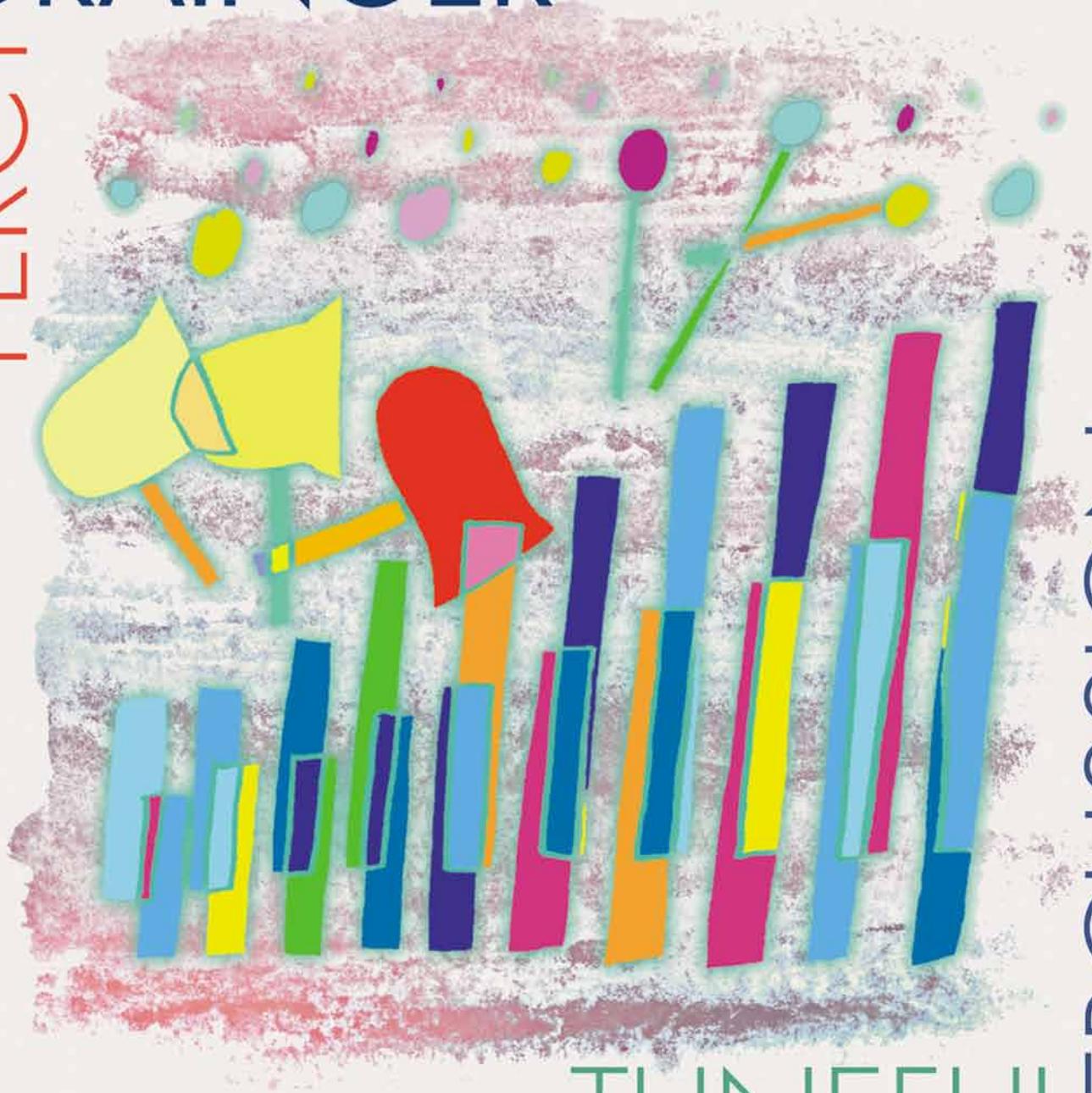


GRAINGER

PERCY



TUNEFUL PERCUSSION



Ella and Percy Grainger
playing staff bells and marimbas, Adelaide 1934

It took musicians about 60 years to realise the beautiful possibilities of the Saxophone family. How long will it be before the rich quality of the percussion section will be used in full? – PERCY GRAINGER, 1926.

“What makes you think the piano has anything to do with music? By the end of the 20th century people will be listening to African music ... they’ll be dancing to African music ... the Asian gamelan. Children, savages, nature itself; percussion is an instinct music, and music must never lose touch with its instincts.”
PERCY GRAINGER, AS HEARD IN THE FILM PASSION (1999)

PERCY GRAINGER (1882-1961)

The very mention of percussion and twentieth century music in the same breath evokes images of Stravinsky’s ballets or Bartók’s Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste, not music by the Australian composer Percy Aldridge Grainger. Pick up any textbook on percussion technique or history and it is doubtful whether you will find his name or his works mentioned, and yet Grainger’s once revolutionary ideas on the use of tuned percussion in the symphony orchestra are now commonplace.

The word tuned is the key here. Grainger would place composers like Stravinsky and Bartók in the category of those who were content to explore the tuneless percussion – drums, cymbals, woodblock, castanets and the like – rhythmic instruments of little or no definite pitch. Instead, Grainger pioneered the introduction of tuneful percussion into the orchestra. The purpose of this group – consisting of the glockenspiel, xylophone and bell families, as well as the dulcitone, celeste and the piano – was not to make a larger volume of sound but to create clarity and distinctness of tone.

Grainger had visited the Paris International Exhibition in 1900 (his father having designed the West Australian exhibit) and had been impressed by the clarity and independence of tone in the Javanese gong orchestras performing there. He felt that in these ensembles, there was none of the tendency to “get ‘soaked up’ in indistinct conglomeration of sounds” such as with Western orchestras when “loud and complex in tone”.

In the early part of the twentieth century, these ‘families’ of tuneful percussion instruments were not yet complete, and Grainger was content to spend his years in London frequenting the music halls to hear the capabilities of existing

instruments and arranging with Boosey and Hawkes to borrow a new percussion instrument each week. However, it was his 1912 visit to the Ethnographical Museum in Leyden, Holland, and its collection of low-toned Indonesian mallet instruments that confirmed his need to augment the percussion section with something new.

Within two years of Grainger's move to the United States in 1914, he was a regular visitor to the factory of J.C. Deagan, a company specialising in musical bells, chimes and tubes. Their large range of acoustic and electric percussion instruments fascinated Grainger, especially the nabimba – a five octave bass xylophone with vibrating resonators and a sound reminiscent of the low clarinets. Later, he furnished Deagan with a complete design for a set of Swiss staff bells, to be premiered in his new work for percussion and orchestra, the suite *In a Nutshell*.

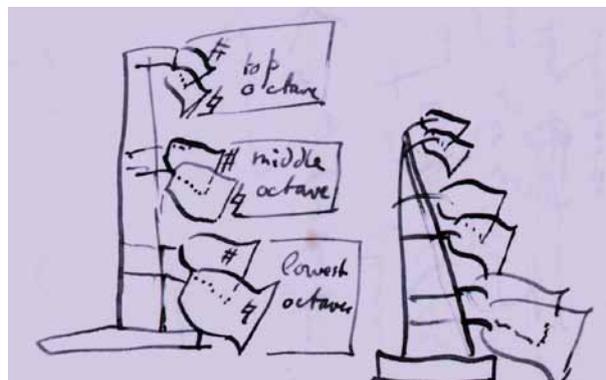
Meanwhile, Grainger had commissioned the New York-based percussion manufacturer, R.H. Mayland, to build a steel marimba or bass glockenspiel-style instrument with tuned wooden resonators. An octave-extension table built in Adelaide would follow nearly twenty years later, but the unique feature of this particular marimba was that the individual bars could be removed to facilitate bowing by members of the string section in Grainger's *Tribute to Foster* (1932).

Grainger also furnished his own mallets to perform with – from soft or wool-wound to those made of hard wood or rubber. Double-headed mallets with shorter sticks were also created to allow for quick changes of sound at the flick of a wrist. Not that percussionists were grateful for his efforts; indeed, his demand for the then unheard of multi-mallet technique and having multiple players on each instrument were greeted with scepticism and derision. Ever practical, Grainger then proceeded to perform on his

own instruments with great aplomb and taught his mother Rose and later, his wife Ella to play alongside him.

The experience also encouraged Grainger to avoid percussion specialists during his teaching positions at Chicago Musical College, New York University and the Interlochen Music Camps in the 30s and 40s, preferring to allow pianists to experience the benefits of ensemble playing. Many of Grainger's percussion arrangements of Debussy's and Ravel's piano music stem from these experiences with young musicians.

Grainger's educational radio lectures in



1934/5 for the then Australian Broadcasting Commission on *A Commonsense View of All Music*, enabled him to re-visit the non-Western music that had so influenced his percussion writing. Although he had a number of pioneering ethnographic recordings at his disposal, Grainger augmented these with new transcriptions of Javanese and Balinese music for the tuneful percussion, thus providing live musical excerpts in the studio.

This is not to say that Grainger's ideas went completely unnoticed by other composers; Alban Berg, for instance, was very impressed with Grainger's journal article on the tuneful percussion in the 1926 edition of *Pult und*

Taktstock. However, as Grainger's bells and marimba were purpose-built and therefore unique, he chose not to publish his percussion works and most lay undiscovered until quite recently. And without publication and performance, how could percussion textbooks hope to give Grainger any recognition for his efforts?

This recording, featuring the Woof! percussion ensemble, intends to change all that. It presents a fascinating portrait of Grainger through his music for tuneful percussion, combined with the sounds of the actual steel marimba and staff bells designed by the composer himself (courtesy of the Grainger Museum, the University of Melbourne). One could not ask for a more 'authentic' listening experience.

1 Shepherd's Hey (1908-1913) British Folk-Music Settings No. 4

Grainger's composition teacher Karl Klimesch once said to his pupil, "if you have a theme or melody, start off with it right away and the moment your melodic inspiration runs out stop your piece". With its lively and contrapuntal treatment of four variants of the British folk-tune, *Keel Row* – here emphasised by Woof!'s arrangement for what the composer would describe as a "hammerwood four-some" (xylophone and three marimbas) – it would appear that Grainger's *Shepherd's Hey* more than lives up to his teacher's expectations. As with the equally famous *Country Gardens*, the tune has its basis in Morris dancing; indeed, the 'Hey' of the title denotes a particular figure within the dance itself.

2 Gamelan Anklung (Berong Pengèjètè) (arr. Grainger 1935-6)

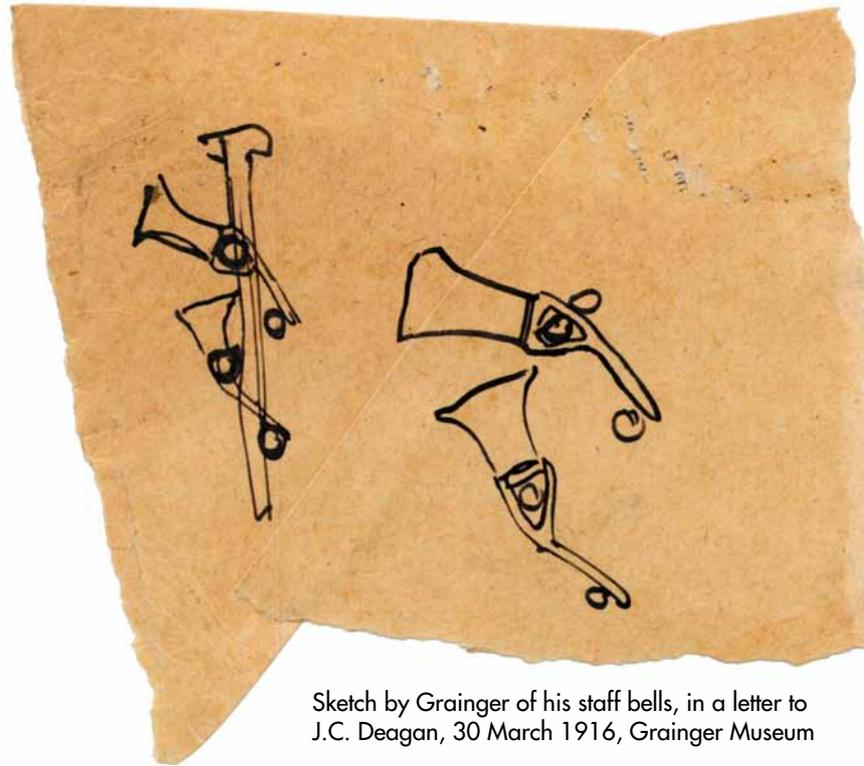
Composed in a four-tone scale, the Gamelan Anklung (Berong Pengèjètè) is Balinese religious ceremonial music, as noted down from one of the Musik des Orients Parlophone albums, by James Scott-Power and Percy Grainger. Grainger's later arrangement for tuneful percussion, piccolo and harmonium was intended to illustrate a "typically Mongolian use of slow, well defined intervals" that Chinese sages believed promoted harmony and stability.

3 Irish Tune from County Derry (1902) British Folk-Music Settings

Originally of unknown title and without text, the Irish Tune from Country Derry or Londonderry Air became one of Grainger's most beloved folk-song settings. Although initially scored for wordless a capella choir, and later "dished-up" for a variety of different ensembles, this setting for mallet percussion was especially written for the University of Arkansas Percussion Ensemble by Chalon Ragsdale in 1987 and here receives its first Australian performance.

4 The Lonely Desert Man Sees the Tents of the Happy Tribes (1914/1949) Room-Music Tidbits

Those who know Grainger's The Warriors (1916) and the Tribute to Foster (1931) would already be familiar with the principal melodies of The Lonely Desert Man. Yet, with its scoring of voices, guitars and percussion, and a song text comprising nonsense syllables, could it be as serious and autobiographical as Grainger intended? When sketched in 1914, he wrote that it was "a sort of Desert-Music or On the



Sketch by Grainger of his staff bells, in a letter to J.C. Deagan, 30 March 1916, Grainger Museum

Prairies ... composed in a mood of great sorrow & wistfulness, & expressed the thought 'Last year's summer, where is it?' The summer of the previous year was spent in London. Perhaps the sense of isolation and sorrow was a direct result of Grainger's move to New York, of feeling ostracised, and of being alone in a new land.

5 J.S. Bach: Blithe Bells (arr. Grainger 1930-31)

Grainger once declared to his students at New York University that the three greatest composers were Bach, Delius and Duke Ellington. Not that there is much of the original Bach aria Schafen können sicher weiden left in Grainger's free "ramble" or improvisation, Blithe Bells. Grainger's thoughts were apparently coloured by

the idea that in writing the melody in thirds, Bach was hinting at the sound of "sheep bells" – a sound most evident in this 'elastically scored' version for piano (four hands) and mallet percussion.

6 Eastern Intermezzo (1898/9, 1933) Youthful Toneworks

One of Grainger's earliest encounters with non-Western culture was as a boy growing up in Melbourne, visiting the Chinatown precinct in the 1880s and early 1890s. The lights, sounds and visual delights of these boyhood visits would later culminate in the rhythms and delicious parallel harmonies of the Eastern Intermezzo. This arrangement for tuneful percussion, composed for radio but unpublished in Grainger's lifetime, is even more effective at capturing the exotic colour of a part of Melbourne that exists to this day.

7 Ella Grainger: Crying for the Moon (arr. Grainger 1946)

In addition to performing her husband's bell parts on stage, Grainger's wife, Ella Ström, was a talented visual artist, poet and amateur composer. Between 1944 and 1950, she composed ten songs which were later harmonised and arranged by her husband for different forces. Crying for the Moon, for contralto, marimbas ("trembled throughout") and piano strings, is an unusual work in which a man and a maid cry for the moon and, upon being transported there, are duly frozen into ice.

8 Arrival Platform Humlet
(1908-1916)
Room-Music Tidbits

Conceived in a single line of unbroken melody – without chords or themes – Arrival Platform Humlet was something Grainger felt one could hum to oneself on the railway platform whilst waiting for a lover to return from afar. This arrangement for percussion ensemble was only recently discovered amongst a mass of sketches for Grainger's orchestral suite *In a Nutshell*, later realised by Vaughan McAlley. As in the orchestral version, the work demands the use of the rare Deagan nabimba, its bass clarinet-like reedy quality here imitated by membranes attached to the resonators of a standard marimba.

9 Claude Debussy: *Pagodes*,
from *Estampes*
(1903 arr. Grainger 1928)

Grainger gave the first British performance of Debussy's *Pagodes* in 1905. Many years later, in a lecture on the same work, Grainger remarked that "if we want one single influence that turned music away from the noisiness of the late nineteenth century to the delicacy of twentieth century music, I think it is to be sought in Debussy's admiration for the Javanese gong orchestras". Indeed, it was very much the sound of these gong orchestras that Grainger hoped to evoke by arranging *Pagodes* for a large percussion ensemble including no less than four pianists.



Ugo Marcelli's 1916 caricature of Grainger's suite *In a Nutshell* for tuneful percussion and orchestra, featuring (from left to right) Percy Grainger, Aldred Hertz (conductor of the San Francisco S.O.), Louis Persinger (concertmaster) and Redfern Mason, the music critic for the San Francisco Examiner.

10 Bahariyale V. Palaniyandi (1935)

Grainger transcribed this "oriental instrumental (*Jalatarangan*)" from an old Columbia recording used in his radio lectures in the mid-1930s. Highlighting the difference between 'tuneful' and 'tuneless' percussion, this example is scored for harmonium, various drums and a set of Indian cup bells. These bells, according to Grainger, are placed on the ground and "offer much resistance to the blows of light wooden wands, by which they are sounded".

11 *Sailor's Song* (1900/1954)

Although its title may suggest otherwise, *Sailor's Song* is a wholly original work and began life as

a sketch "for bells, or bowls, or bars" during the Graingers' trip to San Remo, Italy, in 1900. In the 1950s, Grainger returned to the work and "dished it up" for keyboard, although the suggested instrumentation on the score is "bells or other tuneful percussion". Taking this as their cue, Woof! have now returned the work to its percussive origins and created a new version of *Sailor's Song* for marimba ensemble.

12 Balfour Gardiner: *London Bridge*
(1911 arr. Grainger 1935)

Balfour Gardiner (1877-1950) was a wealthy but generous composer who befriended the young Grainger whilst studying in Germany; together with Cyril Scott, Norman O'Neill and Herman Sandby, they formed the 'Frankfurt Group' of composers. Grainger had planned on arranging

two of Gardiner's works for tuneful percussion, but unfortunately the other – *The Joyful Homecoming* – never went beyond the sound-trial stage. This arrangement of *London Bridge*, the third of Gardiner's *Five Pieces* for piano, is interesting in that it leaves much of the original work intact and simply augments it with a second piano part and adds harmonium and double-bass to the mallet percussion group.

13 Maurice Ravel: *La Vallée des Cloches*,
from *Miroirs* (1905 arr. Grainger 1944)

Grainger had been attracted to the bell-like sonorities in Ravel's keyboard writing before, having made an arrangement (now lost to us) of *Le Gibet* in 1934 for piano and marimbas. In the

1940s, Grainger began teaching at the National Music Camp in Interlochen, Michigan, and made this arrangement of La Vallée des Cloches over a four-day period for his students, adding harp and strings to an ensemble of pianos, marimbas, bells and gongs. Interestingly, no orchestral score survives of this work, as Grainger was by this stage in the enviable position of being able to write out parts from an 'imagined' score.

14 Sekar Gadung (arr. Grainger 1932-33)

Sekar Gadung, traditional Javanese music, was "roughly noted down" from the Musik des Orients recording by Norman Voelaker and Percy Grainger in 1932/3 and arranged for two voices and percussion shortly thereafter. As with so many of his other transcriptions, Grainger used this arrangement for educational purposes, principally to illustrate the properties of the 'salendro' or five-tone scale. This scale, unlike the more familiar 'pentatonic' scale, divides our western octave into five equal parts – something approximated by Grainger here using vocal trills and notes deliberately marked flatter than usual.

15 Under en Bro (Under a Bridge) (1946) Danish Folk-Music Settings No. 12

Having previously recorded this Danish folk-ballad in Jutland six years earlier, Grainger had intended to present Under en Bro to his wife as a wedding present in 1928, but did not finish the arrangement until 1946. The narrative depicts two lovers who taunt each other until the man at last declares his undying love. The restlessness of the text is mirrored by Grainger's setting, which ranges from a capella solo voices, to bitonal gong accompaniment and a final gamelan-like section strangely reminiscent of Jamaican steel bands.

16 Country Gardens (1908, 1918) British Folk-Music Settings No. 22

Although Country Gardens is arguably Grainger's most famous arrangement, it was something he grew to despise in old age, writing that "the typical English country garden is not often used to grow flowers in; it is more likely to be a vegetable plot. So you can think of turnips as I play it". Taking Cecil J. Sharp's published folk melody, Grainger initially "rough-sketched" a version for whistlers in 1908, later "dishing it up" for solo piano. Woof! have now arranged the work for "hammerwood four-some", whose rich tones capture the spirit of the rural 'Morris Men' who still dance to such tunes bedecked in ribbons and jingling bells.

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ABOUT WOOF!

Since its formation in 1995, Woof! has performed twice on ABC Classic FM's Sunday Live, as well as on Melbourne's 3MBS-FM and as a part of the University of Melbourne's Lunchtime Concert Series. The ensemble has performed for Musica Viva in Schools and Countrywide programmes since 1996, presenting concerts in metropolitan Melbourne, regional Victoria and New South Wales. Woof! also presents its own concert series in which a number of Australian premieres have been included.

Christine Baker graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 1992 where she studied with Paul Sarcich, Peter Neville and Graeme Leak. As a recipient of the Willem van Otterloo Scholarship she began three years of study at the Sweelinck Conservatorium in Amsterdam, completing a Post Graduate Degree studying with Jan Pustjens, Marinus Kamst and

Peter Prommel. During this time she performed with various orchestras and ensembles including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. After her return in 1996 Christine began freelance work playing in orchestras, contemporary chamber ensembles, musicals, operas and theatres (most recently with the Chamber Made Opera Company and Hungry Ghost Theatre Company). She is a member of the renaissance group La Compañia and is the most recent member of Woof!, having joined in 1998.

Tracey Patten began tertiary studies in Adelaide at the Elder Conservatorium of Music and in 1994 completed a Bachelor of Music Performance (Honours) at the Victorian College of the Arts. That year she received a Young Achievers' Award in Arts and Music and was the recipient of the V.C.A.'s Van Otterloo Memorial Prize. These scholarships allowed her to study at the Sweelinck Conservatorium in Amsterdam with members of the Concertgebouw Orchestra, graduating from there in 1996.

Past performances include touring Europe with the Australian Youth Orchestra, soloist with the Geminiani Chamber Orchestra and on ABC Classic FM's Young Australia Series. Tracey is currently a freelance player with the Melbourne Symphony, the State Orchestra of Victoria and was full-time timpanist/percussionist with Cameron Mackintosh's recent production of Phantom of the Opera. Teaching commitments include the Victorian College of the Arts, the University of Melbourne, Methodist Ladies' College and Melbourne Grammar School.

Matthew Goddard commenced drum kit studies with Eric Johnstone in his hometown of Hobart in the early 1980s and soon after developed an interest in percussion. In 1993 he moved to Melbourne where he studied at the Victorian College of the Arts with Tom O'Kelly, Robert Cossom, Christine Turpin and



Craig Beard, completing an Honours degree in Performance. Matthew currently works as a freelance timpanist and percussionist and has played with the Melbourne and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, the Gavin Bryars Ensemble, on various film and television soundtracks and was for five years timpanist in the Geminiani Chamber Orchestra. In April 1998 Matthew performed in the percussion section of *Kits* by Phillippe Hurel which formed part of the Melbourne Symphony's Metropolis Series. In June 1998 he also travelled to Japan for six months to work as guest timpanist/

percussionist with the orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa.

Stephen Hardie began his musical studies with his mother on the piano at age five, and took up drums soon after. At age fourteen he commenced the study of classical percussion. From 1988 he studied at the Victorian College of the Arts, where his teachers were Robert Clarke, Paul Sarcich and Robert Cossom, eventually completing a Bachelor of Music Performance (Honours). He has been in a number of ensembles as a student, including the Australian Youth Orchestra for three years

and was principal percussionist with the Geminiani Orchestra for five years. Stephen has been a casual performer with the Melbourne Symphony since 1990 and was a soloist in their performance of *Kits* by Phillippe Hurel in April 1998. He has also played with the State Orchestra of Victoria, the Melbourne Bach Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Melbourne Chorale, along with numerous other freelance engagements. He is the percussion teacher at Eltham High School, where he also directs the jazz band.

THE GRAINGER MUSEUM

Unique in Australia, the Grainger Museum at the University of Melbourne is an autobiographical museum with a collection numbering in excess of 100,000 items. In building this innovative structure, Percy Grainger was motivated by the desire to interpret and contextualise his achievements in the fields of music composition, ethnomusicology, 'free music' experimentation and two and three dimensional design.

By example, he aimed to highlight the creative process inherent in musical composition. As an additional charter, the museum was established to preserve works of Australian composers from the 1880s to the present.

The Collection includes rare musical instruments, a vast holding of correspondence, paintings, decorative arts, costumes and a significant music manuscript archive representing Grainger's oeuvre and many works by his contemporaries. As such, the Grainger Museum is delighted to have had the opportunity to work with Move Records and Woof! in bringing Grainger's unique 'tuneful percussion' instruments to life, and enabling them to reach a potentially worldwide audience through this premiere recording.

Brian Allison, curator

Produced by Martin Wright for Move Records

Co-produced by Woof!

Recorded at Move Records studio between May and November 1999

Mixed by Martin Wright, Vaughan McAlley and Woof!

Mastered by Vaughan McAlley and Thomas Grubb

Project management by Tracey Patten

Percussion 1 – 16

Woof!: Christine Baker, Matthew Goddard (appears courtesy of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra), Stephen Hardie and Tracey Patten

Piano, Celeste and Harmonium 2 5 7 9

12 13 15

Mark Knoop

Conductor 6 7 9 13 – 15

Michael Lichnovsky

Mezzo Soprano 7 14 15

Kirsten Boerema

Bass 14 15

Clifford Plumpton

Double Bass 2 6 12 13 15

Sylvia Hosking

(appears courtesy of the Melbourne Symphony)

Strings 13 15

Linden String Quartet: Michal Loftus-Hills and Jane Mason (violin), Danielle Arcaro (viola) and Phillipa Gardiner-Svarc ('cello) (appears courtesy of the State Orchestra of Victoria)

Flute and Piccolo 2 14

Wendy Clarke

(appears courtesy of the Melbourne Symphony)

Harp 13

Mary Anderson

(appears courtesy of the State Orchestra of Victoria)

Tenor 4

Vaughan McAlley

Choir 4

Members of the Ormond College Choir

Thanks to

Alessandro Servadei

Mark Knoop

Vaughan McAlley

Michael Lichnovsky

Gerald Gentry

Barry Quinn

Victorian College of the Arts

The Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne, for allowing Woof! access to and use of the Staff Bells and Steel Marimba from Grainger's private instrument collection

Grainger's instruments appear on

5 6 8 9 12 – 15

Original art work and front cover design

Jim Pavlidis

Historical photographs and sketches reproduced courtesy of the Grainger Museum, the University of Melbourne

Undated sketches by Grainger of his staff bells, found in the Deagan correspondence collection of the Grainger Museum

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The first complete recording of Percy Grainger's unique 'tuneful percussion'. Performed on authentic instruments including Grainger's own staff bells and steel marimba, this collection includes many previously un-recorded works.

PERCY GRAINGER • TUNEFUL PERCUSSION

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WOOF!

"Percussion will be the thing this century ... I'm sure of it. We will all be drawn back to first things, and the first thing in music is percussion."

"What makes you think the piano has anything to do with music? By the end of the 20th century people will be listening to African music ... they'll be dancing to African music ... the Asian gamelan. Children, savages, nature itself; percussion is an instinct music, and music must never lose touch with its instincts."

PERCY GRAINGER, AS HEARD IN THE FILM *PASSION* (1999)

