



Southeastern Massachusetts
Community Concert Band

Twentieth Anniversary Concert



Sunday April 28, 1996
7:30 p.m.
Millis High School

Children's March "Over the Hills and Far Away"

Percy Aldridge Grainger
(*Australian*)
1882-1961

Percy Grainger was one of a kind. Through his innovative writing for winds coupled with an incredibly creative imagination, Grainger managed almost single-handedly to have allowed the modern band or wind ensemble to emerge as a vehicle for serious composer of music. This is partially due to his selection of musical materials, but even more to an "I'm going to write what I hear, not what I'm expected to write" attitude.

Grainger lived in an era which was to become intensely nationalistic, the decades around and immediately after World War I. Afraid that the traditional musics of especially Central Europe were going to slip through the cracks due to the political situation, composers such as Bartok, Kodaly, and Carl Orff began to travel to remote areas of their countries and record traditional music and folk songs on wax cylinders.

Australian born Percy Grainger did the same thing in his adopted country of Great Britain. Many of his works are indeed based on this research, Lincolnshire Posy, the *Hill Songs* and the 1919 *Children's March* among them.

Despite a few brash interjections by the horn section, this is one of Grainger's most accessible works. Its historic claim to fame is its being acknowledged to be the first original work for piano and band.

The subtitle is drawn from a line in John Gay's **The Beggars Opera**:

***And I would love you all the day,
If with me you'd fondly stray
Over the hills and far away.***

Pineapple Poll, ballet Suite "Over the Hills and Far Away"

Sir Arthur Sullivan
(*British*)
1842-1900
ballet by Charles Mackerras
arranged for band by W.J. Duthoit

Pineapple Poll is truly a Gilbert and Sullivan ballet scored by Sir Charles Mackerras. A well-known British based conductor (he was actually born in Schenectady, New York), Mackerras has worked with the Sadler's Wells Opera, the Hamburg Opera, and numerous symphony orchestras around the world.

The plot of the ballet is based on *The Bumboat Woman's Story*, from W.S. Gilbert's **Bab Ballads**. The music itself is literally a medley of music from the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. In this suite at least twenty full melodies and pieces of other appear.

The plot is pretty typical of the G & S operetta: Poll Pineapple, a bumboat woman (like Little Buttercup in *H.M.S. Pinafore*) is enamored of Lieutenant Belaye, the commander of the gunboat, *The Hot Cross Bun*. And, as luck would have it, Poll is the object of affection of one Jasper, the pot boy at the local pub. Belaye, of course, loves Blanche, "a lass above his station." And Poll really wants nothing to do with the unfortunate Jasper.

Scene 2 begins as shore leave ends. As the sailors begin to return to *The Hot Cross Bun*, Poll disguises herself as a sailor and joins them aboard ship to be closer to Belaye (who doesn't know she's alive). Jasper finds her dress beneath the dock and decides that Poll has, in fact, killed herself in despondency.

Scene 3 takes place aboard the ship. After the rigors of a long tough voyage plagued with seasickness and hard labor, *The Hot Cross Bun* returns to port where Blanche is waiting in her wedding gown despite family protests. Poll Pineapple now throws off her uniform, revealing her true identity and claims Belaye for her own. Now Blanche is mad. And the sailors are mad that their captain would allow a woman aboard ship. A seemingly hopeless situation! But, within a few minutes all is unraveled: Belaye gets Blanche, the sailors get their shore leave, and Jasper and Poll Pineapple decide to wed. The final moment in the ballet finds a huge Union Jack being raised over all.

Three Marches: "Over the Hills and Far Away"

John Philip Sousa
(*American*)

Indisputably America's "March King" with at least one hundred thirty-four marches to his name (many published simultaneously for band and orchestra), Sousa was an incredibly prolific composer not only of marches, but of solo songs, suites of music for orchestra and band, and operettas.

The first of the three marches on today's program, *The Bride Elect* (1897), was taken from Sousa's operetta of the same name. With *El Capitan* (1895), *The Bride Elect* confirmed Sousa's place as a pioneer in American musical theatre.

The Crusader (1898) was written for the Knight Templar Commandry in Boston of which Sousa had been made a member shortly before he composed this march.

Of *The Occidental* (1897) we really have no information except, most unusually for Sousa, its publication was delayed for four years until 1891.