
by

Thomas Craig Duke

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Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the use of folk music in some art music of the early twentieth century, especially in the musical oeuvre of Percy Grainger, and what, precisely, it means for a composer to incorporate folk music into his own compositional style. Chapter 1 compares Grainger with Béla Bartók and, using the two composers’ own writings on the matter, discusses their motivations for using folk material as well as their philosophical perspectives on folk music, using a short composition by each composer to observe his ideas in practice. Chapters 2 and 3 are analytical essays; Chapter 2 focuses on the construction of a complex formal structure out of simple, repetitive material in Molly on the Shore, while Chapter 3 looks at a particularly innovative modal harmonic language in “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter.” Finally, Chapter 4 confronts the basic notion of “seriousness” in music, which seemingly threatens the artistic validity of Grainger’s compositional output, by examining Grainger’s own writings on “frivolous” versus “sublime” music and then presenting an especially challenging case in the “Jutish Medley” from Grainger’s Danish Folk-Music Suite, which defies easy description along the lines of “seriousness” or “frivolity.” To deal with the individualized nature of Grainger’s modal harmonic style, a new system of functions is presented which classifies harmonies as prolongational, cadential, or tonic—labeled PRO, CAD, and T, respectively—based on what functional roles a given piece assigns them. The overarching theme of this thesis is Grainger’s attempts to integrate two musics—high art music and folk music—that are, on some levels, incompatible, to examine the sources of that incompatibility, the way Grainger viewed that incompatibility and how and why he sought to overcome it, and the ways in which his attempts at doing so inspired a unique body of musical works.
Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, T. C. Duke.
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Dedication

To my parents, David and Ceci.
Chapter 1 – Bartók and Grainger

An informed response to music is dependent on convention and acculturation. A well-known example in tonal music is the cadential 6/4: a 6/4 sonority over scale-degree 5 in the proper context indicates the harmonic approach to the conclusion of a phrase, a cadence. This is so because that is what it usually does; listeners have grown accustomed to many tonal phrases and the harmonies at their conclusions and are therefore familiar with the cadential 6/4 among tonal music’s wider repertoire of cadential signals.

Because understanding music consists largely in being able to form correct expectations, on the basis of familiarity with conventions, it follows that a listener from one musical culture will not understand music from another musical culture the same way that the members of that culture would. This gives rise to an interesting question: what is really at play when one kind of music is added to another, as when a composer quotes or imitates music from an exotic tradition in the context of a piece of more or less normative tonal music, as Mozart does in the Rondo allaTurca and Brahms in his Hungarian Dances? Why might a composer do this, and what is the desired aesthetic effect? Surely it is not to introduce music that is incomprehensible into an otherwise meaningful context. Exotic musical material does not sound like a confused blur the way an unfamiliar language would; listeners simply hear something different from the norm. The effect of exoticism, then, must be to add some charm or piquancy, and perhaps an aspect of novelty, to an otherwise conventional context, by carefully integrating those aspects of an exotic style that are distinctive yet compatible with it.

A listener is of course not familiar with Janissary music after a hearing of the Rondo AllaTurca; indeed, to take the definition from Grove Music Online, exoticism is “the evocation of a place, people or social milieu that is (or is perceived or imagined to be) profoundly different.
from accepted local norms in its attitudes, customs and morals.”¹ The use of unfamiliar musical devices as signals of the exotic can be successful, it would seem, as long as the devices are noticeably unfamiliar yet well integrated into their musical context. This alone is apparently sufficient for these signals to be “imagined to be” characteristic of whatever culture they allegedly represent. To make a broader theoretical point about musical signification: the means by which music can achieve referential status are not gauged in effectiveness by their authenticity with respect to that to which they refer. Crucial to this point is the concept of Orientalism, which, as Edward Said has noted, “deals principally, not with a correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient… despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a ‘real’ Orient.”² Said’s concept also encompasses academic ways of thinking about the “Orient,” but the most relevant implication here is that a hypothetical listener need only hear qualities that fit his or her preconceptions about another musical style to create an association.

With this possibility in mind, the purpose behind the borrowing of “external” music-cultural material becomes crucial. While, in some limiting cases, it is enough for music to use unfamiliar devices to signal strangeness and thus the exotic, without any kind of attempt at authenticity, the point of such limiting cases would surely not be to introduce a Western audience to the aesthetic glories of a particular exotic style. It might in fact be quite opposite; for example, to make fun of the culture in question, as is arguably the case with some of Mozart’s

Turkish music. However, in those cases in which composers are using an exotic idiom for aesthetic enrichment—as for example several Eastern European composers were doing at the turn of the 20th century—one must assume that they would make every effort to convey at least some of the music’s features with a high degree of authenticity. To do otherwise would be to defeat the composers’ purpose. In such cases, the question becomes this: which features of the “other” music are the most important to retain, since these must convey some of what is aesthetically valuable in that music, without contradicting (and in fact adding to) what is aesthetically valuable about the conventional idiom in which it is embedded.

A particular case of incorporating music that is in some way exotic is that of using the folk music of one’s own culture. Of course, such folk music may or may not seem foreign to audiences. This depends on whether the art music of the culture has, over time, incorporated basic melodic attributes of its folk traditions, as was obviously the case with some of central Europe’s most treasured art music. But composers who wish to incorporate folk music must confront a different issue, which is that such music is generally regarded—less so today, perhaps, but certainly a hundred years ago—as much lower on the artistic scale than serious concert music. The issue then becomes one of aesthetic fit. It is obvious that composers who used folk music in elaborate compositions were aware of this problem. To bring a rustic singer to a

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4 In the United States, for example, there was a trend in the mid-19th century (largely at the behest of musicians) to encourage separation in concerts between “serious” and “popular” music, as expounded upon in John Spitzer, “Orchestral Repertory: Highbrow and Lowbrow,” in John Spitzer, *American Orchestras in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 367-371. The more general version of this trend—the genesis of cultural boundaries between “high” and “popular” art—is the subject of Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: the Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988). The notions of “serious” and “light” music will receive more attention in Chapter 4 of this thesis.
metropolis and put him or her on stage to sing, unaccompanied, as part of a recital or orchestral concert simply was not done because, presumably, audiences would have reacted badly.

The question arises then, as to why so many composers around the turn of the twentieth century were so committed to the incorporation of folk melodies in their elaborate compositions. There were nationalists among song collectors who were mainly interested in preserving a part of the national heritage, as a living repository of national feeling and spirit. But for composers who took their own work seriously, there surely must have been other reasons. It is clear, as I will show in the cases of Béla Bartók and Percy Grainger, that many composers believed that folk song, or some folk song, was high art, modest in scale but with perfect use of that scale. These composers were trying to present it in a context in which the qualities they saw in it would become obvious to sophisticated concert audiences. For this they had to compose a sort of unfamiliar yet obviously artistic music, incorporating folk song, that would have an effect on bourgeois audiences—open-minded ones, so presumably ideal audiences—that was somehow the same as the effect folk song had had on them when they spent weeks or months living among the peasants and encountered particularly moving performances. In a way, then, they were trying to translate the emotional experience from one medium or context into another, even if the music itself required little in the way of translation.

One could even say that while there are parallels between setting radically foreign music in a Western context and setting Western folk music in a Western art-music context, there is also an inverse relationship between the two. With radically different music, the problem is one of potential incompatibility. With Western folk music, the problem is that the music may seem trivially familiar, so part of the task is to defamiliarize it by setting it in an art-music frame that is itself novel. The result is a kind of feedback situation in which
the art-music frame defamiliarizes the folk melody while the task of doing this necessitates innovation in the frame itself. We will see this first in a setting by Bartók and, in varying ways, in the settings by Grainger, especially those discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

The feedback mechanism just discussed implies a more personal reason for providing folk melodies with more or less elaborate settings. The general goal of adding something novel to the familiar, mentioned above, becomes individualized as the composer’s goal of using the special musical attributes of a folk-melodic idiom to enrich and even transform his or her personal style. Whether or not this amounts to treating folk music as a sort of exotic music, so that issues I have referred to, issues of difference and compatibility that arise with the incorporation of any exotic idiom, come into play, depends on particulars of a composer’s style and on the particular folk traditions involved. In other cases, where the folk tradition is more demotic than exotic, the problem of reconciliation becomes that of incorporating the apparently naïve or simple into the ostensibly elaborate and complex. In all cases, then, there is a task of overcoming difference, even apparent incompatibility, born of the conviction that the folk idiom is inherently valuable and will add something to the art-music idiom involved in the synthesis.

The main purpose of the present thesis is thus a case study in the folk-music settings of Grainger, a pianist and composer who collected folksongs in Great Britain, and who might perhaps have made the most devoted effort to bring the true inner character of the folk music he set to the ears of his audiences. To begin, however, it is best to take as a point of departure another, better-known pianist/composer of the same time period who not only collected and set folk music but also wrote a great deal theorizing the act of incorporating folk music in his compositions: Bartók. The two composers were working with different source material—British and Hungarian folk songs, respectively—and certainly had different compositional styles,
so their contrasting procedures to the task of folk-music setting make for an informative comparison.

A particularly telling excerpt from Bartók’s writings is a definition he supplies of the term “folk music”: “the music of the class of population the least affected by city culture, a music of a more or less great temporal as well as spatial extent, which is or sometime was alive as a spontaneous manifestation of musical impulse.”\(^5\) The defining characteristic of folk music, one can surmise, is its insularity, which allows for its independence from more intellectualized—particularly Western European—musical culture. As Bartók himself describes it, folk music comes from “a community entirely devoid of erudition” and “is just as much a natural phenomenon as, for instance, the various manifestations of Nature in fauna and flora.”\(^6\)

This naturalistic, biological view of folk music is a thought-provoking reminder of humankind’s membership in the animal kingdom, but it also presents a kind of dualism between musics with and without influence from academic or professional thought. Bartók uses this dichotomy to explain the difference between “true” folk music as defined above and what he terms “popular art music,” and this explanation is particularly telling:

[Popular art music] derives from individual composers, known or unknown, who possess a certain musical erudition. With us in Eastern Europe, it comes from amateurs of gentle birth who satisfy the creative impulse of their slender musical talents by the composition of more or less simple tunes. Their music is partly made up of elements of Western European art music—a jumble of commonplaces in this respect—but it also bears traces of peasant music of their own country. This is what lends their music a certain exotic flavour by which even men like Liszt, Brahms, and Chopin felt themselves attracted. Nevertheless the outcome of this mixture of exoticism and banality is something imperfect, inartistic, in marked contrast to the clarity of real peasant music

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\(^6\) ibid., 321.
with which it compares most unfavourably… artistic perfection can only be achieved by one of the two extremes: on the one hand by peasant folk in the mass, completely devoid of the culture of the town-dweller, on the other by creative power of an individual genius. The creative impulse of anyone who has the misfortune to be born somewhere between these two extremes leads only to barren, pointless and misshapen works. When peasants or the peasant classes lose their naivety and their artless ignorance, as a result of the conventional culture, or more accurately half-culture, of the town-dwelling folk, they lose at the same time all their artistic transforming power.  

This argument accompanies Bartók’s declaration of what he saw as the value of folk music: “the classical model of how to express an idea musically in the most concise form, with the greatest simplicity of means, with freshness and life, briefly yet completely and properly proportioned.” One exposed to the intellectual face of music, it seems, is fettered by his own mind, which surely cannot create that same “freshness and life” with the artifices of the conscious mind unless he possesses a sufficient degree of creative genius.

I argued above that an uninitiated listener will not understand music from an outsider’s perspective the same way the members of that musical culture would; Bartók has his own explanation for why the general public cannot appreciate the “perfection” of folk music:

Comparatively few people appreciate melodies such as these; indeed, the majority of conservative, trained musicians hold them in contempt. This is understandable, because anyone who is slave to customary patterns will naturally qualify as unintelligible and meaningless that which deviates even slightly from them. This type of musician will not understand any simple, clear but unconventional melody if it does not fit into his imagination. If his musical mentality or that of a dilettante is based on triadic variation of tonic and dominant only, how can we expect such a

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7 Bartók, Bela Bartók Essays, 322.
8 ibid.,
person to comprehend these melodies which, for instance, altogether lack the dominant in the harmonic sense of the term.”

The central task of folk-music setting thus becomes clear: to provide some manner of “sophistication” within the bounds of listeners’ understanding that still enables an audience to appreciate the value inherent to the folk music. It is as though the composer is performing some kind of translation into a format that is understandable to those who are “fluent” in Western European tonality, which, as a musical “language,” embeds a kind of erudition in listeners’ minds that effectively bars them from appreciating true folk music.

Of course, no translator is successful who is not sufficiently fluent in both languages involved, hence Bartók’s observation that “the effects of peasant music cannot be deep and permanent unless this music is studied in the country as part of a life shared with the peasants.”

The path to bring folk music to the ears of the public, therefore, is for a fully trained composer to listen to and collect the music directly, then to employ the whole of his or her artistic creativity to realizing the essence of that music in a different format. Given the immense artistic challenge of this task, it is easy to understand why Bartók claimed that “a composer in search of new [musical direction] cannot be led by a better master” than folk music. The fruits of this labor constitute an entirely new musical style, one that presents material with foreign elements to challenge listeners’ expectations but also provides artfully composed familiar material that facilitates a proper understanding of these foreign elements.

Bartók outlines three ways in which a composer can use folk music in the composition of art music: a direct setting of an authentic folk tune, a composition with an original tune composed in the style of a folk tradition, or a wholly original composition that has the general

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9 Bartók, Bela Bartók Essays, 6.
11 ibid., 19
“atmosphere of peasant music.” Interestingly, he claims that the first two types have “no true difference,” since a composer should be sufficiently versed in the folk-musical style he is imitating to create a melody that might as well be authentic. This might be an interesting philosophical point to argue, but in any case it is safe to conclude that Bartók himself, when he set a folk melody in a composition, devoted himself wholeheartedly to the full realization of that melody’s musical character.

Within the first category—setting an unaltered folk melody—Bartók identifies two subtypes. Either the “accompaniment, introductory and concluding phrases, are of secondary importance” and “only serve as an ornamental setting for the precious stone: the peasant melody” or “the melody only serves as a ‘motto’ while that which is built round it is of real importance” or the piece falls somewhere in between those two extremes, “[b]ut in every case it is of the greatest importance that the musical qualities of the setting should be derived from the musical qualities of the melody... so that melody and all additions create the impression of complete unity.” Bartók’s use of the word “unity” here is probably not related to music-philosophical ideas of organicism; rather, it simply means that a setting of a folk tune, in whichever format, should have strong motivic links to the melody. As examples, he points to the common presence of melodic leaps by fourth and seventh, which inspires the use of quartal sonorities and seventh chords in some melodies’ harmonizations.

Bartók issues a warning, however, against a regrettably common misconception—namely, that “only simple harmonizations [are] well suited to folk-tunes. And even worse, [when] by simple harmonies [is] meant a succession of triads of tonic, dominant and possibly

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13 ibid., 20.
14 ibid., 21.
subdominant.”15 He asserts that just the opposite is true: “the simpler the melody the more complex and strange may be the harmonization and accompaniment that go well with it.”16 This claim at first seems counterintuitive; if the setting must match the character of the melody, how is it that a simpler melody affords greater potential for innovation?

Here Bartók’s comment that a typical listener cannot fully appreciate a simple folk tune is especially relevant. The true identity of a folk melody is foreign and unfamiliar; therefore, its harmonization and accompaniment not only can, but must be foreign and unfamiliar as well. A simple setting would present that melody as exactly what its audience is predisposed to misjudge it: as unremarkable and uninteresting. The task of the composer, then, is to strike a delicate balance, to find the right way to add to this musical alienation, yet still doing so in a way that is not utterly unintelligible.

To explore these concepts more rigorously, I will examine the first of Bartók’s Romanian Folk Dances, Sz. 56, subitled “Stick Game.” Within the categories listed above, the goal of this setting is the presentation of the tune (the first sub-type in the first category); this much is clear because Bartók himself used the set in a lecture to demonstrate this type of setting, describing the “added accompaniment and eventual preludes and postludes” as “the mounting of a jewel.”17 While the first of the Romanian Folk Dances is largely diatonic and certainly makes use of tonality, the harmonic direction is often irregular. The melody is partly in the Dorian mode, and the formal layout is a straightforward simple binary with varied repetitions of both segments. All four phrases end in either a PAC or a “modal” PAC without a leading-tone.18

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16 ibid., 21
17 Bartók, Béla Bartók Essays, 351.
18 The score appears in the Appendix.
The first phrase has roughly the structure of an eight-bar period. Although there is very little, if any, cadence in m. 4, the parallelism between m. 1 and m. 5 is sufficient to create a sense of beginning again, giving the four-bar sub-phrases an antecedent/consequent relationship. Harmonically, the antecedent sub-phrase prolongs the tonic of A minor, but several harmonic signals complicate the notion that A minor is in fact the tonic. Mm. 1-3 tonicize G major with what would be a simple <ii, V^7, I> progression in that key, but an F♭ seventh suggests C major as the harmonic goal of the phrase. This implication is bolstered by the melody, which arpeggiates an ascending and descending C-major triad in its most prominent notes. However, at the point of resolution at the beginning of m. 4, the only notes sounding are C, E, and B; the lack of the fifth of this potential C major-seventh chord allows the B to resolve as a suspension to the root of an A minor chord. The G seventh-chord thus acts as VII^7 in a motion back to A minor.

In retrospect, the progression of mm. 1-4 is functionally normative for a “modal” harmonization: <i, V^7, VII, VII^7, i>, cycling through tonic, pre-dominant, dominant, and tonic, but before the end of the sub-phrase C major seemed like the goal of the phrase. The reason for this confusion is the fact that the D seventh-chord and the G seventh-chord play the same functional roles in “modal” A minor and in C major—pre-dominant and dominant. As a result, the arrival on A minor is tonally successful, even though the harmonies approaching it suggested a different tonic. This unusual possibility is created by the use of “modal” dominant harmonies without a leading-tone, which eliminates the distinction between pitch-collections in relative major and minor keys.

M. 5 begins in parallel to m. 1, but it proceeds immediately as a cadential idea that starts directly on v^7. This dominant harmony moves through a passing 6/4 before it lands on A major on a strong beat in a modal PAC, confirming A much more clearly as the tonic, albeit without a
leading-tone. The relative “weakness” of this cadence also demonstrates a general aspect of weak harmonic direction, as though A only becomes the tonic because the melody happens to end there. Harmonic function, similarly, is much more present in hindsight than it is in the moment of the harmonies themselves because of the almost hierarchically inverted diatonicism: the primary tonic A does not have a leading-tone, while the secondary tonic C does.

After the second phrase repeats the same basic material with slight variation, a new idea begins in m. 17, creating a 16-measure period with four-bar sub-phrases and increasingly adventurous harmonies. Mm. 17-19 have a series of parallel descending 6/4 chords through <IV, III, ii, i>, and the final tonic chord simply receives a bass note root on the second beat. Curiously, this harmonization does not match especially well with the melody, which by itself might be said to imply a <i, iv, VII, III> progression. In particular, D and A make a figuration that implies a chordal skip, but neither pitch is a chord tone in the left-hand harmony. They do, however, match with the previous D major harmony and somewhat with the subsequent B minor harmony; thus, the C major harmony can be viewed as an accented passing chord, prolonging the subdominant function of the IV and ii chords and resulting in a plagal resolution to tonic.

The second subphrase, beginning in m. 20, implies another turn in the direction of C. A melodic descent of an octave from C6 to C5 is supported by the pairing of minor-third-related harmonies, again sharing functional roles to their respective tonics of C and A. The seventh-chords on F and G imply a <IV7, V7> progression, but each is undermined by a registrally distant bass note that transposes the harmony down a diatonic third, resulting in a separate <iv7, v7> progression in A minor. It is not immediately clear which tonic wins out, as m. 23 begins with the trichord <B, C, E>, as in m. 4, but the B once again resolves as a 9–8 suspension in a tonic A
minor harmony. The pull between C and A is dramatized in the separation of melody, which heavily suggests C, and harmony, which eventually suggests A.

M. 25 begins the consequent eight-bar phrase, with very different harmonies and an entirely new melodic conclusion. The anacrusis in m. 24 has a passing \( \tilde{7} \) in the bass, leading to an augmented-sixth chord in the next measure. There is another melodic leap from D to A, as in the previous phrase, juxtaposing \( \tilde{6} \tilde{4} \) and \( \text{#} \tilde{4} \). In common harmonic practice, \( \tilde{6} \tilde{4} \) is often used as an appoggiatura, “resolving” to a diminished seventh above \( \text{#} \tilde{4} \), but here it is \( \text{#} \tilde{4} \) that resolves up to \( 5 \), creating a minor seventh. This resolution to a \( v^7 \) chord (without a third) is not a strong dominant, however, but merely a passing chord on the way to IV\( ^7 \), which prepares the final cadential progression in m. 29-31 of \( <IV^7, V^7, I> \) which concludes in a true PAC, shown in Figure 1.1. This cadence does not match the melodic arrival on \( \tilde{1} \) in the pitch dimension, however: as the four-measure sub-phrase ends in m. 28, the melody arpeggiates a C major triad in preparation of a \( 7-\tilde{1} \) resolution at the start of the final sub-phase.

M. 29 is thus the point at which the melody arrives on tonic, while the remaining two measures simply alternate between A and E in eighth notes. However, because rhythmic closure is lacking at this point in the melody, Bartók prolongs a subdominant harmony into m. 29 and brings the harmonic and rhythmic cadences together in m. 31. The conflict here is more complicated than a clash between melody and harmony; rather, the melody itself has non-congruent points of pitch-based and rhythm-based closure. While Bartók’s harmonization does not create this conflict, it does draw attention to it, most notably with the prominent statement of \( \tilde{1} \) at the exact point that the harmony moves to \( V^7 \) on beat 2 of m. 30, as if to demonstrate that this melody cannot or at least should not be railroaded into a simple Western European tonal setting.
The second version of this period is more continuous, with a harmonic progression that spans across phrase and sub-phrase boundaries. M. 33 begins a long bass descent with an F major-seventh chord, which passes through an E minor-seventh chord en route to a D minor-seventh chord. This descent-by-third recalls the paired roots, separated by diatonic thirds, in mm. 21-22, parallel to the progression from mm. 25-27 in terms of attack rhythm, but the resolution to tonic expected in mm. 35-36 is derailed. The tonic chord, and thereby any sense of harmonic segmentation, is avoided at m. 36, while at m. 40—by means of a modally mixed plagal resolution, shown in Figure 1.2—C major actually appears as a tonic harmony, but in 6/4 position. Thus, a C major tonic is substituted for A minor (which occurred at m. 24) in m. 40, and there is a 7–6 suspension (F4 to E4) that replaces the <B3, A3> 9–8 suspension in mm. 23-24.

The reason for these changes is largely the desire to preserve the continuity of a descending bass line, which began, as noted above, in m. 33, although the larger double tonic {C, A} concept might be regarded as an end in itself. M. 41 has the same augmented sixth as before, but this time it resolves to a long seemingly cadential 6/4 chord. This dominant sonority, too, becomes relegated to the role of a passing chord, however, as a C minor 6/3 chord continues the
quite remarkable chromatic descent all the way to D, the bass of the IV\(^7\) harmony that brings about the same <IV\(^7\), V\(^7\), I> progression as before. While the “cadential” 6/4 harmony in m. 44 more closely matches the C-major arpeggio in the melody than was the case at m. 28, the same conflict of harmonic and melodic pitch and rhythmic closure still occurs in this, the final PAC of the piece.

It is clear that Bartók’s setting is more adventurous than the melody might seem to necessitate. In the passages with conflict between C and A as competing tonics, for instance, it would be easy to imagine a simpler setting with a modulation to the relative major and back, and such a modulation is as normative a tonal practice as there is. But tonal simplicity would not truly fit the character of the tune, which does not work out its obligation to a tonic in the Western European sense. Thus, Bartók’s aforementioned argument—that a simpler melody lends itself to more complex harmonic accompaniment—comes more clearly into focus: a folk tune is not “simple” in the tonal sense; rather, it is “simple” in the sense that it is not committed to harmonic common-practice tonality in the first place. “Simplicity,” then, is perhaps actually “freedom,” and in this particular setting Bartók preserves that freedom by introducing uncertainty into the harmonies (“is C the goal of this progression, or is A?”) and by allowing the melody to have an identity outside its relation to its accompanying harmonies in part through creative compositional
devices such as rhythmic displacement. As Bartók might have argued, his harmonization is, in a sense, a translation of the unrestrained melody into the medium of tonality, and it is this translation that allows his audience to appreciate the folk music on its own terms.

This dichotomy between melody and harmony—a reflection of the profound differences between monophonic music and polyphonic or homophonic music—marks a good point at which to turn to the main subject of this thesis: Percy Grainger. Like Bartók, Grainger discussed the inaccessibility of folk music to cosmopolitan audiences:

While so many of the greatest musical geniuses listen spellbound to the unconscious, effortless musical utterances of primitive man, the general educated public, on the other hand, though willing enough to applaud adaptations of folk-songs by popular composers, show little or no appreciation of such art in its unembellished original state, when, indeed, it generally is far too complex (as regards rhythm, dynamics, and scales) to appeal to listeners whose ears have not been subjected to the ultra-refining influence of close association with the subtle developments of our latest Western art music [emphasis mine].

Grainger’s assertion here that folk music is too complex for the ears of the general public points to the deceptive nature of folk music’s perceived simplicity. In truth, the main feature that makes a folk song “simple” is the very fact that it is monophonic, and this is why it is free from the constraints of harmonic-functional tonality. That a listener accustomed to polyphonic and homophonic tonal music fails to appreciate folk music implies neither that it is absolutely simpler nor more complex, but that it is too simple where that listener is accustomed to complexity and too complex where that listener is accustomed to simplicity. Elsewhere, Grainger elaborates further on this point:

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Polyphony and harmony… gradually turned the popular ear of Continental Europe away from the melodic and narrative appeal of folk songs in the direction of an absorbing interest in those massed musical effects and complex harmonic lines of thought and perception that have culminated in the oratorios, fugues, symphonies, sonatas, operas, music dramas, concertos, symphonic poems, chamber and virtuoso music of the last three or four hundred years, representing a general musical advance the like of which the world has probably never seen and to the true magnitude of which it is difficult to do full mental justice, so iconoclastic have been the changes effected, so seemingly limitless the new aesthetic realms opened up. But we shall be doing no injustice to the great musical geniuses of Continental Europe if we assert that their great progress in emotional expressibility by means of an ever more and more subtle use of harmony, dynamics, and orchestral tone color was accompanied by a comparative atrophy of melodic and rhythmic inventivity.\(^{20}\)

To Grainger, the dearth of melodic innovation is not a slight against the great art music of Western Europe; rather, of the potential avenues through which to pursue musical sophistication, Western European art music devoted the majority of its attention and energy to harmony in particular. Like Bartók, he concludes that folk music presents an opportunity for a new musical style:

> I think it is not unreasonable to look for a vigorous and refreshing amalgamation from the clash of such vital contrasts as those presented by our folk music and our art music. In particular, I think we may hope that early contact with the exquisite linear achievements of our individualistic folk melodies will imbue our art-music composers of the future with a craving for essentially melodic expression.\(^{21}\)

Grainger was notable among folk-song collectors in Great Britain for his use of the phonograph rather than just the human ear, since he was the first among the Folk Song Society

\(^{20}\) Grainger, *Grainger on Music*, 116. Note: Grainger often used creative neologisms such as “inventivity” in his customized writing style.

\(^{21}\) ibid., 119.
members to record songs in the field instead of merely transcribing them. In “Collecting with the Phonograph,” his only publication of collected material, Grainger espouses one of the particular advantages of a mechanical recording device:

To my mind the very greatest boon of the gramophone and phonograph is that they record not merely the tunes and words of fine folk-songs, but give an enduring picture of the live art and traditions of peasant and sailor singing and fiddling; together with a record of the dialects of different districts, and of such entertaining accessories as the vocal quality, singing-habits, and other personal characteristics of singers. And a knowledge of such points is every bit as indispensable to good renderings of folk-music as is experience of the traditions of cultured music to its proper interpretation. I think that most folk-song enthusiasts who have had the good luck to hear the singing of gifted folk-singers and chantymen, must feel that much of the attractiveness of the live art lies in the execution as well as in the contents of the songs, and will surely welcome the ability of the gramophone and phonograph to retain for future ages what is otherwise but a fleeting impression. From his phonograph the collector can note down at full leisure, and with all possible care and thoroughness, repeating his records again and again, in part and in whole, until he has extracted from them a host of details that seem to him fascinating, interesting, or instructive.  

This perspective placed him at odds with the Folk Song Society’s philosophy at the time, which sought to sift through the individual variants of folk songs to come as close to the “original” version of the tune as possible. Grainger shared with Bartók a view of folk music as

22 Percy Grainger, “Collecting with the Phonograph,” *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 3 (1908): 150.
23 See Graham Freeman, “‘It Wants All the Creases Ironing Out’: Percy Grainger, the Folk Song Society, and the Ideology of the Archive,” *Music and Letters* 92 (2011): 410-36. Freeman observes “all the hallmarks of cultural nationalism” in the Folk Song Society’s transcriptions, particularly “the fetishization of the song or artistic creation as an object of national or ethnic cultural value; and the propogation of that musical fetish-object in an edited and sterilized incarnation in which evidence of individual and unique artistic variation is eliminated in order to allow for the object to be disseminated among the people of the nation as an artistic exemplar” (p. 416).
a living musical tradition and an enthusiastic interest in the minutiae of its performance, but there is an important point at which he departs from Bartók’s line of thinking: Grainger says nothing of the dichotomy between erudite and non-erudite music. Instead of the intellectual influence of the city, Grainger attributes the character of Western European art music to sociological factors: “Where humanity is herded together in groups we find a widespread growth of the sense of harmony... On the other hand, where more individualistic, more lonely lives are led we find the fullest fruition of the art of individualistic melody.”

Where Bartók sees folk music as a natural phenomenon, free from being over-thought, Grainger sees it as another artistic tradition that simply comes about in a different kind of society.

If the composer of a folk-song setting views the folk song itself as a fully realized work of art, the full enormity of the challenge he faces comes into view. The act of translating the musical character of a simple unfettered melody into a more sophisticated musical language is no small task, but it is something else entirely to translate one kind of sophistication into another. Nevertheless, this undertaking arguably describes the challenge that Grainger accepted and the resulting distinction of his accomplishments in the field of folk-music settings. A good demonstrative example is his choral setting of “Brigg Fair.”

A unique advantage to this particular piece is that the original phonograph recording, collected by Grainger himself, survives to this day. The singer is Joseph Taylor, described by Grainger as “one of the best songsters [he] ever met” out of “Saxby-All-Saints, Lincolnshire.” In the recording, Taylor’s vocal timbre is very dissimilar to any mainstream singing practice

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25 The full score can be found in the appendix.
existing today: he uses a shaky, almost wobbly vibrato, yet his precision indicates both comfort with and control of his voice, and Grainger imitates this with ornamental turns and grace-notes. The mode of the song is somewhat difficult to pinpoint, since scale-degree 6 seems to be slightly flatter than a Dorian 6 yet significantly more sharp than a minor 6—a common trait in Grainger’s observation.28 Grainger’s setting simply uses the Dorian 6, presumably to express a distinction between the “folk” mode and the typical minor mode.

In setting major-mode folk songs, Grainger uses a conventionally functional tonal language, but for modal folk songs (e.g. in the Dorian mode) Grainger uses a heavily customized harmonic language. Most obviously, 7 is typically not raised as a leading-tone in his settings of modal tunes, but Grainger often takes this further: harmonies capable of a “modal” dominant function such as v and VII are separated from their typical tonal role of supporting cadences. Frequently in their place are major-minor seventh chords with roots more associated with the subdominant and pre-dominant functions, such as IV7 and II7. But the kinds of chords that appear in a cadential role can vary from piece to piece, even within Grainger’s repertoire—the unifying factor about them is that a given set of harmonies establishes itself as cadential in function by virtue of repetition. Given that the role of supporting cadences is the defining aspect of such harmonies, I simply label them as cadential, or CAD. The tonic function (abbreviated T) assumes its regular form—of triads (or seventh chords) based on 1 that act as a contextual “home” to which the other harmonies relate. Finally, the prolongational or PRO function describes harmonies which depart from and return to the tonic within the early part of a phrase with a cadence, or throughout phrases that lack cadences.

28 Grainger, “Collecting with the Phonograph,” 158. “The sixth, which is generally major, though sometimes minor (and when acting as a quickly-moving passing or auxiliary note is often alternately either, or a blend of both).”
There is not always a sharply etched distinction between PRO and CAD harmonies; just as a V\(^7\) in common-practice tonal music can appear early in a phrase as a prolongational harmony, a chord associated with the CAD function can also serve as a PRO harmony, depending on context. The determining factors as to which function that chord has are melody and rhythm: the progression from a CAD-type chord to a tonic chord is only a CAD–T progression if it coincides with an approach to a melodic cadence. Thus, the CAD label in my analyses indicates two things: the potential for a chord to be a cadential chord by its previous usage, and the melodic realization of that potential. The fact that these harmonic functions are so dependent on context is one of the ways that Grainger maintains the primacy of melody in his modal settings, and a tonal drama often emerges as traditional dominant harmonies appear and attempt to impose their harmonic strength on a context that does not support them.

In “Brigg Fair,” IV\(^7\) is the primary CAD chord, while II\(^7\) fills this role only at the ends of interludes. As shown in Figure 1.3, both of these harmonies approach the tonic with a common tone on ̂1, and with voice-leading of 6–5, giving a plagal quality to their resolutions. IV\(^7\) is a sensible candidate for the primary CAD harmony because of the melody’s 4–3–1 cadential figure—IV\(^7\) is the only seventh-chord that contains both 4 and 3—but it is also implied and used by Grainger in other parts of the phrase, as shown in Figure 1.4. Since the melody has no points of closure until the 4–3–1 cadence at the end, all of the non-tonic harmonies before that point—including the modal “dominant” v\(^7\) and the CAD-capable IV\(^7\)—are PRO harmonies. This situation is, notably, a reversal of the normal tonal dichotomy: a plagal <IV\(^7\), i> motion has the potential to be either a cadential or prolongational progression, while an “authentic” <v\(^7\), i> motion can only be prolongational.
Figure 1.3 – CAD – T progressions in “Brigg Fair”

Figure 1.4 – “Brigg Fair” melody with basic harmonic structure

Taylor apparently could only remember the first two verses of the song (which prompted Grainger to add three stanzas of text to add length to his setting), but even in these two verses of his performance there are subtle differences; for example, the final melodic gesture in the first verse is $4\rightarrow 3\rightarrow 2\rightarrow 1$, while its counterpart in the second verse is simply $4\rightarrow 3\rightarrow 1$. In Grainger’s composition, he tellingly does not replicate all of these minutiae. It can be inferred that while he considered the small details crucial to the artwork that is a folk song, all of these details would be lost in translation upon their presentation to a cosmopolitan audience. Instead, Grainger “translates” the oddness and quirkiness of this style of constant individualized variation into a harmonic style that has its own roughness and peculiarity, but he never allows this strangeness to
interfere with a consistent affect—one meant to amplify, without distorting, the emotional tone of the original.

The first and second verses are different from one another only in rhythm, resulting from the different text, and in their endings. The harmonies are relatively simple with almost clumsy counterpoint, and the accompanying voices, who are instructed to “hum with closed mouths,” are clearly subordinate to the tune in the solo tenor voice, often doubling it in parallel octaves. There are also often parallel fifths and octaves between the bass and baritone voices, and the C\(^7\) chord in mm. 8-9 has a tripled seventh, giving m. 8 the feel of a quartal harmony and temporarily merging the accompaniment into a three-voice texture.

Still, while there is a certain unvarnished quality to this setting, Grainger’s use of accented dissonances and very light chromaticism adds a slight touch of contrapuntal sophistication. The aforementioned quartal harmony switches to a more conventional role as the F forms an accented passing 4–3 figure (in m. 9), and this figuration is part of a motivic 7–6–5 descent that idiomatically represents the Dorian mode. M. 11 similarly features a sonority of many stacked thirds above a bass-note F that would be an eleventh-chord, but it too resolves into a more conventional harmony, an F\(^7\) chord. In a clever departure from the norm, the melody plays an atypical role in this harmony, as it shares the suspended interval of a fourth with the baritone but resolves upward to a fifth. Furthermore, mm. 7-9 also feature a descending chromatic line, something that Grainger comments that he never observed in his folk-music collecting trips.\(^{29}\)

The harmonic setting of these two verses is somewhat simple, but it is also unusual in a couple of ways. As described above, mm. 1-9 is a prolongation of tonic. Interestingly, m. 7 has a

\(^{29}\) Grainger, “Collecting with the Phonograph,” 157. “I cannot recollect ever having come across a downward chromatic passage of any kind amongst folk-singers.”
6/4 to 5/3 double suspension above 5, complete with a raised 7, but it resolves directly down to the aforementioned quartal-turned-IV7 chord as the leading-tone descends chromatically through the aforementioned 4-3 accented passing tone. This 6/4 sonority also occurs on a weak beat, relegating it to a subservient role as an arpeggiation of the tonic that moves through chromatic voice-leading to a PRO-functioning IV7 chord and preventing it from expressing any kind of dominant function.

M. 10 begins what sounds like a continuation phrase (shown in Figure 1.5), with an accelerating harmonic rhythm. The last eighth-note of m. 9 is an anacrustic modal v7 in a PRO function, and mm. 11-12 tonicize III, bringing a stronger sense of harmonic direction through dominant-like descending-fifth bass motion. The tonicization of Bb major is interesting because it is not literally the relative major of G “Dorian” by diatonic collection, but the association of minor-third-related major and minor keys as relative keys is firmly entrenched enough in Western music to render this point moot from a tonal listener’s perspective, and in any case the melody suggests Bb major by arpeggiating it. The climax of the melody reaches an F4, but at the same time the bass descends to G2. While the F is a highly expressive melodic turn, the G is anticlimactic, and their functions clash as the G sounds like a resolution to tonic while the F sounds like it creates tension that needs resolution.

This compositional decision is crucial: in the melody, the notes that suggest harmonization by a modal dominant sonority—F and A—do not precede the melodic cadential arrival; rather, they precede the beginning of the cadential gesture, the fundamental notes of which are 3–4–1. A listener might well latch on too strongly to the tonal energy of a dominant harmony and misinterpret the arrival on Bb at m. 14 as representing melodic closure, however, so
Grainger *weakens* the harmony in m. 13 (by the tonic arrival in the bass) and relegates it to a
PRO function, allowing the <i, IV<sup>7</sup>, i> progression, which supports the 3–4–1 melodic gesture, to retain its primacy as the harmonic conclusion to the phrase. This gesture is a quasi-reversal of Bartók’s technique of splitting the moments of melodic and harmonic closure, since in this case the harmony reaches tonic before the melody does.

Grainger’s avoidance of the leading-tone in its typical role also prevents the melody from suffering too complete a tonal assimilation, and it also reflects the same lack of a raised 7 in Taylor’s tune. The use of seventh chords based on 4, however, is more intriguing in this regard because it creates a tritone from which neither voice resolves by semitone when the harmony moves to tonic (as it most often does). Thus, like Bartók, Grainger treats the seventh in a seventh chord as full-fledged consonance, with no need of resolution at all, and this allows for a major-minor seventh-chord—which, traditionally, belongs exclusively to a dominant-functioning role—to function plagally instead. This fully “emancipated” dissonance also takes its precedence from the melody itself, which arpeggiates a G minor-seventh chord. It engenders a
separation from traditional harmonic practice that, coupled with the roughness (from parallel fifths and unsystematic doubling) of Grainger’s “folk” style, creates a result that would have sounded foreign to audiences with a perspective grounded in common-practice tonality. The following verses continue along this vein, but become far more harmonically adventurous.

This intensification in harmonic and contrapuntal style happens very abruptly as the second ending connects the second verse with the beginning of the third, shown in Figure 1.6. In comparison to the accented dissonances and consonant sevenths of the first two verses, Grainger now uses far more intricate counterpoint and functionally ambiguous harmonies. The bass averts the expected plagal cadence by beginning a descending line in m. 19. On the downbeat of m. 22 there appears to be a “cadential 6/4/3” harmony, since the small \( \langle vi, vi^\#_4, V^{6/4/3} \rangle \) progression, complete with \( \hat{3} \) in the upper voice, gives the impression of an approaching dominant – tonic cadential harmony. In fact, there is a \( \hat{3}–\hat{2}–\hat{1} \) descent in the upper voice, but the D and F in the bottom voices prove to be accented passing tones, leading to a IV\(^9\) harmony on the last eighth note of the measure, eliminating the fleeting impression of a dominant function. The harmony in m. 23 creates an enharmonic conflict: the C\(^\#\) might either be \#4 as a dissonant neighbor to \( \hat{5} \) or a respelled D\(\flat\) that is part of a G half-diminished seventh chord. However, the A\(^7\) chord that follows treats the B\(\sharp\) and F as the dissonances, which resolve by parallel fifths to A and E, and the C\(^\#\) as a chord-tone. The transformation of a potential D\(\flat\) to a C\(\flat\) resembles the “Fate” Leitmotiv from Richard Wagner’s Die Walküre (reproduced in Figure 1.7), in which the E\(\#\) acts as F in a respelled D-minor triad but holds as a common tone to a C\(^\#\)\(^7\) chord. Thus the harmony in m. 24 can be interpreted as a linear chromatic displacement of the A\(^7\) chord.
The motion in between a IV\(^9\) chord and a II\(^7\) chord—essentially, C\(^9\) to A\(^7\)—is octatonic in nature and thus prolongs the function of IV\(^9\), in this case, CAD. However, the upper voice strongly implies a tonic arrival in m. 24 and holds \(\text{I}\) as a common tone through the II\(^7\) harmony, and furthermore that II\(^7\) is the middle harmony of a voice exchange between the bass and baritone voices; it is only the C\# that subverts any possibility of tonic arrival in m. 24. The result is another example of non-congruent arrivals between the melody and harmony, which is articulated here even more clearly by the hypermetric cross pulse between the melodic and harmonic rhythms: in the melody the basic pattern of even-numbered measures being strong is maintained, but as Figure 1.6 shows, the accompaniment at this point reverses the hypermetric pattern, assigning greater strength to odd-numbered bars. These rhythmic refinements, besides
introducing more complicated counterpoint, suit the function of these measures, which are an extra link between verses, one that mitigates the highly segmented effect of simple repetition.

Although the character of the harmonies changes drastically in this short interlude, Grainger maintains some parallelism in his harmonic treatment of the third verse, even as more dominant-to-tonic tonal “gravity” tries to emerge. The 4–3 figure over the IV\(^7\) chord is embellished into a triple suspension in m. 28, but the harmony functions as it did before. More significant changes begin in m. 31, which leads to a strong modal dominant VII\(^7\) in m. 33 where there had been a IV\(^7\) before the grouping divide between mm. 9 and 10, still playing the role of a PRO function. The continuation phrase, shown in Figure 1.8, brings a strange juxtaposition of nineteenth-century heavy chromaticism with “modal” diatonic harmonies. The approach to a strong dominant V\(^7\) (in m. 36) is an unusually normative tonal progression, anticipating G minor where previously there had been a tonicized B\(^b\) chord, which made sense in view of the melodic arpeggiation of a B\(^b\) major triad, as here in mm. 35-37. Harmonic expectations thus clash with melodic implications. The mollifying solution, oddly enough, is a highly chromatic quasi-hexatonic shift directly from D\(^7\) to B\(^b\)\(^7\), which uses semitone voice-leading to free itself from its implied function as a dominant of G.

Just as suddenly, however, diatonicism returns with a traditional tonal approach to a cadential 6/4 in m. 38. Despite its more normative arrival, this cadential 6/4 also fails to perform its typical role as it tries to support the \(\frac{3}{4}\)–\(\frac{4}{4}\)–\(\frac{1}{4}\) melodic gesture with a dominant. Instead, there is a contrapuntally staggered motion to a CAD-functioning C\(^9\) chord: in m. 39, every voice except the bass moves to a component of a C\(^9\) chord, while the bass follows in the next measure. The harmonic progression thus continues its path to tonic, without the intervention of a dominant, all
the way into the next verse, which begins before the \(<i^6, \text{ii}, i^7>\) progression brings about the eventual resolution to tonic. This verse-connecting progression mirrors mm. 24-26 from the beginning of the third verse, only without a C# in the CAD-functioning ii chord. The connection between the verses is direct here, foregoing any use of a four-measure link analogous to mm. 21-24.
The fourth verse, beginning in m. 41, is by far the most chromatic, it contains the clear climax of the piece, and it has a texture distinct from that of the other verses. The solo tenor drops out as the soprano picks up the melody, and all parts sing the words, increasing both the rhythmic activity and the overall dynamic level. The parallel fifths in mm. 41–42 establish a rustic and “old” contrapuntal style behind the increasingly sophisticated harmonic language. Mm. 41–49 proceed by way of the same harmonies as the first two verses, but the descending chromatic line is moved to the bass in mm. 47–49, speeding up the harmonic rhythm that approaches the $v^7$ dominant that begins the “continuation” phrase. As shown in Figure 1.9, the solo voice re-enters on a neutral “ah” in m. 50 as the phrase undergoes a dramatic twist: III is replaced by a B♭ dominant seventh-chord – a measure earlier in the phrase than it appeared before – which then tonicizes an augmented-sixth chord with an added ninth. The solo tenor makes this alteration by singing an accented fortissimo $\flat 2$, and this note’s place in a climactic cadential progression harkens to the Neapolitan.

It is worth noting, however, that the very notion of a tonicized augmented-sixth chord is inherently problematic, since by its letter-name spelling it has no root to be tonicized. But it is conceptually no different from a modulation achieved by respelling a dominant seventh-chord as an augmented-sixth chord. $\flat 6$ in a German augmented-sixth chord would be the root if the chord were enharmonically respelled, as in a $<[V^7], V^7>$ progression in A♭, but rather than proceeding to an A♭ major triad, the E♭ chord merely “borrows” its role as a consonant sonority from the Neapolitan key, then reverts to its G minor pre-dominant role. The implied presence of an E♭$^7$ chord also provides the culmination of another musical process: the addition of seventh chords by descending fifths. Whereas the first two verses feature C$^7$ and F$^7$ chords,
the third and fourth verses introduce B♭⁷ and Eb⁷ chords respectively. This creates a kind of musical escalation, as Grainger employs seventh chords from progressively “flatter” diatonic regions. The use of peculiar chromatic chords that do not serve any modulatory role is a common feature of Grainger’s music that will be explored further in Chapter 3 (on “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter”).

The role of the augmented-sixth thus established, Grainger risks veering too far into nineteenth-century chromaticism to maintain the “folk” character of the piece, especially with such a strong progression to a dominant. He evades this danger by evading the cadence, neutralizing the dominant and even the leading-tone in the solo voice by turning it into a tonic 6/4 chord that resolves directly to IV⁷. The solo voice solidifies this progression’s connection with the previous V to IV⁷ motions, as it fulfills the role of resolving the 4–3 suspension to the leading-tone and then continues into a 4–3 accented passing tone over the IV—an augmented reiteration of the harmonies in mm. 7-9. The music enters a denouement after voices attempt a dominant-tonic cadence again in mm. 60-64, featuring the “Dorian” ♯7–♭6–♯5 motive from 23-26
over the progression <[V⁷], V⁸/6/4—7/5/3>, but a move to IV⁷ thwarts this cadence as well.

Eventually the solo voice drops out and the choral voices successfully – but less satisfyingly – reach the tonic, as the cadential 6/4 in m. 70 resolves to a dominant minor-seventh chord and the bass descends stepwise through an A⁷ CAD chord down to the tonic, as shown in Figure 1.10. This resolution to tonic is a more “normal” version of the strange progression in mm. 23-26, in which the C♯ is replaced with a less-problematic D♭. Afterward, the final verse returns more to the style of the first two verses, but with a tonic pedal most of the way through.

Grainger’s technique of following normative tonal dominant harmonies with a direct move to the “Dorian” subdominant preserves the Dorian mode’s primacy. But the lack of any successful authentic cadences—even of a modal type—is also a crucial component of the “folk” character of this music because it prevents harmony from surmounting melody as the pre-eminent organizing feature. Grainger’s claim that melodic creativity suffered as a result of harmony thus gains further vindication. Composers of tonal music were not simply too distracted by their interest in harmony; rather, the prevalence of harmony necessarily diminished the importance of melody by its pure musical strength. In order to ensure the pre-eminence of the melody in a folk-song setting, then, a composer had to subvert the most powerful harmonic gestures. A setting with harmonies that overpowered the melody would arguably have ceased to be a folk-song setting and become a new composition “based on” a folk-song. Grainger’s avoidance of authentic cadences removes the rhetorical power of harmonies as primary sources of closure, and thus even the highly chromatic and emphatic progression to the dominant in mm. 50-55 must “wind down” back into the tonic over the next eighteen measures, only reaching its goal through the functionally weaker CAD.
“Brigg Fair” has a unity of character all through its stylistic evolution which Grainger largely achieves by means of the avoidance of a most characteristic component of tonal music: the perfect authentic cadence. At the turn of the twentieth century the avoidance of PACs was a common feature in serious music. In Grainger’s case, its purpose is more specific: to maintain a harmonic language that evokes a foreign musical style, much as Bartók did in his setting. But Grainger’s attitude to this foreignness is very different from Bartók’s. Bartók’s setting uses harmonies with unclear direction while the motivic identity of the melody is clear, allowing him the means to pursue the end of harmonic innovation. In Grainger’s setting, the goal is to preserve powerful musical quality of the original song, which for him meant conveying the wistfulness and melancholy that he heard in Taylor’s performance. This goal necessitates limitations on harmonic innovation, and these limitations also maintain the original tune’s prominence in the musical texture. While this difference of approach reflects a difference of

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30 A telling quote appears in Edward T. Cone, “Sound and Syntax: an Introduction to Schoenberg’s Harmony,” Perspectives of New Music 13 (1974): 30. “Authentic cadences are comparatively rare in Schoenberg's music, even of this period, for what should by now be obvious reasons.” As composers continued to avoid using authentic cadences to divide phrases internally, the danger arose of creating a “stylistic inconsistency” (in Cone’s terms) to conclude a piece or climactic phrase with a PAC.
compositional goals, both composers find ways to provide the melody with an apposite setting, one that nevertheless allows it the freedom to be itself.

“Brigg Fair,” of course, represents only one (particularly instructive) example of Grainger’s folk-influenced musical style. The remainder of this essay will examine other pieces in detail to observe his various compositional techniques to achieve the same basic end: a fully unified musical style that synthesizes folk music and Western European art music. Chapter 2 looks at *Molly on the Shore* and discusses the creation of large-scale form with sparse and repetitive thematic material, Chapter 3 looks at a more experimental harmonic language in “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter,” and Chapter 4 explores the very notions of sophistication and seriousness in music in “Jutish Medley” from the *Danish Folk Music Suite*. 
Chapter 2 – Formal Construction in *Molly on the Shore*

*Molly on the Shore* is a relatively long composition among Grainger’s single-movement works, lasting over six minutes. It takes its origin from two tunes: “Molly on the Shore,” and “Temple Hill,” both of which appear in *The Complete Petrie Collection of Ancient Irish Music*.\(^{31}\) The original setting for *Molly on the Shore* was for a string quartet or a band with strings, but I have chosen to analyze the setting for solo piano.\(^{32}\) There are thus two potential problems in selecting this piece: it derives from folk tunes Grainger did not collect himself and thus may only have known a distilled version of, and it is itself a distilled version of Grainger’s composition—in Grainger’s own words: “Dished up for piano.”\(^{33}\) With regard to the former, the chief compositional achievement—the construction of a sophisticated formal structure from simple and repetitive material—is different from the achievement discussed in “Brigg Fair.” Instead of a “translation” from the nuance of melodic turns into an artful polyphonic setting, Grainger uses a simple melody as the source material for a complex composition without destroying the *feel* of simplicity. The original “Molly on the Shore” is a dance tune, and its lively straightforwardness is an important aspect of its identity that Grainger—who was familiar with other folk-musical styles—could recognize without necessarily hearing an “authentic” performance of it.

As for the selection of the piano setting, this decision stems from the necessary narrowness of my focus in this chapter. Grainger’s orchestration in his settings for larger ensembles deserves more attention than this essay has space for. While orchestration is deeply

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\(^{32}\) Ibid., 3.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 17.
connected to the development of complex musical textures—an essential characteristic of *Molly on the Shore*—the fact that the music is successful in this regard even in the version “dished up for piano” is a great testament to Grainger’s compositional skill. To incorporate orchestration into the analysis might draw attention away from this achievement, and for these reasons a treatment of Grainger’s orchestrations must await another study.

The formal layout of Grainger’s setting is tripartite, as shown in Figure 2.1. “Molly on the Shore” and “Temple Hill” are the origin of all thematic material and correspond to ‘a’ and ‘b,’ and the first and last sections focus primarily on the former, while the middle focuses primarily on the latter. The first section, similarly, is a large ternary with “Temple Hill” as its contrasting middle. The second section begins with anadiplosis—starting a new section with material that ended the previous one—as a quasi-transition, then proceeds to a quasi-development based on “Temple Hill”. The third section is another ternary with “Temple Hill” in the middle, but this contrasting middle more closely resembles the larger B section of the piece. The resulting form is a rondo-like series of alternations between the two melodies, embedded with ternary groupings at multiple levels.

“Molly on the Shore” itself is a very repetitive tune, and nearly every phrase ends with the same cadential figure. As shown in Figure 2.2, there are three phrases, which I have labeled P, P’, and P”’, and each contains two sub-phrases and is repeated (though only the repeats of P’ and P”’ are written out in the figure). The first phrase P has two component sub-phrases, labeled x and x’. The x’ sub-phrase changes a by using a durational accent to make a weak-beat cadence on the tonic, while the x phrase is open-ended and ends on 6. The second phrase (P’) opens with a different sub-phrase beginning on G5. I have labeled this y, even though its second
measure is almost exactly the same as that of x. P’ closes the first time with y’, which begins like y and ends like x’; however, the repetition of P’ closes with an entirely different figure (labeled cad.) that leads to the same 2–1 weak-beat cadence as before. The final phrase P’’ again changes the content of the first and third measures but maintains the second and fourth, while the
final subphrase of the tune returns to x’. Thus, P’’ and its repetition return just enough of the material from P to provide closure for both its own phrase and the song as a whole.

With one exception, then, all of the melodic phrases in this tune end exactly the same way, resulting in six iterations of the same cadence, five of which have an entire measure of melodic material in common, in a song that is only 20 measures long. It has to be said, therefore, that this song is characterized by extreme repetitiveness and very clear segmentation: the three different melodies are related by variation, and the cadences they conclude with scarcely vary at all in strength of closure. These characteristics clearly indicate the tune’s identity as a folk song, and they present the most significant challenge to a composer setting this tune. Longer-ranging musical processes are all but a stylistic necessity for “serious” repertoire, while pervasive repetition of clearly defined segments is a direct barrier to such processes; indeed, one could argue that this incompatibility describes a basic difference between the “folk” style and the “classical” style. But therein lies Grainger’s primary accomplishment in Molly on the Shore: he combines both styles with such skill that the final result sounds like both “folk” music and “classical” music. Grainger achieves this by creating relative levels of closure throughout the piece and developing an increasingly complex musical texture throughout, even while the music maintains the stylistic feel of folk-dance music.

Harmonically speaking, functions are more conventional in this piece than they are in other repertoire (in part because the melody is in the major mode), so I will use the regular names of tonic, subdominant, and dominant to refer to harmonic function. PRO and CAD are only needed in a few particular instances, all of which involve the “Temple Hill” tune, so I will not invoke them where harmonic progressions follow their normal trajectories.
The piece begins with a two-measure vamp, which establishes the accompanimental pattern that supports the melody, beginning in m. 3. The harmonic rhythm of two chords per bar is also introduced here, as the accompaniment figure teeters between tonic and dominant, with unison eighth-notes on 5 that switch harmonies when grouped with the strong-beat notes that precede them. Since every downbeat has a solid tonic sonority, and since the dominant clearly arises as an arpeggiation of the tonic, this accompaniment figure not only prolongs the tonic but creates the effect of a tonic pedal, which also underlies the tune when it appears.

Above, I described the two largest levels of formal structure in this piece. I have called the large-scale level <A, B, A>, and noted that the first A groups into an <a, b, a> of its own, the components of this grouping being our two source melodies. As shown in Figure 2.3, the first ‘a’ (in A) is likewise a small ternary form, this one at a third level of structure, which partitions the second of those already described. For clarity’s sake, I have labeled the interior form of this small ternary with bracketed letters: [A][B][A], in Figure 2.3. Inside this small ternary (entirely made up of the main tune, “Molly on the Shore”) the P” from the tune serves as the contrasting [B] material, and the totality of P (stated twice as in the tune) and P’ comprise the [A] sections. The first P phrase and its repetition feature the aforementioned accompaniment figure with no breaks, while the melodic cadence from the original tune punctuates the phrase boundaries. Because this cadence lands with scale-degree 5 in the bass, and because the harmony prolongs tonic throughout, the P-based phrases do not have harmonic cadences at all. This simple technique—subverting a cadence with a tonic pedal—is the most basic way in which Grainger effects continuity across clear borders of segmentation.
Because the song only changes the odd-numbered measures in each melodic variation, the phrase beginning in m. 11 gives the impression of developing the original melodic idea, while the accompaniment changes very minimally. The new melody expands the register, as noted above, to G4, and an E–C melodic fragment now occurs over the dominant’s fifth, which is brought into the left hand, an octave lower than in the opening vamp. This produces a fleeting A minor chord, whereby the first harmony other than I or V emerges, though not yet in a cadential function, since this phrase features yet another iteration of the previous weak cadence. In the repetition of this phrase, however, a highly unusual progression drives into the first harmonic cadence at m. 18. A series of parallel fifths in the bass traverses a stepwise ascent from 1 to 5, resulting in a progression of <I, ii, iii, IV, V^6/4–5/3, I>. The parallel fifths negate any subtlety that this progression might have had, as though Grainger is loudly telegraphing the approach of a strong cadence. Nevertheless, he ultimately weakens this cadence, too, by adding
two voices above the melody on degrees 3 and 5, burying the melodic resolution to tonic in the texture.

Grainger uses the final two phrases of the original tune as the [B] section within ‘a’ and sets this portion of the tune with more distinct harmonies and texture to provide the necessary contrast. The melody shifts to the bass line, and the harmonies are expressed by block chords on upbeats. Additionally, the harmonies are much more active, but also more ambiguous and unusual. The progression of mm. 19-20 is a motion to a tonicized E minor, roughly \(<iv^{6\text{add}}_{4}, i^{6/4}, [V_{1}^{4/3}], iv^{7}, i>\). At the end of this sub-phrase, Grainger removes the eighth-note pickup to the next two measures, giving a more cadential feel the quasi-plagal harmonic arrival on E minor and thus a brief departure from G major before the next two bars return to the familiar 2–1 melodic cadence. These changes reinforce the notion that this musical material is a departure from the beginning, compensating for the shared melodic material.

In the repetition of this phrase (mm. 23-26), shown in Figure 2.4, Grainger makes interesting alterations to the harmonies: mm. 23-24 replace the Cmaj.$^{4/3}$ harmony with Cmin./maj.$^{4/3}$ and the E minor harmony with a $V^{4/3}$ of V, which resolves to a cadential 6/4 in G major. The inclusion of the least-used type of seventh chord and a secondary dominant removes the self-containedness of mm. 19-20, as a segment in E minor, and brings everything back to G major. But the chromaticism in m. 24, while leading tonally back to the small-ternary return of [A], also deepens the level of contrast inherent in the [B] section that is about to conclude. And just as we seem to be securely back in G major, Grainger feints a motion back to E minor with a conventional tonicization in m. 25, immediately preceding the section’s final cadence in G. Grainger also weakens this cadence by passing the melody between the bass and middle voices, so that the eventual 2–1 resolution is again buried under upper voices.
The small ternary of the opening ‘a’ section concludes with a restatement of mm. 3-18, with some crucial changes. Mm. 27-34 use a thicker variant of the opening accompaniment figure under the melody, functioning again as a tonic prolongation. But mm. 35-42 present the melody from mm. 11-14 with much stronger harmonies, as shown in Figure 2.5. After a neighboring IV in m. 35, m. 36 features a <I, vi\(^7\), Fr\(^+6\), V\(^7\), I> progression that elides into a melodic repetition, starting an octave lower. The repetition finishes with a strong PAC in m. 38, with a decisive <I, vii\(^{a7}\)/V, V\(^7\), I> progression. Thus, this four-measure phrase involves a two-octave melodic descent through the pentatonic scale, using chromatic pre-dominants, and ending with an unambiguous PAC, all of which creates far more closure than anything before this point. Grainger further invests this musical landing with the first mezzo-forte dynamic in the piece, and with a crescendo into the final <V\(^7\), I>, and he repeats the entire phrase to drive the point home, this time without changing the final two bars, as in mm. 15-16. This high point of closure
creates a strong ending to the first section, clearing the air for the first statement of substantially new material.

The idea of new melodic material is a difficult one to reconcile with the genre of folk-music setting, since it implies the absence of the very tune the composition is based on. Beyond this, any new melody must be sufficiently distinct from the original tune, yet little enough of a stylistic departure from it, that the piece remains firmly within the folk genre. For Molly on the Shore, Grainger’s solution is quite simple: to use another folk song: “Temple Hill,” from the very same collection. This song, shown in Figure 2.6 is a very short simple binary form with repeats, the second of which is written out. Like “Molly on the Shore,” its phrases consist of two parallel sub-phrases, the latter of which ends on a 2–1 melodic cadence. Curiously, the melody’s mode is indeterminate, because it never states 3; however, in all of its appearances in Molly on the Shore, Grainger places “Temple Hill” within a diatonic collection that clarifies its mode as Dorian. As we shall see, however, the tune’s tonic (A in the printing) is not always the tonic of its harmonization, and this technique is one of Grainger’s cleverer compositional devices.

The ‘b’ section from Figure 2.1 begins in m. 43 with the “Temple Hill” melody, as shown in Figure 2.7. While the tonic of the tune is A, the harmonic key remains steadfastly in G major;
thus, all of the $\hat{2}$–$\hat{1}$ melodic cadences become $\hat{5}$–$\hat{3}$ figures in the harmonic setting. As a result, there are no PACs in this section because every phrase ends on a dominant. This unusual harmonic quality leads to a peculiar situation in which dominant and tonic seem to reverse their roles. Mm. 43-46 illustrate why this is so: whenever the notes of the melody’s implied “tonic”
triad, A, C, and E, appear in the melody, they are accompanied by dominant harmonies, while the notes of the tune’s “modal” dominant are usually given a tonic triad harmonization. In m. 43, for example, the melody note E, which arises from an arpeggiated fifth above the “tonic” in the melody, is harmonized with a V\(^9\) chord, whereas the outlined G major triad that would function as a dominant VII in A Dorian is now a simple tonic triad. Mm. 45-46 present an even more interesting example: the tonic harmony is embellished with a 6/4–5/3 figure above the pedal-sustained G in the bass, before the phrase ends on a dominant harmony. This figure is thus analogous to a cadential 6/4 above the tonic instead of the dominant, contributing still more to the reversal of functional roles. Furthermore, if we consider the two-measure sub-phrases as an antecedent-consequent pair, as with the tune “Molly on the Shore,” then tonic and dominant have completely exchanged functional roles: the tonic concludes an “HC”, while the dominant concludes its consequent “PAC”.

The unusual situation regarding cadences creates a fascinating possibility to apply the PRO and CAD concepts: the tonic functions as PRO early in the phrase and as CAD to support the cadence, while the dominant functions as a “tonic” in this system. Using a separate set of functional labels helps to clarify the strangeness of this situation: the dominant acts as “tonic” in the PRO-CAD system because it is the goal of cadences, but its representative sonority is a dominant seventh-chord based on D, taken from the diatonic collection of G major, maintaining a strong sense of its identity as a dominant in the tonic-subdominant-dominant system.

Indeed, this strange reversal of functional roles persists throughout the rest of this section. Mm.47-50 begin on the dominant and conclude with a CAD–T or S–T–D progression in m. 50. These harmonies play on the traditional “acceptability” of subdominant-to-tonic progressions in regular tonal music, but tonic is the penultimate—or CAD—harmony rather than the concluding
harmony. Thus the subdominant prepares the tonic in an analogous way to how it prepares the dominant in more normative tonal contexts. Even the final cadential progression in mm. 53-54 continues to swap tonic and dominant: after an approach to IV by a descending third sequential progression, shown in Figure 2.8, a progression that normally might have been \(<IV, V^7, I>\) is replaced by \(<IV, I, V^7>\). This is the point at which the tension between melody and harmony becomes most clear: the G major chord would be a functional modal dominant in A Dorian, allowing the melodic arrival on A to coincide with a dominant-tonic progression. But the harmonic key of G major supercedes this tendency and instead ends the section with a \(V^7\) chord.

This peculiar reversal of harmonic gravity combines with the use of new melodic material, as well as the first use of \textit{fortissimo} dynamics, to create a very heavy level of contrast from the ‘a’ section. Moreover, because each phrase is bookended by a dominant-functioning harmony, the entire section can be seen as a dominant prolongation. Apart from further distancing the two sections, this attribute gives the ‘b’ section a surprisingly normative characteristic of a contrasting section: “tonicizing” the dominant, albeit in a spectacularly different way. As we shall see below, however, the musical potential of this unusual tonal ploy is far from exhausted.

After this diversion, Grainger reprises the entire small ternary of the first ‘a’ section, but with a great deal of variation. Mm. 55-58 feature the P phrase with a new accompanimental figure of rolled chords and more active and directed harmonies than the P phrase at the beginning: \(<I, IV, I, V^7, I, IV, V^6/4, V^7, I>\). The initial phrase of this ‘a’ section thus ends with a fully convincing PAC, marking an immediate point of departure from the original ‘a’. In the repeated P phrase in mm. 59-62, Grainger adds an accented upper voice on \(\tilde{5}\) above the main melody to ornament the texture, establishing a new trend of non-literal immediate repetition. M.
61 has the first alteration to the “Molly on the Shore” melody as well, since an E appears where there is normally a B. This E belongs to the upper-voice melody in a pentatonic ascent to G, and it allows this extra melody to take precedence for a very short amount of time.

Mm. 63-70 proceed with the second phrase of the original tune, transplanting the texture from the final phrase of the original small ternary in mm. 35-42. The harmonies are slightly altered here, but they mostly maintain their sense of strong harmonic motion. A more significant variation is the cadence figure “cad.” from the original tune in mm. 69-70, which retains its position at the end of the first A of the small ternary and appears for the first time in this new textural context, as shown in Figure 2.9. Grainger gives it suitably convincing harmonization: <I, IV, V, VI, I>, but much as in the first time this figure appeared, the final two notes of the melody are buried under added voices. Interpreted in parallel to its schematic counterpart in m. 18, this PAC’s harmonic approach gives it a stronger sense of closure than it had before, but it also confirms the re-entry into a tonic area after the ‘b’ section’s departure to the dominant. What is more, Grainger has begun developing his musical material further through melodic variation, and this process will continue through the rest of the piece.
Figure 2.9 – mm. 67-70

The [B] phrase of this small ternary is varied in a different way: the harmonies are mostly maintained, but the music is transposed up an octave, and the melody is marked with slurs and the direction to play “feelingly.” This marks the first change from the “short” (staccato) articulation that pervades most of the rest of the piece and increases the sense of contrast from the [A] material. The change to an expressive, lyrical style is a particularly effective technique of variation because it differentiates from the small [B] from mm. 19-26 in a new way while still clearly maintaining its parallelism to its predecessor.

Another point of variation is in the grace-notes added to the accompaniment chords, which strengthen the tonicization of E minor with D#s in mm. 71-72. But the most significant change occurs in mm. 77-78, in which a variant of the preceding [A] section’s cadence drives the final cadence of the [B] section, back in G major. In stark contrast to the [B] section from the first ‘a’ section, this [B] section concludes convincingly and without its counterpart’s misdirection toward E minor. This appearance of closure where it was less present before suggests a significant point of rhetorical closure, implying that this ‘a’ will end more decisively than the first.

Immediately, the return of [A] emphatically confirms this implication, as shown in Figure 2.10. In addition to the main melody, there is a rhythmically augmented version of the cadential
melody just heard in mm 77-78 that spans through the entire four-bar phrase to the PAC at the end. Furthermore, there is an expanded cadential progression that begins in m. 80 on a I\(^6\) harmony, moving across the dividing line between the two-bar subphrase and culminating in the first strong-beat cadence of the entire piece in m. 82. As the strongest cadence thus far repeats in m. 86, its convincing closure appears to be sufficient to close the section, as Grainger omits the final two phrases from the original small ternary. The fact that this small ternary ends with such strong rhetorical closure implies a larger group A that encompasses the first “aba” of the larger form—the first ‘a’ ends with a weak-beat PAC, the “b” prolongs the dominant and ends with a HC, and the subsequent ‘a’ ends with a strong-beat PAC. Such a large formally closed unit provides an opportunity for a more significant textural departure in the subsequent section.
Rather than proceeding to such a change immediately, however, Grainger uses a transitional phrase to lead more smoothly from one style to the next. This phrase in E minor, which begins in m. 85, is a sentential new melody over a variant of the P’” phrase of the original tune, just heard in mm. 71-78. The harmonies are quite different from those of the rest of the movement: the conclusive cadences from before are gone, and the harmonies lack a clear tonal direction. Mm. 87-90 follow the harmonies <iv, i\(^6\), VI, i\(^7\), iv, i\(^6\), II\(^7\)> before restarting the phrase in m. 91 on iv, offering no indication of a functional progression to tonic. The quasi-continuation modulates in a highly unusual way: in m. 93, a <iv, i\(^6\)> progression that is emphasized by durational accents stops the melodic motion without a true cadence, and m. 94 states the melodic cadential measure from the main tune over the harmonies <e, C\(^4b3\), g>.

The two harmonies of F\(^7\) (II\(^7\)) and the C\(^7\), shown in Figure 2.11 and Figure 2.12, are the primary wrenches in the works, and interestingly, they share a tritone that includes an E, held over from a preceding E minor chord. Neither, however, follows up on the voice-leading implications of that tritone. The F\(^7\) chord moves over an interrupting phrase boundary to A minor, holding E as a common tone and chromatically shifting A\# down a semitone, while the <C\(^7\), g> succession holds the B\# as a common tone (along with G) and displaces the E and C to D. There is no sense of harmonic progression across m. 94-95, only some kind of gradual preparation (in m. 94) for the arrival in m. 95. And indeed, there can be no mistaking m. 95 as a tonic arrival in G Dorian, since a drone on the tonic fifth of that mode lasts all the way until m. 109. The subversion of voice leading in these peculiar harmonies removes the prominence of leading-tones as it approaches a more modal texture. It is not inappropriate to
invoke the concept of CAD here, since a C⁷-G minor progression was the primary CAD progression in “Brigg Fair,” but the label comes with a significant caveat here: while this progression is typical of Grainger’s modal harmonic technique for supporting cadences, it is not typical in this particular piece. Thus this progression is idiomatic to the composer, but it does not have the same contextual power to signal a cadence that it had in “Brigg Fair.”

This harmonic drone also clarifies the true modal identity (within this setting) of the “Temple Hill” melody from mm. 43-54, which now sounds firmly in the Dorian mode. In this statement, it has been transposed down a step to G, giving it a parallel relationship to the main tonic key of G major. As a full melody finishes, the harmonies modulate through another C⁴/₃ chord in m. 110, this time realizing its potential to tonicize F in the next measure. Here,
Grainger cleverly reapplies the tonic mismatching technique from before and does not transpose the melody along with the harmonies, pairing a melody in G with harmonies in F. This is a transposition of both the melody and the harmonies down a step from the first appearance of this material, but because this transposition is staggered, the tonics align in mm. 95-110 before bifurcating again at m. 111.

The rather unusual dominant prolongation that characterized the reversal of tonic and dominant in mm. 43-54, however, is not quite the case here, since there is a tonic pedal under many of the dominant harmonies. Grainger uses stacked fifths above low Fs to achieve a somewhat consonant sonority out of these harmonies, but the effect of these chords is very static but not stable. If we consider this instability in light of reversal of roles between tonic and dominant from before here, a remarkable conclusion arises: this tonic pedal is supplanting a dominant pedal in a quasi-retransition. F major, like G major in mm. 43-54, is the putative tonic, but all of the phrases end on the dominant instead, implying that F major has a CAD function and will thus need to resolve in a cadence. Mm. 119-127 realize this implication, as shown in Figure 2.13: the “Temple Hill” theme goes through its second phrase as it did before, but the cadential progression of m. 125-26 resolves simply and almost clumsily with a $\text{VII}_4^{-1}$ progression back into G major, dragging the tonic of the harmony back up to meet the tonic in the main key. And sure enough, the main theme returns in m. 127, beginning the final (A) section of the large ternary design.

Because the first large section of this movement began and ended in the same key and was already repetitive in itself, Grainger avoids repeating it very literally in its reprise. He
Figure 2.13 – mm. 125-127

therefore compresses the textural development from mm. 1-34 into the first eight bars of the ‘a’ section: mm. 128-130 use the accompaniment from mm. 1-18, while m. 131-134 use the accompaniment from mm. 27-34, paired with the very straightforward instruction to “louder lots.” M. 135 jumps straight into the harmonically strong phrase that concluded the first small ternary, this time at a *fortissimo* dynamic. As that phrase repeats in mm. 139-142, as shown in Figure 2.14, Grainger drives home the return of the main tune and its tonic key with a new melody over a strong cadential progression: <I, ii\(^{4/3}\), I\(^6\), ii\(^{6/5}\), V\(^{8/6/4-7/5/3}\), I>. In addition to the strong harmonic arrival, Grainger leaves no doubt of the power of this cadence by marking the final dominant–tonic chords *sfff* and instructing the pianist to play both bass notes with the middle finger.

In the aftermath of this cadence at m. 143, we hear what sounds like a codetta that is repeated, before m. 151 begins a reprisal of the material that began the B section in m. 87. The piece sounds like it has already reached its tonal goal in m. 142, and mm. 143-150 repeat a four-bar tonally closed phrase that sounds postcadential in nature. Because of the tonal closure
achieved here, as well as the mostly soft dynamic level in the music to follow, I consider this the beginning of the piece’s denouement.

M. 151 reiterates the transitional music from mm. 87-94. The harmonies are slightly varied and include more striking dissonances; for example, mm. 154’s progression in E minor is $<V^9/V, i^6>$, and beat 3 pits an A$\#$ against an A$\flat$ as accented non-harmonic tones. In the place of the unusual modulation to G Dorian from m. 94, m. 158 presents a F$\#$\textsuperscript{6/7,9} chord, as shown in Figure 2.15, which is anticipated by a thunderous F$\#$ in m. 158, but it does not modulate this time, since it resolves to a pair of stacked fifths back on E.

Nevertheless, there is a final statement of the “Temple Hill” melody, fully integrated into a key more compatible with the main tonic of G major, serving as the ‘b’ section of this final large section. As with the relation between G Dorian and B$\flat$ major in “Brigg Fair”, E Dorian is not literally a relative key to G major since they do not share the same diatonic collection, but the normativity of a close relation between a major tonic and its “minor” submediant allows E Dorian to fulfill this role effectively anyway. This choice of key fulfills the role of contrast associated with the “Temple Hill” melody—particularly by being a new key—without straying too far diatonically from the main key.
For the final ‘a’ section, Grainger returns to G major with a lead-in in m. 174, followed by the codetta-like phrases from before mm. 143-150. M. 183 brings back the material that concluded the ‘a’ section in mm. 35-42, varied with still thicker harmonies and additional augmented sixth chords. The dynamic is pianissimo, bringing about the end of the denouement of the piece. But Grainger has one final trick, shown in Figure 2.16: he delays the final 2–1 melodic cadence with a surprise quarter-rest, placing the cadence point on the downbeat of the final measure. This is the first PAC of the entire piece to land on beat 1 of a measure. After this brilliantly subtle conclusion, which occurs at the end of a decrescendo, Grainger gives us a spectacularly unsubtle ffff G major chord to punctuate the whole piece.
The three large sections of this piece all share the presence of the “Temple Hill” melody, but it is only the primary melody in the middle section. In addition to the melody itself, specific textural statements of “Temple Hill” manage to cross sectional borders: the characteristic Dorian-mode drone from the large-scale middle section reappears in the “b” of the final section, only transposed. Yet the alterations Grainger makes to the melodies themselves are minimal. “Molly on the Shore” never appears in any other key than G major and is subject to only sparse melodic variation, while “Temple Hill” is almost exactly the same in each of its various transpositions. This treatment allows Grainger to imbue the former with the function of a main theme and the latter with a contrasting theme, and more importantly, with those two themes he creates a work of significant formal complexity and completeness, including recursive ternary structures, without tampering with the identity or character of his source material: two simple and repetitive tunes.
Chapter 3 – Harmonic Originality in “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter”

“Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter” is another setting of a folk song that Grainger himself collected. Although the melody as he recorded it was sung with words, Grainger’s setting is an instrumental piece for solo piano. The composition is a series of six variations on the original melody, and as in a typical variation set, Grainger takes more and more liberties with the character and content of that melody as the piece progresses. Grainger’s harmonization is particularly innovative, even though the tonic is unambiguously E minor throughout the entire composition. The affect of the chosen harmonies is surprisingly unsettling, almost sinister, as the pages below will explore.

The formal layout of this setting is a set of six variations, but Grainger weaves these variations into a more complex formal structure. While cyclicity is the most obvious source of formal organization—i.e. the six variations as I have labeled them—large-scale formal boundaries do not always coincide with cyclical boundaries. Figure 3.1 plots the basic formal structure of Grainger’s setting with letters corresponding to identifiable musical textures. Variations 1 and 2, spanning mm. 1-14, make up a single group by their shared texture, since a clear change occurs in m. 15. Variation 3 and 4 seem to have a similar relationship, sharing the “B” texture, but mm. 25-28 return to the texture of Variations 1 and 2. Similarly, Variations 5 and 6 are related in this same way with the “C” texture, but m. 39 returns once again to the original texture. Since thematic content is always the same, texture is the most prominent source of differentiation, so on a large scale I consider this a tripartite form with a return to the first section at the end of the second and third sections. The evolving harmonic style accompanies this formal layout in such a way that each “return” is changed in some way.
Grainger’s own transcription of “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter,” as sung by William Roberts, appears in “Collecting With the Phonograph,” and I have reproduced it in its original form in Figure 3.2. Apart from the fascinating details that Grainger’s transcript reveals about the diction, a particularly crucial detail that this transcription reveals is the text of the song. Upon reviewing this text, we find that the unsettling and sinister affect that Grainger’s setting displays may have a disturbingly simple point of origin in the clause “before I gave him leave.”

Even with such a direct textual basis in the original song, it seems hardly defensible to claim that this in many ways typically structured variation set is a musical depiction of rape, even with the textual evidence to support such a possibility. There are obvious reasons why Graingier would not have identifiably retained the idea of rape in his setting. First, a setting of a folk song is in some sense an artistic depiction of the culture it came from, and the narrative of this song’s text would be all too susceptible to misinterpretation as stemming from a “savage” peasant culture, which might detract from the folk tradition’s worthiness in the eyes of a

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wished to foster. Indeed, one might surmise that this was why Grainger decided to set the song instrumentally, though that is pure speculation.

The other reason relates to something more ironic: the melody of the original song itself does not lend itself to a dramatic depiction of its own subject matter. Rather, the tune better fits the dramatic perspective of the narrator, who is recounting a tragic tale in a strangely detached way. Grainger’s instrumental setting retains this affect but “hints” at the dark original subject matter, perhaps with the intention of bringing out the ironic relation between music and text. Nevertheless, without a copy of the words in a program, an audience would never be able to infer the specific source of this darkness. For this reason (among others), I have elected to make no interpretive connections with this highly unseemly subject in my analysis of Grainger’s composition. It is certainly possible that Grainger had such concepts in mind in the act of composing—the piece does not contradict such speculation, at least—but the music nevertheless does not communicate what was in Grainger’s mind when he devised it. I therefore will examine the harmonic language and the general affects it creates on their own terms, and I leave the reader with the option to apply further interpretation to my analysis of the music.

Since the setting is instrumental, the melody is the only aspect of the original song that remains in its literal form, and Grainger makes scarce alterations in this tune. The melody is very short and metrically simple, and its layout is a straightforward bar form, with a repeated A phrase and a B phrase that acts as a refrain. As in “Molly on the Shore,” a common concluding gesture spans formal boundaries, as it ends both the A phrases and the B phrase, and this corresponds to the rhyme scheme of the text: the A phrases always end on a rhyming syllable, and the B phrase repeats the second half of the text of the second A phrase. Each phrase ends with a clear sense of closure, culminating in a strong-beat rhythmic cadence at the end of a
melodic descent to the tonic note E. The B phrase opens with a contrasting melodic turn, a simple opening leap from B4 to B3 followed by a quick return to B4. This motion, which recalls a sea shanty, is particularly appropriate to the B phrase’s function as a refrain.

Grainger’s harmonization of “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter” is highly irregular in its use of function—there are almost no leading tones whatsoever, and many phrases approach the tonic with peculiar harmonies. This creates a unique collection of PRO and CAD harmonies, as shown in Figure 3.3. The CAD harmonies are based on quasi “roots” of F♯ and/or A♭, often include the tritone {E, B♯}, appear as penultimate cadential harmonies throughout the piece, and often include chromatic notes from the {C, C♯} octatonic scale other than D♯. PRO harmonies, on the other hand, tend to be based on D♯ and B♭, are typically diatonic, and appear earlier in phrases. Since the basic chords as defined by their roots as scale degrees almost never act in their most common tonal roles—II’s and IV’s to progress to the dominant, V’s and VII’s to precede the tonic at cadences—it is best to use the PRO and CAD labels primarily and use subdominant and dominant mostly in reference to un-realized harmonic implications, as I will demonstrate below. This situation creates a reversal of functional roles for chords associated with dominant and subdominant functions, and I will discuss the ramifications of this throughout the analysis.

Grainger’s harmonization of the very first two-bar phrase, shown in Figure 3.4, immediately indicates that the harmonies will not be straightforward in this piece. M. 1’s harmony is colorful—a ninth-chord tonicizes a modal dominant VII harmony—but functionally normative for a modal harmonization. In order to line up with melodic forces, it is the task of m. 2 to conclude the phrase, but Grainger harmonizes it with a tonic pedal and a #4 harmony, which
could either be called a II\(^7\) chord or a common-tone diminished-seventh chord. If the first two measures are indeed a full phrase, then the conclusive harmonic and melodic arrivals do not match, presenting a similar phenomenon to one discussed in Chapter 1 in Bartók’s Romanian Folk Dances and Grainger’s “Brigg Fair.” While the harmonies do cycle through the basic normative tonal functions of tonic, pre-dominant, (modal) dominant, and tonic, the \(\frac{3}{2} - 1\) melodic gesture only comes after this progression is over.

An obvious alternative, of course, is not to consider this two-bar group a phrase at all. Indeed, there is a great deal of merit in labeling the entire first variation, which spans mm. 1-6, as a single quasi-sentential phrase, with mm. 1-4 repeating a two-bar basic idea while mm. 5-6 contain a compressed continuation phrase that ends with a plagal cadence. From a harmonic standpoint, this interpretation fits very well, as shown in Figure 3.5: m.5 can be seen as
consisting of a repeated half-bar pattern (producing the requisite sentential fragmentation in the
left hand), and the introduction of C♯ in m. 6 even represents the plagal counterpart to a leading
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concerns, and to ignore melody in the setting of a folk song would be egregious.

On its own, the structure of this melody is functionally quite distinct from the
presentation and continuation of a sentence. The melody of mm. 1-2 gives every impression
of completeness in both pitch and rhythm. Beat 3 of m. 2 has a very strong durational accent—it
is the longest note thus far and is followed by a rest—and it occurs on the final beat of the two-
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On its own, the structure of this melody is functionally quite distinct from the presentation and continuation of a sentence. The melody of mm. 1-2 gives every impression of completeness in both pitch and rhythm. Beat 3 of m. 2 has a very strong durational accent—it is the longest note thus far and is followed by a rest—and it occurs on the final beat of the two-bar hypermeasure. Pitch-wise, it is difficult to imagine a modal melody that makes for a better example of composing out the tonic triad through a descent from 5 to 1. Had Grainger chosen a harmonization like the one in Figure 3.6, there would be little doubt that this two-bar phrase ends in a cadence. Since this two-bar phrase repeats, ending exactly the same way the second time, the melody of mm. 5-6 seems like an afterthought, as though a chorus is offering a succinct response to the verse of mm. 1-4. As noted above, the octave leap at the start of the B phrase makes allusion to the refrain of sea shanty, and the repeated text in the original song further supports this interpretation.

This conflict between melody and harmony manifests itself in a swapping of functional roles at different levels. Were we to consider m. 2 as offering a cadence on its first beat, the
harmony of beats 1-3 of that measure would seem to be postcadential, even as the melody was still in the act of achieving closure. On the other hand, the strong cadential bass motion in m. 6 occurs after the melody has achieved its goal at the ends of mm. 2 and 4. As the first variant of the melody—I have elected to call it Variation 1, although it could be the “theme” of a theme and variations—these first six measures serve as a jumping-off point for the whole composition,
and the mismatching of harmonic and melodic goals demonstrates the utility the PRO and CAD functions discussed above. The would-be dominant chords—D major and B minor—all prolong tonic and thus act as PRO harmonies, while the A# chord in mm. 2 and 4 and the A minor-seventh chord in m. 6 are all CAD chords because they support melodic and rhythmic cadences.

A particular advantage in setting a folk song with a series of variations is that the driving force of the piece is the melody and what happens to it—what changes it undergoes, and what elements of it remain. It also affords the composer a reason to take more stylistic liberties in setting that melody, and in this case, Grainger realizes that possibility largely through the exploration of textural and harmonic terrains. In Variation 2, these changes begin gradually: m. 7 is much like m. 1 with the melody in octaves and added syncopation, and m. 8 adds a C₃ to the final tonic harmony of the two-bar group, erasing some of the closure that it normally has. But things change much more dramatically in m. 10, as the second two-bar group closes with a chromatically descending series of minor 6/3 chords, as shown in Figure 3.7.

The significance of this harmonic change is difficult to overstate here; there has yet to be any progression resembling a modulation, and every note thus far has been easily explicable in its role as a scale-degree thus far. These harmonies, by comparison, are clearly chromatic, although this does not mean they are nonfunctional. The progression is clearly directed toward tonic, and the last chord seems to fulfill the role of bii in diatonic space. There is, however, a hint of G minor—E minor’s octatonic relative—here, particularly because of the Ab in the bii harmony and the G minor triad that begins the progression. The Bb of this triad reveals the duplicity of the pitch class that it shares with A#, since they appear in parallel positions in m. 2 and m. 10.
A final alteration brought about by Variation 2 is an added B phrase, shown in Figure 3.8, which Grainger calls forth in m. 12 by means of the same gesture he used in m. 8: adding 6 to the final tonic harmony (a C# this time) and leaving the task of closing this variation to m. 14. Here Grainger presents us with another bizarre harmonization, as he combines the #4-based harmony from m. 2 with the A-minor chord from m. 6, as well as a pedal-tone B# in the top voice, creating a three-note semitone cluster. This “chord,” which combines two previously established CAD harmonies under a B pedal, proceeds to a harmonic arrival on a tonic seventh-chord in second inversion. To call this arrival a cadence seems to take undue liberties with the term, but it is undeniably the end of a phrase by virtue of parallelism and its durational accent. The 3–4–5 bass line is incomplete by conventional standards, but there is a harmonic progression from CAD to tonic in the cluster chord to a relatively consonant tonic sonority.

Whether or not one is inclined to refer to this point as a cadence—which is my leaning—this cluster harmony calls attention to the importance of the {C, C#} octatonic scale, since only the pedal B# comes from outside that collection. But the lack of a root-position tonic, the non-simultaneous resolutions in the right and left hands, and the odd voice-leading of A# and A# both moving to a B that is already present certainly prevent a convincing cadence.
The affect of this confused harmony, which is mostly upset by the presence of A#, is very unsure and unsettled, even though its eventual resolution seems clear. Perhaps most important, though, is the reason this eventual resolution seems clear: almost all of the component notes of the cluster-containing chord were used in CAD harmonies in Variation 1. While these notes do not combine into a consonant sonority, the listener has heard them all progress to tonic at least once before, so the fact that they do here makes some amount of sense.

Variation 3 introduces an entirely different sort of harmonic innovation. To accompany a drop in register and dynamic, Grainger adds a pedal tone in the top voice on D4. These changes herald a return to a relatively diatonic texture and with it a relaxation of musical intensity. Harmonically, Variation 3 is mostly the same as Variation 1, except every harmony has a D added to it. This has the straightforward effect of adding a seventh to all tonic chords and adding a root to the D major PRO chord, and the resulting sound is strangely consonant and evocative of
the archaic. This pedal D does, however, clash uncomfortably with the common-tone
diminished-seventh CAD chords in mm. 16 and 18. Because of the simultaneous presence of D
and C♯, the sonority tugs in both directions around the A♯/B♭, which can belong either to its usual
common-tone diminished-seventh harmony or a G minor triad with added sixth, recalling the
brief emergence of G minor in m. 10. Grainger even points to this ambiguity directly: even
though mm. 16 and 18 are exactly the same from a harmonic standpoint, he spells the chord with
an A♯ in m. 16 and with a B♭ in m. 18. In the conclusion of Variation 3, in mm. 19-20, this chord
is stated more explicitly in its G minor incarnation and effects the final cadence.

These G-minor-type harmonies are a new variant of the CAD function—most notably
because of the new pedal note D. Here the tritone between B♭ and E remains, and all the notes,
except D, are still members of the {C, C♯} octatonic collection. Yet because this pedal D is to
some degree a consonance—it is, after all, the fifth of a G minor triad—it has more pull than the
pedal B did. Furthermore, it calls attention to the tonicization of D major, which has thus far
been relegated to the PRO function. The A⁹ chord that tonicizes D is the strongest dominant
harmony by conventional standards in the entire piece since it clearly has a leading-tone, but the
melody so powerfully asserts E as the tonic that the E-minor harmonies at the beginnings and
endings of phrases assert themselves as tonic beyond any doubt. In Variation 3, however, D is a
pedal note in the top voice. It is as though the harmonization wants D to be the tonic, but the
melody forcibly maintains E as tonic in spite of the harmonies.³⁵

In this case, several factors other than a lack of a tonally conventional harmony
undermine the sense of cadence at m. 20, shown in Figure 3.9. There is, of course, the pedal D,

³⁵ Here the clearest case could be made for an interpretation involving the text’s subject matter.
Although I will not pursue this interpretation, it is certainly possible.
which homogenizes all of the harmonies somewhat and buries the melody—a source of closure in previous cases like m. 2—inside the texture. Perhaps more significant is the gesture after the would-be cadence point: the same 16th-note left-hand figure and right-hand pickup as in m. 16, which does not lead to a change of texture even though it begins the next variation. In the specific context of this piece, this phrase generates only weak sectional closure as a result of its failure to proceed to a different texture, and this creates conflicts in the interpretation of grouping structure and large-scale form, as I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

Variation 4 continues along the same vein as Variation 3, with the pedal D4 still in place, but mixes the various group-ending harmonizations. M. 22 brings in the descending minor 6/3 chords to end the first two-bar group, while m. 24 ends the second with a gesture very similar in content to that of m. 20, by now well entrenched as a CAD–tonic progression. Finally in m. 25,
the stranglehold of the D4 is finally released and the texture changes back almost exactly to what it was in mm. 11-14, but with C♭s instead of C♯s. A cadence is averted in m. 26, again by the technique of adding a C♭ to the tonic harmony, but there is also a new note: B♭, taking on yet another guise in a C chord with both kinds of sevenths.

M. 27 continues this harmony and poses significant challenges of functional interpretation. The C “both-sevenths” chord results here from the combination of the CAD-type C7 chord with the part of the melody that emphasizes B5, and this harmony replaces the tonic harmony which usually accompanies this melody, as in m. 5. Because CAD notes are inserted where they do not match the melody—every note except for B belongs to the {C, C♯} octatonic scale—the first two beats m. 27 do not express any unified harmonic function. Instead, there are linear patterns that point in individual directions, as shown in Figure 3.10: B and E are pedals, B♭ oscillates with B♯, G moves to F♯ and back, and C♭ moves up to C♯ and back, then down to B. This linear motion only finds harmonic direction in beats 3 and 4, wherein a clear CAD-genus C7 chord moves directly to a tonic triad with added sixth. M. 28 is much more straightforward, using the C7-based harmony in a simple T–CAD–T–CAD progression.

Curiously, this is the first variation that does not conclude with a tonic resolution, ending instead with an F♯7 chord and a bass-note B. M. 28 is not, however, an example of a half-cadence, since the CAD chord at the end is not the harmonic goal of the phrase. Rather, it is a

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36 I use the term “half cadence” along the lines of the definition found in William Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 29. “In the half-cadential progression, the dominant itself becomes the goal harmony and so occupies the ultimate position.”
stopping point between tonic that arrives with the melody on beat 3 and the tonic that begins
Variation 5. Grainger draws extra dramatic effect from this chord with a *fermata*, but it
ultimately creates continuity between Variations 4 and 5 by *denying* the attempt at a cadence in
m. 28.

Emerging from the dissonant turmoil of mm. 27-28, Variation 5 calms the texture, but it
also brings about a more significant change, as shown in Figure 3.11. This variation omits the
main melody altogether and replaces it with its harmonies, played in rolled chords with the
instruction to play “like an Aeolian harp with somewhat gusty variations of sound-strengths,”
generally meaning the performer should play with *rubato* and give hefty dynamic accents *ad
libitum* to some of the rolled chords. The harmonic progression of m. 29 most closely parallels
the first measure, albeit with a decorative 4–3 suspension and a decorative B3 above the D major
sonority, but m. 30 takes a decidedly unexpected turn of harmonic language. The harmony on
beat 2 introduces the by-now familiar combination of F♯7 with a B, which resolves as expected to
a tonic chord, but the chord on beat 4 is a completely new musical element: a combination of the
pitch classes of a D7 chord and a B major chord.

While the descending 6/3 chords from mm. 10 and 22 alluded to the octatonic
relationship between E minor and G minor, neither actually combined two octatonically related
chords. But this chord has more revolutionary implications: the Eb is the first instance of pitch-
class Eb/D# *in the entire piece*, potentially qualifying for a true leading-tone to E.
Figure 3.11 – Variation 5, mm. 29-30 (harmonies)

Furthermore, this chord belongs to the PRO-associated region of B and D, and the leading-tone transforms this into more or less a “real” dominant. However, the voicing of this chord suggests a variant of a dominant of G major—another place this piece has never gone—and while that key is also octatonically related to the true tonic of E, the chord’s ability to function as a conventional dominant suffers. Still, m. 31 simply re-begins the same two-bar phrase on the tonic, confirming that the D⁷/B chord was in fact a functional dominant to E minor and calling further attention to the notable absence of a relative major key.

The B phrase of this variation returns abruptly to a more energetic texture, with the instruction “dance-like.” This furious texture of alternating chords on eighth-notes spans only mm. 33-34, but the harmonies acquire an unusual amount of momentum, leading to the only forté dynamic in the piece. M. 33 contains normal B-phrase harmony, but m. 34 sounds very unusually like a traditional approach to a dominant, progressing through C♯⁹ and F♯⁷ to an augmented-sixth chord. While the latter two harmonies have been very common, the motion of a descending fifth from a half-diminished-seventh chord to a dominant-seventh chord suggests the possibility of a shift toward a more conventional tonal language. It would not be an utterly ineffective gesture to follow the augmented-sixth with a “real” dominant on the fourth beat of the measure, but Grainger opts instead to proceed to a new CAD-type chord instead.
Enharmonically speaking, this harmony is a diminished-seventh chord with an added A. Grainger spells it as though it is a dominant ninth-chord with A as a root, but I hear A more as an added dissonance to the familiar harmony of the common-tone diminished seventh chord. In any case, this chord is yet another CAD harmony with the \{E, A\#\} tritone and the \{A, A\#\} semitone, and like the harmony in m. 28, it resolves to tonic at the beginning of the next variation.

A melodic bass line accompanies more harp figurations in Variation 6, which is harmonically similar to Variation 5. M. 35 is a straightforward reiteration of the normal A phrase harmonization, as shown in Figure 3.12, but m. 36, like m. 30, presents us with something new. The bass line has clear tonal implications as it arpeggiates the tonic triad with a C\# upper neighbor to B. But Grainger harmonizes both the C and the G with a Petrushka chord—a combination of C major and F\# major triads. This chord, like the dominant chord from beat 4 of m. 30, is another octatonic chord, but it comes from the \{C, C\#\} collection associated with the CAD function. M. 36 to beat 1 of m. 37 is thus a functionally straightforward T–CAD–T–CAD–T progression, and the G–E bass motion at the end of it recalls the CAD to tonic progression in m. 20.

The octatonic pairings in Variation 5 with its dominant of G and E and Variation 6 with its CAD harmony are distinct from the rest of the octatonicism in the piece because they combine octatonically related triads with no extraneous pitches, and the variations are further related by their textural similarity as arpeggiano chords without a clear statement of the main melody present. To use a word from Grainger’s musical directions, it is as though he has taken a “wayward” venture into a land of pure harmony, and here harmony is allowed, however briefly, to experience a short, adventurous trek into more modernist territory.
Figure 3.12 – Variation 6, mm. 35-36 (harmonies)

M. 39 returns to the old style, although it is technically still part of Variation 6. M. 40 avoids closure again with a C#, giving the task of tonal conclusion to the next two measures. Grainger decides to bring about the end of the piece, but there is still one more surprise left in m. 41: a plagal tonicization of G major, as shown in Figure 3.13. The C minor chord with added sixth falls within the {C, C#} octatonic collection, but G replaces E as the common tone; therefore, this plagal progression is a G-major equivalent of a CAD–tonic progression. A G major triad is octatonically related to one of E minor, but it also alludes to the ubiquitous relationship between minor-third-related major and minor keys, evoking an ever so brief move to the relative major. This might not be such a significant turn of events if it were not the only time we ever hear a tonic chord other than E minor in the entire piece. There has been no modulation, even to the relative major, but for one fleeting moment, it finally happens.

From here, Grainger sets off the final harmonic progression of the piece, which presents still new peculiarities. There is a 3–2–1 bass descent in m. 42, and the arrival on E begins a tonic pedal that persists to the end, but the harmonies in m. 42 are \(<Cmaj^7, F#^7, C^9, Fmaj^7>\).

Particularly because this bass line doubles the melodic line—taken from the conclusion of every two-bar phrase in the folk song—this gesture is one final instance of a non-congruent point of closure in
the pitch dimension, just as in m. 2. The next voice to arrive at tonic is the top voice on beat 4, before M. 43 finally brings about the tonic harmonic arrival.

This final tonic pedal does not act as a denouement, however. A crescendo underlies a series of arpeggiated grace-note harmonies, and triads are supplanted with more complex chords. The tonic harmonies are minor triads with added sixths and ninths, and they surround first an F major-seventh chord and then a final common-tone diminished-seventh chord with added A, before one last loud added-sixth-and-ninth chord and a soft B–E concluding gesture in the bass. This dramatic dissonant final tonic chord ends the piece in a very different place from where it started, texturally and harmonically.

The particular kind of harmonic innovation “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter” is unique within Grainger’s folk-influenced musical style, but is exemplary of the harmonic creativity behind all of his music. That I saw fit to use new names for the harmonic functions in this piece alone—a piece that (with one very small exception) never suggests that it has left the key of E minor—indicates an impressive accomplishment of innovation without abandoning tonality. In chapter 1 I discussed the necessity in folk-music settings, as Grainger and Bartók perceived it, to
defamiliarize the music to draw greater emotional complexity from it; in this regard, “Knight and Shepherd’s” daughter is paradigmatic.
Chapter 4 – Grainger’s “Seriousness”

The repertoire discussed thus far in this thesis showcases what I consider to be Percy Grainger’s greatest accomplishment: the judicious use of compositional innovation to present folk music in a convincing format for cosmopolitan audiences. Central to this point is the notion of sophistication—while folk music, in Grainger’s view, is sufficiently complex to stand on its own as art, it is complex in ways only recognizable to those who possess a deep familiarity with the musical culture that it comes from. Thus, to be appreciated for what it is aesthetically, music must be sophisticated in ways to which listeners are acculturated. In monophonic folk-music traditions, this sophistication rests entirely within melody, whereas in Western European art-music, it rests much more within harmony and large-scale formal construction. Grainger’s harmonic innovations, as exemplified by “Brigg Fair” and “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter,” represent a quasi-translation of melodic intricacy, and the subtle artistic nuances involved in the performance of melody, into the musical language of harmonic tonality; while Molly on the Shore shows how a fairly elaborate formal structure can be based on a short, extremely repetitive dance tune.

One particularly noteworthy admirer of Grainger’s folk-music settings was Benjamin Britten. Yet ironically, a quote from Britten offers a somewhat troubling challenge to the suitability of British folk music in forging an individualistic compositional style:

> Since the form of a work is dictated by the material, the [sweet yet uneventful quality of the melodies is] bound to have a weakening effect on the structure of the music founded directly upon

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Folksongs are concise and finished little works of art. When used as raw material they tend to obstruct thinking in the extended musical forms. Works founded on them are usually little more than variations or potpourris. Again, each folksong has a completely suggested harmonic scheme—so that it should sound satisfactory when sung unaccompanied—and much deviation tends to produce a feeling of irritation.\textsuperscript{38}

Percy Grainger is notably not the target of this criticism.\textsuperscript{39} Indeed, the repertoire discussed so far serves as a counterexample to many of Britten’s points: Grainger’s harmonic settings are far from stunted by their source material, and \textit{Molly on the Shore} crafts a large-scale formal structure that sustains itself very well. These points demonstrate Grainger’s level of skill in accomplishing his goals. But how do such accomplishments truly stand as musical works of art? The phrase “little more than variations or potpourris” remains unsettlingly relevant: “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter” is indeed a variation set, “Brigg Fair” is strophic with variation between verses, and \textit{Molly on the Shore} can be described as both a potpourris and a series of variations.

Overall, and not only with respect to his folk-song settings, Grainger’s repertoire consists almost exclusively of short pieces. This calls attention to a fundamental question that has plagued his reputation as a composer: whether or not his music ought to be considered “serious” music. The controversy could not be better summarized than it has by Grainger’s biographer, John Bird:

\textit{At the beginning of my own quest, when I told colleagues I was engaged on research for a Grainger biography, the reaction I would most frequently receive (particularly from professionals and academics—people who, at the time, I felt ought to have known better) was usually a variant of, “why are you wasting your time on a tenth-rate, light music}

\textsuperscript{38} Quoted in Freeman, “Into a Cocked Hat,” 43-4.
\textsuperscript{39} Britten viewed Grainger as far superior to his contemporaries from the Folk Song Society, as noted in Freeman, “Into a Cocked Hat,” 42.
composer like Grainger?” (I was, of course, unaware at the time that by ‘light music’ they
really meant ‘meretricious music’).\(^{40}\)

To call Grainger’s music “light music,” by all appearances, is to deny that he has
successfully communicated the artistic depth of his source material in his folk-music settings.
Bird, obviously, does not subscribe to this view, nor does the opinion implicit in my own
analysis of his music. The question of which side is “correct” is not completely answerable,
since the notion of what makes music “good” in the first place relies upon subjective
considerations. One well-educated musician may consider Bach a superior composer to Brahms,
and another may believe the reverse, and neither’s point of view may be superior to the other’s.
But in the intersubjective view of Western musical thinkers—reflected in generations of
historiography and critical commentary—both Bach and Brahms are masters; whichever
composer one prefers, both have canonical status. According to Anne Shreffler’s criteria,
Grainger fails to achieve canonical status on two counts: his music’s lack of staying power (few
professional performances of his work still happen today outside of North American wind
ensembles) and his lack of music-historical significance (little music of subsequent years has
taken influence from Grainger’s).\(^{41}\)

Percy Grainger certainly lacks a scholarly imprimatur; as Bird has put it, he “has
drawn the short straw in the academic world of theory and analysis and it is tempting to
try to investigate why this should have been so.”\(^{42}\) That Grainger’s music did not


\(^{41}\) Anne C. Shreffler, ”Musical canonization and decanonization in the twentieth century,” in *Der
Kanon der Musik: Theorie und Geschichte: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Klaus Pietschmann and Melanie
Wald-Fuhrmann (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, forthcoming). For further reading on the
formation of musical canon, see also: Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works:
an Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) and Marcia J.

\(^{42}\) Bird, *Percy Grainger*, xviii.
maintain much momentum into the second half of the twentieth century is an interesting historical issue, but Bird specifically refers to “theory and analysis” as the realm in which Grainger is mistreated. This point relates not to Grainger’s failure to enter the “old” canon along with Bach and Brahms; rather, it alludes to his exclusion from what Shreffler calls the new music canon, including, for example, the Second Viennese School, which “distinguishes itself by privileging intellectual qualities and complexity over popularity.” The problem, implicitly, is not that Grainger’s music is too unknown but that it is too little respected.

Peter Tregear has recently explored the view of “mawkishness, levity, and exultation of kitsch” in Grainger’s music. As a representative example of this sort of reaction, Tregear cites a description from Paul Griffiths:

Grainger … was not a composer but a state of mind. He had few ideas of his own but the ability to make anything exposed to him instantly commonplace: folksongs he denatured with dance hall harmonies and inevitable counter-melodies, Bach he reduced to a picture postcard. His much vaunted freedom is not revolution but escape. His emotional range is bounded by schoolboy stereotypes of jollity, fun and earnestness. The appeal of his music is as dated as that of mountain walking and youth hostels.

Tregear argues that the superficial sentimentality of Grainger’s music can be taken as a display of “ironic self-awareness” that also acts “as a defence of the value of everyday human experience in the wake of high modernism”; thus, the kitsch that a listener hears is a knowing presentation of “low” art with the intention of forcing the audience to recognize their enjoyment

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45 Quoted in Tregear, “Nostalgia is not What it Used to Be,” 99.
notwithstanding. The expression of musical irony through deliberate use of kitsch, however, treads dangerously close to the intentional fallacy: that the composer intended the piece as a guilty pleasure and points this out to its audience does not necessarily elevate it from its position as a guilty pleasure. But Tregear makes a further, more interesting case: “the foregrounded compositional apparatus that Grainger almost invariably employs in setting [folk songs] reminds us that we are not so much listening to a musical (and social) ideal that is complete, stable, and coherent, but rather one made in our own image that is ironic, contingent, and tragic.” On this view, the layer of self-awareness beyond the “escapism” that Griffiths alludes to becomes a pointed recognition of the fact that such escapism is not real, depicting a very real tragedy in the longing for something entirely fictional.

While Tregear uses examples from Grainger’s repertoire to great effect, the pieces discussed in this essay show that his argument cannot be applied to vouch for all of Grainger’s music. The sense of bittersweet longing that so powerfully pervades the mood of “Brigg Fair” comes not from irony but from earnestness. This affect is not derived from the recognition that the folk ideal is fictional but from a composer’s efforts to communicate the pathos already inherent to Joseph Taylor’s performance. And here we come upon another important point: to say that Grainger, a man who so diligently sought to immerse himself in the culture folk music he collected, can only be considered artistically successful through ironic presentation of that music is to dismiss the artistic value of the folk music on its own terms. Such a dismissal is directly contrary to the arguments of the previous three chapters, so I can only conclude that the invocation of irony is insufficient to settle this matter.

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46 Tregear, “Nostalgia is not What it Used to Be,” 103.
47 ibid., 110.
Given this controversy about his own music, it is deeply ironic that Grainger himself wrote about the unfortunately wide acceptance of frivolity in music, seeking to differentiate “frivolous” and “sublime” music and “to urge the habit of distinguishing between musical farmhouses and musical cathedrals.”

He explains their important characteristics:

The influence of these two main types of music is obvious enough: the active music spurs us on to carry on the struggle of life—the so-called “practical” side—while the contemplative or rapturous music induces love, harmony, unity, peacefulness, bliss, nirvana… Angelic music prepares us to enjoy lives of heavenly happiness here on earth—just as definitely as frivolous, jiggly, restless music drives us to lead hum-drum, dull, bootless lives without revolt or protest.

Grainger develops the specifics of these categories further, but most important to the present discussion is the focus of this dichotomy: a psychological and emotional function for music to fulfill. “Active” music is “frivolous,” and its function is to evoke the energy for physical action that human beings need to exert; one manifestation of this quality in musical terms is dance forms. While this “active” music does have an important role, that role is significantly less important than that of “sublime” or “contemplative” music, which carries with it a depth of thought and reflective nature. This view of the function of music categorizes musical style by two different therapeutic mental activities: exercise and meditation. Where one provides enjoyment rather directly, the other facilitates mental stimulation and a deeper understanding of the human condition.

Considering the repertoire discussed in the preceding chapters, Molly on the Shore would be “active” music, “Brigg Fair” would be “contemplative” music, and “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter” would likely be something in between. In Grainger’s mind, then, “Brigg Fair” would

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49 ibid.
likely be the most “serious” of these pieces, since it evokes a more subdued and thoughtful atmosphere than the other two. It would, of course, be perfectly reasonable to disagree with this assessment and argue that, say, *Molly on the Shore* is more “serious” because of its larger scope and more interesting formal construction, or that “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter” is more “serious” because it displays a more challenging harmonic language. But such arguments show only that there is more than one measuring-stick for “seriousness.”

To argue in favor of *Molly on the Shore* suggests complexity as the primary criterion for “seriousness,” and more specifically complexity in the deployment and development of musical materials. This metric shows us a particularly “serious” aspect of Brahms’s music, as exemplified by the famed principle of developing variation. Complexity may also manifest itself in other aspects of music, as harmony does in “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter”; harmonic complexity is a notably “serious” aspect of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*. However, the harmony in these two pieces is more than just complex; it is challenging, it is *opaque*, and *opacity* was widely taken to be crucial element of “seriousness” in the new music canon of the twentieth century.50

It is perhaps this consideration that spawns the polarized opinions on Grainger’s artistic merit as a composer; with a few exceptions like “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter” (none of which are his most well known works), his music is not opaque. “Brigg Fair,” for instance, requires no musical learning curve to understand its affective content perfectly well on an intuitive level. That it is easy to appreciate (albeit not to comprehend intellectually) the merit of

50 This view is exemplified in Milton Babbitt, “The Composer as a Specialist,” in *The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt*, ed. Stephen Peles (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 50: “Apart from the often highly sophisticated and complex constructive methods of any one composition, or group of compositions, the very minimal properties characterizing this body of music are the sources of its ‘difficulty,’ ‘unintelligibility,’ and— isolation.”
a work like “Brigg Fair” does not inherently detract from that merit, but in a climate like the high modernism of the first half of the twentieth century, where departures from the easily comprehensible were necessary for the creation of the new, there may well have been little room for non-opaque works of music to gain much traction as “serious” art.

The fact that Grainger primarily composed comprehensible music relates directly to his criteria for “seriousness” in music. “Active” and “contemplative,” the two poles of musical style, describe the general feel of a piece of music above anything else, and emotions were, for Grainger, the entire purpose of music:

Music appeals to me merely as an expression of emotion, emotion in its broadest sense. Form, instrumentation, composition-technique generally, are to me satisfying in so far as they succeed in exploiting the underlying emotion of a composition to its fullest possible extent, & are to me unsatisfying in so far as they introduce elements which are nonconductive to the fullest possible exploitation of the underlying emotion of a composition. Other standards than this I have no use for. (Needless to say that it needs no end more technique to create form & style, so as to realize such an ideal of emotional expression, than to accomplish pretty devices of contrapuntal cleverness, thematic complexities, & trickiness, generally. 51

To criticize Grainger’s music as too sentimental is perhaps to mistake, for sentimentality, the approach of being as directly expressive as possible and of foregrounding expressivity over any sort of artifice. Where complexity might lend itself as a source of “seriousness” in music, Grainger viewed it simply as a means to an end, and emotional expression was the only true metric for the success and quality of a composition. Over-conventional music is thus not unsophisticated ipso facto but because too strict of an adherence to norms in music results in an emotionally stunted and bland piece of music. Grainger would not have pursued musical

51 Grainger, Grainger on Music, 13. A footnote in the compilation observes that “Grainger’s footnote at this point suggests he intended further elaboration here.”
innovation for its own sake but only if it worked in the service of his expressive musical goals, and this very conceivably could be why so little of his music registers as “serious” in the sense meaning “opaque.” Furthermore, this aspect of Grainger’s outlook demonstrates why many of his compositions are so short:

In one & the same composition I never introduce two contrasting styles or elements, as this would break the continuity throughout of the same emotion which to me is imperative. (Contrasts of type are admissible to me in compositions of a light & frivolous nature, dances, marches, & such, & also in the case of compositions of which the emotional type is capricious, or rhapsodical but, in this latter case, it will be seen that the contrasts are part of the requirements of the type-as-a-whole, & do no violation to its consistency.)

It is not unfair to say that this point of view is overly one-dimensional for a full appreciation of much of the great music of the twentieth century—surely new compositional techniques need not be devised only in the direct process of creating a particular feeling. Nevertheless, the fact that Grainger’s outlook represents only one out of many ways of composing does not mean that it is inferior to the other ways of composing. And if we, with the benefit of hindsight, take a pluralistic approach to evaluating musical “seriousness” and “sophistication,” we can classify Grainger’s repertoire meaningfully. “Brigg Fair” is serious in terms of sentiment and harmonic complexity, but not in terms of opacity or formal complexity; Molly on the Shore is serious in terms of formal complexity, but less so in terms of harmonic complexity and not at all in terms of opacity or sentiment; “Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter” is serious by its harmonic complexity and opacity but less so by formal organization and sentiment. The authentic engagement with one or another form of seriousness is a more liberal and, to my mind, a more valid basis on which to judge the seriousness of a piece of music, and this, I

52 Grainger, Grainger on Music, 13.
believe, is the crucial point at which subjectivity plays a final determining role. To quote David Lewin: “Theory and analysis cannot be used to support a critical judgment. But they can be used to qualify it, to sharpen and develop one’s own discrimination, and to communicate critical experiences to others.”

To conclude this essay, I will explore this last issue more directly in the “Jutish Medley” from Grainger’s Danish Folk-Music Suite, applying music analysis, in Lewin’s words, to “sharpen and develop [my] own discrimination” of the music, in the process bringing to bear all of the theoretical considerations heretofore discussed. I have selected this piece because—from a standpoint of “serious” vs. “light,” “sophisticated” vs. “unsophisticated,” or “frivolous” vs. “sublime”—it is surprisingly difficult to classify, and thus an examination of this piece highlights many considerations that are implicit in any such discussion.

“Jutish Medley” is the fourth and final movement of the Danish Folk-Music Suite, and it is a conglomeration of four folk songs. The score includes program notes, in which Grainger briefly describes his collecting venture in Denmark and the songs he uses as source material:

My Danish Folk-Music Suite is based on Danish folk-songs gathered with the phonograph in Jutland by Evald Tang Kristensen and myself during the years 1922-1927…

The “Jutish Medley”, as its name implies, is a succession of tunes hailing from Jutland. The first, “Choosing the Bride”, voices a young man’s dilemma in choosing between two sweethearts—one rich, one poor—and his reasons for finally taking the poor one. The second melody employed is a sentimental “Dragoon’s Farewell”, supposed to be sung by the dragoon just before setting out for the wars. The third is a very archaic religious song entitled “The Shoemaker from Jerusalem”.

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The final ditty, “Hubby and Wifey”, is a quarreling duet in which the wife brings her obstreperous husband to his senses by means of a spinning spindle skillfully applied to his forehead.\textsuperscript{54}

I would be remiss if I made no note of orchestration, since “Jutish Medley” is a prime example of “elastic scoring,” a concept Grainger invented to lower barriers to performance of his large-ensemble works. Grainger was interested in experimenting with the potential combinations of timbres in large ensembles, and this prompted him to employ unusual instruments such as the harmonium, but he did not want to enforce this experimentation on performers to such a degree that they might be unable to perform it. Thus, in the program notes, he writes

As long as a really satisfactory balance of tone is preserved (so that the voices that make up the musical texture are clearly heard, one against the other, in the intended proportions) I do not care whether one of my “elastically scored” pieces is played by 4 or 40 or 400 players, or any number in between; whether trumpet parts are played on trumpets or soprano saxophones, French horn parts played on French horns or E flat altos or alto saxophones, trombone parts played on trombones or tenor saxophones or C Melody saxophones; whether string parts are played by the instruments prescribed or by mandolins, mandolas, ukeleles, guitars, banjos, balalaikas, etc.; whether harmonium parts are played on harmoniums (reed-organs) or pipe-organs; whether woodwind instruments take part or whether a harmonium (reed-organ) or 2\textsuperscript{nd} piano part is substituted for them.\textsuperscript{55}

It is therefore important to remember that while I may refer to a melody as a “trumpet melody” over the course of this analysis, a given performance might conceivably involve no trumpets at all. In such a case, the reader should assume that a trumpet \textit{usually} would play that melody. That Grainger’s “elastic” scoring is an early example of indeterminacy in music is a fascinating feature and merits more analytical attention, but it is regrettably tangential to the issues at hand in this essay. I heartily encourage future research in this direction.

\textsuperscript{54} Percy Grainger, “Jutish Medley,” (London: Shott & Co., 1930), IV.
\textsuperscript{55} Grainger, “Jutish Medley,” IX.
The character of the first and last songs is light-hearted and energetic—“active” music, to use Grainger’s terms—while the second and third songs are more somber and thus might be called “contemplative” music, as shown in Figure 4.1. These basic moods are the primary basis for large-scale form in the piece: the middle section is a somber departure from the jolly romp of the beginning, in a direction of internalized feeling, sometimes warmly luxuriant, as at the start of the second song, at other times wistful and melancholic, as in the third song, or even tending toward pathos and heart-sickness, as at the end of the second song. Towards the end, there is a return of the initial style, accompanied even by a return of the first melody during the final section.

Considering the issue of “seriousness,” the formal construction is not especially complex, and this is appropriate because it allows the different songs to assert their own musical identities within the larger musical work. However, as I will demonstrate, there is an overall formal logic, in terms of tonal stability/instability, harmonic language, and texture, which fosters an impression of piece-spanning unity. The fact that these individualistic songs are grouped together in the same composition does not conflict with Grainger’s axiom of emotional consistency, since he specifically made an exception for “capricious” music. But this does not negate the possibility of analyzing the directions that these “capricious” emotional turns take, and in consequence, the accompanying fluctuations of tone, whereby sections that have a somewhat uncouth character sit alongside others that seem more to belong to the concert setting.
Figure 4.1 – “Jutish Medley,” basic formal layout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Choosing the Bride&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;The Dragoon's Farewell&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key:</td>
<td>Bb major</td>
<td>B major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>64</th>
<th>133</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Shoemaker from Jerusalem&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Hubby and Wifey&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A minor–D minor–G minor</td>
<td>Eb major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|  | "Contemplative" | "Active" |

The piece begins with “Choosing the Bride,” and Grainger’s transcription of the original melody appears in Figure 4.2. Because the notation is condensed into a single verse with alternate figurations written in, and because the words are excluded, it is likely that this transcription is a simplified sketch. The melody has two contrasting phrases, each of which ends with the same 5–1 ascending cadential gesture with a portamento. Grainger’s treatment of this melody in the opening section is more or less a series of repetitions with different orchestrations and slight changes of harmony, and each ends with a weak-beat PAC that lines up with the melodic cadence-point on B♭.
Harmonic function is very straightforward and directly follows along with the directionality of the melody, as shown in Figure 4.3. For example, mm. 2-3 each have a very straightforward tonic-prolongational harmony, going first to IV and then to V between the tonic harmonies. The bass line sounds on all quarter-notes, while a mostly constant stream of eighth-notes in parallel sixths form an inner-voice accompaniment pattern. Even the cadential progression in mm. 3-5 is very tonally normative: <I, vi, IV, ii, V, I>. But there is a single oddity to this progression: some remarkably blatant parallel fifths between the bass and the melody. The counterpoint in the rest of the phrase is well crafted, so these parallel fifths call significant attention to themselves in the phrase, especially because they are immediately followed by a sixteenth-rest, then the V–I cadence. It makes sense, therefore, to consider this musical gesture a kind of “joke,” one that helps to reinforce a general sense of levity in the music.

The second phrase in mm. 6-9 adds linear chromaticism but is still tonally direct. M. 6 prolongs a dominant through a chromatic passing motion between V and V6, and the cadential progression in m. 7-9 is <I, V7/vi, IV, [vii0], [V7], V7>—an interesting but not unusual harmonization. What makes this passage more intriguing is the piano part, which has the same basic harmonic
shape but does not seem to cooperate exactly with the strings, giving the impression of a local folk ensemble. This kind of texture, as shown in Figure 4.4, is reminiscent of some of Charles Ives’s music, such as *Central Park in the Dark* and *The Unanswered Question*, in that it evokes the experience of hearing a fictitious ensemble that is not perfectly coordinated.
Beat 3 of m. 9 states a new dominant harmony, one that initiates the second iteration of the tune. This weakens the PAC by surrounding the weak-beat tonic arrival with dominant harmonies on the strong beats that immediately precede and follow, creating continuity between two variants of the tune. Grainger repeats this pair of phrases three more times with the same basic harmonic structure, changing the orchestration and thickening the texture and adding more and more linear chromaticism to each harmony. Space is too limited to document all of the alterations that Grainger makes, but a few examples will illustrate the Ivesian textural disruptions which steadily accumulate. An accompanimental gesture of loud, chromatically descending triads surfaces over the IV\(^6\) main harmony in mm. 15, and it appears again more forcefully in m. 30 over a V harmony. In particular, the final iteration of the melody almost goes off the rails,
introducing a more and more complex texture that seems to threaten the cohesion of the ensemble. A *fff marcatissimo* line in the low brass accompanies mm. 27-28 and is so forceful that it significantly disrupts the meter, and yet it rejoins the regular metric pattern of accents only in time to produce the customary parallel fifths on beats 3 and 4. And the final cadence of the opening section nearly becomes downright messy in its harmonies, as shown in Figure 4.5, but it nevertheless culminates in a normal V\(^7\)–I PAC.

Grainger appears to have taken liberties with the character of this folk song. It seems fair to assume that its original performance by Anna Nielsen Bech did not have quite the bombast of this composition, which has the sound of a folk ensemble giving an improvisatory performance of a well-known tune. Nevertheless, there is a free-spirited joy to the original tune by itself, and perhaps Grainger’s setting is a depiction of freedom taken to its implied raucous conclusion. To categorize this tune by the criteria discussed above, this is a clear example of “active” music in its purest form, and while it possesses some degree of harmonic sophistication, it is certainly not harmonically opaque nor formally very complex. But raucous merriment is clearly the mood intended for this opening section, so it is reasonable to say that an “unsophisticated” character is the very aim of Grainger’s setting and to see it as having a depictive or symbolic function that transcends its literal crudity, giving it an underlying seriousness of purpose which it might be said to share with some of the cruder, texturally thick passages by Ives.

Grainger sets up the second song in the medley with an unsubtle halt on an F\(^\#\) seventh chord, which pivots as a German augmented-sixth in the preceding key of B\(^\#\) major and as V\(^7\) in the ensuing key of B major. What follows is one of the more baffling passages in Grainger’s oeuvre, and because it presents direct and difficult challenges to affective interpretation, I will give it the closest analytical attention of the four. The tune “The Dragoon’s Farewell,” as shown
in Figure 4.6, alternates between 3/4 and 4/4 and consists of a repeated four-bar phrase followed by a non-repeated six-bar concluding phrase.

Grainger’s setting changes moods swiftly and unpredictably even within the first iteration of the melody. Mm. 34-38 are, for the most part, a straightforward diatonic setting that leans toward softly sentimental, particularly the progression of <I, vi, iii> in mm. 35-36. But the approach to tonic that follows in mm. 37-38 is very strange: seventh chords ascending by step in parallel thirds, fifth, sevenths, and octaves, all the way from IV\(^7\) to I. The parallel motion of the \{4, 7\} tritone up to \hat{1} and \hat{5} sounds particularly strange, counterpointing as it does the melody’s descent from tonic to leading-tone. In the repetition of this phrase, Grainger thickens the texture considerably with an orchestral *tutti*, and the quasi-cadential progression in m. 41 begins the parallel seventh chords on iii\(^7\) and rises to tonic through ascending triplets. Although the
Figure 4.6 – “The Dragoon’s Farewell,” Grainger’s transcription

Contrapuntal conflict of the first phrase is somewhat smoothed out here, this gesture seems far too forceful for its surroundings, at least in the context of a sweet-sounding slow song.

The last phrase of the melody takes a very different turn for the bizarre. A trumpet solo takes up the tune with accompanying harmonies in the woodwinds, but these harmonies are packed with an enormous number of accented dissonances, as shown in Figure 4.7. The harmonic trajectory is fairly normal, and if the core harmonies were presented in a straightforward manner, they would make perfect sense as part of a bittersweet love ballad. But the stacked dissonances are used as if in excess, producing chromatic clusters, such as the A and A# in m. 44 acting as semitone neighbors over a ii<sup>6/5</sup> chord. Moments of the music sound simple and wistful, but other moments disrupt that feeling terribly, in an entirely different way from the ascending triplet-chords in the previous phrase.

These malformed harmonies find their way into the first verse of the next statement of the tune, which begins in the low woodwinds in m. 48. A subtle hint of uneasiness rears its head in m. 50, in which a V<sup>7</sup>/IV chord brings another A§ to clash with the A# in the melody. Almost immediately a heavy, almost morbid chromaticism begins to take over, as a series of chromatically descending triads from D major to B major accompanies the F# at the end of the first melodic phrase, creeping its way into the second phrase. With a jolt, an augmented-sixth
Figure 4.7 – mm. 43-48 with pickup
chord and a $V^7$ dominant chord wrest control from this deviant chromaticism, returning to a more diatonic texture in the *tutti* in m. 53. This phrase provides the culmination of the ascending triplet chords in parallel motion, beginning all the way at ii before rising to I in the climax of the section. A rest after this climactic tonic creates doubt as to what will happen next, setting the stage for the section-ending final phrase.

Where the third phrase in the first statement of the tune introduced dark chromaticism, the phrase beginning in m. 57, adds a Wagnerian level of linear chromaticism, almost completely derailing the normal harmonic direction as the tune steadfastly presses on in the low winds. The accompanying voices have a mostly four-voice texture with a near-total absence of dominant harmonies, as shown in Figure 4.8. II-based seventh-chords of various kinds are the most prominent, and they tend to progress to I chords, usually also with sevenths. The resulting harmonic direction is confused: harmonies that normally would progress to dominant—II harmonies—move directly to tonic, without much gravitation, while normally stable I harmonies are heavily directed toward IV, which does not follow. And even this harmonic progression is subject to further obfuscation from the vast number of chromatic non-harmonic tones, which come to a climax in m. 63 as the eventual resolution to tonic is disrupted, with Cx, E♯, and G♯ acting as chromatic neighbors to D♯ and G♯, in a B-major chord that is never attained as its fifth is replaced by a sixth.

It is especially difficult to evaluate the “seriousness” of Grainger’s treatment of this tune because it is hard to place exactly what its general mood is supposed to be. The affect is, at different times, straightforwardly and gently sentimental, bludgeoning and boisterous, clumsy, creepy, and disturbing. Grainger’s summary of the story behind the tune “Dragoon’s Farewell”
Figure 4.8 – mm. 57-64, reduction

provides a reasonable way to interpret this, since it is “supposed to be sung by the dragoon just before setting out for the wars.” Perhaps Grainger’s setting depicts both the tumultuous emotions of preparing to part with loved ones—calm melancholy in the beginning, which grows into a passionate swell of emotion in the parallel triplet-chords—and the growing realization of the horrors of war that the dragoon will soon experience, as represented by the harshly dissonant chromaticism.

56 Grainger, “Jutish Medley,” IV.
The “wrong-sounding” notes and overly enthusiastic parallel fifths may also depict the soldier’s descent into drunkenness as he thinks about his situation and tries to drown his sorrows. This interpretation fits especially well with the final, most chromatic phrase: the misdirected harmonies and meandering chromatic lines can be said act as the culmination of the Dragoon’s drunken ramblings. As he loses focus on the direction of his stories, the harmonies lose their direction, and the persistent presence of notes that do not belong to their concurrent harmonies corresponds his fumbling of words. The final resolution to tonic in m. 64 is less a completion than a relaxation, as though the Dragoon runs out of energy and sits down, subdued, or falls asleep.

Rather than depicting one aspect of the sentiment that a soldier about to head off to war might feel, Grainger gives us all of them, mixed together in a rapid and dizzying succession—the way a real person might feel them. The theme of intoxication, however, results in an exaggerated presentation; the thoughtful contemplation becomes overly grandiose emotional wallowing. Irony—specifically, dramatic irony—is thus appropriate here: the character of the Dragoon is being perfectly earnest, but his languishings eventually become tragically comical to the audience. And the “seriousness” in the music reflects this as well: intricate chromaticism certainly gives this setting complexity, but it goes too far—instead of intense dissonances pressing toward climactic resolution, many chromatic non-harmonic tones start to sound like they are simply wrong notes.

Upon the completion of “The Dragoon’s Farewell,” Grainger calls upon “The Shoemaker from Jerusalem” as a quasi-development section. Grainger gives no description of the song in the program notes other than that it is a “very archaic religious song,” and from his setting, it
appears Grainger did not take pains to connect it to any textual origin.57 The tune, shown in Figure 4.9, consists of four phrases, and the second is a repetition of the first, but together they do not fall under classical formal categories; they are simply a succession of musical ideas. Of particular note is the shift in focal pitches: the first and second phrases focus on D, while the final pitch of the third phrases is G. Figure 4.10 shows the way in which Grainger uses the fifth-related focal pitches of the tune to effect a tonal move from E minor—which immediately follows the B major of the previous song—all the way to G Dorian. The first variation omits the first phrase and travels from E minor to A Dorian, and the second and third variations continue the descending-fifths sequence all the way down to G Dorian. Because the variations are not especially different from each other and for the sake of space, I will briefly analyze the third variation, beginning in m. 90.

The mood of Grainger’s setting is a pleasant sort of melancholy that softens the emotional turmoil of “The Dragoon’s farewell.” Grainger harmonizes the first phrase and its repetition with a basic falling-fifths sequence in D minor that heads to a half cadence. Beginning with the G7 chord, all of the chords have sevenths, including the Neapolitan Eb chord in m. 93. This seventh—a Db mismatches diatonically with the C# in the dominant A7 chord of the next measure, an aspect of the harmonic language reminiscent of late nineteenth-century chromaticism. The dominant at the end of the second iteration of this phrase leads into the next through a bass-line motion to i6 in D minor, as shown in Figure 4.11. Here the melody descends

57 Percy Grainger, “Jutish Medley,” IV.
from C to F over a prolongation of D minor before a descent to an $E^7$ chord, which, instead of moving back to A minor, serves as a neighboring harmony to the $i^6$ of D minor. Linear chromaticism, however, disrupts the clarity of this tonic chord, adding a $B^*$ to it, before an assertive bass line moves abruptly to the new tonic of G.

The final phrase is in G Dorian and moves through a slower version of the falling-fifths progression, and the final “cadence” is a modal $<v, i>$ motion to G. In a climate so filled with dominant seventh-chords and root motion by fifth, a modal dominant in the final cadence is uncertain and unconvincing, especially because the final tonic also has an added sixth and an ascending chromatic line from B to D.

The music now begins a transition to the final song through a tonic pedal in G major, over which chromatic major triads in parallel motion are sounded in the trumpets and woodwinds. These are best understood as a stream thickening the succession $<b\flat, 1, 2, b^7, 5, 1>$,
the lowest notes of these chords. At the end of this small transition, the harp plays the chords D♭ major, B♭ major, and C♭ Major. Here, the melody shifts to the tops voice, which plays the thirds of the chords: <F, D, E♭>. E♭ major is the final tonic of the piece, so the upper voice lands on this new tonic, supported by what sounds in hindsight like a <V,bVI> progression.

The quasi-Romantic harmonic style of the third large section (the setting of “The Shoemaker From Jerusalem”) gives it a very different kind of sentimental character from its predecessor. Its mood is straightforwardly wistful and melancholy, but the pitch center is unstable—a feature that makes this music more like the sentimental music of the late nineteenth
century. The way the tonality lurches its way down the circle of fifths counterbalances the uncomplicated purity of this melancholy mood, and more importantly, it serves the formal function of shifting away from the drunken moroseness of the second song and clearing the air, and the strange transition passage in mm. 110-132 serves to lighten the mood more directly, paving the way for the jovial romp of the final song.

The final song of the medley, “Hubby and Wifey,” begins in m. 133, commencing the final section of the work, and its transcription appears in Figure 4.12. Grainger’s humorous description of the textual premise—a marital conflict that results in comedic violence—
Figure 4.12 – “Hubby and Wifey,” Grainger’s transcription

establishes quickly that the tune’s musical setting will be “active” and light-hearted, much like that of the opening song. There is even a humorous quality to the original tune as Grainger transcribed it: the melody ascends a tonic arpeggio then descends a tritone down to the leading-tone to return to Ī at the end of only one 3/4 measure, as though it finishes its tonal trajectory too quickly, and the repetition of Ī five times in a row during a 4/4 measure before bluntly landing on tonic in a 3/4 measure has a similarly comedic effect.

Grainger’s setting maintains these elements and adds several other odd musical “stumbles,” but he also speeds up the meter by supplanting 3/4 and 4/4 with 3/8 and 4/8, as shown in Figure 4.13. The basic harmonization is not especially complex and matches well with the melody, but a clever bass line manages to maintain continuity through the basic phrase structure. As the tune appears starting in m. 133, there are two parallel four-bar groups in its first half, followed by different pair of parallel four-bar groups. The first two groups, which do not cadence, suggest a sentential form, but the last two groups are more period-like, as m. 144 shortens the meter and cycles directly into its repetition, which then finishes with a PAC in m. 148.

The formal treatment of this melody, like the first, is a series of varied repetitions. To add to the humorous character of this tune, Grainger also throws a harmonic wrench into the
Figure 4.13 – “Hubby and Wifey” harmonization, mm. 133-148
texture occasionally. The first example occurs in m. 163, where he transposes the typical vi and iii triads to $bVI$ and $bIII$, then returns immediately to the normal harmonization as though nothing out of the ordinary has happened. M. 178 brings these two foreign chords back and then adds a resounding gesture of quick chromatically ascending triads up to tonic in mm. 179-180. This abruptly forceful gesture might reasonably be seen as the blow to the head in the story of the song.

As a final way of cementing that the mood of the beginning has returned, Grainger actually brings “Choosing the Bride” back—in the trumpet, as it originally appeared—in m. 181, while “Hubby and Wifey” continues in the background, making the relationship to Ivesian free juxtaposition particularly clear. The harmony from “Choosing the Bride” predominates, and in m. 197 even the texture of the beginning returns in its most raucous form, almost becoming cacophonous. This eventually leads to a resounding dominant ninth-chord in m. 206 followed by a rest with a *fermata*, and finally a faster return to “Hubby and Wifey” begins a coda, which brings about whole piece’s climactic conclusion.

The fact that this piece traverses such a wide range of emotions in a very short space is certainly a defining characteristic of the composition, so the question of how to interpret that characteristic naturally arises. Some helpful insight comes from an essay by Grainger in *The Musical Quarterly*:

H. G. Wells, the novelist, who was with me during a “folk-song hunt” in Gloucestershire, on noticing that I noted down not merely the music and dialect details of the songs, but also many characteristic scraps of banter that passed between the old agriculturalists around us, once said to me: “You are trying to do a more difficult thing than record folk-songs; you are trying to record life”; and I remember the whimsical, almost wistful, look which accompanied the remark. But I felt then, as I feel now, that it was the superabundance of art in these men’s lives, rather than any superabundance of life in their art, that made me so anxious to preserve their old saws and
note their littlest habits; for I realized that the every-day events of their lives appealed to these dirty and magnificently ignorant rustics chiefly in so far as they offered them opportunities for displaying the abstract qualities of their inner natures (indeed, they showed comparatively small interest in the actual material results involved), and that their placid comments upon men and things so often preferred to adopt the unpassionate formal and patterned habits of “art” (so familiar to us in rural proverbs) rather than resemble the more passionate unordered behaviour of inartistic “life”. 58

“Jutish Medley” reads very well as a translation, or perhaps a distillation, of what he felt he had encountered among the inhabitants of the farming communities where he found his source melodies: the concise encapsulation of feeling, simply but artistically expressed. What Grainger achieved here, despite working with potpourri as a genre, is an emotionally and in many ways formally satisfying overall composition. Frivolity and parody are present at times, but they are always accompanied by complexity in one dimension or another, such as the Ivesian juxtapositions in the first and last songs, the harmonic opacity of the second song, and the tonal instability of the third song. As with the other repertoire discussed in previous chapters, Grainger adds complexity in such a way as to preserve the spontaneity and directness of expression—heartfelt but artful at the same time—that he felt in the people he encountered while collecting, not only in the singing of those who sang, but in the ordinary speech of those who only spoke.

Thus, to attempt to say whether this piece as a whole is “serious” or “frivolous” or “sophisticated” or “contemplative” seems, really, to miss the point entirely, for it is all of these things—the point is that all of these things are presented in a somewhat organized, artistic manner, as Grainger observed in the everyday actions of the people of the countryside. Within the space of a single-movement composition we are shown why seeking to decide whether

58 Percy Grainger, Grainger on Music, 49.
Grainger’s music is mere “light” music is a fool’s errand to begin with: if a single piece of music can transcend such categorizations, certainly a composer’s entire repertoire can and does so.

A potential explanation for Grainger’s lack of recognition does arise, however. The artistic depth behind “Jutish Medley” is difficult to unearth, but it is not difficult to enjoy. An energetic and quirky piece of music with a more somber middle section can quite easily be a crowd-pleaser, and perhaps a pitfall for musicians is to assume that this is all there is to the music. Grainger once said, “The object of my music is not to entertain, but to agonise.”59 Whether his music successfully communicates pathos behind a portrayal of superficial emotions is another matter, but the conversation must go beyond dismissing the music for its sentimentality.

No amount of specificity and clarity can make an argument capable of proving that Percy Grainger was a worthy composer. Furthermore, while I have compared Grainger with Béla Bartók and Charles Ives, I do not claim that Grainger’s contributions to the music of the twentieth century compare to those of Bartók or Ives. But it does seem fair to say that Granger at least managed to avoid the pitfalls of setting English folk music that Britten articulated. Grainger’s success in this regard stems from his ability to provide opportunities to experience musical sophistication while retaining constant reference to, and indeed clear presentation of, the original melodies, in rich harmonic settings that are always changing but always respect their phrase structure, and that amplify the emotional character that derives from their original format: as folk songs. It also has to do with the fact that he manages, in each piece, to create a larger unified structure without too-significantly departing from the theme and variations principle or,

in the last case, from the potpourri genre. Finally, he succeeds in the aim of recreating something of the artistic impression that the performers of this music made on him, leaving us with a kind of musical record of the expressive aspects of a vanished way of life.
Bibliography


Appendices\textsuperscript{60}

Appendix A – Béla Bartók, \textit{Rumanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, No. 1, “Stick Game”}

\textsuperscript{60}N.B. The scores which appear in this appendix are in the public domain in Canada, where this thesis is published. They may not, however, be in the public domain in other jurisdictions.
Appendix B – Percy Grainger, “Brigg Fair”
PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER.
BRITISH FOLK-MUSIC SETTINGS.
(Lovingly and reverently dedicated to the memory of Edward Grieg.)

No. 7. Brigg Fair."

Folk-song from Lincolnshire.
Tune taken down at Brigg, Lincs., 11.4.05.
from the singing of
MR. JOSEPH TAYLOR,
OF SAXBY ALL SAINTS, LINCOLNSHIRE
by Percy Aldridge Grainger.
AND SET FOR
a single high male voice and mixed chorus
BY

PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER.
Revised edition.

WITH GENTLE SWING. M.M. 7., about 5-4.

Single high male voice.
(Tenor Solo)

Women.

HIGH.
(Tenor)

Middle.
(Basses)

Low.
(Basses)

Piano version of Chorus score.
For practice only

*er* is a folk-singer's added nonsense syllable*: it should rhyme with "her*" (the * being mute)
I took hold of her lily-white hand, O and merrily was her heart.

"And now we're met together I hope we ne'er shall part."

Brigg Fair.
For its meeting is a pleasure, and parting is a grief.

but an unconstant lover is worse than any thief.

Ah (below)

Brigg Fair.
The green leaves they shall wither and the branches they shall breathe at will.

if ever I prove false to her, to the girl that loves me.
Appendix C – Percy Grainger, *Molly on the Shore*
Grainger
British Folk-Music Settings

(Loovingly and reverently dedicated to the memory of Edvard Grieg)

No. 19. "Molly on the Shore"

Irish Reel

for Piano

Piano setting: April, 1920

Birthday gift, Mother, 37, '09

"Molly on the shore" was originally set for string four-octave or string band (summer 1907) (Schott & Co., London)

"Molly on the shore" is also set for symphony orchestra, theatre orchestra, and violin and piano (Early 1916) (Schott & Co., London)

By kind permission of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford

by

Percy Aldridge Grainger


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If your piano has a sustaining (middle) pedal play as follows. no pedal

Hold with sustaining (middle) pedal.