

PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER:

LINCOLNSHIRE POSY

Nationality:

AUSTRALIAN



Dates of Life:

1882 - 1961

Percy Grainger



Instrument:

PIANO

Known For:

- FOLK MUSIC ROOTS
- ECCENTRIC PERSONALITY
- UNIQUE STYLE
- INTERESTING TASTES

About Percy Grainger

- Home schooled until 13 - attended the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, Germany
 - Held strong roots to his Australia, but never permanently returned
 - Known as piano prodigy
 - Had difficulties with first composition teacher, began to flourish after establishing studies with Karl Klisch (known folk music enthusiast)

Life in London (1901-1914)

- Found great success as a solo artist - performed privately in homes of the wealthy, soloed with orchestras, and accompanied opera singers
- Began focusing on inclusion of folk songs in new music
- Became acquainted with leading music figures of the time such as Grieg, Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Strauss
- Composed MANY of his famous works during this time - had concert devoted to only his compositions in 1912 at Aeolian Hall in London



Life in America (1914-1961)

- Said to have left for mother, but also explained he didn't want to be killed in World War I - judged for cowardice
- Became an official U.S. citizen in 1918
- Enlisted as bandsman in U.S. Army (performing as a saxophonist)
- After Army, performed about 120 concerts a year while still composing new works and rescoring old works
- Mother committed suicide in 1922 - Grainger took to traveling, performing, composing, and teaching to keep busy (NYU, Interlochen)
- Founded Grainger Museum in Melbourne in 1932
- Performed at London Proms, awarded St. Olav Medal, worked on "free music machines"
- Essentially stopped composing by 1950 - passed away in 1961 after several performances and attempts to compose through failing eyesight and hallucinations

Well Known Works for Wind Band:

Children's March: Over the Hills and Far Away, Colonial Song, Hill Song No. 1, No. 2, The Lads of Wamphray, Irish Tune from County Derry, Molly on the Shore, Shepherd's Hey, Ye Banks and Braes o Bonnie Doon

About Lincolnshire Posy

- In 1905, Grainger was inspired by a lecture from folk song historian Lucy E. Broadwood
 - Transcribed hundreds of songs in the span of five years - many had not been previously written down.
 - Assembled 200+ Edison cylinder (phonograph) recordings of the folk songs.
 - Movements of Lincolnshire Posy were adapted from the transcriptions & recordings of these folk songs.
 - Piece was dedicated to singers that sang for Grainger.
- Composed in 1937 as a commission for the American Bandmasters Association. Premiered March 1937 with Grainger conducting
- After composing, Grainger realized it would challenge and confuse band directors - left detailed program notes for them.
- Wanted to maintain exact style demonstrated by folk singers - led to interesting time signature and rhythmic notation.
 - Mostly in strophic form with numerous verses.

Movements

I. Lisbon

- Shortest movement of the work
- A-flat Mixolydian, brisk, "simple" melody in 6/8 time (full of lilt)
- Opens with melody in bassoon, muted trumpet, and stopped horn - melody expands to full ensemble
 - Features heroic countermelody in saxes, trumpets, horns, and baritone horn
- Depicts having to leave family/love behind for battle

II. Horkstow Grange

- D-flat Major (with chromaticism), many meter changes
 - Meant to mimic the vocal stylings of the singer - should be free
 - Lyrical, singingly - upon hearing people believe its a love song
 - Story: innocent man is beaten in a public square with no help from bystanders
- Densely scored throughout the movement

III. Rufford Park Poachers

- Two versions - dependent on abilities of soprano saxophone player
- F dorian or C dorian, depending on choice of version —> D-flat Major
- Incredibly difficult to conduct (challenging meters)
- Depicts an attack of poachers by gamekeepers
- Lines are very intertwined/connected

IV. The Brisk Young Sailor

- Subtitled "who returned to wed his True Love"
- B-flat major, 3/4 time, very upbeat and sprightly
- Virtuoso parts in clarinet and flute parts

V. Lord Melbourne

- D Dorian, many meter changes (both simple and complex meters)
- Begins with free time featuring brass instruments
- Specific markings for articulations, time, and dynamics
- Depicts John Churchill (1st Duke of Marlborough) as a successful soldier/statesman
 - Bold, strong, fanfare-like

VI. The Lost Lady Found

- D Dorian, 3/4 time, subtitled "Dance Song"
- Depicts story of a man who is nearly hanged, but is rescued at the last possible moment when found innocent for the return of the lost lady
- Alternates between denser and thinner scoring, as well as accented and lyrical playing

Instrumentation

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn (ad libitum), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon (ad lib.), E-flat clarinet, 3 B-flat clarinets (2+ per part), alto clarinet, bass clarinet, 6 saxophones (soprano, 2 altos, tenor, baritone and ad lib. bass), 3 cornets/trumpets, 4 horns, 3 trombones, baritone horn, euphonium, tuba, string bass, and percussion (timpani, xylophone, glockenspiel, handbells, tubular bells (ad lib.), snare drum, bass drum, and cymbals)



FUN FACT:

Grainger visited Gustavus Adolphus College in 1940 to teach, perform, and lecture with the Gustavus Band.

He returned in 1941 to tour MN (cities like Willmar, Cambridge, Duluth) alongside conductor Fredrick Hilary.

He even helped attempt to push the tour bus out of a classic Minnesotan snowstorm!