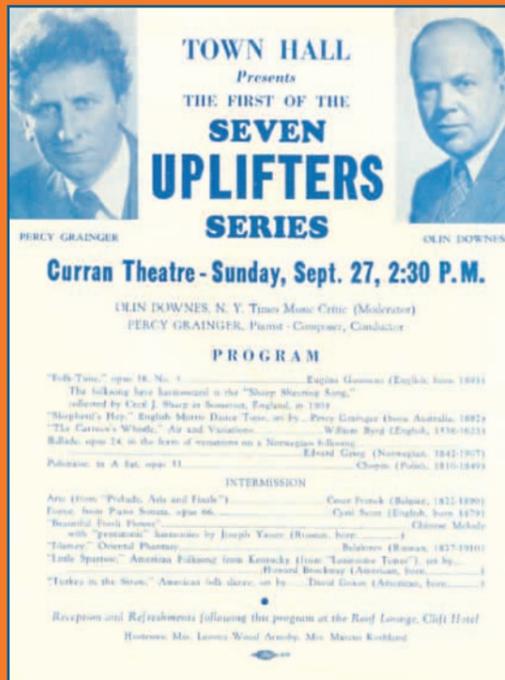


Learned Professor and Lionised Pianist

I visited Melbourne in 2005, 2007 and 2008, and on this third visit, for the first time, I was able to devote time to exploring the Grainger Museum collection. I spent two weeks at the end of November and beginning of December taking almost 1000 photographs (943 to be precise, plus some duplicates!) of primary source material relevant to Grainger's concert activities in the 1930s and 1940s and to his teaching activities at New York University in 1932–1933.

It has been said many times that Grainger, like Wagner (and for many of the same reasons), was his own worst enemy. Grainger's writings are an amalgam of the brilliant and the bizarre. In order to escape the power of his rhetoric in my writings on Grainger and democracy I used little of 'Democracy in Music' (1931), and in my writings on Grainger and interpretation I relied hardly at all on 'Can Music Be Debunked?' (1934). It is not that these are not interesting and relevant sources. They are. But that doesn't mean we must accept what they say at face value. In short, while almost 1000 pages of documents relating to my current research activities seems like a lot, it's the unguarded and private motivations behind these documents that will ultimately prove most illuminating.

Grainger's life and art were — again, as many have said before — rife with contradictions, not least of which was the care and attention he lavished on pursuits he evidently reviled. He was uncomfortable with formal teaching and all that goes with it, and with formal performing, and all that goes with that. I use the word formal, since Grainger was always teaching and performing in some capacity or another. What he could not be, at heart, was a university professor or a concert pianist, although he could play both roles convincingly. Like many of us, Grainger



Program for Percy Grainger recital, moderated by Olin Downes, held in San Francisco on 27 September 1942. Grainger Museum

responded to his own misgivings and perceived inadequacies by preparing himself thoroughly, especially when he was called upon to do something that was well outside his comfort zone.

Outstanding examples of Grainger's penchant for preparation and thoroughness (including his monomaniacal autoarchivism, which ensures some degree of control even beyond the grave) came to light in the course of my recent research. Grainger's recital in San Francisco on 27 September 1942, that involved commentary by music critic Olin Downes, elicited more than 25 pages of correspondence from Grainger to Downes, some of it

incredibly detailed, beginning with program suggestions and ending with kudos after the event. Grainger met his match in Downes, who responded with more than 15 pages of his own. When all is said and done, this single event generated more than 60 pages of correspondence, involving the principal players as well as publicists, personal representatives, and venue management and staff.

Grainger's New York University teaching is another case in point. In conjunction with his duties during the 1932–1933 academic year, the Grainger Museum houses a 30-page typewritten summary of lectures, two complete typewritten lectures, some handwritten notes, and a great deal of correspondence, including 6½ typed pages of 'Thoughts to the Dean' written at the end of the semester. Grainger's activities for the Summer Session of the NYU School of Education in 1933 are documented in a 30-page scrapbook plus miscellaneous notes and jottings. Although he may have found the role of the learned professor, like that of the lionised pianist, a bit of a stretch, he was assiduous in his preparation and documentation.

These two activities, Grainger's teaching at NYU in 1932–1933 and his collaboration with Olin Downes in 1942, are two of several Grainger projects with which I am currently occupied. My 2008 research trip was planned to coincide with the Musicological Society of Australia conference, at which I presented 'Percy Grainger: Another nincompoop like Sir Thomas Beecham?' on 4 December. I will advise Hoard House readers when this article, which concerns Grainger's role as performer of other people's music, appears in print.

Dr Glen Carruthers
Brandon University, Canada

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Lomax met Charles Seeger and Henry Cowell around 1933. Grainger wrote to both Seeger and Cowell at The New School for Social Research at that time. Cowell was enthusiastic about Grainger's suggestion that he record 'into his gramophone' his English, Danish and Rarotongan phonograph records and wrote that 'young Seeger' would collect the cylinders from Grainger. Was this Charles Seeger's son Pete who was to become such a close colleague of Lomax's?

The only evidence of Grainger's awareness of Lomax was found in a letter from collector Peter Kennedy. Kennedy had an impressive folksong pedigree. He was the son of Douglas Kennedy, Director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, and nephew of Maud Karpeles who collected Appalachian folksongs with Cecil Sharp in 1916. Karpeles and Grainger corresponded for many years. In the 1930s she supplied him with traditional song lyrics to possibly accompany his most well-known arrangement, the folk dance 'Country Gardens'.

From 1950 to 1959, when Lomax was living in London, he collaborated with Kennedy on the field survey 'Folk Songs of Great

Britain' (released 1961). In 1956 Kennedy wrote to Grainger to respectfully give him an update on folksong collecting in England. When Grainger went to London in 1958 he met with Kennedy for a 'record session'. Kennedy wrote to him following the visit, 'Alan Lomax is also particularly keen to see you.' Unfortunately no record of a meeting could be found.

It would seem highly unlikely that Lomax never contacted Grainger, as he displayed as strong a commitment to the preservation of folksong as Lomax did. So why is there no evidence of this? The Grainger Museum collection contains approximately 50,000 items of correspondence so there is a chance that Lomax could still be found amongst it. International archives may hold correspondence between the two. Or perhaps Grainger chose not to include the letters in his museum. Revealing more of this story could well be a rich vein for research.

Monica Syrette
Assistant Curator

Hoard House

NEWS FROM THE GRAINGER MUSEUM

Grainger Museum Redevelopment Project Update

Ever since the fencing went up around the Grainger Museum in January this year, I have made walking past the site a special part of my daily routine. The conservation building works being undertaken are fascinating to watch. Seeing all this construction activity going on never fails to make me think about what it would have been like for Percy Grainger back when his museum was originally being completed in 1938 and how thrilling it must have been for him to watch the final bricks being laid.

As many of our readers will know, Grainger had taken an active part in the design of the building, working closely with architect John Gawler throughout all stages of its evolution. Unfortunately, almost immediately after the Grainger Museum was built, the onset of World War II put a stop to any further developments. And after the war was over, a number of circumstances conspired to prevent Grainger from making it back to Australia. It was not until 1955, some 17 years later, that he finally saw his museum again. So much time had elapsed that Grainger had almost forgotten what it looked like. In an (some would say characteristically) effusive letter, Grainger wrote to John Gawler on 22 October 1955:

... what a delight your building is to us, in every way. It is so truly lovely in design & in colour & seems so much larger than we remembered it. In every respect it realises all our hopes & meets all our practical needs. We were extremely lucky to have you as our

architect for the museum & thus have every detail of the building dealt with so originally & unusually & with such wonderful taste in all respects ... gratefully & admiringly yours, Percy Grainger

In 2009, thanks to the wonders of modern technology, everyone with a computer can watch the progress of the Grainger Museum renovations online. The University's Property and Campus Services division has created a building project webpage in order to keep Grainger Museum stakeholders and interested members of the public informed and up to date on the Grainger Museum development. See http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/granger_museum.html. A link to this page features on the front page of the Grainger Museum website.

While all this building work has been going on we have been engaged in research and preparation for the exhibitions that will be installed in the Museum to coincide with the building's public re-opening in early 2010. The project to design new exhibitions for the Grainger Museum is currently nearing the end of the conceptual development phase. Museum staff have been working closely with exhibition designer Lucy Bannyan (from the highly regarded exhibition design firm Bannyan Wood P/L) and are now finished writing the basic narrative for each of the six new galleries, and have chosen the objects and documents with which to illustrate the storylines. It has been a challenge making these selections as the Museum's collection consists of more than



Percy Grainger's wife Ella working on the exhibits in the Grainger Museum during their 1955–1956 visit, photographer unknown. Grainger Museum

100,000 items — so many of which have their own captivating story to tell!

The items not on display will be housed within our offsite, climate-controlled storage facilities and remain accessible to researchers upon request. For the first time in the history of the Grainger Museum, therefore, visitors will be able to access the entire building and see in detail the unusual and innovative design that Grainger so unreservedly praised architect John Gawler for in 1955.

Astrid Britt Krautschneider
Curator, Collections and Research



Grainger meets Duke Ellington

In his award-winning book, *Visions of Jazz*, jazz historian Garry Giddings states that Percy Grainger referred to Duke Ellington ‘as the only original mind in American music’. Though he does not give a source for this statement we know Grainger held Ellington in high regard and he was certainly prone to making exclusive statements. Grainger’s three biographers, John Bird, Eileen Dorum and Thomas Slattery, all make mention of one of the high points in Grainger’s lecture series, ‘A General Study of the Manifold Nature of Music’, given at New York University in 1932, when he invited Ellington and his orchestra on stage to musically illustrate aspects of his lecture. Bird even goes so far as to make what appears on first reading to be a slightly apocryphal statement: ‘To open the lecture Grainger jumped onto the stage and said, “The three greatest composers who ever lived are Bach, Delius and Duke Ellington. Unfortunately Bach is dead, Delius is very ill but we are happy to have with us today The Duke.”’

This low resolution image (shown at right) came to light recently having been embedded in an antiquated Jaz drive disk (appropriate format!) for some years. Its origins are unknown. Coincidentally, Grainger’s lecture notes from when he was an associate professor at New York University were unearthed for a completely unrelated reason. The 32-page typescript lists lecture six on 25 October 1932 as the date when Grainger brought Ellington’s band onto the lecture stage.

In his previous lecture, Grainger had talked to his students about the Ellington band and discussed the different uses of syncopation in folk song, ragtime and jazz. He also referred to a recent article written about Duke Ellington in *Disques* magazine. This was an important milestone in Ellington’s career. Written by Robert D. Darrell, it was the first published in-depth study of Ellington’s music, but what made the essay, titled ‘Black Beauty’, particularly significant was that it was published in a journal that specialised in European art music and catered for white middle-American tastes. Darrell stated: ‘Duke Ellington, [is] a young Negro pianist, composer and orchestra leader, gifted with a seemingly inexhaustible well of melodic invention, possessor of a keenly developed craftsmanship in composition and orchestration.’

Ellington’s star was rising. In less than 12 months his band would be touring Europe exposing his music to completely new audiences. Grainger appeared to have two main motivations for engaging Ellington as part of his lecture series. Firstly he wanted to demonstrate the similarities and differences between a ‘big band’ playing written arrangements and a symphony orchestra playing a composer’s score. He defined art music as ‘fixed by notation’, and he asked the question ‘to what extent, is Ellington’s music art music [and] to what extent does it admit free improvisation (varying with each performance) by individual players?’ He also wanted to demonstrate jazz phrasing. He had the band read a popular tune ‘straight’ as notated and then play it ‘as individualized and specially treated by the Ellington Band’.

The other reason Grainger chose Ellington to illustrate his lecture was he felt a kinship with the bandleader. Both men were highly skilled orchestrators. In introducing the band’s music Grainger spoke of the ‘high emotional and technical qualities in Ellington’s music — rapturous moods [in his previous lecture he had compared these rapturous moods to those experienced in the music of Delius], sustained melodiousness, imitation of human voice by instruments, polyphonic texture [and] rhapsodic improvisation by individual players’. He also saw ‘the gliding and off-pitch sounds’ as a step towards the free music of the future.

When Grainger questioned Ellington’s main impulse behind his music, the bandleader declared it to be racial. Grainger was on common ground here having espoused his own beliefs on the racial origins in art on many occasions. Even the Duke’s use of language had a certain synergy with Grainger’s often creative use of English. Ellington would not use the word jazz but preferred ‘American music’. His suite *Black, Brown and Beige* was subtitled *A tonal parallel to the history of the American Negro*.

If anyone reading this article has access to the original photograph of Grainger and Ellington, the Grainger archive would like to acquire a good quality copy and any information about the circumstances of the photograph being taken.

Brian Allison, Curator, Exhibitions and Public Programs



Duke Ellington and Percy Grainger, possibly taken in 1932 at New York University, photographer unknown. Grainger Museum

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Grainger’s Managers

The collections of the Grainger Museum afford insights into an area of current interest among musicologists: musical management and entrepreneurship. Grainger’s practice of preserving papers and documents that many would discard — invoices, receipts, royalty statements and day-to-day correspondence — means the collection is rich in sources that illuminate his experience of music as a business.

Percy Grainger had only two personal managers — Antonia Sawyer and her niece Antonia (‘Tonie’) Morse — though his mother took a similar role early on and continued to exert influence in managerial matters until her death. Those familiar with Grainger’s life will remember that it was from Sawyer’s office window in New York’s Aeolian Hall building that Rose Grainger fell or jumped in 1922.

Antonia Sawyer and later her niece were essentially musicians’ managers. They secured engagements for Grainger (negotiating a set fee or occasionally a percentage of gross takings, with or without a minimum guarantee) and planned and administered his extensive concert tours in the US and Canada, though individual tour concerts would themselves be ‘micro-managed’ by someone in situ. From the late 1930s on, Morse was obliged to engage ‘sub-managers’ or booking agents on Grainger’s behalf. These booked concerts for him in their various US ‘territories’, though they appear mostly to have communicated with him through Morse.

The two women also advised Grainger on how to structure a

successful and profitable performing career in concert, on cylinder and disc and later radio — advice that he didn’t always take — and were to a great extent responsible for ‘keeping his name before the public’, often through the musical press. Percy paid his manager a percentage of both his gross concert income (including radio concerts) and of the royalties he received from his recordings; the former fluctuated between 15 to 20 per cent, depending, mostly, upon what expenses were borne by Sawyer or Morse. Where there was a sub-manager taking his or her own flat percentage (and occasionally a third party taking a cut as well), Morse took around ten per cent. Sawyer and later Morse also occasionally acted as entrepreneurs and concert managers themselves but only at key venues in major cities. These recitals, particularly later in Grainger’s career, would often run at a loss but, as they would be prominently reviewed, they served to stimulate bookings for other concerts.

While personal managers were first used by the likes of Paganini and Liszt in the 1830s and 1840s, Sawyer (1865–1941) described herself on page one of her published memoir (*Songs at Twilight*), as ‘the first woman manager who immediately stepped into the arena for international artists’. Sawyer was a professional church and concert singer, an alto, who in 1910 retired from public singing and set herself up as a manager, working at first from home. Evidently the business was a successful one and some five years later Grainger signed with her. The point at



Antonia Sawyer, 1917, photograph by Aimé Dupont (New York), sepia-toned silver gelatin print on card, inscribed to Grainger in ink and dated 10 April 1917. Grainger Museum

which Sawyer’s management stopped and Antonia Morse’s began is officially 1924, but Morse (1883/4–1963), who had worked for her aunt in the business since around 1917, appears to have dealt with all the details of Grainger’s tours from early on. Morse, not herself a musician, began as an employee on \$30 per month. She later became an associate in the company, then took over when her aunt retired and finally operated under her own name from her house in White Plains, next door to the Graingers.

Grainger’s long relationship with the two women, particularly Morse, was much more than a business association. Morse was a little younger than Percy and she and her husband Frederick became his friends and long-time neighbours. They were maid of honour and best man at his

wedding and went along on his ‘honeymoon’. Fred, by profession a photographer, took many studio portraits of Grainger and also acted as his secretary, music librarian and accountant for many years. The correspondence records only minor irritations and dissatisfactions on both sides until in 1932 there was a major and acrimonious ‘falling-out’ resulting in Grainger dismissing Tonie as his manager; Ella Grainger, at this time, disliked and resented her. In 1934 Tonie resumed Grainger’s management and when in 1943 she tried to retire, he was quick to dissuade her with his strongly expressed wish that ‘we could stay together to see my concert career decently folded up’. Morse ultimately managed him for 35 years.

Jennifer Hill
Curatorial Assistant



Grainger’s 1943 membership card for The English Folk Dance and Song Society. Grainger donated generously to various folksong organisations throughout his life.

Looking for Alan Lomax

The Grainger Museum contains many traces of Percy Grainger’s love for folksong. Amongst the most well known are the wax cylinder recordings he made in the early 1900s and later briefly in the 1930s. Grainger’s well-documented preference for capturing the nuances of an individual folk singer’s interpretative style and his pioneering use of the phonograph in the field gained him high praise from many fellow collectors.

Although Grainger’s commitments to performing and composing largely kept him from pursuing further folksong collecting his passion never wavered. His influence was also long-lasting and there are many examples of the high regard he was held in by collectors, musicologists and folklorists. These include books in Grainger’s

personal library with hand-written dedications from the authors, correspondence, notes from his university teachings and invitations to write for publications. Many of the major figures in folksong collecting are represented in the Museum’s collection including Lucy Broadwood, Cecil Sharp, Maud Karpeles, Natalie Curtis, Frances Densmore and Charles Seeger. However, anyone familiar with the field will notice at least one significant omission: Alan Lomax.

Alan Lomax (1915–2002), along with his father John A. Lomax, began making field recordings in the 1930s throughout the American South and West. He went on to contribute thousands of recordings from across the United States to the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress. It seems likely that Grainger and Lomax would have met or at least corresponded. However, a search of the collection came up empty handed.

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