

Delius Society concert - Sunday, November 20th 2011, at 3:00 pm

Dear Members and Friends,

We are delighted to remind you that the next concert of our 2011/12 “Wister and More!” Series will be this Sunday, November 20 at 3:00 p.m.:

Delius Society Concert

Lloyd Smith, cello

Davyd Booth, piano



Sunday, November 20 at 3:00 p.m.

The Program

SIR EDWARD ELGAR

Salut d'Amour

W. H. SQUIRE

Danse Rustique

Humoresque

GEORGE DYSON

Melody

Intermezzo

JAMES FRISKIN

Scherzo (Philadelphia Premiere)

FREDERICK DELIUS

Three Fragments from “A Mass of Life”

Arr. Robert Threlfall

(United States Premiere)

FREDERICK DELIUS

Romance

Caprice

Elegy

EDVARD GRIEG

Sonata in A Minor, Op. 36

A Brief Overview of our Concert

Frederick Delius' German connection gives us a natural link between the music of the two countries. His friendship with Edvard Grieg, who also studied in Germany, gives us a natural link between these two composers as well.

A collection of rarely heard but eminently attractive short pieces by prominent English composers open this recital, followed by the United States Premiere of a new work arranged from Delius' "A Mass of Life" by Robert Threlfall.

The three short works for cello by Delius open the second half, and Edvard Grieg's monumental cello sonata complete the program by cellist Lloyd Smith, accompanied by Davyd Booth on the German Society's marvelous new Bösendorfer piano.

Notes on Our Program

Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Salut d'Amour

Trained as a performer rather than as a composer, Sir Edward Elgar bridged the gap more successfully than almost any other composer in recent history. He learned well from what he heard during his years as a concert violinist and was able to turn it into a personal style of enormous vision and character. His tonal palette was distinctly English and the nobility of spirit in his music is the highest imaginable homage to national identity.

Elgar's greatest music offers nobility, strong tensions and profound spirituality. His "Salut d'Amour" is one of his best known and best loved compositions. He wrote the work in 1888 and orchestrated it the following year. So popular was the piece that arrangements for various instruments with piano accompaniment inevitably followed.

William Henry Squire (1871-1963)

Danse Rustique and Humoresque

Well known as a cellist as well as a composer, William Henry Squire was born in Ross-on-Wye and educated at the Royal College of Music, studying cello with Edward Howell and composition with Sir Hubert Parry and Sir Charles Villiers Stanford.

Squire wrote a cello concerto, two operettas, and orchestral pieces but is best known today for his many imaginative and entertaining miniatures, mostly for cello and piano. He made arrangements of works by Chopin and Offenbach and transcribed many folk songs.

Sir George Dyson (1883-1964)
Melody and Intermezzo

This well known English composer attended the Royal College of Music and won the Mendelssohn Scholarship in 1905, which gave him the opportunity to spend some years in Italy and Germany.

He has written a symphony, in 1937, a violin concerto and many choral works. He has composed some fifty works for the liturgy of the Church of England, including two complete morning and evening canticles and a setting of the evening service in C Minor for trebles. His evening service works remain popular in English churches and cathedrals and are considered part of the Church's core repertoire.

His skill and depth of feeling as a composer certainly translate in his miniatures for cello and piano. These two pieces are part of his "Six Lyrics," Op. 12a.

James Friskin (1886-1967)
Scherzo

Another composition student of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford and a piano student of Edward Dannreuther at the Royal College of Music, James Friskin spent most of his professional life in New York, moving there in 1914. There he taught at the Institute of Musical Arts and became an original faculty member of the Juilliard Graduate School.

His editions of J. S. Bach's music were highly regarded and was equally famous for his interpretations of Bach's compositions on the piano.

He wrote primarily chamber works, including a piano quintet played often in England before he left for New York. His many short instrumental works and songs were equally well received. This *Scherzo* is a virtuoso tour de force for both instruments and an example of his brilliant abilities.

Frederick Delius (1862-1934)
Three Fragments from "A Mass of Life"
Arranged by Robert Threlfall

Frederick Delius had reached complete musical maturity by the turn of the century. Emulating Richard Wagner's harmonic genius and Edvard Grieg's airy textures and unique use of chromaticism, he found his own voice and embarked on ever more ambitious compositions. His favorite medium, soloists, chorus and orchestra, emerged in operas and in choral works with orchestral accompaniment. Delius' most monumental work, "A Mass of Life," was inspired by the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, who he claimed spoke directly to him. Delius later said that reading "Also Sprach Zarathustra" was one of the most important events of his life.

"A Mass of Life" embodies Delius' philosophy that each person should stand fearlessly alone in the face of ultimate death, should realize his potential (whatever the cost) and be immersed wholeheartedly in all that life has to offer. Sir Thomas Beecham conducted the premiere performance of the work in 1909. The text was written in German, taken directly from Nietzsche's writings. The massive work likens the whole of one's life to the passing of one day, from the dawn of spiritual awareness, to the "glorious noontide" of maturity and then the midnight bell of death's call. This work contains some of Delius' most exultant music as well as passages of almost hypnotic calm.

For this arrangement, Robert Threlfall took widely dispersed fragments from "A Mass of Life" and moulded them into a coherent three-movement work for cello and piano. This arrangement was made in 1979 and has since had only a private reading by cellist Julian Lloyd Webber. About two years ago The Delius Trust published just twelve copies of the work, and The Delius Society, Philadelphia Branch, was fortunate to receive one.

Frederick Delius **Romance, Caprice and Elegy**

Delius has given us a small but handsome collection of works for the cello including one sonata and these three short pieces. The Romance, written in 1896 is an expansively luminous work of great beauty. His Caprice, written in 1930, is an intimate miniature, simple and filled with heartfelt expression. His Elegy, also written in 1930, is a thoughtful, serene piece of musical contemplation.

Edvard Grieg (1832-1907) **Cello Sonata in A Minor, Op. 36**

Edvard Grieg was born in Bergen, Norway, to a merchant and a music teacher. The family name derived from his father's Scottish ancestors — originally MacGregor. After the Battle of Culloden in 1746, Grieg's great-grandfather traveled widely, settling in Norway about 1770, and establishing business interests in Bergen.

Grieg's musical development was largely influenced by his travels throughout Europe and in his own country. He grew to love the scenery of Norway; its dramatic beauty gave him an affinity for writing dramatic, sweeping musical lines.

The cello sonata opens on a serious note and after the first theme is stated the tone becomes more sternly muscular, culminating in a faster, more emphatic version of the theme. The second theme follows and is more tranquil, but the intensity of the opening returns now and then and the mood builds in strength until a third, restless, theme is heard. Again the music builds up and a cadenza-like climactic passage leads to a repetition of the third theme, then the second theme, and finally the original theme returns much faster at the end. You will notice quotations from his piano concerto here and there.

The slow movement begins serenely but serious questions arise in the middle, and an impassioned high point is reached before subsiding and regaining the serenity.

A soliloquy from the cello opens the finale, and the jaunty first theme sets the stage for some fast footwork to follow. The second theme is more spacious and morphs into a better-humored section. The Grieg most of us recognize is present in this many-faceted movement, filled with energy, changing weather and good-natured story-telling.

Tickets are \$20, and can be purchased by calling 215-627-2332, online at <http://httpgerman-society-of-pennsylvania.ticketleap.com/delius-society-concert>, or at the door 30 minutes before the concert.

With kind regards,

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