Mock Morris

English Country Dance

PERCY GRAINGER
Arranged by DAVID GIARDINIERE (ASCAP)

INSTRUMENTATION

- 1 Conductor
- 8 1st Violin
- 8 2nd Violin
- 5 3rd Violin (Viola T.C.)
- 5 Viola
- 5 Cello
- 5 String Bass

PROGRAM NOTES

The Morris dance has been a part of spring country celebrations in rural England since the latter part of the 15th century. Accompanied with music on fiddle, pipe (recorder) or melodeon, it commonly engages six dancers with lively costumes that may include bells, sticks, ribbons, handkerchiefs or tambourines. Intricate movement patterns correspond to changes in the melody at the musical phrase. The interplay between the dancers with blunt sticks and their dancing patterns recalls the defeat of the Moors that occurred throughout Europe, culminating in Spain in 1492. (hence: Moorish Dance).

When Percy Grainger moved from Australia to London in 1901, the Morris dance was experiencing a revival. Dance steps and costumes from earlier centuries were being renewed and the melodies recorded for the first time. Grainger's approach to this piece was to capture the "merry and bright" style, but to use his own melodies. Rather than an authentic Morris dance, he titled his a "Mock Morris," completing it in the summer 1910 for six single strings. A solo piano version was presented as a birthday gift to his mother on July 3.

Grainger added wind and percussion parts to his score around 1914, and, at the request of Leopold Stokowski in 1950, further expanded the orchestration to include a full set of winds and brass, more percussion and seven string parts with divisi in all but double bass. This arrangement brings Grainger's melodies back to a more conventional string orchestra, affording students the joy of the dance and the creativity of the 20th century musical giant.

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

This sparkling arrangement offers young players the joy of this dance described as "always merry and bright." Guaranteed to get the toes tapping in your audience. Most of the string parts lie in 1st or 2nd position, and where two notes appear on individual parts, players are able to have fun with double stops.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

All Belwin string parts have been carefully bowed and fingered appropriately by level. The Yellow Very Beginning series includes many bowings as well as reminder fingerings for first-time readers. The Red Beginning series includes frequent bowings to assist younger players. Fingerings for altered pitches are often marked. The Green Intermediate series includes appropriately placed bowings for middle-level students. Fingerings and positions are marked for notes beyond first position. The Blue Concert series includes bowings appropriate for the experienced high school player. Fingerings and position markings are indicated for difficult passages.

Bob PhillipsBelwin/Pop String Editor



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