Isabella Stewart Gardner, Fenway Court, and a Life on Display: French Music in Turn-of-the-Century Boston

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ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER, FENWAY COURT, AND A LIFE ON DISPLAY:
FRENCH MUSIC IN TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY BOSTON

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To my wife and my daughter: Thank you for patience. Your love motivates me each day.
To my mother: Thank you for always encouraging me to follow my heart.
To my father: Thank you for everything, Dad.
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ABSTRACT

Isabella Stewart Gardner (1841–1924) was a wealthy art patron and founder of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, MA. Though most scholarship dedicated to her concentrates on the museum’s fine art collections, she was involved with music as much as she was with art. Her financial patronage and house concert series provided support for newer composers, who were currently underrepresented in Boston’s more established musical scene. Boston’s well-known musical institutions, such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Harvard Music Association, and the Handel and Haydn Society tended to focus their programming on Germanic composers. Despite her earlier interests in the Germanic musical canon, which was engrained into the fabric of the city, Gardner became more interested in French styles and supported like-minded American composers and musicians through concerts at her homes. Her homes were also robust centers of Bostonian society and culture, particularly Fenway Court—the museum’s location, built in 1901. Through analysis of social and cultural context and archival research at The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, this thesis aims to provide a wider and deeper understanding of her connections to Boston’s music culture, her transition to supporting French styles, as well as the ways in which Fenway Court was a central vision to her role as an active music patron.
CHAPTER ONE

BELLE GARDNER AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY BOSTON

Isabella Stewart Gardner (1841–1924) was a wealthy patron of the arts and music. She is now most known for the Boston art museum that bears her name: The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Born in New York to an elite family, she moved to Boston in 1860 after marrying John Gardner, the child of an even wealthier family.\(^1\) They quickly became part of the city’s elite and beginning in the 1890s began to acquire many paintings during trips to Europe, which would eventually constitute the museum’s holdings. Art was not her only passion; she was especially interested in music and nurtured Boston’s musical culture.

Gardner’s interest in music came early in her life. Morris Carter, first director of the museum and her first biographer, said “Before she turned her energies to collecting works of art, it might have seemed that music was to be the great interest of her life. It always stimulated her emotionally, but, because she did not wish to be merely a sentimental amateur, she worked hard to acquire knowledge of it and a sound basis for an intelligent appreciation of it.”\(^2\) Musicians appreciated this hard work to “acquire knowledge” of the musical literature, and she developed relationships with the composers and musicians that she supported that went beyond typical patron/artist relationships. She became a discerning and active patron.

In nineteenth-century America, music patrons played a critical role in supporting performers, composers, and musical organizations. European-court life was not a viable model for support of the artists in the United States. Instead, wealthy individuals, acting on their own

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\(^1\) Gardner’s general biographical information and be best drawn from Carter’s and Tharpe’s works cited below. Since Carter was a friend of Mrs. Gardner, his biography has more intimate analysis of Gardner’s actions and opinions.

tastes and interests, were some of the most important financial supporters of music. Extended trips to Europe were commonplace for wealthy Americans, and journeys across the Atlantic were not made for mere sightseeing purposes. Upper class families placed value on the edifying benefits of travel. America had cultivated a diplomatic relationship with France, placing our foremost politicians as ambassadors there, including Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. It is this close relationship between the two countries that encouraged many young intellectual and artistic Americans to travel to France. Writers and artists traveled to European cultural capitals, in particular Paris. In the years leading up to and during the heart of Napoleon III’s remaking of Paris, New Englanders Samuel Morse, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., James Fenimore Cooper, and Nathaniel Hawthorne made several long-lasting stays. These noteworthy men of literature, philosophy, and art immersed themselves in Parisian culture.

Cultural tourism was not the only means by which Americans learned of European art and music. Immigrants came to America seeking work, and Boston, as a cultural, intellectual, and financial capital of the United States in the aftermath of the revolution was prime location for a new start. Germanic immigration, particularly after revolutions in 1848, was high, and with migration to America they brought pride for Germanic composers. Though German immigration to Boston was limited, the city’s cosmopolitan status encouraged musicians to settle there.

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3 Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr, *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860*, (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1997). Locke and Barr provide accounts of various patrons beneficial to understanding Gardner’s place amongst her peers.


5 Nicholas Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England*, (Boston: Northeastern Press, 2001). In Chapter Four, Tawa provides a comprehensive view Boston’s strides in music in the nineteenth century, including Thomas Hasting’s advocacy of Haydn and
Through these circumstances Boston grew to be a cosmopolitan city, and Gardner’s young adulthood was a product of Boston’s elite society. As a child of a wealthy family, she was given every opportunity to see Europe. She attended finishing school in France, and her family traveled extensively during her teenage years. John Gardner’s sister and Isabella were close friends from finishing school, and after a short courtship, John proposed to her and the couple was married on April 10, 1860. John was by many accounts an eligible young bachelor. His family was of old Boston stock dating back before the nation’s birth. With this established presence in New England, John’s father succeeded in the textile industry. With his wit and charm, young Bostonian women were somewhat upset at the prospect of a New York outsider like “Belle” (as she was known as a young woman) winning his heart. This was first of many instances where she and Boston’s social elite would clash.

Almost immediately, the couple began to travel. Their honeymoon took them throughout Europe and foreshadowed the extensive travels that would characterize their relationship and feed Isabella’s passions. Gardner had an inquisitive mind and educated herself in world cultural history. They traveled to Egypt, Japan, Cuba, and extensively throughout the eastern United States and Europe. While some of the trips were summer retreats, they also had regular, extensive stays in Italy and a year-long stay in Europe. During her travels, she collected postcards, photographs, other keepsakes, and a vast collection of paintings. These journeys abroad were an extension of her lifestyle at home, continuously cultivating her interests in art, music, literature, and even sports. She sought out all that Boston had to offer, including lesser-

Bach, the Boston Academy of Music, and the Germania Society, an ensemble that left Berlin in 1848 after the uprisings and settled in Boston.

Louise Hall Tharpe, *Mrs. Jack: A Biography of Isabella Stewart Gardner* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1965), 24. Tharpe discusses an interesting occasion when the Prince of Wales visited Boston. Belle was the talk of the ball in a fashionable gown, highlighted in the following day’s papers. John Gardner was quite taken by her presence.
performed French and American music, particularly those residing in Boston whom she befriended.

Through dedicated education—by schooling during her youth, travel, self-edification, and the social functions of upper-class life—Gardner amassed a wealth of knowledge in all arts. Her social surroundings played a significant role in the artistic works that she was exposed to in her youth and early adulthood. Two different artistic and intellectual camps that existed in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Boston fueled her curiosities. The first is the old, establishment Boston into which she married. This group, collectively called “Boston Brahmins,” had deep ties with Harvard intellectuals, established local merchant families, and German music (to be discussed later.)

Henry Lee Higginson, founder of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Harvard alumnus, was a close friend of the Gardners. His wife, Ida, first met Isabella in 1857 in Italy. Mrs. Gardner was a staunch supporter of the BSO through faithful attendance and constructive criticism. In the month after the first performance Higginson was adamant that Gardner provide honest opinion for his new organization. While he is known now for his orchestra and its success, his first bit of fame was as a successful military man. He served for two years in the Union army during the first years of the Civil War, and in the summer of 1863, was injured and returned home to Boston. After the war he settled into a successful career in finance, following his father’s profession and served as a financial investor for the Gardners. While he was secure

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7 Carter, 14.
9 Henry Lee Higginson to Isabella Stewart Gardner, October 10, 1906. Higginson details several stocks that Gardner owns, including United States Steel Preferred, United Fruit, and Utah
in his vocation, his passion for music was still pronounced.\textsuperscript{10} His travels in Europe in the 1850s included music studies and intended to become a professional musician. It would take nearly three decades for him to combine his passion for music and knowledge of business to create the Boston Symphony.\textsuperscript{11}

Higginson lacked the wealth of the Gardners or Sears or an old Boston lineage like the Cabots or Lowells. But these Brahmin families did support the Germanic music tradition that characterized the Harvard Music Association (HMA) and, later, the BSO. (These organizations will be discussed in further detail in next chapter.) These families, among many others, were intimately connected to Harvard at a time when artistic-minded transcendentalists like Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Sullivan Dwight were establishing aesthetic values for the young country. Dwight, best known for his publication \textit{Dwight’s Music Journal}, published in Boston for twenty-nine years, staunchly supported the conservative Germanic music tradition and opposed newer programmatic tendencies. Norton, Emerson, Dwight, and later Higginson were among a score of men that made up the Saturday Club, a group that met to discuss life and the arts. Many Saturday Club members also frequented social clubs in town like the Tavern Club and the St. Botolph Club. John Gardner often spent time at the Tavern Club as did many of Isabella’s friends such as painter John Singer Sargent and musicians Charles Martin Loeffler, Clayton

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\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{10} M.A. DeWolfe Howe, \textit{The Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1881–1931}, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931). Higginson’s biographical information, through the early chapters of Howe’s book, is an undercurrent of the early history of the orchestra and frames his selection of the ensembles’ first conductors.
\end{center}

\footnotesize
\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{11} Steven Ledbetter, “Higginson and Chadwick: Non-Brahmins in Boston,” \textit{American Music} 19/1 (Spring 2001): 52.
\end{center}
Johns, and Wallace Goodrich; Higginson served as the club’s president for twenty years. Even though he was not of traditional Brahmin stock, his artistic preferences matched those of the typical Brahmin, he participated in many of the social and intellectual club associated with the group, and they supported his new organization wholeheartedly.

Mrs. Gardner was particularly close to Harvard president Charles Eliot Norton, who was the college’s first art history professor. Norton too was a member of the Saturday Club and served the Tavern Club as vice president for three years and president for eight years. For years, he had been encouraging Harvard students, his friends, and colleagues to spend time in Europe devoted to cultural education, principally art. As professor of literature Norton encouraged Gardner’s antiquarian interests. She took great interest in his devotion to Dante, and some of her earliest purchases were of old editions of his works. Gardner attended many of his lectures on Dante and literature topics, and the two developed a close friendship. Gardner even provided generously to a school with which Norton was associated. The relationship was not one-sided; he trusted her love for historical artifacts enough to send her a number of old texts including an original manuscript of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem “Paul Revere’s Ride.”

13 Ledbetter, 52. Ledbetter believes that “Higginson and [composer George] Chadwick are often casually described as exemplars of the Boston Brahmin.” This point is well-taken. Yet the social, cultural, and intellectual kinship that Higginson shared with those considered by most to be true Brahmin stock is more relevant here than his economic status and adolescent life.
14 Charles Elliot Norton to Isabella Stewart Gardner, June 11, 1885.
15 Edward Waldo Emerson, The Early years of the Saturday Club, 1855–1870, Boston New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1918, 11. Norton and Longfellow were both members of the Saturday Club. The members established a secondary group to publish a magazine, becoming the Atlantic Monthly in 1857, which published “Paul Revere’s Ride.”
would have been “sorry to have these autographs go out of Massachusetts . . . and [did] not want
to expose them for sale.”  

Gardner’s other social and cultural circle was a new generation of artists, musicians, and
writers who cultivated a musical landscape beyond the Germanic tradition. They aligned more
closely with French styles. She was well versed in French literature and had strong friendships
with French-inspired artists such as Dodge MacKnight, Sarah Sears, and John Singer Sargent.
These artists made Paris a second home just as Samuel Morse had done two generations prior;
Morse was known to sit for hours and paint copies of masterpieces at the Louvre. As might be
expected Sargent and others made connections with French writers and musicians, supporting
another avenue of creativity that Gardner could explore.

These two different factions of Boston life and Mrs. Gardner’s interest in arts
characterized her life as a whole—challenging and embracing tradition simultaneously. Beyond
artistic pursuits, she demonstrated this duality in many ways. In support of tradition, her interest
in Renaissance art is impossible to ignore. A great many of her artistic purchases were from that
period, including Titian’s *The Rape of Europa*, a favorite of today’s visitors to the Gardner
Museum. In addition to her love for Renaissance art, she was devoted to the careers of
contemporary artists like MacKnight and Sargent. Some paintings by these artists challenged
Parisian taste, including works like Sargent’s *Madame X*, which caused quite a stir at its premier
in Paris.  

She embraced those who were willing to buck trends and act outside of expectations.
Her fame—perhaps better termed *infamy*—in Boston social circles was due in part to her breaks
with social norms. In 1888 she commissioned Sargent for a portrait, “which was exhibited to

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16 Charles Elliot Norton to Isabella Stewart Gardner, November 12, 1902.
17 Sargent’s *Madame X* (1884) can be viewed at http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections.
great acclaim at Boston’s St. Botolph Club.”18 At the time, some believed the work was intentionally reminiscent of Madame X. Close friend and painter Anders Zorn depicted a lively Gardner in another portrait. Though there is a stylistic difference between Sargent’s works and Zorn’s, the portraits show a lady not in keeping with upper class attire. Zorn’s painting goes a step further and presents a grand entrance.19

Boston newspapers contained various tales of her daring attitudes and exploits. Her love for animals and their well being fueled her life-long commitment to organizations that supported proper treatment of animals; she was frequently seen at the local zoo holding tiger cubs.20 The local press took this opportunity to enhance the narrative to the point where she was described as walking down Boston’s streets with lions on leashes. A famous incident, and perhaps the most frequently mentioned among musical circles, was wearing a bright-red headband to a BSO performance to demonstrate support for Boston’s beloved baseball team, the Red Sox.21 She was an avid sports fan, following the success of all the local sports teams and the competition at local clubs, atypical for the average upper class female. The Brookline Country Club, one of the earliest of its kind, devoted resources to polo, golf, and equestrian events, and Mrs. Gardner saved newspaper coverage of many of these events. Though she followed local events closely, she was also aware of the importance of Jim Thorpe’s football prowess in Pennsylvania. When

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19 Zorn’s *Isabella Stewart Gardner in Venice* (1894) can be viewed at [www.gardnermuseum.org/collection](http://www.gardnermuseum.org/collection).
20 Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Final Will, 9. Her will provides provisions for the Animal Rescue League of Boston, and the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. All of the archive’s musical materials are uncatalogued within each particular subcategory of materials. The scores are kept together but not itemized; musical programs are similarly handled. Guest books have volume numbers.
21 Tharpe, 290.
Thorpe’s college Carlisle played Harvard in 1911, she saved Thorpe’s picture from the newspaper even though Harvard lost the game.\footnote{Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Guest books, Volume 9.}

While it might be easy to see these actions as a break with the upper-class norms of Boston social circles, there is a deeper root, at least, to her excitement for sports. After her brother-in-law passed away, she and John adopted his sons. She had affection for John’s family members, but she took seriously the opportunity and responsibility to nurture two teenagers. It was so important to her because the only child that she and John had died at age two; Gardner was devastated when her son, Jackie, passed. “It was her supreme desire to be a mother.”\footnote{Carter, 25.} With another chance to be a role model and mentor, she would support her nephew’s passions fervently. Sports was a burgeoning past time in America. Football, baseball, tennis, and hockey were in their infancy, and her nephews were extremely active in these and other sports. Both played on the Harvard football team, and Gardner took great pride when the Harvard Crimson beat the Yale Bulldogs.

Gardner’s interests were wide-ranging, encompassing different streams of Boston social and musical life. As she became older and her knowledge of the arts matured, she and John cultivated salon-life in Boston. A few years before the turn-of-the-century, she decided to build a grand new home, Fenway Court. This new home would also serve as a museum to display her art collection and a venue for stage performances of the music that she had come to love. Fenway Court would prove to be a turning point in her engagement with music. For most of her early years, her interests in music lay within the Germanic tradition that captivated Boston and its music institutions. While much of Boston, particularly Brahmin circles, rarely looked beyond German music until after the Karl Muck incident at the BSO in World War I (to be discussed...
later), Gardner’s importance in Boston’s French-influenced culture predates the war and the subsequent anti-German sentiment. She also drew attention to Boston’s own composers and musicians, something the city’s more established institutions neglected. While much has been written on Boston’s German ties, the Muck incident and its effects, and Gardner’s role as a patron, there has been little exploration of Boston’s pre-war French musical circles and Gardner’s role as a patron of French and American composers.
CHAPTER TWO

BOSTON’S GERMAN TRADITION

For most of its young history as an independent nation, the United States was unsurprisingly less concerned with a developing robust concert music scene than with establishing rule of law, productive trade relationships, fixing financial problems during and after the Revolutionary War, and dealing with another war with England in 1812. The musical tradition of New England continued to center on psalmody, which reigned the soundscape since the late seventeenth century.24 Local town’s choral societies established in and around Boston in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century trained performers and conductors who were skilled in performing both historical and newer works imported from Europe.25 Native composers, though, were mostly ignored. These societies provided fertile ground and paved the way for the success of organizations such as the Handel and Haydn Society.

The Handel and Haydn Society was established in 1815, and select individuals from churches around the city and towns outside Boston comprised the ensemble. From the first concert, works by the organization’s namesakes were programmed almost exclusively. Popular hymns and anthems supplemented selections from Handel’s and Haydn’s——mostly Handel’s—oratorios, and early programming eventually diversified to include Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* and *Lobgesang* and Rossini’s *Stabat Mater*. Throughout much of the nineteenth century, a small group of works by mostly Germanic composers dominated each season, which usually consisted

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25 Perkins, 29. Some choral societies include Stoughton Musical Society (1786), Boston’s Independent Music Society (1786), and Massachusetts Musical Society (1807), and the Lock Hospital Society (1812). Churches in Boston also created their own choral societies.
of less than ten concerts per year. The ensemble became part of the city’s fabric and even
performed for Presidents James Monroe in July of 1817 and John Tyler in June of 1843. The
group was even called upon to heal during national tragedy. Just after the beginning of the Civil
War, the society volunteered to hold a benefit concert at Music Hall “with the co-operation of the
Philharmonic Orchestra, the Germania Band” and individual local patrons.\(^{26}\) And in May of
1865, a little over a month after the President of the United States was assassinated, the society
held a five-day musical commemoration of Lincoln’s life at Music Hall. Assisted by members of
orchestras from New York and Philadelphia, the ensemble performed Mendelssohn’s *Lobgesang*
and *Elijah*, Haydn’s *Creation, Israel in Egypt*, and *Messiah*, and Otto Nicolai’s *Religious
Festival Overture* along with an evening of organ music by B.J. Lang, noted pianist, conductor,
and friend of the Gardners.\(^{27}\) With musicians from across the northeast, this music was chosen to
celebrate the end of the war and the nation’s union, while simultaneously mourning the death of
the president. It is understandable how the music that had normally been used for artistic
enjoyment might also serve to bring the city and the nation together and also further entwine
with the citizens’ lives.

While the Handel and Haydn Society nurtured an emotional connection to Boston,
Harvard College supplied the intellectual grounds for supporting Germanic composers. Harvard
had a long history of supporting music yet did not have an organized department until the 1862.
In 1808, students formed the Pierian Sodality Society in order to rehearse and perform in an

\(^{26}\) Perkins, 197. The information provided in this work is extensive, including programming and
members.
\(^{27}\) The first entry in Gardner’s will requires that $5,000 be given to the Boston Public Library’s
music library for a memorial to B.J. Lang.
organized manner.\footnote{28} Eventually other clubs, namely the Glee Club and the Instrumental Club, formed to emphasize particular areas of music. Most of their musical activities were serenades throughout campus and Cambridge, though they managed to perform opera selections as well. In May of 1837 recent graduates formed the Harvard Music Association (HMA) and began to host dinners in order to raise funds for chamber concerts. As the organization matured, it began to create “agitation for the teaching of music at Harvard.”\footnote{29} Harvard Presidents Thomas Hill and Charles Eliot were receptive to the idea and hired John Knowles Paine as the first professor of music in 1862. Paine was a talented young musician and, at age 19, traveled to Europe and studied organ in Berlin where the music of Bach impacted him greatly. He returned to Boston three years later, played organ for West Church, and performed concerts around town, earning recognition as “the leading organist of the country.”\footnote{30} Once Paine was hired onto the faculty, he began teaching works of the German masters. Paine and Harvard’s connection to German composers was on display in 1903 when, as a demonstration of the city and country’s devotion to Wagner, “Professor Paine represented America at the unveiling of the Wagner Memorial in Berlin.”\footnote{31} Even into the 1920s after Paine was no longer on the faculty, the supplementary classes in history focused mostly on Germans: “Presentation and analysis of representative works of Mozart;” “French music from 1871 to the present day;” “Presentation and analysis of the works of Beethoven;” “The Russian Nationalists from Glinka to Stravinsky;” “The works of J.S. Bach;” and “Presentations and analysis of representative works of Brahms.”\footnote{32} The class on Russian nationalists would have been welcomed amongst wider Boston public, since

Tchaikovsky gained prominence on the BSO stage in the 1890s. The class on French music was probably the brainchild of faculty member Edward Burlingame Hill, an avid admirer of French composers; however, it seems odd to only attend to French works after 1871, leaving behind centuries of established French styles.

John Sullivan Dwight was especially influential in musical circles in Boston and throughout New England. He graduated from Harvard Divinity School and could be counted as one of several Unitarian ministers and Harvard alumni who became attached to transcendentalist philosophy in the early nineteenth century. Ultimately deciding that life in the ministry was not his desired path, Dwight focused on music. He began writing on music for a magazine established developed by the Brook Farm commune, a transcendentalist experiment started by fellow Unitarian George Ripley, which was plagued by financial problems and several fires. Dwight’s greatest contribution was the founding of Dwight’s Journal of Music, a widely circulated periodical that discussed performances and works of the day. Dwight was a member of the HMA, and the journal “came out of its friendly dinners and discussions.” Several area musicians contributed articles during its run from 1852 until 1881, including John Knowles Paine, Alexander Thayer, and Arthur Foote. Dwight’s contributions showed steadfast devotion to Germanic tradition, and he was “always an ally of the Handel and Haydn Society.” He became a beacon of taste for mid-century Bostonians; even though the journal was surely available on campus the Harvard Glee Club voted to subscribe to the journal in 1858. Dwight’s connections with Harvard intellectuals and HMA musicians and his journal’s influence further bent the city’s

34 Spalding, 57.
35 Perkins, 153.
36 Spalding, 79.
music tastes towards Beethoven and the like. Once Dwight’s publication ceased production in September of 1881, a new institution was being started—the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which would assume the role of torch-bearer for Germanic composers.

Dwight’s relationships were far-reaching, and Gardner too was touched by his influence on the city’s organizations. The two had a minor association that probably developed through their mutual involvement with the Boston Orchestral Club (BOC), a small organization that performed between 1885 and 1910. (The BOC will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.) Dwight was founding vice president of the organization and Gardner was an associate member. Beginning in February of 1887, Gardner assumed Dwight’s role as vice president. While the role of member, vice president, or even president is not known, one can assume duties might include offering suggestions for programming, providing assistance with logistics, and selecting conductors—Bernhard Listeman, George Whitfield Chadwick, and George Longy. Is it notable that women and men could belong to the club, because women were excluded from the Tavern Club and the St. Botolph Club. While Dwight is not documented as a visitor in any of Gardner’s guest books, she thought his birthday was important enough to keep track of in her journals. Dwight and Gardner’s association is more of a product of mutual friends and other social and intellectual clubs; Dwight was a member of the Saturday Club and the St. Botolph Club.

Higginson’s orchestra was the culmination of several generations of musicians and amateur orchestras. While the Handel and Haydn Society was successful in its own right, Higginson was determined to have an orchestra of only full-time professionals that performed

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37 Boston Public Library, Allen A. Brown Music Collection. Programmes of Concerts, 1885–1891, and Programmes of Concerts, 1903–1911. M. Cab.1.42. No.1 and No 2 [bound together]. All information regarding conductors and officers is given in this bound collection of programs at the Boston Public Library. Please note that at time of research the library’s electronic catalog identified the programs as residing in two separate volumes; however, once located the two call numbers were bound together.
the best of the repertory with an extended concert season. German immigrants comprised most of the personnel of the new orchestra. Harvard further cultivated its relationship with the orchestra by having BSO musicians attend Harvard classes on orchestration to enhance the students’ studies.\textsuperscript{38} The BSO’s first conductor and his early successors had a great impact on the repertory. Higginson selected German-born George Henschel for the position.

Henschel and Higginson had become acquaintances through evenings at the HMA. Henschel was a highly regarded singer, fond of Wagner’s works, and a great friend of Brahms. As such, programming in the early years at the BSO favored these composers as the living representatives of Beethoven’s legacy. Though Henschel’s tenure with the orchestra was short, Gardner formed a lasting relationship with the conductor. The devotion to Brahms and Wagner continued under Henschel’s successor, Austrian Wilhelm Gericke, a successful opera conductor in Vienna. He and Mrs. Gardner developed a very strong bond and even spent time together in the summer of 1894 in Europe, making the acquaintance of Brahms and hearing his works.\textsuperscript{39}

As Mrs. Gardner became more interested in programming music at social gatherings for her home, he helped select works for her. On two separate occasions, he selected the entire program. One contained Mozart, Bach, Berlioz, Schubert, Wagner, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Johann Ritter von Herbeck, demonstrating a strong allegiance to German classics.\textsuperscript{40} The other occasion was for a larger courtyard party hosted at her Brookline home with similar selections.

\textsuperscript{38} Spalding, 169.
\textsuperscript{39} Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Archives, Master Chronology, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA.
\textsuperscript{40} Isabella Stewart Gardner, The Papers of Isabella Stewart Gardner, Archives of American Art, Wilhelm Gericke to Isabella Stewart Gardner, November 5 (n.d.).
They maintained their friendship even throughout the war years, and to assist his travels during these lean times, Gardner gave him 16,000 Kronen.\(^{41}\)

The BSO conductors who followed Gericke’s tenure were Austrians Arthur Nikisch and Emil Paur. Gardner knew both musicians, yet their relationships were not on the level of conductors Karl Muck or Gericke. Nikisch was a member of the Tavern Club for a short while and also attended a birthday party at her Beacon St. home in 1898.\(^{42}\) Paur’s wife performed with Loeffler and Gardner’s friend Lena Little.

Karl Muck’s tenure at the BSO was both triumphant and tragic. Gardner’s bond to Muck held throughout each phase of his life in America. He served two separate times as the BSO’s conductor, once from 1906 to 1908 and the second from 1912 to 1918. Gardner was an avid supporter—one amongst several that Muck referred to as “rehearsal girls.”\(^{43}\) These women were not only concerned with attending the concert events, but were interested in witnessing the process of getting the music to stage. Muck also participated in the Brahmin world. He frequently attended the Tavern Club and St. Botolph Club, surrounding himself with the city socialites, and visited Brookline’s Country Club on several occasions. Frequently on his way out of the city, Muck visited Gardner’s home at Fenway Court as a resting place before continuing on to the Country Club.\(^{44}\) Whether he was a full member or not is unknown.

During Muck’s second period as conductor, World War I broke out. While anti-German sentiments “grew to a level of near-hysteria,” musicians received greater latitude than the

\(^{41}\) Gericke to Gardner, February 25, 1921.
\(^{42}\) Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Programs. Though Nikisch does not appear in her guest book, this program had signatures from several BSO performers and Nikisch.
\(^{43}\) Tharpe, 304.
average immigrant, particularly Muck as the leader Boston’s much-loved orchestra. Yet even the BSO was not immune to the nationalist fervor. Before a planned concert in Rhode Island, a Providence music club sent a letter to Higginson demanding that the “Star-Spangled Banner” be played before the concert. Higginson dismissed the request and did not inform Muck of the situation. Once in Providence, the concert was played as planned without meeting the request. Almost immediately New England newspapers began to condemn Muck and push for his termination. He continued to conduct until the following March when he was arrested for being an enemy alien, and violinist Ernest Schmidt assumed conducting responsibilities for the rest of the season. His final concert featured George Chadwick’s Symphonic Sketches and Camille Saint-Saëns’s Symphony No. 3. Muck was placed in a prison camp at Ft. Oglethorpe, Georgia for many months before eventually being deported.

General public opinion did not stop Gardner from supporting her friend; she followed the situation as it was covered in the local papers. Muck saw fit to write to her during his stay, a grand gesture since internees only could “write two letters and four postal cards during a month.” Muck used these to show his appreciation to Gardner: “First of all let me thank you from the bottom of my heart for your friendships which you have shown to Anita during those last sad sixteen months. You can never know, and never will I be able to express to you in words what it has meant to me to realize that of all our many friends in Boston at least one has stood by

46 While Muck’s troubles surrounding the “Star-Spangled Banner” are documented in numerous sources, Bowles’s account provides in-depth discussion of the events leading up to his arrest and his time at Ft. Oglethorpe including musical activities at the prison camp.
47 Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Archives, Newspaper Clippings.
48 Karl Muck to Isabella Stewart Gardner, August 19, 1919.
my poor haunted wife.”⁴⁹ Notwithstanding any possible hyperbolic language in his letter, Gardner’s role as singular companion to Anita during Karl’s incarceration speaks to how Gardner viewed the personal connection over any social expectations. In 1921, just three years before her death, Muck wrote to tell her that an ocean and years apart did not sour his love for Boston and their “true loyal friends.”⁵⁰

Muck was the last in a line of Germanic conductors at the BSO until Erich Leinsdorf took the position 1962. But, from the orchestra’s inception in 1881 until Muck left following the 1918 season, Germanic composers dominated the programming. In the first decade of its existence, nearly eight out of every ten works performed were by Germans, approximately seventy-seven percent on average (See figure 4 below and appendix A for detailed yearly and overall combined statistics). The orchestra gave similar attention to Italians and other Europeans as it gave to the French. With these conductors at the helm, it is not surprising that German works provided the foundation for the each season. Beethoven’s Third Symphony was programed no fewer than 30 times in the first 37 years not including performances outside of Boston.⁵¹ In the years Brahms and Wagner died, the BSO dedicated full evenings to each composer, fully aware that their respective works would make numerous appearances throughout the remainder of the season’s schedule. Through 1889, 55 concerts out of 188 were all-German programs, approximately thirty percent. And from the orchestra’s inception through Muck’s departure, nearly two out of every three works performed were German.

⁴⁹ Karl Muck to Isabella Stewart Gardner, October 27, 1921.
⁵⁰ Karl Muck to Isabella Stewart Gardner, October 27, 1921.
⁵¹ Boston Symphony Orchestra, “Archives Collection Performance History Search,” http://www.bso.org/brands/bso/about-us/historyarchives/archival-collection.aspx. (accessed Spring 2014). All statistical and historical information regarding the BSO’s programming was compiled from their exhaustive online archives, making note of each work played and detailing the composer’s nationality. The author holds this information.
Works by other nationalities—those not German, French, or American—represent the next most-performed body of the literature. Dvorak (Czech), Tchaikovsky (Russian), and Anton Rubinstein (Russian) were popular from the first season. Cherubini (Italian) made frequent appearances on the seasons’ programming, as did Liszt (Hungarian). French composers received less notice compared to the decades after the Muck affair. Berlioz, Saint-Saëns, and Franck were the most consistently performed composers with less frequent appearances from others such as Emmanuel Chabrier and Gustave Charpentier. Through composer and first violinist Charles Martin Loeffler’s suggestions to Gericke and Higginson, d’Indy guest conducted in December of 1905. The program consisted of all French works, including d’Indy’s own Symphony No. 2.52 Loeffler understood French composers’ position in Boston, calling the city a “musical German outpost” and made little difference in the orchestra’s programming tendency.53

American composers received the least attention, even in the heart of American independence. John Knowles Paine was the first American to be performed at the BSO, although, it was not until the final concert of the first season that his Oedipus Tyrannus was performed. George Whitfield Chadwick gained some popularity as did several composers of the Second New England School. Arthur Foote, Horatio Parker, and others Americans were given opportunities with the BSO, yet their pieces amounted to no more than three or four works per year out of more than a hundred.

German composers began to represent a smaller percentage of works being performed as this period progressed, but these numbers had almost nowhere to go but down (see figure 1 below). Outside of the mid 1880s, French works were being performed on average the least

53 Ibid, 103.
during the 1908–1909 season. This year coincides with an average high percentage of composers from other nationalities. In simple numerical and percentage terms, German works were declining slightly but as a product of including more composers of other nationalities, particularly Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, Grieg, and Sibelius. The dramatic drop in Germans programmed came in the 1917–1918 season, the first full season after America declared on Germany in April 1917. (Ironically Muck was the conductor; he conducted more American works during his tenure than the other BSO directors.) Falling below fifty percent for the first time, German works were also now a casualty of war. French works rose to their highest number and works from Other Nationalities climbed to its second highest percentage since the orchestra’s founding. While these might be seen as nationalist tendencies, American works saw greatest attention in the 1915–1916 with nine works, only for the total to drop back to three in the 1917–1918 season. Three is the average number of American works played for the entire thirty-seven seasons compared.

As discussed earlier, the Gardners were dedicated to European travel. Their travel was not wholly reserved to procuring art to take home. On three separate occasions, they made trips to Bayreuth to take in Wagner operas at the famed theater. Before trips across the Atlantic, Gardner purchased scores for the works that they intended to see from Schmidt & Co., a music store in downtown Boston. Tristan und Isolde, Tannhäuser, Die Walküre were purchased in 1886. Siegfried, Das Rheingold, Götterdammerung, in 1888. She returned to these scores in 1897 when Siegfried was staged in Boston at Mechanics Hall on Huntington Avenue and in 1917 when it was staged in the open air at Harvard Stadium. Gardner sought out signatures of the cast

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54 Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Scores. These uncategorized scores still reside in the archives. Performers’ signatures are in front covers of some and several programs are attached inside several as well. Schmidt & Co. and Boston Music Company stamped the first pages of each score, identifying purchasing location.
members as a lasting memory of her experiences. Signatures were obtained for cast members of *Tannhäuser* from an 1897 Viennese production and for Boston productions of *Tristan und Isolde* in 1896 and 1912. (This score was purchased at the Boston Music Company instead of Schmidt.) The scores have no markings on the pages of music; there are inserts of programs and signatures on the title page. Otherwise, the spines are all in fine condition, allowing for speculation that these scores were not used for playing at her home, just souvenirs.

Gardner compiled travelogues with photographs, postcards, and other clippings to document their journeys. On their first trip to Bayreuth, she placed a wreath at Wagner’s grave. On the next trip in 1892, she returned to the gravesite and saved a maple leaf for her scrapbook. The Gardners were not the only Bostonians who took tours of Bayreuth. Her love for Wagner and desire to see his operas in Bayreuth was common amongst Boston elites. During their 1886 trip, Walter Cabot and his family, Higginson, and “many others, known and unknown” were in Bayreuth at the same time and able to visit with the Gardners. During this same trip, Franz Liszt died, and Gardner was highly moved by his passing. She had intended on meeting him to discuss their shared love of music, but she would have to settle for attending his funeral on the third of August to pay her respects. While she frequently acquired various items as mementos from her trips abroad, her meeting with Brahms in 1894 resulted in a curious token: a cigarette. On September 3, she traveled with Gericke and Clayton Johns to meet Brahms. During their meeting a cigarette was “given by Brahms at his house,” as labeled on an envelope containing

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55 Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Archives, Master Chronology.
56 Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Archives, Master Chronology.
57 Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Archives, Miscellaneous Holdings.
the remnants.\textsuperscript{58} It is unclear who smoked the cigarette; Brahms and Gardner both enjoyed the vice. At the very least, this used cigarette served as a treasure of her meeting with the composer.

\textsuperscript{58} Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Archives, Miscellaneous Holdings.
Figure 1. Percentage of works performed at the Boston Symphony Orchestra by nationality.

See Appendix A, p. 64, for detailed statistics
CHAPTER THREE

FENWAY COURT

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw a construction boom in Boston. Fenway Court was part of a trend in Boston to build edifices devoted to the arts. These formed the core of Boston’s cultural headquarters and cast wide influence over the life of the city even through today. This chapter is devoted to the building and its purpose, which is more profound than the sum of individual paintings purchased or musical works performed in the museum. Fenway Court was not just a museum and house; it was a home.

In 1895, the new Boston Public Library was completed in Copley Plaza. The McKim Building, as it is now known, presently holds the library’s research collection. It features beautiful marble flooring, an inner courtyard, and impressive murals by John Singer Sargent. Dedicated to the citizens of Boston, the library’s outer walls display names of important figures in the history of literature, science, and the arts. Composers’ names can be found engraved on the Dartmouth Street façade. Of all the composers—Bach, Beethoven, Cherubini, Gluck, Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Mozart, Palestrina, Purcell, Wagner, and Weber—only three are not German. (All names appear together with the names of two English painters: Joseph Turner and Joshua Reynolds.)

Just to the southwest corner of the McKim Building, Huntington Avenue, now nicknamed the “Avenue of the Arts,” extends west-southwest out of Back Bay towards Brookline. This road would come to house major centers of art, music, and education, many of

59 Frank N. Jones, *An Index to the Persons Commemorated by Inscriptions or Works of Art in the Central Library Building of the Boston Public Library*, (Boston: Boston Public Library, 1939), no number pages.
60 A painting of Allen Brown hangs in the Rare Book and Music Department at the Boston Public Library for his contributions to the collection of music that bares his name.
which were built in the years surrounding Fenway Court’s construction. In 1881, Mechanics Hall was completed. The Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association, an early post-Revolutionary War organization, commissioned the building in order to celebrate the craftsmanship of bookbinders, hairdressers, and many others. The hall housed festivals and variously-themed exhibitions until the Prudential Center redevelopment of the 1960s needed its land. Mechanics Hall even held operas from time to time. While its use was long-lasting, the buildings that were to be erected on Huntington’s western stretch would not be multiuse facilities. The next generation of buildings was to be devoted to celebrating a specific artist interest under each roof. Much like the new public library, the BSO’s new facility and the new Museum of Fine Arts were built with the desire to enshrine a lasting legacy of each respective art and demonstrate commitment to culture.

By 1893, the Boston Symphony Orchestra was in need of a new performance space. Higginson was determined to have a new hall of which Boston could be proud. Different sites were considered for the new hall. The current site of the Boston Public Library, which had not yet been built, was considered, as was the Union Boat House, near Boston Public Garden. Both of these locations would have placed Symphony Hall within the heart of the city. Two other sites would have located the hall farther west: the present-day home of the Harvard Club of Boston on Commonwealth Avenue—an interesting connection given Higginson’s role as inaugural president of the Harvard Club; and the corner of Massachusetts and Huntington Avenues, the

site that was eventually chosen. The city went through a small recession and plans were delayed; yet Symphony Hall was finally completed in 1900. As part of the plans of the music hall itself, the designers intended to include the names of seminal composers to be engraved on the frame of the stage. However, only one composer could be agreed upon: Beethoven. Set in an oval amongst an ornate design of leaves, ropes, and flowers directly above the center of the stage, “Beethoven” is visible from every seat in the hall. The BSO’s original home just east of the Boston Public Garden, Music Hall, was even more emphatic in its reverence of Beethoven. A large bronze statue of him graces the stage, watching over the musicians’ performance (see figure 2 below). The statue, in this case, becomes more than a celebration of a composer of monumental ability; it becomes an idol on a grand altar of music meant for worship. And Boston’s ensembles were pleased to congregate in the hall to perform his works and those of his countrymen as discussed earlier. The Handel and Haydn Society performed there frequently, including at Music Hall’s inaugural concert featuring several other musical organizations: Musical Education Society, the Musical Fund Orchestra, the German Serenade Band, and Kreissman’s Liedertafel, a group of German part-song singers. Music Hall’s associated ensembles, its statue, and Symphony Hall’s inscription are resounding declarations of German masters’ place in American music and a confirmation of the devotion towards the German tradition held by Higginson and the city’s musical brain trust.

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65 Perkins, 155.
The two years following Symphony Hall’s construction saw completion of two more large buildings in the vicinity. Across Massachusetts Avenue, Horticultural Hall was built to house the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. This building is now the home to the offices of the Handel and Haydn Society. In 1903, New England Conservatory completed Jordan Hall less than one-tenth of a mile down Huntington Avenue from Symphony Hall.

In 1909, the new home for the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) was completed on Huntington. Gardner had a deep, long-standing association with the staff at the MFA. She held at least one luncheon for the staff at Fenway Court in the year before the new building was designed. Directors and curators even wished for her to serve an official capacity on an

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advisory board, but her time commitments were already too great. Okakura Kakuzo was the museum’s first curator for Asian art and a close friend of Mrs. Gardner. When Okakura passed away in 1913, his memorial service was held at Fenway Court.

When Mrs. Gardner was ready for her contribution to Boston’s western edges, she selected the marshy area of the Fens and Willard T. Sears as the architect. Sears had designed several prominent area buildings including the Old South Church in Copley Square and the chapel at Phillips Academy, a selective boarding school in Andover, Massachusetts. He was approached in 1896 to create design plans for her new home and museum. However, no immediate date was set nor was a location selected. The pace intensified greatly after Mr. Gardner died on the December 10, 1898. By the end of the next month, Gardner acquired the plot of land. Groundbreaking began in June 1899. Gardner herself oversaw the construction down to minute details of design and construction. Her first set of problems involved Boston’s building codes. She insisted that her four-story building needed no steel, and inspectors eventually relented after sending construction material for testing. Since Fenway Court was going to be on soft ground, piles were to be driven down to the bedrock below. This construction method was not new to Gardner given her time spent in Venice, and Boston officials reluctantly allowed the design to continue. She attended the first pile driving and laid the building’s cornerstone. Over the course of the next several years, Gardner spent most days at the construction site and dedicated her time to every last detail of the construction. She could even

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68 Arthur Fairbanks to Isabella Stewart Gardner, February, 13, 1908. Gardner wrote to Benjamin Ives Gilman, on staff at the MFA at the time, to turn down an offer to serve on the Advisory Committee on Installation. Fairbanks responded with appreciation and kind request that Gardner provide personal advice “from time to time.”
be seen climbing ladders to instruct laborers how brush strokes should be made.\textsuperscript{69} If there was ever a problem with a worker, Gardner made sure that he would not return to the worksite. Several workers lost their job at Gardner’s request.

Once the public was able to purchase the one-dollar tickets to view Garner’s new museum, enthusiasm could not have been higher. Since groundbreaking, excitement abounded for Gardner’s project. Once the shell of the building was complete, papers up and down the East Coast gave publication space to the museum. “Even the ‘Kansas City Times’ gave Fenway Court half a page in September, 1901.”\textsuperscript{70}

![Figure 3. Drawing room at 152 Beacon Street, circa 1882. Used by permission of Archives, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA.](image)

Gardner was no stranger to entertaining, particularly with musical guests. Two rooms in her Beacon Street home had pianos. The drawing room functioned more as a lounge than a room


\textsuperscript{70} Carter, 182.
for presenting works to a larger group of friends (see figure 3 above). Its layout suggests a more informal use of the piano. However, Beacon Street also had a music room with enough space for a seating area (see figure 4 below). This photograph also shows a harp. There is no special mention of works played on the instrument or even its playability, but it is not hard to imagine a New England Conservatory student stopping by to play for Gardner from time to time. In comparing the wall decorations between the drawing and music rooms, it is clear that Gardner viewed the function of each in different light. The drawing room’s walls are filled with art with less deference to symmetry or uniformity across the room. The piano is crowded into the corner just like the writing desk on the opposite side of the room. The music played in this room would have been for smaller groups or even private enjoyment. The music room, however, demonstrates much greater consideration towards staging the instruments, allowing for unobstructed viewing of the keyboard instruments and the wooden music stand. The multi-panel relief sculpture serves as dramatic focal point to the room, framing the performers. Beyond its use for music, the room functioned for other entertainment, including large formal dinners and dances; Gardner’s home was a place where “all society comes to dance.”

With Fenway Court, Gardner had the opportunity to build a new room dedicated to music, which could fit her tastes without the restrictions of a pre-existing home. The Music Room was as grand as she could have hoped. The stage could accommodate dozens of musicians. The room had more than enough space for seventy chairs down the center and more than twenty chairs on either side against the wall. The balcony could hold dozens more. The greater number of people that could take part in an evening’s performance, particularly in comparison to Beacon Court.

Tharpe, 110.
Street’s music room, was equaled by the Music Room’s dramatic design. Gardner reused the white reliefs from Beacon Street to decorate the stage’s apron. Corinthian columns accent the stage’s simple, elegant tapestries (see figure 5 below). The most impressive feature of the Music Room is the dual staircase opposite the stage (see figure 6 below). Never afraid of being the center of attention, Gardner frequently sat in the in the balcony and made a grand entrance at the top of the staircase for the Music Room’s inaugural concert.\textsuperscript{72} Before the first concert could be held, she wanted the acoustics of the room to be tested but did not want anyone to see the room before its spectacular opening day. She invited students from the Perkins Institution for the Blind to sit and listen to music; they gave approval for the room’s quality.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{72} Tharpe, 4.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, 235.
Figure 5. Stage of Music Room at Fenway Court, circa 1914.
Used by permission of Archives, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA.

Figure 6. Rear of Music Room at Fenway Court, circa 1914.
Used by permission of Archives, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA.
Opening day, New Year’s Day of 1903 was a lavish affair. The evening’s music program featured orchestra members from the BSO and singers from the Cecilia Society under direction of Wilhelm Gericke. The ensemble performed a Bach chorale, the overture to Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*, Chausson’s *Viviane Symphonic Poem*, and Schumann’s *Overture, Scherzo, and Finale.* The attendees for opening day included close friends, social elite, and artistic-minded Bostonians. William Apthorp, Gardner’s friend and Harvard Music Department alumnus, wrote a review of the opening for the *Boston Transcript*. With all the beauty that the visual space embodied, it would have been a travesty if the music room had not been sufficient for the sounds that it was to display. Apthorp was completely satisfied:

> Fortunately the acoustics turned out to be about as perfect as the soul of musical man could desire. Not since old Bumstead Hall have I heard anything to compare with the resonance of this ideal room. It reminded one of the old hall of the Conservatoire in Paris, the model and paragon of all music halls…. Listening to music in such a hall, you feel as if you were inside of some musical instrument; indeed, such a hall is a musical instrument in itself.  

The glowing review surely met with Gardner’s approval—approval that Apthorp sought through his letter on January 2, the day after opening:

> Here it is—in exactly the shape in which it would go upstairs to the printer… I can not tell you what a good time I had. I now begin to believe that beauty—inanimate beauty, that is to say—may have a moralizing influence…Voyez là what harmony of line and color can do!  

Attendees for the evening included friends and local composers including Arthur Foote and George Chadwick. Over the next eleven years, the room would host many musical performances and dances.

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74 Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Programs.  
75 William Apthorp to Isabella Stewart Gardner, January 2, 1903.  
76 William Apthorp to Isabella Stewart Gardner, January 2, 1903. Apthorp, in sending the review to Gardner, identified that it would run in the following day’s *Boston Transcript.*
Even though the Music Room was a great success, in 1914 it was reconstructed and divided into two rooms above and below with a music room still on the upper level. “Yet she knew even then that the Music-Room would not be permanent; it must be perfect, though temporary.”\(^{77}\) She had begun to consider these changes as early as 1905. While this might seem odd given her devotion to music and entertainment, there were practical concerns with giving up so much square footage above. Her collection was growing and needed space. The Spanish Cloister was constructed on the first floor to house John Singer Sargent’s *El Jaleo*. T. Jefferson Coolidge, a short-term ambassador to France under President Benjamin Harrison,\(^{78}\) presented the painting to her as a gift in 1914.\(^{79}\) The Tapestry Room, which was constructed on the second floor, served as the new music room. The short life of the two-story Music Room exhibits her flair for the dramatic and her devotion to music in the face of predictable logistical concerns like square footage.

With the public’s fervor to see the infamous Isabella Gardner’s museum and the priceless works inside prized by art lovers, it might be easy to overlook the personal connections that the building and its contents represent. As discussed in chapter two, Gardner saved many different keepsakes from her friendships with musicians. Neither the scores, the travel books, nor the Brahms cigarette are on display for public viewing. Yet next to antique works are portraits, books, or china that have emotional meaning for Gardner. The “Yellow Room” in the museum displays her bonds to musicians. Along with works by Henri Matisse, James Whistler, Joseph Turner, Thomas Dewing, Edgar Degas, Dante Rossetti, and an eighteenth-century Chinese

\(^{77}\) Carter, 191.
The glass display cases in the “Yellow Room” contain a wide variety of musical artifacts. In the “Liszt” case are several keepsakes that demonstrate her love for the composer and certainly her regret to have missed an opportunity to meet him before his death. There is a plaster cast of his hand holding a women’s hand, a brass die of his signature, a silver filigree box with a lock of his hair, and a photograph of him at the piano. Along side these items are several mementos of her friends: a plaster cast of composer Arthur Foote’s hand, a photograph of conductor B. J. Lang, a note from German soprano Lilli Lehmann, and an autographed photograph of William Apthorp. Two more cases line the wall opposite of the doorway. The most visually striking item in the left-side case is Beethoven’s life mask; a Beethoven signature and medal portraying his face accompany the mask. Most of the material in this case is from Gardner’s friends: letters from singer Jean de Reske, the pianist Ignacy Paderewski; and composers Ethelbert Nevin, Clayton Johns, and Percy Grainger; postcards depicting composers Puccini, Rossini, and Pietro Mascagni. Telling of her affection for the Footes, a letter from Arthur’s daughter, Katharine, is included in the case even though she was not a professional musician herself. In the right-side case are more letters and pictures. This time the subjects are Jules Massenet, Cyril Scott, Fritz Kreisler, Horatio Parker, Vincent d’Indy, and Wagner, to name just a few (see appendix D, p. 68 for complete listing). The two more intriguing items in this
case are a fan with musical notation signed by composer Paolo Tosti and a plaster cast of Loeffler’s hand.

Even to the casual observer, the room proudly displays homages to Beethoven, Wagner, and Liszt. These are far outnumbered by the lesser-known musicians however, whom Gardner had direct contact with in some manner. Loeffler, perhaps her closest musical confidant, is represented in the cases in several instances and, more notably, in Sargent’s portrait. Aside from Loeffler’s dominating presence and the numerous Liszt relics, Brahms and Beethoven are given the same treatment as Clayton Johns and B.J. Lang.

The main entrance to Fenway Court included an inscription above the door: “C’est mon plaisir” [It is my pleasure]. The inscription certainly contrasts starkly with Symphony Hall’s “Beethoven” and the public library’s engraved names of German composers. Patricia Vigderman calls Fenway Court “a lovely counter-institution created by one person to hold in perpetuity her particular sense of our relationship with art.” It might be better stated to contemplate our relationships with artists. The museum and its inscription are personal reflection of her life, friendships, and experiences that made the contents of the museum possible and meaningful. That the inscription is in French represents a cosmopolitan lifestyle that began with finishing school during her adolescence, travels with John until his passing, and the extensive friendships that continued well beyond her confinement to eastern Massachusetts in her later years. But it also speaks to her and her artist-friends’ broader connections to Parisian culture. For writers and painters, such as Sargent, Holmes, and Norton and for some musicians to be discussed in the next chapter, this was an understandable sentiment.

In reference to Lawrence Levine’s book *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, Ralph Locke laments that American concert life, as established during the half century from around 1860 to 1910, was the site of a sacrilizing ideology, like America’s (and Europe’s) museum-oriented art life or the teaching and publishing of the literary “classics.” One need only recall the exalted, idealizing language used at the turn of the century to describe the great masters of European music; or the imposing classicistic grandeur of the halls in which many American symphony orchestras, virtuoso recitalists, and opera companies have long performed; or the snobbish distinction that have shaped the “classical” repertory as canonical.\(^81\)

Fenway Court and its first Music Room could be described in Locke’s terms as “imposing classicistic grandeur.” As a home, it is much, much larger than Boston’s Back Bay brownstones including Gardner’s Beacon Street residence. But, as will be discussed in the next chapter, the music at Fenway Court challenged the canon of European works. The Renaissance art housed within are important works, and surely Titian’s *Europa* can be counted amongst that period’s canonical paintings—probably a contributing factor in its purchase and the purchase of several other works in the museum. Yet, Gardner built an entirely new room for her friend Sargent’s *El Jaleo*; it is the only work in the Spanish Cloister.

Fenway Court was not designed solely to honor the art that was purchased; it was designed to celebrate the lives of the people represented inside, including Belle, Jack, and Jackie. This “counter-museum” was “conceived and built for the immediate enjoyment of art, rather than for the moral education and uplift on which the city’s upper class based its aesthetic stewardship of the Museum of Fine Arts.”\(^82\) The MFA, Symphony Hall, and Music Hall all have “classicistic

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\(^82\) Vigderman, 38.
grandeur” but even more so contributed to the canonical works in their respective fields. And the public library went so far as to engrave composers’ names in stone.

Fenway Court was a living, breathing home for the last portion of Gardner’s life. The tragic loss of her son and the death of her husband emphasized the fragility of life, and she wished to celebrate the life that she had been given. Her love for history is on display; but Fenway Court embodies connections to both the past and her present. And with her present in mind and a new home to exhibit her interests, Gardner set about showcasing to the public a life impacted by art and music.
CHAPTER FOUR
FRENCH AND AMERICAN FRIENDS

Beginning in the early to mid-1890s, Gardner’s interests began to expand. Even while her trips to Bayreuth were in full swing, she began to be more involved in Boston’s musical life. She hosted more concerts with formal programs than before. Even though she had frequently allowed Gericke and others to decide what would be played, she began to create programs—sometimes wonderfully creative—suggesting that she was beginning to view her role in the music as more than just passive listener, and John’s passing seems to have hastened Isabella’s desire to build a new home for her art. Fenway Court and its Music Room would come to embody her role as patron and solidify her impresario-like connections to musicians and composers. But in order for the transition from passive listener to active participant to commence, there first must be a catalyst. That catalyst came in the form of new, non-German music from her friends. Vigerman writes, “She surrounded herself with young writers, artists, and musicians, promoting her patronage and friendship, contemporary rather than anointed art.”83 Youth was an obvious influence on the artistic taste of her musician friends as compared to socialite friends of her own age: John Singer Sargent was 15 years younger; Clayton Johns, 16; Loeffler, 20; Amherst Webber, 26. Vigerman’s point regarding “contemporary rather than anointed art” is particularly perceptive when applied to music. These young musicians were represented a living art; each was participating in their respective field in Boston and abroad, which excited Gardner, especially since she was providing material support to several of them. For years she had been engaging with musicians like Beethoven, Bach, and Schumann through intermediaries—students

83 Vigderman, 38.
willing to perform at her home and some friends playing these composers’ catalogues in the privacy of her home. Loeffler and others represented an opportunity for Gardner to become part of the creative process as patron and friend. Instead of being just a ticket buyer and rehearsal girl, she could be a committed participant.

Her first step into an active, non-private role in music was to serve as an associate member of the afore-mentioned Boston Orchestral Club at its founding in 1885. While the role was surely minimal, the possibility of having her voice heard regarding music was different from her relationship with Higginson and the BSO and from what others might experience since women were not allowed in the Tavern or St. Botolph Clubs. The BOC and its conductors could make changes that the BSO and its financial barriers could not allow. The BOC was not the commercial enterprise that the BSO was and, therefore, would seem to allow for wider exploration of literature. The BOC had thirty concerts during its life and almost from the beginning avoided the literature that was so commonplace at the BSO, only playing a Beethoven work four times during its existence.84 Once Gardner became vice president, it would only stand to reason that her input would gain more respect and her impact would increase. No matter what is assumed about her role with the club, immediately following taking over Dwight’s role of vice president, the programming began to shift slightly away from Germanic composers. Americans received little to no attention from the BOC except for Chadwick’s songs; it is not surprising that he was later willing to take up a baton with orchestra. French composers almost immediately received more attention at the BOC than the BSO. The greatest shift came in 1900 when BSO oboist and Frenchmen George Longy assumed Listeman’s role as conductor. Instantly the BOC

84 Boston Public Library, Some Programmes of Concerts, 1885–1891, and Programmes of Concerts, 1903–1911. All statistical and historical information regarding the BOC’s programming was compiled from the bound programs, making note of each work played and detailing the composer’s nationality. The author holds this information.
dramatically placed its weight behind French composers. The first concert with Longy at the helm contained all French works, and the orchestra never looked back to the German-dominated concerts of just a few years prior or to Higginson’s orchestra across town (see figure 7 below). Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* received its first performance in America at the BOC in 1902. Lesser-known composers such as Andre Caplet were performed, and in 1910 the orchestra performed a second concert of all-French works with each work having never been played in America before. In the last years of the orchestra, the programs were even in French. It is unknown whose decision it was to do so. Gardner would have had no qualms with the French language. Her Fenway Court already displayed its French motto, and friends routinely wrote to her in the language. The French-ness of the orchestra was a nod to the French-American cultural exchange that was underrepresented in Boston’s musical landscape yet nurtured in other arts. In its programming the Boston Orchestral Club was the antithesis of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and provided Gardner with a listening experience vastly different from her subscription with Higginson’s orchestra.

George Longy’s imprint on chamber wind literature matched his impact on the orchestral performances of the BOC. He founded the Longy Club in 1900, in order to focus on wind ensemble music, which he felt was underrepresented in a town with the talent level represented by the BSO. Their first concert was in December of 1900 and featured works by Beethoven, Bach, and Emile Bernard. Similar to its orchestral cousin, the Longy Club eventually ventured beyond the most familiar composers and programmed Andre Caplet, Gabriel Pierné, and d’Indy with almost the same frequency as Mozart. Philip Hale responded to the issue of performing works by a lesser-known composer. Works by Beethoven were “probably played as a guarantee
Figure 7. German and French Music at the Boston Orchestral Club.

See Appendix B, p. 65, for full statistics.
of good faith for the benefit of those who are inclined to shy at the mere mention of an unfamiliar name. ‘Caplet? Who, pray, is he? What business has he to write music? But Beethoven—ah, Beethoven! Anything by him must be good.’” 85 During his visit to Boston in December 1905 arranged by Loeffler, d’Indy conducted a concert of his music with the Longy Club, and he made time for a lecture at Harvard on César Franck’s influence on French composers. 86 Gardner met the composer during his stay and received a “souvenir” from him: a letter on St. Botolph Club letterhead with an incipit of music, kind words, and his lavish signature. 87 It rests in one of the cases in Fenway Court’s Yellow Room. Even the use of the saxophone can be seen as a distinguishing facet of the music at the BOC and BSO. The BOC president Elisa Hall championed the instrument and studied it with Longy. The BOC performed works such as Longy’s Impressions and Georges Sporck’s Legends pour Saxophone and Orchestra, and the saxophone was used several times with the Longy Club. 88 Hall commissioned Debussy to write Rapsodie for Saxophone and he dedicated the work to her. The BSO did not feature a saxophone until October 1939 when they performed the Debussy work and Jacques Ibert’s Concertina de Camera on a single program. 89 French and American jazz musicians would come to bond over their mutual love for the saxophone in the years after the First World War and beyond, sowed in the years first decades of the new century.

86 Whitwell, 55.
87 Vincent d’Indy to Isabella Stewart Gardner, December 1905.
88 Boston Public Library, Some Programmes of Concerts, 1885–1891, and Programmes of Concerts, 1903–1911.
89 Boston Symphony Orchestra, “Archives Collection Performance History Search.” The BSO archive is searchable by several different parameters including concert season, venue, composer, conductor, performer, and instrument.
French music was around Gardner in other ways. She met Gabriel Fauré in 1894,\(^90\) It is noteworthy that the score in the photograph of the Beacon St. music room shown earlier is of his music (see figure 8 below for close-up of photograph). Such a staging is no mere accident, given her and Loeffler’s mutual interest in the composer. The photograph of the music room is presumed to be from circa 1900. The BSO had only performed Fauré twice before 1900—the first song from *Poeme d’un jour* (1880)—further illustrating her willingness to seek new composers. She also was able to spend time with Massenet in the same year she met Fauré, causing some good-natured jealously in Loeffler.\(^91\) Violinist Harrison Keller recalls playing for

![Figure 8. Music Room at 152 Beacon Street, circa 1900, detail. Used by permission of Archives, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA.](image)

\(^{90}\) Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Master Chronology.

\(^{91}\) Charles Martin Loeffler to Isabella Stewart Gardner, January 27, 1895.
her in the 1910s works that she admired: “Franck, Fauré, d’Indy sonatas for violin and piano, etc.” This is dramatically different than music she requested from Johns and Loeffler in the 1880s at her Beacon St. home.

Longy, Loeffler, Fauré, and d’Indy were not the only advocates of French music and culture in her life. Heinrich Gebhard was a local pianist frequently featured at the BSO and was a member of Longy Club. As many musicians tended to do, Gebhard signed Gardner’s guest books with music incipits. In demonstration of his love for Debussy, he signed with the opening measures of Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* just a few years after its first performance with the BOC in 1902 (see figure 9 below). This stands in contrasts to Gardner friend Enid Slater’s incipit spelling out the famous B-A-C-H notes (B flat-A-C-B natural). Heinrich was not the only American in her orbit taken with French culture. Henry James frequently included French passages in his letters to her, and Gardner particularly enjoyed hearing of Parisian life after her travels ceased. Matthew Prichard’s correspondence with Gardner was a detail of his life in Paris and his studies, including philosophy and art history. Abram Piatt Andrew, a Massachusetts Congressman, also obliged her requests. He spent time in France during World War I and kept up correspondence with Gardner even on tours of duty. On two separate occasions he mailed concert programs to her, once of the *Festival Berlioz* from January 3, 1915 and another on April 9, 1916 featuring works by Saint-Saëns. Gabriel Pierne, whose music the BOC performed in the early part of the decade, directed both. In 1914, Andrew sought Gardner’s knowledge of French songs for a group of French people outside of Salem affected by fire who had “lost everything except the clothes they were wearing when the fire

92 Locke, *Cultivating Music in America*, 122.
93 Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Guest book, Volume 9. Musical incipits are common in Gardner’s guest books. Some signors include the composer’s name while others do not.
reached them.” 

Andrew hoped French songs would comfort them, and Gardner was a resource for musicians and repertoire.

![Image of musical notation]

Figure 9. Heinrich Gebhard’s entry into Gardner’s guest book—an homage to Debussy. Photo by the author.

Used by permission of Archives, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA.

Of course, musicians of other nationalities filled her life. Polish musicians Timothee Adamowski and Ignacy Paderewski came into her life via associations with the BSO. Yet, neither did much in the way of encouraging their countrymen’s music in her life compared to the influence of others, aside from Paderewski’s performance of Chopin and his own works in 1892. The evening of May 15, 1915 was devoted to fellow Polish composer and pianist Theodor Leschetizky, just six months before his passing. Scottish pianist Helen Hopekirk Wilson and Russian Ossip Gabrilowitsch, both Leschetizky students, probably were the catalyst for the music selection; American pianist George Proctor was on hand as well. Pier Adolfo Tirindelli, an Italian composer best known for his operas and vocal music, was frequently at the Gardner’s Venetian vacation site of choice the Palazzo Barbaro. On several occasions he performed his

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95 Abram Piatt Andrew to Isabella Stewart Gardner, July 3, 1914.
96 Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Guest books, Volume 13.
97 Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Guestbooks, Volume 2.
works and those of other contemporary Italians. He presented her with several manuscripts that currently reside in the museum archives. In the way of Spanish music, Sargent gave her a set of flamenco records, a fabulous compliment to *El Jaleo* and its prominence in Fenway Court’s Spanish Cloister.  

Gardner engaged American composers and performers with particular zeal. There were few Bostonian musicians of note with whom she did not have some association or to whom she did not provide some support. Chadwick was frequently performed at the BSO until after World War I, a guest at Gardner’s home several times, and a member of the Tavern Club. A few of his songs were featured at Gardner’s Beacon St. home along with works from Schubert and others. The Boston Orchestral Club programmed his works on several occasions and he frequently served as the ensemble’s conductor after she took on the vice president role in 1887. The BOC also played Amy Beach’s compositions in 1901, and her music was included at a Manuscript Club event later. Gardner hosted another Manuscript Club evening with works by Edward MacDowell, Horatio Parker, and Margaret Lang. While Parker made no documented appearances at Gardner’s home, her contributions to local musicians surely encouraged him to personally invite her to a masque and costume ball at the Yale art gallery.  

He had composed music for a play by John Jay Chapman, a Gardner friend who wrote to her on many occasions from his New York home. John Knowles Paine, the oldest of the Second New England School of composers, had no documented association with the Gardners. Given his lengthy association with Harvard’s music program, their paths would have crossed at HMA events, though nothing has been confirmed.

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98 *Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Miscellaneous Music Items.*

99 Horatio Parker to Isabella Stewart Gardner, June 9, 1916.
John Sullivan Dwight respected Chadwick and the rest of the Second New England School, but the BSO gave them far less attention. If not for Gardner, it is possible that other local musicians would have struggled to gain any recognition during their life or even afterwards by historians. Amherst Webber was a young musician who became a frequent companion in her later years, even staying with the Gardners in Italy. He often served as accompanist for Polish singer Jean de Reske, who also performed the title roles in Boston productions of Wagner’s *Siegfried* and *Lohengrin* at on April 5 and 7, respectively, in 1897.\textsuperscript{100} Gardner attended these performances held at Mechanics Hall and attached the programs to the scores she purchased before trips abroad. Webber owed a great deal of gratitude to Gardner for two very different reasons. On one occasion, Webber accompanied her to the zoo to view the large cats. He unknowingly stood too close to a cage and one of the tigers grabbed his arm. Gardner quickly noticed and saved his arm, though not his coat. The newspapers enjoyed reporting on Gardner’s heroism. Even though the paper might be exaggerating the circumstances slightly, Webber likely appreciated her willingness to get so close to an adult tiger for him.\textsuperscript{101} Of course, he might have been even more excited when his one-act comedie lyrique *Fiorella* was premiered at Fenway Court on April 23, 1906.\textsuperscript{102} Enoch of Paris published the score, and he gave the proof to Gardner.\textsuperscript{103}

Clayton Johns, another little-discussed composer, was a closer companion. He studied with Paine at Harvard and for a short time at the Berlin *Hochscule für Musik* and quickly became attached to Gardner. As early as 1890, they traveled together in Europe, including when Gardner

\textsuperscript{100} Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Scores.
\textsuperscript{101} Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Newspaper Clippings.
\textsuperscript{102} Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Programs.
\textsuperscript{103} Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Scores.
met Brahms in 1894.\textsuperscript{104} He helped dedicate the new music room at Beacon St. with Loeffler on violin and could be frequently counted on to provide the evening’s music. The Manuscript Club programmed a set of his songs and his \textit{Petite Suite} at the first concert held at Beacon St. and another set of his songs at their following concert.\textsuperscript{105}

Of the composers associated with the Second New England School, Arthur Foote was the closest with Gardner. She was godmother to Foote’s daughter, Katharine, “a role she took seriously.”\textsuperscript{106} Katharine received $10,000 upon the execution of Gardner’s final will.\textsuperscript{107} If it were bestowed in 2014, then the amount would be a generous sum of $136,792—a monetary sign of just how fond she was of Katharine.\textsuperscript{108} Foote and Gardner were associated with many of the same local musicians and intellectuals. Foote, Chadwick, B.J. Lang, and several BSO conductors attended music nights at Clara Roger’s house, as did Dwight and Apthorp. Roger’s sonata was performed at the first Manuscript Club concert that Gardner hosted. Julia Ward Howe was also known to make appearances at Roger’s home. Howe, best-known as the author of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” was a social activist and Gardner’s friend; Howe’s daughter Maud was a closer friend, and was also allocated $10,000 in Gardner’s will. These common bonds would only strengthen Foote’s success in and around Boston. And Gardner helped in any way she could to support his craft. She allowed the Footes to use her home at Pride’s Crossing, a vacation area on the north shore in Beverly, MA, where Arthur could write in peace and quiet.\textsuperscript{109} She also inspired his interest in the work of Dante, leading to his composition \textit{Francesca da Rimini},

\textsuperscript{104} Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Master Chronology.
\textsuperscript{105} Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Programs.
\textsuperscript{106} Nicholas E. Tawa, \textit{Arthur Foote: A Musician in the Frame of Time and Place} (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 71.
\textsuperscript{107} Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Final Will, 1.
\textsuperscript{109} Tawa, \textit{Arthur Foote}, 111.
Symphonic Prologue, which was dedicated to her. As Nicholas Tawa states, “when he stood before the Boston Symphony Orchestra and conducted the premiere on 23 January 1891, he was confirming his familiar relationship to her and to Boston’s literary and artistic circles.”  

Foote, in agreement with Apthorp’s review of Fenway Court’s acoustics, wrote “I really can’t help it—I must write this to tell you that I think I never heard a string quartet before last Saturday. The marvelous beauty of the sound in your music hall was hard to believe. I am very grateful that I was there.”  

He would have certainly had the same sentiment when his piano trio was performed there just two years later.

Gardner’s musician friends include many other performers and composers. Singer Lena Little was a regular visitor to Gardner’s home when performing in town. New England Conservatory student and faculty member Wallace Goodrich frequently visited her home, served as organist for the BSO, and conducted opera. Composer Ethelbert Nevin was also a friend; he, like Gebhard, signed her guest books in French, though with worse penmanship. Perhaps her closest American musical confidant was pianist George Proctor. He performed concertos by Grieg, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Eduard Schütt, Mendelssohn, and Rimsky-Korsakov with the BSO and once with the Longy Club. She financed his music training in Europe on the request of Padereswki, he traveled with her more than any other musician, and she referred to him as a “musical protégé of mine.”

Of all of Gardner’s close, musician friends, Loeffler enjoyed the most successful career and the most praise. Loeffler’s nationality has been a much-debated topic. Labeled French,

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110 Ibid, 256.
111 Arthur Foote to Isabella Stewart Gardner, March 12, 1906.
112 Isabella Stewart Gardner, Archives, Master Chronology.
German, “Francophile,” and American, he is difficult to categorize. He maintained that his birthplace was in Alsace, France, although, this has been called into question since his parents were from Berlin and Hochschule für Musik documents designate Schöneberg as his birthplace. After study in Berlin and Paris, Loeffler traveled to New York in 1881 then to Boston in 1882 to begin his tenure with the BSO, which lasted until 1903 when he decided to commit himself to composition full time. Just six years after his arrival in the United States, he acquired American citizenship. In a short time, Loeffler became active in Boston’s social scene. He became a member of the Tavern Club in 1885 where he befriended other Boston composers Chadwick, Foote, Johns, and Frederick Converse. These friendships lead to formation of the short-lived Composer’s Club of Boston with these composers and Edward Burlingame Hill.

Regarding music, Loeffler’s activities involved many composers, conductors, and performers. He sought input on his first orchestral work from John Knowles Paine, a symbolic gesture given Paine’s role as one of America’s first music professors. He performed frequently at the town’s social clubs with Foote, Chadwick, and Converse, and suggested to BSO conductors the music of Hill, Horatio Parker, Henry Eichheim, younger composers who were not established as Chadwick and Foote. He thought very highly of Converse: “This week, at the Symphony, we are having Fred. Converse’s New Symphony, which to me is a very noble work, expressive of his own noble soul. I cannot tell you all the good I find in this man, all the good I think of the man and the musician.” He thought highly of Webber’s orchestration, and once Wa-Wan

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115 Charles Martin Loeffler to Isabella Stewart Gardner, January 29, 1920. The letter was written to Gardner while she was ill and unable to attend the BSO. The piece was Converse’s Symphony No. 1 in C Minor, conducted by Pierre Monteux.
Press was founded, Loeffler encouraged its success. As the city embraced him, he embraced its native composers. He of course did not neglect German or French musicians; he frequently performed with Gericke at the St. Botolph Club, was instrumental in Schirmer’s publication of Fauré’s music, and played more than his share of German works with the BSO.

Loeffler represents a cultural bridge between America and France. Paintings by French-inspired American artists John Singer Sargent and Dodge MacKnight adorned his walls, and he advised the conservatory at Fontainebleau, the embodiment French-American musical exchange in early twentieth century. He adored French poetry and spoke about French literature at the St. Botolph Club. It is not surprising that this French-self-identifying, American citizen would be friends with Isabella Garner, a French-schooled, world-traveling, music-loving, art collector. They both admired French literature; Gardner suggested texts for Loeffler to set on several occasions, including for his Verlaine songs. In 1893, she also had become friends with French poet writer Paul Borget whose poems were used by Debussy. In 1902, she provided a translation of Virgil poems, which probably became the basis for his Pagan Poem for orchestra. Though left unfinished, she gave permission for Loeffler to set Okakura’s play The White Fox; Okakura gave Gardner the rights to the play through his will.

Their cosmopolitan background was not the only unifier. “Mrs. Jack was genuinely excited over [his] compositions. Her taste in music was more advanced and modern than her

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116 Charles Martin Loeffler to Isabella Stewart Gardner, n.d.
117 Knight, 214.
118 Ibid, 212.
119 Charles Martin Loeffler to Isabella Stewart Gardner, August, 21, 1893.
120 In 1894, Borget sent a copy of his book Cosmopolis to Gardner. (See Paul Borget to Isabella Stewart Gardner, June, 26, 1894.)
121 Charles Martin Loeffler to Isabella Stewart Gardner, 1902.
And she used her taste to support his works. Though Johns and Loeffler frequently played German sonatas for her, this was a more private indulgence in the salon-like lifestyle of Beacon St. There was at least one programmed performance at Beacon St. of Loeffler’s songs along side works by Rameau, Mattheson, and C.P.E. Bach. With the construction of Fenway Court, three larger concerts were held of his music. In April of 1903, just three months after opening day, a concert was devoted to his music alone. This was a particularly important event since it also celebrated Gardner’s birthday two weeks later; her birthdays were usually an elaborate affair. An orchestra assisted by B.J. Lang, Proctor, Gebhard, and Chorus of St. Cecilia’s Church performed *Pagan Poem, L’Archet*, and several songs. This was the first concert after opening day, a sign of her affection for Loeffler and his music. The following year saw another concert dedicated to his chamber music. Aside from the viola d’amor, Loeffler presented Gardner with several manuscripts, a sign of his admiration: Divertimento; *Reverie en Sourdie*, based on Verlaine’s poems suggested by Gardner; *Serenade* (five songs for voice), performed at the concert in 1904; *Paysage Trieste; de Rossignol*; and *Four Poems to Music*, also performed at the concert in 1904. Except for the Divertimento these items are not displayed in the museum yet are retained in the archives. It stands apart from the rest of these works since Loeffler dedicated the work to her. He sought her assistance for its publication in 1899. Ralph Locke surmises that she “may have taken the initiative of interesting her friend Gustave Schirmer in Loeffler, for Schirmer later published nearly all of his music.” This is a fitting arrangement since when Schirmer died, Gardner held a concert on March 22, 1907, in his honor at which Loeffler’s *Pagan Poem* was performed (eight months before its premier at the BSO with Muck conducting.

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122 Tharpe, 115.
123 Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Programs.
and Gebhard as soloist.)\textsuperscript{125} Her great interest in his music was enough for him to warn to “not go to Worcester on Friday morning to hear a rehearsal of \textit{Bonne Chanson} for it will consist of rehearsal of a few hard places all together perhaps 24 bars and will last from 5-10 minutes.”\textsuperscript{126} He was further concerned that they would not rehearse the work at all since time would probably be needed for Wallace Goodrich, pianist and her friend, to work with the orchestra. Traveling to Worcester, approximately 45 miles away, would certainly not have been an easy jaunt just for a rehearsal. Even if she had no definite plans to make the trip, the letter underscores her role as one of Muck’s “rehearsal girls” and emphasizes her friendship with Loeffler. At the very least, it demonstrates her interest in the music.

Gardner and Loeffler showed affection aside from concerts. In the early 1890s, she acquired a Stradivarius violin in Paris and allowed Loeffler to use it in the BSO premiere of the Divertimento with the BSO under Emil Paur’s direction in January of 1895.\textsuperscript{127} Loeffler kept the violin for some time. When Loeffler purchased the viola d’amor in Paris, he wrote to her a short letter so that she might share in the enthusiasm for the new instrument.\textsuperscript{128} Gardner was quite interested in the instrument, and he reciprocated by giving the viola to her, which now rests in the Yellow Room below a painting of Loeffler. She provided money on his behalf in order to purchase a “new Liszt organ” for St. Edwards Church in Medfield, Massachusetts, his place of residence.

Gardner could be counted on to attend weekly subscriptions at the BSO, the few concerts at the BOC each year, operas around town, and smaller performances at Jordan Hall or

\textsuperscript{125} Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Archives, Guest books, Volume 12.
\textsuperscript{126} Charles Martin Loeffler to Isabella Stewart Gardner, n.d.
\textsuperscript{128} Charles Martin Loeffler to Isabella Stewart Gardner, no date.
Chickering Hall. But the concerts at her home provide a different perspective on her own tastes and desires. Music was omnipresent in her home even when programmed events were not being held. The programming might easily be divided into two different periods: before Fenway Court’s construction and after.

She certainly would not allow music to be played at her home that she did not approve, yet it was common for others to suggest the music in the years before construction. Gericke selected works for a concert in 1889. Paderewski hand-picked compositions by Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Chopin, and included four short works of his own at a Beacon St. performance in 1892. Programs at Beacon St. were commonly planned or suggested by others. And as might be expected, Germanic composers dominated these performances. The Manuscript Club concerts (those at Beacon St. and those not hosted by Gardner) were the only concerts in which American works could be heard with any regularity. Johns’s and Foote’s success with the club surely contributed to the growth in their friendship with Gardner. The European conductors gave them little to no exposure.

Performances at Fenway Court not only challenged the cultural expectations and norms of Boston, they challenged the style and genre that upper class socialites might take in as an evening’s entertainment. The first of such performances was on three days in February of 1904 with a vaudeville act. The cast performed twelve different numbers including sketches, dances, a pantomime, and a variety act. Susan B. Howe’s music from *Rajah’s Daughter*, including several songs, a chorus, and a march, was interpolated throughout the dances. Eleanor Hyde also sang “I’ll Sing Thee Songs of Araby” by English composer Frederic Clay and “Nymphes et Sylvains” by French-Argentine composer Herman Bemberg.\(^{129}\) Roger Scaife led the orchestra that

\(^{129}\) The program however gives the name “Bember.”
comprised several musicians from the Footlight Club Orchestra, an ensemble that accompanied community theater at the Footlight Club in Jamaica Plain on Boston’s southern side. The Footlight Club professes to be “America’s oldest community theater, [performing] every year since 1877.” The full program for the evening was as follows:

**OVERTURE**

“The Wizard of Oz”

“March of the Vincent Highlanders,” from “Rajah’s Daughter”

Music by Miss S.B. Howe

Pages: Master Edward Winsor, Master Ralph Lowell

**I. VARIETY ACT**

Mr A.H. Parker, the Showman

Miss Mabel Stedman, Carmencita

Miss Caroline M Dabney, his wife

Mr. Russel H. Greely, Don Quixote

Mr. Philip Dalton, Mr Le Baron Russell, assistants

**II. SONGS FROM “THE RAJAH’S DAUGHTER”**

“Aloes linger long before they die” (“Rajah’s Daughter”) Susan B. Howe

“Filles de Cadiz” Tosti

**III. DANCE**

Miss Josephine Wilson

Miss Marian Fenno

Miss Dorothy Quincy

**IV. MONOLOGE**

Mrs. Fiske Warren

“Les Trois Hussards” Dialect Sketches

**V. PANTOMIME DANCE**

An Adventure Red Ridinghood had with a Bear

Red Ridinghood, Miss Clara Rotch

Bear, Mr. Harold Peabody

**VI. SONGS**

Miss Eleanor Hyde

“I’ll sing thee songs of Araby” Clay

“Nymphes et Sylvains” Bember

**VII. GOLD DANCE**

Mrs. Howard Cushing

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130 Footlight Club, *The Footlight Club, One Hundredth Performance: A Scrap of Paper, Eliot Hall, Jamaica Plain, May 4–5, 1906*, Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1906. Though there was some overlap in personnel between the Fenway Court performance and the one-hundredth performance at Eliot Hall cited here, the orchestra at Gardner’s home was not billed as the Footlight Orchestra.

VIII. MONOLOGUE
Mrs. Fiske Warren, “Country French”

IX. SERPENTINE DANCE
Miss Mary Curtis

X. DARK DEEDS
Mr. Joseph Seabury, Jr.

XI. FAIRY DANCE
Miss Katherine Fay

XII. CHORUS
“Kamadiva” from “The Rajah’s Daughter”

The dances have all been taught by Miss Isabel Florence. The piano used is a Chickering.\(^{132}\)

Gardner was also becoming interested in dance after the turn of the century, particularly in the work of Ruth St. Denis and Florence Noyes. St. Denis gained experience in New York vaudeville and variety dances. After visiting Paris’s World’s Exhibition she began to include styles from Egypt, Turkey, and Japan, and a short while later left the troupe she had been working with to dance as a solo artist. Her first successful dances were The Cobra and Radha, which was choreographed to music from Leo Delibes’s opera Lakme. The Cobra and Radha were performed at Fenway Court in May of 1906 and benefited the Holy Ghost Hospital for Incurables in Cambridge. The list of almost three-dozen patrons included Mrs. Higginson, Mrs. Storrow, Governor and Mrs. Guild, and Mayor and Mrs. John Fitzgerald, President John F. Kennedy’s maternal grandparents; the Governor and Mayor received honors at the head of the program. In between the dances Lena Little sang songs by Brahms, Schubert, and eighteenth-century French composer Nicolas Dalaryac.\(^{133}\)

\(^{132}\) Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Programs.

\(^{133}\) Isabella Stewart Gardner Archives, Programs.
The vaudeville and dance performances were outside of the normal programming for Beacon Street or Fenway Court yet illustrate the musical variety that Gardner sought and was more than eager to stage at her new home. These performances in particular cut against the “snobbish distinctions that have shaped the ‘classical’ repertory as canonical,” which Locke criticized. At Gardner’s home—and in the music cases that adorned the “Yellow Room”—vaudeville and dance shared the stage with Beethoven, Bach, Chausson, Loeffler, Foote, and Webber.

As seen in the chart below (see figure 10), the years coinciding with Fenway Court’s design, construction, and opening saw a shift in works programmed. In her early concerts at Beacon Street, German and other nationalities provided the bulk of material performed. This is consistent with activities at the BSO, the BOC, and the St. Botolph Club. Towards the later 1890s, the period coinciding with land purchase and design of Fenway Court, there is an increase in French works and a decrease in other nationalities. Once Fenway Court was built, American music began to usurp German music’s stage time.

While Loeffler’s contribution to her French taste is undeniable, the inclusion of other French works by Chausson and Rameau and American works by Webber, Foote, and even Stephen Foster at the expense of Germans demonstrates more dramatically her desire to make her own decisions. The programming tendencies in the other orchestras with which Gardner was associated eventually began to include French works as a greater percentage of total selections except for the St. Botolph Club. Its programming was somewhat steady across nationalities, due to the membership of composers such as Loeffler, Converse, and others. Its programming tendencies were distributed more evenly than other orchestras: German at 38%; French at 17%;

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Figure 10. Musical programming at Gardner’s homes.\textsuperscript{135}

See Appendix C, p. 66, for full statistics.

\textsuperscript{135} Since Gardner’s concerts with written programs were so sporadic, it is more difficult to see trends over a given amount of time. As such, a rolling five-concert average is used to view the trends in the percentage of works by German French, American and Other Nationalities. All statistical information regarding the Gardner’s programming was compiled from her archives, making note of each work played and detailing the composer’s nationality. The author holds this information.
American at 17%, almost nine times higher than the BSO; and Other Nationalities at 28%. The BOC made dramatic shifts once the conductor at the helm was French beginning in 1900, and the BSO made small changes after the Muck affair and its conductors became French. Yet in a smaller body of concerts, Gardner’s attention to French music began earlier than at the BOC and BSO, she programmed more Americans than the St. Botolph Club (as a percentage of the total), and she supported lesser-known composers more than all three.

Conclusion

Isabella Stewart Gardner’s life was one of privilege, and she gifted financial resources and returned favor upon the artists and musicians that inspired her and captured her emotions. Harvard intellectuals with whom she was acquainted peaked her curiosity in history and antiquarian artifacts, but she devoted most of her time to personal connections within the musical world. For Gardner, music and art were not products for simple consumption; the arts were a life-affirming endeavor to be celebrated. Tradition and contemporary artistic reflection from across the aesthetic spectrum were equally important to her. Musically, this came in the form of Germanic traditions and new French and American composers.

German music dominated Boston’s musical soundscape within established organizations such as the Handel and Haydn Society, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Harvard Music Association. Yet there was a small but vibrant group of musicians

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136 Boston Public Library. Allen A. Brown Music Collection. Some Programs of the St. Botolph Club. ML 28.B7 S37 Music Brown. All statistical and historical information regarding the programming was compiled from their exhaustive these bound programs, making note of each work played and detailing the composer’s nationality.
absorbed with French styles, mainly at the Boston Orchestral Club and the Longy Club. Charles Martin Loeffler and George Longy had great impact on Gardner and eventually on the BSO regarding their countrymen’s works. And Boston’s native composers gained footing in organizations like the St. Botolph Club and Manuscript Club. Gardner bonded with musicians and composers from each of these groups and supported them financially,logistically, and intellectually. As her art collection and knowledge of music grew, she built a grand home on Boston’s western side to pro-actively support her musician friends and exhibit to the city, state, and nation that which she valued. Many have cited her love for Wagner and his peers; however, it was French and American music that she chose to showcase the most once Fenway Court began to take shape as a design concept in the 1890s and a physical reality after the turn of the century. German music dominated Boston’s most renowned musical organization, the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Her musical interests and efforts expanded beyond its German composers, setting her apart from the rest of the social elite. She immersed herself in learning musical literature, yet it was the relationships and musicians’ lives that she chose to display in her Fenway Court. The home and museum reflect this in its paintings, display cases, and even its architectural design—a beautiful homage to her and John’s time in Venice.

Gardner’s love for all arts can be seen as a synthesis of Boston’s culture: its post-Revolutionary War sociopolitical kinship with France, cultivated by generations of writers and painters and by late nineteenth- and early twentieth century composers; its reverence for Germanic musical accomplishments from Bach and Handel to Brahms; and its burgeoning native-born composers. She embodied all that artistic Boston had to offer. Her interest in culture and intellect cultivated a rich environment for artistic creativity
and curiosity beyond the German canon. Years of collecting paintings and learning music literature culminated in the construction of Fenway Court, where she could display a lifetime of memories in a manner that reflected her personality—a personality that both embraced and challenged the social and cultural norms in which she lived.
## APPENDIX A

### PROGRAMMING AT THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA BY NATIONALITY

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**Total** | **64%** | **12%** | **3%** | **21%** |
APPENDIX B

PROGRAMMING AT THE BOSTON ORCHESTRAL CLUB BY NATIONALITY

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PROGRAMMING AT ISBELLA STEWART GARDNER’S HOMES

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APPENDIX D

CONTENTS OF MUSIC CASES IN THE ISABELLA STEWART
GARDNER MUSEUM’S YELLOW ROOM

CASE 1

Photograph of Jules Massenet, autographed
Photograph of Cyril Scott, autographed
Photograph of Fritz Kreisler, autographed
Photograph of Max Alvary (Achenbach), autographed
Photograph of Amalie Materna, autographed
Photograph of Nellie Melba, autographed
Letter from Nellie Melba
Sketch of Jascha Heifetz by John Singer Sargent
Sketch of Gabriel Fauré by John Singer Sargent
Letter from Theodore Thomas
Fan with musical notation and autograph of Francesco Tosti
Programs from concerts at Brookline home (2)
Tchaikovsky manuscript
Sketch of Charles Martin Loeffler by Anders Zorn
Plaster cast of Loeffler’s left hand
Hector Berlioz letter
Letter from Anna Pavloca
Letter from Vincent d’Indy
Photograph of Ethel Smyth, autographed with musical notation
Richard Wagner letter
Letter from Horatio Parker
Letter from Ossip Gabrilowitch

CASE 2

Photograph of Jean de Reske, autographed
Ignacy Paderewski postcard
Photograph of Pauline Lucca, autographed
Photograph of Joseph Joachim, autographed
Photograph of Ethelbert Nevin, autographed
Photograph of Theodore Leschetitsky, autographed
Giacomo Puccini postcard
Gioachino Rossini postcard
Pietro Mascagni postcard
Postcard/photograph from Edvard Grieg
Photograph of Pablo Saraste, autographed
Framed etching of Pablo Saraste
Photograph of Jules Massenet, autographed
Letter from Ignacy Paderewski
Photograph of Ignacy Paderewski, autographed
(Case 2 continued)

Photograph of Karl Muck, autographed
Photograph of Johannes Brahms, autographed
Photograph of Brahms and Richard Strauss, autographed by Strauss
Photograph of Eugene Ysaye, autographed
Anton Rubinstein manuscript
Photograph of Clayton Johns, autographed
Letter to Katharine Foote, with Gustav Mahler postcard
Letter from Wilhelm Gericke
Letter from Percy Grainger
Letter from Pierre Monteux
Medal with Brahms’s face
Ludwig van Beethoven life mask
Ludwig van Beethoven letter
Photograph of an engraving, Wagner and Liszt
Letter from Vanni Marcoux
Letter from Clayton Johns
Photograph of Anton Bruckner
Letter from Pablo Casals
Felix Mendelssohn letter
Music program, Amherst Webber’s Fiorella

CASE 3

Photograph of William Apthorp, autographed
Plaster cast of Franz Liszt’s hand
Franz Liszt letter
Photograph of Franz Liszt
Brass die of Franz Liszt’s autograph
Silver filigree box with lock of Franz Liszt’s hair
Plaster cast of Arthur Foote’s hand
Photograph of B.J. Lang
Letter from B.J. Lang
Note from Lilli Lehmann
Japanese mouth organ

Separate case for Charles Martin Loeffler’s viola d’amore and a letter from the composer
APPENDIX E

PERMISSION FOR USE

DATE: April 29, 2014
TO: Whom it may concern
FROM: Shana McKenna, Archivist
       617-278-6003 / smckenna@isgm.org
RE: Image request and permission

Brad Rohrer has requested and received permission to use the following images in his dissertation, Isabella Stewart Gardner, Fenway Court and a Life on Display (May 2014)

- Marr 19035 Fenway Music Room 1914
- Marr 19034 Fenway Music Room 1914
- DRAWING ROOM BEACON ST., CIRCA 1882
- Marr 2047 152 Beacon St. Music Room, ca 1900
- Photograph taken by Brad Rohrer (Summer of 2013) of a small portion of Guest book Vol. 9, June 1908, depicting a musical inscription written by H. Gebhard. The archives hold no other image of this particular guest book.

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REFERENCES


Jones, Frank N. *An Index to the Persons Commemorated by Inscriptions or Works of Art in the Central Library Building of the Boston Public Library*. Boston: Boston Public Library, 1939.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Brad A. Rohrer was born in December of 1977 in Nuremberg, Germany to American parents serving U.S. Armed Forces abroad. After several other posts, his family settled in Jacksonville, Alabama in 1986. He began playing guitar at age 8 and saxophone at age 11. He graduated with a Bachelor of Music in Composition from Berklee College of Music, Boston, Massachusetts in 2002. After graduation, Rohrer took time away from academics to feed his love for history and poetry before attending Florida State University for graduate studies in musicology. He lives in Tallahassee, Florida with his wife, Sarah, and their daughter, Annelise.