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Press Release

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Launches Free Classical Music Podcast - “The Concert” - Under a Creative Commons License

Museum offers unreleased live performances by notable musicians and emerging young artists for free download and file sharing

BOSTON, MA, USA – September 14, 2006

Starting today, everyone who visits the website of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (www.gardnermuseum.org) will be able to download free classical music and share it with anyone, anywhere.

“The Concert,” the museum’s new classical music podcast, features unreleased live performances by master musicians and talented young artists recorded from the museum’s Sunday Concert Series, the nation’s longest-running museum music series. Today, the museum posts the first in a series of 45-minute podcasts, including music by Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, and Chopin for solo piano, orchestra, string quartet, and voice. A new podcast will be posted on the 1st and 15th of every month, and users will be able to subscribe to receive free, automatic updates delivered directly to their computers or mp3 players.

With this podcast, the Gardner Museum also breaks new ground, becoming the first art museum to encourage sharing and free distribution of its online programming by using a “some rights reserved” copyright license from Creative Commons. On the website, links to the Music Sharing license encourage users to freely share the music they download in “The Concert,” making the Gardner Museum one of the few early adopters of flexible copyright in licensing classical music.

“By sharing its renowned classical music performances with all the world under a Creative Commons license, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum embraces its public, expands its reach, and steps into the future,” said Eric Saltzman, a Creative Commons founder and board member. “Creative Commons got its start across the river in Cambridge, so we’re especially pleased that the museum looked to CC to make “The Concert” series freely available online.”

The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard Law School has worked with the museum to address legal issues relating to podcasting music and using Creative Commons licenses for podcasts.



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“To be able to support the artists who perform here and, at the same time, to expand the reach of classical music is very exciting,” says Gardner Museum Music Director Scott Nickrenz. “By using podcasting technology, and with the full support of the artists, we’re going to be able, for the first time, to offer free recordings of great classical music to anyone who wants to listen, wherever they want to listen.”

The podcast is a modern continuation of the museum’s long history of supporting young artists. Artists heard in this first season of “The Concert” run the gamut from young chamber musicians to established solo pianists. The artists whose performances are featured in “The Concert” include: the Borromeo String Quartet, the Claremont Trio, violinist Corey Cerovsek, the Gardner Chamber Orchestra with conductor Douglas Boyd, harpsichordist John Gibbons, violist Kim Kashkashian, Musicians from Marlboro, flutist Paula Robison, baritone Randall Scarlata, and pianists Jeremy Denk, Paavali Jumppanen, Cecile Licad, and Seymour Lipkin. Artist and composer bios are available on the website.

“This is a great opportunity, not just for the musicians involved, but for listeners, too,” says pianist Jeremy Denk, one of the musicians heard in “The Concert” and the author of the blog Think Denk (<http://jeremydenk.blogspot.com>). “For such a long time, the only way to get a recording out was to go through established channels of distribution, and even then, it’s rare that a classical record is widely available. The internet has really changed that. Projects like this support new voices in classical music, and create new opportunities for audiences to hear them.”

“I don’t think Isabella Gardner could have imagined all the incredible innovations of the past century, but at its heart this podcast is a continuation of her vision for the museum, and of her spirit of adventure and creativity in supporting artists,” says Anne Hawley, Norma Jean Calderwood Director of the Gardner Museum.

The title “The Concert” is in part an homage to the Gardner Museum’s treasured Vermeer painting “The Concert,” stolen in 1990.

“THE CONCERT”: WHAT’S INSIDE

“The Concert” strives to make classical music accessible to many different kinds of listeners. Rather than re-broadcasting complete concerts, each podcast features selections from the museum’s recording archives, paired in a way that draws interesting connections between pieces and offers variety. In a single podcast, a listener may hear a Schubert song and a string quartet, or a



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Mozart violin sonata and a concerto. Brief introductions place the music in context for listeners. Those interested in additional information about composers or artists featured in the podcast can find bios and links on the podcast website.

The podcast is also a first step towards building a free online classical music library on the museum's website. Each musical work featured in "The Concert" will be archived to this virtual library, sorted by performer and composer. As it grows, the library will be a resource for free classical music that can be shared with listeners around the world.

BREAKING NEW GROUND WITH CREATIVE COMMONS

All podcasts in "The Concert" are offered under a Music Sharing 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.

"As soon as I heard that this was an option, I knew it was the right thing for us to do," says Scott Nickrenz. "If we're serious about getting this music out there, we need to allow people to spread the word. Whether that means using peer-to-peer file sharing or burning a CD and sending it to your grandparents, we want people to be able to share this music in a way that works for them, using the power of the internet to spread classical music."

The Clinical Program in Cyberlaw at Harvard's Berkman Center (<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/home/clinical>) provided support and legal counsel for the project. "This has been an exciting collaboration for us," explains John Palfrey, Executive Director of the Berkman Center and Clinical Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. "We're big believers in combining the innovative use of technology with the freedoms offered by a Creative Commons license to help increase everyone's access to information, knowledge and music, like these terrific Gardner concert recordings."

MUSIC AT THE GARDNER MUSEUM

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is home to the oldest museum music program in the country. From September through May, the museum hosts weekly Sunday concerts. The Sunday Concert Series features renowned musicians, and the Young Artists Showcase presents outstanding emerging artists. Composer Portraits features adventurous young performers playing the music of 20th- and 21st-century composers. Live performances from the



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Gardner Museum are heard frequently on radio, locally on WGBH radio and nationally on National Public Radio's "Performance Today."

Isabella Stewart Gardner established a legacy of music with the creation of her museum. Boston Symphony Orchestra members performed on opening night, January 1st, 1903. Isabella Stewart Gardner also supported established and emerging young musicians, including Margaret Ruthven Lang, the Boston Symphony Orchestra's first female member. The music program at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum was formally established 79 years ago.

About the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is a work of art itself. Housed in a Venetian-inspired palace, turned inside-out and surrounding an ever-changing courtyard garden, the museum's collection spans more than 30 centuries and features artworks by Rembrandt, Michelangelo, Raphael, Botticelli, 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.

About Creative Commons

Creative Commons is a not-for-profit organization, founded in 2001, that promotes the creative re-use of intellectual and artistic works—whether owned or in the public domain. Creative Commons licences provide a flexible range of protections and freedoms for authors, artists, and educators that build upon the "all rights reserved" concept of traditional copyright to offer a voluntary "some rights reserved" approach. It is sustained by the generous support of various organizations including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Omidyar Network, the Hewlett Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation as well as members of the public. For general information, visit <http://creativecommons.org>

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