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hyperion
Jungle Book

soprano
LIBBY CRABTREE

tenor
JOHN MARK AINSLEY

baritone
DAVID WILSON-JOHNSON

POLYPHONY
THE POLYPHONY ORCHESTRA

leader SIMON FISCHER

conductor STEPHEN LAYTON

PERCY GRAINGER
(1882–1961)

Jungle Book

[25'09]

1. Shallow Brown [6'04]

2. The fall of the stone [2'11]

3. Morning song in the jungle [2'50]

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25. The love song of Har Dyal [2'14]

26. My love’s in Germanie [3'57]
ON THE WHOLE I think the whole musical world is oblivious of all the bitterness, resentment, iconoclasm and denunciation that lies behind my music. The worth of my music will never be guessed or its value to mankind felt until the approach to it is consciously undertaken as a pilgrimage to sorrows.

_Percy Grainger_

These are hardly words you would expect from the composer who made the popular _Country Gardens_ his own. During the recording sessions for this disc I went into a fast-food restaurant and was greeted by the sound of _Country Gardens_ coming over the piped music system; the smash hit of the 1920s which fully consolidated Grainger’s reputation is still to be heard today in countless arrangements. But how does this pleasant little ditty square up with such gloomy writings as above? Too often it has been forgotten that Grainger was not just the eccentric who threw tennis balls over houses and caught them on the other side; he also had a dark side which at times is explored in the music on this disc. It should be remembered that he was also one of his century’s most distinguished polymaths—composer, pianist, writer, ethnomusicologist, inventor, linguist, painter and traveller.

The performance practice of Grainger’s music is not straightforward. The orchestrations in the _Jungle Book_ cycle, which receives its first recording on this disc, are fairly free. Grainger marks various instruments ‘at will’ while others are compulsory. It is therefore for the conductor to decide on the inclusion or exclusion of certain instruments. Essentially, all the necessary musical lines are incorporated into the piano, harmonium and string parts, and over this further layers of instrumentation can be added. The particular orchestrations we have used for each piece are detailed later in this booklet.

The most unusual work on this disc must be _Shallow Brown_. Again the conductor is allowed to select the instruments, Grainger merely suggesting a minimum. On a cold, damp January morning mandola, ukulele, mandolin and guitar players joined ranks with harmonium, piano, piccolo, clarinets, saxophones, horns and contrabassoon to record Grainger’s ‘seascape’: it was a session to remember. With respect to the singing of _Shallow Brown_, Grainger was known to have preferred a man to take the solo role. We have followed this practice—although the piece would work just as well with a female soloist.

Grainger considered himself a choral composer above all and yet it is his orchestral miniatures that have enjoyed the most exposure to date. In contrast with the works on Polyphony’s first Grainger disc, _At Twilight_, which explored largely folk material, _Jungle Book_ is an original composition independent of such influence.

Towards the end of his life Percy Grainger was seen walking into Manhattan ‘with a knapsack on his back’. In this bag were some of the unpublished compositions which he was hawking around to music publishers—most of whom did not want to know. This disc is a celebration of a misunderstood genius whose time perhaps is soon to come.

_STEPHEN LAYTON © 1996_

Recorded on 18–20 January 1996
Recording Engineers ANTONY HOWELL, JULIAN MILLARD
Recording Producer MARK BROWN
Executive Producers JOANNA GAMBLE, NICK FLOWER
Front illustration by Roland Piper
PERCY GRAINGER’S introduction to the poetry of Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) can be traced back to 1897 when Grainger was a student at the Hoch Conservatory of Music in Frankfurt. The young Australian’s father, John Grainger, sent his son a parcel of Kipling books in an attempt ‘to tickle up the British Lion in him’, being concerned that the young boy was becoming too Teutonic after a couple of years in the German city. Of all the authors and poets that Grainger encountered, none had such a profound effect on his development as a composer than Kipling. Cyril Scott, who first met the composer at the Hoch Conservatory as a fellow student, wrote of Grainger in 1916:

He began to show a harmonic modernism which was astounding in so young a boy, and at times excruciating to our pre-Debussyan ears. He began to write in whole-tone scales without knowing of Debussy’s existence. At sixteen he had in fact developed a style, and that style was the outcome of a discovery, and a literary discovery, not a musical one; for he had discovered Rudyard Kipling, and, from that writer he imbibed an essence and translated it into music.

Grainger was eventually to begin more than fifty works which were inspired by Kipling’s verses; all of them were dedicated to his beloved mother. He completed thirty-three, twenty-two of these being numbered in chronological sequence as they were published. The remaining settings were left in various states of completion. Grainger considered that, of all his musical settings of Kipling, those of the *Jungle Book* were the most characteristic and significant amongst his compositional output and tells us of them: ‘I developed my mature harmonic style—that is to say, harmony in unresolved discords … such a procedure was unknown at that time [1898] and must be considered an Australian contribution to musical progress. So through that parcel of books my father sent me, I became what I have remained ever since, a composer whose musical output was based on patriotism and racial consciousness.’ Grainger avers that setting the Kipling poems to music led him to view this art form in a new light and made him unwilling to use titles like ‘symphony’ or ‘sonata’. Furthermore, the influence of the poet deemed by Grainger as ‘the seer of English-speaking folk’ was partly responsible for sowing the seeds of the composer’s interest in language reform which was to culminate in his ‘Blue-Eyed English’. After some early student exercises, Grainger began to set to music poems of those authors he and his mother Rose read aloud, including works by Burns, Conan Doyle, Longfellow and Swinburne. It was the words, with their ability to convey tragic images, that appealed to Grainger. He was careful to select those poems which echoed his own inclinations towards the tragic elements of life: drownings, hangings, jailings, partings, slain knights mouldering in ditches, and death for love’s sake. Grainger sought a sympathetic voice and pointed out that, despite the fact that Kipling had been called the ‘poet of Imperialism’, in the poems he chose to set it was more often the tragedy associated with Imperialism than its splendour which manifested itself.

When the twenty-three-year-old Grainger first met his cultural hero, he played him the music for his settings of *Danny Deever* and *We have fed our sea for a thousand years*. History relates that Kipling responded, ‘They are like deaders rotting in bilge water’, later adding, ‘Till now I’ve had to rely on black and white, but you do the thing for me in colour!’ At the end of 1905 Grainger wrote to Alfhild Sandby: ‘Look up *The Song of the Banjo*. That’s me to a “T”.’ Although he never set it to music, he would often quote to his friends lines from this particular Kipling poem:

I’m the Prophet of the Utterly Absurd
Of the Patently Impossible and Vain——
I—the war-drum of the White Man round the world! …
Vulgar tunes that brings the laugh that brings the groan——
I can rip your very heartstrings out with those; …
I have told the naked stars the grief of man!
But the Song of Lost Endeavour that I make,
Is it hidden in the twanging of the strings? …
I, the joy of life unquestioned—I, the Greek—
I, the everlasting Wonder-song of youth! …
So I draw the world together link by link:
Yea, from Delos up to Limerick and back!

At the time of Grainger’s death in 1961, his musical legacy was in a state of chaos as his published editions of music went rapidly out of print. Grainger had been his own champion as well as the champion of many other composers’ music and suddenly there was no one to take up the promotion of his works. Grainger wanted above all to be remembered for his original compositions and yet he is mostly remembered for what he called ‘fripperies’: *Country Gardens*, *Shepherd’s Hey* and so on. Richard Franko Goldman, writing in the Fall 1955 issue of the *Juilliard Review*, said of Grainger: ‘Nearly everyone, musical or not, knows *Country Gardens*, and it is probable that most people associate the name of Percy Grainger with that appealing piece … To have such a reputation is undeniably no sad fate, but in Grainger’s case it is so partial a recognition of artistic accomplishment that one is forced to reflect on the obscurity created by the wrong kind of fame.’

Grainger thought of himself primarily as a choral composer and many of his works are for this medium. In his 1916 essay *Percy Grainger: The Music and the Man*, Cyril Scott states: ‘That Grainger is a choral writer of exceptional power, those people who know his works at all are aware … Grainger has, in fact, a choral technique which only the initiated can divine, for he manages to draw effects from a chorus which have remained latent heretofore, and the choral writers that will come after his day will owe him a debt in the field of technique.’

1 *Shallow Brown*  Sea-Chanty Settings No 3  [6'04]

DAVID WILSON-JOHNSON baritone
piccolo, three clarinets, bass clarinet, bassoon, contrabassoon, two alto saxophones, horn, strings, piano, harmonium, four guitars, two mandolas, two mandolins, two ukuleles

*Shallow Brown* was composed between August and 17 December 1910 and is based on a sea-chanty collected from the singing of John Perring of Dartmouth by H E Piggott and Grainger on 18 January 1908. In Grainger’s words: ‘[Perring] was a remarkably gifted deep-sea sailor songster and said that this song was supposed to be sung by a woman standing on the quay to Shallow Brown as his ship was weighing anchor. Perring did not know why Brown was called “Shallow”—“unless it was that he was shallow in his heart”, as he added. My setting aims to convey a suggestion of wafted, wind-borne, surging sounds heard at sea.’ Although a woman’s voice would make sense to the story, chanties are almost always the prerogative of men singing on board a ship. This is one of Grainger’s most powerful settings, evoking as it does the wildness of the sea and the intensity of human loss; one can almost feel the spray of the ocean and taste the salt water. Grainger is said to have swooned with intense excitement when he played the shimmering accompaniment on the piano and on one particular occasion it caused a female admirer to faint at his feet.

Shaller Brown, you’re goin’ ter leave me,
*Shaller, Shaller Brown;*
Shaller Brown, don’t ne’er deceive me,
*Shaller, Shaller Brown;*
You’re goin’ away accrost the ocean,
*Shaller, Shaller Brown;*
You’ll ever be my heart’s devotion,
*Shaller, Shaller Brown.*
For your return my heart is burning,
Shaller, Shaller Brown;
For your return my heart is burning,
Shaller, Shaller Brown.
Shaller Brown, you’re goin’ ter leave me,
Shaller, Shaller Brown;
Shaller Brown, don’t ne’er deceive me,
Shaller, Shaller Brown.

* * *

The *Jungle Book* cycle, here receiving its first recording, was composed and reworked over a period of fifty-nine years. Its genesis dates from December 1898 when the young Percy composed three settings, a fourth following in January 1899. Of the settings composed between 1898 and 1906, Grainger wrote in a programme note: ‘These settings [were] written under the strong spell cast upon me by Kipling’s Jungle verses (the passion for the face of virgin nature, the intimate sympathy with the wild creatures that roam the jungle, the revolt against civilization …’ And later in a preface to the published score: ‘My Kipling “Jungle Book” Cycle, begun in 1898 and finished in 1947, was composed as a protest against civilization.’ In this ‘nature’ music, with its irregular rhythms and unrestricted harmonies, Grainger points the way to his interest in the musical freedom which was to culminate in his ‘Free Music’, which he first thought of at the age of ten when seeing the waves lapping against his sailing boat on the Albert Park Lagoon in Melbourne. The cycle was eventually published in its entirety in 1958. Grainger wrote to publisher Max Steffans: ‘I AM SO GRATEFUL TO PUBLISH MY CYCLE COMPLETE.’ Between then and Grainger’s death three years later, the work received scant attention and it was to be another twenty-one years before the work received its British premiere at the 1982 Aldeburgh Music Festival.

The cycle consists of eleven movements: five are for choir alone (with three of these being for men’s voices only) whilst the remaining six have instrumental accompaniment. Most of the poems used represent the mankind-less world of the animal kingdom, where Kipling views the world through the eyes of wild beasts or Mowgli, the young human initiated into the laws and dangers of the jungle by the tiger and the bear in *The Jungle Books*. The young Grainger felt himself to be something of a Mowgli figure, and identified strongly with the poem *The only son* where the subject matter is of a boy’s dreams of life amongst the wolves and his longing to learn if these dreams are true. About *The Inuit*, the fourth movement of the cycle Grainger wrote: ‘The urge behind this poem is the very strongest and most pronounced root emotion of my life: the love of savagery, the belief that savages are sweeter and more peaceable and artistic than civilized people, the belief that primitiveness is purity and civilization filthy corruption, the agony of seeing civilization advance and pass its blighting hand over the world.’ Grainger was not alone in his admiration of Kipling, and the names of two other composers who composed *Jungle Book* music come to mind: Charles Koechlin and Miklós Rózsa. Koechlin’s vast symphonic poem occupied him from 1899 to 1950 (a timescale similar to Grainger’s involvement). Koechlin also set three Kipling poems in his Op 18, one of which, *Night-song in the jungle*, is contemporary with Grainger’s original setting of the same poem. Rózsa composed the music for Alexander Korda’s epic 1943 film of *The Jungle Book* starring the elephant boy Sabu as Mowgli. Grainger’s *Jungle Book* cycle, like Koechlin’s *Jungle Book*, is central to the composer’s long and creative life. Each work in their respective cycles displays specific compositional techniques and an homogenous unifying thread—despite the fact that individual movements of both cycles were not composed in the order they are to be performed. Grainger’s *Jungle Book* provides a key to understanding his fundamental philosophy and spirit. He writes: ‘My effort even in my young days was to wrench the listener’s heart with my chords. It is a subtle matter for music is not made agonizing merely by sharp discords any more than literature is made agonizing by crude events. It is the contrast between the sweet and the harsh that is heart-rending.’
2 The fall of the stone  Kipling Setting No 16 [2'11]  
strings, harp, piano, harmonium, clarinet, two alto saxophones  
The first movement of the Jungle Book cycle is taken from  
Kipling’s Plain Tales from the Hills where the verse, headed  
From the Unpublished Papers of McIntosh Jallaludin, introduces the story ‘To be Filed for Reference’. The title is  
Grainger’s own and was composed between 20 July 1901 and  
19 December 1904 when it was given to his mother for Christmas. The scoring was later revised in 1923.  

By the Hoof of the Wild Goat uptossed  
From the cliff where she lay in the Sun  
Fell the Stone  
To the Tarn where the daylight is lost,  
So she fell from the light of the Sun,  
And alone!  
Now the fall was ordained from the first  
With the Goat and the Cliff and the Tarn,  
But the Stone  
Knows only her life is accursed  
As she sinks in the depths of the Tarn,  
And alone!  
O Thou Who hast builded the World,  
O Thou Who hast lighted the Sun,  
O Thou Who hast darkened the Tarn,  
Judge Thou  
The sin of the Stone that was hurled  
By the Goat from the light of the Sun,  
As she sinks in the mire of the Tarn,  
Even now—even now—even now!  

3 Morning song in the jungle  Kipling Setting No 3 [2'50]  
The second movement is the first of the a cappella settings for  
mixed choir and is a four-stanza verse from the story ‘Letting  
in the Jungle’ from The Second Jungle Book. It was composed  
between 14 and 20 June 1905 and presented as a birthday  
greeting for his mother on 3 July of the same year.  

One moment past our bodies cast  
No shadow on the plain;  
Now clear and black they stride our track,  
And we run home again.  
In morning-hush, each rock and bush  
Stands hard, and high, and raw:  
Then give the Call: ‘Good rest to all  
That keep the Jungle Law!’  
Now horn and pelt our peoples melt  
In covert to abide;  
Now crouched and still, to cave and hill  
Our Jungle Barons glide.  
Now, stark and plain, Man’s oxen strain,  
That draw the new-yoked plough;  
Now striped and dread the dawn is red  
Above the lit talao.*  
Ho! Get to lair! The sun’s aflame  
Behind the breathing grass:  
And creaking through the young bamboo  
The warning whispers pass.  
By day made strange, the woods we range  
With blinking eyes we scan;  
While down the skies the wild duck cries:  
‘The Day—the Day to Man!’  
The dew is dried that drenched our hide,  
Or washed about our way;  
And where we drank, the puddled bank  
Is crisping into clay.  
The traitor Dark gives up each mark  
Of stretched or hooded claw:  
Then hear the Call: ‘Good rest to all  
That keep the Jungle Law!’  

* pond or lake  

4 Night-song in the jungle  Kipling Setting No 17 [0'48]  
The third movement is the first of the a cappella settings for  
male voices and is an eight-line verse chapter heading for  
Mowgli’s Brothers’ from The Jungle Book. It was originally  
composed on 20 December 1898 and the last seven bars were  
revised on 2 February 1924.
Now Chil the Kite brings home the night
That Mang the Bat sets free—
The herds are shut in byre and hut,
For loosed till dawn are we.
This is the hour of pride and power,
Talon and tush and claw.
Oh, hear the call!—Good hunting all
That keep the Jungle Law!

The Inuit  Kipling Setting No 5  [2'17]
The fourth movement is again for a cappella mixed chorus. The text is an eight-line verse heading for the story ‘Quiquern’ in The Second Jungle Book. It was composed in 1902 and slightly revised in 1907. The title is Grainger’s own: ‘Inuit’ refers to the indigenous Eskimo peoples of the Arctic regions.

The People of the Eastern Ice, they are melting like the snow—
They beg for coffee and sugar; they go where the white men go.
The People of the Western Ice, they learn to steal and fight:
They sell their furs to the trading-post: they sell their soul to the white.
The People of the Southern Ice, they trade with the whaler’s crew;
Their women have many ribbons, but their tents are torn and few.
But the People of the Elder Ice, beyond the white man’s ken—
Their spears are made of the narwhal* horn, and they are the last of Men!

* an Arctic whale

The beaches of Lukannon  Kipling Setting No 20  [3'23] strings, harmonium
The fifth movement, considered by Grainger as the pearl of the set, tells of the singing of the seal-rookeries on the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea about 250 miles north of the Aleutian Islands, and the coming of the sealers to cull them. Entitled ‘Lukannon’ by Kipling, it is from ‘The White Seal’ in The Jungle Book and is described by Kipling as ‘a sort of very sad seal National Anthem’. Grainger originally set this poem for male voices a cappella between 27 and 29 December 1898 using all three verses, each with a refrain chorus; he revised the work on 28 May 1941 when it was offered as a birthday gift to the memory of his beloved mother. In the revision only two of the verses are used for male voices a cappella: the middle section for mixed voices, harmonium and strings is sung to the first refrain chorus. Here Grainger paints an icy landscape of stark beauty with the use of parallel fifths. In the central section the choir sings antiphonally with dissonant clashes against sustained chromatic chords which increase layer upon layer, capturing in sound the primitive waste and the happy song of nature ‘in the raw’ in a magical way. There is no room for the comparatively safe world of the garden here!

I met my mates in the morning (and oh, but I am old!)
Where roaring on the ledges the summer ground-swell rolled;
I heard them lift the chorus that drowned the breakers’ song—
The beaches of Lukannon—two million voices strong!
The song of pleasant stations beside the salt lagoons,
The song of blowing squadrons that shuffled down the dunes,
The song of midnight dances that churned the sea to flame—
The beaches of Lukannon—before the sealers came!
I met my mates in the morning, a broken, scattered band.
Men shoot us in the water and club us on the land;
Men drive us to the Salt House like silly sheep and tame,
And still we sing Lukannon—before the sealers came.

Red Dog  Kipling Setting No 19  [1'11]
JOHN MARK AINSLEY tenor
The sixth movement, the second of the male voice a cappella settings, is from the verse heading to the story ‘Red Dog’ from The Second Jungle Book and was composed on 13/14 May 1941. The uncanny sound of voices imitating the baying of wolves is heard at the close of this movement and again points the way to Grainger’s ‘Free Music’.

I met my mates in the morning (and oh, but I am old!)
For our white and our excellent nights—for the nights of swift running,
Fair ranging, far-seeing, good hunting, sure cunning!
For the smells of the dawning, untainted, ere dew has departed!
For the rush through the mist, and the quarry blind-started!
For the cry of our mates when the Sambhur* has wheeled and is standing at bay,
For the risk and the riot of night!
For the sleep at the lair-mouth by day—
It is met, and we go to the fight.
Bay! O Bay!

* elk found in forest-clad parts of India

8 The peora hunt
Kipling Setting No 14 [0'40]
strings, piano, harmonium, bassoon, contrabassoon, baritone saxophone
The seventh movement, for mixed voices and ‘room-music’, is the verse heading to the story ‘Cupid’s Arrows’ from Plain Tales from the Hills and was composed on 8–11 March 1906.

Pit where the buffalo cooled his hide,
By the hot sun emptied, and blistered and dried;
Long in the reh-grass, hidden and lone;
Bund* where the earth-rat’s mounds are strown;
Cave in the bank where the sly stream steals;
Aloe that stabs at the belly and heels,
Jump if you dare on a steed untried—
Safer it is to go wide—go wide!
Hark, from in front where the best men ride;—
‘Pull to the off, boys! Wide! Go wide!’

* a dam

9 Hunting-song of the Seeonee pack
Kipling Setting No 8 [1'19]
strings
The eighth movement, for male voices and plucked strings, is taken from the story ‘Mowgli’s Brothers’ in The Jungle Book and was composed on 1 January 1899. ‘Seeonee’, usually spelt ‘Seoni’, is a district of Central India. In this setting Grainger asks that all notes marked sforzando should be sung with barking, yelping violence.

As the dawn was breaking the Sambhur belled
Once, twice and again!
And a doe leaped up, and a doe leaped up
From the pond in the wood where the wild deer sup.
This I, scouting alone, beheld,
Once, twice and again!
As the dawn was breaking the Sambhur belled
Once, twice and again!
And a wolf stole back, and a wolf stole back
To carry the word to the waiting pack,
And we sought and we found and we bayed on his track
Once, twice and again!
As the dawn was breaking the Wolf-Pack yelled
Once, twice and again!
Feet in the Jungle that leave no mark!
Eyes that can see in the dark—the dark!
Tongue—give tongue to it! Hark! Oh, Hark!
Once, twice and again!

10 Tiger! Tiger!
Kipling Setting No 4 [1'19]
JOHN MARK AINSLEY tenor
The ninth movement is the third and final setting for male voices a cappella. This is an eight-line verse heading for the story ‘Tiger! Tiger!’ from The Jungle Book and this setting was composed on 24 March 1905. In instrumental terms Grainger made other versions of this piece for brass ensemble, cello ensemble, recorder ensemble, harmonium duet, and piano solo: a good example of making his music suit whatever resources were available.

What of the hunting, hunter bold?
Brother, the watch was long and cold.
What of the quarry ye went to kill?
Brother, he crops in the Jungle still.
Where is the power that made your pride?
   Brother, it ebbs from my flank and side.
Where is the haste that ye hurry by?
   Brother, I go to my lair—to die!

11 The only son  Kipling Setting No 21 [4'40]
LIBBY CRABTREE soprano, JOHN MARK AINSLEY tenor
strings, harp, piano, harmonium, oboe, cor anglais, two bassoons,
three clarinets, bass clarinet, two alto saxophones

The tenth and penultimate movement is taken from Many Inventions. Grainger’s setting starts with the fourth line of Kipling’s poem. The seventh line follows, then all lines to the end. Work began on this setting in July 1945 and the finished manuscript was made on 13 February 1947 with the scoring finalised between 12 and 19 March the same year.

[And] the only son lay down again and dreamed that he dreamed a dream.

‘Now was I born of womankind and laid in a mother’s breast?
   For I have dreamed of a shaggy hide whereon I went to rest.
And was I born of woman kind and laid on a father’s arm?
   For I have dreamed of clashing teeth that guarded me from harm.

And was I born an only son and did I play alone?
   For I have dreamed of comrades twain that bit me to the bone.
   And did I break the barley-cake and steep it in the tyre?
   For I have dreamed of a youngling kid new-riven from the byre:
   For I have dreamed of a midnight sky and a midnight call to blood
   And red-mouthed shadows racing by, that thrust me from my food.

‘Tis an hour yet and an hour yet to the rising of the moon,
   But I can see the black roof-tree as plain as it were noon.
   ‘Tis a league and a league to the Lena Falls where the trouping blackbuck go;
   But I can hear the little fawn that bleats behind the doe.

‘Tis a league and a league to the Lena Falls where the crop and the upland meet,
   But I can smell the wet dawn-wind that wakes the sprouting wheat.
   Unbar the door. I may not bide, but I must out and see
   If those are wolves that wait outside or my own kin to me!’

She loosed the bar, she slid the bolt, she opened the door anon,
   And a grey bitch-wolf came out of the dark and fawned on the only son!

12 Mowgli’s song against people
Kipling Setting No 15 [3'41]
DAVID WILSON-JOHNSON baritone, JAMES GILCHRIST tenor
strings, piano, harmonium, two oboes, cor anglais, horn

The eleventh and final movement of the cycle, for mixed voices and ‘room-music’ accompaniment, is the five-stanza verse that ends the story ‘Letting in the Jungle’ from The Second Jungle Book. It was composed between 25 April and 29 June 1903 and given as a birthday gift to Grainger’s mother the same year. The scoring was revised in 1907 and again in 1923.

I will let loose against you the fleet-footed vines—
   I will call in the Jungle to stamp out your lines!
   The roofs shall fade before it,
   The house-beams shall fall;
   And the Karela*, the bitter Karela,
   Shall cover it all!

In the gates of these your councils my people shall sing.
In the doors of these your garners the Bat-folk shall cling;
   And the snake shall be your watchman,
   By a hearthstone unswept;
   For the Karela, the bitter Karela,
   Shall fruit where ye slept!

Ye shall not see my strikers; ye shall hear them and guess;
   By night, before the moon-rise, I will send for my cess†,
   And the wolf shall be your herdsman
   By a landmark removed;
   For the Karela, the bitter Karela,
   Shall seed where ye loved!
I will reap your fields before you at the hands of a host;  
Ye shall glean behind my reapers for the bread that is lost;  
And the deer shall be your oxen  
On a headland untilled;  
For the Karela, the bitter Karela,  
Shall leaf where ye build!

I have untied against you the club-footed vines,  
I have sent in the Jungle to swamp out your lines.  
The trees—the trees are on you!  
The house-beams shall fall;  
And the Karela, the bitter Karela,  
Shall cover [you] it all!

* a wild melon; † an indian tax

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865–1936)

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13 Good-bye to love  
Bridal Lullaby (arranged by Alan Gibbs) [3'54]  
JOHN MARK AINSLEY tenor  
strings, harp

Like Grainger, who was not averse to making choral arrangements of other composers’ music, others in turn have made choral arrangements of his original compositions or completions of existing sketch material. This piece (and three others on this recording: Early one morning, The sprig of thyme and Lord Maxwell’s goodnight) come into this category. 

Good-bye to love is an arrangement by Alan Gibbs of a piano miniature Grainger wrote in 1916 as a wedding-gift to his former Danish lover, Karen Holten, when she announced that she was to wed another. The original sketches for this piece suggest that the thematic material might be used for a love song and Grainger indicates that the rising and falling motif could be suitable for a tenor solo ‘chirping up’. In the preface to his score the arranger adds: ‘Grainger had vocal possibilities in mind, and if there is a certain vulgarity, this was a quality of which the composer was proud rather than the contrary, pointing to Richard Strauss (whose influence is not far to seek) for justification.’ With this in mind the arrangement was made and words were added paraphrasing Grainger’s notes on his manuscript score. The arrangement can be performed ‘elastically’ in true Grainger style, but is recorded here in the full complement of solo tenor, SSATBB chorus, harp and strings. The original piano version gained further life as the theme music for the Merchant-Ivory film Howards End.

Good-bye to love. It has to be,  
For though I lose you to another,  
I can see  
The time has come for you to wed.  
With all my heart I wish you happiness ahead.  
All summer long I feared this day.  
When lovers part for ever what is there to say?  
Our love will sleep but never die.  
My darling, hear my heartfelt  
Bridal Lullaby.

14 Died for love  
British Folk-Music Setting No 10 [1'24]  
LIBBY CRABTREE soprano  
strings

Died for love is a setting of a Lincolnshire folk-song jointly collected by Lucy Broadwood and Grainger from Joseph Taylor at Brigg on 28 July 1906. Grainger writes: ‘Mr Taylor sang this song with an exquisite tender gaiety and gentle dance-like rhythmic lift.’ Grainger made four different versions of this poignant melody including one for piano solo, but it is the version for soprano voice accompanied by three wind or string instruments which has established itself as one of Grainger’s most exquisite miniature masterpieces. As with all the British Folk-Music Settings it is dedicated ‘Lovingly and reverently to the memory of Edvard Grieg’.

I wish my baby it e was born,  
Lyin’ smilin’ on its father’s knee,  
Addnd I was dead and in my grave,  
And green gress growin’ all over me.
Dig me my grave long, wide and deep,  
Put a marble stone at my head and feet;  
But a turtle white dove put over above  
For to let the world know that I died for love.

**15 The power of love**  
*Danish Folk-Music Setting No 4 [4'53]  
JOHN MARK AINSLEY tenor  
strings, piano, harmonium, horns*

*The power of love* tells the story of a maiden who has a clandestine lover. Her seven brothers challenge him to combat because he has made love to their sister without ‘asking their rede’. In the fight that follows he kills the seven brothers and the maiden swears that even if he had killed her father she would not be minded to leave him. Grainger collected this ballad during his ‘folk-fishing’ trip to Jutland with the Danish folklorist, Evald Tang Kristensen on 25 August 1922. The singer, Mrs Ane Nielsen Post, remembered only the last verse. Grainger composed his setting for solo voice with instrumental accompaniment in a burst of inspiration during the period 3–6 September 1922 in memory of his mother who had committed suicide the previous April. Like many of Grainger’s works it passed through various guises, finally appearing as the first movement of his *Danish Folk-Music Suite* completed in 1928. Interestingly, a particular string sound is required in this piece, Grainger instructing the violas and cellos to change the tuned pitches of strings on their instruments. Of this work Grainger wrote: ‘Love’s sway is firm and ruthless. The tune and words of *The power of love* seemed to me to match my soul-seared mood of that time—my new born awareness of the doom-fraught undertow that lurks in all deep love.’

A green-growing tree in my father’s orchard stands,  
I really do believe it is a willow tree.  
Its branches twine together so close from root to top,  
And so do likewise true love and fond heart’s desire in summertime.

**16 The Rival Brothers**  
*Unnumbered Færoe Island Setting [1'03]  
strings*

*The Rival Brothers* relates a story from the Viking age. A man called Arngrim has two sons, Angantyr and Hjálmar the Champion. Angantyr hears that a bonder, in lands-beyond-the-sea, has a comely daughter, so the brothers build a swift cutter and set out to woo the girl. The melody is an original tune and not based on folk-song; the words have been ‘Englished’ by Grainger from a folk-ballad contained in V U Hammershaimb’s *Færøiske Kvæder*, Vol 2 (Copenhagen, 1855). Grainger’s work on this piece dates from 1905 with further revisions following in 1931, 1938, 1940 and 1943. It was ‘dished-up’ for piano solo and for piano duet in July 1932 as part of a projected collection of keyboard pieces to be called *The Easy Grainger* or *The Music Lover’s Grainger*. As with all Færoese folk-ballads there are many verses but in this case Grainger is very selective and chooses to set only three out of the possible twenty-one verses given in his manuscript sketches.

On his farm lived a bonder free,  
(Well-born Men.)  
His sons eleven were fair to see.  
(Arngrim’s sons from the Blue Country  
Set out for Samsoy.)

Hyálmar Champion’s a handsome knight,  
(Well-born Men.)  
While Angantyr is but a sorry wight.  
(Arngrim’s sons from the Blue Country  
Set out for Samsoy.)

Bonder there you sit drinking wine,  
Give me that comely daughter of thine!  
(Well-born Men.)

If I choose, it is clear to see
Hyálmar Champion’s the man for me!  
(Well-born Men.)

*Arngrim’s sons from the Blue Country  
Set out for Samsoy.*
**Six dukes went afishin’**

Unnumbered British Folk-Music Setting [2'19]

This setting was first performed at the 1906 Brigg Festival. In all Grainger made three distinct arrangements of this folk-melody and the version recorded here was collected by ear from the singing of George Couldthorpe of Barrow-on-Humber (North Lincolnshire) by Grainger on 4 September 1905. Subsequent Edison phonograph cylinder recordings were made of the tune with variants phonographed from Joseph Leanin on 4 August 1906, and these were to form the basis of Grainger’s two other settings, the voice and piano version published as BFMS No 11 and the third and final setting, for four voices and flute, which was composed in 1910. The final setting makes great demands on the singers to produce a Lincolnshire dialect whilst this first setting indicates only one alternative for the word ‘body’. The words of this song have a curious history. Miss Lucy E Broadwood, who had noted down two extra verses at Brigg on 7 May 1906 (subsequently used in Grainger’s 1910 setting), believes the words relate to William de la Pole, first Duke of Suffolk, whose murdered body was washed ashore near Dover in 1450.

Six dukes went afishin’ down by yon seaside,
And they spied a dead body come arolling with the tide.
They one said to each other, these words I’ve heard them say:
‘It’s the Royal Duke of Grantham, what the tide has washed away.’

They took him up to Portsmouth, to a place where he was known,
From there up to London, to the place where he was born.
They took out his bowels, and stretched out his feet,
They balmed his body with Roses so sweet.

He lies betwixt two towers*, he lies in cold clay,
When the Royal Queen of Grantham went weeping away.

* men on the tow-path of a canal

**The sprig of thyme**

British Folk-Music Setting No 24
(arranged by Dana Paul Perna) [2'35]

LIBBY CRABTREE soprano, JAMES GILCHRIST tenor

The sprig of thyme is included here in a choral arrangement by the American composer and Grainger scholar, Dana Paul Perna. Grainger’s original setting of the folk-song collected from Joseph Taylor of Saxby-All-Saints, Lincolnshire, was made for his mother’s birthday in 1920. The arranger comments: ‘While listening to a recording of this Lincolnshire folk-song in Grainger’s voice and piano version, I began to imagine how it would sound cast for mixed voices. The use of the male voice four-some corresponds to Grainger’s own use of the same forces in his settings of Dollar and a half a day, Shenandoah and Stormy…’.

Wunst I had a sprig of thyme,
It prospered by night and by day
Till a false young man came acourtin’ te me,
And he stole all this thyme away.

The gardiner was standiddn by;
I bade him che-oose for me:
He chose me the lily and the violet and the pink,
But I really did refuse them all three.

Thyme it is the prettiest thing,
And time it e will grow on,
And time it’ll bring all things to an end
Addend so doz my time grow on.

It’s very well drinkin’ ale
And it’s very well drinkin’ wine;
But it’s far better sittin’ by a young man’s side
That has won this heart of mine.

**Willow, willow**

Old English Popular Music No 1 [3'57]

JOHN MARK AINSLEY tenor, SIMON FISCHER violin strings, harp

Willow, willow was first set by Grainger for voice and piano in November 1898. It was his first setting of a traditional tune. Four years later he sketched a version for voice, strings and
guitar or harp adding a further verse with a much richer accompaniment, finally publishing this version together with its voice and piano counterpart in 1912. The words are familiar to us as those sung by Desdemona in Shakespeare’s Othello. This lament for lost love, with its sighing motifs, is of rare and ravishing beauty.

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing willow willow willow:
With his hand in his bosom and his head upon his knee.
O willow willow willow willow,
O willow willow willow willow
Shall be my garland;
Sing all a green willow, willow willow willow;
Aye me the green willow must be my garland.

He sighed in his singing and made a great moan,
Sing willow willow willow:
I am dead to all pleasure, my true love she is gone.
O willow willow willow willow,
O willow willow willow willow
Shall be my garland;
Sing all a green willow, willow willow willow;
Aye me the green willow must be my garland.

Take this for my farewell and latest adieu,
Sing willow willow willow,
Write this on my tomb, that in love I was true.
O willow willow willow willow,
O willow willow willow willow
Shall be my garland;
Sing all a green willow, willow willow willow;
Aye me the green willow must be my garland.

Recessional Kipling Setting No 18 [3'58]
piano, harmonium

Recessional is a five stanza verse from Kipling’s The Five Nations which was written for Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Grainger’s setting dates from 27/28 November 1929, although sketches date back to 1905. Scored for mixed chorus with or without keyboard accompaniments, Grainger sets all five verses with the direction that the fourth and fifth verses ‘may be left out’ (as they are here). With the rousing hymn-like tune Grainger creates an anthem that is quite unlike anything else in his output. In a ‘Round Letter’ dated 7 June 1949 he writes: ‘Kipling’s Recessional was so sweetly sung in a small college town, that I almost wished I was dead and it sung over my grave!’

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The Captains and the Kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!

Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Amen.

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865–1936)

Lord Maxwell’s goodnight British Folk-Music Setting No 42 (arranged by David Tall) [2'48]
JOHN MARK AINSLEY tenor

Lord Maxwell’s goodnight is also an arrangement, this time by David Tall. The words for the first half of the tune (bars 1–8) are from Walter Scott’s Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, those for the second (bars 9–16) were added by Grainger. The first setting of this work dates from 1904 when the twenty-two year-old Grainger scored it for solo male voice and strings. But it was Grainger’s habit to lay aside his manuscripts for
mature reflection and, in 1912, a new setting was made for solo male voice, six solo strings and string orchestra. Not being satisfied he returned to the 1904 setting at the age of seventy-six, casting it for voice and piano and giving it its final blessing as BFMS Number 42: the version which forms the basis of this arrangement for tenor solo and male voices.

‘Adieu, Madame, my mother dear, but and my sisters three, O! 
Adieu, fair Robert of Orchardstane, my heart is wae* for thee, O! 
Adieu the lily and the rose, the primrose fair to see, O! 
Adieu, my ladye and only joy, for I may not stay with thee, O! 
Tho’ I hae slain the Lord Johnstone what care I for his feid †, O! 
My noble mind their wrath disdains, he was my father’s deid ‡, O!
Both night and day I labor’d oft of him avenged to be, O!
But now I’ve got what lang I sought, and I may not stay with thee, O!
Then he tuik off a gay gold ring, thareat hung signets three, O!
‘Hae, tak thee that mine ain dear thing, and still hae mind o’ me, O!
But if thou take another lord ere I come ower the sea, O!
His life is but a three days lease, tho’ I may not stay wi’ thee, O!’
The wind was fair, the ship was clear, that good lord went away, O!
And most part of his friends were there to give him a fair convey, O!
They drank the wine, they didna spair, e’en in that gude lord’s sight, O!
Sae now he’s o’er the floods sae grey, and Lord Maxwell’s ta’en his goodnight, O!

* sorrowful; † a continued state of hostility, a feud; ‡ the cause of (someone’s) death

22 The Three Ravens  British Folk-Music Setting No 41 [4’02]
DAVID WILSON-JOHNSON baritone
flute, three clarinets, bass clarinet, oboe, two alto saxophones, bassoon, harmonium

The Three Ravens is based on an old English song and was in the first place composed to a modernized version of the original text by Sir Harold Boulton in July 1902. Grainger later revised the setting in 1949, reverting to the original text which had been unknown to him in 1902. The work is arranged for baritone solo, mixed chorus and instrumental accompaniment and the choral writing gives us an early example of Grainger’s interest in sliding intervals. The atmosphere captured in this music, depicting a slain knight mouldering in the field with the ravens discussing how they might take breakfast, is at once both sinister and moving. Grainger’s original scoring was for either five clarinets, flute and four clarinets, other woodwinds, or harmonium (reed-organ or pipe-organ). For this recording the option for ‘other woodwinds’ is used with additional saxophones and harmonium.

There were three ravens sat on a tree, 
Down a down hey down hey down.
And they were black as they might be, 
With a down.
Then one of them said to his make*:  
‘Where shall we our breakfast take?’
With a down derry derry derry down down.
Down in yonder green e field, 
Down a down hey down hey down.
There lies a knight slain under his shield; 
With a down.
His hounds they lie down at his feet, 
So well they can their master keep; 
With a down derry derry derry down down.
‘His hawks they fly so eagerly,’
Down a down hey down hey down, 
‘There is no fowl dare come him nigh,’
With a down.
But down there comes a fallow doe, 
As great with young as she might go, 
With a down derry derry derry down down.
O she lifts up his bloody head, 
Down a down hey down hey down.
And kissed his wounds that were so red. 
With a down.
She gat him up upon her back
And carried him to earthen lake.
With a down derry derry derry down down.
She buried him before the prime,
Down a down hey down hey down,
She was dead herself ere evensong time.
With a down derry derry derry down down.
Now God send every gentleman
Such hounds, such hawks and such a leman†.
With a down derry derry derry down down.
* mate; † friend

23 The running of shindand  Kipling Setting No 9 [1'41]
The running of shindand is a two-stanza verse generally acknowledged as being from ‘The Lost Legion’ in Kipling’s Many Inventions. It was composed by Grainger for male voices a cappella in ‘about 1902 or 1903’. It is the least well-known of Grainger’s Kipling settings and received its first performance at an ‘At Home’ given by Mrs Frank Lowrey in London 1903. The performance indication is particularly worth mentioning: ‘With Caruso-like, Italian-like, clinging unbroken tone thro’out, unless marked otherwise.’ Also specifically requested is the use of countertenors on the highest part. Grainger was later to make an arrangement of this piece for an ensemble of five cellos.

There’s a convict more in the Central Jail,
Behind the old mud wall;
There’s a lifter less on the Border trail,
And the Queen’s Peace over all,
Dear boys,
The Queen’s Peace over all!

For we must bear our leader’s blame,
On us the shame will fall,
If we lift our hand from a fettered land
And the Queen’s Peace over all,
Dear boys,
The Queen’s Peace over all!

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865–1936)

24 Early one morning  Unnumbered British Folk-Music Setting (arranged by David Tall) [2'51]
DAVID WILSON-JOHNSON baritone, LIBBY CRABTREE soprano

Early one morning, edited by David Tall for large mixed chorus, incorporates Grainger’s early vocal settings as verses two and three. It has been seen that it was Grainger’s habit to return to his manuscripts over the years, extending songs with new verses, adding richer harmonies, changing instrumentations for special occasions or sometimes just adding small details to material that did not satisfy him. He originally set this traditional folk-song when sixteen years old as a single verse for voice and piano. On 16 October 1901 he modified this setting in a sketch for mezzo soprano and three altos and added a newly composed verse for mezzo soprano and male voice choir. The metamorphosis of this work continued throughout the years and finally, in 1950, he responded to a request from Leopold Stokowski and transcribed it for full orchestra. This version uses choral techniques pioneered by Grainger with the unison singing of the melody (soloists in this recording) being accompanied by a small chorus singing in harmony. The last verse makes use of the harmonies Grainger introduced in his 1940 transcription for soprano solo and piano.

Early one morning, just as the sun was rising
I heard a maid sing in the valley below.
‘Oh, don’t deceive me, oh, never leave me,
How could you use a poor maiden so?’ [repeated]

Remember the vows that you made to your Mary,
Remember the bow’r where you vowed [promised] to be true.
‘Oh, don’t deceive me, oh, never leave me,
How could you use a poor maiden so!’ [repeated]

25 The love song of Har Dyal  Kipling Setting No 11 [2'14]
LESLEY JANE ROGERS soprano
strings, piano, harmonium, oboe, bassoon

The love song of Har Dyal is a setting of a three-stanza verse from the story ‘Beyond the Pale’ in Kipling’s Plain Tales from
the Hills. A setting for voice and piano dates from 12 September 1901 whilst the version recorded here for soprano solo and ‘room-music’ accompaniment was not scored until 1 January 1958. In this beautiful setting Grainger manages to stun us with the rising motif to the words ‘Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!’ which on each repeat becomes more and more heartfelt.

Alone upon the housetops to the North
I turn and watch the lightnings in the sky—
The glamour of thy footsteps in the North.
Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!
Below my feet the still bazar is laid—
Far, far below the weary camels lie—
The camels and the captives of thy raid.
Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!
My father’s wife is old and harsh with years,
And drudge of all my father’s house am I—
My bread is sorrow and my drink is tears.
Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865–1936)

My love’s in Germanie
My love’s in Germanie, send him hame, send him hame,
My love’s in Germanie, send him hame.
My love’s in Germanie, fighting for Royalty;
He may ne’er his Jeanie see, send him hame, send him hame;
He may ne’er his Jeanie see, send him hame.
He’s brave as brave can be, send him hame, send him hame,
He’s brave as brave can be, send him hame.
He’s brave as brave can be, he wad rather fa’ than flee;
But his life is dear to me, send him hame, send him hame;
Oh! His life is dear to me, send him hame.
His faes are ten to three, send him hame, send him hame,
His faes are ten to three, send him hame.
His faes are ten to three, he maun either fa’ or flee,
In the cause o’ loyalty; send him hame, send him hame,
In the cause o’ loyalty, send him hame.
Your love ne’er learnt to flee, bonnie dame, winsome dame,
Your love ne’er learnt to flee, winsome dame.
Your love ne’er learnt to flee, but he fell in Germanie,
Fighting brave for loyalty, mournfu’ dame, mournfu’ dame;
Fighting brave for loyalty, mournfu’ dame.
He’ll ne’er come owre the sea, Willie’s slain, Willie’s slain,
He’ll ne’er come owre the sea, Willie’s slain.
He’ll ne’er come owre the sea, to his love and ain country,
This wairld’s nae mair to me, Willie’s gane, Willie’s gane;
This wairld’s nae mair to me, Willie’s gane.

My love’s in Germanie
My love’s in Germanie, send him hame, send him hame,
My love’s in Germanie, send him hame.
My love’s in Germanie, fighting for Royalty;
He may ne’er his Jeanie see, send him hame, send him hame;
He may ne’er his Jeanie see, send him hame.
He’s brave as brave can be, send him hame, send him hame,
He’s brave as brave can be, send him hame.
He’s brave as brave can be, he wad rather fa’ than flee;
But his life is dear to me, send him hame, send him hame;
Oh! His life is dear to me, send him hame.
His faes are ten to three, send him hame, send him hame,
His faes are ten to three, send him hame.
His faes are ten to three, he maun either fa’ or flee,
In the cause o’ loyalty; send him hame, send him hame,
In the cause o’ loyalty, send him hame.
Your love ne’er learnt to flee, bonnie dame, winsome dame,
Your love ne’er learnt to flee, winsome dame.
Your love ne’er learnt to flee, but he fell in Germanie,
Fighting brave for loyalty, mournfu’ dame, mournfu’ dame;
Fighting brave for loyalty, mournfu’ dame.
He’ll ne’er come owre the sea, Willie’s slain, Willie’s slain,
He’ll ne’er come owre the sea, Willie’s slain.
He’ll ne’er come owre the sea, to his love and ain country,
This wairld’s nae mair to me, Willie’s gane, Willie’s gane;
This wairld’s nae mair to me, Willie’s gane.

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A note on guitars, ukuleles, mandolins, mandolas and the harmonium

Perhaps aware that ‘adequate’ (Grainger’s word) ukulele, guitar, mandolin and mandola players might be difficult to procure, Grainger is keen to indicate, in his detailed preface to the scores, that great flexibility can be exercised in terms of which fretted instruments may be omitted or doubled according to the forces available, even to the extent of mentioning that the ukulele and guitar parts may be played on balalaikas! For the purposes of this recording, Grainger’s desired complement of two ukuleles, four guitars, two mandolas and two mandolins was used, with ukuleles and guitars using felt plectrums as requested. Grainger’s instructions also give precise indications as to the stringing of the ukuleles and guitars: ukuleles to be strung with four (gut) violin A strings and guitars each with single-note guitar strings (B, G and D respectively, guitars 1 and 2 using gut, guitars 3 and 4 silk-wound). Grainger points out that none of these instruments should use any steel strings. For this recording, ukuleles and guitars used nylon strings (standard for today, more reliable for tuning, and not available at Grainger’s time of writing), these capable of producing the soft tremolando effect which Grainger desired, an effect which steel strings would have denied him.

The harmonium is a 1928 Mannborg reed organ and has been supplied courtesy of Cambridge Reed Organs by arrangement with Justin Sillman. Harmoniums are notoriously noisy. Please excuse the odd extraneous noise of wind and creaking pedals—all are integral to the charm of the instrument!
Percy Grainger, Jungle Book

« JE PENSE, dans l’ensemble, que le monde musical n’a pas conscience de tout ce que ma musique cache d’amertume, de ressentiment, d’iconoclasme et de dénonciation. Jamais la valeur de ma musique ne sera estimée, ni son prix pour l’humanité ressenti, tant que son approche ne sera pas consciemment entreprise comme un pèlerinage aux souffrances. »

Percy Grainger

De tels propos sont plutôt inattendus de la part du compositeur qui fit sien le populaire Country Gardens. Un jour que je me rendai dans un fast-food, pendant les séances d’enregistrement de ce disque, je fus accueilli au son de Country Gardens diffusé par le réseau de musique d’ambiance. Ce gros succès des années 1920, qui consolida pleinement la réputation de Grainger, demeure joué dans d’innombrables arrangements. Mais comment cette agréable chansonnette se concilie-t-elle avec des écrits aussi noirs que ceux susmentionnés ?

D’aucuns oublièrent trop souvent que Grainger ne fut pas seulement l’excentrique qui lançait des balles de tennis par-dessus les maisons pour les rattraper de l’autre côté. L’homme possédait aussi une facette sombre, que le présent enregistrement explore parfois. Rappelons également que ce compositeur, pianiste, écrivain, ethnomusicologue, inventeur, linguiste, peintre et voyageur fut un des plus éminents puits de science de notre siècle.


L’œuvre la plus insolite de ce disque est certainement Shallow Brown, où le chef d’orchestre peut à nouveau sélectionner les instruments, Grainger ne suggérant que le minimum. Par un froid et humide matin de janvier, des joueurs de mandole, de ukulélé, de mandoline et de guitare se joignirent aux rangs de l’harmonium, des saxophones, des clarinettes, des cors, du piccolo, du contrebasson et du piano pour enregistrer la « marine » de Grainger: une séance mémorable. Concernant le chant de Shallow Brown, nous savons que Grainger avait préféré un homme dans le rôle de soliste, et nous avons suivi cet usage—mais le morceau aurait tout aussi bien fonctionné avec une soliste.

Grainger se considérait avant tout comme un compositeur choral. Et pourtant, ce sont ses miniatures orchestrales qui ont le mieux résisté au temps. Par contraste avec les œuvres du premier disque de Grainger (At Twilight), qui explorait largement le matériau populaire, Jungle Book est une composition originale, indépendante d’une telle influence.

Vers la fin de sa vie, Percy Grainger fut aperçu, marchant dans Manhattan, un havresac au dos. Ce sac contenait certaines de ses partitions inédites, qu’il colportait auprès des éditeurs de musique—lesquels ne voulaient, pour la plupart, rien savoir. Ce disque est la célébration d’un génie méconnu, dont l’heure viendra peut-être bientôt.

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PERCY GRAINGER  Dschungelbuch

„IM GROSSEN UND GANZEN, denke ich, ist sich die gesamte Musikwelt wohl nicht all der Bitterkeit, des Ärgers, der Bildstürmerei und Denunziation bewußt, die hinter meiner Musik liegt. Der Wert meiner Musik wird so lange nicht erraten oder ihr Nutzen für die Menschheit so lange nicht wahrgenommen werden, bis ihr nicht bewußt in einer Wallfahrt des Leidens nachgegangen wird.“  

Percy Grainger


Grainger betrachtete sich vor allem als Chorkomponist, und doch sind es seine orchestralen Miniaturen, die bis heute die größte Verbreitung gefunden haben. Im Gegensatz zur ersten Polyphony-CD mit Werken von Grainger, At Twilight, die zum größten Teil folkloristisches Material vorstellt, ist Dschungelbuch eine Originalkomposition und frei von solchen Einflüssen.


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