

The Percy Grainger Home

7 Cromwell Place, White Plains, New York 10601

This historic home is an exceptionally significant local landmark because of its association with the life and work of Percy Grainger (1882-1961), composer, pianist, collector of folk songs, and writer. For forty years, from 1921 until his death in 1961, Grainger occupied the house at 7 Cromwell Place, White Plains, using it for his residence, practice studio, and laboratory for his avant-garde musical compositions and experimental music machines. After service in World War I, Grainger purchased the single-family residence in White Plains that became his home and studio for the rest of his life; the building is the resource most significantly associated with Grainger in America.

A MUSICAL PRODIGY IN MELBOURNE

Penelope Thwaites, who grew up in Melbourne, recently found herself staying with friends around the corner from Oxley Road, Hawthorn: the street where the 5-10 year-old Percy Grainger lodged from 1887-1892. It brought the Melbourne of his childhood very near.

Largely home-schooled by his art-loving parents, his wide-ranging education had a direct and lasting impact on the directions his compositions took from his concept of music unfettered by key, conventional pitch or time-signature, his intense love of Bach, his worship of the natural world, and much else.

His aspiration to live a “natural” life was in strained conflict with the family tragedies that forced him to support his mother by pursuing a concert pianist’s career. That he achieved what he did is remarkable, and his mother’s part in that is also remarkable.

Program

A Musical Prodigy in Melbourne

Shepherd’s Hey

Prelude and Gigue

Blithe Bells

Free Music:

Sea Song Sketch & Train Music (recording)

Arrival Platform Humlet

Beautiful Fresh Flower

Lullaby from *Tribute to Foster* (from *The Childrens’ Grainger*)

The Power of Love (transc. Thwaites)

Klavierstück in D

Scotch Strathspey & Reel

Irish Tune from County Derry

Country Gardens

**The International Percy Grainger Society (IPGS), was formed to preserve the legacy, home, and artifacts of Percy Grainger. Currently the Society is in progress with a restoration of the physical structure of the house and an enlargement of the display of artifacts that render Percy Grainger a living presence to a new generation of visitors. Board of Directors: Barry Peter Ould, President, Susan Edwards Colson, Eric Culver, Mark N. Grant, Paul Jackson, Vincent Lioni, Matthew McGarrell, Dana Paul Perna, and Cora Sowa.*

**Percy Grainger America (PGA), a fundraising group, shares this mission.*



We are thrilled to welcome **Penelope Thwaites**, internationally recognized as an exponent and scholar of Percy Grainger's music as well as editor of *The New Percy Grainger Companion* (Boydell & Brewer 2010).

Born and current resident in UK, Penelope grew up in Australia, winning first place on graduation in Music from Melbourne University. She has won acclaim as a concert pianist, recording artist, composer, writer and editor, broadcaster and music festival curator. In 2001, she was awarded

the Order of Australia for her work.

In the mid 70's, the composer William L Reed said to Penelope - "You're an Australian - why don't you play some Grainger?" She considered, and decided to include three folk-settings at the end of her next recital. She notes that she found them delightful, stimulating - and demanding, not an unusual experience for those embarking on performing Grainger. She notes that Grainger was a formidable and hugely energetic pianist.

She has now recorded more than 260 tracks of Percy Grainger's music. She was the featured solo, chamber and orchestral artist on eight of Chandos Records' 19-CD Grainger Edition. Most recently, she recorded a fourth CD with fellow Australian pianist, Timothy Young, to add to the three existing CDs of Grainger's music that she had previously recorded with John Lavender. All four CDs contain many world premieres, including the discovery of a youthful piano concerto fragment, and provide a fascinating insight into Grainger's pianistic output.

Her lectures and broadcasts on the composer and detailed research into his life and work led to her editing *The New Percy Grainger Companion*, widely recognized for its new research and insights by established performers of Grainger's music. She was Artistic Director for two major Grainger Festivals in London: St John's Smith Square in 1998 and a four-day celebration at King's Place in 2011 - 50 years since Percy Grainger's death.

Penelope muses "My preliminary skirmishes with Grainger led to a fascination with the story of his life, and I devised a program of piano works that would follow at least something of its extraordinary progress. Making a series of recordings of all the two pianos four-hand repertoire included the discovery of several works that had lain undiscovered. The process continued through many live performances as well as further solo, chamber and orchestral recordings. Some 260 tracks later I am amazed at the richness of his imagination and his understanding of the piano."

A pencil sketch of a two-story house with a prominent front porch and a gabled roof. The drawing is rendered in a textured, stippled style. Overlaid on the sketch is a large, handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Percy Grainger".

Piano Recital

Sunday, May 12, 2019

4:00 pm