



Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger

From Oxford University Press

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Shortly before his death, Percy Grainger (1882-1961) lodged over twenty unpublished sketches in his Australian Museum. *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger* draws exclusively from these sketches, revealing for the first time an illuminating portrait of the composer's life. With such titles as "The Aldridge-Grainger-Strom Saga," "Thunks," "Ere-I-Forget," "The Love-Life of Helen and Paris," and "Anecdotes," these manuscripts were intended as precursors to Grainger's autobiography, *My Wretched Tone-Life*, which he only commenced in his final years. Expertly shaping these sketches, the editors have created a "self-portrait" along the lines that Grainger himself had intended.

The volume first introduces Grainger's forebears, parents, friends, wife, and himself before moving on to his views on composition, performance, and the musical world. In these sketches, Grainger addresses such topics as racial and national identity, the meaning of work, physical culture, language reform, sexual practice, and artistic patronage. Grainger also probes the nature of musical genius, discussing a broad range of composers including Igor Stravinsky, Thomas Beecham, Frederick Delius, Edvard Grieg, Charles Stanford, Cyril Scott, Fritz Kreisler, Donald Tovey, Ferruccio Busoni, and Balfour Gardiner. Among the works of his own that Grainger most featured are his *The Warriors --Music for an Imaginary Ballet*, *Colonial Song*, the *Lincolnshire Posy* series of band pieces, his greatest "hit" *Country Gardens*, and his many settings of English folk-music.

Written in Grainger's own self-created "Nordic English" as well as translated from Danish, the language of his most intimate confessions, *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger* sheds light on some of the most revealing details of the composer's life. The sketches trace Grainger's changing self-perception, from the romantically tinged, even lustful, views of his forties and fifties, through a period of wistfulness in his sixties, to the bitterness and self-loathing of his old age. The volume also includes several of Grainger's own drawings as well as both public and private photographs. A fascinating and revealing collection of vignettes, this extraordinary book will appeal to instructors, students, and enthusiasts in musicology, music history, cultural studies, and Australian, British, and American history.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Malcolm Gilles, David Pear and Mark Carroll steer us unflinchingly through a personal history that calls for a systematic handling, applying a degree of assiduousness that can only arise from a genuine and deep respect for their subject."--Mark Tanner, *Musical Opinion*

"All this fretful retrospection must have kept Malcolm Gillies, David Pear and Mark Carroll, the editors of *Self Portrait*, very busy. Grainger gave them half a million words of fragmented autobiography to choose from, deposited at the Grainger Museum in the University of Melbourne, and they have done a thorough job of exposing him in all his glory and his madness. It's a long way from "Country Gardens."--Michael Caines, *Times Literary Supplement*

"What began life in Grainger's hand as detailed, candid notes for an autobiography he would never fulfill are here shaped into a compelling, unsanitized portrait of a brilliant artist and a vital epoch. A great read."--Paul Kildea

"The volume as a whole is fascinating and a very revealing portrait of this complex personality. It's a must for Delians and those interested in the Frankfurt Gang."--*The Delian*

"This substantial and revelatory anthology of the private writings of Percy Grainger fills many significant gaps in our knowledge of the composer as both artist and man. The collection has been prepared with impeccable attention to detail but in a manner which allows the text to speak for itself. With its fine balance between scholarship and sheer readability, it is difficult to see how the task could have been accomplished more effectively."--Mervyn Cooke, Department of Music, University of Nottingham

"*Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger* goes beyond existing volumes of letters and other documents, in terms of intimate revelations, and in illuminating neglected areas of Grainger's life. Rarely have the shadowy relationships of ideas about music, sex, and race been so frankly laid bare."--Alain Frogley, Department of Music, University of Connecticut

About the Author

Malcolm Gillies is a vice-president of The Australian National University and a leading figure in Australian higher education and research. As a musicologist, he has written extensively on twentieth-century music,

including major studies of Béla Bartók and Percy Grainger. Since 1997 he has been the editor of the series *Studies in Musical Genesis and Structure*, published by Oxford University Press.

David Pear is a senior lecturer at Monash University (Australia) and a fellow of the Humanities Research Centre in Canberra. He holds a PhD from The University of Queensland, and other qualifications in theology, education, and music. Pear has been a co-editor of letter, reminiscence, and autobiographical volumes of Grainger's writings, and has worked extensively in the Grainger Museum (Melbourne).

Mark Carroll is a senior lecturer in Music at the Elder School of Music, University of Adelaide (Australia), from which he holds his doctoral degree. For several decades he has worked as a professional classical and popular musician. His recent publications include *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (2003), and a co-edited volume of Grainger essays. Carroll is also a researcher for The Australian Ballet.

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