



Harry Partch, Hobo Composer (Eastman Studies in Music)

By S. Andrew Granade

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Harry Partch (1901-74) was one of the most distinctive and influential American composers of the mid-twentieth century. During the Great Depression, Partch rode the railways, following the fruit harvest across the country. Although he is renowned for his immense stage works, such as *Delusion of the Fury*, and his use of highly sophisticated instruments of his own creation, Partch is still regularly called a "hobo composer." Yet few have questioned this label's impact on his musical output, compositional life, and reception. Focusing on Partch the person alongside the cultural icon he represented, this study examines Partch from historical, cultural, political, and musical perspectives. It outlines the cultural history of the hobo from the mid-1800s through the 1960s, as well as those figures associated with the hobo's image. It explores how Partch's music, which chronicled a disappearing subculture, was received, and how the composer ultimately engaged and frustrated popular conceptions of the hobo. And it follows Partch's later years to question his response to the hobo label and the ways in which others used it to define and contain him for over thirty years. S. Andrew Granade is associate professor of musicology in the Conservatory of Music and Dance, University of Missouri-Kansas City.

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Editorial Review

Review

Granade shows that the grim predicament of the transient population during the Depression depicted in films, the novels of Steinbeck and the songs of Woody Guthrie, is also central to Partch. Provides new material, including details of his friendships and his contacts with other composers. Well produced and cheap at the price. GRAMOPHONE (Peter Dickinson) Harry Partch, Hobo Composer is almost epic in its panoramic view of an American subculture as seen through the lens of one artist's life. It should find a ready audience among composers and scholars of American music, not to mention the legions of microtonalists who look to Partch as their primogenitor and patron saint. An important book. --Michael Hicks, author of Henry Cowell, Bohemian

About the Author

S. Andrew Granade is associate professor of musicology in the Conservatory of Music and Dance, University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Melissa Alfonso:

People live in this new day time of lifestyle always make an effort to and must have the spare time or they will get great deal of stress from both day to day life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not a robot. Then we consult again, what kind of activity do you have when the spare time coming to anyone of course your answer will unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading books. It can be your alternative with spending your spare time, often the book you have read is definitely Harry Partch, Hobo Composer (Eastman Studies in Music).

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