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Percy Grainger: How American was He?

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The national affiliation of composer-pianist Percy Grainger (1882–1961) is a complex matter. While often claimed today to have been Australian or American, he was a 'naturally born British subject' for the first 36 years of his life. Thereafter, he was a naturalized American. Drawing on Grainger's letters, essays, scores and memorabilia, this article investigates the reasons behind Grainger's adoption of American citizenship during the final months of the First World War, and the subsequent national traits within his manner of living as well as his social attitudes, musical approach and style. His contributions to instrumentation, scoring and texture, as well as to music education, are seen from this analysis to have strong American traits, and subsequent influence, while his compositional style remained essentially English, although built upon a technical base established while a teenage student in Germany.

In later life, Grainger was ambivalent about remaining an American citizen and resident, not just because of an implied disloyalty to his 'native land', Australia, but also because of his lack of empathy with evolving American values. To a Yale University audience in 1921, he confessed to being 'a cosmopolitan from first to last'. This article analyses Grainger's thinking about cosmopolitanism, nationalism and universalism in the following decades, against the backdrop of his growing commitment to the racialist, later racist, cause of Nordicism. It focuses particularly upon Grainger's series of articles about 'Grieg: Nationalist and Cosmopolitan' from 1943, before investigating the relationship between racial and national thinking in Grainger's final years. This culminates in his last statement of musical 'creed', published in a Norwegian magazine in 1955: musically to support the 'unity' of the Nordic race, and to bring 'honor and fame' to his native land, Australia. Yet, Grainger died, in 1961, in America, and still an American citizen.

Encyclopaedias normally introduce their biographical entries by reciting name, lifespan, nationality and profession. This helps immediately to distinguish between similar entries and starts to establish defining characteristics of the entry's subject. Such headline generalizations work best where one name, professional track and country of residence were maintained by the subject across a life, and the positioning and extent of the lifespan is unproblematic.[1] To the degree that this is not the case, such biographical openers can be less helpful, sometimes even misleading, because of their over-simplification of complex situations. As with so many leading figures of the 'turbulent' early twentieth century, Percy Grainger defied the encyclopaedic rubric admirably. Born George Percy Grainger in 1882, he adopted the professional name of Percy Aldridge Grainger in 1911. For much of his life he was best known as a pianist, but in increasing retrospect is now better known as a composer; and he had noteworthy commitments to ethnomusicology

[1] Acknowledgements: Quotations from published Grainger writings in this article accord with 'common use' scholarly provisions; for quotations from unpublished materials I am indebted to the University of Melbourne, the custodian of the Grainger Museum.Lifespan problems arise, for instance, when birth or death date, or location, are unknown, as with many medieval figures, or alternative calendars were once in operation, such as with the Russians before 1918.

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and music education, not to mention a collection of interrelated interests in 'sex, race, athletics, speech and art'.[2]

Grainger was born in Melbourne, Victoria, and died in White Plains, New York, with substantial intervening residencies in – as they then were – the British colony of Victoria, the German Empire, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and, finally, the United States of America,[3] so the question of summary national designations or affiliations for him is already complex.[4] Hence this propositional study of Grainger as an American: was he American, when was he American, and how much was he American, both in his outlook to life and his work? And what other descriptors could helpfully be used to summarize important aspects of his being?[5] Many of the leading figures of the early twentieth century moved from their birth lands – some because of cataclysmic world events, others for reasons of professional opportunism – and, in so doing, created profound questions about their later national identities. For some, even the very cities and countries of their residence changed their identities or statuses, leading to geographical and linguistic dilemmas that are thankfully lacking in Grainger's case.[6]

What is beyond dispute is that on 3 June 1918, at the age of 35, Percy Grainger became a citizen of the United States, by the process of naturalization. Accounts of his life sometimes juxtapose this American naturalization with his expectation of being sent as part of a United States Army band to fight in France, but his decision to seek American citizenship was, in fact, not a sudden one; nor was its award related to the possibility of his being sent abroad. In fact, Grainger's first registration of intention to seek American citizenship dates from July 1915,[7] barely ten months after his arrival in neutral United States in the earliest weeks of the

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[2] Letter, Percy Grainger to Rose Grainger, 7 October 1911, in *The Farthest North of Humanness*, ed. Kay Dreyfus (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1985), 428.

[3] Consisting of 48 states when he arrived in 1914, and 50 states (with the addition of Alaska and Hawai'i, in 1959) by the time he died in 1961.

[4] For a broad survey of the multiple paradoxes of Britishness, as against Englishness, in Grainger's earlier years, see G.R. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War, 1886–1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004). Searle notes that 'Immigration and emigration were also important in raising puzzling questions as to whether nationality was conferred by ethnicity, geographical location, or culture'. (p. 42)

[5] This article gained its impetus from a recent review for a publisher of a new selection of Grainger's letters. The reviewer had expected that, being from Grainger's American years, the selection would be most revealing of his Americanness. 'That he still considered himself Australian, even in the late 1940s and beyond, is a key revelation' wrote the reviewer about the collection, prompting this article about the valencies of the various identities attributed to Grainger.

[6] The redrawing of the boundaries and creation of new nation-states in Europe during the mid-nineteenth century (Germany, Italy) and then, again, in central and eastern Europe following World War One provide particular challenges for encyclopaedists, including major cities that consequently changed name and purpose, as well as national placement. Pozsony, in the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918, was by 1920 Bratislava, a major city in the new Czechoslovakia, but is now, under that same name, the capital city of Slovakia. Throughout, however, the neighbouring Viennese persisted in calling it by its German name, Pressburg.

[7] 'Declaration of Intention' form of the US Department of Labor, dated 7 July 1915, and lodged in the Supreme Court of New York. This form included the declaration that 'it is my bona fide intention to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to George V, King of Great Britain and Ireland, of whom I am now a subject'. (Grainger Museum, Melbourne; hereafter, GMM.)

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War, and he must have reaffirmed that intention in June 1917 when joining the United States Army. Normally, at least five years' residence after disembarkation was required before gaining citizenship, but, through a special Act of the United States Congress of 9 May 1918, aliens serving in the American armed forces could petition for immediate naturalization without the stipulated 'first paper' declarations or completed residencies. In the following seven weeks, some 192,000 servicemen took advantage of this opportunity, including Percy Grainger.[8] He was not subsequently sent abroad, but remained in the United States, through his appointment as an Assistant Band Instructor at the Army's band training school at Fort Jay on Governor's Island, off Manhattan,[9] until he was demobilized on 6 January 1919.[10]

There was both push and pull for Grainger in seeking this fast-tracked American citizenship. He had been attacked repeatedly since leaving Britain in 1914 for shirking his (British) patriotic duty,[11] and he feared, as an alien in the United States, either being repatriated to Britain or being forced to join the 'British forces' when on tour in Canada. He must also have worried what would happen should he return to work in Britain after the War's end.[12] By the time the United States joined the War, in April 1917, Grainger was starting to accept the inevitability of his enlistment and was carefully weighing up his North American options.[13] The Americans' willingness to enlist him in a band based in the New York region, the Fifteenth Band of the Coast Artillery Corps, and so near to his ailing mother, eventually seemed more personally and professionally attractive than anything the Canadians might offer, or require of him.[14]

To his own surprise, Grainger loved the communal life of the Army, thinking it revealed American men and American music at their best. 'Looking around me at the life here, at the young men here, the uniforms, & listening to the American music, the foxtrots, 2 steps, etc., I feel more deeply, more satisfactorily American than ever', he wrote on 17 June 1917, five days after being assigned to Fort Totten on Long Island.[15] From this time, too, he became more deeply committed to

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[8] 'United States Certificate of Naturalization', in the name of George Percy Grainger, dated 3 June 1918, GMM; for a study of changing US citizenship requirements at this time, see Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[9] US Army 'Detachment Order', dated 10 May 1918, GMM.

[10] 'Honorable Discharge from the Army of the United States', dated 6 January 1919, GMM; a later 'Certificate in Lieu of Lost or Destroyed Discharge' form, dated 26 April 1960, gives a discharge date of 7 January 1919, GMM.

[11] Most notably, by the London critic, Robin Legge. See Eileen Dorum, *Percy Grainger: The Man Behind the Music* (Melbourne: IC & EE Dorum, 1986), 108–110. Later, Grainger was also fiercely criticized in the United States. See, for instance, Constance Drexel, 'Percy Grainger Holds Life Too Dear to Lose in Battle', *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia), 31 January 1917.

[12] Robin Legge, writing in May 1917, had warned Grainger: 'England is no place for you after the war I fear. The feeling here is very strong against those who pitted a paltry £.s.d. against the blood of their contemporaries'. Dorum, *Percy Grainger*, 109.

[13] See, for instance, telegram of Lord Richard Nevill, Comptroller of the Governor-General's Household in Ottawa, to Grainger, 6 June 1917: 'I am afraid I cant advise you and you must take your chance like other people but your knowledge of language might obtain promotion for you later on', GMM.

[14] Grainger underscored his choice later in the year, writing to his mother about having just heard 'a *rotten* brass & reed band' from Canada. Letter, Percy Grainger to Rose Grainger, 28 September 1917, GMM.

[15] Letter, Percy Grainger to Rose Grainger, 17 June 1917, GMM; according to the 1960 copy of his 'Honorable Discharge', he had formally enlisted on 12 June 1917, GMM.

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the propagation of American music, whether popular, folk or high-art,[16] as well as of American poetry.[17]

Grainger's essays and letters at this time show that he was particularly impressed by three sub-groups of the American population: the Italians, the Scandinavians (particularly, the Swedes), and, to the consternation of some of his hosts and sponsors, the American blacks. Writing to his mother on 19 January 1921, two years after leaving the Army, he associated their former life in London with 'drudgery', but he was

> Now, so much happier in this country, more sure of myself in every way & contented with my present economic prosperity & hopeful for a rosy future for you & for me, [that] I no longer need such comfort as I did in London.[18]

All that optimism would change, however, after the death of his mother, by suicide, in April 1922.

In national terms, however, what precisely was Grainger's status *before* 3 June 1918? Having been born in a British self-governing colony, he was simply, and without further qualification, a 'naturally born British subject'. Although the Commonwealth of Australia was subsequently formed from six former colonies in 1901, with constitutional powers that included 'naturalization and aliens' and 'immigration and emigration',[19] it was only in 1949 that Australia offered its own distinctive Australian citizenship, following a precedent established by Canada in 1946.[20] Even then, Australian citizens simultaneously remained British subjects until 1984, when that British subject affiliation ceased. Despite Grainger's unceasing claim during life, and the retrospective claim of many historians, to his being an Australian – often, none too modestly, Australia's greatest composer – he technically never was an Australian citizen. When Australian citizenship might have been available to Grainger, that is, after 1949, he did consider it,[21] but only to coincide with his leaving the United States to return to live in Australia. In such an eventuality, he would have had to become an Australian (citizen) *and* British (subject), yet he could only ever be an Australian citizen *or* an American citizen.[22]

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[16] See, for instance, his essays 'The Unique Value of Natalie Curtis' Notations of American Negro Folksongs' (completed on 26 November 1917) and 'Let Us Sit in Wait No Longer for the Advent of Great American Composers – They are with Us Already' (1919), reproduced in *Grainger on Music*, ed. Malcolm Gillies and Bruce Clunies Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 95–98 and 106–112, respectively.

[17] Grainger had first read Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* in early adolescence, and he remained in thrall to its rugged masculinity. This led Grainger, in 1917, to complete his *Marching Song of Democracy*, with dedication 'in loving adoration of Walt Whitman'. A newer discovery was the poetry of Edgar Lee Masters, whom Grainger described as 'a real first class genius, enthralling & cosmic'. Letter, Percy Grainger to Balfour Gardiner, 16 June 1916, GMM. Inspired by Masters, Grainger completed his *American Folk-Music Setting* No. 1, *Spoon River*, during 1919–22.

[18] Letter, Percy Grainger to Rose Grainger, 19 January 1921, GMM.

[19] Section 51, xix and xxvii, respectively, of the Act to Constitute the Commonwealth of Australia, passed by the British Parliament in 1900, leading, for instance, to Australia's Naturalization Act of 1903.

[20] A meeting of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Nations in London in 1948 adopted the Canadian model of 1946 for the rest of that Commonwealth.

[21] See note 38.

[22] Now, of course, dual citizenships are possible between any of these three countries, although with different obligations.

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Ever since coming to the United States in 1914, Grainger had dearly wanted to be both Australian *and* American. Even before taking American citizenship he had considered the democratic, social and cultural directions of the two countries to be so similar as sometimes to be 'indistinguishable'.[23] Writing in 1926 about a visit to Australia, he agonized over having

> come to the birth-land you have forsaken for another land, & … to have to be careful every time one talks to an interviewer or holds a speech that one never calls Australia 'my country', but always only 'the country I was born in'.[24]

He swore at this same time never to forget 'that I was a true & passionate Australian, or at least a would-be Australian, in my young manhood', and then oddly introduces another part of his distinctive national melange by explaining that, rather than anything American, 'what cut me adrift from Australian-ness for ever was the going to Scandinavia & the finding there of the things I had liked best in Australian pioneeringness'.[25] Indeed, in 1928 he married the Swede, Ella Strøm, whom he had met in 1926 on a return voyage from Australia to the United States. Even in America, he sometimes still appeared as an Australian, if it made good business sense. When, during the 1920s, Steinway commissioned a painting for a feature on his *Colonial Song* and its own 'instrument of the immortals', he was portrayed as 'the Australian pianist'. The accompanying text assured the reader that the work, 'an impression of [Grainger's] native land, captures much of the stark and sun-drenched majesty of that primeval continent'.[26]

The tragic and highly publicized circumstances of his mother's suicide, in 1922, changed Grainger forever.[27] He rapidly withdrew from many American relationships, especially with those previously closest to his mother and himself – his lover since 1917, Lotta Mills Hough, and a retinue of female admirers including Isabel Du Cane, Else Permin and Hazel Hyde, along with a number of New York society 'nincompoops, hyenas & ogres'[28] – all of whom Grainger considered held some culpability for his mother's confused final action. Uncharacteristically, he sought to cleanse his recent past by destroying countless personal documents in a bonfire shortly after her death,[29] and in privately publishing his own eulogistic

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[23] See, for instance, letter, Percy Grainger to Rose Grainger, 17 June 1917, GMM.

[24] From reminiscence in 'Sketches for My Book "The Life of My Mother & Her Son"', (1926), in *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, ed. Malcolm Gillies, David Pear and Mark Carroll (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 213.

[25] *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, 214. In a letter to his mother of 14 May 1921, GMM. Grainger stated that 'I truly believe the Swedish is the lov[e]liest of *all* the races [*sic*]'.

[26] Full-page advertisement in Metropolitan Opera House programme booklet (1920s), GMM. The painting was by Everett Henry.

[27] See the recollection of Grainger's manager, Antonia Sawyer, reproduced in Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, *Portrait of Percy Grainger* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2002), pp. 99–103.

[28] Letter, Percy Grainger to his long-term agent, Antonia Morse, 8 October 1946, GMM.

[29] John Bird reports that Grainger destroyed 'several hundreds, perhaps thousands, of letters to and from his mother and himself'. *Percy Grainger*, 3rd edition (Sydney: Currency, 1999), 208. Actually, Grainger appears to have destroyed more of his other correspondences and preserved a good percentage of the correspondence between his mother and himself. The over-90 letters he wrote to his mother between 1915 and 1922 are now one of the few consistent sources of information about his life for his early American period. A contemporaneous note made by Grainger's mother, and kept with a new will that Grainger

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Photos of Rose Grainger and of 3 Short Accounts of Her Life, in Her Own Hand-Writing Reproduced for Her Kin and Friends by Her Adoring Son Percy Grainger.[30] His professional and personal standing in America – so painstakingly built up since 1914 – now slipped, as for much of the next four-and-a-half years he was out of the country, often visiting places and people in Europe or Australia associated with his earlier life with his mother. But he then sought to rebuild his career and, without his mother, 'to prove myself capable of earning more money than ever before'. This he succeeded in doing across the latter years of the 1920s, mainly through his hectic pianistic schedule.[31] Through the 1920s, however, he started to take a more negative view of his compositional career in America, stating later in life that 'it was just with those 2 pieces (Nutshell & Warriors) that I sullied my fame in America. But it would have been sullied anyway – there was not a chance for a man like me to stay long in America's good graces'. He considered that America had been 'nice enough as long as I played second fiddle, played other men's works & played into the hands of other men's vanities', but the Americans had given him 'the cold shoulder the moment I made any sign of being a great man in my own right'.[32]

This mood of personal retreat and bitterness, which Grainger largely hid from his American colleagues, was only partially alleviated by his marriage in 1928.[33] While having respectful professional associates in the United States, and a growing number of student acolytes (both of piano and in bands), he had few close American friends. Grainger rationalized this circumstance many times in later life by explaining that real friends are those made early in life.[34] Increasingly, it was Scandinavia and his Scandinavia-of-the-South, Australia, that he idolized. 'This generous amusing land', as Grainger had described America in 1916 to his British friend, Henry Balfour Gardiner,[35] remained in the inter-war years a convenient place for him to live and to earn, but any sense of primary rapport with America had departed, along with his mother. Into the 1950s he felt that he had no influence in the United States, as the Americans still regarded him as a foreigner.[36] Deep down, in this McCarthyite era with its witch-hunt for 'un-American activities', Grainger identified a fundamental incompatibility of values. In 1914 he

made on 28 February 1922, advises: 'Burn all things in attic that are private before leaving house', GMM.

[30] (Frankfurt, 1923).

[31] Letter, Percy Grainger to Antonia Morse, 8 October 1946, GMM. By the late 1920s Grainger's compositional royalties were also considerable, especially from his 'hit' of 1919, *Country Gardens*.

[32] Percy Grainger, 'Stanford Wanted to Take Me to the Norfolk, Conn. Festival', in 'Grainger's Anecdotes' (c. 1949), in *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, 228. *In a Nutshell* was premiered at the Norfolk Festival in 1916, and *The Warriors* in 1917.

[33] Grainger's growing nostalgia is most systematically tracked in his private autobiographical writings from the mid-1920s onwards, from which the selection of *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger* is drawn.

[34] In one letter, Percy Grainger to Robert Bristow, 18 January 1955 (GMM), Grainger even questioned whether he had ever experienced 'real friends' anywhere, in terms of 'finding happiness & satisfaction' in their company. He felt his need to earn a living as a pianist had obliged him to adopt an open-mindedness that even his closest musical colleagues all lacked.

[35] Letter, Percy Grainger to Henry Balfour Gardiner, 16 June 1916, GMM.

[36] Letter, Percy Grainger to the British composer, Josef Holbrooke, 30 May 1951, GMM.

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had applauded America as a 'pacifistic' land, as he explained decades later to his Norwegian-born doctor, Kaare Nygaard, continuing:

> as I have lived here for nearly 40 years I have seen that I was wrong about many things … American beliefs & ideals (so moralistic & uniform) are SO different to my own that it is an agony for me to live amongst them. … I feel I would rather die of inferior treatment in (say) Denmark or Australia than be cured in U.S.A.[37]

Grainger's plans to return permanently to live in Australia were forever announced and forever postponed. To his step-daughter's husband, Robert Bristow, he wrote confidently in early 1948 about an approaching time 'when I change my nationality from American back to Australian (which I must eventually do, as my only object in being a composer is to raise Australia's standard of achievement in the international world of composition)'.[38] Less confidently and more practically, however, he then added, 'What will Ella & I then live on?', a question that dogged him to his dying day.[39] He announced his last formal North American concert tour for the end of the 1947–48 season; in Winnipeg, on 16 March 1948, he even included the programme note that 'This will probably be Mr Grainger's last appearance in Canada as the artist plans to retire to his native Melbourne at the close of the current season'.[40] Back in Winnipeg, on 26 November 1949, the programme clarified: 'This will definitely be Mr Grainger's final appearance in the Canadian West for he will retire after the 1949–1950 season to Melbourne, Australia'.[41] But Grainger would continue to perform in Canada until 1953, and, indeed, only gave his final American concert appearance in Hanover, New Hampshire, on 29 April 1960, just ten months before his death.[42]

For one reason or another – pressure of continuing work, aborted concert tours, increasing illness, fears about new taxation or royalty arrangements, and, finally, encroaching senility – Grainger never managed to take the irrevocable step of emigrating from the United States. As the 1950s progressed, he thought, alternatively, of moving to Pevensey Bay, on England's south coast, where his wife owned a cottage. His long-heralded and final trip to Australia only came about in 1955–56, when he spent many months working on his Museum's collection in Melbourne. While there, for the first time in 17 years, however, he came to realize that his native Australia, too, was now an illusion: 'And one never hears a word from anyone, or an opinion, that one does not heartily disagree with', he wrote to his step-daughter, Elsie Bristow. 'So coming back only stresses the fact that I have no real contacts here & nothing to look forward to here. Of course, all

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[37] Letter, Percy Grainger to Kaare Nygaard, 18 July 1953 (GMM), shortly before going to Denmark to undertake an unsuccessful cancer operation. All his subsequent treatments would be undertaken in American hospitals.

[38] Letter, Percy Grainger to Robert Bristow, 25 January 1948, GMM. Six years later in his protracted whinge, 'The Things I Dislike' (1954), Grainger confessed (somewhat rewriting his own history), 'I am bitterly ashamed of having had to change my nationality [to American]'. *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, 157.

[39] In older age the Graingers were cash, rather than asset, poor. The gross value of Percy Grainger's estate was $208,293.48. 'Appraisal of the Estate of George Percy Grainger', dated 17 May 1963, GMM.

[40] PD/1 Grainger Programmes 1948, GMM. The 'close of the season' meant the start of summer 1948.

[41] PD/1 Grainger Programmes 1949, GMM.

[42] PD/1 Grainger Programmes 1960, GMM.

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this is my fault, not theirs. It is I who have changed, not they'.[43] But Grainger still entertained further plans to return, to hear the world premiere in Sydney of the 'complete' *Kipling 'Jungle-Book' Cycle*, on which he had worked since 1898. This performance was long mooted, then scheduled for 1959, and further postponed to late 1960, by which time Grainger was far too ill to travel and plans were indefinitely shelved.[44]

On 20 February 1961, then, Grainger died: an American, in America. But his remains were buried beside his mother's in Australia, in the Aldridge family grave in West Cemetery, Adelaide. Today he is claimed by the musical encyclopaedias of Australia, Britain and the United States.

The case of Grainger suggests that there are widespread dangers in over-simplified encyclopaedic summaries of nationality, particularly when they adopt anachronistic national formations. It also raises the more fundamental question of whether, for some individuals, the application of any concept of nationality may be misleading of their fundamental traits. The last two centuries have seen the rise of the nation-state, and recently the start of its fall; the heyday of its invocation as a key measure of identity is now perhaps passing. The integral nation-state might be considered to have come to the fore in the nineteenth century post-Napoleon (such as with the formation of Germany, Italy and, further afield, the independent Latin American countries). It reached its apogee in the period between the two world wars, when concepts of ethnic, linguistic and cultural kinship were most dominant. Often this was in the guise of genuine 'self-determination', particularly in Europe but also in the post-Ottoman Middle East, and it had a pathetic aftermath in the struggling nation-states of post-colonial Africa.[45] Since the 1960s, however, a series of new alliances have impinged upon the sovereignty of the nation-state: mega-state unions, such as the European Union; atomized former federations in the post-Communist world; multi-national defensive, trading or strategic alignments of nations, taking over some previously national roles; and the rise of cities and informal alliances of cities.[46] Most recently, corporate-driven globalization, coupled with the wider acceptance of multiple citizenships, has threatened traditional concepts of national sovereignty and further questioned the relevance of primary identification by nationality, citizenship or subject status. Whether the British vote on 23 June 2016 to leave the European Union heralds a wider swing back to greater assertion of national sovereignty, a key issue in that referendum vote, remains now to be seen.

Grainger's experience was similar to that of so many musicians born in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, who moved from Europe to North America to escape unsympathetic communist, fascist or nationalist regimes, although his case is more complex, because he was effectively a 'double expatriate': a self-diagnosed

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[43] Letter, Percy Grainger to Elsie Bristow, 29 October 1955, GMM. Even as early as his 1926 trip to Australia, Grainger had expressed concern that he had 'lived away from Australia too long to be able to understand them [Australians], their needs, their aims – or what they felt to be their needs, their aims'. 'The Love-Life of Helen and Paris' (1927–1928), in *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, 108.

[44] See Kathleen Nelson, 'Grainger and the Australian Broadcasting Commission after 1935: Memories, Hopes and Frustrations', *Australasian Music Review* 5 (2000): 123–4.

[45] This proliferation of nation-states is tracked in Andreas Wimmer and Yuval Feinstein, 'The Rise of the Nation-State across the World: 1816 to 2001', *American Sociological Review* 75/5 (2010): 764–90.

[46] See, for instance, Brendan Barber, *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

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Australian of German education who had, in mid-career, left Britain for the United States. The characteristics of his thought, word and deed present something of a patchwork quilt of national traits, although sometimes also a highly distinctive blend of these traits. And some important phenomena just defy any definite sense of national origin. In use of language, for instance, Grainger spoke consistently with an English accent;[47] in spelling, learned at home from his Australian mother, he was more Australian than British, but showed some influence of American spellings as the decades progressed; in vocabulary, he consistently preferred to use words of Anglo-Saxon rather than Graeco-Roman provenance, eventually codifying his preference in his own "Blue-Eyed English", which he sometimes found best reflected in the usage of American immigrants from northern Europe;[48] in grammar – which he once called 'just a bad wont stepping in between a man'[49] – he ranged from careless to reckless, often resorting to ungrammatical, incantatory enumerations of points or to rambling, cumulative constructions akin to everyday speech.

So, too, his musical output presents a medley of national traits, most developed during his pre-American years. Grainger could be considered, despite the solidly Germanic foundations espoused by his teachers, to be predominantly British in his base musical style, and within that, even English more than Scottish or Irish.[50] It was not without consequence that his most formative, adolescent years, at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, were spent in the close company of English, not German, students: Cyril Scott, Henry Balfour Gardiner, Roger Quilter and, to a lesser extent, Norman O'Neill. Grainger was most persistent in maintaining that, despite these composers' high degree of individuality, there was a distinctive aesthetic and technical base to this so-called Frankfurt Group (or Gang). Traits resulting from innovative cross-influences within the Group included use of larger forms, irregular rhythms, and a distinctively wistful harmonic style, along with a common dislike of Beethoven and respect for Grieg. Grainger connected harmony and aesthetic together in the comment to Sir Thomas Armstrong that 'we were all of us PRERAFAELITE composers … I think the answer is "the CHORD". The chord has the heartrending power we musical prerafaelites needed, … Cyril, Balfour & I became chord-masters indeed'.[51] Armstrong, in writing about the

[47] According to Grainger's Australian relatives, Gordon and Evie Aldridge in Melbourne, 'He had a lovely English accent, and he lived in America. We couldn't understand it'. In Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, *Portrait of Percy Grainger* (Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 2002, 144–45).

[48] See, variously, *The Farthest North of Humanness*, xviii–xix; *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, xxvii–xxx; *The All-Round Man: Selected Letters of Percy Grainger 1914–1961*, ed. Malcolm Gillies and David Pear (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 10–11.

[49] Letter, Percy Grainger to Ella Grainger, 12 November 1944, in *The All-Round Man*, 196.

[50] This is not to overlook Scottish influences, for instance in his two early *Hill-Songs*, or his many Irish settings, for instance *Irish Tune from County Derry*.

[51] Letter, Percy Grainger to Thomas Armstrong, 17–18 October 1958, in *The All-Round Man*, 272–78. In a following article Armstrong repeats this emphasis on 'the chord', and sees 'a derivative from the major common chord on the flattened mediant, or the major triad on the submediant of a major key, which had been freely used in romantic music, but was now given fresh pungency by the addition of its sevenths, ninths, and their appoggiaturas' as being 'the basis of this new style', indeed also one of Schoenberg's starting points towards atonality. Thomas Armstrong, 'The Frankfort Group', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 85 (1958–1959), 6–7.

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Frankfurt Group, commented upon the 'Englishness' of the Group's compositions, but observed that their influence on others did not outlive the First World War.[52]

That early established English style dominated Grainger's output as a composer and arranger. In 1955, in a questionnaire for a Norwegian publication, he was asked which of his own works he considered 'most important and characteristic'. Grainger listed nine works. Astoundingly, despite widely varying completion dates, the commencement dates of six of these nine composition was 1901 (the year he concluded his studies in Frankfurt) or earlier;[53] two further works in Grainger's 'most important and characteristic' list were started in 1907 or 1908.[54] Only one work dates from later: his *Free Music* No. 1, for string quartet, from 1935, although Grainger several times claimed its initial inspirations can be traced back to his boyhood in Melbourne. Similarly, in terms of broader approach to composition, Grainger's views were maturely elucidated during his earliest London years, 1902–1904, in an extended letter written to his one-time mentor in Frankfurt, Karl Klimsch.[55] This 'Outlook' document is remarkably prophetic not just of the works and texts he would use in compositions over succeeding decades, but also of his views on instrumentation, orchestration and the evolution of distinctive texture.

Looking back in two long letters from the 1950s to the British conductor Basil Cameron, Grainger analysed his life's output in another way: his most profound innovations. He listed five: 'harmony consisting of successions of unresolved discords', 'irregular rhythms (irregular time-signatures)', 'discordant closing chords', 'wordless syllables in choral writing', and fundamental innovations in the writing of 'large chamber music'.[56] With bitterness he explained that music history had attributed these innovations to others (such as Stravinsky or Schoenberg), while he had actually had been first; what is more, he claimed to have been progressive in all of these facets *together* while others had regressed back to 'conventional music' in later life.[57] More implausibly, though genuinely, Grainger claimed these musical 'firsts' for Australia, through his own agency. 'Yet Australia (in me) was so far ahead of Europe & America that today (1952) no non-Australian has yet caught up on my Free Music ideas of 1892 – as far as I know'.[58] He argued similarly for his other listed innovations.

Grainger was habitually unclear as to what precisely was Australian in his own music or innovations. At one point, in 1933, however, he likened the monotony of the Australian desert to his own artistic goals: 'vast sweeps of harmony' leading to

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[52] Armstrong, 'The Frankfort Group', 14–15.

[53] *Marching Song of Democracy* (1901–17), *Hill-Song* No. 1 (1901–02), *Hill-Song* No. 2 (1901–07), *English Dance* (1901–09), *Kipling 'Jungle-Book' Cycle* (1898–1945), *British Folk-Music Settings* (1898–1950), in Questionnaire (1955), in *Grainger on Music*, 374 (with Grainger's own given datings). His *British Folk-Music Settings* included over 40 works, ranging from *Molly on the Shore* (No. 1), through *Shepherd's Hey* (No. 16), and *Country Gardens* (No. 22), to *Bold William Taylor* (No. 43).

[54] *Sketch for 'Sea-Song'* (1907) and *The Bride's Tragedy* (1908–13), in *Grainger on Music*, 374 (with Grainger's own datings).

[55] 'My Musical Outlook' (1902–04), in *Grainger on Music*, 13–28, contains extensive selections from Grainger's extended letter.

[56] Letters, Percy Grainger to Basil Cameron, 20 March 1952 and 2 May 1957, GMM.

[57] Grainger is particularly thinking of Stravinsky's move in the inter-war years towards neo-classicism.

[58] Letter, Percy Grainger to Basil Cameron, 20 March 1952, GMM.

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'a great nirvana-like oneness of contrast-less, monotonous bliss'.[59] In establishing a prize for New Zealand composition in late 1935, he went further, providing an exquisitely crafted definition of what might qualify as a typically 'national' composition, as he explained, 'to forestall the useless reply "we have no New Zealand style in music"'.[60] He listed these criteria for such a 'national work': with mood inspired by nature; depicting patriotic background; using indigenous or other traditional material; developing 'local colour'; expressing the 'national soul'; celebrating a city; unfolding a rural mood; reflecting a political viewpoint; or presenting national, moral or aesthetic ideals. Grainger diligently provided examples of music from other countries for each of these 'national' criteria.

The early years of the near half-century that Grainger resided in America did move him to support American (sometimes, Canadian) composers, through performing their works (including those of Nathaniel Dett, Daniel Gregory Mason, Arthur Fickénscher, and Howard Brockway), and to support individual American performers or ensembles, particularly school or college bands. He was less moved to compose upon specifically American themes or in identifiably American styles. While there is only one *American Folk-Music Setting*, for instance – 'Spoon River' – there are several works of definitely American inspiration, most dating in conception from before he ever actually set foot in America.[61] Grainger's greatest technical contribution to American composition is probably through his arrangements of the works of Americans (including Brockway, Cowell, Curtis-Burlin, Mason), culminating in his settings for one, two or three pianists of six pieces of George Gershwin.[62]

In the educational domain, however, Grainger's contribution is truly substantial and distinctively American. He had been educated at home in Melbourne under the exacting eye of his mother, and had no experience of formal British education, so in 1932–33 he brought to his one-year role as Head of the Music Department at New York University, a fresh, individualistic, strongly 'New World' approach. He was influenced by his many years of summer teaching at the Chicago Musical College, his detailed knowledge of ethnic musics, and his attendance at festivals, including the 1931 Haslemere Festival of early music, organized by Arnold Dolmetsch in England. His long farewell letter to his College Dean at New York University, E. Raymond Bossange, at the end of this year was a meticulous blueprint for how the University might attract and educate more perceptive musicians, who were more aware of their own American musical heritage.[63] It has a thoroughly modern ring to it, with its blend of promotion, engagement, outreach, use of technology, even student satisfaction.

The most striking, and long-lasting Americanism of Grainger, however, lies in the innovations in instrumentation, orchestration and texture that he championed.

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[59] Letter, Percy Grainger to Henry Balfour Gardiner, 25 December 1933, GMM.

[60] Letter, Percy Grainger to E.C. Hands (New Zealand Broadcasting Board), 1 December 1935, GMM.

[61] These works include: his 'cakewalk smasher', *In Dahomey* (1903–1909); his 'windlass chanty', 'Shenandoah' (1907); 'Tribute to Foster', based upon Foster's *Camptown Races* (1913–31), and the related 'room-music titbit', *The Lonely Desert Man Sees the Tents of the Happy Tribes* (1913–49).

[62] See American entries in Barry Peter Ould, 'Catalogue of Works: Arrangements by Grainger', in *The New Percy Grainger Companion*, ed. Penelope Thwaites (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), 282–92.

[63] Letter, Percy Grainger to E. Raymond Bossange, 31 May 1933, GMM.

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Shortly after arriving in America, he had first experienced Deagan percussion instruments in Chicago. He visited the Deagan workshop, with its vast instrumental array, particularly of glockenspiels, xylophones and chimes;[64] he studied the instruments, and readily set to using them in his compositions ('In A Nutshell', 'The Warriors', and 'Marching Song of Democracy'), as well as encouraging others to do likewise. This led to his important article about percussion texture, 'The Completion of the Percussion Family in the Orchestra' of 1926, with its opening challenge that 'the percussion family is the least complete in the orchestra', and his call for composers and arrangers to make creative use of the now available range of 'clear sounds', 'less clear sounds', and 'hollow, liquid sounds'.[65]

Meanwhile, of course, Grainger had diligently served in United States Army bands for over one-and-a-half years. Working with some of America's finest bandsmen, such as Arthur A. Clappé and the Resta brothers – Francis E. Resta and Robert (Rocco) Resta – his knowledge of the potentialities of wind and brass instruments and their ensembles had been transformed.[66] What excited him most about the modern wind band was its effectiveness in the rich and varied expression of harmony, that chordal quality that had fascinated him since his Frankfurt days. As with percussion, he looked upon complete family groupings of instruments, in particular the full oboe-bassoon family of reeds, as essential for achieving 'a kaleidoscopic variety of tone colours'. He especially recommended the double reeds for their primitive 'snarling, skirling, nasal wildness'.[67] For Grainger, the band's potential balance of instruments could be a counter-balance to the over-emphasis upon upper-range melody that had predominated in the music of classical and early romantic-era composers and was often replicated in the rigid make-up of modern orchestras.

Grainger's war-time lessons were not forgotten after he was discharged from the Army. He continued to build contacts with some of the best bands in the country, including the Goldman, the Military Academy Band at West Point, and the Eastman Wind Ensemble; he wrote new compositions and arrangements of his own music for them, as well as occasional arrangements of the music of others. His early successes for band included his *Children's March: 'Over the Hills and Far Away'* (1919) and settings of his *Colonial Song* (1921), including one with parts for contra-alto clarinet, contrabass clarinet and contrabass sarrusophone. Grainger also started to pass on this new instrumental knowledge through his American summer-school activities, which continued into the mid-1940s, and through many American university and college performances, well into the later 1950s. His greatest success for band was undoubtedly *Lincolnshire Posy*, his imaginative 'bunch of musical wildflowers', commissioned for the annual convention of the American Band Masters' Association in Milwaukee and premiered on 7 March 1937. Although using English songs, some of which Grainger himself had

[64] Letter, Percy Grainger to D.C. Parker, 28 August 1916, in *The All-Round Man*, 32. Grainger's visit had prompted his prediction that 'it is only a matter of patience, & waiting a few years, to get an *absolutely perfect* medium in the percussion field' (letter, Percy Grainger to Rose Grainger, 5 March 1915, GMM).

[65] See *Grainger on Music*, 165–8.

[66] A major source for Grainger's new knowledge was Clappé's *The Wind Band and its Instruments* (New York: Henry Holt, 1911).

[67] 'Possibilities of the Concert Wind Band from the Standpoint of a Modern Composer' (1918), *Grainger on Music*, 99–105. This essay originally appeared in *Metronome Orchestra Monthly* 45/11 (1918): 22–3.

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collected three decades earlier, its compositional style and its varied instrumental textures bear the fruit of 20 years of sensitive exploration of the potentialities of American wind and brass bands. *Lincolnshire Posy* remains a fixture in American band repertory today, not only because of its brilliant, challenging, and perfectly adapted use of the instruments, whether solo or massed, but also because of what it has become: a yardstick by which the success of subsequent generations of American composers and conductors for bands have been measured. Writing in 1961, Richard Franko Goldman summed up its significance in this way: 'The total of Grainger's contribution to the band repertoire still remains the greatest made by any single composer of any time', especially noting Grainger's development of the 'low reeds'.[68] In this way, Grainger influenced a national style in a more profound and tangible way than he managed to achieve with British or Australian music.

From his Army band and American summer-school experiences, Grainger came to yearn for something more: a scoring of works that would draw in all available players, not just those who fitted the fixed, inherited templates for orchestras or bands. He considered such participation an act of 'musical democracy',[69] with useful applications to schools in countries like Australia or America, then experiencing burgeoning numbers of young people playing 'new' brass, wind or percussion instruments, which did not feature in traditional ensembles.[70] This led to his principles of 'elastic scoring', formalized in the late 1920s, and based upon a simple rule: particular instruments do not need to be assigned to particular parts, as long as attention is paid to the blending characteristics of the instruments. Through experimentation, a balance of tone can be achieved, for that particular combination of instruments.[71] 'The budding musician needs the inspiration of hearing a grand cooperation of myriad sounds surging around him, to which he joins his own individualistic voice', explained Grainger, adding 'This is the *special experience* of music'.[72] His attention to musical democracy, with inspirations stretching back to Walt Whitman, was a distinctively American contribution to Grainger's 'creed'. As he explained, in his Norwegian Questionnaire of 1955, his definition of democracy was '"a chance for all to shine in a starry whole". I would like each voice, at all times throughout my music, to enjoy equal importance & prominence'.[73]

This probing of national traits in Grainger's music from his years of American residence, then, shows strong British (predominantly English) characteristics in the primary (pitch and rhythmic) aspects of his style, and strong American characteristics in the secondary aspects (use of instruments, textures, balance). Distinctively Australian traits are more conceptual, and harder to identify with precision. Of course, the effect of six years of education at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, and frequent concert-going there, laid a Germanic influence upon Grainger's musical foundations that he, and others, often overlooked. His fellow student, Cyril Scott, noted that although Grainger did not 'get on' with his

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[68] Richard Franko Goldman, *The Wind Band: Its Literature and Technique* (Westport, NY: Greenwood, 1974, originally published Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1961), 228–9.

[69] 'Democracy in Music' (1931), in *Grainger on Music*, 217–22.

[70] See 'The Orchestra for Australia' (1927), in *Grainger on Music*, 173–8.

[71] See Percy Grainger, 'To Conductors' (1930), in *A Musical Genius from Australia: Selected Writings by and about Percy Grainger*, ed. Teresa Balough (Perth: University of Western Australia, 1982), 125–31.

[72] 'Democracy in Music' (1931), in *Grainger on Music*, 218.

[73] *Grainger on Music*, 375.

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composition teacher in Frankfurt, Iwan Knorr, or avail himself of Knorr's 'valuable criticism in purely compositional matters', Knorr did lay Grainger's foundations of harmony and counterpoint.[74] Yet, this probing of national traits in Grainger's composition suggests that, as with the investigation of his technical nationality, something transcending national characteristics, going beyond a varied scorecard of influences (both on Grainger, and of Grainger upon others) is needed in representing the broad sweep of his life, work and significance.

Writing in 1937, the musician Charles W. Hughes, a near neighbour of Grainger in White Plains, New York, dubbed Grainger 'a cosmopolitan composer'. By this Hughes appeared to mean that Grainger was truly open to the whole world of music and reflected that whole world in his compositions. Hughes elaborated: 'His music is to an unusual degree the record of his feelings and enthusiasms as a vital artist. His works might well serve as a wordless biography'.[75] In language bordering on the promotional, Hughes described the Australian, English, Scandinavian and American sources from which Grainger had drawn inspiration, before coming to some conclusions about the overall characteristics of Grainger's music. He highlighted his freedoms in form, his distinctive use of musical instructions, his original choice of instruments and scoring, and his preference for 'large and unusual chamber-music ensembles'. But Hughes's article also shows the inadequacy of the description 'cosmopolitan', as a catch-all, umbrella term for anything that defies tight cultural pigeon-holing, whether in terms of source, stylistic or structural characteristics.

Grainger himself did a much better job of defining musical cosmopolitanism, in writing a long article entitled 'Grieg: Nationalist and Cosmopolitan', that was serialized in the *Etude* magazine during 1943, in celebration of the centenary of Grieg's birth.[76] His own self-analysis lurks close to the surface of this extended appraisal of his most frequently invoked model of nineteenth-century musicianship.[77] From the title it is clear that Grainger believes that nationalism and cosmopolitanism do not have to be considered as alternatives.[78] For him, Grieg was 'a United Nations type of man' but also an ardent Norwegian. In particular, his family background and early musical training (in Germany) were 'cosmopolitan',[79] as were his later compositional sympathies. Grainger then makes a

[74] Cyril Scott, *The Philosophy of Modernism: In its Connection with Music* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1917), 125–6.

[75] Charles W. Hughes, 'Percy Grainger, Cosmopolitan Composer', *The Musical Quarterly* 23/2 (1937), 127–36.

[76] *Grainger on Music*, 318–37.

[77] See, further, Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, 'Grieg and Grainger: Great Expectations', *Musical Times* 148 (2007): 7–26.

[78] Over the last two centuries, 'cosmopolitan' has often been presented alongside its apparent opposites, for example, nationalist, bigoted, isolationist, rural or orthodox. In the literature about late twentieth-century and twenty-first century cities, the cosmopolitan city is generally depicted as progressive while 'dead heart' cities of urban decay become social voids. In the post-communist world, since 1989, 'cosmopolitan' has often been treated synonymously with 'global citizen'. See Brett Bowden, 'The Perils of Global Citizenship', *Citizenship Studies* 7/3 (2003): 349–62, and his 'Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism: Irreconcilable Differences or Possible Bedfellows?', *National Identities* 3/3 (2003): 235–49. See also a study of cosmopolitan origins, especially as applied to music, in Cristina Magaldi, 'Cosmopolitanism and Music in the Nineteenth Century', in *Oxford Handbooks Online* (New York: Oxford University Press, February 2016), 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935321.013.62.

[79] *Grainger on Music*, 318–21.

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useful distinction: that all the arts 'inherit their broad expressiveness from cumulative cosmopolitan skill and traditions, and their individuality and originality from local [non-cosmopolitan] influences'.[80] The world tends to forget this, he claims, and overemphasizes one or the other, while creativity – as in Grieg's case – was actually stimulated by the interaction between the two.[81] Indeed, Grieg's Norwegian works (similarly, Wagner's German) were expressions of national spirit, while at the same time 'great and deathless masterpieces of cosmopolitan art'.[82] Similarly, he identified four works that while 'impassioned utterances of American liberalism, altruism, humanitarianism' were equally cosmopolitan masterpieces: Rubin Goldmark's *A Gettysburg Requiem*, Roy Harris's *American Creed*, John Alden Carpenter's *A Song of Faith* and Arthur Fickénscher's *From the Seventh Realm*.[83] But cosmopolitan and nationalist did not always have to go together, as in Grieg's case, and even where they do, their combination does not ensure artistic greatness. Writing in 1949, Grainger commented upon the 'unmistakable Danishness of Herman Sandby's musical idiom' being an 'electrifying contrast to the pale cosmopolitanism' of earlier Danish composers, such as Gade and Hartmann, or the 'more recent Germanisms' of Nielsen.[84] So, did Grainger, following Grieg, accept himself as both cosmopolitan and nationalist?

Before answering that question, another strand of Grainger's thought needs elucidation. If a cosmopolitan was a 'citizen of the world', was this different from a universalist?[85] Having in 1919 described himself as a 'Scandinavian-British-American-Negro-Polynesian',[86] Grainger was clearly very self-aware of his own distinctive multicultural make-up. In an essay of 1933, 'Can Music Become a Universal Language?' he observed that music, 'as it is practised throughout the White Man's world', was the least universal of all the arts.[87] A cosmopolitan musical outlook was a required first step for music to become a more universal language; and the first prejudice that had to be set aside was the limitation of musical vision to 'the output of four European countries between 1700 and 1900'.[88] In the outline to his 'General Study of the Manifold Nature of Music' course at New York University in 1932–33, he explained that 'some general

[80] *Grainger on Music*, 323–4.

[81] To illustrate the point of this 'dual personality' of Grieg leading to the 'richness and many-sidedness of his artistic output', Grainger quotes from Kipling's 'The Two-Sided Man' (1901).

[82] *Grainger on Music,* 337.

[83] *Grainger on Music*, 337.

[84] 'Music Heard in England' (1949), in *Grainger on Music*, 354.

[85] Today's 'multicultural' also falls into this same category of unlimited terms. It does not say anything about cultural priority or limit, or the consequential effect upon a state's identity; hence, its current lack of favour with the political right.

[86] Letter, Grainger to his mother Rose, 8 June 1919, GMM: 'Negro' because of the black American inspirations for some of his early compositions (see note 60, above), and his continuing fascination with black American music (such as the music of Nathaniel Dett, and arranging the transcriptions of Natalie Curtis-Burlin); 'Polynesian' because of his affinity, since 1909, with the music, language and culture of the South Sea Islanders. On first hearing Polynesian chorus singing, he described it as 'a treat no less than the best Wagner', and into the 1950s harboured hopes of completing his annotations of recordings of that singing that he had started in 1909 (*The Farthest North of Humanness*, 263–4).

[87] *Grainger on Music*, 246.

[88] *Grainger on Music*, 250.

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knowledge of all the world's music will promote a genuine cosmopolitan musical outlook', as well as countering the current prejudice against nearly all forms of American music.[89] A cosmopolitan outlook, then, was a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for enhancing the universality of music.

The problem for Grainger with both universalism and cosmopolitanism was their inherent lack of focus: a tolerance, even promotion, of all things. For him, such opening of the mind, and the ear, needed then to lead to new binding tenets of belief, based on individual loyalties and preferences. Without these discriminating characteristics a person risked being devoid of personality. In Grainger's case the binding element was something powerful and supra-national: race. For his first four decades he searched for the correct formulation of an all-encompassing racial framework, within which concepts such as nationalism, cosmopolitanism and even universalism might reside. He first thought of himself racially as Anglo-Saxon, though then, through his love of the Icelandic sagas and closeness to his Danish friend, Herman Sandby, started to worry about the distinctions between Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians, and, somewhat later, Teutons and Aryans.[90] It was only just after the First World War, through reading the works of the American Nordicists, Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard,[91] that Grainger came upon a simple, even simplistic, racial model and vocabulary that he would accept and propagate for the rest of his life. As he explained to his students while guest-lecturing on 'Nordic Characteristics in Music' at Yale University in March 1921, the population of Europe was made up of three races: the Nordics, Alpines and Mediterraneans. While he said he did not believe in the magic of 'blood', he was fascinated by the proposition of Grant, a Yale alumnus, that one of these races, the Nordic 'great race', was passing away through inappropriate conservation.[92] Grant and fellow Nordicists of the time considered that the Nordics were the leaders in culture, innovation and human development, both in Europe and in North America. They were fading away through the dysgenic consequences of racial inter-breeding, the intensification of urban life, and warfare. Eugenic interventions were needed. One of Grant's major triumphs was to influence post-War immigration policies of the United States so that they favoured immigrants from Northern Europe (Scandinavia, Germany, Britain), while restricting those from Eastern and Southern Europe, and prohibiting immigration from Asia.[93]

To the Yale music students in 1921 Grainger declared, as a 'cosmopolitan musician from first to last', that there were 'no greater composers and musicians alive than the best of our Nordics (Americans, British, Scandinavians)'. In his

[89] *Grainger on Music*, 224.

[90] See David Pear, 'Percy Grainger as "Educator-at-Large": the Formation, Expression and Propagation of his Manliness' (PhD dissertation, University of Queensland, 1998), chapter 5, 'Grainger as Thinker about Race and Nation', for an exposition of the evolution of Grainger's racial thinking; revised as 'Grainger on Race and Nation', *Australasian Music Review* 5 (2000): 25–49.

[91] In particular, Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race, or The Racial Basis of European History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), and (Theodore) Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Colour against White World-Supremacy* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1920).

[92] Madison Grant was a keen naturalist, who played a major role in the founding of the New York Zoological Society and the Yellowstone National Park.

[93] Grant influenced the United States's Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the Immigration Act of 1924.

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peroration to the students, he exhorted them, as fellow Nordics, to a mission that was something more than an open-ended cosmopolitanism:

> Let us see that our Nordic characteristics, that have come down to us through the icy Northern past, that have weathered all sorts of adventures in all sorts of exacting, primitive lives, that have now spread out into so many richly diversified artistic types of expression and have now entered *conscious, cultured, studious, complex stages, are delivered in full to the world at large*, enriching cosmopolitan music in all sorts of unexpected ways, providing all sorts of new themes and forms and expressivenesses for the future of music, placing our races artistically on the map for all time – an honor and benefit to others no less than ourselves, to ourselves no less than to others.[94]

While adopting the racial typologies and vocabulary of Grant, Grainger still argued at this stage from a cautiously cosmopolitan perspective and context, with Nordicism merely as a proud and beneficial 'enrichment'.[95] With 'Nordic' he had found a comfortable term that described the ethnic kinship that he saw existing between Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians and Teutons in Europe, and that was replicated, through migration, in such countries as America and in Australasia. Over the following decade, however, while the influence of the American Nordicists slackened in America (although not in Germany), Grainger's views were only hardening, from an idiosyncratic, sometimes playful, racialist stance to a more strident, racist position. His call for 'cosmopolitan' Nordicism was turning into an assertion of Nordic superiority, even supremacy.[96] He started to write privately in the early 1930s about a 'breed-above-breeds'.[97]

To Australian, British and American 'kin and friends' in 1942, Grainger wrote with a new excitement: 'I have done fairly well as a world-wide, all-theed-som ((cosmopolitan)) art-man, but it was never my plan or wish to do well that way. I have had only one goal, as an art-man, since I was about 10 years old: to make my art the slave of race-boostment, realm-keenth ((patriotism))'.[98] What pleased him about the Second World War was not only the way it had finally brought the English-speaking peoples together, but also had brought the Nordic world together, at least 'in spirit'.[99] There is a transition, then, in Grainger's statements of the 1930s and 1940s from liberal cosmopolitan or universalist to enthusiastic Nordicist.

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[94] *Grainger on Music*, 139.

[95] See Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, 'Percy Grainger and American Nordicism', in *Western Music and Race*, ed. Julie Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 115–24, 'Grainger's Response', 120–23.

[96] See, for instance, Grainger's juxtaposition of cosmopolitanism and Nordic musical superiority in the summary of his lecture for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, 'The Superiority of Nordic Music', in John Blacking, *'A Commonsense View of all Music': Reflections on Percy Grainger's Contribution to Ethnomusicology and Music Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 172–3.

[97] Gillies and Pear, 'Percy Grainger and American Nordicism', 123–4. See, also, sections from his 'The Aldridge-Grainger-Ström Saga' (1933) in *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, 132–43.

[98] Round Letter, Percy Grainger, 15–17 February 1942 (GMM), written in his Blue-Eyed (Nordic) English, with more familiar synonyms provided by Grainger in double parentheses.

[99] How Grainger deduced this state of the Nordic world in early 1942 is hard to fathom. His self-identified Nordic lands were taking leading roles on both sides in the War, and one, Sweden, was remaining neutral.

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Even the subsequent revelations of the full force of Nazi atrocities did little to mute his Nordic faith.

By the time of Grainger's final statement of musical 'creed', in his Norwegian Questionnaire response of 1955, 'cosmopolitan' has been cut out of the equation: 'The driving force behind my work as a composer is racialism & nationalism: I would not write any music at all if it were not to express the unity of the Nordic (blue-eyed) race, wherever found, to express the tragic position of the Nordic race (out-numbered in a hostile world), & in the hopes of bringing honor and fame to my native land: Australia'.[100] Grainger could, indeed, be Nordic and Australian, or Nordic and American. And clearly at the end, he was both: one by life-long national sentiment, the other by long-term citizenship, but within the shared frame of common race.

[100] *Grainger on Music*, 375–6. An early expression of Grainger's view about the limitations of cosmopolitanism, and the growing importance of race is found in a private letter to Wellington Gustin, 15 March 1927, GMM: 'For me the personal side of music is sunk in the *racial side*. Music I feel to be cosmopolitan, international only on the *appreciative* side, not, however, as regards its origins'.

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