

# Hoard House

NEWS FROM THE GRAINGER MUSEUM

## News from the Manager's Desk

Joining the Grainger Museum as Manager in its 75th year I feel a great sense of privilege and responsibility. Privilege to be joining an organisation that through the efforts of so many passionate and focused Grainger devotees – many working in a volunteer capacity – has managed through 75, sometimes turbulent, years to build, interpret, maintain and latterly enhance a respected Museum of national cultural significance; responsibility to augment those collective efforts, which started with the work of Percy Grainger himself, to ensure that the Museum and its collections retain their relevance and continue to fascinate, intrigue and inspire future scholars, students and museum audiences.

The key event to date in the 75th anniversary celebrations was the launch in April of the temporary exhibition, 'Sidelights and Cross-references: 75 years of the Grainger Museum', by ABC Classic FM presenter Emma Ayres. This fascinating exhibition takes its name from a quotation of Percy Grainger's that encapsulates his collecting tastes and techniques. 'Most museums, most cultural endeavours, suffer from being subjected to TOO MUCH TASTE... TOO MUCH SELECTION... TOO MUCH SPECIALISATION. What we want is ALL-SIDENESS, SIDE-LIGHTS, CROSS REFERENCES'. The symbol of the turnip

Emma Ayres and Philip Kent, University Librarian  
Photograph by Daryl Snowden



– the antithesis of flower-like images – which Grainger suggested his audiences conjure up when he played *Country Gardens* is used to highlight our 75 special objects.

Although the exhibition launch pre-dated my joining the Grainger Museum by a couple of months, I have heard from reliable sources that Ms Ayres entertained a gathering of over 120 guests with her colourful and at times irreverent speech that suggested novel interpretations of Percy Grainger's famously broad musical tastes. Guests lingered long after official proceedings to peruse the exhibition and enjoy the company of their fellow invitees.

Other activities in the 75th year calendar include the production of an elegant Grainger Museum publication featuring stunning photographs of some of the most intriguing and evocative collection items, with written contributions by subject experts. We have been delighted with the generosity of our authors who have in many cases provided us with valuable additional research, new insights and a different interpretation. We are confident the new publication, which will be launched at a celebratory party on 13 December – 75 years to the day since the Museum opened – will be an attractive and informative addition to the Grainger Museum story.

With funds allocated for the Museum's 75th year, we are in the process of migrating over 125,000 of our existing collection records to the sophisticated KE EMu museum cataloguing system. Under Curator Astrid Krautschneider's direction a small team of KE EMu specialists has been recruited to lay the groundwork for this daunting task, determining the logic and structure that will underpin our new collection management system, improving catalogue records and inputting previously uncatalogued items.



Monica Syrette and Astrid Krautschneider installing the 75th Anniversary exhibition. Photograph by Brian Allison

While we hope to make significant headway with this project over the next few months, we regard the catalogue overhaul as a work in progress. Additional collection items, images and, wherever possible, sound will be added incrementally over the next two years. Researchers, students and the public will nonetheless start to see the benefits from early next year.

Our striking new 'Grainger Museum' signs were installed just prior to the popular *Open House Melbourne weekend*, which for the third year in a row resulted in hundreds of people streaming into the Museum, most of whom had never visited before. It was very satisfying to overhear the animated conversation of delighted visitors and receive positive feedback from so many as they departed.

It seems fitting at this point in my first *Hoard House* article to acknowledge the valuable contribution of my predecessor, Ms Suzanne Bravery, who led the Grainger Museum through its post re-opening period. I look forward to building on her legacy of academic and public engagement and to welcoming an ever increasing number of visitors both on-line and physical to the Grainger Museum in its 75th year.

**Jo-Anne Cooper**  
Manager



# Highlights from the 75th anniversary exhibition

## The 1907 edition of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*

**O**n Christmas Day in 1907, British composer Roger Quilter wrote to his close friend Percy Grainger to see what he had made of this year's Christmas present:

I hope you will be amused by this absurd but laughable book – I fear it will not suit your fresh, healthy personality – it is, to say the least, perverse. The pictures are the best part, I think, particularly the title page – the 'Black Cloak' (Japanesey) [sic] and the little figure being laid in the powder-box, at the end.'

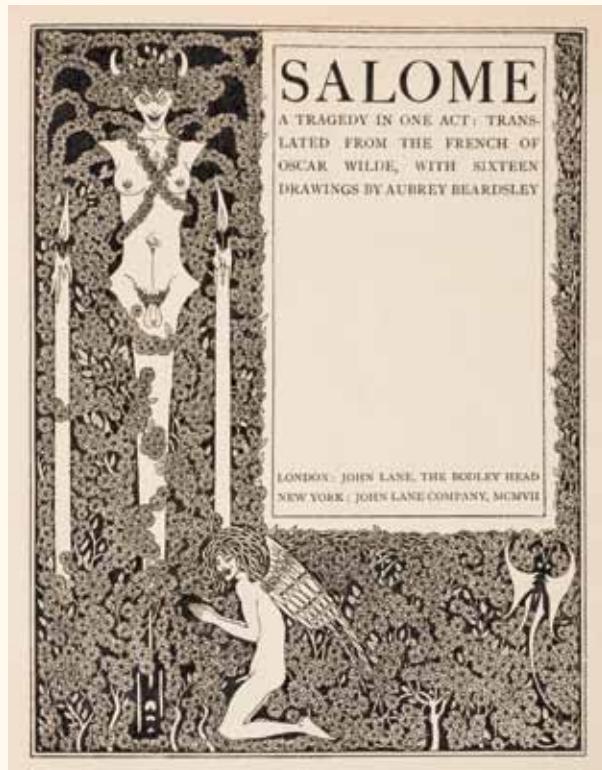
Oscar Wilde's notorious play *Salome* was originally written in French and then translated into English by his friend Lord Alfred Douglas ('Bosie'). First published in English in 1894, the book caused an immediate sensation. In 1895, Wilde was convicted of 'gross indecency' after a court battle with Douglas' father, the Marquess of Queensberry. Aubrey Beardsley, associated with Wilde because of his illustrations for *Salome*, was sacked as art editor of *The Yellow Book* (the leading literary journal of the 1890s) and obliged to flee temporarily to France.

The 1907 edition was the first to contain all 16 of Beardsley's intended illustrations, including the uncensored title page, the cover design prepared for the 1894 edition which was suppressed, the illustration of John and Salome which was previously cancelled, the uncensored version of 'Enter Herodias', both versions of 'The Toilet of Salome' and a full-sized illustration of the 'Cul de lampe'.

Percy Grainger was much taken by Beardsley, considering him to be among the few English artists able to transcend the 'cage' of 'British national life' and produce 'wild, ruthless... terrible art' (Grainger to his mother Rose, 31 March 1909). He treasured his copy of *Salome*.

**Astrid Britt Krautschneider**  
Curator, Collections and Research

1 Quilter to Grainger, 25 December 1907.  
Grainger Museum collection



Oscar Wilde (1854–1900)  
*Salome: a tragedy in one act*  
London: John Lane, 1907



Yoeman and Co., Prahran  
Robert Wilson, c.1895  
Silver gelatin print mounted on card

## Robert Wilson 'Tram-man' on the Toorak line

**V**isitors to the Grainger Museum occasionally ask why it was built in Melbourne, given that Percy Grainger left Australia in 1895 and lived overseas for the rest of his life. For Grainger there was no question that a museum devoted to understanding his creative processes should be located in his home town. Throughout his life he referred to key experiences in his formative years when discussing his compositions and musical experiments, such as watching waves lap against the side of his model boat on Albert Park Lake. He also identified a range of local people who had a significant impact, including his 'boyhood friends', the 'Tram-men'.

When looking into the early years of Grainger's life, the motto "Give me a child until he is seven and I will give you the man" comes to mind. His governess Mabel 'Middney' Todhunter describes a boy with a fertile imagination and deep curiosity: "One could never be dull with Percy for a companion; his small brain was always working out things".<sup>1</sup>

Grainger found it difficult to relate to his peers, Middney attributing that to his enthusiasm for a rich and complex world of make believe, but adults were charmed by his intelligence and creativity. Grainger liked to explore the city by jumping on and off trams and got to know a number of drivers. The kindness shown by the drivers, with at least one even allowing him to take the controls, clearly left a lasting impression on the young Percy.

When compiling his Museum index Grainger assigned a number to the photos, mementos and letters from the 'Tram-men' but to date few items have come to light. It is tempting to think that tucked away in local historical societies and family archives there may be further evidence of Grainger's childhood friendship with the tram drivers of Melbourne. If you have any information please feel free to drop us a line.

**Monica Syrette**  
Assistant Curator

1 Mabel 'Middney' Todhunter to Grainger, 30 March 1938. Grainger Museum collection

# A Pueblo pot with echoes of a brief friendship

This hand-painted jar is believed to have been created by the Zia Pueblo people living in Arizona or New Mexico in the United States. It is a simple earthenware pot, thrown on a hand-turned wheel – the flat base swells outward and then narrows at the rim, reducing

the likelihood of spillage when the vessel is carried filled with liquid. The characteristic jagged decorations have been painted onto the vessel after firing. This object displays evidence of surface abrasion commensurate with extensive use in a domestic environment.



Pueblo water container, c. 1900.  
Earthenware, applied pigments

Percy Grainger was interested in collecting the material culture of diverse tribal groups from across the globe, but like many items in his collection he did not collect this vessel in the field. It has a museum or dealer's inventory number written on a paper label in longhand that appears to predate Grainger's time. His interest in Pueblo culture may have been piqued by his friendship with composer and folk song collector, Natalie Curtis-Burlin (1875–1921) who he joined on some of her expeditions in the United States southwest during, and shortly after World War I. Grainger's collection of music by other composers includes *Songs of Ancient America* – three Pueblo corn-grinding songs, transcribed by Curtis-Burlin and published by Schirmer in 1905. Like Grainger, she tried to preserve folk music with painstaking fidelity to the original performance, and also like her Australian counterpart, periodically used an Edison Phonograph.

The Grainger Museum archive has a hand-made greeting card with the following inscription: 'For Percy Grainger, best of folklorists (whose own song is immortal, too!) from a humble American collector, and a warm, admiring friend, Natalie Curtis, New York, Feb. 11th, 1915'. Curtis-Burlin produced ground-breaking work in preserving examples of music, folklore and art of indigenous American people. Later in her short life she began recording the music of African-American peoples. She died in a traffic accident in Paris in 1921.

**Brian Allison**  
Curator, Exhibitions and Public Programs

## Letter from Tchaikovsky to Maurice Ernst, Paris, 15 June 1893

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) was a prolific letter writer and some 5375 letters to nearly four hundred correspondents are still extant.<sup>1</sup> The letter currently on display in the Museum, collected by Percy Grainger himself, is one of nine that survive from that one day alone.

The Museum's letter was written the day after Tchaikovsky's return from England, where he had received an honorary doctorate at the University of Cambridge as one of an extraordinary group of five musicians; the others were Arrigo Boito, Max Bruch, Edvard Grieg (too ill to attend) and Camille Saint-Saëns. This was also the year Tchaikovsky composed his Symphony no. 6 ('Pathétique') which was to be his last. Tchaikovsky died in November 1893 just after the work's first performance in Saint Petersburg.

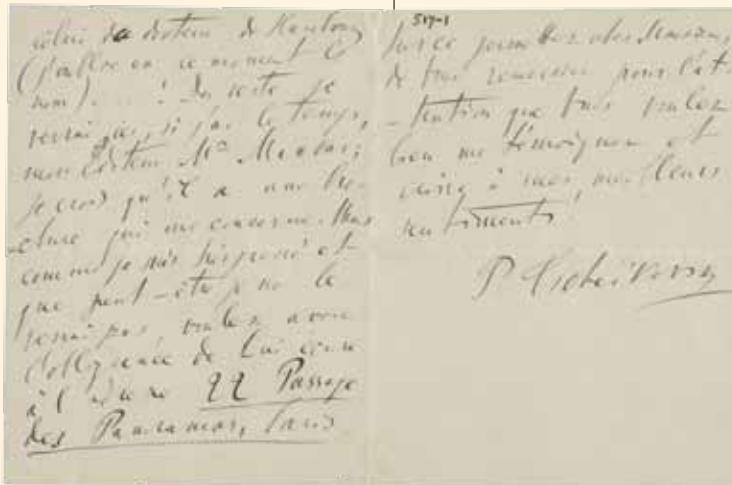
Tchaikovsky's letter is in reply to Budapest-born Maurice Ernst. Ernst was then a student of just 22 – he studied medicine then law – and was later a journalist and the London correspondent of the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*. Ernst had asked Tchaikovsky to nominate the best book about himself. With no book to recommend, and a lapse in memory, the composer identified rather than named Hugo Riemann's *Musik-Lexicon*. He also suggested obtaining a brochure from his French publisher, Félix Mackar.

The recipient, Maurice Ernst (1872–1955; Ernest post-1915), went on to become an interesting figure. A biologist by profession, he devoted enormous energies to the quest to greatly extend life and amassed a library of some 600 volumes on the subject, writing several books of his own.<sup>2</sup> The reason, beyond simple curiosity, for his letter to Tchaikovsky is unknown.

**Jennifer Hill**

<sup>1</sup> See the online resource [www.tchaikovsky-research.net](http://www.tchaikovsky-research.net). The Museum's letter is 4951a and a transcription and translation of the French into German is found in Thomas Kohlhase, "Čajkovskis Brief vom 3./15. Juni 1893 an den Journalisten Maurice Ernst in London," *Tschaikowsky-Gesellschaft Mitteilungen* 10 (2003): 83–89.

<sup>2</sup> See Lucy Evans, "The Problem of Death: Dr Maurice Ernest and his Longevity Library", *eBLJ* (Electronic British Library Journal) 2013, <http://www.bl.uk/eblj/2013articles/pdf/ebljarticle112013.pdf>.



Tchaikovsky letter, 15 June 1893

# "KEEPERS" of the J.C. Deagan Organ Chimes

The instrument, model 5400 or 5500, was used by Grant Allen, born 1896, in vaudeville entertainment.

It is unlikely that Grant, my father, would have started in this field before 1914, and my sister, who was born in 1926, has no recollection of anything suggesting stage-work during her life, so it probably ceased before 1930. We have no knowledge of how he came to purchase the chimes, or from where.

When Dad died in 1966, Mum was ready to move into a retirement village, so there was no way she could keep the big instrument, even if she had wanted to. One of my ex-neighbours had worked at the Grainger Museum, and I think he might have suggested the donation.

After making contact, I duly delivered the complete, but dismantled, instrument to the Grainger Museum, did not request or receive a receipt, and probably said something to the effect that we were pleased to find an appropriate home for it. I left a note with it to the general effect that we were donating the chimes in memory of Dad. I now know that the person I dealt with was Keith Humble.

Here, percussionist Graeme Leak takes up the tale.

"The story from my end is that I arrived at La Trobe Music Department in the early 90s and the chimes were a part of the instrument collection there. We used them quite a bit in concerts and improvisations. This was towards the end of Keith Humble's time there. When Keith was leaving La Trobe he took me aside and said that the chimes had been 'given to him' when he was at the Grainger Museum and they did not belong to the Department and would I make sure to look after them. When the Department closed at the end of 1999 I took them home and they lived in my shed until a few years ago when I donated them to the Grainger Museum!"

In 2012 I, Laurie Allen, contacted the museum to enquire about the instrument, and spoke to Monica Syrette. She initially said she could find no record on file of the chimes, but further probing found them in the store room, but incomplete. I immediately began to seek permission to do some work restoring them to a stage where they could at least be displayed and played.

A fairly thorough examination of the individual chimes showed they appeared to be in sound condition except for one. Of the main frame of the instrument, only two of the ten steel tubes were in hand, plus the two decorative scrolls, so a new frame had to be produced.



Laurie Allen demonstrating the Deagan Organ Chimes

For the most part, this would consist of minor machining of steel tube sections, but four joiners which interconnected the tubes would be a difficult task for me. Time to consult a very clever engineer friend, Alan Tolley. From studying photographs of organ chimes, I drew the most complex one and showed it to Alan, and he felt confident he could produce them. On my next session at the Grainger Storeroom, I noticed another Deagan instrument which was on a frame exactly like the lower section of the chimes frame. Eureka, we have one in captivity, which we can copy. Much superior to working from a 'Laurie-sketch'!

I was given the OK to borrow the joiner, for replication. Between us, Alan and I, put in over 160 hours and drove in excess of 630 kms to finish the frame. At last the chimes are "whole" once more.

**Laurie Allen**

## Investigating the deterioration of a Lynch Family Handbell at the Grainger Museum

The Grainger Museum holds a number of items belonging to the Lynch Family Bellringers from Geelong. These include posters, scrapbooks, photographs and musical instruments. Handbell ringing as a form of entertainment was rare when the Lynches started their performances and their act drew crowds from city and country. Their scrapbooks illustrate how popular this entertainment was and the type of use the bells were subjected to. Robert Lynch's 1880 scrapbook includes a photograph of the handbells lined up on a table ready for use by the ensemble cast.

The handbells the Lynch Family used were most likely cast by the English foundry Mears and Stainbank. Being the most reputable and oldest manufacturers, their traditional methods of handbell casting (dating to Elizabethan times) would surely have appealed to the Lynches.

One particular item the Grainger Museum acquired in 2000 is a bronze and leather handbell tuned to the note F. This handbell was examined with the aim of investigating the corrosion products of this late 19th-century musical object.

At first glance, the bell is bright, shiny and looks well used. Upon closer examination a series of coloured markings and stains are seen surrounding the bell, arranged in many different patterns and shapes. The brown, black, white, and hues of green, stand out against the golden sheen of the metal. The leather handle also shows signs of wear. Distorted, abraded and cracked, with insect remains and the hint of a white thumbprint on the leather, it is clear that something has happened to the handbell to make it look this way.



Photograph by Marica Mucic, Masters student at CCMC

Deterioration of objects is synonymous with inherent vices of materials and manufacturing processes. Factors to consider regarding the life of the bells are the method and environmental conditions of storage. One of the scrapbooks shows sales dockets for horse and buggy equipment being sold after the Lynches had travelled around Australia. It could be construed that the bells were kept in boxes in these carts and subjected to many bumpy and dusty journeys. It is the storage conditions at the end of their life where one can imagine much deterioration occurring. The bells were found in an undesirable condition. Not only being subjected to a salt-laden atmosphere, they were inside a basic pine box that had years of organic decomposition.

Leather deteriorates with noticeable cracking, shrinking and warping. It also goes through a hardening process caused by exposure to light (UV and visible) and air pollutants. The outer strap shows increased surface cracking when compared to the inner strap. The regular usage pattern of the bell would certainly attest to moisture from the operator's hands and also the atmospheric conditions inside 19th-century halls.

The penultimate resting place of the bells would certainly have exacerbated the deterioration processes. The bell strap is bent forward consistent with being unsupported in storage. The fact that they were found under a house in Sorrento, in an enclosed space that would regularly heat up, cool down, and be exposed to damp and salt-laden conditions, made it easy to understand the substantial damage that had occurred.

To achieve the notes required from the bells, the manufacturer ensured that during casting of the bell metal they added phosphorous or some other deoxidiser. With this in mind and observing the corrosion products on the bell metal, we start to understand that the copper component of the alloyed metal is causing much of the deterioration. The corrosion processes could have occurred from a number of sources, including water staining, perspiration, chloride contamination and volatile organic acids.

This study has highlighted the complex relationship of material, manufacturing techniques, social history and storage conditions. When looking at the handbell, it is visibly clear that degradation has occurred. Similarly, analytical methods help to identify the deterioration factors that it has been subjected to. With empirical knowledge conservators can make better judgements with storage and environmental controls and ensure that deterioration is reduced and the object better protected.

**Jeff Fox**

Jeff Fox is currently studying for a Masters degree at the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne

# Percy Grainger: Australian Genius of the American Wind Band

“Art is either plagiarism or revolution” – Paul Gauguin (1848–1903)



Percy Grainger's status as an innovative genius in the area of orchestration was reinforced for me during a ten-day visit to the Grainger Museum in November of 2012. My intention was to track Grainger's development in his orchestration for wind band, tracing his work from his early efforts with the Band of the Coldstream Guards in 1904–1905, through his work with Arthur Clappé and the Resta brothers during World War I, to his crowning achievement, *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937).

Grainger's transformational energy found fruit in his new model of orchestration, as expressed most convincingly in his large orchestral works *The Warriors* and *Suite: In a Nutshell*. Grainger continued the work of Wagner and Mahler in completing the woodwind and brass families of the orchestra; but he also created a new family of instrumental colour by combining the “tuneful” percussions with harp and the various keyboard actuated instruments (piano, celesta, dulcitone, etc.).

Thus in *The Warriors* Grainger provides a fourth complete family to add to the woodwinds, brass and strings consisting of: 3 players on side-drum, tambourine, cymbals, bass drum, gong, castagnettes and wood block; xylophone; wooden marimba (2 players); glockenspiel; steel marimba, bar-piano or dulcitone; staff bells; tubular bells; celesta; 3 pianos; 2 harps.

Though *The Warriors* and *Suite: In a Nutshell* received mixed and negative reviews (many of which now seem harsh and unenlightened), the appeal of Grainger's use of orchestration was undeniable. Writing for *Musical America* in August 1917, Charles L. Buchanan said,

“...Grainger's contribution to the sheerly instrumental side of his art is obviously far and away the most important development in contemporary symphonic music. An inborn knack, a ceaseless practical intimacy with the orchestra and a utilization of a whole new army of percussion instruments [...] lend his orchestra an individual timbre of an exceeding richness of texture [...] and a wealth of tone color that appears to mark a new high record in the contemporary concert hall.”<sup>1</sup>

Grainger's experiments with the wind band started about 1905 in England with his setting of *Lads of Wamphray Ballad* for men's chorus and band (orchestra). His original unfinished score of some 120 measures is a riot of boldly imaginative scoring, including parts for 2 oboes, 2 English horns and 2 bassoons, parts for a 6 member sax-reed complement, and parts for a section of saxhorns (brass instruments of conical bore invented by Adolph Sax) in addition to a fully instrumented orchestral brass section. Grainger's letters from the period indicate he deemed the scoring a disaster (it would have certainly been a challenge as to balance in an acoustical setting, assuming a men's chorus of less than 1000), and he executed a virtual overhaul of the scoring.

In any case, his completed scoring of the *Ballad* for a more modest instrumentation of piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 bassoons, contra-bassoon, E♭ clarinet, 3 clarinets in A, alto clarinet in E♭, bass clarinet in A, 6 horns in F, 3 trumpets in F, 3 trombones, 3 cornets in B♭ (members of the afore-mentioned saxhorn family), 2 tenor horns in E♭, 2 independent euphonium parts, 1 brass bass (tuba), kettle-drums and strings is still ahead of its time.

Grainger's scoring of the *Lads of Wamphray March* in a stand-alone version for band, finished and presented as a birthday gift to Rose, 3 July, 1905 (though receiving extensive revision to 1907), has a scoring only slightly less extravagant, using flute, E♭ clarinet, oboe, 3 B♭ clarinets, bass clarinet, bassoon, E♭ alto sax-reed (saxophone), E♭ baritone sax-reed, 3 B♭ cornets, 4 French horns in F, with optional 5th and 6th horn parts, 2 tenor trombones and bass trombone, 2 euphoniums, E♭ bass (tuba), and BB♭ bass (tuba), string bass, kettle-drums, side-drums and big (bass) drum. Clearly, Grainger had a fully-realized sense of the “combined choirs” approach that would be his wind-writing hallmark; he also demonstrated a significant sense of confidence in this new medium, brought about at least partly by his opportunity to have these pieces rehearsed

and performed by the excellent Band of the Coldstream Guards in 1904–1905.

After *Wamphray*, Grainger's interest in wind band scoring lay relatively dormant until he moved to America in 1915. There are numerous projects involving winds and percussion between 1905 and 1915, but Grainger during this time was more interested in scoring for ad hoc “large room music” combinations than for any of the standard instrumental combinations. His large scale completed orchestration projects were *The Warriors* and *Suite: In a Nutshell*.

Having moved to America in September of 1915, Grainger enlisted in a U.S. Army band on 12 June, 1917. During his time in bands in the U.S. Army, Grainger was fortunate to work in the American wind band medium with one of its most prominent and innovative experts, Arthur A. Clappé, and to make a lifetime friend of Francis Resta, a fellow bandsman who later served as Director of the U.S. Military Academy Band at West Point from 1934–1957. Fortunately for the wind band medium, Percy Grainger established his position as the first prominent composer to develop a substantial body of work for the wind band and remains one of the medium's most significant composers.

*Note: The pleasure of study and research at the Grainger Museum is certainly enhanced by the support of the brilliant, knowledgeable and dedicated staff. Many thanks to the great team at the Grainger Museum, including Astrid Krautschneider, Monica Syrette, Jennifer Hill, Brian Allison and Suzanne Bravery for their efforts in pulling together the materials I needed to “connect the dots,” and for being such wonderful hosts.*

## Chalon Ragsdale

Professor of Music, University of Arkansas

Image reproduced by permission of the East Central Oklahoma University Band Library and Alan Correll, Director of Bands at East Central

<sup>1</sup> John Bird, *Percy Grainger*, p. 193.

# PUBLIC PROGRAMS



Brian Allison and Astrid Krautschneider

## Exhibition Floor Talk

After our very successful 75th anniversary exhibition launch, Co-curators, Brian Allison and Astrid Krautschneider gave a Curators' floor talk on Monday 20 May. A most attentive group heard about the exhibition's conceptual development. Astrid spoke frankly about Grainger collecting trophy objects that demonstrated his successes and those of his friends and heroes. She gave the example of Grainger collecting a clipping of Hans Christian Anderson's hair, and how he also treasured and used a battered document box belonging to Franz Liszt.

Topics included Grainger's life-long interest in ethnographica and how the Museum's collection has benefitted greatly from his almost obsessive preservation of his mother's clothes and accoutrements. The talk ended with a discussion about the difference between restoration and conservation in a Museum. Astrid spoke of treatment to our Deagan organ chimes recently made complete and restored from rusty archaeological relics. Brian compared this with the treatment required for Grainger's beloved Estey reed organ. The curators desired to preserve (or conserve) the existing object so that the extensive work is almost non-evident.

## Ella Grainger: a lecture on 'A Wayward Girl'

On Sunday 2 June, Monica Syrette, Assistant Curator, presented an illustrated lecture about the early life of Ella Grainger. Ella Viola Brandelius Ström has been an enigma, an attractive Bohemian and creative artist in her own right, yet also comfortable in London high society. She had a series of love affairs and Monica spoke in a most engaging fashion about Ella's varied exploits until she met Percy. The audience left wanting to hear about the next instalment – married life with Percy!

## Colin Offord's Landscape of Sound Performance

Followers of Colin Offord were delighted he was performing again at the Grainger Museum on Sunday 30 June. He is a singer, composer, instrument inventor, visual artist and world traveller. We heard new compositions, free improvisation and his recordings. Colin's unique exploration and development of his particular music is always a special experience. His music, very much of this century, is an eclectic mix of cultural influences, performed on instruments Colin has invented and refined over a lifetime.



## Grainger and Ragtime

The arrival of American ragtime in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century created a sensation. The forerunner to jazz with its novel, syncopated rhythms was met with both adulation and abhorrence. Some critics lambasted its irreverence and barbarism while others embraced it as the sound of a New World. This innovative dance music created an epidemic in the cosmopolitan centres of Europe, particularly in Paris and London. Consequently, it wasn't long before some classically trained European composers started experimenting with the genre in their own compositions. Percy Grainger was among the first.

Grainger was soon exposed to the incoming ragtime trend at the dawn of his London period. In 1901 he attended a performance by the catalyst for the ragtime explosion in Europe, the famous American John Philip Sousa and his military band. Grainger's interest in this genre was enhanced by his own emerging musical aesthetic. He was fascinated by its improvisatory nature, a similarity it shared with his beloved folk music, and the peculiar instrumentation that was now being used in band ensembles. Grainger soon completed his own ragtime work for solo piano, *In Dahomey: Cakewalk Smasher*.

Largely composed in 1909, *In Dahomey: Cakewalk Smasher* is essentially a 'ramble' on two popular cakewalk tunes from the early century. The cakewalk was a popular satirical dance that originated in the American plantations of late nineteenth century, where the African slaves would mock the eloquent dance styles of white high society. By the turn of the new century, the music that was composed to accompany this dance was one of the most popular styles of ragtime.

Named after the first all-black musical performed on Broadway, Grainger's cakewalk is a virtuosic homage to two of ragtime's composer-performers: African American composer and conductor, Will Marion Cook, creator of the musical, *In Dahomey*, and Arthur Pryor, a trombone virtuoso and soloist with the Sousa Band. Grainger's work is structured on the development of two themes by these musicians.

What is striking about *In Dahomey: Cakewalk Smasher* is how Grainger embellishes the themes in an exaggerated, over-the-top manner. It is fundamentally virtuosic and it is perhaps through his innovative techniques that we find the motivation behind the work's identification as a 'Cakewalk Smasher'. Of particular interest are the various ways in which Grainger attempts to notate graphically a trombone slide. At one point, Grainger presents the performer simply with a steep curve and the beginning and ending notes (pictured). This leaves it to the performer's judgement as to how high and consequently how fast they dare go within the space of a single beat. This writing for the piano was far ahead of its time. It could be argued that in constructing a piece so unashamedly and palpably virtuosic, Grainger is attempting to revitalise the German catalogue of 'spectacle' pieces that were demanded of him as a performer by embracing the emergent American virtuosity of ragtime.

There are many other aspects of this work that demand further investigation, particularly Grainger's decision to borrow a theme from both a black and a white musician. This was certainly no accident as Grainger often promoted equality when it came to music. Yet perhaps here we simply find Grainger adapting a fresh new genre in order to explore the capabilities of the piano. Almost contemporaneous with Debussy's interest in the genre, and well before the jazz explosion of the 1920s, Grainger's piece was far ahead of its time. It is with this virtuosic homage to ragtime that we find the composer, perhaps with tongue-in-cheek, refuting the established conventions of serious virtuosity and embracing the emerging New World. Grainger himself would later remark on the genre, stating that "my chief impression ... is that it is near-perfect and delightfully popular dance music. It is that and nothing more – and what more should it be?"

**Michael Williamson**  
Gallery Attendant



Colin Offord performing at the Grainger Museum



Monica Syrette lectures on 'A Wayward Girl'



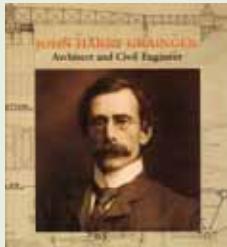
## Ninety-six years in an unmarked grave

John Harry Grainger, Percy's father, passed away virtually penniless in 1917 and was buried in Box Hill Cemetery. Neither his relatively wealthy son, nor his companion of 22 years, Miss Winifred Falconer, felt compelled to mark his grave with a headstone. To be fair to Falconer, she had to purchase the plot with what little money she had – Grainger senior and Falconer had been surviving on monthly cheques wired from New York by Percy.

Melbourne heritage engineer, David Beauchamp, has long believed that John Grainger's contribution to Australia's built heritage has never been appropriately recognised, and that the provision of a headstone would be a significant gesture. John Harry Grainger designed Princes Bridge over the Yarra River when he was just 25. Other Melbourne landmarks born of his architect's pen and engineer's slide rule were the Georges building in Collins Street, northern wing of Melbourne Town Hall and the Robur Tea building in Spencer Street. He worked as principal architect for the Western Australian Public Works Department and designed the impressive Auckland Public Library and Municipal Offices in New Zealand. Beauchamp and the late architectural historian, George Tibbits, planned to raise funds for a memorial stone.

On the unseasonably sunny afternoon of 21 June this year, David Beauchamp read a few words of dedication over the recently erected, simple, yet elegant marble gravestone, replacing the once dusty patch of gravel where Grainger was laid to rest. The ceremony included members of Engineering Heritage Victoria, staff from the Grainger Museum and architectural historians Professor Philip Goad and Dr Andrew Dodd. The Grainger Museum, through the University of Melbourne Library, was one of the contributors to the cost of fabricating the memorial.

**Brian Allison**



Brian Allison (ed.)  
*John Harry Grainger: Architect and Civil Engineer*  
Available for sale in the Grainger Museum \$19.95

# In Grainger's footsteps

On an overcast day in July this year I waited on a Chelsea footpath for Dr David Pear who had generously offered to take me on a private walking tour of Grainger's homes in London. Readers of this newsletter would no doubt be aware of David's many Grainger-related publications, exhibitions and lectures so I was clearly in for a real treat.

When David arrived we only had to walk a few steps to 31A King's Road where he pointed out the blue plaque commemorating Percy Grainger, 'Australian Composer, Folklorist and Pianist' almost hidden behind scaffolding. London's blue plaque scheme was founded in 1866 to commemorate the link between notable figures and the buildings in which they lived and worked.<sup>1</sup> Grainger's plaque was erected in 1988 at the site where Rose and Percy lived from December 1907 until November 1914.

Our next step was to consult David's Google map printouts over a cup of tea. Between 1901 and 1907 the Graingers lived in at least six different locations and, given my terrible sense of direction, I was more than happy to leave all the navigating up to David. Our journey meandered through the streets of Chelsea and Kensington, from the quiet of Upper Cheyne Row to the bustle of Harrington

The Grainger home next door to the Elephant and Castle, Kensington



Road. Along the way we stopped by the imposing Rossetti House, the former home of Grainger's patron and lover, Lili Lowrey, as well as the studio of artist John Singer Sargent.

It was fascinating to wander these streets discussing with David how Grainger, as a young man who professed to be strongly aligned to Australian democratic ideals, may have felt about the development of his career in the rarefied world of London high society. In 1906 Grainger wrote to his mother that he had "nought in common with these ways of living... give me rather bugs in my bed, dirt in my dishes, soap on my spoons, life in my limbs".<sup>2</sup>

Although Grainger relocated to the United States in 1915 and lived there for the rest of his life, he considered his time in the English capital to be significant enough to warrant an entire gallery in his Museum. Visitors can still see a contemporary interpretation of the London Room, as Grainger referred to it, with items of furniture, decorative arts and artwork on display.

I would like to thank David Pear for guiding me along the paths that Grainger once walked and sharing with me his extensive knowledge of Grainger's life and times in Edwardian London.

**Monica Syrette**

1 <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/blue-plaques/>

2 Letter from Grainger to Rose Grainger, July 7, 1906. See John Bird Percy Grainger, p. 73.

## Conservation project underway

Funds raised from the University of Melbourne's Annual Appeal, together with cash donations from our supporters, have allowed for the preventative conservation of 100 significant works on paper in the Grainger Museum's collection. Among the items to benefit are our collections of works by Adelaide-born printmaker, Mortimer Menpes (1855–1938), etchings by well-known Australian artist, Norman Lindsay (1879–1969) and platinum prints by Baron Adolph de Meyer (1868–1946) 'court photographer' to Edwardian England's aristocracy. These works will be matted using archival quality board, which will provide for their safe storage in solander boxes – and for their future display. Researchers will soon enjoy a much-improved access to these important works.

**Astrid Krautschneider**



Mortimer Menpes (1855–1938)  
*Heavy Laden*, 1896–1897  
(Also titled *Bearing a burden and Mother and child*)  
Colour etching and drypoint

# NEW MANAGER



Jo-Anne Cooper

In the Grainger Museum's 75th anniversary year I am very pleased to welcome Jo-Anne Cooper as Manager, Grainger Museum at the University of Melbourne, whose inaugural year as Manager will be marked by a rich offering of 75th anniversary events. Jo-Anne commenced her appointment in late May and comes to the University after working for nearly three decades in the fields of marketing and museum administration. She holds a Masters in Public Policy and Administration from the University of Melbourne, and a BA (Hons) in Politics and History also from the University of Melbourne.

Jo-Anne led the development of the Old Treasury Building in Spring Street as a museum, and for many years was the Director of the City Museum at Old Treasury and its predecessor, the Gold Treasury Museum. Most recently she held the position of Marketing and Communications Manager at the Jewish Museum of Australia. Jo-Anne has a personal interest in music and has attended every Wangaratta Jazz Festival – barring two since its inception in 1990. She has served on numerous arts, cultural and heritage committees and is currently the Secretary for Museums Australia (Vic Branch) and is a member of the Arts and Heritage Advisory Board for Bayside City Council – in the neighbourhood of Grainger's birth. Jo-Anne commenced at the Grainger Museum on 28 May 2013.

Jo-Anne's skills and experience will be a marvellous asset to the Grainger Museum and we look forward to a new period in the life of the Grainger Museum under her leadership.

## Donna McRostie

Acting Director, Research and Collections



## Grainger Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal

The second issue (2012) of *Grainger Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* features four substantial scholarly articles that span a wide range of topics. Firstly, English musicologist Paul Jackson writes of 'Percy Grainger's aleatoric adventures: The Rarotongan part-songs'. This will be the first of two articles on this topic. Canadian scholar Dr Graham Freeman contributes "'Into a cocked-hat': The folk song arrangements of Percy Grainger, Cecil Sharp and Benjamin Britten". The cover of the journal features a beautiful photograph of Britten (whose centenary is being celebrated this year) on the beach at Aldeburgh in 1959, produced courtesy of the Britten centenary organisation in the UK. University of Melbourne graduate and former Grainger Museum staff member Stella Gray examines several artists' representations of Grainger in 'Object of desire: Portraits of Percy Grainger from his London period'. Finally, journalist and architectural historian Dr Andrew Dodd considers the career of Percy Grainger's father, John Grainger, in the context of the cut-throat world of architectural competitions in 'Understanding John Grainger through the prism of an architectural rivalry'.

*Grainger Studies* is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal published by the University of Melbourne Library, custodian of the Grainger Museum. It is available electronically free of charge at [www.msp.unimelb.edu.au/index.php/graingerstudies/](http://www.msp.unimelb.edu.au/index.php/graingerstudies/), while the print version can be purchased at the Grainger Museum or the Co-op Bookshop located in the Baillieu Library (see [www.coop.com.au](http://www.coop.com.au)).

Contributions to *Grainger Studies* are always welcome. Please contact the editors Dr David Pear (david.pear@cantab.net) or Dr Belinda Nemec (bnemec@unimelb.edu.au).

## Percy Grainger from the Atlantic Ocean

The Grainger Museum was delighted to receive a gift of a letter from Mrs Ann Ekers, dated 7 December, 1936. It was written to Mr and Mrs Barton while Percy Grainger was sailing in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean on the SS Bremen. Barton was a Professor of Music at the Elder Conservatorium, Adelaide, at this time.

In Grainger's sprawling hand, many insights and cross-references are provided, including the mention of sailing on "L'Avenir" to Adelaide in January 1934. Grainger recalls his father, John, and Barton having much to do with the first string quartet concerts in Adelaide, and his mother, Rose, playing the Beethoven sonatas with Mrs Barton in "Killalah", Hawthorn.

The Bartons were asked for anecdotes and reminiscences about his parents from this time "for a golden contribution to my museum and the book I am going to write". Sadly, we do not think such a book was ever written, but the Grainger Museum certainly holds the source material that he collected. Grainger concludes his letter apologising, "This boat is very shaky, because so speedy!" (The SS Bremen was also known as a turbine ship, having a cruising speed of 27.5 knots).

### Nina Waters

Information Desk Officer



Paul Ekers delivers the letter on behalf of his mother Ann.

### GRAINGER MUSEUM

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### Hoard House

News from the Grainger Museum  
Compiled by Nina Waters  
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## Sidelights and cross-references: 75 years of the Grainger Museum

