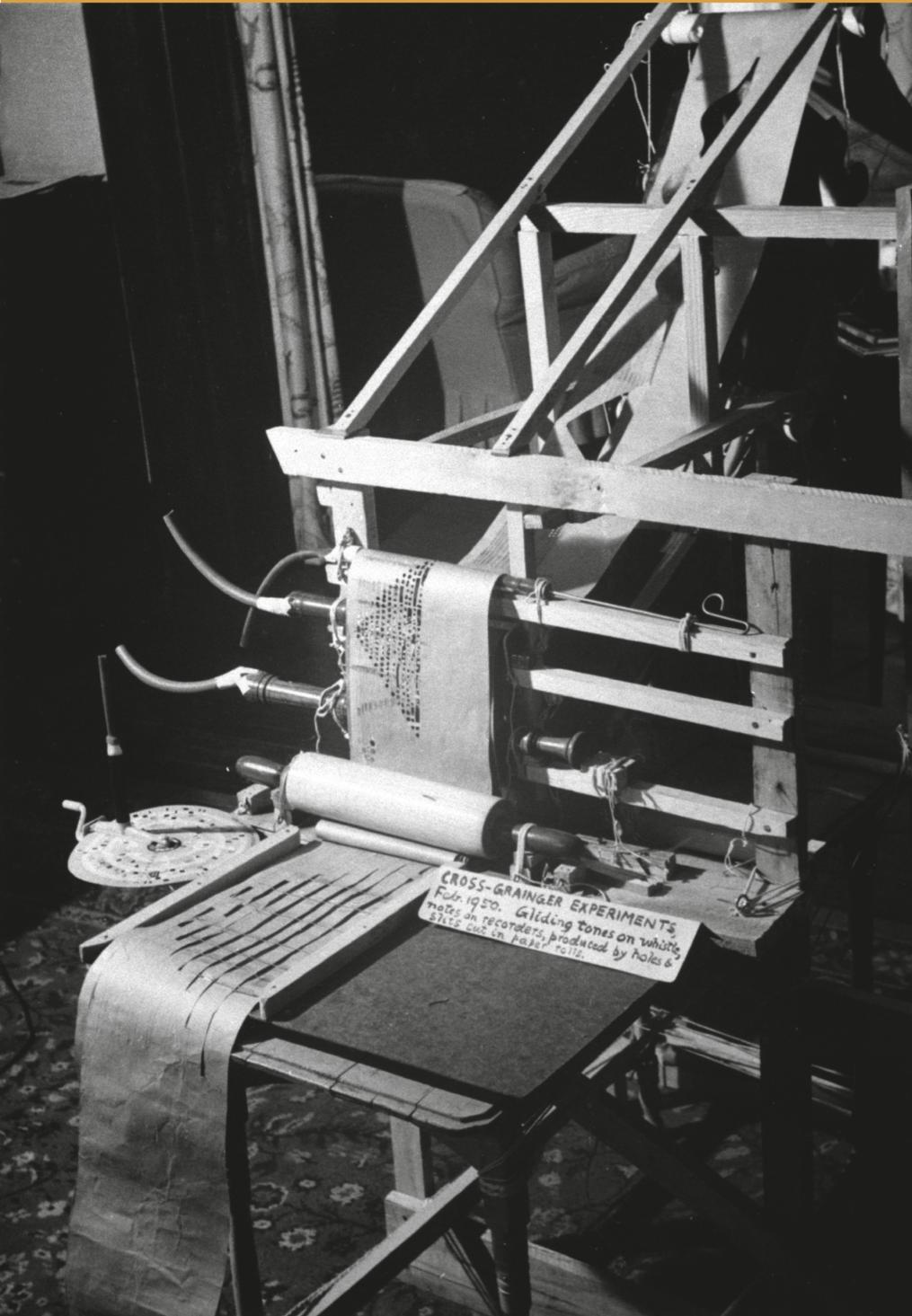


Gliding Tones on Whistle, Notes on Recorders

The Gliding Tones on Whistle, Notes on Recorders machine was constructed in February 1950. It is one of two Free Music machines that remains intact, the others either dismantled, lost, or transferred by the composer to the Grainger Museum in Melbourne, Australia.

In common with all of the Free Music machines, it incorporates a two-part design, a control mechanism and a sound producing element. Grainger drew on his early experiences as a recording artist with player and reproducing pianos in the design of many of the machines, using paper rolls with slits and holes cut into them to play the various instruments. These comprised organ pipes, harmonium reeds, simple electronic oscillators, and, in the case of this machine, two recorders, and a slide, or swanee whistle. The recorders and whistle would have been connected to a vacuum cleaner or hair dryer by means of rubber tubes, which provided the necessary amount of air to produce a continuous sound. As the paper rolls passed over the holes of the recorders, emulating the fingers of a human player, different notes would have been produced.

'Free Music demands a non-human performance. Like most true music, it is an emotional, not a cerebral, product and should pass direct from the imagination of the composer to the ear of the listener by way of delicately controlled musical machines.'



It is unlikely that the Gliding Tones on Whistle, Notes on Recorders machine was particularly successful, as the tension required to ensure that the paper rolls stayed sufficiently close to the body of the recorders would have meant that the paper was liable to tearing and uneven flow, problems that Grainger experienced in many of the machines. But it remains a fascinating testament to Grainger's dogged pursuit of his vision of Free Music, encapsulating his multi-faceted character as visionary composer, performer, artist, designer and inventor.

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