



## A Ramble on Love

### MUSIC

**Who:** Soundstream Collective

**Where:** Elder Hall, Thursday

**Reviewer:** Elizabeth Silsbury

AUSTRALIAN Percy Grainger admired Norwegian Edvard Grieg for his settings of Nordic folksongs. Grainger's original interpretation of Grieg's piano concerto was admired by its composer.

Although Grainger longed to be recognised by the older man as a composer, rather than as a pianist, they became friends.

Their intense, though brief relationship was celebrated through music and words in a collaboration between the University of Adelaide's Arts and Heritage Collections, holder of a substantial amount of Grainger memorabilia, Soundstream Collective, the J M Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice and the Elder Conservatorium.

Grainger scholar, Mark Carroll, told the story about the youngster from down-under and the oldster from the top of the world. John Addison (cello) and Gabriella Smart (piano, pictured above), illustrated their common ground in their music.

The melodies and rhythms of folk music were of prime importance to both composers. Arguably, both were at their best in country mode; from the Soundstream duo, *La Scandinavie*, five pieces based on Swedish folk songs and dances, Grainger's homage to Grieg and Nordic culture.

The cello sang most sweetly in the wistful *Song of the Vermeland*; both players gave a glimpse of Grainger's passion in *Air and Finale on Norwegian Dances*.

Smart chose well, with four of Grieg's *Nineteen Norwegian Folk Songs*, the work that so captivated his young disciple.

Understandably, she struggled with Grainger's *Ramble on Love*, doggedly persisting in her quest to find much to justify his claim that he was rambling on about the love duet from *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Actually, he was confirming that such an exercise was beyond him, but grateful thanks to Smart for her enlightening labours.

The duo rounded off with an admirably disciplined performance of Grieg's *Sonata for cello and piano op 36*, wherein the Norwegian also suffered from occasional attacks of the rambles.

Flashes of melodrama, moments of humour, several trick endings (but no one clapped), references to the rightly famous piano concerto and patches of the delicate and fragile writing so admired by Grainger; interest in the piece was maintained as much by the delivery as the content.