

VOODOO AND SLAVE CULTURE

IN

FREDERICK DELIUS' *KOANGA*

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A DOCUMENT

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts
in the Department of Music
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2018

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ABSTRACT

Exoticism was a reflection of European societies' increasing interest in foreign places and cultures. Better access to the outside world allowed for increased exploration, colonization, travel, and exposure to different cultures. In music, composers' interests in the "other" prompted them to capture foreign sounds. One of the most prominent subcategories within musical exoticism was orientalism, but exoticism involved other features, including indigenous folk traditions, particularly those of Native Americans and Africans. Interest in the music of these groups often prompted composers to travel to the United States to experience their music first hand.

During his travel to the United States, English composer Frederick Delius (1862-1934) grew fond of the Negro melodies he heard, and he frequently utilized musical features of the African American folk tradition in his compositions, in particular his opera *Koanga*. Although his work is powerful in many ways, particularly for its use of African American characters, *Koanga* reflects the sometimes exploitative nature of exoticism by using foreign subjects to entertain privileged Western audiences and to embellish overused plots, such as love stories. This document examines Delius' deviations from the original plot of the novel on which *Koanga* was based (George Washington Cable's *The Grandissimes*) and details the ways in which this impacted perceptions of the opera. Likewise, it focuses on societal and cultural influences that impacted compositional choices and investigates possible reasoning behind his choices. Because of Delius' deviations from Cable's novel, the manner in which he set certain musical material, and certain performance choices in initial stagings, this document, while acknowledging this was

not Delius' intent, will draw the conclusion that the opera promotes stereotypical racial tropes that Cable was challenging in his novel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document would not have been completed without the assistance of committee members, help from friends and colleagues, and support from my family and husband. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor and voice teacher, Dr. Susan Williams, for her guidance, encouragement, and patience as I researched. I am grateful to each member of my committee who has provided me with extensive professional supervision and taught me an immeasurable amount about scholarly research in music. I am grateful to all of those with whom I have had the pleasure to work during this and other related projects. I would like to express my gratitude to my friend and colleague, Lydia Beasley Kneer, who has provided an immense amount of support during this process. No one has been more important to me in the pursuit of this degree than the members of my family. I would like to thank my parents; whose love and guidance are always with me during my many endeavors. Most importantly, I thank my loving and supportive husband, Kevion Rogers.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

British composer, Frederick Delius (1862-1934), is known for expressing nostalgia for the places he visited during his international travels in his music. Time spent in the United States (1884-6, 1897) significantly influenced many of his compositions, and he often incorporated American vernacular music in his pieces, for example: *Florida Suite*, *Appalachia*, *The Magic Fountain*, and *Koanga*. In fact, *Koanga* (1897) is reputed for being the first opera to utilize African American music and to feature African Americans as title roles.

Koanga is loosely based on George Washington Cable's novel, *The Grandissimes: A Story of Creole Life*, which addresses the impact of race relations on creole society and slavery.¹ The novel first appeared in installments in *Scribner's Monthly* in 1879 and, one year later, was published in book form. In 1883, Cable edited the writing and published a revised edition of the novel. *The Grandissimes* is mostly recognized for its social realism in the portrayal of southern creole life and for its confrontation of social injustices.² Furthermore, Cable's intended goal for the novel was a political confrontation opposing Louisiana society.³ Delius, however, only used a portion of the novel and made significant alterations to the story's plot. Furthermore, Delius chose to remove the political and social commentary of the novel, and to focus on incorporating

¹ Katharine A. Burnett, "Moving Toward a 'No South': George Washing Cable's Global Vision in 'The Grandissimes,'" *The Southern Literary Journal* 45, no. 1 (Fall 2012): 22.

² *Ibid.*, 22.

³ George W. Cable wrote to author and Cornell University English professor H. H. Boyesen about *The Grandissimes* on several occasions. In one correspondence written December 28, 1878, Cable wrote, "The Creole character, the Creole society, the philosophy of these things, Creole errors and defects and how to mend them, all clamoring to be treated in a love story." Philip Butcher, "Cable to Boyesen on *The Grandissimes*," *American Literature* 40, no. 3 (November 1968): 393.

elements of African American folk music and Wagnerian opera. Therefore, Delius changed the overall purpose of the story, invoking stereotypical images of blackness and Voodoo common among whites, and likewise promoting racial hierarchy. Comparison of *The Grandissimes* and *Koanga* will demonstrate how these plot differences reflect these perceptions of blackness.

Chapters two and three center on societal influences of *Koanga*. Chapter two concentrates on exoticism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including a discussion on traits of musical exoticism and how these traits are manifested in the opera.⁴ As Delius was British, chapter three investigates British perceptions of race during the nineteenth century, examining images of blackness in science, politics, literature, and theater. Due to the plot of the opera, chapter four explores American slavery, Louisiana society, and Voodoo. This chapter also focuses on how these different topics are depicted in both the opera and George Cable's *The Grandissimes*, investigating both Delius' and Cable's understanding of these subjects. Chapter five is an historical and analytical discussion of the opera, focusing on the creation of the work itself, the plot synopsis, musical analysis, and also describes its initial performances in order to show problematic aspects of Delius' interpretation.

Despite *Koanga*'s historical significance and usage of African American folk music, scholarship on the opera is limited. Much of the background information on the opera appears in biographical literature on Delius and in articles in the *Delius Society Journal*, which provides a significant amount of information on early performances.⁵ Additionally, archives of Delius'

⁴ Exoticism can be defined as the incorporation or imitation of elements from foreign cultures or different ethnic groups in compositions. See chapter 2. Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁵ Lewis Foreman, "Koanga: The 1935 Production of Frederick Delius's Opera in the Context of its Performance History," *The Delius Society Journal*, no. 113 (Winter 1994): 1-65.

letters and correspondences provide a wealth of information on the creation of *Koanga*, especially on Delius's compositional goals. The Swisher Library at Jacksonville University holds the Delius Collection.⁶

The most recent scholarship on the opera can be found in Eric Saylor's essay, "Race 'Realism,' and Fate in Frederick Delius's *Koanga*" in *Blackness in Opera*.⁷ In this 2012 essay, Saylor addresses the creation and composition of the opera, issues surrounding race, musical aspects, and the influence of Wagnerian opera on *Koanga*. Although Saylor addresses racial realism, he does not address how presenting inaccurate portrayals, which were really Delius' understanding of African Americans, affects audiences' perceptions of blackness.⁸ He also does not discuss Delius' outside societal influences and how this might have influenced the composer's conceptualization of *Koanga*. Saylor's essay begins with a discussion of the text. He asserts that there are racial inconsistencies between the music and text, influencing how the opera models blackness. He concludes that *Koanga* is essentially *Tristan und Isolde* in blackface and that Wagner is the driving influence on the opera. He acknowledges the historical significance of the opera, but ultimately concludes that *Koanga* is problematic for its stereotyping of race. Unlike Saylor's essay, this document will evaluate differences between the novel and opera and examine the impact of outside influences, therefore proving that these factors invoke stereotypical images of blackness and Voodoo common among whites and promote racial hierarchy.

⁶ *The Delius Collection*, Jacksonville University Special Collections, Carl S. Swisher Library.

⁷ Eric Saylor, "Race, 'Realism,' and Fate in *Koanga*," in *Blackness in Opera*, ed. Naomi André, Karen M. Bryan, and Eric Saylor (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012): 78-100.

⁸ For the purposes of this document, racial realism can be defined as: veracity in the portrayal of blackness.

Delius in the United States

The inspiration for *Koanga* came primarily from Delius' time (1884-6, 1897) in the United States, where he began to compose seriously. Specifically, his time in Florida exposed Delius to African American folk music, which he utilized in *Koanga* and the *Florida Suite*. Delius, in fact, visited the United States twice during his lifetime. He made his first visit in March of 1884 with his companion Charles Douglas, traveling to Solano Grove in Florida via New York and Jacksonville. Solano Grove, an orange plantation of approximately one hundred acres on the east bank of St. Johns River in Jacksonville, was significant to Delius' development as a composer because it provided him an opportunity to nurture his compositional interests without the interference of his overbearing father.⁹

Serving as Solano Grove's plantation manager, Delius became fascinated with Jacksonville's musical culture, rather than his plantation work. Jacksonville served as a cultural center year-round. During the tourist season, there were productions every week that featured both touring and local performers. Additionally, several hotels and restaurants employed African American waiters who doubled as singers that gave concerts for patrons and passersby.¹⁰ Delius presumably encountered these performances during his time there. Also popular in Jacksonville was the Merryday & Paine music store, where Delius met two influential instructors: William Jahn and Thomas Ward. Jahn provided him piano instruction and likely encouraged Delius' interest in Edvard Grieg. Ward, who was also an organist, gave Delius instruction in composition.¹¹

⁹ William Randel, "Delius in America," in *A Delius Companion*, ed. Christopher Redwood (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), 148.

¹⁰ Randel, "Delius in America," 149.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 149.

While at Solano Grove, Delius was exposed to African American music, planting the seed for eventual usage of this material in his future works. He encountered some of this music from his African American foreman, Albert (also documented as Elbert) Anderson. Often, Delius would request Anderson to sing him old black folk songs and spirituals. Anderson's sister-in-law, Julie Sanks, who also tended to Delius, recounts:

Maybe he don't care what he eat if he can be at his piano or his fiddle. Long as he make his music, he just don't mind what else. He didn't have no conveniences. He didn't care about the fruits, neither. He didn't do yard work to speak of. It was a trouble to Elbert, and a worry. He weren't much for hand work, Mister Delius, and that's a fact. Just that music. I ain't heard nothing like it since. I disremember what I sang to him except the hymns... It was Elbert mostly he wanted to hear.¹²

Sanks also reported that she and her sister would be asked to sing these melodies with her brother. Her words give insight into Delius' musical habits, as well as how he encountered various repertoires. Another account of his interest can be read in Delius' own words, where he discusses the impact African American folk music had on him. In reference to the black residents and employees of Solano Grove who would sing in the evenings, he recalls:

They showed a truly wonderful sense of musicianship and harmonic resonance in the instinctive way in which they treated a melody... and, hearing their singing in such romantic surroundings, it was then and there that I first felt the urge to express myself in music.¹³

Delius formed several important relationships in Jacksonville. One such relationship was his friendship with Jutta Bell, who was well-educated in music and often encouraged Delius' composition. In fact, Delius consulted her during his creation of *Koanga*.

In the fall of 1885, Delius moved to Danville, Virginia, perhaps for employment.

Danville did not influence Delius' music as much as Florida, though he continued to encounter

¹² Gloria Jahoda, *The Other Florida* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), 267.

¹³ Quote by Frederick Delius to Thomas F. Ward. Mark A. Stoneman, "Delius in Florida: the Delius Festival of Jacksonville," in *Frederick Delius: Music, Art and Literature*, ed. Lionel Carley (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998): 38.

Negro spirituals and work songs in the tobacco fields. In Danville, he might have found the Gottschalk Musical Association, and there Delius presumably encountered the music of Louis Moreau Gottschalk, who incorporated African American music in his works. One of Delius's more valuable relationships was with Robert Phifer, a professor of Roanoke Female College in Danville, and a graduate of the Leipzig Conservatorium.¹⁴ Delius frequently attended and participated in many of the musical gatherings at Phifer's home. Phifer was also a major influence in Delius' life, likely encouraging him to attend the Leipzig Conservatorium, where he polished his musical skills and was further exposed to the operas of Wagner.

Delius entered the Leipzig Conservatorium in August of 1886, after his father finally agreed to let him pursue his musical career.¹⁵ He spent two years at Leipzig before leaving for Paris. As a student, he attended the music classes of Hans Sitt, Reinecke, and Jadassohn.¹⁶ Leipzig was particularly important to Delius' musical development because of its concert and operatic performance tradition. Delius often attended performances of Wagner's operas at the opera-house, where Hungarian conductor Arthur Nikisch and German composer and conductor Gustav Mahler shared the responsibility of conducting several performances.¹⁷ One of the operas Delius frequently attended was *Tristan und Isolde*. He also attended orchestral concerts at the Gewandhaus. There, Delius saw Brahms and Tchaikovsky conduct performances of their own works.¹⁸ One of Delius' more important relationships was his friendship with Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg, who often helped Delius therefore influencing his musical style. In the spring of 1888, Delius heard the first performance of one of his compositions, *Florida Suite*,

¹⁴ William Randel, "Delius in America," 160.

¹⁵ Rachel Lowe, "Frederick Delius and Norway," in *A Delius Companion* ed. Christopher Redwood (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), 169.

¹⁶Peter Warlock, *Frederick Delius* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 45.

¹⁷ Warlock, *Frederick Delius*, 45.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

which consisted of an orchestral performance of sixty musicians in the large hall of the Restaurant Rosenthal under the direction of his professor Hans Sitt.¹⁹ Later that year, Delius left Leipzig for Paris after his father no longer supported him financially.

George Washington Cable and *The Grandissimes*

George Washington Cable (1844-1925), a white native of New Orleans, is considered one of the first American novelists to address racial and social issues in the South, particularly in Louisiana creole society. Cable began to speak out against racial injustices around 1870, after being influenced by Christian ethics and a newfound awareness of historical injustices against blacks.²⁰ Cable had not always been concerned with the issue, as he was born into a family that owned slaves and Cable himself served in the Confederate Army for the southern cause. Cable seemed to have a deep interest in black culture and black folk music, as he is noted for collecting Negro spirituals and folk songs. As an advocate for free African Americans, Cable published articles in the *New Orleans Picayune*, and scholarly essays on administrative policies of southern governments, schools, and prisons.²¹ Some of his essays on race include *The Silent South* (1885) and *The Negro Question* (1890), the latter of which includes an explanation for tackling the legend of Bras-Coupé, which is the foundation of *Koanga's* plot.

There are several versions of the legend of Bras-Coupé (translated from French to Congolese this becomes Koanga) but the story can be traced to an outlaw slave named Squire, who repeatedly escaped police custody during the first half of the 1800s. During the early nineteenth century, the New Orleans police used propaganda detailing Squire's actions to justify

¹⁹ Warlock, *Frederick Delius*, 47.

²⁰ Saylor, "Race, 'Realism,' and Fate," 80.

²¹ *Ibid.*

violence against fugitive slaves.²² Descriptions of Squire's activities were colorful, and he was often viewed as the leader of fugitive slaves. One New Orleans newspaper, *The Picayune*, summarized Squire's career shortly after his death, writing:

This demi-devil has for a long time ruled as the "Brigand of the Swamp." A supposition has always found believers that there was an encampment of outlaw negroes near the city, and that Squire was their leader. He was a fiend in human shape and has done much mischief in the way of decoying slaves to his camp, and in committing depredations upon the premises of those who live on the outskirts of the city. His destruction is hailed, by old and young, as a benefit to society... It is hoped that the death of this leader of the outlaw negroes supposed to be in the swamp will lead to the scouring of the swamp round about the city. This nest of desperadoes should be broken up. While they can support a gang and have a camp, we may expect our slaves to run away and harrowing depredations to be committed upon society.²³

By all accounts Squire was a nuisance to the New Orleans community. Several white business slave owners reported robberies and violence, attributing it to Squire. In 1837, Squire was killed, but his death was justified by his crimes against the white New Orleans population. After the death of Squire, various legends of Bras-Coupé began to spread, such as the one found in *The Grandissimes*. One narrative claimed his body was bullet proof. In 1857, Louis Moreau Gottschalk recorded an account that he had heard from a black New Orleans native, saying:

One of my favorite stories was that of John Bras-Coupé, captain of the runaway slaves of bayou Sarah, who filled the whole of Louisiana with the reports of his sanguinary exploits. He resisted alone, this hero of our savannas, all the expeditions sent in pursuit of him.²⁴

Cable made a few adjustments to the legend of Bras-Coupé in his novel. Typically, Bras-Coupé is depicted as Creole or mulatto, but for Cable, Bras-Coupé is African. Cable also changes the death of Bras-Coupé. In the legend, Bras-Coupé's death is public, to serve as a warning to fugitive slaves and potential runaways. The novel eliminates the public nature of his death and

²² Bryan Wagner, "The Strange Career of Bras-Coupé," in *Disturbing the Peace: Black Culture and the Police Power after Slavery*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009): 69.

²³ Wagner, *Disturbing the Peace*, 70.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 69.

writes in an empathetic scene between him and the widow of his former slave owner. Cable's elimination of his depiction as a savage, humanizes Bras-Coupé.

The Plot of Cable's *The Grandissimes*

George Washington Cable's *The Grandissimes* depicts the downfall of a prominent nineteenth century New Orleans creole family. The source material for *Koanga* comes from chapters twenty-eight and twenty-nine of the novel, entitled "The Story of Bras-Coupé." In these chapters, Agricola Fusilier, the uncle of Honoré Grandissime and the manager of the Grandissime estate, purchases a Jaloff prince named Mioko-Koanga, whose name is changed to its French form, Bras-Coupé or "Arm-Cut-Off." He sells Bras-Coupé to plantation owner Don José Martinez. After coming to the plantation, Bras-Coupé becomes defiant, refusing to work and injuring other slaves when he was told to work.²⁵ To combat Bras-Coupé's defiance, Martinez persuades his fiancée's slave, Palmyre, to seduce Bras-Coupé into submission. Bras-Coupé falls in love with Palmyre and, despite Palmyre's objections, the two are set to be married on the same day as Martinez and his fiancée.²⁶

The story continues on their wedding night. Bras-Coupé drinks alcohol for the first time, becomes drunk, and assaults Martinez. As punishment under New Orleans law, he is sentenced to death. Instead, he escapes into the swamps and curses Martinez and his plantation. The curse affects the crops, the slaves, and finally Don José, who dies. Three days later, Bras-Coupé returns to the plantation, demanding Palmyre. When she is not given to him, he curses the house again. Later, he is captured by the police at Congo Square, a gathering place for slaves. Palmyre

²⁵ George Washington Cable, *The Grandissimes: A Story of Creole Life* (New York: Hill and Wag), 221.

²⁶ Cable, *The Grandissimes*, 230.

pleads for Bras-Coupé's life, but he is flogged, hamstrung, and mutilated. Afterwards, Bras-Coupé is brought to the plantation to die. While lying on Palmyre's porch, Martinez's fiancée brings her infant son to Bras-Coupé. Her son smiles and touches his cheek, which causes Bras-Coupé to lift the curse. He dies with visions of Africa.

The story of Bras-Coupé in *The Grandissimes* attracted Delius for a number of reasons. It served as a foundation to explore common nineteenth-century Romantic themes and compositional techniques. Though Delius made alterations to the storyline, the plot of the Bras-Coupé chapters allowed him to indulge exotic themes while still providing a story to which his mostly white audiences could relate. Further, the themes of fate and love proved attractive to white European audiences. The framework of the story's love plot stayed the same and allowed Delius to implement a parallel aspect of Wagnerian opera in *Koanga*.²⁷ Additionally, the subject of slavery and African Americans encouraged the use of nostalgic and creative musical components.

²⁷ Similar to *Tristan und Isolde*, both the title character and his love interest die at the end.

CHAPTER 2: EXOTICISM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY MUSIC

Delius' willingness to make blackness the centerpiece of *Koanga* reflects the influence of musical exoticism (see definition in the following paragraph) in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The juxtaposition of white slave owners against black slaves illustrates the parallels between Europeans and the "other" (i.e. non-white, non-Europeans). In the nineteenth century, interest in the exotic was prompted by the expansion of European and American presence throughout the world; this population grew from thirty-three to sixty-seven percent between the early 1800s and 1878.²⁸ Consequently, Europeans began incorporating elements from various non-western cultures (or western cultures that they considered distant) into various aspects of their lives, such as orientalism in art.²⁹

Musical exoticism expanded during the nineteenth century, presumably due to several interrelated trends occurring during the time.³⁰ New technology allowed for better travel, which allowed exposure to different types of music, and therefore impacted composition. Music published during this period was cheaper and more accessible. Coinciding with an increased number of musical publications was an increased contact with musicians from distant lands, for example foreign artists who performed at the London World's Fair.³¹ Performances by foreign

²⁸ Timothy D. Taylor, "The Age of Empire," in *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007): 215.

²⁹ This can be seen in the paintings of French painter Alexandre Cabanel, such as his *Cleopatra Testing Poisons on Condemned Men*. Another example can be found in Léon Belly's *Pilgrims Going to Mecca*. These reflect the interest French painters had in the Middle East. Gerald Needham, "Orientalism in France," *Art Journal* 42, no. 4 (Winter 1982), 339.

³⁰ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 131.

³¹ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 132.

groups were not just limited to Eastern European, African, and Asian countries. American performers, like the Fisk Jubilee Singers and blackface minstrel troupes, also toured Europe, often singing Negro spirituals and American folk songs. Further, there were an increased number of international performances, due to the growing number of symphony orchestras, opera companies, choral societies, and acquisition of pianos in the home.³² These exposed European audiences to exotic musical trends in foreign countries. Even *Koanga* experienced its own international performances and successes in Germany, England, and the United States.

Musical exoticism, in its most basic sense, is the incorporation or imitation of elements from foreign cultures or different ethnic groups in compositions. Ralph Locke, however, further develops the concept, defining it as:

The process of evoking in or through music - whether that music is “exotic sounding” or not - a place, people, or social milieu that is not entirely imaginary and that differs profoundly from the home country or culture in attitudes, customs, and morals. More precisely, it is the process of evoking a place (people, social milieu) that is perceived as different from home by the people who created the exoticism cultural product and by the people who receive it.³³

This definition allows for an investigation of binarism, or two opposing ideas, found within musical exoticism.³⁴ The most crucial example of binarism occurs between self and other, where self is representative of Europe and other is representative of the foreign or distant group. In *Koanga*, this example of binarism is seen in the slave owners—with whom the largely white European audiences identify—and the black slaves, who are the exotic other. Another important binary factor is geographical distance, which does not always refer to a distant, foreign land but rather, to relatively close locales that appear to be distant, and therefore exotic, due to the

³² Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 131.

³³ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 47.

³⁴ Binarism can be defined as two opposing ideas. Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 64-71.

contrasts between the groups.³⁵ This is commonly seen in nineteenth century French opera, which is often situated in rural villages. In *Koanga*, distance appears in the form of two contrasting scene settings: the slave quarters in contrast to the owner's mansion, and the swamps versus the plantation.

Another binary element appearing in exoticism is realism versus fiction. In order to maintain its exotic appeal, an exotic locale should not be entirely imaginary, because one would not yearn to visit a fictitious place.³⁶ Exoticism, however, can include a combination of realism and fantasy. In the case of *Koanga*, Delius utilizes a historical setting, but uses Voodoo as a vehicle for fantasy, despite Voodoo being a real religious practice. Further, Voodoo provides something that is unfamiliar and unique to largely white audiences in contrast to the familiarity of slavery.

The final binary distinction in *Koanga* involves extramusical instructions counter to musical notation.³⁷ In vocal music, extramusical indications can appear as stage direction, tempo markings, or song text. These instructions allow for the performer to better evoke aspects of the exotic when performing. For example, in Act III, the following stage direction illustrates characterization of the Voodoo religion: "Koanga and Rangwan gash their arms with knives. The priest pours blood from a gourd on to the fire".³⁸ Another example of this can be seen in scenery descriptions at the beginning of each act or scene.³⁹

³⁵ Ibid., 67.

³⁶ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 68.

³⁷ Ibid., 69.

³⁸ Frederick Delius, *Koanga*, vocal score, eds. Douglas Craig and Andrew Page (London: Boosey & Hawkes 1974) 61.

³⁹ Scene 1 of Act III, the scene is described as a swamp during night time, where light reflects pools of water. Also in this scene, musical directions describe the music as "mysteriously, but not fast," Delius, *Koanga*, vocal score, 117.

Examining the musical aspects that reflect exoticism reveals that it can manifest in various ways. The most common way is through the use of modes and harmonies that include the subcategories of pentatonicism or other “gapped” scales, as well as intense chromaticism and shifting tonality. From 1850 forward, composers began to enrich the major and minor modes and further break down the stanchion between the two modes.⁴⁰ Composers would also alter scales, usually chromatically, and use new harmonic practices of the time. Delius evokes these features through his juxtaposition of utilizing diatonicism for the black characters and chromaticism for the white characters.⁴¹ Additionally, he uses tonal instability and unusual chordal progressions to create the exotic mood. Musical exoticism can also be seen through the use of texture, such as pedal points, unisons, and parallel fourths, fifths, and octaves. For example, during the Act III Voodoo scene, Delius makes use of unisons and parallel fourths, in both vocal and instrumental parts. Texture between choruses and the named characters is vastly different; the black chorus is set more sparsely, where the named characters are set to a thicker texture.

Arias, duets, and other portions of exotic operas are sometimes composed simply, usually as a way to imitate folk song in the depicted culture. For example, in George Bizet’s *Carmen*, the title character’s Act I aria, “L’amour est un oiseau rebelle” is composed over a simple habanera rhythm.⁴² Further, vocal passages can reflect unique vocal features in certain cultures. For example, vocal melodies in *Koanga* are reflective of chant-like features in the Voodoo religion (such as the syllabic text setting and stepwise motion of the Voodoo slave chorus in Act III). Also indicative of exoticism is the use of vocal range and tessitura.⁴³ In *Koanga*, Delius mostly limits the vocal range of the melodies, but utilizes tessitura to evoke certain emotions or

⁴⁰ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 51.

⁴¹ See Chapter Five: *Koanga*, section Musical Analysis for musical examples.

⁴² Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 52.

⁴³ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 54.

moods (i.e. anger, savagery, and defiance), particularly in the character Koanga's arias, by creating melodic tension. Often the tessitura in arias, such as "O Voodoo Manian," convey defiance and anger, emotions often attached to Black characters. Another exotic style feature that Delius employs is repeated melodic and rhythmic patterns. In Act II and Act III, the choruses repeatedly sing and eighth and sixteenth note rhythmic patterns. This is seen in the *La Calinda*, where the chorus repeatedly sings "la calinda" on the same melodic and rhythmic gesture throughout the entire piece. The final stylistically exotic feature is the usage of foreign instruments, or western instruments that are utilized to sound exotic, or western instruments utilized in an atypical fashion.⁴⁴ The use of the banjo and cowhorn in the opera is used to further characterize Blacks in *Koanga*.⁴⁵

There was also an increased exploitation of style traits associated with distant places and their inhabitants.⁴⁶ Some of these traits are sacred, pastoral, and military themes, all of which can be seen in Verdi's *Aida*. In *Aida*, Act 1 Scene ii are solemn ceremonies and dances inside the Temple of Vulcan; in Act 3 there is a pastoral setting on the banks of the Nile; and the end of Act 3, the militaristic imperial guards appear.

Exoticism was also promoted by the publication of collections of folk songs. These collections included both folk songs from rural European groups, as well as foreign folk melodies, such as *A Collection of Spiritual Songs and Hymns, Selected from Various Authors*

⁴⁴ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 54.

⁴⁵ The banjo and instruments such as the cowhorn were commonly used in African and slave music. Eileen Southern, "Antebellum Rural Life" in *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, 3rd ed (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 203.

⁴⁶ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 131.

(1801) compiled by former slave Richard Allen.⁴⁷ Further, Cable's own collection of spirituals appeared in his novels, like *The Grandissimes*.

Delius' use of exoticism in *Koanga* was similar to other exotic operas of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in that it includes the use of chant-like melodies, repeated rhythms, folkloric narratives, and the unconventional use of harmonies, such as parallel fourths and fifths. However, it differed from in its treatment of the social status of its black characters, for example Verdi's *Aida* was an Ethiopian princess, while *Koanga* is an enslaved African prince. On the operatic stage, exotic operas of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mostly featured the Orient and used ancient or Biblical texts. Some popular settings were Spain, as seen in *Il trovatore* and *Carmen*, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. Sub-Saharan Africa, however, was considered problematic, or at least unappealing, due to its close association with blackface minstrelsy, which was considered a form of lowbrow entertainment.⁴⁸ Although, Delius' willingness to use black characters is somewhat peculiar given that African Americans were the focal points of blackface minstrelsy, his sophisticated treatment of the music is indicative of Delius' avoidance of blackface tropes, such as laziness and ignorance. Therefore, while Delius' understanding of Voodoo and African American culture was limited, he nevertheless did not wholly participate in negative stereotypes of African Americans.

Although not obviously seen in *Koanga*, Orientalism was dominant in opera in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴⁹ This was partly a result of increased presence of

⁴⁷ Daniel Mendoza de Arce, "Religious Music in North America and the Caribbean in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century" in *Music in North America and the West Indies from the Discovery to 1850: A Historical Survey* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 242.

⁴⁸ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 151.

⁴⁹ Locke uses "Orientalism" and "Orientalist" as neutral labels and admits that his use of the term can be problematic, as it bundles different societies into one grouping. However, "Orientalism" for the purpose of Locke and this document refers to the use of Asian and Middle Eastern

European and American countries throughout the world. Increased imperial control over “the East,” which included North Africa, led to increased competition and collaboration between Western countries for markets, raw materials, cheap labor, and strategic military advantages.⁵⁰ As this presence in Eastern countries increased, elements of the Orient began to appear in fashion, artwork, clothing, and other areas. Further, interest in the Orient often influenced what artists viewed as exotic. Eric Saylor suggests that *Koanga*’s librettist C. F. Keary’s conceptualization of nonwhite cultures and his approach to *Koanga* might have been influenced by Orientalism.⁵¹ Parallels between the treatment of Asian subjects and other ethnic groups reflect attitudes of race and gender at the time. Typical opera plots feature a white male hero, usually sung by a tenor, who is depicted as brave and tolerant; a mysterious brown or black skinned colonized territory with an affectionate, native woman; a brutal male tribal leader; and a chorus of male savages, who blindly follow their leader.⁵² In addition to these plot commonalities, exotic male characters are often depicted as unable to control their anger, desires, or actions. *Koanga* is portrayed as defiant and angry throughout the opera. Similarly, exotic women are also depicted as lacking control, overly sexual, fragile, and usually suffer some fatal demise. For instance, Palmyra commits suicide at the end of the opera.⁵³

musical elements and characterizations, which often include stereotypical tropes, within a musical work. Further information on Orientalism in music can be found in Locke’s chapter “Imperialism and ‘the exotic Orient,’” in *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections*, 175-213.

⁵⁰ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 176.

⁵¹ Saylor, “Race, ‘Realism,’ and Fate,” 85.

⁵² Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 181.

⁵³ Another example can be seen in *Madama Butterfly* as the title character is portrayed as fragile and suicidal. Also, in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*, *Monostatos* (who is a Moor) is portrayed as having untamed sexual desire for Pamina.

African American Folk Music: Spirituals and Work Songs

The African American folk music that Delius encountered while in the United States influenced *Koanga*. Black folk music was not always considered a part of American concert music by white Americans, because concert music in the United States was considered exclusive to the upper class.⁵⁴ As music became more accessible to different social groups in the nineteenth century, more popular styles of music became more widespread. Music by African Americans and Native Americans was popular amongst composers, and several composers began to use melodies from these groups in their works, for instance Charles Edward Horn in his song cycle *National Melodies of America*.⁵⁵ Further, African American and Native American music was appealing for its ability to add something unique to classical music.

African American music was found to be appealing for its unique rhythms, melodies, and harmonies. Composers took particular interest in the rhythmic drive of African American music. This attention to rhythm was likely due to African American folk songs being derived from African dance music. Black folk songs show a preference for duple meter, and the steady tempos of these pieces are sustained through foot stomping and hand clapping.⁵⁶ Further, rhythm within these folk songs was more complex than it was usually notated: for instance, cross-rhythms (which were usually mistaken as syncopation) were produced against the fixed rhythms and pulse patterns.⁵⁷ Rhythmic instruments, particularly drums, were important. Drums used by

⁵⁴ Mendoza de Arce, *Music in North America*, 169.

⁵⁵ Mendoza de Arce, *Music in North America*, 199.

⁵⁶ Eileen Southern, "Antebellum Rural Life" in *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, 3rd ed (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 195.

⁵⁷ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 195.

slaves were either made from trunks of hollowed trees with skins stretched across the opening, or they were kettle drums of varying sizes.⁵⁸

Repetition is another common aspect of African American folk music. Folk songs and Negro spirituals were usually performed in call-and-response form. A leader would sing a solo verse and the congregation or chorus would respond with another verse or refrain. Stanzas of these songs were also repetitive, usually in AAAB form in terms of song structure. Repeated musical lines occurred with minor changes to pitch or sequential movement in a phrase are then repeated on a higher or lower pitch level.⁵⁹ For instance, in the Negro spiritual “Guide my Feet,” each of the three occurrences of the text “guide my feet” are set either a third higher or lower from the previous occurrence. Delius uses this technique for choral sections, such as “John say you got to reap what you sow,” where there is repetition of both text and melodic material with a slight melodic alteration in the second verse.

Another feature of African American folk song is its heterophonic musical texture and call-and-response structure. Musical texture of African American work songs and slave songs depends on the context in which the piece is heard. Although this repertoire was passed down monophonically through oral tradition, notated evidence contradicts the received notion that this genre was performed monophonically.⁶⁰ The call-and-response performance style of African American songs allowed for independent harmonization, which often made it difficult for transcribers to notate. William Francis Allen, editor of *Slave Songs of the United States*, noted:

The voices of the colored people have a peculiar quality that nothing can imitate; and the intonations and delicate variations of even one singer cannot be reproduced on paper. And I despair of conveying any notion of the effect of a number singing together,

⁵⁸ Dena J. Epstein, “More Black Instruments and Early White Reactions,” in *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press) 47.

⁵⁹ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 190.

⁶⁰ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 197.

especially in a complicated shout... There is no singing in parts, as we understand it, and yet no two [singers] appear to be singing the same thing.⁶¹

Despite these pieces being notated as single melodies, their performances can be best described as heterophonic. As Eileen Southern explains, singers followed the lead melody for the most part, but allowed themselves to wander from melodies as tones became out of range, as the text called for special emphasis, or as their own whims to create more variety.⁶² Tonality in these pieces is often based on pentatonicism or other “gapped” scales. Other prominent scales are: a major scale with a flat seventh, a minor scale with a raised sixth, a minor scale without a sixth, and the harmonic minor scale.⁶³ Song texts varied based on whether the piece was secular or sacred, but most song texts utilized metaphors and colorful imagery. Sacred texts often focused on biblical leaders who rescued the Hebrews or brought others to salvation, such as Abraham or Moses. Occasionally, personification of inanimate objects was used as seen in the Negro spiritual “Death is Gonna Lay His Cold Icy Hands on Me,” but the language is usually forceful and direct.⁶⁴ Many songs have subtexts, often hidden messages for slaves.

African American folk music also tends to be syllabic, but there is also opportunity for more melismatic passages to adjust with text, which can be seen in various arrangements of the spiritual “Were You There,” where the word “lawd” is often set to a melismatic passage after several occurrences on one note. Often the use of melismatic passages makes the music sound improvisatory in nature. When performing this repertoire, singers varied vocal timbre through usage of monotone, shrill, or guttural sounds.⁶⁵ The banjo, like the drum, was also considered an

⁶¹ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 197.

⁶² Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 198.

⁶³ Harold Courlander, “Negro Folk Music in the United States,” in *Negro Folk Music U.S.A.*, (New York: Dover Publication, 1963), 15.

⁶⁴ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 199.

⁶⁵ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 203.

important instrument in this folk repertory. Several observers of slavery throughout its history noted the importance of the banjo in the music of slaves. John Dixon Long observed, “The banjo is of all instruments the best adapted to the lowest class of slaves...They talk to it, and a skillful performer can excite the most diverse passions among the dancers.”⁶⁶ Slaves skilled at this instrument also often played the violin or fiddle.

While *Koanga* captures many traits of African American folk music, it also neglects some. Delius does not incorporate standard performance traits, such as the call-and-response singing or the harmonization. This is not too surprising because he is writing for classically trained singers. Additionally, the choruses are homophonic instead of heterophonic. Likely, the absence of these features is due to lack of familiarity with African American folk songs on the part of the performers, and for practical reasons: many of the choruses occur as background music, therefore making call-and-response performance impractical. Instead, Delius maintains some of the rhythmic traits through other means, such as syncopation, and creates realism in textual features, like the use of vernacular (particularly found in the revised editions). The text remains syllabic and refers to biblical characters, such as the mention of Samson in the chorus of Act I. Here, the chorus sings the text “D’lilah gained ole Samson’s fancy ‘coz he thought she looked so fine,” where D’lilah represents Palmyra and Samson represents Koanga. The harmony does not have the timbre of African American folk music because Delius uses four-part harmony. Thus, while he captures some of the nuances, some are, due to his aim and reasons stated above, necessarily lost.

⁶⁶ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 203.

CHAPTER 3: NINETEENTH-CENTURY SENTIMENTS TOWARDS BLACKNESS

Delius' British upbringing naturally meant *Koanga* was not immune to the influences of nineteenth-century social attitudes to race in England. Further, British attitudes towards blackness, such as black inferiority and savagery, appear throughout the opera. British attitudes towards race in the nineteenth century were complex and often adjusted to cultural influences, such as immigration and advances in social theory (Darwinism and Eugenics) influenced how blackness was viewed. Immigration to Britain occurred prior to the nineteenth century, but beginning in 1815, there was an influx of Irish immigrants, Protestant refugees, and black slaves into Britain.⁶⁷ Blacks made up a rather small percentage of the population and many blacks coexisted with Indians (India) in Britain.⁶⁸ Victorian attitudes towards blacks were not favorable. Many Victorians disliked the physical appearance of blacks, finding them repulsive, and considered blacks to be lazy, superstitious, dishonest, and sexually promiscuous.⁶⁹ Though many sentiments towards blacks were negative, British attitudes towards blackness were complicated. For instance, Queen Victoria (1819-1901) adopted an Ethiopian Prince named Alemayehu, who she described as "a pretty, polite, and graceful boy."⁷⁰ Ethnological and anthropological societies in London played a leading role in the growing interest in racial study, influenced attitudes

⁶⁷ Panikos Panayi, "Immigration into Britain 1815-1945," in *Immigration, Ethnicity, and Racism in Britain 1815-1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 23.

⁶⁸ Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and Racism in Britain*, 70.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁷⁰ Mitiku Ashebir, *Color of the Skin: In Pursuit of Integration* (New York: Page Publishing, 2017), 75.

towards non-Whites.⁷¹ Two social theories, Darwinism (the theory of evolution of a species by natural selection discussed by Charles Darwin) and eugenics (the science of improving a human population by controlled breeding developed by Francis Galton), played a significant role in nineteenth-century characterization of blacks.

Black Characterization on the British Stage

During Delius's formative years, he and his family were known to partake in the musical and theatrical culture of England. Attending and hosting performances of different types, such as chamber works and some chamber performances of his operas certainly exposed him a broad variety of theatrical practices, which appeared in his works. A major influence on the British stage was the social sciences (such as Darwinism), which impacted theatrical characterization and performance in the nineteenth century. Entertainment in the nineteenth century, however, was not driven by scientific and social theory, rather the two worlds shared a common curiosity about particular subjects.⁷² Many images that appeared during this time linked humans with other species, such as the cartoon *Punch* (a satirical cartoon), which associated humans with apes.⁷³ Such images were continuously explored as playwrights and performers involved in theatre explored racial diversity and gender in characterizations. The mid- to late nineteenth century, known as the Age of Darwinism, was a period of social curiosity during which individuals were investigating how humans came into existence. This appeared most prevalently in the sciences. Moreover, many of the images of blackness in nineteenth-century British theatrical works were a result of evolutionary theory.

⁷¹ Panyi, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and Racism in Britain*, 119.

⁷² Jane R. Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin: Out of the Natural Order* (New York: Routledge Press, 2002), 4.

⁷³ Goodall, *Performance and Evolution*, 2.

Some of the earliest black characters in British entertainment date back to the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Early depictions of blacks were typically focused on the evil Moor, but also included slaves and other exotic characters.⁷⁴ Black characters during this time were mostly depicted as evil and driven by lust, thus making their black skin a representation of their evil nature. The earliest example of the evil Moor can be seen in the character Muly Mahamet from *The Battle of Alcazar* (1589), where the character commits parricide and fratricide.⁷⁵ Further, the characterization of the Moor as evil continues well into the twentieth century, as seen in Igor Stravinsky's portrayal of the Moor in his ballet, *Petrushka* (1910-11). The character of the Moor represented sexual desires and jealousies between blacks and whites. The Moor was also depicted in plots as murderous, often being quite heinous.⁷⁶ This representation of the Moor continued through the early nineteenth century. As the institution of slavery grew and became a focal point, images of slavery began to dominate theatrical works. By the eighteenth century, whites could no longer explain black inferiority with the Moor, spurring a more prevalent use of the slave and savage (non-whites).⁷⁷

The first depictions of slaves and savages, which began around the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, included themes of African nobility and revolt. Later, this is evident in *The Grandissimes* and *Koanga*. Nobility and revolt were used to stress revenge as a motif in many works.⁷⁸ Also appearing in the eighteenth century were characterizations of the comic black servant. Servants were often stereotyped and juxtaposed against their revengeful

⁷⁴ Hazel Waters, *Racism on the Victorian Stage: Representation of Slavery and the Black Character* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press), 8.

⁷⁵ Waters, *Racism on the Victorian Stage*, 8.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 8.

⁷⁷ Waters, *Racism on the Victorian Stage*, 11.

⁷⁸ Waters, *Racism on the Victorian Stage*, 11.

counterparts.⁷⁹ Such characterization can be seen in the character of Mungo in Isaac Bickerstaffe's *The Padlock* (1768). In this play, Mungo partakes in various mischievous activities and disrespects authority.⁸⁰ A third common characterization was a blend of the noble and vengeful savage and the comic servant. This final characterization was often the image of black slaves in literature by eighteenth century abolitionists, who were both black and white.⁸¹

By the early nineteenth century, little was done to alter the images of black characters by British playwrights and composers, despite shifts in British political ideologies between liberalism and conservatism. The abolitionist movement helped clarify and intensify pro- and anti-slavery sentiments.⁸² Additionally, historical events, such as the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), prompted the reemergence of certain characterizations on the theatrical stage, such as blacks being portrayed as dangerous. As slavery ended and Jim Crow began to take root in the United States during the 1830s, characterizations of blacks on the British stage also changed. This was partly due to an increased presence of Americans in England. Shifts to English racial attitudes and beliefs by American influence were achieved through the use of comedy (for example, blackface minstrelsy).⁸³ American influences on black characterization became more evident with the introduction of blackface minstrelsy, which served as a comedic way to promote black tropes, and the popularity of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), which sold one million copies in England a year after its publication.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Waters, *Racism on the Victorian Stage*, 28.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸¹ Waters, *Racism on the Victorian Stage*, 33.

⁸² Waters, *Racism on the Victorian Stage*, 38.

⁸³ Waters, *Racism on the Victorian Stage*, 89.

⁸⁴ Josephine, Donovan, *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Evil, Affliction, and Redemptive Love* (Boston: Twane 1991), 11.

Blackface Minstrelsy in England

Blackface minstrelsy, sometimes referred to as “nigger” minstrelsy, was introduced to England in the 1830s, and became a popular form of British entertainment for the remainder of the nineteenth and part of the twentieth centuries.⁸⁵ Blackface minstrel shows were first developed in the United States during the early nineteenth century. The shows consisted of comedic skits, dance and musical performances, and variety acts. These shows were performed by white and sometimes black performers who used black make-up to darken their faces and used speech to specifically mock African Americans. In the 1840s and 1850s, minstrel shows began to develop a format, which was flexible and allowed for additions and variations.⁸⁶

Many shows followed a three-act structure. During the first section, the entire troupe paraded on stage, sang popular songs, joked, and presented a host, who functioned as a master of ceremonies. The strength of the show was found in the second part of the show, called the olio.⁸⁷ The olio included variety acts with comedy, musical numbers, and acrobatic acts. The highlight of the section was the actor, who portrayed minstrel stock characters, which promoted stereotypes of blacks. These characters are often depicted as shiftless, irresponsible, unintelligent, carefree, and thieving.⁸⁸ There were several character archetypes in minstrelsy, which included hunters, fishermen, and riverboat workers. Some of the popular characters were Jim Crow (idiocracy) and Zip Coon (arrogancy). The show concluded with a “walk around finale,” where performers sang and danced on the front part of the stage as the remainder of the company gave support from the back of the house.

⁸⁵ Michael Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain*, (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2008): 1.

⁸⁶ Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain*, 15.

⁸⁷ John Strausbaugh, “Black Like You: Blackface Minstrelsy, the Rock and Roll Years,” in *Black like You: Blackface, Whiteface, Insult and Imitation In American Popular Culture* (New York: Penguin Group Publishing, 2006): 128.

⁸⁸ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 96.

Throughout the Victorian period, blackface performances appeared in solo and duo music halls, but they were most prominent in fixed metropolitan venues like St. James' Hall and Piccadilly Square.⁸⁹ In the 1830s to 1840s, blackface minstrelsy evolved from solo performances to staged works. What differentiated British minstrelsy from American minstrelsy was stylized acting and a shift towards refinement and sentimentalism.⁹⁰ Between the 1860s to the end of the nineteenth century, minstrelsy reached its peak in England.⁹¹ Also occurring during this time was the popularity of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), which prompted Uncle Tom Mania.⁹² Stowe's book benefited from the popularity of blackface minstrelsy and remained popular through its structural shifts because it appealed to growing anti-slavery sentiments. As popularity of minstrel shows increased, composers transformed minstrel songs into parlor songs, which appealed to the middle class.⁹³ Additionally, minstrel shows began to take the shape of concerts. Although in many areas throughout Europe and the United States blackface minstrelsy was considered a lowbrow art form, the structural shifts in England elevated the genre to a concert art form. Since minstrelsy was an elevated art form in England, Delius did not have to distance himself from it in *Koanga*. Further, the theatrical trends of British minstrelsy lessened the tendency to avoid black characters in exotic opera, allowing Delius to incorporate features of minstrelsy, like blackface, in his composition and performances.

⁸⁹ Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain*, 2.

⁹⁰ Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain*, 4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Uncle Tom mania describes the period of time (1850s) where Stowe's *Uncle's Tom Cabin* was mass commercialized throughout the United States and England, including: mass production of the novel, production of merchandise such as Uncle Tom dolls, and staged performances of the novel.

⁹³ Sarah Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy, and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005): 25.

CHAPTER 4: ANTEBELLUM SLAVERY AND VOODOO

By the time Frederick Delius traveled to the United States in 1884, slavery had been eradicated for nearly twenty years. Thus, it is unclear what knowledge he had of slavery since he never personally experienced the institution. It is possible he heard stories from locals throughout the Jacksonville or Danville areas and would have also gained some knowledge from Cable's novel. Unlike Delius, Cable was quite familiar with the institution of slavery, as he both owned slaves and served as a Confederate soldier. Further, Cable used his firsthand knowledge and outside research to create realism in *The Grandissimes*. An investigation into the institution of slavery in the United States will show how authentic or inauthentic the depictions of slavery are within the novel and the opera.

Slavery varied from place to place, but standard to most plantations was a social hierarchy. Plantations were highly organized socially with several ranks found within the system.⁹⁴ Slave owners and their families were the most powerful on the plantation, followed by the overseer, who managed the plantations. Ranked below the overseer was his assistant or the "driver," who looked after details of management, helped to train new slaves, and performed other supervisory duties.⁹⁵ Although the assistant was a slave himself, many slaves disliked him. The most respected slaves on the plantations were the skilled laborers, such as the artisans, carpenters, and religious leaders. Below them, were the house servants and coachmen, and following were the field slaves, which included of the majority of slaves. Plantations had a strict

⁹⁴ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 153.

⁹⁵ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 153.

routine, which varied somewhat from place to place. Most routines comprised of slaves beginning work at daybreak and ending at sundown. In some plantations, slaves would be awakened by a conch horn, a trait Delius recreated with the use of the cow horn in *Koanga*. A traveler in Virginia during the eighteenth century once observed:

The Negro is called up about daybreak, and is seldom allowed time enough to swallow three mouthfuls of homminy, or hoecake, but is driving out immediately to the field of hard labor...the noon mean...[consist of] homminy and salt and, if his master be a man of humanity, he has a little fat, skimmed milk, rusty bacon or salt herring to relish his homminy or hoecakeThey then return to severe labour... until dusk in the evening, when they repair to the tobacco-houses, where each has his task stripping allotted him, which employs him some hours.... It is late at night before he returns to his second scanty meal.⁹⁶

This observation gives some insight to the everyday life of slaves. Assigned jobs influenced the daily routine. Locations of plantations also had some influence, as seen in the differences between Louisiana plantations and the rest of the United States. In many places, slaves did not work every day of the week, most having Sundays as a day of rest. In some places, slaves also had Saturday afternoons off, along with Christmas and Easter.⁹⁷

While working, slave owners frequently encouraged their slaves to sing work songs.

These songs served as a means to alleviate boredom and keep the workers on tasks. Former slave Frederick Douglass once reported:

Slaves are generally expected to sing as well as to work. A silent slave is not liked by masters or overseers. "Make a noise" and "bear a hand" are the words usually addressed to the slaves when there is silence amongst them. This may account for the almost constant singing heard in the southern states. There was, generally, more or less singing among the teamsters, as it was one means of letting the overseer know where they were, and that they were moving on with the work.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 154.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 161.

Singing by slaves has been incorporated in several writings and theatrical works depicting slavery. In *The Grandissimes*, Cable even inserts musical excerpts in his depictions of the Martinez plantation. Similarly, Delius incorporates slave work songs in *Koanga*. Though singing was allowed, slave owners did not allow their slaves to sing mournful tunes, instead they wanted songs to be upbeat to keep up with the motion of the work.⁹⁹

Along with tending to the plantation products, slaves were also expected to entertain their masters, especially when guests were visiting. Entertainment varied based on the owner's preferences and the occasion, ranging from simple songs to serious music. Further, fiddlers were always in great demand, often gaining them access to places otherwise prohibited to slaves.¹⁰⁰ There were also slave orchestras that played for the owner's events. Basic slave orchestras comprised of violins, cellos, and double bass, to which they might add flutes, oboes, clarinets, or French horns.¹⁰¹

For recreation, some slaves visited other plantations to visit family members, friends, or to attend religious meetings. Slaves caught off the plantation without passes, however, would be punished. Patrol systems in the south were strengthened after slave insurrections, particularly after the Nat Turner rebellion in 1831.¹⁰² These rules, however, did not prevent slaves from moving freely without permission. Other recreational activities comprised of storytelling and singing songs, examples of which can be found in the opera and the novel.

⁹⁹ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 161.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 155.

Slavery in Louisiana

Louisiana underwent different periods of control that affected the slave industry and the ways in which different groups (slaves, whites, and free people of color) interacted with each other. Before Louisiana was purchased by the United States in 1803, it was controlled by France (1699-1762) and Spain (1763-1803). *The Grandissimes* depicts laws and social practices that developed under the control of the French and Spanish, specifically the *Code Noir* (see below) and the *plaçage* system (see below), the latter of which was still in force in the period just after the Louisiana Purchase.

The *Code Noir* was an edict implemented by King Louis XIV in 1685, in order to regulate slavery in France and the Caribbean islands, which Louisiana later adopted.¹⁰³ The code regulated interactions between slaves and their masters, as well as relationships amongst slaves. There were fifty-one codes, which could be divided into various sections: slaves as movable property, slave behavior, and treatment of slaves.¹⁰⁴ The *Code Noir* gave slave masters and slaves rights. Under the code, slaves could file grievances against their masters if they violated laws. For example, masters could not force their slaves to marry against their will and they were prohibited from selling husbands from their wives and selling parents from their minor children.¹⁰⁵

The *plaçage* system developed to give legitimacy to interracial relationships that resulted in offspring since interracial marriage was illegal.¹⁰⁶ However, these unions were often treated like marriages. Under the system, children from such relationships received their social status

¹⁰³ Jennifer M. Spear, "Legislating Slavery in French New Orleans," in *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009) 59.

¹⁰⁴ Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans*, 60.

¹⁰⁵ Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans*, 60.

¹⁰⁶ Turry Flucker and Phoenix Savage, *African Americans of New Orleans* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing): 8.

from their mother.¹⁰⁷ Thus, if the mother was enslaved, the children were enslaved. The father, however, could choose to free the child, which was often the case in relationships resulting in sons. Children benefited greatly the plaçage system. They often received an overseas education, inherited large sums of money and land, received monthly stipends, or were paid partners in their fathers' businesses.¹⁰⁸ Further, they received their father's social status.

The Grandissimes and *Koanga* depict the *Code Noir* and the plaçage system. The *Code Noir* appears in the novel several times. When Palmyre refuses to marry Bras-Coupé, the Martinez family must delay the wedding in accordance to the code. References to the code reappear when Bras-Coupé assaults Don José. In general, *The Grandissimes* is a commentary on the plaçage system, which is illustrated in the Grandissimes brothers. Delius' alterations to the plot remove some references to the code and the plaçage system found in the novel. Like *The Grandissimes*, the *Code Noir* is referenced in Act II of the opera when Koanga assaults Don José, mentioning death as a punishment for his assault. References to the marriage statute are eliminated when Delius alters the love story. Though the plaçage system is never mentioned in *Koanga*, the effects of it are visible through observation of the character Palmyra. In the opera, Palmyra's white heritage does not free her from slavery. Originally, the quadroon Honoré Grandissime, who benefited from the plaçage system, was a character in the opera. He was later removed, consequently removing references to the plaçage system.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Flucker and Savage, *African Americans of New Orleans*, 8.

¹⁰⁸ Flucker and Savage, *African Americans of New Orleans*, 8.

¹⁰⁹ A quadroon is defined as someone who is one-quarter African. More information on the history of the word can be found in Emily Clark's *The Strange History of the American Quadroon: Free Women of Color in the Revolutionary Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

Voodoo

Presumably, Delius never personally encountered voodoo and had very little knowledge of it. Some of the voodoo imagery in *Koanga* is reflective of *Koanga*'s librettist C. F. Keary's (1848-1917) knowledge of primitive religions.¹¹⁰ Cable, however, encountered voodoo while living in New Orleans and documented his observations in several of his works, such as his notation of an African song in *The Grandissimes*.¹¹¹ Voodoo in New Orleans evolved throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Voodoo came to Louisiana and New Orleans with the arrival of slavery. Prior to the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the French and Spanish governments were fairly tolerant and rarely interfered with voodoo worshippers.¹¹² Freed and enslaved blacks were allowed to congregate at Congo Square to participate in voodoo rituals. After the Louisiana Purchase, societal attitudes towards Voodoo, people of color, and blacks began to change. The newly arrived Anglo-Americans, who were mostly Protestant Christians, considered New Orleans to be a troubled city. They considered Catholicism to be idolatry and viewed voodoo as sinful and savage.¹¹³ Fear and hatred of voodoo grew after the success of the Haitian Slave Revolt (1791-1804), the success of which many attributed to the Haitian voodoo gods.¹¹⁴

Voodoo in nineteenth-century Louisiana followed the Haitian structure and was highly organized.¹¹⁵ Within this structure, a priest and priestess served diverse communities and acted

¹¹⁰ C.F. Keary published *Outlines of Primitive Belief Among the Indo-European Races*, where a discussion of African religions appears. See chapter five for further discussion on C.F. Keary.

¹¹¹ Cable, *The Grandissimes*, 245.

¹¹² Carolyn Marrow Long, "Perceptions of New Orleans Voodoo: Sin, Fraud, Entertainment, and Religion," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* vol. 6, no. 1 (October 2006): 87.

¹¹³ Long, "Perceptions of New Orleans Voodoo," 87.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

as intermediaries between the communities and the gods. Much of what is known about voodoo in the nineteenth century came from newspaper reports and observations by white southerners. One observer, who visited New Orleans in 1834, described Congo Square. In his account, he reported:

North of Rampart street... is the celebrated Congo Square, well enclosed, containing five or six or perhaps more acres, well shaded, with graveled walks and beautiful grass plats, devoted on Sunday afternoons to negro dances and amusement... The lower order of colored people and negroes, bond and free, assemble in great numbers in Congo Square, on every Sunday afternoon in good weather, to enjoy themselves in their own peculiar manner. Groups of fifties and hundreds may be seen in different sections of the square, with banjos, tom-toms, violins, jawbones, triangles, and various other instruments from which harsh or dulcet sounds may be extracted; and a variety, indeed, of queer, grotesque, fantastic, strange, and merry dancers are to be seen... most fancifully dressed, with fringes, ribbons, little bells, and shells and balls, jingling and flirting about the performers legs and arms, who sing a second or counter to the music most sweetly; for all Africans have melody in their souls; and in all their movements... the most perfect time is kept, making the beats with the feet, heads, or hands, or all, as correctly as a well-regulated metronome! Young and old join in the sport and dances. One will continue the rapid jig till nature is exhausted; then a fresh disciple leaps before him or her and “cuts out” the fatigued one.¹¹⁶

This quote provides information on the participation and practices of voodoo, which is similar to Cable’s observation, as depicted in his novel. Additionally, this account illustrates the importance of music and dance in voodoo. It also highlights the communal features of the religion and gives insight into musical practices of African American folk music in Louisiana.

Cable’s illustration of Congo Square in *The Grandissimes* shares similarities with the observations. Like the observer, he illustrates the activities. His description follows:

It was on a Sabbath afternoon that a band of Choctaws having just played a game of racquette behind the city and a similar game being about to end between the white champions of two rival faubourgs, the beating of tom-toms, rattling of mules’ jaw bones and sounding of wooden horns drew the populace across the fields to a spot whose present name of Congo Square still preserves a reminder of its old barbaric pastimes. On a grass plain under the ramparts, the performers of these hideous discords sat upon the

¹¹⁶ Colonel James Creecy, *Scenes in South and Other Miscellaneous Pieces* (Washington: Thomas McGill Printer, 1860) 19-23.

ground facing each other and in their midst the dancers danced. They gyrated in couples, a few at a time, throwing their bodies into the most startling attitudes and the wildest contortions, while the whole company of black lookers-on incited by the tones of the weird music and the violent posturing of the dancers, swayed and writhed in passionate sympathy, beating their breasts, palms and thighs in time with the bones and drums, and at frequent intervals lifting, in that wild African unison no more to be described than forgotten, the unutterable songs of the Babouille and Counjaille dances, with their ejaculatory burdens of “Aie! Aie!! Voudou Magnan!” and “Aie Calinda! Dancé Calinda!”¹¹⁷

Cable’s description of Congo Square maintains authentic portrayals of voodoo. Like the newspaper observation, Cable uses the dancing, instrumentation, and activities found in Congo Square. Delius omits Congo Square, allowing him to fantasize voodoo. By doing this, voodoo becomes a tool of exoticism, thus commercializing it for entertainment purposes, thus further making the opera more interesting to the white audiences it was intended to entertain.

¹¹⁷ George Washington Cable, *The Grandissimes: A Story of Creole Life* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Son, 1880) 89.

CHAPTER 5: KOANGA

Delius began composing his third opera, *Koanga*, in 1895 while living in Paris. By not writing his own libretto, he took a different approach than his previous two operas. Delius first enlisted the help of his friend Jutta Bell, who had previously assisted him with the libretto to *The Magic Fountain*. On February 9, 1896, he wrote a letter to Bell, stating:

I am writing another opera – Please keep this quite to yourself – I am taking the story of Bras-Coupé in *The Grandissimes* – Read it and tell me what you think of it – I will send you shortly the libretto and no doubt you will be able to give me some help. I am getting all the Southern flavor in music.

In another letter to Bell, dated February 25, 1896, he described his writing process, explaining that he chose to compose the music simultaneously with the text. Jutta Bell, however, declined Delius' invitation for help because of her busy schedule. Recognizing his own weakness in writing, Delius decided to enlist the help of a librettist.

Koanga: The Libretto

Delius struggled to find a librettist in Paris because he knew very few writers, and none of which Delius considered suitable for assisting him. In the spring of 1896, however, Delius met the author Charles Francis Keary (1848-1917), who had authored several books by the time Delius became acquainted with him.¹¹⁸ Securing Keary to write the libretto was peculiar because he had no prior experience writing librettos and was unfamiliar with American literature and the African American dialect.

¹¹⁸ William Randel, “‘Koanga’ and Its Libretto,” *Music and Letters* 52, no. 2 (April 1971): 142.

Keary's inexperience and his unfamiliarity with Cable's *The Grandissimes* is obvious in *Koanga's* libretto. In fact, there is no evidence that Keary actually read the novel. Instead he followed an outline of the plot written by Delius, which likely also included Delius' desired changes to the plot.¹¹⁹ Keary also showed no inclination to make his own artistic changes to the plot outline that Delius had drafted, as he did not contribute to any revisions of the later editions of the opera.¹²⁰ The most significant pitfall of Keary's writing was the dialogue. In the libretto, Keary sought to, as William Randel stated, "elevate" the speech of the characters.¹²¹ He does this by writing poetic lines and using old British words, such as "thee" and "thy," rendering some of the scenes and interactions between characters artificial. For example, the scene between Simon Perez and Palmyra in the original libretto illustrates how the dialogue creates an unnatural interaction between the two characters:

SIMON PEREZ: In vain to call Koanga; he is a thousand miles away
PALMYRA: Nay, it is false; a shameless lie
SIMON PEREZ: And yet, I will not leave your side! 'Tis foolish thus to moan and
grieve! Let us be merry, while we may! You and I, Palmyra sweet!
PALMYRA: Oh coward! To face him you would never dare.¹²²

This style of writing is far removed from the Louisianan vernacular that Cable encountered. Further, it uses dated language, awkward sentence construction and grouping of words (such as large groupings of text in passive voice), resulting in a weakened plot and unusual musical setting of the text.

¹¹⁹ Randel, "'Koanga' and Its Libretto," 144.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 145.

Plot Synopsis

Despite alterations to the plot and Keary's treatment of the text, *Koanga* still remains connected to Cable's *The Grandissimes*. The opera has a prologue, three acts, and an epilogue. The prologue opens with the Planter's daughters and Uncle Joe, an old slave who tells the story of the slave Koanga. The rest of the opera occurs in a flashback.

Act I opens with Palmyra singing a lament, but is interrupted by an overseer named Simon Perez, who wakes the slaves for work. Perez, who is attracted to Palmyra, finds Palmyra and attempts to woo her. Palmyra is unimpressed by Perez's attempts. The two are interrupted by Don José Martinez's arrival. Palmyra tries to leave, but Don José orders her to stay. A chained Koanga is brought forth, guarded by two slaves. Upon his arrival, Koanga curses his African traitors who sold him into slavery and vows not to submit to the owners. After hearing this, Don José dismisses Koanga and discusses with Perez the best work assignment for him, but Perez warns Don José that he will be defiant even after being whipped. Koanga becomes aware of Palmyra's presence, which reminds Don José that Palmyra is still standing there. Then, Don José decides that Palmyra will convince Koanga to submit.

Palmyra speaks to Koanga, telling him compliance will make life easier. It seems that Palmyra has convinced Koanga to be submissive, which excites Perez and Don José. Koanga tells them that he will work for them if he can marry Palmyra. Don José agrees to this, but Perez objects. Clotilda, Don José's wife, enters and Perez whispers to her, telling her of Don José's plans to marry off Palmyra. Clotilda also objects to this wedding, but Don José will hear no more of their pleas. Palmyra is also apprehensive of the arrangement, but Koanga and Don José are pleased.

Act II begins with preparations celebrate both Don José's birthday and Koanga's and Palmyra's wedding. Clotilda goes to Perez, pleading him to convince Don José to stop the wedding, but he will not listen. After revealing to Perez that Palmyra is actually Clotilda's father's daughter, making Palmyra her half-sister, Perez decides to help Clotilda by trying to convince Palmyra to marry him. Palmyra enters, dressed in her wedding garments, and Perez and Clotilda try to convince Palmyra that marrying Koanga would bring her shame. Insulted, Palmyra explains they do not understand her bond to Koanga. Unable to change Palmyra's mind, Perez tells Clotilda to leave him alone with Palmyra. Perez tells Palmyra that she is Clotilda's half-sister and that is why she must not marry Koanga, but Palmyra is still in love with him. Perez reveals his own love for Palmyra, but Palmyra is disgusted relaying that she hates him.

The wedding draws near and the slaves prepare to attend. Palmyra professes her love to Koanga. Don José enters with the priest and proposes a toast to the couple. Koanga advances slowly towards Palmyra and lays his right hand upon her head. Before the ceremony can continue, Clotilda objects and proposes that Koanga have a glass of wine before the priest begins the service. Wine is served and the white attendants gather round the table to get a drink. Palmyra hands a cup to Koanga and kneels before him. Palmyra says her vows to Koanga and offers him another drink. There is a dance of *la Calinda* and Palmyra finds herself separated. Perez, assisted by a few servants, captures Palmyra and forcibly drags her away. Koanga realizes that Palmyra has disappeared and inquires after her. Koanga approaches Don José and strikes the table violently, asking the whereabouts of his bride. Angered by his behavior, Don José confronts Koanga. Koanga curses Don José, and Don José threatens him with a voodoo curse. Tensions build, the two fight, and Don José falls. Alone, Koanga falls on his knees and prays to the Voodoo gods. He then disappears into the forest, calling on the Voodoo gods for protection.

Act III begins at a swamp where a group of Negro men are calling the names of various Voodoo gods. Rangwan, the Voodoo priest, calls upon the spirits. Koanga enters accompanied by a group of Negro men carrying torches. The two prepare to cast a spell. They perform a blood sacrifice, gashing their arms with knives. Rangwan pours the blood from a gourd on to the fire. The fire blazes up as the attending men continue to call upon the Voodoo gods. Koanga ascends the hill and the attending men gash themselves with knives and commence to dance wildly. The fire dies down and mist covers the area. Koanga goes off to pray that the curse on the Martinez plantation continues. The next scene opens early in the morning, with the slaves praying before a shrine at a cabin where Palmyra lives; Perez is among the slaves. Don José yells at the slaves and orders them back to work. The slaves tell Don José that Koanga has cursed the plantation, but he does not believe them. Don José summons a troupe to search and capture Koanga. A weak Palmyra steps out of the cabin. Mourning her beloved Koanga. Perez tries to convince her to forget Koanga and be with him. She declines. Perez tries to embrace her and Palmyra cries to Koanga for help, angering Perez. He takes her in his arm, when suddenly Koanga appears. He approaches Perez and Perez flees. Koanga follows him and kills him with his spear. In the midst, the troops appear and capture Koanga, as Palmyra watches. The troops beat him with their whips and place him beside Palmyra. Dying, Koanga asks for Palmyra and his spear. Then he asks the Voodoo gods for forgiveness and dies. Distraught over his death, Palmyra renounces her Christianity and dedicates herself to Voodoo. She then stabs herself and dies. Act III is then followed by the Epilogue, which takes place on the verandah steps of the plantation house, with the Planter's daughter's intently listening to Uncle Joe. The opera ends with daughters commenting on the tragedy.

Performance History

Delius completed *Koanga* in 1897, and it was the first of his operas to be performed and one of his earlier works to be published. By 1899, Delius was preparing for the first performance of the opera. The two years between the completion of the opera and the first performance appeared to be a busy time for Delius, including revisions to *Koanga*. In 1899, he traveled to London with the hopes of seeing *Koanga* performed, and began working with impresario R. Norman-Concorde.¹²³ Before the opera's first public performance, Delius presented a private performance in Paris in March of 1899, where Gabriel Fauré was one of the performers.¹²⁴ A few months later, there was a concert performance of portions of the opera at St. James' Hall in London, conducted by Alfred Hertz. The second half of the program was devoted to *Koanga* and included the Prelude to Act III, the Quintet and Finale of Act I, and a complete performance of Act II.¹²⁵ The concert performance of *Koanga* appeared to be well received by the audience. Several critics praised the performance. One review, appearing in *The Daily Telegraph* on June 1, 1899, stated:

Mr. Delius is a musician of his own day and not of the past. So much is clear on every page of his scores. He stands forward as an embodiment of the modern spirit... Alike in orchestral works, in song, and in operatic scenes this composer strikes one as really having something to tell us in a masterful fashion, which will not be denied.¹²⁶

Delius was also pleased with the performance of his work, expressing this in letters written to different people.

¹²³ Carley, *A Life in Letters*, 143.

¹²⁴ In March of 1899, Delius wrote to Jelka Rosen about the concert, informing her that Fauré and a few young French musicians performed the opera at Mrs. Adela Maddison's home, where the Prince and Princess de Polignac were in attendance, along with other musical guests. Carley, *A Life in Letters*, 149.

¹²⁵ Lewis Foreman, "Koanga: History and Background," *The Delius Society Journal*, no. 113 (Winter 1994): 9.

¹²⁶ Foreman, "Koanga: History and Background," 10.

The first staged performance of the opera, conducted by Fritz Cassirer and produced by Jacques Goldberg, was on March 30, 1904 at the Stadttheater in Elberfeld, Germany. Delius' wife Jelka translated the libretto into German, which proved to be somewhat difficult. There were also alterations to the libretto, which changed some aspects of the plot, the most significant being the removal of Honoré, who was one of the main characters in *The Grandissimes*. Delius also added an aria for Palmyra in the second act, which changes Palmyra's and Koanga's love story. There were some small additions of lines to Don José's text in Act III. American singer Clarence Whitehill sang the role of Koanga completely in blackface, wearing only a leopard skin, which Whitehill feared would not be well-received by the audiences.¹²⁷ Other problems with the opera arose from Rose Kaiser, who sang the role of Palmyra. She would often feign illness when dissatisfied with her costume. Delius' sister Clare once recalled:

There was another anxiety, too. Rose Kaiser was dissatisfied with her costume and showed a dangerous inclination to develop a temperamental sore throat in consequence. I suppose all first performances are liable to these stresses and strains but as I was new to the experience I make mention of them here. My sister-in-law inspected Palmyra's costume, suggested various alterations, and by her tact and sweetness tided over the difficulty. But Whitehill's case was almost beyond human aid. He had to be black, and he had to wear only a leopard skin.¹²⁸

Despite the difficulties that accompanied this performance, the production was well received.

In the years following the Elberfeld performance, the full score and parts of the music of *Koanga* were lost, which prevented future performances of the opera. The composer Patrick Hadley subsequently found the score of the opera.¹²⁹ Following the discovery of the lost opera, a new libretto was written in an effort to restore Cable's intent of his novel. After many revisions to the score and libretto, the first complete and staged English performance, conducted by Sir

¹²⁷ Foreman, "Koanga: History and Background," 17.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

Thomas Beecham and played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, occurred on September 23, 1935 at Convent Garden in London. This performance was followed by a tour of the opera to various cities in England. John Brownlee sang the role of Koanga and Oda Slobodskaya sang the role of Palmyra in blackface, despite performances of all black casts in the operas of *Four Saints in Three Acts* by Virgil Thomson and *Porgy and Bess* by George Gershwin the previous year.¹³⁰ The first appearance of black singers in a performance of *Koanga* occurred during two BBC broadcasts, conducted by Stanford Robinson and played by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, on February 1 and 2, 1958. African American singers Lawrence Winters and Lenore Lafayette sang the title roles of Koanga and Palmyra. The next significant performance was the American premiere at Lisner Auditorium in Washington, D.C. on December 18, 20, and 21, 1970.

Musical Analysis

Koanga is a multilayered opera that juxtaposes two different musical styles, thus creating two different social environments and blending African American folk music and European romantic style, in particular that of Richard Wagner. Delius' treatment of the music connects scenes, creates social hierarchy amongst the characters, and adds musical variety. This is achieved through use of heavy chromaticism, use of motivic material, treatment of the chorus, musical quotations, and rhythm.

Delius juxtaposes chromaticism and diatonicism to define a musical social hierarchy. The music of the main characters (Don Josè, Simon Perez, Palmyra, Clotilda, and Koanga) is highly chromatic. Additionally, chromaticism connects scenes and theatrical moments via tonal ambiguity, which creates tension, dissonance, and suspense. Often this chromaticism delays

¹³⁰ Saylor, "Race, 'Realism,' and Fate," 87.

musical resolution for an extended period of time. Delius' treatment of chromaticism is best exemplified in Palmyra's suicide aria in the end of Act III.¹³¹ The piece begins with a key signature of three flats, indicating E-flat major or C-minor, but the use of a modified fate motive from *Die Walküre* and Tristan chord from *Tristan und Isolde*, which resolves to a f-minor chord in measure 2, creates tonal confusion (see Figure 1).¹³²

The image shows a musical score for the vocal line and piano accompaniment of Palmyra's suicide aria. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (C minor). The piano accompaniment is in bass clef. Measures 1 and 2 are highlighted with a red box. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Ko-an - ga, dead! Dead is my be - lov - ed Prince and". The piano accompaniment includes markings for "Ob.", "p w.w.", "Tr.", "Cor.", and "Vel. (6)".

Figure 1

Measures 1-5 of Palmyra's suicide aria found at the end of Act III. Measures 1 and 2 showing the Tristan chord (*Tristan und Isolde*) and the Fate motive (*Die Walküre*) moving to the f minor chord. Reprinted with permission of Boosey & Hawkes Inc.

The next significant tonal change occurs in measure 13, where an f minor key signature is indicated, along with an f minor chord on the down beat (see Figure 2).¹³³

The image shows a musical score for the vocal line and piano accompaniment of Palmyra's suicide aria, measures 12-14. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of three flats. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef. Measure 13 is highlighted with a red box. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "- venge? He has pass'd be - yond your an - ger, but his". The piano accompaniment includes markings for "Tr.", "p Trbs.", "Vel. pizz.", and "mf".

Figure 2

Measures 12-14 of Palmyra's suicide aria found at the end of Act III. Measure 13 indicates the key signature change and the f minor chord. Located on the downbeat of measure 14 is the F major seventh chord, with the g-flat resolving to F. Reprinted with permission of Boosey & Hawkes Inc.

¹³¹ Full score of Palmyra's suicide aria can be found in the Appendix.

¹³² Frederick Delius, *Koanga: Opera in Three Acts*, Vocal Score, Ed. Eric Fenby. Libretto by C.F. Keary, Rev. Douglas Page and Andrew Craig (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1991) 148.

¹³³ Frederick Delius, *Koanga: Opera in Three Acts*, 148.

The movement into f minor occurs in measure 12 via three chromatic-step descents. The establishment of f minor is short-lived, as an F major seventh chord appears in measure 14. The F major seventh chord could be connected to the beginning E-flat key signature at the beginning of the aria, functioning a dominant seventh chord of the V. Further, f minor/F major are constantly used as dominant or predominant chords, rather than the tonic chord that it should be. After measure 13, Delius' rarely references the f minor chord again. This relationship to E-flat major is later confirmed at the end of aria, where essentially a C-flat chord moves B-flat (see Figure 3.1).

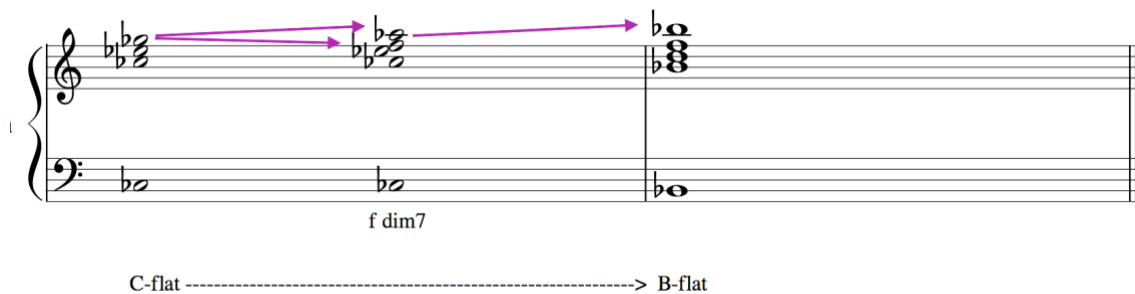


Figure 3.1

Final measures of Palmyra's suicide aria in Act III. This illustrates the final chordal progression of the aria, indicating a relationship to E-flat major.

When the B-flat chord arrives, there is still no tonal resolution, instead the chord functions as a dominant chord, hearkening back to E-flat.



Figure 3.2

Final measures of Palmyra's suicide aria in Act III. A reduction of the harmonic in the final two measures of the aria.

Figure 3.2 shows how Delius moves between these chords, using the f diminished chord as a transition point, thus creating a predominant to dominant relationship. In this example, the C-flat moves to f diminished then to B-flat major. The movement at the end of Palmyra's aria indicates that although the key signature reflects f-minor, the aria might actually be situated in E-flat or f-dorian instead. The final significant moments of this aria and its use of chromaticism can be found at the end of the aria during the instrumental postlude (see appendix). Here, Delius prolongs the harmonic tension and the aria never reaches a conclusion.

Using Wagner as a model, Delius incorporates some motivic material, but his treatment of it is different from Wagner. Delius does, however, utilize some of Wagner's motives in Palmyra's suicide aria. Eric Saylor indicates that a modified version of the Tristan chord from *Tristan und Isolde* and the fate motive from *Die Walküre* appear in the first measure of the aria, which is used to depict Koanga's fate in the opera (see Figure 4).¹³⁴

The image shows a musical score for the beginning of Palmyra's aria. It consists of two staves: Voice and Piano. The key signature is F minor (three flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The Voice part starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The lyrics 'PALMYRA' are written above the first measure, and 'Koan-ga,' is written below the second measure. The Piano part starts with a modified Tristan chord (F, Bb, Ab, Cb) in the right hand and a bass line (F, Bb, Ab, Cb) in the left hand. A box labeled 'Ob.' and 'Fate motive' is placed over the piano accompaniment, indicating the presence of these motifs. The piano part is marked with a dynamic of *p* (piano).

Figure 4
The modified version of the Tristan chord (*Tristan und Isolde*) and Fate motive (*Die Walküre*) as illustrated in Eric Saylor's "Race, 'Realism,' and Fate" p.93

¹³⁴ Saylor, "Race, 'Realism,' and Fate," 93.

Further, the presence of the modified Tristan chord in Palmyra's aria indicates her fate and highlights the connection between the plot of *Koanga* and common themes of Wagner's operas. Delius also incorporates melodic motion and harmonic ideas that are associated with a particular character, but these motions and ideas are not necessarily heard as motives. For example, a chromatic descending line often appears in Palmyra's music. This can be seen in Palmyra's aria in measures 12 and 13 (see Figure 2), where the bass descends chromatically (E-flat — D — D-flat — C). This also appears in other sections of the opera, such as *La Calinda* (see Figure 5).

* PALMYRA

The hour, is near, when I to_ him my soul sur - ren - der. Ko - an - ga,

p sfz

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of Palmyra's aria. The top staff is the vocal line in 4/4 time, with lyrics: "The hour, is near, when I to_ him my soul sur - ren - der. Ko - an - ga,". The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, also in 4/4 time. The bass line is highlighted with purple arrows, showing a chromatic descent from E-flat to C. The piano part includes dynamic markings *p sfz* and *f*.

Figure 5

The first four measures of Palmyra's aria that appears in the middle of *La Calinda* in Act II of *Koanga*. In the bass line the notes move chromatically (indicated by arrows), as characteristic in Palmyra's music. Reprinted with permission of Boosey & Hawkes Inc.

The treatment of the chorus contrasts that of the main characters through the use of diatonicism and instrumentation. In an effort to recreate African American folk music, Delius orchestrates the chorus with the banjo, strings, and percussion. Also, the chorus is mostly set diatonically and only becomes chromatic as main characters interact with the chorus. This can be seen in *La Calinda* in Act II (see Figure 6).

In the opening measures, there is a clear

Enter CLOTILDA (The negroes accompany themselves with a rhythmical clapping of hands)

Banjos

mf Arp

I C major V G major -16/4 C major V7/V D major7

Figure 6
La Calinda in Act II of *Koanga*, illustrating diatonicism and elements of African American folk music. Reprinted with the permission of Boosey & Hawkes Inc.

indication of C major with a root position chord in the first measure. Delius further establishes the key with tonic expansion, where alterations of the tonic and dominant chords occur. Elements

of African American folk music appears with the use of the banjos and the stage directions of rhythmic clapping by the chorus of slaves.

Other instances of African American folk music appear in the form of musical quotations and dance music from African and African American music. The use of *La Calinda*, although added later in one of the first revised versions of the opera, is an example of how Delius incorporates traditional African American music. *La Calinda* was one of the more popular African dances frequently documented by observers of slave life throughout the United States and the Caribbean islands. The decision to add *La Calinda* into the opera, though it may not musically capture all the aspects of the style, allows for more authenticity. Delius also includes melodies recorded by Cable in *The Grandissimes*. The first appearance of such a melody occurs in the Act I chorus' "John say you got to reap what you sow." Delius does little to alter Cable's interpretation of the melody, only making rhythmic adjustments and adding harmony (See Figure 7).

George Cable's melody from *The Grandissimes*

John say you got to reap what you sow; to reap in the harvest

"John say you got to reap" from *Koanga* in Act I

Figure 7

The melody of "John say you got to reap" from Act I. The top melody is the recorded melody taken from George Washington Cable's *The Grandissimes*, as it appears in the novel. The bottom melody is the chorus melody as it appears in Act I of *Koanga*. Comparison of the melodies show that Delius made rhythmic alterations to accommodate the text.

The melody makes a second, transposed, appearance in the orchestra at the beginning of Act II.

Rhythm is used to distinguish between characters and to add variations to long instrumental passages that serve as connective material between scenes. In the postlude of

Palmyra's suicide aria (see appendix), Delius uses rhythm to signal changes in mood as the music transitions to the next theatrical moment. These rhythmic changes help to clue the audience without disrupting the chromaticism. The use of syncopation is also used to distinguish white characters from black characters. Its usage is particularly evident in the Voodoo scene of Act III, where the runaway slaves and the orchestra have syncopated lines. In *Koanga*, syncopation occurs in the music of the slaves, including Palmyra and Koanga, illustrating the distinction between blackness and whiteness.

Delius' musical choices contribute to the overall dramatic development. The use of tonality and rhythm help in further illustrating the various characters. These elements also contribute to social hierarchy of the drama. Hence, the closer the music represents nineteenth-century European culture, the closer the association to whiteness. Additionally, the influence of Wagner on Delius' musical treatment helps to create cohesiveness in the story plot. Seamless transitions allow for the story to flow continuously without interruption. Motivic material allows for themes of fate, death, and love to be attached to certain characters and scenes.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE AND *KOANGA*

The combination of departing from the novel's original plot and the impact of the societal influences of Darwinism, blackface minstrelsy, and immigration created inaccurate portrayals of American slavery and African Americans. Through the presented evidence, it becomes clear how Delius' own creativity, along with common societal trends influenced his treatment of the opera. Some of the inaccuracies that occur appear in the music itself, the differences between the novel and the opera, and early performances of the opera. Furthermore, these inaccurate portrayals drive the opera further away from Cable's intended purpose of using the Bras-Coupé legend.

Differences between *The Grandissimes* and *Koanga*

The most problematic issue is the difference between the *The Grandissimes* and *Koanga*. Because Delius deviated from the plot and disregarded Cable's original motivations of the novel, there are striking differences between storylines and characters. Also, Delius was less concerned with depicting realism than Cable.¹³⁵ Some of the alterations by Delius and Keary significantly change the story. The most significant changes are to the Voodoo curse and the death scene. In the opera, *Koanga* places a curse on the Martinez family and the plantation, but the curse does not affect the white characters but rather the black slaves. This is significantly different from *The Grandissimes*, where Bras-Coupé's curse affects all the characters on the plantation, harming the crops, the slaves, and eventually killing Don José Martinez. By removing *Koanga*'s power over

¹³⁵ See quotation from correspondence between Frederick Delius and Jutta Bell found on page 52 of this document.

white characters, Delius weakens Koanga.¹³⁶ Further, the alteration attaches negative consequences to blackness. This illustrates a deeper societal attitude where a group of people of color are held accountable for the actions of one person. In the opera, this is seen in the curse, where the black slaves experience the curse because of Koanga's violence and disobedience. Because the white characters are immune to Koanga's curse, the lives of the black slaves become less valuable in comparison to white lives.

The death scenes are also vastly different. In the novel, Bras-Coupé dies after reconciling with the Martinez family and lifting the curse. Further, he was surrounded by love, compassion, and innocence, making Bras-Coupé appear more empathetic to the family's pain. In the opera, Koanga is brutally killed in the dark swamp. In his death, he maintains his anger and unwillingness to control his emotions. Additionally, his death prompts the demise of Palmyra, continuing the negative impact of his actions on others within in his racial community. Acknowledging the influence of Wagner on *Koanga*, Palmyra's fate can be tied to the character of Koanga, much like *Tristan und Isolde*. The manner in which Koanga dies eliminates his humanity and perpetuates stereotyping of blacks as primitive. Further, it keeps Koanga one-dimensional. Other alterations to the plot affect the character development of Palmyra and Koanga. Palmyra is much weaker in the opera and is stripped of the Voodoo powers she has in the novel. In the novel, Palmyre (as her name is spelled) is not of mixed race, and, therefore, she is not attached to whiteness. Instead, she is a dark-skinned Congolese slave.¹³⁷ Cable gives her an immense amount of power in the novel, while also reminding the audience that she is still

¹³⁶ We may only speculate as to why Delius did this, but perhaps it was because white audiences might not have been accepting of a black slave having the ability to cause harm to his white owner.

¹³⁷ In the novel, Palmyre is described as "a dwarf Congo woman, as black as soot," George Washington Cable, *The Grandissimes: A Story of Creole Life* (New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1880) 89.

enslaved. Such power occurs in her ability to choose whether or not she will marry Bras-Coupé. In the novel, Palmyre does not originally desire to marry Bras-Coupé and only agrees after he woos her. This ability to choose gives her power over her own life. Delius, however, strips Palmyra of her power by attaching her to other characters, removing her ability to make her own decisions, and stripping her of her Voodoo powers. Her function in the opera is always attached to another character. For instance, her suicide is attached to Koanga and the slave owners because she reacts to Koanga's death and in desperation attempts to free herself from her masters' control. In the opera, Koanga is limited to his emotions, which drive all of his actions, and is incapable of making rational decisions.

The changes to the plot also show a lack of concern for realism, such as an authentic portrayal of slavery, though Delius does not completely depart from reality. Cable's novel is often praised for its social realism, which is achieved through his use of research and personal knowledge of Louisianan culture and slavery. As a means to maintain veracity, Cable incorporates historical events into his novel, such as the mention of yellow fever.¹³⁸ Delius, however, was not concerned with realism, writing to Jutta Bell:

Have you an idea? A dramatic one? Do you think you have time to help me in this? I think the music is a success – It is more of an opera than the last one – with quartets Trios, quintettes & chorus – If you undertake it make it as varied as possible – Do not fear not being realistic – I don't believe in realism in opera – Fantasy and poetry. Please write and let me hear your idea about this – I own my style and language is sometimes so vile that it shocks me as a musician.¹³⁹

Delius' willingness to break away from realism allowed him to be creative, and to incorporate fantasy into the opera. This is seen in the Voodoo scene of Act III. Unlike Cable's interpretation, which incorporates Congo Square, Delius places the ceremony far removed from the plantation

¹³⁸ Cable, *The Grandissimes*, 60.

¹³⁹ Carley, *A Life in Letters*, 99.

in the swamp. Additionally, he exploits the magic and mysticism to create these imaginative scenes. However, his interpretation removes the elements of Voodoo that would have been realistic and observed by those living in Louisiana. Differences dialect between the novel and the opera also affect the authenticity of the work. Unlike Cable, Keary was unfamiliar with the African American vernacular of the time. Consequently, this resulted in awkward dialogues between characters and strange character portrayals.

Other Issues

The music, which was a whitewashed version of African American folk music, and the earlier performances, which include the use of blackface, are also problematic because both promoted appropriation of blackness for entertainment purposes. Although Delius encountered African American work songs and spirituals, he did not truly understand the music. Moreover, Delius' focus on replicating Wagner's operatic style would suggest that he exploited African American music, where blackness becomes a tool for recreating Wagner, as Saylor concludes in his essay.¹⁴⁰ Also, the imbalance between the use of African American folk music and European classical music insinuates hierarchy between the two musical styles, where the limited amount of African American music indicates that it is less important or valuable than European romantic music. In addition to the music, the use of blackface in initial performances is also problematic, although blackface minstrelsy was still popular in the early twentieth century. Of course, the use of black performers in the 1899 or 1904 performance would have certainly been revolutionary

¹⁴⁰ In his essay, Saylor writes "Viewed in context, *Koanga* could uncharitably be described as little more than *Tristan und Isolde* in blackface—a reasonable conclusion, given the composer's Wagnerian tendencies and the striking dramatic parallels between the two works. "Race, 'Realism,' and Fate," 94.

for its time. In spite of this, the use of blackface in the opera diminishes the authenticity of the narrative.

Conclusion

Delius' compositional mastery in *Koanga* cannot be denied. His use of tone color, choice of instrumentation, the seamless transitions between scenes, and the integration of two musical styles are all features that contribute to the beauty of the work. Despite all of this, the work is not an accurate portrayal of Louisiana slavery or African Americans. His failure to achieve racial realism is largely due to his departure from Cable's novel. Moreover, it becomes clear that Delius makes many of these decisions based on societal or personal influences. It also becomes clear that the differences of media (literary versus staged or musical performance) also impact the portrayal of the story. Unlike Cable, Delius has to be more aware of his audiences and cater to musical trends of the time, which impact his treatment of the music and the libretto.

There are flaws in the libretto's text and its character portrayal, and also in the music. The earlier versions of the libretto disregard cultural dialect and language. Keary's original text neglects vernacular language and does not incorporate any of the French that would have been spoken on the plantation. In addition to issues with the text, the music does not fully incorporate African American folk music, and it is Europeanized, probably to make it more palatable to the British and German audiences that first encountered the opera. Moreover, Delius' "white-washing" of African American music seems to be a result of attempting to separate the opera from blackface minstrelsy, which was still popular around this time. Alterations to the plot perpetuate and maintain problematic societal norms, such as associating blacks with savagery and inferiority. In conclusion, the movement away from Cable's intentions in *The Grandissimes*

weakens the opera's success due to the treatment of characters, music, social themes, and giving way to racial stereotypes.

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APPENDIX

Revisions

First Edition 1895-7	Composed by Frederick Delius Libretto by C.F. Keary
Second Edition 1904	Translated into German by Jelka Rosen Delius Addition of an aria for Palmyra Music from <i>The Magic Fountain</i> used for Prelude in Act III Removal of Honoré from libretto
Third Edition 1935	Translated into English by Jelka Rosen Delius <i>La Calinda</i> inserted as Prelude to Act II <i>Irmelin</i> inserted as Prelude to Act III
Fourth Edition	Revised Libretto by Sir Thomas Beecham & Edward Agate Music Revisions by Eric Fenby
Fifth Edition	Libretto revised by Douglas Craig and Andrew Paige

List of Instrumentation

3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, Bass clarinets
 3 bassoons, 1 double bassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones
 1 tuba, 1 offstage cowhorn, 2 harps, Banjo, Timpani, Strings
 Percussion (triangle, bass drum, side drum, tenor drum, tam-tam, cymbals, tambour, tom -tom,
 glockenspiel)

List of Acts as Described in *Koanga*

Prologue	The verandah of a southern plantation house, surrounded by orange trees and slave huts; Uncle Joe begins to tell the planters' daughters the story of Koanga.
Act I <i>30 minutes</i>	Out in the sugar cane fields, just before sunrise; Koanga is introduced after recently being bought
Act II <i>30 minutes</i>	At the main house; Koanga and Palmyra's wedding celebration
Act III <i>51 minutes</i>	The Louisianan swamps; Koanga puts a curse on the plantation
Epilogue	The verandah of a southern plantation house, surrounded by orange trees and slave huts; the planters' daughters intently listening to Uncle Joe

List of Characters

Uncle Joe, an old slave <i>Only appears in Prologue and Epilogue</i>	Bass
Planters' Daughters Renée Helène Jeanne Marie <i>Only appear in Prologue and Epilogue</i>	soprano
Planters' Daughters Aurore Hortense Olive Paulette <i>Only appear in Prologue and Epilogue</i>	contralto
Don José Martinez, a planter	Bass
Simon Perez, Don José's overseer	Tenor
Koanga, an African Prince and Voodoo priest	Baritone
Rangwan, a Voodoo priest	Bass
Palmyra, a quadroon; half-sister to Clotilda	Soprano
Clotilda, wife to Don José Martinez	Contralto

List of Performances

<p>May 30, 1899 St. James' Hall, London</p>	<p>Concert Performance Prelude to Act III; Quintet and Finale of Act I, and Act II complete Conducted by Alfred Hertz</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koanga: Andrew Black • Palmyra: Ella Russell • Clotilda: Tilly Koenen • Simon Perez: G.A. Vanderbeeck • Don José Martinez: William Llewellyn
<p>March 30, 1904 Stadttheater, Elberfeld</p>	<p>Staged Performance Included two other performances Conducted by Fritz Cassirer Produced by Jacques Goldberg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koanga: Clarence Whitehill • Palmyra: Rose Kaiser • Clotilda: Charlotte Lengenber • Simon Perez: Georg Förster • Don José Martinez: Max Birkholz
<p>September 23, 1935 Covent Garden, London B Cast</p>	<p>Staged Performance Other Performances - September 27; October 3, 12, 18, 21, 28; November 11 and 23 Tour Locations: Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, and Leeds Conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham Stage Directed by Charles Moor Choreographed by Antony Tudor Accompanied by London Philharmonic Orchestra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koanga: John Brownlee • Palmyra: Oda Slobodskaya • Clotilda: Constance Willis • Simon Perez: Frank Sale • Don José Martinez: Leyland White • Rangwan: Reginald Thurgood • Uncle Joe: Leslie Horsman • Planters' daughters: Enid James, Elisabeth Aveling, Barbara Lane, Patricia Guest, Dorothy Donaldson, Pauline Gray, Vanwy Davies, Esme Webb

<p>December 18, 1970 Lisner Auditorium Washington D.C.</p>	<p>Staged Performance Other Performances: December 20 & 21, 1970 First African American Cast Conducted by Paul Callaway Directed by Frank Corsaro Scene and Film Designed by Ronald Chase Accompanied by Opera Society of Washington Orchestra and Chorus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koanga: Eugene Homes (18th & 20th); Edward Pierson (21st) • Palmyra: Claudia Lindsey • Clotilda: Joyce Gerber • Simon Perez: William McDonald • Don José Martinez: Will Roy • Rangwan: Edward Pierson (18th & 20th); Michael Malovic (21st) • Uncle Joe: Edward Pierson (18th & 20th); Isaiah Lurry (21st) • Planters' daughters: Judith Benson, Sandra Blake, Dolores Brown, Yvonne Easter, Adreana Hardy, Janet Kenney, Monica Ortiz, Martha Randall
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<p>September 23, 1935 Covent Garden, London B Cast</p>	<p>Staged Performance Other Performances - September 27; October 3, 12, 18, 21, 28; November 11 and 23 Tour Locations: Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, and Leeds Conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham Stage Directed by Charles Moor Choreographed by Antony Tudor Accompanied by London Philharmonic Orchestra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koanga: John Brownlee • Palmyra: Oda Slobodskaya • Clotilda: Constance Willis • Simon Perez: Frank Sale • Don José Martinez: Leyland White • Rangwan: Reginald Thurgood • Uncle Joe: Leslie Horsman • Planters' daughters: Enid James, Elisabeth Aveling, Barbara Lane, Patricia Guest, Dorothy Donaldson, Pauline Gray, Vanwy Davies, Esme Webb
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List of Voodoo gods mentioned in revised edition of *Koanga*

Ogoun Badagris	The Evil One
Heviyoso	God of Thunder
Tokpodu	The God Protector of the Dahomey
Onyame	The Supreme Being of the Ashanti
Alivodu	A Tree God; Protector of Health and Home
Mahou	Supreme Being of the Dahomey
Ruhanga	The God Creator of Man
Damballa	The Snake God; equivalent to Jove
Ayida	The Rainbow Goddess; equivalent to Juno
Selwanga	The Python God, worshipped at the new moon
Agoué	The God of the Sea
Papa Lébat	The Guardian of the Cross-Roads

SCORE: PALMYRA'S SUICIDE ARIA

a tempo

Ob. 1.2
E. Hn.
Cl. 1.2 in Bb
1.2
Bsn.
3
D. Bsn.
1.2
Hn. in F
3.4
Tr. 1.2 in C
Timp.
PALMYRA
Ko - an - ga, dead! Dead is my be - lov - ed Prince and Pro - phet!

a tempo

unis.
VI. I
VI. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

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Ob. 1.2

E. Hn.
mp espress.

Cl. 1.2
in Bb

B. Cl.
in Bb

1.2
Bsn.
mp

3
Bsn.
mp

D. Bsn.

1.2
Hn. in F
mp espress.

3.4
mp

Tr. 1.2
in C

Timp.

Pal.
For all he suf - fered can there be a just re - venge?

VI. I
ppp

VI. II
ppp

Vla.
ppp

Vc.
ppp

Db.
pizz. *arco* *cresc.* *mp*

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37

Ob. 1

E. Hn.

B. Cl. in B \flat

1. 2 Bsn.

3 D. Bsn.

1. 2 Hn. in F

3. 4 Tr. 1. 2 in C

Thne. 1. 2

Timp.

Pal.

37

unis.

div.

div.

pizz. arco p pizz.

pizz. arco p pizz.

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E. Hn.
 B. Cl. in Bb
 1.2 Bsn.
 3 Bsn.
 D. Bsn.
 1.2 Hn. in F
 3.4 Hn. in F
 Tr. 1.2 in C
 Pol.
 VI. I
 VI. II div.
 Vla. div.
 Vc.
 Db.

Ha - ted whites, who dared to kill a Voo-doo Prince! He has pass'd beyond your

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Cl. 1 in B \flat *f espress.*

1.2 *mf*

Bun. 3 *f* *mf* *f*

D. Bun. *f* *mf* *f*

Hn. in F 1.2 *f* *mf* *mf*

3.4 *f* *mf* *mf*

Tr. 1.2 in C 1. *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

2. *f*

Tbn. 1.2 *f* *mf*

3 *f* *mf*

Tuba *f* *mf*

Timp. *f*

Pal. an - ger! ... High - ty Prince, Dahom - ey's pride;

Vl. I *f espress.* *mf*

Vl. II unis. *f* div. *mf*

Via. unis. *f* div. *mf*

Vc. *f* *f marcatis.*

Db. *f* *f marcatis.*

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38 *rall.* *a tempo*

1
Ob.

2
Cl. in B \flat

1, 2
B. Cl. in B \flat

1, 2
Bsn.

3
D. Bsn.

1, 2
Hn. in F

3, 4
Tr. 1, 2 in C

1, 2
Tbn.

Timp.

Harp

Pal.
great in war, great in love! You, who gave me my be-lief, and showed me Voo - doo's

38 *rall.* *a tempo*

1
Vl. I

2
Vl. II div.

Vla. div.

Vc. unis.

Db. pizz. unis.

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Ob. 1.2 *a2*

E. Hn.

B. Cl. in B \flat

Bsn. 1.2 *a2*
3 *mf marc.* *f marcatiss.*

D. Bsn. *mf* *marcatiss.*

Hn. in F 1.2 *a2*
3.4 *ff* *mf marc.* *f marcatiss.*

Tr. 1.2 in C
3 *mf marc.* *f marcatiss.*

Tbn. 1.2
3 *mf marcatiss.*

Tuba *f*

Timp. *mf* *f*

Pal.
might - ty power. Great Da-hom-ey Prince, I cannot live if you are dead.

Vl. I div. *mf marc* *f*

Vl. II div. *f* *mf marc* *f*

Vla. *f* *mf marc* *f* *div.*

Vc. *mf marc* *unis.* *div.*

Db. *f* *mf* *marc*

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Fl. 1.2 *f marc.*
 2.3 *f marc.*
 Ob. 1.2 *f marc.*
 E. Hn. *mf*
 Cl. 1.2 in Bb *f marc.*
 1.2 *mf*
 Bsn. 3 *f*
 D. Bsn. *f*
 Hn. in F 1.2 *f*
 3.4 *f*
 Tr. 1.2 in C *f*
 1.2 *mf*
 Tbn. 3 *f*
 Tuba *f*
 Timp. *mp*
 Pal. *f*
 I re-nounce my Chris-tian faith. Accept my sac-ri-lice, Voo-doo; and re-mem-ber thou the
 VI. I div. *f* unis.
 VI. II div. *f*
 Vla. div. *f* unis.
 Vc. *f* pizz. arco
 Db. div. *f* unis. pizz. arco

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Clouds cover the scene.

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The woodwind section includes Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), English Horn (E. Hn.), Clarinet in Bb (Cl.), Bass Clarinet in Bb (B. Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Double Bassoon (D. Bsn.). The brass section includes Horn in F (Hn.), Trumpet in C (Tr.), Trombone (Tbn.), and Tuba. The percussion section includes Timpani (Timp.) and Harp (Harp). The string section includes Violin I (VI. I), Violin II (VI. II), Viola (Via.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The percussion part includes a vocal line with the text "She stabs herself. day!".

Dynamic markings include *f*, *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. Performance instructions include *espress.* and *con molto espress.*

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1
Ob. *p espress.*

2
E. Hn. *p*

Cl. 1.2 in Bb *p dolce*

B. Cl. in Bb Solo *mp*

1.2 Bsn. *mp*

3 D. Bsn. *p dolce*

1.2 Hn. in F *p dolce*

3.4 Tr. 1.2 in C *p dolce*

1.2 Tbn. *p dolce*

3 Tuba *p dolce*

Timp. *p*

Harp *p*

VI. I div. *p dolce*

VI. II *p dolce*

Vla. *p dolce*

Vc. *p dolce*

Db. *p dolce*

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40 **Maestoso**

Fl. 1. 2
Ob. 1. 2
E. Hn.
Cl. in Bb
B. Cl. in Bb
Bsn. 1. 2
D. Bsn.
Hn. in F 1. 2, 3. 4
Tr. 1. 2 in C
Tbn. 1. 2, 3
Tuba
Timp.
Harp

40 **Maestoso**

VI. I div.
VI. II div.
Via.
Vc. div.
Db.

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rall. **Lento**

The score consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes: Fl. 1, 2; Ob. 1, 2; E. Hn. 1; Cl. in Bb 1, 2; B. Cl. in Bb; Bsn. 1, 2, 3; D. Bsn.; Hn. in F 1, 2, 3, 4; Tr. 1, 2 in C; Tbn. 1, 2; Tuba; Timp.; Harp. The second system includes: Vl. I; Vl. II; Vla. div.; Vc. div.; Db. The music features a gradual deceleration from a moderate tempo to a very slow tempo. Dynamics are carefully controlled, with many passages marked 'dim.' (diminuendo) leading to 'mp' (mezzo-piano) or 'p' (piano). The final measures of the system feature 'pp' (pianissimo) with 'echo' markings, indicating a very soft, reverberant sound. The string parts (Vc. div. and Db.) are marked 'arco pizz.' (arco pizzicato), indicating they should be played with the bow but using a pizzicato technique.

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cresc. poco a poco *rit.*

Fl.
E. Hn.
Cl. in Bb
B. Cl. in Bb
Hn. in F
Harp
Vi. I div.
Vi. II div.
Vla.
Vc. div.
Db.

p *mp* *mf* *f*

cresc. poco a poco *rit.*

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