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ISABELLA
STEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM

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Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Celebrates Millionth Download of
Successful Free Classical Music Podcast *The Concert* and Online Music Library

Live since September 2006, podcast and online music library have been embraced by music lovers worldwide for superlative recordings and groundbreaking use of flexible copyright



BOSTON, MAY 12, 2009 — Just over two and a half years after launching the free classical music podcast *The Concert*, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is delighted to announce that its successful podcast programs and corresponding online music library have surpassed the one-million download mark.

The Concert, which launched on September 15, 2006, features live recordings of classical masterpieces from the Gardner Museum's weekly concert series. Curated by Gardner Museum *Music Director* Scott Nickrenz, the programs include a wide range of music – from classical masters Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart to musical greats of the 20th and 21st

centuries, including Leon Kirchner, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Julius Hemphill. May 15th will mark *The Concert's* 70th podcast program, featuring works by Antonio Vivaldi and Charles Ives.

"I think the success of the podcast and music library really speaks to the fact that there is a strong desire for quality classical music programming on the web – and it's particularly exciting that we're able to provide it for free," says **Scott Nickrenz**, the museum's music director.

The podcast and online recordings enjoy a steady audience of over 30,000 listeners per month, and the museum's online library has grown to include almost 150 classical works. *The Concert* and the Gardner's online recordings have been discovered and enjoyed by people in 116 countries across the world -- as far away as Bangladesh, Uganda, and Kuwait. *The Concert* has inspired messages of support and appreciation from across the Charles River and across the globe: from Belgian innkeepers, nuns at the Philippines' only classical radio station, university students in Colombia, and – most recently – from "up a mountain in Eastern Crete."

"We are delighted to be able to share the fantastic music that is made in the Gardner's Tapestry Room with listeners everywhere," says **Anne Hawley**, *Norma Jean Calderwood Director* of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. "Isabella Gardner left her museum 'for the education and enjoyment of the public forever,' and podcasting has provided us with a new way to bring the museum's programming to a worldwide audience."

The Concert has been the subject of feature articles in publications including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fast Company*, and the popular blog *BoingBoing* highlighting its quality programming and groundbreaking use of flexible copyright. *Fast Company* called it "one of the most popular classical podcasts to date" and blogger Alex Ross, music critic from *The New Yorker*, has cited *The Concert* as case-in-point for the "non-death" of classical music.

Each program contains approximately 45 minutes of music, prefaced by a brief introduction to the included works. New programs are posted on the 1st and 15th of each month, and are available through iTunes and at <http://gardnermuseum.org/music/podcast/theconcert.asp>. All works featured in the podcast are accessible through the Gardner Museum's online music library at <http://gardnermuseum.org/music/library.asp>.

ABOUT THE CONCERT

The Gardner Museum's first podcast, *The Concert* features free, unreleased recordings of live performances by master musicians and talented young artists recorded at the museum's *Sunday Concert Series*. New programs are posted on the museum's website, www.gardnermuseum.org, on the 1st and 15th of every month, and listeners may subscribe to receive free, automatic updates. The title *The Concert* is in part an homage to the Gardner Museum's treasured Vermeer painting "The Concert," stolen in 1990.

All podcasts in *The Concert* are offered under a "Share Music" license from Creative Commons, meaning that users are free "to download, copy, file-share, trade, distribute, and publicly perform (e.g. webcast)" the podcast for any noncommercial purpose. The Gardner Museum's choice to allow free sharing is a first for an art museum.

Upcoming podcast programs include performances by artists featured in this season's live concerts, including the Gardner Chamber Orchestra, the Claremont Trio, Musicians from Marlboro, pianists Jeremy Denk and Paavali Jumppanen, clarinetist José Franch-Ballester, and flutist Paula Robison.

MUSIC AT THE GARDNER MUSEUM

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is home to the oldest museum music program in the country, celebrating its 82nd season this year. From September through May, the museum hosts weekly Sunday concerts, showcasing a mix of world-renowned musicians and outstanding emerging artists. In addition, Thursday evening concerts as part of the museum's popular *Gardner After Hours* events feature programs of jazz and new music by adventurous young performers. Live recordings from the Gardner Museum are heard frequently on radio, locally on WGBH-FM and nationally on National Public Radio's "Performance Today."

Isabella Stewart Gardner established a legacy of music within her museum from its opening night celebration in 1903, when guests enjoyed a performance by members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Throughout her life, Isabella Gardner was a devoted champion of both established musicians and emerging young composers and performers, including Margaret Ruthven Lang, the Boston Symphony Orchestra's first female member.

MUSIC DIRECTOR SCOTT NICKRENZ

Renowned violist **Scott Nickrenz** began his 19th season as music director at the Gardner Museum in fall 2008. Since 1990, Nickrenz has taken the Gardner's music programs to an unprecedented level of excellence, initiating a number of exceptional music projects including the Museum's Centennial *Open Air* concerts and *Vivaldi in the Courtyard*, and the ongoing *Young Artists Showcase* program. Formerly the Director of Chamber Music at the Spoleto Festivals in the USA and Italy, as well as at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Scott Nickrenz is currently the Director of Chamber Music at the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, Florida.

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM

280 The Fenway Boston MA 02115 617 566 1401 www.gardnermuseum.org • Green Line E train or #39 bus to Museum • Hours: Tue.–Sun., 11 am–4:45 pm • Tickets: \$12 adults; \$10 seniors; \$5 students; FREE members, children 18 & under, all named "Isabella," and everyone on their birthday • \$2 off same-day admission at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston • Concert Tickets: \$5-23; concert tickets include museum admission

Modeled after a 15th-century Venetian palazzo surrounding an interior courtyard garden, the century-old Gardner Museum houses one of the most remarkable art collections in the world, featuring works by Rembrandt, Michelangelo, Raphael, Degas, and Sargent. Continuing the legacy of its founder, changing contemporary and historic exhibitions, the oldest museum music program in the country, seasonal courtyard garden displays, annual free days, visiting contemporary artists and innovative school and community partnerships enrich the permanent collection and provide ongoing inspiration for all.

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