

THE CHORAL MUSIC OF FREDERICK DELIUS (1862-1934) AND ITS
INFLUENCE ON THE CHORAL MUSIC OF EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY
BRITISH COMPOSERS

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Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree
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ABSTRACT

The composer Frederick Delius wrote a large body of choral music including choral/orchestral works and part songs. This body of choral music had an important influence on the younger generation of British choral composers, including Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock) (1894-1930), E. J. Moeran (1894-1950), Constant Lambert (1905-1951), and Patrick Hadley (1899-1973). To date, only one dissertation in the United States has been devoted to the choral music of Delius. While several books have been published on Heseltine (Warlock), the others—Moeran, Lambert, and Hadley—are underrepresented in scholarly choral literature.

In his book *Delius: Portrait of a Cosmopolitan* (1976), Christopher Palmer details the extent to which Delius influenced this younger generation of composers. While Palmer examines some of the choral music of Delius and his followers in varying degrees of detail, other important choral works of Delius and his followers are absent from his discussion. Besides Donald Caldwell's dissertation (1975), there is no recent study of Delius's complete body of choral music. Moreover, the larger extent to which Delius influenced the next generation of British choral composers has not been satisfactorily researched. This thesis seeks to address this paucity. Some works, such as Moeran's *Nocturne* (1935), show an explicit imprint of Delius. Others, such as Hadley's *The Hills* (1944) and Lambert's *The Rio Grande* (1927), show a more complex convergence of influences, including those of Delius.

This study critically examines every choral work of Delius in an effort to make his music better understood and more accessible. In addition to investigating the influence of Delius on the choral music of Moeran, Lambert, and Hadley, this thesis also

provides exposure to choral works which merit broader representation in the performing repertoire. By examining the music and composers whom Delius influenced most, it is hoped that more of this choral repertoire will be performed and shared with audiences.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my supportive and loving wife.

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LIST OF TERMS AND SYMBOLS

- The composer Philip Heseltine published many of his books and music under the pseudonym Peter Warlock. However, in correspondence and amongst family and friends he remained Philip Heseltine. For the sake of consistency, unless quoting a primary source, I refer to him as Heseltine.
- The British choral music studied in this paper does not include measure numbers. In larger works, rehearsal numbers and letters are used. In smaller works, such as part songs, the author has added measure numbers. In the larger works, rehearsal letters or numbers are placed in a [] figure with a plus or minus sign to indicate measures forward or backward from the sign. For example, [6]-1 indicates rehearsal number six, minus one measure.
- When quoting texts set to music, single quotations are used, such as ‘O my dear heart.’
- To indicate a work composed for choir and orchestra, the term choral/orchestral is used.

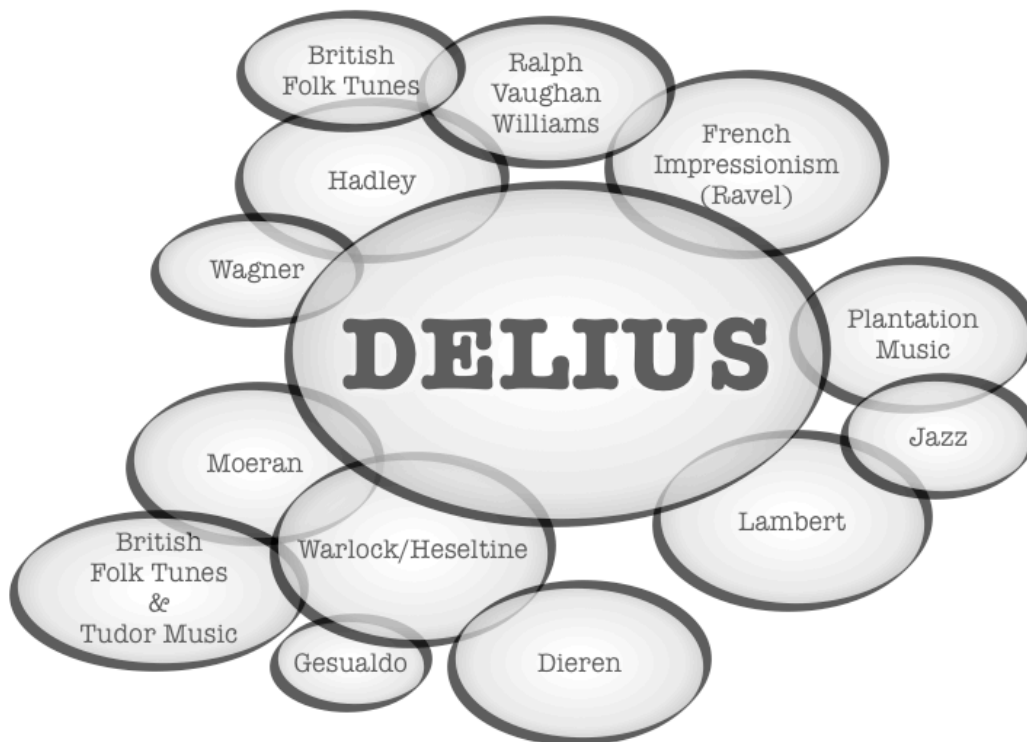


Figure 1. Venn diagram showing the mutually inclusive fields of Delius's choral music.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

...Delius's music has never been loved by the many, but it has always been loved, and dearly loved, by the few.

—Christopher Palmer, *Delius: Portrait of a Cosmopolitan*

This study presents a two-fold argument. One, that the choral music of Frederick Delius and his followers is under-represented in the choral repertoire and merits rediscovery by audiences and conductors alike. Two, that a better understanding of the relationships between sympathetic composers can ameliorate our appreciation of their music. By studying how the choral music of Delius influenced Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock)(1894-1930), E. J. Moeran (1894-1950), Constant Lambert (1905-1951), and Patrick Hadley (1899-1973), the music of each of these composers is brought into a clearer focus.

The choral music of Frederick Delius is a unique contribution to the repertoire. Delius is the only composer to fuse such disparate influences as African American plantation music from the 1880s, nature mysticism, Wagnerian opera, French Impressionism, and the philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche. In a time of increasing nationalism, Delius was a nationless man. He lived in Britain, Florida, Germany, Norway, and finally France. Instead of nationalism, Delius impressed his atheistic views on the world in his Nietzschean *Mass of Life* (1905) and *Requiem* (1916). His zeal for nature, Nietzschean philosophy, French Impressionism, and the self-important, emotionalism of Wagner made him both adored and scorned in his lifetime.

In his book *Delius: Portrait of a Cosmopolitan* (1976), Christopher Palmer provides not only details of Delius's life, but how that life intermingled with and inspired

others. He touches on Delius's contemporaries including the younger generation of British composers. Palmer discusses both the instrumental and choral works of Delius but he does not provide an in-depth study of Delius's choral music. Palmer credits the Delius part song *On Craig Ddu* (1907) for exposing the young Philip Heseltine to Delius, but he provides no description of the music. Heseltine's two most important biographers Cecil Gray and Barry Smith also make mention of the importance of Heseltine's discovery of *On Craig Ddu*, but again, the music is not described. In this thesis, the author studies *On Craig Ddu* in detail as well as Heseltine's absorption of the part song into his own compositional palette.

The choral music of Delius was greatly influential on the younger generation of British composers. In this thesis the entire body of Delius's choral music is examined from the practical perspective of a musician. Study of Delius's choral music also provides context to examine his influence on the younger composers. Although Palmer examines some of the choral music of the younger composers, such as Constant Lambert's *The Rio Grande* (1927) and Patrick Hadley's *The Hills* (1944), he does not provide a complete analysis of the relationship between the choral music of Delius and his followers. Palmer skims the surface in the manner of a survey; because his book is a biography on Delius, it was beyond his scope to examine the choral music of Moeran in detail. Several paragraphs are all he is able to provide to Moeran's homage to Delius, the beautiful choral/orchestral *Nocturne* (1935). The author provides a laser-focus to the choral music of Delius and the influence he had on the choral music of some of his most ardent followers.

Chapter 2 retraces the life of Frederick Delius. In an effort to avoid going into the family wool business, as a young man Delius traveled broadly. In 1884 he purchased an orange plantation in Florida. It was there that Delius heard the black plantation workers' singing in improvised harmonies. The Florida landscape enchanted Delius, also awakening his burgeoning sense of nature mysticism. Additionally, it was in Florida that Delius met his most important music teacher, Thomas F. Ward (ca. 1855-1912). After Florida, Delius attended the Leipzig Conservatory in Germany, an experience which he valued very little.¹ In Germany, his love of Wagner grew and he also made the important friendship of Edvard Grieg (1843-1907). Following Germany, Delius spent time traveling in Norway. He finally settled in France. Delius contracted syphilis in Paris in the late 1880s, a condition that eventually robbed him of the use of his limbs and his sight.

Chapter 3 is a survey of Delius's choral music. It is hoped this survey will make Delius's choral music more available to choral conductors and choirs. The primary source for this chapter is the new biography *Delius and His Music* (2014) by Martin Lee-Browne and Paul Guinery. This book provides both biographical information and detailed musical analysis. *Delius and His Music* is a complete evaluation of Delius's music, both choral and instrumental. In this disquisition, many of Lee-Browne's comments are distilled and combined with information from other sources, such as Palmer. The author provides an analysis of Delius's choral works relative to their influence on the next generation of composers.

The author makes value judgments in this thesis because some of Delius's choral music merits a fresh evaluation. For example, because of religious and political reasons,

¹ See notes 15, 16.

Delius's *Requiem* has languished in obscurity for nearly one hundred years. *Requiem* has moments of great beauty and power which would resonate with a modern audience. *An Arabesque* (1911) has also languished in obscurity, though not for political or religious reasons. The difficulties partially lie partially in the complex poetry translated from Dutch to English. Other works of Delius, such as *A Mass of Life*, will remain difficult to revive because of their length, massive orchestral demands, and dense philosophical texts.

Chapter 4 details the most important friendship of Delius with a younger, British composer. Philip Heseltine had a brilliant mind and voracious curiosity. At the age of sixteen he discovered Delius through the part song *On Craig Ddu*. Soon Heseltine obtained any score of Delius he could locate and began transcribing orchestral works for piano. Heseltine developed an obsession with Delius. Through letter correspondence the two men developed a close friendship. Heseltine shared the gospel of Delius with all his musical friends. Heseltine's obsession gradually softened as his musical interests shifted to other areas. But he remained a faithful friend to Delius, eventually helping to organize the historic 1929 Delius Festival in London.

The primary source for Heseltine's biographical information was Barry Smith's book *Peter Warlock: The Life of Philip Heseltine* (1994). Smith's book is inadequate for a musical study, as it is almost purely a biography compiled from numerous quotes and letters. In the examination of Heseltine's choral music, numerous periodicals were consulted, particularly Ian Copley's "The Choral Music of Peter Warlock (1979)." The author also studied the complete body of Heseltine's extant choral music. Of the composers examined, Heseltine's choral music is the most eclectic. His choral music

varies from simple, diatonic carol arrangements for unison voices and piano to extremely difficult, dissonant, and angular part songs such as *All the Flowers of the Spring* (1923) and *The Full Heart* (1921). Among some inaccuracies discussed in the following chapters is Dennis Shrock's assertion that, "All the music [of Peter Warlock] is characterized by conservative harmonies, with mild dissonances and occasional chromaticism in the style of Delius."² A cursory glance at the parallel minor-ninths on the penultimate page of *All the Flowers of the Spring* and the strange, dissonant word-painting set to the word 'wind' at the work's conclusion emphatically demonstrate the inaccuracy of Shrock's statement.

Perhaps the most important composer to emerge freshly from this study is E. J. Moeran. Moeran was the same age as Heseltine and both shared a love for the music of Delius. Both men famously rented a cottage in the British town of Eynsford in the late 1920s where there was much drinking, carousing, and some composing. Heseltine was in many ways the alpha-male, with Moeran receding into the background. Moeran composed little at Eynsford, whereas Heseltine was prolific. Moeran also became addicted to alcohol, a condition that hurt his career and his health. Moeran existed under the shadow of Heseltine even after the latter's death. It is a shame, because Moeran's choral music is perhaps better than Heseltine's, exhibiting an economy of means and a deft craftsmanship.

Recent scholarship is changing how Moeran is perceived. Until 2014 there were only two biographical sources on Moeran, both flawed in how they represent this

² Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 688.

composer.³ Both books were sources for the Grove dictionary entry (Anthony Payne) on Meoran. Ian Maxwell's new dissertation, "The Importance of Being Ernest John: Challenging the misconceptions about the Life and Works of E. J. Moeran," has brought new light to this misunderstood composer. While Maxwell is writing a new entry for Grove, his study does not examine any choral music of Moeran in detail. In this thesis, the author examines nearly all of Moeran's choral music. Moeran's music shows a more organic synthesis of influences than Heseltine's. Whereas the choral music of Heseltine shows enormous stylistic differences, much of Moeran's choral music is similar in style. In the choral music of Moeran it is difficult to disentangle the influences of Delius, the Tudor era, and British folk song. Often times the three elements are seamlessly integrated.

Chapter 7 combines the composers Constant Lambert and Patrick Hadley. This is not because their music is similar but because they wrote smaller quantities of choral music. Lambert wrote one spectacular choral/orchestral work called *The Rio Grande*. It is a fifteen-minute work that successfully fuses the influence of jazz and the British choral tradition. In this piece, American influence is evident, as in Delius's early *Appalachia* (1902). Palmer discusses this musical relationship in some detail in his book. The author provides more detail because *The Rio Grande* is analyzed from a performer's point of view, as is the historic and biographical context in which the work was composed.

Patrick Hadley is perhaps the most obscure composer mentioned in this study. After careful examination the author concludes that Hadley is worthy of revival. Hadley's

³ Geoffrey Self, *The Music of E. J. Moeran* (Inverness, Britain: Toccata Press, 1986), Lionel Hill, *Lonely Water: The Diary of a Friendship with E. J. Moeran* (London: Thames Publishing, 1985).

music is effective and striking in its austerity and contrasting moments of sensual warmth and color. His debt to Delius is more often in his themes of nature mysticism and the nostalgic love of the landscape of Britain. But there are concrete, musical examples of Delius's influence, such as how Hadley deploys the wordless chorus.

In this thesis the author demonstrates the scope of Delius's choral music and the extent to which it helped shape the choral music of Hesletine, Moeran, Lambert, and Hadley. Choral conductors, choirs, and audiences alike will benefit from greater exposure to the choral music of Delius and his followers. This study serves as a resource for a conductor interested in sharing the music of these composers with a broader audience.

CHAPTER 2: THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DELIUS

The musical figure of Frederick Delius emerges from post-Romantic England in the late 19th century. His Father, Julius Delius (1822-1901), was a wool manufacturer who had immigrated from Germany to England ca. 1840.⁴ Julius hoped to pass the business on to his son, despite young Frederick's interest in music. Thus the seed was sown for Frederick Delius's nationally rootless life and his unique compositional style. Delius discovered a love of travel at a young age and struggled to gain independence from his strong-willed father. Delius absorbed the landscapes, music, and culture of Florida, was enchanted by the fjords of Norway, he enjoyed Wagner's operas in Germany, he indulged in the sexual delights of Paris, and ultimately settled in the rural French village of Grez. Though Delius is categorized as an English composer, his compositional style was most strongly shaped by international influences. Delius ultimately found advocates in his former homeland in the likes of conductors Sir Thomas Beecham (1879-1961), Patrick Hadley (1899-1973), and the composer Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock) (1894-1930). Delius was gradually embraced—if reluctantly and controversially—by his native country, where his music remains divisive. Despite Delius's unusual status in music history, he was enormously influential on an immediate generation of important British composers. His absorption of African American plantation singing, French Impressionism, Wagner opera, and his love of nature all synthesized into a unique compositional voice. This influential style was seen by his followers as an alternative to the nationalist folk music movement led by Ralph Vaughan

⁴ Martin Lee-Browne and Paul Guinery, *Delius and His Music*. (Woodbridge, Britain: The Boydell Press, 2014), 3.

Williams (1872-1958) as well as the traditional, academic composers of early nineteenth-century England.

Later in life, Delius described his musical influences and his opinion on music critics in a letter to the young Philip Heseltine:

“...I never once remember having made a mistake vis a vis a new work of music – When I first heard Chopin as a little boy of 6 or 7, I thought heaven had been opened to me – When I was a little boy – I first heard the *Humoresken* of Grieg – a new world was opened to me again – When at the age of 23 I heard Tristan – I was perfectly overcome – also when I heard *Lohengrin* as a schoolboy. Beethoven always left me cold & reserved – Bach I always loved more – it seemed to me more spontaneous – Brahms I never liked much & never shall – it is philistin (sic) music – altho’ (sic) some of the chamber music is good – But to have to get accustomed to music is a fearfully bad sign – The sort of people who get accustomed to music are the unmusical & when they have become accustomed to it they will hear no other – All the music critics have got accustomed to music – to their great composer...”⁵

At the age in eighteen in 1870, Delius was sent to Stockholm, Sweden, an important city in the wool trade.⁶ While in Sweden he took the opportunity to explore the countryside. When he encountered the beauty of Norway’s mountains and fjords he experienced one of his life’s great epiphanies. He realized that commercial endeavors in his father’s wool business were not for him and that his life was to be one of communion with nature. Nature-mysticism became one of Delius’s primary means of self-expression through composition.

In 1884 the twenty-one-year-old Delius read an advertisement for the sale of an orange plantation in Florida. Delius’s father agreed to purchase the land and sent Delius as an entrepreneur, perhaps hoping his son would discover a passion for business, even if

⁵ Lionel Carley, *Delius: A Life in Letters* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), vol. 2, 91-92.

⁶ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 6.

it was growing oranges. Delius, of course, saw the plantation as an opportunity for adventure and freedom which he gleefully undertook. He sailed for Florida in 1884 March to Solano Grove, a plantation located on the St. James River. Today the grove is a residential area south of Jacksonville known as Picolata.

While at Solano Grove it scarcely needs mentioning that Delius showed little energy for growing oranges; he had African American workers who managed the site for him. These workers however, were to be essential to his blossoming sensitivity to music, and would inspire one of his earliest choral masterpieces, *Appalachia* (1902). Delius was intoxicated by the experience of the American South and wrote to his friend and future wife Jelka Rosen (1868-1935):

“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. The scenery is lovely and I should say remarkably well adapted for a painter. There is a nice little house on the place with a broad verandah (sic) facing the St. John’s river and standing in the middle of the orange trees.”⁷

Later in life, in 1928, Eric Fenby records Delius’s pleasure in listening to a record of the song *Ol’ Man River*:

“This and other such records gave him great pleasure, for the singing was reminiscent of the way his negroes used to sing out in Florida, when he was a young orangeplanter (sic) he had often sat up far into the night, smoking cigar after cigar, and listening to their subtle improvisations in harmony. ‘They showed me a truly wonderful sense of musicianship and harmonic resource in the instinctive way in which they treated a melody...and, hearing their singing in such romantic surroundings, it was then and there that I first felt the urge to express myself in music.’”⁸

In his Delius biography, Heseltine comments:

⁷ Carley, vol. 1, 114.

⁸ Eric Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him* (London: Quality Press, 1948), 25.

“Delius speaks with admiration of the musical instincts of the negroes who worked on his plantation. One of them possessed an astonishing faculty of whistling passages in thirds, and all took a keen delight in their singing. It is unlikely that any of them had ever heard any music other than their own traditional songs, yet when these were sung in chorus inner parts would be improvised with extraordinary taste and skill. Their harmony was not that of the hymn-book – with which such negroe melodies as have been published are almost invariably associated – but something far more rich and strange which aroused the enthusiasm of Delius and baffled Tom Ward’s attempts to analyse (sic) it by any methods known to the theorists.”⁹

Delius later recalled:

“Florida! Ah! Florida! I loved Florida – the people, the country – and the silence! ... I wanted to get away as far as possible from parental opposition to my becoming a musician... [At Solano Grove] I used to get up early and be spellbound watching the silent break of dawn over the river; Nature awakening – it was wonderful! At night the sunsets were all aglow – spectacular. Then the coloured folk on neighboring plantations would start singing instinctively in parts as I smoked a cigar on my verandah (sic).”¹⁰

Delius’s final comment is of particular interest to the student of his choral music; aside from Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904), Delius is one of the first European composers to fully appreciate the value of “negro” music and accept it at face-value. We see in Delius’s appreciation of African American improvisatory singing a lack of snobbery and an openness to the value of “amateur” music. Delius’s egalitarian and independent worldview ultimately shaped his music. Additionally, Delius’s embrace of African American music and its subsequent integration in *Appalachia* and other works is more historically important than has been acknowledged.

⁹ Peter Warlock, *Frederick Delius* (London: The Bodley Head, 1923, rev. 1952), 42.

¹⁰ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 8.

While in Florida Delius had a famous, serendipitous encounter with an American church musician, the Catholic priest/organist Thomas Ward (ca. 1856-1912). While visiting a sick friend in Jacksonville, Delius stopped in a piano shop and began to improvise. Thomas Ward, who was living in Florida to soothe his tuberculosis, heard Delius and introduced himself.¹¹ The two men struck up a friendship and Ward agreed to move to Solano Grove for a period of about six months.¹² After Delius's nature epiphany in Norway, his encounter with Ward was a similarly powerful bolt of musical illumination. Ward instructed Delius in the disciplines of counterpoint, fugue, and orchestration, as well as exposing him to Baroque and Classical repertoire.¹³ Delius would later comment that Ward was his only teacher of any lasting value.

“I remember of those early days in Florida, Delius once said to me, ‘Ward’s counterpoint lessons were the only lessons from which I ever derived any benefit. He showed wonderful insight in helping me to find out just how much in the way of traditional technique would be useful to me.’”¹⁴

¹¹ Don Gillespie, *The Search for Thomas F. Ward, Teacher of Frederick Delius* (Miami, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996), 48.

¹² Warlock, *Delius*, 40.

¹³ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 9.

¹⁴ Gillespie, *The Search for Thomas F. Ward*, xi.



Figure 2. The restored Delius house at Jacksonville University, Jacksonville, FL. Picture by author.



Figure 3. The author at the Delius house, spring 2015. Picture by Dr. Scott Watkins.

Delius eventually abandoned the orange grove and moved north, first to Virginia, and eventually to the city of New York, though records of his movements are scarce and very few letters from this time survive. He sought employment as a music teacher, a synagogue cantor, and may have served as a church organist.¹⁵ When his father learned of Delius's plans to seek a music career in America he recalled his son to Britain. Julius however finally caved to his son's wishes and agreed to enroll him in the prestigious Leipzig music conservatory.

Delius studied in Leipzig from 1886-1887 with decidedly mixed results. Of the greatest benefit was a close friendship he formed with Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) who happened to be there at the time. Grieg became a musical mentor and friend to Delius. In Leipzig, Delius was exposed to the musical elite of late 19th century Europe which included concerts and recitals by Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) and Peter Tchaikovsky (1840-1893).

Apart from the musical friendship formed with Grieg, Delius valued very little of his Leipzig education. He openly derided the study of counterpoint and formal music education. In May of 1918, he expressed some of his opinions on music education to Philip Heseltine:

“You know my opinion on contemporary music. For me music is very simple: it is the expression of a poetic and emotional nature. Most musicians by the time they are able to express themselves manage to get rid of their poetry and emotions. The dross of Technic (sic) has killed it; or they seize upon on a little original streak, and it forthwith develops into an intolerable mannerism – Debussy, Ravel.”¹⁶

Years later, he confided to Fenby:

¹⁵ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 11.

¹⁶ Warlock, *Delius*, 138.

“You can’t teach a young musician to compose any more than you can teach a plant to grow, but you can guide him a little by putting a stick in here and a stick in there. Composition as taught in our academies is a farce. Where are the composers they produce? Those who do manage to survive this systematic and idiotic teaching either write all alike, so that you can say this lot belongs to that institution, this lot to that, or they give us the flat beer of their teachers, but watered down...How can music ever be a mere intellectual speculation or a series of curious combinations of sounds that can be classified like the articles of a grocer’s shop? Music is an outburst of the soul.”¹⁷

Indeed, a defining characteristic of Delius’s style is a lack of counterpoint – or put in a more constructive perspective, a preponderance of homophonic textures. Delius also avoids formal musical development using traditional, classical techniques. This is not to say that Delius does not tightly organize his music, but he does so in an undisciplined and instinctual or rhapsodic manner. For a composer with a preference for a large canvas (*Sea Drift*, *The Song of the High Hills*, *Mass of Life*) Delius creates impressively cohesive works with little formal design.

After graduating in 1888 Delius sought his fortune in Paris where he quickly became absorbed in the artistic elite of the city. Surprisingly, he seems to have shown little interest in Parisian music, with only passing and ambivalent comments on the work of Faure (1845-1937), Debussy (1862-1918) and Ravel (1875-1937).¹⁸ How well he knew these composers is not known, but their lack of mention in his letters presumes little interaction.

Although Delius had limited interaction with Debussy and Ravel, their influence in his choral works is apparent. Delius used worldless chorus often in his choral works, either orchestral (*The Song of the High Hills*, *Appalachia*, *Sea Drift*) or unaccompanied

¹⁷ Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him*, 196-197.

¹⁸ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 28.

(*To be sung of a summer night on the water, The Splendor Falls on Castle Walls*), enough to demonstrate an influence of both Debussy's *Palléas et Mélisande* (1902) and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* (1912). It may be that Delius was coy about his influences. Delius's musical tastes are revealed by the scores in his library, which Fenby divulged in his memoir *Delius as I Knew Him*:

“What little interest he had ever had in the music of others a glance at his library will suffice to show. The only full scores he possessed 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.”¹⁹

From a very young age Delius developed an appreciation for the music of Richard Wagner, and as a young man he took it upon himself to absorb as many live performances as possible. In 1894 he traveled to Bayreuth and Munich to attend Wagner's operas. He wrote to a friend:

“*Parisfal* is magnificent: the finest work of Wagner. The orchestra and theatre are perfect. I am really very glad I came back here, 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.”²⁰

In another letter, dated May 29, 1894, Delius explained his artistic ambitions as related to Wagner:

“I should, as I said before, like to give all my works a deeper meaning. I want to say something to the world very serious & music & poetry are only my means...But I want to tread in Wagner's footsteps and even give something more in the right direction. For me dramatic art is almost taking

¹⁹ Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him*, 195-196.

²⁰ Carley, *A Life in Letters*, vol. 1, 55.

the place of religion. People are sick of being preached to. But by being played to, they may be worked upon.”²¹

This extract is particularly salient as it relates directly to Delius’s eventual choral output; here is a premonition of Delius’s two quasi-religious, large-scale choral orchestral works: the *Mass of Life* (1905) and *Requiem* (1916). Delius exchanged one belief system for another: in his mind, the official church – of any denomination – should be replaced by the beauty and power of nature and the good will of secularized, enlightened mankind. He wrote a Christmas letter in 1888 to Grieg that concluded:

“I think the only improvement that Christ and Christianity have brought with them is Christmas. As people really then think a little about others. Otherwise, I feel that he had better not have lived at all. The world has not got any better, but worse & more hypocritical, & I really believe that Christianity has produced an overall sub-mediocrity & really only taught people the meaning of fear.”²²

Delius might be an early example of a trend more openly discussed in the early twenty-first century of today: he was spiritual but not religious. As will be shown in the next chapter, his spirituality is particularly displayed in the choral works, in which the human voice – with or without text – is used for his most intense emotional and utterances.

In 1895 Delius met his future wife, Jelka Rosen (1868-1935). She was an aspiring painter moving through the artistic crowds of Paris. Through this same network of artists, Delius became increasingly exposed to the Impressionist works of Claude Monet (1840-1926), Pierre-August Renoir (1841-1919), Edgar Degas (1834-1917), and others. Jelka’s own works were Impressionist in many ways, though her works are not widely known

²¹ Ibid. vol. 1, 86.

²² Ibid. vol 1, 15.

and many are apparently lost.²³ After 1895 the Impressionist movement increasingly influenced Delius's music.

Already in the 1890s Delius demonstrated a distinct and utter lack in of interest in any music earlier than Chopin. Delius's musical interest was emotional, not academic. Musical antecedents were only appreciated in how they related to Delius's aesthetic ideals. As we have seen, his music library was famously small, including only several works by Wagner, Richard Strauss, Ravel, and Debussy. Delius revealed his opinions about early music in a letter to Heseltine from 1920 in a lymmerick:

“Why unearth old Gesualdo Venosa?
Or any old mouldy composer?
Let him rest in his grave,
Why these madrigals save?
Enough rotten music we know Sir.”²⁴

While clearly written in jest, much can be gleaned from this rhyme. Delius held no interest in antique music, nor did he believe it could constructively inform current composers. The irony of course is that Delius's music itself would inform and influence a future generation of composers, even after he himself had become “mouldy.” Fenby comments on this curious trait of an egoist composer:

“...I asked if we might keep the wireless on to hear a pianoforte concerto by Mozart. His reply was startling, ‘You needn't ask me to listen to the Immortals. I can't abide 'em. I finished with them long ago!’”²⁵

In 1897 Delius moved to the French village *Grez-sur-Loing*, in a picturesque house along the river. Here Jelka and Delius would transition to a quieter life of painting and

²³ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 72.

²⁴ Barry Smith, *Peter Warlock* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 174.

²⁵ Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him*, 195.

composing, with Delius as a somewhat outcast musical rebel. Despite the isolation, Delius was sought out by many other sympathetic musicians. These included Percy Grangier (1882-1961), Philip Heseltine, E. J. Moeran, Patrick Hadley, and later his amanuensis²⁶ Eric Fenby.²⁷ Delius's career settled into composition and correspondence; he began the never-ending process of self-promotion by trying to publish his works and receive premiers. Stylistically, after 1900, Delius changed little; his traits as a Romantic Impressionist would more or less remain consistent until his death in 1934.

In 1885 Delius was diagnosed with syphilis, the disease which would eventually rob him of his strength, sight, ability to walk, and ultimately, his life. From about 1900 to his death in 1930 Delius suffered a gradual and miserable decline of health. Despite his suffering, he remained optimistic and productive up until the very end, producing many of his most important works. Exactly how and to what extent syphilis affected his music is not clear; he spoke and wrote little of his creative process. However, after 1900 a clear sense of melancholy and loss pervades much of Delius's music, most explicitly in his choral/orchestral works *Sea Drift*, *Songs of Sunset*, and *Songs of Farewell*. But, as we shall see, Delius never slips into sentimentality, self-pity, or despair, and is equally able to compose life-affirming choral/orchestral works such as the *Mass of Life*, *Requiem*, and *The Song of the High Hills*.

In 1911 a young Philip Heseltine wrote his first letter of adoration to Delius. The correspondence was to last the rest of Heseltine's life, resulting in Delius assuming a fatherly, mentoring role which may not have been entirely healthy in the end,

²⁶ One who takes dictation.

²⁷ Fenby writes in detail about each of these composer's (excepting Moeran) visits in *Delius as I Knew Him*. Moeran's visit is documented in Lionel Carley, *Delius: A Life in Letters*, vol. 2, 297.

professionally or emotionally. I will examine the details and results of their complex relationship in chapter four. The Delius-Heseltine relationship is the clearest example of musical influence between Delius and his followers. Heseltine benefited from Delius's professional and musical guidance, and Delius benefited from Heseltine's promotion of his music. Heseltine wrote and published the first biography on Delius and helped to organize the important Delius Festival of 1929.

Unlike many famous composers, Delius played no instrument and did not conduct. As his health gradually declined he remained in France which became his surrogate country. The period from 1911-1914 was one of his most prolific. Delius produced three of his choral/orchestral works²⁸ as well as the *Two Songs for Children* (1913). World War I disrupted his life considerably, and the Deliuses briefly sought refuge in Britain.

After the war ended in 1918 Delius moved back to Grez where he resumed composition. Delius's health began to fail as his syphilis worsened, and he eventually grew blind and lost the use of his limbs. Then something unique in the history of music happened. A young man named Eric Fenby (1906-1997) came to Grez in 1928 to serve as Delius's amanuensis. Through trial and error, Delius and Fenby developed a system where Delius would sing his musical ideas and Fenby would write them down. The full details of this fascinating and difficult relationship is relayed in Fenby's memoir *Delius as I Knew Him*. For the purposes of this study, the following extract is sufficient to understand the process of dictation:

“Throwing his head back, he began to drawl in a loud monotone that was little more than speech, and which, when there was anything of a ring about it, wavered round a tenor middle B. This is something like what I heard: ‘Ter-te-ter – te-ter – ter-te-te-ter – and here he would interject ‘Hold it!’

²⁸ These are *An Arabesque*, *The Song of the High Hills*, and *Requiem*.

and then went on – ‘ter-te-te-ter – ter-te-te-te-ter – hold it! – ter-te-ter-ter-
te-ter-ter-te-ter – hold it! – ter-te-ter-ter-te-ter-ter-te-ter...’²⁹

Fenby served in is this way until Delius’s death, granting him an Indian summer of composition. Together they dictated Delius’s final choral/orchestral work, *Songs of Farwell* (1930). Those who visited Delius during these years marveled at the tenacity of their work. When Fenby showed Heseltine what Delius had accomplished through dictation, Heseltine’s response was incredulous:

“After tea Heseltine asked me to take him up to the music-room (sic). He could not believe that ‘old Fred’ (Delius) was trying to work again, and when he saw what had been done he exclaimed, ‘My God, how both must have slaved at this!’³⁰

Delius died in Grez in 1934 in “appalling agony” as the syphilis finally consumed his life.

³¹ His cremated remains were moved to England where he was interred at St. Peter’s Church at Limpsfield, Surrey.³² Soon after his death the Delius Trust was established (with funds from his estate), an organization devoted to the preservation and promotion of his music.

²⁹ Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him*, 31.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

³¹ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 479.

³² *Ibid.*, 479.

CHAPTER 3: THE CHORAL MUSIC OF FREDERICK DELIUS

Special sympathy is required in the performance of Delius' work. It will not give up its secret by rough treatment. It is so sensitive and refined that the performer must have a like attitude, particularly as regards beauty of tone. If he is not a poet at heart, he had better leave Delius alone.

–Roger Quilter as quoted in *Delius* by Peter Warlock (Philip Heseltine)

Delius was a prolific composer who contributed to many genres. Like Debussy, Wagner, and other modernist composers, he was not particularly interested in traditional techniques of musical development such as the transformation of themes in sonata form. There is little counterpoint to be found in Delius. Although he composed in some traditional forms (string quartets, several concertos and sonatas) these works generally do not incorporate traditional development techniques. His orchestral works are mostly suites and tone poems; Delius composed no symphonies. Fortunately for the choral scholar, many of Delius's most significant mature works are choral. Nearly all of Delius's choral output is secular; he was an atheist and composed only one choral work that could be categorized as liturgical (the *Ave Maria* from *Six Early Part Songs*).

Stylistically, Delius changed little over his lifetime. Although in his formative years he studied counterpoint and fugue under both Ward and his teachers at the Leipzig Conservatory, the general consensus amongst his biographers – and what even a casual survey of his choral music will reveal – is that he applied little of these techniques to his music. Delius was more interested in emotional expression and tone-color than technique.

Delius formed his style from an amalgamation of postromantic harmony inspired by Grieg, a passion for Wagnerian emotional expression, French Impressionism, and a dash of American “negro” music. The final ingredient was of course Delius himself and

his own ideas about the world, including his passions for nature-mysticism, life and love, and a stalwart atheism inspired largely in part by the writings of Nietzsche. Additionally, as a choral composer, Delius was interested in poets who reflected and amplified his world-view. The poetry of Walt Whitman (1819-1892) in particular appealed to Delius. Delius chose Whitman's poetry for two of his most important choral orchestral works: *Sea Drift* (1904) and *Songs of Farewell* (1930). In his two quasi-religious choral/orchestral works, *A Mass of Life* (1905) and *Requiem* (1916), Delius set the writings of Nietzsche (for *Requiem* Delius also adapted some verses from the book of Ecclesiastes). After 1900, when Delius's musical and philosophical principles congealed, his compositional style remained relatively unchanged. Additionally noticeable is the complete lack of British folk influence in Delius's music. He was not interested in the English Revival spearheaded by his contemporary Ralph Vaughan Williams. Here again we can observe Delius as apart from – and something of a unique voice among – his contemporary counterpoints in Britain.³³

In the following chapter I will discuss Delius's entire choral output. Works deemed most significant are qualified by several conditions: they remain in the active repertoire, they significantly influenced later composers, or are neglected/misunderstood works deserving a new appreciation by conductors.

Delius's approach to writing choral music is also important to examine as it has been scarcely discussed, yet explains much about his style. Delius was a man of paradoxes; he criticized Debussy for his "deficiency of melody", yet Delius's own music

³³ Although Vaughan Williams was central to the English Revival, he too, came under French Impressionism's influence in his studies with Maurice Ravel.

is driven by harmonic, homophonic progressions of tone color.³⁴ In his choral/orchestral works the chorus parts appear to have been written last, basically being filled in from “crude chunks of sound” after the instrumental parts were complete.³⁵ Smooth voice leading is not of concern to Delius; his scores are replete with awkward and unprepared leaps and other violations of established voice-leading and counterpoint. Delius himself commented on his own voice leading technique in a story recounted by Eric Fenby:

“What he did understand in writing for voices was the colour of the choral sound, and the peculiar emphasis of voice a particular line needed if it was to tell effectively in the harmonic texture. He used to relate with great amusement how, at the early rehearsals for the first performance of *Sea Drift*...they thought the chorus parts unnecessarily difficult whereupon one bright fellow decided to rewrite the parts in such a way as to facilitate their execution, yet preserving the harmony. After a great deal of manipulation he finished the job, convinced he had done the composer a noble service. Copies were made of the new part-writing, and a few crack singers from the chorus chosen to sing the improved version, so that the indignant composer might be shown the error of his ways. ‘When they had finished,’ said Delius, ‘I told my good friend that he could alter just alter it back again; that I would have none of it! He had taken all the character out of my music. The outcome of it all was that he apologized, and said that it had been a shocking eye-opener to him. He would never have believed that such music could have sounded so different when the part-writing had been altered. When he heard the total effect...he was more surprised than ever, and heard for himself that the chorus parts had to sound exactly as I had distributed them.’”³⁶

A final word on Delius’s approach to choral voice leading come from Hubert Foss’s (1899-1953) addendum Heseltine’s Delius biography:

“Yet Delius constantly disregards the logic of the vocal line, preferring harmonic to linear disposition in order to secure his purpose – a sure sign of his concern with background. The melody is there, but he will often

³⁴ Palmer writes (without a citation): ‘Delius told Fenby he admired Debussy’s refinement of orchestration but he considered his music deficient in melody.’ Palmer, *Delius*, 141.

³⁵ Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him*, 151.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 203-204.

begin it in one voice and end it in another, tossing it about just as it suits him, rather to the discomfort of the singers. The total effect is supremely beautiful, but it is erratic, and (as someone has said) ‘ruthless’ in arrangement.”³⁷

Parallel tritones are an idiomatic characteristic of Delius’s writing. These tritones confirm Fenby’s comments and contribute to the unique sound of Delius’s choral music. Although these tritones increase the difficulty level for the singers, they are worth overcoming for the beautiful and characteristic affect of Delius’s music. (ex. 3.1, 3.2)

Example 3.1. Frederick Delius, *On Craig Ddu*, mm. 29-33.

³⁷ Warlock, *Delius*, 160.

Example 3.2. Frederick Delius, *To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water*, mm. 9-12.

As with many iconoclasts, Delius was blazing a trail for others to follow. We shall see in the works of Heseltine, Moeran, Lambert, and Hadley how Delius's voice leading was a liberating influence.

While Delius's style changes little over his career, there are some significant changes in his approach to choral music. As observed in their book *Delius and His Music* by Martin Lee-Browne and Paul Guinery, Delius's approach to text underlay underwent one significant development; in his earlier choral works such as *Sea Drift* and *On Craig Ddu* (1908) lines of text often overlap between voices, thus making certain words less intelligible.³⁸ Whether or not Delius used this technique for rhetorical emphasis or simply to integrate musical lines is not clear. What *is* clear is that in his final choral orchestral work, *Songs of Farewell*, there is no text overlapping; clarity of text takes preeminence.

Another characteristic trait of Delius's mature choral music is the use of the wordless chorus. For today's choirs to sing a neutral vowel is commonplace and perhaps

³⁸ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 172.

even *cliché*. But in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century it was a new and radical idea. As with many “firsts,” providing credit for the origins of the wordless chorus is elusive, with more than one character taking credit. We can be reasonably confident in citing three famous examples of wordless chorus that undoubtedly influenced Delius. *Sirenes*, the third movement from Debussy’s *Nocturnes* (1899) is the first example. In *Sirenes* women’s voices are integrated seamlessly with the orchestral texture to create a movement of haunting beauty. The second work is the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902) in which Debussy deploys a similar effect. In both works Debussy provides no indication of vowel shape or sound of any kind, whereupon singers invariably default to a neutral ‘Ah.’ In the unaccompanied part song *To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water* (1917), like Debussy, Delius provides no indication of a vowel or consonant. The third important example of wordless chorus is from Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloé*. Like Debussy, Ravel treats the women’s voices as an additional orchestral color. Because Delius was living in France at the time both of these works were premiered and by the inclusion of *Daphnis* as one of the very few scores Delius retained in his library, one can presume Delius took inspiration from Ravel and Debussy in his use of the wordless chorus.

Percy Grainger (1881-1961) was just one of the many important composers to enter Delius’s orbit in the first decades of the twentieth century. Grainger’s choral works will not be examined because it is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, he merits inclusion in this discussion because Grainger claimed it was *he* who influenced Delius concerning the wordless chorus:

“After hearing my ‘wordless syllables’ in such numbers as my choral *Irish Tune from County Derry* (1902) he [Delius] adopted the same method in

The Song of the High Hills (1912) and elsewhere, abandoning the “la la” method employed by him in *Appalachia*.”³⁹

Grainger is correct at least on one point: Delius indeed set the syllable ‘la la’ and ‘ha ha’ in numerous choral works before 1900, including *Appalachia* and several opera choruses from *Koanga* (1895-1897). Only Delius could reveal whether it was Debussy, Ravel, Grainger, or another source which fired his imagination for the wordless ‘ah’ – or indeed if Delius arrived at this idea himself by some other means. However, Grainger is incorrect about Delius “abandoning” ‘la la’, because it is found in *A Mass of Life*, *Wanderer’s Song* (1910), and part II of *To Be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water*.

The earliest choral pieces by Delius are student works collected in a supplement to volume seventeen of his collected works, entitled *Six Early Part-Songs*. These songs are not available separately or in any other format. The six songs date from the 1880s, most likely while he studied in Leipzig; they were not published during his lifetime and have been transcribed from Delius’s notebooks and papers.⁴⁰ They are part songs in the purest sense, both strophic and homophonic. Three are German (1. *Durch den Wald*, 2. *An den Sonnenschein*, and 5. *Frühlingsanbruch*), one Latin (3. *Ave Maria*), and one is Norwegian (6. *Her ute skal gildet staa*).⁴¹ There is little to distinguish these works from the work of other part songs by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), Johannes Brahms or

³⁹ Palmer, *Delius*, 89.

⁴⁰ Frederick Delius, *Six Early Part Songs*, ed. Robert Threlfall, Frederick Delius Complete Works, supplement to vol. 17 (London: Thames, 1994).

⁴¹ 1. *Through the Woods* 2. *O Shining, Golden Sun* 3. *Hail Mary* 4. *Song of Sunshine* 5. *The Coming of Spring* 6. *Here we shall feast*

Edvard Grieg.⁴² The harmony in these part songs is purely common-practice, colored with late romantic chromaticism.

Appalachia: Variations on an Old Slave Song dates from 1902, and was published in 1906. It is his first foray into large-scale, choral/orchestral music and serves as a point of departure for the rest of Delius's output in the same genre. As we shall see, Delius often scores for massive orchestras and, because he is a colorist, calls for unusual instrumentation (six horns in *Appalachia*) and in some cases, instruments (bass oboe in *Songs of Sunset*). In *Appalachia* he calls for three flutes, three oboes, cor anglais, E-flat clarinet, two B-flat clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, double bassoon, six horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, tam-tam, two harps, and strings (16.16.12.12.10). This massive instrumental requirement may contribute to the work's relatively rare performance. Indeed, much of Delius's choral orchestral output suffers a similar challenge.

Appalachia is primarily an orchestral work and is a theme and variations based on a traditional slave song. The chorus does not enter until the sixth variation (of fourteen) and then they only sing three bars of repeated "la's." The chorus concludes variation eight similarly, with little more than repeated note "la's." After the final variation (and over twenty minutes into the music) the choir leads an epilogue.

Appalachia tells a story of sorts. As the sun sets, a slave's voice cries out from the chorus, lamenting the fact that he is being separated from his family. The ideas of sunset, loss, and a musical atmosphere drenched in harmonic color are quintessentially Delius.

⁴² While we count Delius as a twentieth-century composer, it is important to appreciate he was born in 1862 and was educated as a Romantic composer. Brahms was still an active voice in the 1880s, and the memory of Mendelssohn was still fresh.

Delius wrote a program note in the title page of the manuscript explaining the expressive goals of the work:

Appalachia is the old Indian name for North America. The composition mirrors the moods of the tropical nature in the great swamps bordering on the Mississippi River, which is so intimately associated with the life of the old Negro slave population. Longing melancholy, an intense love of Nature, child-like humour and an innate delight in dancing and singing are still the most characteristic qualities of this race.⁴³

Of note for performance practice is Delius's desire that the baritone soloist sing from the chorus (he indicates *Volkstümlich* in the score), like a voice rises from the masses: "Oh, Honey, I'm going down the river in the morning..."

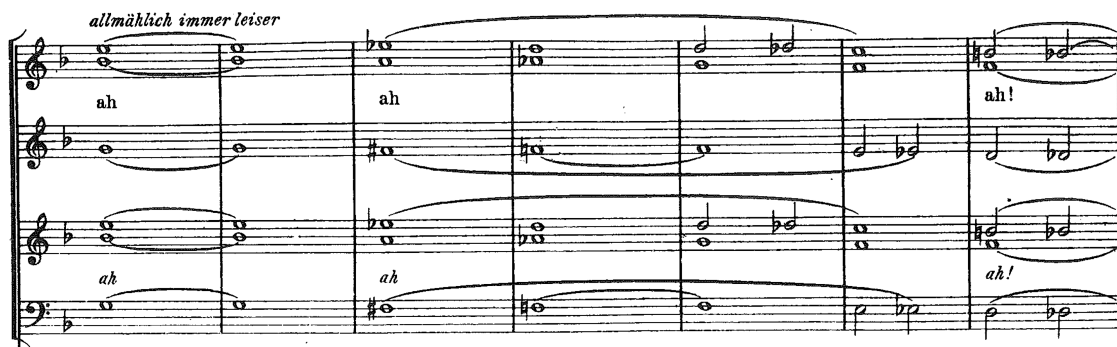
Delius calls for a large choir. The voicing is SSAATTBB and the texture is primarily homophonic. He thins the texture with the text, 'For the dawn will soon be breaking...' by employing simple, imitative entrances, beginning with the sopranos at rehearsal [Ee] (ex. 3.3).

The musical score for Example 3.3 from Frederick Delius's *Appalachia* is presented in a four-part vocal setting. The score is in G major and 4/4 time, marked "piu allegro" and "poco a poco". It features four vocal parts: Soprano, Tenor, Baritone, and Bass. The lyrics are in German and English. The Soprano part begins with "denn kom - men wird der Tag der fro - hen Wie - der" and "For the dawn will soon be breaking the ra - dant morn is". The Tenor part begins with "denn kom - men wird der" and "For the dawn will soon be". The Baritone part begins with "kehr und ich blei - be e - wig dein. He Ho He" and "nigh and you'll find me e - ver a - wai - ting Heigh Ho Heigh". The Bass part begins with "kehr und ich blei - be e - wig dein. He Ho He" and "nigh and you'll find me e - ver a - wai - ting Heigh Ho Heigh".

Example 3.3, Frederick Delius, *Appalachia*, [Ee].

⁴³ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 138.

Once all the voices have entered Delius brings the piece to a brilliant, unison climax with sopranos and tenors singing high Cs (C 5 and C 6) on the text, ‘t’ords the morning lift a voice let the scented woods rejoice...’ Like nearly all of Delius’s choral works, the music dies away softly. In this case, the choir sings long series of chromatic whole-note chords on the vowel ‘Ah’ before dying away to silence (ex.3.4). A brief orchestral coda concludes the work.



Example 3.4. Frederick Delius, *Appalachia*, [F]+4.

Unusual in his output is the sparse use of chorus in *Appalachia*; the choir does not enter until nearly half though the piece, and then they only sing a very few notes on ‘la.’

Appalachia is important for several reasons. One, it is a very early example of African American music being used in a Western European art composition. The song to which the title refers is unknown, although Eric Fenby claimed Delius transcribed the tune after hearing it sung by a worker in a tobacco factory near Jacksonville.⁴⁴ In his lecture *The Influence of African-American Music on the Works of Frederick Delius* Derek

⁴⁴ Ibid., 143, fn.

Healey asserts the tune was, "...at one time sung in churches in Florida."⁴⁵ The tune's provenance is of less importance than the *feeling* of the Southern swamps and African-American life that is evoked by Delius. He accomplishes this through use of harmonic ambiguity and free voice leading. Delius was greatly influenced by improvisational singing of the plantation workers at Solano Grove. As Palmer describes:

"Text-book harmonization of Negro spirituals, academically sound and unexceptionable by European standards, has tended to obscure the fact that, before the dissemination of such arrangements either in printed form or through the singing of trained Negro choirs abroad, harmony in the sense we understand it was virtually unknown to original Afro-American music."⁴⁶

The final variation of *Appalachia* is for unaccompanied chorus, also unusual in Delius's choral orchestral works. The texture is primarily one of animated homophony with the melody in the top voice and chromaticisms clouding the otherwise diatonic tune. Over the last several pages the choir changes to an 'Ah' vowel on whole-note chords, fading away as the sun sets and the slave disappears down the river.

Delius followed *Appalachia* with *Sea Drift*, composed the next year, 1903, and premiered in 1906 in Germany. As we will see, *Sea Drift* is particularly relevant in the discussion of Delius's influence; few other works are as "Delian" as *Sea Drift* in terms of instrumental color, subject matter, rhapsodic construction, and choral treatment. *Sea Drift* launched Delius into fame in Germany, a fame he retained until the first World War, after which the Germans jettisoned much pre-war art. *Sea Drift* is perhaps Delius's most famous work, and the one which helped to elevate his fame across Europe. It is a perfect

⁴⁵ Derek Healey. 2004. "The Influence of African American Music on Delius." Lecture, La Villa Museum, Jacksonville, March 6.

⁴⁶ Palmer, *Delius*, 13.

marriage of music and poetry, capturing the essence of Whitman's poem. The story – as it were – is an existential question of the transience of life. A young boy goes to the Alabama sea shore and observes a pair of gulls who dutifully provide for each other. One evening the 'shebird' fails to return, leaving her mate alone, 'under the full of the moon.' He laments and calls for her, 'poured forth the meanings which I of all men know.' Here Whitman confesses that he – the boy – shares the same pain of lost love as the bird. Through illusion or wishful thinking, the man believes he may yet hear the voice of his beloved, but, alas, 'Those are the shadows of leaves.' Then follows the emotional climax of both text and music, 'O darkness in vain! I am very sick and sorrowful.'

Delius calls for a large orchestra, chorus, and a baritone soloist to sing the role of the narrator. Descending woodwinds *arpeggios* evoke the calm waves of the sea in a short orchestral introduction. Then the chorus enters on a major-triad in the second inversion. This chord spelling is another fingerprint of Delius and contributes to the unstable and colorful sound of his choral music. In *Sea Drift*, even more than with his eventual followers, Delius incorporates programmatic elements, creating impressions of musical imagery. Nearly every system of music is full of such imagery. At [6] the orchestral scoring is at first bright with winds, with brass representing the shining sun. This is followed four bars later with the rapid change to bassoons and strings to show the sun shining 'pouring down.' What might have in previous centuries been labeled as text painting, Delius augments with the tools of French Impressionism and German modernism to create even more colorful representations of textual imagery.

Because of its lengthy and rhapsodic nature, *Sea Drift* may seem tiresome to some audiences. The baritone sings in a rhapsodic, *arioso* style always responding

expressively to the Whitman text.⁴⁷ As in much of Delius's music, a vertical, chordal alignment prevails over linear textures, creating washes of sound and color. *Sea Drift* benefits from multiple hearings and a thorough understanding of the poetry. Many composers, critics, and even Delius himself believed *Sea Drift* to be his masterpiece and it remains his most well known work.⁴⁸

The first decade of the twentieth century was Delius's most productive; he poured forth many major works one after the other. On the heels of *Appalachia* and *Sea Drift* came his largest choral orchestral work, *A Mass of Life*, or *Eine Messe des Lebens*. The full score numbers 203 pages and a complete performance lasts well over ninety minutes. It is scored for double chorus, a huge orchestra (the largest Delius ever scored)⁴⁹, and soprano, alto, tenor, and bass soloists. The orchestra calls for piccolo, three flutes, 3 oboes, cor anglais, three clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, double bassoon, six horns, four trumpets, three tenor trombones, bass tuba, timpani, bass drum, side drum, cymbals, castanets, triangle, glockenspiel, deep tam-tam, two bells (F and G sharp), two harps, and strings (16.16.12.12.12).

Delius read Nietzsche since he was a young man and by 1900 *Also Sprach Zarathustra* ("Thus Spoke Zarathustra") was a pillar of his world view; Nietzsche's writings were as important to Delius as the Bible was to a devoted Christian.⁵⁰ Delius believed, or hoped, that the new century would be an age dominated by reason, when

⁴⁷ In this context *arioso* refers to a freedom of melodic shape, phrase length, limited repeated material, and no formal structure.

⁴⁸ Delius is quoted as saying to Fenby shortly before his death, "Yes, I think if I had anything worth saying, my boy, I said it in *Sea Drift*." Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 180.

⁴⁹ *A Mass of Life* has one more trumpet than *Appalachia*. Otherwise, the instrumentation is the same.

⁵⁰ Palmer, *Delius*, 97.

mankind might free himself from the shackles of religion and therefore accomplish true greatness.⁵¹ *A Mass of Life* retells the story of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* in a libretto adapted by German conductor Fritz Cassirer (1871-1926).

A Mass of Life has endured a somewhat controversial history—adding to the Delius mythos. It is his only strictly German work, conceived in the German language and extoling German—Nietzschean—values. Palmer explains:

“This is the music of the new Germany, of the race of the Supermen, of the blond Teutonic god-hero who armed, brazen and beautiful, the fire of vision and victory in his eyes, stands flexing his muscles in a deluge of sunlight. How the Nazi culture-vultures could have overlooked this sterling musical prophet of their fondly-imagined thousand-year empire remains a mystery to me.”⁵²

Delius interpreted Nietzsche through the lens of his own ego. He viewed *Also Sprach Zarathustra* as a story of one man’s willful triumph against the shackles of religion. *A Mass of Life* is intended to affirm the triumph of man’s will over spiritual and physical oppression; it is an optimistic, celebratory piece filled with exultant outbursts.

Unfortunately for the chorus, many of these outbursts present enormous physical and musical challenges. The sopranos alone are asked to sing in a very high tessitura; for such a lengthy work consistently singing beautifully and with good vocal health would prove a challenge for all but the most accomplished choirs. A further challenge for the chorus is its independence from the orchestra. While a sign of compositional strength, the lack of doubling the chorus parts with such a dense and chromatic work substantially increases the difficulty level. (ex. 1.5)

⁵¹ See note 21.

⁵² Palmer, *Delius*, 99.

I. Fl. I.
 II. Fl. II.
 C.A. Clarinet in A.
 I. Cl. Bb.
 II. Cl. Bb.
 Ba. Cl. Bass Clarinet.
 I. II. Bsn. Bassoon.
 III. Horn I.
 I. II. Horn II.
 III. IV. Horn III & IV.
 Hp. I. Harp I.
 Hp. II. Harp II.
 S. I. Chorus Soprano I.
 S. II. Chorus Soprano II.
 A. I. Chorus Alto I.
 A. II. Chorus Alto II.
 Vla. Viola.
 Vc. Violoncello.
 D.B. Double Bass.

Example 3.5. Frederick Delius, *A Mass of Life*, [75]+3.

A Mass of Life contains some of the best examples of Delius's contrapuntal writing which is otherwise often lacking in his choral music. In movement III, *In dein Auge schaute ich*, the chorus begins languidly with neutral vowel 'Ahs' sung in a sustained, unison and static melody, creating a haunting color. Tenor and soprano soli sing successively in a free, rhapsodic style similar to *Sea Drift*, while accompanied by rich, gorgeous orchestral strings and woodwinds. Delius gradually increases the textures, adding sopranos at [17], then at [19] the altos switch to a jaunty 'la la.' At [23] Delius finally passes the text to the choir, *Das ist ein Tanz*, after which the double choirs break into independent, imitative parts, shifting to the gay 'la la' and 'ha ha' vowels. Delius gradually increases the choral and orchestral density until an explosive climax at [32], marked *sempre fortissimo*.

Programming challenges persist, but they are primarily misperceptions. One such challenge is the word Mass in the title: this raises the expectation of a Christian context and settings of the Ordinary. Delius uses the term Mass only to emphasize the work's pantheistic religious importance, not to suggest any Christian context. Secondly, two world wars focused on Germany—the second of which with a strong philosophical connection to Nietzsche—further discouraged performances of *A Mass of Life*.⁵³

As an apologist for the Nietzschean cause, Delius clung to a hope that atheism might prevail over Christianity. In Delius's mind, such a development seemed a natural state of progression. As Delius's disciple, Heseltine adopted a similar view, jettisoning

⁵³ For example, the famous Nazi propaganda film *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*) (1935) directed by Leni Riefenstahl takes its name from *Also Sprach Zarathustra*; the opening chorus to Delius's mass translates: "Oh, thou my will, thou can'st shatter my misfortune, preserve me from all trivial victories!"

his Christian faith and taking up the Nietzschean banner. In his 1923 biography on Delius, Heseltine elucidates his hope for the work:

“This colossal work, without a doubt the greatest musical achievement since Wagner, a Mass worthy to rank beside the great Mass of Sebastian Bach, is as yet almost entirely unknown, even to musicians and those who profess to be in touch with the most recent developments of the art. It may be that, in this age of superficiality in art, its very profundity militates against it. But such music is proof against the neglect of the age which gave it birth. It is, in the fullest sense, a deeply *religious* work, and one can imagine a more spiritually enlightened generation performing it as a solemn ritual in some gigantic open-air theatre, year after year at the coming-in of summer.”⁵⁴

A more recent, objective, and critical commentary provides a counter-balance to Heseltine’s praise:

“The trouble was that for the purpose of a two and a quarter hours’ (sic) *Mass* these sentiments [Nietzschean] had to be stated convincingly in music which would equal in weight the essentially epic nature of Nietzsche’s philosophy – a trouble which renewed itself in the *Requiem*. Now Delius was a master of the personal utterance and where this utterly private and solitary individual attempted to turn into a Public Orator, he failed. In the *Mass*, Delius tries his hand at public oratory and the experiment was not a success. His most personal style – a basically improvisatory chromaticism which breathes from bar to bar, not from paragraph to paragraph, or movement to movement – cannot sustain big structures and, as a result, in a *Mass* requiring extended movements, Delius is obliged to relieve his customary chromaticism with draughts of the diatonic. But diatony does not necessarily guarantee firm, formal foundations and, moreover, once Delius had sacrificed his harmonic individuality – and there is little or no contrapuntal interest in his music – eclecticism seeps in. Hence the *Mass*’s comparatively eclectic style and its patent Europeanism.”⁵⁵

A Mass of Life is, in fact, no Mass at all, but more in style and scope a secular oratorio. If Delius had simply titled it *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and acknowledged the genre as oratorio it may have been more accepted by audiences. Even if such were the

⁵⁴ Palmer, *Delius*, 106.

⁵⁵ Donald Mitchell, “Delius: The Choral Music,” *Tempo* 26 no. 3 (Winter 1952-53), <http://jstor.org> (accessed Oct. 17, 2014).

case, most oratorios from the time period languish in obscurity, from Granville Bantock's (1868-1946) *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (1910) to Edward Elgar's (1857-1934) *St. Olaf* (1896). Delius's *A Mass of Life* remains an important work in his choral output despite its troubled history and musical challenges, if for no other reason it was a seminal piece in his own mind and it influenced his musical followers, particularly in their religious and musical philosophies.

A choral hiatus followed *A Mass of Life* as Delius turned his attention to orchestral and instrumental works until 1908 when he completed *Songs of Sunset*. As with most of Delius's works, he wrote it for his own pleasure, not on commission. Delius was taken by the poetry of Ernest Dowson (1867-1900), a poet who shared his world-view. As stated by Lee-Browne:

“He [Delius] would, of course, have been utterly fired up by Ernest Dowson's text which fulfils (sic) just about every criterion for the composer in terms of his personal world-view: all transient existence on Earth compared with Nature's eternal renewal, to the austere belief that we come from nothing and return to nothing.”⁵⁶

Songs of Sunset is shorter in length and smaller in scale than both *Sea Drift* and *A Mass of Life*. In some ways, it resembles a chamber work. The movements are closed, there is no orchestral prelude, the choral parts are often doubled by the orchestra, the choir is often undivided, and the orchestra is smaller. Always concerned with color, the more intimate orchestra includes some unusual instruments including bass oboe and sarrusophone. Later editors have suggested the sarussophone might be replaced by the double bassoon, but conductors should be wary of tampering with Delius's

⁵⁶ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 229.

orchestration.⁵⁷ Delius also calls for occasional solo violin *obbligato* passages, adding another depth of color and further increasing the chamber feel of the work. The vocal forces are SATB chorus with minimal divisions, and soprano and baritone soloists. Unlike *Sea Drift*, *Songs of Sunset* is organized like a cantata (with closed movements), making for possible choral extractions. Because Delius wished for this choral cycle to be performed as one complete work without breaks between movements he neither titles movements, nor indicates them numerically or otherwise; they are to follow one another *attacca*. For the sake of clarity, I am providing a list of movements with incipit titles and performing voices:

- I. Chorus: “A Song of the Setting Sun!”
- II. Baritone and Soprano duet: “Cease Smiling, Dear!”
- III. Chorus: “Pale Amber Sunlight Falls”
- IV. Soprano solo: “Exceeding Sorrow Consumeth my Heart!”
- V. Baritone solo: “By the Sad Waters”
- VI. Chorus and Baritone solo: “See how the Trees and the Osiers Lithe”
- VII. Baritone Solo: “I was not Sorrowful”
- VIII. Chorus, Baritone and Soprano soli: “They are not Long, the Weeping and the Laughter”

Songs of Sunset is united by a recurring motive, something not present in the previous choral works. First introduced in the *cor anglais* at [4] + 6, the theme is four notes and encapsulates a sense of loss (ex. 1.6):

⁵⁷ *Songs of Sunset* was revived with original orchestration for the Millennium Choral Competition 2000-2001 by the British Music Society. In the resultant journal publication, *British Choral Music: A Millennium Performing Conspectus of nineteenth & Twentieth Century Music for Choral Societies*, Robert Tucker, the conductor of the Broadheath Singers said concerning the bass oboe: “...it is such an important part and having the authentic sound was doubly wonderful.” The article continues with the comment: “Even more interesting was the metallic sound of the contra-bass sarrusophone, a part often heard on the contrabassoon, but here reminding us of the demands of its period for orchestral color and ever widening musical sensation.” Lewis Foreman, ed. *British Choral Music: a Millennium Performing Conspectus of Nineteenth & Twentieth Century Music for Choral Societies* (Essex: British Music Society, 2001), 18.

Example 3.6. Frederick Delius, “A Song of the Setting Sun!,” in *Songs of Sunset*, [4]+6.

This motive recurs throughout the score, often transposed, varied, and rhythmically augmented or diminished. Indeed, at the conclusion of the final movement, it is the final musical statement in the work, voiced by a single, lonely clarinet. The use of this motive provides *Songs of Sunset* with a greater sense of unity, and the conductor must recognize the importance of this motive with each statement. Interestingly, this motive is never deployed in the choral texture.

Songs of Sunset was particularly appreciated by Heseltine who said of it:

“This song-cycle affords a fine example of the way in which Delius imparts to his works a feeling of unity and cohesion fully as satisfying as the most elaborate devices of formal structure by means which totally elude a formal theoretical analysis. Except for the one little theme that wanders through the score like a pale ghost, there is no thematic connection between the various songs; the structure of the work, the interrelation of the different movements, and the significance of their sequence are wholly spiritual.”⁵⁸

Concerning the relationship of chorus to orchestra, Heseltine provides some important observations that we can extrapolate upon the broader body of Delius’s choral orchestral output:

⁵⁸ Warlock, *Delius*, 112.

“Between the choral and purely orchestral works of Delius we can draw no rigid distinction. Chorus and orchestra are not two separate bodies but organically related members of the great body of musical sound. The chorus is never pitted antiphonally against the orchestra after the practice of the older choral writers. Delius aims always at the coalescence of contrasting factors. At the first performance of *Songs of Sunset* he desired the chorus to remain seated while singing, to lend colour to the illusion of impersonal unity. The idea was not carried into practice, but it serves to illustrate his view of the function of the chorus in his works and is fully in keeping with the spirit of his choral style.”⁵⁹

Songs of Sunset deserves to be better known by choral conductors and could serve as an entry-point for Delius’s choral music. Although it largely lacks in contrast—there are no climactic outbursts, nor dramatic changes of affect—*Songs of Sunset* is quintessential Delius in the use of orchestral color, mood, and poetry. The choral parts are more accessible than *Sea Drift* and *A Mass of Life*. The primary choral challenges are the sustained singing and Delius’s characteristic chromaticism.

We come at last to Delius’s first part songs in over twenty years, *Three Unaccompanied Part Songs*, published in 1910 by Harmonie Verlag. The songs are *On Craig Ddu: An Impression of Nature*, *Wanderer’s Song*, and *Midsummer Song*. These songs are published in volume 17 Delius’s collected works. *On Craig Ddu* is arguably the best of the set. Of additional interest is the subtitle, which makes a direct connection to the impressionist movement.

On Craig Ddu was composed in 1907 and is scored for SATTBB voices, although this voicing is misleading. The female voices divide into three, then four parts. Although the men’s voices are scored openly in four staves, the tenors are rarely divided. Delius frequently splits the bass II’s and bass I’s, but never at the same time. In other words, he

⁵⁹ Ibid., 113.

scores for four-part basses, but the middle voices are usually doubled. The score is for a large choir with enough depth to divide each section (ex. 3.7).

4

low In-to the si-lence the sound of the wa-ter.
 bei- und in dem Schwei-gen das Rau-schendes Was-sers.

low In-to the si-lence the sound of the wa-ter.
 bei- und in dem Schwei-gen das Rau-schendes Was-sers.

low In-to the si-lence the sound of the wa-ter.
 bei- und in dem Schwei-gen das Rau-schendes Was-sers.

low In-to the si-lence the sound of the wa-ter.
 bei- und in dem Schwei-gen das Rau-schendes Was-sers.

low In-to the si-lence the sound of the wa-ter.
 bei- und in dem Schwei-gen das Rau-schendes Was-sers.

brought from be-low in-to the si-lence the sound of the wa-ter.
 flü-steri vor-bei und in dem Schwei-gen das Rauschendes Was-sers.

Example 3.7, Frederick Delius, *On Craig Ddu*, mm. 22-28.

The texture of *On Craig Ddu* is homophonic with the sopranos singing the tune over a chordal texture. Aside from the cascading of high voices to low in the opening, there is no ceasing from a full choral texture; Delius provides not one rest in the entire piece, demanding sustained singing. Delius makes careful use of text painting, for example with long melismas on the word ‘blew,’ (ex.3.8) chromatically flowing ‘water,’ (ex.3.7) and the placidly still whole and half-notes at the concluding ‘silence, a veil.

The image shows a musical score for 'On Craig Ddu' by Frederick Delius. It consists of six staves. The top four staves are for vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass), each with the lyrics: 'wind as it blew, Wind und sein Weh'n,'. The bottom two staves are for piano accompaniment, with the lyrics: 'Hark! for the wind as it blew, Horch auf den Wind und sein Weh'n, lie on the mountain-top. Hark! for the schau von den Bergeshöhen. Horch auf den'. The score includes musical notation such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano). A fermata is placed over the final notes of the vocal parts, and a '3' is written above the final measure of the piano part.

Example 3.8. Frederick Delius, *On Craig Ddu*, mm. 13-16.

The second work in the set, *Wanderer's Song*, is voiced for four-part men's chorus, TTBB, and is a more standard, strophic work striking a more popular tone. The chorus sings syllabically and homophonically throughout. Delius contrasts the sections by switching from simple to compound meter. He divides the chorus into eight parts in the last four measures, though there is some doubling of parts. The effect of this piece is largely forgettable. The rampant chromaticism and syllabic style do little to distinguish it from other similar repertoire. However, *Wanderer's Song* is Delius's only unaccompanied part song for male voices and should be considered for performance by collegiate male choirs searching for early twentieth-century repertoire.

The third work, *Midsummer Song*, is written in an entirely different style than the first two songs. It is scored for SSAATTBB voices, although the split voices are

Palmer suggests the sudden “squelch” of a chromatic chord in an otherwise diatonic texture is a characteristic of Delius that influenced Heseltine (ex.3.10):

...more directly relevant to this context is the splendid *Benedicamus Domino* which sports a favourite device of Warlock’s [Heseltine’s]...that of throwing in a short pregnant phrase of Delian chromatic harmony to enliven a consistently diatonic norm...In the New Year Carol *What Cheer? Good Cheer!* Delius would have liked the ‘squelch’ of the clotted chord at ‘birth,’ the sole pimple in an otherwise blamelessly diatonic harmony.⁶⁰

The image shows a musical score for Philip Heseltine's 'Benedicamus Domino' (mm. 32-36). It consists of four staves, each with a vocal line and the Latin lyrics 'fac-tus est et im-mor-ta-lis. In hoc fes-to de-ter-min-o E-ya, no-bis'. The music is in 2/4 time and features a chromatic chord at the end of the phrase, marked 'f risoluto'.

Example 3.10. Philip Heseltine (Warlock), *Benedicamus Domino*, mm. 32-36.

Delius’s next choral work is one of his most interesting and neglected, *An Arabesque* (1911). *An Arabesque*’s construction is more akin to a tone poem than the other cantata-like (sectional) choral/orchestral works so far discussed. After studying the of the score, the author agrees with Beecham who said, “...the work is not only in its composer’s ripest style but in the point of sheer opulence of sound unsurpassed by

⁶⁰ Palmer, *Delius*, 158.

anything else he ever wrote.”⁶¹ Heseltine translated Jens Peter Jacobson’s (1847-1885) Danish poem into a singing English translation, which may help explain the work’s neglect.⁶²

An Arabesque is scored in a typical Delius style, including the sarrusophone. An important orchestral addition is the celesta, which contributes coloristic effects to *An Arabesque*. The vocal parts are for a baritone soloist, and for SATB chorus, *divisi*. The baritone is the star of *An Arabesque*, with the chorus taking a much more subdued, but no less critical role. Heseltine summarized the symbolic text in a 1929 program note:

“...a strange half-symbolic poem dealing with the darker aspects of the god Pan, who here represents the object of sensual passion which leads to madness and death. It is at once a lover’s rhapsody of long-lost love and a paean in prose of the brilliant, all-too-fleeting Scandinavian summer. In each case the passionate moment is exalted and a short spell of bliss breeds dissolution and decay.”⁶³

The translation of *An Arabesque* has long been a source of confusion. There is even contradictory evidence as to which language Delius set; Palmer claims Delius set the original Danish while Lee-Browne claims it was Jelka’s German translation.⁶⁴ Helsetine’s translation of the German into English resulted in some confusing lines of poetry, such as:

Yea, she drank and her glance then obeyed her,
From the bowl of troth to eternal plighting
From the poisonous lilies’ dazzling chalice!⁶⁵

Lee-Browne provides a helpful interpretation of the poem:

⁶¹ Thomas Beecham, *Frederick Delius* (New York: Vienna House, 1959), 168.

⁶² Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) selected his *Gurrelieder* (1913) from the same collection of Jacobson’s poetry.

⁶³ Palmer, *Delius*, 71.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 72. Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 295.

⁶⁵ Palmer, *Delius*, 72.

“It is not so much a narrative, as a portrait of an unnamed female figure. She is an ambivalent creature, seductive but treacherous. Though compared to ‘jasmin’s sweet-scented snow’, she also has the ‘red blood of poppies in her veins.’ A *femme fatale* with ‘singing in her laughter’ and ‘gladness in her pain’, she seemingly drinks allegiance to her lovers, but her pledge is drained from the ‘dazzling chalice of poisoned lily’ and those who desire her are doomed.”⁶⁶

An Arabesque opens and closes with the “enigmatic question, ‘knowst thou Pan?’

implying “pagan lust.”⁶⁷ The work, then, is a symbolic exegesis on the consequences of lust, which Palmer suggests is autobiographical:

“That Delius was able to respond so keenly to the peculiar mood and theme of the poem is perhaps not surprising when we realize that by the time he came to compose this music (1911-1915) the malady he had acquired in the throes of passion [syphilis]...was now beginning to stir and betray its presence in the form of physical symptoms.”⁶⁸

Delius strikes at something both intimate and powerful in *An Arabesque*.

Musically, he never wrote more colorfully, using the celeste and harp to more effect than any other work, and effortlessly weaving together the choir, orchestra, and baritone.

Delius uses the choir sparingly and to powerful effect. The choir does not enter until the piece is well underway, and then, they sing a chromatic “Ah” for only two bars.

Thereafter, the chorus enters periodically in either four-part animated homophony, or in striking passages of voices doubled at the octave. This texture of octave doubling creates a surprising sense of heightened drama and intensity (ex.3.11).

⁶⁶ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 295.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 295.

⁶⁸ Palmer, *Delius*, 73.

Sopr.
 Alt.
 Ten.
 Bass.

Wor - te fie - - len weich wie Ap - fel - blü - - ten blät - - ter auf das
 words they fell as soft - - ly as pet - als of ap - - ple blos - - som on the.

Fließender. *More flowing*

Example 3.11. Frederic Delius, *An Arabesque*, [7]+3.

The chorus is reserved for the most climactic, *fff* moment at [10]+1 with the text ‘Gladness was in her pain; By her were all things vanquished.’ This is the most “passionate moment” as described by Heseltine. Delius follows with a baritone and tenor chorus quite literally spell-bound by the *femme-fatale*’s song. At [10]+3 Delius marks “continually softer and slower,” and then, two bars later, “very slow” with the text, ‘But the spell of her two eyes,’ sung first by the baritone, then, dreamily with an augmented 3/2 measure and languid quarter-note triplets by the tenors. What follows is an intoxicated, beautifully arpeggiated orchestral interlude when ‘all things’ are vanquished by her beauty (ex.3.12).

25

Wieder ruhiger u. langsamer. *Quieter and slower.* Sehr langsam. *Very slow.*

1. Clarin. in A
2. B.
Clarin. in E-flat
Fag. B.
1. 2. Cor. in F.
3. 4.
1. 2. 3. 4. Trb. in B.
1. 2. 3. 4. Trb. in E.
Cel.
Acp.
Bar. S.
Sopr.
Alt.
Ten.
Bass.
VI. 1.
VI. 2.
Vla.
Vcl.
Cb.

Wieder ruhiger u. langsamer. *Quieter and slower.* Sehr langsam. *Very slow.*

surwei wagten ihr zu trösten. In-re ei - gegen Au - gen.
and nought else dared gaze upon her. But the spell of her o'ertwo eyes.

Wieder ruhiger u. langsamer. *Quieter and slower.* Sehr langsam. *Very slow.*

Example 3.12. Frederick Delius, *An Arabesque*, [10]+3.

As the story reaches its conclusion and the cold snow leaves the narrator desolate, ‘One after another shedding its bloodreddened berries In the, white, cold snow...’, Delius transforms the score into a bleak, cold, winter landscape with strings divided into eight parts. The cellos and violas play pizzicato on off-beats while the violins play double-stops in divided parts (ex.3.13).

Example 3.13. Frederick Delius, *An Arabesque*, [10]+3.

In the last, mysterious phrase, ‘Knowest thou Pan?’ Delius pairs the upper and lower voices, doubling sopranos with tenors, and altos with basses, drenched in chromaticism.

The final cadence occurs over a low B pedal, intensified by use of the Lydian mode (ex.3.14).

Example 3.14. Frederick Delius, *An Arabesque*, [16]+1.

In terms of performance practice, *An Arabesque* presents several surmountable hurdles. One is the length. A major choral/orchestral work of only fifteen minutes is difficult to program, both musically and financially. Second is language: does a conductor choose English, German, or the original Danish? The score published by

Boosey & Hawkes includes both English and German translations. At least one commercial recording is available in Danish by Delius's greatest champion, Thomas Beecham, who claimed the result was, "...surprising and beautiful."⁶⁹ Third, while the chorus is a critical part of the performance, Delius holds them in reserve, thus increasing their effect. The result, though, is less music for the choir; *An Arabesque* is primarily for baritone and orchestra.

An Arabesque is one of Delius's most unjustly neglected works. It is Delius distilled. Instead of a lengthy rhapsody like *Sea Drift*, or an overwhelming and huge piece like *A Mass of Life*, here is a work with every characteristic of Delius: chorus and orchestra, baritone soloist, a worthy, color-drenched orchestration, a sophisticated text, and themes of love, lust, and loss. All these elements are concentrated into a compact score of fifteen minutes, making for a powerful and potent concert work.

Delius followed *An Arabesque* with another important choral/orchestral work, *The Song of the High Hills* (1912). Several factors distinguish *The Song of the High Hills* from his other choral/orchestral works. One, it is the only choral orchestral work of Delius where the *entire* piece is wordless. Two, *The Song of the High Hills* includes a sonata-like recapitulation.

The Song of the High Hills is scored for large orchestra, SSAATTBB chorus, and soprano and tenor soli (to be sung from the chorus). Again there are unusual instrumental demands including bass clarinet, three bassoons, sarrusophone, six horns in F, timpani for three players, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, celesta), and two harps. No vowel or consonants are indicated for singing, although the preface to the score includes

⁶⁹ Frederick Delius, *Hassan, Sea Drift, Arabesk*, Sir Thomas Beecham, Masterworks Portrait 0104768010, 1991, compact disc.

the editorial note, “The chorus must sing on the vowel which will produce the richest tone possible.”⁷⁰

Delius took the unusual step to provide program notes for *The Song of the High Hills*:

“I have tried to express the joy and exhilaration one feels in the Mountains & also the loneliness & melancholy of the high Solitudes (sic) & the grandeur of the wide far distances. The human voices represent man in Nature (sic); an episode, which becomes fainter & then disappears altogether.”⁷¹

Delius’s friend, Percy Grainger, later recalled:

“I once asked Delius whether his *Song of the High Hills* purported to be the high hills ‘singing about themselves’ or whether the music tallied the impressions of a man under the spell of Alpine scenery. His reply was expectable: ‘The impression of a man walking through the hills.’”⁷²

The programmatic nature of the piece is further elucidated by Beecham:

“The ascent of and descent from the High Hills is cunningly depicted in music of a totally different character from that which greets us when the summit has been attained, where we have a magical sequence of sounds and echoes, both vocal and instrumental, all culminating in a great outburst of tone that seems to flood the entire landscape.”⁷³

Lee-Browne provides a table of the work’s sonata-like structure, which I have reproduced:

Section I:

A: Exposition I, Opening

⁷⁰ This quotation is included in the title page of the score, beneath the instrument list. Robert Threlfall, the editor of the 1985 edition makes a note that the new edition includes tempo and dynamic markings made by Percy Grainger and Thomas Beecham that were approved by Delius. It is not clear who wrote the note on the singing style. Frederick Delius, *The Song of the High Hills*, Robert Threlfall, ed. (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1988), 2.

⁷¹ Carley, *Life in Letters*, 228.

⁷² Walrock. *Delius*, 171.

⁷³ Beecham, *Frederick Delius*, 168.

- B: (Interlude), [8] + 7
- C: Exposition II, [15] + 3
- Section II:
 - A: [17] + 1
 - B: ‘The Wide Far Distance – The Great Solitude,’ [23] + 4
 - C: Combination of IIA & IIB, [27] + 7
 - D: Recapitulation of IIA, [30] + 1
- Section III:
 - A: Recapitulation of section I with B omitted [35] + 1
 - B: Coda, recapitulation of IIB, [49] + 1⁷⁴

When Delius deploys the chorus, it is treated even more reservedly than in *An Arabesque*; Delius uses the chorus incrementally, first with four tenors singing ‘To sounds as if in the far distance.’

At [17]+7, is one of Delius’s most effective moments in his body of choral orchestral works. To increase the effect of remoteness, Delius writes in the score: ‘The wide far distance – The great solitude.’ He also indicates ‘The chorus keeps sitting.’ Delius desires for the choir to be as musically integrated into the orchestra as possible. The strings are muted and divided into seventeen parts resulting in a wash of soft, warm color. Delius calls for only four singers on a part, singing from *pp* to *pppp*. After the first-tenors sing their ‘distant sound’ for seven bars, Delius adds first the second-altos, second-tenors, and basses, followed in the next bar by the sopranos; he controls every aspect of color with attention to density, range, timbre, dynamics, and written descriptions (ex.3.15).

⁷⁴ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 302.

Example 3.15. Frederick Delius, *The Song of the High Hills*, [18]+1.

The second use of the chorus occurs at [21]+4, with six tenors ‘In the far distance’ simply singing a gently ascending figure from low A to a high D over three measures. Delius uses sopranos, tenors and basses at [26]+5 marked *pppp* and as ‘a sigh.’ The choir sings mostly static, dotted-whole notes, followed by the gentlest of soprano “sighs” at [27]–1. All three of these small uses of chorus are mere foreshadowing of *The Song of the Hills*’s choral climax.

A ‘Tenor solo in the chorus’ follows at [28], then at [30] Delius finally adds the full chorus in an unaccompanied section. Once the full chorus has entered, the soprano and tenor soloists sing together. The full orchestra joins the chorus and builds to the only work’s only *fff* at [33]. This is Delius’s climax at reaching the hill’s peak, a moment of

pantheistic joy. Thereafter Delius gradually *decrescendos* and subtracts forces, until the last bass sings a *pppp* on a low G2, marked “only a sigh.” The chorus does not sing again, though the piece continues for another six or seven minutes.

The Song of the High Hills is sometimes not included in lists of Delius’s choral output.⁷⁵ This is because it is primarily an orchestral work. *The Song of the High Hills* is in fact a tone poem with chorus as an additional orchestral color. *The Song of the High Hills* was, however, recognized by his contemporaries as one of his greatest achievements. Palmer describes it as “...the most wonderful music he ever wrote...”⁷⁶ In his Delius biography, Beecham writes:

“It [*The Song of the High Hills*] is built on an heroic scale and the inspiration is on an exalted level throughout...The first entrance of the full choir singing as softly as possible is surely a stroke of genius, and of its kind without equal, either in him or any other composer.”⁷⁷

Constant Lambert—whose own choral orchestral work *The Rio Grande* will be examined later—wrote of *The Song of the High Hills*, “...how is one to convey one’s feeling that the middle section of this work is not only the most inspired moment of Delius but one of the most moving passages in the whole of music?”⁷⁸

It is a sad fact that as music scholars we often overlook small gems for what are considered more important, larger works. Delius composed two songs for children in 1913, aptly titled *Two Songs for Children*, which are valuable not only because they are unique in his output, but because they are well crafted examples of Delius at the height of his maturity. Delius does not compromise his style, creativity, or personal expression

⁷⁵ Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 675.

⁷⁶ Palmer, *Delius*, 41.

⁷⁷ Beecham, *Frederick Delius*, 168.

⁷⁸ Stephen Lloyd, *Beyond the Rio Grande* (Woodbridge, Britain: The Boydell Press), 202.

when writing for children. These two songs are unique for two reasons: they are the only music Delius wrote for a children's (or treble) choir, and they are his only choral works with a piano accompaniment. By his choice of sophisticated texts, complex harmonic language, and ever-present chromaticism, we can surmise Delius's respect for children's musicianship. These songs remain a delightful challenge for children's and women's choirs and should be reintroduced into the treble repertoire.

As with most of Delius's music, the origins of *Two Songs for Children* is murky. He wrote them in 1913 for an apparent commission by the American Progressive Music Series.⁷⁹ They were supposed to be sung in American schools but for unknown reasons only the first was released. Both songs were later published by Oxford.

The first song is *Little Birdie*, a strophic setting of a short poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892). The brevity of this setting combined with its modest range, unison voices, and prevalent use of the child-friendly intervals of the minor third, perfect fourth and fifth make it accessible for younger singers (ex.3.16).⁸⁰ Delius includes piano figures to add representative imagery, including the 'birdie's' song in the first and final two measures, as well the 'little birdie' flying away at the song's conclusion. The work is a lullaby, with use of the rhetorical comparison of the bird's flight to the baby's dreams (ex.3.17).

⁷⁹ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 320.

⁸⁰ Lois Choksy, *The Kodaly Method: Comprehensive Music Education from Infant to Adult* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 16.

VOICES

1. What does lit - tle bir - die say
2. What does lit - tle ba - by say

PIANO

mf

With Pedal

Example 3.16. Frederick Delius, *What does little Birdie Say*, mm. 1-3.

Then she flies a - way.
Ba - by too shall fly a - way.

p

Example 3.17. Frederick Delius, *What does Little Birdie Say*, mm. 16-19.

The second song, *The Streamlet's Slumber Song*, with poetry by May Morgan (dates unknown), is more sophisticated, although still strophic. The two independent treble voices are more chromatic and complicated than *Little Birdie*. Delius increases the difficulty level with occasional voice crossings, increased chromaticism, broader ranges spanning an octave and a half, and parallel tritones. As in Delius's other choral music,

tritones are prevalent both melodically and harmonically between voice parts.⁸¹ Delius also uses text painting, as in the closing words ‘Slower, softer still it sighs, to a whisper dies.’ The poetry of *The Streamlet’s Slumber Song* is consistent with Delius’s theme of dying summer and the transience of life.

Example 3.18. Frederick Delius, *The Streamlet’s Slumber Song*, mm. 12-19.

The piano accompaniment for both songs is surprisingly sophisticated and dense. Delius is careful to keep the piano and vocal lines integrated, always keeping the tune present in the accompaniment. In *The Streamlet’s Slumber Song*, the piano has especially thick and chromatic textures, requiring skilled use of the pedal.

⁸¹ See examples 3.1, 3.2.

Requiem of 1916 is Delius's most controversial and least performed choral/orchestral work. After studying the score and reading both contemporary and current reviews and scholarship, I believe this work is ripe for a new evaluation. Although little from *Requiem* can be linked to Delius's successors, this work falls squarely in the category of pieces worthy of rediscovery. One hundred years have passed since *Requiem* was written, and the controversies surrounding it have become dim memories. *Requiem* is a victim of the social and religious politics of Edwardian England in a Britain howling from the pain and devastation of World War I.

Delius conceived *Requiem* as a memorial to the dead killed in the Great War. His miscalculation was to give the work a Christian title, while filling it with his own Nietzschean attacks on the Christian religion. *Requiem* is a polemical attack on any kind of faith that confesses an afterlife. But *Requiem* isn't purely a negative work. It simultaneously uplifts Delius's faith in the constant renewal of nature. It must be remembered that Britain was experiencing a religious revival in the wake the devastation of World War I, and its people were searching for hope and comfort from the horrors of mechanized warfare. Audiences were not sympathetic with the opening lines sung by the baritone soloist:

‘Why then dissemble we with a tale of falsehoods...At this regard weaklings waxed soar afraid, and drugged themselves with dreams and golden visions, and built themselves a house of lies to live in.’

Requiem is scored for a typically large orchestra; again he calls unusual instruments such as both bass oboe and sarrusophone. The addition of bass clarinet, three bassoons and six horns in F create a darker, more sinister sounding ensemble. The vocal

forces in *Requiem* are for double choir and baritone and soprano soli. The work is relatively short, lasting only about twenty minutes.

Delius includes a dedication in the score: “To the memory of all young Artists fallen in the war.” Additionally, Delius described his *Requiem* in his own words:

“It is not a religious work. Its underlying belief is that of a pantheism that insists on the Reality of Life...The weakling is weighed down thereby and revels in magic pictures of a cheerful existence hereafter. The storm of reality destroys the golden dream-palaces...Often a man is judged worthless to the world and its laws, who should be exalted by praise for his human goodness, and the love of which he freely gives. Thus independence and self-reliance are the marks of a man who is great and free. He will look forward to his death with high courage in his soul, in proud solitude, in harmony with nature and the ever-recurrent, sonorous rhythm of birth and death.”⁸²

It is worth noting that for his lofty, intellectual ideals, Delius was known to be callous and even cruel towards women, using them freely. Fenby recalls Delius’s views on women and marriage:

“No artists should ever marry. He should be as free as the winds. Amuse yourself with as many women as you like, but for the sake of your art never marry one. It’s fatal. And listen; if you ever do have to marry, marry a girl who is more in love with your art than with you. It’s from your art only that you will get lasting happiness in life, not from love. Love is madness.”⁸³

Delius’s philosophy of life carried little sense of goodwill or charity towards the neighbor. His main interest was the exultation of the Self. After Delius died, Grainger wrote to Fenby, “Fred set out to enjoy life, did so, and did not regret paying the price it

⁸² Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 330.

⁸³ Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him*, 185.

cost.”⁸⁴ This aspect of Delius is important because it lends context to *Requiem* and helps one understand why audiences were initially repelled by it.

Requiem is organized in five closed movements. The first movement is the most criticized and arguably the least inspired. It is constructed in a ternary form, evoking a parody of a Kyrie-like form (*Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy*). The orchestra opens with a soft, dark prelude marked “Solemn.” The double choir enters with the bleak, anti-resurrection text ‘Our days here are as one day, for all our days are rounded in a sleep, they die and never come back again.’ The movement grows to a massive, *ffff* climax meant to symbolize the storm that destroys the lies of religion. This concludes the A section. Out of the destroyed faith rises the baritone soloist who sings, ‘And out of the storm the voice of truth resounded in trumpet tone, ‘Man, thou art mortal and needs must thou die.’ At [11]+7 Delius returns to the A section with both choirs merged in a homophonic texture, repeating the opening text and music.

The second movement is a strange and questionable creation, perhaps unique in the choral repertoire; Delius mocks both Christianity and Islam with ridiculous outbursts of simultaneous ‘Hallelujahs’ and ‘Allah.’ The double choirs are marked as ‘The Crowd’ and are arranged in a three-part treble and three-part men’s texture. The treble voices syllabically sing the word ‘Halelujah’ in a trio texture for nineteen measures. The men’s voices sing ‘La il Allah’ in a similar manner, though with syncopated rhythms. The effect of this vocal cacophony is quite strange. It symbolizes the confused and ignorant masses. The cries gradually fade away to nothing and then are provided context with the baritone’s words, ‘And the highways of earth are full of cries, the ways of earth bring

⁸⁴ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 82.

forth idols...’ Delius continues with a text proclaiming that death is the end of all knowledge, so man should essentially eat, drink, and be merry: ‘...take to thyself some women thou lovest and enjoy life.’ Despite Delius’s deploration of religion, he maintains an optimistic, hedonistic philosophy.

It is in the last three movements when *Requiem* shines; as Lee-Browne puts it, after the first two movements, “...Delius has spent his rage and delivered his uncompromising sermon.”⁸⁵ Movements three and four are both love songs, the first from the baritone soloist’s perspective, the second from the soprano’s. The third movement is a love song evoking the Song of Solomon: ‘My beloved whom I cherished was like a flower whose fair buds were folded tightly, and she opened her heart at the call of love.’ The baritone is still the central voice, singing, ‘I praise her above all other women poor in their being, and so poor in giving too.’ The chorus has only one interjection, swelling to a homophonic and syllabic climax at [25].

Movement four finally gives the soprano soloist her voice. Delius crafts a dynamic response to the third movement with an indulgently beautiful, rhapsodic soprano aria. Divided, sustained strings and lushly voiced woodwinds add to the sensuous mood. The choir sings only six measures in the entire movement, adding emphasis to the soprano. She sings of the heroic man (Delius) who, ‘can love life, yet without base fear can die.’ Delius makes effective use of text painting at the close of this movement. As the soprano sings, ‘And so the star of his life sinks down in the darkness whence it had arisen,’ Delius gradually sinks the strings through their tessitura, while simultaneously

⁸⁵ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 332.

descending the woodwinds in arpeggios. Finally a solo bassoon descends in half-notes, answered by a *pppp*, low F-sharp timpani.

The fifth and final movement is a triumph of choral/orchestral music. Delius's masterfully picturesque and colorful orchestration is used to its fullest effect. In a letter to Heseltine concerning *Requiem* Delius said, "I do not think I have done better than this."⁸⁶ The fifth movement justifies his comment.

Delius created a movement of idealized scenery, his own affirmation of the pantheistic beauty of nature. The movement rotates around the importance of the four seasons and the cycle of renewal with the coming of spring. The movement is in six loosely connected sections. The first section portrays the beauty of the mountains (similar to *The Song of the High Hills*). It opens with violins playing double-stops in their highest range while the violas plane in impressionistic parallel motion. The addition of celesta and some delicately added flutes and a bassoon create a colorful opening, portraying snow-topped mountains. The baritone sings, 'The snow lingers yet on the mountains, but yonder in the valleys the buds are breaking on the trees and the hedges.'

The second section continues with a colorful, orchestral representation of springtime with singing birds in the woodwinds (ex.3.19). An ostinato of block chords in the celesta adds to the sparkling, joyful sound and the soprano soloists sings, 'The little full-throated birds have already begun their singing.' The choir responds with a joyful outburst by singing the word, 'springtime' four times in long *ff* whole-notes.

⁸⁶ Lee-Brown, *Delius and His Music*, 338.

1. Fl. I.
 II. III.
 Ob. I. II.
 C. Ing.
 I.
 Clar. in B.
 II. III.
 Clar. bas.
 I. II.
 Fag.
 III.
 Sar. in C.
 I.
 Trbe. in C.
 II. III.
 I. II.
 Trbnl.
 III.
 Tb.
 Trgl.
 Cel.
 Arpa.
 Sopr. s.
 Lied, das heißt Früh ling.
 song whose name is Spring - time.
 S.
 Früh - ling, Früh - ling, Früh - ling,
 Spring - time, time, time, A. Früh - ling, time, time, time,
 S.
 Früh - ling, Früh - ling, Früh - ling,
 Spring - time Spring - time Spring - time, T. Früh - ling, time, time, time,
 A. Früh - ling, Früh - ling, Früh - ling,
 Spring - time, time, time, B. Früh - ling, time, time, time,
 A.
 VI. I.
 VI. II.
 Vla.
 Vic.
 Ch.

Example 3.19. Frederick Delius, *Requiem*, [38]+6.

The third section follows with a calm forest scene. Delius slows the tempo, and changes the orchestration to horns in F and sustained, low strings (ex.3.20). The baritones describes the scene, ‘The woods and forests are full of coolness and silence.’ The chorus again echoes with the same words.

44 **39** *Langsamer und ruhiger, Fast 1/2 of previous.
Slower and Quieter, Almost 1/2 of preceding.*

I. II. Fl. III. *Fl. II. nimmt Pico
Fl. III. takes into Pico.*

Op. I. II. C. Ing. I. II. III. Clar. bas. I. II. III. Fag. III. Sax. in C.

39 *Langsamer und ruhiger, Fast 1/2 of previous.
Slower and Quieter, Almost 1/2 of preceding.*

I. II. Cor. in F III. IV. I. II. III. Trbn. in C. I. II. III. Trbn. Trgl. Cel. Arpt.

39 *Langsamer und ruhiger, Fast 1/2 of previous.
Slower and Quieter, Almost 1/2 of preceding.*

Bar. a. Die dich - ten Wälder sind
The woods and forests are

S. Früh - ling!
spring - time!

A. C H O R U S Früh - ling!
spring - time!

T. Früh - ling!
spring - time!

B. Früh - ling!
spring - time!

VI. I. VI. II. Vla. Vlc. Cb.

Example 3.20. Frederick Delius, *Requiem*, [39]+1.

In the fourth section, Delius begins to build to his triumphant climax of *Requiem*. First the baritone sings of one, final scene, ‘The golden corn awaits the hand of the

reaper, for the ripeness bids death come.’ With the text, ‘Everything on earth will return again’ the choir ascends in a homophonic texture to a *ff* C-major chord. As in many of Delius’s climaxes, this is followed immediately by a lengthy *decrescendo* drawing the piece towards its conclusion.

The fifth section begins at 42, with the baritone and soprano soloists dueting for the first time in *Requiem*. Together in beautifully consonant parallel sixths they simply sing the word, ‘Springtime,’ which then is echoed in a single statement by the choir. The soloists the name of the other three seasons, echoed each time by the chorus. A final choral outburst of the word ‘Springtime!’ at [45]-2 anticipate the somewhat vexing *ff* chords in the woodwinds, low brass and high strings, followed by *p* chords in the horns and low strings. Because they occur in four pairs, it may be Delius is representing the four eternal seasons.

Delius saves one more surprise in a beautiful instrumental coda, the final sixth section. As in *An Arabesque*, he alters the scale to D-Lydian with a new, lilting motive doubled in the flute and piccolo. What follows is a four-measure orchestral ostinato with each voice of the orchestra playing a different figure. Delius gradually simplifies the flute melody, subtracting notes and rhythms until only a F-sharp whole-note remains. This is one of the most interesting, beautiful, and atmospheric passages Delius ever composed (ex.3.21).

47

Fl. I.

Picc.

Ob. I.

Cl. in G.

Cl. in B.

II. III.

Fag. II. III.

Sar. in C.

Hörner in weiter Entfernung
(Horns outside (draussen).)

III.

Cor. in F.
(V. VI. im Orchester)
(In the orchestra)

V. VI.

Trompeten in weiter Entfernung
(Trumpets outside (draussen))

I.

Trb. in C.

II. III.

48

Timp.

Camp.

Celesta.

Arpa.

Vi. I.

Vi. II.

Via.

Vic.

Cb.

Example 3.21. Frederic Delius, *Requiem*, [47].

Contemporary responses to *Requiem* were condemning. Delius was not even spared the vitriol of his champions. Heseltine wrote:

“In writing it his constructive instinct seems to have temporarily deserted him, with the result that for once his music seems to have been conditioned by the form of the text rather than the text by the music. The music lacks coherence and organic unity as well as the text. It is vacillating, uncertain – and contains more than one of Delius’s very rare lapses into sheer banality.”⁸⁷

Beecham echoes similarly negative comments:

“Let confession be made at once that here we are confronted with the most curious flight of futility that ever misled the intelligence of a great artist. At no point is the invention equal to that of any preceding work of similar dimensions, and for this reason alone, it is not surprising that it has failed to hold an established position in the Delian repertoire...during the early days of the war there appeared in England, certainly for a time, a strong revival of religious emotion, largely inspired by a conviction that the contest was between one side that was upholding certain principles of supreme value, and another which was shamefully abandoning them. It has been asserted that as a highly egocentric individual, he regarded the war as a personal affront to himself, on the score that it was seriously interfering with his own labours. But there were many thousands of others sharing this misfortune, who nevertheless refrained from exploiting it for the purpose of theological argument...The spirit that animated the great *Mass*...and the *Song of the High Hills* had departed forever.”⁸⁸

When Heseltine wrote his critical comments in the early 1920s, his adoration for Delius had somewhat paled. He had found new music idols that will be discussed in the fourth chapter. The fact that Delius’s own champions thought the work was bad probably helped to ensure its place in oblivion.

It is small wonder with such passionately negative reactions that few conductors were willing to consider *Requiem* for performance. Those who bothered to play through it were sometimes surprised at what they heard:

⁸⁷ Warlock, *Delius*, 108.

⁸⁸ Beecham, *Frederick Delius*, 172-173.

“During the evening he [Moeran] sat at the Bechstein and played through my score of Delius’s *Requiem*. ‘There’s some gorgeous music in that,’ he said: ‘Why is it never performed?’”⁸⁹

One possible answer to that question is that the score is too German. *Requiem* was published in both English and German, and Delius himself thought it “...may achieve its greatest significance in Germany.”⁹⁰ There is some insinuation that Delius’s German name aroused suspicion during the war, and writing a secular memorial piece denouncing Christianity certainly did *Requiem* no favors.⁹¹ It is quite possible that post-war, anti-German sentiment in Britain contributed to *Requiem*’s critical and popular failure there.⁹² These factors may indeed be what Beecham is referencing by Delius’s “flight of futility.”

The controversial themes inherent in *Requiem* have faded over one hundred years. Some program notes or a pre-concert lecture would suffice to provide context for the work. And the theme of natural renewal – of humankind’s intimate relationship to nature and the environment – are important themes for the twenty-first century, and indeed may resonate well with a modern audience. In this sense, *Requiem* is a surprisingly progressive and forward-looking piece. The final movement would make a lovely extraction in a concert of choral/orchestral works. If it weren’t for Delius’s frontal assault on formal religion in the opening movements, much of *Requiem* could easily be reconciled with progressive Christianity and modern ideals. Lee-Browne sums it up well:

⁸⁹ Lionel Hill, *Lonely Waters: The Diary of a Friendship with E. J. Moeran* (London: Thames Publishing, 1985), 90.

⁹⁰ Carley, *A Life in Letters* vol 2, 225.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁹² *Requiem* was performed in Germany in under the direction of Otto Klemperer (1885-1973) in Frankfurt in the spring of 1922. Delius was able to attend and was pleased, and claims the audience was “enthusiastic” but there is no word on critical reaction or further performances. *Ibid.*, 255-256.

“In many pages of this challenging work, Delius’s artistry is arguably unsurpassed. It is undeniable that the first movement and part of the second – where the composer is firmly astride his hobby-horse – are weak parts of the score. . . . For vintage Delius, one must look instead to the closing pages of the second movement and what comes after, which still comprise over half the work’s total duration and in which his artistry shines out.”⁹³

The year 1917 brings us one of Delius’s most famous and important part songs, *To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water*, otherwise known as *Two Aquarelles* (1932) in the string orchestra arrangement by Fenby. As with nearly everything Delius wrote, they were an impulse, not a commission. Roger Quilter (1877-1953) wrote that Delius heard him and other members of the Orriana Choir singing *On Craig Ddu* and was so pleased he wrote *To be Sung of a Summer Night*:

“...I remember him coming to Leighton House one night when we were practicing his part-song *On Craig Ddu*; he appeared to be very affected by what he heard. In consequence he wrote two unaccompanied, wordless songs for us, *To Be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water*, shortly thereafter.”⁹⁴

The songs are an inseparable pair, simply titled “I” and “II.” While the first is often sung on its own, and likewise recorded, the second suffers without the context of the first. Delius composed two purely atmospheric works with no texts. Delius has set the imagery for us in the title. The harmonies are chromatic and are filled with parallel motion similar to the impressionist compositions of Debussy and Ravel. Delius contrasts the two songs both in articulation, tempo, mood, key, and vowel sound.

The first song includes a performance note from Delius:

⁹³ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 337.

⁹⁴ Warlock, *Delius*, 159.

Sing on vowel “ah” (as in love) with very loose mouth, almost closed in the *pianissimo*, but which should gradually be opened or shut according as more or less tone is wanted. Breath should be taken only at the sign “√” if possible, and quietly and quickly in order to preserve the *legato*.

Delius divides the tenors and basses into four parts, but leaves the sopranos and altos paired, creating a six-part texture. As in *Craig Ddu*, there are no rests throughout. The singers are called upon to sing constantly, thus contributing to the lush and sustained character of the piece. The texture is uniformly homophonic throughout, though Delius emphasizes the linear quality by overlapping the breath marks and passing the opening eighth-note motive from sopranos to every voice part (except second basses). Delius gradually builds the intensity from the opening *pianissimo* to an eventual *forte* at the middle-point of the song. Then he gradually *decrescendos*, with the indication ‘dying away to the end.’

The polarity between soprano and bass is an important aspect of how Delius scored *To be Sung of a Summer Night*. The bass and soprano often move in parallel motion and resolve in unisons at the octave. The integral relationship between the soprano and bass is important for the conductor to understand because it is the spine of the piece. If the soprano and bass sing in tune with each other, the inner parts should follow.

Delius deploys other subtleties in this song, all of which contribute to its unique qualities. While this song at first seems rhythmically simple, closer examination reveals more subtlety. The most obvious is the use of the suspension to delay melodic movement and thus propel the music forward (ex.3.22).

Another rhythmic device is the syncopation. In long-value notes, this kind of syncopation is almost imperceptible to the ear, although the overall effect is important. This syncopation occurs when Delius indicates a breath before a weak beat followed by a held note, thus forcing the singer to syncopate while maintaining a *legato* line.

Slow, but not dragging

The musical score consists of five systems of staves. The first system is for Sopranos, the second for Contraltos, the third for Tenors (I and II), and the fourth for Basses (I and II). Each system begins with a star symbol and a *pp* dynamic marking. The melody is characterized by long, sustained notes with a syncopated rhythm, indicated by a breath mark before a weak beat. The bass part includes a *pp (fulsetto)* marking.

Example 3.22. Frederick Delius, *To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water*, no. 1, mm. 1-4.

Delius adds one other syncopation. Near the end of the song, he diminished the rhythmic value of the soprano's notes, moving them on the off-beats of three and four. This increases intensity and adds rhythmic variety. Finally, Delius creates a complex rhythmic pattern at the final cadence before the penultimate measure. By moving the voice parts in diminution from bass to soprano: the second basses sustain a whole note,

the inner voices all move on beat four, and the sopranos move to a C-natural (via cross-relation with the alto's C-sharp!) on the off-beat of four (ex. 3.23).

The image shows a musical score for Example 3.23, Frederick Delius, 'To Be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water, no. 1, mm. 26-31'. The score is for voice and piano. The vocal line is marked 'dying away to the end' and 'p'. The piano accompaniment is marked 'p' and 'pppp'. The score shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 26-31.

Example 3.23. Frederick Delius, *To Be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water*, no. 1, mm. 26-31.

A final observation is Delius's tendency for inverted chords and lack of strong cadences. These features are prevalent throughout his output, but are well distilled in this piece. After the opening root-position D-minor chord, Delius doesn't provide another root position chord for four measures. The final chord of *To be Sung of a Summer Night*, no. 1 is classic example of a Delian added 6th chord (ex. 1.23).

The second part song is marked 'Gaily but not quick.' Delius includes another performance note:

The solo voice should sing to syllables as indicated, introducing delicate *staccato* at appropriate places (which are generally where the syllables "luh" is put). On *staccato* notes the vowel should be sung for a very short time and the remainder of the notes continued on the sound of "l." The accompanying voices should sing in "uh" (as in "love"). A slight aspirate, though, without taking the voice off before it, may be made at (1)

all repeated notes and (2) the first note of slurs (unless it happens to come after a breath, in which case the aspirate is best omitted).

Other than the tenor solo, the voicing is the same as the first song. Most of the gaiety is given to the solo in short value eighth and sixteenth notes, with some dotted eighths as well. Without the tenor solo the affect of this song is very similar to the first. More chromaticism in the middle section makes this song somewhat more difficult and intense. Delius also increases the rhythmic complexity, particularly in the bass voices where he develops an opening syncopated idea with increasing complexity (ex. 3.24).

The image shows a musical score for two basses, labeled I and II. The music is in 4/4 time and begins with a syncopated rhythmic pattern. A star symbol (☆) is placed above the first note of a slur in both parts. The dynamic marking *p* (piano) is indicated below the first notes. The score consists of two staves, each with a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with some dotted rhythms. The first two measures show a syncopated pattern of eighth notes, followed by a slur over a series of notes in the third and fourth measures.

Example 3.24. Frederick Delius, *To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water*, no. 2, mm. 1-2.

This song also has a more tonal feel, beginning and ending in D-major, whereas the first in the set begins in D-minor and ends in B-flat.

After 1917 Delius composed only one more part song, *The Splendor Falls on Castle Walls* (1923). This song was the product of Jelka's influence. She was known to put poetry on Delius's desk that she thought he might set to music.⁹⁵ The poem *The Splendor Falls on Castle Walls* is extracted from a long poem by Tennyson called *The Princess* (1847). The poetry is classically Romantic, filled with images of beautiful

⁹⁵ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 419.

nature and the magical, faint blowing horns of ‘Elfland.’ One particular line in this poem must have held a strong appeal for a Romantic Impressionist like Delius: ‘The long light shakes across the lakes...’

What begins as a relatively straight forward, homophonic part song turns unusual in the third system of music where Delius deploys a separate male chorus humming to imitate distant horns. He marks the score *forte*, but writes above their parts, “Separate [male] chorus to be hummed with a closed mouth imitating horns.” Delius is less concerned about practical matters as he is with his artistic vision; how can the men hum *forte* with closed lips? Always with a careful ear for color and vocal orchestration, Delius is not satisfied with the horn sound alone. While the male chorus intones their horns, the primary chorus basses sustain a low G while the sopranos ascend eventually to C5, then back to G4. Subtle touches like this can too easily be taken for granted. Delius’s use of the choir as background in this case is a striking and brilliant idea. The most evocative section of the song is the ending as, once again, the music dies away. He repeats the word ‘dying’ three times in the final cadence, with both choirs fading away to a final bitonal chord of F major over C major (ex.3.25).

The image shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble and piano. It consists of five systems of staves. The top four systems are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and the bottom system is piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'dy - ing, dy - ing, dy - ing.' repeated three times. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, and *pppp*. The piano part features a low, sustained bass line and a more active upper line.

Example 3.25. Frederick Delius, *The Spendour Falls on Castle Walls*, mm. 71-78.

In 1930, with the help of his amanuensis⁹⁶ Eric Fenby, Delius finally completed his *Songs of Farwell*. Amazingly, while both blind and paralyzed, Delius dictated the entire piece to Fenby. It was to be Delius's final choral work and stands as one of his finest. As Lee-Browne states:

“*Songs of Farewell* is Delius at his most concentrated: the work lasts barely twenty minutes, with no place for self-indulgence or needless expansion.”⁹⁷

The orchestral forces are somewhat small for Delius: two flutes, 2 oboes, cor anglais, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, double bassoon (replacing the obscure sarrusophone Delius had scored in previous works), four horns in F, three trumpets in C, three trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals (ad lib.), harp, and strings. In terms of vocal forces, *Songs of Farewell* is unique amongst Delius's choral orchestral works because there are no soloists. The chorus parts are SSAATTBB though not always divided. The score is dedicated to Jelka.

For text Delius turned again to Whitman, whose poetry he had previously set in *Sea Drift*. As we shall see, there are certain parallels between *Sea Drift* and *Songs of Farewell*, including the “seascape” of the second movement.⁹⁸ Because *Songs of Farewell* is Delius's final choral work, and evokes an elegiac quality, it is tempting to ascribe autobiographical qualities to it, as though it were Delius's own farewell. The author discourages such an interpretation because Delius began the work ten years prior to its completion and themes of sunset, loss, and sadness prevail in his output. Like *Songs*

⁹⁶ One who takes dictation.

⁹⁷ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 446.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 448.

of *Sunset*, Delius separates the work into five separate songs. In this case Delius titles each song with a roman numerals. Incipit titles are therefore provided by the author:

- I. "How Sweet the Silent Backward Tracings!"
- II. "I Stand as on some Mighty Eagle's Beak."
- III. "Passage to You!"
- IV. "Joy, Shipmate, Joy!"
- V. "Now, Finalè to the Shore"

Because Delius's choral style was well established decades earlier, *Songs of Farewell* was less influential on the younger generation of British composers. Hesletine committed suicide in 1930 and had already composed his last choral work, the unison carol *Carillon Carilla* (1929). Constant Lambert had already composed his choral masterpiece *The Rio Grande*. Moeran had matured and already absorbed what he desired from Delius. As will be shown in Chapter Six, Patrick Hadley concludes his cantata *The Hills* similarly to *Songs of Farewell*.

The first movement "How Sweet the Silent Backward Tracings!" opens without a prelude of any kind; after a half-rest, the choir is launched into a chromatically descending wash of color and choral homophony. Unlike *Sea Drift*, there is virtually no overlapping text in *Songs of Farewell*. Rather, the chorus is most often set in a syllabic, homophonic texture. Some expressive arpeggios remind us of Delius's sentimentality and Romantic roots. There is a striking similar passage in this movement and Giacomo Puccini's (1858-1924) aria *Nessun Dorma* from *Turandot* (1926). Although the evidence is anecdotal, the timing is conspicuous, with *Turandot* premiered only four years before

Delius began to work on *Songs of Farewell* (ex.3.26).⁹⁹ It is helpful to remember Delius wrote four operas and maintained a sense of drama in all his choral works.¹⁰⁰

♩ 24

[4] Andante sostenuto

Fl. I. *pp*

Ob. I. *pp*

Cl. in Sib *pp*

Cl. B. in Sib *pp*

Fg. I. *pp*

in Fa

Cr. in Fa III. *pp*

Trb. in Fa III. *pp*

Trbn. III. con Sordina *pp*

Cel.

A.

IL PRINCIPE

Nes-sun dor-ma!... nes-sun dor-ma!...

[4] Andante sostenuto

III. Corda (*sforzato*) *p*

Vni. *p*

Pos. Nat. *p*

Vle. *p*

Vc. div. *pp*

Cb. div. *pp*

Example 3.26. Giacomo Puccini, “Nessun Dorma,” in *Turandot*, [4].

⁹⁹ The only mentioning of Puccini in the published Delius literature is Fenby who reports Delius that “loathed” him! Fenby, *Delius and I Knew Him*, 195.

¹⁰⁰ Zaroni (1888), *Irmelin* (1892), *The Magic Fountain* (1895), and *Koanga* (1897).

The second movement, “I Stand as on Some Mighty Eagle’s Beak,” is one of the most beautiful and convincing choral/orchestral works in Delius’s output. The imagery of the gently rolling sea is immediately evident in the upward-moving cello figure. This motive is passed throughout the orchestra as a unifying element and also maintains the seascape idea (ex.3.28).



Example 3.28. Frederick Delius, “I Stand as on some Mighty Eagle’s Beak,” in *Songs of Farewell*, mm. 60-61.

Delius fills the piece with imagery, as in [70]+1, with the text, ‘I stand as on some mighty eagle’s beak.’ In this instance Delius creates a sense of vast space over a calm sea, quite literally as if we were soaring with the eagle across the water. A new “eagle” theme is introduced in the horns, which is then passed to the woodwinds (ex.3.29).

The image shows a page of a musical score for Frederick Delius's "I Stand as on some Mighty Eagle's Beak" from his *Songs of Farewell*. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with vocal parts. The instruments listed on the left include Flutes (I, II), Oboes (I, II), English Horn, Clarinets (I, II, Bb), Bassoon (I, II, III), Horns (I, II, III, IV), 3 Trumpets (C), Trombones & Bass Tubas (I, II, III), Timpani, Harp, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Basses, Violins (I, II), Violas, Cellos, and Double Basses. The vocal parts (Sops., Altos, Tenors, Basses) have lyrics in both English and German. The English lyrics are: "I stand as on some mighty / ea-gle's beak, / Ich steh' wie auf des mächt'gen / Ad-ler's Horst." The German lyrics are: "Ich steh' wie auf des mächt'gen / Ad-ler's Horst." The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, *espress.*, *dim.*, and *pp*. A rehearsal mark [70] is present at the bottom of the page, with the instruction *pp* 1st. halves below it.

Example 3.29. Frederick Delius, "I Stand as on some Mighty Eagle's Beak," in *Songs of Farewell*, mm. 67-73.

The next example of musical imagery is with the text, ‘The tossing waves...’.

Delius writes a more agitated texture with increasingly active strings and violins in their highest register. The chorus gradually expands in texture from a unison A4 at [80]+2 to a six voice parts spanning three octaves from low G2 to high G5. However, this is an emotional climax, not one of volume. At this point the choir is marked *piano* and the score is marked ‘Piu Tranquilo.’ Simultaneously the opening seascape theme returns in the cello and the movement swiftly ends as gently and serenely as it began. The eagle theme is heard one last time in doubled clarinets and bassoons. The violins add another characteristic color with an added-sixth (A-natural) in the final C-major chord.

The choral writing in this movement is particularly appealing. Unlike some of the chorus parts in *Songs of Farewell* (and other Delius works), Delius keeps the choir in their most comfortable registers. Because of effective orchestration, good choral writing, and motivic unity, “I Stand as on some Mighty Eagle’s Beak” is one of the most effective movements of *Songs of Farewell*.

The choral writing in the third movement “Passage to You!” presents some difficulties. In his unrestrained passion (similarly to the first movement of *A Mass of Life*) Delius once more plunges the sopranos skyward with seven high A5s, four high B5, and one high C6. Without professional sopranos this is a perilous piece of choral music. Another characteristic of this movement is lack of the vocal line’s independence. Doubling vocal lines in the orchestra is well and good, but not if the chorus is an afterthought. At several points in this movement it appears as though choir is only syllabically singing chords (ex.3.30).

Sops.
 O sun and moon and all you stars!
 Oh Son - ne, Mond und Ster-ne all!

Altos
 O sun and moon and all you stars!
 Oh Son - ne, Mond und Ster-ne all!

Tenors
 O sun and moon and all you stars!
 Oh Son - ne, Mond und Ster-ne all!

Basses
 O sun and moon and all you stars!
 Oh Son - ne, Mond und Ster-ne all!

Example 3.30. Frederick Delius, “Passage to You!,” in *Songs of Farewell*, mm. 144-154.

Additionally, the voice parts often double each other, creating a two-part texture instead of a genuine four (ex.3.31).

Sops.
 clouds! roll O rain and snows! O day and night, pas-sage to you!
 Oh Re-gen, Schneef. Oh Tag und Nacht, ich will zu euch!

Altos
 clouds! roll O rain and snows! O day and night, pas-sage to you!
 Oh Re-gen, Schneef. Oh Tag und Nacht, ich will zu euch!

Tenors
 clouds! roll O rain and snows! O day and night, pas-sage to you!
 Oh Re-gen, Schneef. Oh Tag und Nacht, ich will zu euch!

Basses
 clouds! roll O rain and snows! O day and night, pas-sage to you!
 Oh Re-gen, Schneef. Oh Tag und Nacht, ich will zu euch!

Example 3.31. Frederick Delius, “Passage to You!,” in *Songs of Farewell*, mm. 137-143.

Movement four, “Joy, Shipmate, Joy!” is the shortest choral/orchestral piece in Delius’s output, lasting only ninety seconds and numbering only twenty-nine measures. It is a delightful movement, capturing the rugged energy of Whitman’s poetry. The eight-part chorus launches immediately into the action with no orchestral prelude. The chorus states the text homophonically with hymn-like austerity, doubled by the strings. At [190] Delius deploys a rare moment of imitation with the repeated words, ‘Joy, Shipmate, Joy!’ The first-altos and first-Basses sing together in unison on high Ds, then each voice part answers imitatively. Once every voice has made their statement the homophony resumes; Delius is not interested in developing contrapuntal textures. The movement ends with a

final outburst of, ‘Joy,’ and once again concludes with an added-sixth chord, this time F-major with an added D.

The final movement is in three sections. The first marked *moderato con moto*, vacillates between 5/4 and 6/4 meters and is declamatory and chromatic. There is a similar motivic shape to the climactic section of *Sea Drift* in this section:

The image shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble. The top section is a short excerpt with four parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics are: "Das sind die Schat - - ten von Blättern. Those are the sha - dows of leaves." The dynamics are marked *pp*. The bottom section is a longer excerpt with the same four parts. The lyrics are: "stu-dy-ing the charts, Du-ly again to port and haw-ser's tie re-turn-ing; But now o - bey thy cherish'd se-cret wish, Em - prii - fend die Karten, nur um zurück zum Port und An-ker-tau zu keh-ren; doch heu-te fol - ge der ge-hei-men Sehn - sucht, um -". The dynamics are marked *mf* and *cresc.*

Example 3.32. Frederick Delius, *Sea Drift*, [22]+8 & “Now Finalè to the Shore,” in *Songs of Farewell*, mm. 221-226.

The second section of “Now, Finalè to the Shore” begins with a meter change to 3/4 and the words, ‘Embrace thy friends, leave all in order.’ Rising triplet figures in the strings, harp, and woodwinds propel the piece onward. Delius once more places the sopranos in an uncomfortably high tessitura, with sustained high B-naturals at the song cycle’s climax, ‘...depart upon they endless cruise old Sailor.’ But Delius isn’t quite

finished, he follows this climactic *fortissimo* with a *fff* repeat of the word, ‘depart’ with the choir singing in a lower register. Lee-Browne describes this moment as, “...like being drenched in pure, ice-cold water.”¹⁰¹

The slower, third section is an orchestral coda with a peaceful, undulating cello ostinato, recalling the surging sea of the second movement. Delius saves his loveliest music for the closing, and inserts the choir for a final statement at the last cadence, floating on a D-major chord in second inversion. In all of Delius’s choral orchestral works, this is the only occasion where he allows the chorus to simultaneously conclude with the orchestra.

In Delius’s choral music there are moments of extraordinary beauty and effective rhetorical treatment of texts, as in the second movement of *Songs of Farewell* and all of *An Arabesque*. Delius’s choral writing in his choral/orchestral works is idiomatic: he generally treats the chorus as a part of the orchestral texture. Delius’s idiom is to express the text equally by voices and instruments. This sometimes results in awkward and difficult choral parts with jagged, disjunct lines, and extremely chromatic homophony. However, many of Delius’s choral/orchestral works merit revival and a fresh hearing, in particular *Songs of Sunset*, *An Arabesque*, *The Song of the High Hills*, and at least movements from *Requiem* and *Songs of Farewell*. *Appalachia* alone is an important choral/orchestral work because it is an early example of African American influenced choral music. Delius understood the intrinsic value of African American music while most of the United States was still prejudiced against it.

¹⁰¹ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 451.

The part songs *On Craig Ddu*, *To Be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water*, and *The Splendor Falls on Castle Walls* are arguably Delius's finest choral works. These part songs combine with Delius's colorful, chromatic imagery. Though difficult, they are programmable for many high school and most collegiate choirs.

CHAPTER 4: THE LIFE AND CHORAL MUSIC OF PHILIP HESELTINE (PETER
WARLOCK)

The supreme blasphemy, the sin against the Holy Spirit, is to know the light and, knowing it, to plunge into the darkness: and I know now by bitter experience that it is not without reason that this sin is called the soul's destruction.

–Philip Heseltine, as quoted in *Peter Warlock: The Life of Philip Heseltine*

Few characters from music history are as complicated and interesting as Philip Heseltine – or better known as Peter Warlock, the pseudonym associated with most of his published music and literature. Fatherless from the age of two, young Heseltine seemed to spend much of his brief life in search of a father figure. In 1910, at the age of sixteen Heseltine began an obsession with the music of Delius. The composition that fired his imagination was Delius's part song *On Craig Ddu*. In a letter to his mother he wrote:

“...I may say that so far as I have yet found, Delius comes the nearest to my own imperfect ideal of music, though when I say nearest I mean ‘one of *the* nearest’, as I could not say I like him better than Elgar or Wagner, but I still think he is wonderful. There is one little work of his: a part-song for voices unaccompanied, to words by Arthur Symmons, *On Craig Ddu*: I think that song appeals to me as much as almost anything I have ever heard, by the way it *absolutely* catches the spirit of the Welsh hills and transfers it to music. I would give anything to hear it sung, as it seems to me nothing short of wonderful.”¹⁰²

In his biography on the life of Philip Heseltine, Barry Smith supposes “...the immense, emotive power of Delius's chromatic, impressionistic style appealed in some way to

¹⁰² Barry Smith, *Peter Warlock: The Life of Philip Heseltine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 18.

Philip, a relatively naïve listener with an obviously sympathetic temperament.”¹⁰³ After Heseltine studied Delius’s *Songs of Sunset* his enthusiasm only increased:

“...I consider it is one of if not the finest and most lovely pieces of music I have ever come across: it is very sad in character, but will be glorious when performed...”¹⁰⁴

In June, 1911, he was able to attend an all Delius concert conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. The concert included the choral orchestral work *Appalachia* as well as the orchestral works *Paris* (1899-1900), and *Dance Rhapsody* (1908). After the concert, Heseltine wrote his first letter of adoration to Delius, beginning a life-long friendship.

“...I cannot adequately express in words what intense pleasure it was to hear such perfect performances of such perfect music. I hope you will not mind my writing to you like this, but I write in all sincerity, and your works appeal to me strongly – so much more so than any other music I have ever heard – that I feel I cannot but tell you what joy they afford me, not only in hearing them, and in studying the scores at the piano (which, until last night, was my only means of getting to know your music) but also in the impression they leave, for I am sure that to hear and be moved by beautiful music is to be influenced for good – far more than any number of sermons and discourses can influence.”¹⁰⁵

Heseltine’s final comment about the power of music to sermonize must have resonated with Delius.¹⁰⁶ Delius gradually assumed a mentor role, filling a void in Heseltine’s life left by the lack of a father.

“Brought up by an overpowering mother who kept her son on less than she paid her servants, Heseltine had to endure her total hostility to all that really mattered to him – his music and his musical and other artistic friends. But on his father’s side there was even less, a total blank, a nothing. This led to a persistent search, not just for a man from whom he could learn, but for a father figure whom he found first in Delius and later

¹⁰³ Ibid., 17.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 20.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 21.

¹⁰⁶ See note 21.

in van Dieren. In Heseltine there was a real depth of unrequited filial love. He had a need to give and repay and make himself loved in return.”¹⁰⁷

Beecham held the opinion that the Delius/Heseltine relationship was fundamentally unhealthy.

“Upon me the letters from both sides have always made an impression that is far from agreeable. The trouble began in 1913 when an anxious ex-schoolboy, beginning to look upon Frederick as in infallible guide, sought advice as to his immediate future. Frederick give his views in a letter dated January 11th, 1913, in which he advises his young friend to do exactly what he feels like doing, and to stick to it. If he considers that music is the only thing in the world which interests him, he should take it up to the exclusion of everything else. But he adds that everything depends on perseverance, for ‘one never knows how far one can go’. This reads very pleasantly and would be harmless if there had not been a world of difference between the two men. Frederick, who had escaped from Bradford, not only realized that music was everything on earth to him, but had the iron will to pursue his way towards a definite goal, without hesitations, misgivings, or complaints. By the time he had arrived at full manhood both his mind and character had hardened unto moulds that nothing changed until the day of his death. Philip was of quite a different type. At that time, barely nineteen years of age, and of a mental development he himself admitted was distinctly backward, he vaguely desired a career with all the intensity of a great longing and a fruitful imagination, but was entirely incapable of either following a fixed course, or doing some of those things which might have expedited the close of a long period of vacillating apprenticeship.”¹⁰⁸

Warlock scholar Fred Tomlinson provided a more positive interpretation in a 1979 lecture he gave to the Delius Society in London:

“It has been suggested that the friendship [of Delius] was harmful to Philip, and if Delius had never encouraged him his life might have gone completely differently. What would they want instead of Peter Warlock? A civil servant?”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ David Cox and John Bishop, comp., *Peter Warlock: A Centenary Celebration* (London: Thames Publishing, 1994), 165.

¹⁰⁸ Beecham, *Frederick Delius*, 175.

¹⁰⁹ Fred Tomlinson, *Warlock and Delius* (London: Thames Publishing, 1976), 28.

Whatever the opinions on their relationship, it was mutually beneficial, at least professionally. As a music critic in London, Heseltine was an advocate for Delius's music. In 1923 Heseltine published his Delius biography which was an unapologetic championing of Delius.¹¹⁰ In the biography's conclusion Heseltine wrote:

“Serenity seems to have forsaken music for a while; it is, at any rate, almost impossible to name any living composer, save Bernard van Dieren, in whose work this quality is conspicuous or even dimly apparent. But it is one of the essential qualities of the great art of all ages, and its presence in every work of Delius is one of the surest tokens of his immortality.”¹¹¹

In return for Heseltine's support, Delius offered both professional and personal advice and offered critiques of his compositions.¹¹²

Heseltine's interest in Delius's music gradually gave way to other influences. The now forgotten composer Bernard van Dieren (1887-1936) became Heseltine's new musical “Master” around the year 1915.¹¹³ Dieren surrounded himself with musical disciples, of whom Heseltine assumed a primary role. Heseltine led the charge to champion Dieren's music. But the musical establishment of London would have none of it, and critically derided the music.¹¹⁴ A war of words developed between Heseltine and the established critics concerning the worth of Dieren's music.¹¹⁵ Later in life, this acrimony deprived Heseltine of much needed professional support and possible vocational opportunities and may have ultimately contributed to his suicide.

¹¹⁰ The only negative comments about Delius concern *Requiem*: “From *A Mass of Life* to the *Requiem* is indeed a far cry: it is a transition from the truly sublime to something very near the ridiculous.” Warlock, *Delius*, 106.

¹¹¹ Warlock, *Delius*, 136.

¹¹² Such as the critical comments on Heseltine's song cycle, *The Curlew*. Carley, *Delius: A Life in Letters* vol. 2, 292.

¹¹³ Heseltine refers to Dieren as “the Master” in his letters. Smith, *Peter Warlock*, 152.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

Other musicological interests absorbed Heseltine's considerable and voracious curiosity. He was a frequent visitor to the British Museum in London where he became one of the first transcribers and editors of Tudor music (ca. 1485-1603).¹¹⁶ His pioneering work in the field of early music was not adequately appreciated during his lifetime.¹¹⁷

The English Revival of the early twentieth century including the rediscovery of music from the Tudor era and the collecting of folk songs. Heseltine was involved in both of movements. Between 1926 and 1929 Heseltine published a series of books on a variety of topics. The scholarly books on early music were *Carlo Gesualdo: Prince of Venosa: Musician and Murderer* (1926), *The English Ayre* (1926), and *Loving Mad Tom* (1927). His book, *Merry Go Down: A Gallery of Gorgeous Drunkards Through the Ages* (1929), is a collection of debauched poetry.

Heseltine advocated for appreciating early music on its own terms, not through the lens of abstract scholarship. In his book on Gesualdo he explains:

“Modern music is teaching us reverence for the old order of polyphony. We no longer dare to “correct” their works, to alter them and titivate them in a futile endeavor to make them conform to the conventions of an age other than their own, for we no longer wish to do so. We can see beauty in dissonances which to our predecessors seemed meaningless and were treated as miscalculations or misprints; and we can see that the best of the old music to-day (sic) as it was when it was written, in spite of its having been relegate (sic) to the dusty shelves of libraries for over two centuries. It speaks to us with a living voice in a language which, whatever changes of idiom may be imposed by the passing of time, is changeless and eternal and can never fail to evoke a response in the hearts of all who have ears and will hear.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 75.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 247.

¹¹⁸ Cecil Gray and Philip Heseltine, *Gesualdo Prince of Venosa: Musician and Murderer* (1926. Reprint, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971), 122.

These words, published in 1926, show a thirty-two-year-old man well ahead of his time, with a finger on the pulse of modern musicology; Heseltine undertook his musical scholarship as a performing musician. He believed early music should not only be resurrected in performance, but that it should be performed expressively and musically. He edited and published many Tudor choral works (ex.4.1). His work in the area of musicology merits further investigation. Heseltine's work in the field of early music sets him apart from Delius, who cared very little for early music.¹¹⁹

As thy shadow itself apply'th

Transcribed and edited by
PETER WARLOCK

THOMAS WHYTHORNE (1571)

[With a gentle lilt: not fast]

Key G: s *mp*

SOPRANO
As thy sha - dow it - self ap - ply'th To

ALTO
As thy sha - dow it - self ap - ply'th To

TENOR I
As thy sha - dow it - self ap - ply'th To

TENOR II
As thy sha - dow it - self ap - ply'th To fol -

BASS
As thy sha - dow it - self ap - ply'th To

Example 4.1. Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock), ed. *As Thy Shadow itself Apply'th*.

¹¹⁹ See note 24, 25.

Another interest of Heseltine's was the Christmas Carol. He contributed three to the *Oxford Book of Carols* (1928) and many of his choral works are carols, including *A Cornish Christmas Carol* (1918, revised 1924), *Corpus Christi* (1919), and *Three Carols: Tyrley Tyrlow, Balulalow, The Sycamore Tree* (1923).

Unlike Moeran – whose arrangement of *The Sailor and Young Nancy* (1925) for mixed voices is a staple of choral repertoire – Heseltine never set an existing folk tune for chorus. Rather, he wrote some choral works in a folk style, such as *Ha'nacker Hill* (1927) and *My Own Country* (1927) and all of the *Sociable Songs* (1922-1928).

From 1925-1928 Heseltine moved to the town of Eynsford where he shared a house with fellow composer Moeran. Many composers and artists visited Heseltine and Moeran at Eynsford including Constant Lambert, Patrick Hadley, William Walton (1902-1983), Eugene Goossens (1893-1962), and other important musical figures of the time.¹²⁰ The Eynsford years were famous for copious drinking binges, much womanizing, rowdy music making, and even dabbling in black magic.¹²¹

Eventual financial strains forced Heseltine to move back to London. In 1929 Heseltine and Beecham organized a Delius Festival to celebrate the aging and ill composer. It was fitting that Heseltine was able to help honor the man who had mentored him for so long. Smith writes:

“The wheel had come full circle and now his [Heseltine's] last major musical undertaking was to help in the honouring of the man whose music had meant so much to him in his early days.”¹²²

¹²⁰ Ian Maxwell, “The Importance of Being Ernest John: Challenging the Misconceptions about the Life and Works of E. J. Moeran.” (PhD diss., Durham University, 2014), 240.

¹²¹ Smith, *Peter Warlock*, 221-252.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 259.



Figure 4. Philip Heseltine, far left with Jelka and Frederick Delius at the 1929 Delius Festival (Anonymous, *Warlock and Delius at the Delius Festival*, in Copley, *The Music of Peter Warlock*, plate thirteen).

Indeed, the Delius festival was Heseltine's last ambitious project. He felt he had reached a creative dead-end in his compositions, and because of earlier acrimony with the musical establishments, he could not find work.¹²³ Few singers performed his songs and he received very little money in royalties.¹²⁴ He was gripped by an enormous melancholy, and on the night of December 16, 1930, he committed suicide in his apartment.¹²⁵

Heseltine's "intimate" friend Elizabeth Poston¹²⁶ – an important composer and music editor in her own right¹²⁷ – surmised the reason for his suicide:

“He also learned little of the practice of music in its practical application, and this was the cause of a fundamental problem in his technique. He never solved it. The pivotal point of his musical life,

¹²³ Ibid., 255.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 287.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 279-180.

¹²⁶ Cox and Bishop, *Peter Warlock a Centenary Celebration*, 5.

¹²⁷ She is perhaps most famous for the SATB carol *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree*, but she also edited the important *Penguin Book of Christmas Carols*. In that collection, her arrangement of *Behold a Silly Tender Babe* includes a descant borrowed from Heseltine's *Carpool Suite*. Elizabeth Poston, ed. *The Penguin Book of Carols*, 9th ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 23, 58-59.

which came with his attraction to the music of Delius, was an obsession that coincided with the disturbances of his adolescence. It finally proved fatal, because by the time he repudiated it in his later years its stranglehold admitted no escape. He could see no creative way ahead of him.”¹²⁸

Although Heseltine is most famous for his art songs, he wrote a significant body of choral music. Much of this choral music exhibits the influence of Delius. From the beginning of their correspondence, Delius’s opinions on music shaped the impressionable younger man. As has been shown, Delius discouraged formal, academic musical study and scoffed at the “immortals.”¹²⁹ Delius believed that composing music should flow from an emotional and instinctive inspiration, not from academic or theoretical study.¹³⁰ These opinions resonated strongly with Heseltine. He excelled at miniature compositions that required little musical development, such as art songs, part songs, and short instrumental works such as his *Capriol Suite* (1926).

Delius’s *On Craig Ddu* was especially influential on Heseltine’s choral music. Ian Copley, in his article *Peter Warlock’s Choral Music* says the following:

“*Craig Ddu*...written for mixed voices...is far removed both in technique and spirit from the average Edwardian part-song [such as Hubert Parry (1848-1918) & Charles Stanford (1852-1924)]. Its dense choral texture, conceived almost entirely in vertical terms with little apparent concern for the shaping of the individual vocal strands, is something that is also characteristic of a number of the disciple’s [Heseltine’s] part-songs, as is also its extraordinary harmonic subtlety.”¹³¹

¹²⁸ Elizabeth Poston, “Dispelling the Jackals,” in *Peter Warlock a Centenary Celebration*, comps. David Cox and John Bishop. (London: Thames, 1994), 13.

¹²⁹ See note 25.

¹³⁰ See note 17.

¹³¹ Ian Copley, “Peter Warlock’s Choral Music.” *Music & Letters* 45, no. 4 (Oct. 1964): 320.

In his early part song *The Full Heart* (1916, revised 1921) Heseltine reveals the dual influences of both Delius and Gesualdo.¹³² Heseltine himself compared *On Craig Ddu* to Gesualdo's famous madrigal *Moro Lasso* (1613) in his book on Gesualdo (ex. 4.2).

“These madrigals show that the so-called homophonic revolution which is supposed to have dethroned polyphony at the end of the sixteenth century is a mere figment of the historians’ imagination. Gesualdo was always a polyphonist in his methods, yet there are harmonic passages in his work to which we should not find parallels until we come to Wagner. If anyone doubts this statement, let him compare the opening of Gesualdo’s *Moro lasso al mio duolo*, from the sixth book [of madrigals], with the famous chord-sequence in *Die Walküre* which is heard when Wotan kisses Brünhilde to sleep, and – a nearer parallel seeing that it occurs in a work for unaccompanied chorus – with the chord-sequence to which the words “sounds of the water” are set in Delius’s *On Craig Dhu* (sic):”¹³³

The image displays three musical excerpts, each on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first excerpt is labeled 'GESUALDO. 1611.' and shows a series of complex, chromatic chords. The second excerpt is labeled 'WAGNER. 1855.' and shows a similar sequence of chromatic chords. The third excerpt is labeled 'DELIUS. 1907.' and shows a sequence of chords that closely resemble the Gesualdo and Wagner examples.

Example 4.2. Excerpt from Heseltine’s Gesualdo biography.

¹³² The song is dedicated ‘To the immortal memory of the Prince of Venosa.’

¹³³ Heseltine, *Gesualdo*, 120-121.

In clarifying what he values in Gesualdo's madrigals, Heseltine illuminates something of his own priorities as a composer. On Gesualdo's text painting and use of vocal color, he writes,

“Look at his impassioned exclamations – *cris de coeur* [cry of the heart] which seem to be left suspended in the air, while other voices gravely comment or continue to plaint (there is masterly use of the different registers of the voices in varied effects of tone-colour to be observed here).”¹³⁴

In *The Full Heart*, Heseltine shows both the influences of Gesualdo and Delius. The song is voiced similarly to *On Craig Ddu* for SATB with frequent *divisi*. A soprano solo is added, with an instruction similar to *Appalachia*: the soprano solo is to sing in the chorus. Another similarity shared with *On Craig Ddu* is that that the soprano line—in this case the soloist—set over a largely homophonic texture. Heseltine uses text painting to emphasize important words, such as when the soprano soloist sings a languid ‘Ah’ when the choir has the words, ‘I heard the long wind blow,’ or when the upper voices descend stepwise over a held bass note with the words, ‘I hear the wave fall in the hush of the night’ (ex. 4.3).

¹³⁴ Heseltine, *Gesualdo*, 124.

burn-ing; I hear the wave fall in the hush of the night.

burn-ing; I hear the wave fall in the hush of the night.

burn-ing; I hear the wave fall in the hush of the night.

burn-ing; I hear the wave fall in the hush of the night.

burn-ing; I hear the wave fall in the hush of the night.

Example 4.3. Philip Hesletine (Peter Warlock), *The Full Heart*, mm. 18-14.

The final cadences of *On Craig Ddu* and *The Full Heart* are strikingly similar. Both works *decrecendo* to silence over slow whole-notes. Delius indicates a *diminuendo* to *pp*, then writes, ‘dying away’ to *ppp*. Heseltine includes similar marks including *morendo*. The final cadence is resolved similarly in both pieces. *On Craig Ddu* Delius resolves an alto 4-3 suspension in the penultimate bar, ending in G-minor. In *The Full Heart* Heseltine resolves the two tenor voices chromatically on the penultimate bar, spelling a second inversion, major seventh-chord.

SOPRANO SOLO.

Still slower.

pp Wind, Wa - ters, Stars, and Night.

pp dim. al fine Ah

morendo

pp Wind, Wa - ters, Stars, and Night.

pp dim. al fine morendo

pp Wind, Wa - ters, Stars, and Night.

pp dim. al fine morendo

pp Wind, Wa - ters, Stars, and Night.

pp dim. al fine morendo

pp Wind, Wa - ters, Stars, and Night.

pp dim. al fine morendo

Example 4.4. Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock), *The Full Heart*, mm. 44-50.

Vaughan Williams was so impressed with Heseltine's carols that he commissioned a set for the 1923 Bach Festival.¹³⁵ Heseltine dedicated the resultant set, *Three Carols* (1923), to Vaughan Williams. *Three Carols* is Heseltine's only choral orchestral work and is scored for full orchestra with 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion, piano, and strings. The three carols, *Tyrley Tyrlow*, *Balulalow*, and *The Sycamore Tree*, are all newly composed melodies. Heseltine unites them as a group by contrasting the *tempi* of the three carols (fast, slow, fast). *Tyrley Tyrlow* and *The Sycamore Tree* are similar in their lilting compound meters and modal tonality; both carols make liberal use of the flat seventh scale-degree. *Balulalow* is a choral arrangement of an earlier art song of the same name (1919) for solo voice and piano. The solo voice part, in fact, remains unaltered. Heseltine

¹³⁵ Smith, *Peter Warlock*, 209.

simply wrote new choral parts for the wordless chorus and orchestrated the piano accompaniment.

Balulalow is a simple binary form of two strophes, set as a lullaby in 3/4. The first strophe is sung by a solo voice (or unison chorus). A brief transition to the second strophe is sung by the choir, with “closed lips” on the sound ‘Mm.’ For the second strophe Heseltine instructs the altos, tenors, and basses to sing “open” on ‘Ah,’ while the sopranos are added to the melody with “still closed lips.” While the sopranos double the melody, the altos and tenors move together in a simple homophonic texture, doubling the harmonies of the orchestral accompaniment. The basses sing a sustained, gently syncopated E-flat pedal with additional instructions: “Very slight aspiration every 3rd beat of the bar.” The final choral cadence – a truncated version of the transition after the first strophe – instructs the choir to sing again with “closed lips.”

The overall effect of this carol is one of haunting beauty. The wordless chorus creates a warm, otherworldly atmosphere. Like Delius’s *The Song of the High Hills* and *To Be Sung of A Summer Night on the Water*, the chorus is treated as an orchestral color. Also similar to Delius are the specific instructions provided to the choir to achieve the desired vocal colors.

Two of Heseltine’s most impressive unaccompanied works for chorus are the *Corpus Christi Carol* (1919) and the part song *All the Flowers of the Spring* (1923). *Corpus Christi* is a strophic carol with the burden (refrain) ‘Lully, lullay, the faucon hath

borne my make away.¹³⁶ The carol's text portrays a strange, haunting scene filled with religious symbolism. The full text of the carol follows:¹³⁷

Burden: Lully, lullay, the faucon hath borne my make away.
Verse 1: He bare him up, he bare him down, he bare him into an orchard brown.
Verse 2: In that orchard there was a hall, that was hanged with purple and pall.
Verse 3: And in that hall there was a bed: it was hanged with gold so red.
Verse 4: And in that bed there lithe a knight, His woundes bleeding day and night.
Verse 5: By that bedside there kneeleth a may, and she weepeth night and day.
Verse 6: By that bedside standeth a stone: CORPUS CHRISTI written thereon.

The exact meaning of this carol is illusive. Multiple translations of the carol exist and they serve only to muddy the waters.¹³⁸ Various interpretations of the carol include the mystery of the Eucharist, an allegorical Passion scene, or even the Holy Grail. Whatever the meaning, Heseltine approached the text at face value and tried to capture the scene's austere and strange mood.

The voicing is for SATB *divisi* with alto and tenor soli. Apart from two brief sections the chorus is entirely wordless. As in Delius's *To Be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water*, Heseltine includes performance practice instructions on the first page of the score:

The chorus must be very subdued throughout. The phrasing marked is only approximate. A smooth *legato* is required, almost unbroken. In order to secure this effect the singers should take breath at different points. For the figure marked *, wherever it occurs, a slight aspiration, rather than marked phrasing is wanted.

¹³⁶ The archaic English translates, 'The falcon has born my maker away.'

¹³⁷ In the score Heseltine cites the text's source as "anonymous." The full text is included as a footnote in *Oxford Book of Carols*. The Hill manuscript (ca. 1500) is cited as the primary source. Dearmer, Percy, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Martin Shaw, ed. *The Oxford Book of Carols*, 13th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 134.

¹³⁸ Two such translations exist in the *Oxford Book of Carols*: #61, *Down in Yon Forest* and #184, *All Bells in Paradise*. Heseltine set the oldest extant version. *Oxford Book of Carols*, 134, 392-393 .

The final comment about “aspiration” is especially noteworthy because Delius used the same verb (“aspirate”) in *To be Sung of a Summer Night*. Heseltine includes other specific voicing marks in the score. Beginning in the first measure the altos and tenors are to sing ‘Ah’, while basses sing ‘Mm.’ At m. 6, while the basses continue to simply hold their *pedal* A, Heseltine writes, “Half the basses sing Ah, the other half with closed lips.”

A rocking motive runs throughout the carol, uniting the piece. Above this figure on the first page of music Heseltine has marked “hair-pin” *crescendos* and *decrescendos* with the following note:

This very small dynamic rise and fall should be observed wherever the figure occurs throughout the piece.

Vocal orchestration also contributes to Heseltine’s carefully constructed color. The voicing of divided altos, unified tenors, and divided basses could easily have been voiced as SATBB. But by scoring the opening of the carol for AATBB Heseltine achieves a darker, richer sound of alto women. Sopranos do not enter the fifth measure (ex. 4.5).

Very quietly, but not slow

CONTRALTO SOLO

Lul-ly, lul-lay, lul-ly, lul-lay, The

SOPRANO

(This very small dynamic rise and fall should be observed wherever the figure occurs throughout the piece.)

CONTRALTO

Ah

TENOR

Ah

Ah

BASS

Mm

Example 4.5. Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock), *Corpus Christi*, mm. 1-4.

Tonally, *Corpus Christi* pays homage to Heseltine's interest in early music. It is chromatic, but not in a postromantic way. Rather, Heseltine is experimenting with modal shifts and Elizabethan cross-relations. The opening measure demonstrates this tonal ambiguity and modal approach. The tenor/bass texture suggests A-minor, but the altos and tenors taken together appear to be in C-Lydian. The pedal note A holds through 24 measures while Heseltine alters the modal relationship of the upper voices.

At m. 37 Heseltine sets the only only homophonic, syllabic section of the work. Heseltine elides this texture with the next section at m. 40 by changing the word, 'night' into a sustained "Ah." While singing the word 'night' the basses move slowly from F-natural to the leading tone of G-sharp, then finally resolve back to A, reestablishing the opening tonality of A-minor (ex.4.6).

rit. molto - - -

bed there lithe a knight, His woun - dès bleed - ing day and

bed there lithe a knight, His woun - dès bleed - ing day and

bed there lithe a knight, His woun - dès bleed - ing day and

bed there lithe a knight, His woun - dès bleed - ing day and

night.

night.

night.

night. Ah

Example 4.6. Philip Hesletine (Peter Warlock), *Corpus Christi*, mm. 37-42.

The diatonic texture is interrupted once more at m. 49, at the fermata with B-flat minor/minor seventh chord. We are reminded of Palmer's observation about a "Delian squelch" with a suddenly chromatic chord.¹³⁹ On the final page of music, Heseltine is back in A-minor/C-Lydian, with the ambiguity affirmed by the final A-minor chord with

¹³⁹ Palmer, *Delius*, 158.

an added sharp-sixth (F-sharp). Heseltine uses some biting cross-relations, as in m. 40-41 when basses have the leading-tone G-sharp against the soprano's G-natural (ex.4.7).

Corpus Christi was apparently one of Heseltine's favorite works¹⁴⁰ and one of Heseltine's contemporary critics praised it after his death saying,

“The young man who conceived these exquisite things [*Corpus Christi, As Dewe in Aprylle, and Balulalow*] and realize them so perfectly in music must have had the root of the matter in him; they are all gems that will keep his name alive as a composer.”¹⁴¹

All the Flowers of the Spring is one of three dirges by the poet John Webster (1580-1634) that Heseltine set 1923-1925.¹⁴² The work is scored for SATB voices, though with frequent *divisi*. This is one of the Heseltine's most challenging choral works. The difficulties lie in pervasive dissonance, chromaticism, and extreme dynamics (from *ppp* to *fff*). The poem concerns mortality and the transience of life. To provide context for the intense darkness and gloom of the piece, the entire poem follows:

All the flowers of the spring
Meet to perfume our burying;
These have but their growing prime,
And man does flourish but in his time.
Survey our progress from our birth,
We are set, we grow, we turn to earth.
Courts adieu, and all delights,
All bewitching appetites!
Sweetest breath and clearest eye,
Like perfumes go out and die;
And consequently this is done
As shadows wait upon the sun.
Vain the ambition of kings
Who seek with trophies and dead things
To leave a living name behind,

¹⁴⁰ Smith, *Beyond the Rio Grande*, 204.

¹⁴¹ Ernest Newman, as quoted in Copley, “The Choral Music of Peter Warlock,” 318.

¹⁴² The other two are *Call for the Robin-Redbreast and the Wren* (1925) for SSAA and *The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi* (1925) for TTBB

And weave but nets to catch the wind.

When Heseltine reaches the end of *All the Flowers of the Spring* he uses the word “wind” to create an innovative and striking conclusion. The choir sustains the word “wind” for twenty-one measures, gradually closing to the consonant “n.” Heseltine provides detailed instructions at the bottom of the page:

Gradually close lips and prolong the *n* sound, keeping the *d* till the very end. Take breath where necessary, but not all the singers of any one part at the same time. The first note of each bar slightly accented.

The altos and basses lock into a unison C-flat (an octave apart) while the sopranos and tenors move in slow, chromatic half-steps, creating a weird, haunting effect of blowing wind. But this isn't the wind of nature, or any gentle, pastoral breeze. It is a wind symbolizing the futility of life's ambitions. After another five measures of the “wind” texture, Heseltine switches the parts: the sopranos and tenors hold a D-natural pedal while the altos and basses pulsate chromatically. Once the final G-minor chord is reached, a soprano soloist sings a sorrowful descent stepwise from C-sharp to A-natural (ex.4.7). As in *Corpus Christi*, the final chord is deliberately cloudy. Palmer describes the effect of this passage:

“The effect is almost mesmeric, almost as if the chorus had picked up the sound of the low-singing wind and had identified themselves with it.”¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Palmer, *Delius*, 160.

- hind,... And weave..... but nets to catch the

- hind, And weave..... but nets to catch the

- hind,... And weave..... but nets to catch the

- hind, And weave..... but nets to catch the

* Rather slower from here to the end.

wi

wi

wi

wi

Example 4.7. Philip Hesletine (Peter Warlock), *All the Flowers of the Spring*, mm. 40-63.

The image displays a musical score for 'All the Flowers of the Spring' by Philip Hesletine (Peter Warlock). It is divided into two systems, each containing four staves. The first system shows vocal lines with lyrics '- n -' and markings 'rit.' above the staves. The second system features a vocal line with lyrics 'molto. Solo. Ah! morendo. Lunga.' and piano accompaniment. The piano part includes markings 'molto.' and 'morendo.' and ends with a 'd' time signature.

Example 4.7. Philip Hesletine (Peter Warlock), *All the Flowers of the Spring*, mm. 40-63 (continued).

The effect of these final two pages of *All the Flowers of Spring* transcend Delius's use of choral color. Delius never transformed single words into neutral vowels as Heseltine does on the word 'wind' or 'night' in *Corpus Christi*. Heseltine built on the foundations laid by Delius and created something new and ahead of his time.

All the Flowers of the Spring was dedicated to the choral conductor Charles Kennedy Scott (1876-1965) and his choir, the Oriana Madrigal Society (otherwise referred to simply as the Oriana Choir or simply Oriana).¹⁴⁴ Delius dedicated *To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water* to Kennedy Scott and the Oriana Choir, and they premiered it as well. The Oriana choir was already accomplished in tackling the challenges of Delius, and therefore the closely related choral music of Heseltine made them a logical choice of ensemble. After attending a rehearsal in 1917, Delius himself wrote to Heseltine and said of the choir, "...you must hear them – to realize what one can do with a good choir."¹⁴⁵ Fred Tomlinson, the editor of the Warlock's collected choral works, includes the following in his introduction to volume seven:

“*All the Flowers of the Spring*...was dedicated to Charles Kennedy Scott and the Oriana Madrigal Society, presumably one of the few choirs then capable of coping with the eight-part writing.”¹⁴⁶

Though perhaps tangential, it is important to note that *All the Flowers of the Spring* was dedicated to, and performed by, the same ensemble as Delius's *To Be Sung of a Summer Night*. This provides some insight into the sound expected from an early twentieth-century, professional British choir.

The style of Heseltine's choral music is as divided as were his various personalities, interests, and pseudonyms. While sprinklings of his various influences may be found in many of his works, the influence of Delius is most distilled in the works examined above. Perhaps most important of all is how Heseltine moved beyond Delius in

¹⁴⁴ Roger Quilter in Warlock, *Delius*, 159.

¹⁴⁵ Lee-Browne, *Delius and His Music*, 389.

¹⁴⁶ Peter Warlock, ed. Fred Tomlinson, *The Choral Music of Peter Warlock* vol. 7 (London: Thames Publishing, 1995), 3.

his use of vocal color and wordless chorus, as evidenced in *Corpus Christi Carol* and *All the Flowers of the Spring*. Though these works are challenging, they are remarkably modern works which would stand up well amongst the choral repertoire of the later twentieth century as well as the choral music of today.

CHAPTER 5: THE LIFE AND CHORAL MUSIC OF E. J. MOERAN

A great deal of meritorious music comes one's way with which one is glad to have passing acquaintance. These are songs [*Songs of Springtime*] that we shall not just sample, but unless I am mistaken, learn to love – which is the ultimate test of appreciation.

–Charles Kennedy-Scott, “E. J. Moeran’s ‘Songs of Springtime.’” *Musical Times*.

Of the five composers discussed in this paper, Moeran’s tale is perhaps the most tragic. By all accounts he was a sensitive, quiet, and introverted personality who took inspiration from the quietness of nature.¹⁴⁷ Thus he naturally empathized with the music of Delius, and this in turn eventually led him to cross paths with Philip Heseltine. Through Heseltine, Moeran developed an interest in Elizabethan music. Heseltine and Moeran also joined forces in researching English folksong. As will be shown, the Heseltine/Moeran friendship was in many ways an ultimately destructive affair. While Heseltine ultimately destroyed himself, Moeran’s destruction was a result of alcoholism acquired under Heseltine’s influence.

Much of the history of Moeran’s life has been misrepresented in the scholarly literature, including the entry in the Grove’s Encyclopedia. Ian Maxwell, in his dissertation *The Importance of Being Ernest John: Challenging misconceptions about the Life and Works of E.J. Moeran*¹⁴⁸ has corrected many of these errors, and he is writing a new article for the Grove Music Encyclopedia. Maxwell’s corrections appear throughout this chapter. Of additional importance is Moeran’s relative misrepresentation in books on

¹⁴⁷ Maxwell, “The Importance of Being Ernest John,” 264.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

choral repertoire. Dennis Shrock's otherwise accurate book *Choral Repertoire*¹⁴⁹ is one such case. Although Shrock accurately describes the choral suite *Songs of Springtime*, he refers to Moeran's second suite, *Phyllida and Corydon* as a "...single part song."¹⁵⁰ Indeed, *Phyllida and Corydon* is a part song in a suite of nine. But the impression is given that Moeran wrote a single part song, not an entire suite. No mention is made of Moeran's numerous folksong arrangements, the early part songs, his church music, or of his largest, arguably most important choral work, the choral/orchestral *Nocturne*.

Nick Strimple, in his equally important book *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century*, makes a similar error, claiming Moeran wrote, "...only a few pieces for chorus."¹⁵¹ He then describes both the choral suites as though they were single part songs:

"The unaccompanied *Phyllida and Corydon* (1934) and *Songs of Springtime* (1934), and the larger *Nocturne* (1934)...are warm and convincing examples of a fastidiously crafted style reminiscent of Delius and Vaughan Williams."¹⁵²

In addition to the mischaracterization of the suites as part songs, it must be observed that Strimple's dates are incorrect. *Songs of Springtime* was published in 1933 and *Phyllida and Corydon* was published in 1939. As for Moeran writing "only a few" pieces for chorus, counting the individual part songs contained in the choral suites, Moeran published at least forty-one choral works.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 673.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Nick Strimple, *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century*. (New Jersey: Amadeus Press, 2002), 95.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Moeran's choral works are collected in the centenary editions of his collected works. Counting his choral works is complicated by the fact that he sometimes arranged a folk tune in multiple arrangements and combinations of voices.

Moeran showed an interest in music from a young age and learned to play both the violin and piano. In 1913 he enrolled at the Royal College of Music. At the school he was introduced to the contemporary works Delius, including the Piano Concerto (1907).

“My first introduction to Delius was in 1913, when I was a student at the R.C.M. and I heard his Piano Concerto at a Balfour Gardiner concert at the Queen’s Hall. I shall never forget the profound impression it made on me at the time, also the lordly and superior comments on it by some of my fellow students.”¹⁵⁴

Moeran’s studies were interrupted by World War I. In the war he served as a dispatch rider and was wounded in the neck in 1917. Recent research by Maxwell has corrected a previous misperception that Moeran was “severely wounded in the head” during the fighting.¹⁵⁵ After researching medical records, Maxwell discovered that Moeran’s wound was not severe and he made a full recovery. This is significant because Moeran’s supposed head wound has been cited as a reason for his destructive alcoholism.¹⁵⁶

Maxwell clarifies the matter in his paper:

“...Moeran indeed suffered an injury during the First World War, the full recovery from which was sufficient that by the time he was fit, the war was almost over. The evidence of the various Medical Board Reports between 10 May 1917 and 2 September 1918 clearly shows that the injury was relatively minor, that the shrapnel fragment was removed and that Moeran was eventually declared fully recovered.”¹⁵⁷

After the war ended Moeran resumed his compositional studies with John Ireland.

Upon graduating, Moeran embarked on a career as a serious composer. Moeran also

¹⁵⁴ Hill, *Lonely Waters*, 11.

¹⁵⁵ *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. “Moeran, E. J.,” by Anthony Payne.

¹⁵⁶ Self writes: “Many of Moeran’s accidents have been attributed to drunkenness – but this seems too facile; it is probable that the war injury may have had much responsibility for them.” Geoffrey Self, *The Music of E. J. Moeran* (Inverness, Britain: Toccata Press, 1986), 237.

¹⁵⁷ Ian Maxwell, “The Moeran Myth,” *British Music* 32, (2010), 43.

became involved in the English revival and collection of folksong. Moeran had a unique gift for cajoling locals to sing for him.

“...I tackled the senior member of the choir on the subject of old songs. He immediately mentioned *The Dark-Eyed Sailor*, but the day being Sunday, I had to curb my impatience to hear a real folksong, sung by a traditional singer, until the next day. I soon discovered in Bacton and the immediate district there seemed to be a very few songs left, and these I succeeded in noting down...By the time the war was over, I assumed that there was no longer anything to be had, and I did not resume my attempts at collecting. However, in the late summer, 1921, I received an urgent message from the folksong enthusiast, Mr Aurthur Batchelor, to come over to Sutton, near Stalham. It appeared that he had accidentally overheard an old roadman singing softly to himself over his work. This turned out to be none other than Bob Miller...Bob admitted that he knew some ‘old ‘uns’ but he was at pains to point out that he had really been singing, but ‘just a-tuning over to himself.’ I soon fixed an appointment to spend the ensuing evening in his company at the local inn, and he gave me a splendid batch of songs, some of which were hitherto unpublished.”¹⁵⁸

Lionel Hill, Moeran’s friend, witnessed Moeran’s charms at work:

“After getting our mugs of ale, I would follow him across the bar parlour and sit down near some elderly ‘locals.’ Before long Jack [Moeran] would get into earnest conversation with them, and it was amazing to see the pleasure on their faces. Being completely without pomposity he was able to share their language and thoroughly enjoy their company.”¹⁵⁹

Exactly how Moeran and Heseltine met is not clear, but by 1923 Heseltine had written to Delius saying, “A great friend of mine E.J. Moeran...has gone to Norway for the wedding of his friend, and if his money lasts out he wants to stay there a bit and take a trip up to the North Cape. He is a very good composer and a great admirer of your work...”¹⁶⁰ Maxwell provides as good an explanation as possible about how they met:

“The two young men (just a few months apart in age) seem to have discovered almost immediately on meeting that they shared many musical tastes and interests – in particular, there was a mutual appreciation of the

¹⁵⁸ Palmer, *Delius*, 166.

¹⁵⁹ Hill, *Lonely Waters*, 65.

¹⁶⁰ Heseltine as quoted by Maxwell in “The Importance of Being Ernest John,” 230.

music of Frederick Delius. They also seemingly took a liking to each other – probably stimulated by these common musical enthusiasms.”¹⁶¹

In 1925 Moeran and Heseltine moved to Eynsford where they rented a cottage. Unfortunately, the social environment at Eynsford negatively affected Moeran’s ability to compose. He required quiet and isolation to form his musical ideas, two factors distinctly lacking at Eynsford.¹⁶² Moeran produced almost no music during the Eynsford years and it is quite likely that during this time he became addicted to alcohol. Jack Lindsay (1900-1990) – the collaborator with Heseltine on the poetry collection *Loving Mad Tom* – was a regular visitor to Eynsford and observed, “Of the other persons who come in the narrative, Moeran and Lambert drank heavily and thus destroyed themselves...”¹⁶³

Maxwell describes a possible scenario explaining Moeran’s creative desolation and the complex nature of his friendship with Heseltine:

“The *laissez-faire*, even hedonistic way of life there had perhaps liberated Moeran from a lifetime of reserve and abstemiousness that was probably a legacy of his strict Anglican childhood. It is also possible that there was an even more inhibiting factor at work, and this was Heseltine himself. As has been shown, Heseltine thrived in the Eynsford cottage milieu. The drinking, the society, the sex and free-living in which the inhabitants indulged seem to have been exactly the stimulation and nourishment that his intellect and imagination craved. It is possible that observing Heseltine’s ability to consume quantities of alcohol throughout the day and evening and then work all night on an article or a compositions that was completed by the following morning may have led Moeran to some kind of despair.”¹⁶⁴

The argument for the damage done to Moeran at Eynsford is two-fold. He developed a crippling addiction to alcohol that hampered his creative output and physical health for

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 230.

¹⁶² Ibid., 253.

¹⁶³ Jack Lindsay, *Franfrolico and After* (London: Bodley Head, 1962), 190.

¹⁶⁴ Maxwell, “The Importance of Being Ernest John,” 255-256.

the remainder of his life, and he was emotionally scarred by the death of Heseltine in 1930. Moeran was so devastated by Heseltine's suicide that he could not bear to hear Heseltine's song cycle *The Curlew* and refused to speak of his old friend.¹⁶⁵



Figure 5. Philip Heseltine (far right) with E. J. Moeran (head through bench), Constant Lambert (middle), and the artist Hal Collins at the Five Bells pub in Eynsford (ca. 1927). (Anonymous, *Peter Warlock, Constant Lambert, E. J. Moeran and Hal Collins in The Music of Peter Warlock*, Copley, plate seven)

Although the argument can be made that Moeran's friendship with Heseltine was not healthy, it was not without benefit and productivity. Both men enjoyed collecting folksongs¹⁶⁶ and "shared a love for the music of Delius."¹⁶⁷ Heseltine and Moeran were so compatible as friends and musicians that they co-composed the sociable song *Maltworms* (1926).¹⁶⁸ The fact that the song *Maltworms* is published in Heseltine's

¹⁶⁵ Hill, *Lonely Waters*, 68.

¹⁶⁶ Smith, *Peter Warlock*, 212.

¹⁶⁷ Self, *The Music of E. J. Moeran*, 63.

¹⁶⁸ *Maltworms*, like most of the *Sociable Songs*, is for unison chorus, although "chorus" is a stretch, since these songs were meant to be sung by the Eynsford cadre, and, indeed, anyone who happened to be enjoying a libation at the Five Bells pub. Peter Warlock and E. J. Moeran, ed. Fred Tomlinson, *The Choral Works of Peter Warlock: Sociable Songs*, vol. 1 (London: Thames Publishing 1999), 33-38.

collected works (and not Moeran's) demonstrates how the personality and fame of Heseltine overshadowed him.¹⁶⁹

Moeran achieved some fame for his later orchestral works, particularly his *Symphony in G Minor* (1924-1937),¹⁷⁰ and *Lonely Waters* (1931), an orchestral folksong arrangement with soprano soloist.¹⁷¹ Moeran's career remained hampered by his alcoholism. His productivity slowed, and his drunkenness made him "unreliable."¹⁷² There was one particularly humiliating incident at the Proms of 1946 when, "...unable to manage it on his own, he had to be assisted to take a bow after a performance of the Cello Concerto and was unceremoniously marched off the platform with a support at each elbow."¹⁷³

In 1943 Moeran developed a friendship with Lionel Hill – an admirer, who eventually published his correspondence with Moeran in his book *Lonely Waters: the Diary of a Friendship with E.J. Moeran*. Hill was an admirer of Delius, and inquired of Moeran what influence the elder composer might have had on him. Moeran wrote back, mentioning many of Delius's choral/orchestral works as his favorites.

"I have always had a great admiration for Delius, that is to say what I call good Delius...my love of his really great works remain unimpaired by the trash he wrote latterly. To my mind the *Mass of Life*, *Songs of Sunset*, *Sea Drift*, *Song of the High Hills* are masterpieces, each in its own way."¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ In Moeran's *Collected Choral Music for Unison Voices* there is no mention of *Maltworms*. Both Heseltine's and Moeran's collected works are published by Thames, so copyright is not an issue.

¹⁷⁰ The symphony took over ten years to complete, with a virtual stop of production beginning with the Eynsford years. The Symphony's long gestation is a direct result of the Eynsford disruption.

¹⁷¹ In *Lonely Waters* the soprano voice sings the unaccompanied folk-tune at the work's conclusion, much as the chorus in Delius's *Appalachia*.

¹⁷² Self, *The Music of E. J. Moeran*, 233,

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 236.

¹⁷⁴ Hill, *Lonely Waters*, 10.

Concerning the texture of Delius's work, Moeran reveals the following opinion about *A*

Mass of Life after reading a critical article:

“There are one or two points: - (a) Is Sir Thomas Beecham such a fool as to have for years championed the cause of tripe!? (sic)(b) That Delius only meanders about in chords. How about the tremendous fugal chorus in *The Mass of Life*? This work is full of counterpoint elsewhere. (c) As for vamping about the keyboard, his last works, including the *Songs of Farewell*, were written by dictation.”¹⁷⁵

Hill relates an interesting episode when together he and Moeran listened to Delius's opera *A Village Romeo and Juliet*. Maxwell's assertion that Moeran may have been inhibited by creative insecurity is reinforced by the story.

“I [Hill] set the gramophone going. Jack lit his pipe and leaned back, gazing at the ceiling, his hands gently caressing the dog. As the lovely opera unfolded I noticed that he was becoming more and more restless, clouds of smoke coming from his pipe. I knew instinctively that he would not be able to contain himself much longer, and when the beautiful music of the love scene engulfed us he was so moved that he leapt to his feet, flinging the bewildered dog to the floor, and paced to and fro, repeatedly muttering, ‘What's the use, it's all been done before!’”¹⁷⁶

As for Delius's *Requiem*, the previous quotation from Chapter 3 is repeated:

“During the evening he [Moeran] sat at the Bechstein and played through my score of Delius's *Requiem*. ‘There's some gorgeous music in that,’ he said: ‘Why is it never performed?’”¹⁷⁷

With Moeran we also encounter the overlapping influence as shown in the Venn diagram on page xiv. Moeran and Hadley were friends and shared a mutual admiration for Delius.

Hill recounts a story when he played a record of Hadley's *The Hills* for Moeran:

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 87.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 93.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 90.

“...I was able to let Jack hear a new set of records... This was *The Hills* by Patrick Hadley, and was the first performance of the work, recently given at the Proms [1945?]. I admired Hadley’s music and knew that he was an old friend of Jack’s... At the end he remained quiet for a moment, still smiling, and said, ‘I enjoyed that very much.’ I was not surprised by this remark as both composers were half Irish; both were inspired by Nature and had a mutual regard for Delius. Indeed, Hadley had once stated that the latter’s *Song of the High Hills* was his favourite piece of music.”¹⁷⁸

Moeran died of a sudden heart attack in 1950 at the age of fifty-six.

Moeran wrote four styles of choral music. However, as in much art, elements of these different styles often intrude upon one another. The first influence on the style of Moeran’s choral music is that of Delius. Delius’s influence can be seen in the three early part songs (1924), and in Moeran’s only choral/orchestral work, *Nocturne* (1935). The Delius-influenced choral works are characterized by divided voice parts, sustained passages of colorful chromaticism, homophonic textures, use of wordless chorus, unresolved dissonances, added tone chords, and a prevalence of inverted chords.

Church music written in the conservative, postromantic style of late nineteenth-century British composers is Moeran’s second style of choral music. Because it generally does not show the influence of Delius, it is beyond the scope of this thesis.¹⁷⁹

The third category of Moeran’s choral music was inspired by Tudor models. Moeran’s Elizabethan part songs show a variety of influences. While the most obvious are from the Tudor madrigal, Moeran also colors his Tudor part songs with expressive chromaticism, shifting meters, wordless chorus, and expressive dynamics. Moeran’s Elizabethan part songs are also characterized by an economy of means; the Elizabethan

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 75.

¹⁷⁹ Moeran himself commented on his inability to insert, “...some luscious Stainerisms...” while writing his *Te Deum* [1930] and Evening Service. Letter to Heseltine, as quoted by Maxwell in “The Importance of Being Ernest John,” 271.

part songs are strictly written in a four voice texture and are strophic. Because he restricts himself in these ways, his ingenuity is on full display. For example, Moeran varies the vocal textures with dueting between parts, moving the melody to different voices parts, and varying the chromatic texture for every strophe. Of Moeran's choral output, the Elizabethan part songs are his finest work.

The fourth and final category of Moeran's choral music is the folksong arrangements. While most of his folksong arrangements are for solo voice and piano, he published several for SATB choir.¹⁸⁰ *The Sailor and Young Nancy* (1925) remains the most popular and is regularly programmed in the United States. Other arrangements for chorus include *O Sweet Fa's the Eve* (1925) and *The Jolly Carter* (1949). The folksong arrangements are sometimes relatively straightforward, diatonic, strophic arrangements, as in *The Sailor and Young Nancy*. Other folksong arrangements combine the ethereal effects of wordless chorus and an expressive use of chromaticism which stems from the influence of Delius. Of the composers studied in this paper, only Moeran arranges folk tunes for chorus with an audible influence of Delius.

Moeran wrote three early part songs that have unjustly languished in complete obscurity. They were composed immediately before his move to Eynsford, during some of Moeran's most prolific and promising years. The three part songs, *Weep You No More, Sad Fountains* (1924), *Gather Ye Rosebuds* (1924), and *Robin Hood Borne on his Bier* (1924) have all been ignored in every survey of his work the author was studied.¹⁸¹ Even

¹⁸⁰ Self, *Lonely Waters*, 262-263.

¹⁸¹ Self, *The Music of E. J. Moeran*; Hill, *Lonely Waters*, 158; Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 673; Strimple, *Choral Music of the Twentieth Century*, 95.

Moeran seems to have forgotten them when he tried to recount a list of his vocal works to Hill in 1943:

“You ask about church music: I have *Te Deum* and *Jubilate* at the Oxford Press... There is also a *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*... and an anthem *Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem*. Another short unaccompanied anthem is at Novello, the title of which I forget [*Blessed are those Servants* (1938)]... also the vocal scores of *Nocturne*, *Songs of Springtime* and a recent work, *Phyllida and Corydon*. That, I think, is about the lot.”¹⁸²

It is only through Palmer’s passing comments in his Delius biography that *Robin Hood* has come to light. Palmer claims, “...it is one of Moeran’s most concentrated and powerful utterances.”¹⁸³ And, unlike the later, Elizabethan part songs, *Robin Hood* demonstrates the influence of Delius *before* Moeran became embroiled with Heseltine at Eynsford. Disentangling Delius, Heseltine, and Moeran after 1925 is a very difficult task.

Unfortunately, unlike Heseltine with *On Craig Ddu*, there is no primary source to suggest Moeran knew Delius’s part songs.¹⁸⁴ Regardless, the influence is apparent in *Robin Hood*. The most obvious similarities are the largely homophonic texture, pervasive *divisi*, and highly chromatic voice leading. Texturally, Moeran also wrote two imitative passages in *Robin Hood*. But, as in both Delius and Heseltine, these passages quickly change back into homophony.

Robin Hood makes use of rhythmic subtlety, also redolent of Delius. The use of a long note tied to a triplet is often found in Delius, especially in *On Craig Ddu*. Moeran uses this device at m. 9, combined with sliding chromaticism, to paint the text, ‘sigh.’ Delius used a similar device in *On Craig Ddu* at m. 9 with the word, ‘lie.’ Moeran builds

¹⁸² Hill, *Lonely Waters*, 13.

¹⁸³ Palmer, *Delius*, 171.

¹⁸⁴ See notes 108, 139.

on this idea and uses wordless chorus to literally create a ‘sigh’ with a similar motive sung to ‘Ah’ (ex.5.1).

The image shows a musical score for four staves. The lyrics are: "Rob - in Hood lies dead, — There-fore sigh as you". The dynamics are marked as *mf*, *p*, and *pp*. The score includes a triplet of eighth notes in the second and third staves. The first staff is a soprano line, the second is an alto line, the third is a tenor line, and the fourth is a bass line. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature.

Example 5.1. E. J. Moeran, *Robin Hood Borne on His Bier*, mm. 4-9.

Moeran ends *Robin Hood* with the choir singing ‘lips closed,’ clearing the song of words and emphasizing the emotional quality of the mourners as they bear away Robin Hood’s body. A solo soprano voice enters in the final phrase on the same ‘sigh’ motive as before. The final chord is unresolved, similar to *To Be Sung of a Summer Night*.

Moeran’s chord is D-major in the second inversion with an added sixth (B-natural).

Moeran concludes with a half-cadence of D in the key of A-minor, reinforced by a pedal A2 in the basses (ex.5.2).

The various techniques Moeran use on this final page of music closely resemble the conclusions to the previously studied Hesletine *Corpus Christi* carol and the part song *All the Flowers of the Spring*. Both of the Heseltine works predate *Robin Hood* by several

years. *Robin Hood* was composed in 1923,¹⁸⁵ the same year Heseltine introduced Moeran to Delius.¹⁸⁶ The evidence suggests that *Robin Hood* was influenced by both Delius and Heseltine (ex.5.2).

The image displays a musical score for a vocal piece. It is divided into two systems, each with four staves. The first system features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with the lyrics "And on to Wake-field take your way." The dynamics range from *p* (piano) to *pp* (pianissimo). Performance instructions include "(lips closed)" and "(gradually close lips)". The second system begins with a solo vocal line marked "(SOLO) Ah" and *pp*, followed by piano accompaniment for the other three parts, all marked *ppp* and *morendo* (crescendo).

Example 5.2. E. J. Moeran, *Robin Hood Borne on His Bier*, mm. 31-40.

Several of Moeran's choral folk song arrangements show the influence of Delius in both how Moeran uses chromaticism and wordless chorus. In the folk song *O Sweet Fa's the Eve* (1925) Moeran arranged a Norwegian tune to a poem by Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759-1796) for baritone solo and a flexible deployment of either ATTB or

¹⁸⁵ Self, *The Music of E. J. Moeran*, 264.

¹⁸⁶ See note 167.

TTBB voices. In this folksong, Moeran calls for wordless sounds from the chorus, including: ah, lips just parted, la, and lips closed. The chorus never has any text; they are treated as an instrumental color throughout the entire folk song. The baritone alone sings the tune. Harmonically, the song is primarily diatonic with only functional chromatics. In the final strophe, ‘If thou shalt love anither (sic), When yon green leaves fa’ frae the tree, Around my grave they’ll wither,’ Moeran adds expressive, colorful chromatics with a prevalence of descending half-steps. The texture is reminiscent of both *On Craig Ddu* and *To be Sung of a Summer Night* (ex.5.3).

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows a vocal line with lyrics: '- ni - ther, When yon green leaves fa' frae the tree, A-'. The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings: *mp*, *p*, *pp*, and *ten.*. The second system shows the vocal line with lyrics: '- round my grave they'll wi - ther.'. The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings: *pp* and *ppp morendo*.

Example 5.3. E. J. Moeran, *O Sweet Fa's the Eve*, mm. 31-40.

The folk song arrangement *The Jolly Carter* (1949) had a very long gestation. It began as a unison song collected and arranged in 1924, then rearranged for unaccompanied SATB chorus in 1944.¹⁸⁷ The choral arrangement is diatonic with only occasional accidentals. However, two passages of wordless chorus in *The Jolly Carter* show the influence of Delius. The first occurs in a wordlessly sung introduction with sopranos singing ‘la’ while the lower three voices are set to ‘ah.’ During the third and fourth verses the tenors take the melody with the women’s voices and basses sing first with ‘lips parted’ and then with ‘lips closed’ (ex. 5.4).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the folk song 'The Jolly Carter'. The first system shows the vocal parts with lyrics and performance instructions. The second system shows the vocal parts with lyrics and performance instructions.

System 1:

- Staff 1 (Soprano): *p* Hum { v. 3. *lips parted* / v. 4. *lips closed* }
- Staff 2 (Alto): *p* Hum { v. 3. *lips parted* / v. 4. *lips closed* }
- Staff 3 (Tenor): (2nd time *p*)
- Staff 4 (Bass): *p* *mp* (2nd time *p*)
- Lyrics: has-tened my hors-es to walk by her side, And I said to the put my arms round her and I gave her a kiss, She said "You can
- Footnote: 3. So I has-tened my hors-es to walk Hum { v. 3. *lips parted* / v. 4. *lips closed* }
4. I put my arms round her and kissed her

System 2:

- Staff 1 (Soprano): *pp* *mp* "Well — done"
- Staff 2 (Alto): *pp* *mp* "Well — done"
- Staff 3 (Tenor): *p* *mp* dam-sel "My dear won't you ride?" — } "Well — done Rob-in, take me young man if you wish." }
- Staff 4 (Bass): *pp* *p* *mp* "Well — done Rob-in,

Example 5.4. E. J. Moeran, *The Jolly Carter*, mm. 5-14.

¹⁸⁷ Self, *The Music of E. J. Moeran*, 50.

Songs of Springtime is loosely united by the seven Elizabethan poets whose texts Moeran set to music. Although Moeran indicates in the score that “Each song may be had separately... When the work is performed as a whole, the sequence herein must be followed.”¹⁸⁸

These songs are not mere anachronisms, but combine elements of Delian chromaticism and wordless chorus, as is evident at the conclusion of *Love is a Sickness* (ex.5.5).

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Love is a Sickness" by E. J. Moeran. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff has lyrics: "- hol - Heigh - hol - Heigh - hol". The second staff has performance instructions: "(lips slightly open)" and "(lips closed)". The third and fourth staves also have these instructions. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, *ppp*, *SOLO*, and *morendo*. The music is written in a 4/4 time signature and features a mix of whole, half, and quarter notes, with some chromaticism.

Example 5.5. E. J. Moeran, *Love is a Sickness*, mm. 42-47.

Good Wine shows Moeran's creativity in regards to meter as well as expressive dynamics. Though not particularly Delian, these expressive devices demonstrate Moeran's blending of modern and Elizabethan music (ex.5.6).

¹⁸⁸ E. J. Moeran, *Songs of Springtime*, (London: Novello, 1933), in the table of contents.

7

ff p subito *cresc.*

drink of the sher - ry, That makes us so

ff p subito *cresc.*

drink of the sher - ry, That makes us so

ff p subito *cresc.*

drink of the sher - ry, That makes us so mer - ry, To drink of the sher - ry, That

ff p subito *cresc.*

drink of the sher - ry, That makes us so mer - ry, To drink of the sher - ry, That

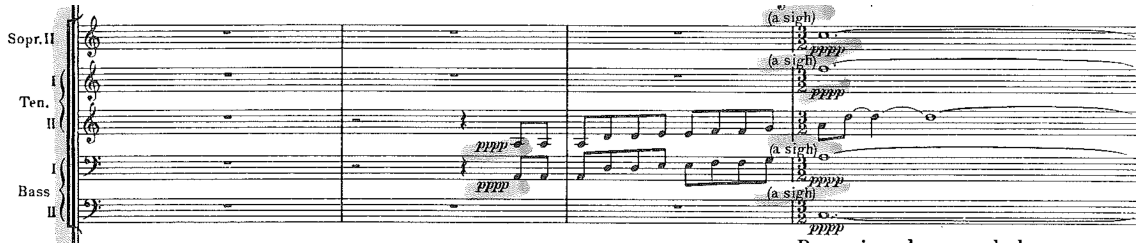
Example 5.6. E. J. Moeran, *Good Wine*, mm. 42-53.

Delius died in 1934 and Moeran quickly composed his tribute piece, *Nocturne*, for chorus, large orchestra¹⁸⁹, and baritone soloist. *Nocturne* is dedicated “To the Memory of Frederick Delius.” The text was written by Moeran’s friend Robert Nichols (1893-1944) is also evocative of Delius. The poetry portrays a sunset and a silently soaring crane over the “Exquisite stillness.” The choral demands are SSAATTBB. *Nocturne* is set as a single movement, lasting about fifteen minutes. The similarities between *Nocturne* and various Delius choral/orchestral works are too numerous for the scope of this study. Therefore only the most salient examples will be discussed.

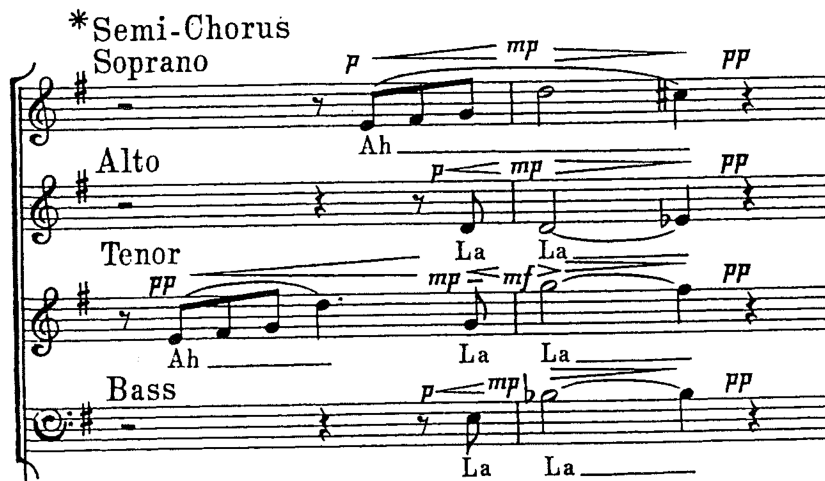
The first similarity is a motive that unifies *Nocturne*, similar in application to the motive Delius used in *Songs of Sunset*. Moeran’s motive first appears in the voices after a brief orchestral introduction of soft, languid strings and woodwinds. Moeran keeps the chorus soft and in the background, indicating a semi-chorus of “16 to 24 voices.” The choir sings only two wordless measures in the ascending motive. This motive is so

¹⁸⁹ The orchestra is smaller than most of Delius’s choral orchestral works, and includes no unusual instruments. Moeran indicates in the manuscript: “It is possible to dispense with the 2nd oboe and the 3 trombones, the parts of which are cued in elsewhere.” E. J. Moeran, *Nocturne*, full score (London: Novello, 1935), instrumentation page.

similar to the one used by Delius in *The Song of the High Hills* it must be considered an homage (ex.5.7, 5.8).



Example 5.7. Frederick Delius, *The Song of the High Hills*, [27]-4.



Example 5.8. E. J. Moeran, *Nocturne*, [1]-6.

The semi-chorus singing ‘Ah’ in a single-movement, choral/orchestral work is strongly reminiscent of *The Song of the High Hills*. A passage for four horns follows the semi-chorus, again mirroring Delius’s common use of the horn to evoke the majestic, outdoor landscape of mountains and sunsets.

The next choral entrance occurs at [2], after a brief orchestral passage. Moeran changes the choral voicing to a four part men scored TTBB. He instructs the male chorus to sing with “lips closed” in a homophonic, chromatic passage. Moeran has the second-

tenors enter one beat early, on the fourth beat of rehearsal 2. This again recalls *A Song of the High Hills*, with the single tenor entrance anticipating the full choral texture at [30]-1. Moeran instructs the chorus to then sing “with lips slightly open,” and then, one measure later he changes the second-tenors to the vowel ‘La,’ and in the next measure, ‘Ah.’ In the span of four measures Moeran has used every wordless choral sound deployed by Delius (ex.5.9, 5.10).

The image displays a page of a musical score for Frederick Delius's *The Song of the High Hills*, specifically rehearsal 29 through rehearsal 30. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves for woodwinds, brass, percussion, strings, and voices. Rehearsal 29 begins with a 'long' marking. Rehearsal 30 is marked 'slow and very legato (♩=50-56)'. The score includes various dynamics such as *pp*, *p*, and *dim.*, and features a 'long' marking over a measure in rehearsal 30. The vocal parts (Soprano, Contralto, Tenor Solo, Tenors, Basses) show entrances and specific instructions for the chorus, such as 'with lips slightly open' and the use of wordless sounds like 'La' and 'Ah'.

Example 5.9. Frederick Delius, *The Song of the High Hills*, [30]-1.

2 Chorus Tenor I *pp* *p* *mp* *p*
(lips closed) *(lips slightly open)*

Tenor II *pp* *p* *mp* *p* La
(lips closed) *(lips slightly open)*

Bass I *pp* *p* *mp* *p*
(lips closed) *(lips slightly open)*

Bass II *pp* *p* *mp* *p*
(lips closed) *(lips slightly open)*

Example 5.10. E. J. Moeran, *Nocturne*, [2].

This choral passage consequently elides with the entrance of the baritone soloist singing the first words of the poem, ascending in a similar motive to the chorus's original statement. With the appearance of the baritone, *Nocturne* is suddenly evocative of *Sea Drift* and *Songs of Sunset*. The lush, diatonic parallel sixths of the next section at [5] are more redolent of Vaughan Williams than Delius;¹⁹⁰ this style of composition echoes Moeran's folksong expertise. The following section of the baritone soloist is rhapsodic, recalling the *arioso* style of *Sea Drift*.

Another unaccompanied choral passage follows at [7]+2 with orchestral interjections until *Nocturne's* conclusion. The chorus is set in lush, eight-part, homophonic parts, with the sopranos again singing the same ascending motive as at the work's beginning (ex. 5.11).

¹⁹⁰ Vaughan Williams's solo song *Silent Noon* (1904) comes to mind.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble. It consists of eight staves, each for a different voice part: Soprano I, Soprano II, Alto I, Alto II, Tenor I, Tenor II, Bass I, and Bass II. The music is in the key of D major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) and ends with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte). The lyrics for all parts are: "Now, spi-rit,— find out wings and mount to him,—". The word "soar" is indicated by a melisma line above the notes in each part.

Example 5.11. E. J. Moeran, *Nocturne*, [7]+2.

Brief passages of imitation and texture reduction are combined with text painting, particularly on the word ‘soar’ which Moeran sets to an ascending melisma. Of note is a passing moment of bitonality, the presence of which reminds us that Moeran was not purely a neo-romantic conservative, nor a simple parrot of Delius. The bitonal chord is at

[8]-1 on the word 'hangs.' The chorus sustains a G-major chord over E-flat major in the low strings (ex.5.12).

The musical score consists of eight staves. The top four staves are vocal parts with lyrics: "Hang where now he hangs", "soar - ing soar,", and "where he is soar - ing soar,". The bottom four staves are piano accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *fz*, as well as performance instructions like *dim.* and *fz*. The piano part features a sustained G-major chord over an E-flat major bass line in the low strings.

Example 5.12. E. J. Moeran, *Nocturne*, [8]-1.

The conclusion of *Nocturne* is one of peace and serenity as the chorus and orchestra fade away with softly, divided strings and the chorus in a consonant, G-major chord. The final nod to Delius is the added sixth (E-natural) of the final chord. The added sixth in a final chord is a fingerprint of Delius observed in many of his choral works. Unlike Delius, however, Moeran resolves the sixth to a pure major chord.

Although *Nocturne* reflects the influence of Delius, it retains Moeran's sense of lyricism and diatonicism. In terms of length the only choral/orchestral equivalent in Delius's output is *An Arabesque*. Pairing the two pieces would make a compelling half of a program. *Nocturne* impressed Vaughan Williams enough that he wrote to Moeran:

“Many thanks for the copy of the *Nocturne* – I thought it beautiful – I think the references to Delius in the Press are absurd. Doubtless if Delius had not existed it might not have been written just as Delius would not have written without Greig or Greig without Schumann and so back to Tubal Cain...”¹⁹¹

Even Benjamin Britten weighed in positively on *Nocturne*'s behalf, saying, “Of course the *Nocturne* owes much to the shifting harmonies of the senior master [Delius], but the twilight nostalgic beauty is Moeran's own.”¹⁹²

More choral conductors should consider programming *Nocturne*. The vocal writing is lyrical, and, most importantly, it sings. Unlike Delius, Moeran never pushes the sopranos too high—there is only one high B-flat. In fact, all the tessituras of *Nocturne* are in a comfortable range.

¹⁹¹ Self, *The Music of E. J. Moeran*, 100.

¹⁹² Benjamin Britten as quoted by Lewis Foreman in liner notes for *Moeran: Rhapsodies Nos. 1 & 2, In the Mountain Countrey, Serenade, Nocturne*, Chandos 10235, 2004, compact disc.

Nocturne is well-crafted, as can be seen through the unifying material and skilled orchestration. Unlike many of Delius's choral/orchestral works, Moeran doesn't call for any unusual instruments (like bass oboe) or instrumentation (like six horns) in *Nocturne*. Therefore, *Nocturne* is compatible with other similarly scaled works.¹⁹³ The overall mood is one of peaceful introspection, made all the more effective by the quality of the poetry.

Phyllida and Corydon: Choral Suite for SATB (1939) is Moeran's second Elizabethan choral cycle and is dedicated to Constant Lambert. *Phyllida and Corydon* is a more cohesive cycle than *Songs of Springtime* because the poetry concerns the romantic relationship of the two title characters. Moeran used Elizabethan madrigal genres as a model for each part song. This is elucidated by the contents of the cycle, reprinted verbatim:

1. Madrigal-Phyllida and Corydon
2. Madrigal-Beauty Sat Bathing by a Spring
3. Pastoral-On a Hill there Grows a Flower
4. Air-Phyllis Inamorta
5. Ballet-Said I that Amaryllis
6. Canzonet-The Treasure of my Heart
7. Air-While She Lies Sleeping
8. Pastoral-Corydon, Arise
9. Madrigal-To Meadows

Moeran applies the particular characteristics of each Tudor model to the modern part song. The madrigals are polyphonic and imitative, exhibiting a great deal of counterpoint, independence of line, and text painting. The pastorals are set in lilting, compound meters. The airs are in a song style evocative of the lute song with their emphasis of a single melodic voice, accompanied by animated homophony. The ballet is predictably light in affect, with a quick tempo, imitative 'fa la la's,' and homophonic

¹⁹³ Unlike the sarrusaphone and bass oboe found in some of Delius's choral/orchestral works.

refrains. The canzonet is primarily homophonic but strikes a surprisingly sincere, reflective tone.

Although Moeran applies many Elizabethan characteristics to the part songs of *Phllyida and Corydon*, they could never be mistaken for early music. Moeran shades them with chromatic harmonies and unexpected resolutions (ex.5.12).

The image displays two musical excerpts. The first excerpt consists of four staves of music, each with a vocal line and a bass line. The lyrics are: "fast?— Look how the snow-y moun - tains Heaven's sun doth gent - ly". The music is marked with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The second excerpt also consists of four staves, with the lyrics: "waste!— But". This second excerpt is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a common time signature, and various musical symbols such as slurs and dynamic markings.

Example 5.13. E. J. Moeran, *While She Lies Sleeping*, mm. 4-8.

We can see from this brief examination of Moeran's choral music that he was an impressionable composer. He easily absorbed ideas from Delius, Heseltine, folk song, and early music. Rather than label him as an imitator, Moeran should be considered as composer similar to George Frederick Handel (1685-1759). Though the comparison may

seem at first unlikely, consider Handel's ability to absorb and synthesize the musical styles of Germany, Italy, and England.¹⁹⁴ Although Moeran was a much less prolific composer than Handel, he too synthesized various influences into new works that bear his distinctive stamp. Moeran's choral music always exhibits a sense of lyricism, an economy of texture, and a sensitivity to text. His Elizabethan part songs, though not his most "Delian" works, are a masterful fusion of Tudor madrigals and twentieth-century harmony and rhythm. And *Nocturne* is a beautiful and important twentieth-century choral/orchestral work worthy of standing alongside comparable masterworks of similar scale.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ George Buelow, *A History of Baroque Music* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 476.

¹⁹⁵ Such as RVW's *Serenade to Music* (1938), and Delius's *An Arabesque*.

CHAPTER 6: THE LIFE AND CHORAL MUSIC OF CONSTANT LAMBERT AND
PATRICK HADLEY

Mr. Lambert's *Rio Grande* is not only full of life that is contagious.
...Seldom in Symphony Hall has there been so instant, spontaneous, so
prolonged, so tumultuous recognition of an unfamiliar composition signed
with an unfamiliar name.

—anonymous critic of the *Boston Herald*

We pass finally to a composer profoundly influenced by Delius's musical
outlook but in a class by himself, namely Patrick Hadley. An individualist,
one who moved in the Warlock-Lambert-Walton circle, his work is hardly
ever played today [1976], not through any lack of intrinsic merit but
because, one's impression is, it failed to receive the right kind of
promotion at the time when the musical climate was most favorable.
Hadley is however a composer worth reviving.

—Christopher Palmer, *Delius: Portrait of a Cosmopolitan*

Taken together Constant Lambert and Patrick Hadley wrote a small but
significant body of choral music. Because of their relatively small output and the fact that
the influence of Delius on their music fades after his death in 1934, this chapter will
combine the lives and choral music of these two composers. As is seen in the Venn
diagram, Lambert's and Hadley's orbits are distinctly different than Heseltine and
Moeran. Whereas Heseltine and Moeran shared direct connections through the music of
Delius, English folksongs, music from the Tudor era, and Bernard van Dieren, Lambert
embraced jazz and rebuked the English Revival of folksong. Hadley embraced the
English Revival, but showed no interest in jazz, Dieren, or the Tudor era. The common
thread that unites them is Delius.

Like Heseltine and Moeran, Lambert died young, at the age of forty-five, a combination of alcoholism and undiagnosed diabetes.¹⁹⁶ Lambert studied composition with Vaughan Williams at the Royal College and in the late 1920s he was a regular visitor to Eynsford where he enjoyed carousing with Heseltine, Moeran, and others.¹⁹⁷ Various biographers have asserted that Lambert became an alcoholic during the years he spent at Eynsford.¹⁹⁸

Lambert is primarily remembered as a conductor, a champion of British ballet, and a music critic. His book *Music Ho!* is a “modern classic” of early twentieth-century music criticism.¹⁹⁹ Although Lambert composed several ballets and orchestral works, many have not received regular performances since his death. His most famous work is the choral/orchestral *The Rio Grande* (1927), composed when he was just twenty-two. His other large, choral/orchestral work is *Summer’s Last Will and Testament* (1934), which combines Tudor musical models of madrigals with settings of poetry by the poet Thomas Nashe (1567-1601). Palmer claims *Summer’s Last Will and Testament* may be Lambert’s masterpiece²⁰⁰, but that it was neglected due to “bad timing.”²⁰¹ *Summer’s Last Will* shows less influence of Delius and therefore will not be further discussed.

In the early twentieth century, jazz, gospel, and the African American spiritual were increasingly accepted by Western composers and audiences. As we have seen, Delius himself embraced the music he heard at Solano Grove and applied it to much of

¹⁹⁶ Christopher Palmer, liner notes for *Constant Lambert: Summer’s Last Will and Testament*, Hyperion 664565, compact disc.

¹⁹⁷ Lloyd, *Constant Lambert*, 84.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁹⁹ Angus Morrison in the introduction to Constant Lambert, *Music Ho! A Study of Music in Decline* 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press).

²⁰⁰ Palmer. Liner notes for *Summer’s Last Will*, 6.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

his work, including the opera *Koanga* and the choral/orchestral work *Appalachia*. Palmer asserts that the jazz-inspired *Rio Grande* was, "...one of the few 'modern' works for which Delius had a special regard."²⁰²

Before the *The Rio Grande* itself is discussed, it would be helpful to clarify Lambert's perspectives on jazz and Delius. The late 1920s were a time of radical musical and cultural shifts. It was a post-war world, and Europe was coming to grips with a new cultural reality; the dominant influence of the postromantic German composers had largely been swept away to be replaced by the new Viennese school, Impressionism, jazz, neo-classicism, nationalistic folk music, and experimental (electronic) music. Lambert himself comments in *Music Ho!*:

"The landmarks of pre-war music, such as *Le Sacre du Printemps*, *Pierrot Lunaire* and Debussy's *Iberia*, are all definitely antitraditional (sic); but they are curiously linked to tradition by the continuous curve of their break-away, comparable to the parabola traced in the air by a shell. But this shell has reached no objective, like a rocket in mid-air, it has exploded into a thousand multicoloured (sic) stars, scattering in as many different directions, and sharing only a common brilliance and evanescence."²⁰³

For the first time in music history, composers in the early twentieth century were faced with limitless choices of style. Innovation has always spawned controversy in music history, from Giovanni Artusi's (1540-1613) attack on Claudio Monteverdi's (1567-1643) *secunda prattica* to the debate between the traditionalist versus modernist composers of the nineteenth century.²⁰⁴ The difference between these earlier stylistic debates and the early twentieth century was the degree by which the old systems of

²⁰² Fenby as quoted by Palmer in *Delius*, 37.

²⁰³ Constant Lambert, *Music Ho! A Study of Music in Decline* 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1985), 35.

²⁰⁴ Such as Robert Schumann (1810-1856) and Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) versus Franz Liszt (1811-1886) and Richard Wagner (1813-1883).

musical organization were rapidly disintegrating and developing. No decisive voice for the future of music emerged before 1930, and it is arguable that the remainder of the twentieth century remained a kaleidoscope of musical styles. For the first time in music history composers could choose from, "...a thousand multicoloured stars, scattering in as many different directions..."²⁰⁵ Some composers, like Heseltine and Moeran, looked for inspiration in music of the past (Gesualdo and Tudor composers), as well as to contemporary composers (Delius, Dieren), and their native folksongs. Lambert ignored English folk music, but shared Heseltine's admiration for Dieren and Delius.²⁰⁶ The additional ingredient in Lambert's *Rio Grande* is jazz and his enthusiasm for the composer Duke Ellington (1899-1974).

Lambert was also interested in the often overlooked Jewish contribution to jazz.

"The nostalgia of the Negro who wants to go home has given place to the more infinitely more weary nostalgia of the cosmopolitan Jew who has no home to go to... There is an obvious link between the exiled and persecuted Jews and persecuted Negroes, which the Jews, with their admirable capacity for drinking the beer of those who have knocked down their skittles, have not been slow to turn to their advantage."²⁰⁷

Lambert is referring to commercial, Tin Pan Alley jazz composers of the 1920s, Jewish composers like George Gershwin (1898-1937). Lambert refers to this style of commercial jazz as "sweet nothings."²⁰⁸ Lambert has more criticisms concerning Gershwin specifically:

"The difficulty of making a satisfactory synthesis of jazz is due to the fact that it is not, properly speaking, raw material but half-finished material in which European sophistication has been imposed over coloured crudity. There is always the danger that the highbrow composer may take away the

²⁰⁵ See note 210.

²⁰⁶ Lambert, *Music Ho!*, 221.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 184-185.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 186.

number he first thought of and leave only the sophisticated trappings behind. This is indeed what has happened in that singularly inept albeit popular piece, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* [1924]. The composer, trying to write a Lisztian concerto in jazz style, has used only the non-barbaric elements in dance music, the result being neither good jazz nor good Liszt, and in no sense the word a good concerto.²⁰⁹

The Rio Grande is also a work of symphonic jazz, and, like Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, it includes a virtuosic piano part, so his criticism seems contradictory. With over seventy years hindsight we can more clearly see what Lambert was witnessing: the beginnings of the commercialized music industry and the mutation of early jazz into popular dance music. The subtitle of *Music Ho!* is *A Study of Music in Decline* and Lambert is at pains to clarify the difference between "lowbrow" and "highbrow" music.²¹⁰ He was witnessing the beginning of the rift between commercial and art music that has continued to widen to this day.

Lambert was an advocate for the edification of jazz. Although he admired the compositions of Ellington²¹¹ he felt, "It is for the highbrow composer to take the next step."²¹² Lambert was hopeful that future composers might be capable of elevating jazz to a new art form. He held up the examples of Darius Milhaud's (1892-1974) *La Création du Monde* (1923)²¹³ and Kurt Weill's (1900-1950) *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1933)²¹⁴ as hopeful examples.

The other important influence in *The Rio Grande* is Delius. Lambert wrote the following in the 1933 journal *Radio Times*:

²⁰⁹Ibid., 195.

²¹⁰ Lambert, *Music Ho!*, 200-229.

²¹¹ "...in Duke Ellington's compositions jazz has produced the most distinguished popular music since Johann Strauss..." Ibid., 194.

²¹² Ibid., 194.

²¹³ Ibid., 195.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 197.

“The best Delius is to be found, not in his concertos and sonatas, but in the exquisite series of works for chorus and orchestra...; which includes *Sea Drift*, *Appalachia*, *Songs of Sunset*, and *The Song of the High Hills*. It is in these that Delius finds his most satisfactory expression.”²¹⁵

In *Music Ho!* Lambert reveals some of his thoughts concerning how the music of Delius and jazz might be married:

“The sudden post-war efflorescence of jazz was due largely to the adoption as raw musical material of the harmonic richness and orchestral subtlety of the Debussy-Delius period of highbrow music. Orchestral colour, of course, is not a thing that can really be appreciated in itself; it is largely dependent for its colour on the underlying harmonies. The harmonic background drawn from the impressionist school opened up a new world of sound to the jazz composer, and although the more grotesque orchestral timbres, the brute complaints of the saxophone, the vicious spurts from the muted brass, may seem to belie the rich sentimentality of their background, they are only thorns protecting a fleshy cactus – a sauce piquante poured over a nice juicy steak.”²¹⁶

The Rio Grande witnesses Lambert’s successful attempt to fuse symphonic jazz with a Delius-inspired harmony. Although the jazz influence is flagrant, the influence of Delius is subtler as Palmer makes clear:

“...Delius was haunted throughout his life by the sound of black voices singing in close harmony; and if, therefore, the sound of the unaccompanied chorus in *The Rio Grande* singing ‘The noisy streets are empty and hushed is the town’ is magically Delian, it also sets up a complex series of overtones in terms of Lambert’s musical makeup.”²¹⁷

The Rio Grande is scored for solo piano, mixed chorus, alto soloist, two trumpets, two cornets in A, three trombones, one tuba, strings, and a five player percussion ensemble including three timpani, side drum, tenor drum, bass drum, cymbals, Turkish crash, tam tam, tambourine, castanets, triangle, Chinese tom tom, cow-bell, Chinese

²¹⁵ Lloyd, *Constant Lambert*, 201.

²¹⁶ Lambert, *Music Ho!*, 181.

²¹⁷ Palmer, liner notes for *Constant Lambert: Summer’s Last Will*, 4.

block, xylophone, and *jeu de timbres* (glockenspiel). The size and breadth of the percussion ensemble is the most obvious example of the jazz influence in this work. The percussion adds intensity, color, and excitement to *The Rio Grande*. Of particular importance is the complete lack of woodwinds.

The poem is by Sacheverall Sitwell (1897-1988), a poet and music critic who moved in Lambert's social circle. The poetry is a travelogue, filled with the sights, sounds, colors, smells, people, places, flora, and fauna of the coastal state of Rio Grande, Brazil. But there is nothing authentically Brazilian about *The Rio Grande*. Rather, Lambert uses the poetic imagery as a musical point of departure for his work of symphonic jazz. This approach is similar to the pastiche of Florida created by Delius in *Appalachia*. Palmer claims, "...Lambert was less concerned with topographical nicities than with the fact that the poem was a virtual transliteration of that mood of feverish activity suffused with desperate melancholy which accorded so well with his own temperament and outlook..."²¹⁸ In terms of length *The Rio Grande* is similarly scaled to Delius's *An Arabesque* and Moeran's *Nocturne*. But in terms of style, compared to the intense melancholy of Delius and Moeran's choral/orchestral works, Lambert is quite literally a breath of fresh air.

Like some of the choral works of Delius and Heseltine, Lambert includes a prefatory note concerning choral performance practice:

The chorus is only part of the work and of no more importance than, say, the piano part, and it is essential that the singers should have *absolute rhythmic precision* (sic) as the least lagging behind will ruin the ensemble.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Palmer, *Delius*, 38.

²¹⁹ Constant Lambert, *The Rio Grande*, full score (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), 1.

The view of the choir as an essential integration of the orchestra has precedent in the choral/orchestral works of Delius.²²⁰

Elements of Delius prevail throughout *The Rio Grande*. Upon the chorus's entrance we are immediately struck with the highly chromatic part writing. Lambert uses *The Rio Grande* to make a natural musical bridge between the chromaticism of Delius and the colorful, chromatic harmonies of jazz. In *The Rio Grande* the two styles—impressionist chromaticism and jazz—become difficult to distinguish. Other elements of Delius include wordless chorus (Lambert indicates this with *bouche fermée*), use of atmospheric text painting, soloists singing from within the chorus, and a gradually soft ending, suggesting the setting sun.

In regards to Lambert's approach to text and rhythm, Lambert himself wrote in a 1928 article (one year after completing *The Rio Grande*):

“...the chief interest of jazz rhythms lies in their application to the setting of words, and although jazz settings have by no means the flexibility of subtlety of the early seventeenth-century airs, for example, there is no denying their lightness and ingenuity...English words demand for their successful musical treatment an infinitely more varied and syncopated rhythm than is to be found in the nineteenth-century romantics, and the best jazz songs of today are, in fact, nearer in their methods to the late fifteenth-century composers than any music since.”²²¹

The rhythms of Delius are subtle, gentle, and essentially postromantic—in other words similar to Lambert's description of nineteenth-century composers. The chorus parts of Delius are often strictly homophonic, like a German chorale. Lambert, on the

²²⁰ See note 64.

²²¹ Lambert as quoted by Palmer in liner notes for *Constant Lambert: Summer's Last Will and Testament*, 4.

other hand, makes use of jazz-inspired rhythms both in the choral and instrumental parts of *The Rio Grande*. Lambert further explains his opinions on rhythm in *Music Ho!*:

“It is often suggested that jazz rhythm, though exhilarating at first, ends by becoming monotonous through its being merely a series of irregular groupings and cross-accents over a steady and unyielding pulse. This is true in way...yet in the best Negro jazz bands the irregular cross-accents are given so much more weight than the underlying (sic) pulse, that the rhythmic arabesques almost completely obscure the metrical framework... We make a mistake in considering these rhythmic arabesques abnormal or artificial. It is the lack of rhythmic experiment in the nineteenth century that is really abnormal – at least in regards English music and the setting of English words.”²²²

The chorus’s first phrase is an example of jazz-inspired syncopation combined with impressionist chromaticism., both melodic and harmonic (ex.6.1).

Example 6.1. Constant Lambert, *The Rio Grande*, [1].

Lambert only uses wordless chorus twice in *The Rio Grande*, once near the beginning at [4]-2, both with the alto soloist. In both cases the chorus is set in gently oscillating in a slow harmonic rhythm of whole-notes. By setting the wordless chorus as a static background color, Lambert imitates Delius’s similar use as in *An Arabesque* and *The Song of the High Hills* (ex. 6.2).

²²² Lambert, *Music Ho!*, 191-192.

Just as Delius varied the size of the chorus in *The Song of the High Hills*, so Lambert reduces the vocal forces to semi-chorus for the final pages of *The Rio Grande*. The effect is—as noted by Palmer—a similarly haunting effect as the conclusion of *Appalachia*. The semi-chorus is instructed to sing with closed lips (*bouche fermée*) increasing the atmosphere of the ‘southern winds wafted slow and gentle their fierceness tempered...’. Though the effect of the music fading to silence may only bare an anecdotal similarity to Delius’s choral/orchestral output, it remains a significant similarity.

Lambert’s *The Rio Grande* shows how the influence of Delius permeated more deeply into the musical language of choral composers than is generally acknowledged. Lambert never held Delius in the same thrall as did Heseltine and Moeran, nor is there evidence that he visited Delius at Grez. But Delius and Lambert shared an affinity for early twentieth-century jazz and the musical lineage of slave-inspired songs and spirituals. *The Rio Grande* is an important example of how a composer can take seemingly disparate styles of music (jazz and the romantic-impressionist style of Delius) to create something uniquely new.

Of those important composers most closely aligned with Delius, Patrick Hadley lived the longest; he died on December 17th, 1973. Although Hadley is less well known than the other composers in this paper, he wrote a significant body of choral music that is virtually unknown to conductors in the United States.²²⁴ His choral music covers multiple genres, including choral/orchestral works such as *The Trees so High* (1931), *The Hills* (1944), *Fen and Flood* (1955), a lengthy SATB part song *The Solitary Reaper* (1936), and his famous anthems *I Sing of a Maiden* (1936) and *My Beloved Spake* (1936). As seen

²²⁴ Hadley is not mentioned in either Shrock or Strimple.

in the Venn diagram, Hadley's music stands slightly apart from Heseltine, Moeran, and Lambert. His primary influences were a love of nature, the English countryside, folksong and the music of Delius and Vaughan Williams.

Like Moeran, Hadley was wounded in World War I. In 1918, at the age of nineteen, he lost the lower half of his right leg. Unlike Moeran, Hadley's wound was extremely severe and resulted in lifelong pain and discomfort.²²⁵ From 1922-1925 Hadley studied composition and conducting at the Royal College of Music. It was at the RCM that he studied with Vaughan Williams and is presumably where he developed and interest in the English Revival. Once graduated, Hadley was immediately added to the faculty as professor of composition, a post he held until he retirement in 1962.

During the 1920s Hadley moved with the Heseltine crowd and was a regular visitor to Eynsford, along with Moeran and Lambert.²²⁶ Hadley suffered from a lifetime of heavy drinking, which may have resulted from his years at Eynsford. Luckily for Hadley, his indulgence in alcohol apparently did not lead to the devastating alcoholism that so consumed Moeran and Lambert.

The extent of Hadley's friendship with Heseltine is not known. Hadley's name does not appear in Heseltine's extant letters, and there is only passing reference to his presence at Eynsford.²²⁷ However, his friendship with Moeran and Lambert is well documented. As shown in Hill's memoir of Moeran *Lonely Waters*, Moeran admired Lambert's music. The excerpt from Hill's book (previously excerpted in chapter five of this thesis) is reproduced here for the sake of convenience:

²²⁵ Eric Wetherell, *Paddy: The Life and Music of Patrick Hadley* (London: Thames Publishing, 1997), 13.

²²⁶ Smith, *Peter Warlock*, 226.

²²⁷ See note 28

“...I was able to let Jack hear a new set of records... This was *The Hills* by Patrick Hadley, and was the first performance of the work, recently given at the Proms [1947]. I admired Hadley’s music and knew that he was an old friend of Jack’s... At the end he remained quiet for a moment, still smiling, and said, ‘I enjoyed that very much.’ I was not surprised by this remark as both composers were half Irish; both were inspired by Nature and had a mutual regard for Delius. Indeed, Hadley had once stated that the latter’s *Song of the High Hills* was his favourite piece of music.”²²⁸

Constant Lambert and Hadley studied together at the RCM where they both studied composition with Vaughan Williams. Hadley later recalled:

“I knew him [Constant] perhaps more intimately than most since the day he arrived (aged 17) at the RCM when we happened to share a lesson with old Ralph.”²²⁹

Lambert himself recounted his first lesson with Vaughan Williams, while Hadley waited in the hall:

“I well remember the trepidation with which I waited outside the [Vaughan Williams’s] door (oddly enough with Patrick Hadley) for my first lesson with him at the Royal College of Music. My admiration for him was as profound as my knowledge of my own technical shortcomings...”²³⁰

In his biography on Hadley, the author Eric Wetherell claims Hadley revered Delius as an “idol”²³¹ whom he finally had the opportunity to meet at the 1929 Delius Festival. Then, in 1930 Hadley visited the Delius’s in Grez and helped to unearth the lost score of *Koanga*. In a letter to Percy Grainger, Jelka Delius wrote:

“The great event is that the big orchestral score of the opera *Koanga* has been found *at last*, after it has been lost since 1915 when Beecham was in money troubles and really bankrupt... Heseltine discovered the Orch (sic) parts... last summer and Hadley got them to make another serious search and they found it... We had an amusing visit from Balfour [Gardiner] with

²²⁸ Hill, *Lonely Waters*, 75.

²²⁹ Lloyd, *Constant Lambert*, 32.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

²³¹ Wetherell, *Paddy*, 25.

Patrick Hadley, the young composer, whom we liked very much. Balfour had ordered a little barrel of French wine for us, which he himself was to bottle here with Hadley...Hadley then did a wonderful act of devotion. He extracted from Beecham's secretary all the new scores that he had played at the [Delius] festival and also the parts of *Koanga* and brought it all back here straight away. At that time the Score (sic) had not been found and Fenby was going to reconstitute the score out of the parts – a frightful work!!”²³²

Hadley conducted several successful concerts of Delius's choral/orchestral works including *Appalachia* and *The Song of the High Hills*. Boris Ord (1897-1961), the regular conductor of the Cambridge University Musical Society (CUMS), served in the Royal Air Force during World War II.²³³ Hadley served as his replacement until Ord returned from active duty in 1945.²³⁴ In 1942 Hadley conducted *Appalachia* and in 1945 he realized a “lifetime's ambition” in conducting *The Song of the High Hills*.²³⁵ His reputation as a choral conductor was outstanding. The German conductor Hans Oppenheim (1892-1965) wrote to Hadley after hearing him conduct Bach's B-minor Mass:

“It is nothing short of a miracle that in the fifth year of the War you have achieved a performance of this standard...the chorus was excellent, the orchestra remarkably good, and if I may say so your conducting the finest thing I have ever heard you do.”²³⁶

In 1946 Hadley was made full professor and made chair of the music department at Cambridge University. Among the congratulatory letters was an anonymous student article in the college newspaper which provides some insight into Hadley's choral conducting style:

²³² Carley, *A Life in Letters*, vol. 2, 365.

²³³ Wetherell, *Paddy*, 52.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

“Despite many calls upon his time, Dr. Hadley has always given freely of his energy in conducting the Chorus and Choir, in advising and rehearsing, in teaching and inspiring those who have had the privilege of being led by him. True, we frequently find it difficult to sing with the ‘utmost conviction’ of even ‘passion’ when he rolls his eyes in a frivolous way, but we believe that his insistence upon a high standard of performance, lavishly demanded by adverbial phrases in Italian and by three magic letters ‘J A S’ [Just Accent Syllables], has been and will be of permanent value to ourselves.”²³⁷

Because of Hadley’s promotion to chair, along with his responsibilities to teach and rehearse the school choirs, he had less time to compose. His most important choral works were already behind him, though he would still write three major choral/orchestral works: *Fen and Flood* (1955), *Connemara* (1958), and *Cantata for Lent* (1962). *Fen and Flood* was so adored by Vaughan Williams that he arranged Hadley’s original TTBB score for mixed voices. The SATB version was published by Oxford in 1955. The other two works remain unpublished, although Palmer praises *Cantata for Lent* and laments its undeserved obscurity:

“This was completed in 1962 and performed later that year by the CUMS Chorus and Orchestra under David Willcocks, but has so far remained unpublished. I hope it will not do so for much longer, for it is a fine piece, deeply felt, the work of a sensitive poet and able craftsman.”²³⁸

Because these later works show less influence of Delius and are not easily available they will not be further discussed. However, Hadley’s greater choral output merits further study.

²³⁷ Ibid., 67.

²³⁸ Christopher Palmer, “A Note of the Church Music,” *Musical Times* 114, no. 1569 (Nov. 1972), <http://jstor.org> (accessed Oct. 17, 2014). Unfortunately, *Cantata for Lent* has remained unpublished.

Because of his divided energies, Hadley not only composed little, but did not find adequate time to promote his own works. Over the 1950s and 60s his works were performed less frequently. His music never penetrated the choral repertoire of the United States, although Robert Shaw was known to have received a copy of *The Hills* in 1949.²³⁹ If Shaw had decided to program *The Hills*, Hadley's reputation may have been greatly bolstered. His works also suffer from an overly localized focus; *The Hills* is concerned primarily with the nostalgic memories of the English hills of Derbyshire, and *Fen and Flood* relates a similarly narrow geographical experience. In the latter half of the twentieth century Hadley's choral music was all but forgotten. He died quietly and in obscurity in his family home.

Of the composers so far examined, the choral music of Patrick Hadley bears the most interesting of contradictory influences. He was a self-confessed "Wagnerite" and also "adored" Debussy and Ravel.²⁴⁰ These would seem to align him closely with Delius as a Romantic Impressionist. But he was also an avowed member of the folksong school, which aligned him with Vaughan Williams. The school of musical thought with which he shared little affinity was the *avant-garde*, atonal and serialist movements pioneered by Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) and Pierre Boulez (b.1925). When asked by student Peter Dickinson about the "twelve-tone composers" in 1953 Hadley's response was exceedingly colorful: "Twelve-tone, what's that?...You know what I say, Peter? I say – balls!"²⁴¹

²³⁹ Wetherell, *Paddy*, 80.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

Palmer relates Hadley's close affiliation with the Heseltine crowd, as well as clarifying the potentially contradictory influences of Delius and Vaughan Williams:

“...like [William] Walton he [Hadley] hovered on the periphery of the Warlock – Cecil Gray circle and was close to Constant Lambert, despite the latter's oft-repeated dislike of the ‘folksong school’ to which Hadley belonged... The two brightest stars in Hadley's heaven were both fearlessly unacademic – Vaughan Williams and Delius... The interesting point here is that Hadley somehow contrives to reconcile these often conflicting influences into something refreshingly strong and distinctive; the whole is always more than the sum of its parts. Like Delius and VW [Vaughan Williams], he is essentially a nature mystic...”²⁴²

To demonstrate how Hadley reconciles these diverse influences three of his choral works will be examined in greater detail. These include the part song *The Solitary Reaper* and the two choral/orchestral works *The Trees so High* and *The Hills*.

The part song *The Solitary Reaper* was composed in 1936 and is set for unaccompanied SATB voices. The poem is by William Wordsworth (1770-1850), again reflecting the high quality of texts often chosen by this group of British composers. An immediate similarity to Delius's part song *To Be Sung of a Summer Night* is apparent in a performance note on the first page: “It will be observed that for a good part of the time the sopranos are given no words to sing. A suitable vowel should therefore be decided upon by the conductor.”²⁴³ Despite this vague instruction, Hadley indicates ‘ah’ in the soprano part of the score.

The Solitary Reaper is essentially a program piece; it tells a simple story of the narrator listening to a maiden sing as she reaps and binds grain. She is a ‘highland lass’ singing a ‘melancholy strain’ that surpasses all other beauties in the world. Her beautiful song is inextricably connected to the hills of the Scottish landscape, yet another similarity

²⁴² Palmer, “A Note on the church music,” *Musical Times*.

²⁴³ Patrick Hadley, *Solitary Reaper* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 1.

to Delius's *The Song of the High Hills*. The climax of the work is reached with the text 'And, as I mounted up the hill, the music in my heart I bore long after it was heard no more.' *The Song of High Hills* also reaches the musical apex with the ascent of a hill.

The first sound of the part song is the sopranos' solitary voice, leaping up an octave on the syllable 'ah,' representing the singing maiden. The sopranos then spin out a linear, languid two measure phrases over a homophonic, ATB texture (ex.6.2). The harmonies are at first mostly diatonic, built on the scale of E-Dorian. Hadley develops the lengthy, twelve-page part song by introducing more chromaticism at the midway point, when the sopranos sing, 'A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard in springtime.' Hadley then further increases the complexity by shifting the lower voices from a relatively simply rhythmic pattern of quarter and eighth notes to eighth-note triplets. The two-fold addition of chromatic modulation and increased rhythmic complexity substantially increase the work's difficulty (ex. 6.3).

NOTE.—It will be observed that for a good part of the time the Sopranos are given no words to sing. A suitable vowel should therefore be decided upon by the conductor.

Molto moderato

Key Emi. { .m, | m : .m, | m : s — | — .fe :fe .l }

SOPRANO *pp* Ah —

ALTO

TENOR *pp* .t, :d — .d : .t, | d :d
Be - hold — her, sin - gle

BASS *pp* .m, :l, — .l, : .m, | l, :l,
Be - hold — her, sin - gle

Example 6.3. Patrick Hadley, *The Solitary Reaper*, mm. 1-3.

work, And o'er the sic - kle bend - ing; - I lis - tened,
 work, And o'er the sic - kle bend - ing; - I lis - tened,
 work, And o'er the sic - kle bend - ing; - I lis - tened,

Example 6.4. Patrick Hadley, *The Solitary Reaper*, mm. 70-75.

After the climactic *ff* on page 11, Hadley returns to the opening rhythmic and diatonic language of the part song’s opening. The last sound heard is the sopranos held ‘ah’, left hanging on the dominant B, as if the song of the maiden continues forever in memory.

The Solitary Reaper is a lengthy contribution to the part song repertoire, and has been unjustly left to oblivion. It seems to have stumbled out of the gate with a lackluster review:

“This part-song is excellent more in intention than achievement; or perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say the expectations based on the excellence of the opening stark and tellingly simple pages are somewhat disappointed in the subsequent developments. It was a good idea to use the sonorous tones of the alto voices for much of the principle melodic part [is the reviewer mistakenly referring to the soprano ‘ah’s?], but, anxious to introduce harmonic colour at the climax, the composer forgot the claims of the words and developed the music instrumentally, and, it must be confessed, rather uninterestingly. This is a pity, for the ending echoes the poetry of the beginning.”²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ “Hadley, Patrick, ‘The Solitary Reaper,’ for Unaccompanied Chorus, SATB.” *Music and Letters* 18, no. 2 (April 1937), <http://jstor.org> (accessed Oct. 17, 2014).

Both Wetherell and Palmer suggest this part song is worthy of reconsideration. Wetherell writes:

“Of equal import is the unaccompanied SATB setting of Wordsworth’s *The Solitary Reaper*. Paddy [‘Paddy’ was Hadley’s nickname] sets the tale...with considerable imagination. ‘The maiden sang as if the song could have no ending’ drew from him the idea of a wordless soprano modal melody while the remaining voices set the scene...and at the end, a single soprano note lingers on after the other parts have ceased.”²⁴⁵

Palmer offers even more perceptive insights:

“In his mature manner Hadley eschews the familiar appurtenances of ‘juicy’ harmony; he inclines to austerity of texture rather than lushness, understatement and a species of tough-fibered introspection rather than passionate self-revelation or assertiveness. In his four-part *a cappella* setting of Wordsworth’s *Solitary Reaper*...the stress of overwhelming emotion is suggested with exemplary reticence and economy of expression.”²⁴⁶

By emphasizing the dichotomy of Hadley’s style, Palmer is contrasting Hadley with Delius. Unlike Hadley, Delius’s *A Mass of Life*, *Requiem*, and *The Song of the High Hills* insist on “passionate self-revelation” and “assertiveness.” Delius’s music often impresses his viewpoint upon the world. Hadley, on the other hand, was not openly hostile to the church, and in fact served as the precentor (chapel master) from 1946 until his retirement.²⁴⁷ His secular choral music has no philosophical or theological undertones and his small but significant body of church music is devout.

Why *The Solitary Reaper* fell into oblivion is difficult to gauge. Perhaps the performance heard by the reviewer “E.R.” was not stellar. Perhaps choirs found the chromaticism and rhythm too difficult. Perhaps it is too long and complex: it is through-

²⁴⁵ Wetherell 43-44

²⁴⁶ Christopher Palmer, “Patrick Hadley: The Man and His Music,” *Music & Letters* 55 152, no. 2 (April 1974), <http://jstor.org> (accessed Oct. 17, 2014).

²⁴⁷ Wetherell, *Paddy*, 65.

composed and not strophic, gradually building in musical complexity and intensity. Oxford eventually took *The Solitary Reaper* out of print and sold the rights. Today Oxford is unable to disclose who owns the copyright. Various libraries hold copies, so obtaining the score remains viable. It is unfortunate the score isn't more readily available to choral conductors. Those who seek it out will discover a worthy challenge for a good collegiate or skilled adult choir as well as a fresh musical experience.

The Trees so High is a choral symphony, similar in style to Beethoven's 9th Symphony (1824) and Mendelssohn's *Lobegesang* (1840) in that the chorus does not enter until late in work. The work is scored for large orchestra, large mixed chorus, and baritone soloist, a scoring redolent of Delius's *Sea Drift*. Like a Classical-period symphony, *The Trees* consists of four movements, although the opening and closing movements are Adagio rather than Allegro. The movements are:

- I. Adagio
- II. Andante tranquillo
- III. Vivace
- IV. Adagio

The Trees might also be called a folk-symphony, because it is based on a folksong from Somerset. The opening three movements are purely orchestral and use the tune as the genesis for thematic material. Lambert's biographer Christopher Lloyd frames the complex issue of Lambert, Hadley, Vaughan Williams and folksong in his book *Constant Lambert: Beyond the Rio Grande* which I reproduce here:

“...he [Lambert] was not a follower of the folk-song school...Constant held a similar view [to Walton]:

‘The English folk song, except to a few crusted old farmhands in those rare districts which have escaped mechanization, is nothing more than a very pretty period piece with the same innocent charm as the paintings of

George Morland... Even in our day Elgar and Delius have, in their widely different ways, written music that is essentially English without having to dress it up in rustic clothes or adopt pseudo-archaic modes of speech.’

... But Vaughan Williams was in no doubt of the importance of folk-song on British music when he fired this broadside:

‘I know in my own mind that if it had not been for the folk-song movement of twenty-five years ago this young and vital school represented by such names as Walton, Bliss, Lambert, and Patrick Hadley would not have come into being. They may deny their birthright; but having once drunk deep of the living water no amount of Negroid or Baroque purgatives will enable them to expel it from their system.’²⁴⁸

Wetherell suggests that Hadley took up Lambert’s “jibes at folksong”²⁴⁹ and composed his choral/orchestral *The Trees* to demonstrate how a large-scale symphonic work might edify the humble tune and “... to attempt something that his friend believed to be impossible.”²⁵⁰

Hadley was not one to set folksong to an overly simple way.²⁵¹ As put by Palmer:

“He is not what is often slightly referred to as a ‘folksong composer’; flattened sevenths, clod-hopping six-eighths, amiable pentatonic doodlings and all the other trappings of synthetic folkery (sic) play no part in his work. It is not, in fact, difficult to see why his works never became popular; for he lacks the warm-hearted, expansive gestures of a Vaughan Williams on the one hand, and the luxuriant subjectivity of Delius of the other.”²⁵²

Hadley included a preface to the score which reveals similarities to Delius’s *Appalachia*, *The Song of the High Hills*, Moeran’s *Lonely Waters*, and even Lambert’s own *Rio Grande*:

²⁴⁸ Lloyd, *Constant Lambert*, 34-35.

²⁴⁹ Wetherell, *Paddy*, 27.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁵¹ Such as Moeran’s diatonic and strophic *The Young Sailor and Nancy*.

²⁵² Palmer, “Patrick Hadley: The Man and His Music,” *Music & Letters*.

“...I have imagined the chorus seated throughout, and the [preferably baritone]²⁵³ soloist, if acoustic conditions allow, standing behind the orchestra but apart from the chorus, without an air of formality of apparent consciousness of his (or her) own importance.”²⁵⁴

Indeed, seated chorus was called for *The Song of the High Hills*,²⁵⁵ and in both *Appalachia* and *The Rio Grande* soloists sing from the chorus, not spotlighted next to the conductor. Although Moeran’s tone poem *Lonely Waters* is not a choral work, both the mood and effect are quite similar to *The Trees*. In both works the folksong is used as a source for melodic and thematic material in the orchestra before the song is sung in the conclusion. In *The Trees* the folksong is sung by chorus and baritone while in *Lonely Waters* it is sung by an unspecified, solo voice. Moeran indicates in his score a performance note strikingly to Hadley’s:

“...it should be understood that the singer need not be a professional one, in fact anyone with a clear and natural manner of singing may perform the verse. And in any case, the singer must be in an unobtrusive position, sitting at the back of the orchestra or out of sight altogether.”²⁵⁶

The Trees tells a tragic story of a young boy married too young, before he’s ‘done growing’ at the age of sixteen. By seventeen he is a father, and then at eighteen he has died and his grave is covered in flowers. The score is sprinkled with Hadley’s notes on performance practice, creating an idiomatic experience for the singers. Hadley was a practical chorus master and knew the concerns of the singers, so he simply writes in suggestions such as: “A few picked sopranos” which are thereafter bracketed in the score

²⁵³ Hadley’s score is marked for a baritone.

²⁵⁴ Wetherell, *Paddy*, 27-28.

²⁵⁵ Frederick Delius, *The Song of the High Hills*, ed. by Robert Threlfall (London: Universal, 1953), [17]+7.

²⁵⁶ Moeran as quoted by Palmer in *Delius*, 167.

as Picked Sops. In the same passage he recognized the voice parts may be too difficult and he added an *ossia* and an asterisk, “If this phrase (‘And buttercups of gold’) is asking too much of the sopranos, the contraltos had better sing what is inside the square brackets.” Also of interest on this page is the *glissando*. Hadley includes no extended techniques in his choral writing and this is the only case of such a notation. The *glissando* is a dramatic effect used to intensify the words, ‘And buttercups of gold, O’er my pretty lad so young...’ (ex.6.4).

In a later passage (that strongly evokes Delius) Hadley specifies for men to ascend gently on an ‘ah’ “going into head voice.” On the final page of the score are two performance notes. The first is for the baritone soloist who must hold an impossibly long note across a *fermata*. Wisely *before* the *fermata* Hadley writes “The singer must take a breath somewhere here.” Secondly, Hadley calls for “only a few ‘real’ basses” to sing the penultimate phrase ‘forever’ before adding all the basses to the final low E on the word ‘farewell’ (ex.6.5).

The choral writing in *The Trees* is more varied in texture and vocal orchestration than in Delius. Hadley frequently divides the choir into treble and bass textures as well as splitting from SATB to as large as SSATTBB. Hadley’s choral writing is more contrapuntal than Delius, with frequent shifts between imitative and homophonic textures. However, like Delius, at the moment of greatest intensity the chorus sings an unaccompanied passage before the orchestra rejoins for the soft conclusion.²⁵⁷ All three of these characteristics are seen on page 30 of the vocal score with the text, ‘Whilst my pretty lad is young And a growing. To let the lovely ladies know...’ (ex.6.6).

²⁵⁷ As in *Appalachia*, *Sea Drift*, and *The Song of the High Hills*.

M *Molto lento*

icked Soprs. *sempre pp*
dais - ies were out - spread, — And but - ter - cups of

icked Soprs. *sempre pp*
dais - ies were out - spread, — And but - ter - cups of

C. *ppp semplice e dolciss.*
And but - ter - cups of

pp molto espress.

Molto rit. —

icked Soprs. *(with great tenderness)* *poco* *p*
gold, — O'er my pret - ty lad So young, Now ceased

C. *p*
gold,

Molto rit. —

mp

p *pp*

N $\text{♩} = 120-125$ **BARITONE SOLO**

BAR. SOLO All the

icked Soprs. growing.

N $\text{♩} = 120-125$

pp legato

* If this phrase ('And buttercups of gold') is asking too much of the sopranos, the contraltos had better sing what is written inside the square brackets.

Example 6.5. Patrick Hadley, *The Trees so High*, [M].

40 *Molto lento* The singer must take a breath somewhere here. $\text{♩} = 60$

BAR SOLO

S. *mf* - well! *pp* So high!

C. *mf* - well! *pp* So high!

T. *mp* *mf* Fare - well! *pp* So high!

B. *mp* *mf* Fare - well!

Molto lento $\text{♩} = 60$

S. C. *Rall.*

T. *Rall.*

B. (only a few 'real' basses) *pp* For - ev - er. (TUTTI) Fare - well!

p *pp* *ppp*

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Example 6.6. Patrick Hadley, *The Trees so High*, [Q].

Unfortunately, also similar to Delius are the occasional, difficult high notes for sopranos. In this case, several high B5s will challenge all but the best sopranos to be sung beautifully (ex.6.4).

Near the conclusion, after the tale of loss has been told and the baritone sings, ‘The day is past and gone, my love...’ the choir is set in a series of wordless ‘ahs.’ This homophony, chromaticism, prevalence of inverted and added-sixth and seventh chords is strongly reminiscent of Delius (ex.6.7).

BAR. SOLO
The day is past and

S. C.
Ah

T. B.
Ah

BAR. SOLO
gone, my love, That you and

S. C.
Ah

T. B.
Ah

BAR. SOLO
I have seen. It is

S. C.

T. B.
(going into head voice)

Example 6.8. Patrick Hadley, *The Trees so High*, [O].

Of Hadley's complete output, aside from the anthem *My Beloved Spake* (1936), *The Hills* is his most famous and important.²⁵⁸ It was composed in 1944, shortly after the death of his mother, and stands as a memorial to his parents.²⁵⁹ Wetherell suggests the grief which inspired *The Hills* went beyond the loss of his surviving parent:

“...Paddy needed the comfort of a private grief which asks unconsciously...the fundamental question ‘Who am I?’, goes on to lament the passing of his mother and father and ends with an aching regret that he will never know the happiness that he saw them experience. Marriage has now passed him by; he loved the young, but he was now convinced, in spite of many casual love affairs, that he would never experience the gift of marriage and children.”²⁶⁰

The Hills is set for large orchestra, large choir, and soprano, tenor, and baritone soloists, placing it on a similar footing with similar choral/orchestral works of Delius. The orchestral scoring is also similar to Delius's comparable works: two flutes, two piccolos, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, optional double bassoon, four horns, two trumpets, two trombones, bass trombone, tuba, and percussion: three kettle drums, triangle, three temple blocks, tambourine, side drum, cymbals, bass drum, harp, and strings.

The Hills is a tribute to the hills of Derbyshire, where Hadley's parents met, fell in love, were married, and were buried. The libretto—by Hadley—is a programmatic travelogue of sorts. Hadley wrote detailed and lengthy program notes for each movement as well as some comments on performance practice. These notes cannot be fully reproduced here, but the following provides a summary:

²⁵⁸ *My Beloved Spake* is Hadley's only widely recorded, commonly performed choral works which remain in print and is easily available.

²⁵⁹ Wetherell, *Paddy*, 61.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

Hadley prefaces the score with a “Note to the chorus:”

“The nonsense words during the festive portion of III are meant to point and enhance the rhythm of the music, and their vowel sounds assist in the resonance of the high notes. The lines should therefore be enunciated *con brio* and with the utmost conviction.”²⁶¹

Hadley’s abbreviated program notes follow:

Prologue: *Along the Old Manchester Coach Road*

The prodigal son returns to find his father no more and his mother near to death. Then, stung with remorse and in the hope of learning something of the early life of his parents, he set out for those distant hills which he knows saw their first meeting, watched their friendship grow and finally witnessed their wedding...At last he reaches the place with the view across the valley beyond which the hills suddenly loom up...he then falls asleep...

I. *The Hills in Spring*

The hills have now sprung into life...They well remember that tale of long ago which soon begin to unfold...And so the story begins to unfold just as though it were actually happening once more. The hills call down to the folk below urging them to climb and enjoy this magical spring day upon their heights...The remainder of the movement portrays the ascent of the lovers and their arrival upon the summit, when soli and chorus combine in a final burst of joy.

II. Interlude: *In Taxal Woods*

To the sounds of nature the pair vow eternal love.

III. *Wedding and after*

During the festive earlier phases of this movement the chorus takes part of ordinary worldly wedding guests. Amid the general hubbub the words are indistinguishable, but the general impression seems cheerful as befits the occasion...But now the time draws near for the departure of the bride and bridegroom, when the former saddens at the thought of taking leave of her beloved hills...The orchestra continues in this vein after the voices cease, until it dies down and the prodigal awakens from his dream...but now all is darkness...He himself can now take up the take during his own boyhood...Once more he appeals to the hills. The moon comes up and illumines the rugged skyline. ‘If more there be to tell, you only know. Sing on!’...

²⁶¹ Patrick Hadley, *The Hills* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), iii.

Epilogue: *The Hills by Moonlight*

The chorus (once more as the hills), joined by the soprano and tenor soli, now sings again. The tale is finished. After many troubled years spent far away these two devoted souls have at last returned to the hills, to remain for ever (sic) in their tender care.²⁶²

The similarities to Delius are obvious: a spiritual, near pagan infatuation with the beauty and majesty of ascending the hills, wordless chorus used to create an “impression” of a wedding party, the orchestral “dying away,” the baritone as narrator, and the overall sense of loss minus despair.

In the prologue, Hadley wrote several passages for wordless chorus, evoking the wonder and mystery of the hills. Palmer claims, “This is Delian nature-mysticism of the purest water” (ex.6.8).²⁶³



Example 6.9. Patrick Hadley, *The Hills*, [3].

In *The Hills in Spring* Hadley “...both fulfills and transcends his debt to Delius.”²⁶⁴ The fulfillment is the musical climax upon reaching the hill’s summit. But Hadley’s use of rhythm to build excitement is much more complex and developed than in

²⁶² Ibid., iv-v.

²⁶³ Palmer, *Delius*, 185.

²⁶⁴ Palmer, “Patrick Hadley: The Man and His Music,” *Music & Letters*.

the homophonically dense *The Song of the High Hills*. Rapidly changing meters and metric modulations combine with a fast tempo create a “tumbling, untamable, tumultuous ecstasy” that only increases for the concluding *presto* and final, joyful choral outburst (ex.6.9).²⁶⁵

Example 6.10. Patrick Hadley, *The Trees*, [15]+4.

The Interlude, *In Taxal Woods* is a duet between the soprano and tenor soloists who represent the bride and bridegroom. Because it is not choral, nor particularly influenced by Delius, it will not be discussed in detail. Subjectively is notable that this is

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

a movement of great beauty, drama, clarity of texture, and orchestral color. Palmer suggests *In Taxal Woods* is a foreshadowing of Benjamin Britten (1913-1976).²⁶⁶

Wedding and After is a celebratory movement of nonsense syllables. While it is tempting to closely associate the wordless chorus with Delius, in this case Wetherell clarifies in discussing *Connemara*, which uses the same technique: “There is imaginative use of the spoken words in the form of ‘mouth music’... This was a technique he had heard on his Irish travels...”²⁶⁷

Epilogue: *The Hills by Moonlight* is a gorgeous setting for SSATB choir, orchestra, and soprano and tenor soloists. This movement is set in a simple rounded-binary form, with the opening and closing section both scored for full orchestra and chorus. The middle section is unaccompanied with a colorful modulatory bridge back to the opening key of B-major. Like *The Trees*, the unaccompanied portion of the movement is contrapuntal, while the orchestra-accompanied sections are primarily homophonic.

However, in the middle section, with the words, ‘Home at last to us beloved hills...’ Hadley does something remarkably unusual with the texture, something not seen in any other choral work discussed in this thesis. He composed the extended, unaccompanied section in a *cantus firmus* style, with a long-note melody embedded in octaves by the soloists, second sopranos, and altos. The outer voices – first sopranos, tenors, and basses – are woven around this *cantus firmus* in an imitative style. The fixed melody may be a rhetorical device to represent the immovable, ever-present hills. Aside from occasional secondary-dominants, the harmonic language of the middle section is

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Wetherell, *Paddy*, 111.

diatonic. Contrary to Palmer's generalization, this section is more redolent of the "warm-hearted, expansive gestures of a Vaughan Williams" than of Delius.²⁶⁸

The way in which Hadley concludes *The Hills by Moonlight* is a beautiful example of his mixed influences. "Warm-hearted," inverted major triads hover over a static orchestral texture with the hills singing, "We shall guard and watch tenderly and lovingly, in sweet and everlasting peace...". A final orchestral surge of upward strings is suddenly cut off with a small stroke of genius: Hadley reduces the orchestra to that most intimate and warm of sounds with a simple string quartet. The quartet plays a cadential E-major added-sixth chord, the added-sixth recalling Delius. But the sixth passes as Hadley moves to his final B-major chord. The chord however, is spelled in second inversion, with the basses and cellos sustaining a low F-sharp. The spelling is the same as the final D-major chord of "Now, Finalé to the Shore" from Delius's *Songs of Farwell*. The final chord of *The Hills* dies away, *morendo*, fulfilling the hills' promise of granting the couple 'eternal calm' as they are laid to rest (ex.7, 7.1).

²⁶⁸ See note 251.

S. I. II
 C.
 T.
 B.

(74)

(74)

(Strings) *ppp*

I. II
 III

ppp *morendo*
 cal - m!

ppp *morendo*
 calm, e - ter - nal cal - m!

ppp *morendo*
 calm, e - ter - nal cal - m!

ppp *morendo*
 cal - m!

p.

Example 6.11. Patrick Hadley, *The Hills*, [74].

Sops. *ppp*
De-part. Schei - del.

Altos *ppp*
De-part. Schei - del.

Tenors *ppp*
De-part. Schei - del.

Basses *ppp*
De-part. Schei del.

V. I.

V. II.

Violas *ppp*

Cellos *simile* *pp*

Basses *ppp*

Example 6.12. Frederick Delius, “Now Finalè to the Shore,” *Songs of Farwell*, mm. 260-263.

After Vaughan Williams died, his widow Ursula wrote in a 1958 program note of a Hadley concert:

“The first performance of *Connemara*...in 1958 was the last work of Patrick Hadley’s that Ralph Vaughan Williams heard. Of it, he said, ‘Paddy has such a magical gift for tunes.’ He spoke of *The Hills*, *The Trees*...and the tune of *The Solitary Reaper*, works he had given at the Leith Hill Festival, and which he felt had never had the recognition they deserve.”²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ Wetherell, 119.

In conclusion, the choral music of Lambert and Hadley represents an important body of choral repertoire. Appreciating the influence of Delius in their choral music increases an appreciation for how each composer synthesized independent styles. Their diversity of style also shows how composers who simultaneously shared a composition teacher—and who close friends—might compose wildly different music. The fusion of jazz with characteristics of Delius (wordless chorus, atmospheric choral passages, and impressions of scenery) is a unique fusion. There is no other piece of music quite like *The Rio Grande*. Patrick Hadley's choral music is a spiritual inheritor of Delius, channeling both Delius's use of wordless chorus to evoke mood and atmosphere, as well portions of his harmonic language. The transcendent, mystic experience of hills is passed from Delius's *The Song of the High Hills* to Hadley in both *The Solitary Reaper* and *The Hills*. Hadley's use of folksong in *The Trees* also surpasses Heseltine's in regards to scale and sophistication. Hadley transformed a humble folk tune into a symphonic work that blends characteristics of Delius with his own sense of "...austerity of texture rather than lushness, understatement and a species of tough-fibered introspection..."²⁷⁰ *The Rio Grande* is a classic of choral repertoire and merits rediscovery by American choirs. It is also important because it is one of the few examples of a faster tempo, "upbeat," vigorous choral work examined in this study. Hadley's choral music stands as an equally unique voice in mid-twentieth-century Britain. Hadley is more reserved in expression than Vaughan Williams, but more diatonic and contrapuntal than Delius; he offers something in between. The inquisitive choral conductor will be rewarded by programming the choral music of Constant Lambert and Patrick Hadley.

²⁷⁰ Palmer, "Patrick Hadley: The Man and His Music," *Music & Letters*.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Like all music, the choral music of Delius did not emerge from a vacuum, but was a synthesis of various influences including African American plantation song, Wagnerian opera, and French Impressionism. To these musical styles he added his personal ideas about the world including the philosophy of Nietzsche and a love of nature. While Delius's musical style changed little during his career, his subject matter was widely varied. He produced both epic choral/orchestral works and short part songs. Some works, like *A Mass of Life* and *Requiem*, were religious in a pagan manner. Others, like *Sea Drift*, *Songs of Sunset*, *Songs of Farewell*, and *An Arabesque* set contemporary poets with similar themes of loss, decay, and melancholy. Works for wordless chorus, such as *The Song of the High Hills* and *To Be Sung of a Summer Night*, combine nature-mysticism and Impressionism.

Heseltine, Moeran, Lambert, and Hadley all had a detailed knowledge of Delius's choral music; it was an essential part of their style. However, each of them expressed the influence of Delius in various ways. Some, like Heseltine and Moeran, emulated his complex, chromatic harmonic language and made similar use of the wordless chorus. Lambert used these elements too, but instead of African American plantation songs, he was inspired by jazz. Hadley combined a love of British folk song and music of Vaughan Williams with an equal appreciation for Delius.

By understanding the choral music of Delius one can better understand the choral music of Heseltine, Moeran, Lambert, and Hadley. The choral music of Delius's followers demonstrates that he was a far a more important and influential figure in the

first three decades of the twentieth-century than is generally acknowledged. It is my hope that this research will encourage more choral conductors to familiarize themselves with Delius and the music of his followers. This body of choral music is a valuable contribution to choral repertoire and shows that the development of British choral music in the early twentieth century is more complex than is commonly described. Because of his complex and unique musical style, Delius offered younger British choral composers more options for self-expression such as wordless chorus, increasingly colorful harmonic language, and freedom from traditional models of form and technique. Without Delius, there may have been no Peter Warlock, and the careers of E.J. Moeran, Constant Lambert, and Patrick Hadley would have been significantly different.

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