

Music History and Cosmopolitanism / abstract & bio  
Weber, Ryan (Misericordia University, Pennsylvania, US)  
Session 4b / Thursday June 2, 2–3:30 xm

### **Between Hatred and Hybridity: Grainger’s “conscious, cultured, studious, complex stages” of Cosmopolitanism**

In his 1921 article on “Nordic Characteristics in Music,” Percy Grainger (1882-1961) responded to Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) and declared: “We must go further and raise our racial art to the niveau of cosmopolitan art, so that foreign artists may recognize achievement in our art.” Grainger’s discourse reveals many contradictory impulses, from preserving a Nordic identity (which he thought was in danger of extinction) to promoting a cosmopolitan style that could embrace a universal perspective. In making his case, he adapted the writings of Madison Grant (1865-1937), whose ideas on eugenics provided the backdrop against which Nordic blood would become the measure of perfectibility in the process of cultural appropriation. Thus, through the conflation of racial politics and aesthetic philosophy, Grainger molded a unique perspective that aimed to realign the peripheral role of Scandinavian countries among established European discourses.

Yet Grainger’s concept of cosmopolitanism stood in bold opposition to the attitudes of his Norwegian colleague, who favored a Nordic identity that transcended race, nationhood, and religion. For the elder Grieg, the path to universalism in art meant not the injection of northern “whiteness” into the European experience, but an organic symbiosis of national and international traits. This study will explore these opposing affinities through three key points of entry, including: 1) the brief period of their friendship; 2) their evolving interpretations of cosmopolitanism; and 3) the extended period after Grieg’s death, during which Grainger assimilated and manipulated Nordic traits leading to a new racially-charged creed. In so doing, I will illustrate how Grainger’s unstable definition of cosmopolitanism vacillated between models of hatred and hybridity as he sought to cultivate so-called “conscious, cultured, studious, complex stages” of universality throughout the early twentieth century.

**Ryan Weber**, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of musicology at Misericordia University (Pennsylvania, USA), where he facilitates a program in Music and Culture. His research interests include the works of Edvard Grieg, Percy Grainger and their contemporaries, music and literature, and perceptions of cosmopolitanism. Dr. Weber’s recent articles can be found in the journals *Ars Lyrica* and *Musicology Australia*. His forthcoming projects include a volume on “Percy Grainger and his Cosmopolitan Imagination” for *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* and a subsequent study on cosmopolitanism in music and literature at the end of the long nineteenth century.