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Editorial

It is with great pleasure that the *Percy Grainger Society* relaunches *The Grainger Journal* in 2021, a double anniversary for Grainger: sixty years since his death in 1961 and 100 years since he and his mother, Rose, moved into their house at 7 Cromwell Place, White Plains, New York, now the Percy Grainger Home and Studio.

Originally edited by David Tall, *The Grainger Journal* was first launched in spring 1978, editorship passing to Barry Peter Ould from 1984. Renamed *The Grainger Society Journal* in 1985, the journal's twice-yearly run continued until 1998, with a final, standalone, volume released in the winter of 2002. During this time, the journal included many articles penned by those who knew and worked with Grainger, alongside original writings by Grainger. Three of the journal's editions were monographs: 'Conversations with Ella Grainger' (11/1), 'Lincolnshire Posy: A Personal View' (14/1), and 'The Hill-Songs of Percy Aldridge Grainger' (15/1).

The relaunched journal continues in the spirit of its earlier incarnation, with an additional focus on exploring Grainger's influence on music-making today. Alongside a range of writings on Grainger's life, work and legacy, future volumes will also explore contemporary composers' responses to Grainger, advice to performers and conductors on the many challenges faced in the realization of Grainger's works, and newly-published writings and music from Grainger archives around the world.

The current edition includes Peter Tregear's extended consideration of Grainger's notion of music as 'The Art of Agony', originally published in *Nineteenth Century Review* 15/2 (2018). In 'The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart: A Conductor's Journey', Joanne Heaton recounts her experience in mounting one of Grainger's less-often performed works for wind band, while in the pair of articles recounting the reimagining and first performance of *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad*, Chalon Ragsdale and Stephen Caldwell offer invaluable advice about ways in which to overcome the many performance challenges posed by the composer's larger-scale works. Susan Edwards Colson's fascinating account of the history of the Percy Grainger Home and Studio, and the ongoing plans for its future development, will be of interest to those who have visited 7 Cromwell Place, and will whet the appetite for those who have yet to visit. Grainger's own 'Folk-Songs and Their Singers', published here for the first time, is a typically vivid account of the composer's experience of folk-song collecting in England in the early years of the twentieth century. Finally, the journal includes Andrew Hugill's review of *Distant Dreams*, the recently published correspondence between Grainger and his long-time Free Music collaborator, Burnett Cross, edited by Teresa Balough and Kay Dreyfus.

We hope that the journal will provide a refreshed locus for the exploration and critique of Grainger's continuing influence in music and in wider cultural practices, and will encourage communication, discussion and sharing among Graingerites worldwide!

P.J., Cambridge, UK, July 2021

'The Art of Agony': Aspects of Negativity in Grainger's Music

Peter Tregear

Throughout his life, Grainger claimed that he sought to put his music at the service of 'the complicated facts & problems of modern life', a task he thought required engaging his audience in a 'pilgrimage to sorrow'. On the whole, however, audiences and critics alike have tended instead to associate Grainger with the works of his that sound anything but downbeat. Nevertheless, Grainger's self-assessment was genuine. He had a painfully ambivalent relationship to many of the emerging features of modernity, a state of mind for which he found a fellow-traveller in Rudyard Kipling. Both men found a means to express elements of this ambivalence via an unusually strong interest in both local and foreign vernacular cultures. Grainger's original text settings and folksong arrangements alike do not merely celebrate the global reach of the British world or try to preserve the dying folk music traditions of rural England and Scandinavia, but instead are an attempt to express what he considered to be particular fissures in the modern psyche, not least his own. He believed that any lasting accommodation with the emerging features of modern life required us to confront what we had lost along the way.

Introduction: The End of the Lone Grainger

Towards the end of his life Percy Grainger declared that two of his best-known works, *Shepherd's Hey* and *Molly on the Shore*, were so good 'because there is so little gaiety & fun in them. Where other composers would have been jolly in setting such dance tunes', he continued, 'I have been sad or furious.'¹ His publisher, Schott Music Ltd, however, would beg to differ. It suggests that a work like *Shepherd's Hey* is the ideal encore piece for an orchestra 'that wishes to make its audience leave the concert hall with a smile on their faces.'² Or, more expansively – as John Blacking wrote in the 1980s – such music invites us to turn our attention 'away from the Sturm und Drang of Germanic composers and the associated violence and torment of the European continent' towards a civilised world of 'English tennis parties, village fêtes, plus-fours, and home-made clothing of the 1920s and 1930s'.³

Even a cursory glance at Grainger's voluminous commentary on his own music reveals, however, that Grainger believed he was doing something very

¹ Percy Grainger, handwritten collection of autobiographical jottings c. 1949–1954 entitled 'Grainger's Anecdotes', Grainger Archives, White Plains, NY; quoted in John Bird, revised ed., *Percy Grainger* (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), 70.

² Schott Music Ltd catalogue description for *Shepherd's Hey*, <https://uk.schott-music.com/shop/shepherd-s-hey-12.html>, accessed 15 August 2015.

³ John Blacking, *'A Commonsense view of all music': Reflections on Percy Grainger's Contribution to Ethnomusicology and Music Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 102.

extends far beyond the aforementioned *Shepherd's Hey*, *Molly on the Shore*, and the ubiquitous *Country Gardens*; a state of affairs that, according to one early commentator on his posthumous legacy, had 'obscured utterly the spirit and accomplishments of the man', slowly driving 'his reputation into the ground'.⁷ There has also been a parallel shift in interest in academic circles, with several new books of Grainger's writings appearing at the same time, spearheaded in particular by Malcolm Gillies and David Pear.⁸ In those geographical centres most closely associated with his life (the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia) there now seems to be a desire to look at and listen to Grainger's music with fresh eyes and ears.

Furthermore some of the broader historical assumptions that buttressed more traditional views of Grainger and his music have also been reassessed. Histories of the British Empire are now more likely to give weight not only to tracing the various ways people, goods and military and economic power were imposed and disseminated around the world, but also the ways in which the resulting contact between peoples and cultures 'engendered new, more transnational, ways of thinking', including new forms of sentiment and subjectivity.⁹ The idea of a 'British World' that lies alongside the 'British Empire' has emerged, one that presumes the existence of a global community of shared cultural interests and experiences that extends beyond rigid geopolitical borders and ethnic divisions. It encompasses 'familial, cultural, commercial, and professional networks; flows of information, people, and ideas; and a sense of a shared identity and culture'.¹⁰ The editors of *Grainger the Modernist* rightly, therefore, criticize those who have previously characterized Grainger as a 'self-sufficient entity', a 'man out of his time. It is time, they say, to 'de-bunk' the 'customary idea of Grainger as a lone individualist'.¹¹

Being in and of one's time, however, is not the same as being in accord with it. To that end, Grainger's repeated claims that he put his music at the service of 'the complicated facts & problems of modern life' invites further

⁷ David S. Josephson, 'Percy Grainger: Country Gardens and Other Curses', *Current Musicology* 15 (1973), 56. To be sure the veneer of jollity we usually hear in *Country Gardens* is a trap; Grainger exploits the tune's manic, even violent, physical energy, which – as any pianist who has tried to play the solo version knows – well describes the approach required to perform it successfully!

⁸ See, for instance: *Portrait of Percy Grainger*, ed. Malcolm Gillies and David Pear (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2002); *The All-Round Man': Selected Letters of Percy Grainger, 1914–1961*, ed. Malcolm Gillies and David Pear (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), reprinted in 2002; and *Grainger on Music*, ed. Malcolm Gillies and Bruce Clunies Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁹ Kent Fedorowich and Andrew S. Thompson, 'Introduction: Mapping the Contours of the British World: Empire, Identity and Migration', in *Empire, Migration and Identity in the British World*, ed. Kent Fedorowich and Andrew S. Thompson (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2013), 5.

¹⁰ Amy J. Lloyd, review of *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration and Identity*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006) ed. Phillip Buckner, *The Historical Journal* 51/4 (2008), 1127.

¹¹ Dreyfus and Robinson, 'Introduction', in *Grainger the Modernist*, 10–11.

in his music at times, it is *not* because nothing ‘occurs to him’ (to use a foreign idiom) but because, as with Kipling, the vulgar evidently means to him a certain strength.¹⁶

Foregrounding the commonplace was, of course, no mere abstract aesthetic choice. It implied a criticism of established culture, of metropolitan sophistication, and of the social and economic forces that sustained it. For both men, commonplace culture pointed to a life-attitude of a kind they felt was ebbing away at the dawn of the twentieth century. Kipling found in India the continuation of an aspect of European culture now lost, a ‘world where our subjective and mutually alienated existences are comprehensible through common ritual and tradition’.¹⁷ His poetry strived to reconcile this ‘old’ world with the emerging new one by promoting ‘a benevolent globalism in which all men are mutually dependent brothers, in place of a corrupting global market through which all become mutually alienated free agents.’¹⁸ Grainger, similarly, looked forward to a time when an idealized pre-industrial past and alienated present could be reconciled:

the bulk of civilized men and women will come to again possess sufficient mental leisure in their lives to enable them to devote themselves to artistic pleasures on so large a scale as do the members of uncivilized communities. Then the spectacle of one composer producing music for thousands of musical drones (totally uncreative themselves, and hence comparatively out of touch with the whole phenomenon of artistic creation) will no longer seem normal or desirable, and then the present gulf between the mentality of composers and performers will be bridged.¹⁹

In a more unguarded moment, in the wake of the critical failure of a performance of his setting of Kipling’s ‘The Inuit’ from the *Second Jungle Book*, Grainger wrote bitterly that ‘primitiveness is purity and civilization filthy corruption’, passing its ‘blighted hand over the wild’. We are left with not so much the “the survival of the fittest” but “the survival of the fetidest”.²⁰ The heart of Grainger’s argument, however, is not so much that pre-modern communities enjoyed art in ways that modern society no longer do, but rather that in such communities there had been need for a demarcation between everyday life and creative life at all.²¹

¹⁶ Scott, *The Philosophy of Modernism*, 131–2.

¹⁷ Alexander Bubb, ‘The Provincial Cosmopolitan: Kipling, India and Globalization’, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 49/4 (2013), 399.

¹⁸ Bubb, ‘The Provincial Cosmopolitan’, 396.

¹⁹ Percy Grainger, ‘The Impress of Personality on Unwritten Music’ (1915), *The Musical Quarterly* 75/4 (1991), 13.

²⁰ Percy Grainger, ‘“The Inuit” at La Crosse, Wis[consin] (1923)’, in *Self-Portrait*, 184.

²¹ It is curious that Grainger never appears to have engaged substantially with that most influential of nineteenth-century composer-critics, Richard Wagner, with whom Grainger might otherwise seem to have shared more than a few philosophical and political ideas. But Grainger’s encounters with Wagner’s music occurred at the very end of the nineteenth century at a time of growing British

Grainger himself wrote that that as a result of his encounter with Kipling 'I became what I have remained ever since, a composer whose musical output was based on patriotism and racial consciousness.'²⁷ And, as the work of Gillies and Pear has shown, there is no way we can avoid the realisation that, if anything, Grainger's racial views over his lifetime went 'from being a naïve even playful, racist to becoming an increasing intolerant racist' which drew not only on Kipling's example but also that of the American Nordacists and ideas he found in books like Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* or *The Racial Basis of European History* (1916).²⁸ These excesses neither require nor deserve any special pleading.

But they are not the whole story. Alongside Grainger's free-wielding, bombastic, and often contradictory rhetoric on race can also be found a concern with much more subtle and sophisticated understandings of social identity that, like Kipling's works, is expressed in a focus on the experiences of the ordinary men and women of Empire, and on the tragic elements of their lives, the 'drownings, hangings, jailings, partings' and so on. Perhaps these works still speak to us notwithstanding the problematic background because, as Kipling scholar W. J. Lohman Jr. puts it, the problems of the citizen of Empire '—loneliness and isolation—are [also] the problems of existential man'.²⁹ For all their outwardly reactionary and chauvinistic tendencies, Grainger and Kipling alike were 'in fact dealing with one of the more serious problems of modern life long before Sartre and Camus brought it to general public attention.'³⁰ His settings also offer what Bob van der Linden has called an 'imperial counterculture', an unmistakably cosmopolitan colonial gaze that bore witness, in particular, to experiences of estrangement, violence, and loss.³¹ Or, as Grainger put it directly in a program note for a performance his setting of Kipling's *The Widow's Party* (1939) he wished his works to speak to 'the tragedy, not the splendours of imperialism'.³²

To take just one example, his setting of Kipling's *Love Song of Har Dyal* which appeared in the latter's *Beyond the Pale* of 1888, tells of the disastrous consequences when an English man becomes involved with an Indian widow. 'Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!', the widow exclaims, but the musical setting of this refrain, through sense of growing urgency in the accompaniment, and ultimately, through a wrench of tonal centre from the home key of F minor to F# minor, help underline what is already implicit in

²⁷ Percy Grainger, 'John H. Grainger (1956)', in *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, ed. Malcolm Gillies, David Pear and Mark Carroll (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 17. See also Bob van der Lind, *Music and Empire in Britain and India*, 68.

²⁸ Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, 'Percy Grainger and American Nordicism', in *Western Music and Race*, ed. Julie Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 124.

²⁹ Stephen Layton, CD liner note to *Grainger: Jungle Book*, Polyphony, Hyperion CDH55433 (1996).

³⁰ W. J. Lohman, *The Culture Shocks of Rudyard Kipling* (New York, Peter Lang, 1990), 221.

³¹ Bob Van der Linden, *Music and Empire in Britain and India*, 55.

³² Percy Grainger, program note to *The Widow's Party* (1939), quoted in Bob van der Linden, *Music and Empire in Britain and India*, 65.

who loses his sweetheart because his mother delays him. I even dedicated the work to mother, as if to say, "This is partly your work."³⁷

The Bride's Tragedy premiered in May 1922 at the Evanston Festival, just a month after Rose committed suicide in New York.³⁸ It recounts the story of a girl who is rescued at the church door from an arranged marriage by her lover. The pair is pursued by the bridegroom and her own family and are drowned while trying to make their escape across a flooded river. In a letter to Alfhild Sandby several years later, however, he explained that it was also:

my personal protest against the sex-negation that our capitalist world ... offered to young talents like me. A man cannot be a full artist unless he is manly, & a man cannot be manly unless his sex-life is selfish, brutal, wilful, unbridled. But the main stream of that in our age sets its face against such manliness as has always seemed right and proper to me. Well, there was no need to lose one's temper about it. But the situation called for a protest, I felt, & *The Bride's Tragedy* was my protest, & the angry chords on the brass (at the first singing of 'they lie drowned & dead') is my personal bitterness.³⁹

All the same, Grainger recognized that acts of self-realization often came at a severe cost to others, what he called 'love's ruthless sway'. Psychoanalytical theory, too, would support Grainger's contention that the masculine desire for independence 'corresponds to the role of destroying and negating in erotic domination'.⁴⁰ In turn that implied self-resourcefulness and mastery over the environment-at-large. Indeed, if we accept a key thesis of John Kucich's *Imperial Masochism: British Fiction, Fantasy, and Social Class*, it is also possible to connect Grainger's interest in personal self-abnegation and suffering with a broader critique of mainstream culture of the time. Both share, in the private and public sphere respectively, an investment in scenarios of sacrifice and submission.⁴¹ Grainger believed he had not been brought up by Rose to be able competently to negotiate these circumstances, instead he was made 'to become a worldfamed whim-tickling wonderchild &

³⁷ *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, 59.

³⁸ 'The Brides Tragedy' was a text that Oscar Wilde described as having a 'fierce intensity of passion'. See Oscar Wilde, 'Swinburne's Poems and Ballads', in *Criticisms and Review* (London: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1923), p. 455. In addition, Wilde singled out Swinburne's 'Reiver's Neck Verse', which Grainger also set. Swinburne shared Kipling's and Grainger's interest in dialect, as well a particular interest in Northumberland, and Grainger later recalled 'my father telling me that Percy was linked up with the Earl Percy of Northumberland & that the name meant "Pierce-Eye", one of the Northumbrian earls having had someone's eyes struck out'. Percy Grainger, 'John H. Grainger' (1956) and '[George Percy]' (1933), in *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, 15, 125.

³⁹ Percy Grainger, *The All-Round Man*, ed. Malcolm Gillies and David Pear (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) 29.

⁴⁰ Jessica Benjamin, 'The Bonds of Love: Rational Violence and Erotic Domination', *Feminist Studies*, 6/1 (1980), 167.

⁴¹ John Kucich, *Imperial Masochism: British Fiction, Fantasy, and Social Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

Authority—and especially in wartime. Men who hate killing are forced to be soldiers, and other men, though not unwilling to be soldiers, are horrified to find themselves called upon to fight in the ranks of their enemies. The sight of young recruits doing bayonet practice in the First World War gave me the first impulse to this composition which, however, is not in any sense program music and does not portray the drama of actual events. It is merely the unfoldment of musical feelings that were started by thoughts of the eternal agony of the Individual Soul in conflict with the Powers That Be.⁴⁷

In an interview with Daniel Sternberg in 1946 he expanded further:

Well, while I was in the band, I use to see young boys doing bayonet practice, and I thought of all the different people who'd been forced into the various armies of the world. For instance, Danes, who happen to be born across the border, being forced into the German army, and other people who'd just come here from Europe being forced into the American army. And finding themselves fighting against the people they'd been brought up with ... And that seemed to be very sad, and it ... I thought about it a great deal and it started a mood. It also made me think of all those other situations, such as that of the early Christians in Rome. Anybody who has any strong beliefs or any strong feelings is always likely to find themselves in conflict with the authorities that exist at the moment. And it isn't a question whether those authorities are right or wrong, or whether the young people are right or wrong. But it's very ... it's a very torturing kind of condition ... I wrote [*The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart*] out of the depression that was generated in me by the sight of all these things ... It has no meaning. It just has no ... It points [to] no paths. It offers ... no solution. It simply is grouchy. It simply grumbles at the sad condition of tyranny and torturing.⁴⁸

For Mellers, the score *The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart* bears the signs of this divided mind, fluctuating between stark diatonicism and 'oleaginous chromaticism' as Grainger does between feelings of resignation and protest in the face of violent oppression. He suggests, however—and rightly in my view—that such a 'problematic nature is fundamental to the Grainger experience'. It helps us understand Grainger's instinctive understanding of (and the will to seek the means of expressing) some of the deep conflicts of his, and indeed our, age.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Grainger, foreword to the conductor's full score of the 'final scoring' of *The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart* for wind band, string orchestra and organ (1943), Grainger Museum, Melbourne, MG7/20-1.

⁴⁸ James Michael Floyd. 'An Interview with Percy Grainger, 15 May 1946', *Tempo* 61/239 (2007), 18-26.

⁴⁹ Mellers, *Percy Grainger*, 44.

demonstrated the most 'willingness to face the greatest possible sadness.'⁵⁵ A supreme example of this interest can be found in his setting of the Danish folksong 'The Power of Love'. It was composed immediately after his mother's death in April 1922 in no small part because it seemed to match Grainger's 'own soul-seared mood of that time and 'my new-born awareness of the doom-fraught undertow that lurks in all deep love'.⁵⁶ A sort of Danish Romeo and Juliet, the original ballad, as Grainger describes it, 'tells the story of a maiden who has a clandestine lover. Her seven brothers challenge him to combat, because he has courted and made love to their sister without "asking their rede". In the fight that follows, however, he kills the seven brothers.' Returning to his beloved, he confesses:

It's I have struck down thy brothers all seven;
What answer to that wilt though give me?
She answers:
Yea, hadst thou struck down my father as well,
I ne'er would be minded to leave thee.⁵⁷

Grainger sets only the final verse – the only one that the original singer, Ane Nielsen Post, remembered, but also one symbolic, as he says, of 'love's ruthless sway' –

A green-growing tree in my father's orchard stands,
I really do believe it is a willow tress
From root to crown its branches together bend and twine,
And likewise so do willing hearts at love's decree,
In summer-time.

For a composer commonly cited for the concern he takes to capture the nuances of the original folk singer, this setting is especially notable for having one of the more rarefied accompaniments.⁵⁸ For most of the setting, indeed, we hear *only* the accompaniment, commencing with a series of chromatically saturated broken chords descending in sequence played on the pianoforte (Figure 1). The rhetorical effect of such an opening is not dissimilar to that of the opening of *The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart*, which also begins with a solo keyboard instrument (here an organ) playing a sequence of chromatically descending harmonies (Figure 2). Similar to the perambulatory gestures that open each of Chopin's four *Ballades*, they provide an introductory context for what follows that suggests the image, and function, of a bard improvising an opening verse. The fact that they are both slow chromatic descent suggests, furthermore, that the story that follows will have both pathos and gravitas. And, like his setting of *The Love Song of Har Dyal*, *The*

⁵⁵ Percy Grainger, 'Why "My Wretched Tone-Life?"', in Grainger, *Self-portrait of Percy Grainger*, 175, 177.

⁵⁶ Grainger, introduction to the published score of the *Danish Folk-Music Suite* (New York, Schirmer, c. 1950).

⁵⁷ Grainger, introduction to the published score of the *Danish Folk-Music Suite*.

⁵⁸ See Percy Grainger, 'Collecting with the Phonograph', *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 12 (1908): 147–242.

IN TIME

Woodwind 1

Horns

Brass

Trbns
Tuba

Trbn I

Figure 3: Percy Grainger, *The Power of Love*. Danish Folk-Music Settings No. 2 (1922, rev. 1941), version for full orchestra. Schott, bars 35-7.

Slowly, anguished, ♩ = about 56

Voice

Piano

Figure 4: Percy Grainger, *Early One Morning*. Set for voice (man's or woman's) and piano (1940). Bardic Edition (BDE 431), bars 1-3.

This is the key to their on-going fascination for us, I think. As Nietzsche once wrote concerning our evergreen interest in Ancient Greek literature, what useful meaning can an interest in any culture of the past have for us if it is not 'untimely – that is to say, acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come.'⁶² Or, as Malcolm Chase and Christopher Shaw note about the folk song revival more

⁶² Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On the uses and disadvantages of history for life', *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 60.

To be sure, as Nigel Spivey notes in his 2001 book on art and pain, a creative interest in dismal subject matter is nothing new, it has been a fixation of Western art from well before the Ancient Greeks (although it was the Greeks who first raised the notion of contemplating another's pain into a particular virtue).⁶⁹ But for one contemporary American commentator at least, Grainger was nevertheless noteworthy for setting out on such a melancholy creative path in an age that had otherwise 'learned to shun frank emotion for irony and burlesque ... No other composer', he claimed, 'is so willing to speak frankly, directly.'⁷⁰

That is quite a call, and I doubt even the most ardent support of Grainger's music would try to make it today. Nevertheless, in facing some uncomfortable truths a good deal of his music does also seem to proffer something akin to what Bob van der Linden has suggested is a 'therapeutic means of coping with life in an increasingly urban, industrial and modern world.'⁷¹ Or, were we inclined to be bolder, perhaps Grainger's music thereby approaches the condition of 'great art' as defined by Leonard B. Meyer, a means via which 'we can approach this highest level of consciousness and understanding without paying the painful price exacted in real life and without risking the dissolution of the self which real suffering might bring.'⁷² That is, perhaps because, not despite, the composer's manifold idiosyncrasies and infelicities, his music offers a challenging and occasionally compelling perspective on what he recognized as fissures in the modern psyche (his own not least) and what it might take to continue to live an undamaged—as well as undamaging—life in the modern world.

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⁶⁹ Nigel Spivey, *Enduring Creation: Art, Pain and Fortitude* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

⁷⁰ Charles W. Hughes, 'Percy Grainger, Cosmopolitan Composer', 127. I have argued elsewhere, however, that Grainger's music might indeed be considered 'ironic' in at least one respect. I agree with Mellers that the 'over-arranged' quality of his folk-sing arrangements produces a 'distancing effect' that reminds us of our own distance from the historical and social context from where the folk song came. See 'Giving Voice to "The Painfulness of Human Life": Grainger's Folk Song Settings and Musical Irony', in *Grainger the Modernist*, 93–105.

⁷¹ Bob van der Linden, *Music and Empire in Britain and India*, 78.

⁷² Leonard B. Meyer, *Music, the Arts, and Ideas: Patterns and Predictions in Twentieth-Century Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 39. Earlier in this book he writes: 'Only through our encounters with the world, through what we suffer, do we achieve self-realization as particular men and women' (35).

The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart: **A Conductor's Journey**

Joanne Heaton

I have long been enamored by the music of Percy Grainger. From a very young age playing saxophone in a number of community concert bands, I was fortunate to be exposed to his music and very quickly found that Grainger's music moved me more than any other composer. I am sure that Grainger's democracy of part writing was a contributor to the experience I was having, as every part in his band repertoire has melodic significance. Of course, there were many more elements at play as to what was significant in his music than that, but my teenage understanding of music at that time had me unaware of the intricacies of what was going on in his music. I just knew that playing his music inspired me greatly.

As I progressed to college age, I found myself studying music education at The University of Melbourne. It was during these years that I forged a relationship with the Grainger Museum, where much-loved museum curator Rosie Florrimell was most generous in giving me access to what I would refer to as the 'secret chambers' of the museum. These rooms were not part of the public display, and much of the material held in these rooms at that time was somewhat loosely catalogued, or at least, let's say, it was a work in progress. It was a chaotic treasure trove of Grainger's music and possessions, and I was so fortunate to deepen my understanding of the man and his music through this opportunity. I would spend many lunchtimes working my way through the filing cabinets to find incomplete works and compositional sketches, pouring over the hand-written notes and fragments of music. I might add that this was over thirty-five years ago, and there has been an enormous amount of work since then to catalogue and properly preserve the Grainger collection, both in Melbourne and at White Plains.

I eventually followed the path to becoming a conductor, and in 1996 there came an opportunity to put on a concert for the Grainger Museum as part of a series of events for the Friends of Percy Grainger. For this event, I called sixty of my musician friends and we prepared a performance of Grainger works for band, including *The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart*. My first experience of this amazing work was to be conducting it at Melba Hall at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, right next door to the Grainger Museum. I was still in my twenties, and I confess conducting a work of this grandeur challenged me greatly, to say the least. To make the performance all the more special we were permitted to borrow Grainger's own percussion instruments from the museum, the set of staff bells and the metal marimba.

Move along twenty years and I was now preparing my final recital to fulfill the requirements of a Doctor of Musical Arts degree, majoring in conducting. It was more than poignant to me to revisit this monumental work that was so significant at the start of my conducting journey. I felt it was a must to perform the work again, twenty years later, twenty years more

The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart

sketch fragments for missing elements, such as the double-bassoon part (see Figure 1). I was able to reconstruct a part to include the double-bassoon and string bass parts, which was in line with Grainger's intentions.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the Double-Bassoon part, titled "DOUBLE-BASSOON" and "Grainger: The Power of Rome & the Christian Heart". The score is divided into three sections: SECTION A, SECTION B, and SECTION C. SECTION A is marked "slowish" and "ready, express:", with a tempo of 9/4 and a key signature of one flat. It includes dynamic markings such as mp, f, and mf, and features a ritardando section. SECTION B is also marked "ready, express:" and includes dynamic markings like mp, f, and mf. SECTION C is marked "ready, express:" and includes dynamic markings like f and mf. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and articulation marks. A handwritten note at the bottom right of the score reads: "Open Utah Grainger's march 18, 1942, 12 noon".

Figure 1: Double-Bassoon Sketch, Section A (Grainger Museum).

I understand I have been so fortunate to access resources that, as far as I am aware, are only available in Grainger's birthplace, but I would encourage conductors to consider what substitutes could be used for the swiss hand bells (staff bells) for example, rather than leaving the parts out. The grandeur of this work is lost without fulfilling as much of what Grainger has called for as possible.

The wind band setting of *The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart* was completed when Grainger was asked to write something in 1947 by the League of Composers to celebrate Edwin Franko Goldman's 70th birthday. Faced with a deadline, Grainger orchestrated this work from an earlier setting he had compiled for large forces of strings and winds combined, presumably prepared for Interlochen National Music Camp. The first sketches are dated as early as 1918. A fragmented condensed score sketch of the work can be found in the Grainger Museum.

Grainger had an exceptionally close relationship with his mother and this piece represented great meaning in their relationship. Grainger first composed *The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart* for a Christmas gift to his mother in 1919. It had not been orchestrated or even filled out to a whole piece

Grainger conducted well ... and the audience was warmly responsive.”¹ Incidentally, *The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart* was also the last piece Grainger performed in his lifetime, on 29 April 1960. As cancer had spread to his brain at this time, he could not concentrate on the complexities of conducting the score and, unfortunately, Ella Grainger described the concert as “a pathetic disaster.”²

The piece is an anguished protest against the futility of war. It was inspired by Grainger’s own involvement in the US army towards the end of World War One. Grainger’s program note is as follows:

Just as the early Christians found themselves in conflict with the Power of Ancient Rome so, at all times and places, the Individual Conscious is apt to feel itself threatened or coerced by the Forces of Authority. And especially in war time. Men who hate killing are forced to become soldiers. And other men, though not unwilling to be soldiers, are horrified to find themselves called upon to fight in the ranks of their enemies. The sight of young recruits doing bayonet practice, in the First World War, gave the first impulse to this composition, which, however, is not in any sense programme-music and does not portray the drama of actual events. It is merely the unfoldment of musical feelings that were started by thoughts of the eternal agony of the Individual Soul in conflict with The-Powers-That-Be.³

The emotional content of the work is significant. As Grainger’s biographer, John Bird, has noted, “sections of agonizing dis-chords contrast well with sweeter passages and the opening and closing passages played by the pipe organ are hauntingly sad.”⁴ The piece, which “represents the true Grainger: complex, conflicted, joyful, sorrowful, lonely, and alienated,”⁵ is “filled with conflicting rhythmic and melodic ideas and is restless in its tonal ambiguity, harmonic tension, and emotional extremity of ranges.”⁶

As a rule, Grainger deliberately avoided using classical structures, such as sonata form, in his compositions. *The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart* meanders through a variety of sections and seems to ramble at times. The work unfolds as if following a train of thought, although this somewhat haphazard structure does not consistently represent the referenced dramatic content as described in Grainger’s quotation above. The early sketches of the work were organized as individual pieces, fragmented in nature. Grainger expanded on these fragments, yet still had distinct sections that were

¹ John Bird, *Percy Grainger* (London: Elek Books, 1976), 224.

² Frank van Straten, ‘Percy Grainger 1882–1961’, *Live Performance Australia*, accessed 12 June 2021, <https://liveperformance.com.au/hof-profile/percy-grainger-1882-1961>.

³ Percy Grainger, quoted in Barry Peter Ould, *Works for Wind Orchestra 2*, Royal Northern College of Music [CD Jacket Notes] (Essex: Chandos, 1998), 6.

⁴ John Bird, *Percy Grainger* (London: Elek Books, 1976), 163.

⁵ Wilson Bartell Wise, “The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart: An Analysis and Study of Conflict in the Life of Pacifist-Composer Percy Grainger” (unpublished DMA Thesis. University of Oklahoma, 2013), xii.

⁶ Wilson Bartell Wise, “The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart”, 5.

The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart

Theme (B)' and the 'Power of Rome Theme', and 'Theme F' is significantly developed and reimagined over an extended section of the middle of the work. The statement of Theme F, for example, when presented at measure 70, appears to be climactic, but it is then superseded when the thematic material returns at measure 98. Having concluded that this is the penultimate climax of the work as a whole, the architecture of previous statements of this theme needed to be measured accordingly, both in tempo and intensity, to have an organic relationship to the climax at 98. The overall journey of the work was to be considered for each and every tempo variation.

Given the freedom of interpretation that this work affords, it can be a conductor's dream or nightmare to undertake. Other challenges to consider are the complexities of the rhythms throughout the work and the plethora of tempo and time changes, including Grainger's emblematic use of fractions in his time signatures, with the use of $4\frac{1}{2}/4$ time. I would dare to hypothesize that the perceived weaknesses of this piece are less to do with the construction of the work, and more to do with the unforeseen challenges that it presents. I, for one, am most grateful that I had an opportunity to revisit the work at a time that I was more able to take it on, and I must confess that the moment I had finished the performance, I yearned to do it again. Not because I was unhappy with the performance that had just occurred, but I suddenly felt I knew even *more* about the piece, and, quite frankly, the piece moves me so much. I will no doubt endeavor to perform again whenever I can muster the opportunity.

So, conductors I extend this challenge to you, as it would be wonderful to have many, many more performances of this most unique work, to add to the 'brains trust' of possible interpretations. Through more regular performances, let's keep *The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart* front and center in the wind band repertoire!

Reclaiming *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad* for a New Generation

Chalon Ragsdale

The composer has wished to express the devil-may-care dare-deviltry of the cattle-raiding, swashbuckling English and Scottish borderers of the period so grimly yet thrillingly portrayed in the border ballads collected and published by Scott, Motherwell, Jamieson, Johnson, Buchan, Kinloch, Swinburne and others.¹

In October of 2011, while studying Kay Dreyfus's *The Farthest North of Humanness*, I stumbled across a letter to Karen Holten, dated 18 April 1906 (letter Nr. 62 in Dreyfus's ordering) mentioning, in passing, that he was "now writing 'Wamphray' (at the Ballad, not the Wamphray March)".² Dreyfus's footnote to the letter describes *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad* for men's chorus and band. She says it is a setting of a folk-poem from Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and goes on to give its provenance.

I was stunned. What was this piece (the *Ballad* as opposed to the *March*)?

I was scheduled to make a 2012 trip to the Grainger Museum in Melbourne, Australia, and decided to ask my hosts at the Museum to pull together for me what they had related to *The Lads of Wamphray*, whether *March* or *Ballad*.

And what a collection of riches they had! I was presented with Percy's original manuscript (in pencil) for the *Ballad*, scores from 1904–7 for both the *Ballad* and the *March*, several pages of sketches for new ideas for sections of each piece, plus various other later versions of the pieces, some of them presumably the 1937 revisions to the 1905 version of the *Wamphray March*. I reviewed those materials, made photographs of as much as I could organize, and determined that, someday, I would produce an edition of *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad* suitable for American collegiate choral and wind band forces.

After I returned to the U. S., and my duties as percussion teacher at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Arkansas, I approached our newly-hired Director of Choral Activities, Stephen Caldwell, to gauge his interest. As any diligent choral conductor would do when approached about collaborating on a piece, Stephen asked to see the vocal score, made a quick calculation of how many male voices, and of what quality, would be needed to achieve proper balance, and told me, "You may need to give me a while."

In the fall of 2016, I re-approached Stephen Caldwell, and Christopher Knighten, our Director of Bands, to see if I could secure their blessing to develop a version of *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad* to be premiered by the choral and wind band forces of the University of Arkansas. They both gave their

¹ From Grainger's program note to the score of the *Lads of Wamphray March* (Carl Fischer Edition, 1941).

² Kay Dreyfus, *The Farthest North of Humanness: Letters of Percy Grainger 1901–14*, (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1985), 61.

Grainger wrote *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad* in a typical Graingeresque white heat (he would later estimate that he never spent more than eight days a year composing). The music was written in four days, between 5 and 20 December 1904, and scored between 23 August and 12 September 1907, with final touches rendered on 25 October 1907.

But whence the unusual instrumentation “for Men’s Chorus and Band?” During 1906 and 1907, Grainger had been one of the few British composers to act on the invitation of Major John MacKenzie-Rogen, Bandmaster of the Band of the Coldstream Guards, to attend rehearsals and learn first-hand of the capabilities of the modern (for that time, anyway) military band. According to MacKenzie-Rogen,

Percy Grainger, the pianist, was one of the few who attended our band practice on several occasions, and he assured me that he learnt more in a few hours at the band room than from all the books he had read on instrumentation.⁵

It was with Mackenzie-Rogen’s group in mind that Grainger wrote *The Lads of Wamphray March*, using material he had distilled from *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad*. MacKenzie-Rogen generously provided Grainger with rehearsal time in March of 1906 with the Band of the Coldstream Guards, allowing him to make adjustments in a workshop setting, and a second rehearsal in March of 1907. Thirty years later, Grainger was able to pull out that same arrangement (the *March*), and with only minor adjustments, prepare it for the now-legendary America Bandmaster’s Association performance in Milwaukee at which *Lincolnshire Posy* was also premiered. While the *March* has become a staple of the band’s repertoire, the *Ballad* has been rarely performed, and had become, as Grainger might have said, “lost to forgottenness.” Its only published version was in 1925 for men’s chorus and two pianos (though brilliantly conceived, each of the two pianists need to be near virtuosos).

Grainger’s band instrumentation for the *Ballad* is: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 bassoons, contra-bassoon, Eb soprano clarinet, 3 clarinets in A, Eb alto clarinet, bass clarinet in A, 6 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 3 cornets, 2 Eb tenor horns, 2 euphoniums, tuba, timpani, and strings.

Though the composing of *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad* was done before Grainger worked with MacKenzie-Rogen and the Band of The Coldstream Guards, the scoring was done afterwards. His inclusion of string writing makes Grainger’s designation of the *Ballad* as being for band a bit confusing, though the seldom-discussed history of the use of strings in otherwise band settings should make us think twice before disqualifying a band piece simply on the circumstance of the inclusion of strings. Grainger’s *The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart*, after all, calls for an optional string orchestra, which does not prevent us from considering it a masterpiece of the band repertoire.

The more striking aspects of the *Ballad* instrumentation, I think, are Grainger’s use of a complete clarinet family, and his addition of a virtual

⁵ John MacKenzie-Rogen, *Fifty Years of Army Music* (London: Methuen & Co., 1926), 246.

We all have our “Holy Grail” experience and producing a practical (albeit challenging) version of Percy Grainger’s *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad* was mine. It seemed to me a matter of good stewardship of an underserved work of art.

Grainger's *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad*: Reimagining a Great Work to Work

Stephen Caldwell

A good part of any choral director's career is spent answering the oft-asked question, "can you provide a choir for this?" It is not a simple task to prepare a choir for collaborative instrumental works, and far too often the performances are derailed by practical considerations overlooked in favor of teaching the notes. The best choir in the world does not matter if they can't be heard, if they can't be seen, or if they are placed on stage in a manner acoustically counterproductive to the music.

When Chalon Ragsdale, noted Grainger scholar and University Professor at the University of Arkansas, first asked me about providing a choir for a performance of Grainger's *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad*, I approached the score with skepticism. Grainger's original scoring was large: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 bassoons, contra-bassoon, Eb soprano clarinet, 3 clarinets in A, Eb alto clarinet, bass clarinet in A, 6 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 3 cornets, 2 Eb tenor horns, 2 euphoniums, tuba, timpani, strings, and a choir of men's voices. My first thought, how do we balance it? Winds and strings aside, a brass section of twenty players presents monumental balancing problems for voices, especially for a men's chorus who sings primarily in the same frequency range in which the brass section plays.

In the past twenty years, as microphone quality has dramatically increased and their size and cost dramatically decreased, we have seen many organizations try and solve balance problems by just throwing up a few mics and looking to the audio technician for help. While there are certain instances where microphones can help, in many ways they create more issues than they solve. Unless the composers conceived the music to be amplified, the mics are better left in the box.

Large choruses of 150 or more can balance large instrument ensembles with relative ease, but even with choruses that large a small handful of excited horn players or trombones can easily overwhelm them. The better your singers, and the more pronounced their natural resonance, the less you ultimately need. The New York Philharmonic Chorus sings Verdi's *Requiem* with only ninety, but those are ninety fully professional singers that can produce serious sound and are operatic soloists in their own right.

For Grainger's original scoring, a massive men's chorus would be needed, far more tenors and basses than I could cobble together in Northwest Arkansas, a long way from a major metropolitan center. Complicating matters further, the tenors and basses available at most college campuses are between eighteen and twenty-two years old and have not yet fully developed their resonant potential. So, all considered, I politely declined, hoping for a time in the future when we had enough tenors and basses to try it.

Sometime later, Chalon came to me again with a sabbatical project idea to adapt *The Lads of Wamphray Ballad* for wind band, doing away with the

Reimagining a Great Work to Work

The final rehearsals provided unique challenges from the podium. The conductor was mere feet away from the band, the piccolo closest among the instruments. The choir in the rear on risers, were an ocean away. No amount of considerate playing from the winds would allow me to hear the choir clearly. In this instance, the concert hall's acoustic cloud tiles worked beautifully to project the choral sound over the instruments and into the audience with clarity. For my part, in many instances I was "conducting blind," trusting that the sound in the audience was correct, and indeed it was.

After more than one hundred hours of transcription and arrangement, more than three months of rehearsals with four choirs and a wind band, and many obstacles overcome, the performance in total was a little less than eight minutes. Music is funny that way. The audience is really just a bunch of tourists on an Alaskan cruise, gawking at the beauty of the iceberg tips, unaware of the monumental structure beneath the sea. For the musicians who bring projects like this to life, these fleeting few moments of performance can sometimes be a letdown. All of that work, for eight minutes.

It's worth it every time.

The Power of Place: The Percy Grainger Home and Studio

Susan Edwards Colson



Figure 1: The Grainger home and neighborhood, showing a tree-lined street.

Percy Grainger made news in 1921¹ when he bought a house in White Plains. He, and his mother, Rose, had arrived at Boston harbor, via the ship *Laconia*, on 14 September 1914. They left London in haste, putting their furnishings in storage. After arriving they immediately traveled south by train to New York City, becoming residents of one New York City rental or the next for seven more years. During this time, Percy first established himself as a pianist extraordinaire, followed by a brief tour as a bandsman in the US army. But they could not accommodate their London belongings, and truly settle in, until they had the space and permanency of a home.

After seven years, they certainly understood that the greater New York area offered an overwhelming choice of residences and lifestyles. There is the island of Manhattan itself—in the 1920s, as today, the hub of a thriving music and art scene—as well as four (huge) surrounding boroughs that comprise New York City proper. There was suburban Long Island to the east, suburban Westchester County to the north, and the entire state of New Jersey to the west, with Connecticut to the Northeast. What to do?

The Grainger's chose White Plains, the county seat and near geographical center of Westchester County. White Plains offered quiet county living (including the physical space between houses to play piano twenty-four hours per day, if necessary, impossible in the city), punctuated with train services leading smoothly south to Manhattan in under thirty minutes. There were

¹ In *The Daily Pantagraph*, Bloomington, Indiana, 9 June 1921.

White Plains is near the midpoint of Westchester County, both geographically and culturally. To the south, high rises and warehouses abound, resembling the Bronx. Heading north, the land spreads gently out into small towns and estates. Beyond White Plains, Westchester County was blossoming in the 1920s and 1930s. D. W. Griffith built and operated a movie studio complex on Orienta Point in nearby Mamaroneck. Mary Pickford, as well as Lillian and Dorothy Gish, were filmed there. The Lawrence Family Theatre, a summer stock theater, opened on the Moses Taylor Estate in Mount Kisco. Tallulah Bankhead, Henry Fonda and Margaret Sullivan appeared in productions there.

The Grainger House does not appear in the 1900 Map of White Plains. By 1910, residents were Charles and Mable Prigge, along with their three children, Charles, Jr., Jean, and Alan. There was also a servant, Annie Pahockus. With four bedrooms on the second floor, and three (for servants and storage) on the third floor, this configuration would be perfect for a family of five, plus the servant(s) necessary to manage a 2,600 square foot house.



Figure 2: Parcel map noting 7 Cromwell Place, its location, and the fact that the side yard is a separate parcel (formerly part of the Keeley Institute for Inebriates).

Cromwell Place/Chester Avenue, only one block long, had nine parcels. There were three buildings among the five parcels on the Cromwell side: A private residence at the corner of Cromwell/Boston-New York Post Road occupied the first three. Then, the Grainger home resided on parcels 2 and 1A. Parcel 1 was formerly the grounds for the annex to the Keeley Institute for Inebriates. The Institute was founded in 1879, with a branch in rural White Plains. Those seeking *Dr. Leslie Keeley's Gold Cure* (a potion containing "a double chloride of gold containing old salts, alcohol, and morphine cannabis, suspended in colored water") included alcohol users plus "opium inebriates" and "morphine fiends." Their original White Plains locations had over-flowed capacity and so the institute added an annex on Cromwell Place. The annex

experienced professionals to assess the house and collection. The first, Kathy Craughwell-Varda, closed her report with:

The International Percy Grainger Society is fortunate to have a dedicated group of people who care deeply about the musical contributions of Percy Grainger and volunteer their time and talents toward its preservation. They are equally fortunate to have their caretaker/curator/archivist. He is the bridge between the current stewards of Grainger's legacy and the man himself. It is unfortunate that as a result of deferred maintenance the Percy Grainger house and collections are at risk. Now, more than ever, the IPGS must determine how they can successfully manage the Grainger legacy – with or possibly without his house and collections.⁵

After Ms. Craughwell-Varda's visit, and based upon her comments, GHHN sent several other heritage site experts. Immediate steps were taken (floorboards replaced, basement air quality improved, plans in place to restore heat), plus, her most pressing recommendation to embark on an initial strategic plan began. The IPGS completed its initial five-year plan (with support from the Museum Association of New York) in 2016.

With a written plan, progress, while certainly not assured, was possible. The first step was to remove items that did not belong in the collection and were not instructive, and in fact had no role in the Grainger legacy. While this was a difficult task, in retrospect, it was the simple part. Limited interpretive tours had taken place in the preceding few decades, and the house had been used primarily as private residence, gathering point, and warehouse for personal items, unrelated collections, and even for storing contractors' construction equipment.

Many historic houses can claim similar dark days, often more challenging—and expensive—than the situation the Percy Grainger Home and Studio⁶ found itself. Chawton House (Hampshire, UK) had been owned by Jane Austen's family for sixteen generations, with each generation making changes to suit their own needs. With all the added doors and dark hallways, visitors sometimes got lost and could not find their way out. Denver's Molly Brown (of *Titanic* survivor fame) House had been sold into private ownership and devolved into a rooming house, destroying much of the collection along with the original character of the house.

⁵ Kathleen Craughwell-Varda, Museum Consultant, C2CNY ("Connecting to Collections of New York") Circuit Rider Program, Site Visit Report, 15 September 2015.

⁶ The name "Grainger Home and Studio" was coined for use in the 1992-93 application to the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, Nation Register of Historic Place. While there was some discussion that Percy Grainger's removal of the living room fireplace rendered the house ineligible for inclusion of the list because the house was not in original condition, the application was approved, and the house was added to the registry on 4 April 1993 (Registry 93000234).

should we restore and focus on a range of time? Which range? We have a basic tour, should we add specialty tours? Would *Grainger Tech: Gramophones, Gadgets and Gigahertz* interest visitors? Would visiting musicians like *How did Percy ROLL in the Golden Age of Piano: 1870 to 1930?* Or maybe *The 1950s: Grainger's Final Pursuits in White Plains*, focusing on the visitors who sat on the porch and the Free Music machines taking up every square inch of the sitting room?

One of the challenges with an historic house is allowing change while embracing the past. While we are sorting things out in the house it is easy to fall into the trap “now we know all there is to know, and we can easily focus on what is important.” A heritage site such as the Grainger House is essentially a place of learning and entertainment, and visitors bring different expectations as well as experiences and knowledge on visits. Franklin Vagnone, after a high-handed experience during a house museum tour, noted the docent’s attitude as:

Be still. Be silent. Listen and learn. Be respectful of the important people who once lived here. They were important, proper people and more important than you. So act according.⁷

Interpretive tours can take many forms, and an exchange with visitors is preferable to a one-way lecture. While there are challenging considerations in planning tours, there are uses for the house beyond the interpretive tour. The board and set of local volunteers are grappling with the physical limitation (no wheelchair access, fragile furniture, no first-floor bathroom, no driveway and parking is a challenge), while staying true to mission. Ghost tours have been suggested; there is a well-known ghost tour at New York City’s Morris Jumel House.⁸ But a ghost tour, or dinner theatre, while entertaining, can stray far from the mission. Morris Jumel also has a yoga class that meets at their house, but it is simply a subcontracting yoga teacher using their large room after/before open hours. The Hammond Museum & Japanese Stroll Garden hosts an annual Mother’s Day Brunch. This brunch is planned, promoted, and presented by a private caterer, an independent contract, with only the final proceeds remitted to the museum board. The brunch is served in a tent in the seven-acre Japanese stroll garden, thereby tying it nicely to the museum’s mission.

Tying events directly to mission is crucial. A quick glance at the Percy Grainger Society’s website allows a review of house usage for the past (pre-Covid) five years. In 2017, there was a reception for around eighty attendees

⁷ Franklin D. Vagnone and Deborah E. Ryan, *Anarchist’s Guide to Historic House Museum* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2016), p. 18. Vagnone is here musing about what he termed “the unwritten and unquestioned code of conduct for Historic House Museums”, and argues that a fresh approach is necessary for their survival, a core premise of the book.

⁸ Hunting ghosts at the Morris-Jumel Mansion, “Sunday Morning” producer Sara Kugel talked with paranormal investigator Vincent Carbone, who explains the eerie “electronic voice phenomenon” that made itself known in a recording made in Aaron Burr’s bedroom (see <https://youtu.be/-M9F0Fwr5UE>).

Folk-Songs and Their Singers

Percy Grainger

In a day when the search for novelty is carried to such extremes it is somewhat surprising how few people attempt the collection of folk-songs. Such a collection provides not only an intensely interesting study, but a very amusing pastime, for much innocent strategy has sometimes to be employed before the old folks who know them can be induced to sing to a stranger the romantic and beautiful songs that have been handed down to them from generation to generation. In Ireland, Wales, and Scotland the collection of folk-music has been carried on for centuries, but in England it has been sadly neglected through it being generally believed that this country is practically devoid of such native music. As a matter of fact England is wonderfully rich in this respect, and it is safe to say that there is not a single country district that cannot boast of interesting old folk-songs which will soon disappear altogether unless they are discovered and recorded by collectors.

Any readers of this article who are of an enquiring turn of mind can easily discover this for themselves, and I will wager that they will hardly visit any rural village in England without coming across, if they search carefully, some rich thread of traditional song linking this prosaic age of railways and motor cars with the romance of past centuries when highwaymen lay in wait for old-fashioned stage coaches and when noblemen rode flaunting through the streets of country villages to steal away the loves of honest yeomen.

It is intensely interesting and curious to observe how the ideas of the past linger in the minds of the old yokels who sing folk-songs, and how their notions of the world to-day are affected by the stories handed down to them in verse. For instance, many old folk-songs deal with the period when Spain was England's rival. Songs about the Spanish Armada are frequently met with and many of those who sing them still think of Spain as the great and thriving nation which it then was. Their ideas of Royalty, of London, of military and maritime life and, in fact, of the entire world outside the bounds of their own village, are largely coloured by the state of things that was sung of by their forefathers.

It is impossible to talk to these old men without being oneself carried into a world of romance. One discovers that there has been in this country, passed on from generation to generation by means of mouth and ear alone, an entirely unsuspected and self-contained stream of music quite apart from the broader currents of more scientific and cultivated art that have run on simultaneously in higher circles in Italy, Germany, France, and other countries. We have every reason to be deeply proud of this simple, home-grown song, for it has many special excellencies of its own to recommend it, and it is above all exclusively our own, since there is not a note or word of it that does not bear the hall-mark of the unaided mother wit of our native population. The melodies themselves carry with them the proof of their antiquity, for the curious scales and modes on which they are based are

easily be found to write out the tune. In many cases it enables one to get accurate records of songs that it would be impossible to take down in any other way, for some of the old singers sing very rapidly and go one from verse to verse without a break. Any interruption is apt to disturb their memory and put them out so that it will be seen at once how great a disadvantage those who try to take down such a song by hard labour [are] under. The use of the phonograph too, pleases the old singers, for they are often used to seeing and hearing them in the village inn and much like the idea of hearing their own voices reproduced.

If, as I hope, this article inspires any who read it to become collectors and to attempt to rescue from oblivion some of the old songs – for there is no doubt that in about fifteen years' time they will practically all have died out, since the younger generation seems somewhat to despise the old songs and do not attempt to learn them—they will find that the task is not always a straightforward one. Many difficulties must be overcome before the tunes can be obtained, for only the aged remember the real old songs, and they are often so deaf that it is very awkward to take them down from them. For one thing it is no easy matter sometimes to make them understand which song the collector wants to hear, and when they do sing it they are often unable to control the pitch of their own voices. Occasionally, too, one has to sit out lengthy songs quite unlike anything that is really wanted, for it would be most unwise and unkind to hurt the feelings of the singers by stopping them in the middle. They will, however, generally do all they can to help you. One old man I came across, for instance, offered to copy out for me a long Robin Hood ballad¹ that he knew and there and then tore a strip of wall-paper, about two yards long, from his wall and wrote it out. I need hardly say that I greatly treasure this most unusual MS.



Figure 2: Grainger's transcription of the singing of Dean Robinson (Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, <https://www.vwml.org/record/PG/19/2/6>)

It will often happen that considerable strategy must be employed in order to induce the old people to sing. Miss Lucy Broadwood, the secretary of the

¹ Grainger collected "As Robin Hood ranged the words all round", also known as *Robin Hood Rescuing Three Squires*, from the singing of Dean Robinson of Scawby Brook, Lincolnshire, on 3 and 4 September 1905 in Brigg.

very long he commenced to sing. That evening I went to see him again at his cottage and, to his immense surprise, sung to him two of his own songs, which I had been able to take down. This so pleased him that we at once became very good friends and he there and then sung me several tunes.

This is by no means the only occasion when I have got songs from old men while they have been working in the fields. More than once I have been caught in the rain and got wet through while tramping about the country on similar errands, but perhaps my most unpleasant experience occurred to me last year. I was walking along a country road past a field, thinking of anything rather than folk-songs, when I heard someone singing. Peeping over the hedge I espied an old woman picking up stones about fifty yards away. I at once went round to the side of the field nearest where she was and was just approaching the hedge, to get as close to her as possible, when I fell headlong into a ditch full of nettles! The result was exceedingly unpleasant as, in addition to having my face badly stung, I got covered in mud, but I forgot my troubles when the old woman, who heard the noise of my fall and came to see what was the matter, consented to sing to me.

A fact that will probably surprise a good many people is that there is very little music to be found that is peculiar to any given district or county. On the contrary, the same tunes and the same words are constantly turning up all over England, Scotland and Ireland, in forms curiously varying from one another, or again curiously resembling one another. So much is this the case that it is often impossible to discover what particular portion of the British Isles such songs originated. There are, of course, characteristics which are peculiar to Scottish, English, or Irish songs, though even of these characteristics there are fewer than most people would imagine, but wider research is every day bringing to light cases of occurrence in one country of characteristics hitherto supposed to be typical of songs of the other. In England, for instance, one runs across characteristics which are supposed to be typical of Scotland or Ireland, and so on. Indeed one is forced to believe that British folk-music is very literally "British" and that it is, in fact, an art spread equally throughout all three countries.

To give instances of the way in which the same song crops up in slightly different forms in different parts of the country, I may mention the following. Miss Broadwood collected a song which began –

"The Americans in England stole my true love away."

I got the same song from a different source² with the much more plausible wording –

"A merry king of England stole my true love away."

In another ballad about the Duke of Marlborough³ I got the version –

² Collected from the singing of Alfred Hunt in Wimbledon, London, August 1905.

³ Collected from the singing of George Wray in Brigg, Lincolnshire, July 1906.

The subjects of these old folk-songs are very various indeed, but similar themes are constantly cropping up all over the country. One favourite idea, which is made the subject of innumerable songs, is that of the unequal marriage, telling how noble ladies fall in love with ploughboys, or how the proud lord of a county took to wife the humble village maiden. No doubt this was the only way in which the ploughboy or the cottager's daughter could get a little romance into their lives and revenge themselves, so to speak, for the otherwise dull drudgery of their existence. Songs about pirates and outlaws are also very common, Captain Ward, Paul Jones, Dick Turpin, and Robin Hood being sung of again and again, while famous poachers are also the heroes of many songs. The great Napoleon, too, seems to have appealed very vividly to the peasantry, for among the songs of that period which the collector unearths are any number of "grand conversations", as they are called, with him.

One very remarkable thing about these old singers is their wonderful voices. Old men of eighty often sing with a voice as fresh as a boy's! There is one such old man in Sussex¹ who is now seventy-seven years old, but who sings as freshly and clearly as though he were twenty-seven. He has never left his native town, Horsham, in the course of his lifetime for more than twenty-four hours at a stretch, except once in his youth when he was away for a week. He knows no less than four-hundred songs perfectly, and many others in part, and he has a list of all of them in a book. On one occasion he offered to sing them all to a gentleman who was curious to test his memory, and he achieved the feat although it took him a whole month to get through them.

There is a good deal of very pleasant romance about the collection of this old music. The collector comes into contact with many delightful old men and women who have learnt the songs from their grandmothers and grandfathers and have treasured them in their memory ever since — often without meeting with much appreciation from their own or later generations. Their pride and delight when they find that their ditties, so long buried in oblivion, arouse interest and enthusiasm is in itself almost a sufficient reward to the collector for his pains. The feeling which these old singers have for their songs is almost a personal one, for each sings in his own particular way and no two men sing the same song alike. In many cases the tune has become moulded to the personality of the singer, and for this reason one comes across many curious differences in the tunes of one song as sung by different people. For instance I have run across three separate versions of an old song called "The Gipsy's Wedding-day" in each of which the tune has been moulded to fit the personality of the singer.

¹ This is likely the singer and bell-ringer, Henry Burstow (1826-1916) who, in his 1911 book *Reminiscences of Horsham*, lists 420 songs he could sing. Grainger must be in error about Burstow's age, however, as this would date this article to 1903, two years before Grainger began his folk song collecting activities in England.

which still remain unrecorded. In almost every country-town or village there are songs and singers waiting to be discovered, and those who, while on their holidays, care to seek for and record them will have done something towards the preservation of a branch of our national music which is intensely interesting and of which we have every reason to be proud.

Source: This non-dated typescript, likely written somewhere between 1906 and 1908, was discovered in Grainger's home in White Plains. The music examples were missing, Grainger including indications of where they should appear in the text, but not their precise description. I have therefore used best judgment to substitute suitable examples, drawing on Grainger's manuscripts, many of which are available to view online via the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, and on the examples contained in the 1908 *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* (No. 12).

—P.J.

Book Review

Andrew Hugill

Distant Dreams: The Correspondence of Percy Grainger and Burnett Cross 1946-60
ed. Teresa Balough and Kay Dreyfus.

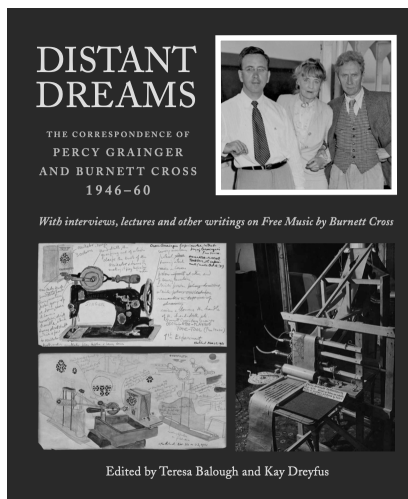
Melbourne: Lyrebird Press, 2020.
Paperback. ISBN: 9780734037947.
\$40.00 AUD.

This fascinating account of the three-way “Free Music” collaboration between Burnett Cross, Ella Grainger and Percy Grainger between 1946 and 1960 is an important addition to the literature. As well as its great interest to Grainger scholars, the book provides a highly informative case study of inter-disciplinarity that has a more general and contemporary relevance. Interdisciplinary collaboration is a pervasive aspect of today’s research landscape, required by almost every funding council and scientific organisation. Its aim is to encourage productive interactions leading to innovations that provide creative solutions. A mono-disciplinary approach, it is often argued, is inherently limiting and so insufficient to address complexity.

The challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration are many. How may someone from one field credibly enter another? How may the gap between the “Arts” and the “Sciences” be bridged? How may the specialised language and practices of a discipline such as music or physics or engineering be understood by people who do not have that background? The answer, of course, lies in the ability of the collaborators to overcome such barriers, to respect and learn from one another's expertise, to share a common sense of purpose, to submit to a vision that is larger than any one of them.

This is resplendently true of the Cross/Grainger collaboration and, fortunately for us, the work undertaken by them has been thoroughly documented. This book provides a detailed account of the entire process (or series of processes) from ideation to realisation, complete with every problem encountered and solution found through the creativity of mutually respectful and open minds. It shows what may be achieved when all researchers suspend their egos and engage in genuinely collaborative enquiry, gradually gaining a deeper understanding of one another's approaches as they do so.

I have no hesitation in calling this “research”. At its heart was an idea, a hypothesis if you will, that entered the mind of an eleven-year-old Percy Grainger when he “saw waves lapping against the side of boats in the Melbourne Lagoon” (p. 141). Free Music was summarised by Burnett Cross as follows: “Percy was trying to break away from the established way of doing



things, from the halftone scale, from the regularities of established music, [...] he was in fact searching for something new" ("Free Music" 1978, p. 154). This spirit of adventurous questioning was what sustained the project for so many decades. The details of how it was to be implemented provided collaborators with a series of objectives, each of which superseded the previous ones and so produced endless re-invigoration and progress. In fact, as Cross observed, none of the Free Music machines was ever actually finished, because "as soon as a new machine began to work properly, and demonstrated what Percy wanted to hear, its disadvantages and inadequacies immediately loomed large, and we started to think about something better, a design of free music machine that would overcome the faults of the half-completed one" ("Free Music" 1978, p. 158). Today, we would call such an approach 'agile', with an iterative feedback cycle leading to continuous improvements to a series of prototypes.

Each of the collaborators stressed the value of the others' contributions. This is important to note, because the account of Ella Grainger's work is necessarily less detailed, given that the documentation mostly takes the form of letters and other materials exchanged between the two men. Grainger wrote: "Each of the 3 of us has bright thought-germs ((ideas)) all the time & each evening sees the ways-of-doing-things of the morning left far behind and forgotten" ('Round Letter to Friends and Kin', 5, 26, 27 April 1951, p. 3), while Cross wrote: "I must say right away that Ella Grainger was a full partner in this labour – not only in the matter of supplying us with dinner, tea, cake etc., but in helping with what we were trying to do – with creative ideas and with labour" ("Collaborating with Percy Grainger", 1988, p. 169). The editors also comment: "though she is mostly silent, Ella Grainger too is continually reflected and refracted through the letters and the complementary daybook entries, completing a creative coalition of three" (Editors' Note, xvii).

One of the things that made the collaboration so successful was that none of the participants saw it as anything other than a labour of love, driven by Percy's desire for a kind of democratic approach to music that could be independent of human performers and yet relatable, especially through the construction of the instruments from homespun and domestic materials. The various unproductive encounters with university-based engineers and academics who were working on early synthesizers and other electronic instruments at the time are revealingly described. The inaccessibility of such machines and their need for ongoing and expensive maintenance represented an insurmountable barrier. For Cross, the music they produced was also uninspiring, although Percy Grainger had less to say on that score.

For Percy, of course, Free Music was the climax of all his musical endeavours, in his opinion his only lasting contribution to music. For Burnett Cross, on the other hand, the project contributed to his developing thesis that the supposed objectivity of science is largely a fiction. As he puts it: "The scientists' communication network is eminently social. There is still another dimension of the scientific method, the extrarational, which includes chance and intuition". Quoting H. G. Wells, he states: "Swapping wisdom, that's the true scientific method [...] Scientists collaborate" ("A Letter to the Editor: The

Scientific Method Revisited", pp. 170–1). It is abundantly clear from this book that Cross would not have been able to be so secure in this conclusion without his many decades of collaboration with the Graingers. Since he was a teacher of considerable renown, these ideas have since found their way into the minds of many young scientists.

One of the major objectives of the book is to counter the received wisdom that Burnett Cross was a mere technical assistant to Percy Grainger. This it achieves very well, showing that this was a collaboration in which all parties shared equally, each contributing their own particular expertise and indeed personality. As Percy aged and became unwell, Burnett increasingly drove the project, but never in a way that would diminish the composer's central position. The Electric Eye Tone-Tool was clearly Cross's own creation, but it is equally clear that he understood that it would not have existed without Grainger. By that stage in the collaboration, the depth of their mutual understanding was such that this was never in question. There was certainly trust and indeed affection between them but, more than that, there was a harmonious relationship between their respectively convergent and divergent thinking, between scientific method and artistic creativity.

This is touchingly brought home in some of the exchanges where Grainger indulges in rueful self-criticism. In a letter written aboard the *S. S. Stockholm* (many of Grainger's letters are written in transit during concert tours) on June 22, 1950, he begins: "As I look back on my life as a tone-wright ((composer)) I am aware of having failed again & again thru lack of bravery rather than thru lack of giftedness" (p. 41). The substance of his argument is that by letting his lighter music go first into the world he avoided the difficult challenge of putting forward more experimental works. He contrasts this lack of bravery with Cross's bravery and speed in his scientific work and teaching. Cross replies calmly that Grainger's self-accusation of "lack of bravery" is misplaced because the experimental works were: "Difficult to perform, perhaps, yes; that is no serious barrier. But they lie on a level of expression toward which we move (I think) but errantly and have scarcely touched" (p. 46). Seven years later, while writing appreciatively of the Electric Eye Tone-Tool experiments, Grainger declared: "I have held things back by being too bodily, too mechanical" (p. 122). It is certainly true that almost all Grainger's contributions comprise mechanical solutions, and that Cross himself moved things forwards by introducing electronics. But Cross's reply is clear-sighted: "As for your suggestion that you have held things back by being too mechanical, I beg to demur. The photo cells available until recently were, as we noted, very unstable and out of the question for playing music with any degree of accuracy at all". There may be an element of politeness here, of giving succour to a sick man but, if so, it is very well concealed behind Cross's characteristically rational take on the situation. No, this is just a reasoned reply to an unfounded self-criticism that reflects the scientist's admiration for the composer's ambition and Cross's experience over decades of Grainger's immensely pragmatic approach and energetic solutions.

The bulk of the correspondence is a full documentation of all this, copiously and marvellously illustrated with drawings by both men in their

different styles. There are also several valuable photographs and a highly informative commentary that is both thoroughly researched and insightful. Most letters contain detailed discussions of the technical workings of various Free Music machines, along with more speculative writing and discussions of music. Burnett Cross's mother, herself an accomplished musician, provided an additional point of connection and organised several performances of Grainger's work. Cross emerges, to his own surprise, as a trusted singer of Grainger's "Bold William Taylor", of which he made a recording in 1949. He also helped with the folksong transcription projects and, most importantly, he created the "Piano-Desk-Roller" or music roller that Grainger used throughout the 1950s as his memory became less reliable. This alone was an enormous act of support, and it clearly gave Grainger much comfort as his anxieties increased.

Perhaps the most interesting letter (at least, to this reader) is the one sent by Burnett Cross on 15 November 1955 in which he describes his thoughts as he prepares to write a book on the relationship between music and science. He says: "It seems that scientists are at long last beginning to investigate the question of the mathematical relations of musical intervals in a scientific way. Having stated for some centuries that the octave ratio is 2 to 1, the physicists are now beginning to wonder just what evidence they have for that statement—since they have never examined any number of *people* on the subject (p. 100)". He goes on to describe some experiments in which people hear an octave as more like 2.04 to 1. This insight really summarizes the cross-fertilisation between the two men. On the one hand, Grainger sought to develop a machine-based music that removed the human element from musical performance, while on the other hand Cross sought to embed human perception into the supposedly abstract and perpetual laws of mathematics and physics.

Submissions to The Grainger Journal

The Grainger Journal is a twice-yearly publication devoted to the study of the music, life and cultural contribution of Percy Grainger. *The Grainger Journal* aims to promote Grainger scholarship and welcomes submissions from established academics, new entrants to the field, and those who simply admire the works of Percy Grainger.

Submissions to *The Grainger Journal* should in typescript, in Book Antiqua (this font), or Times New Roman, 12-point font size, and between 1,000 and 3,000 words in length, unless otherwise agreed. Reviews should be between 500 and 1,000 words in length, unless otherwise agreed.

Submissions should follow the Chicago Manual of Style: Notes and Bibliography system, with consideration of the conventions of the country of origin. Note, however, that bibliographies should not be included and that all cited texts should appear in footnotes.

Submissions should be sent to the editor as an email attachment, in Microsoft Word format or another editable format. Submissions should not be supplied in non-editable formats such as PDF.

The Grainger Journal is happy to publish images, photographs and musical manuscript excerpts, although contributors are responsible for securing appropriate copyright permission. Any images reproduced in the journal will be in black and white. For quality purposes, all photographs and other images provided should be at a resolution of between 300 dpi and 600 dpi and should ideally be supplied in an uncompressed file format such as TIFF. Music examples should, where practicable, be re-created in an electronic music notation software application and exported as vector graphics (PS, EPS, SVG, PDF) or as 600 dpi TIFF images. Note that, when sending graphic files by email, it is preferable to archive them (in a ZIP file or similar) as this avoids the tendency for some email clients to automatically adjust file sizes and image resolutions. Very large files should be sent via a file transfer system (such as WeTransfer) rather than by email.

The *Percy Grainger Society* permits authors to deposit the accepted manuscripts of their articles in institutional repositories, subject repositories or on their websites at the point of publication. Articles must give credit to *The Grainger Journal* and provide a link to the Percy Grainger Society web site (percygrainger.org).

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Membership of the Percy Grainger Society

The Percy Grainger Society's mission is to promote the work and legacy of Percy Grainger with a membership community that preserves his historic house, encourages appreciation and performance of his music, and promotes a deeper understanding of the cultural, social, and economic context of his life and work.

We envision an international community that values the exploration of the music, heritage, and culture of the early 20th century, particularly as it relates to Percy Grainger's work, and is empowered to preserve it and interpret it for future generations.

While many of our events, publications and resources are freely available to the general public via our website, membership of the Percy Grainger Society brings a host of additional benefits. All membership dues go directly to support the work of the society, including the upkeep and development of the Percy Grainger Home and Studio.

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