Modernity "auf den Bergen:" Delius, Mahler, and Nietzsche's Ecocriticism

Daniel M. Grimley

The Wounded Kings

In an essay for the *Sunday Times* dated June 17, 1934, journalist and music critic Ernest Newman lamented: "Elgar, Holst, and now Delius! This is a year of mourning for English music."[1] The deaths between February 23 and June 10—less than five months—of three such formative and ground-breaking figures in English music marked a watershed moment. For Newman and others, it signaled the end of a stylistic and aesthetic era. Quoting a line from the final scene of Stephen Phillips's four-act tragedy *Paolo and Francesca* (1900), a work inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy* but almost completely forgotten and unperformed today, Newman wrote of Delius that:

> In the music of his final period, with its poignant nostalgia for a beauty that is fast vanishing from the earth, we hear, *as in no other music but that of Mahler's*, 'the sunset cry of wounded kings', the last regretful murmuring of ancient talismans which,

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1 Ernest Newman, "Delius: the End of a Chapter in Music," *The Sunday Times*, June 17, 1934, reproduced in Newman, *From the World of Music*, selected by Felix Aprahamian (London: John Calder, 1956), 114, and also in Christopher Redwood, ed., *A Delius Companion* (London: John Calder, 1976, rev. ed. 1980), 97–100. On Newman's career and his lifelong support for British music, see Paul Watt, *Ernest Newman: A Critical Biography* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2017).

> in its strange blend of credulity and negation, the distracted new world has for the time being rejected.[2]

Newman's commentary reflects the pessimism that had overtaken English musical circles in the 1930s under the growing shadow of fascism and the prospect of further military conflict with Germany.[3] It simultaneously served as a critique of developments in contemporary music from which he felt increasingly distanced and estranged. Newman drew these themes together in the final section of his essay, and closed with an impassioned defense of the emotional and affective impact of what he regarded as one of the key musical works from the turn of the century, Delius's *A Mass of Life*:

> It may be that, as some think, we are now in the first hour before a new dawn in music. But that hour is grey and chilly: and those of us who have been drunk with the beauty amid the glory of the sunset of civilisation as we knew it must find our consolation in the melting colours of the cloud-shapes of the music of this last great representative of that old dead world. Delius has summed it all up for us in his moving setting of the no less moving words that Nietzsche puts into the mouth of his Zarathustra:
> O man! Take heed![4]

The image of Delius and Mahler as leading representatives of that sunset generation extolled in Newman's essay, the "wounded kings" of an "old dead world," anticipates the revival of interest in their music in the 1960s, when a similar view was advanced by writers such as Deryck Cooke and Michael Kennedy and, most

2 Newman, *From the World of Music*, 117 (emphasis mine). Phillips (1864–1915) was a cousin of both the actor and impresario F. R. Benson and also Laurence Binyon, whose work included the First World War poem "For the Fallen" that Elgar set as part of his choral triptych *Spirit of England* (1917) and which later became part of the cenotaph ceremony on Remembrance Day. Phillips's *Paolo and Francesca* was produced for the first time by George Alexander at the St James' Theatre, London, in 1902.

3 A similar underlying thesis underpins much of Constant Lambert's *Music Ho!: A Study of Music in Decline* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934).

4 Newman, *From the World of Music*, 117.

poignantly, by the film maker Ken Russell. It also points to a parallel between the two composers and their common inspiration in Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy. This parallel has nevertheless seemed less evident in the light of their more recent critical reception. Though Mahler has increasingly been heralded in scholarly circles as the leader of a forward-looking wave of Viennese modernists, Delius has been comparatively neglected or regarded negatively as a formless epigone.[5] In other words, while Mahler's work has seemed ever more current given both its popularity in the concert hall and the growing acknowledgement of the enduring legacy of early twentieth-century modernism, Delius's music has not benefited from the same level of historical or analytical scrutiny or appreciation. For Delius reception, Newman's image of an "old dead world" has assumed the quality of an end point, his music sidelined as the aesthetic product of a value system long since left behind.

The following discussion takes its cue from Newman's essay not as a way of staking progressive claims for Delius's work—though I have argued elsewhere for a more nuanced and ambivalent reading of his music and its engagement with strategic problems of modernity, being, and place[6]—but rather as the basis for contrasting their response to Nietzsche's writings. In particular, I want to draw out and amplify the tone of Newman's closing comments on *A Mass of Life*, though for a slightly different purpose. Delius's work should not be heard as the emblem of a faded and outmoded Romanticism, any more than Mahler's, but instead as signaling a deeper preoccupation with questions of human mortality and contingency: themes that have gained a renewed urgency in an age of climate change and environmental catastrophe. In that context, the lingering sunsets of

5 See, for example, the contributions in Arnold Jacobshagen, ed., *Gustav Mahler und die musikalische Moderne* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011), and Leon Botstein's essay, "Whose Gustav Mahler? Reception, Interpretation, and History," in Karen Painter, ed., *Mahler and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 1–53. For an especially pernicious example of the pejorative trend in writing on Delius, see Michael White, "The Chromatic Slithering of Delius Leaves Me Cold," *The Daily Telegraph*, July 7, 2012, accessed March 28, 2024, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/classicalmusic/9383360/The-chromatic-slithering-of-Delius-leaves-me-cold.html.

6 Daniel M. Grimley, *Delius and the Sound of Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Mahler and Delius's music, and their fleeting feeling for such "melting colours" and "cloud-shapes," assume a more pressing and contemporary relevance. Returning to *A Mass of Life*, I will suggest, underlines the deeper poetic significance of Nietzsche's work for Delius and Mahler, and can also focus our attention on the foundational ontological questions with which his philosophy is concerned. That in turn may prompt a shift in our approach to questions of agency and environment, especially its evocation of landscape, and foster a greater sense of responsibility: a heightened awareness of and re-sensitization to the ongoing impact of our presence and activity in the world. This essay develops a more ecologically informed reading of Delius's music through his first encounter with Nietzsche's work. It compares his understanding of Nietzsche's texts with that of Mahler and explores their differences. It then moves to a discussion of selected passages from *A Mass of Life* which exemplify Delius's creative response to Nietzsche's writing. The conclusion returns to questions of agency, ecology, and embodiment, issues that are central to Nietzsche's philosophy and to more contemporary environmental concerns.

Reading Nietzsche Musically

Mahler and Delius were born within a couple of years of each other, but their lives and professional careers followed very different pathways. Mahler's father was evidently ambitious for his family's socio-economic prospects, but the young Gustav had to work his way up the professional musical ladder from the relatively humble beginnings of his first professional appointment as director of the spa band at Bad Hall in summer 1880.[7] Delius, in contrast, was the privileged son of upper middle-class German immigrants from Bielefeld in Westphalia who had settled in Bradford, Yorkshire, in connection with the cotton trade. The Delius family wealth rested on the profits of a highly extractivist industry that entailed

7 Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: the Arduous Road to Vienna* (1860–1897), ed. Sybille Werner (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 11–21 (on Mahler's childhood) and 145–50 (on Bad Hall).

significant levels of low-wage heavy-duty labor in northern England and relied upon the devastating environmental and social impact of plantation agriculture in the southern United States and elsewhere across the British empire.[8] Delius himself both benefitted from this economic model and also played an active role in its continuation, through his short-term oversight of a citrus plantation, Solano Grove, on the St. Johns River in northern Florida which his father had purchased as an investment in the 1880s.[9] Though chamber music and lieder recitals had been a regular feature of Delius's childhood, he was never intended to pursue a full-time musical career: it was only after his return from the United States that Delius was eventually permitted to matriculate at the Leipzig Conservatoire, where he studied for two years before settling permanently in France. With the exception of a brief stay in London as a refugee following the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Delius would never live permanently in England again.

It is not clear when Delius and Mahler first met, although they were in fact resident in Leipzig in the same years. Already a precocious talent, Mahler had taken up the post as Arthur Nikisch's assistant at the city's Neues Stadttheater in July 1886, after a year in Prague (where he had conducted 68 operas in less than 12 months).[10] One of Delius's younger English contemporaries and fellow pupil at the conservatory, the organist and composer Percy Pitt, later described Nikisch and Mahler as "founts of joy and inspiration" during his time in the city.[11] In Leipzig, Mahler directed performances of the Ring cycle (with the exception of *Götterdämmerung)* in place of the indisposed Nikisch in February–March 1887: performances which the student Delius certainly attended, although it seems un-

8 One of the principal sources for information about Delius's early life remains Thomas Beecham's biography, *Frederick Delius* (London: Hutchinson, 1959); Beecham of course benefitted, like Delius, from inherited family wealth, founded on the profits of his father's pharmaceutical industry in the north-west of England.

9 On the environmental implications of the Delius plantation, and the way in which such patterns of land ownership were tied to a highly racialised social economy in the southern United States, see Grimley, *Delius and the Sound of Place*, chap. 3, especially 113–15.

10 La Grange notes that during his time in Leipzig, "Mahler had conducted 68 performances of operas, and he was involved in 7 concerts," La Grange, *The Arduous Road*, 278, fn 270.

11 Lionel Carley, ed., *Delius: A Life in Letters*, vol. 1, 1862–1908 (London: Scolar Press, 1983), 7.

likely that it would have led to a personal meeting between the two musicians. Mahler resigned his Leipzig post a year later, on May 17, 1888, to return to Prague, where he stayed barely three months before moving to Budapest. But his stay in Leipzig coincided with the completion of his First Symphony in March 1888; Delius's most significant compositional output from the same period was his four-movement *Florida Suite*, a work of vastly different scale, scope, and ambition from Mahler's score.

Even if it seems unlikely that Delius and Mahler had encountered each other directly in person while in Leipzig, Delius later felt sufficiently confident about their professional relationship to be able to boast to Granville Bantock that he could persuade Mahler, "the finest conductor in the world," to direct one of his works at the proposed inaugural festival of the English Musical League: "If Mahler & [Max von] Schillings come over," Delius added, "it would be a splendid set off."[12] In the event, neither the festival nor Mahler's performance took place. Mahler wrote coolly but courteously to Delius on May 13, 1909:

> I cannot possibly conduct a work of mine without *abundant* rehearsals . . . the least that I require for a performance of a work of mine—in the case of an orchestra which has not played anything of mine before, is 4-5 full rehearsals.—I quite understand that in your still precarious circumstances this is not possible, and so I beg you to excuse me on this occasion.[13]

Delius must previously have had direct experience of Mahler's intensive practical working methods after a concert at the Tonkünstler Verein in the Saalbau, Essen, on May 27, 1906, where Mahler's Sixth Symphony received its first performance under the composer's direction. A day earlier, Delius's wistful setting of texts from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, *Sea Drift* had received its premiere, conducted by Schillings. Predictably, the German newspapers devoted far more space to printing excoriating reviews of Mahler's symphony than to describing Delius's

12 Letter dated November 21, 1908. Quoted in Carley, *Life in Letters*, vol. 1, 374–75.

13 Quoted in Lionel Carley, ed., *Delius: A Life in Letters*, vol. 2, 1909–1934 (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1988), 25.

new work. For his part, Mahler offered no opinion of Delius's score, and had no plans to conduct any of his work, but the conjunction of Delius's richly evocative response to Whitman's atmospheric account of the experience of absence, loss, and solace in the natural environment with Mahler's fatalistic symphony reveals the aesthetic and artistic distance between the two men. It was arguably through the experience of setting Whitman's text, the year before he started work on *A Mass of Life*, however, that Delius's approach to Nietzsche began to coalesce and crystallize.

Mahler is likely to have first read Nietzsche's writings through his close friendship with the poet Siegfried Lipiner, who was a member of the Leseverein der deutschen Studenten Wiens in 1875 and part of the Pernerstorfer Circle that played an active role in the Wagner polemics that dominated Viennese musical life.[14] Mahler furthermore attended lectures on Nietzsche and Schopenhauer at the University of Vienna during his student years in the city. Delius came to Nietzsche's work significantly later. The artist and sculptor Jelka Rosen, a student of Auguste Rodin in Paris who was to become Delius's wife, wrote to the composer on June 20, 1896: "I wonder whether you are composing Nietzsche? I am longing for that. I have discovered several other poems of his, and send you a little one: the others are all longer. Would you like copies? I hope you might feel inspired for this one! The big ones are very fine: Dionyssos—Dithyramben."[15] Whether or not Jelka introduced Delius to Nietzsche's work is uncertain—his amanuensis Eric Fenby believed he had stumbled across *Also sprach Zarathustra* first while staying with his friend, the Norwegian violinist Arve Arvesen, in the early 1890s. Delius did, however, compose four settings of Nietzsche's shorter poetry, "Nach neuen Meeren," "Der Wanderer," "Der Einsame," and "Der Wanderer und sein Schatten," the following year, along with his setting of the "Mitternachtslied," "O Mensch! Gib Acht!," based on a passage from Book IV of *Also sprach Zarathustra*, which later served as the catalyst for *A Mass of Life*. Delius's cousin and the dedicatee of the *Mitternachtslied Zarathustras*, Arthur Krönig, wrote disparagingly on

14 Leah Batstone, *Mahler's Nietzsche: Politics and Philosophy in the Wunderhorn Symphonies* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2023), 14–15.

15 Quoted in Carley, ed., *Life in Letters*, vol. 1, 104–5.

October 24, 1898: "I consider Nietzsche quite unsuitable for musical treatment. He is not sombre enough,"[16] a common reaction to the philosopher's satirical and often parodistic style. Delius nevertheless worked hard to secure performances of the *Mitternachtslied*, approaching Hans Haym of the Elberfeld festival and Schillings, who described the work as "very interesting & *Stimmungsvoll*."[17] In the event, the first performance was conducted by Hermann Suter and took place in Basel on June 12, 1903, a year after the premiere of Mahler's Third Symphony (completed in 1895–6), which included a setting of the same passage, "O Mensch! Gib Acht!" from Nietzsche's text. After the Basel concert, Delius's friend and mentor Edvard Grieg wrote, referring not to Mahler but to another of Delius's contemporaries:

> Congratulations on Basel! Do send me the piece when it comes out. What a pity it is from "Zarathustra." I have to think of Strauss, and I have no stomach for Strauss! That is to say, I am a great admirer of "Tod und Verklärung." But afterwards he becomes insolent and beauty, I mean inventiveness, fantasy, bears no relationship at all to insolence.[18]

Delius, in reply later that month, reassured Grieg that "my *Mitternachtslied* has, needless to say, absolutely no relationship with the Straussian *Zarathustra*, which I regard as a complete failure: yet to my mind *Till Eulenspiegel* & *Heldenleben* in particular are splendid works."[19] There is no evidence, however, that Delius was aware of Mahler's symphony, nor that he realized they had been drawn to the same lines in Nietzsche's book.

16 Quoted in Carley, ed., *Life in Letters*, vol. 1, 134.

17 Letter dated December 20, 1902, quoted in Carley, ed., *Life in Letters*, vol. 1, 209.

18 Letter dated September 1, 1903, quoted in Lionel Carley, ed. and trans, *Grieg and Delius: A Chronicle of their Friendship in Letters* (London: Boyars, 1993), 176.

19 "Mein *Mitternachtslied* brauche ich Dir nicht zu sagen hat absolut keine Verwandschaft mit dem Strauß'schen Zarathustra, das ich für ein ganz verfehltes Werk halte: Doch finde ich 'Till Eulenspiegel' & Heldenleben besonders famose Werke sind." Delius to Grieg, September 28, 1903. Grieg archive online, Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek, accessed March 20, 2024, https://mitt.bergenbibliotek.no/cgi-bin/websok-grieg?mode=p&tnr=214334&dok=0&pf=kort&side=2.

Nietzsche, *Parsifal*'s Bells, and the Genesis of *A Mass of Life*

Delius assembled the texts for *A Mass of Life* in 1904 with help from the German conductor Fritz Cassirer, a friend of Haym in Elberfeld, who would later direct the premiere of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* at the Komische Oper in Berlin in February 1907. The score of the *Mass* was completed in draft by November 1905, roughly contemporary with Mahler's work on the short score of his Seventh Symphony, which was finished in August that year. Delius's attempts to secure performances of his new work initially proved unpromising. Hermann Suter, who had directed the premiere of the *Mitternachtslied Zarathustras*, wrote to Delius on August 18, 1906 stating that "the *Messe* is a very difficult proposition, particularly for soloists and choir," adding "I have a slight misgiving over the fact that so many adagios follow on from each other; I wonder whether they do not work to the detriment of each other and in particular spoil the effect of that incomparable final piece?"[20] Likewise, Schillings, who suggested performing just part of the score in Munich in 1909, reported: "I am afraid it is impossible to perform the *whole* of your work. Ludwig Hess and his choir cannot master it *all*; for that, *months* of rehearsal would be necessary, & you know yourself how enormous the difficulties are for a choir which is not composed of professional musicians."[21] Hess indeed gave the premiere performance of selections from Part II in Munich in June 1908, after which Delius wrote to Bantock that the work "made an enormous impression,"[22] but the first full performance of the *Mass* did not take place until June 7, 1909, at the Queen's Hall, London, conducted by Thomas Beecham; Haym gave the first complete German performance on December 11, in Elberfeld. Thereafter, the *Mass* quickly became one of Delius's most high profile and successful works: other significant early outings included two sold-out performances in the Musikvereinssaal in Vienna in February 1911, which left a lasting impression on the young Béla Bartók, who was especially struck by the writing for wordless chorus.[23]

20 Letter quoted in Carley, ed., *Life in Letters*, vol. 1, 268–69.
21 Letter dated April 1, 1908, quoted in Carley, ed., 342–43.
22 Letter dated June 9, 1908, quoted in Carley, ed., 351.
23 Carley, ed., *Delius: A Life in Letters*, vol. 2, 70.

It was in connection with a request to provide further information about the work for the inaugural Munich performance in 1908 that Cassirer wrote to Delius on May 6, explaining that "As Zarathustra is absolutely not composed *thematically*, a *brief* analysis is impossible. I would send a few biographical particulars and merely mention that your artistic aim is the rendering of the *Zarathustra mood*, and nothing more. Any analysis would here be nonsense."[24] Delius himself later confided to Newman that "It is not Nietzsche's philosophic side that I love, but the poetic one."[25] The implication, then, is that Delius read Nietzsche very differently to Mahler: not as part of a long philosophical critique of early nineteenth-century idealism, leading through Feuerbach and Schopenhauer to *The Birth of Tragedy* and beyond, but rather for his more bluntly iconoclastic rhetoric and subjectivity. This is certainly consistent with his most extended commentary on Nietzsche, as evidenced in his correspondence with the young Philip Heseltine (later the composer Peter Warlock), who for a brief time regarded Delius as a surrogate father figure. In a letter dated April 28, 1912, for example, Delius wrote to Heseltine:

> Read *Nietzsche*—the "Antichrist"—"Beyond good & evil"—Christianity is paralysing—If one is sincere it utterly unfits one for Life—If hypocritical one becomes hateful to oneself—And thenceforward one can only live amongst similar hypocrites—England & America have, I believe, the monopoly of such. The moment you chuck all this rot over board Life becomes interesting—wonderful—& one gets a great desire to make something of it—*to live it to its full*. One enjoys things more thoroughly—*one feels Nature*—there is no reason whatever for any doctrine or religion.[26]

24 Letter quoted in Lionel Carley, "Hans Haym: Delius's Prophet and Pioneer," *Music & Letters* 54, no. 1 (January 1973): 13.

25 Letter dated December 13, 1933, quoted in Carley, ed., *Delius: A Life in Letters*, vol. 2, 432.

26 Quoted in Barry Smith, ed., *Frederick Delius and Peter Warlock: A Friendship Revealed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 28–29.

Two months later, Delius reinforced these same points, writing again to Heseltine that "Jesus—Nietzsche & Co are really the same natures—Earnest, ardent, & sincere natures protesting against human fraud & humbug: destroyers of doctrine."[27] Nietzsche for Delius hence served as an archetype, and as an artistic manifesto, rather than as a coherent set of principles or a logical system. "Be free—believe in Nature," Delius advised in his April letter to Heseltine, "it is quite enough & by far the most satisfactory standpoint." By those criteria, then, it would be easy to dismiss Cassirer and Delius's work on Nietzsche's text as little more than an incidental means to a polemical end: a largely opportunistic exercise, which was ultimately subordinate to the interpretative and artistic freedom that Delius extolled in his correspondence with the youthful Heseltine.

More recently, however, Derrick Puffett has argued for a closer reading of the *Mass*'s texts, and a deeper view of the work's structure and its large-scale organization.[28] As Puffett notes, Cassirer and Delius's libretto accentuates and amplifies the nonlinear, antinarrative aspects of Nietzsche's book: in other words, the choice of text goes beyond a simple attempt merely to distil the mood of *Also sprach Zarathustra*—although, as I shall argue later, I think this notion of mood is more complex than it first appears. *A Mass of Life* falls broadly into two roughly symmetrical (but unevenly sized) halves, which comprise five and six movements respectively (or five each, if movements 5 and 6 in Part II are elided, as Delius's *attacca* direction implies) (see table 1). Following Deryck Cooke and Anthony Payne, Puffett views these two halves as offering parallel trajectories, constituting, for Cooke, a "double-arched form"[29] in which each half covers the same basic series of events: a spectacular sunrise, followed by the ascent toward noontide and growing onset of evening toward midnight, with the glimmerings of a third new dawn cycle momentarily glimpsed at the end of the second part. The work's tonal layout also supports this reading: Part I evolves essentially around various modal colorings of F major, Delius's favorite pastoral key, whereas Part II is more

27 Letter dated July 27, 1912, quoted in Barry Smith, ed., 43.

28 Derrick Puffett, "A Nietzschean Libretto: Delius and the Text for *A Mass* of Life," *Music & Letters* 79, no. 2 (May 1998): 244–267.

29 Puffett, 257.

Table 1. Delius, A Mass of Life, *outline summary*

Part I	**Part II**
	[Introduction: Auf den Bergen C major→A major]
1. [Invocation] Animato con fervore. F major	1. Con elevazione e vigore. A major
2. [The Song of Laughter] Recit. Animoso, con alcuna licenza. F major→D major	2. [The Song of the Lyre] Andante. A flat major
3. [The Song of Life] Andante tranquillo con dolcezza. B major	3. [The Dance Song] Lento. A minor
4. [The Riddle] Agitato ma moderato, B minor→F major!	4. ["Noon in the Meadows"] Lento molto, F major→E flat major
5. [The Night Song] Andante molto tranquillo. F major	5. [The Song of Rapture] Allegro ma non troppo, con gravità. E minor→V/B attacca
	6. [The Paen to Joy]; Largo con solennità. B major

wide-ranging, trending upward and closing in a radiant B major (a key center signaled earlier just briefly in Part I, movement 3). The whole work thus opens out, tonally, rather than suggesting symmetrical closure, and brightens as it progresses: a symbolic reflection of Delius's ultimately optimistic reading of Nietzsche's book.

According to Fenby, the "spiritual axis"[30] of the *Mass* is the setting of the *Mitternachtslied*, the pivotal passage from the penultimate section of Book IV, prompted by Zarathustra's last supper with his disciples prefiguring his final going-down from the mountains out into the world. This forms the apotheosis and finale of Delius's scheme. The passage is foreshadowed, however, by its appearance earlier in the *Mass* at the end of the third movement, "The Song of Life," which sets extracts from Book III, "Das andere Tanzlied" (The Second Dance Song), §1–3, where Nietzsche describes a hallucinatory dream sequence in which Zarathustra imagines himself on board a golden barque glittering upon dark waters. This formal anticipation is echoed on a more local scale by the way in which elements of the *Mitternachtslied* are evoked elsewhere in the text: for example, at the end of Part I, movement 4, "The Riddle" ("Das Nachtwanderlied" from Book IV, §4, "du höhere Mensch, gib Acht!/was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?"); Part II, movement 2, which sets a later passage from the same section (Book IV, §6, "die Welt ist tief, und tiefer als der Tag gedacht!"); and Part II, movement 5 (Book IV, §8, "Lust ist tiefer noch als Herzeleid"). Indeed, as Puffett suggests, "it is almost as if Delius's selections from Zarathustra boil down to extensive extracts from one chapter, with a few other passages thrown in for good measure."[31] Puffett comments on both the strong poetic assonance of these lines (Acht/Nacht/gedacht) and also their versification, pointing to Nietzsche's description of *Also sprach Zarathustra* as a *Dichtung*. Puffett additionally underlines also the elevated biblical quality of the imagery, which he reads in an entirely unsardonic, non-parodistic manner; hardness and fierce brilliance are instead the qualities that he identifies most clearly in Delius's response to Nietzsche's text. These internal

30 Cited in Puffet, 246. The reference to a "spiritual axis" is striking given Delius's strongly atheistic beliefs, which considerably distressed Fenby. For his reaction to Delius's lack of religious faith, see Eric Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), first published 1936, 182–5.

31 Puffett, "Nietzschean Libretto," 249.

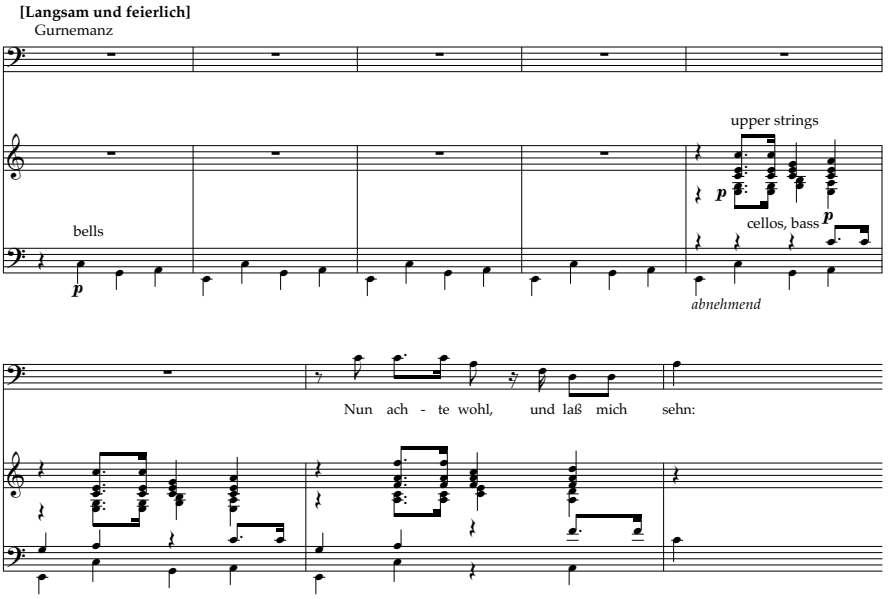
repetitions, at both large-scale and local level, further serve as a neat metaphor for Nietzsche's underlying doctrine of eternal recurrence: a circularity implied by Zarathustra's repeated pattern of descent and retreat, as he seeks an attentive worldly audience for his philosophy before withdrawing back to reverie in nature. This cyclic quality is further intensified by Nietzsche's evocations of specific times of night and day: the spectacular dawns, evoked no less thrillingly in the opening movements of Part I and Part II of the *Mass* than in the opening pages of Strauss's tone poem, the high noontides, and the existential midnight.

The other recurrent image in Delius's selection of Nietzsche's text is the deep tolling of the "Brumm-Glocke," Zarathustra's iconic midnight bell. Like Mahler, Puffett suggests, Delius eschews any attempt to capture the sound of the bell in the vocal line: the sound is rendered instead by the soft strokes of the tam-tam in the "Andere Tanzlied" (Part I, movement 3), in a manner akin to Mahler's use of harp, pizzicato strings and woodwind accent in the fourth movement of his Third Symphony. The second element of this symbolic word-painting in Delius's score is the ostinato figure—paradigmatically a pair of rising fifths—which increasingly saturates the final movement and is prefigured in Part I, movement 3. The obvious parallel here is with the ostinato figures that dominate the two transformation sequences in Acts 1 and 3 of *Parsifal*, likewise inspired by swinging bell sonorities.[32] In Act 1, this is the moment when the ageing Gurnemanz reveals to a naïve and unthinking Parsifal, "Zum Raum wird hier die Zeit" (This is where space becomes time), implying a similar involution of spatial and temporal dimensions to that imagined by Zarathustra.[33] Whereas the intervallic contour of Wagner's bells, however, descends *downwards*—fatefully so in their re-occurrence in Act 3 as the grail community reaches its crisis point—Delius's bells move in the opposite direction and ascend (see examples 1 and 2). At first glance, this inversion of Parsifal's bell figure might appear counter-intuitive. As Puffett notes,

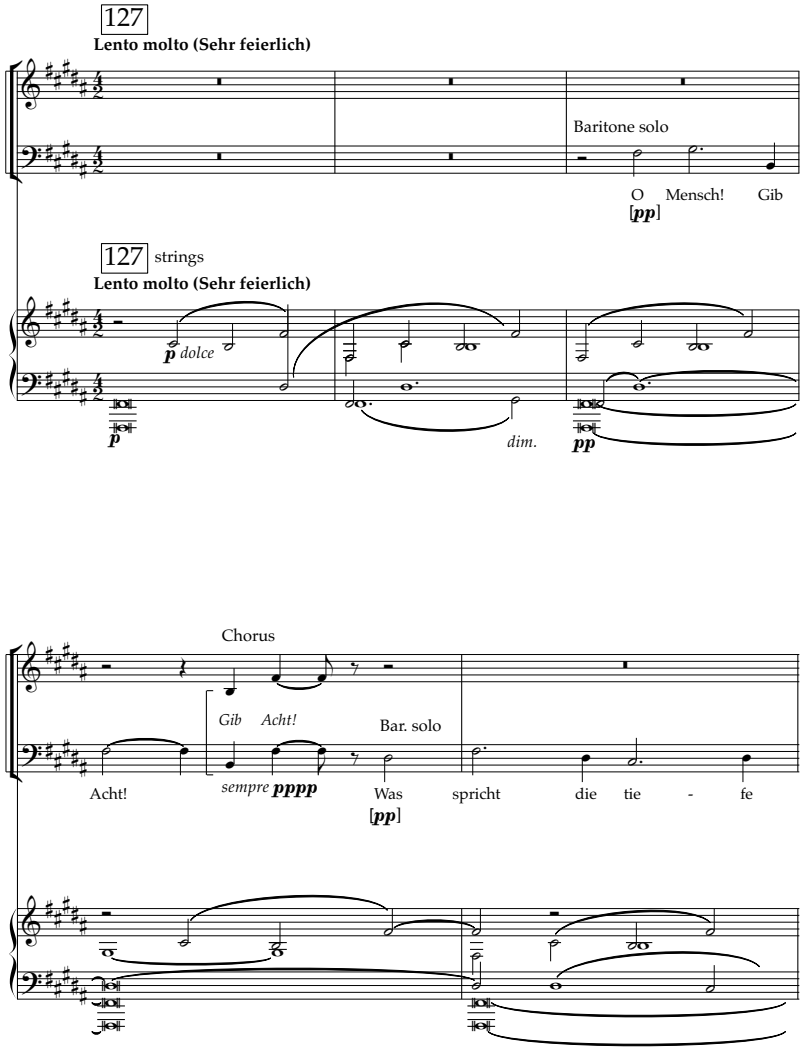
32 Delius was profoundly influenced by *Parsifal*, and copied out by hand a large part of the first half of Act 3 in short score, up to and including the Good Friday Music. The score is now held in the British Library (GB-Lbl MS Mus 1745/2/10, ff. 141–150).

33 On the physical challenges of realizing Wagner's directions, and the various solutions adopted in both historical and more recent productions, see Derrick Everett, "The Bells of Monsalvat: a Short History," accessed July 16, 2024, https://www.monsalvat.no/parsifal-bells.htm.

Example 1. Richard Wagner, Parsifal, act 1, Verwandlungsmusik *(bell entry)*



Example 2. Frederick Delius, A Mass of Life*, part 2, VI, rehearsal 127*



"Zarathustra's melancholy predisposition towards thoughts of death is intensified by the sound of the midnight bell. The return of the midnight bell at the end of the *Mass*, must, therefore, mean an intensification in these melancholy feelings, perhaps even Zarathustra's death itself."[34] But this reading feels strangely at odds with Delius's musical realization. That sense of an ending is negative only if death itself is seen as a final and irrevocable stage. *Parsifal*, of course, is characteristically more ambivalent: the fate of the grail kingdom and its community remains unclear after Parsifal unveils the grail cup and assumes leadership of the ritual ceremony in the temple in the opera's final scene. Wagner, in other words, equivocates, the promise of redemption sensed fleetingly if it is grasped at all.

In contrast, redemption for Mahler, as envisioned paradigmatically in the Third Symphony, lies on a higher plane, in the affirmatory Adagio of the symphony's final movement. This can be heard as a form of massively slowed down and sustained Beethovenian apotheosis, a "taking back of the Ninth," to borrow Reinhold Brinkmann's phrase,[35] which celebrates the enduring power of human love. Peter Franklin suggests that this music "inspires rather than expresses reverential awe. By thus *becoming* God, Mahler redefines the deity as Nietzschean *Übermensch*: as the highest mode of human awareness; a climax rather than a transcendence of conscious Being."[36] In other words, Mahler's glowing conclusion strains toward the transcendent rather than remaining earth-bound, and effectively sublates Nietzsche's epistemological scepticism through a renewed declaration of divine faith—a Pauline love, like that of the end of the Second Symphony, which promises a cosmological spring after the bleak winter of the symphony's epic first movement. Mahler, in other words, seeks to move beyond Nietzsche's humanistic critique and re-attain a loftier spiritual and existential plane, a gesture consistent with the generic status of the post-Beethovenian symphony as the most elevated and idealistic form of musical expression. The

34 Puffett, "Nietzschean Libretto," 247.

35 Reinhold Brinkmann, *Late Idyll: The Second Symphony of Johannes Brahms*, trans. Peter Palmer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 220–26.

36 Peter Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony no. 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 76 (emphasis mine).

symphony's closing measures seem to hold onto the promise of salvation and to the potential presence of the divine.

Delius's approach, I would argue, remains closer to the spirit and letter of Nietzsche's post-Darwinian skepticism—the abandonment of institutional religion and the belief in God—and to his lesson of eternal recurrence. Death is contemplated, inescapably, as part of an endless cycle of rebirth and renewal, an ineluctable quality of the natural order of things which lies beyond any human capacity to alter or change. This suggests an alternative reading for the hardness and brilliance that Puffett observes elsewhere throughout Delius's *Mass*, namely in the image, which Delius confided to Heseltine, of Jesus and Zarathustra as "destroyers of doctrine" rather than offering false comfort or reassurance. "I don't find it depressing at all to look upon death as complete annihilation," Delius wrote to Heseltine at the end of his letter on June 27, 1912; "It harmonises perfectly with my outlook on Life & I am an optimist & love life in all its forms."[37] The tolling bell, which recurs in the very final measures of the *Mass* to accompany the closing word, "Ewigkeit," is simultaneously a moment of dissolution and of rebirth. Its closest Mahlerian analogy might therefore not in fact be the finale of the Third Symphony but more properly the final section of "Der Abschied" from *Das Lied von der Erde*, with its promissory vision of the newly blooming earth and the distant blue light upon the horizon.[38] And here lies the key to an alternative understanding of Nietzsche's writing which is likely to have shaped Delius's work even more immediately than Mahler's.

37 Smith, ed., *Frederick Delius and Peter Warlock*, 43.

38 This is an image to which Delius was also repeatedly drawn, for instance in the closing sequence of the *Requiem* (1917), where he substitutes the final "In Paradisum" of the liturgical Requiem service for a passage that suggests the re-blossoming of the earth in springtime.

Delius and Nietzsche's Ecocriticism

The grounding in the earth implied by the final measures of the *Mass* points to another aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy which is not discussed by Puffett or other writers on the *Mass*, namely the recurrent references to landscape and environment that are such a prominent feature of *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Nietzsche's text is remarkable for its close attention to specific natural details: the luxuriant foliage and ripe figs of the blessed isles to which Zarathustra retreats, the high alpine environment in which the book begins and to which Zarathustra frequently returns, and the prominence of the non-human agents (the animals) who serve as his primary companions and protagonists. As Gary Shapiro notes, "all of *Zarathustra* can be understood as an extended landscape or garden poem."[39] This points toward a more ecological response to Nietzsche's work. "*Remain true to the earth*," Zarathustra entreats his audience after he first descends from the mountain in the Prologue, "in truth, man is a polluted river. One must be a sea, to receive a polluted river and not be defiled."[40]

Nietzsche's significance as an environmental thinker, who pre-emptively engaged questions of the Anthropocene and the climate crisis, has been increasingly addressed in recent scholarship without a consensus emerging as to the status of his contribution to more contemporary debates.[41] It is clear, as Henk Manschot has argued, that Nietzsche's experience of staying in the mountains at Sils Maria in the Engadin in eastern Switzerland in the 1880s profoundly affected both his

39 Gary Shapiro, *Nietzsche's Earth: Great Events, Great Politics* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016), 137.

40 Friedrich Nietzsche, "Zarathustra's Prologue," §3, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 2003), first published 1961, 46.

41 Among the earliest substantive ecocritical readings of Nietzsche's work is Max Hallman, "Nietzsche's Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 13 (1991): 13–26. For trenchant critiques of Hallman's position, see Michael E. Zimmerman, "Nietzsche and Ecocriticism: a Critical Enquiry," in *Reading Nietzsche at the Margins*, eds. Steven V. Hicks and Alan Rosenberg (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008), 165–85, and David E. Storey, "Nietzsche and Ecology Revisited: the Biological Basis of Value," *Environmental Ethics* 38, no. 1 (April 2016): 19–45.

working habits and his writing. Like Mahler and Delius after him, the philosopher's long walking trips in the area prompted both a heightened sensitivity to the animals and flora of the region, and also intensified his response to the spiritual tradition of retreat and self-renewal: a process that led to his first formulation of the principle of eternal recurrence.[42] Through this experience, as Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei observes, "Nietzsche recognised both the physiology of the human mind, and our connection, through embodiment, with the earth as the ground of all human action and thought."[43] One of the most striking passages in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, not set by either Mahler or Delius, is the encounter with the prophet or soothsayer in Book 2, who outlines an apocalyptic vision of failed harvest, dried-up wells and water sources, and the ashen aftermath of wildfires and scorching heat: a painful and acute contrast with the verdant fields and leaping springs of Zarathustra's own country. Environmental collapse, in other words, has become further evidence of the downward trajectory of the human condition, the fateful and crumbling decadence of the Anthropocene.

That is not to suggest that Nietzsche's views were entirely those of a twenty-first century climate activist, nor that he developed a consistent vision of environmental change throughout his writing. Mapping Nietzsche's writing directly onto more current ecocritical discourse is both anachronistic and potentially misreads important elements of his philosophy. Rather, as Gosetti-Ferencei suggests, the significance of such passages lies not so much in their call to any specific ecological action or intervention, but rather their ability to disrupt normative narrative structures and habitual patterns of thought. Though environment is central to what Gosetti-Ferencei terms Nietzsche's "geophilosophy," she insists that "local rootedness does not necessarily nurture environmental responsibility."[44] Furthermore, what she identifies as Nietzsche's "deconstruction of metaphysics, his

42 Henk Manschot, *Nietzsche and the Earth: Biography, Ecology, Politics* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 17–18.

43 Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei, "Nietzsche and Cognitive Ecology," in *Anti-Idealism, Anti-Classicism: Reinterpreting a German Discourse*, ed. Juliana de Albuquerque and Gert Hoffman (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019), 212.

44 Gosetti-Ferencei, 211.

critique of the ecological implications of idealism" is not a backwardly conservative or reactionary return to a mythic past. Rather, *Also sprach Zarathustra* demands a new form of what Gosetti-Ferencei describes as a cognitive ecology, a space for a different mode of being, "for in order to live differently upon the earth, we must think, feel, and experience differently."[45]

These twin strands—the openness to disruption and to a new depth of feeling and experience as a result—lie at the heart of Delius's response to Nietzsche in *A Mass of Life*. Indeed, they are common threads also in his treatment of Whitman's verse in *Sea Drift* and also to his adaption of Gottfried Keller's source novella in his fourth opera, *A Village Romeo and Juliet*. What the opera and the *Mass* share with *Also sprach Zarathustra* is their frequent references to the high mountains as a symbol of difference or alterity. Alpine distances in the opera signify the potential, tragically unrealized, of liberation or release from burdensome social mores and routines for the work's protagonists (the doomed young lovers Sali and Vreli), a sense of a world beyond the mundane reality of the stifling village politics in which they find themselves trapped.[46] In the *Mass*, the mountains assume an even deeper and more abstracted significance, in Nietzschean sense, as a site of creative renewal and rebirth.

This process of renewal and rebirth is captured most vividly in the instrumental prelude which opens the second part of the *Mass*, "Auf den Bergen" ("In the Mountains"). One of Delius's most sustained evocations of Alpine space, the sequence consists of a quadrophonic ensemble for four horns supported by the strings. Distance is evoked, as commonly in Mahler's music, by placing two of the horns offstage, intensifying the echo effect of the dynamics (the loudest, *mezzo*

45 Gosetti-Ferencei, 212.

46 This is, of course, consistent with earlier nineteenth-century representations of the Alps, often configured through a gendered and/or (proto-)nationalist vein. See, for example, Emanuele Senici, *Landscape and Gender in Italian Opera: the Alpine Virgin from Bellini to Puccini* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century evocations of such Alpine spaces often tend toward the more abstract and less explicitly figurative: see, for example, Christopher Morris, *Modernism and the Cult of Mountains: Music, Opera, Cinema* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2012).

forte, is heard in the opening measure and the remainder of the passage is in effect a prolonged diminuendo, suggesting a gradual recession or retreat). This impression is deepened further by the slow tempo, essentially suspending any regular impression of passing time, and the gentle alternation between duple and triplet crotchet figuration: one of Delius's characteristic rhythmic gestures which here suggests a greater expansiveness and weightlessness. But what lends the passage its particularly affective quality is the string accompaniment: entering in measure 7, after sounding an initial pedal in cellos and basses, the upper strings form a curtain of sound like a chromatic aura that slowly shifts color and intensity as the passage progresses. The effect is of a heightened resonance or increased amplitude, even as the volume fades, which reveals a richer range and depth of harmonic spectrum: a re-sounding of the horn quartet's echoing calls, heard and transformed across an imaginary mountain space as the listener's attention is drawn further into the horn calls as a sounding object. The process of total immersion is shattered only by the electrifying entry of the following movement, the chorus's brilliant "Herauf! Nun herauf, du großer Mittag!" ("Arise! Now arise, you great noontide!"), as Zarathustra's day dazzlingly breaks anew.

The closest analogous passage in Mahler's music is arguably not found in the Nietzsche-inspired music of the Third Symphony but in its immediate predecessor, the Second. Mahler's pivotal setting of Klopstock's resurrection ode, "Auferstehʼn, ja, auferstehʼn wirst du," (Rise again, yes, rise again you will) which forms the work's climax, is preceded at figure 29 by an extended nature sequence of offstage horn and trumpet calls marked "in weiter Entfernung" (in the far distance), with woodwind cadenzas for flute and piccolo, that serves a similarly disruptive purpose to that of the prelude in Delius's *Mass*.[47] In both cases, the sequences constitute a form of suspension, according to Adorno's definition, which radically redirects the music that follows.[48] Although such moments of suspension appear

47 On this passage in particular and the notion of parataxis in Mahler's approach to musical form, see Thomas Bauman, "Mahler in a New Key: Genre and the Resurrection Finale," *Journal of Musicology* 23, no. 3 (2006): 478–80.

48 Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Adorno writes that "Mahlerian suspensions tend to be sedimented as episodes. These are essential to him: roundabout ways that turn out retrospectively

to halt the linear motion of history and time, Adorno argues that they ultimately become part of a deeper dialectical turn.[49] Landscape is invoked here not as an ideological second nature, but as a *mise-en-abyme*: a glimpse into the void which in turn reveals the alienation of the attending subject. The heroic artist-protagonist of Mahler's Second is insistently pulled downwards even as he aspires ever higher. The feeling of attainment offered in the closing moments of the symphony becomes a Schopenhauerian release from earthly suffering. The superficially similar Alpine episodes in Mahler's later music, such as the Sixth and Seventh Symphonies, appear even more acutely aware of their own provisionality.[50] In an already fractured landscape, these nature sequences seemingly have little genuine redemption or release to offer other than a blank allegory of their own own fictive condition.[51]

Delius's music does not offer the kind of immanent critique that Mahler develops in his later works. Rather, the *Mass* suggests a different mode of critical response, one grounded in a much closer relationship to Nietzsche's nascent ecological concerns. One passage that particularly exemplifies this trend in the *Mass* is the fourth movement, "Noon in the Meadows" ("Mittags," "At Noontide") from Part II. A setting of extracts from the eponymous chapter in Book IV, the movement is an extended dream sequence in which Zarathustra rests amid an enchanted landscape before the energetic exertions of the final movements begin (see table 2). Poetically, the passage superficially recalls Stéphane Mallarmé's "L'après midi d'un faune" (1876), famously the inspiration for Claude Debussy's

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to be the direct ones" (p. 41) and adds that "suspensions give notice to formal immanence without positively asserting the presence of the Other; they are self-reflections of what is entangled in itself, no longer allegories of the absolute. Retrospectively they are caught up by the form from whose elements they are composed." (p. 43).

49 John J. Sheinbaum, "Adorno's Mahler and the Timbral Outsider," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 131, no. 1 (2006): 38–82, especially 66–65. Sheinbaum focuses his discussion on the posthorn episode from the third movement of the Third Symphony.

50 Thomas Peattie, *Gustav Mahler's Symphonic Landscapes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 109–15.

51 This is an argument that Adorno developed more fully elsewhere, for example in his writing on Schubert. See Scott Burnham, "Landscape as Music, Landscape as Truth: Schubert and the Burden of Repetition," *19th-Century Music 29*, no. 1 (Summer 2005): 31–41.

Table 2. Delius, A Mass of Life*, part 2, IV.* Mittags *(At noon) text. Translation after Puffett 1998 (emended by Daniel M. Grimley)*

Reh. 98	**Book IV. Mittags**	**Book IV. At noon**
Reh. 99	Chorus: Heißer Mittag schläft auf den Fluren.	Chorus: Hot noontide sleeps upon the fields. . . .
	Du liegst im Grase.	You lie in the grass . . .
	Still!	Soft!
	Tenor: Wie ein zierlicher Wind, ungesehn, auf getäfeltem Meere tanzt, leicht, federleicht: so—tanzt der Schlaf auf mir.	Tenor: As a delicate breeze, unseen, dances upon the smooth sea, light, light as a feather: thus—does sleep also dance upon me. . . .
Reh. 100	. . . das ist die heimliche feierliche Stunde, wo kein Hirt die Flöte blast.	this is the secret, solemn hour when no shepherd flutes.
	Chorus: [O] Heimlichkeit des bunten Grases, . . .	Chorus: O secrecy of the coloured grasses, . . .
	O Glück!	O joy! . . .
	Baritone: Was geschah mir: Horch! Flog die Zeit wohl davon?	Baritone: What has happened to me: Listen! Has time flown away?
	Falle ich nicht? Fiel ich nicht—horch! In den Brunnen der Ewigkeit?	Do I not fall? Have I not fallen—listen! Into the well of eternity?
	. . . Oh zerbrich, zerbrich, Herz, nach solchem Glücke!	. . . O break, break, heart, after such joy! . . .
	Still!	Soft! . . .
	Willst du wohl singen, oh meine Seele?	Would you still sing, o my soul? . . .
	Alto: Singe nicht, . . . Still! Flüstere nicht einmal!	Alto: Do not sing . . . Soft! Do not whisper! . . .
	Die Welt ist vollkommen. Still!	The world is perfect. Soft!
	Chorus: Der alte Mittag schläft, . . .	Chorus: the old noontide sleeps, . . .
	Soprano: trinkt er nicht eben einen alten braunen Tropfen goldenen Glücks, goldenen Weins? Es huscht über ihn hin, sein Glück lacht.	Soprano: has it not just drunk an old brown drop of golden joy, of golden wine? Something glides across it, its joy laughs.
	So—lacht ein Gott.	Thus—does a god laugh!
	Chorus, Soprano and Tenor: sein Glück lacht. So—lacht ein Gott!	Chorus, Soprano and Tenor: its joy laughs. This—does a god laugh!
	. . . Der alte Mittag schläft, . . .	. . . the old noontide sleeps, . . .
	Alto: Auf! Du Schläfer! [Zarathustra!] Du Mittagsschläfer!	Alto: Arise! Slumberer! [Zarathustra] You noontide-slumberer!
	Baritone: Laß mich doch! Still! Ward die Welt nicht eben vollkommen?	Baritone: Let me alone! Soft! Has the world not just become perfect?
	O des goldnen runden Balls!—	O golden round balls [=grapes]?
	Wer bist du doch! O meine Seele! Wie wenig genügt schon zum Glücke!	But who are you then! O my soul! How little attains joy!
	Wie lange erst darfst du nach solchem Schlaf—dich auswachen?	For how long after such a sleep are you allowed—to wake up?
	Chorus: O Glück!	Chorus: O happiness!
	Der alte Mittage schläft, . . .	The old noontide sleeps. . . .

eponymous orchestral *Prélude* (1894) which was one of the formative musical influences on Delius during his early years in Paris, although without its provocatively explicit eroticism.[52] Nietzsche's text, like Mallarmé's, pays careful attention to the particular time of day and its accompanying atmospheric conditions, a mood evoked with characteristic intensity in the opening lines: "Heißer Mittag schläft auf den Fluren" (Hot noontide sleeps upon the fields). Zarathustra himself speaks from within the haze, eliding time and space with a feeling of suspension: "Was geschah mir: Horch! Flog die Zeit wohl davon? Falle ich nicht? Fiel ich nicht?" (What has happened to me: Listen! Has time flown away? Do I not fall? Have I not fallen?). What follows is a curious dialogue, a form of self-mockery—whether it is Zarathustra talking to himself or an unseen second voice is unclear.

What is apparent, however, is the way in which the passage's repeated injunctions to listen, "Horch!," gradually give way a deeper sense of attunement and abandonment: "Still! Flüstere nicht einmal!" (Soft! Do not whisper!).

Tonally, "Mittags" returns to the F-based modal emphasis of Part I of the *Mass*, in contrast to the largely sharpward orientation of the other movements in Part II. In that way, "Mittags" is already in some senses a gentle glitch or disruption in what had otherwise seemed a progressive shift of harmonic direction. This trend is emphasized by the movement's coda, which leans increasingly flatward, descending via whole step to close on E flat, and suggesting an even profounder state of slumber from that in which the movement began. Delius's setting opens with an extended instrumental prelude, scored for three reed instruments (oboe, cor anglais, bass oboe), muted strings and timpani, which, like "Auf den Bergen," suggests both an opening outward towards a seemingly limitless horizon and a process of interiorization. An early draft of the movement in short score,[53] shows

52 Compelling evidence of the lasting influence of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* on Delius's work is apparent in the openings of both *Brigg Fair* (1907) and *In a Summer Garden* (1908), which were written after Delius had relocated from Paris to Grez-sur-Loing.

53 The item was part of a set of Delius materials from a private collection sold at Sotheby's in London on August 11, 2019 and was purchased by the Delius Trust who subsequently transferred it to the British Library (shelfmark GB-Lbl MS Mus1939 (1)). The source consists of three folios, numbered 1–3; ff.2–3 comprise a single bifolio on unwatermarked 14-stave ms paper, containing a pencil sketch in short score headed "Mittags/Prelude." The

how Delius's thoughts about the sequence developed as the compositional work progressed: in the earlier draft, the antiphonal opening for solo winds, surely inspired by the famous "Scène aux champs' from Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* which evokes a similar sense of contemplative open space, is sketched in nascent form, albeit without the careful imitative detailing developed in the final version (see examples 3 and 4). The string passage that follows has a basic kinship with Delius's later realization but is harmonically much less streamlined: the string entry at measure 12, for example, is retained in the final version (measure 22) but now elided to underpin the cor anglais's second entry. The final version is also much more sensitive to the shifts of color created by modal mixture (the insistent movement from a♭ to a♮ and back again) as well as to the piquancy of the Lydian inflection provided by the b♮, which is less pronounced in the earlier draft. At the same time, the earlier sketch does include a hidden reference to the bell motif sounded elsewhere in the *Mass* (measures 22–4), suggesting again the importance of this image in Delius's mind as he worked on the score.

The remainder of the setting follows the pattern of Nietzsche's dialogue and divides the text between the chorus, alto and tenor, and the baritone soloist, who serves as Zarathustra's voice. There are three distinct waves of activity or strophes (see table 3), alternating the soft ululation of the chorus's initial entry, "Heißer Mittag schläft auf den Fluren" with a more dance-like compound meter (e.g. Zarathustra's cry: "Was geschah mir?"). The music toward the second half of each strophe becomes increasingly energized as the voices of the meadow call urgently to Zarathustra to wake in spite of the intoxicating effects of the "alten braunen Tropfen goldenen Glücks" which he has consumed: a poetic reference to the "golden wine" of Dionysian ritual, and to the fruitfulness of the earth upon which he lies. But the cresting wave of the third strophe breaks prematurely, and the music quickly subsides into a coda that draws on elements of the "Heißer Mittag" music from the chorus's first entry. Ultimately, then, Zarathustra becomes completely immersed in the landscape: any trace of individual subjectivity is dissolved entirely as he slips back into sleep and loses consciousness once more.

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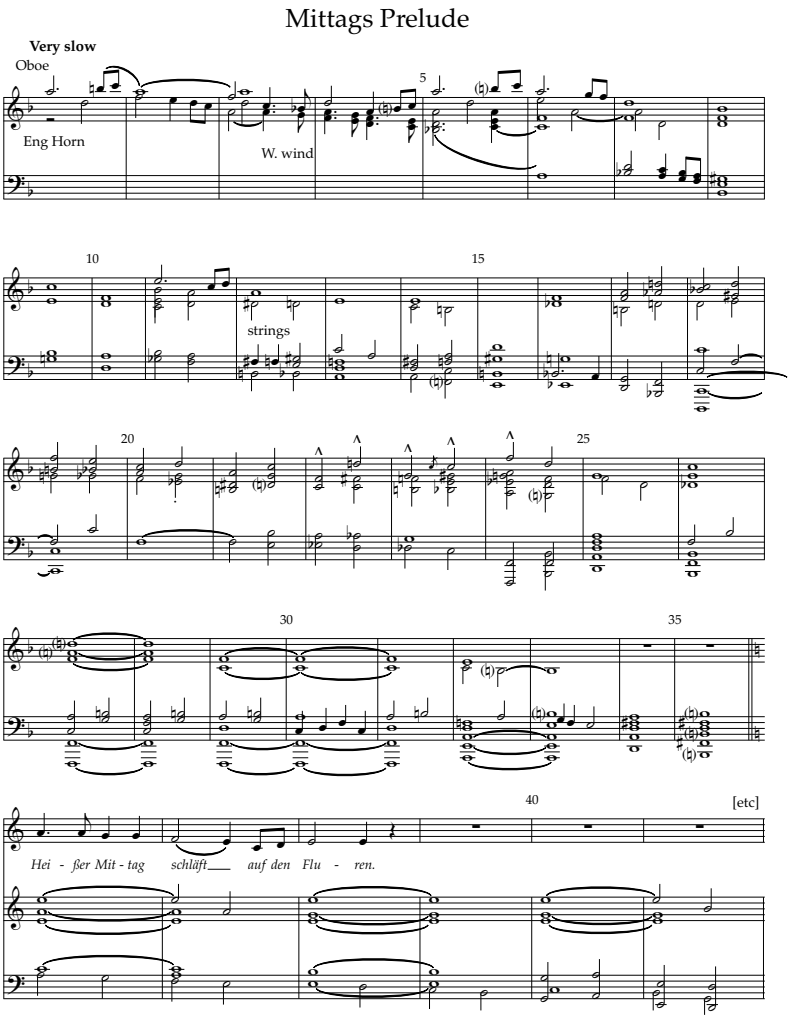
sketch includes some instrumental markings and text underlay (in German), amounting to 47+21+17+16mm in total.

Example 3. Delius, preliminary sketch for A Mass of Life*, Part 2, movement IV (GB-Lbl MS Mus1939 (1), f. 2)*



Example 4. Delius, A Mass of Life*, Part 2, movement IV, opening (short score)*

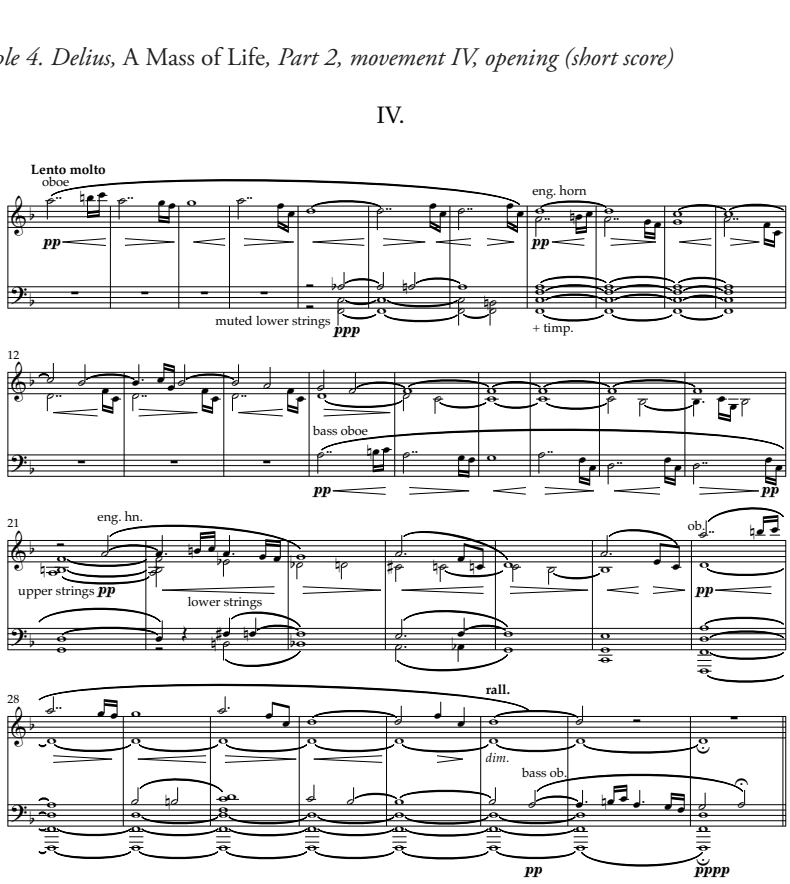
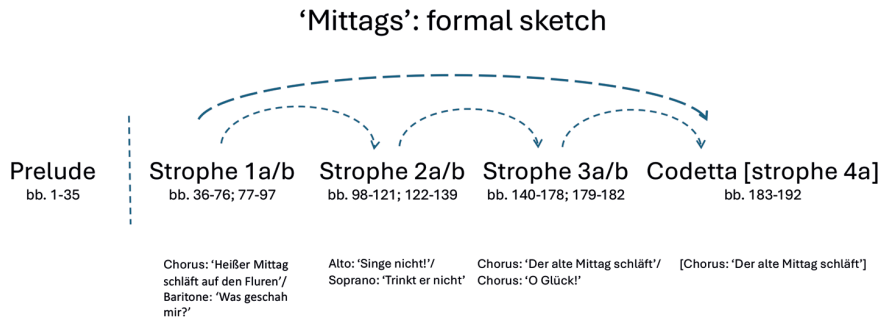


Table 3. Delius, A Mass of Life*, Part 2, movement IV, formal sketch*



The final measures are a letting go, a senseless drift into a new tonal region that is also an acceptance of death.

Conclusion

Delius's response to Nietzsche's ecological thought is tightly bound up with this affective transformation, a dissolution of the self that constitutes a merging with the natural world. This is a very different mode of being from the hard brilliance and biblical satire addressed by Puffett. Rather, the overriding impression is of mortality: a feeling of presence illuminated by an aura but which is continually aware of its own fleeting contingency. Curiously, it is this quality that appears to have moved some of Delius's more attentive listeners after early performances of the *Mass*. Richard Capell, for example, in a short essay for the *Radio Times* entitled "Delius: Landscape Painter of Music" written in 1931, just three years before Newman's obituary tribute, asked:

> Is not the static art of painting evidently concerned with everlasting Nature, while ever-moving music, existing in time and not in space, must deal with the fluctuations of human feeling and not representation? . . . We measure music by our own

> pulse; but music in these moods slows down to such another pulse-rate that it seems not mortal but Nature's expression: landscape music.[54]

Capell's binary divisions—time versus space, painting versus music—are overly simplistic, as Gurnemanz had already revealed to the naïve and unknowing Parsifal on the threshold of Monsalvat in Wagner's opera. Nietzsche's vision, to which Delius's music richly responds, insistently collapses such Cartesian cartographies into a more emergent process of presencing that celebrates bodily materiality even as it laments loss, absence and departure. That is not the same as the feeling of an "end of a chapter" identified and lamented by Newman in his memorial article on Delius of 1934, quoted at the head of this essay. Rather, the *Mass's* numinous quality is the music's afterglow, or residue, the impression of something which lingers unresolved and that promises some form of return, as yet uncertain and intangible. This is the essence of what Gosetti-Ferencei calls Nietzsche's cognitive ecology, as it is articulated in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, and what also lies at the heart of Mahler and Delius's work too, despite their very different musical and aesthetic concerns. Their work, inspired by Nietzsche, is motivated by an understanding of landscape as profoundly human and interconnected with the natural world, rather than irrevocably separated from it by an immovable and distancing frame. As Newman suggested elsewhere, in the review of a 1925 performance of *A Mass of Life* for the *Glasgow Herald*: "here, if anywhere, is a philosophy not so much set to music as transformed and transfigured into music."[55] That is not to ascribe any doctrinal orthodoxy to either Nietzsche's philosophy or Delius's musical realization. Rather, it is to be open to a more active mode of engagement and recognize that it is surely we who are transformed through the quiet gentle motion of Delius's music, as the breeze moves softly through the colored grass of Zarathustra's meadow and the air lies heavy and still upon the earth. In that way, a deeper and more sensitive ecological attunement might begin to emerge.

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54 Richard Capell, "Delius: Landscape Painter of Music," *The Radio Times* 33, no. 427 (December 4, 1931): 756. Reproduced in Redwood, *A Delius Companion*, 45–6.

55 Quoted in Martin Lee-Browne and Paul Guinery, *Delius and his Music* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2014), 223.

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