



DELIUS

Appalachia • Sea Drift

Leon Williams, Baritone

The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay • James K. Bass

The Florida Orchestra • Stefan Sanderling

Frederick Delius (1862-1934)

Appalachia • Sea Drift

Two major European composers were so smitten by American plantation song that their own music was instantly stamped by “Negro melodies.” One – as many Americans know – was Antonín Dvořák, who during his American sojourn of 1892-95 predicted that the songs and dances of African-Americans would spawn “a great and noble school” of American music. The other – a story much less well-known – was Frederick Delius. Born in England in 1862 to German parents, Delius was sent by his father to Florida to manage an orange grove at the age of 22. He showed no skill in that department. But he did encounter in Thomas Ward, an organist from Brooklyn, a formidable musical mentor. And the songs of the plantation workers that he heard were an epiphany in which he discovered “a truly wonderful sense of musicianship and harmonic resource.” Hearing this singing “in such romantic surroundings,” he later told his disciple Eric Fenby, “I first felt the urge to express myself in music.” A few years later, after Delius had resettled in Danville, Virginia, as a fledgling musician, his father finally agreed to allow him to study composition formally – in Leipzig.

Decades later, in 1928, Delius was moved to write a preface to the German-language edition of *The Autobiography of an ex-Colored Man* by James Weldon Johnson, who crucially contributed to the Harlem Renaissance. “I believe that if America is one day to give the world a great composer,” Delius predicted, “he will have colored blood in his veins.” Both Dvořák’s prophecy and Delius’ were fundamentally correct. Dvořák, in the 1890s, could not have foreseen jazz; Delius, in 1928, was possibly too much in his own world to learn about Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong. But *Porgy and Bess* is the great American opera Dvořák anticipated. Far more than Aaron Copland, who sought to define American concert music after World War I, Dvořák and Delius gleaned that “Negro melodies” would prove the fundament of the music Americans would most call their own.

Dvořák’s American output, between 1892 and 1895,

comprises a symphony, a cello concerto, and various piano and chamber works, all of which save the concerto strikingly evoke his “America.” At least four Delius compositions explicitly evoke the sounds of the American South: the *Florida Suite* (1887, revised 1889), the operas *The Magic Fountain* (1895) and *Koanga* (1897), and the present *Appalachia* (1896-1903). Coming last, *Appalachia* is music on the cusp of Delius’s mature chromatic idiom, which translates the harmonic world of late Wagner into a voice unlike any other, a voice whose central application would be the expression of loss of self in rapturous, solitary communion with Nature. (The intense eccentricity of Delius the man is unforgettably conveyed in the greatest of all film portraits of a composer: Ken Russell’s *Song of Summer*.)

When Dvořák returned to Prague in 1895, he dropped his American style. For Delius, by comparison, the American influence was formative and permanent. His frequent elegiac tone, his way of oscillating between sorrow and exaltation may be traced back to plantation song, as can be his frequent recourse to the vernacular. In his invaluable book *The Search for Thomas F. Ward, Teacher of Frederick Delius* (1996), Don Gillespie pertinently writes:

The evidence is strong that the young Ward had a fondness for vernacular music, embraced it openly, and perhaps communicated this openness to his pupil Delius later in Florida, for the young Englishman from a cultivated family of German origin accepted American vernacular music readily and did not hesitate to incorporate it into his own compositions. The recurring nostalgia in Delius’s later music could certainly have found roots in nineteenth-century America, whose preoccupation with the past was a strong theme in sentimental and patriotic popular music ... What can be more nostalgic than the “silent backward tracings” (to quote Whitman in Delius’s

Songs of Farewell) of an orphan towards his or her mother – a theme of many popular ballads of the day?

Moreover, concerts by “colored singers” from the South, including songs of the sort that influence Delius’s *Appalachia*, were not uncommon in the Brooklyn of Ward’s time.

Appalachia is Delius’s *New World Symphony*, composed less than a decade after Dvořák’s. The title does not denote the Carolina region, but appropriates a Native American word for the whole of North America. The pacing of this 40-minute sequence of “variations on an old slave song with final chorus” is leisurely and expansive. Coming first is a preamble: an epic sunrise on virgin terrain. For Dvořák, the vast American landscape was the Iowa prairie, so vacant and flat as to seem (as he once wrote in a letter home) “sad to despair.” The elemental vacancy of virgin America is unforgettably limned in the *Largo* of Dvořák’s *Symphony ‘From the New World.’* For Delius, virgin America was Florida’s Solano Grove: lush, edenic. Sailing past Solano Grove around the time that Delius and Thomas Ward were there, Lafcadio Hearn (a writer of international reputation, cited by Gillespie in his Ward biography) observed “blue miles of water to right and left; the azure enormity ever broadening and brightening ... the immortal beauty of the domed forests crowning its banks, the day-magic of colors shifting and interblending through leagues of light, a sense of inexpressible reverence ... a sense of the divinity of Nature, the holiness of beauty” – imagery indelibly inscribed in the epic *New World* dawn with which *Appalachia* begins. For Delius, the American landscape here revealed is both physical and metaphysical: untrammelled, life-affirming. We next hear the first stirrings of nature, rising to a high pitch of elation; the orchestra fairly shouts “America!” Then the “old slave song” is sung – as in Dvořák’s *Largo* – by a solo English horn.

Fourteen variations follow. Four times, the chorus enters as a murmured pendant. This *pianissimo* echo remembers Delius’s first enthralled discovery, from the veranda of his Florida home, of distant black voices, a

siren call floating across the water. A central series of slow variations comprises the work’s most hypnotically Delian episode: of forms half-seen, half-imagined in the hazy heat. Only with the penultimate variation does the chorus deliver, a *cappella*, the “old slave song:”

After night has gone comes the day,
The dark shadows will fade away

For the finale, a solo baritone joins the singers: “Aye! Honey, I am going down the river in the morning.” “Heigh ho, heigh ho, down the mighty river!” the chorus retorts. Though the tone is robust, “going down the river,” in plantation song parlance, translates as a sold slave. But this sold slave is resilient:

Aye! Honey. I'll be gone when next
the whippoorwill's a-calling;
And don't you be too lonesome, love,
And don't you fret and cry.
For the dawn will soon be breaking
The radiant morn is nigh,
And you'll find me ever waiting,
My own sweet Nelly Gray!

Delius now builds swiftly toward a refulgent climax capped by wordless choral exhalations (“Ah!” “Ah!”). This pantheistic ecstasy may be the Delian equivalent of “crossing over into campground.” The complex affect – balancing the work’s ecstatic preface – is of a culminating dawn of the spirit. It is a gesture of *New World* freedom, of human liberation.

And so both *New World* symphonies – Dvořák’s and Delius’s – culminate in an apotheosis: in Dvořák, of the noble savage; in Delius, of the noble slave, or of ennobling nature, or both. Solitude and sorrow, nostalgia and rapturous illumination would define Delius’s musical expression as he receded into a realm of pure experience. The potency of plantation song as a starting point for this singular compositional odyssey remains ponderable.

In later life, Delius absorbed a further American influence in the nature mysticism of Walt Whitman – and

in 1904 (just after *Appalachia*) composed among the most telling of all the many musical settings of Whitman's verse: *Sea Drift*, for baritone, chorus, and orchestra. To Eric Fenby, Delius confided: "The shape of it was taken out of my hands ... and was bred easily of my particular musical ideas, and the nature and sequence of the particular poetical ideas of Whitman that appealed to me." The outcome is considered by many as Delius's masterpiece.

Whitman's poem, from *Leaves of Grass*, begins with the poet observing mated birds – and the sudden disappearance of the female, no longer daily tending her nest. The he-bird's bewildered loss transmutes into human loss. The poet imagines the voice of his beloved – "This gentle call is for you" – only to be disabused by the

commenting chorus. The permanence of loss erases cherished memories: "O darkness! O in vain!"

Whitman's imagery is of love, death, and the sea – and a tidal ebb and flow informs Delius's setting. Though solo woodwinds evoke birdsong, and a solo harp the glitter of stars, the nature music of *Sea Drift* is wondrously interior. Its high arc peaks with the ecstasy of apotheosis, then descends to plumb the heartbreak of personal pain. Identifying with the grieving bird, the human sings: "Yes, my brother, I know," a passage ushering distant memories of childhood – and also a distinct memory of a plantation song, wafted from a Florida orange grove long, long ago.

Joseph Horowitz

Author of Classical Music in America: A History

Leon Williams



Photo: Andrew Steinman

American baritone Leon Williams has won top prizes in the Naumburg, Joy-in-Singing, and Lola Wilson Hayes Competitions and enjoys a busy and highly successful career, with engagements including Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (Honolulu Symphony and The Florida Orchestra), Orff's *Carmina Burana* (The Florida Orchestra, Baltimore, Reading, Alabama, Westchester, Grand Rapids, Jacksonville, Hartford and Colorado Symphonies, National Philharmonic, Berkshire Choral Festival), Britten's *War Requiem*, the Mozart and Fauré *Requiems* and Haydn's *The Creation* with the Colorado Symphony; Vaughan-Williams' *A Sea Symphony* with the Portland, Grand Rapids and Illinois symphonies and The Florida Orchestra; Fauré's *Requiem* with Raymond Leppard and the Kansas City Symphony; Brahms's *Requiem* with the Alabama and Santa Barbara symphonies; Haydn's *Il Ritorno di Tobia* and Mahler's *Eighth Symphony* with the American Symphony Orchestra; and Weill's *Lindberghflug* with Dennis Russell Davies and the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. He appears widely in recital and, a much-in-demand *Porgy and Bess* principal, he has sung Jake with the Boston Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as with the Dallas Opera.

The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay

The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay, under the direction of Music and Artistic Director James Bass, is an auditioned 150-voice volunteer chorus embracing a broad representation of singers from the Tampa Bay region. Founded in 1979 by Robert Summer and designated as the Principal Chorus of The Florida Orchestra, The Master Chorale is featured annually on The Florida Orchestra's Masterworks season. In 1999, The Master Chorale was appointed as Artist in Residence at the School of Music at the University of South Florida. The organization serves Tampa Bay with a mission to advance the art of choral music. Since its inception in 1979, it has produced at least one major choral-orchestral work each year, ranging from Bach to Mahler and including commissions from contemporary composers. Other appointed conductors during the history of The Master Chorale include Daniel Moe, Duncan Couch, David Brunner, Joseph Holt, Jo-Michael Scheibe, and Richard Zielinski, and with conductors including Stefan Sanderling, Jahja Ling, Robert Shaw, John Nelson, Julius Rudel, Sir Colin Davis, and Sir David Willcocks.

James K. Bass



James K. Bass, GRAMMY® nominated singer and conductor, is Director of Choral Studies at the University of South Florida and Music and Artistic Director of The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay. At USF he conducts the University Chamber Singers, Collegium and Collegiate Singers, in addition to teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in choral conducting, philosophy, and literature. Previously he was on the faculty at Western Michigan University and the University of Central Florida. Bass received the doctor of musical arts degree from the University of Miami–Florida, where he was a doctoral fellow, master of music and bachelor of science degrees from the University of South Florida and is a graduate of the Interlochen Arts Academy.

Sopranos

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Badala
Amber Berlin Blair
Susann Brady
Janice Crowe
Amy Currotto
L. Susan Darqusch
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Deadra Johnson Griffith
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Heather Haskell
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Arthur J. Stagg, Jr.
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Steven P. Vertz
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Dr. James K. Bass,
*Music and Artistic
Director*
Brett Karlin,
Assistant Conductor
Robert Winslow,
Accompanist

The Florida Orchestra

The Florida Orchestra and The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay



Photo: JM Lennon

a leader and beacon for the musical arts throughout the state. The Florida Orchestra is committed to serving the entire Tampa Bay area. The Florida Orchestra performs nearly 100 concerts annually in the tri-city area of Tampa, Clearwater, and St. Petersburg. Concert series include the Tampa Bay Times Masterworks, Morning Masterworks, Raymond James Pops, Coffee Concert Matinees, free Pops in the Park Concerts, and educational Youth Concerts.

Stefan Sanderling



Photo: Rosalie O'Connor

Stefan Sanderling was born in East Berlin in 1964, the son of legendary conductor Kurt Sanderling. He studied musicology at the University of Halle and conducting at the conservatory in Leipzig before continuing his studies at the University of Southern California. After the fall of the iron curtain, he returned to his native Germany, where his career ascended rapidly. Sanderling has conducted such orchestras as the London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, Vienna Radio Symphony, Berliner Sinfonie Orchester and St Petersburg Philharmonic. He has guest conducted at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Komische Oper Berlin. He made his debut in Australia with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and in Japan with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra. Since his North American debut at the 1989 Tanglewood Summer Music Festival, he has forged a successful career for himself in the United States, serving as Music Director of The Florida Orchestra from 2002-2012, and now holds the positions of Conductor Emeritus and artistic advisor of The Florida Orchestra and principal conductor and artistic advisor of the Toledo Symphony Orchestra.

The Florida Orchestra's history is steeped in orchestral tradition from both sides of Tampa Bay. The Tampa Philharmonic and the St. Petersburg Symphony merged on November 23, 1966, and the Florida Gulf Coast Symphony opened its first season on November 14, 1968, changing its name to The Florida Orchestra in 1984. The Florida Orchestra is recognized as one of the leading professional symphony orchestras in Florida, and one of the largest orchestras in the southeast. Through extraordinary musical performances, the orchestra inspires the people of Tampa Bay and serves as

Violin

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Concertmaster
 Nancy Chang, *Associate*
Concertmaster
 Jeffrey Smick, *Assistant*
Concertmaster
 Lei Lu, *Assistant*
Concertmaster
 Sarah Shellman,
Principal Second
 Lucas Guideri,
Acting Principal Second
 Virginia Respess,
Acting Assistant
Principal Second
 Valerie Adams
 Toula Bonie
 Sandra Buscemi
 Mary Corbett
 Linda Gaines
 Oleg Geyer
 Cynthia Gregg
 Linda Hall
 Thomas Kennedy
 Jiang Yan Lu
 Evelyn Pupello
 Claudia Rantucci
 Matthew Albert*
 Annabelle Gardiner*
 Conrad Harris*
 Pauline Kim*
 Tiffany Lu*
 Eric Nordstrom*
 Amy Sims*
 Ovidiu Sutic*
 Derek Ratzenboeck*

Viola

Ben Markwell, *Principal*
 Kathie Aagaard,
Assistant Principal
 Karl Bawel
 Lewis Brinin
 Alan Gordon

Alison Heydt
 Kenneth Kwo
 Warren Powell
 Barbara Rizzo
 Karen Dumke*
 Kenneth Martinson*

Cello

James Connors, *Principal*
 Lowell Adams,
Assistant Principal
 Rebecca Bialosky
 Alfred Gratta
 Gretchen Langlitz
 Laura Smith
 Zsuzsanna Varosy
 Sasha von Dassow
 Merrilee Wallbrunn

Bass

Dee Moses, *Principal*
 Brandon McLean,
Assistant Principal
 John DiMura
 Roger Funk
 Alan Glick
 James Petrecca
 Deborah Schmidt
 Wendy Leggett*

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Clay Ellerbroek, *Principal*
 Daphne Soellner,
Assistant Principal
 Lewis Sligh

Piccolo

Lewis Sligh

Oboe

Katherine Young Steele,
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 Lane Lederer,
Assistant Principal
 Jeffrey Stephenson
 Andrew Parker*

English Horn

Jeffrey Stephenson

Clarinet

Brian Moorhead, *Principal*
 Erika Shrauger,
Assistant Principal
 Vicky Newcomb
 Miranda Dohrman*

E Flat Clarinet

Erika Shrauger

Bass Clarinet

Vicky Newcomb

Bassoon

Anthony Georgeson,
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 Maurizio Venturini,
Assistant Principal
 John Kehayas
 Kathryn Sleeper*

Contrabassoon

John Kehayas

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 Andrew Karr
 Carolyn Wahl
 Richard Sparrow
 Emily Nagel*
 Robert Pruzin*
 Cynthia Wulff*

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Robert Smith, *Principal*
 Kenneth Brown,
Assistant Principal
 Kristofer E Marshall*

Trombone

Dwight Decker, *Principal*
 Donald Zegel,
Assistant Principal
 Harold Van Schaik

Bass Trombone

Harold Van Schaik

Tuba

William Mickelsen,
Principal

Timpani

John Bannon

Percussion

John Shaw, *Principal*
 David Coash
 Kurt Grissom

Harp

Anna Kate Mackle,
Principal
 Dolly Roberts*

Librarians

Ella M. Fredrickson,
Principal
 Sarah Logan Smith

Stage Management

Art Molinaro
 Robert Kahl

Personnel Manager

N. Samantha Headlee

*Guest Musician

1 Appalachia

Text: Traditional

Chorus:

After night has gone comes the day,
The dark shadows will fade away;
T'ords the morning lift a voice,
Let the scented woods rejoice
And echoes swell across the mighty stream.

Baritone:

Aye! Honey, I am going down the river in the morning.

Chorus:

Heigh ho, heigh ho, down the mighty river,
Aye! Honey. I'll be gone when next the whippoorwill's a-calling;

Baritone:

And don't you be too lonesome, love,
And don't you fret and cry.

Chorus:

For the dawn will soon be breaking
The radiant morn is nigh,
And you'll find me ever waiting,
My own sweet Nelly Gray!
T'ords the morning lift a voice,
Let the scented woods rejoice
And echoes swell across the mighty stream.

2 Sea Drift

Text by Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Chorus:

Once Paumanok,
when the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this seashore in some briers,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest and four light green eggs spotted with brown,

Baritone:

And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Chorus:

Shine! Shine! Shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together...
Two together!
Winds blow south or winds blow north,
Day come white or night come black.

Baritone:

Home, or rivers and mountains from home,

Chorus:

Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

Baritone:

Till of a sudden,
Maybe kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One fore-noon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
Nor returned that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appeared again.
And thence forward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

Chorus:

Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea winds along Paumanok's shore;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Baritone:

Yes, when the stars glisten'd
All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,

Down almost amid the slapping waves
Sat the lone singer, wonderful, causing tears.
He call'd on his mate,
He poured forth the meanings which I of all men know.
Yes my brother I know,
The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights after their sorts.
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long,
Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you, my brother.

Chorus:

Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,

Baritone:

But my love soothes not me, not me.

Chorus:

Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging – O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

Baritone:

O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love.
O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?
Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you my love!
High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love!

Chorus:

O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.
O throat! O trembling throat!

Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.

Baritone:

Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!
O reckless despairing carols.
But soft! sink low!
Soft! Let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment you husky voic'd sea.
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.
Hither my love!
Here I am! here
With this just sustain'd note I announce myself to you,
This gentle call is for you my love, for you.

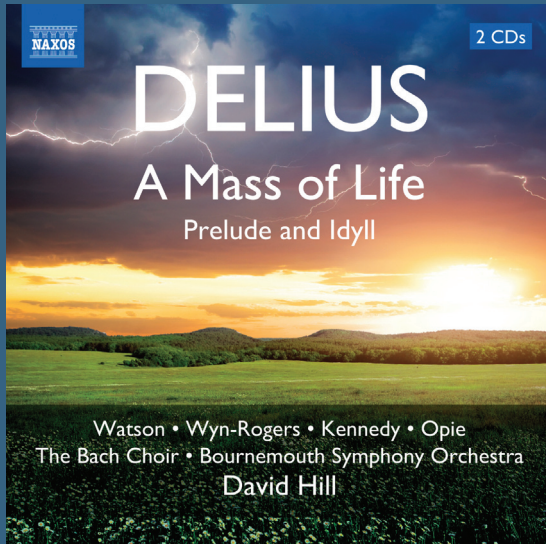
Chorus:

Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the shadows of leaves.
O darkness! O in vain!

Baritone:

O darkness! O in vain!
O I am very sick and sorrowful.
O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.
O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.

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Appalachia (a native American word for North America) is a set of variations based on a slave song about the tragedy of the cotton planters 'being sold down the river'. Delius heard the song when teaching the violin in Virginia, but the primary inspiration was his formative experience of the semi-tropical beauty of Florida's Solano Grove where he had managed an orange plantation. In *Sea Drift* Delius absorbed a further American influence in the nature mysticism of Walt Whitman. The symphonic poem, one of his greatest works, is a song of love and death in which the baritone soloist is both a participant in the drama and offers a commentary upon it.

Frederick
DELIUS
(1862-1934)

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>1 Appalachia – Variations on an Old Slave
Song with Final Chorus (1896-1903)
(ed. Sir Thomas Beecham)</p> | <p>35:19</p> |
| <p>2 Sea Drift (1904)
(ed. Sir Thomas Beecham)</p> | <p>24:52</p> |

Leon Williams, Baritone
The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay • James K. Bass
The Florida Orchestra • Stefan Sanderling



The Michael Marks
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Assistant Producer: Bob Mirakian • Assistant Engineer: Ian Dobie
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and can also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/572764.htm

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