

Percy Aldridge Grainger

Country Gardens

British Folk-Music Settings

for Piano

Simplified Version

ED 11179-02
ISMN M-2201-0857-0

PREVIEW
Low Resolution

PROGRAM NOTE

Groups of countryside dancers (men only, so-called "Morris Men"), decked out with ribbons and jingling bells, still dance the Morris dance to the accompaniment of such tunes as "Country Gardens" and "Shepherd's Hey" in many parts of England. Our knowledge of Morris tunes and Morris dancing we owe to that genius and folk-music collector Cecil J. Sharp, and those interested in the subject should consult *Morris Dancing* (London, 1908), by Cecil J. Sharp and Herbert C. Macilwaine and by *Morris Book* (London, 1928), by Cecil J. Sharp and Herbert C. Macilwaine and by *Morris* (London, 1934), by Cecil J. Sharp and Herbert C. Macilwaine.

My original setting of "Country Gardens" (British Folk-Music Settings, No. 22) was written as a birthday present for my beloved (July 3, 1908). It was based on sketches for a room-music setting of "Country Gardens" (about 1905).

MERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER.

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NOTE TO PIANO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The passages marked to be played "with stiff fingers, stiff hand, stiff wrist" are intended to develop finger resistance and to serve as a fore-study for "stiff" octave playing—in which not only the fingers, hand and wrist, but also the whole arm and other parts of the body, are gripped in an almost concrete-like tenseness. This habit of highly energized attack forms, in my opinion, the basis of the greater part of modern piano technic. It is to be hoped that an early familiarity with such "stiff" playing will help to lay the bogie "relaxation"—which, in my opinion, is not an absurd superstition, a mere catch-word, an invitation to laziness. Since both relaxation and the root of most pianistic short-comings (as it likewise is the origin of most "stiff" playing) are the same, the student should be led to practise in the most mercilessly energetic, unhesitating way possible—instead of being advised to "spare" himself, as in relaxation. If the hand is sufficiently energized (stiff, tense, spasmodic) the relaxation (between attacks) will look after itself. You do not have to tell a man to sleep who has just walked a mile. Let us remember Nietzsche's wise words: "Only utmost hardness (that is, the most unflinchingness) is beautiful."

The fingering is designed to encourage the student to use the fingers as firmly the stronger and more reliable hand-positions and to learn to jump with the fingers in the same way as he, later on, must jump with octaves. When playing in this manner (jumping with fourths, or jumping with sixths) it is obvious that the hand must be raised only very slightly on a 16th-note and the note that follows it, whereas in the case of all longer notes (not marked *staccato*) the hand may be raised as high as comfort dictates.

If the exact difference between the duration of 16th-notes and 8th-notes is not firmly established in the student's mind he should practise the following exercise:



Count: 1234

The student should practise playing like this, and he should note (when

practising) the exact duration-length of the 8th-note marked with a * above it.

This is a piece of such a rhythmic nature, that there must be clearly-marked beats accented by the first and third beats of every bar, throughout, and that all 16th-notes (even those marked with *staccato*) be played much lighter (softer) than all longer notes in the same phrase. The best way of bringing this about is to play the 16th-notes loosely, the longer notes stiffly—thus:



stiff loose stiff loose stiff

PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER,
July 16-17, 1930.

"COUNTRY GARDENS"

(By kind permission of Novello & Co., Ltd.)

English Morris Dance Tune

Collected by
Cecil J. Sharp

set for piano by
PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER

Easy version by the composer for children or beginners,
containing no stretches as wide as an octave.

Fairly fast. ♩ = 144 (or slower)
With stiff fingers, stiff hand, stiff wrist

mp
R. H. detached
L. H. short

(No pedal except where marked)