

# Another Nincompoop like Sir Thomas Beecham? Percy Grainger and the Inter-relationship of Performers and Composers

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In the past few years I have written about musical interpretation, most recently in conjunction with Treitler's concept of 'the historical imagination,' and about the ontology of musical recordings.<sup>1</sup> I have also written about community / creative capital and careers in music, and on Percy Grainger: his piano playing and teaching, his concerts in Canada, and his role as an advocate for musical democracy.<sup>2</sup> The present study weaves together these seemingly disparate research strands by considering the moral, ethical and musical responsibilities of performers to composers, with specific reference to Percy Grainger.

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<sup>1</sup> Glen Carruthers, 'The Pedagogy of Interpretation,' *Educating Musicians for a Lifetime of Learning*, ed. Michael Hannan, Proceedings of the 17th Commission for the Education of the Professional Musician, Spilamberto, Italy, 2008: 21–25, <<http://www.members.isme.org/ceprom/ceprom-proceedings-2008.html>>; 'Musical Interpretation and "The Historical Imagination",' paper presented to the American Musicological Society—Midwest Chapter meeting, National-Louis University, Chicago, Illinois, 2008; 'Recordings in a Diachronic Continuum: Embodying the Musical Past,' unpublished paper presented to the International Musicological Society, Conservatorium van Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 5–10 July 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Glen Carruthers, 'Human, Social and Creative/Community Capital in the Training of Professional Musicians,' *Inside, Outside, Downside Up: Conservatoire Training and Musicians' Work*, ed. Dawn Bennett and Michael Hannan (Perth: Black Swan Press, 2008) 37–47; 'The Piano Music of Percy Grainger: A Pianist's Perspective on Pedalling,' *Canadian University Music Review* 21.2 (2001): 77–93; 'Percy Grainger Remembered: Alma Brock-Smith Talks to Glen Carruthers,' *Piano Journal* 24.74 (Summer 2004): 5–9; 'Percy Grainger and Louise McDowell,' *The Grainger Society Journal* 13.1 (1995): 17–31; 'Percy Grainger in Winnipeg,' *A Celebration of Canada's Arts 1930–1970*, ed. Glen Carruthers and Gordana Lazarevich (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1996) 97–116; 'Percy Grainger and the Schubert Choir of Brantford, Ontario,' *Anacrusis* 25.2 (2006): 11–17; 'Percy Grainger and the "Onward-March of Democratic Humanity",' paper presented to the symposium 'Percy Grainger at 125,' Ian Potter Museum of Art, The University of Melbourne, 7 Dec. 2007.

Distilling Grainger's views on musical interpretation or on anything else for that matter is, if not confounded utterly, certainly made challenging by his apparent flair for inconsistency. Grainger's views can appear contradictory. For example, his love of all peoples is, *prima facie*, difficult to reconcile with his pronounced racist convictions. Beneath the surface bluster, however, there emerges a cogent and reasoned worldview that comprises clearly delineated social and musical hierarchies. It is one of these musical hierarchies—the relationship of performers to composers—that this paper explores. It focuses on Grainger's all-roundedness, within which a clear distribution of musical roles and responsibilities is evident, and considers Grainger's concepts of musical democracy, textual fidelity and virtuosity from this perspective. The paper concludes by making a few observations arising from the discussion that point the way to further research.

It is tempting to reduce Grainger's complex personal and professional creed to binary relationships: for example, process/product, form/content, specialisation/all-roundedness, tradition/innovation, democracy/communism, constraint/freedom and performance/composition. Grainger himself often thought in binary terms. Articles like 'Melody Versus Rhythm,' 'Grieg—Nationalist and Cosmopolitan,' and 'The Specialist and the All-Round Man,' and his frequent contrasting of civilised and uncivilised peoples, and of amateur and professional musicians, speak to this tendency.<sup>3</sup> If Grainger is viewed expansively, on the other hand, as Blacking and others have done,<sup>4</sup> the principal themes of his life and music float to the surface and coalesce. Among these themes all-roundedness and democracy prevail and have a direct bearing on Grainger's career as an interpreter of his own and others' music.

Grainger's perspective on all-roundedness is gaining more and more currency all the time. Traditional boundaries between musical disciplines are now breached as a matter of course and distinctions between historical and systematic musicology, for example, became all but meaningless in the 1980s. Grainger would have approved. On a more pragmatic level, portfolio careers, like Grainger's, are nowadays common among professional musicians for personal as well as vocational reasons. Again Grainger was ahead of the curve. We are—as Grainger scholars like to point out—just catching up to where Grainger was comfortably ensconced some seventy-five or even one hundred years ago.

In his day, Grainger's array of abilities and interests, which came so naturally to him, proved baffling, especially to an academic world which so prized specialisation. He wrote that:

the all-round genius is the hard one for outsiders to understand ... partly because there are two all-round methods: the man who nibbles shallowly at many things, & the man (like Goethe) who struggles thoroly with many things, *one at a time* (at least concentrating on one at a time, tho possibly keeping the others going at the back of his brain—like a juggler keeping 5 balls in the air).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Percy Grainger, 'Melody Versus Rhythm,' *The Music News* (29 Sep. and 6 Oct. 1933), reprinted in *The Grainger Society Journal* 8.1 (Spring 1986): 64–69; Percy Grainger, 'Grieg—Nationalist and Cosmopolitan,' *The Etude* 61.6 (1943): 416–18; Percy Grainger, 'The Specialist and the All-Round Man,' *A Birthday Offering to [Carl Engel]*, ed. Gustave Reese (New York: Schirmer, 1943), reprinted in *The Grainger Society Journal* 10.1 (Spring 1990): 28–33.

<sup>4</sup> John Blacking, *A Commonsense View of All Music: Percy Grainger's Contribution to Ethnomusicology and Music Education* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987).

<sup>5</sup> Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, eds, *The All-Round Man: Selected Letters of Percy Grainger 1914–1961* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) 135. In quotations, I have preserved Grainger's idiosyncratic spelling and grammar. Underlining that appears in the originals is also retained.

Grainger belongs to the second type. As David Tall explains, Grainger did an astonishing number of things astoundingly well:

[I]n a life dominated by the rigours of being a concert pianist, [he] found time for many other time-consuming activities that a greater genius [?] might have avoided in the single-minded pursuit of his own ends. Despite, or rather because of, all the distractions he chose to place in his path, he found time to expand his frontiers in many directions with perceptive and highly prophetic innovations to stake his claim as one of the twentieth century's true originals.<sup>6</sup>

Part of the reason Grainger did many things well is that he had little interest in doing one thing exceptionally well. The discipline necessary for unequivocal success as a concert artist, for example, involves sacrifices that Grainger was not prepared to make. He was not so focussed on playing the piano that practising many hours a day on a consistent basis was really an option for him. He would apparently cram for concerts, practising for up to eight hours daily in the two months preceding a tour.<sup>7</sup> That he did not practice consistently is not because he was lazy (he was not), nor solely because he found it difficult to sit still (he did), but because performing to him was akin to driving a functional, as distinct from a sporty or luxury car. Performing was a means to an end (yet no less exigent for it), but was not an end in itself. Grainger encouraged one and all to make music in whatever way possible—this was core to his musical credo—and he believed that playing or singing was essential to a rounded and complete musical experience (as opposed to just listening). Nevertheless, he consistently placed performers near the bottom and composers at the top of his musical totem.

Grainger considered performers, including conductors like Sir Henry Wood and Sir Thomas Beecham, nincompoops—sometimes merely functional, sometimes inspired specialists who were *de facto* in a class apart from and subservient to composers. In a letter to Storm Bull Grainger characterises Wood and Beecham this way:

I believe in keeping the class distinctions between creative and executive musicians very strictly. I have always begged my composer-friends (alas fruitlessly) never to dedicate their music to nincompoops such as Sir Henry Wood or Sir Thomas Beecham.<sup>8</sup>

Slattery is incorrect that Grainger 'held all performers in contempt' and that he was 'especially vindictive' towards Wood and Beecham.<sup>9</sup> These two conductors were simply examples that came readily to mind of musicians whose careers were built on performing other people's music. Grainger was indebted to Beecham in many ways and called him 'one of the very greatest conductors,'<sup>10</sup> and a 'genius'<sup>11</sup> who conducts 'like a God.'<sup>12</sup> Grainger received much support and encouragement from Sir Henry Wood, who not only programmed many

<sup>6</sup> David Tall, 'Percy Grainger—An Overview of His Musical Achievements,' *Percy Aldridge Grainger—Symposium*, ed. Frank Calloway (Nedlands, WA: Callaway International Resource Centre for Music Education, The University of Western Australia, 1997) 9–10.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Lewis Taylor, *The Running Pianist* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1950) 14.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas C. Slattery, *Percy Grainger: The Inveterate Innovator* (Evanston, IL: Instrumentalist Co., 1974) 184.

<sup>9</sup> Slattery, *Percy Grainger* 184.

<sup>10</sup> Kay Dreyfus, ed., *The Farthest North of Humanness: Letters of Percy Grainger 1901–14* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1985) 419.

<sup>11</sup> Dreyfus, *Farthest North of Humanness* 447.

<sup>12</sup> Dreyfus, *Farthest North of Humanness* 448.

of Grainger's works at the Queen's Hall Promenade concerts, but also conducted on several occasions when Grainger was soloist (for example, in the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 in 1904, 1907, 1908 and 1911).

Incidentally, critics were also nincompoops: 'Fancy that any real tone-birther ((composer)) should sink so low as to read the bilge written by such a nincompoop as Ernest Newman.' That there was nothing personal in Grainger's assessment is evidenced by his explanation that, 'I single out E.N. because I am not aware of his ever having written against me or my art.'<sup>13</sup> Performers and critics were nincompoops (that is, lesser mortals) by virtue of their *métier*. Since we know he harboured considerable respect for Beecham, it can be assumed that although Grainger used the term "nincompoop" pointedly, it was not necessarily intended malevolently.

From Grainger's standpoint, while performers were single-minded and therefore disadvantaged, composers were all-rounded and therefore privileged. One of the stated objectives of the Grainger Museum was 'to collect evidence bearing on the question: are composers specialists or "all-round men"?' Grainger already knew the answer. '[T]he museum [is to] display examples of paintings, drawings, literature by composers and accounts of their extra-artistic enterprises.'<sup>14</sup>

A composer's all-roundedness did not preclude performing at the highest level. 'Grainger stated that the greatest performers were composers—for example, Rachmaninoff. He thought they had perhaps a greater gift of "understanding" and that this enabled them to look into a composition and see what the composer meant.'<sup>15</sup> Alma Brock-Smith concurred that Grainger the performer was 'as true as he could be to the composer.' She, too, wondered if 'Perhaps composers are especially conscious of what their attitudes should be when they deal with other composers' music.'<sup>16</sup> It was the same in his teaching. In an interview with Harriet Brower, Grainger explained: 'I enjoy teaching immensely; ... it is like conducting in its effort to bring out the meaning of the composer by means of another medium or mentality.'<sup>17</sup> Karl Payne writes that, 'Grainger was meticulous in his teaching about the accurate realization of the composer's intentions.'<sup>18</sup> In playing, conducting and teaching the goal was to advocate the composer's "meaning."

There can be no question that, in the relationship between a composer's conception, a performer's mediation, and a listener's reception of a musical artwork, Grainger believed that performers were to intervene only to the extent necessary to render the composer's conception intelligible to the public. Grainger saw the relationship between performers and composers in no uncertain terms. In a letter to the chancellor of the University of Melbourne, he explained that another purpose of the Grainger Museum would be to stress:

the creative side of music, as distinct from the merely executive side. Australia has, in the last 60 years, seen and heard many outstanding servants of music (singers,

<sup>13</sup> John Bird, *Percy Grainger* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1977) 126.

<sup>14</sup> Gillies and Pear, *All-Round Man* 150.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas P. Lewis, ed., *A Source Guide to the Music of Percy Grainger* (White Plains, NY: Pro/Am Music Resources, 1991) 28.

<sup>16</sup> Carruthers, *Percy Grainger Remembered* 7.

<sup>17</sup> Harriette Brower, *Piano Mastery: Second Series* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1917) 4–5.

<sup>18</sup> Lewis, *Source Guide* 14.

instrumental virtuosi and conductors) but to my knowledge none of the masters of music of that period [he lists 14 composers as examples] have visited Australia. I hope that the display of photographs, relics, letters, MSS, typical of such men may prove stimulating to creatively-minded Australian music-lovers.<sup>19</sup>

In another letter, Grainger averred that:

Composers are the masters of music. Pianists, conductors, violinists, singers, etc., are merely the servants of music. Insofar as I appear as a mere pianist, I try to behave as a servant of music. The musical world clearly draws this distinction, recognising a great gulf between a great pianist like Josef Hofmann who hasn't enough brains to become a composer, and a great pianist like Rachmaninoff who *has* the brains to be a great composer. It is a mistake to rate creators and performers as co-equal branches of the same art. A performer is merely a parasite living on the body of art created by the composer.<sup>20</sup>

These letters, the first from 1938 and the second from 1943, help explain why Grainger the composer felt free to do anything he pleased, while Grainger the performer felt constrained to do only what composers required of him.

The unexamined belief that performers were composers' underlings was prevalent in Grainger's day and is repeated without question in many articles about him. D.C. Parker states that, 'Notwithstanding his gifts as a pianist, it is as an active force in music that Grainger merits our attention.'<sup>21</sup> The implication that performers are passive forces in realising composers' intentions has now been widely and resoundingly debunked, but in not recognising the active role performers play in realising musical artworks, Grainger was uncharacteristically characteristic of his time.

Grainger's words and actions in this matter mirror one another. As an arranger, Grainger takes tremendous liberties with other people's music, reharmonising, truncating, adding fresh counter-melodies and so forth. The list of Grainger's reworkings of borrowed sources is extensive and the degree of intervention can be extreme, as when he reduces the Tchaikovsky, Grieg and Schumann piano concertos to a few minutes each. No composer since Liszt has adapted such a wide range of repertoire and done so as idiosyncratically as Grainger. Mellers sees in this practice a manifestation of Grainger's musical democracy and evokes the model of Liszt. 'Liszt, [like Grainger], was a musical democrat, whose aesthetic shows less concern with distinctions of authorship *per se* than with *making music*.'<sup>22</sup> Authorial rights are a thorny issue in the performing arts, but whatever the case, there remains irony in the fact that Grainger, in his own music, punctiliously indicated many details—pedalling in particular, but also chord voicings and voice leading—that other composers routinely left to the performers' discretion.

Grainger's estimation of the performer's role in music's diachronic continuum translates into a regard for textual fidelity that was unusual in the early twentieth century. There is little

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<sup>19</sup> Gillies and Pear, *All-Round Man* 148–49.

<sup>20</sup> Lewis, *Source Guide* 31.

<sup>21</sup> Douglas Charles Parker, 'Percy Aldridge Grainger: A Study,' *The Grainger Society Journal* 16.1 (Winter 2002): 5.

<sup>22</sup> Wilfrid Mellers, 'Some Remarks on the Music of Percy Grainger,' Lewis, *Source Guide* 43, n.36.

evidence to support Tan's view that 'Grainger's pianism was synonymous with the romantic virtuoso tradition.'<sup>23</sup> Grainger stood apart from that tradition. As Kevin Bazzana relates:

At first glance, it would seem that Grainger was eccentric as everything but a pianist. Yet, this apparent lack of eccentricity was, one might say, the greatest eccentricity of all, at least in his heyday in the first decades of [the twentieth century]. What was remarkable about Grainger was how modern he sounded ... Grainger played with a directness and clarity, an absence of self-indulgence, that many found refreshing. And for such a world-class eccentric, he had a remarkable (and very modern) respect for the printed score, declaring that 'I am against the injection of personality into music of any kind.'<sup>24</sup>

The context of the Grainger quotation is interesting. He was referring to his reluctance to wear towelling costumes in concert since 'it might cause talk.'<sup>25</sup> While one might question whether Grainger ever worried about 'causing talk,' and while the veracity of Taylor's anecdotal material is often suspect, the point is well taken that, in performing, Grainger aimed to prevent his larger-than-life personality from intruding upon the composer's score.

Grainger's 1928 recording of Chopin's B $\flat$ -minor Sonata, op. 35, is an excellent example of his playing.<sup>26</sup> His rendering of the Funeral March does not sound dated, more than eighty years later. Conversely, Rachmaninoff's recording from 1930 is incongruous with present-day notions of textual fidelity,<sup>27</sup> and Paderewski's recording, from the same year as Grainger's, is resolutely (even alarmingly) from another era.<sup>28</sup> Musical interpretation cannot preclude the voice of an intermediary that has its own ontology—that is a given—but in this regard Grainger kept an anomalously low profile.

Some alleged exceptions are so extreme (even egregious) that they are unlikely to be true. Two examples will suffice to make this point. One instance is Taylor's report of Grainger's first solo recital, in Melbourne, when he was ten:

It was a crashing success, although many critics expressed mystification over some of the numbers. The trouble was that by then Grainger had decided to become a composer rather than a pianist, and he was acquiring a resentment of playing that has been with him ever since. Consequently, he gave several of the pieces he played a somewhat cavalier treatment, omitting passages, substituting cadenzas of his own, and forming hybrid compositions, such as a Schubert beginning joined to a Chopin middle and a Beethoven ending.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Eleanor Tan, 'Grainger the Performer,' *Facing Percy Grainger*, ed. David Pear (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2006) 15.

<sup>24</sup> Kevin Bazzana, "'Kicking Out at Space': On the Life and Art of Percy Grainger," notes to *Percy Grainger in Performance* (works by Grieg [rec. 1945], Grainger [rec. 1945 and 1946] and Schumann [rec. 1928]), Music and Arts, CD-1002, 1997, 10.

<sup>25</sup> Taylor, *Running Pianist* 17. Grainger and his wife frequently wore clothing they had made from towels.

<sup>26</sup> Percy Grainger, *Percy Grainger – Volume II* (includes Chopin Sonata in B $\flat$  minor, op. 35, rec. 9 Oct. 1928), Pearl GEMM, CD 9013, 1993.

<sup>27</sup> Sergei Rachmaninoff, *The Complete Recordings* (includes Chopin Sonata in B $\flat$  minor, op. 35, rec. 18 Feb. 1930), RCA Victor, 09026-61265-2, 1992.

<sup>28</sup> Ignaz Paderewski, *Legendary Performers* (includes Chopin Sonata in B $\flat$  minor, op. 35, mvts III & IV, recorded 24 May 1928), BMG Classics, 09026-60923-2, 1992.

<sup>29</sup> Taylor, *Running Pianist* 19.

There are no independent sources to verify this account. Certainly, the press makes no mention of it. Taylor is the source of a second anecdote:

At one afternoon performance, before a collection of women's clubs on Long Island, [Grainger] gave what seemed to her a suspiciously curt rendition of Grieg's 'Ballade,' and on the way home [Grainger's manager] said, 'Wasn't that pretty brief, Percy?' 'I dropped six pages out of the middle,' he said, 'so's I could catch the four fifty-eight.'<sup>30</sup>

This anecdote, too, is unverifiable. It contributes to the Grainger "mythology" that Taylor, with Grainger's complicity, helped create, but gives an inaccurate picture of Grainger's conception of musical performance.

Grainger, in his 'Guide to Virtuosity: Foreword to Students' (1923),<sup>31</sup> makes clear that a finely honed technique had one purpose only: to aid in satisfying as best one could a composer's intentions. That many performers were not composers complicated matters. According to Grainger, divisions of labour wrought by the industrial revolution had exacerbated the separation of performers from composers. Performers became zealots seeking converts to a cause which was, in Grainger's view, not necessarily primarily musical.

The changes in society which came with the industrial revolution meant a new necessity for appealing to a wider audience, composed of the general public in place of a limited circle of music-lovers. Acrobatics and virtuosity became the order of the day and musical mountebanks like Paganini entered the scene.<sup>32</sup>

Typically, racially biased nationalism enters the picture:

[G]enerally it is the musically undeveloped countries in the classical sense which produce great virtuosi like Hungary. Or Spain, which gave us Sarasate. Russia produced Rubinstein. Many of the greatest are Jews. Great composers, but not great virtuosi are the rule in Nordic countries, although these have produced many of the greatest interpretive artists, among whom I rank singers like Gerhard and Plunket Greene, who were not virtuosi.<sup>33</sup>

Civilisation had, to Grainger's way of thinking, spawned yet another monster, the musical mountebank, whose ascendancy could be ascribed partly to the taste of the general public (this, despite Grainger's leitmotivic disavowal of elitism). Grainger believed that performative virtuosity in classical music was often extraneous. I stress 'performative' because he relished virtuosity in composition (witness his delight at the opening chorus of the *St Matthew Passion*),<sup>34</sup> and I stress 'classical' because he celebrated the complexities (complex to western ears) of non-

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<sup>30</sup> Taylor, *Running Pianist* 39.

<sup>31</sup> Percy Grainger, 'Guide to Virtuosity: Foreword to Students,' reprinted in *Grainger on Music*, ed. Malcolm Gillies and Bruce Clunies Ross (Oxford: OUP, 1999) 143–51.

<sup>32</sup> Percy Grainger, 'A Musician Talks of Music,' *The Herald* (10 Sep. 1938), reprinted as 'Who are the Great?' *The Grainger Society Journal* 8.2 (Fall 1986): 20.

<sup>33</sup> Grainger, 'A Musician Talks of Music' 20.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Percy Grainger, 'Theme as Related to Form in Music,' Gillies and Clunies Ross, *Grainger on Music* 7–9; Percy Grainger, 'The Music of Cyril Scott,' *Music Student* 5.2 (Oct. 1912), reprinted in Gillies and Clunies Ross, *Grainger on Music* 36.

classical musics. In other words, virtuosity and complexity were *a priori* suspect, but could be redeemed by musical context.

There are many factors besides all-roundedness and musical democracy, textual fidelity and virtuosity relevant to an assessment of Grainger's erratic career as a concert pianist. These include his dislike of practising, his fear of memory lapses, his frustration with the piano's limitations, and the boundaries of his own playing technique. As many critics and scholars have noted, Grainger's technique was not of the Horowitz-Hofmann order. Of these and many other complex issues I will expand briefly on four that could provide the basis of further research.

When confronted with linear arguments and logical outcomes, Grainger was an Outsider, observing from the periphery a world to which he did not intuitively subscribe. Grainger was, to take an obvious instance, nonplussed by the rigours of sonata form. An aversion to the Viennese classicists and their successors exacerbated Grainger's Otherness and excluded from his repertoire much of the core piano literature. The musical canon presupposes connectedness and the centrality of tradition. Grainger sought to disconnect from the canon and to erode its centrality. Once eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sonata forms and nineteenth-century virtuoso repertoire were eschewed, the remaining repertoire was far outside the mainstream and could prove challenging to audiences reared on Schubert and Beethoven, and Liszt and Rachmaninoff.

Grainger's focus on musical processes negates easy identification with musical products. Although performing appears to be process, on the concert stage and in the recording studio it effectuates an end product. Product—for instance, a finely honed *Waldstein*—is not what Grainger relished. Whether performing live or on recordings, performers distil an interpretation from limitless possibilities. Grainger's robust view of music worked the other way around. He would rather explore limitless possibilities than instantiate a single option.

As a performer Grainger had no interest in colonising other composers. As a composer he felt otherwise and colonised (some would say cannibalised) musical borrowings widely. It is ironic that one of Grainger's most assured compositions, *Colonial Song*, belongs to that small minority of his works not based on pre-existing sources. This work celebrates the idea of democracy and the colonial spirit, but does not itself colonise anything.

Musical idioms predicated on conflict and resolution, including the solo/tutti tensions in many concerti, wherein the soloist seeks integration with or subjugation of the surrounding forces left Grainger at a complete loss. This is typical of his pacifistic views generally. He did not regard social accord and individual freedom as opposites, but believed one was inseparable from the other.

A professional performing career, and the assumptions that appertain to it, stood in opposition to all that Grainger held dear. The performer is inside the music (and experiences it directly), but the audience is outside the music (and experiences it indirectly). Grainger sought greater unity with his audiences than this entrenched paradigm allows. Although Grainger resisted specialisation, the formality of public concerts, programming conventions, and the interpretive predilections that developed apace audience proclivities, he was fighting an uphill battle. 'With the concert-goers who flocked to witness virtuosos walking the tightrope he was to lose much irretrievable ground.'<sup>35</sup> But Grainger, ever the iconoclast, was able to escape the

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<sup>35</sup> Bird, *Percy Grainger* 197.



unwelcome strictures of a virtuoso career by going his own way, by cultivating audiences and repertoire neglected by his contemporaries. With a performing career only, Grainger, like Rachmaninoff, would have remained unfulfilled. That Grainger's all-roundedness enabled him to engage the world in diverse ways, sustained his career and enriched his legacy immeasurably.