

Consultants Commissioned in Latest Grainger Redevelopment Plans



*The Grainger Museum under construction, c. 1938.
Photo Grainger Collection*

An important step in the Grainger Museum Redevelopment Program has been undertaken. Two cultural heritage specialists have been commissioned to analyse the future role of the Grainger Collection in relation to the role of the Museum building.

For many years Grainger Museum curators and researchers have been aware that the collection has been put in jeopardy by the extremely cramped storage conditions within the Museum. The logical solution is to establish an

offsite repository to store selected material. However, the relationship between the collection and the building is integral to the Museum's high value of cultural significance.

The Grainger collection is made up of items donated by Percy Grainger and material collected after his death in 1961. The Museum also holds collections that although related to music, are not directly related to Grainger. The Information Division at the University of Melbourne, the umbrella body that manages the

Grainger Collection and Museum, recognised that concise guidance on possible options for the collection and building use was required. The consultants commissioned to undertake this assessment are Dr Kevin Fewster, AM, Director of Sydney's Powerhouse Museum and the museum sector's representative on the Collections Council of Australia. He will be assisted by Melbourne-based arts/heritage communications specialist, Robyn Oswald-Jacobs.

Brian Allison
Grainger Collection Curator

Student Projects at the University of Melbourne

The establishment of the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne has enabled new student-focused programs for the research and conservation of the University's cultural collections. Students in the Centre's Master of Arts by Coursework (Cultural Materials Conservation) are introduced to the various collections held within the University during the course and items from the collections are incorporated into a range of teaching subjects. Students then use objects from the University's collections for extensive research and conservation treatment projects. The following is a report by Megan Phillips, a second year student who spent 50 hours conserving one of Percy Grainger's piano stools as her major work for semester 1, 2005. The stool's significance lies primarily in its historical connection to Grainger's life as an internationally acclaimed composer and concert pianist.

The Conservation of Percy Grainger's Piano Stool

Initial examination of the stool showed the wooden underframe and winding mechanism to be in good condition. The upholstery of the seat was another matter entirely. The leather was torn, thin, and worn. Percy's enthusiastic playing has revealed horsehair and hemp cushioning materials inside the seat — he literally loved the seat to bits! The underside of the seat upholstery was also torn and dropping dust and debris whenever it was moved.

After a general clean, the treatment of the stool logically divided itself into two sections: a) stabilisation of the underside of the seat upholstery, and b) the stabilisation of the seating surface.

Treatment of the underside was achieved by positioning the broken straps and torn fabric under fine nylon bridal tulle. This was secured with widely spaced stitches of polyester thread. The tulle and thread were chosen for their strength, good ageing properties, air circulation and compatible appearance.

Once the underside of the seat was stabilised, the challenge of the seating surface was addressed. This involved making patterns for and cutting leather fills, thinning the edges of the leather pieces to make smooth joins, and tinting the leather to match the worn seat colour. The leather pieces were adhered to the old leather with a traditional Japanese adhesive used for centuries for scroll mounting. Japanese tissue paper, sourced from the mulberry tree, was used to bridge a problematic area of the leather.



*Grainger's piano stool showing the corner rebuilt using leather fills.
Photo by Megan Phillips*

The result was satisfying; visual cohesion was achieved and the stool is strong enough to stand up to the rigours of display in the museum. The surface of the leather seat is still extremely delicate and will never be able to be sat upon (and why should anyone other than Percy?!) On a more serious note, the treatment preserves the stool and its original materials for the appreciation of future museum visitors.

Megan Phillips

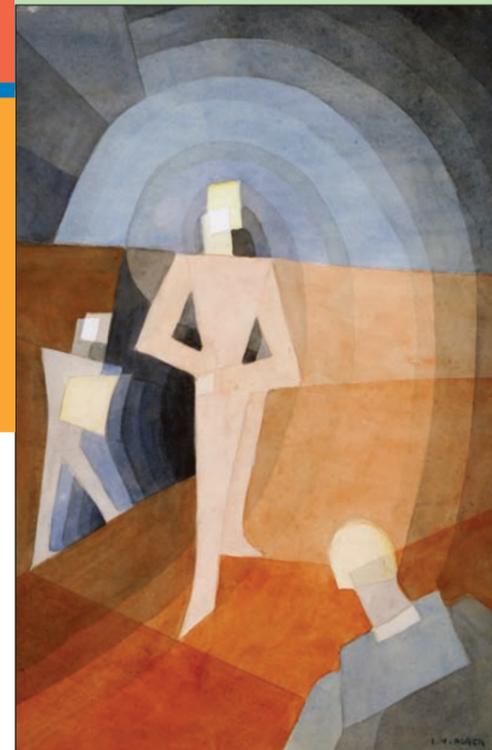
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Hoard House

NEWS FROM THE GRAINGER COLLECTION

Utopian Visions

Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack and Percy Grainger



*Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack, Untitled,
watercolour and pencil on paper, c. 1950.
The University of Melbourne Art Collection*

Percy Grainger's spectacular towelling clothes take the spotlight once again in a new exhibition at the University of Melbourne's Ian Potter Museum of Art.

Utopian Visions features four terry-towelling costumes from the Grainger Collection displayed alongside some 34 works by artist Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack (1893–1965). The exhibition's curator, Joanna Bosse, has drawn a fascinating parallel between Grainger's unusual fashion concept and the modernist paintings and prints of Hirschfeld Mack — tracing both artists' creations back to the leading avant-garde concerns of the early 20th century — and thus providing viewers with a rare insight into their shared quests for a 20th century utopian ideal.

Percy Grainger's flamboyance and freedom of expression in his attitude towards clothing design is, by now, well known. During his professional career as a concert pianist he conformed to stereotypical protocols that demanded a performer wear formal garb, yet in his private life he delighted in experimenting with colour, form and the tactile nature of different fabrics in his dress.

Many of Grainger's early experimental towelling designs articulate a certain playfulness and daring practically unheard of in 1910. Although there is little evidence in his writings of a personal (or utopian) desire for some kind of universal clothing reform, he was clearly reacting to the oppressive dress conventions of the Edwardian middle-class. He created garments that allowed him greater flexibility of movement and it is commonly supposed that he regularly jogged through London's parks in his novel attire.



Photograph of Grainger wearing one of his towelling clothes creations, c. 1936. Photo Grainger Collection

Grainger's clothing designs of the 1930s exhibit an even more 'way-out' use of colour and form than his pre-war designs. He and his wife Ella created arresting garments that appear to show an awareness of the effect on costume design of early modernist art movements such as the Orphists¹ — especially designs by artists such as Sonia Delauney — designs that integrated strong, cadenced shapes with lively primary colour combinations.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

A Celebration of Voices

The spirit of Percy Grainger was well and truly alive during the 15th National Conference of the Australian Society for Music Education held at the University of Melbourne, 3 to 7 July 2005. With the theme of 'A Celebration of Voices', the conference attracted over 300 music educators, performers and composers, both international and from around Australia. This conference is hosted every two years by a different state chapter, this year being the first time the conference has been held in Melbourne since 1991.

Grainger's contribution to music education is perhaps not as well known as other aspects of his life. He was head of the music department of New York University in 1932–1933, where he gave a course of lectures on 'The Manifold Nature of Music'. For a number of years Grainger tutored at the annual Interlochen Summer School, a rare film of which is in the Grainger Museum titled *Youth Builds a Symphony*. This 27-minute film from 1943 features Grainger playing and discussing 'Country Gardens', conducting a free percussion piece and demonstrating his renowned physical fitness when he takes a high jump onto the stage for an orchestral rehearsal.



Publicity photograph of Percy Grainger with one of his students at the National Music Camp, Interlochen, c. 1942. Photo Grainger Collection

In celebration of both the ASME Conference and Grainger's role as a music educator, the Grainger Collection's Assistant Curator Astrid Krautschneider, prepared two display cases of memorabilia for the foyer of the Faculty of Music.¹ Photographs of Grainger working with students were displayed as well as his soprano saxophone, much to the delight of conference delegates.

Undoubtedly Grainger would have particularly enjoyed the Young Composers Concert held in Melba Hall on the penultimate night of the conference. A regular event at

ASME conferences since 1995, the Young Composers Project provides secondary school students with an invaluable opportunity to work with experienced composers, people involved in the music industry and young composers' peers from around the nation.

Six young composers, one representing each Australian state, performed works with The WhizBang Orchestra, a contemporary popular ensemble from Ballarat High School. The six works ranged from film music (complete with film) to a jazz ballad to big band works. A highlight of the concert was the premiere of a new work commissioned for the conference from Melbourne composer Lachlan Davidson, titled 'A Way Back'. The concert was sponsored by Billy Hyde Music, one of the largest Australian companies working in music education. In recognition of this support the concert was dedicated to Billy Hyde (1918–1976) with a work in his memory, titled 'Song for Billy', and performed by its composer Brian Brown to open the concert.

Dr Ros McMillan
Conference Convenor and President of the
Friends of the Grainger Museum

¹ These cases are now on display in the Baillieu Library's 3rd floor lift foyer.

Percy Grainger and the Spirit of William Morris

In his unpublished autobiographical writings, the *Aldridge-Grainger-Ström Saga* (1933), Percy Grainger wrote: 'The Icelandic Saga of Grettir the Strong immediately became, & has always remained, the strongest single artistic influence in my life, providing me ... with an ideal example of what Nordic art should be ...' Grainger read the 1869 translation by William Morris and Eiríkr Magnússon.

William Morris (1834–1896) — medievalist, poet, designer and socialist — exerted influence over Grainger's creative life, which is rarely discussed.

In the *Aldridge-Grainger-Ström Saga*, Grainger proceeds to explain that reading Grettir motivated him to remove words of Southern European, Norman and Classical Roman origins from his lexicon. He aimed to celebrate Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse characteristics within the English language. Thus in his writing, museums became 'past-board-houses', memory became 'call-to-mindments', and quartets became 'four-somes' (to name but a few). As a young

boy reading Grettir, he would have absorbed the way Morris solved the problem of dealing with Icelandic words without direct English translations by creating compound words. A certain kind of skirmish became a 'spear-storm' and medieval Icelandic menservants became 'home-men'. One name he used for warrior was 'axe-breaker' — a hero who would wield a 'war-flame' (or sword).

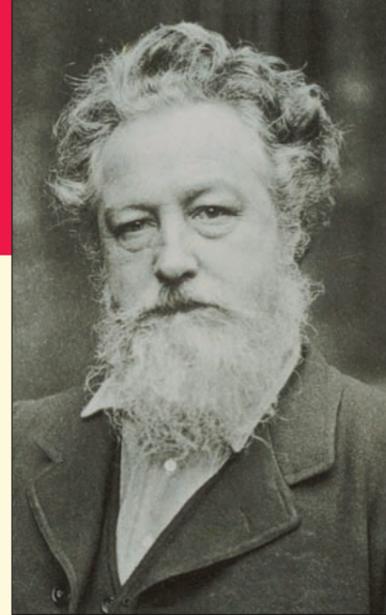
Both men venerated the Nordic sagas with an almost religious fervour. But language and myth were not their only areas of common interest. Grainger became very active in the revival of early music and sourced much of his information and musical examples from the pioneer of early music revival, Arnold Dolmetsch, whom he also befriended.

Decades earlier, William Morris discovered a strong affinity with Dolmetsch — his craftsmanship and his love for medieval music. Morris helped him become a member of the Art Workers' Guild and encouraged him to exhibit a harpsichord in the 1896 Arts and Crafts Exhibition. Dolmetsch is

said to have played to Morris on his death bed.

It is in the theories underpinning the Arts and Crafts movement where Morris' greatest influence on Grainger can be seen. Grainger's mother Rose collected Arts and Crafts style furniture and decorative arts from about 1901. Two of the ladder-back chairs in the Grainger Collection come from the workshop of Ernest William Gimson (1863–1919), one of Morris' greatest devotees.

Morris expressed a philosophy of the designer as craftsman. He believed that the artist should be directly involved in the production of the finished object and amass the skills to facilitate this process. Percy Grainger was intimately involved in the production of his published editions. He often directed the layout of his scores and supplied his own idiosyncratic language for expression and dynamics. But more importantly, he designed the covers for his sheet music, learning calligraphy and developing his own very fluid graphic style.



William Morris. Photo courtesy of the Domestic Textile Corporation

In his beadwork designs, Grainger again follows a 'Morrisian' approach to developing design and fabrication skills. He methodically pulled examples of ethnographic beadwork apart to learn the complex knotting and threading techniques.

Brian Allison
Grainger Collection Curator

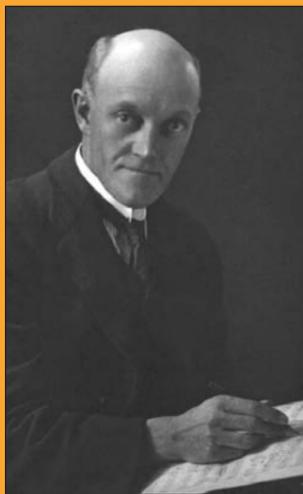
The University of Melbourne's Baillieu Library recently displayed an exhibition titled *Kelmscott: A Medieval Adventure in the Age of the Machine*, an investigation of William Morris' remarkable Kelmscott Press.

Henry Tate (1873–1926): From Under the Bed to Preservation

Henry Tate (1873–1926) knew and respected Percy Grainger, and it is fitting that the majority of Tate's manuscript collection is housed within the Grainger Collection archives — since Grainger intended his Museum to be a major repository for Australian music in addition to his own works.

After Tate's death in 1926, many 'old music friends' visited his widow, Violet Tate (nee Mercer), and came away with music manuscripts they wished to 'borrow', but some were never returned. In 1932, a very good friend of Tate's, the author Katharine Susannah Prichard, wrote that, in her opinion, many Tate manuscripts were found 'practically in a dustbin' [in a house in South Yarra]. After Violet's death in 1963, her brother, Ivan Mercer, divided Tate's collection between surviving family members and manuscripts were actually stored under the beds, where the Mercer family kept important papers!

In 1978, the Mercer family donated part of Tate's collection



Henry Tate, c. 1920.
Photograph courtesy of the Mercer Family

to the Grainger Museum. Sometime after it was received, all items were listed on a card system. In 2003, the current curator, Brian Allison, gave me permission to sort the collection into categories in preparation for a permanent catalogue number.

I had trouble in recording details of Tate's works at the Museum. The pencilled musical

notations in some instances have been nearly obliterated from the page over time, and fading words are difficult to read. Tate, like many other composers, was always skimping on manuscript paper due to his precarious financial situation. In order to protect many of the torn and perishing works, the Mercer family recently purchased archival sleeves for preservation, and this task is now complete.

Since my Master of Music (Preliminary) catalogue of 2003, I have completed a comprehensive Australia-wide catalogue, which lists all Tate's compositions. This catalogue was compiled from the Grainger Museum/Tate Collection, Tate's own lists of his major works, musician and Tate's friend Gibson Young's article in Eaglefield Hull's *Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians* (1924), Vida Lenox's annotations in *Australian Musical Possibilities* (1924), and Anne Harper's extensive listing in her 1994 BA (Hons.) thesis. Furthermore, I have added works located in a variety of manuscript collections discovered in the State Library of Victoria, Mitchell Library of

Sydney, National Library of Australia in Canberra, Dr A.E. Floyd's collection in the Grainger Museum and the residual of the Mercer collection. During this research, I found many manuscripts 'borrowed' from Violet Tate, which had been thought lost. Two catalogues will be available shortly (Grainger Museum Collection and Australia-wide).

In *Manuscripts: A Miscellany of Art and Letters No. 3* (1932), Prichard wrote 'A Reverie — A Memory of Henry Tate' and asked:

Why isn't Tate's music better known? Has it been forgotten? What has become of the songs and compositions for orchestra and piano Henry Tate wrote?

How many other early Australian composers have suffered this fate? A few musicologists are trying to alleviate the situation and, due to recent Musicological Society of Australia debate on Australian musicological studies, I hope that more researchers will come forward.

Christine Mercer

Utopian Visions

from front page

Born in Germany, Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack studied painting and art history in Munich. After serving in World War 1, he commenced studies at the newly opened Weimar Bauhaus School of Art, Design and Architecture. In its short existence, the Bauhaus developed a reputation for its progressive attitude to architecture and design. He left Germany due to the rising fascist regime and moved to London in 1936. After the commencement of World War 2, Hirschfeld Mack was interned as an enemy alien and deported to Australia. In 1942 Dr James Darling (headmaster of Geelong Grammar School) used his influence to have Hirschfeld Mack released and appointed Art Master at Geelong Grammar,

where he remained until retirement in 1957. It was in his retirement that he worked most actively on the 'Colour Chord', providing sets of instruments for various children's centres and schools.

Hirschfeld Mack's own particular interests lay in the field of colour theory and design, as is demonstrated by the artworks on display in this exhibition — with their bright colours and emphasis on geometric figures. He also explored the dynamic relationships between colour, light, music and movement in performances he referred to as 'Colour Light Plays'. An accomplished musician and craftsman, the influence of his Bauhaus training and fascination with colour is again demonstrated in his innovative approach to instrument design.

In 1971 and 1980 Hirschfeld Mack's wife Olive donated his collection of instruments to the Grainger Museum. His personal papers and many artworks were donated to the University of Melbourne Archives and the Ian Potter Museum of Art respectively.

Utopian Visions: Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack and Percy Grainger is showing at the Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne until 30 October 2005.

Astrid Britt Krautschneider
Grainger Collection Assistant Curator

¹ French art movement, developed and derived from Cubism but focussing more on the application of colour in painting and influenced by music.