

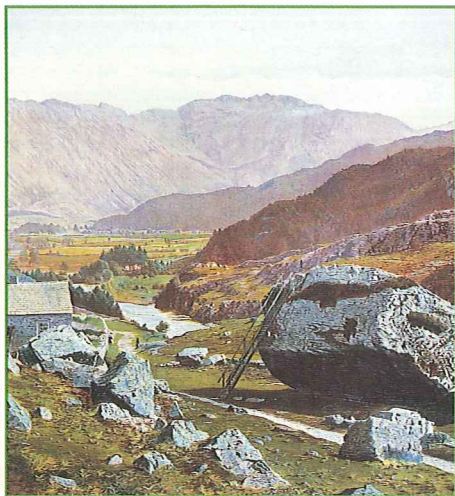
DELIUS

DDD  
8.553535

Florida Suite

Koanga • Over the Hills and Far Away  
Idylle Printemps • La Quadroöne • Scherzo

English Northern Philharmonia  
David Lloyd-Jones



## **Frederick Delius (1862 - 1934)**

### **Florida Suite**

Daybreak - Dance

By the River

Sunset - Near the Plantation

At Night

### **Over the Hills and Far Away**

Idylle de Printemps

La Quadroöne

Scherzo

Final Scene from Koanga

Fritz Delius was born in the Northern English city of Bradford, where his father Julius had moved from Germany to take advantage of the opportunities offered there by the then flourishing wool trade. The family was a large one and established in comfortable circumstances. In ancestry it was once suggested that Delius was descended from Julius Caesar, but the more probable descent was from Dutch forebears, who had by the sixteenth century adopted the Latin form of the family name. Although Delius as a composer has often been associated with the essentially English, he boasted, in fact, a much wider genetic and cultural heritage, German, Dutch and by adoption French, with marked influence from Scandinavia and from Florida. It was to this last that his father sent him, when it seemed clear that he had no inclination for the family wool trade. Julius Delius saw a possible future for his son in the Florida orange groves and in 1887 Delius set sail from Liverpool, bound for New York and thence south to reach Solano Grove, a plantation of a hundred acres of orange orchards on the banks of the St Johns River. Here there was a substantial enough house and Delius, showing more inclination to music than to business, was able here to acquire a grand piano and to embark on lessons in counterpoint from Thomas Ward in Jacksonville. He later moved to Danville in Virginia, abandoning his plantation and seeking now to earn his living as a musician, teaching violin, piano and theory and taking part in local musical activities.

It was at this time, in the summer of 1886, that Julius Delius allowed his son to return to Europe to enter Leipzig Conservatory, where he studied with Reinecke, Jadassohn and Sitt and formed an important friendship with Grieg. It was through the last that his father was persuaded to continue to support him, allowing him, therefore, to move to Paris. His meeting there with the young painter Jelka Rosen led to a liaison. In 1897 they set up house together in Grez-sur-Loing and married in 1903.

Much of the rest of the life of Delius was spent at Grez-sur-Loing. During the war years it was necessary to take refuge in England, a time of some difficulty in view of the absence of the usual royalty payments from Germany, where he had already made something of a name for himself as a composer. After the war he returned to France, but gradually succumbed to effects of syphilis, possibly contracted in America, suffering blindness and paralysis. For the last six years of his life he was helped in his work by the young Yorkshire musician Eric Fenby, who served as his amanuensis. He died in 1934.

As a composer Delius owed much to the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham in England, while in Germany he had been helped in his early years by the particular support of Hans Haym, the young Music Director in Elberfeld (Wuppertal). His *Florida Suite* was written in Leipzig in 1887 and first played to a limited audience of Christian Sinding, Grieg and the composer by the musicians of the band at Bonorand's restaurant in the Rosenthal Park, conducted by Hans Sitt, who taught violin at the Leipzig Conservatory and had succeeded Brodsky as director of the Conservatory Orchestra. The orchestra on this occasion was rewarded with a hundred marks and free beer. Delius hoped for a London performance, but in March 1889 August Manns returned the score and parts, claiming that his schedule left no time for rehearsal for inclusion of the *Suite* in the Crystal Palace concert season. In Paris in June Delius revised the work, ironing out what he described as unnecessary orchestral brutalities. It was published posthumously by Sir Thomas Beecham, who conducted the first English public performance of three of its four movements in London in 1937. The first movement, *Daybreak* leads to the well known *La Calinda*, that

he was later to use in the opera *Koanga*. The second movement, *By the River*, much favoured by Beecham, relies on a repeated theme of less obvious provenance than the material of the third movement, *Sunset - Near the Plantation*, which makes use of a well enough known theme sung, it may be supposed, by the black plantation workers in Florida, the setting of the sun leading to a dance with elements of apparent Spanish origin, heard through the prism of black America. The last movement suggests Grieg rather than Florida, as the oboe leads into an evocative night-piece.

*Over the Hills and Far Away*, a fantasy-overture, was written between 1895 and 1897 and played in Elberfeld under Hans Haym. It was first performed in London in a concert at St James's Hall in 1899, paid for by Delius and under the direction of Alfred Hertz, who had served as a conductor in Barmen-Elberfeld and was early in the new century to move to America where he established himself as a conductor of German opera at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The work opens evocatively, looking towards the distant hills, before the *Allegro*, a joyful outburst of sound, before the flute leads into a series of variations. The overture ends with a passage in which much of the earlier thematic material is recalled.

*Idylle de Printemps* (Spring Idyll) was written in 1889, its content aptly conjured in its title, while *La Quadroïne*, with the *Scherzo*, formed part of the *Suite d'orchestre* of 1889 and 1890, the first of the two pieces having the self-explanatory alternative title *Rapsodie floridienne*. Memories of Florida and of Virginia remained with Delius, particularly during these earlier years, in which he sought his own distinctive musical idiom.

The opera *Koanga*, a lyric drama in a prologue and three acts, was first heard in an incomplete concert performance at St James's Hall in 1899. It was first staged at Elberfeld in 1904. With a libretto by Delius and Charles F. Keary, *Koanga* is based on the novel *The Grandissimes* by George Washington Cable. The plot is set on an eighteenth century Louisiana plantation, where the slave-girl Palmyra is the object of the attentions of the overseer Simon Perez. *Koanga*, a new slave, is a prince and voodoo priest and the plantation owner, seeing the

value of Koanga's cooperation, seeks to marry him to Palmyra, who is his own illegitimate daughter. During the celebrations that precede the wedding, as they dance La Calinda, Perez abducts Palmyra, to prevent the match, and Koanga strikes the plantation owner, Don Martinez, and lays a voodoo curse on the place, seeking refuge himself in the swamp-land. The opera ends in tragedy, when Koanga is captured and put to death and Palmyra takes her own life. The opera had opened with a prologue in which Uncle Joe promises to tell the story of Koanga to the planter's daughters. It ends with an epilogue in which the girls await the sun-rise and hope that all true lovers will find the happiness they deserve.

### **English Northern Philharmonia**

The English Northern Philharmonia is the resident orchestra of Opera North and since its formation in 1978 has established itself as one of England's leading operatic orchestras. In addition to playing for all the company's performances in Leeds and on tour, the orchestra enjoys an independent existence as a symphony orchestra, giving concerts throughout Yorkshire and in the surrounding area. Performances have involved collaboration with distinguished visiting conductors, as well as with the founder-conductor of the orchestra, David Lloyd-Jones, and with Paul Daniel, who became Music Director and Principal Conductor in 1990. In addition to operatic repertoire, the orchestra offers considerable variety in its concert programmes. It is the resident orchestra of the Oldham Walton Festival and enjoys a close relationship with the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. Recordings for a number of companies have brought a new relationship with Naxos, with a series devoted to the music of Walton and recordings of works by Vaughan Williams, Delius and Arthur Bliss.

## David Lloyd-Jones

David Lloyd-Jones began his professional career in 1959 on the music staff of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and soon became much in demand as a free-lance conductor. In 1972 he was appointed Assistant Music Director at the English National Opera and during his time in that position conducted an extensive repertory which included the first British performance of Prokofiev's *War and Peace*. In 1978, on the invitation of the Arts Council of Great Britain, he founded a new full-time opera company, Opera North, of which he became Artistic Director, with its new orchestra, the English Northern Philharmonia. During his twelve seasons with the company he conducted fifty different new productions and numerous orchestral concerts, including festival appearances in France and Germany. He has made a number of very successful recordings of British and Russian music and has a busy career as a conductor in the concert-hall and the opera-house that has taken him to leading musical centres throughout Europe and the Americas.

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COMPACT  
disc  
DIGITAL AUDIO

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STEREO

Frederick  
**DELIUS**  
(1862 - 1934)

DDD

Playing  
Time:  
79'05"

## Orchestral Works

English Northern Philharmonia  
David Lloyd-Jones

## Florida Suite

- |   |                              |         |
|---|------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | Daybreak - Dance             | (11:43) |
| 2 | By the River                 | (7:07)  |
| 3 | Sunset - Near the Plantation | (10:11) |
| 4 | At Night                     | (8:05)  |
| 5 | Over the Hills and Far Away  | (13:32) |
| 6 | Idylle Printemps             | (8:00)  |
| 7 | La Quadroöne                 | (4:05)  |
| 8 | Scherzo                      | (5:50)  |
| 9 | Final Scene from 'Koanga'    | (10:32) |

(Susannah Glanville • Susan Lees • Irene Evans, Sopranos /  
Sandra Francis • Sue Pearce • Shirley Thomas, Mezzo-Sopranos)

Recorded at the Leeds Town Hall, England, on 22nd and 23rd August, 1995.

Producer: Paul Myers

Engineer: Dave Harries

Post Production: Black Box Music Ltd.

Music Notes: Keith Anderson

This recording is made with the generous assistance of the Delius Trust and Opera North.

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DELIUS: Orchestral Works

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