fig. 21 that a tonal centre is firmly established. A second duet follows, commencing with Sali's questions, "What shall you do? Where shall you go?" Though it is music in a broad, tranquil style, the duet does contain elements of inner conflict (see ex.6, 286). Simple diatonic passages in resolute mood

Ex.6. Scene IV,fig.21.

vr. *knufft! -*
stid! -

molto espress.

Sali.

Was willst du
What shall you

Tranquillo.
Quart.

p

e Timp.

vr. Vrenchen.

Hin -
Out.

tun? _____
do? _____

Wo _____
Where

gehst du hin? _____
will you go? _____

2

vr. aus _____
Out

in die Welt. _____
in to the world. _____

Nein, nein, das darf nicht sein! Du darfst dich nicht
No, no - ver can I face the world with

string.

5

tren - nen von mir. Wo - hin _____ du _____ gehst, ich fol - ge,
out _____ you, and where _____ you go, I will fol - low,

Plü.

cr. *Cr. Vel.*

8

e Cr. e Fr. Cl.

(as at bars 1-5, employing a variant of motif A) are balanced with more chromatic writing at moments when the lovers' resolve wavers and emotions are ruffled (as at bars 6-8).

The fluctuations of feeling in this long dramatic sequence are finally resolved in the beautiful song "Come sit beside me here". Twilight has passed, and in the dark empty house the glow of the fire unites the two lovers. The closing G major tonality of the preceding duet sinks a semi-tone, and the music embraces a mood of peaceful resignation:

Ex.7. Scene IV, fig.27.

Molto lento.
 Vrenchen. schlingt ihre Arme zärtlich um SALI und drückt ihn auf die Bank am Feuer nieder.
(throws her arms tenderly about SALI and draws him to the bench by the fire.)

v. *Komm, setz' dich ne - ben mich! Bleib so die gan - ze Nacht!*
Come sit be - side me here. stay by me thro' the night,

Quart. div.
pp sempre legato

Removed from its context, the music is trivial, a simple hymn-like piece. But considered in its relation to the earnest longing of Sali and Vrenchen for freedom and for each other, its artless style conveys not mere simplicity, but restraint. Deep emotion is sensed to be running beneath these still waters. At the moment when they are resigned to their fate and to the future, this music conveys their nostalgia for what they have lost.

(III). The final duet. The duet which brings Scene VI towards its close, illustrates well Delius's mastery of post-Wagnerian harmony, accumulating the tension of its superb climax from a finely graded increase in chromaticism and tonal uncertainty (see ex.8, pp.288-290).

The Db tonality of the opening lies beneath the first 7 bars, with its subdominant (Gb) implied in bars 8-9. The entire rhythmic interest is concentrated hypnotically on the constantly repeated ♪♪♪.

Ex.8. Scene VI,fig.95.

Vr. Vrenchen.
Sich, der Mond - schein
Sec. the moon - beams

Sali.
Sich, der Mond-schein küs - set Wie - se und Wald und bun - te
See the moon-beams kiss the woods the fields and all the

Lento assai.
V.I. u. II. div.
pp un poco marcato
Via. sempre
Fl. Cl. simile
Vcl.

küs - set Wie - se, Wald und bun - te Blu - - men. Träu - mend seufzt dor
kiss the woods, the fields and all the flow - - ers, and the ri - ver

Blu - - men. Träu - mend seufzt der
flow - - ers, and the ri - ver

Fl. Cl. Ob.
Cl. Bcl.

stil - le Strom, glei - tet lang - sam un - ser war - tend!
soft - ly sing - ing glides a - long and seems to beck - on

stil - le Strom, glei - tet lang - sam un - ser war - tend!
soft - ly sing - ing glides a - long and seems to beck - on

sezza Ob.
Orch. sempre trom.
Cl. mp
Vcl. Cb.
Hr. I.

(Ex. 8. cont.)

12

Vr. Lau - schel
lis - ten!

S. Lau - schel
lis - ten! Fer - ne Tö - ne,
far off sounds of

r.H. *vll. cl. pb.*
i.H. *pp* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3*
Fl. *e Cr.* *Cl.* *cresc.*
e Hrf. II.

5

Vr. Fer - ne Tö - ne, schö - ne Klän - ge wek - ken
far off sounds of mus - ic so wa - ken tremb - ling

S. schö - ne Klän - ge wek - ken zit - ternd
mus - ic so wa - ken tremb - ling e - choes

Fl. *(cresc.)* *Cl.* *mp cresc. poco*

3

Vr. zit - ternd Wie - der - hall, Schwel - len,
e - choes throb - bing, swel - ling

S. Wie - der - hall, Schwel - len,
mo - ving throb - bing, swel - ling

Tutti senza Tr. Pos. Tba.
(cresc.) *mf cresc. poco a poco*

(Ex. 8. cont.)

21

Vr. schwin - den ster - ben in des A - bends
faint - - - ly dy - - - ing in the sun - sets

S. schwin - den ster - ben in des A - bends letz - tem
faint - - - ly dy - - - ing in the sun - sets *sad - ing*

Tr.

24

Vr. letz - tem Glühn! Da - hin, wo das E cho
sad - - - ing *glow,* where the e - choes dare to

S. Glühn! Da - hin, wo das E - cho tö - net,
glow, where the e - choes dare to wan - der

Tutti

I.H.

Tba.

27

Vr. tö - net, wa - gen auch wir zwei zu gehn. —
wan - der shall we two not dare to go? —

S. wa - gen auch wir zwei zu gehn.
shall we two not dare to go?

Vi. senza Cr.

Tr. Pos. Cr.

Fg. Cfg. Hrf.

senza Fg. Tr. Pos.

Cr. Cb.

pp

dim molto

fff rit.

At bar 10 the harmonic and rhythmic movement is stepped up. Triplet figuration corresponds with the textual reference to the gliding river. Side-stepping sequences at bars 15-19 (Eb - Db - Cb - A - G) add greatly to tonal tension and, as the preparation for the eventual E major home key is made from bar 21, chromaticism is also increased.

After the earlier harmonic ambiguities, the prominence and unequivocal tonal gravity of E at the climax arouses expectations of a glorious resolution of the emotional tensions and the lovers' passionate longing. It does not come. After the duet the drama rushes on and, far from there being tonal resolution, a series of new tonal areas is passed through quickly in 7th and 9th chords. Sali and Vrenchen appropriate a hay barge, the dark fiddler and vagabonds reappear and the fiddler plays wildly for the lovers as they push out into the river. Only as the young couple sink into each other's embrace does the composer allow the satisfaction of a firm resolution. Apart from one melodramatic chord as the boat sinks, the B major tonality established at fig. 104 is sustained throughout the final 44 bars.

+ + +

Section Six - An Epilogue

" [Niels Lyhne taught Gerda] that a belief in a personal God, who rules perfectly over everything, and punishes or rewards in another life, was an escape from brutal reality, an impotent attempt to take the sting out of the harsh conditions of existence." ³⁰

" [Gerda:] 'We never thought that I would die first....Niels, it isn't possible that death is the end. You who are healthy can't tellfetch the priest, I want him to come so much.' " ³¹

30. J.P. Jacobsen: Niels Lyhne (Copenhagen, 1880). Translated from the Norwegian edition (Oslo, 1971) by the present author. P. 156.

31. ibid., pp. 158-9.

" [Doctor Hjerrild:] 'Tell me Lyhne....do you want to talk with a priest?'

'I've got no more to do with priests than you have', Niels whispered bitterly.

'We're not talking about me - I'm alive and healthy - don't lie there and torture yourself with your principles - people who are dying have no principles....'

Niels' pains became ever worse....It would have been good to have had a God to complain and pray to....

And finally he died his death, the difficult death."³²

These scenes from Jacobsen's novel Niels Lyhne - Niels' conversion of his young wife, Gerda's death and finally Niels' own death - were part of Delius's initial concept for his operatic treatment of the book, Fennimore and Gerda (1909-11). None of them, however, have a place in the finished work, although extensive sketches remain of the scenes envisaged, which would probably have extended the eleven 'Pictures' of the opera to fifteen.

The stark humanist philosophy of Jacobsen's novel would have found much sympathy in the mind of Delius. Indeed, he would voice a strikingly similar life-code in his uncompromising Requiem (1914). Nevertheless, in the end he decided that this was not the way his opera should conclude. Why he changed his mind is open to speculation. It is possible that, while Delius recognized in the book the enactment of his own beliefs, the painful, harrowing deaths of Gerda and Niels were rejected because they ran against the grain of his artistic aesthetic. Throughout his career, his music was the vehicle for expressing affirmation of life. Fennimore and Gerda comes to a conclusion, therefore, in a glow of optimism and fresh heart. In Pictures 1 to 6 the passionate love of Fennimore and Niels' closest friend, Erik, gradually fades, leaving their marriage a hollow and tragic relationship. In the 7th to 9th Pictures, Niels and Fennimore fall passionately and secretly in love, again to end in despair when Erik's carriage overturns, killing him. The 10th Picture is set three years later, on the farm where Niels grew up: (p.293)

32. ibid., p.164-5.

(Niels, seen in simple farmer's clothes, is sitting on a low wall, left. Behind him, the garden is seen and beyond the garden is the fjord. Niels has just returned from the fields).

"Dear old home! Peaceful haven, 'twas here I played when I was a child. O Earth, O Earth, our old and trusty mother, thine be my life now."

For this scene Delius writes a theme as bright and Grieg-like as any in his early Norwegian period. The glance back to his youth in melody and harmony also breaks with a subtle violence the emotional intensity of the preceding scenes in the opera. It carries the poignance of a fond memory of childhood:

Ex.9. Opening of 10th Picture.

Very quietly, not dragging.

The musical score is written for a string quartet and woodwinds. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes staves for Flute 1 (Fl. 1), Oboe (Ob.), Flute 2 (Fl. 2), Violin 1 (Vl. 1), Violin 2 (Vl. 2), and Viola (Vla.). The second system includes staves for Oboe (Ob.), Violin 1 (Vl. 1), Violin 2 (Vl. 2), and Viola (Vla.). The score is marked 'p' (piano) and 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The tempo is 'Very quietly, not dragging.' The key signature has one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. A box containing the number '107' is visible in the second system.

In the final Picture, Gerda, a shy, beautiful and innocent girl in the first years of maturity, enters the story. Niels is devoted to her with a warm and sincere love. Gerda loves Niels (who is her senior by many years) with a childlike admiration. The opera ends with the joyful news of their betrothal.

In late middle-age, a decade after completing his trilogy, Delius wrote this, his most unambiguous eulogy of the virtues of innocence. Niels' return to an intimate contact with nature, to the comfort of childhood's ambience and a mutual childlike love, affirms that Delius's faith in his vision of noble, free spirits did not give way to cynicism in later life.

Fennimore and Gerda may be seen as an epilogue to the three operas through which Delius had advanced to creative maturity. The span of fifteen years separating the composition of The Magic Fountain and Fennimore and Gerda is the central period in the composer's life. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the same theme as pervades these operas is common to all periods and branches of his art. Mention was made in chapter five of the nostalgic coda in Sea Drift and of the Negro innocence which Delius declared to be the inspiration of the Appalachia variations. In the first orchestral score of his career, the Florida suite, the dance of the Negroes in the third movement is as simple and exuberant a piece as any he penned; the choruses of youths in Irmelin are the precursors of the Negro work-songs and dance-songs in Koanga; and the broad viola melody in Paris, an orchestral score contemporary with A Village Romeo and Juliet, has been described as "opening a magic window to Innocence".³³

At the turn of the century, Delius's life-style changed drastically, as he withdrew to Grez-sur-Loing to devote himself to his work. The magic window of his music was now his main means of communicating with the world of innocence. The freedom he had known there awoke poetic sentiment; his utterances were characterized by his longing to return there.

Sali and Vrenchen reject the dark fiddler. Halfdan Jebe made his world tour alone.

33. Eric Fenby: Delius (London, 1971), p. 40.

Chapter Seven

"Une note à lui" - Aspects of Delius's Emerging Style

Section One - External Influences

The many, disparate lines of Delius's development seem to converge in A Village Romeo and Juliet. Of course, the neatness of this ending to fifteen years of development, if not actually an illusion, can be rather misleading. It is not an illusion because A Village Romeo and Juliet was, indeed, a turning-point, a fulfilling of potential. But the image of a slow, steady progress of technical abilities until the threshold to artistic manhood is crossed is inaccurate.

First of all, the lines which converge on A Village Romeo and Juliet have been far from straight. In Sakuntala and Twilight Fancies, already in the 1880s, Delius expressed himself in a highly individual, intimate voice, which was lost for several years while he tried to achieve the same results on an operatic scale. The orchestral beauty which characterizes the score of The Magic Fountain (discussed in section three, below) was sacrificed in Koanga to the colour of folk music-influenced vocal writing. And the effectiveness of short, episodic forms, such as were employed in the Florida suite and the Paa Vidderne melodrama were followed up by structural adventures on Delius's part little suited to his methods of composing: the more he became entangled in the principles of sonata form (it is suggested in section four), the less satisfied he was with the end result.

Secondly, it must be noted that the great advances in Delius's art in the years 1894-9 were to a large extent due to extra-musical influences. Rather than a sense of artistic purpose and direction, it was more likely that a sense of advancing middle-age had most to say in the emergence of the composer's mature style around the turn of the century.

One or two non-musical events in Delius's life seem to have had a particularly important bearing on his musical development at this time. That his treatment of the theme

of innocence in A Village Romeo and Juliet was affected by his settling at Grez-sur-Loing in the late 1890s, has already been noted. This and other biographical details are summarized in this section, before the advances Delius made in this period in song writing, orchestration and form are examined. In all areas of his life and work, one central trend is evident: Delius came to rely more and more on the strength of his own individuality.

From the time he took up residence outside Paris at Ville d'Avray in November 1888 until 1895, Delius's attraction to and involvement in artistic and social circles in the capital seem to have steadily increased. In 1891 he moved into the city, and by the following year he was a familiar figure both at social events of the Parisian aristocracy and at the informal soirées held by the composer Mollard for artistic friends.¹ His increased participation in society exacted its toll on his creative efficiency: the highly productive years of 1881-1891 were succeeded by leaner times, his output in 1893 being particularly meagre. The years 1894-5 saw Delius's attachment to Mollard's Bohemian circle increase, with Gauguin and Strindberg among his daily friends. Early in 1895 Gauguin contracted syphilis and soon afterwards left Paris for good. Later that year secondary syphilis was diagnosed in Delius.

Although the medical treatment Delius received at this time seems to have been successful, the experience robbed him of his energy and positive spirit for a while. His depression was not helped, either, by the financial crisis he was in, his family being unwilling to support further this wayward son whose music had achieved scant public notice.

How deeply these events affected the composer is impossible to assess. But from 1896 there becomes evident an earnestness in Delius's utterances about his desire to devote his time to his art, and also a gradual withdrawal

1. This fascinating period of Delius's life has been admirably described by Lionel Carley in his monograph, Delius: The Paris Years (London, 1975).

from his Parisian circles. Early that year he made the acquaintance of his future wife, Jelka Rosen, and was introduced by her to the village of Grez-sur-Loing:

"When Fred came to see me at Grez, we rowed on the river, then running extremely high. We managed to get thro' under the old stone bridge of Grez with great difficulty and struggled on until we got to the landing place of an old deserted but lovely garden belonging to the Marquis de Carzeaux, with an old rambling, but very cosy looking house at the top.... Delius was enchanted on this spring day with blue sky and fleeting clouds and against it the grey pile of the big solid old church and on the other side the ruin of an early medieval castle.... The garden had run quite wild. There were beautiful old trees near the river, and little wild primroses and violets were already in bloom. We picked some and pressed them in Nietzsche's 'Fröhliche Wissenschaft', and Fred said: 'A place like this one could work in, it is so beautiful and quiet and unspoilt'".²

In the summer he took his first mountain holiday in Norway for five years. It may be recalled that the first part of 1897 saw Delius back on Solana Grove. A desire to escape from Parisian social life in general, and the attentions of one persistent female admirer in particular were among the reasons for that unusual trip (see CLL/1, p.112). On his return to France that summer, Delius learned that Jelka had bought the house in Grez:

"And then he came, as simply and naturally as was his wont, with a little suitcase and said: 'I suppose you can put me up.'.... He stayed over the weekend and then only went back to Paris to fetch his music and a few clothes.... So simply it was that my happy life at Grez began".³

In these years following the temporary breakdown of his health, a new determination entered Delius's personality: he now placed his artistic ambition before everything else, and

2. Jelka Delius: 'Memories of Frederick Delius'. Given as Appendix VII of CLL/1 . P.411. .

3. ibid., pp.413-4.

recognized the need for the right conditions for his art to flourish. From Christiania in the autumn of 1897 he wrote to Jelka:

"How is everything in the quiet haven? As soon as I come out of your garden at Grez everything seems to me to be in an uproar" ⁴

The strength of purpose he nurtured in the garden at Grez no doubt already formed an essential part of his character. Support for his strong will had also been available to him from one literary source for several years. That Delius, on his first visit to the garden at Grez should have pressed flowers in Fröhliche Wissenschaft seems now ironic for, besides nature, it was Nietzsche who inspired him to make the most of his creative powers.

"I have at last arranged my life according to my own nature and truth....World Joy instead of World Woe ". ⁵

This declaration, in a letter to Grieg, shows that as early as 1890 Delius had heard in Nietzsche's doctrine of the will and the superman a call to his own personality. He had probably first come across Also sprach Zarathustra during his Norwegian holiday with Grieg and Sinding in 1889, and according to Fenby (writing years later), the book

"never left his hands until he had devoured it from cover to cover. It was the very book he had been seeking all along, and finding that book he declared to be one of the most important events of his life. Nor did he rest content until he had read every work of Nietzsche that he could lay his hands on". ⁶

What was initially taken for philosophical substance in Nietzsche's work had been widely discredited even in Delius's lifetime. But in the "pseudo-philosophical" Also sprach Zarathustra (to borrow Bertrand Russell's phrase) the poetical message of spiritual freedom and artistic aspiration struck a very resonant chord in the young Delius.

4. Unpublished letter from Delius to Jelka Rosen, 1 October 1897 (Delius Trust archive).

5. Unpublished letter from Delius to Grieg, 1 April 1890. Quoted by Rachel Lowe in 'Frederick Delius and Norway', 'A Delius Companion (ed. Redwood, London, 1976), p. 177.

6. Eric Fenby: Delius as I Knew Him (London, 1936), p. 171.

In the middle of the 1890s, Delius seemed to his Parisian friends "a devoted disciple of Nietzsche", with the doctrines of Zarathustra "deep-seated in his mind".⁷

In 1896 it was a shared love of Also sprach Zarathustra which won Jelka his friendship (see CLL/1, Appendix VII, p. 408). Her endeavours to interest Delius so much in Nietzsche's poems that he might set some to music finally bore fruit in 1898, after Delius had settled at Grez. Not only were four songs to words by Nietzsche forthcoming, but also the Mitternachtslied Zarathustras for baritone solo, male chorus and orchestra. This short setting was later incorporated into the finale of the great Mass of Life (1904-5), the eleven movements of which are set to texts extracted from Also sprach Zarathustra.

Nietzsche was of importance to Delius over many years; but it is probable that at the time of his period of decision (crisis is perhaps too strong a word) in the mid-1890s, Nietzsche's glorification of the Will, the Artist and the Individual was partly responsible for Delius's advance to full realization of his powers, and for a more mature, more sober attitude to his vocation:

" [Nietzsche] absorbed me so much that after reading most of his works - some again and again - I came to the conclusion that I was not a philosopher but a musician and would have to restrict my powers to one of these two - Philosopher is a rotten word - Reformer would be better - Nietzsche was not a philosopher either - but a gigantic reformer, an enthusiast and poet....As you know I chose solitude and music and nature".⁸

+ + +

7. Isidore de Lara: Many Tales of Many Cities (London, 1928), p.99.

8. Unpublished letter from Delius to Philip Heseltine, 11 May 1916 (Delius Trust archive).

Section Two - Verlaine and Delius's Song Style

"How very French you have become"⁹, wrote Grieg to Delius in the mid-1890s, on receiving one of his Verlaine settings. It was perhaps inevitable that, once Delius had settled in Paris, the teutonic melodic squareness and Griegian harmonic colour and folk traits of his songs would give way to new influences.

His contact with the active musical life in the city probably brought Delius, already in his first year (1888-9), the acquaintance of André Messager and, possibly, Gabriel Fauré. In the following years he could count among musician friends in his artistic circle Maurice Ravel and Florent Schmitt, who were a few years younger than him. The restrained temperament, simplicity and refinement which typified the French song tradition were an important counterbalance to Delius's earlier influences. Already in his first songs to French texts an elegance and delicacy rarely suggested in earlier works is in evidence. The composer's French songs anticipate the softer style which permeated much of his instrumental and choral music from the end of the 1890s.

Dating from November 1889, Delius's earliest surviving French setting, Chanson de Fortunio¹⁰ is contemporary with many of his Norwegian settings. The simple syllabic word-setting is, however, quite unprecedented in his music. Furthermore, the rhythmic content of the 45-bar song is confined to a single pattern - $C \ 7 \ \text{♪♪♪♪} \ | \ \text{♪} \ \text{♪} \ \text{♪} \ | \ \text{♪} \ \text{♪} \ \text{♪} \ | \ \text{♪} \ . \ \text{♪} \ |$ - an economical use of material which would be a significant element in later scores. The declamatory effect of the voice line is enhanced by a static chordal accompaniment, 'alla recitativo' (ex.1, p.301):

9. Unpublished letter from Grieg to Delius. Quoted by Lionel Carley, op.cit., p.67.

10. Published in facsimile, in Lionel Carley, op.cit., pp.87-9.

Ex.1. Chanson de Fortunio, opening.

ARRANGÉ DÉDIÉ

Si vous aviez que jadis di-re / Que j'ose ai-mer, / Je ne saurais pour ce empire / Sous la main-meur

Repetition of rhythmic cells had already been employed to good effect in the Norwegian lullaby songs Slumber Song and Cradle Song. But the hypnotic device was taken to an extreme in Delius's second French setting, Nuages (1893).¹¹ A gentle ♩ ♩ ♩ cell is sustained, 'lento', throughout the 40-bar song: the poet's reflective mood is suggested by the slightest of means, and the listener's interest is directed to the colouristic effect of the chord combinations.

For these two songs Delius chose words by de Musset and Richepin. However, once Delius discovered the work of Paul Verlaine, sometime in the early 1890s, he set no other French author.¹² A.K. Holland, in his series of articles on Delius's song output, argues that Verlaine's principles were inclined

"to the expression of those values which are the special concern of music. His is an art of suggestion, of correspondences, of analogy, of evocation, of the subtle interlacement of the visual and auditory."¹³

In a further reference, specifically to Delius's Verlaine songs, Holland has also summed up the composer's general attitude to the delicate moods of French verse:

"Delius has educed from [the poems] music of a highly evocative order, the tones of which seem to be painted in monochrome.

11. Published in facsimile, ibid., pp. 90-2.

12. Five further French settings exist, written between 1895 and 1919.

13. A.K. Holland: 'The Songs of Delius', Musical Opinion (Nov. 1936), p. 119.

In approaching these poems, Delius seems to be conscious that they demand music which is to some extent French in spirit without being reminiscent of any particular French composer. There is, for example, no trace of Debussy, or any other composer who has set Verlaine poems, in these songs. But in the tendency to recite on a single note, in the comparatively restricted compass of the vocal phraseology, in a certain tenuity of substance and, with that, a greater conciseness in the use of the artistic material, the songs do suggest a French atmosphere." ¹⁴

The two Verlaine settings of 1895 are among the finest songs Delius wrote. Il pleure dans mon coeur employs two ideas for its 36 bars, ex.2(a) and (b), both of which carry forward the song's monorhythmic quaver flow, and vacillate between Db major and Bb minor:

Ex.2(a). Opening.

(b). Bars 11-13.

In contrast to the teutonic angular squareness of earlier Delius songs, the melodic line here begins in soft contours, only gradually asserting itself, in deference to the thematic content of the piano part.

14. ibid., Musical Opinion (April, 1937), p. 592.

Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit, though equally sensitive a setting, is for the most part more conventional. A typical Delius chromatic slide is employed for expressive effect in the opening episode, and at the mention of "un oiseau" which is plaintively singing outside, a Grieg-like bird-song is heard.

In his treatment of the poem's final stanza, however, the composer reduces his material to bare semibreve chords, focussing all attention on the evocative power of his harmonic vocabulary. It is, indeed, a powerful tool that he has at his disposal, but it is handled with a restrained and delicate touch. "Rarely", in Beecham's opinion, "can a lament over lost happiness in youth have been sung more poignantly".¹⁵

Ex.3. Bars 15-24.

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/8. The lyrics are in French.

System 1 (Bars 15-17):
 - meur - là Vient de la vil - le. Qu'as - tu fait, ô
 Dynamics: *f*

System 2 (Bars 18-20):
 toi que voi - là, Pleu - rant sans ces - se, Dis, qu'as - tu
 Dynamics: *mp*, *dim.*, *mf*, *p*

System 3 (Bars 21-24):
 fait, toi que voi - là, De ta jeu - nes - se,
 Dynamics: *p*, *ritardando molto*, *ritardando molto p*

15. Beecham: Frederick Delius (London, 1959), p. 83.

Compared with these two French songs from 1895, the remaining dozen songs Delius wrote between 1895 and 1900 are of varying, and generally minor, interest. They include the four Nietzsche songs and a group of seven Danish settings which were written both in voice/piano and voice/orchestra versions. The Nietzsche songs (1898) mix together, rather unsatisfactorily, differing Delius styles. They are marked either 'Langsam' or 'nicht schnell' and rely, as did the Verlaine settings, on sluggish progressions of block chords for expressive effect. But, coupled to teutonic dotted-note rhythms and angular melodic contours, the French delicacy of feeling seems terse and manneristic. The Danish settings, written between 1894 and 1897, are uneven. The most well known, In the Seraglio Garden, captures the serene mood of Delius's mature nature-scapes; yet, surprisingly, it is one of the earliest of the group. While never attaining the exquisite refinement of the French songs, at their best the Danish settings continue the trend set earlier towards a high level of integration between voice and accompaniment.

The culmination of this period of progress in Delius's song-writing output came in 1900-2 (contemporary with A Village Romeo and Juliet) with three individual settings of Danish and Swedish texts: Autumn (Ludvig Holstein), Black Roses (Ernst Josephson) and Summer Landscape (Drachmann). Successfully combining the chromatic/diatonic contrasts explored in his opera with the sensitivity of his most personal moments, they carry Delius beyond his influences. It is particularly with these songs in mind that Holland writes:

"Delius was feeling his way towards a new and poetic style of song-writing, in which voice and instrument are merged indissolubly into a single unity, and in which neither can be made intelligible apart from each other. He no longer writes a vocal part with piano-forte accompaniment, and while he enriches the expressive use of the voice, he relies increasingly on the suggestive power of the instrumental part to realise his poetic purpose." "

16. A.K. Holland, op.cit., Musical Opinion (February, 1937), p. 404.

The rich promise to be found in this music was never fulfilled. These songs were the last Delius wrote before 1910. In the early 1900s he finally made a breakthrough in the concert halls first of Germany, and later England. Orchestral works, and works for voices with the full-blooded accompaniment of the late-Romantic orchestra would dominate in his output in the ensuing years.

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Section Three - Use of the Orchestra

In his radio talk preceding the world première of The Magic Fountain, given by the B.B.C. in 1977, Robert Threlfall said of the work:

"...the first and most convincing thing about the opera is the sound of the orchestra. I think, when we heard it for the first time, it was the maturity of the skill of Delius's orchestration that struck us most."

It is one of the anomalies of Delius's development that he was much closer to the orchestral style of his maturity in the inspired instrumentation of his second opera of 1894-5 than he was in Koanga, 1896-7, Folkeraadet, 1897 or the Piano Concerto, 1897.

It has been noted earlier (see p.177) that Delius had absorbed the style of Wagner's late operas at the Bayreuth Festival and the Munich Opera in 1894, while working on The Magic Fountain. That Wagner's example would be an inspiration to him was sensed by Delius even before he turned again for home, writing from Munich that "I am really very glad I came here, it will no doubt be of great benefit to me".¹⁷ It was shown in chapter four that his operatic technique in The Magic Fountain was clearly affected. The leap forward in orchestral skill in the opera was also prompted in part by Wagner's textures, and perhaps also to some extent by those of the new bright star on the German scene, Richard Strauss.

17. Letter from Delius to Jutta Bell, 12 August 1894, CLL/1, p.90.

The warmth of the wind timbre is among the most obvious developments. The bass clarinet and sarrusophone enrich the lower end of the section, and are widely used with subtlety and intelligence (for example, at "A phantom quest", v.s.p.12). Solo melody passages are now only infrequently given to the oboe: the cor anglais has a share (notably the opening New World theme), and the clarinet has clearly displaced the oboe in the composer's affections, its mellower tone being chosen for such vital moments in the drama as the first entry of Watawa at the close of Act I, and the lovers' first kiss in Act III (v.s.p.150).

Both the wind and brass sections are now used in solo groupings in contrast to each other or to the string band. The frequency with which chromatically sliding progressions are given to the woodwind, and especially to a reed ensemble, weakens their effect; but there is also abundant evidence that Delius is now conceiving imaginative passages with particular wind timbres in mind (for instance, the top of v.s.p.24, pp.25-6 and the foot of p.115).

While the four horns are, as ever in Delius's orchestral music, rarely idle, trumpets, trombones and tuba are used sparingly, but with telling effect. The lightweight texture which characterizes much of Act I is achieved partly by the near-total exclusion of these instruments. Wagnerian sonorities are called forth from the brass, however, when the noble spirit of the Indians is to be suggested (Act II, v.s.p.80 and p.86) and at the solemn moment when the fountain is first revealed in all its splendour (Act III, p.178).

Striking though these individual instances of Delius's widening instrumental spectrum are, the real surprise of his score comes elsewhere. From the middle of Act II onwards can be seen example after example of a skill in writing in fluid polyphonic textures which the instrumental scores up to 1894 had rarely hinted at. In many instances the instrumentation is shorn of ponderous timbres which might hinder the weightless flight of the music, but this is not exclusively the case. In the transformation music between Act II, Scenes I and II, the passionate climax in the prelude to Act III and in the love-duet, Delius collects up the entire orchestra,

propelling his forces with the buoyant brilliance of a chamber group.

Act III of The Magic Fountain offers perhaps the most consistently fascinating sequence of events in the composer's operatic oeuvre. The large orchestral palette Delius utilizes plays a fundamental part in delineating the various stages of the almost bewildering, unfurling dénouement. It is the enchantment of the everglades and the other-world magic of the fountain which inspire the composer's most memorable felicities of instrumentation. Ex.4 (p.308) shows the final bars of everglade music in the orchestral prelude to Act III. The harp figuration, springing dotted-note figures in the wind and trilling strings are recurring elements in the dance movements of Delius's mature scores, such as Sali and Vrenchen's wild game in Scene III of A Village Romeo and Juliet, and the second dance-song of A Mass of Life. Its weightless, gossamer texture is later matched by the scene of the fountain-spirits: the chorus of Night-Mists and Invisible Spirits of the Fountain sing their warnings to an accompaniment of bubbling semiquavers in flute, harp and strings (v.s. pp.165-8, and pp.171-2).

The fact that shortly before Delius's orchestration came to an early peak in The Magic Fountain the composer had been active on a treatise entitled Anatomie et Physiologie de l'Orchestre, may seem significant. Written in collaboration with the renowned Papus, and published in Paris in 1894, this extraordinary 24-page document is testimony, however, more to Delius's absorption in the mysteries of the occult than in those of symphonic orchestration. Lionel Carley sums up the result of this joint endeavour in the following way:

"One doubts if there is very much of Delius in this. Papus must have been one of the most prolific writers who ever lived.... More than probably his acquaintanceship with Delius gave him the opportunity to discuss and develop theories which had already buzzed through his fertile brain, and it was Delius's part to set out for him the composition of the orchestra and generally to lend a helping hand. 'A Cabalist and a Musician' ran a blurb for the booklet, 'have come together [cont. p.309]

BASSOON
(KEY-SIGNS
OMITTED)

PICCOLO

FLUTE 1

FLUTE 2

CLAR. 1
IN B

CLAR. 2

OBOE 1

OBOE 2

BASSOON 1
(B)

BASSOON 2 (F)

SARANGHAE
(S)

4 HORNS
IN
E♭

HARP 1

HARP 2

VIOLINS 1
DIV.
CON. SORDANI

VIOLINS 2
DIV.
CON. SORDANI

VIOLAS
DIV.
CON. SORDANI

CELLOS
DIV.
CON. SORDANI

Ex.6. The Magic Fountain, Act III, f. 74a.

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However, the few orchestral 'tuttis' which occur are conventionally scored, making no advance on, for example, the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem of 1890; the main accompaniment textures, while admirably transparent and economical, almost never display the sparkling imagination Delius brought to The Magic Fountain. This is not to say that the orchestral writing is at any time misjudged or shoddy. But it does place Koanga somewhat apart from the main stream of Delius's development of orchestral skills.

The obvious reason for this change of heart is that Delius was much more concerned with the sound of the vocal ensemble than with the instrumental backdrop. He had declared, after all, that he wanted to keep "the whole in the character of the negro melody". This still leaves room for a less conventional, less reserved style of writing than is generally evident.

A few other factors which may or may not have some significance in this matter can also be considered. The first two acts, it is known, were orchestrated, not at home in the Parisian artistic climate, but in Norway during a three-month stay at a mountain cottage. In contrast to the steeping in Wagnerian music-drama he had benefited from earlier, he was temporarily exiled from his milieu, and isolated from external musical influences and stimuli. The new direction Delius followed in Koanga may also have been a reaction to the lack of success he had had with earlier operatic efforts. The Magic Fountain had, in fact, been accepted for performance in Prague, but was subsequently dropped for unknown reasons.¹⁹

What is certain, in any case, is that Delius's confidence in his skills as an orchestrator was restored by the time he penned the Mitternachtslied Zarathustras in 1898. The

19. Some commentators suggest that Delius himself halted plans for a production of The Magic Fountain in Weimar in 1896, because he was unhappy about the quality of the music (see RL p.39).

instrumental writing here continues more or less where The Magic Fountain left off; significantly, when it was incorporated into A Mass of Life in 1904-5, practically no alterations were made to the scoring.

The influence of Strauss is again evident in the Mitternachtslied Zarathustras; so this is a good point at which to consider the importance of that influence for Delius. Eric Fenby has recorded that the only full scores Delius possessed in the 1930s were "Beethoven's Symphonies (many of the pages are still uncut), the Faust Symphonie (Liszt), Tristan und Isolde (Wagner), Don Juan, Til Eulenspiegel, Heldenleben, Zarathustra (Strauss), Rhapsodie Espagnole (Chabrier), La Mer (Debussy), Daphnis et Chloé (Ravel); and Busoni's Pianoforte Concerto."²⁰ That Strauss's music should have appealed to Delius is not surprising. In their early careers both men uttered their musical language in a dialect learnt from Wagner, their shared idol. Essential elements of their lyrical melodic styles, orchestral textures and chromatic techniques come from that source. Nietzsche's Also sprach Zarathustra also played nearly as important a part in Strauss's life around 1890-5 as it did in that of Delius, and, of course, inspired Strauss's tone poem of the same name in 1896.

When Delius made a study of Strauss's scores is not known. He had heard Don Juan twice in 1891, commenting in a letter to Grieg that he found "splendid things in it but some frightful echoes too of the Tannhäuser Bacchanalia".²¹ He is not known to have heard Strauss's works again before 1900, when he wrote of Till Eulenspiegel:

"I like this piece more & more....It is so light & fantastic & so full of humor".²²

However, in the free structures and orchestral brilliance of Delius's 1898-9 scores La Ronde se déroule and Paris, a familiarity with Strauss's music is suggested.

20. Fenby, op.cit., p.196.

21. Unpublished letter from Delius to Grieg. Quoted in CLL/1 p.55.

22. Letter from Delius to Jelka Rosen and Ida Gerhardi, 18 November 1900. CLL/1 p.174

Interestingly, Delius was adamant that his Mitternachtslied Zarathustras (1898) "has absolutely no relationship with the Strauss Zarathustra, which I consider a complete failure".²³ Be this as it may, a relationship with Strauss's Tod und Verklärung (1889) is evident. The important "theme of the artist's Ideology"²⁴ in Strauss's work (a), and the 'bell-motif' in Mitternachtslied Zarathustras (b) do not, in themselves, bear any close resemblance to each other:



However, in the coda of his symphonic poem (the 'Verklärung' section), Strauss uses initially only the first four notes of the theme, overlapping them in a fashion identical to recurrences of Delius's 'bell-motif' in later stages of the Mitternachtslied Zarathustras:

Ex.8 (a). Tod und Verklärung, p.99, bar 4.



(b). Mitternachtslied Zarathustra
(A Mass of Life, 2 bars before fig.129)



23. Letter from Delius to Grieg, 28 September 1903. CLL/1, p.225.

24. The title comes from Norman Del Mar: Richard Strauss, vol.I, (London, 1969), p.81.

Strauss's concept at the opening of the coda is described as follows by his biographer Norman Del Mar:

"From the utter darkness in which everything is enveloped, only the infinitely deep strokes of the tam-tam are heard, until very little by very little out of the obscurity the opening figure of the Ideology theme....emerges, first on the four horns in turn and then gradually spreading in close stretto to the higher wind instruments.... [I]t builds up.... in an ever-increasing weight of glowing sound".²⁵

Ex.9. Tod und Verklärung p.98.

The musical score for 'Tod und Verklärung' p.98 is arranged in a multi-staff format. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- 1. 2. Kl.** (Trumpets 1 & 2): Resting.
- 3. Kl.** (Trumpet 3): Resting.
- 1. 2. Fag.** (Flutes 1 & 2): Playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- K.-Fag.** (Bassoon): Playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- 1. 2. H.** (Horn 1 & 2): Playing a melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *p*. Includes markings "gut hervortretend" and "1. Solo."
- 3. 1. H.** (Horn 3 & 1): Playing a melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *p*. Includes markings "hervortretend" and "3. Solo."
- 3. Pos. Tb.** (Trombones 3, 1 & 2): Playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- Pk.** (Percussion): Playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- Tamtam.** (Tamtam): Playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- 1. Hfe.** (Violin 1): Playing a melodic line with dynamics *f* and *p*.
- 2. Hfe.** (Violin 2): Playing a melodic line with dynamics *p*.
- Br.** (Viola): Playing a melodic line with dynamics *pp*.
- Vlc.** (Violoncello): Playing a melodic line with dynamics *p*.
- Kb.** (Kontrabaß): Playing a melodic line with dynamics *p*.

25. ibid., p.84

This passage should be compared with the opening of the Mitternachtslied Zarathustras (that is to say, p.174 of A Mass of Life). The roll on the timpani and entry of the harp in ex.9 are also echoed in Delius's music.

Delius uses a subsidiary theme as he accumulates "an ever-increasing weight of glowing sound" (to borrow Del Mar's phrase), but at the climax, the 'bell-motif' sounds out, along with Strauss's tam-tam (ex.10, p.315).

Writing this time about Strauss's opera Guntram, Del Mar has commented that Strauss

"was totally unable to realize how many of his most valuable characteristics he was sacrificing in embracing the idiom and philosophy of his idol [Wagner] in so uncompromising a manner."²⁶

Delius, however, made a conscious effort to put his influences behind him. As the new century opened, the differences between his and Strauss's creative aesthetics became more marked, and Delius's feelings for Strauss's music rather more mixed:

"His tragedy is 'Dick & Deutsch'"²⁷

"He's simply dished up Wagner with twice as much devil and not half the inspiration".²⁸

The return to a vital, imaginative orchestral style in Mitternachtslied Zarathustras by Delius was probably also connected with the fact that, in the two years since Koanga he had twice had the rare opportunity to hear how his ideas actually sounded. The overture Over the Hills and Far Away was given in Germany, while the incidental music to Gunnar Heiberg's play Folkeraadet ('The People's Parliament') - commissioned by the Norwegian playwright - was given in Christiania. Neither work is noticeably adventurous in its scoring. The typical theatre orchestra Delius was compelled

26. ibid., p.118.

27. Letter from Delius to Grieg, 28 September 1903. CLL/1 p.225.

28. Quoted by Gerald Cumberland in 'Pen Portraits of Musicians - Frederick Delius', A Delius Companion (ed. Redwood, London, 1976), p.21.

Ex.10. Mitternachtslied Zarathustras
(A Mass of Life, fig.119)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system contains the woodwind and percussion parts, while the second system contains the string parts. The woodwind parts include Flute (I, II), Oboe (I, II), English Horn, Clarinet (I, II), Bassoon (I, II), Horn (I, II), Trumpet (I, II), Trombone (I, II), and Tuba. The percussion parts include Snare Drum, Cymbal, and Tom-tom. The string parts include Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score is written in a complex, multi-measure format with various dynamics, articulation, and performance instructions. Key markings include 'poco più mosso' and 'in R.'.

to write for in his Folkeraadet music hardly allowed for too much experimentation. Nevertheless, the chance was there to have basic ideas and textures soundly tested:

"At the theatre they are afraid that my music will cause trouble as I have employed the National hymn.²⁹ What interests me the most is that the orchestration is just as I thought it and sounds fine. I have had an orchestra rehearsal alone and now, considering the orchestra (only two horns and one bassoon) I cannot hope for better. They managed to get four trombones. On the whole I am very glad, very glad I came; I know now where I am; and this affair is of the greatest importance for my future work."³⁰

At roughly the same time as the Mitternachtslied Zarathustras was composed, Delius's symphonic poem La Ronde se déroule came into being. (By 1901 it had been extensively revised and given the title Life's Dance; final revision and publication followed in 1912). Those two works have in common a restless spirit with flashes of brilliant orchestration; thematic material is short-winded, however, the rapid succession of ideas giving the effect of a patchwork of orchestral notions, and a lively imagination being suggested rather than confirmed by the fleeting episodes.

Both the Mitternachtslied Zarathustras and La Ronde se déroule would play their parts in the 1899 concert of Delius's compositions which marks the turning-point proper for his orchestral skills. Delius organized this concert himself, having decided that a performance of his works in London - where his music had still not been heard - would be the best way to spend a small legacy received after his uncle's death. The programme embraced much of his work from the previous three years (see next page):

29. The extraordinary controversy which surrounded Delius's use of the Norwegian national anthem is now fairly well known. A summary of the details can be found in Rachel Lowe: 'Frederick Delius and Norway', A Delius Companion (London, 1976), pp.181-2; also RL pp.62-5 and pp.172-6.

30. Letter from Delius to Jelka Rosen, 16 October 1897.
CLL/1 p.120-1.

Part One

1. Overture Over the Hills and Far Away.
2. Légende for violin and orchestra.
3. Movements from Folkeraadet.
4. Six Danish songs (with orchestra).
5. La Ronde se déroule
6. Mitternachtslied Zarathustras

Part Two

Koanga (Excerpts from Act I and all of Act II).

"I have learned a devil of a lot in the last month", Delius wrote shortly after the concert, " - practical things which may help me when I write another opera".³¹ Indeed, the libretto of A Village Romeo and Juliet was written by Delius in the autumn of 1899, and the music which poured from him thereafter showed every sign of having benefited from his concert.

But in the six months or so immediately after the concert Delius had already put his new knowledge to good use in Paris. The work followed a loose tone poem format, although the composer chose not to categorize it in this way, calling the work simply a 'Nocturne, The Song of a Great City'. Paris by night had excited Delius for ten years, and he prefaced the score with these lines:

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

31. Quoted by Lionel Carley in his article, 'A Village Romeo and Juliet (1899-1901)', The Delius Society Journal (October, 1981), p.13.

Tender moments of warmly amorous music have their part, albeit small, in the scheme of Paris, as do the evocations of a tranquil early morning (these open and close the work). But Paris is remembered first and foremost for the spectacular orchestral brilliance of its waltz episodes. For the first time, Delius extends his horn section from four to six instruments, and stipulates the numbers of string instruments the music demands. With Paris, then, he arrived at the orchestral size and instrumentation he would favour for the rest of his career:

Picc. 2. 3. CA. 3. BsCl. 3. Contra

6. 3. 3. 1.

Timp. BD. Cym. Trgl. Tbno. Castanets. Glock.

2 Harps

16. 16. 12. 12. 12.

The expansion of his orchestral forces was probably prompted by the tone poems of Strauss (although Delius never followed him so far as to make the excessive and unreasonable demands which frequently characterize Strauss's symphonic instrumentation of this period).³² Furthermore, Delius reveals himself master of polyphonic textures, weaving them with Strauss-like skill and sureness of hand.

Examples 11 and 12 show the central moments in respectively the first joyous waltz episode (which runs from fig. 8 to fig. 11) and the last (from fig. 28 to fig. 33). The melody in ex. 11, carried by the brass, is more a rhythmic presence than a definite theme. It is quite lost in the gaiety of the bravura writing around it, like a dancing couple swept up in the whirling mass of activity of a ball. Three melodic lines vie for prominence in ex. 12. They all merge briefly at one point ('x'), collecting themselves before dancing on in their individual manners.

32. Del Mar considers these demands " a symptom of Strauss's growing tendency towards over-protestation in the face of insecurity" (op.cit. p. 181).

Ex.11. Paris, 3 bars after fig.10.

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The top section includes Percussion (Perc.), Flutes (Fl. I, II, III), Oboes (Ob. I, II, III), English Horn (Eng. Ho.), Clarinets (Cl. I, II, III), Bassoons (Bas. I, II, III), Horns (Horn I, II, III, IV), Violins (Vln. I, II), Violas (Vla.), Cellos (Cello), and Double Basses (C.B.). The bottom section includes a full drum set: Tom-toms (Tomb.), Snare Drum (Timp.), Triangles (Tri.), Cymbal, and Tambourine (Tamb.). The score consists of three measures. The first measure shows the initial entry of the woodwinds and strings. The second measure continues the development of the themes. The third measure features a prominent woodwind melody and a complex string texture. Performance markings such as *ff*, *mf*, *div.*, and *arco* are present throughout the score. The key signature is one flat, and the time signature is 4/4.

Ex.12. Paris, 8 bars after fig.31.

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes:

- Picc. Fl.
- Fl. I, II
- Obs. I, II
- Engl. Ho.
- Cl. in Bb I, II
- B. C. in Bb I, II
- Bas. I, II
- D. B.
- Mus. in F I, II, III, IV, V, VI
- Tpts. in C I, II, III
- Trbs I, II, III
- Tuba
- Timp.
- Glock.
- Hp III
- Viol. I, II
- Vla.
- Vcl.
- C. B.

The second system includes:

- Viol. I, II
- Vla.
- Vcl.
- C. B.

A bracket with an 'X' above it spans the first four bars of the first system. Dynamics include 'ff' and 'cresc.'. The score is in 2/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Delius had been in Grez for two years when he wrote Paris. Lionel Carley has summed up in the following way the significance of the score to the composer:

" [Paris] may now be seen as a valedictory gesture to the city and to that whole rich period he spent in it....The Parisian interlude - extensive both in terms of time as of artistic experience and development - was virtually over....Now followed the years of stability and compositional maturity at Grez-sur-Loing, where nearly all his greatest works were to be written. And as he turned to England and to Germany for the success which had eluded him in France, Paris became a diversion which was on the whole easily resisted. The city was henceforth to play little part in a creative life which was to be dominated by the will to compose in tranquility. For Delius, youth and an epoch had come to an end."³³

It is in A Village Romeo and Juliet that the orchestral skills of the composer came to full fruition. Here they are not dedicated to the evocation of a "city of pleasures, of gay music and dancing", but to the depiction of subtleties of character, mood and emotion. An astonishing variety of instrumental textures results, testimony to a fertility of imagination and advanced understanding of orchestral colour.

The orchestration of A Village Romeo and Juliet shows in many ways its kinship with the earlier operas. The horns (though now six in number) are liberally used, and represent in several crucial instances the voice of Nature (for example, Scene I, fig. 3, the opening of Scene III and the curtain-rise - fig. 57 - in Scene VI); the clarinet has remained Delius's favourite soloist; Wagnerian sonorities typify much of the wind writing; and chromatically sliding harmony is always given to the wind band. However, quite unprecedented in his music is the degree to which the orchestration of ideas actually carries and conveys the dramatic message. The instrumentation is remarkably suggestive and expressive.

33. op.cit. pp. 75-6.

To illustrate this, four passages are considered below; in order to reinforce the point that Delius's imagination was alive to gradations of mood, these examples are taken from one short sequence of events in the opening scene, between fig.4 and fig.26.

(I). Sun and high spirits. The entry of Manz, as the curtain rises on Scene I, is accompanied by flourishes of semiquaver motifs, two in particular generating much of the material for the ensuing episode. In ex.13, which comes at the end of Manz' monologue, the two motifs are marked 'x' and 'y'. It is music of high-spirited, carefree pleasure, the two motifs being passed playfully between instruments. The interplay of motifs in snatches of colour dotted around the orchestra breaks the material up into a light, transparent texture:

Ex.13. Scene I, 6 bars after fig.11.

The musical score for Ex.13 is a full orchestral score. It consists of 15 staves, each representing a different instrument or section of the orchestra. The instruments listed on the left are: Fl. (I, II), Ob. (I, II), Cor (I, II), Cl. B. (I, II), Fag. (I, II), Cor. I. (I, II), Cor. II. (I, II), Viol. I. (I, II), Viola, Violoncello (I, II), and Bass. The score shows a complex interplay of semiquaver motifs across the instruments, with two specific motifs marked 'x' and 'y'. The music is characterized by high-spirited, carefree pleasure, with motifs being passed playfully between instruments. The texture is light and transparent, with motifs in snatches of colour dotted around the orchestra.

(II). Rest from work. As both Manz and Marti settle down in the shade to their midday meal, the music settles into a more leisurely pace. The motivic material consists of motif 'y' from ex.13, along with a new idea, motif 'z' (see oboe, bar 3). In contrast to the fragmentary treatment in ex.13, the ideas are now broader, even 'y' becoming quite lyrical. The main difference, however, is in the string writing. Rather than merely toying with the motifs, the strings now seize upon them as the basis of a melodic elaboration, spinning from their rhapsody a polyphonic web:

Ex.14. Scene I, 3 bars after fig.20.

The musical score for Ex.14, Scene I, 3 bars after fig.20, is a complex polyphonic arrangement. It features multiple staves for woodwinds, strings, and vocal soloists. The vocal parts include Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The string parts are for Violins I and II, Violas, Cellos I and II, and Double Basses. The woodwinds include Flutes I and II, Oboes I and II, Clarinets I and II, Bassoons I and II, and Horns I and II. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamics. There are also some handwritten annotations in the vocal parts.

(III). The wind and forest. Following directly on after ex.14., the muted strings suddenly adopt a single rhythmic cell (♩. ♩. ♩.), passing it in pianissimo phrases up and down the section. This is the 'Pan'-music preparing the entry of the dark fiddler described in chapter six (see ex.1, p.271). Ex.15 below shows the continuation of this episode, the rhythmic cell now being ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩. Played in a piano transcription, the passage from bar 5 is

incomprehensible - the sole focus of interest is the monotonously repeated rhythm stepping downwards and rising again. In its instrumental colours, this material becomes highly expressive. The bareness of wide-spaced intervals, the meagre tone of muted strings, the plaintive effect which string instruments give the rising motif and, of course, the striking contrast of a monochromatic timbre after the rich complexity in ex.14 - all of these contribute to the fact that, in its context, the simplicity of ex.15 conveys a mysterious mood of chill, naked beauty. It is ideally appropriate to the drama:

Ex.15. Scene I, 6 bars after fig.20.

The musical score for Ex.15 consists of several staves. The top staff is labeled 'Solo Viol.' and contains a melodic line with a rising motif. Below it are staves for 'Viol. I', 'Viol. II', 'Viola', and 'Vcllo'. The 'Solo' part has lyrics: 'Hah on... on... on... / Hah on... on... on...'. The 'Vcllo' part has lyrics: 'En... En... En... / En... En... En...'. The 'Violoncello/Fiddle' part has lyrics: 'L'as-tu... L'as-tu... L'as-tu... / L'as-tu... L'as-tu... L'as-tu...'. The score is in a minor key and features a monochromatic timbre.

(IV). The dark fiddler. The romance which surrounds the dark fiddler derives from his intimate associations with the forest and the wind, and not directly from his personal appearance. Indeed, as the character-sketch given as ex.16 suggests, his actual physical looks make him rather pathetic.

He limps out of the wood, playing on his violin a swaggering vagabond air. Bassoon and deep strings depict his hobbling gait, while the comical effect of his angular movements is hinted at by a xylophone:

Ex.16. Scene I, 2 bars before fig.25.

Cl. *Con moto. 1. = 4*

Fag. *p*

Xylophon *p*

Solo Viol. *senza sord* *Con moto. 1. = 4*

Viol. I *p*

Viol. II *p*

Viola *p*

Mantel *Der schwarze Geiger tritt geigend auf
Einem The. dem Fiedler pöyung las fadte* *Mantel*
*Su, den kenn' ich, das Trompetere En - tel, der En - te an dem
Sont, you know him? The Trumpeters grandsons and horn - to that*

Vcl. *p*

B. *p*

+ + +

Section Four - Problems of Structure

In the years which followed the composition of the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem and the B minor Violin Sonata, Delius's instrumental works reveal that he went through something of a crisis in handling the problems of form. It may be recalled that in those two large scores of the early 1890s he had achieved a solid structural basis and formal coherence through the use of modified sonata form. The demands of thematic development were inadequately met, however: for this reason, the episodic scheme utilized in the finale of the Sonata seemed most appropriate to the composer's manner of treating his material.

The question of to what degree sonata-form principles were suited to his aims in instrumental composition became something of a dilemma for Delius between 1895 and 1899. The three large instrumental works of the period - the fantasy overture Over the Hills and Far Away (probably begun in 1895), the Piano Concerto (1897) and the symphonic poem La Ronde se déroule (1898) - were all subjected to substantial revision in ensuing years on account of the composer's dissatisfaction with the way he had developed their material.

Considering that Delius had the fluid lyricism and rhythmic flexibility of The Magic Fountain behind him when he wrote Over the Hills and Far Away, its four-square themes and rigid rhythmic patterns come as something of a surprise. In fact, the work is conceived in much the same spirit as the two Paa Vidderne scores, with bold fanfaric figures dominating an array of his 'mountain melody' (see Table V, pp.143-4). It seems that, without the stimuli of the operatic text and dramatic passions, he was unable at that stage to manipulate ideas with any degree of rhythmic freedom.

Over the Hills and Far Away is built from solid blocks of material, which form the pattern A-B-C-D-C-A-B. Some minimal thematic argument is attempted in the two opening sections, where motifs first heard in the tranquil 'wilderness' episode which introduces the work are transformed into resolute fanfares in the subsequent 'Allegro'. The episodes are

otherwise thematically unrelated. With the recapitulation of the two contrasted sections A and B, practically unaltered, at the end of the work, a tripartite scheme is imposed upon the material.

The overture presents, in all likelihood, some unknown programme, in the form of a series of tableaux: perhaps it describes a particular mountain walk Delius had made. At one point in the score used for the 1899 concert of his works, Delius has pencilled the remark "sunshine & clouds".³⁴ It is interesting that Richard Strauss's imagination also relied on external motivation - "I have long recognized", he wrote once, "that when composing I am unable to set anything down without a programme to guide me".³⁵ Strauss's solutions to structural problems, it is seen later in this section, provided a useful precedent for Delius, although the extreme level of realism he adopted in programmatic works like Till Eulenspiegel, Tod und Verklärung and the Alpine Symphony was always foreign to Delius's creative aesthetic.

The published score of Over the Hills and Far Away is essentially in agreement with the copyist's manuscript used at the 1899 Delius concert (no original manuscript of the work has survived). However, this form of the work is the second complete version. An earlier copyist's manuscript dating from around 1895 (in the Delius Trust collection) is 70 bars shorter, lacking the extensive recapitulation of the A-section (see RL pp.43-4).

Afterthoughts about Over the Hills and Far Away pale into insignificance when compared with the great alterations made to the Piano Concerto in the first ten years of its existence. The history of the work and a comparison of various stages of its development are given by Robert Threlfall in his fascinating article 'The Early Versions of Delius's Piano Concerto'.³⁶ However, since the dilemma created for the composer in this transitional period by the problems of finding a form suitable to his material is never clearer

34. See RL p.44.

35. Norman Del Mar, op.cit., (vol.II)p.272.

36. A Delius Companion (ed.Redwood, London, 1976), pp.239-247.

than in this work, a summary of Threlfall's findings will be of value here.

Three principal stages are evident in the concerto's evolution:

1). Begun during Delius's return visit to Florida in the early part of 1897, a Fantasy for piano and orchestra was completed after he had settled at Grez that summer. Though the Fantasy is cast in one movement, as is the published concerto, the layout is very different. The thematic material is substantially the same, however.

2). By the early 1900s a three-movement version had come into existence. The first two movements contain much in common with the exposition of the first and second subject in the published Piano Concerto. The finale, however, is peculiar to this stage of the work's evolution, its material being found in neither the original Fantasy nor the published version.

3). Between April 1906 and the publication of the Piano Concerto in 1907, Delius rewrote the work, restoring it to a one-movement form. The piano part was extensively reworked by a professional pianist.

Despite all this effort, Delius was unhappy with the final results, and in later years regarded the Piano Concerto as one of his failures.

The final version of La Ronde se déroule completely satisfied Delius, but this work, too, had first to go through three distinct stages of development. As noted earlier (see p. 316), the original score was revised in 1901, and a new title given to the piece: Life's Dance. At this point the composer expanded the work's development section, without adding to the essential thematic material of La Ronde se déroule. A new ending was added before Life's Dance was published in 1912.

La Ronde se déroule was the last work for many years in which Delius wrestled with the principles of sonata form. With his new determination to seek other means of binding ideas coherently together, he put this difficult period behind him. He does not appear to have found either a single or a simple way forward, but in looking for structural principles which


were more suited to his methods of creating music, he was always more likely to finish up with a more logical, more satisfying whole. In the 1900s, Delius favoured two means of working when writing on a large scale, both of which were infinitely variable - formal principles which the composer might adjust to fit his ideas. On the one hand were the through-composed forms adopted for his settings of poetry. Ranging from a single short movement - as in A Mass of Life (1904-5) - to the substantial length of Sea Drift (1903-4), such works carried the in-built emotional form of the poetry and, usually, elements of contrast and reprise in the music suggested by the text. On the other hand was the formal model which, in retrospect, seems the obvious choice for a composer who had always tended towards episodic treatment: theme and variations. The Appalachia variations (1902-3) represent the composer's real breakthrough in the construction of a large-scale, untexted (for most part) composition. The Brigg Fair variations (1907) are also justly well known. With full maturity and total mastery of his technique, Delius would go on from this point to explore new forms in later years (for instance, in Eventyr and The Song of the High Hills), and would even have little difficulty in penning three concertos - for violin and cello (1915), violin (1916) and cello (1921).

Delius's advance from La Ronde se déroule to the assured confidence of Appalachia was principally made by way of Paris and À Village Romeo and Juliet. In the orchestral 'Nocturne', a free-ranging form is evident for the first time; in the opera, the composer explored the possibilities inherent in the use of motivic cells which generate substantial material. The surviving sketches for Paris indicate that it was first conceived as a suite.³⁷ Very little headway had been made in the individual movements

37. The sketches are preserved in DT vol.40. The generic title Delius gave the envisaged movements was 'Scènes Parisiennes'. He probably had in mind a final set of pieces similar to the Florida suite (which was subtitled 'Tropische Scenen').

beyond the sketching of a number of attractive themes. Many of the ideas, in embryonic form here, found their way into the single-movement work which emerged in 1899:

Table VIII.

Title of sketch	DT folio no.	Position in published full score
L'heure de l'Absinthe. Heureuse rencontre & joyeuse nuit.	f.1a f.1b - f.2b	Fig.1 Fig.8 - 11
Cité mystérieuse & fantasque de joie & de tristesse aux crépuscules étranges (Amours féroces et tendres - Deleted by Delius) Ville d'amour et de plaisirs féroces & aux amours tendres	f.3a - f.5b "Tempo of a grand waltz" f.7a - f.8b "very slow"	6 bars before fig.19 Fig.27 (and subsequent 'Adagio molto' section) ³⁸
Episodes & Aventures	f.17a - f.19a working of motif: ³⁹  f.20b	This motif enters first at fig.11; used extensively later. Fig.23

Two aspects of Paris are of interest here, and in both instances the shadow of Strauss seems to be hovering close to Delius. First of all, as Fenby has remarked, Delius learnt from Strauss how to "construct on an extended time-scale".⁴⁰

38. The melody which is presented in an elaborate fashion here is the second main theme of Paris, and is found earlier in the work in a much simpler version (after fig.13). At this point, scored only for strings (with the melody in the viola), it is more easily recognized as the slow movement theme of Hiawatha (see Table I, p.25, theme 'c').

39. This cell would later play a major part in Delius's one-act opera about seedy Paris life, Margot la Rouge (1901-2).

40. Eric Fenby: Delius (London, 1971), p.46.

Nowhere is this extended time-scale more evident than in the 'Adagio' introduction to Paris. The 16 bars which constitute the slow prelude in the sketches are expanded to 80, the initial tranquil mood blossoming out into a marvellous broad conception for the full orchestra (fig. 4-7), enlarging all the while on the opening motif.

Secondly, Paris is a free fantasia in form. Apart from the return of opening material in the coda, extensive recapitulation is not evident. The ideas seem to grow naturally out of the energetic motivic cells which the composer has before him; indeed, it is the sheer exuberance with which Delius approaches his subject which seems to carry the music on its course. The stranglehold on free imagination formed by the composer's preconceptions of how instrumental scores should be organized was finally loosened.

For all this, the structural plan of Paris can not be said to be successful. It is not an organized score, with a symphonically presented argument: the composer is determined, rather, to find a place for all the ideas he has in hand, and even with beautifully fashioned bridge passages and well contrasted sections, there is no overall coherence. Strauss's free fantasia works (of which Also sprach Zarathustra is probably the best example) never degenerate into shapelessness, for his thorough grounding in traditional symphonic forms had provided him with a fine sense of architectural balance. Delius lacked this training. In Paris he seems to have adopted the Strauss free fantasia, but paid little attention to overall unity.

By a happy coincidence Strauss's reactions on reading through the score of Paris have been recorded. In a letter to Delius he says he has studied the work with great interest, but "the symphonic development seems to me to be too scant";⁴¹ and, in a further letter, this time to a friend of Delius, he adds, "Nevertheless the work shows evidence of talent, even if it does not exhaust the subject & is a little thin from a thematic viewpoint".⁴²

41. Letter from Strauss to Delius, 2 March 1902. CLL/1, p.199.

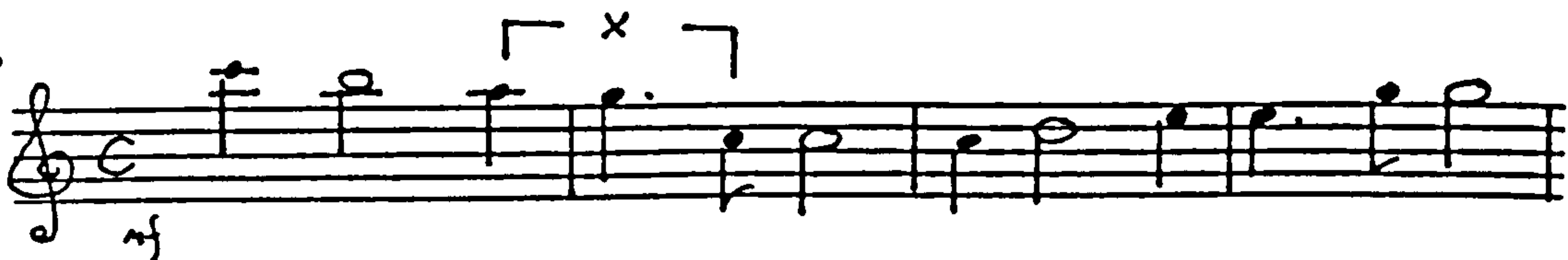
42. Letter from Strauss to Ida Gerhardi, 23 May (1902?). Quoted in CLL/1, p.199.

In contrast to the fairly detached mental discipline demanded of a composer by abstract thematic development, generation of material from motivic cells requires an emotional sympathy with the material above all else, an intimacy between the creator and the tools with which he works. Motif generation was ideally suited to Delius's creative methods, and even as early as the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem (1890-1) and the B minor Violin Sonata (1892) it evidently came easily to him to unify large areas of music by allowing motivic shapes and rhythms to permeate them. A growing realization of the appropriateness of this method of working to his developing technique is evident in A Village Romeo and Juliet.

A significant step forward from The Magic Fountain is seen in the fact that there is no network of leitmotifs with special associations in A Village Romeo and Juliet. Instead, a small handful of phrases infiltrate or generate much of the material (a technique closer to that of Tristan than the Ring cycle). It is the presence of these motifs at all crucial moments in the drama that sustains the mood of romance and poetry in the opera. Three protean cells which dominate the whole opera are given out already in the opening bars of orchestral prelude (Scene I). It is probably no coincidence that this basic material contains intrinsic contrast, (A) falling, (B) rising and (C) rotating around a central note. (see Table IX, p.333). The answering phrase which forms the third and fourth bar of (A) can be regarded as the first and most important extension of the opera's prime motif in bars 1 and 2. Motif (E), which plays a crucial role in the drama once it has entered into the music in Scene II, is also a derivative of the opening bars.

Table IX. Principal motifs in A Village Romeo and Juliet.

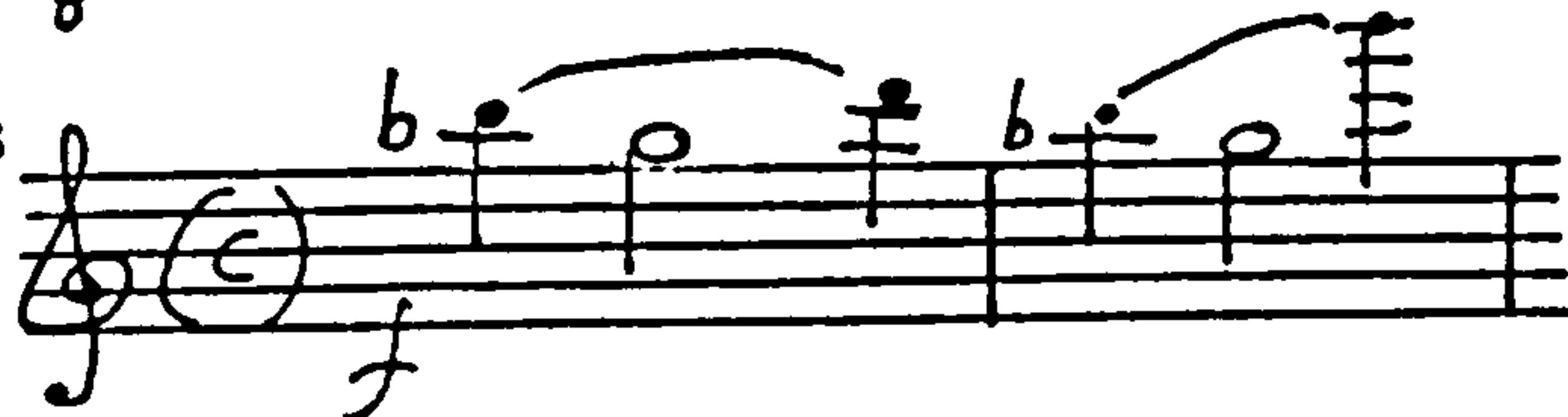
(A) Bar 1.



(B) 3 bars
after
fig.1.



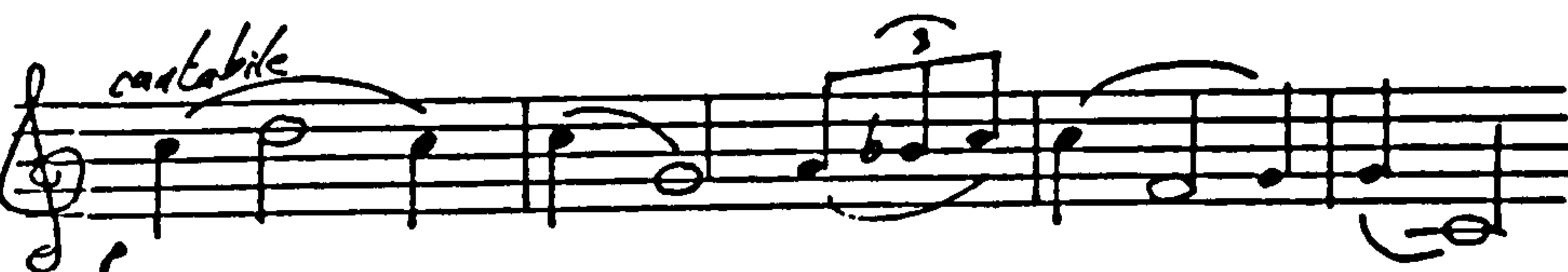
(C) 3 bars
after
fig.2.



(D) Scene
II, fig.2



(E) Scene
II, fig.21



Example 17, showing the transition from Scene II to Scene III, is a predominantly tranquil, lyrical episode. Motif (A), it will be seen, is very much in evidence, both in the love-music which ends Scene II and the nature-music which opens Scene III. Additional illustrations of the use of these cells is provided by practically all the examples from the opera which have been given earlier in other connections. Of particular interest is the final love duet, given on pp.288-290. The hypnotic rhythm upon which the duet floats is derived from a small unit of (A) (marked 'x' in Table IX). The motivic material of the well known Walk to the Paradise Garden intermezzo between Scenes V and VI is also exclusively derived from motifs (A) to (C).

Ex.17. Scene II, 4 bars after fig.18

Molto tranquillo.

Vorhang zu.
curtain

B **B/D**

Fl.
Ob.
Corng.
I. Cl.
II. Cl.
B.Cl.
Fag.
I. Cor. I.
II. Cor. II.
2. Hrpt.
Timp.
Solo Viol.
I. Viol.
II. Viol.
Viola
Vcl.
Kell.
B.

Molto tranquillo

Salz geht, Brenner will ihn und ungeduldig nach, wendet sich dann und geht ins Haus
Salt goes, Brenner follows impudently after him, then turns and goes abruptly into the house.
Ich fol - ge bald
I soon will follow

B/A **A**

Fl.
Ob.
Corng.
I. Cl.
II. Cl.
B.Cl.
I. Cor. I.
II. Cor. II.
Timp.
Solo Viol.
I. Viol.
II. Viol.
Viola
Vcl.
B.

(Ex.17.cont.)

A

Fl. I
Ob.
Clarinet in G
Clarinet in Bb
Bassoon
Horn I
Horn II
Trumpet I
Trumpet II
Trombone I
Trombone II
Timpani
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello/Double Bass

p, *pp*, *mf*, *rit.*, *a poco in the distance (Scene II)*

Drittes Bild.
Scene III.

A

Poco meno

Piccolo
Fl. I
Ob. I
Ob. II
Clarinet in G
Clarinet in Bb
Bassoon
Horn I
Horn II
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello/Double Bass

pp, *p*, *Corno auf der Bühne (wie immer Entfernung) Horns on the stage (as if in the distance)*, *Poco meno*

Section Five - An Individual Style (For Better or Worse)

Delius's maturing as a composer was directly connected to the faith he had in the validity of his intuition, feelings and personality. In an extreme way, he turned inwards, closing himself off to a great extent, not only to new impulses, but also to criticism. In this way, Delius also locked into his style defects which undermine the total value of his art. Two weaknesses in particular seem to be a result of the narcissistic attitude he adopted once he had settled at Grez: harmonic mannerism, and structural incoherence.

It is in Delius's least inspired, least original works that he most often resorts to harmonic mannerism. No surprise, this; but beyond the truism is the fact that a considerable number of Delius's least inspired and least original compositions are also among his most well known. In comparison with the almost unfailing harmonic freshness and imaginative vigour of An Arabesque, Appalachia, The Song of the High Hills and parts of the Requiem, it is an unmotivated Delius that is heard in Summer Night on the River, On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring, Air and Dance, among others. But this comparison is made very rarely.

For the commentator on Delius who would make a reasonable criticism of the degree of harmonic mannerism in one of his works, two difficulties are commonly in the way. Delius probably could not recognize when he was writing jaded progressions. He was too close to the music; and, for him, each mannerism had at some point been brought into his vocabulary in a pure moment of sincere thought. Subsequently, the sincerity of that moment remains with him, within him, but does not always come through into the music. Thus, there is in practically all of his works, good, bad and indifferent, a harmonic complexity and intensity of ideas which resembles inspired, motivated effort. This aspect of mannerism has been described by Arnold Schönberg in the following way (see next page):

"Though originality is inseparable from personality, there exists also a kind of originality which does not derive from profound personality. Products of such artists are often distinguished by a unique appearance which resembles true originality. Certainly there was inventiveness at work when the striking changes of some subordinate elements were accomplished for the first time. Subsequently, used consciously, they achieved an aspect of novelty not derived profoundly from basic ideas. This is 'mannerism', not originality."⁴³

The second difficulty arises from the fact that a piece of unoriginal, self-derivative harmonic writing can, in certain circumstances, have immense power. In isolation, any Delius work characterized by the harmonic richness of his matured chromatic language may strike the listener as deeply poignant; for this language has as its source the post-Wagnerian procedures which came into being in order to strike the listener in precisely this fashion. (At its best, Delius's music is derived from that source; at its worst, it is assembled from it). Furthermore, set within a given dramatic context (the Hassan Serenade, for instance), or introduced by a poetically suggestive title (A Song Before Sunrise, for instance), a work may have already favourably disposed a listener's emotions towards its idiom before a note is heard.

Critical fairness can, of course, only be ensured by knowledge of a wide range of a composer's works. Yet, in Delius's case, the difficulties of performing many of his finest works, or their exoticism, has led over the years to judgements being based on the merits of his most popular pieces. If Elgar's creative achievement were assessed on the strength of the Pomp and Circumstance marches, Debussy's on the strength of 'La fille aux cheveux de lin' and 'Minstrels', Stravinsky's on the strength of Circus Polka, the results would be equally inadequate.

43. Arnold Schönberg: Style and Idea (New York, 1950), pp. 133-4.

With form, completely different laws come into force. Whereas in his harmonic language Delius had repeated certain procedures 'ad nauseam', the structural plans of all his large-scale compositions from about 1898 onwards are highly individual and unorthodox. Each must, therefore, be judged by its effectiveness. Wide extremes of critical opinion have also arisen here, however, for the same reasons as with harmony: the specific is taken to be true for the general. Both Delius's admirers and detractors have all too frequently based their arguments on the evidence of one or two scores.

"Delius had a well-nigh perfect sense of form for what he had to say"⁴⁴ Eric Fenby's striking insight into the composer's creative processes has been open to misinterpretation. It has suggested to the less objective of Delius's commentators that the compatibility of form and content in his music resulted always in perfect structures. In the composer's finest works this may not, indeed, be such an exaggerated claim. In such works as the Violin Concerto and In a Summer Garden the evolution of ideas is so natural and so subtly graded that the imposition of a superstructure is either unnoticed or unnecessary. Here, content is form. In the majority of Delius works, however, this unity of thought is not sustained over whole scores - ideas are presented in clearly distinguishable episodes. But also in the finest of these compositions (Sea Drift, An Arabesque, The Song of the High Hills, for instance) the level of organization of the material, or degree of logic of the argument, renders the effect of the whole satisfying.

Fenby's statement has implications, however, which Delius enthusiasts are less ready to acknowledge. What about those works where the substance of what Delius "had to say" was, in fact, pretty meagre? In these instances, it should be realized, the sense of form does still match the content: the structure is flimsy, the material is not developed or sustained, the argument (if there is one) is incoherent. In Paris, for example, what Delius had to say amounted to no more than

44. Eric Fenby: Delius As I Knew Him (London, 1937), p.198.

"Paris is a city with many faces". Attempts to read into the score a unifying concept will fail here, because the content of the piece is essentially disparate. The composer intends no more or less.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Delius rarely looked to pre-ordained patterns for means of imposing logic and order. His reliance on his own sensibilities resulted, on a few occasions, in a remarkably individual, satisfyingly formed composition. On a few occasions it resulted in a more or less amorphous whole no greater than the sum of its parts.

+ + +

In the mid-1890s the pianist Harold Bauer was living in Paris. He was introduced to Delius, who was then "totally unknown to fame":

"I did not care very much for the compositions he showed me, for I found them loose in construction and deficient in contrapuntal writing. We discussed these things very frankly, and he criticized my attitude as being unduly academic, saying that he was not interested in writing in the style of the ancients. This did not mean that he disliked the music of any one of the great composers; on the contrary, his tastes in art were as wide and liberal as could be imagined; but he had the strongest feeling that the first duty of any artist was to find ways in which his own personality could be expressed, whether or not the process conformed to traditional methods. 'An artist', said Delius, 'will finally be judged by that and nothing else. He must have' - here he hesitated and finally found the expression of his thought in French - 'une note à lui'." ⁴⁵

45. Harold Bauer: His Book (New York, 1948), p. 59.

Chapter Eight

"And then comes Springtime"

"I believe myself, in no doctrine whatever and in nothing but in Nature and the great forces of Nature - I believe in complete annihilation as far as our personal consciousness goes ".¹

Sali and Vrenchen were offered a life of freedom by the vagabonds, roving with them in the mountains. They had to turn them down, it may be recalled, for the sexual licence of the vagabond life-style would rob the love of the two young people of its romance. Furthermore, in being at liberty to enjoy each other their very love and passion would dissolve. Either way, they would be deprived of the one saving grace in their impossible existences: the poetry of their longing for each other. Sali and Vrenchen chose instead to go to their deaths in one another's arms.

To all intents and purposes this dénouement has the hallmark of one more 'Liebestod' in a post-Tristan era when 'Liebestode' were much in vogue among opera composers. But into the old bottle Delius pours new wine. In the textual details and musical working of the final scene it becomes clear that the manner of the lovers' suicide in A Village Romeo and Juliet, far from being a rejection or negation of life, was intended as a statement of affirmation. In the opera's closing pages the moral and creative aesthetic fundamental to Delius's artistic utterances for the rest of his life is clearly expressed for the first time.

The primary dramatic notion in A Village Romeo and Juliet, as in Irmelin and The Magic Fountain, is the longing of the characters. In love, longing expresses the desire for an unending perfect state of love. It symbolizes, and is also a part of, human longing for unending life. In The Magic Fountain the transience of love and life was overcome by the

1. Unpublished letter from Delius to Philip Heseltine, 23 June 1912 (Delius Trust archive).

classic 'Liebestod' implications of an after-life existence.

As Delius took more and more to heart his sympathies with the doctrine of Nietzsche, the quasi-religious resolution of life's troubles in a perfect after-life must have rung hollow. Thus, in A Village Romeo and Juliet it is made clear that Sali and Vrenchen expect nothing of their deaths but extinction. How, then, is love/life-longing resolved? How do the lovers achieve a triumph over transience, without which their longing is meaningless?

Sali's and Vrenchen's longing for love evades transience by being resolved at the moment of death, with the two events indivisible from each other. The wider implications are self-evident: their longing for life evades transience by being resolved at the moment of death, with the two events indivisible from each other. The resolution of love-longing is achieved by the moment of physical ecstasy. The resolution of life-longing is achieved by a merging with Nature, annihilating the Self.

+ + + +

The curtain rises on Scene VI to reveal the Inn of the Paradise Garden.

To the right an old dilapidated little country house with a rather high verandah situated in a beautiful garden run wild. Everything shows traces of bygone beauty. It is now used as an inn. In the background a river flows by and a barge full of hay is moored to the bank. The garden overlooks a long valley through which the river winds its way. In the distance the snow mountains.

(Scene VI, v.s.p. 192)

Delius has elaborated here on Keller's original suggestion of a somewhat run-down house, the "bygone beauty" he sees everywhere in the scene implying the power of transience. However, at the moment Sali and Vrenchen reject the option of following the vagabonds, the whole scene is magically transformed (see next page):

Whilst Vreli kisses Sali a beautiful change comes over the Paradise garden; the rising moon floods the distant valley with a soft and mellow light. It seems as if something mysteriously beautiful had touched the garden by enchantment.

What has happened to the garden is that it has ceased to be a symbol of transience. It has been transformed into the arena in which transience shall in fact be overcome: delapidation and decay gives way on all sides to the beauty of Nature.

The truest magic of this transformation, however, comes with the distant song of the bargemen on the river. There is no intimation of bargemen in Keller's narrative, Delius introducing them as the spokesmen of the new attitude he has adopted in the dénouement of his opera. In earlier operas the composer had made much of his characters' resistance to nature, and of their hopes of after-life existence. The joyful sympathy with the life-cycle which the bargemen voice is a new path for him:

"Halleo! Halleo!
in the woods the wind is sighing
Halleo! Halleo!
down the stream our bark is gliding....
Our home is ever changing
travellers we a-passing by."

(see ex.1, p.343)

Vrenchen, momentarily confused by these songs across the water, thinks them beautiful enough to be sung by a heavenly choir, Sali, however, is not only aware of the reality of the situation, but also receptive to the message the bargemen's song contains: the river represents life, the bargemen fleeting points in its flow who have found peace in their oneness with nature:

Vrenchen: "ah yes!
Now I understand!
This is the garden of Paradise!-
listen!-
the angels are singing"
Sali: "Nay, 'tis bargemen on the river -
Travellers we a-passing by"

Ex.1. Scene VI, 6 bars after fig. 87.

Erster Schiffer. (In der Ferne und langsam näher kommend)
 First bargeman. (In the distance and gradually approaching.)

1. Hal - le - o! Hal - le - o! In den Blät - tern weht der Wind.
 Hal - le - o! Hal - le - o! in the woods the wind is sigh - ing

Lento.

pp Quart.

pp Cl

tr. H.

Cl

Fl

Ob.

1. Hal - le - o! Hal - le - o! Ab - wärts glei - ten wir im
 Hal - le - o Hal - le - o down the stream our bark is

ppp

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system features a vocal line for the 'Erster Schiffer' (First bargeman) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment includes a grand piano (pp), a quartet (Quart.), a clarinet (Cl), a trumpet (tr. H.), and a bassoon (Bass). The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment, with additional parts for flute (Fl) and oboe (Ob.). The tempo is marked 'Lento' and the dynamics range from 'pp' to 'ppp'.

They both become suddenly aware of the appropriateness of this philosophy to their own predicament:

Sali: "Shall we also drift down the river?"

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

Sali: "Aye let us die together"

It is Sali who perceives that in embracing death at the moment of ecstasy, and before passion dissolves, they would triumph over transience:

"to be happy one short moment
and then to die,
were not that eternal joy?"

Now follows their final duet, which was described in chapter six (pp.287-290). This great lyrical climax expresses both the lovers' deep pleasure in the beauty of their anticipated destiny, and their intense longing to fulfill it. It will be recalled that the harmonic tension is not resolved here, but stretched onwards.

Unbridled joy erupts as their physical union is prepared. Sali and Vrenchen spy their marriage-bed - the boat filled with hay - and the dark fiddler reappears, keeping an earlier promise that he would be the fiddler at their wedding. Sali pulls the plug from the bottom of the boat and casts off. As he sinks down beside Vrenchen the music makes its final poignant modulation and settles onto B major.

As the boat goes under, Delius frames it against a backdrop of Spring and eternal renewal:

The boat drifts slowly down the river and just as it arrives in front of the Wildland, now crowned with luxuriant growth, it sinks.²

+ + +

2. Full score, pp.174-5. The stage direction is not included in the vocal score.

Delius lived out his deep-rooted belief that every moment was to be enjoyed and utilized. In all his letters and writings, in all descriptions of him and in all the decisions he took in his life he manifests a spirit of whole-hearted affirmation:

"I should certainly like to enjoy good health and live for 3 or 400 years at least - Life is so interesting to me".³

His personal aesthetic was based on fundamental love for living, and not infrequently this positive joy flows over into his writing: in the Paa Vidderne symphonic poem, at the opening and conclusion of A Mass of Life, the end of Dance Rhapsody No.2, the climax of Eventyr, the final choral variation of Appalachia, the dance-songs of Koanga and in 'Joy, Shipmate, Joy' in the Songs of Farewell, to mention but a few.

For all that, Delius's art is associated first and foremost with an emotional poignance common to moods of nostalgia - for past passions, faded youth, lost innocence and bygone summers. There is no contradiction here. For, in his music, longing is itself a statement of affirmation. When he longs, for example, to hear the Negro music he heard at Solana Grove, what Delius values is not the Negro music, but his capacity to long for it. The poignance caused by his distance from that time, that place and that person he was is much more important to him than the old experience itself. There is no doubt that, for Delius, the pleasure he found in life and the joy with which he affirmed his grasp on existence, derived directly from his personal longings.

This makes him in no way different from other men. He is only different from other artists in the degree to which he let longing permeate all levels of his creative aesthetic. The dedication of artistic endeavour to 'la recherche du temps perdu' is, after all, fundamental to meaningful creation. The following words, written of Marcel Proust, might equally have been written of Delius, and can, indeed, be applied to

3. Unpublished letter from Delius to Philip Heseltine, 22 August 1912 (Delius Trust archive).

all art:

"Longing is what makes art possible: for Proust, this is the same as saying that longing is what gives sense to living." ⁴

"This theory, that creation springs from longing and therefore depends on deprivation, is central to Proust: and it is not merely a theory of art. It is an obvious parallel to his belief that love depends on separation and is destroyed when the possibility of fulfillment is offered. It is a theory that covers all human experience." ⁵

Walt Whitman, whose poetry inspired much fine music from Delius after 1900, expressed a mystic vision of the relationship between human longing and the forces of nature very similar to that of Delius:

"I think the soul will never stop, or attain to any growth beyond which it shall not go - When I walked at night by the sea shore and looked up at the countless stars, I asked of my soul whether it would be filled and satisfied when it should become god enfolding all these, and open to life and delight and knowledge of everything in them or of them; and the answer was plain to me at the breaking water on the sands at my feet: the answer was, No, when I reach there, I shall want to go further still."

That Proust, Whitman and Delius should confine their utterances to this germinal source of inspiration is less due to their originality or eccentricity than to their basic, individual perceptions of style.

Many of the changes in Delius's personality and music during his advance to mastery have been examined in this study. Yet, the compulsion to create which he had seems to have altered very little, being inspired by fundamental beliefs that much of life is longing, that in longing is life, and that nature frames and defines that longing. In employing

4. Laurence Lerner: The Uses of Nostalgia. Studies in Pastoral Poetry (London, 1972), p. 52.

5. ibid., p. 55

a musical language which was built up from essential harmonic ambiguity, Delius's work is easy to misunderstand or misinterpret. But, at the core of his art, for those who are willing to penetrate that far, there is a remarkable, affirmative spirit:

"The snow lingers yet on the mountains,
but yonder in the valleys the buds
are breaking on the trees and hedges.
Golden the willow branches
and red the almond blossoms.

The little full-throated birds
have already begun their singing.
But hearken, they cannot cease for very joy
from singing a song whose name is Spring-time.

The woods and forests are full
of coolness and silence,
and silv'ry brooklets
prattle round their borders.

The golden corn awaits the hand
of the reaper, for ripeness
bids death come.

Eternal renewing; everything on earth
will return again.

Springtime, Summer, Autumn and Winter:
And then comes Springtime -
and then new Springtime.

(From the Requiem)

The love-duet, The Magic Fountain, Act III, pp. 154-64.

5. *tranquillo moderato*

Rall. (ritard.) *mf*

Wa-ru-wa, I cherish doubly now thy

3. love for me far greater than life or duty

7. was the love that shall reveal me

11. Justing, doubly hast thou given me the life

14. of for thee, Take it now to kiss and

S. 18
cherish bo - dy, soul thine own to be

S. 21
pain fate
Lie Viro In thy

S. 24
Will let all my bliss In thy

S. 28
pre - sence, on thy kiss
Come, No - Pa - own,

S. 32
kill or kiss if thou lo - vet me still!

W. *(with cultivation)* *ff*

36 have thee

piu piano

W.

39 still? could the sun — beams cease

piu piano

W.

42 shine? when

W.

45

W.

S.

48 e — ven time — can change a

(passionately) *f*

Wa-ri-um!

W. love like mine
S. Wa-ta-wa
52
piano

W. pas-sion that my soul en-ter-ain — as,
S. pas-sion that my soul en-ter-ain — as,
56

W. tell me love than dost feel
S. tell me love than dost feel
59

62

W. *its thrill*

S. *its thrill*

65

W. *thrill-ing, burning with fire di-vine, then the*

S. *thrill-ing, burning with fire di-vine; then the light that*

accel. do poco

68

W. *light that flooded all my dark-ness Then the light that*

S. *flooded all my dark-ness Then the light that*

Appassionato

W
S.

flooded all my darkness; I live in thee, thou art my life, my all
flooded all my darkness; I live in thee, thou art my life, my all

72

rall. molto

W
S.

and in close embrace we two shall slum-ber
and in close embrace we two shall slum-ber

75

Rall. molto

accel. do poco.

W.
S.

her ——— giving soul in soul *rall.*
her ——— giving soul in soul *rall.*

79

accel. do poco. *rall.*

Molto tranquillo ed lento

molto

W. *in one long kiss (Their lips meet in a long kiss and they fall to sleep in my mother's arms)*

S. *in one long kiss*

molto

The image shows a handwritten musical score. At the top, the tempo is marked 'Molto tranquillo ed lento'. Below this, the word 'molto' is written above the first vocal line. The vocal line for 'W.' (likely a woman) has the lyrics 'in one long kiss (Their lips meet in a long kiss and they fall to sleep in my mother's arms)'. The vocal line for 'S.' (likely a man) has the lyrics 'in one long kiss'. Below the vocal lines, there are two staves for piano accompaniment. The word 'molto' is written above the first piano staff. The piano part includes a 'Solo' marking and features a long, sweeping melodic line across several measures, with some triplets and dynamic markings like 'p'.

Appendix II

Delius's Compositions - 1880-1900

[The category and number of each work, given in parenthesis, follows the listing in Robert Threlfall: A Catalogue of the Compositions of Frederick Delius (London, 1977)]

1880-1887

When other lips shall speak (Bunn), song (V/1) - 1880 Presumed lost

Over the mountains high (Bjørnson), song (V/2) - 1885

Zwei bräune Augen (Andersen), song (V/2) - 1885

Zum Carnival Polka, piano solo (IX/1) - prob. 1885

Pensées Mélodieuses, piano solo (IX/2) - 1885 Presumed lost

Der Fichtenbaum (Heine), song (V/4) - 1886

Six part-songs (IV/1)

1. Lorelei (Heine) - poss. 1885

2. Oh! Sonnenschein (Reinick) - prob. 1886-7

3. Durch den Wald (von Schreck) - prob. 1886-7

4. Ave Maria (?) - March 1887

5. Sonnenscheinlied (Bjørnson) - prob. 1887-8

6. Frühlingsanbruch (Bjørnson) - prob. 1887-8

Florida, suite for orchestra (VI/1) - 1887

Norwegischer Schlittenfahrt [Norwegian Sleigh Ride], piano solo (IX/3) - 1887

+ + +

1888

Hiawatha, tone poem (VI/2)

Paa Vidderne (Ibsen), melodrama (III/1)

Five Songs from the Norwegian (V/5)

1. Slumber Song (Bjørnson)

2. The Nightingale (Kjerulf?)

3. Summer Eye (Paulsen)

4. Longing (Kjerulf)

5. Sunset (Munch)

Swedish folk-song arrangement (X(i)1) - Presumed lost

Hochgebirgsleben (Ibsen), song (V/6)

(1888 - cont.)

O schneller, mein Ross! (von Geibel), song (V/6)

Zanoni (Bulwer Lytton), incidental music (I/1) - Unfinished
Suite for violin and orchestra (VII/1)

Rhapsodische Variationen for orchestra (VI/3) - Unfinished

Three pieces for string orchestra (VI/4) - Presumed lost.

String Quartet (VIII/1)

+ + +

1889

Sakuntala (Drachmann), for tenor and orch. (III/2)

Seven Songs from the Norwegian (V/9)

1. Cradle Song (Ibsen)
2. The Homeward Journey (Vinje)
3. Twilight Fancies (Bjørnson)
7. The Bird's Story (Ibsen)

Florida suite (VI/1) - Revision of at least two movements

Romance for violin and piano (VIII/2)

Two piano pieces (IX/5)

Idylle de Printemps, for orchestra (VI/5) - Presumed lost

'Small piece' composed by Grieg, Sinding and Delius (X(i)3)
- Presumed lost

Draft orchestral piece (X(ii)3) - Incomplete

Chanson de Fortunio (Musset), song (V/8)

Suite d'Orchestre (VI/6)

1. Marche Caprice
2. La Quadroone (Rapsodie Floridienne)
3. Berceuse
4. Scherzo
5. Thème et Variations

+ + +

1890

Seven Songs from the Norwegian (V/9)

4. Sweet Venevil (Bjørnson)
5. Minstrel (Ibsen)
6. Love Concealed (Bjørnson)

Irmelin, opera (I/2) - Begun

Three Small Tone Poems (VI/7)

1. Summer Evening
2. Winter Night [Sleigh Ride]
3. Spring Morning - Presumed lost

A l'Amore, orchestral fragment (VI/8)

Petite Suite d'Orchestre (VI/9)

Légendes (Sagen), for piano and orchestra (VII/2) - Draft
incomplete

Skogen gir susende, langsam besked (Bjørnson), song (V/10)

Four Heine Songs (V/11)

1. Mit deinen blauen Augen
2. Ein schöner Stern geht auf in meiner Nacht
3. Hör'ich das Liedchen klingen
4. Aus deinen Augen fließen meine Lieder

Paa Vidderne, symphonic poem (VI/10)

+ + +

1891

Irmelin, opera (I/2) - Continued

Maud (Tennyson), for tenor and orchestra (III/3)

1. 'Birds in the high Hall-garden'
2. 'I was walking a mile'
3. 'Go not happy day'
4. 'Rivulet crossing my ground'
5. 'Come into the Garden, Maud'

Three Shelley Songs (V/12)

1. Indian Love Song
2. Love's Philosophy
3. To the Queen of my Heart

Lyse Nætter (Drachmann), song (V/13)

+ + +

1892

Irmelin, opera (I/2) - Completed

Sonata in B major for violin and piano (VIII/3)

Légende, for violin and orchestra (VII/3) - Possibly in the
form of a work for violin and piano, and orchestrated
in 1895

String Quartet (VIII/4) - Presumed lost

+ + +

1893

Jeg havde en nyskaaren Seljefloyte (Krag), song (V/14)

Nuages (Richepin), song (V/15)

+ + +

1894

The Magic Fountain, opera (I/3) - Begun

+ + +

1895

The Magic Fountain, opera (I/3) - Completed

Deux Mélodies, songs (V/16)

1. Il pleure dans mon coeur (Verlaine)

2. Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit (Verlaine)

The Page sat in the lofty tower (Jacobsen), song (V/17)

Over the Hills and Far Away, fantasy overture (VI/11) - Begun?

+ + +

1896

Koanga, opera (I/4) - Begun

Appalachia, American Rhapsody for Orchestra (VI/12)

Romance for cello and piano (VIII/5)

Badinage, piano solo (IX/4) - date?

+ + +

1897

Koanga, opera (I/4) - Completed

Piano Concerto in C minor (first version, entitled Fantasy for orchestra and pianoforte) (VII/4)

Folkeraadet, incidental music (I/5)

Seven Danish Songs, with orchestral or piano accomp. (III/4)

1. Silken Shoes (Jacobsen)
2. Irmelin Rose (Jacobsen)
3. Summer Nights (On the Sea Shore) (Drachmann)
4. In the Seraglio Garden (Jacobsen)
5. Wine Roses (Jacobsen)
6. Red Roses (Jacobsen)
7. Let Springtime come, then (Jacobsen)

+ + +

1898

Four Nietzsche Songs (V/19)

1. Nach neuen Meeren
2. Der Wanderer
3. Der Einsame
4. Der Wanderer und sein Schatten

Mitternachtslied Zarathustras, for baritone solo, male chorus and orchestra (II/1)

Traum Rosen (Heinitz), song (V/18)

Im Glück wir lachend gingen (Drachmann), song (V/20)

La Ronde se déroule, symphonic poem (VI/13)

+ + +

1899

Paris, Nocturne. (The Song of a great City), for orchestra (VI/14)

A Village Romeo and Juliet, opera (I/6) - Begun

+ + +

1900

A Village Romeo and Juliet, opera (I/6) - Continued (comp.1901)

The Violet (Holstein), song (V/21)

Autumn (Holstein), song (V/21)

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