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Portrait of Percy Grainger (Eastman Studies in Music)

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Percy Grainger (1882-1961) was a pianist, composer, ethnographer, essayist, and much more. The Australian-American musician aspired to the condition of a polymath, with strong interests in language, culture, ecology and technology. In an age of increasing specialisation Grainger held to a breathless all-roundedness. This book looks at the scrabbling diversity of Grainger's life through the eyes of others. Family and friends, pupils, musical associates and chance acquaintances recall their experiences of Percy Grainger from his boyhood in colonial Australia, through his conservatorium years in Germany, on to his early professional years in London, and further to the zenith of his career and then years of decline in the United States. In the final chapter, Grainger himself explains the driving passions of his life. Fifty illustrations, including architectural drawings, scores and machine plans, vividly depict the enthusiasms described in over ninety recollections of Grainger. A composer of over four hundred compositions and virtuoso performer in some three thousand concerts, Grainger left a large legacy. He was an important influence upon the folk-song movement in Britain, and, through such masterworks as Lincolnshire Posy, he was enduringly popular with the band movement in America. On a personal level, his development of the language of "blue-eyed English" was stillborn, and his muscular style of pianism found few adherents among the next generation of performers. His frankly expressed views on sexual licence were also many decades ahead of their time. Today, however, Grainger the musician is again in the ascendant. His more innovative works are gaining a belated hearing, while his standards, such as Country Gardens, remain firm favorites.BR> Malcolm Gillies and David Pear are co-editors of Grainger on Music and 'The All-Round Man': Selected Letters of Percy Grainger, 1914-1961

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