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The Incredible Mr. Grainger

His Boundless Energy

FEW contemporary musicians have attracted such attention as the Australian-born, vegetarian, composer, pianist and conductor, Percy Grainger. His home is in America, and there he continues to dynamite critics out of their bored seats by his activities. Here is what one critic said in an American paper of a recent concert with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

"After the intermission, Mr. Grainger, with all his trappings, took the stage in its entirety, save when it was imperative that Mr. Stock conduct an accompaniment. The composer himself, led performances of his 'Mock Morris' and 'Molly on the Shore.' Then the stage was reset for the suite 'In a Nutshell,' Mr. Grainger's most fervent adventure of all into the art of hit sound.

"For this, he himself played the piano, inside and out, at times abandoning the keyboard and somewhat preciously making contact with its inward parts direct. There were also all sorts of rattlings and pats from the rear of the stage, where Mr. Grainger's travelling companions, a set of Deagan percussion instruments, were being wrought upon by union musicians.

"It was all very 20th century, early style, and took us back to those halcyon days when the young Australian first descended upon us as if from Parnassus. He seemed then too incredible to be believed. He remains just as incredible as ever, but he has been very widely believed.

"In fact, it was obvious on Tuesday that during his career he had composed music good enough to be imitated and too good to be copied. Like what he plays, his music has a tendency to sound always the same, the more it changes. But also like his playing it does represent a boundless extension of unlimited energy. And Mr. Grainger though his hair is darker, remains what he has always been, the darling of women's hearts and the idol of every Boy Scout of the piano.

"The public was delighted, and Mr. Stock, knowing Mr. Grainger could take his cue on the fly, started in on a repetition of the finale of 'In a Nutshell' while his guest was still but halfway out from backstage for what he expected to be a curtain call."

On Tuesday night, April 30, 2YC's programme features a number of Grainger's compositions, both choral and orchestral.