Cyril Scott (1879–1970) was primarily a composer, part of Percy Grainger’s ‘Frankfurt Group’, but also a writer, homeopath, artist, occultist and philosopher.

Born in England, Scott began studying at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt at the precocious age of 12. A prolific composer, Scott wrote more than 400 musical works, including four symphonies and three operas. Considered a pioneer of British piano music in the early 20th century, Scott helped Britain break away from the prevailing Austrian/German musical influence and its reputed conservatism.

This bronze bust, by renowned English architectural sculptor Francis Derwent Wood, was modelled when Scott was in his twenties. He is depicted in romanticised clothing, with a stern gaze – elements popular in portraiture of the period.

The bust was purchased by the Australian composer and pianist Percy Grainger (1882–1961) in 1946 from the sculptor’s widow (Australian soprano Florence Schmidt, 1873–1969), as part of Grainger’s continuing efforts to promote Cyril Scott’s reputation as a leading force in 20th-century composition. As a result, a considerable amount of material relating to Scott (including music manuscripts, correspondence, artworks and clothing) is in the collection of the Grainger Museum.
Teaching ideas

The University of Melbourne’s curriculum is rich and varied, and changes from year to year. For more teaching ideas, contact a collection manager.

Society, Politics and the Sacred
Discuss Cyril Scott’s writings held in the Grainger Museum Collection as an example of the early 20th-century interest in the occult.

Creativity, Genius, Expertise and Talent
Consider the correspondence and manuscripts of the Frankfurt Group composers as a way of defining the influence of the collective on individual creativity and artistic practice, and the ways in which environmental, historical and cultural forces influence productivity and reputation.

Music and Spirituality
Examine the complex relationship between Cyril Scott’s musical compositions and his writings on spirituality, by looking at material held in the Grainger Museum Collection.

Sex, Death and the Ecstatic in Music
Read the letters between Cyril Scott, Percy Grainger and other members of their circle to develop an understanding of the representation of sex, death and the ecstatic in musical composition.

20th/21st Century Western Music
Place the musical compositions of Percy Grainger and Cyril Scott in the historical context of performance.

Australian Music
Discuss Percy Grainger’s music in the context of Australian music, and in relation to the broader music community, such as the Frankfurt Group.

Intersecting objects

Theod Bänder (Frankfurt-am-Main)

Percy Grainger and Cyril Scott, Schillerplatz, Fankfurt-am-Main. c. 1900
photographic print
Grainger Museum
University of Melbourne
Percy Grainger (Australian/American, 1882–1961)

**Frankfurt room**, probably c. 1895–1900
watercolour and pencil on paper
24.0 × 18.0 cm
Grainger Museum
University of Melbourne
04.0161

To learn more, visit the website of the Grainger Museum.

**Reference**
Rowena Pearce, [Portrait bust of Cyril Scott], in Chris McAuliffe & Peter Yule (eds), *Treasures: Highlights of the cultural collections of the University of Melbourne*, Melbourne University Publishing, 2003, p. 120.

**Further reading**