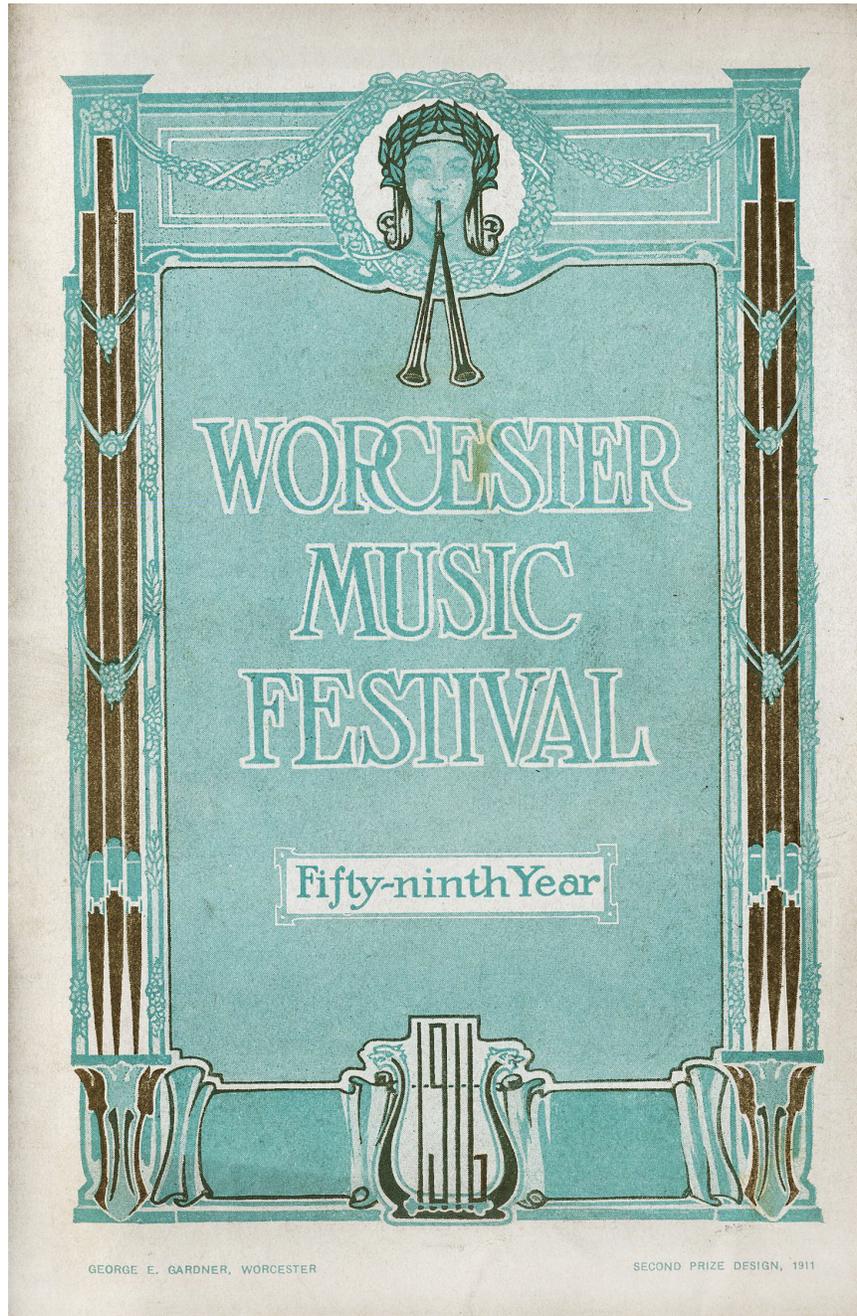


59th Worcester Music Festival, 1917: Mechanics Hall

Grainger's first appearance was on the second night of the 59th Festival, which ran from Monday, September 25 to Friday, September 29, 1916.



Open rehearsal announcement for Thursday, September 28, 1916 at 9:30 a.m.

“GRAINGER’S FIRST APPEARANCE AT REHEARSAL THIS MORNING

“Percy Grainger, the talented young Australian composer and pianist, this morning at 9:30 o’clock, will make his initial appearance on the platform in Mechanics hall, in a rehearsal scheduled to precede his concert appearance this afternoon.

“Much interest centers in this young artist, and many Worcester pianists who have been unable to secure tickets for the concert, will be glad to avail themselves of the opportunity to hear him play this morning. The rare genius attributed to Mr. Grainger was gained in no small measure under the

tutelage of his mother and of the Dutchman, Kwast, and for a brief period his teacher was the world-renowned Busoni.

“Mr. Grainger arrived last night and registered at the Bancroft Hotel.

“It was erroneously stated yesterday that the rehearsal tickets were practically disposed of: there are plenty of these to be had for both the remaining rehearsals.”

Worcester Music Festival Program, September 28, 1916:

Second Concert

Thursday Afternoon, September Twenty-eighth



Goldmark *Overture to Sakuntala, Op. 13*

Grieg *Concerto in A minor for Pianoforte, Op. 16*

Allegro molto moderato

Adagio

Allegro moderato molto e marcato

Percy Grainger

Richard Strauss, *Don Quixote, Fantastic Variations on
a Theme of Knightly Character, Op. 35**

Cello Solo by J. Keller

Viola Solo by F. Wittman

(a) Percy Grainger, *One More Day, My John**

(b) Percy Grainger, *Colonial Song (Song of Australia)**

(c) Stanford-Grainger, *Leprechaun's Dance (Irish Reel)**

(d) Stanford-Grainger, *Reel (Irish Dance)***

Percy Grainger

Brahms *Hungarian Dances, Nos. V* and VI*

Steinway Piano Used by Mr. Grainger

*First Festival Performance

**First Performance in America

"GRAINGER MASTER PIANIST

Australian Composer Charms All at Second Concert of Festival

By Kathrine Wright

"A large audience filled Mechanics hall yesterday afternoon. Percy Grainger was the soloist, and the program was : -

"Overture to 'Sakuntala, op. 13," Goldmark; 'Concerto in A minor for pianoforte, op 16,' Grieg; 'Don Quixote,' fantastic variations on a theme of knightly character, op. 35, Strauss (first festival performance); 'One more day, my John,' Grainger; 'Colonial Song,' Grainger; 'Leprechaun's Dance,' and 'Reel' (Irish dance), Stanford-Grainger.

"These last three pieces had their first festival performance. Mr. Grainger played his reel (Irish dance) for the first time in America. The program concluded with Brahms' 'Hungarian Dances,' V, first festival performance, and VI. Gustav Strube conducted.

"To many the most interesting feature of the concert was the appearance of the young Australian pianist and composer. In the morning he had attracted large numbers to the rehearsal. Born in Brighton, in Victoria, he gave his first recital in Melbourne at the age of 10.

"He then was looked upon as an infant prodigy. Later

he studied piano

and composition with Prof. Pabst of the New York conservatory, who visited Australia. The boy made enough money by recitals to go with his mother to Germany, where he studied at Frankfort-on-the-Main with Prof. James Kwart, Ivan Knorr, and Busoni..

"The Hoch conservatory at that time included on its staff Hugo Heerman, Hugo Becker and Frau Schroeder-Hanfestaengl. Mr. Grainger found Knorr uncongenial. He availed himself of his instructions in harmony and counter point, but disdained his criticisms.

"As a composer , Mr. Grainger has passed through many phases. At 13 he composed piano pieces in a Handelian manner. Later, wholly innocent of the activities of one Claude Achille Debussy, he began to use the whole tone scale. At 16 he discovered Rudyard Kipling, and found himself. A year later he became fascinated with experiments in rhythm.

"A passionate collector of folk music, he has many years wandered far and wide with his gramophone, gathering material. This material has been culled from peasants and sailors in Europe, from natives in New Zealand and the South seas. Some of his admirers fear that his devotion to the setting of folk songs will prevent his being considered in the light of a serious composer.

"His friend, Cyril Scott, himself a composer of distinction, lately

undertook his defense

in the Musical Quarterly. In this article Scott calls attention to the young composer's 'Hill Song,' for wind instruments, 'The English dance' for full orchestra and 'Father and daughter' for male quartet, chorus and orchestra, including a number of guitars as substantial revelations of serious technique and inspiration.

"An independent spirit, one of Mr. Grainger's chief characteristics is his pronounced originality. Thus he delights in the handling of words and, not content with the customary Italian designations for tempo and marks of expression, his scores are masses of quaint slang of his own coining, often a riddle to his publishers and the uninitiated. He also designs all the covers for his music.

"It is said that he is an athlete, delighting in the spirit of force; that, something of a sociologist, he finds pleasure and interest in the picturesque speech and homely humor of the humblest workingman.

"His 'Marching Song of Democracy,' which will have its first performance on any stage at the Worcester festival of 1917, is inscribed, 'In loving adoration of Walt Whitman,' and largely inspired by sentiments he found in the works of the good, gray poet.

"A close friend of Grieg, who called him a genius and praised him warmly

for his performance

and understanding of his music, no fitter interpreter than Mr. Grainger could be imagined for the concerto written at the Danish village of Sollerod, when Grieg, then 25 years old and newly married, was radiantly happy with Nina Hagerup, the charming daughter of a famous Danish actress.

“With a shock of blond hair, his smiling blue eyes, his fresh and youthful countenance, Mr. Grainger presents a romantic and boyish appearance. Extremely modest in his behaviour on the platform, he strode to the piano with light but determined steps.

“Exceeding praise has not turned his head. He has no self-conscious strut. He has no disturbing and peculiar mannerisms. It was immediately apparent that he had his own ideas about the concerto.

“Some pianists italicize the opening measures, give undue dramatic importance to the theme as it is first given by the pianist. On the contrary, Mr. Grainger played the opening measures with delicacy and exquisite lightness of touch.

“As the first movement progressed there was evident depth and sonority in his playing of chords. There was a limpid clearness in his runs. His tone was warm and sensitively colored. There

were striking contrasts,

pages in which the pianist also displayed in turn flaming intensity, poetic insight, a vivid sense of rhythm.

“His phrasing throughout was finished. He was brilliant in cadenzas. Gifted with a technical equipment of the first rank, perhaps the most salient feature of Mr. Grainger’s playing is its elemental vigor, its dominant virility. This quality of olympian vigor is refreshing.

“It is a pleasure to hear a virtuoso who is not merely a highly polished machine, or one whose musical spontaneity has suffered from imparting the secrets of his art to others.

“Mr. Grainger’s pieces were interesting and in certain cases, charming. The “Sea-chanty” or sailor’s working song, is hymnlike in quality. There is an arrangement for men’s voices to an accompaniment of wind, string, guitars, concertina and xylophone.

“The ‘Colonial Song’ is intended to express feelings aroused in Australian scenery. It is charming in theme and skillful in workmanship, yet not so appealing as Mr. Grainger’s exquisite setting of the Irish tune from county Derry.

“The ‘Leprechaun’s Dance’ has the elusive quality of the fairy it is intended to portray. The ‘reel’ is remarkable for its realization of a sustained spirit of animation.

“Repeatedly recalled, the pianist played

his lively ‘Shepherd’s Hey.’

(This review continues regarding Strauss’ Don Quixote:)

“...This work (‘Don Quixote’) requires a far larger orchestra than that of yesterday, and an extended discussion of the performance would therefore be unfair. The ‘cello and viola solos by J. Keller and F. Wittman were creditably played, but as a whole the work dragged.

“There was an admirable performance of Goldmark’s overture. Then the orchestra, catching Mr. Grainger’s spirit, gave an animated accompaniment of the (Grieg) concerto. This animation returned returned with the closing numbers, Brahms’ ‘Hungarian Dances.’ **This concert was too long, and should have ended with Mr. Grainger’s pieces.**” (*My emphasis, - ed.*)

60th Worcester Music Festival, 1917; Mechanics Hall

The 60th Festival ran from Wednesday, October 3 to Saturday, October 6, 1917

Worcester Daily Telegram: Thursday Oct 4, 1917, p. 8, within a review of *Samson and Delilah*:

“... Tonight will be composers’ night, presenting two new works, ‘Marching Song of Democracy’ by Percy Grainger, and ‘Ode to Music’ by Henry Hadley. Percy Grainger will be in the audience with his mother, Mrs. Rose Grainger, New York. ... “

“MANY MUSIC LOVERS ARE GUESTS FOR THE WEEK”

“... Mrs. Rose Grainger, mother of Percy Grainger, who is to attend the concert tonight, will be accompanied by Mrs. Williston Hough, New York, better known as a pianist under the name of Lotta Mills. Others of their friends who are coming to hear the initial performance of Mr. Grainger’s work, are Miss Bessie Harlow, New York; Mrs. Schumeier, St. Paul, Minnesota; Miss Grace Martin, Miss Ruth I. Martin and Miss Antonia Sawyer, all of New York.”

-Mr. E. H. Krehbiel

Review, Friday, October 5, 1917

“FESTIVAL AUDIENCE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY TWO NEW WORKS

“Two important choral novelties were produced at the third concert of Worcester music festival last night, in Mechanics hall: Percy Grainger’s ‘Marching Song of Democracy,’ inspired by poetry of Walt Whitman, for chorus, orchestra and organ, and Henry Hadley’s setting of Dr. Henry van Dyke’s ‘Ode to Music,’ for chorus, solos and orchestra. Mr. Grainger’s work was conducted by Dr. Mees. Mr. Hadley himself conducted the performance of the ‘Ode to Music.’

“The performance of Mr. Grainger’s piece was brilliant and successful. The chorus, which had sung in rather a routine manner the evening previous, outdid itself in this performance. Evidently fond of the music, the singers found parts which were written admirably for them, whatever their difficulties of execution or intonation. They and the orchestra did justice to an effective composition.

“The ‘Marching Song of Democracy,’ tho inspired by texts of Whitman, and, according to Mr. Grainger, by the fundamental conception of democracy which the great American poet expressed with such power and vision, does not consist of a musical setting of this text. On the program book, and doubtless on the flyleaf of the score, are many quotations from Whitman, such as ‘Democracy! near at hand to you a throat is now inflating itself and joyfully singing,’ and ‘One’s self I sing a simple separate person, yet utter the word democratic, the word en-masse.’ But these texts are not sung, and Mr. Grainger should have added one quotation to the many he has made, the quotation about the hour of the soul, and its ‘free flight into the wordless.’

“Mr. Grainger flies freely, too, in this composition, and also confidently into the wordless. The singers sing “nonsense syllables,” sing-song sounds that mean nothing definite and lend themselves readily to vocalization, a device which eliminates one of the problems of the choristers, that of diction, and makes them freer to sing in a joyous and spontaneous manner.

“The composition carried the audience off its feet. It is indeed an extraordinary piece of writing, because of its hoop-la spirit and its breathtaking virtuosity in the treatment of voices and orchestra. One watches Percy Grainger these days, very much as Bernard Shaw watches the American captain in ‘Captain Brassbound’s conversion,’ wondering, in the words of that able playwright, ‘what the devil he will evolve into’ in the coming years. For Mr. Grainger has a great and indisputable talent, and a technical facility which is vouchsafed to few young men of his age.

“He has done big things and small things, poor things and fine things, as a composer and as a pianist, and in the meantime he has been suspiciously successful with the public!

Third Concert

Thursday Evening, October Fourth

at eight o'clock



Marching Song of Democracy*

Percy Grainger

The Festival Chorus, Orchestra and Organ

Ode to Music*

Henry Hadley

Text by Dr. Henry Van Dyke

Conducted by the Composer

Soprano	Inez Barbour
Contralto	Margaret Abbott
Tenor	Arthur Hackett
Baritone	Vernon D'Arnalle

The Festival Chorus, Children's Chorus, Orchestra and Organ

Children's Chorus from Sever Street School, Grades 7 and 8,
in Charge of Miss A. Louise Jones

*First Performance

14

“The effect of ‘The Marching Song of Democracy’ was as entertaining as it was bewildering. Before one knew it, the thing was going, and going so quickly, so surely and with such sinister self-possession that, while enjoying the sportive play of the voices and the mellifluous sounds coming from chorus and orchestra, one wondered whether the composer was playing a trick on him. It was a little like the conjurer who steps upon the stage and affably informs you that you have two rabbits, a toad and a gorilla in your trousers pocket, and then proceeds to demonstrate the truth of this statement.

“Furthermore, one realizes after an instant, that there was form and plan in the apparently aimless ha-haing and ho-hoing. There was orderly and constructive treatment of germinal motives and a logical growth and development of the subject matter. The lines of the work began to show and one was carried along with unfaltering interest, if not trust, to the brilliant climax.

“The secrets of the artist’s workroom are nobody’s business but his. Doubtless Mr. Grainger could tell of knotty problems solved by hard labor and distress of the soul. But the feeling in the mind of the hearer was that if someone had requested it, the composer could have presented a similar achievement at the breakfast table the following morning.

“Is this enduring music, or a superb feat of sleight-of-hand? It seems invidious to raise such a question, but a still small voice in the soul of the reviewer will not down. Sufficient unto the day it is that Mr. Grainger, with indisputable gifts and an amazing technic, delighted his audience last night.

“And what about democracy? Frankly, we think that this brilliant composition, which Mr. Grainger first conceived as music to be sung and whistled by people in the open air, would be exactly as much in place for a Sunday school picnic in the month of May, as for the vanguard of democracy!”

GRAINGER

IN LOVING ADORATION OF
WALT WHITMAN

MARCHING
SONG *of*
DEMOCRACY

VOCAL & PIANO
SCORE

Price, 60 cents net

NEW YORK: G. SCHIRMER
BOSTON: THE BOSTON MUSIC CO.

“TWO NOTABLE INCIDENTS MARK THE SECOND NIGHT

“Last night’s concert, composers’ night at the festival, will linger long in the memory of those who attended it. Two significant incidents occurred which in themselves lifted the occasion out of the ordinary. One was the ovation granted to Percy Grainger, the talented young composer of the new choral work, ‘Marching Song of Democracy,’ which opened the program; the other was the appearance on the platform of Dr. Henry van Dyke, writer of the poem which inspired Henry K. Hadley’s ‘Ode to Music,’ the second new work presented last night.

“At the close of the ‘Marching Song’ Mr. Grainger was called to the platform by insistent applause from both audience and members of the chorus and orchestra. Dr. Arthur Mees, who conducted the work, met the composer and led him up the steps to the platform, where he was given an ovation. Two large laurel wreaths, tied with red, white and blue, were given him, bringing more rousing plaudits.

“Both concerts yesterday were given to capacity audiences, as was the rehearsal yesterday morning.”

71st Worcester Music Festival, 1930; Mechanics Hall

The 71st Festival ran from Wednesday, October 1st to Saturday the 4th.

[Note: Grainger was not expected to attend the Festival, arrived with Ella unexpectedly, and offered to appear. -Ed]

Preview article, Telegram, Monday September 29, 1930, p. 1 + 5

“Grainger Will Appear In Festival Program

“Renowned Pianist and Composer Volunteers to Participate in Artists’ Night Concert

“While the Worcester Festival Chorus assembled last night in Mechanics hall from many parts of the country for the first of a series of final rehearsals for the program to open Wednesday, Festival officials learned from Albert Stoessel, director, that Percy Grainger, renowned pianist and composer, and Mrs. Grainger, would appear in the Festival Artists’ night program.

“This was the first suggestion there had been that the musician would visit Worcester for the event. Mr. Stoessel explained that a last minute call had come from Mattapoisett that Mr. and Mrs. Grainger would not only sit in the audience but would also participate in the program without compensation if Mr. Stoessel should desire it.

“So on Friday evening Grainger himself will be at the piano when one of his recent compositions, ‘Spoon River’ is given, and Mrs. Grainger will play the staff bells on her own instruments.

“‘Mr. and Mrs. Grainger are doing a most gracious thing’ commented Hamilton B. Wood of the Worcester County Musical association. ‘When one considers the eminence of Mr. Grainger in the musical world, the importance of the tribute which he pays the Festival becomes all the more striking.’

“Percy Grainger, who is a native of Australia, has been a resident in the United States since shortly before the World War. He became a member of the 15th Coast artillery as a musician, and played the saxophone. Following his experience he returned to the piano and to composing.”

. . . .

FIFTH CONCERT

Friday Evening
October third at eight o'clock

1. MARCH OF HOMAGE from "Sigurd Jorsalfor" Grieg
 2. (a) ARIA ("Flower Song") Bizet
from "Carmen"
 - (b) LOHENGRIN'S NARRATIVE Wagner
PAUL ALTHOUSE, Tenor
 3. (a) LA MEDIA NOCHE (Spanish Serenade) Stoessel
(b) SPOON RIVER (new) Grainger
 4. ARIA WITH ORCHESTRA
Una Voce Poco Fa
from "The Barber of Seville" Rossini
 - GROUP OF SONGS WITH PIANO
 - (a) "Donde Lieta" from "La Boheme" Puccini
 - (b) Guitars et Mandolins Saint-Saens
 - (c) Si tu le Veux Charles Koechlin
 - (d) Ballad of Colleen Alice Vaiden
 - (e) Noon Marketing Powell Weaver
- NINA MORGANA, Soprano*
Miss Alice Vaiden at piano for Miss Morgana
5. BOLERO Ravel
 6. EXCERPTS from "Tannhauser" Wagner
March for Chorus "Hail Bright Abode"
Act III including "Elizabeth's Prayer,"
"The Evening Star," "Tannhauser's Narrative,"
and the "Pilgrims' Chorus."

Elizabeth, NINA MORGANA
Venus, MILO MILORADOVICH
Tannhauser, PAUL ALTHOUSE
Wolfram, ALEXANDER KISSELBURGH

THE FESTIVAL CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA
ALBERT STOESSEL, Conductor

Miss Morgana uses the Steinway piano

“Percy Grainger composes While Wife Writes Poetry

“Famous Pianist Here for Festival Tells of Choral Compositions Underway-
Helpmate Also Paints

“An artists’ life need not be any different from that of other people,’ Percy Grainger, renowned pianist and composer protested while his wife nodded assent.

“The couple, garbed in informal sport clothes, had slipped into a rear bench in Mechanics hall at 9:30 o’clock last night, and were listening to the rehearsal unnoticed by Worcester Festival officials or artists. Their determination to attend the concerts and simultaneously to perform the artist’s ‘Spoon River’ on Friday evening, was a sensational last minute announcement for the Festival week.

Thrives on Work

“Art is as healthful an occupation as any other,’ Mr. Grainger continued. ‘The true artist works hard or he wouldn’t be in it at all, and he thrives on his activity.

“I have worked 10 to 16 hours a day for five months composing scores for a choral work, writing every detail of the orchestral score myself. Yet the work has hardly done me harm.’

“Doesn’t your concentration upon your work demand infinite patience from Mrs. Grainger?’ he was asked.

“Why, no! You see, she is a painter and poetess,’ – with pride, ‘and she works while I do. We are never troubled by the other being about.’

“At which Mrs. Grainger, a slight, dainty woman with exquisite childlike features and a rhythmic enunciation born of her Swedish origin, interrupted: ‘He pays all his attention to my work, and I pay attention to his, - so we are very busy.’ She beamed utter fondness upon her husband. ‘He teaches me to play the piano, too – for he is a wonderful teacher. He knows my limitations and teaches me only what I will grasp.’

Busy Composing

“Mrs. Grainger is even now planning an exhibition of tile paintings which will be hung in a New York art gallery soon. Mr. Grainger is at work on several compositions – choral compositions, which he loves best. The more pretentious of the two is composed in tribute to Foster, the American composer, while another, for smaller chorus, is based upon the Song of Solomon. Because of these and ‘several minor things,’ which must meet the demands of his publisher, the composer is postponing the concert pianist’s next tour until January.”

Review, Telegram, October 2, 1930, pp. 1 + 11

“Glittering Social Scene At Festival’s Premiere

Mechanics Hall Thronged With Worcester
Folk Intent on Musical Treat –
Colorful Audience

By Sara White

“Festival week in Worcester was formally opened last night while long lines of cars glided pompously by the canopy before old Mechanics Hall, releasing luxuriously gowned figures past bands of soiled, gaping urchins. The glamour of Festival eve was revived when the 71st Festival

assembly passed down the central aisle under the scrutiny of the (somber) row of generals maintaining guard above the gallery of the historic hall. Expectant murmers rose as the chorus, colorless and austere, mounted the steep incline of the cane seats. Here was the Festival as Conductor Stoessel quietly reached the stand!

. . . .

Music Subdues Audience

“And then the parade of fashion converted into subdued listeners. . . . There was a moment when the entire body seemed to enter emotionally into the lamentation of Delius, which closed with a response of tremendous enthusiasm for the great composer who now suffers, paralyzed and blind, in a little house on the outskirts of Paris.

“In the artists’ corner, there was Ethyl Hayden, customarily stern, in white and black; Countess Milo Miloradovich vivid in many-hued brocade and furs; and Mrs. Albert Stoessel, in blue and gold brocade. Percy and Mrs. Grainger sat apart, clad in street clothes, intent on every phrase as if inhaling the music.”

[I include this paragraph for context: the first appearance of nine-year-old prodigy Ruggiero Ricci, a noisy occasion with which Grainger would have been very familiar: -Ed.]

“Praise for Boy Violinist

... “(At intermission,) considerable conversation was devoted to the rehearsal of yesterday morning, when many Festival officials and audience were moved to tears by the playing of Ruggiero Ricci, violin prodigy who will play this afternoon. Following the program last night, Hamilton B. Wood, president of the Worcester County Musical Association, . . . maintained that the appearance of the nine-year-old boy is the ‘most startling event in the history of music in Worcester.’ . . . When the child concluded the Mendelssohn concerto at the rehearsal, Mr. Stoessel bent and kissed his head; the orchestra declared themselves prepared to discard their instruments in despair and Arthur J. Bassett, former president of the association, declared in tears that Ricci is ‘the most wonderful child in three generations.’”

Review, Daily Telegram, Saturday morning edition, October 4, 1930

“Artists’ Night’ a Great Triumph

Tremendous Ovarions Given Performers on Final Evening of Worcester’s 1930 Festival –
Mechanics Hall Packed

By Sara White

“From the opening of the kaleidoscopic surge of velvet and furs on the worn staircases of Mechanics hall to the final ovation of a radiant and elated assembly, ‘Artists’ Night’ at the Worcester Music Festival strode to its traditional triumph last night.

“Last night’s audience glowed with the promise of enthusiasm, which it gave until flushed and weary. The house was packed. Furs brushed white tickets which had been improvised for extra chairs established along the aisles. Some perched in the loft above the chorus. Many more joined the procession into the reception rooms and corridors during intermission.

“Marcelled heads bobbed with the vivacious ‘Spoon River;’ young eyes and old chuckled with the coquettish Nina Morgana, and heads bent in a single movement over the text of ‘Tannhauser.’

“Portly Althouse received the first ovation at the conclusion of two operatic arias. A reception to Percy Grainger and Mrs. Grainger demanded the repetition of the musician’s work. Mrs. Grainger was in scarlet lace and kept her exquisite features turned toward her husband while a smile rested on her lips. Nina Morgana gave two encores, turning towards the chorus in the rear of the stage for the first. She made a vivid figure in salmon satin and cloth of gold, making sharp gestures as she flirted with her listeners.

“Milo Miloradovich, in white crepe and with brilliants bound about her slender form, was perhaps the most striking figure in the room.

“Among the knot of distinguished guests were Muriel Kerr, the black-velveted, chubby girl of the afternoon piano performance; Thompson Stone, conductor of the Handel and Hayden society in Boston; Ward Stephens, conductor of the Harrisburg Festival; and George Dunham, conductor of the Keane, N.H. festival and of the Brockton chorus.”

72nd Worcester Music Festival, 1931; Mechanics Hall

This year the Festival ran from Monday, October 5 to Saturday, October 10, 1931

Preview article, describing the open rehearsal Tuesday October 6, 1931: p 1 and 7.

“Dame Laughter Sets Music Festival Pitch

“A contagious merriment that seemed to shift from ‘Stephen Foster’ to the artists’ thence to an alert audience, and back again to jaunty ‘Stephen Foster’ possessed the assembly in Mechanics hall last night for a public rehearsal of tomorrow night’s Festival program: auguring an especially enthusiastic Worcester Music Festival season.

“By 7:15 several hundred had collected by the gate on the first landing of the building, eager for admittance to a rehearsal scheduled for 3. Another group congregated in front of the building beneath an awning already put up.

“Hall Filled

“The hall was filled before the orchestra began to assemble. there were music students, high school students, many youngsters, matrons and a large number of Festival subscribers drawn to the early rehearsals by curiosity excited by the number of modern works, several performed for the first time, in this year’s concerts.

“Grainger Busy

“Percy Grainger held the limelight during the performance of his works. He sat at the piano while young men carried trays of glasses, ‘musical glasses,’ up the steps of the choral section distributing them to the singers. He became scarlet with effort as he played for this., the first full performance he has heard of his new work. During his other two compositions, which did not require assistance, he hastened back and forth in the hall, testing the swelling sounds of chorus, orchestra and organ from various positions.”

Daily Telegram Review of Weds 10/7/31 opening concert

“Tradition Marches On As 72nd Festival Opens

“Brilliant Audience, Galaxy of Composers, Leaders in Musical World,
Witness Triumph of Premiere Given Grainger Work

“Reaffirming the vitality of Worcester’s oldest musical tradition, a company radiant in velvets, brocades and opera-hats and topped by a procession of dignitaries from the musical world, ushered in the 72nd Worcester Music Festival in Mechanics hall last night.

“Above them the Festival chorus, sloping like the wings of a great ebony-and-white moth spreading from the organ-head, closed in on the knot of distinguished artists at conductor Albert Stoessel’s stand. Ovarions swelled at the close of the first work, the giant ‘Morning Heroes,’ as late-comers swarmed down the aisles, and continued until the close of the last Grainger work and repeated acknowledgements from the artists.

The Programs

Seventy-second Year

Worcester Music Festival

Worcester, Massachusetts

FIRST CONCERT

Wednesday Evening

October seventh at eight o'clock

1. MORNING HEROES Arthur Bliss
A symphony for orator, chorus and orchestra
(First performance in America)
BASIL MAINE, Orator
2. PSALMUS HUNGARICUS Zoltan Kodalyi
Tenor solo, chorus and orchestra
DAN GRIDLEY, Tenor
3. (a) TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN FOSTER Percy Grainger
For five single voices, mixed chorus, musical glasses,
solo piano and orchestra
The composer at the piano
Incidental soli by
LOUISE LERCH, Soprano
ROSE BAMPTON, Contralto
DAN GRIDLEY, Tenor
WILLARD YOUNG, Tenor
FREDERIC BAER, Baritone
(b) Irish tune from County Derry Percy Grainger
A new setting for chorus and orchestra
(c) "Father and Daughter" Percy Grainger
A Faeroe Island folk ballad set for five men's single voices,
double mixed chorus, strings, brass, and mandolin and
guitar band
Five Narrators
WILLIAM ARTER *CHARLES H. FARRELL*
GEORGE H. BIRCHALL *JOHN F. KYES*
SAMUEL G. REA
WORCESTER FESTIVAL CHORUS THE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA
ALBERT STOESSEL, Conductor
WALTER HOWE, Organist

“Composers Present

“Drawn by the unusual program last night came a bevy of conductors of Metropolitan orchestras, composers and musicians. There listened a trio of three eminent women composers: Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, composer of the ‘Canticle of the Sun,’ to be performed at tonight’s concert; Mrs. Mary Howe, Washington’s social leader and composer, whose ‘Chain Gang Song’ was performed in 1925; and Mabel Daniels of Boston, whose choral works have been performed by leading eastern choruses; Mme. Elizabeth Campanoli of New York, a well known singer; her mother, Mrs. Ernest F. Wood; and Mrs. Antonia Sawyer, Percy Grainger’s manager.

“Tensely still on the platform stood Basil Maine, who came from London to read the narrator’s score in his friend’s composition, and whose voice issued, vibrant, from fixed, motionless features; Louise Lerch, in canary chiffon; Rose Bampton, queenly, in blue panne velvet, as a Wagnerian heroine; and Mrs. Percy Grainger, her exquisitely chiseled face flushed above a delicate apple-green chiffon gown, softened the stern black of the male soloists, Dan Gridley, Willard Young and Frederic Baer. Percy Grainger, agitated, active, eagerly rendered credit to the performance of his works by quick gestures to chorus, artists and conductor.

“The ‘Tribute to Stephen Foster,’ Grainger’s novel adaptation of ‘Camptown Races’ brought the greatest applause from the assembly. Music students halted the little pencils with which they had been jotting notes, the luster of Worcester music teachers unwrinkled their brows, here and there a dowager permitted a grin as they watched the rhythmic design of the forearms in the chorus. moving in circles about the musical glasses, and listened to the theme unfold.

“All but a single work on last night’s program, the ‘Psalmus Hungaricus’ by Zoltan Kodaly, were new to the majority of hearers. ‘Morning Heroes,’ by the English composer Arthur Bliss, was heard for the first time in America; the ‘Tribute’ is new to the world; and the ‘Irish Tune from County Derry’ and ‘Father and Daughter’ are both from the recent compositions which Grainger has constructed from old tunes.”

Worcester Daily Telegram, Friday October 9, 1931 (roll 0425)

Eric Culver
March 15, 2021