

KNOW YOUR CLASSICS

THIS is one of a new series of articles written for "The Listener" by **BESSIE POLLARD**. As with the preceding series, published some time ago, the aim is to help the student and the interested listener towards a more complete appreciation of good music.

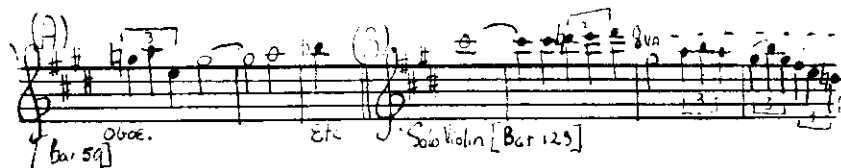
"Sea Drift," for Baritone Solo, Mixed Chorus and Orchestra (Frederick Delius)

DELIUS'S *Sea Drift* is based on Walt Whitman's poem which tells the rather tragic story of two birds who built their nest on a lonely part of the seashore and a boy who watched them at mating time; one day the hen bird disappeared and was never seen again: "... And thence forward all summer in the sound of the sea, or flitting from briar to briar by day, I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird, the solitary guest from Alabama ..." says Whitman. The telling of the story in Delius's work is shared by the lonely boy (baritone soloist) and the chorus, which also personifies the cock-bird crying out to the wind and stars to bring him back his mate. The whole is an impression of the drama of life and death, and the yearning and regret which comes from separation.

The 45-bar orchestral introduction gives out several motifs which play a significant part as the work unfolds; the first of these is heard at the very opening from muted strings ("A" below), while the wood-winds announce a theme descriptive of the waves ("B" below); as the tension increases, much use is made of a rising bass figure ("C" below)—



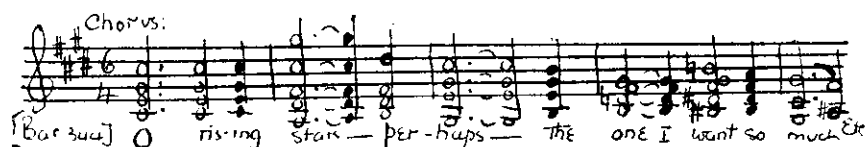
The Chorus enters softly in bar 46, narrating the opening lines of the poem; in bar 59 the oboe gives out a motif describing the "feather'd guests from Alabama" ("A" below); the solo baritone begins in bar 74, telling of the happy life of the two birds. In bar 123, a lovely solo violin passage is heard soaring above chorus and orchestra ("B" below)



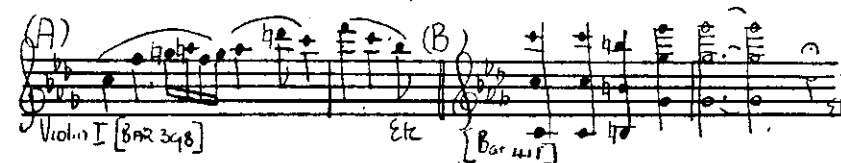
In bar 153, the baritone declaims, in a dramatic recitative, the story of the hen-bird's disappearance; the cor anglais gives out the motif of the "remaining one" in bar 167 ("A" below); at bar 209, we hear a new motif from chorus and orchestra ("B" below)—



There is an exquisite passage for chorus (a cappella) at bar 344, beginning—



The "gentle call" motif is announced by strings in bar 398 ("A" below), rising to a despairing climax in bar 411 ("B" below)—



"Sea Drift," by Delius, will be heard from Station 2YC at 9.0 p.m. on Friday, January 14.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, JANUARY 7

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