

2010

# A History of Opera in Boston

John R. Tedesco

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/theses>

 Part of the [Cultural History Commons](#), [Musicology Commons](#), [Other Sociology Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

Tedesco, John R., "A History of Opera in Boston" (2010). *Masters Theses 1911 - February 2014*. 470.  
Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/theses/470>

This thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses 1911 - February 2014 by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@library.umass.edu](mailto:scholarworks@library.umass.edu).

A HISTORY OF OPERA IN BOSTON

A Thesis Presented

by

JOHN R. TEDESCO

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

May 2010

Musicology

© Copyright by John R. Tedesco 2010

All Rights Reserved

A HISTORY OF OPERA IN BOSTON

A Thesis Presented

by

JOHN R. TEDESCO

Approved as to style and content by:

---

Theodore D. Brown, Chair

---

Miriam Whaples, Member

---

Robert Schultz, Member

---

Jeffery Cox, Department Head  
Department of Music and Dance

## DEDICATION

This thesis is foremost dedicated to the pioneers of opera in the City of Boston. I hope this work can help in one way to fulfilling the long-held dream of a permanent world-class opera company in the city.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my grandparents, Drs. Anthony R. Carbone, Ph.D., and Mary T. Carbone, Ed.D., for their support, guidance, and help. Their academic pursuits have been an amazing inspiration for what is possible when you have conviction and a vision of what you know is right and is worth fighting for. I hope to continue this philosophy of asking questions and continuing to search for the truth.

To my grandparents John N. Tedesco and Anne Tedesco, thank you for the memories and for all the early support. You are missed dearly.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Miriam Whaples, for her thoughtful and provoking questions, and for keeping me on task. Without her, my thesis would probably still be in the planning stages. I would also like to thank my music professors, especially Theodore Brown, who have made me grow through the years and become the musician I am today. I would also like to thank Professor Robert Schultz for the idea of my thesis. Without his opera class in the fall of 2008, I would never even have thought of writing about this topic. The final paper in that class set the stage for this thesis and, what a great experience it has been.

I also own a debt of gratitude to Sociology Professor Robert Zussman of the University of Massachusetts and Professor Ronald Lembo of Amherst College for their insights into the sociological aspects of population movement and how these aspects can change an area's particular culture. I hope to continue with my research down the sociological path of music in culture to see how American's can experience music in an every increasing manner.

I also owe Matthew Brooks a thank you for all of his help with the architectural drawings and research. In finding research material and interpreting building schematics, without him, I would still be lost trying to decipher what it all means.

The Boston Lyric Opera has been an enormous help in allowing me access to their records of the Boston Opera House and of the Boston Opera. I am very thankful for the help that they have given me. I hope that this thesis can be of some help to them to help expand their activities and musical offerings.

I would also like to thank the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Northeastern University libraries for allowing me access to their archives. Without their help I would not have been able to write this thesis.

Finally, and most importantly, I want to thank my family for their support during this time, and the support of my friends, who kept me sane during the entire process. My grandparents have been incredibly helpful with their knowledge of research and what to do with materials. I could not have put this together without the guidance from my grandmother and her incredible knowledge. I hope that someday I can use this knowledge to its full advantage to help others.

ABSTRACT

A HISTORY OF OPERA IN BOSTON

MAY 2010

JOHN R. TEDESCO, B.M., UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

M.M., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Theodore D. Brown

This thesis examines the cultural context of opera in Boston between the years 1620 to 2010. Specifically, I look at how the Boston Opera Company was founded, its existence, and its ultimate demise. The rise of opera in colonial Boston is also explored and especially how the immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries influenced the city. Around this time of changing demographics Eben D. Jordan, Jr., of Jordan Marsh Co. decided to build an opera house for the city of Boston.

The effects that Puritanism had on music and the culture of Boston during its early years are also explored. Then Boston musical independence is catalogued about how it relates to the unique form of music that did form during this time, starting with the First New England School.

During the mid to late nineteenth century massive immigration took place that changed this country, especially Boston. The modern United States was formed during this time, including its music. Boston, starting in the 1830's had numerous societies and schools disseminating music to the populace. This in turn led to the creation of the Boston Opera Company in 1908.

The Boston Opera Company was founded by Eben D. Jordan of Jordan Marsh Co. He decided that the city of Boston needed a proper opera company, so he paid for the



construction of the house and operation. Unfortunately, the populace soon lost interest and the company made an ill-fated trip to Paris in 1914. This trip, coupled with the start of WWI, forced the company to declare bankruptcy in 1915.

There are definite cultural considerations as to why the opera company was unable to make itself part of the fabric of the city, like the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The Boston Symphony Orchestra is very much a part of the city and there is no reason why opera should not be with that part either.

Boston has a very large metropolitan area and with the proper guidance and determination, opera could be supported here year round. A new house would have to be built, since the original opera house was torn down in 1958. With the proper determination, however, it could be done for permanent opera in the city.

# CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xii
CHAPTER	
INTRODUCTION.....	1
I. MUSIC IN BOSTON 1600-1781.....	5
Puritanism and Boston.....	5
Early American Music Tradition.....	7
II. MUSIC IN BOSTON 1781-1850.....	12
First New England School.....	12
Lorenzo da Ponte.....	14
Secular Instrumental Music.....	15
Germania Musical Society.....	19
III. PEACE JUBILEES AND OPERA.....	22
Boston's Peace Jubilees.....	22
Opera in the Northeast.....	26
Important Performance Venues in Boston.....	30
IV. WHY GERMAN CULTURE?.....	35
Second New England School.....	38
Immigration in the late Nineteenth Century.....	41
The New York Music Scene.....	47
V. BOSTON AND MUSIC DISSEMINATION.....	50
The Boston Academy of Music.....	51
The New England Conservatory.....	58

VI. BOSTON BRAHMINS.....	60
Eben D. Jordan.....	65
Henry Russell.....	66
VII. BUILDING THE BOSTON OPERA COMPANY.....	69
Completion of the Boston Opera House .....	71
VIII. THE BOSTON OPERA COMPANY.....	79
The French Trip.....	92
Anglo-American Grand Opera Company.....	94
The War to end all Wars.....	96
IX. THE FAILURE OF THE BOSTON OPERA COMPANY.....	98
Bankruptcy.....	101
Financial Considerations.....	103
X. THE FATE OF THE BOSTON OPERA HOUSE.....	107
Demolition of the Opera House.....	109
XI. WHY OPERA FAILED IN BOSTON.....	113
Cultural considerations.....	113
XII. OPERA IN BOSTON POST WORLD WAR II.....	121
Opera Company of Boston.....	121
Boston Lyric Opera.....	128
Opera Boston.....	130
Other Organizations.....	131
The Future.....	132
APPENDICES	
A:    HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS.....	135
B:    MANAGEMENT STAFF OF THE BOSTON OPERA COMPANY.....	152
C:    SELECTED OPERAS PRESENTED IN BOSTON: 1908-2011.....	153
D:    TIMELINE OF OPERA IN BOSTON: 1750-2010.....	168
WORKS CITED.....	174

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
4.1. Immigration from these European nations from 1850 to 1920.....	45
4.2. Heritage of the total number of immigrants from 1850 to 1920.....	46
8.1. Board of Directors of the Opera Company.....	79

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
I.1. The Vienna State Opera House Today.....	1
I.2. The Boston Opera House's demolition in 1958.....	2
1.1. Governor John Winthrop, one of the most famous of the founding Puritans.....	6
2.1. The Germania Musical Society, early 1850s.....	20
3.1. Firemen rehearsing for the 1869 Peace Jubilee.....	23
3.2. Choristers rehearsing for the 1872 Peace Jubilee in the old Boston Music Hall.....	25
3.3. Patrons Leaving the old Boston Music Hall where the Boston Symphony Orchestra performed prior to 1900.....	31
3.4. The Wang Theatre today.....	33
5.1. Lowell Mason, later in life.....	52
5.2. John Sullivan Dwight, picture taken while he was editor of his music journal.....	56
6.1. Major Henry Lee Higginson later in life.....	64
6.2. Eben D. Jordan, Jr.....	66
6.3. Henry Russell.....	67
7.1. Location of the boxholders for the Boston Opera House, 1909-1914.....	70
7.2. Interior of the Opera House at its opening .....	73
7.3. Traffic plan for the opening of the Opera House.....	74
7.4. The Opera House at its opening in 1909.....	76
7.5. Palm Room of the Boston Opera House.....	77
8.2. Josef Urban in his office.....	85
8.3. Georgette Leblanc.....	90
8.4. Otto Kahn.....	92

8.5. Send-off of the Boston Opera Company to Paris.....	94
9.1. Isabella Stewart Gardner in her early years.....	100
10.1. Original Plan of the Prudential Center in the late 1950s.....	110
10.2. The wrecking ball taking down the Boston Opera House, 1958.....	111
11.1. Original list of boxholders and stockholders for the Boston Opera House.....	114
11.2. William F. Fitzgerald.....	116
12.1. The Orpheum Theater today.....	124
12.2. The current Opera House in Downtown Crossing.....	126
12.3. The Citi Performing Arts Center <sup>SM</sup> Shubert Theatre.....	128
12.4. The Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College.....	130

## INTRODUCTION

After World War II, Vienna, Austria, rebuilt its state opera house in 1954. The rebuilt building (figure I.1) is again one of the main centers for opera in the world. The opera house in Boston, Massachusetts, however was vacant and dilapidated in 1954, soon to be torn down. Two cities, musical capitals in their own right, could not have possessed a more different attitude toward opera. While Vienna rebuilt from the ravages of World War II, Boston tore down its monument of the past. Such was the fate of the opera house in “the city on a hill,” the “Athens of America.” The opera house became a victim of urban renewal that was sweeping through Boston, as it was the rest of the country as well.

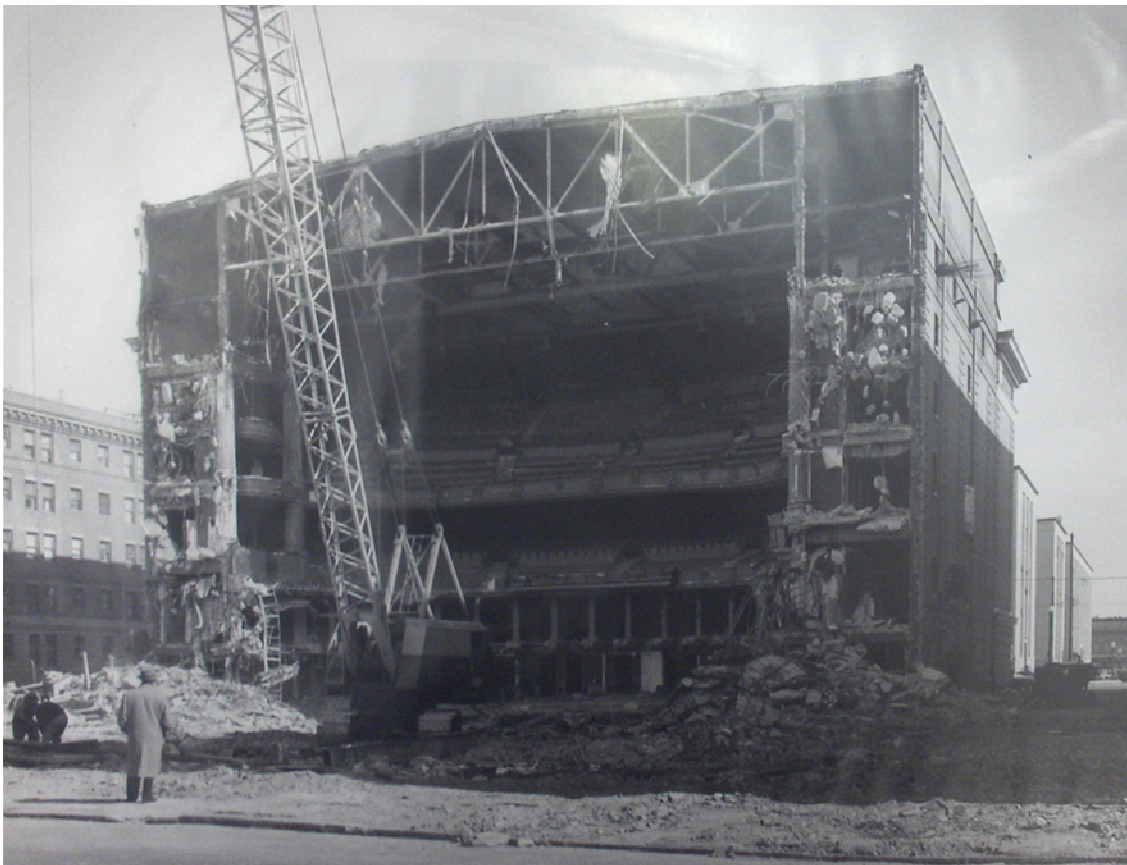


**Figure I.1. The Vienna State Opera House today.**

When the Boston Opera House (figure I.2), the sister of Symphony Hall, was torn down in 1958, so ended an experiment in the city of Boston. As early as 1730, opera companies were struggling to bring opera to Boston. At the turn of the twentieth century, the great philanthropist Eben Jordan Jr. and the opera manager Henry Russell had set out to bring large-scale opera to Boston. Both felt a world-class city needed world-class

opera. For all their considerable effort, however, the opera company lasted barely ten years, the opera house itself, as we will see, less than fifty.

It is not just the fact that the Boston Opera House was the only building in Boston specifically built for opera, it is that the city could not rally to protect it, even though in 1958 Sarah Caldwell was just starting her opera company that would have benefited greatly from this house.



**Figure 1.2. The Boston Opera House's demolition in 1958.**

Boston has some of the greatest cultural centers in the world, and in a city with such a musical heritage, the failure of opera is all the more traumatic. It is not, however, exactly surprising when one looks at the cultural components of the city and what types of music the populace wanted. Many reasons explain why the Boston Opera



Company failed, and, by extension, why other twentieth-century Boston opera companies struggled as well. Some attribute it to the Puritan values that can still be found in Boston.

This does not mean, however, that Boston is devoid of music. Boston has a number of musical organizations, most notably the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) and the New England Conservatory of Music. The BSO is an orchestra catering to the needs of a population that has grown to love it. Boston today would not be complete without the orchestra, as there would be no Tanglewood in the Berkshires, no Boston Pops on the Esplanade, and no Symphony Hall. These three facets have made the orchestra part of the city.

All of these questions lead to a fascinating story of the culture of Boston's Puritan roots; the influence of the Boston Brahmins on its cultural organizations; how partnerships with larger organizations with their own agenda can cripple an organization; and how individuals can change the direction of organizations, for better or worse.

To better understand the opera scene in Boston, one must look at the musical culture of the original Massachusetts Bay colony under the Puritans and then the United States, specifically when music started to be imported by the British in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. After this initial music import, the next major musical evolution would occur in the latter half of the nineteenth century after the Civil War, as changes were afoot to bring the United States out of the war and into superpower status.

The time after the Civil War also saw a major change in musical culture as well, especially because of the large immigrations in the second half of the nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries. This change was most pronounced on the eastern seaboard, with millions arriving annually. This immigration led to an explosion of opera in New York City, and New York became the capital of opera in the United States, especially in 1883 with the founding of the Metropolitan Opera Company.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Metropolitan Opera, almost went bankrupt in competition with Oscar Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera; this would directly affect Boston. Hammerstein's scheme almost worked. The Metropolitan, trying to survive, signed an agreement with companies in Boston and Chicago, in order to stay solvent, intertwining them all. No one at the time could have foreseen how World War I would be another crisis for New York, and by extension, would doom opera in Boston and Chicago.

These events illuminate how the United States' unique musical culture came into being, especially in Boston. The Puritan elements in Boston's early years were important in the formation of the city's unique musical atmosphere and deserve special mention because of the effect they would have on later generations.

## CHAPTER I

### MUSIC IN BOSTON 1600-1781

#### Puritanism and Boston

Music for religious purposes was important to the Puritans in Boston. They had brought with them the Psalter published in Amsterdam by Henry Ainsworth in 1612. It contained thirty-nine tunes, borrowed from English, French, and Dutch Psalters. After this, thirty clergy from the colony devised a new psalm book, resulting in the *The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre* (known as the Bay Psalm Book) of 1640, an important musical document for the colonists, as psalms were the largest source of musical material at this time.<sup>1</sup>

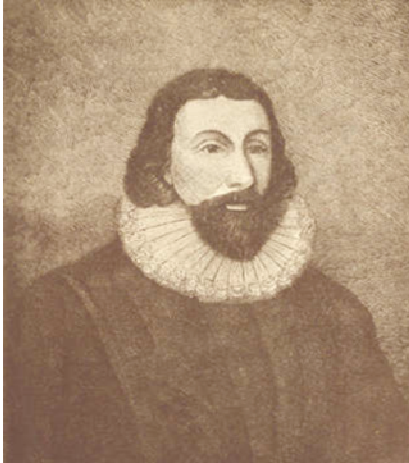
An important early minister in the Puritan colonies was the Reverend Thomas Symmes of Bradford, Massachusetts. In 1720 he wrote about opera arias, “Every Leading-Singer would take the Liberty of raising any Note of the Tune, or lowering of it, as best pleas’d his Ear, and add such Turns and Flourishes as were grateful to him.”<sup>2</sup> Symmes delivered a sermon on “The Reasonableness of Regular Singing” in 1720. His purpose was to convince the congregation to sing the notes as written, instead of adding flourishes, which were not appropriate in his eyes. He believed they added too much ornamentation and weakened the music. Other ministers followed suit as well.

In this vein, the Reverend John Tufts of Newbury, Massachusetts, wrote *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm-Tunes*, first published in 1721. The Reverend Thomas Walter of Roxbury, Massachusetts wrote *The Grounds and Rules of Music*

---

<sup>1</sup> Leonard Burkat, et al. "Boston (i)." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03674> (accessed August 7, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> H. Wiley Hitchcock, *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ.: Prentice Hall, 2000), 5.



**Figure 1.1. Governor John Winthrop, one of the most famous of the founding Puritans.**

*Explained*, also in 1721. Tufts’s book went through eleven editions and Walter’s was still in print almost fifty years after its publication. Both books were very important musical texts throughout Boston, explaining the role of music in society and how the populace should study and perform music.<sup>3</sup>

John Winthrop (figure 1.1), the famous minister and governor, said about the colony, “For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. . . .The eyes of all people are upon us. Soe [sic] that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword throughout the world.”<sup>4</sup> This view of a “city on a hill” would become famous and to this day is still attached to Boston.

Intellectual prowess was something the Puritan leadership took very seriously, as the founding of Harvard College shows in 1636. The original reason for its founding was the training of clergy. As Robert Merrill Bertlett says about the intellectual aspects of the Puritans:

They were part of the intellectual and cultural ferment of the Elizabethan period. They were close to the amenities of Lincoln, Boston, York, and within the arc of influence that emanated from Cambridge [University]. . . .They were substantial thinkers, and their contribution was not only religious and intellectual but of literary significance as well. . . .These Puritans marshaled a mighty brain trust. Their movement was one of the intellectually best equipped in history; and they

---

<sup>3</sup> Hitchcock, *Music in the United States*, 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas H. O’Connor, *Bibles, Brahmins, and Bosses: Short History of Boston*. 3rd ed. (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, 1991), 23.

prevailed in their reformation through the force of their logic expressed in dynamic Elizabethan English.<sup>5</sup>

The Puritans looked at opera as something overly expensive that was not appropriate for their constituents. It was the word of God through Biblical texts that ruled supreme and, of course, knowledge through God.<sup>6</sup> It was not until British nationals, not the direct descendants of the Puritans, had started to come over later to New England in larger numbers, that the first operatic and non-religious musical tradition in New England could begin.

By the time the Boston Brahmins, who would found most of the major Boston cultural organizations, came to their status in the mid to late nineteenth century, Puritanism had been stereotyped as a counter-reaction against the rapid scientific and social changes of the time.<sup>7</sup> It was not that the Puritans themselves were wholly responsible for the musical situation of Boston; it was that the Brahmins used the conservative English culture and Puritan ideas for musical cultivation, as will be discussed later.

### Early American Music Tradition

Music in America, after the Puritans, originally developed as the British brought their music to the America colonies, mainly through hymns and British concert music. After Britain's Civil War of 1642-1649, the monarchy was left with very little power, even being abolished from 1649 to 1660. After its re-establishment, it was unable to pass

---

<sup>5</sup> Richard Howland Maxwell, "Pilgrim and Puritan: A Delicate Distinction," *Pilgrim Society Note*, Series Two (March 2003), <http://www.pilgrimhall.org/PSNoteNewPilgrimPuritan.htm> (accessed February 25, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 149.

<sup>7</sup> Jan. C. Dawson, "Puritanism in American Thought and Society: 1865-1910," *The New England Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (December 1980), 510.

laws and levy taxes, which were left to Parliament. In the passage below, Richard Taruskin describes the English attitude toward music in the seventeenth century:

No matter how heroic or serious their content, [the arts] were viewed and cultivated as an aspect of luxurious living on a par with other sensual and gustatory delights. That hedonism, tinged as it was with licentiousness, may seem to us attractive enough; but in the context of seventeenth-century England it meant a resurgence of aristocratic tastes, values, mores, and privileges.<sup>8</sup>

This view of music worked directly with the Puritans' view of music as well. The Puritans who led England from 1649 to 1660, had not sought to suppress secular music, but they did oppose the theater. At this time, English plays were the most popular form of entertainment.<sup>9</sup> Musicians tried to evade the anti-theatre law by disguising theater productions as musical events. Theater music was confined for the most part to masques and incidental music for plays, as England had no opera at this time.<sup>10</sup> In the late seventeenth century, English opera grew out of the masque, a theatrical production that consisted of dancing and acting performed by masked players.

Soon after 1700, however, Italian musical influences started to invade London, changing their masques and incidental music for plays.<sup>11</sup> In 1710, with a production of Handel's *Rinaldo*, opera seria became an established form of entertainment in England. These new masques were similar to costume balls and the prologues to early Italian or French court opera. These in turn gave rise to ballad operas, which consisted of spoken dialogue interspersed with songs that set new words to borrowed tunes. These ballad operas were brought over to America when the British started to heavily colonize the East

---

<sup>8</sup> Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Vol 2 of *The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 125.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>10</sup> Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History*, 149.

<sup>11</sup> Donald Jay Grout and Hermine Weigel Williams, *A Short History of Opera*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 147.

Coast. Although in England the ballad operas lasted only until the 1730s; in the American Colonies they were popular somewhat longer.<sup>12</sup>

Touring opera companies traveled across the colonies so that music and opera flourished. There was by 1735, for example, a strong opera tradition in Charleston, South Carolina;<sup>13</sup> Providence had seen opera performances by 1746.<sup>14</sup> New York and Philadelphia both had seen opera by around 1750. Most of these opera traditions refer to the British authorities, as the common folk did not have the monetary resources to go to the opera at this time. Disposable income did not become prevalent until the Industrial Revolution, which started in Britain in the 1830s.

Boston had an anti-theatre law of 1750, enacted by the General Court of Massachusetts, which prevented large works from being performed. This did not, however, prevent performances of English ballad and comic operas. These were free to be performed, and were, to great success across Boston. Indeed, there had been over one hundred fifty ballad-opera performances in Boston before 1800.<sup>15</sup>

These were presented to the populace as a way for them to enjoy opera; because of their popularity, they were not banned (as the larger productions were). Also, they could be produced on a very small budget with a small number of performers. This was important for the traveling companies performing them, as the cost of the productions was quite low, enabling the common person to attend. These ballad operas also did not

---

<sup>12</sup> Donald Jay Grout, J. Peter Burkholder, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 495.

<sup>13</sup> McKay, "Opera in Colonial Boston," 133.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>15</sup> Leonard Burkhat, et al. "Boston (i)." In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03674> (accessed July 30, 2009).

contain the expensive, gaudy, and themes that later generations of Boston's elite would find to be improper for the populace as a whole.

One of the earliest documented concerts in America took place in Boston on December 30, 1731, in "Mr. Pelham's Great Room." As the advertisement in the *Boston Weekly News-Letter* announced:

On Thursday the 30<sup>th</sup> of this instant December, there will be performed a Concert of Musick on sundry Instruments at Mr. Pelham's Great Room being the house of the late Dr. Noyes near the Sun Tavern.

Tickets to be delivered at the place of performance at Five shillings each. The Concert to begin exactly at Six a Clock, and no Tickets will be delivered after Five the Day of Performance.

N.B. There will be no admittance after Six.<sup>16</sup>

Boston's first professional operatic season was from September 29, 1769, to June 20, 1770.<sup>17</sup> The first opera performed was *The Beggar's Opera* with music arranged by Johann Christoph Pepusch and the original libretto by John Gay—still popular at this time, though first performed in London in 1728. The performance in Boston was popular with the British authorities and the season was a success.

Although Boston was a large city by colonial standards, it certainly did not have the musical resources that the major musical capitals of Europe had. This did not mean, however, that Boston could not produce the musical works of the time. On April 20, 1774, Thomas Augustine Arne's *Symphony--Artaxerxes* was performed. This performance was unusual because it required full strings, percussion, eight winds, and full brass, which Boston was able to produce.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Henry Woodward, "February 18, 1729: A Neglected Date in Boston Concert Life," *Notes, Second Series*, 33, no. 2 (December 1976), 243.

<sup>17</sup> David McKay, "Opera in Colonial Boston," *American Music*, 3 no. 2 (1985), 133.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.



During this time, as can be seen, Boston was a leading center of secular musical activity in the United States, which caused many early composers, from the colonial to post-colonial times to use Boston as a center for music composition. This in turn laid the foundation for the First New England School. This was so important because it laid the foundation for Northeastern American music.

## CHAPTER II

### MUSIC IN BOSTON 1781-1850

#### First New England School

The First New England School was important in the colonial New England music scene. The best known of the school was William Billings (1746-1800), whose tunebook, *The New-England Psalm-Singer*, was issued in 1770.<sup>19</sup> Before this time, only about a dozen compositions by American composers existed. Billings's book itself had 127 of his compositions. His music would become extremely popular and influential in colonial New England, especially during the Revolutionary War. His tunes were used for American music, his song "Chester" becoming very famous; in 1956 it was arranged by the American composer William Schuman.

Other important composers who complemented the school included Daniel Read (1757-1836), Timothy Swan (1758-1842), Supply Belcher (1751-1836), Justin Morgan (1747-98), and Andrew Law (1749-1821). These composers helped define New England music and thus had a profound influence on American music through their songbooks,<sup>20</sup> which included psalm settings, hymns, anthems, patriotic pieces, fugues, and other sacred and secular works.<sup>21</sup>

Even though this music was nowhere near the quality of European continental music, it was a starting point for American composers. This would also start the Bostonian tradition of placing serious secular music above all other types, a tradition that would reach its zenith with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

---

<sup>19</sup> Hitchcock, *Music in the United States*, 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

The operatic scene in Boston was seriously curtailed during the Revolutionary War. After the war, ballad opera would again play an important role in Boston's music. Even then, it did not appear again in Boston on a large scale until 1792,<sup>22</sup> and the ban on theater that existed in Boston was not lifted until 1793. The first modern theater, the Federal Theatre, opened in 1794,<sup>23</sup> soon followed by the Haymarket Theatre in 1797; both became main attractions.<sup>24</sup> As early as 1797, French opera was performed in Boston. Grétry's *Richard Coeur de Lion* was sung in English and was reportedly John Quincy Adams's favorite opera.<sup>25</sup>

A major influence on the city at this time was William Haliburton's pamphlet, "Effects of the Stage on the Manners of a People, and the Propriety of Encouraging and Establishing a Virtuous Theater." He wanted a very large theater built seating sixty-two hundred people so that everyone could learn proper values. As he said, "[music will be] lending its divine aid, softening the savage heart, and lifting the rapt soul to God."<sup>26</sup> Of course, he did not want opera. He describes it as: "all unintelligible Italian airs, trills, affected squeaks and quavers."<sup>27</sup> This goes back to Reverend Thomas Symmes's view about prostituting music. Serious music was acceptable; opera was not.

The atmosphere of concert and opera performances differed as well: both were not nearly as formal as today. Both of the theaters in Boston were very strict about the conduct of the patrons; women were required to remove their hats, encores were

---

<sup>22</sup> McKay, "Opera in Colonial Boston," 137.

<sup>23</sup> John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 149.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

absolutely forbidden, and patrons had to behave for the entire performance.<sup>28</sup> During the late eighteenth century, this was the scene at a typical opera or symphonic concert in Paris, according to James Johnson:

While most were in their places by the end of the first act, the continuous movement and low din of conversation never really stopped. Lackeys and young bachelors milled about in the crowded and often boisterous parterre, the floor-level pit to which only men were admitted. Princes of the blood and dukes visited among themselves in the highly visible first-row boxes. Worldly abbés chatted happily with ladies in jewels on the second level, occasionally earning indecent shouts from the parterre when their conversations turned too cordial. And lovers sought the dim heights of the third balcony—the paradise—away from the probing lorgnettes.<sup>29</sup>

Opera was a social gathering at this time. Its main purpose was to entertain, and, especially in Paris, this was done with grand showmanship. Such social practices in turn were brought to the United States from the European capitals; concerts were a time for women to show off the latest fashions and men to talk about the issues of the day. Opera and symphonic concerts were not only a place to hear music, but also to catch up with the latest gossip.

#### Lorenzo da Ponte

A key figure in the early opera scene in the United States was Lorenzo da Ponte, librettist of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*, who emigrated from London to New York City in 1805.<sup>30</sup> Da Ponte became a grocer and general merchant in New York, then in Pennsylvania, and supplemented his income with

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> James Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 34.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 181.

private teaching and dealing in Italian books.<sup>31</sup> He returned to New York in 1819, determined to bring Italian culture, including opera, to America. He intended to achieve this through teaching, book dealing, and through his appointment in 1825 as Professor of Italian at Columbia College. He officially taught from 1827 until 1838.<sup>32</sup> He helped revive Italian opera, especially in New York in 1832-33, financing an Italian opera house that was not a financial success.<sup>33</sup>

Da Ponte was attempting to interest the public in opera. At this time, since the United States was still young and centered on an English musical tradition, and although English opera's main influence was Italian opera, the effort to promote Italian opera failed. The United States would have to develop its own musical tradition, apart from Great Britain's. This would be done, aside from church music, with secular instrumental music.

#### Secular Instrumental Music

Once the American colonies had gained their independence in 1783, secular instrumental music in a concert setting received an indifferent reception prior to 1840. From 1809 to 1811 only five secular concerts, not including outdoor concerts, were advertised in Boston.<sup>34</sup> Amateur musical performance was considered inappropriate among the upper class in Boston and they wanted nothing to do with it. As John Rowe Parker said about music in Boston in 1820:

---

<sup>31</sup> Tim Carter and Dorothea Link, "Da Ponte, Lorenzo," in Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07207> (accessed April 28, 2009).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Broyles, "Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston" *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 44, no. 3 (1991), 453-454.

Is there not some reason to doubt whether we are alive to refined music? That this doubt is not altogether unfounded, may be proved by appealing to the success of several concerts of Instrumental music which have been offered the public; not one of the individuals has been substantially benefited by the exercise of those talents. . . Regular concerts have never succeeded well, in this metropolis, and although there exist other causes of failure, beside the want of knowledge of music, yet this last is clearly the reason why patronage is so sparingly bestowed upon professors.<sup>35</sup>

This sentiment did not stop the Handel and Haydn Society from being founded in 1815 to “improve the style of performing sacred music” and to promote more American performances of music by “Handel and Haydn and other eminent composers.”<sup>36</sup> In 1817 the society gave the first American performances of Handel’s *Messiah* and Haydn’s *Creation*, two works with which the organization has remained associated to this day. It was a true choral society then; original members included dry-goods merchants, tailors, and bank cashiers. Rehearsals were mainly social occasions with minimum music rehearsal.<sup>37</sup> Still a musical association today, coming together for the performance of music, the Handel and Haydn Society has much higher standards of playing today as they use professional musicians and singers; they also perform with period instruments.

There were other musical societies founded in Boston during this time as well. Some lasted, while others did not. The Apollo Society, founded in 1824, expired soon after.<sup>38</sup> The Musical Professional Society was founded in April of 1831 and stressed secular music, attempting to give it a new status, more than mere entertainment.<sup>39</sup> Its impact was limited: the society lasted until June of 1831.

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 454.

<sup>36</sup> Crawford, *America’s Musical Life: A History*, 142.

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 28-29.

<sup>38</sup> Broyles, “Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston,” 461.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 467.

The emergence of a large middle class at this time was still in its infancy. The agriculture revolution in England in the late eighteenth century made the Industrial Revolution (as historian Joyce Appleby calls it) in the early nineteenth century possible. Food was now available for the large population growth that industry brought. The invention of the steam engine in 1705 by Thomas Newcomen, with subsequent revisions by James Watt in 1769, allowed England to lead in industrial production. This evolution of industries took some time until populations had enough disposable income to spend on things that they wanted, creating the middle class. The evolution had come swiftly to Germany, Belgium, and France in the middle decades of the nineteenth century and to Great Britain and the United States in the latter half of the century.<sup>40</sup>

The capital that could be raised with this new middle class could now be used to build music halls, start orchestras, support the arts, and fund music societies. The United States was different from Europe: with no aristocracy in its past and a working class that had been composed mainly of farmers, the United States was able to cultivate a large middle class.<sup>41</sup> This would also change as more workers moved to the growing cities, where most of the jobs were.

The establishment of the Boston Academy of Music was a watershed moment in the importance of music for the general public, as it was an actual music school. It was founded in 1833 for the furtherance of urban, evangelical, and sacred music. By the 1840s the Academy had become best known for instrumental music, and its orchestra was also recognized as the best in the city.<sup>42</sup> One of the important contributions to the

---

<sup>40</sup> Joyce Appleby, *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.), 212.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>42</sup> Broyles, "Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston," 468.

musical scene was the introduction of much of the classical literature, including the Beethoven symphonies, to the public.<sup>43</sup> As will later be seen, Samuel Atkins Eliot's election in 1835 as president of the Academy was important as well.

The next major musical organization, the Boston Philharmonic Society, was founded in October of 1843, with a purpose to sponsor concerts and provide Boston with good musical entertainments. It was an informal gathering of professionals and amateurs for the private reading of orchestral music and featured a large orchestra for the time, of between thirty and forty-four musicians.<sup>44</sup> The performances were not of a high quality. The famous Boston music critic John Sullivan Dwight (1813-1893) wrote, "The impression was so sickening to whatever soul of music we had in us, that we have not been able to overcome the associations of the place enough to enter it again, until the late festival of [the composer and pianist] Henri Herz."<sup>45</sup> The society, however, did draw large crowds, and its programs were of a light and popular character. At fifty cents, the tickets were also cheap, half the price of other comparable ensembles.<sup>46</sup>

The Harvard Music Association (HMA) was organized in 1837, and it was the most important musical organization in Boston until the founding of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The association was founded by a group of Harvard graduates who were former members of the Pierian Sodality (today's Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra) of 1808. Its main purpose would be "...the promotion of musical taste and science in the University...to enrich the walls of Harvard with a complete musical library...and to

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 461

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 484.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 485

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.



prepare the way for regular musical instruction in the College.”<sup>47</sup> The original name, The General Association of Past and Present Members of the Pierian Sodality, was changed to its present form in 1840. The association could not mention Harvard at their meetings, however, for twenty-four years because of Harvard’s views on music. Indeed, Harvard hired its first music professor, John Knowles Paine, in 1862. Before him, there was no music curriculum.

The association’s orchestra was in existence until 1882, when they ceased giving professional concerts, as they could not compete with Henry Lee Higginson and the steady wages he could provide. However, the organization itself still survives to this day. The playing of the Harvard Musical Association was adequate at best, and when Theodore Thomas brought his orchestra to Boston in the 1870’s, the level of its playing astounded audiences; Thomas’ ensemble put Boston’s musicians to shame.

#### Germania Musical Society

The musical society, though, that made the most lasting impact on the city was the Germania Musical Society, from Berlin, Germany (figure 2.1). The twenty-four German instrumentalists of this ensemble left Berlin in the midst of the 1848 political turmoil to play concerts in the U.S. They sailed to America “in order to enflame and stimulate in the hearts of these politically free people, through numerous performances of our greatest instrumental composers . . . [with] love for the fine art of music.”<sup>48</sup>

They settled in the United States until disbanding in 1854, and played most of their concerts in Boston. Their music playing was to such a high level in the city, as there

---

<sup>47</sup> “A Brief History of the Harvard Musical Association” [www.hmaboston.org](http://www.hmaboston.org) (accessed on March 9, 2010).

<sup>48</sup> Peter N. Stearns, “Trumpeting down the Walls of Jericho: The Politics of Art, Music and Emotion in German-American Relations, 1870-1920,” *Journal of Social History*, 36, no. 3 (Spring 2003), 592.

were no comparable ensembles, and people flocked to their concerts.<sup>49</sup> This was important not only because Bostonians could hear an ensemble from Germany, which set the ensemble standard, but the Germania Society also provided a blueprint for what future ensembles should sound like as to terms of quality and execution.



**Figure 2.1.** The Germania Musical Society, early 1850s.

In Boston, the first audiences were small but composed of appreciators of music. After the first concerts, the Germania's reputation was established, and twenty concerts were given to overflowing houses.<sup>50</sup>

During their six years, they visited all the principal cities of the East, West, and South coasts and gave 829 concerts, not counting their accompaniment of cantatas and oratorios with local choral societies. They also had some of the greatest soloists of the world perform with them, including Jenny Lind, Henrietta Sontag, Fortunata Tedesco,

---

<sup>49</sup> Nicholas E. Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 96.

<sup>50</sup> Albert Bernhardt Faust, *The German Element in the United States: With Special Reference to its Political, Moral, Social, and Educational Influence* (New York: The Steuben Society of America, 1927), 263.

Ole Bull, and August Kreissmann. Albert Bernhardt Faust explains the impact of the Germania Orchestra:

Within six years this orchestra had done more for the advancement of musical taste in America than any similar organization before them. The fire of their youthful genius, and their artistic expression thrilled audiences wherever they went. . . .Wherever a member of the Germania settled down, he established on the spot a nucleus about which there gathered the choicest musical spirits of that region.<sup>51</sup>

Whenever a Germania musician retired, he immediately had a studio of people eager to learn from him. In their day, they were musical superstars. Most stayed around Boston and made a living teaching in or around the city. The Germania Society musicians showed the general public what was possible with secular music when played at a very high level in the German style.

As can be seen, Boston did have a large and varied musical tradition since the colonial period based on instrumental music. Because of this and the large choral tradition in New England, Boston was picked to hold a gigantic musical concert. This was to be a reconciliation concert after the United States Civil War (1861-1865) to celebrate peace in the United States.

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 262-263.

## CHAPTER III

### PEACE JUBILEES AND OPERA

#### Boston's Peace Jubilees

Because of Boston's cultural stature, views on music, and importance in American history, the Boston-based musician and bandmaster Patrick Gilmore (1829-1892) decided to hold a reconciliation concert to celebrate peace after the United States Civil War. Boston also had a large tradition of choral singing because of the region's church roots, which would be important to the festival as well.

This was to be the largest concert ever held in the world. Gilmore decided that only Boston could stage an event like this because of the musical culture of the city and its organizational abilities.

The concert itself almost failed to materialize because of a lack of financial backing. Only through the patronage and leadership of Eben D. Jordan Sr., who became the treasurer of the concert, did the event take place. As the critic John Sullivan Dwight explained:

At the critical moment Business stepped in to the rescue; Business, with the money guaranty, with organizing skill, with ready way of rushing its big enterprises through. The application of Dry Goods and Railroad methods saved the whole. The work was well laid out among responsible committees. The word went forth that now the enterprise was on its feet. Conversions became numerous; subscriptions, too; whole business streets were canvassed, and it demanded courage in the unbeliever to say no. The huge Coliseum went up as by magic.<sup>52</sup>

On June 15-19, 1869, the concert, called the National Peace Jubilee and Music Festival, was held. The instrumentalists included a one-thousand-person orchestra, with the famous Norwegian violinist Ole Bull as concertmaster, ten thousand singers, and six

---

<sup>52</sup> Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 290-291.

bands. A special hall, the Coliseum, was built for the occasion in the Back Bay at St. James Park, near the original site of the Museum of Fine Arts, which was at Copley Square.<sup>53</sup>The hall was long, rectangular, and very large. People came in droves to see and hear the jubilee, especially to see the 100 firemen (figure 3.1) who were asked to play anvils in “Anvil Chorus” from Verdi’s *Il Trovatore*. A journalist recorded his thoughts:

The scene on entering the huge Coliseum was indeed most imposing. The sight of all those faces turned toward you from the vast amphitheatre filled by ten thousand singers and a thousand instrumentalists, all full of glowing expectation, and of the audience of more than twelve thousand, covering floor and balcony, was inspiring. We can only say that the success of Tuesday was in the main glorious and inspiring. The vast audience were greatly stirred, delighted. The best effects were those achieved by the great Chorus. The unity of impression was much better than we had dared to expect; for it had seemed a very doubtful problem whether the sound of the nearest and farthest voices, hundreds of feet apart, could reach the ear at the same instant. But in all, the wonder was so vast a chorus sang so well together.<sup>54</sup>

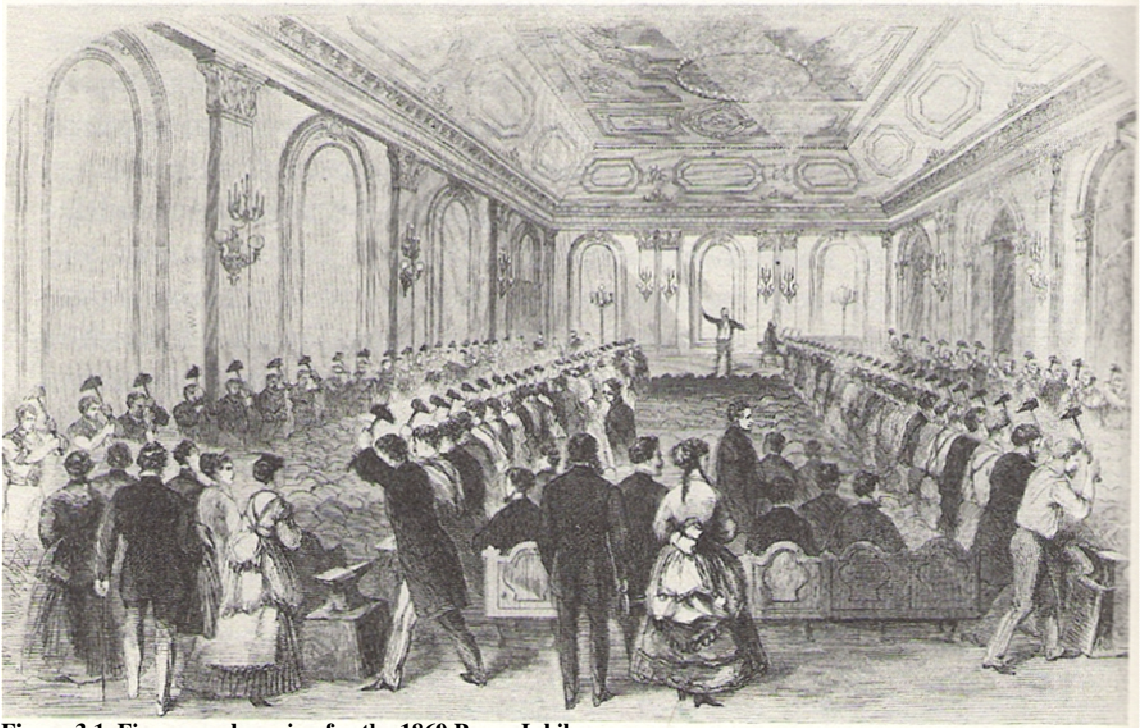


Figure 3.1. Firemen rehearsing for the 1869 Peace Jubilee.

<sup>53</sup> Nicholas E. Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 115.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Hamm, *Music in the New World* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1983), 309.

By the end of the event, on June 19, nearly seven thousand school children had participated, and more than 200,000 people had attended the various events. Dwight continued on the merits of the concert:

[It] has given to tens of thousands of all classes (save, unfortunately, the poorest), who were there to hear, and, through them, to thousands more, to whole communities, a new belief in Music; a new conviction of its social worth; above all, of its importance as a pervading, educational and fusing element in our whole democratic life; a heavenly influence which shall go far to correct the crudities, tone down, subdue and harmonize the loud, self-asserting individualities, relieve the glaring and forthputting egotism of our too boisterous and boastful nationality. Thousands now have faith in Music, who never did have much before; thousands for the first time respect it as a high and holy influence, who very likely looked upon it as the best an innocent, if not a dissipating, idle pleasure . . .so far as the jubilee has wrought this conversation among unbelieving or different thousands, it has done incalculable good.<sup>55</sup>

Due to the success of this concert, Gilmore decided to hold a second jubilee, again in Boston, in order to celebrate the end of the Franco-Prussian war in 1872 (figure 3.2). This festival, the World Peace Jubilee and International Music Festival, was to be both bigger and international in scale. Nineteen hundred instrumentalists and singers performed for over 100,000 people.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, Vienna even sent Johann Strauss II and his orchestra to play his waltzes for the audience.

These concerts laid the groundwork and made the existence of New England composers possible, because of the audience that had been cultivated for the sole purpose of listening to music.<sup>57</sup> The concerts also enabled musicians (especially in Boston) to gain valuable experience and helped them learn to play together in ensembles.

---

<sup>55</sup> Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 22.

<sup>56</sup> Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England*, 116.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

New York had two large music festivals as well, one in 1881 with a chorus of one thousand two hundred and an orchestra of two hundred- fifty conducted by Leopold Damrosch, and a second in 1882.

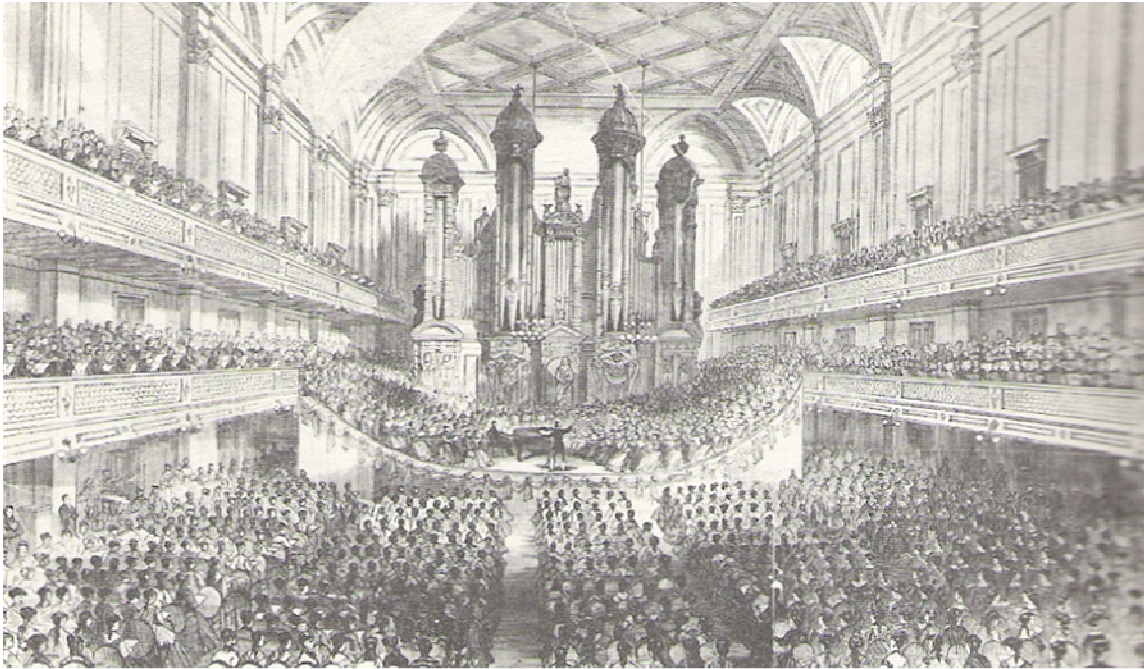


Figure 3.2. Choristers rehearsing for the 1872 Peace Jubilee in the old Boston Music Hall.

Although much smaller than Boston's concerts, they also showed New York's rising musical prestige as it overtook Boston as the musical capital of the United States. Chicago also had a large concert festival with Theodore Thomas conducting 5,500 voices, an orchestra of two hundred, two large military bands, and two drum corps.<sup>58</sup> The inhabitants of these three cities really enjoyed hearing and seeing such spectacular festivals.

European cities also held large concerts. To give one example, in 1857, for the centennial of Handel's death, a festival took place in London with an orchestra of over three hundred and a chorus of almost two thousand at the Crystal Palace. Boston still has

---

<sup>58</sup> Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 110.

a civic concert tradition; every July 4, more than 500,000 people enjoy the Boston Pops on the Charles River Esplanade for the annual Independence Day concert.

The operatic tradition of the United States was very different at this time from the large-concert tradition that was evident in these public concerts. Although opera concert pieces were performed, as can be seen from the “Anvil Chorus,” most of the music was concert music—religious or other. For true opera, one had to leave New England to see large operatic productions.

### Opera in the Northeast

Opera in the United States was centered in New York, eventually leading up to the original Metropolitan Opera (1883) and based on Italian opera first and then German. For a long time, the Metropolitan operated two separate production teams, one for Italian opera and one for German. New Orleans, with its French Opera House (1859) was a center for opera in the South, but not as large as opera in New York.<sup>59</sup> Other opera performance venues were Chicago, with the Chicago Auditorium (1889), and Philadelphia, with the Academy of Music (1857). Even though it failed in this country, da Ponte’s Italian operawas an important milestone in that it helped start the foreign-language operatic tradition that started to gain status in the late nineteenth century.

Opera started to become popular with the general public, because at this time, with small theaters and affordable productions, it could be a cheap and popular entertainment for the general public; but it could also function as a social evening for wealthier patrons sitting in the boxes. It gave them a chance to talk about the important issues of the day and show off the latest fashions. Lawrence Levine writes:

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 190.



Like Shakespearean drama, then, opera was an art form that was *simultaneously* popular and elite. That is, it was attended both by large numbers of people who derived great pleasure from it and experienced it in the context of their normal everyday culture, *and* by smaller socially and economically elite groups who derived both pleasure and social confirmation from it.<sup>60</sup>

Although opera was a form of entertainment for Americans at this time, the Germanic outlook that took hold in the second half of the nineteenth century was molded on the belief that classic orchestral works ranked among the supreme achievements of humankind and that music was a composer-centered art.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, Henry Russell, the opera director who managed the Boston Opera Company, is quoted as saying:

I cannot help feeling that, if the operatic situation in North America is properly handled and concentrated, the day will come when we can control the operatic destinies of the world.<sup>62</sup>

Theodore Thomas said this about the instrumentalists and singers who came over to the United States to perform:

The beginning of the [eighteen] fifties brought over to this country not only instrumentalists, but the most brilliant, finished, and mature vocalists of the world, such as Jenny Lind and Sontag, besides a large number of eminent Italian singers, among them Mario, Frisi, Bosio, Alboni, and others. I doubt if there were ever brought together in any part of the world a larger number of talented vocalists than were gathered in New York between 1850 and the early sixties.<sup>63</sup>

In spring of 1847, Italian opera came to Boston, and as John Sullivan Dwight said about opera at that time in Boston:

[There] arose conflict of opinions and tastes, —endless discussion, often heated, often idle, of the rival merits of the Italian and the German music. Boston, before this time, had witnessed only some occasional slight skirmishes of wandering lyric troupes, —sporadic cases of the opera fever, but no epidemic; small companies of English singers sang translated German, French, and Italian operas,

---

<sup>60</sup> Levine, *Highbrow Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, 86.

<sup>61</sup> Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History*, 310.

<sup>62</sup> Quaintance Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1965), 6.

<sup>63</sup> Joseph Horowitz, *Wagner Nights: An American History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 74.

or thin and threadbare sketches of them, as well as works of English manufacture.<sup>64</sup>

Opera at this time was a minor activity; it was not yet a major musical project, as we have seen.

One person who did bring opera to the public was P.T. Barnum. The master American showman, produced one of the most important events in the early history of American opera. In the 1850s he organized a concert tour for Jenny Lind, the so-called “Swedish Nightingale.” He had to fight the “Protestant Ethic,” which frowned upon all forms of entertainment. To succeed, Barnum advertised her Protestant, orphan background, her purity, and her charitableness. The tour was widely successful, giving an art form previously considered “immoral” and too “Catholic”<sup>65</sup> a strong boost. He made opera into something that could be valuable entertainment.

Along these same lines, the operas of W.S. Gilbert (1836-1911) and Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900) became popular in Boston, as in the rest of the English-speaking world. The Gilbert and Sullivan operettas were popular, for a variety of reasons, not the least of which were that the audience could understand the language, and the works were entertaining. The height of their collaboration was from 1871-1896, when they produced fourteen operas together.

Grand opera, written for the Paris Opéra, would become the best known aspect of opera in this country in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The subject was usually serious and of heroic nature, treated in grandiose proportions and employing the utmost resources of singing, orchestral music, and staging. Usually these

---

<sup>64</sup> John Sullivan Dwight, “The History of Music in Boston,” in *The Memorial History of Boston including Suffolk County, Massachusetts 1630-1880*, edited by Justin Winsor, Vol. 4 (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1886), 433.

<sup>65</sup> Martorella, *The Sociology of Opera*, 43.

had a strong affinity for contemporary issues, under the guise of an earlier time. These usually dealt with a populace that was being restrained in some way and needed freedom. Religious themes also were presented by some operas.<sup>66</sup> Examples include Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (1829), Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* (1836), and Verdi's *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* (1855).

Opéra comique was another French specialty. The eighteenth century opéra comique used spoken dialogue instead of recitatives and was actually a comedy. By the nineteenth century, this had evolved into opera with spoken dialogue, whether comic or tragic, Bizet's *Carmen* (1875) and Massenet's *Manon* (1884) being excellent examples.<sup>67</sup> Opéra bouffe was a romantic operatic genre, also in French, that emphasized the smart, witty, and satirical elements of opéra comique. Opera buffa, however, was an eighteenth-century genre of Italian comic opera that, like all Italian opera was sung throughout.

Sometimes the language of these performances were changed to the local vernacular to make the story more riveting and easy to understand. Italian opera in England was usually performed in Italian for the upper circles of society. This tradition was later brought over to the United States, with Mozart and Rossini as the best-known examples. These pieces, such as Henry R. Bishop's *The Libertine* from 1817 (based on *Don Giovanni*) or Rossini's *Barber of Seville* (1816), were arranged to be more entertaining for the English-speaking audience. These and other "Englished" Italian operas became the most popular music entertainment in American theaters from the 1820s to the 1840s.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Grout and Williams. *A Short History of Opera*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 353-354.

<sup>67</sup> Rosanne Martorella, *The Sociology of Opera* (South Hadley, MA: J.F. Bergin Publishers, Inc., 1982), 15-16.

<sup>68</sup> Hamm, *Music in the New World*, 195.

There was even an English Grand Opera Company, founded in 1886 and called the American Opera Company, under the direction of the conductor Theodore Thomas. Jeannette Meyers Thurber, who founded the National Conservatory of Music in New York City at this time, sponsored the company as well. It had an excellent orchestra and chorus, but by 1887 was bankrupt, and was reorganized as the National Opera Company,<sup>69</sup> which was bankrupt by 1888. Henry Lee Higginson, a friend of Thurber, was on the board of directors of both companies.

No native-born American composer of the nineteenth century wrote an opera that entered the standard repertory.<sup>70</sup> The best known from this time are *Leonora*, written in 1845 by William Henry Fry, and *Rip van Winkle*, by George Frederick Bristow in 1855. Neither opera was particularly successful, but they both opened the door for future generations of music and opera lovers and especially composers.<sup>71</sup>

#### Important Performance Venues in Boston

To perform these musical works, Boston had numerous spaces available. The Boston Theatre (name later changed to the Federal Theatre and then the Odeon), opened in 1794, and then the Haymarket Theatre, which opened in 1796 and burned down in 1803. The Boston Theatre would be demolished in 1852. In 1827 the First Tremont Theatre opened, the largest Boston had yet seen.<sup>72</sup> It burned down on March 30, 1852. By 1835 the Federal Street Theater had become the Odeon Concert Hall, renovated by the Boston Arts Academy for its use.<sup>73</sup> The second Boston Theatre, built in 1854 on

---

<sup>69</sup> Faust, *The German Element in the United States: with special reference to its political, moral, social, and educational influence*, 284.

<sup>70</sup> Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History*, 320.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 320-321.

<sup>72</sup> Broyles, "Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston," 465.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 469.

Washington Street, played host to important touring groups—drama, opera, comic opera, oratorio, ballet and minstrel shows and had 3,140 seats.<sup>74</sup> It was briefly known as the Academy of Music in 1860 and was demolished between 1925 and 1926.<sup>75</sup>

The Boston Music Hall (figure 3.3), built by the Harvard Musical Association, opened in 1852 and is the current Orpheum Theater.<sup>76</sup> This was a huge addition for music in the city as this hall was built specifically for the performance of music. Indeed, the Boston Symphony Orchestra played there before Symphony Hall was



**Figure 3.3.** Patrons Leaving the old Boston Music Hall where the Boston Symphony Orchestra performed prior to 1900.

built in 1900.

---

<sup>74</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 5.

<sup>75</sup> Donald C King, *The Theatres of Boston: A Stage and Screen History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005), 239.

<sup>76</sup> Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England*, 95.

On January 9, 1888, a Grand Opera House opened on Washington Street. Architects Snell and Gregerson built the house out of a cyclorama. It was demolished in the 1930's.<sup>77</sup> Around this time of the 1850s to 1920s, many theaters were being built and the Grand Opera House was a part of this new tradition.

On October 15, 1900, Symphony Hall opened, the home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Boston Pops Orchestra. It is one of the finest concert halls in the world, and the impact of the hall would be so great, in fact, that the Boston Opera House would be modeled after it.

The theaters that are important to opera and theatre today in Boston are The Colonial, Majestic, Shubert, Metropolitan, and B.F. Keith Memorial Theatres.

The Colonial Theatre was designed by the architectural firm of Clarence Blackall and paid for by Frederick L. Ames. The purpose of the building was "a palace dedicated to the play, a monument to the taste of New England, and a credit to the city of Boston."<sup>78</sup> Thomas Alva Edison was the acoustical consultant for the building. It opened with a performance of *Ben Hur*, featuring a cast of 350 on December 20, 1900. Today, the theater is known for performances of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II's *Oklahoma!* and *Carousel*, and other important stage works.

The Majestic Theatre opened on February 16, 1903, with a performance of *The Storks*. Eben D. Jordan commissioned the Majestic, which was supposed to be used exclusively for opera and theatre. The theater did not, however, fulfill this purpose for long. The Shubert organization bought it and by the 1920s it was showing vaudeville. In

---

<sup>77</sup> King, *The Theatres of Boston: A Stage and Screen History*, 239.

<sup>78</sup> History of the Colonial Theater, <http://www.bostoncolonialtheatre.com/History.html> (accessed on March 10, 2010).

the 1950s, the theater was converted to a movie house and fell into disrepair, to be renovated by Emerson College after they bought it in 1983. Today, after an extensive renovation by Emerson, the theater is home to Opera Boston, international opera company Teatro Lirico d'Europa, and the New England Conservatory Opera Theater.

The Citi Center for the Performing Arts contains the Shubert Theatre, which opened on January 24, 1910, and the Metropolitan Theatre (now known as the Wang Theatre), opened on October 17, 1925.<sup>79</sup>The Wang was developed by Max Shoolam and



Figure 3.4 The Wang Theatre today.

designed by Clarence Blackall. It was originally designed for motion pictures, big bands, and vaudeville. In 1962 it was renamed The Music Hall and became home to the new Boston Ballet. During this time the Metropolitan Opera, Bolshoi Ballet, and Kirov Ballet visited as well. By

the late 1980s, the theatre had been completely renovated, thanks to a generous gift by Dr. An Wang. The Shubert Theatre had been taken over by the Wang Theatre on October 10, 1996.

The B.F. Keith Memorial Theatre opened on October 29, 1928, and is now known as the Boston Opera House. It was built under the supervision of Edward Franklin Albee (1857-1930) as a memorial to his late business partner, Benjamin Franklin Keith (1846-1914). No expense was spared. It was built as a vaudeville theater, but it eventually became a movie house with the occasional vaudeville show. In 1965, the theatre was

---

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 244.

purchased by the Sacks Theatres Company, who renamed it the Savoy. By 1978, when Sarah Caldwell's Opera Company of Boston was in desperate need of a home, her company bought the theatre, which they held until 1991, when her company went bankrupt. The house fell into disrepair until 2002, when a major renovation by Clear Channel Communications was initiated.



## CHAPTER IV

### WHY GERMAN CULTURE?

During the nineteenth century, there was no nationally recognized Euro-American music, which did not appear until well into the twentieth century. In 1876 by the eminent conductor Hans von Bülow (1830-1894), said this about the problem with Boston:

There are two types of musical cultivation; for want of better terminology, I might call them in-breadth and in-depth. In the latter respect, I would consider Boston the most cultivated; but the people are narrow and too pretentious for the measure of their knowledge. Puritanism has frozen art in New England; it's a miracle that it hasn't killed it altogether in the last 100 years. The Bostonians feel their indifference not only to an extreme degree: they even display it openly with pride. Presumably they reckon it as one of the Fine Arts. But that it is not. It is simply a form of paralysis.<sup>80</sup>

During the late nineteenth century, there were various attempts at establishing a distinctly American “school” and not a copy of European art forms. There was no real identity; people did not know what to make of American music, as there was no real definition of it. John Knowles Paine counseled against imitating folk songs, Negro melodies, or Indian tunes in songs<sup>81</sup> and yet Antonín Dvořák(1841-1904) used exactly those in his ninth symphony (1893) and said:

The future music of this country must be founded upon what are called the Negro melodies. This must be the real foundation of any serious and original school of composition to be developed in the United States.<sup>82</sup>

That Dvořák did not think that the national identity's he was popularizing to adopt as American music were people that were often a stigmatized minority culture was very unusual. It should be noted here as well that he often confused African-American and

---

<sup>80</sup> Joseph Horowitz, *Wagner Nights: An American History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 240.

<sup>81</sup> Joseph Horowitz, *Artists in Exile: How Refugees from Twentieth-Century War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008), xi.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

Native-American songs. This shows how out of touch he was with United States history and culture because he should have known that African-American and Native American music would not be acceptable to the general population.<sup>83</sup>

Composers themselves and critics did not think they needed these “Negro” songs or “Indian” melodies because Boston was already developing its own musical tradition based upon German symphonic principles. Some in Boston regarded Native Americans and African-Americans as outsiders to America who had no right dictating the terms of American music.<sup>84</sup>

The composer Virgil Thomson (1896-1989), however, had a different idea about what American music was. He wrote, “American music is music composed by Americans, period.”<sup>85</sup> American art had to transform itself from a hodgepodge of imported ethnic strands to an art form in which the transatlantic umbilical chord had been shredded or at least thinned.<sup>86</sup> America needed its freedom and independence to make music important in the lives of ordinary Americans to sustain imports like opera and symphonic organizations. This meant musical organizations were going to have to become relevant to the population.

At this time Boston did have a healthy musical scene, based on European ideals. It harbored numerous choral societies, generated public concerts, and saw numerous vocal and instrumental performances in private homes. Composer Horatio Parker said this about Boston:

---

<sup>83</sup> Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, vol 3. of *The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 767.

<sup>84</sup> Joseph Horowitz, “Reclaiming the Past: Musical Boston Reconsidered,” *American Music*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring, 2001, 24.

<sup>85</sup> Horowitz, *Artists in Exile: How Refugees from Twentieth-Century War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts*, xi.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

New England is the centre from which has radiated thus far a great part of all progress in art, Literature, and other intellectual pursuits in America, and it seems perfectly fair to say than an History of Music in New England would practically cover the subject of the History of Music in America.<sup>87</sup>

Louis Moreau Gottschalk, the famous New Orleans composer, said about Boston's music scene:

Boston. . . is par excellence the aristocratic city. It pretends to be the most intellectual in the United States. It is not to be denied that it has made enormous progress in the sciences and arts. The university at Cambridge is the most celebrated in the United States. Her poets are known the world over. She has for eight years possessed the largest organ in America. . . . Boston has six theaters and three concert halls, two of which can seat thirty-five hundred persons. It is in one of these, the Tremont, that I gave my concerts. It is in my opinion the best for hearing and the most magnificent concert hall in the world.<sup>88</sup>

Pianist Heinrich Gebhard(1878-1963) wrote about the first two decades of the twentieth century:

Foremost residents and visiting musicians, including the conductors Muck, Nikisch, and Monteux, brought the best art music, including the newest compositions of Debussy and Strauss, to the city and unfailingly presented works by America's own composers.<sup>89</sup>

Boston defined itself in the nineteenth century and to a certain extent still does, in opposition to New York City. New York was in the eyes of Bostonians the capital of baseness, distastefulness, and vulgarity. It was too large and cosmopolitan for Boston's taste. Boston was an Anglo-Saxon stronghold, and the affluent considered it the capital of culture, the hub of the "real" America.

These nurturing conditions in Boston explained above, especially the large audience cultivated with the jubilee concerts and the fact that Boston was seen as the capital of culture in America, made Boston the perfect place for the formation of a school of United States composers based on European, mainly Germanic, ideals. They would

---

<sup>87</sup> Horowitz, "Reclaiming the Past: Musical Boston Reconsidered," 20.

<sup>88</sup> Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England*, 112.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

nurture the traditional symphonic ideals of Boston. They became known as the Second New England School.<sup>90</sup>

### Second New England School

The Second New England School, also known as the Boston Academics, or the Boston Classicists, were very important composers in Boston and by extension the rest of the United States. They were Americans but they were bringing back Germanic teachings, after studying in Germany. The first generation included John Knowles Paine (1839-1906), George W. Chadwick (1854-1931), Horatio Parker (1863-1919), and Amy Beach (1867-1944).<sup>91</sup> The second and third generations included Arthur William Foote (1853-1937), Frederick Shepherd Converse (1871-1940), Edward Burlingame Hill (1872-1960), Daniel Gregory Mason (1873-1953), John Alden Carpenter (1876-1951), Charles Martin Loeffler (1861-1935), and David Stanley Smith (1877-1949).

Their “golden” years, according to Chadwick, were from 1890 to 1897, when he felt everything musical was going right for them. They all were extremely important in the development of music in America and all were connected to Boston in some way (most were either born in Boston or moved to the city), which made Boston very important in the development of the American classical symphonic music idiom.

Most of them were influential teachers as well, further broadening their impact on music. Paine was a professor of music at Harvard, Chadwick a faculty member at the New England Conservatory of Music (becoming director in 1897), Converse also taught at the New England Conservatory and was vice president of the Boston Opera Company, Parker was a professor at Yale University, MacDowell a piano soloist and private teacher

---

<sup>90</sup> Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, vol 3. of *The Oxford History of Western Music*, 768.

<sup>91</sup> Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England*, 352.

(Columbia University named him its professor of music in 1896), Foote organist at the First Unitarian Church and also a piano teacher, and Loeffler assistant concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.<sup>92</sup> All the composers were trained in the German style of composition, which only fell out of vogue with the rise of anti-German sentiment before and during World War I.

Frederick Converse, George Chadwick, and Charles Loeffler were important in the opera scene of Boston as well. Converse, as the vice president of the Boston Opera Company, was able to get his operas *The Pipe of Desire* (1905) and the world première of his opera *The Sacrifice* (1910) performed during the 1910-1911 season. Converse had two other operas waiting to be performed as well when the Boston Opera Company went bankrupt: *Beauty and the Beast* (1913) and *The Immigrants* (1914). Chadwick and Loeffler were on the Board of Directors with Converse.

Although Boston had a vibrant musical culture, the city had its critics, who accused Boston of being the center of a stifling Puritanism, defined as smug, arrogant, and small-minded. No vital artistic activity could go on under such a condition, they insisted, because the dedication to the arts was superficial and respectable at best.<sup>93</sup> Although this is a harsh assessment, Boston was a traditional city, as can be seen below.

The term “banned in Boston” soon became a national term to refer to Boston and its prudery and Puritan backwardness, because of an incident at the Boston Public Library.<sup>94</sup> In 1893, the sculptor Frederick Macmonnies offered his *Bacchante*, a nude

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 354.

<sup>93</sup> Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England*, 228.

<sup>94</sup> John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 358.

fountain statue, to the Boston Public Library. The city of Boston was up in arms about the artwork, which they found indecent. Hence the term came into existence.<sup>95</sup> *Rigoletto* by Giuseppe Verdi was also banned in Boston because of its story.<sup>96</sup>

The story centers on a court jester, Rigoletto, who mocks the father of a girl Rigoletto's employer (the Duke) has seduced and abandoned, for which he receives a parental curse. His own daughter, Gilda, is seduced by the Duke and Rigoletto then hires a professional hit man to avenge his parental honor by murdering the Duke. By a series of accidents, Gilda is murdered instead, devastating Rigoletto and fulfilling the curse.

The Puritan view of life that was so engrained in the city of Boston's culture was to be greatly altered by the immigration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This immigration was the largest mass migration as a percent of the population that the United States had ever seen, and it particularly affected Boston. This migration would have effects on our culture that define us to this day. Most of the immigrants who settled in Boston were from Italy and Ireland.

#### Immigration in the late Nineteenth Century

The immigration of the late nineteenth century also contributed to the huge explosion of musical and cultural during this time. People of Germanic heritage did not start to emigrate from Germany until after the failed 1848 revolution there. After the United States Civil War (1861-1865) this immigration exploded, with millions of Germans moving to the East Coast and Midwest.

Between 1850 and 1920, 14,962,781 immigrants came from Germany, 1,696,364 came from Austria, and 693,628 came from Switzerland for a total German speaking

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Horowitz, *Wagner Nights: An American History*, 73.

immigrant population in the United States of 17,352,773.<sup>97</sup> Between 1850 and 1920 there were 3,696,588 who came from Italy during this same period; of these about 50,000 settled in Boston proper.<sup>98</sup> There were also 875,173 immigrants from France, 7,430,677 from the United Kingdom, and 12,159,874 from Ireland.

German immigrants always preferred to settle in close communities. Sometimes this was due to the fact that they immigrated together in groups, although by the late nineteenth century they were mostly traveling with their families. They also liked to stay together because of a common language and a common ignorance of English. This led to communities evolving in cities, most notably New York and Chicago.<sup>99</sup> By 1920 New York had the largest concentration of German immigrants in the United States and Chicago had the second highest.<sup>100</sup> Had there been more German immigration to Boston, the population would have supported the opera scene to a great extent, as they did in New York and Chicago. That Boston had such a small Germanic population would be a problem once the Boston Opera Company was founded in 1909.

As Germans came over at the beginning of industrialization, they were faced with the problems of “becoming Americans,” so they decided to close their ranks and promote communities for themselves. It was where the life, customs, culture, and language of Germany could be preserved.<sup>101</sup> Also, they easily fit into America, as there was very

---

<sup>97</sup> Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850 to 2000* (U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, February 2006), 43.

<sup>98</sup> Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History*, 357.

<sup>99</sup> Agnes Bretting, “‘Little Germanies’ in the United States,” in *Germans to America: 300 years of Immigration 1683 to 1983*, ed. Günter Moltmann (Stuttgart, Germany: Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, 1982), 145.

<sup>100</sup> United States Government, *Population*. Vol 2. of *Fourteenth Census of the United States taken in the year 1920*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), 758.

<sup>101</sup> Bretting, “‘Little Germanies’ in the United States,” in *Germans to America: 300 years of Immigration 1683 to 1983*, ed. Günter Moltmann, 145.

little discrimination towards them, compared to other ethnic groups. Lastly, because of their great numbers, they were a major cultural force.

This is not to say that other ethnic groups did not settle in sections in the city where they were with other people with the same ethnic background, because they did. In Boston, most Irish settled in South Boston or East Boston. The Italians mainly settled in the North End; the English in the Back Bay. By 1920, the German population in Boston was so small that it was not even included in the 1920 population chart of ethnic groups of the city.<sup>102</sup>

The Irish were another ethnic group that would have a profound effect on cities, especially Boston. The over twelve million Irish who immigrated to the United States did so to escape disease and hunger, due to the potato famine that started in 1854. The Irish would settle in large numbers in Boston and in New York City, but they did not, however, have a large taste for opera.

This did not matter, though, for the Irish were not thought of as worthwhile contributors to society anyway. The Irish were assigned the dangerous jobs in which no “Yankee” would dare work. According to one immigrant they were “thought nothing of more than dogs . . . despised & kicked about.”<sup>103</sup> This was the common belief at the time; they were stereotyped as being ignorant and inferior. According to Martin Green:

The Irish refused to become fellow-citizens, culturally. They formed a society within a society. They were opposed to the Bostonian enthusiasms—for reason, for education, for reform. They opposed, for instance, the abolition of slavery; out of fear of economic competitions with Negroes, out of fear of offending Catholic Louisiana and Maryland, out of a generally reactionary temper. They opposed compulsory education and temperance movements (which they thought ignored, contradicted, the doctrine of original sin), prison reform and women’s

---

<sup>102</sup> United States Government, *Population*. Vol 2, 758.

<sup>103</sup> Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008), 139.



rights, and so on. They hated even English literature, seemingly the most unsectarian of Boston enthusiasms. Shakespeare they declared barbaric; his monstrous farces befouled the stage with every abomination. . .

All this presented Yankee Boston with a serious problem. She felt entrusted with the destiny of an alien people—socially and educationally underprivileged and so a sacred responsibility—who refused to find that destiny in Boston’s version of liberal democracy. If she granted them full political and economic rights, if she allowed them the control of the city, they would move it towards reaction and ignorance and prejudice.<sup>104</sup>

This discrimination did not stop them, however, from upward social mobility.

The Irish immigrants knew about hard work and determination, and by 1890, forty percent of those Irish born in America had white-collar jobs, compared to ten percent for those born in Ireland.<sup>105</sup> The fact that they were white allowed them to apply for citizenship and begin the process of social mobility. There were other, more threatening groups to America such as the Chinese and Japanese, which shifted “Yankee” focus away from the Irish. Also, the Irish began to enter politics at this time, the most famous being, of course, the Kennedys of Massachusetts.

The Italians, however, were not so lucky. Like the Irish, they too bore the brunt of many slurs and harsh jobs. The Italians, however, did not have as easy a time with social mobility and racism toward them was rampant. The term “Guinea” was used as a derogatory term toward anyone of Italian, especially southern Italian, heritage. They were thought of as unclean, stupid, and un-American. Indeed, according to John Higham, “native-born and Northern European laborers called themselves ‘white men’ to distinguish themselves from the Southern Europeans whom they worked

---

<sup>104</sup> Joseph Horowitz, “Reclaiming the Past: Musical Boston Reconsidered,” *American Music*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring, 2001, 32-33.

<sup>105</sup> Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*, 151.

beside.”<sup>106</sup> Robert F. Foerster wrote in 1924, “In a country where the distinction between white man and black is intended as a distinction of value . . . it is no compliment to the Italian to deny him his whiteness, but that actually happens with considerable frequency.”<sup>107</sup>

These views made many question Italian motives and culture well into the twentieth century. It would take at least a generation for Italians to be fully accepted into American society and be looked at as true Americans, and not “greasers” or “Guineas.”

Once this mass migration started to American shores, there was no stopping the waves and waves of immigrants. By 1910, 27.9 percent of the population of New England was foreign-born; in Massachusetts, it was 31.5 percent. In the Mid-Atlantic, the foreign-born population was 25.1 percent of the population. In New York, this was 30.2 percent. This is just the foreign-born population of this time, not the spouses or children. This meant that one-third of Boston’s population was foreign-born during this time and over 70 percent was of foreign parentage! Boston’s population had increased from 362,000 in 1880 to 560,000 by 1900,<sup>108</sup> and by 1910 there were 670,585 living in the city, much smaller than New York’s population, which was 4,766,883.<sup>109</sup>

In table 4.1, we can see the large number of immigrants that emigrated from their respective countries to America. This would have a profound influence on every aspect

---

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

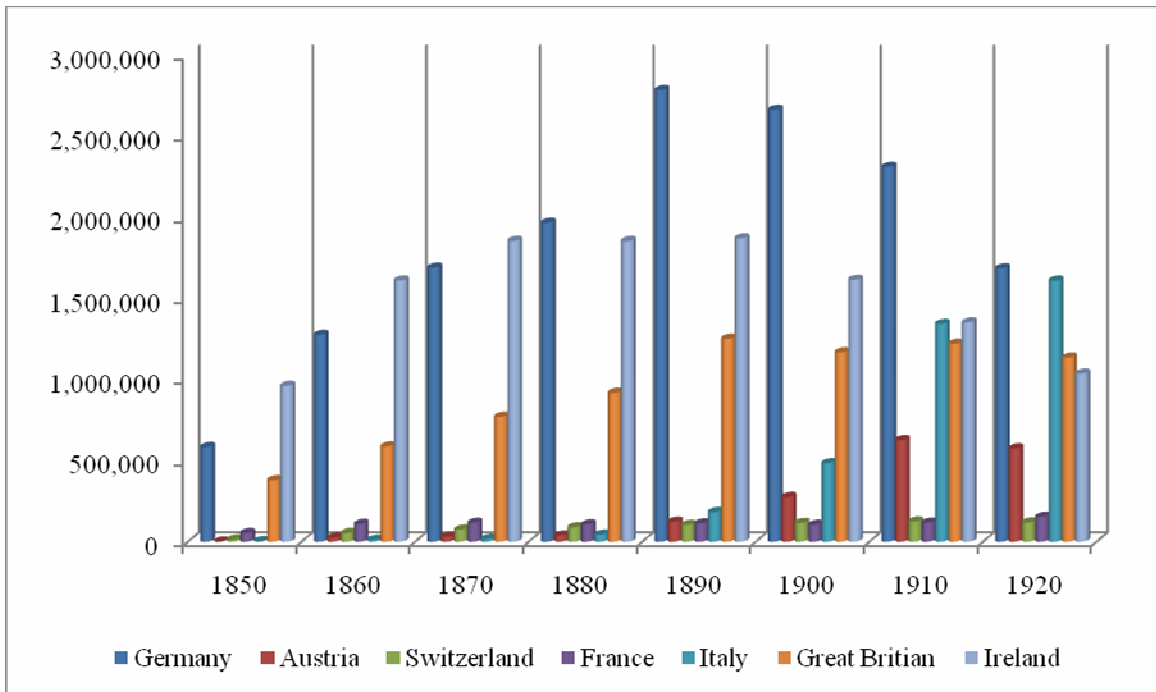
<sup>107</sup> David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America’s Immigrants Became White* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 39.

<sup>108</sup> Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History*, 357.

<sup>109</sup> Cambell Gibson, *Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990*

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/twps0027.html> (accessed on December 9, 2008).

of our culture. In table 4.2, we can see the total number of immigrants, based on heritage, which makes the German connection even more apparent.

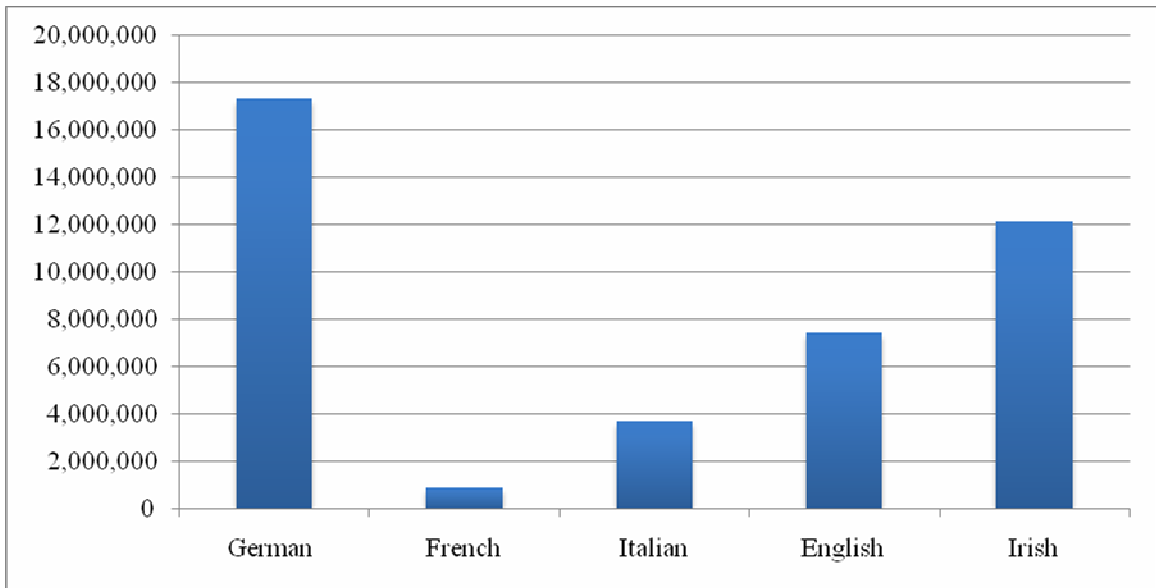


**Table 4.1. Immigration from these European nations, 1850-1920.**

This Germanic musical outlook was set on the belief that classic orchestral works ranked among the supreme achievements of humankind and that music was a composer-centered art, which started with Ludwig van Beethoven.<sup>110</sup> He was considered by many to be the most “humanistic” composer. His music could influence your soul, it was thought, so philharmonic societies wanted to keep his music and others’ in their repertoire.

Richard Wagner’s writings on music and his operas were brought over from Europe, and this again brought change to the music scene. His operas showed the range and power of modern symphony orchestras, and audiences were enthralled by his stories and theatrical stage action.

<sup>110</sup> Richard Crawford, *America’s Musical Life: A History* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 310.



**Table 4.2. Heritage of the total number of immigrants to the United States from 1850 to 1920.**

Germans who immigrated to the United States also enjoyed his writings, especially on music and the role conductors have to interpret and change music to fit the venue. Wagner's operas allowed German immigrants to enjoy their cultural entertainment and feel good about something from home, where they did not have to worry about life at that moment; they could just relax. It is no surprise during this time then that most of the conductors of American orchestras in their infancy were of German descent. The conductors then brought over German musicians as well, further emphasizing the Germanic element in Boston and across the country.

This in turn allowed people of German heritage to have a positive effect on music and made it relevant to the important financiers of music at this time. In Boston this fell to the Brahmins who decided to make cultural institutions available to all, as will be discussed in detail later. This German culture changed completely how Americans saw music and build up high musical culture to what they believed it should be. This was not true only in Boston, but in New York as well, which deserves special mention here.

## The New York Music Scene

New York had more musical variety than Boston by 1890. New York had the Philharmonic Society, the New York Symphony Orchestra, various opera companies including the Metropolitan, and many choral societies. What New York lacked, though, were the universities and cultural institutions comparable to Harvard, Massachusetts Medical Society (1781), Boston Library Society (1794), Massachusetts Historical Society (1797), and the Antiquarian Society (1812).<sup>111</sup> Boston was ahead culturally (or so they thought).<sup>112</sup>

The New York Philharmonic, founded in 1841, was a true philharmonic society (founded for the love of music) and had always employed a fair number of German musicians. By 1875 eighty percent of its member-musicians were of German heritage. The main mission of the New York Philharmonic was:

. . . to elevate the Art, improve musical taste, and gratify those already acquainted with classic musical compositions, by performing the Great Symphonies and Overtures of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Spohr, Mendelssohn, and other great Masters, with a strength and precision hitherto unknown in this country.<sup>113</sup>

William Henry Fry (1813-1864, music critic and composer) explained the role of the Philharmonic,

It is the chief business of Philharmonic Societies to play living pieces or compositions by men alive; by that means Art is advanced. If they are not played Art dies; for Art cannot be sustained by studying the works of the dead almost exclusively. The age must be heroic to itself or it deserves to be covered by ignominy and stricken from human annals.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History*, 310.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>113</sup> Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall*, 149.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

The Metropolitan Opera Company was founded in 1883 as an Italian company by Henry Abbey, to be in residence at the old Metropolitan Opera House. After the first season, however, the company was almost bankrupt because of the enormous expense of the singers and staging the productions. Abbey gave up the directorship, and Dr. Leopold Damrosch suggested to the stockholders that the Metropolitan should be turned into a German opera company.<sup>115</sup> This German company was a major success, and the company's reputation only grew with each opera performed.

The most successful of all the operas presented were the Richard Wagner evenings, which were also the most successful financially. Wagner had specified before his death in 1883 that his opera *Parsifal* should never be performed outside of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, the opera house Wagner had built in Bayreuth, Germany. The Metropolitan's management felt that it should be performed to satisfy the demand of the populace, so they secretly made the plans to present the opera. It was performed for the first time on Christmas Eve in 1903.<sup>116</sup> This infuriated Wagner's relatives, but there was nothing they could do.

The music composed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially the Boston school of George W. Chadwick and Amy Beach, was being written within an idiom whose roots lay in Germany.<sup>117</sup> Britain's influence during this time was not as great because of Britain's diminished role in the music world and the influence and importance of the German-speaking immigrants.

During the time of immigration, as people came to the major cities, they brought with them many aspects of their culture, including food, drinks, traditions, and music as

---

<sup>115</sup> Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, 281.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 281-282.

<sup>117</sup> Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History*, 353.

we have seen. As more people settled in these metropolitan areas, they wanted their music performed. At the same time, prominent people of higher social standing in these cities wanted to give back to their cities and create lasting institutions not just for posterity, but for present citizens as well. Music needed to be passed to the populace in the schools, so music educators in the nineteenth century set to work to help with this dissemination.

## CHAPTER V

### BOSTON AND MUSIC DISSEMINATION

Many important music educators in Boston tried to help with music in the schools during the nineteenth century. The two most important were William C. Woodbridge (1794-1845) and Lowell Mason (1792-1872). Originally a teacher, Woodbridge had suffered a nervous breakdown and had been sent to Europe to recuperate. Before his sojourn in Europe, he hated music, thinking it was “suited only to professional musicians or to females; and, in our sex, as a mark of a trifling or of a feminine mind.” He also regarded the idea that music had power over people as “the dream of poetry as opposed to the sober and practical conclusions of philosophy.”<sup>118</sup>

Woodbridge’s trip to Europe changed his view. He felt the power of music. He wrote about the “heart-swelling music of the bands, in the fascinating but corrupt strains of the opera, and in the over-powering chants of the Vatican.” Music, he felt, although powerful, had been used for degrading purposes “to cover the point of a song whose sentiments would not be tolerated in any other form.”<sup>119</sup> He needed to find a way to make performers moral and to sing and play moral songs.

He was able to solve this dilemma in Germany with the musical instruction based on the theories of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. According to Pestalozzi’s biographer, Henry Holman, the educational method rested on six principles:

1. Education must be essentially religious, since man has a divine origin and end;
2. Education must develop man as a whole;
3. Education must guide and stimulate self-activity;
4. All education must be based upon intuition and exercise—Pestalozzi’s theory of *Anschauung* (intuition, perception);

---

<sup>118</sup> John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 151.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*



5. Education must observe a right graduation and progression in development, for “each child should be taught that which he has to learn at the time his nature calls for it, for this is proof that his sensibility and power are ready for it”;
6. Education must foster the growth of knowledge through the development of ideas; from mere vague impressions, the mind must evolve values and meanings.<sup>120</sup>

Pestalozzi also thought very highly of music in primary school, as he considered it an aid to moral education:

It is not proficiency in music which I consider most important. It is the marked and most beneficial influence which it has on the feelings, and which I have always thought to be very efficient in preparing and attuning us for the best impressions . . . The effect of music in education is not alone to keep alive a national feeling; it goes much deeper. If cultivated in the right spirit, it strikes at the root of every bad or narrow feeling, of every ungenerous or mean propensity, of every emotion unworthy of humanity.<sup>121</sup>

Woodbridge decided that Pestalozzi’s views and his method could work in a public school in Boston writing, “[It was] the property of the people, cheering their hours of labor, elevating their hearts above the objects of sense, which are so prone to absorb them, and filling the period of rest and amusement with social and moral song in place of noise, riot, and gambling.”<sup>122</sup> This was a typical question of the period: what could be done from a moral standpoint to help a populace become more moral? This was especially true in Boston, in keeping with its highest Puritan values.

#### Boston Academy of Music

On his return to Boston around 1830 or 1831, Woodbridge recruited Lowell Mason (figure 5.1), who is remembered as the most important contributor to the early nineteenth-century Boston music scene. He was not wealthy, at least not initially, but his contribution to the musical culture in Boston was important for the dissemination of

---

<sup>120</sup> Robert B. Downs, *Heinrich Pestalozzi: Father of Modern Pedagogy* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 83.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>122</sup> Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History*, 151.

music to the populace. Woodbridge and Mason wanted to start a music academy, which the Boston School Committee was reluctant to approve. In order to get the committee to accept the idea, Mason agreed to run the academy for a year free of charge with himself in control.<sup>123</sup> Under these conditions, the committee agreed. This institution became the Boston Academy of Music, founded in 1833. It had five main goals:

1. To promote the cause of music education for the general public,
2. To set an example by initiating its own instructional classes,
3. To train teachers of music,
4. To bring Bostonians meritorious music that would otherwise be denied them,
5. To sponsor performing groups and concerts.<sup>124</sup>

The school was important because, even though it lasted for only a short time, it

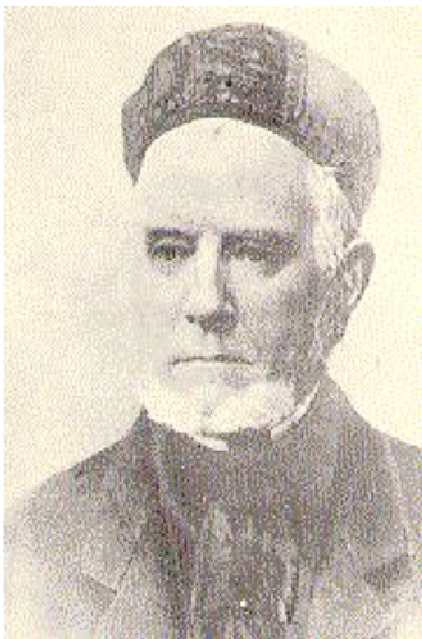


Figure 5.1. Lowell Mason, later in life.

exposed students, who were children and adults, and the audience of its concerts, to music and enabled them to learn of its importance. The method of instruction for the students was as follows: drill in the fundamentals of musical notation, simple scales and other patterns as a first step toward sight reading; simple unison and two-part pieces introduced as soon as possible, to help maintain interest; and the use of a repertory made up of adaptations of pieces by European composers as well as new compositions.<sup>125</sup>

Mason wrote a book called *Manual for Instruction*, which was the first book of modern principles of teaching music. He took the six Pestalozzian principles listed above

---

<sup>123</sup> Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History*, 151.

<sup>124</sup> Nicholas E. Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 90.

<sup>125</sup> Charles Hamm, *Music in the New World* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1983), 168-169.

and interpreted them into seven key ideas for music education, which became the first formulation of theories for teaching music in the United States. They were as follows:

1. To teach sounds before signs—to make the child sing before he learns the written notes or their names.
2. To lead children to observe, by hearing and imitating sounds, their resemblances and differences, their agreeable and disagreeable effects, instead of explaining these things to him—in short, to make them active instead of passive in learning.
3. To teach but one thing at a time—rhythm, melody, expression being taught and practiced separately before the child is called to the difficult task of attending to all at once.
4. To make children practice each step of each of these divisions, until they are masters of it, before passing to the next.
5. To give the principles and theory after practice and as an induction from it.
6. To analyze and practice the elements of articulate sound in order to apply them to music.
7. To have the names of the notes correspond to those used in instrumental music.<sup>126</sup>

Samuel Atkins Eliot (1798-1862) was also very important to Boston music.

Eliot, the Mayor of Boston, was important to music, not only acting as President of the Boston Academy of Music, but also because he had been on the school committee, helping advance music education.<sup>127</sup> Eliot felt that education was the key not only to our musical growth, but to our nation. He was important in the musical culture of Boston, and without his political connections, fortune (he was worth in excess of \$300,000), and force of will, the Boston Academy of Music would never have opened, and music programs would be much different today.

Eliot became president of the Academy of Music in 1835 and brought with him an entirely new agenda for the academy. He hired J.A. Keller as instrumental professor, formed an orchestra through an alliance with the Amateur Society, and renovated the defunct Federal Street Theater into a concert hall, the Odeon. His connections to the

---

<sup>126</sup> Darwin E. Walker, *Teaching Music: Managing the Successful Music Program*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Schirmer/ Thompson Learning, 1998), 282-283.

<sup>127</sup> Michael Broyles, "Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston" (*Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 1991), 468.

socioeconomic elite were important as well because he was able to solicit donations and keep the academy solvent during his presidency.<sup>128</sup>

The school's orchestra, the Boston Academy Orchestra, was said to be the best in the city. It consisted primarily of professionals, and the orchestra introduced much of the standard classical literature, including the Beethoven symphonies, to the Boston populace. It was the first orchestra to be truly embraced by the local population.<sup>129</sup>

This started the thinking, especially in Boston, that music for the sake of music was important. Many people did not like the Academy, however, because they felt it opened the door for all kinds of non-academic subjects, such as dance. Mason's answer: "Because music has an intellectual character, which dancing has not; and, above all, because music has its moral purposes, which dancing has not."<sup>130</sup> This view, however, did not keep the school open for long. Its closure, in 1847 was a serious blow to the ideal music education sought by Mason. His holistic approach to music education has all but disappeared in most American public schools, although a movement exists in some schools to bring this type of education back.

Hymns were how the local population learned and disseminated music. They were the only form of what we would consider music education at this time; therefore, the Handel and Haydn Society teamed up with Lowell Mason to print a book with a large collection of hymns. It was called *The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music*. It was very successful in bringing good, decent music into the homes of the Boston populace.

---

<sup>128</sup> Broyles, "Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston," 469.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 467.

<sup>130</sup> Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History*, 149.

Lowell Mason had collected songs while working at Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Georgia, and the Handel and Haydn Society agreed to publish them. Mason decided that he did not want to be identified as the compiler; as he put it, “I was then a bank officer in Savannah, and did not wish to be known as a musical man.”<sup>131</sup> Both sides benefited from the collection of church hymns with profit and prestige. The hymnal eventually went through twenty-two editions, and Mason ended up making \$12,000, a sizable sum for the time.<sup>132</sup>

Mason’s main reason for encouraging children to learn music was not only financial, it was also spiritual. He wanted people to be able to meet in groups outside of church to learn music. He found the school to be the ideal place to do this. After 1850, music making in the home would explode as well, because of the growing middle class, and the industrial evolution(as explained earlier) make pianos affordable to the general public.

Some people saw Mason’s aims as less than moral; he did make large amounts of money from his educational ideas. He did, however, along with others, create a curriculum became the fundamental basis for music education today; so the outcome was a good and noble one.

Another major influence with a lasting effect on the music cultural scene, especially in Boston, was John Sullivan Dwight (1813-1893, figure 5.2). He was a Harvard graduate who began his career as a Unitarian minister. His interests included German poetry, which he translated for publication, and music. He joined the Brook Farm colony, located in Roxbury, Massachusetts, in 1840 as an instructor in German

---

<sup>131</sup> Hamm, *Music in the New World*, 164.

<sup>132</sup> Richard Crawford, *America’s Musical Life: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 142.

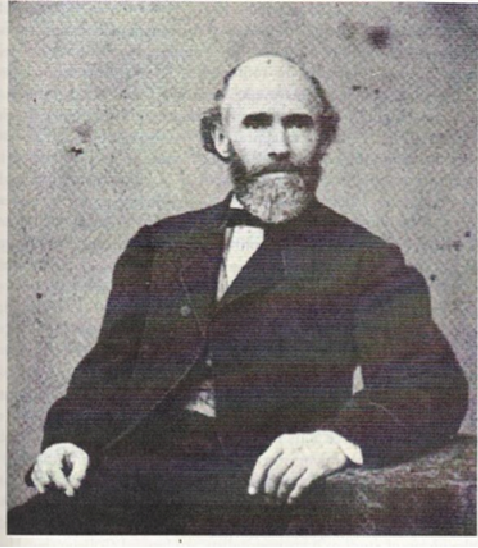


Figure 5.2. John Sullivan Dwight, picture taken while he was editor of his music journal.

literature and music.<sup>133</sup> He returned to Boston in 1848 and in 1852 found *Dwight's Journal of Music*, which he was the editor and critic for until its discontinuance in 1881. He was also heavily involved in the Harvard Musical Association. The association was instrumental in the construction of the Boston Music Hall.

Dwight, with his music journal, was important in influencing the public as to what proper music was and how it should be performed. He influenced not only the public but musicians and composers as well. As Joseph Horowitz says, “[He was] devoted to the Germanic masters of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Dwight viewed Wagner with suspicion and incomprehension. He instinctively mistrusted opera as a variant of the theater.”<sup>134</sup> Dwight felt that Ludwig van Beethoven’s symphonies conveyed the highest type of moral instruction. The other composers’ that he felt were influential and important were Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert. He was also intrigued with Schumann, Mendelssohn, Spohr, and Raff. As Horowitz noted, Wagner was absolutely out of the question and so was Liszt.<sup>135</sup>

This view is typical: Beethoven was seen as being the high point of musical art and should be treated as such. It is no accident that Beethoven is the only composer

---

<sup>133</sup> Philip Hart, *Orpheus in the New World: The Symphony Orchestra as an American Cultural Institution* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), 51.

<sup>134</sup> Joseph Horowitz, “Reclaiming the Past: Musical Boston Reconsidered,” *American Music*, Vol. 19, No. 1, (Spring, 2001), 20.

<sup>135</sup> Hart, *Orpheus in the New World: The Symphony Orchestra as an American Cultural Institution*, 51.

enshrined on the stage of Symphony Hall in Boston. His only opera, *Fidelio*, although a masterpiece, cannot support an entire opera company. Indeed, it was unperformed by an opera company in Boston until 1976 with Sarah Caldwell's Opera Company of Boston!

Christopher P. Cranch in 1845 gave a Harvard Musical Association lecture about the elevation of taste. In this lecture he said, "The music which such concerts make familiar, will inevitably elevate the general standard of taste in the community, and banish from refined and cultivated circles the trashy and commonplace things which find their way into so many fashionable parlors."<sup>136</sup> Dwight's response was "We never have believed that it was possible to educate the whole mass of society up to the love of what is classical and great in Art: we know that all the great loves, the fine perceptions and appreciations belong to the few."<sup>137</sup>

Dwight's vision was unfortunately correct: high culture was reserved to a very few people. Not only did he view Beethoven as the zenith of the western musical art form, this same music was only for a select few, as opposed to Cranch's view. Dwight's view was unfortunate, because it immediately removed an entire population from consideration for the arts, whereas art organizations should be doing the exact opposite and finding potential subscribers and audiences.

The Boston Academy of Music lasted only a few years and then went bankrupt; today nothing remains of the organization. Its very existence, though, set the foundation for another musical institution that would be very important to music in Boston with the teaching of music and the training of teachers. This organization would be fundamental

---

<sup>136</sup> Horowitz, "Reclaiming the Past: Musical Boston Reconsidered," 20.

<sup>137</sup> Michael Broyles, "Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, (1991), 489.

not only to the Boston Symphony Orchestra but also the Boston Opera Company as well. The organization was the New England Conservatory of Music.

### New England Conservatory

In 1867 Eben Tourjée (1834-1891) founded the New England Conservatory (NEC), which has become one of the most important music training schools in the world. He founded the school so that musicians in the United States did not have to go to European conservatories to study. He also wanted the conservatory to be an important institution for the training of music teachers. In 1869 Tourjée organized a music teachers' conference to develop national music education standards in the United States.<sup>138</sup>

Not only was NEC important in advocating for music education in America, but it was also instrumental in helping in the formation of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO). When the BSO was founded (as discussed below) nineteen of the principal players were NEC faculty. Between the faculty, courses, and concerts, NEC was vitally important in the history of Boston music, as it remains today.

NEC was also important to opera in Boston. In 1902, the conservatory started its own opera-training department, the NEC School of Opera, under the direction of Oreste Bimboni. This would prove to be beneficial when the Boston Opera Company (BOC) was founded and the BOC needed people trained in opera to help establish the opera school to train young singers that had been planned. NEC also allowed the BOC use of its facilities for practice and administrative offices until the new opera house was built.

After the BOC went bankrupt in 1915 and the state of opera was abysmal in Boston, faculty member Boris Goldovsky organized opera productions in Boston in 1942,

---

<sup>138</sup> “New England Conservatory of Music Timeline” New England Conservatory, <http://necmusic.edu/about-nec/history/timeline> (accessed on September 13, 2009).



using the NEC opera workshop.<sup>139</sup> This helped at least to keep opera produced in Boston alive in people's minds until Sarah Caldwell's company was founded.

Financing for NEC and other music and art organizations for social good had to come from a group who had the money and prestige to keep organizations afloat and to popularize them with the public, because the government certainly was not going to. Boston found these individuals in the Brahmins.

---

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER VI

### BOSTON BRAHMINS

The Brahmins were wealthy New England families centered in and around Boston. Many of the famous Brahmins were the Lowells, Gardners, Ames, Adamses, Cabots, Forbeses, Shaws, Appletons, Crowninshields, Saltonstalls, Jordans, Lawrences, and Higginsons. The Brahmins provided the main funding and the inspirational force for new artistic endeavors in the mid to late nineteenth century. Most were of English origin, settling in the nineteenth century and making their fortunes by the middle of the century.<sup>140</sup> Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894), the poet, physician, and essayist, first used the term “Boston Brahmin.” The term is from the ancient Hindus, who used the term Brahmin to identify the highest class. The Brahmins performed the sacred rites and set the moral standards. In his novel *Elsie Venner*, Holmes explains who the Brahmins were:

This is the harmless, inoffensive, untitled aristocracy . . . [they have their] houses by Bulfinch, their monopoly of Beacon Street, their ancestral portraits and Chinese porcelains, humanitarianism, Unitarian faith in the march of the mind, Yankee shrewdness, and New England exclusiveness.<sup>141</sup>

They made their wealth in a variety of ways: the Lowells, Lawrences, and Cabots through textiles, the Jordans through business, and the Higginsons through banking. Some say the Derbys, Searses, Endicotts, Peabodys, and Crowninshields made their money through seafaring, and the smuggling of goods, such as rum-running and opium trading.<sup>142</sup> The Brahmins had made Boston the center of the banking industry before the

---

<sup>140</sup> Alexandra Hall, “The New Brahmins,” Boston Magazine.com, May 2004, [www.bostonmagazine.com/articles/the\\_new\\_brahmins/](http://www.bostonmagazine.com/articles/the_new_brahmins/) (accessed March 14, 2009).

<sup>141</sup> Thomas H. O’Connor, *Bibles, Brahmins, and Bosses: Short History of Boston*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, 1991), 84.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

Civil War. Not until after the war did New York become the capital of banking, and the Brahmins had lost a lot of their influence in Boston and New England.

By 1825, however, whatever their means of making money, they were supporting many different types of cultural institutions. In time, their support would include organizations such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and the Boston Athenaeum. Boston, because of the Brahmins, was “the one place in America where wealth and the knowledge of how to use it are apt to coincide.”<sup>143</sup> Most of the young Brahmins studied in Europe to get a taste of the culture and see what was possible for a city. Eventually, not-for-profit institutions achieved the goals of the Brahmins of bringing European culture to Boston. These institutions were created because the Brahmins were, according to Paul DiMaggio:

[A] social class, they built institutions (schools, almshouses, and charitable societies) aimed at securing control over the city’s social life. As a status group, they constructed organizations (clubs, prep schools, and cultural institutions) to seal themselves off from their increasingly unruly environment.<sup>144</sup>

These cultural organizations were founded for the middle class, which would make up the bulk of the audience, as they would be able to afford the tickets to attend such new institutions. The reason for the institutions, however, was to honor past achievements, to turn them into cultural vaults, if you will, for the Brahmins. To honor this past, they used New England’s history, and especially Boston’s, to produce these institutions in a classic New England image. This meant using the Puritan past as an example for the Brahmins to keep the honor and ways of the past in these cultural institutions. As Jan C. Dawson writes:

---

<sup>143</sup> Paul Dimaggio, “Cultural entrepreneurship in nineteenth-century Boston: the Creation of an organizational base for high culture in America,” *Media Culture Society*, (1982), 36.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

Once Calvinism and the Puritan conscience could be accepted as compatible with the liberal, scientific mind of the late nineteenth century, the immediate post-Civil War suspicion of political religionism began to dissolve. In turn, this intellectual adjustment led to an increasingly vocal concern for the moral education of the individual in the public schools, the reformulation of the theocratic ideal, the incorporation of Calvinist theological concepts in the thought of some proponents of the Social Gospel, and an effort to combat the materialism that accompanied Gilded Age prosperity. . . . It was not uncommon for those who wanted an injection of a greater sense of moral responsibility and brotherhood into the education of the American citizen to cite the example of the Puritans.<sup>145</sup>

The Brahmins wanted change to come about in a slow, controlled manner that maintained their own superiority but benefitted the population of Boston.<sup>146</sup> The public schools at the time relied heavily on the Protestant Bible, which the Brahmins did not object to. The Brahmins also wanted to “combat the materialism” that was prevalent at this time and make the Protestant religion still important to Boston, unlike the Catholic elements that were beginning to emerge.

This change happened mostly because of immigration. As the immigrants came in greater numbers and the demographics of Boston were altered, the influence of the Brahmins waned. This led some Brahmins to throw up their hands in despair and give up as they saw the city being overrun by people from all parts of southern and Eastern Europe who knew nothing of the traditions of Boston and, the Brahmins felt, had nothing to offer the city.”<sup>147</sup>

For the Italian and Irish Catholics that had immigrated to Boston, they found a city that was not accustomed to them, and this caused many problems. In 1825 Bishop Benedict Fenwick became the head of the Boston Catholic Church and started Catholic schools, in response to the Protestant public schools. Soon after, in August of 1834, a

---

<sup>145</sup> Jan. C. Dawson, “Puritanism in American Thought and Society: 1865-1910,” *The New England Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (December 1980): 514-516.

<sup>146</sup> O’Connor, *Bibles, Brahmins, and Bosses: Short History of Boston*, 96.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

large Protestant mob attacked the Mount Benedict School in Charlestown (present-day Somerville), run by the Ursuline Sisters, because of the perceived threat of a growing Catholic menace to American institutions.<sup>148</sup> In 1837 a large Protestant mob, from the Boston Fire Department attacked an Irish Catholic funeral procession, quickly engulfing the entire South End of Boston.<sup>149</sup> These tensions between the Protestant's and Catholic's would be very disturbing to the Brahmin social class and would lead to a great schism and break within the Brahmin elite.

The older Brahmins wanted to continue the old Puritan-Yankee-Brahmin tradition defined by the historian John William Ward as the “rational politics” that were “a coherent system of bureaucratic politics which is designed to work in the ‘public interest’ and which looks for a political leader who steadfastly pursues the ‘general good’—a leader who resists selfish interests, pressure groups, or single-issue constituencies.”<sup>150</sup>

By the 1840's, even social causes, such as pacifism, women's rights, and abolitionism, were at the forefront of the Brahmin agenda, especially among the younger Members.<sup>151</sup> They felt it was their duty to maintain the high standards of taste and excellence in Boston. They wanted to extend the cultural benefits of “old” Boston into the “new” sections of Boston. This accorded with a second politics that Ward called “ethnic politics.” He viewed this as a political culture that “celebrates the personal, emphasizes family and friendship, and which totally rejects the notion of affection for others unless they have earned it by their achievement and performance.”<sup>152</sup>

---

<sup>148</sup> Robert J. Allison, *A short history of Boston* (Beverly, MA: Commonwealth Editions, 2004), 53.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>151</sup> O'Connor, *Bibles, Brahmins, and Bosses: Short History of Boston*, 109-110.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

The younger Brahmins, therefore, decided to influence Boston in a positive way. This led to the creation of many buildings and institutions that have shaped Boston as we know it today, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Trinity Church, Boston Public Library, Symphony Hall, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.<sup>153</sup>

The Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) was to provide the framework for what was considered “high art” and to help establish the United States’ symphonic tradition. The orchestra helped to standardize what was appropriate behavior at a concert, which pieces should be on a program, and other formalities of the symphonic tradition.

Major Henry Lee Higginson (1834-1919, figure 6.1) founded the BSO in 1881 with an endowment of \$1 million dollars. He would also cover all deficits until his death.



Figure 6.1. Henry Lee Higginson later in life.

The BSO was steered to public, not private performance, as Higginson wanted the common person to be able to experience great symphonic music. Indeed, Higginson accomplished this by keeping a large number of seats unreserved for blue-collar workers, so that they too could hear the orchestra.<sup>154</sup> Higginson also founded the Boston Pops in 1885, for music of lighter nature. It was (and still is) popular entertainment for the citizens of Boston.

European monarchs and governments supported opera, but almost never a concert

---

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>154</sup> Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England*, 121.

symphony orchestra that was professional and this large (the Mannheim Orchestra of the eighteenth century being an exception). Boston came first and set the standards in America for polish and virtuosity.<sup>155</sup>The Handel and Haydn Society was still active; indeed it had a very close relationship with the BSO, which allowed it to survive, usually providing the chorus for BSO performances.

The creation of these major cultural organizations, such as the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, made one Brahmin consider opera as well. This Brahmin who thought very strongly of this art-form was Eben D. Jordan Jr.

#### Eben D. Jordan

The Jordan family was known throughout New England for their charitable acts. With Benjamin L. Marsh, Eben D. Jordan, Sr., founded the Jordan Marsh Company, a pioneering company instrumental in ushering in the new concept of a department store. Eben D. Jordan, Sr., not only founded the *Boston Daily Globe* and made sure of its financial stability and longevity; he also was a patron of music as shown by his help with the jubilee concert of 1867.

This led his son, Eben Jordan, Jr. (figure 6.2), to continue his father's philanthropy. Jordan himself was a singer (reportedly he was a very good one), and this instilled a love of music in him for the rest of his life. This love of music made him realize that he could finance opera in Boston (he built the Majestic Theatre as well as the Boston Opera House) but also help with the New England Conservatory of Music, of which he was a board member.

---

<sup>155</sup> Joseph Horowitz, "Reclaiming the Past: Musical Boston Reconsidered," *American Music*, Vol. 19, No. 1, (Spring, 2001), 23.



Figure 6.2. Eben D. Jordan, Jr.

When he became the chair of the NEC board, after his father's death, he donated the money in order to build the concert hall in that still bears his name. As discussed earlier, he also built the Majestic Theatre, originally for theatre and opera. In Plymouth, Massachusetts, where he had a summer home, he also donated money to institutions, the most famous being Jordan Hospital. He attended Harvard University but never graduated because of poor health. He did,

however, become a member of the Harvard Musical Association.

Eben D. Jordan, Jr., was the most important early benefactor that the city had for opera in Boston. Without his finances and vision, opera could not even be attempted, certainly not the expansive "grand opera" productions which were produced. He wanted opera in Boston, and in his later years was a board member of the Metropolitan Opera Company and honorary director of the Royal Opera, London.<sup>156</sup> When he decided to support opera, he needed someone to run his company, and he thought he had found that person in Henry Russell.

### Henry Russell

Henry Russell (1871-1934, figure 6.3) was born in London. He was a singer by trade, studying with Hugo Beyer, and although his voice was never good enough to allow him to become a professional, he was a very good singing teacher. He claimed to have

---

<sup>156</sup> "Eben D. Jordan Died Yesterday: Merchant was father of Grand Opera in Boston," *Boston Daily Globe*, August 2, 1916.



taught Lillian Nordica (1857-1914, American Soprano), Ben Davies (1858-1943, Welsh Tenor), and Kennerley Rumford (1870-1957, British Baritone).<sup>157</sup> Curiously, however, he admits he knew nothing about music and could only play by ear. His teaching pedagogy was based more on the physical side of actually singing than the musical side of it.

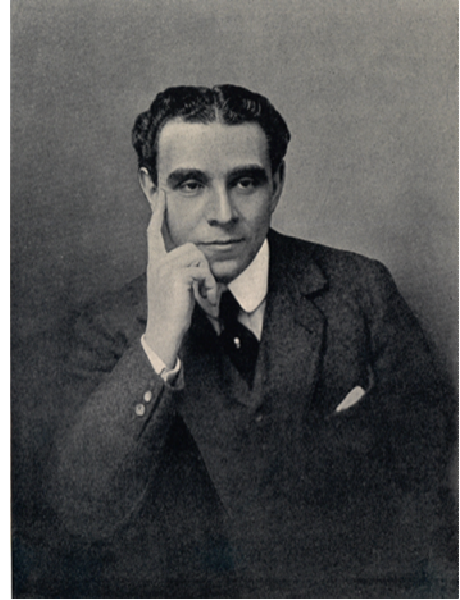


Figure 6.3. Henry Russell.

He learned everything he knew about stage management from the Italian singer and actress Eleonora Duse (1858-1924), who Russell had helped with her voice when she was unable to use it. It is because of her that he decided to become a manager. He says, “As I watched [Duse] arrange performances, direct rehearsals and create herself new roles, I realized that to be a director myself was my fundamental ambition.”<sup>158</sup>

However, people were worried about his management abilities. His friend Don Prospero Cellini had said to Russell, “Your experience as a teacher of singing should be of valuable assistance in choosing singers, and the knowledge you have gained of the stage while with Duse, ought to help you in producing. But you will find opera infinitely more difficult than drama, and if you ever hope to make money out of it—you are certain to be disappointed.”<sup>159</sup>

This was going to be especially problematic because of the singers, especially prima donnas, as Russell did not like them. He states, “Her throat, as a rule, was more

---

<sup>157</sup> Henry Russell, *The Passing Show* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), 11.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

developed than her brain and, with a few notable exceptions, she took no interest in anything or anybody but herself. . .because she wanted everybody else to live exactly as she pleased and entirely for her sake. Whatever she said was right and whoever disagreed with her was wrong.”<sup>160</sup>

Why he wanted to end the star system in the United States becomes more apparent with this passage as prima donnas would not do well working with him. Russell still was able to manage his own opera company, the San Carlo Opera Company, taking them on tour of the United States. This is how Eben D. Jordan and Henry Russell eventually would meet.

---

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 35-36.

## CHAPTER VII

### BUILDING THE BOSTON OPERA COMPANY

Eben D. Jordan, Jr.'s decision that Boston needed its own opera company led to the creation of the Boston Opera Company in 1908. This conclusion was based on the travels of the San Carlo Opera Company, which Henry Russell had brought to Boston in the spring of 1907. Jordan had been thoroughly impressed with the company and knew then that he wanted to support an opera company in Boston with Russell.

The San Carlo Opera Company was established in 1904 as a touring arm of the Teatro di San Carlo of Naples, Italy. Becoming its own institution, it first gave performances at Covent Garden in London in 1905 and then toured the United States in early 1906. The group eventually settled in Boston from 1906-1909, being absorbed by the Boston Opera Company. They settled in Boston because of Eben Jordan.

Russell met Jordan when his company needed money during the fall of 1907, because of the financial panic that year. The company itself was bankrupt, because the financiers had backed out, so Russell needed a loan from Jordan just to be able to pay the company's workers their salaries. Jordan was happy to help and pay the deficit of the company. He said, "Here I was glad to be of some service to the man I was already beginning to admire."<sup>161</sup> Jordan did not seem to be worried in the least about Russell's management abilities, even though Russell had very little experience.<sup>162</sup> His salary as director of the San Carlo Opera was less than 200 pounds per week or around 6,400 pounds a year.<sup>163</sup>

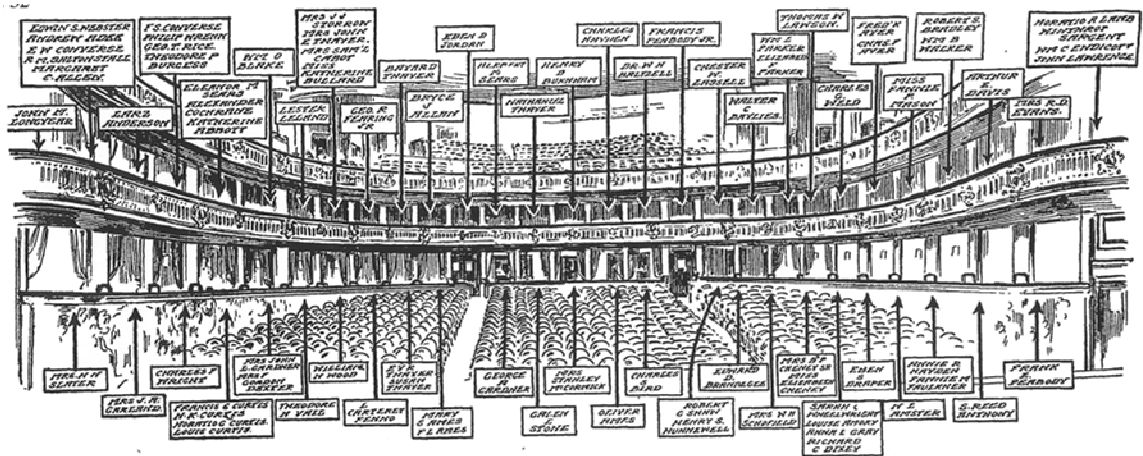
---

<sup>161</sup> Eben D. Jordan, "The New Boston Opera and its Meaning," *New England Magazine*, October, 1909, 138.

<sup>162</sup> Quaintance Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1965), 21.

<sup>163</sup> Henry Russell, *The Passing Show* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), 55.

At this time Jordan, the head of the Jordan Marsh Company as his father had been, agreed to be the main financial provider for the new opera company. He was called the “Father of Grand Opera in Boston” by the local papers because of his support for opera. In fact, it can be argued that what Henry Lee Higginson was to the symphonic scene in Boston, Jordan was to the opera scene.



LOCATIONS AND OWNERS OF BOXES IN NEW OPERA HOUSE.

Figure 7.1. Location of boxholders for the Boston Opera House, 1909-1914.

The new company had lofty goals, according to the official publication:

The Boston Opera House is the centre of the movement which promises to make opera part of the common life of the American people; not something whose enjoyment is restricted comparatively, as heretofore, to the wealthy few, but something that will be acceptable to the masses and that will tend to awaken them to an appreciation of the great masterpieces of music.<sup>164</sup>

A new stock company was formed with a market capitalization of \$200,000 and shares were offered to the public for \$100, each share carrying the privilege of subscribing for a season ticket in advance of the general public.<sup>165</sup> These were all rapidly bought. The original forty-six boxes were also quickly subscribed, to raise the \$150,000 necessary to equip the house with machinery, scenery, costumes, and other essentials.

<sup>164</sup> Frank H. Jackson, *Monograph of the Boston Opera House* (Boston: W.A. Butterfield, 1909), 20.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

The boxes were soon raised to fifty-four because of the demand (figure 7.1).<sup>166</sup> The seating of the opera house was also raised from 2,200 to 2,750. The cost of the house, \$1,200,000, was paid almost exclusively by Jordan.

Jordan was also willing to cover the deficit of the opera company unconditionally for three years. It was decided that to start off, Boston would have a fifteen-week opera season with a total of ninety performances. The directors also decided to provide an opera school, fostering American talent, which was to be a graduate department at the New England Conservatory. The summer before the opening of the house, Jordan went to Europe looking for singers for the company. According to the *Boston Daily Globe*, “During this trip he was instrumental in engaging many stars for the Boston Company.”<sup>167</sup> Thus the stage was set for the opening of the Boston Opera House.

#### Completion of the Boston Opera House

Jordan and a number of other important benefactors laid the cornerstone of the Opera House at a special ceremony on November 30, 1908. Governor Curtis Guild made an address at the event and many of the people in attendance wanted to see the construction of Boston’s first true opera house.

Parkman B. Haven, of the firm of Messrs. Wheelwright & Haven, designed the building with full knowledge of the newest designs and best European opera houses, “in order for the audience to enjoy the operas without any impediment.”<sup>168</sup> The house also had a fire sprinkler system, electricity, telephones, and other advanced building attributes for the time, and, of course, all of the interior furnishings and draperies were furnished by Jordan Marsh and Co.

---

<sup>166</sup> Jackson, *Monograph of the Boston Opera House*, 19.

<sup>167</sup> Chas H. Taylor, “Eben D. Jordan,” *The Boston Daily Globe*, August 2, 1916.

<sup>168</sup> Jackson, *Monograph of the Boston Opera House*, 20.

Wallace Sabine, the acoustician who had developed the acoustical formulas for Boston's Symphony Hall, was called in to do the acoustics for the opera house as well. Sabine charged \$200—the amount he invested into the company—for his services.<sup>169</sup> When the check was sent, however, he refused to accept it as Parkman B. Haven, the architect, had signed it instead of Henry Russell. Sabine wrote to Haven, “I have received a check for \$200 in response to the bill which I sent you. I notice, however, that the check is signed by your firm and not by the opera company. If this means that you pay the bill, I must decline to make any charges whatever for my services.”<sup>170</sup>

The building did not have a flawless construction. There were numerous delays and labor troubles. The most notorious event happened on March 27, 1909, when, just before midnight, exploding dynamite rocked the opera house construction site, ripping a six-foot hole in it. No one was ever charged with the crime, even though there were some suspects, as there was not enough evidence. Fortunately, there was no structural damage from the explosion, but there was an immediate delay in construction to repair the damage to the façade.<sup>171</sup>

The builder was under a lot of pressure to deliver the house in good working order and on time, which unfortunately was unattainable. Indeed, Henry Russell wrote to the architect Parkman B. Haven on April 17, 1909:

Last night I spent several hours in going over repertoire with my stage director. He asked me to positively inform him as to the earliest date when he would be able to have the stage for the purpose of scene and light rehearsals. These rehearsals have nothing to do with the general orchestra and choral rehearsals, which we expect to begin about the first week in September, and which will not

---

<sup>169</sup> Wallace C. Sabine, Letter to Parkman B. Haven, January 1, 1909.

<sup>170</sup> Wallace C. Sabine, Letter to Parkman B. Haven, January 18, 1909.

<sup>171</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 40.

be possible until the entire theatre is cleared of workmen, but it would be possible, desirable, and even essential to have possession of the stage so that Mr. Menotti [Regisseur General, Delfino Menotti] could start his light and scene rehearsals, as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, if such a date should be within hope of possibility.<sup>172</sup>

This deadline would long pass and Russell had to again write to Haven on August 4, 1909, to inquire about the opera house:

Many thanks for your letter which I need scarcely say was most welcome. I naturally share your anxiety regarding the opera house opening on November 8. All that you say in your letter concerning this grave question is of the deepest interest to me. You do not even suggest a faint idea of how much time we shall have for the necessary rehearsals but, on the other hand, I know that from the conversation I had with you before you sailed, that you fully realize that it will be just as impossible for us to open the opera house on November 8 without previously properly rehearsing the opera as it would be if the opera house itself were still in the hands of the workmen.<sup>173</sup>



**Figure 7.2.**Interior of the Opera House at its opening.

The hall was not finished until the Saturday before the grand gala opening. Indeed, on opening night, the doors opened slightly late because of finishing touches that had to be made before the guests could enter. When the Opera House was finished (figure 7.2), the boxes were arranged in two grand tiers on either side of the proscenium. Each was carpeted and furnished with gold chairs and

covered in tapestry. There were no obstructed-view seats, because the house was designed with a support structure that would not impede anyone's view of the opera. The stage, the largest in the United States, was ninety feet high, seventy feet deep, and one hundred and fifty feet wide.

<sup>172</sup> Henry Russell, Letter to Parkman B. Haven, April 17, 1909.

<sup>173</sup> Henry Russell, Letter to Parkman B. Haven, August 4, 1909.

This sister of Symphony Hall finally opened on Monday, November 8, 1909, at 7:45 pm, to fantastic reviews of a performance of *La Gioconda* by Amilcare Ponchielli.

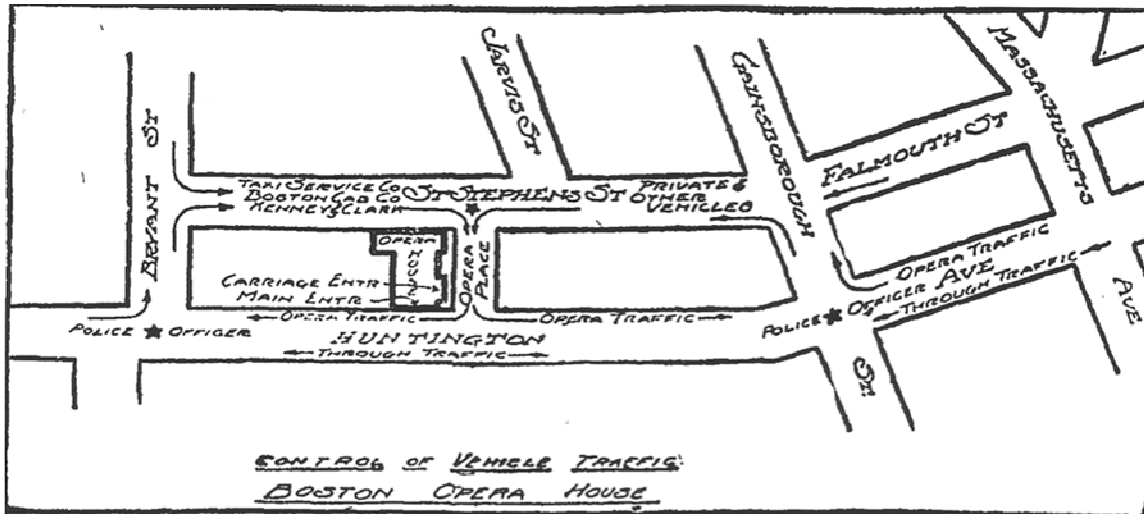


Figure 7.3. Traffic plan for the opening of the Opera House.

Before the performance started, there was a frenzy of activity (figure 7.3). Huntington Avenue was not yet paved and it was raining that night, causing a messy situation as it had been closed to all traffic, except for trams. Because of the amount of traffic, the twenty Boston Police officers assigned to opening night spent three hours clearing up the traffic mess.

Once the performance had ended on opening night, Eben Jordan spoke to the audience:

I know by your applause that you are satisfied. You must be satisfied with this theater, because it is a most beautiful theater, and I think future generations of Bostonians will be thankful that they have the privilege of sitting in it. . . . We had hardly time to get the house into shape: we did not have sufficient rehearsals, and many things still remain to be done. But we kept our word, and opened on time, and by and by we shall improve. And it has all been done for the love, for the love of music and the love of Boston.<sup>174</sup>

As the *Boston Globe* recounted the scene for readers the next day:

Everybody in Boston seemed to be in the house, from President Lowell of Harvard to Mrs. John L. Gardner. And in a rather reserved way, everybody

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 41.



expressed delight with the theatre and the performance. It was typically a Boston atmosphere, except that when the promenade between the acts in the lobby opened—and that was another innovation, seeing that Boston for the first time had a real lobby for a promenade—the crowd was so great, and the gaiety so bubbling, that conversation had to be carried on at a very high pitch indeed. It was almost impossible to make one’s self heard in ordinary tones.<sup>175</sup>

Governor Ebenezer S. Draper of the Commonwealth was enthusiastic as well:

I feel that the entire city of Boston, and the New England states, ought to feel proud for the public spirit shown by Mr. Eben D. Jordan and the gentlemen who have worked with him for the success of the opera organization.

The structure (figure 7.4) was called “the first Unitarian Opera House” by Arthur Whiting because of its simple elegance.<sup>176</sup> It was constructed of brick and stone and had a façade that “may be well said to harmonize with [its surroundings].”<sup>177</sup> The architects did not want the building to take away from the opera performance. Lawrence Gilman of *Harper’s Weekly* magazine declared the exterior of red brick, gray limestone, and terracotta “in admirable taste and reticent beauty, rather than prodigal sumptuousness.” The exterior took many elements from Symphony Hall, a few blocks down the street, with the same type of brick appearance and with cream columns. The exterior decorations included three large panels modeled by Bella L. Pratt for the façade on Huntington Avenue. The center Column was of “Music,” the left one was “the Drama,” and the third on the right was “The Dance.” Philip Hale from the *Boston Herald* said about the structure:

---

<sup>175</sup> “Boston welcomes coming of its own opera with a magnificent audience in new house,” *Boston Daily Globe*, November 9, 1909.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>177</sup> Jackson, *Monograph of the Boston Opera House*, 18.



Figure 7.4. The Opera House at its opening in 1909.

[At last] a building artistic in design, structure, ornamentation, equipment, in which the spectacle is not through necessity only on the other side of the footlights; for there is at last the opportunity for the display of fair women in gala costumes which in an opera house adds so much to the brilliance of the scene and . . . performances; which gives to the opera certain—if the word is sadly abused—aristocratic distinction.<sup>178</sup>

The interior was not gaudy and was in fact quite restrained. As critic Lawrence Gilman wrote, “[it’s designed] in admirable taste and reticent beauty, rather than prodigal sumptuousness.”<sup>179</sup> People were delighted with the ample lobby space, and the promenade. The Palm Room (figure 7.5), a “dignified but cheerful chamber on the second-tier box floor fitted out with ‘graceful chairs and round tables’ . . . was adopted . .

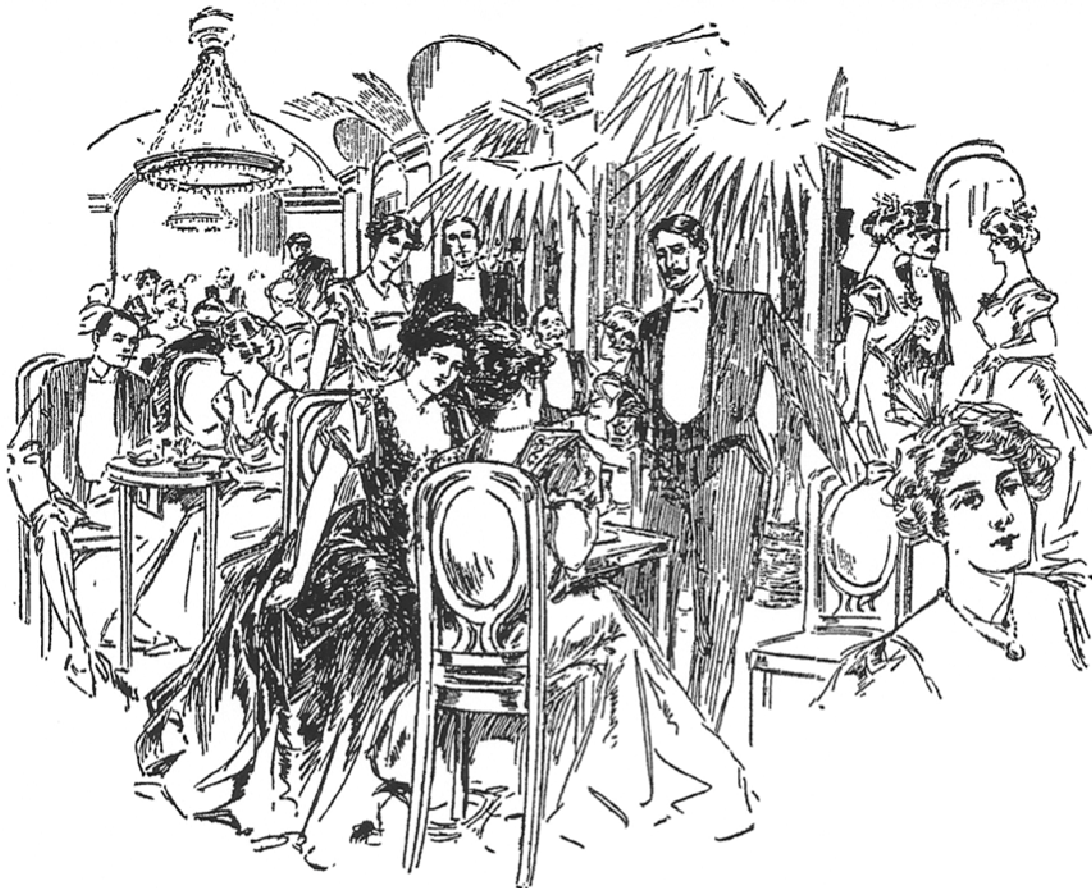


Figure 7.5. Palm Room of the Boston Opera House.

<sup>178</sup> Randolph Carter and Robert Reed Cole, *Joseph Urban: Architecture, Theatre, Opera, Film* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1992), 48.

<sup>179</sup> Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall*, 81.

as a smoking room, ‘men taking the hint from a cigar case in one corner and match safes on the tables.’”<sup>180</sup>

According to critic H.T. Parker for the Boston Evening Transcript, the audience, “sat as though to do so on opening nights had been the habit of their lives, while perhaps within they wondered how X across the way or Y around the turn seemed so used to it as well. After all, we are not quite habitual boxholders or subscribers yet.”<sup>181</sup> Algernon St.

John Brenon of the New York Telegraph wrote about the Boston Opera:

New York is disturbed by a certain restlessness and indocility, a waiting for points and purple patches and loud unmeasured outbursts. . . . Boston listens seriously, equably, giving the artist the same courteous, careful hearing it would extend to a Huxley speaking on a problem in biology. . . .Above all, Boston listens, not languorously as we do in England, but earnestly, seasoning its admiration with a concentration of intellectual curiosity.<sup>182</sup>

The new opera company formed by this endeavor was of the highest caliber and was ready and able to use this new operatic facility to the best advantage. Eben Jordan made sure the company had everything they needed.

---

<sup>180</sup> Carter and Robert Reed Cole, *Joseph Urban: Architecture, Theatre, Opera, Film*, 48.

<sup>181</sup> Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall*, 81.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

CHAPTER VIII  
THE BOSTON OPERA COMPANY

To achieve his goal of a permanent opera company, Jordan put together a board that would put the best musical interests of the company first and would promote music in Boston. As can be seen from a list of the board members of the opera company, he did just that:

<p>PRESIDENT Eben D. Jordan</p>	
<p>VICE-PRESIDENT Frederick S. Converse</p>	
<p>TREASURER  Charles Hayden</p>	<p>SECRETARY  Robert Jordan</p>
<p>ASSISTANT SECRETARY Edwin Westby</p>	
<p>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</p>	
<p>N. L. Amster Samuel Carr George W. Chadwick Frederick S. Converse George R. Fearing, Jr. Ralph L. Flanders Charles Hayden Eben D. Jordan</p>	<p>Robert Jordan Otto H. Kahn Gardiner M. Lane Charles M. Loeffler Francis Peabody, Jr. Thomas N. Perkins Eugene V.R. Thayer, Jr.</p>
<p>FOREIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE</p>	
<p>Lord Grimthorpe <i>London</i> Sir. F. Paolo Tosti <i>London</i></p>	<p>Isidore Braggiotti <i>Florence</i> James Hazen Hyde <i>Paris</i></p>
<p>Max Lyon <i>Paris</i><sup>183</sup></p>	

**Table 8.1 Board of Directors of the Opera Company in 1909.**

---

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 15.

The operas that the Boston Opera Company produced were presented in a style that Americans would associate with “grand opera.” The operas themselves were not all grand operas, of course, true grand operas being generally in four or five acts, characterized by large-scale casts and orchestras, lavish stage designs and spectacular stage-effects. The plots were normally based on or around dramatic historic events, and usually premiered at the Paris Opéra, which was a large center for most of the true grand operas from the late 1820s to around 1875. The term can also be colloquially used to apply to a broader repertoire with respect of contemporary or later works of similar proportions from France, Germany, Italy, and other European countries.

The resources needed for operas of this magnitude were enormous: many characters and secondary roles, a large chorus, the ballet assumed a larger role, the orchestra was expanded and new instruments were added as well, with instruments such as the ophicleide, larger percussion section, and offstage instruments. Choruses and long ensembles, which were used to advance the story in as impressive a way as possible, were a dominant force. Scenery and lighting were made to be more realistic and the spectacle of the opera, for which the French were well known, was increased.

The opera *Robert le diable* (1831) was the work in which Giacomo Meyerbeer made his successful debut in grandopéra at the Paris Opéra. His most famous, though, is *Les Huguenots* (1836), which became one of the most popular operas in the repertoire and then all but disappeared.<sup>184</sup>

French grand opera was a crucial model for many opera composers of the mid to late nineteenth century. Richard Wagner revised *Tannhäuser* (1861) for the Paris Opera

---

<sup>184</sup> M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, "Grand opéra." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/11619> (accessed December 5, 2009).

and Giuseppe Verdi revised his *Les vêpres siciliennes* (1855), and *Don Carlos* (1867) in the French tradition. Charles Gounod and Camille Saint-Saëns both were influenced by this, to say nothing of Hector Berlioz and his *Les Troyens*, which took the elements of grand opera and expanded them to unprecedented levels.

The grand operalegacy was exported around the world, being especially felt in the United States. The aesthetics, which valued visual display as well as aural satisfaction, resulted in a new importance for the set designer, the costumer and the metteur-en-scène. They, and the machiniste (responsible for the realization of special effects), were consulted. This in turn led to huge sums being spent for premières, as it was no longer acceptable to use stock costumes and sets with minor adjustments; innovation was expected. This, in fact, was where Henry Russell would find his finances stretched to the limit. The modern view, which expected creativity and massive resources, is a legacy of the genre.<sup>185</sup>

In the late nineteenth century grand opera was exported around the world – from Paris to New Orleans and St Petersburg. For most of Europe, French opera and opera singers were as important as Italian and far ahead of German and other national traditions. This tradition would grow and expand to include true grand opera and opera that was not, but still could be treated with the same lavish productions. This is what Americans came to expect with these lavish productions.

Operas were presented in their original languages, which could be a problem if the audience could not understand the language, as there were no supertitles. There were of course libretti of the operas presented, but that merely helps one to understand the story—to follow along with a libretto as the opera is in progress is very difficult,

---

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

especially in a dark opera house. The directors of the company felt, however, that the American public wanted and indeed demanded opera in the original language. Henry Russell was keenly aware of this, and even felt that the character of the pieces was lost if they were translated. Hence, Boston was a house to do operas in their original language. It was decided that it would also be a house to put an end to the star system of singers in the United States.

The boards of the Boston Opera Company and the Metropolitan Opera Company decided to share singers, mainly European, signing an agreement on April 30, 1908. There was no financial gain to be made from the partnership between the companies; they were both to develop opera to the highest level that they could, according to the contract.<sup>186</sup>

In July of 1910, the partnership was expanded, in secret, to the Chicago Opera Company and the Philadelphia Opera Company. This Operatic Trust, as it was known, meant that all four companies were to be interconnected and this was to be beneficial to all involved.<sup>187</sup> It was beneficial because the four companies were now capable of having more singers available for productions; it also enabled the companies to split the costs associated with hiring the singers. The Operatic Trust was now in a position to offer twenty-two weeks of opera in New York, twenty in Boston, ten in Chicago, ten in Philadelphia, and other performances around major cities of the country. As Henry Russell told the *New York Times*:

It is an attempt to put opera on a business basis. The organization is absolutely unified. We are going to work together. There will be an interchange of singers and of operas. First of all, there will be an attempt made to reduce the salaries of

---

<sup>186</sup> "Opera Agreement," *Boston Daily Globe*, May 1, 1908.

<sup>187</sup> Henry Russell, *The Passing Show* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), 181.



the singers. As we now control the singing theaters of America, with the exception of the Manhattan Opera House, this will be possible.<sup>188</sup>

He had made this statement before Oscar Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera House was closed. Hammerstein had started the house in 1906 as a direct competitor to the Metropolitan. As a direct result of this competition, the Metropolitan almost went bankrupt because of the expense of producing opera at an ever-increasing lavish level to keep up with Hammerstein's house. The Metropolitan decided to buy up the Manhattan Opera in 1910 and use its sets and costumes for the Philadelphia-Chicago Company.<sup>189</sup> Oscar Hammerstein had also owned Philadelphia before it folded, so this course of action was about keeping the Metropolitan fiscally stable and keeping Hammerstein out of opera.

Hammerstein agreed to stay out of opera production because he was given a \$1.2 million payment from the Metropolitan Opera, basically a bribe that Hammerstein's son Arthur negotiated. In return, Hammerstein agreed not to produce opera for ten years. He was dead before the moratorium expired.

Both Henry Russell and Eben Jordan, Jr., wanted to see the "star system" in America ended. The partnership between all of the opera companies certainly helped the situation. Russell and Jordan decided to discount the best seats in the Boston house to \$3.00, whereas the comparable seats in New York were \$5.00.<sup>190</sup> They did this because they wanted to make opera affordable to the common person and change the stigma of opera as being only an activity for the rich.

Russell said at the Boston Opera House cornerstone laying, "Every stockholder who signed the parchment buried in the Opera House Cornerstone may also be said to

---

<sup>188</sup> "Opera Trust to Lower Exorbitant Salaries of Singers," *New York Times*, July 31, 1910.

<sup>189</sup> Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall*, 376.

<sup>190</sup> "Music and Musicians," *The Boston Daily Globe*, November 7, 1909.

have signed the death warrant for the star system in America.”<sup>191</sup> Jordan and Russell wanted opera to become engrained in the populace, as the symphony was. They also were to give an advanced student of the opera school a public debut in performance each Saturday evening with the usual orchestra and choral forces. What Jordan and Russell were hoping was that the populace would eventually come to the Opera House to see the operas presented and not just the singers. As Jordan wrote:

And the singers? Upon them, naturally, chief public interest centers. What is their caliber to be; to what extent are they thus far distinguished; to what degree will they thrill their audiences as well as satisfy the artistic demands of the “cogniscenti”? In reply it may be said that although the “star” system is tabooed in our plans, many of the people engaged belong by right in the ranks of the iridescent. And of the others there is much promise, based upon the expert knowledge of the director of the enterprise. This much we maintain; that the casts will be always adequate, often superb, and that the *ensemble* of each performance will be a constant source of satisfaction, if not surprise.<sup>192</sup>

The singers were brought over from Europe, where most of the internationally known opera singers were from. Among the more famous American and International singers who sang with the Boston Opera Company were Lydia Lipowska, Lillian Nordica, Mary Garden, Vanni Marcoux, Giovanni Zenatello, Maria Gay, Nellie Melba, Enrico Caruso, Jacques Urlus, Leo Slezak, Dame Maggie Teyte, and Ramon Blanchart. The United States was still building its base of professional singer, and the lack of one would have a drastic effect on all three companies at the start of World War I.

The Boston Opera Company itself was quite large: a seventy-person orchestra, fifty in the ballet, and onehundredfifty in the chorus,<sup>193</sup> most of whom were graduates of

---

<sup>191</sup> Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 81.

<sup>192</sup> Jordan, “The New Boston Opera and its Meaning,” 145.

<sup>193</sup> “Boston Opera,” *Boston Daily Globe*, August 1, 1909.

the New England Conservatory, and, of course, the star singers.<sup>194</sup> NEC also provided the rehearsal space for the company, as mentioned before. There were to be performances on Monday, Wednesday, Thursdays (which were added because of demand), Friday, and two on Saturday, a matinee and an evening show.

Stagecraft at this time was very simple in the United States and no great detail was put into the sets. H. T. Parker is quoted in an article called “The New Stagecraft”:  
“And the wonder of it all is that we in American have sat these many years blind to all the changes in the scenic arts of the theatre, content with the old outworn ways—the most conservative of countries instead of the most advanced as we fondly and foolishly consider ourselves.”<sup>195</sup>

Originally, the Boston Opera Company decided to follow this tradition of simple set designs. Secretly, however in 1911, they brought over Josef Urban (1872-1933) from Vienna, Austria to bring to life this new stagecraft that would lead to amazing and spectacular productions, or so they hoped. They listed him (for this season) as the firm Lefler, for which he worked, so as to not raise any suspicions. When he did come over,



Figure 8.2. Josef Urban in his office.

he brought with him the sets for *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and *Hänsel und Gretel*. These were to be in his new, more realistic style.

In the spring of 1912 Urban (figure 8.2) was officially introduced

<sup>194</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 69.

<sup>195</sup> Carter and Robert Reed Cole, *Joseph Urban: Architecture, Theatre, Opera, Film*, 45.

to the Boston public. His art was creating a total production, combining settings, costumes, lighting, stage movement, and sometimes music.<sup>196</sup> He created scenes and lighting that he knew about from Germany and Russia. These designs used special lighting and painting effects to create a heightened sense of realism. His sets were new, modern, and had a lasting effect on American opera. Indeed, his *Tristan* sets lasted until 1959 at the Metropolitan, a remarkable longevity for set designs.<sup>197</sup> His sets were the model for what was possible with stage lighting effects for the next generation of set designers.

The second season of the opera company, 1910-11, was opened by Arigo Boitos *Mefistofele*. During this season price wars were started between Boston and New York. Boston raised the top ticket price to from \$3.00 to \$5.00 because, as the Boston critic Philip Hale explained at the time, the management of the opera company did not want Boston to become the dumping ground for inferior singers from the Metropolitan.<sup>198</sup> Oscar Hammerstein had also said during this time, “There is no such thing in America as cheap and good opera.”<sup>199</sup>

Even with this price war and expensive seats, the second season had to be shortened to twelve weeks because of lack of money. The directors surmised that “Boston could not boast the large floating population of New York, where hordes go prepared and anxious to spend money.”<sup>200</sup> Arthur Wilson from the *Boston Daily Globe* wrote during this time, “Had opera become blasé already by the second season?” The management was having a hard time finding operas everyone in the house could enjoy.

---

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 213.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 239.

People sitting in the box seats liked the old opera classics whereas people in the balcony seats liked the new operas just being premiered.<sup>201</sup>

By the second season, the novelty of the opera company had started to wear off, and the habit of going to the opera had not yet taken hold—a very dangerous condition for any new company. This caused a financial problem for the opera house. As Henry Russell said:

The American public I have found ruthless in its demands for variety, and the constant change of programme that was expected proved to be a terrific strain on the organization of the Opera House, and more especially on its finances. The fees paid to well-known artists were exorbitant and very apt to cripple an ordinary production.<sup>202</sup>

During this time, Russell was thinking about establishing an American wing of opera repertoire, which did not happen because of lack of funds and time. In January of 1910 the company went on an extended American tour, the entire company traveling by train, including the star singers. The first stop was Pittsburgh, on January 3, 1911, and subsequently the company performed in Cincinnati; Indianapolis; Chicago; St. Louis; Springfield, Massachusetts; Providence; and New Haven.<sup>203</sup>

*Samson et Dalila* by Camille Saint-Saëns opened the third season. This season had the same characteristics as the second, with Russell trying to figure out what to show the public. The price wars, so prevalent during the second season, had faded into the background, and the opera company was surviving, even thriving by this time. The public had started to appreciate the art of the company and its performances.

---

<sup>201</sup> John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 363.

<sup>202</sup> Russell, *The Passing Show*, 181.

<sup>203</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 74-76.

By the fourth season, opened by Jacques Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffman*, the standards of performance had risen to unprecedented levels, and the public was responding enthusiastically. Money had become less of an issue because of the public's increasing interest in the new productions and musical ability of the performers. Even though Jordan's subsidies had faded into the background, the opera company was surviving in this environment. Jordan was still keenly involved, however, and made sure to keep supporting the organization. He was not going to allow it to fail at this point.

*I Gioielli della Madonna*, by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari, opened the fifth and final season and was well received by the press. Henry Russell had decided the company was to go on a major tour to Paris, to show Europe what was being produced in Boston and to introduce Parisian audiences to the original language of the operas. This tour, coupled with World War I, would become the downfall of the opera company. At this time, though, Boston had definite plans for a sixth season with possible operas including Modest Mussogsky's *Boris Godunov*, Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Francesca da Rimini*, and Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*.<sup>204</sup>

During the time the opera company was in existence, it performed many works of the operatic repertoire, both large and small. The large works included such staples as Verdi's *Äida*, *Trovatore*, *Rigoletto*, and *La Traviata*; Rossini's *Il Barbieri di Seviglia*; Puccini's *La Bohème*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Tosca* (although this was almost banned); Bizet's *Carmen*; Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*; Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*; Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*; Mozart's *Don Giovanni*; and Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parsifal*, and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. There were also smaller operas as well—Louis Aubert's *La Forêt Bleue*; Bizet's *Djamileh*; and Flotow's

---

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 253.

*Martha*. Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* was one of the few German operas beside Wagner's regularly performed by the Boston Opera Company.

On February 12, 1912, Richard Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* was performed, the first time a Wagnerian music drama, as distinct from the "Romantic opera" *Lohengrin* had been staged at the Boston Opera, and it was a special and unique performance, being sung in the original language. Some opera companies at this time were still translating foreign opera into the local language, and Boston was trying to be as true to the original composition as possible. French and Italian repertoire dominated the company, which, considering the Italian demographic and Boston's emphasis on French opera, made sense.

The 1911-1912 season included eleven operas by French composers, including *Pelléas et Mélisande* by Claude Debussy, with its libretto by the playwright Count Maurice Maeterlinck, who was a great friend of Henry Russell as they were neighbors in France. It deserves special mention because of the uniqueness of the performance and problems it encountered in Boston.<sup>205</sup>

The performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* was a major undertaking that showed, in part, the limits of opera in Boston. In January of 1912, after forty-seven rehearsals, the opera was performed. The Boston public had seen this opera before; Oscar Hammerstein's company had come up from New York to perform it at various times during the preceding years. This production would be different because of the vast resources poured into it: \$30,000 was spent on the production, a huge sum for the day, and even with a full house it would not break even. Also, Georgette Leblanc Maeterlinck (figure 8.3), the purported wife of the playwright (as was generally assumed at the time) was to sing the lead role, a coup for Henry Russell. In reality, she was Maeterlinck's

---

<sup>205</sup> Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall*, 82.

mistress. Maurice Maeterlinck had fought with Debussy over who was to sing the



Figure 8.3. Georgette Leblanc.

première, as Maeterlinck wanted Leblanc to sing it, and it was originally promised to her. Debussy, after hearing the Scottish singer Mary Garden, changed his mind and decided that Garden was to première the work, not Leblanc. This caused Maeterlinck to skip the premiere and not see the opera until 1920.

Even with the vast resources poured into the production and the famous singer, tickets were not selling, and the opera had to be postponed a week. To avoid a huge loss, Henry Russell had to fill the house. As he says, “Apart from my dread of giving a new opera to half-empty houses, the cost of the production was so great that I feared the prospect of a heavy financial loss.”<sup>206</sup>

Russell devised a plan: he would tell the public that Maurice Maeterlinck was coming to the première. There was of course no truth

to this, as Maeterlinck never left his home in St. Wandrille, but it caused a sensation.

People were speculating among themselves as to whether or not Maeterlinck would come. Of course, Russell had to create the impression that Maeterlinck was arriving, so

<sup>206</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 131.



he even set up a hotel room under an alias, made up a story about talking to Maeterlinck's wife about the premiere, and hired an actor and sent out a coach to complete the effect.

Russell's gamble paid off, and the take for opening night was \$5,000. The program book for the night contained instructions on when to arrive, how to behave, when to clap, and other instructions in etiquette. The press dubbed them "solemnities" of the performance. The ensuing performance revenues fell to \$200.<sup>207</sup> Russell got his large opening performance, but strains in the opera community were already apparent.

The reviews from the newspapers were favorable. The *Boston Daily Globe*, in a review of the final rehearsal, said:

The stage pictures attracted great admiration for their beauty of design and for their complete sympathy with the subject and character of the drama. The shifting of the elaborate pieces of stage setting between the scenes of the acts was made promptly and with almost entire elimination of any intrusion of noise upon the orchestral entrances proving the equipment of rubber tired wheels upon the movable platforms to be a success.

The performance of Mme. Maeterlinck was viewed with interest after the large expectations which have been aroused of her, as was that of Vanni Marcoux, the new bass, who as Golaud will make his first appearance in America tonight.<sup>208</sup>

As Philip Hale wrote about the opera, "[it was] a strange manifestation of poetic individuality in a grossly material and commercial age."<sup>209</sup> Tricks and gimmicks to fill seats did not bode well for the future of the opera company.

The lack of public interest in the opera, combined with the deteriorating financial picture, was an ominous sign. Henry Russell had to continue to fight for the company and thought of various ways to counter this malaise that had set upon the opera.

Russell's grandest idea, a trip to Paris to show the international community the Boston

---

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>208</sup> "Final Rehearsal at the Boston Opera House" *Boston Daily Globe*, January 10, 1912.

<sup>209</sup> Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall*, 83.

Opera Company just before World War I, would prove to be the final defeat for this organization.

### The French Trip

This artistic adventure was to be a joint venture by the Royal Opera House,

Covent Garden, and The Boston Opera Company. As Russell said, “Harry Higgins, the director of Covent Garden, came to Boston during what proved to be my last season . . . We discussed the project of an International Operatic Trust, and both agreed that Paris should be made the centre of such a scheme.”<sup>210</sup>



Figure 8.4. Otto Kahn.

This in turn led Henry Russell and Harry Higgins to arrange a joint venture to set up such a trust. It was

made up of Baron Frédéric d’Erlanger, a millionaire composer; the Marquess of Ripon, representing the Royal Opera of Covent Garden; Eben D. Jordan, Jr., representing the Boston Opera Company; Giulio Gatti-Casazza, Otto Kahn (figure 8.4), and Clarence Mackay representing the Metropolitan Opera; and Lord Grimthorpe, Russell’s one-time patron.

According to the *Boston Daily Globe*, “The purpose of the undertaking, Mr. Russell said, was to show the Parisians what real grand opera was and, if it proved

<sup>210</sup> Henry Russell, *The Passing Show* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), 181.

successful, to create in Paris a permanent operatic organization . . . The operas which are to be sung are sure to be Italian and German, and they are to be sung in those languages.”<sup>211</sup> German operas especially could not be performed in Paris in their original languages because special permission was needed from Germany to perform them. Perhaps the most interesting facet of the project, however, is where the musicians came from. Again according to the *Globe*, “Mr. Russell said he expected to have many singers from the Metropolitan Opera House for this international season. . . The chorus, Mr. Russell said, would be recruited from the Boston Opera Company, and would number about 120. . . The orchestra will be recruited in Paris. Mr. Russell will manage the undertaking.”<sup>212</sup>

Principal singers from the Boston Opera Company, and not only the chorus, were to sing at this venture. Besides the singers, the management team of the Boston Opera Company was to travel to Paris as well. The group, called the “Anglo-American,” signed a five-year lease on the new Champs-Élysées Theatre in Paris.

Sir Ernest Cassell, a London banker, subscribed \$15,000 for the project.<sup>213</sup> With the rest of the donations and support, the organization had a total of \$300,000 for the trip, whereas Russell thought \$75,000 would be enough.<sup>214</sup> The proposal for the company was to showcase Italian and German repertoire in their original language, and Wagnerian operas in their entirety, not only in the original language.

This seemed a logical step for the Boston Opera Company, because that is what they had been doing in Boston in regard to performance practice and language treatment.

---

<sup>211</sup> “Tells of plans for the Opera in Paris,” *Boston Daily Globe*, February 11, 1914.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> Quaintance Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1965), 255.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 255-256.

It was said it would be the first time the French would hear these operas in the original language as all operas presented in Paris, regardless of origin, were sung in French.

Russell also organized a women’s committee made up of Princess Murat, the

Duchess d’Aosta, Princess de Polignac, and Mrs. Edgar Stern.<sup>215</sup> It was

common to have women’s committees to organize functions and keep involved with the organization.

The send-off of the company (figure 8.5) on March 30, 1914, was a fantastic celebration as a large crowd came forth to see the singers off. The *Boston Daily Globe’s* account of the departure described the atmosphere:



Figure 8.5. Send-off of the Boston Opera Company to Paris.

Five thousand people jammed the outer shed of the Lyland Line Wharf at East Boston yesterday noon for the purpose of waving a jovial au revoir to the Boston Opera Company, en route to Paris . . . The crowd was so enthusiastic and the demonstration was so complete a success that one of the directors of the opera company observed dryly: ‘The only thing to be sorry for at all is that the company need go away at all!’ He added that the advance sales for next season promise another story a year hence.<sup>216</sup>

### Anglo-American Grand Opera Company

The new company, to be known as the Anglo-American Grand Opera Company, was to open April 25 and continue till June 30. Italo Montemezzi’s *L’Amore dei Tre*

<sup>215</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 256.

<sup>216</sup> “Big Crush at Sendoff of Singers for Paris,” *Boston Daily Globe*, March 30, 1914.

Rewas to open the season, and Pierre Monteux's Paris orchestra was employed by the company to perform the operas with various conductors on the podium.<sup>217</sup>

Indeed, the company did quite well and the reviews were fantastic. As the *New York Times* reported in 1914:

The success of the Boston Opera Company, under Henry Russell, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées has exceeded all expectations. Despite the competition of the Opéra and the Opéra Comique, the Paris public is showing sincere appreciation of the effort to give it something new and different—Opera in the original language of the libretti—with far better artists than are usually heard in Paris, and with scenery and stage management that are a revelation, for, although the French acting standard is extremely high, the scenery and stage methods at best may be characterized as sloppy.<sup>218</sup>

The performances were not without some controversy. André Messager, a conductor with the National Opéra, was in opposition to Henry Russell and the entire organization because he was supposed to go to Boston in 1915 to conduct French repertoire. The deal fell through because the Boston company would not engage one of his star singers, Andrée Valley, at the Opéra, and Messager was furious that she was not engaged. He decided to oppose the opera company at every turn while they were in Paris.<sup>219</sup>

The Opéra Comique was also in serious objection to the Anglo-American Opera Company. The American Company was going to perform Puccini's *La Bohème* and the Comique objected to its performance. The American Company was so successful and popular that the Comique was worried about their productions. A deal was struck, though, between all the parties and *La Bohème* was performed in June of 1914.<sup>220</sup>

---

<sup>217</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*. April 12, 1914.

<sup>218</sup> *New York Times*, May 3, 1914.

<sup>219</sup> "Rivalry in Paris Opera," *New York Times*, June 7, 1914.

<sup>220</sup> "Opera War Averted," *Boston Daily Globe*, May 24, 1914.

The performances were very popular in Paris, as can be seen, but there was also some disdain by some native companies. Most of the performances were very well attended, both by Americans and the French populace. This lasted until the start of the World War I, in late July-early August of 1914. This war would change the entire musical landscape in the United States. After WWI, Germans were no longer entrusted with orchestras or opera companies.

### The War To End All Wars

The Great War, as it was known, was the largest military conflict in modern human history to that point. The war led to European artists' having a very difficult time travelling to America, because of the dangers of crossing the Atlantic. German U-boats were prowling the Atlantic, ready to sink a ship at a moment's notice. Unfortunately, these very Europeans were essential to American opera survival.

The United States had few places to offer apprentice singers where they could practice their craft after finishing their formal studies. Even the Boston Opera Company's School was in existence for only five years, hardly enough time to train a generation of singers. The major European capitals were the only place for this. Besides, most of the major singers of this time were European as well. It was only with the establishment of the Tanglewood Music Center in 1940 by Serge Koussevitzky that the situation in America would be remedied.<sup>221</sup>

The war also affected Paris in substantial ways, making a return of the Anglo-American Opera Company (had it survived) extremely unlikely. Even before the first bomb was dropped, on August 30, 1914, a mass exodus had begun at the beginning of August. By September of that year, approximately 700,000 civilians had fled Paris. The

---

<sup>221</sup> Peggy Daniel, *Tanglewood: A Group Memoir* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2008), 91.

entire government and civil service had fled to Bordeaux, to avoid a repeat of the siege of Paris of 1870-1871.<sup>222</sup>

Just before the start of the war, Henry Russell was supposed to receive an award from the German Kaiser for the Wagner performances in Paris, because of their cultural significance to Germany and their stunning popularity. Russell also knew Baron von Schön, who entertained conductors and singers alike. Because of these associations, Russell was labeled a German spy; this was untrue of course, but it would only subside with British protection, as he was at the French Riviera on vacation when war broke out and was not an American citizen. This circumstance made it impossible for him to return to America or do anything with the company.

---

<sup>222</sup> Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War: Explaining World War I* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 186.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FAILURE OF THE BOSTON OPERA COMPANY

Even in the first season, five years earlier, people were concerned about the opera company. Russell was constantly fighting against the malaise of the Boston audience, as explained before. He was always worried that Boston would see the opera as routine, which is why he was perpetually showing opera in a grand style, with large sets, expensive costumes, and large ensemble pieces. He was also trying new things, including ruses, to keep selling tickets.

Subscribers' seats were already paid for, of course, but the fringe seats of the opera house would not sell. The higher seats in the house were also often empty, even though they were not obstructed. This was due to Russell's fear of the public's lacking interest. If an opera was to be repeated in a season, as often has to happen in opera, people were heard to ask, "Do we have to hear this opera a third time?"<sup>223</sup>

There was also a scandal involving a magazine during the opera's existence. A Mr. Kahn (his first name is never identified) had worked for the opera as a spokesman and was dismissed by Russell for poor job performance. In 1913 *The National Music Weekly* was published in Boston for four issues. All four issues blasted the Boston Opera Company for its bad policies and procedures, most notably singling out Henry Russell. Russell sued the editor, Philip L. Kahn, the brother of Mr. Kahn, for defamation and won in court. According to the *New York Times*, "The trial ended abruptly. The defense offered no evidence and the court instructed the jury to return a verdict of guilty."<sup>224</sup>The

---

<sup>223</sup> Quaintance Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1965), 52.

<sup>224</sup> "Russell's Foe Guilty," *New York Times*, March 15, 1913.



magazine, which was full of stories of mismanagement and kickbacks for the singers and general disarray of the house, was shut down.<sup>225</sup>

The purpose of the magazine was really to retaliate at Russell for the firing. The magazine did say, “While it is fairly questionable whether or not the Boston Opera House added to Boston’s renown as an art center, it is undeniable that it has caused more scandalous gossip than any other art institution, even with a ten-fold longer existence.”<sup>226</sup> This of course was the editors’ biased opinion, and even though it caused the general public to talk about the opera, the damage to the company itself was fairly superficial as the courts found in favor of Russell. It did, however, show that the opera company had its detractors and was not immune to these forces.

During the 1913-1914 season, Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* was produced, taking many resources of time and money. The same could be said for the *Pelléas et Mélisande* of the previous season. These huge operas, of course necessary for the company, were being performed and staged at intervals too close for the budget to absorb. During the first three years, this was not a problem, as Eben Jordan covered the deficits. After this time, new revenue streams had to be found and, if they were not, the company would be in major financial trouble.

Boston Opera had actively pursued a middle-class audience. This idea was a noble one because it increased the audience, but only the wealthy patrons could support the enterprise with the large monetary gifts to keep it afloat. The lack of enough standing-room hampered the opera house as well; standing room rush tickets could not be

---

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>226</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 224.

sold in large numbers. This would have an impact on the university students and others who wanted to see opera cheaply, but could not.

In addition, the opera did not have a permanent conductor, which created a problem for the company. Russell did not like “prima donna” conductors, so he refused to hire one.<sup>227</sup> He instead had various conductors come in to conduct each opera, with two staff conductors as well. This meant there was no one person to take responsibility for

the players and demand uniform standards. Another major problem was that the operas did not change season to season as much as they should have, with too many repeats. The company could not afford the production costs of ever-new operas every season.

When the opera company fell on hard times, many wealthy Bostonians were approached to help fund the company, including Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840-1924, figure 9.1). Charles M. Loeffler, a member of the opera board, pleaded with “Mrs. Jack,” as she was known. She replied to him, “If I had not already yoked my chosen heavy load [her museum] to my shoulders, it would be a joyful thing to be the one to carry this one.”<sup>228</sup> As with everyone, there was a limit to what she could contribute. This did not stop Henry Lee



**Figure 9.1. Isabella Stewart Gardner in her early years.**

---

<sup>227</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 238.

<sup>228</sup> Ralph P. Locke, “Living with Music: Isabella Stewart Gardner,” in *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860*, edited by Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 108.

Higginson, who managed her finances, to beseech her to help with the opera company, as he wrote (original format):

You've been to the opera this week, & have been more or less edified.  
You know the value to us of an opera on a solid & healthy basis. . . .  
Give these folks a chance and some timely help, & we may get an  
*excellent* article.

Give them cold water & we shall help to break down an experiment, which will not be repeated in a hurry—The laborers are earnest & able—Spare the criticisms for the minute s.v.p.—Pray go to that meeting tomorrow at 3 o'clock & *help in your own way*. There are more ways than one, & no quick-witted party (woman) needs hints from a dull-witted party (man) as to the methods.

Bear a hand, Lady.<sup>229</sup>

Even though she might not have been able to give all the money she wanted to, she did “bear a hand” in other ways to support the company; she did have a box in the opera house.

Even though she did like opera, the symphony was her favorite pastime and she paid a high premium for her seats—\$1120.00 for \$12.00 seasonal Symphony concert seats that were auctioned off and she was the winner.

Not even Eben Jordan, Henry Lee Higginson, or Isabella Stewart Gardner could save the opera company after its biggest gamble—the French trip.

### Bankruptcy

Because of the war and the trip to Paris, the Boston Opera Company declared bankruptcy on May 11, 1915, in the United States District Court in Boston, through its treasurer, Charles Hayden. The liabilities of the company were \$215,570.77, and the assets were \$78,900. The creditors were paid with the contracts that had been terminated. Russell alone had \$170,000 dollars worth of artists' contracts himself.<sup>230</sup> Because of

---

<sup>229</sup> Locke, “Living with Music: Isabella Stewart Gardner,” in *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860*, edited by Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr, 109.

<sup>230</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 272.

shoddy record keeping, these contracts were not even known until a full account of the books was made. The original estimate owed to the Metropolitan Opera for various artists' pay was \$1,088.00, whereas the actual amount was \$9,066.79. The musicians' contract was terminated by the "public calamity clause," which was World War I. The musicians fought against this because the calamity was in Europe, but to no avail.<sup>231</sup>

Eben Jordan, Jr., already stung by the poor business practices of the opera management, offered to pay the amount in full, which he did. It is estimated that Jordan invested more than \$1,000,000 of his own money over the period of the opera company's existence.<sup>232</sup> Unlike Higginson, who controlled every aspect of the BSO, Jordan was at the mercy of the board of directors. They held the power, and when they decided not to continue the opera company, there was nothing for Jordan to do. Of course, Jordan's carte blanche patronage had ended after the first three years, but he continued to support the opera, though not fund it entirely.

Russell said about the closing:

. . . I received a telegram from Jordan, stating that the directors of the Chicago and Boston Opera Companies had decided that, owing to the serious financial conditions in America, the opera houses could not open the following winter. As America was taking no part in the war, my colleagues and I considered this a most unfair proceeding, both to the artists and everybody concerned . . . I did not in the least blame my friend Jordan. He had personally subscribed over two hundred thousand dollars a year to give Boston opera during six years; and when people said that the Bostonians were not giving adequate support I have seen men shrug their shoulders and laughingly say: 'It is Jordan's baby.' When I think of how little gratitude he received for his undertaking I cannot blame him for joining hands with Chicago and taking the first opportunity of terminating his liability.<sup>233</sup>

Also, according to the *New York Times*:

---

<sup>231</sup> "Joseph A. Conry Named," *Boston Daily Globe*, May 29, 1915.

<sup>232</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 11.

<sup>233</sup> Henry Russell, *The Passing Show* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), 187-188.

Mr. Russell said that the opera in Paris at the Champs Elysées Theatre would have been a big success all summer if the war had not intervened. He thought that it was a pity the Boston and Chicago opera companies had been taken off this season and there might be trouble with some of the artists. The tour of the Metropolitan Opera Company was one of the difficulties in the way of making a successful season for the other two companies, he said.<sup>234</sup>

The opera organization also did not have an endowment to tap should an emergency arise: Jordan was their endowment. He would be dead before he could restart the opera. Jordan died on August 1, 1916, of a stroke.

There was much debate as to the effect the economic conditions of the war on Jordan and the decision to close the opera company. At the time of his death, Jordan was worth \$4,348,853 personally and \$1,220,162 for his real estate.<sup>235</sup> He had paid taxes of \$32,344.20 in 1915 and he was the twenty-first richest entity (individuals and businesses) in Boston during this time.<sup>236</sup> Had he lived, Jordan probably would have been the first one to suggest a new operatic adventure after World War I.

### Financial Considerations

These serious financial considerations that the boards of Chicago and Boston worried about are also puzzling, as the stock market was growing exponentially at this time. From August through the first half of December 1914, the stock market in the United States was closed because of the war (partially opening for war bond trading in mid-November). Once it opened fully again, it grew rapidly because of the increase in industrial production (see stock market chart in appendix). The opera did not fail until May of 1915, so there is more to the failure than a purely economic argument.

---

<sup>234</sup> “Henry Russell Returns,” *New York Times*, November 28, 1914.

<sup>235</sup> “Eben D. Jordan’s Estate,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 10, 1917.

<sup>236</sup> “Here are Boston’s Big Taxpayers,” *The Boston Daily Globe*, April 7, 1916.

Eben Jordan, just before the opera company foundered, offered to rebate the cost of rent of the opera house, worth \$60,000 to the Boston Opera Company. Also, boxholders would be asked to contribute \$90,000 and the general public was asked for \$150,000. This would be used for the next three years as an operating budget. A combined amount of around \$190,000 was raised during this time but, curiously enough, the money was never used.<sup>237</sup>

When news reached the Boston public of the Opera Company's immediate demise, Mayor John G. Fitzgerald tried to make the opera company a non-profit so it would not have to pay taxes. A Boston legislator also introduced a bill to provide money for the city's purchase of the opera house. Neither bill went anywhere. Most legislators thought it taboo for the state to support opera, as it would set a "dangerous precedent."<sup>238</sup> Some wealthy patrons did come together to try to keep the opera house running, but these efforts were also very much in vain.

Anti-German sentiment, was another major problem for music cultural organizations. This was especially true for such a new organization as the Boston Opera Company, which relied on some Austro-German repertoire and had many musicians and important artists who were of Germanic or Austrian heritage.

Another reason for the collapse of both the Boston and Chicago opera companies, and this probably was the largest, was the fact that singers from Europe now had an increasingly hard time getting to the United States. Although it had a fairly large opera-training program, the United States did not have the resources necessary to share singers among the three opera houses of the partnership. It was therefore decided to sacrifice

---

<sup>237</sup> John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 369.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*

both Boston and Chicago to preserve the Metropolitan Opera House. Otto Kahn would not have his house destroyed because of war. This was the deathblow that money could not remedy: singers could only be brought over by boat, and the going was treacherous, with U-Boat attacks, such as the sinking of the RMS Lusitania, and war restrictions. Boston and Chicago were cut off from the Metropolitan's supply of singers. There were enough singers for one company only.

This left the Opera House itself with an uncertain future; it now had no resident opera company to occupy it. Already in late 1915, Max Rabinoff (1877-1966), who had helped organize the Chicago Opera Company, wanted to bring opera back to Boston, but his company quickly failed as well. The company was to have been called the Boston Grand Opera Company, allied with the Pavlova Ballet Russe.<sup>239</sup> The company was to have a season of between eight to ten weeks performing in the Boston Opera House.

Max Rabinoff said:

When I set about acquiring the property of the Boston Opera Company and determined to reassemble the finest principals, artistic heads and orchestral and chorus units, it was only after I had made an investigation and a discovery. The latter was that, while Boston had unquestionably indicated its unpreparedness to support an 18 weeks' season of opera, it had no less demonstrated its willingness to patronize adequately one of eight to ten weeks.

Possession of these facts instantly created the thought that if enough other communities were similarly interested in shorter seasons, arrangements might be made to reestablish the former Boston Opera organization, and make a permanent institution, serving musical centers other than its own and, in a manner, involving no hardship on any single city. Beside, it seemed to me that it was some one's duty to preserve intact the admirable physical equipment of the Boston institution.<sup>240</sup>

---

<sup>239</sup> "Many Cities to Hear Boston Grand Opera," *Boston Daily Globe*, September 8, 1915.

<sup>240</sup> Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History*, 369.

The City of Boston Hotel Association threw its support behind this latest opera adventure, but to no avail. The new company, after only two short years, went bankrupt as well (see appendix C for repertoire list). This left the Boston Opera House with an uncertain future as it now had no full-time organization occupying it.



## CHAPTER X

### THE FATE OF THE BOSTON OPERA HOUSE

In 1918 the Opera House was purchased for close to \$1 million by the Shubert organization of New York City, which it owned until 1957.<sup>241</sup> J.J. Shubert liked the design of the house, the detail of its furnishings, the marble floor in the lobby, the massive chandelier, and other aspects of the building.<sup>242</sup>

Various Chicago operatic ventures (Chicago had many companies before the formation of the Lyric Opera in 1954) and the Metropolitan Opera annually visited Boston, selling out in most cases up until the late 1940s.<sup>243</sup> The house also hosted a variety of different shows, including ballets and musical comedies, until its demise. The Shuberts did renovate the Opera House slightly over the years. The first-tier boxes were renovated and converted to seats called the “Grand Circle.”

The opera house was damaged, slightly, when the Boston Storage Warehouse was being built next-door in 1913. When the piles were being driven for the foundation, a crack in the foundation of the opera house formed. The buildings were almost touching so it was a very difficult building project. The crack in the Opera House's foundation was about ten feet above the ground and ran for about thirty feet. The National Fireproofing Co. patched the damage very quickly, as it had been the company driving the piles.<sup>244</sup>

---

<sup>241</sup> Karyl Lynn Zietz, *The National Trust Guide to Great Opera Houses in America* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1996), 187.

<sup>242</sup> “When ‘the best temple of music’ graced Boston,” *The Boston Herald American*, March 27, 1977.

<sup>243</sup> Harlow Robinson, “Operatic Intrigue: The Comic, Tragic, True Tale of Opera on Huntington Avenue,” *Northeastern University Magazine*, [www.northeastern.edu/magazine/9911/opera.html](http://www.northeastern.edu/magazine/9911/opera.html) (accessed June 21, 2009).

<sup>244</sup> George W. Harvey, Letter to Messrs. Haven & Hoyt, October 8, 1913.

This is the only damage to the Opera House during its early existence while the Boston Opera Company was in residence.

The building itself had defects from its opening, including a water problem in the basement. In a letter dated December 27, 1909, the consultants Hollis French and Allen Hubbard write:

The present steam sump pump in the boiler room now easily keeps the water pumped out of the stage sump in addition to pumping out the water which collects in the boiler room sump. The fireman in the boiler room is notified when to pump out the stage sump by the ringing of an electric bell in the boiler room, the electric contact being made by means of a float in the stage sump.

The stage sump fills up at least once per day, and when steam is not up in the boilers in the summer the boiler room sump pump would not be available for pumping out the stage sump. We have suggested that in case the stage sump continues to fill up rapidly every day and in case quite a number of breaks occur in the waterproofing during the winter, it would be well to install an electric sump pump for the stage sump and to connect it with the Edison Service. Of course, if only a small amount of water collects when steam is down in the boilers, what water does collect could be pumped out by means of a lever force pump worked by hand.<sup>245</sup>

This constant wear-and-tear in the basement did lead to water damage of the foundation, which is where most of the renovation money would have had to go to correct the defects. The Shuberts should have known about this water problem and dealt with it accordingly throughout the years, but they did not.

According to the *New York Times* at the time of the Opera House's impending demolition, "the building's foundation, which goes deep into filled watery land, and the steel framework [was] in poor condition."<sup>246</sup> This led the Boston Building Department to announce on August 30, 1957, that the building was unsafe and the Shuberts were

---

<sup>245</sup> Hollis French and Allen Hubbard, Letter to Messrs. Wheelwright & Haven, December 27, 1909.

<sup>246</sup> "Boston Opera is Sold to Parking-Lot Firm," *New York Times*, September 5, 1957.

ordered to renovate the Opera House to make it structurally sound.<sup>247</sup> It has never been determined as to how badly the building was falling apart; whether it was just façade damage or actually structural damage.<sup>248</sup> Photos of the opera house just before its demolition show a structure that while weathered, looked to be structurally sound.

If bricks and masonry were falling off the structure, as was reported, then certainly not in large quantities, because the general public would have been much more suspicious of the building itself. By all accounts the operatic community in Boston still very much needed the building for their performances.

#### Demolition of the opera house

The Shubert organization was unwilling to foot the approximately \$300,000 dollar bill to correct the structural defects. They wanted the City of Boston to purchase the building. The city, however, was focused on getting the Prudential Center built (figure 10.1). The city put a multi-use hall into the design of the center in order to hold concerts, which the city found to be an acceptable solution. It is today's Veterans Memorial Hall in the Hynes Convention Center.<sup>249</sup> It did not matter that the building was (and still is) in no way, shape, or form suitable for staging an opera. The Metropolitan Opera did tour there and found the building to be quite unsuitable.

Historical building preservation was not yet an accepted tenet of city planners; they thought new was better. With the city unwilling to buy the structure, the Shuberts sold it on September 4, 1957, for \$135,000 to the S. and A. Allen Construction Company, a firm that specialized in auto parking lots and garages. The Allen Construction

---

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Zietz, *The National Trust Guide to Great Opera Houses in America*, 187.

<sup>249</sup> Harlow Robinson, "Operatic Intrigue: The Comic, Tragic, True Tale of Opera on Huntington Avenue," *Northeastern University Magazine*, [www.northeastern.edu/magazine/9911/opera.html](http://www.northeastern.edu/magazine/9911/opera.html) (accessed June 21, 2009).



**Figure 10.1 Original Plan of the Prudential Center in the late 1950s.**

Company claimed, though, that it had not yet been decided if the opera house would be demolished for a parking lot at the time of the sale.<sup>250</sup>

The president of Northeastern University, Dr. Carl S. Ell, decided to purchase the building from the Allen Construction Company and build a women’s dormitory in its place. He had been looking at ways to fix the chronic overcrowding of Northeastern and this seemed to be a perfect solution to his problem. On September 25, 1957, the Opera House was sold to Northeastern for \$160,000 and torn down in the summer of 1958.<sup>251</sup>

Various protests by the Boston opera community to stop the demolition, including a sit-in, did succeed in postponing the demolition temporarily. The demolition company, however, had a larger wrecking ball brought in and this was enough to force the artists to “lay down their swords” and accept the inevitable demolition of the house.

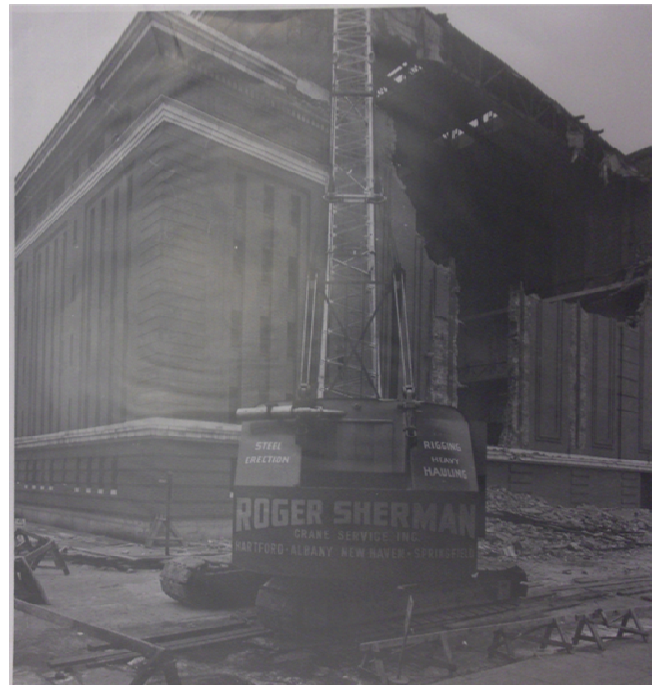
<sup>250</sup> “Boston Opera is Sold to Parking-Lot Firm” *New York Times*, September 5, 1957.

<sup>251</sup> Robinson, “Operatic Intrigue: The Comic, Tragic, True Tale of Opera on Huntington Avenue.”

When the demolition did start (figure 10.2), the construction workers were amazed at the structural integrity of the building. One worker said, “She’s a first-class building. One of the toughest jobs we’ve ever tackled—all steel and concrete inside and completely fireproof.”<sup>252</sup>

As mentioned above, the foundation was cited as being one of the main reasons for the demolition of the opera house. The foundation, however, could not have been severely compromised because the dormitory that was built on the opera house plot, Speare Hall, uses portions of the opera house in its design below ground and as a retaining wall. As stated in a letter on July 17, 1958, between the Boston Building Department and Maurice A. Reidy about the opera house foundation, “The demolition of this structure for Northeastern University is substantially complete. We have made copies of certain of these drawings which pertain to the parts of the Opera House structure left below ground level.”<sup>253</sup>

As Cyrus Durgin, the drama and music editor for the *Boston*



**Figure 10.2**The wrecking ball taking down the Boston Opera House, 1958.

*Globe* during this time, wrote just after the demolition, “Why did this unhappy circumstance come about? All the diverse reasons, I believe, converge into a simple

---

<sup>252</sup> “When ‘the best temple of music’ graced Boston,” *The Boston Herald American*, March 27, 1977.

<sup>253</sup> Maurice A. Reidy, Jr., Letter to Boston Building Department, July 17, 1958.

declaration of fact—just apathy, plain apathy, and, upon the part of certain interests formerly concerned, a complete lack of public responsibility.”<sup>254</sup>Culturally, the Opera House did not have the same amount of following that other important Boston buildings had; it was expendable.

---

<sup>254</sup> Cyrus Durgin, “Boston: Operapathy on-the-Charles,” in *Theatre Arts*, January, 1958, 72.

## CHAPTER XI

### WHY OPERA FAILED IN BOSTON

The failure of the Boston Opera Company was a major cultural blow to the city. This failure was due to many factors; foremost among which was the fact that opera was never able to get ingrained into the city's fabric, like the Red Sox, Museum of Fine Arts, or Boston Symphony Orchestra. These institutions are uniquely Boston and the population recognizes this.

#### Cultural Considerations

Musical life was assured in America only when it proved profitable and awarded prestige, social and otherwise, to its consumers. Since there was no American national tradition, opera in the United States tried to incorporate as much as it could from European operatic traditions.<sup>255</sup> For an institution to become relevant in a city and stay important, four basic steps must be taken in order for the organization to survive:

1. There must be a need for the organization to be created,
2. The person creating this organization then must appeal to the relevant authorities for permission to establish this organization and for funding,
3. The organization must be different from the organizations it was modeled after but still show a similar product,
4. The entrepreneur needs to make sure to market the organization toward the correct demographic.

The Boston Opera Company had a few of these components in place to ensure the success of opera, but it was lacking in some crucial aspects as well. There were misconceptions of the functions of opera, and its relation to the public was never clarified in Boston. This is why Henry Russell had such a hard time making opera interesting to attract an audience.

---

<sup>255</sup> Rosanne Martorella, *The Sociology of Opera* (South Hadley, MA: J.F. Bergin Publishers, Inc., 1982), 41.

The company did have an entrepreneur in Eben Jordan, and he was able to hire an organizational team to make the opera company the best it could be so that it would survive for many years. The primary responsibility for this was laid on the shoulders of Henry Russell. He managed the company as well as he knew how, which, unfortunately



**Figure 11.1. Original list of boxholders and stockholders for the Boston Opera House.**

was not enough to stave off bankruptcy.

Jordan appealed to donors for funding at the beginning of the opera company’s existence, as demonstrated by the extensive list of donors for the opera company to the left (figure 11.1). He was able to get them to commit for a number of years to ensure the survival of the company.

Jordan himself was also able to fund the Boston Opera House and cover many debts of the organization for a limited time.

The audience of opera includes subscribers, those who buy tickets through the box office, and private patrons and other contributors. The selection of repertoire was in response to the demands of the paying public, as they would pay for the operas that they wanted to see. Opera was more dependent on market conditions for its productions than were its symphonic counterparts.<sup>256</sup>

The press reaction to the company during its operating years was generally very favorable. W.J. Henderson, from the *New York Sun*, asked, “Will the new opera in Boston make an inroads to the Boston Symphony loyalty?” Philip Hale of the *Boston Herald* asked:

<sup>256</sup> Martorella, *The Sociology of Opera*, 83.



Will the Boston Symphony Orchestra be as one playing in the wilderness? Is it possible that Symphony Hall will be a desolate house in which wild beasts of the islands shall cry? That owls shall dwell there and satyrs shall dance there; that her time is near and her days shall not be prolonged?<sup>257</sup>

He was mocking Henderson, of course, for he did not truly believe the two companies could not survive in Boston together.

The critic H.T. Parker responded to both Henderson and Hale and said in part that when the Metropolitan visited in 1907-1908 and Hammerstein's company visited in 1909, the Boston Theatre was filled for each performance and it did not detract from the Symphony audience.<sup>258</sup> It was a non-issue that should not even have been brought up; the city was large enough for both performance organizations. Besides, the Symphony at this time had been absorbed into the culture enough to make it unthinkable that anything could happen to it. This was especially true because of the great popularity of the Promenade Concerts (present day Boston Pops), unique to Boston.

Indeed, Major Henry Lee Higginson himself had been on the board of directors of the National Opera Company (originally named the American Opera Company), which was affiliated with Jeannette M. Thurber's National Conservatory of Music in New York City.<sup>259</sup> This opera company did not last long, however, going bankrupt in 1887 because its productions spent too much and took in too little. The fact that Higginson was on the board should prove that he was passionate about all music and not just symphonic. It should also prove that Higginson saw no threat in the opera company: his orchestra was already established and the opera company was offering something different.

---

<sup>257</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 106.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> See appendix A for National Opera Company Directors.



Figure 11.2 William F. Fitzgerald.

The merchants in Boston had almost immediately seen the benefit of having a resident opera company in Boston, especially from the ships that came into the port of Boston, at that time an extremely busy port for travelers and cargo. The opera company was an attraction for people who came to visit Boston. Already by January of 1912, one of the Port Directors, William F. Fitzgerald (figure 11.2), tried to support the Boston Opera Company.

According to the *Boston Daily Globe* of January 6, 1912:

What promises to become one of the strongest movements ever started in Boston is the present plan to arouse a general interest in the performances of the Boston Opera Company and to subsidize the Boston Opera House by enlarging the number of subscriptions in a way that would tax its capacity nightly.<sup>260</sup>

William F. Fitzgerald himself said:

I have met so many expressions of good will on every side and so many offers of practical help that I feel I am not too optimistic in declaring that enough subscriptions to fill the house to capacity next year is already an assured fact. The Boston Opera House means not only an artistic achievement, it is of inestimable value to the city in a commercial sense, and I am glad that the citizens of Boston have fully awakened to the fact. I am not given to over hopeful prophecies, but in my opinion the fight has been won and the Boston Opera House will become a permanent institution. It is no more than right that it should be so, for the public spirit of Mr. Jordan deserves all the possible recognition that Boston can offer.<sup>261</sup>

That the money was certainly there, as can be seen by the efforts of some well-meaning individuals at this early time to make the opera company permanent. It did not materialize, however, when the company was in financial disaster and had to declare bankruptcy.

---

<sup>260</sup> "Plan to Subsidize Boston Opera House," *Boston Daily Globe*, January 6, 1912.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

The Boston Opera Company was different from the European opera companies it was modeled after. At the time, it was reasonable for a few seasons for the opera company to be a novelty for Boston audiences. Instead of changing and becoming part of the city's fabric by seeing what audiences wanted, Boston instead went to Paris for its ill-fated tour. Had the company stayed in Boston and not traveled to Paris, finances would not have been the issue for the demise; the only major issue would have been finding enough singers for the company.

Finally, the demographics that Henry Russell was courting could not keep going to the opera anymore; opera was out of fashion.<sup>262</sup> There was such poor management that when the opera company declared bankruptcy, there was not even an accurate list of who was owed money. Had Boston grown into opera as Boston had grown into symphonic music, opera might have thrived.

Perhaps the sociologist Antoine Hennion has said it best:

Bach was not a "modern composer," author of a "Complete Works," catalogued in the *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis*, before musicology, the record industry, and the modern amateur. One can trace through the nineteenth century the long transformation of what was "music," and how it produced our taste for Bach as a musician, giving him the strange ability of being both the object and the means for our love for music.

The formation of a specific competence, increasingly well defined and self sufficient, that makes us appreciate the works according to a regime of connoisseurship—a format that we stop seeing as we come to belong to it most naturally and intimately . . . . It is the culmination of a transformation of musical taste, not a passive and anachronistic "return to sources." Nothing is more modern than an historical approach to an old repertoire.<sup>263</sup>

---

<sup>262</sup> Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company*, 275.

<sup>263</sup> Antoine Hennion, "Music and Mediation: Toward a New Sociology of Music." In *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*. Ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2003), 85-87.

Indeed, when the Boston Opera Company performed Puccini's *Tosca* in Boston, it nearly got banned; the audience could not believe the sexuality being displayed on stage when Vanni Marcoux, as Scarpia, threw himself upon Mary Garden as Tosca. It prompted Mayor John F. Fitzgerald to say:

Boston is known throughout the country as the home, during a good many months of the year, of hundreds of students at our schools, colleges, and universities, and parents of these students have the right to expect there shall be no performances at the Opera House which would be demoralizing. I think artists who appear at the Opera House can be effective without offending public taste!<sup>264</sup>

The next night, the mayor's lawyer, Francis M. Carroll, was at the performance as was a representative of the police commissioner.<sup>265</sup> Boston probably would be the only major metropolitan city where this could have happened, certainly not in New York. Even *Salome* was allowed to be performed at Oscar Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera House and was given one performance at the Metropolitan before being banned. It was not even considered in Boston. Audiences in the city though were still very close-minded in their views on music.

German immigrants had their important composers, such as Beethoven, Bach, and Wagner. These composers were safe in the United States, but with the severe Anti-German sentiment during and after World War I, other elements of Germanic culture would not be so lucky.

It was even more important for musical organizations in the city, and the United States, to associate themselves with Anglo-Franco or Italian elements to protect themselves. As Henry Pleasants writes:

This time factor [World War I] is essential to the critical comprehension of what happened to serious music. Technical exhaustion coincided with sociological

---

<sup>264</sup> Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall*, 82.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

obsolescence and an aesthetic decay. All coincided with the ultimate agony of the nineteenth century on the battlefield of Europe in the First World War . . . .One of the singularities of world civilization no longer European is the habit of its intellectuals to think of culture in European terms. As though culture were somehow exclusively synonymous with European accomplishments and tastes in music, painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature.<sup>266</sup>

The United States during this time was a country full of immigrants, as shown previously. The 1910 census revealed that 32 million Americans, a full third of the nation, lived in immigrant families. In the Northeast, Midwest, and West, these formed majorities.<sup>267</sup> Facts such as these caused major political leaders, Theodore Roosevelt among them, to think that the United States needed a war to democratize these new immigrants. As Roosevelt said, “The military tent where they all sleep side by side will rank next to the public school among the great agents of democratization.”<sup>268</sup>

This did not bode well for The Boston Opera Company, as it was started right at the end of the old world order in Europe, which was centered around the Austro-Hungarian Empire, German Empire, Italy, and French musical traditions, with the Austro-Hungarian and German empires coming to an end after World War I. Out of this war, the United States emerged as a true superpower on the world stage. Unfortunately for the Boston Opera Company, the country did not have opera deeply seeded in its culture as the old world countries did.

Opera in Chicago and New York survived because of their large German immigrant populations. New York of course was a large immigrant center because of it being the center of finance, manufacturing, and business. Chicago was a large center for rail, where the country’s cattle and pigs were brought for slaughter from the Midwest

---

<sup>266</sup> Martorella, *The Sociology of Opera*, 41.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*

farms. These in turn lured German immigrants to Chicago to work in the slaughterhouses, where they could find steady jobs.

In this old world order opera was a medium in which either royalty or the common folk could enjoy an evening's entertainment; they understood the language, and it was funded by royalty at first and then federal governments later on. In Boston, this was not the case, which was a problem. The opera was run by and for people with the monetary funds to keep the opera afloat—the vast majority of whom spoke only English.

When people came to the opera, they came to watch a spectacle. If you could not understand something, why go to it day after day, year after year? It becomes redundant because there is only so much you can do to make an opera appealing visually; at some point you need to be able to understand the story. Libretto booklets are fine for reading material in the lobby, but they are very hard to read inside during an actual performance.

With the native population not able to understand, after a while, they decided not to come anymore. As the critic Henry Krehbiel wrote in 1909, “[opera will remain experimental until] the vernacular becomes the language of the performances and native talent provides both works and interpreters. The day is still far distant, but it will come.”<sup>269</sup> That day, in Boston at least, has not come yet. Boston's view of music and its proper place in the culture has to grow to encompass all musical forms, and not just symphonic ones.

---

<sup>269</sup> Horowitz, *The Post-Classical Predicament* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995), 45.

## CHAPTER XII

### OPERA IN BOSTON POST WORLD WAR II

In the years after the Boston Opera Company, many attempted to bring a permanent opera company back to Boston. As we saw with Max Rabinoff and the Boston Grand Opera Company, a resurrection was attempted soon after the failure of the Boston Opera Company. Unfortunately, it was not able to establish roots and survive in the Boston Opera House.

#### Opera Company of Boston

The most distinguished company of opera in Boston after the initial Boston Opera Company was Sarah Caldwell's Opera Company of Boston. It was founded in 1957 as the Boston Opera Group and just missed the chance to move into the Boston Opera House. The composer Igor Stravinsky agreed to be the honorary chairman of the board, as Caldwell had a cordial relationship with him. He had conducted his *Rake's Progress* at the Boston University Opera Institute at Caldwell's invitation.

Sarah Caldwell (1924-2006) was born on March 6, 1924, in Maryville, Missouri. She was a violinist and won a scholarship to the New England Conservatory to start school in the fall of 1942. In 1946, she won a scholarship to the Tanglewood Music Center, in Lenox, Massachusetts to study with Boris Goldovsky. This opened her eyes to the opera world and planted the seed for her future career. In 1947, she presented Ralph Vaughan Williams *Riders to the Sea*, which thoroughly impressed Serge Koussevitzky, who was music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the time. This led to her appointment on the faculty of Tanglewood in 1948. Boston University soon recruited her to run their opera program in 1951, which she did until 1960 and the new opera company gained her attention full-time.

Caldwell had large goals when the company was created. She said the company was to be:

[A]n opera company that would present operatic productions of the highest level. We wanted our productions to have meaning for today, for tomorrow, and for yesterday. Our aim was to establish a permanent professional company of first-rank singers, instrumentalists, designers, directors, conductors, managers, composers, and librettists, and to provide them with an artistic climate in which they would have the opportunity to achieve their highest potential.<sup>270</sup>

One of the founders, Linda Cabot Black, of the Boston Cabots, initially helped to raise money for the venture. Black was able to call on her friends to help fund the first production of the company, Jacques Offenbach's, *Le Voyage dans la Lune* at the 1958 Boston Arts Festival, held at the Boston Public Garden. There was a committee of businessmen who meet weekly to discuss the finances of the Opera Company and what could be done to keep it solvent.

The performance of the Offenbach was such a success that the Company was sent on a tour of the United States in 1959, which was successful artistically, but not financially. The tour ended up losing money. As Caldwell explained, "We were yet to learn that even if we had not reached the financial goal we had set for ourselves, we should begin to perform; otherwise the interest that we had carefully generated would be dissipated."<sup>271</sup> This attitude toward fundraising would eventually be the Company's downfall. She would put on productions even when the Company had no money.

---

<sup>270</sup> Sarah Caldwell, *Challenges: A Memoir of My Life in Opera*, with Rebecca Matlock (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 16-17.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.



The members of the orchestra were musicians with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the chorus was hand-selected by Caldwell; most had been students of hers at Boston University when she taught there.<sup>272</sup>

Caldwell herself was a student of Boris Goldovsky, who taught at the New England Conservatory and as we have seen, was instrumental in keeping opera alive in Boston after the death of the Boston Opera Company. Caldwell's company was wildly successful for a time and presented many important American premières, especially the American première of Arnold Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* in 1966.

Caldwell's company performed in venues all over Boston, as there was now no permanent place for opera. Their first season was spent in the Little Opera House, a small theater seating 500, located in the larger Back Bay Theater. It was finally decided that the Company would rent the Back Bay Theater (later known as the Donnelly) located on Massachusetts Avenue, a couple of blocks from Symphony Hall. The new theater opened with a performance of Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème* on January 29, 1959<sup>273</sup>. The theater sat 2,500, a vast improvement over the Little Opera House.

Caldwell presented many important operas here, including, in 1965, the American première of Modest Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* in its original version, rather than the one used by most opera companies, arranged by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. It was a revelatory performance for all involved. This was the year the name of the company was changed to the Opera Company of Boston.

In 1968, the Back Bay Theater was torn down, leaving the Company again without a permanent home. It was decided that the Company would use the smaller

---

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 16.



Figure 12.1. The Orpheum Theater today.

Shubert Theater for a short time, until a larger venue could be found. The Shubert seated half the number of the old Back Bay Theater, severely limiting the amount of money that could be raised from performances. The fact that the Shubert was unionized as well hurt the finances of the Company. It was decided to leave the Shubert after the 1969 season and search for a new venue.<sup>274</sup>

The company would travel from space to space (even using college gymnasiums), until 1972, when the Orpheum Theater (figure 12.1) became available. The Company stayed at the Orpheum until the end of 1978. In the Orpheum, the Company presented many operas, including a complete performance of Hector Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, in 1972. It is a massive opera that takes vast resources, and this was the first complete American performance. Caldwell's company got excellent reviews for the performance. Other operas presented included Verdi's *Don Carlos* in 1973, Prokofiev's *War and Peace* in 1974, Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* in 1975, and Mikhail Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla* in 1977.

In 1974, Linda Cabot Black was instrumental in securing funding for Opera New England, the "touring arm" of the Opera Company of Boston. The main purpose of the organization was to tour, presenting opera all over New England in small cities who would otherwise not hear opera. Black said about the new company:

---

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 55.

I was the obvious target in Southwestern, Connecticut. Betty Hale was in Northeastern, Connecticut; Henry Picking was in Portland, Maine. So, in 1974, the fall was the first season of Opera New England. It consisted of [Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*]. She always had a children's opera. In the spring of 1975 she did [Mozart's] *Così fan tutte*.

I was responsible for presenting a whole season of opera. It was very hard, by definition, [Connecticut] is a fragmented culture. Every little town is its only little kingdom. Very hard. I was really up against it. The second year, I moved the operation to the University of Bridgeport.<sup>275</sup>

Caldwell liked the idea because it meant she could extend the season of her opera company, bringing in more money for the Opera Company of Boston. Indeed, eventually Opera New England would be subsidizing the main company, causing a split in 1988.<sup>276</sup> The Company eventually merged with the Boston Lyric Opera.

Governor Michael Dukakis knew that he had to keep Sarah Caldwell in Boston; she was too important to let leave. By the late 1970s, he wanted the state to build an opera house for her (Columbus Point, next to the University of Massachusetts, Boston was considered). The Commonwealth dithered on the proposal (eventually the legislature never voted on the bill) and Caldwell's board decided to act. On October 19, 1978, it was announced that a down payment of \$285,000 was put down on the B.F. Keith Memorial Theater (figure 12.2).<sup>277</sup> Caldwell was delighted to have her own theater, one in which she could put on her productions and start the opera school she always wanted.

The Company was always short of money and this caused donors, state, and federal agencies to be hesitant to fund it because of Caldwell's poor financial-management skills. There are stories of how wads of bills and even uncashed checks were found beneath seats, sofa cushions, or in her car. This caused her Company to earn

---

<sup>275</sup> Linda Cabot Black, Phone interview, April 15, 2010.

<sup>276</sup> Daniel Kessler, *Sarah Caldwell: The First Woman of Opera* (Toronto: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2008), 115.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 142-143.

a reputation as a debt-ridden institution, which hurt fundraising and, in turn, finances even more.<sup>278</sup>

The opera company was able to make the “new” Opera House work for many years. But, the theater needed extensive renovations. It would have been almost impossible to raise the millions of dollars that were needed for them. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts promised to issue bonds in 1988 so that the City of Boston could buy the Opera House. The agreement negotiated was that the Opera Company of Boston would present opera six months a year for fifty years, with no rent due to



**Figure 12.2.**The current Opera House in Downtown Crossing. It served as Sarah Caldwell’s home from 1980 until 1991. It is currently the home of the Boston Ballet.

the state. Indeed, the state lent the Company \$600,000 just to carry their finances over until the bond issue was passed, when the bonds would pay back the loan. The bond issue, however, was never voted upon. The economy collapsed, preventing the Commonwealth from issuing the bonds. This left the Opera Company of Boston with a \$600,000 debt to the state and a theater that was still falling apart.<sup>279</sup>

In 1988, the Opera Company of Boston participated in a three-week cultural exchange with the Soviet Union. 250 Soviet dances, musicians, composers, and other artists came to Boston for eighty events. The opera company, of course, did not have the money to completely cover the cost of this, especially for such a large number of people.

---

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>279</sup> Caldwell, *A Memoir of My Life in Opera*, 209-210.

It took Governor Michael S. Dukakis, with the intervention of Secretary of State George P. Shultz, to provide the necessary funds to avoid a diplomatic embarrassing. As Linda Cabot Black explains, “Nancy Bush Ellis, sister of [President] George Bush called [Secretary of State] George Shultz. He called “the vault” of businesses in Boston and they put the money up, but “the vault” said [to Sarah to] never to do this again. By 1989 it was over.”<sup>280</sup>“The Vault” was a group of prominent Boston-based business members that helped with the cultural policy of the city. Without their help, Caldwell’s Company was doomed. The company produced its last season in 1990 and declared bankruptcy in 1991.

After sitting idle for years, the Opera House was renovated by Clear Channel Communications for \$52 million and opened in 2004 with a performance of the Disney musical *The Lion King*. The Opera House was then sold to Live Nation, who in 2009 sold it to Boston Opera House Ventures LLC, headed by the philanthropist David Mugar.<sup>281</sup> Boston Ballet now performs at the Opera House, along with Broadway shows.

Even though her financial planning was disastrous, Sarah Caldwell was able to persevere with grit and determination. She was able to keep her company afloat for so many years because of the willpower and sacrifice that she showed. The bankruptcy of her company was a major blow to the opera scene in Boston. There was another company, however, that was still able to keep the tradition of opera alive in Boston: The Boston Lyric Opera.

---

<sup>280</sup> Linda Cabot Black, Phone interview, April 15, 2010.

<sup>281</sup> Casey Ross, “Law, Mugar group agrees to buy Hub theaters,” [http://www.boston.com/business/ticker/2009/05/live\\_nation\\_agr.html](http://www.boston.com/business/ticker/2009/05/live_nation_agr.html) (accessed October 1, 2009).

## Boston Lyric Opera

The Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) is very active today and is the largest opera company in New England, performing an average of four operas per year. Founded in 1976 and incorporated in 1977, it holds performances at the Shubert Theatre (figure 12.3). In 2000, the BLO acquired Opera New England, continuing the legacy of Sarah Caldwell.

The audience for the opera, according to the BLO, are upper-middle class. Every season, more than 25,000 people attend BLO mainstage productions, plus an additional 27,000 through education and community programs.<sup>282</sup> Indeed, the BLO is growing, as can be seen from the six-fold growth of the operating budget since 1992.<sup>283</sup> Opera still



**Figure 12.3.**The Citi Performing Arts Center<sup>SM</sup> Shubert Theatre. The Boston Lyric Opera performs here.

suffers from the stigma, though, maybe even more so now, of being a rich and stodgy activity. According to the BLO, sixty-nine percent of attendees have graduate degrees and sixty-six percent have household incomes above \$100,000.<sup>284</sup> With a metropolitan population in Greater Boston of over five million people, there should be a larger audience for this form of music. Although it is good that they are reaching such an educated audience, more people should be

---

<sup>282</sup> Boston Lyric Opera, *Quick Facts about Boston Lyric Opera*, November 2008. [http://www.blo.org/about\\_BLO.html](http://www.blo.org/about_BLO.html) (accessed April 6, 2009).

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

able to make it to the opera so that an even greater audience can enjoy it. This might mean cheaper tickets, more productions, or the ultimate goal of a new opera house that is so desperately needed by the Company. This situation will change only when a proper opera house is built in the city again.

However, the new General and Artistic Director, Esther Nelson, has great vision and growth planned for the BLO. She is working to increase its reach even further and increase the operatic productions every year. Her Opera Annex idea, where operas are done in unusual locations' at a fraction of the traditional cost, is a fantastic idea. The idea is to have smaller operas in a more intimate setting (mostly chamber operas) that appeal to a less-traditional audience. The first season in 2010, with Britten's *Turn of the Screw*, was a fantastic success. With Viktor Ullmann's *The Emperor of Atlantis* in 2011, the BLO should find new audience members enthralled by the opera, especially since it deals with such a sensitive subject (the Holocaust). Perhaps, Nelson can finally galvanize the support of the citizens and politicians in Boston for a proper operatic venue for this organization, which they and other organizations so desperately need.

One of the greatest performances that the BLO has given, which also made operatic history, was in 2007, when Bizet's *Carmen* was performed on the Boston Common and an estimated 140,000 people came to watch it. It was an amazing feat to reach that many people and, if the funding can be found, this could happen again. Another company that is trying to reach out toward a younger audience as well is Opera Boston.

## Opera Boston

Opera Boston is a modern company, having originally started productions in 1980. It was first known as the Boston Academy of Music until it was reorganized in 2003 as Opera Boston. Today, the company usually produces three operas a season. They changed their name in 2003 when they reorganized their operations as part of an effort to broaden their appeal. Gil Rose also became music director at this time, in an effort to showcase modern works. He is also the principal conductor of the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, an orchestra to which Opera Boston has a close working relationship.

It is a company trying to cater to a younger audience and make itself more relevant to the city of Boston. It presents its operas at the Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College (figure 12.4). The company wants to make opera more affordable and get a larger audience to see their productions, which tend to be of lesser-known operas. Recent performances have included Rossini's *Tancredi*, the world première of Zhou Long's *Madame White Snake*, and Offenbach's *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*.<sup>285</sup> The populace seems to have responded favorably, and Opera Boston seems to have a bright future because of the mystique of the lesser-



**Figure 12.4.** The Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College. Opera Boston performs here.

---

<sup>285</sup> Operas performed at Opera Boston. <http://www.operaboston.org/operas.php> (accessed September 3, 2009).



known operas and catering to the younger population of the Greater Boston area. Indeed, *Madame White Snake* was completely sold out for the world première.

In 2003, when Opera Boston reorganized, its partnership with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project included a new opera presentation idea: Opera Unlimited. This project was meant to expand the boundaries of opera and new music performance in Boston, usually in a chamber setting. This new format would be key to introducing people to new operas and expanding both Opera Boston's and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project's appeal.

#### Other Organizations

The Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF) was founded in 1980, and presents some short operas, usually from the seventeenth century.<sup>286</sup> They perform in multiple venues, from the Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College to Jordan Hall at the New England Conservatory. BEMF performs not only opera, but also many less known concert and chamber works from the Baroque era on period instruments.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra usually presents opera in a concert format because Symphony Hall has very limited operatic facilities. The BSO has done more opera recently during James Levine's tenure as music director, but it has all been concert performances.

The Handel and Haydn Society has been an important ensemble in Boston since 1815. Not only does it play instrumental music; each season it also performs an opera of the Baroque period. Recent productions have included George Frideric Handel's *Ariodante*, Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and Claudio Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. These

---

<sup>286</sup> Boston Lyric Opera, *Quick Facts about Boston Lyric Opera*, November 2008. [http://www.blo.org/about\\_BLO.html](http://www.blo.org/about_BLO.html) (accessed April 6, 2009).

productions are either fully or semi-staged around Boston, usually at the Cutler Majestic Theater.

The Handel and Haydn Society's commitment to early opera is vital to the musical life of the city. It complements Boston's Early Music Festival in presenting a number of Baroque operas.

### The Future

In July and August of 1967, scientists, sociologists, musicians, labor leaders, educators, corporate and foundation representatives, and government leaders all met at a symposium at the Tanglewood Music Center in Lenox, Massachusetts. The symposium was entitled "Music in American Society" and was sponsored by the Theodore Presser Foundation, the Berkshire Music Center, and Boston University of Fine and Applied Arts. It centered on three broad issues:

1. What are the characteristics and desirable ideologies for an emerging postindustrial society?
2. What are the values and unique functions of music and other arts for individuals and communities in such a society?
3. How may these potentials be attained?<sup>287</sup>

The main advantage of this symposium was having such a broad array of disciplines available to look at the music problem (lack of music appreciation in society) in the United States and what can be done to make the arts more relevant to the general population. The recommendation of the symposium was to make music more important to the school curriculum and set the stage for multiculturalism in music education. This emphasis on education would lead in turn to a greater appreciation of all art forms, including opera, and would set the stage for the next generation of art and music patrons.

---

<sup>287</sup> Darwin E. Walker, *Teaching Music: Managing the Successful Music Program*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Schirmer/ Thompson Learning, 1998), 298.

The symposium was moderately effective, especially in multicultural teaching in United States schools. Some cities were also able to build on this greater emphasis on art and music and expand, greatly, the art and music offerings in their cities.

The cities of San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Houston, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and New York have opera companies now, but Boston is left with two opera company's that are in desperate need of an actual opera house. Boston art organizations such as the Museum of Fine Arts and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum have been able to fundraise for massive new additions. The Boston Symphony has been able to grow its own endowment from the late 1960s to today, where it is \$330 million (for the fiscal year that ended on August 31, 2009).

Boston also has an educated, young, and vibrant population. Should the funding ever be committed to build an actual opera house, the various opera companies would thrive, and possibly even Boston Ballet would be able to benefit from a renewed partnership with these companies and with a new, state-of-the-art facility.

Perhaps the music critic Ivan Narodny, writing in the March 7, 1915, *New York Times* captured the essence of the problem best. He wrote:

The American high society, which attends the concerts and operas, does it as a social function. With the exception of professional musicians, there is no real love of music here. My investigation in New York revealed that the musical associations in which the real people are interested are those of Germans, Bohemians, Hungarians, Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Scandinavians, but none of real Americans—that is people born here. . .

That musical enterprises, such as the Boston, Chicago, and Century Opera Companies, failed is due to the fact that they were not institutions that grew out of the people, but came into existence artificially. America should pay less attention to athletics, and cultivate more the love of music.<sup>288</sup>

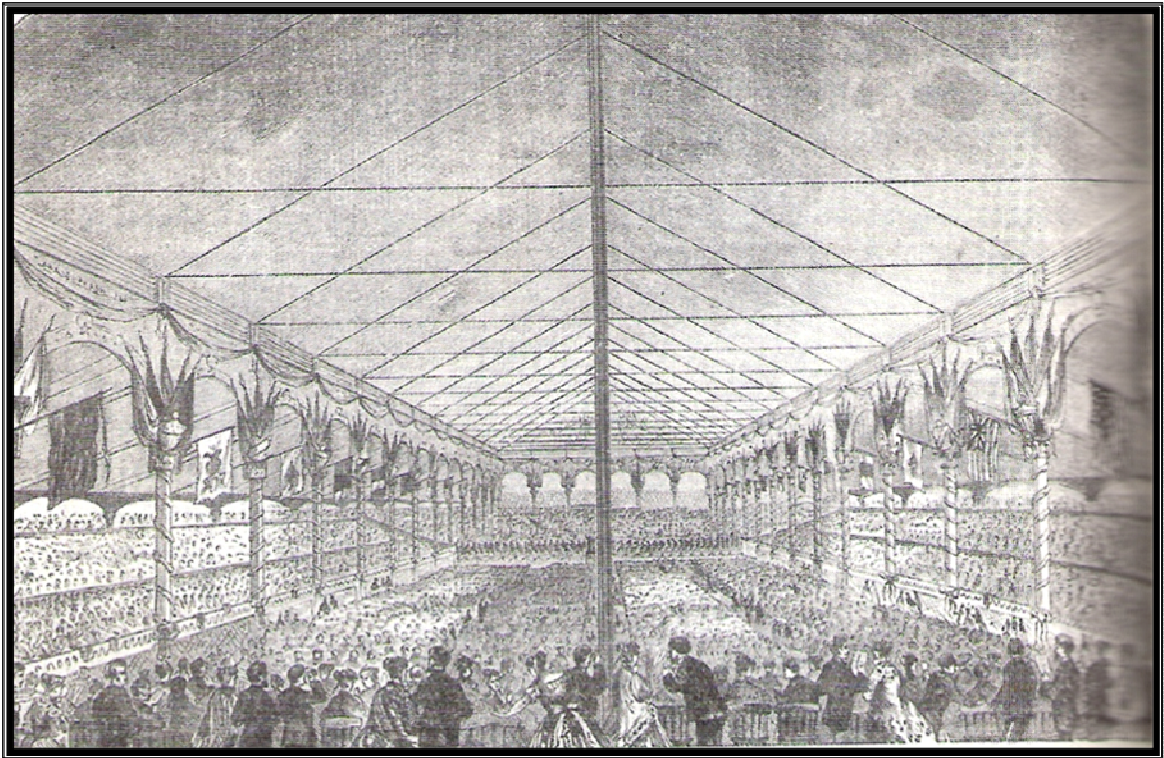
---

<sup>288</sup> Ivan Narodny, "Music in America: Not Relished by the Masses as in European Countries," *New York Times*, March 7, 1915.

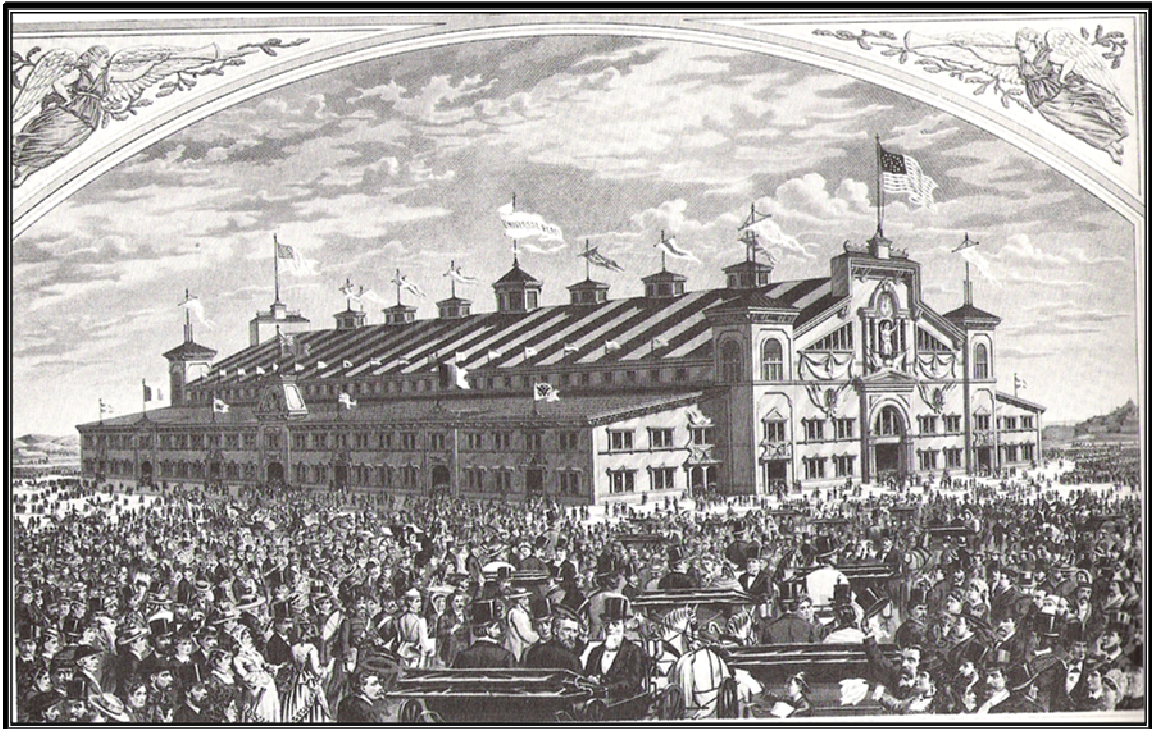
This could have been written today. We still place a high premium on sports and activities outside of music. The type of popular music has changed greatly since 1915 and is much better tolerated by Americans for being ‘American.’ Opera, however, is still looked at as an expensive, European high-class art.

Boston does have its current opera house, but this was never designed specifically for opera. Its contract specifically states, however, that opera must occur there at least once a season. With enough persistence, Boston someday might build its own opera house and fulfill Eben D. Jordan’s dream of permanent opera in the city.

APPENDIX A  
HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS



A. Interior of the 1869 Boston Peace Jubilee Hall.



B. World Peace Jubilee exhibition hall, 1872.

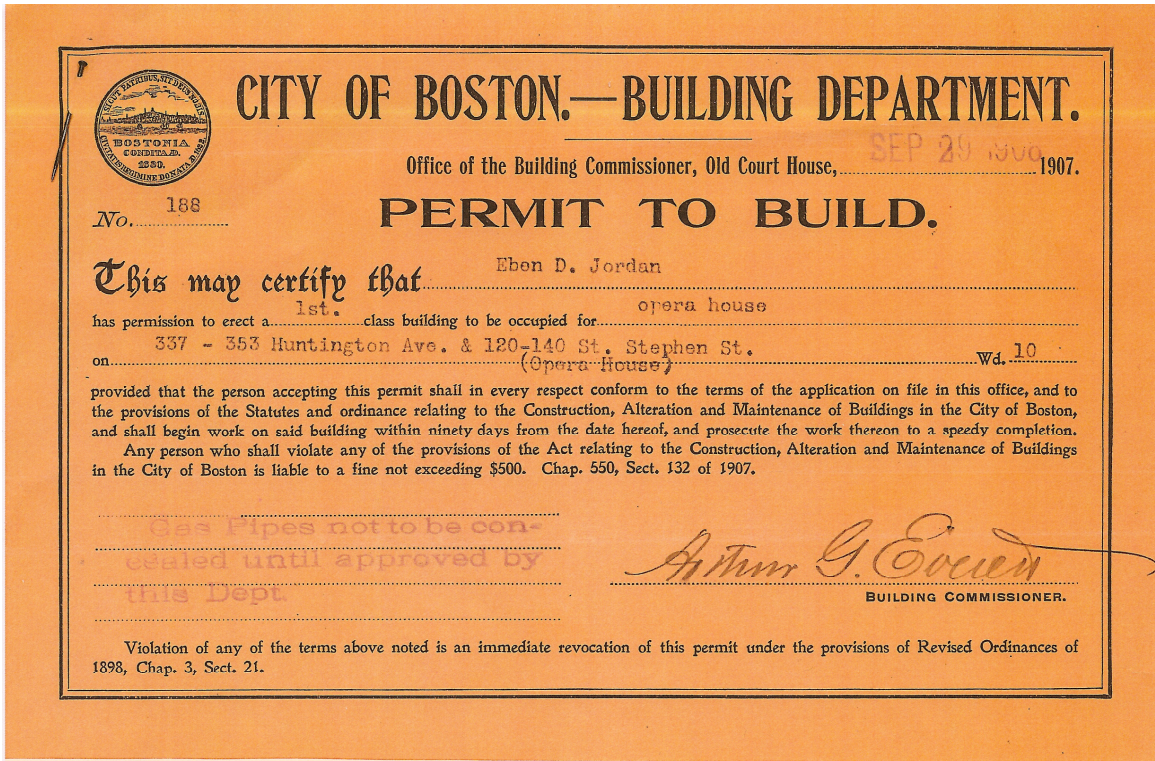


C. Interior of the World Peace Jubilee Hall, 1872.

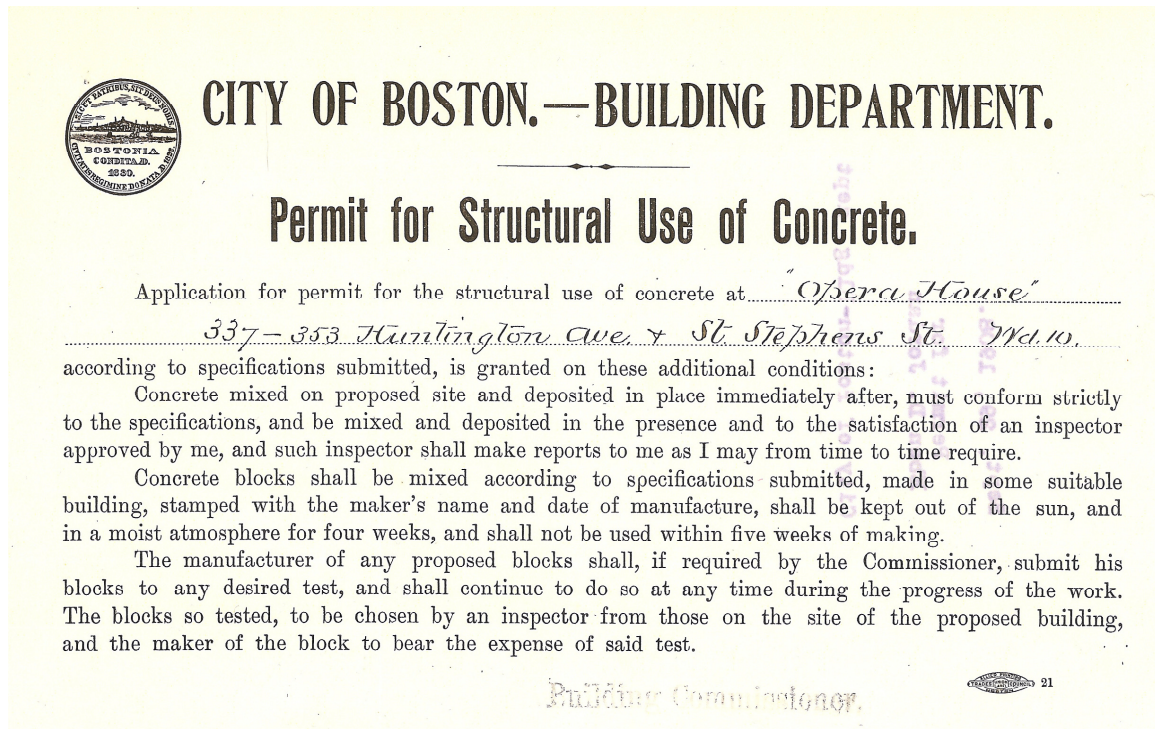


D. Map of Boston in 1910.  
 E. List of Boxholders and Stockholders of the Boston Opera House.



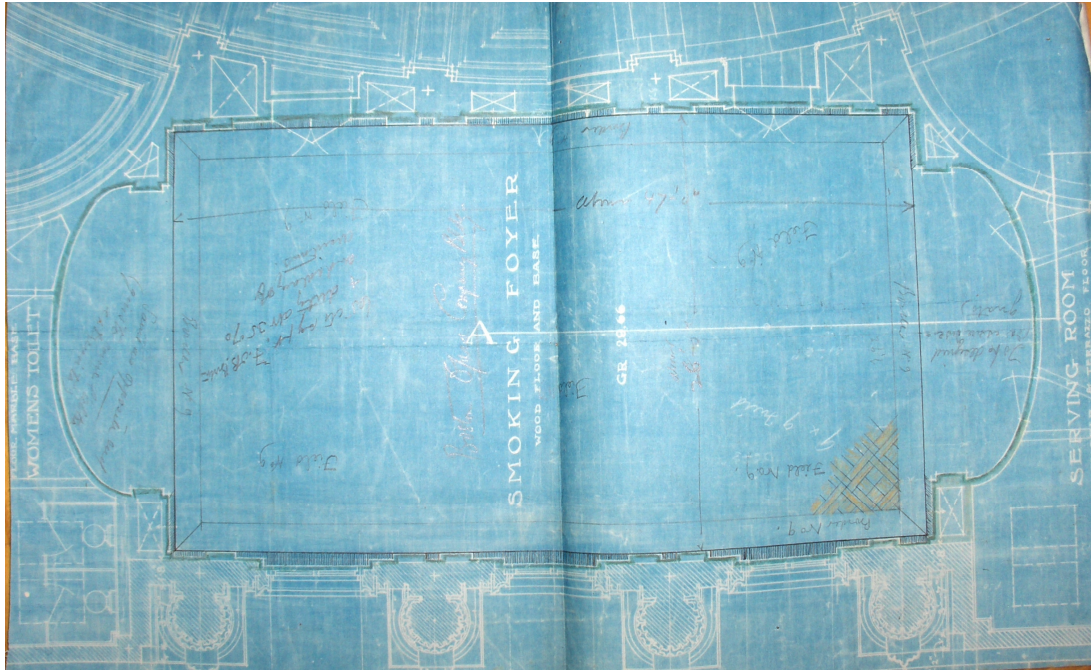


F. Original permit from 1908 for the Boston Opera House.

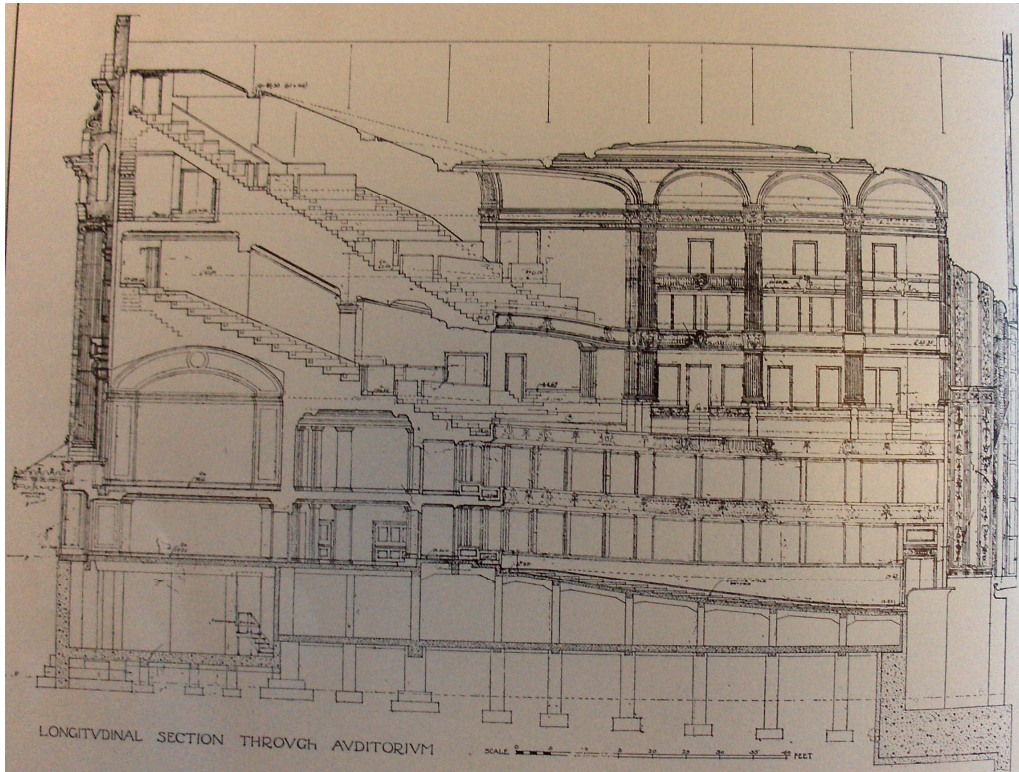


G. Original permit from 1908 for the use of concrete.

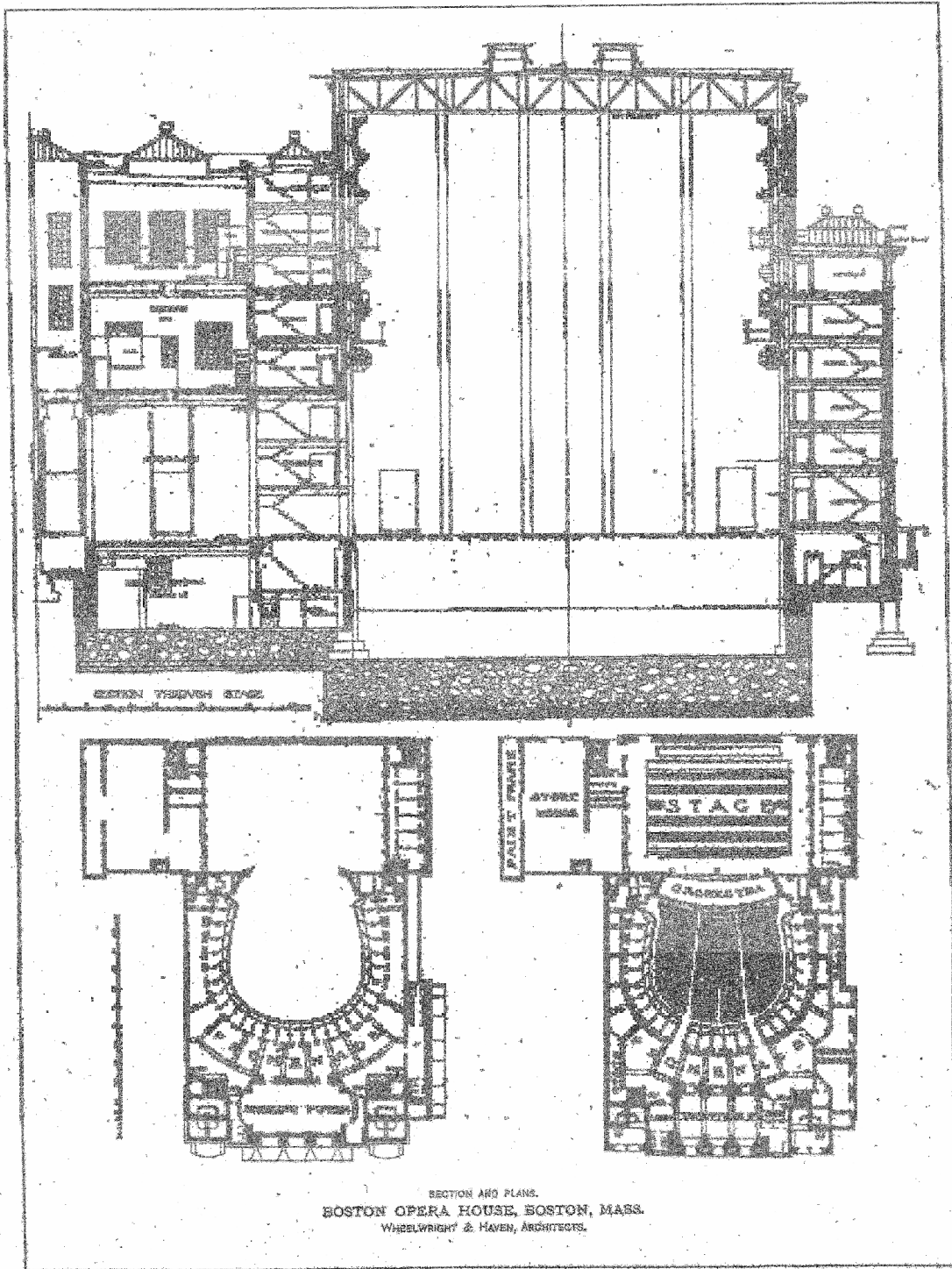




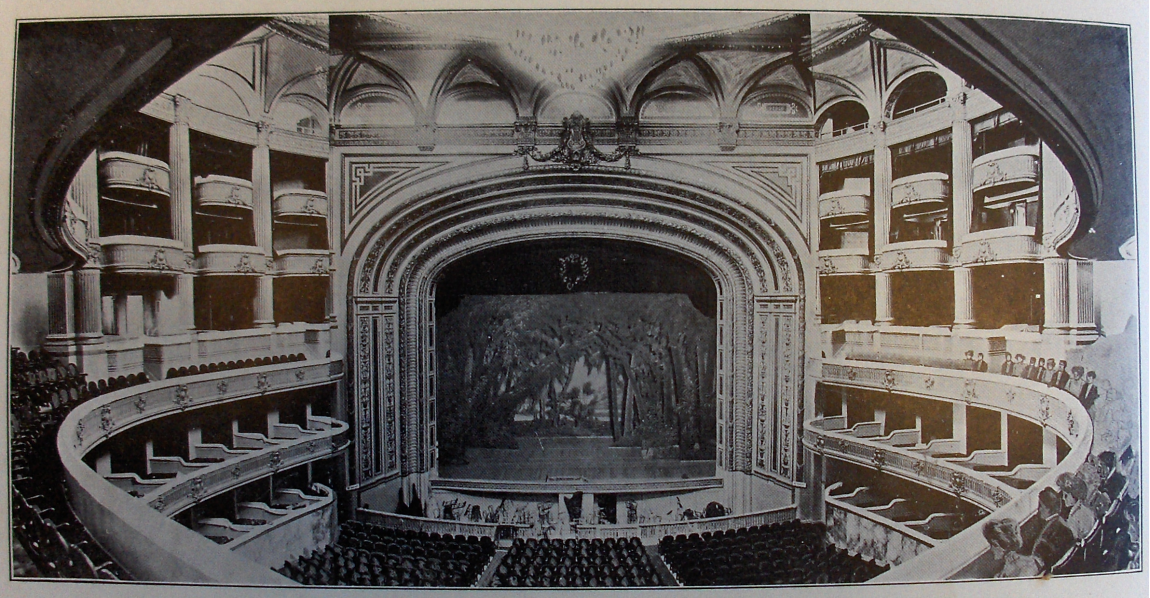
H. Original blueprint for the smoking foyer on the second floor.



I. Cross-section of the seating of the Boston Opera House.



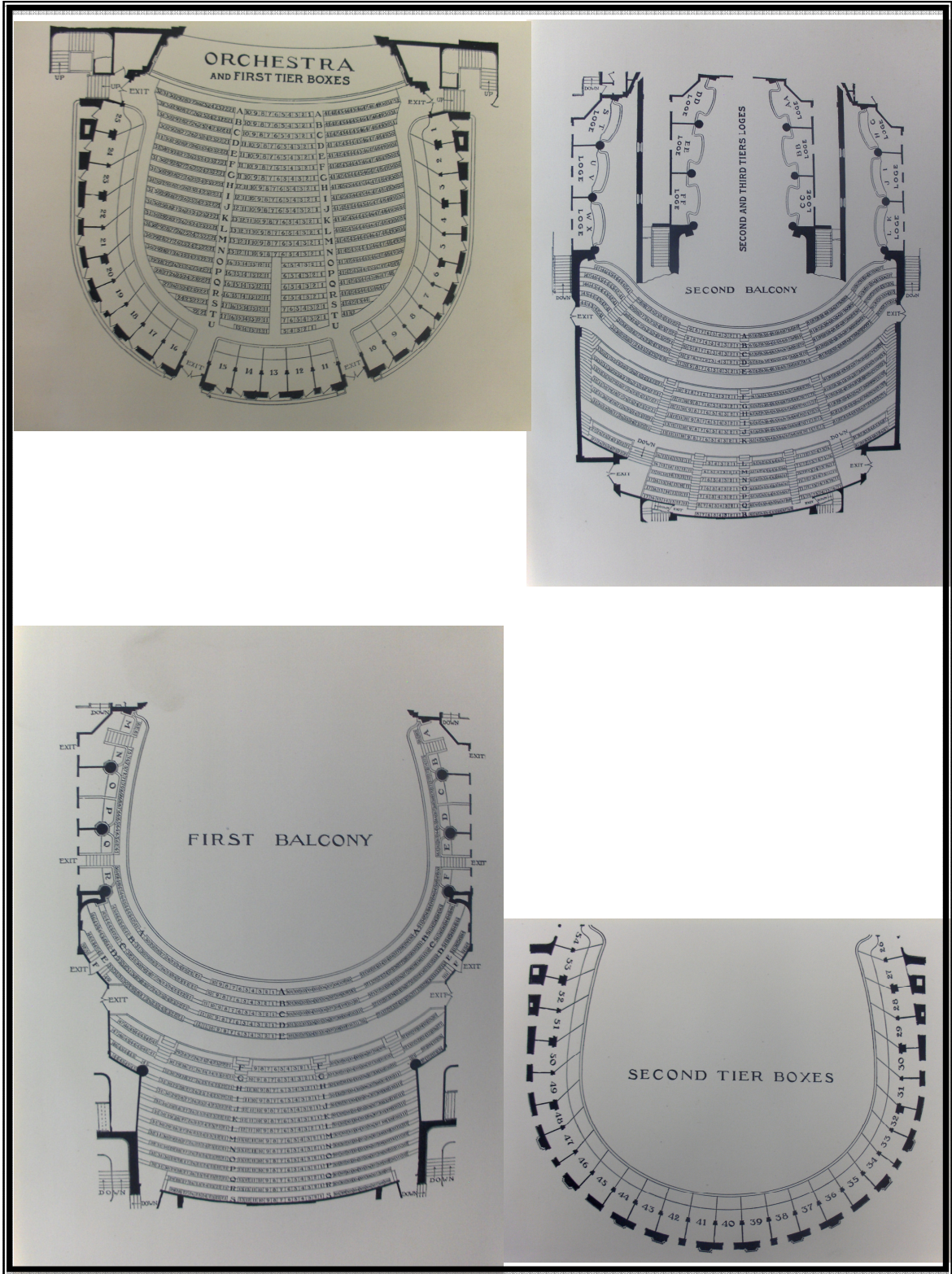
J. Cross-section of the interior of the Boston Opera House.



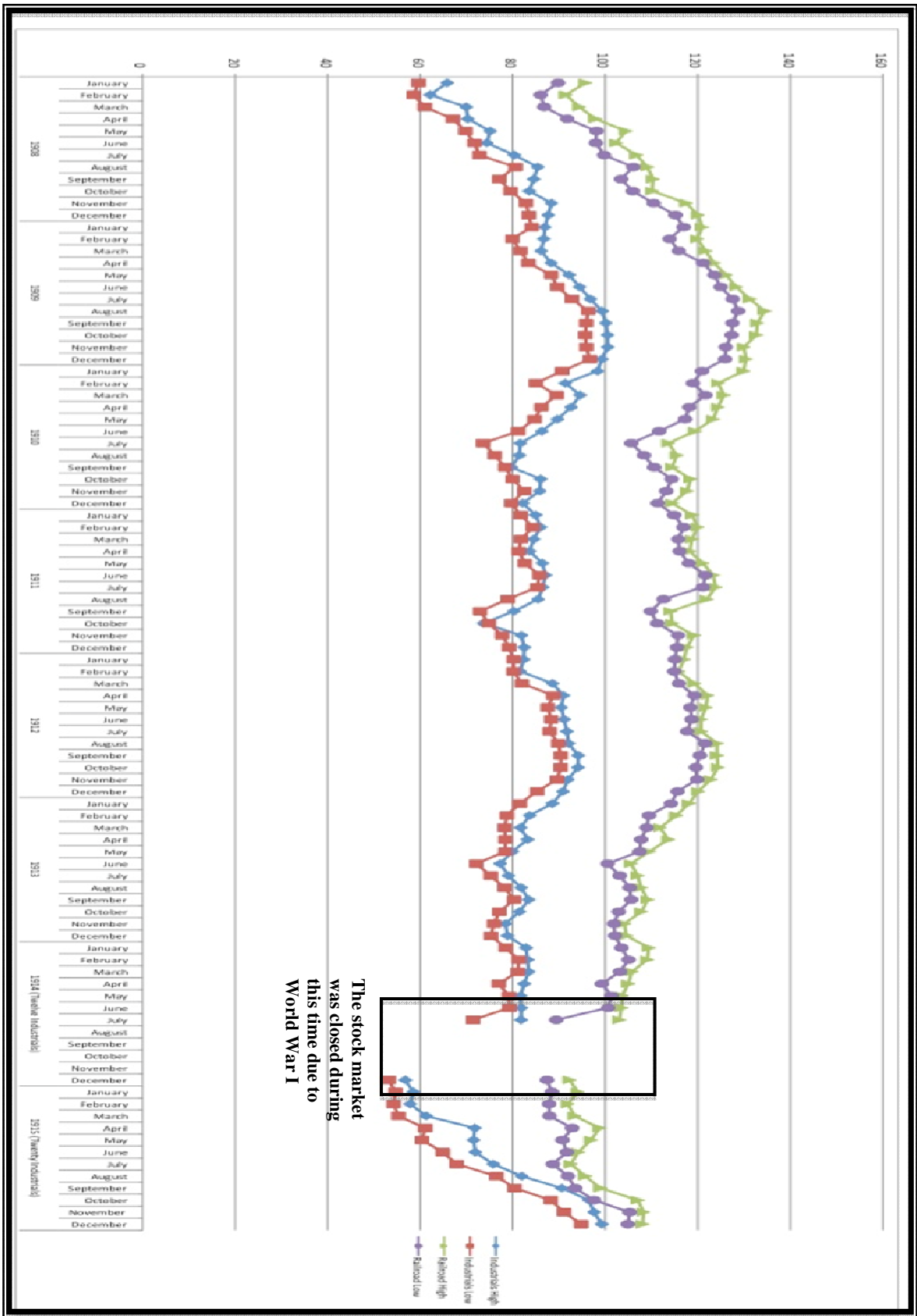
**K. Photograph of the interior of the Boston Opera House from when it opened in 1909.**



**L. Exterior shot of the Boston Opera House when it first opened.**



M. Seating plan for the Boston Opera House.



N. Value of the Industrial and Railroad stocks during the Boston Opera Company's existence.

MAURICE A. REIDY

BRIDGES  
BUILDINGS  
FOUNDATIONS  
SUPERVISION  
INDUSTRIAL PLANTS

ENGINEER  
CONSULTATION \* DESIGN  
101 TREMONT STREET  
BOSTON \* MASSACHUSETTS

MAURICE A. REIDY  
A. STEPHEN WORNALL  
MAURICE A. REIDY, JR.  
F. PARKER REIDY

July 17, 1958

Boston Building Department  
City Hall Annex  
Boston, Massachusetts

Gentlemen:

We are returning herewith blue prints of the Boston Opera House which you very kindly brought up from your files for our information.

The demolition of this structure for Northeastern University is substantially complete. We have made copies of certain of these drawings which pertain to the parts of the Opera House structure left below ground level.

Many thanks for your assistance and cooperation.

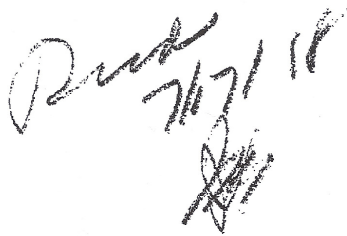
Very truly yours,

MAURICE A. REIDY  
By:

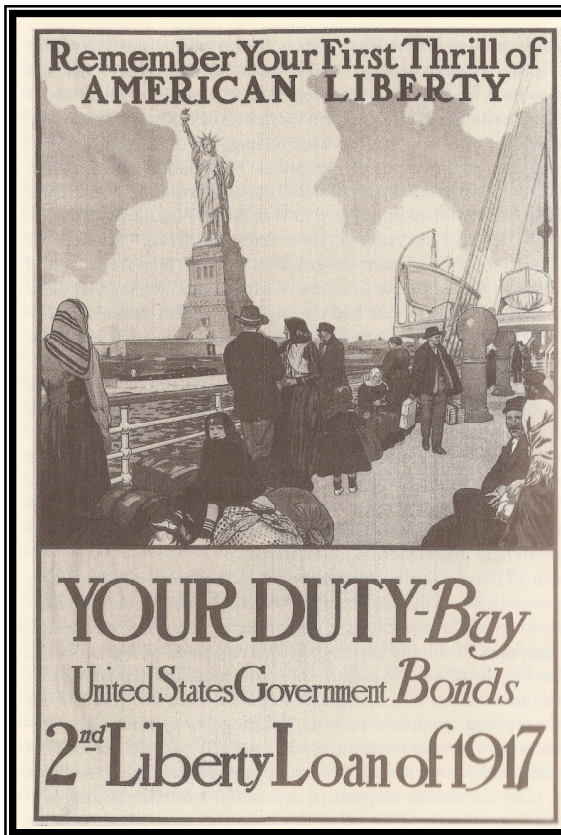


MAURICE A. REIDY, JR.  
MARjr:R

Enclosure



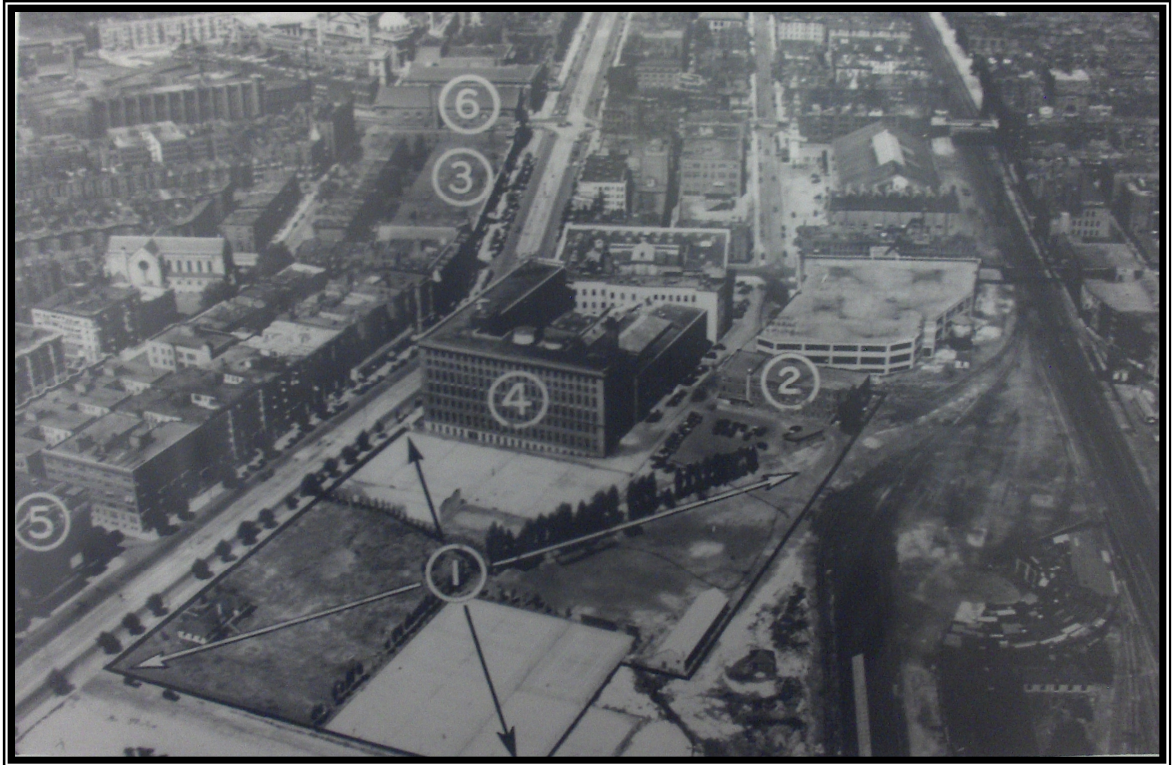
O. Letter explaining the basement of the old Opera House was kept intact in 1958.



P. War bond poster from WWI.



Q. Plaque in Symphony Hall, Boston celebrating Wallace Sabine for pioneering architectural acoustics.



R. Boston Opera House (5) in relation to other buildings. Symphony Hall is number 6.



S. The Boston Opera House as it looked just prior to its demolition in 1957.

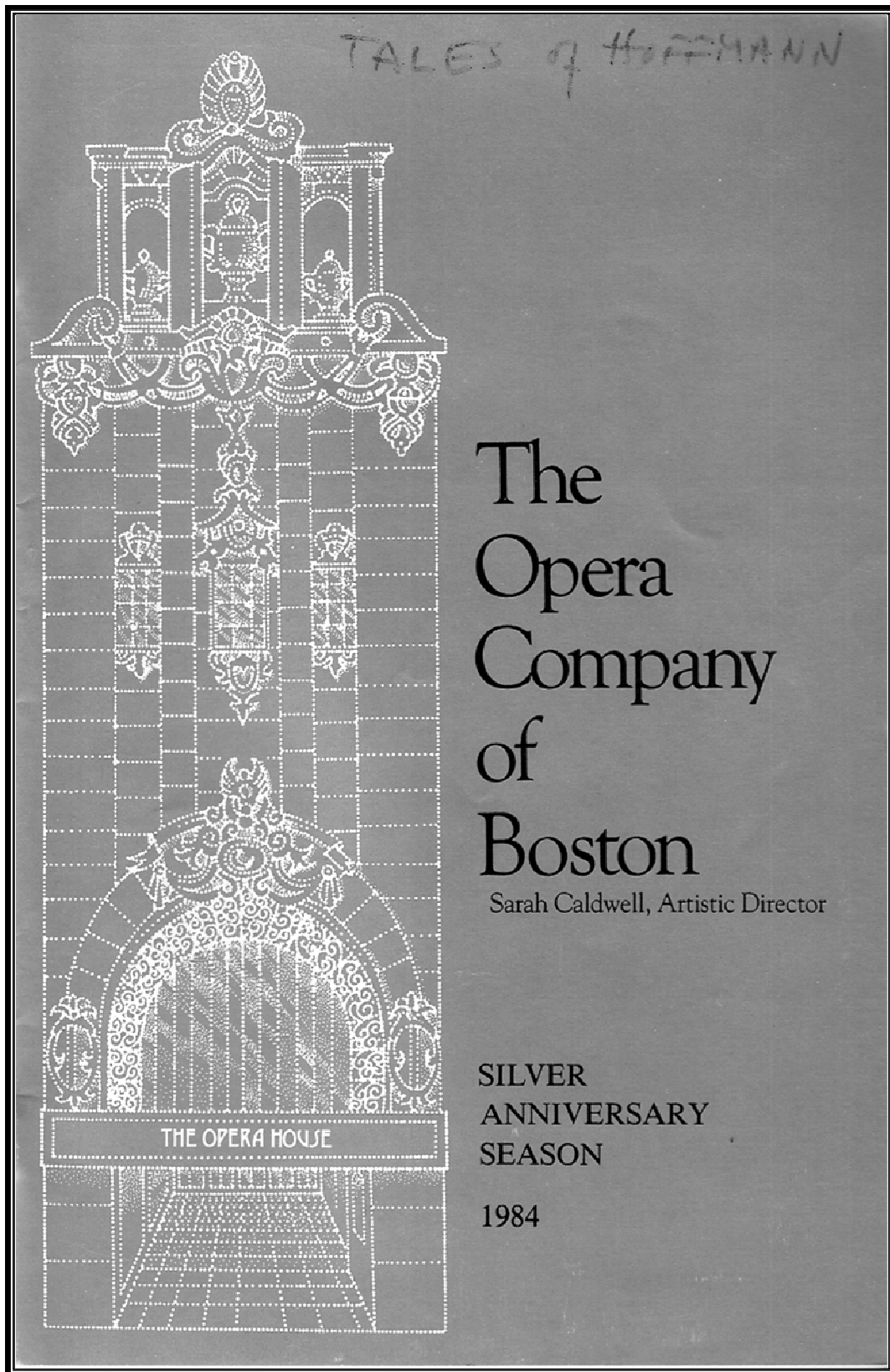




**T. Boston Opera House during demolition.**



**U. Frank Palmer Speare Hall, current building on the opera house plot.**



V. Program from the Opera Company of Boston, 1984.



W. The Prudential Center as it appears today.



X. A color depiction of the Opera House in its former glory.

# NATIONAL OPERA COMPANY.

## OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS.

### OFFICERS :

#### *President.*

PARKE GODWIN.

#### *First Vice-President.*

THEODORE THOMAS.

#### *Second Vice-President.*

CHARLES CROCKER.

---

#### *Third Vice President.*

HENRY L. HIGGINSON.

#### *Secretary and Treasurer.*

MRS. JEANNETTE M. THURBER.

#### *Executive Committee.*

MRS. JEANNETTE M. THURBER.

WASHINGTON E. CONNOR.

THEODORE THOMAS.

Y. Directors of the National Opera Company, of whom Henry Lee Higginson was one.

APPENDIX B

MANAGEMENT STAFF OF THE BOSTON OPERA COMPANY

MANAGING DIRECTOR<sup>289</sup>  
Henry Russell

BUSINESS MANAGER  
William R. Macdonald

MUSICAL CONDUCTORS  
Arnaldo Conti, Wallace Goodrich

ASSISTANT MUSICAL CONDUCTORS  
A. Luzatti, Oscar Spirescu

REGISSEUR GENERAL  
Delfino Menotti

CHORUS MASTER  
Oreste Sbavaglia

ASSISTANT CHORUS MASTER  
Ralph Lyford

PROMOTER  
E. Lombardi

ASSISTANT TREASURER  
William R. Hall

GENERAL PRESS REPRESENTATIVE  
Theodore H. Bauer

NEW YORK PRESS REPRESENTATIVE  
Willard D. Coxey

PRIVATE SECRETARY  
Randolfo Barocchi

MASTER OF TRANSPORTATION  
Walter Hearn

BOX OFFICE  
Fred E. Pond

PROGRAMME PUBLISHER  
Joseph H. Woodhead

---

<sup>289</sup> Frank H. Jackson, *Monograph of the Boston Opera House* (Boston: W.A. Butterfield, 1909), 20.

STAGE MANAGERS  
Antonio Muschietto, Raymond Roze, C. Urban

APPENDIX C

SELECTED OPERAS PRESENTED IN BOSTON—1908-2010

The Boston Opera Company<sup>290</sup>  
Henry Russell, General Manager

**Season 1909-10**

*La Gioconda*, by Amilcare Ponchielli  
*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Lakmé*, by Léo Delibes  
*Pagliacci*, by Ruggero Leoncavallo  
*Cavalleria Rusticana*, by Pietro Mascagni  
*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Don Pasquale*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Faust*, by Charles Gounod  
*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Il Trovatore*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet  
*Il Maestro di Capella*, by Ferdinando Paër  
*Lucia di Lammermoor*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*Mefistofele*, by Arrigo Boito  
*Les Huguenots*, by Giacomo Meyerbeer  
*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*The Miserly Knight*, by Serge Rachmaninoff  
*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*Lohengrin*, by Richard Wagner

**Tour 1910**

*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Lakmé*, by Léo Delibes  
*Lohengrin*, by Richard Wagner  
*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Les Huguenots*, by Giacomo Meyerbeer  
*Lucia di Lammermoor*, by Gaetano Donizetti

---

<sup>290</sup> Quaintance Eaton, *The Boston Opera Company* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1965), 282-321).

*Il Trovatore*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Pagliacci*, by Ruggero Leoncavallo  
*Cavalleria Rusticana*, by Pietro Mascagni

**Season 1910-1911**

*Mefistofele*, by Arrigo Boito  
*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Otello*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Lucia di Lammermoor*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*Faust*, by Charles Gounod  
*L'Enfant Prodigue*, by Claude Debussy  
*Pagliacci*, by Ruggero Leoncavallo  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*La Gioconda*, by Amilcare Ponchielli  
*Il Trovatore*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*The Miserly Knight*, by Serge Rachmaninoff  
*Cavalleria Rusticana*, by Pietro Mascagni  
*La Habanera*, by Raoul Laparra  
*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet  
*The Legend of Azyiade*, by Mikhail Mordkin  
*Giselle*, by Adolphe Adam  
*The Pipe of Desire*, by Frederick Converse  
*La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*La Fanciulla del West*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Hänsel und Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck  
*Manon*, by Jules Massenet  
*Manon Lescaut*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Lakmé*, by Léo Delibes  
*The Sacrifice*, by Frederick Converse (World Premiere)  
*Don Pasquale*, by Gaetano Donizetti

**Tour 1910-11**

*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet  
*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini

**Season 1911-12**

*Samson et Dalila*, by Camille Saint-Saëns  
*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet

*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Thaïs*, by Jules Massenet  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Lucia di Lammermoor*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*Otello*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Mignon*, by Ambroise Thomas  
*Pagliacci*, by Ruggero Leoncavallo  
*Coppélia*, by Léo Delibes  
*Cavalleria Rusticana*, by Pietro Mascagni  
*Pelléas et Mélisande*, by Claude Debussy  
*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*La Fanciulla del West*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Hänsel und Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck  
*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*Manon*, by Jules Massenet  
*Tristan und Isolde*, by Richard Wagner  
*L'Enfant Prodigue*, by Claude Debussy  
*Germania*, by Alberto Franchetti  
*Il Trovatore*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*La Habanera*, by Raoul Laparra  
*Le Martyre de Saint Sebastien*, by Claude Debussy

#### **Tour 1911-12**

*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Faust*, by Charles Gounod

#### **Season 1912-1913**

*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, by Jacques Offenbach  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Il Trovatore*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Thaïs*, by Jules Massenet  
*Lucia di Lammermoor*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*Louise*, by Gustave Charpentier  
*La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Hänsel und Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck  
*Coppélia*, by Léo Delibes  
*Cavalleria Rusticana*, by Pietro Mascagni  
*Pagliacci*, by Ruggero Leoncavallo  
*Pelléas et Mélisande*, by Claude Debussy  
*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet



*I Gioielli della Madonna*, by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari  
*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*Otello*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Tristan und Isolde*, by Richard Wagner  
*Don Giovanni*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*La Fanciulla del West*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Djamileh*, by Georges Bizet  
*Faust*, by Charles Gounod  
*L'Arlésienne*, by Alphonse Daudet (Incidental Music by Georges Bizet)  
*La Forêt Bleue*, by Louis Aubert (American Premiere)  
*Samson et Dalila*, by Camille Saint-Saëns  
*Il Segreto di Susanna*, by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari  
*Martha*, by Friedrich von Flotow

**Tour 1912-13**

*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet

**Season 1913-14**

*I Gioielli della Madonna*, by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari  
*Faust*, by Charles Gounod  
*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Tristan und Isolde*, by Richard Wagner  
*Lucia di Lammermoor*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*Monna Vanna*, by Henry Février (American premiere)  
*La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Thaïs*, by Jules Massenet  
*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*Samson et Dalila*, by Camille Saint-Saëns  
*Pagliacci*, by Ruggero Leoncavallo  
*Cavalleria Rusticana*, by Pietro Mascagni  
*Hänsel und Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck  
*Il Trovatore*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, by Jacques Offenbach  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Louise*, by Gustave Charpentier  
*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, by Richard Wagner  
*La Gioconda*, by Amilcare Ponchielli  
*L'Amore dei tre re*, by Italo Montemezzi  
*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet  
*Il Segreto di Susanna*, by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari  
*Martha*, by Friedrich von Flotow  
*Don Giovanni*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

*Otello*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Roméo et Juliette*, by Charles Gounod  
*Manon*, by Jules Massenet

**Tour 1913-14**

*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, by Jacques Offenbach  
*Hänsel und Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck  
*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*L'Amore dei tre re*, by Italo Montemezzi  
*Manon Lescaut*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Otello*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Un Ballo in Maschera*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Tristan und Isolde*, by Richard Wagner  
*Pagliacci*, by Ruggero Leoncavallo  
*Il Segreto di Susanna*, by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari  
*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, by Richard Wagner  
*Parsifal*, by Richard Wagner  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini

Boston Grand Opera Company  
Max Rabinoff, General Manager

**Season 1915-16**

*L'Amore dei tre re*, by Italo Montemezzi  
*Orfeo ed Euridice*, by Christoph Willibald Gluck  
*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet  
*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Pagliacci*, by Ruggero Leoncavallo  
*La Muette de Portici*, by Daniel Auber  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Otello*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Cavalleria Rusticana*, by Pietro Mascagni  
*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Hänsel und Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck

**Season 1916-17**

*Andrea Chénier*, by Umberto Giordano  
*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*L'Amore dei tre re*, by Italo Montemezzi  
*Faust*, by Charles Gounod  
*Iris*, by Pietro Mascagni  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini

*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi

Boston Opera Group and the Opera Company of Boston<sup>291</sup>  
Sarah Caldwell, General Manager

**Preseason Opener--1958**

*Le Voyage dans la Lune*, by Jacques Offenbach

**Season 1--1959**

*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini

*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini

*The Beggar's Opera*, by John Gay

**Season 2--1960**

*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini

*Le Voyage dans la Lune*, by Jacques Offenbach

*Hansel and Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck

*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet

**Season 3--1961**

*La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi

*Otello*, by Giuseppe Verdi

*Hansel and Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck

*Falstaff*, by Giuseppe Verdi

*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini

*Die Fledermaus*, by Johann Strauss II

**Season 4--1962**

*Command Performance*, by Robert Middleton

*Manon*, by Jules Massenet

*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, by Richard Wagner

*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi

**Season 5--1963**

*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini

*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini

*Faust*, by Charles Gounod

**Season 6--1964**

*Lulu*, by Alban Berg (U.S. East Coast premiere)

*The Magic Flute*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

---

<sup>291</sup> Daniel Kessler, *Sarah Caldwell: The First Woman of Opera* (Toronto: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2008), 197-261.

*I Puritani*, by Vincenzo Bellini  
*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*L'Elisir d'Amore*, by Gaetano Donizetti

**Season 7--1965**

*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*Semiramide*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*Introlleranza,b* by Luigi Nono (U.S. premiere)  
*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, by Jacques Offenbach (in English)  
*Boris Godunov*, by Modest Mussorgsky (in English; original version without Polish Act and Kromy Forest scene)

**Season 8--1966**

*Don Giovanni*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Prague version)  
*Boris Godunov*, by Modest Mussorgsky (in Russian; without Polish Act and Kromy Forest)  
*Hippolyte et Aricie*, by Jean-Philippe Rameau (U.S. stage premiere)  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Moses und Aron*, by Arnold Schoenberg (U.S. premiere)

**Season 9--1967**

*Don Giovanni*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*Otello*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*The Rake's Progress*, by Igor Stravinsky  
*Duke Bluebeard's Castle* (in Hungarian) and *The Miraculous Mandarin*, by Béla Bartók  
*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini

**Season 10-1968**

*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Lulu*, by Alban Berg  
*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet  
*La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Falstaff*, by Giuseppe Verdi

**Season 11--1969**

*Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, *The Miraculous Mandarin*, and *The Wooden Prince*, by Béla Bartók (U.S. premiere of the three performed together)  
*Lucia di Lammermoor*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*Macbeth*, by Giuseppe Verdi (original 1847 version)  
*Le Nozze di Figaro*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (in English)

**Season 12--1970**

*Der fliegende Holländer*, by Richard Wagner  
*La Fille du Régiment*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*The Good Soldier Schweik*, by Robert Kurka

*The Fisherman and His Wife*, by Gunther Schuller (world premiere)  
*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi

**Season 13--1971**

*Louise*, by Gustave Charpentier  
*La Finta Giardiniera*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*Norma*, by Vincenzo Bellini

**Season 14--1972**

*La Prise de Troie*, by Hector Berlioz  
*Les Troyens à Carthage*, by Hector Berlioz  
*La Prise de Troie et les Troyens*, by Hector Berlioz (U.S. premiere of unabridged version)  
*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi

**Season 15--1973**

*The Bartered Bride*, by Bedřich Smetana (in English)  
*La Fille du Régiment*, by Gaetano Donizetti (in English)  
*Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahogonny*, by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht  
*Don Carlos*, by Giuseppe Verdi (U.S. premiere of the original French version)

**Season 16--1974**

*Don Quichotte*, by Jules Massenet  
*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*War and Peace*, by Sergei Prokofiev (U.S. stage premiere)  
*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini

**Season 17--1975**

*Falstaff* by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Così fan tutte* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*Benvenuto Cellini* by Hector Berlioz (U.S. premiere)  
*I Capuletti ed I Montecchi* by Vincenzo Bellini

**Season 18--1976**

*Fidelio*, by Ludwig van Beethoven  
*Montezuma*, by Roger Sessions (U.S. premiere)  
*La Fanciulla del West*, by Giacomo Puccini (in English)  
*Macbeth*, by Giuseppe Verdi (1865 version)

**Season 19--1977**

*Ruslan and Ludmila*, by Mikhail Glinka (U.S. premiere)  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini (in English)  
*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Orfeo ed Euridice*, by Christoph Willibald Gluck (in Italian)

*Orphée aux Enfers*, by Jacques Offenbach (in English)

**Season 20--1978**

*Stiffelio*, by Giuseppe Verdi (U.S. stage premiere)  
*Damnation of Faust*, by Hector Berlioz (in English)  
*Don Pasquale*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini

**Season 21--1979**

*Falstaff*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*La Vide Breve*, by Manuel de Falla  
*El Retable de Maese Pedro*, by Manuel de Falla  
*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*The Ice Break*, by Sir Michael Tippett (U.S. premiere)  
*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Hansel and Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck

**Season 22--1980**

*Die Fledermaus*, by Johann Strauss II  
*Der fliegende Holländer*, by Richard Wagner  
*War and Peace*, by Sergei Prokofiev  
*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi

**Season 23--1981**

*Faust*, by Charles Gounod  
*Der Rosenkavalier*, by Richard Strauss  
*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Otello*, by Giuseppe Verdi (performing edition by Alfredo Zedda)

**Season 24--1982**

*Die Soldaten*, by Bernd Alois Zimmermann (in English; U.S. premiere)  
*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Orphée aux Enfers*, by Jacques Offenbach (in English)

**Season 25--1983**

*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet  
*Invisible City of Kitezh*, by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov  
*Norma*, by Vincenzo Bellini  
*Turandot*, by Giacomo Puccini

**Season 26--1984**

*Der Freischütz*, by Carl Maria von Weber (sung in German with English supertitles)  
*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*Don Giovanni*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, by Jacques Offenbach

**Season 27--1985**

*Hansel and Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck

**Season 28--1986**

*Turandot*, by Giacomo Puccini

*Taverner*, by Peter Maxwell Davies (U.S. premiere)

*The Makropulos Case*, by Leoš Janáček

*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini

**Season 29--1987**

*Il Trovatore*, by Giuseppe Verdi

*Giulio Cesare*, by George Frideric Handel

*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini

*Don Pasquale*, by Gaetano Donizetti

**Season 30--1988**

*Médée*, by Luigi Cherubini (in French with classical Greek dialogue)

*Dead Souls*, by Rodion Shchedrin (U.S. premiere)

*The Threepenny Opera*, by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht

*La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi

**Season 31--1989**

*Mass*, by Leonard Bernstein

*Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi

*Der Rosenkavalier*, by Richard Strauss

*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini

**Season 32--1990**

*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini (final version)

*Madama Butterfly*, (Brescia version)

*Madama Butterfly*, (La Scala version)

*The Magic Flute*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (in English)

*The Balcony*, by Robert DiDomenica (world premiere)

Boston Lyric Opera<sup>292</sup>

**Season 1977-1978**

*Zaïde*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

---

<sup>292</sup> "The Boston Lyric Opera Repertory History," [http://www.blo.org/about\\_history.html](http://www.blo.org/about_history.html) (accessed September 10, 2009).

**Season 1979-1980**

*Un giorno di regno*, by Giuseppe Verdi

**Season 1980-1981**

*Amahl and the Night Visitors*, by Gian Carlo Menotti

*La Clemenza di Tito*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

*The Consul*, by Gian Carlo Menotti

*The Coronation of Poppea*, by Claudio Monteverdi

**Season 1981-1982**

*Norma*, by Vincenzo Bellini

*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

*Werther*, by Jules Massenet

**Seasons 1982, 1983**

*Der Ring des Nibelungen*, by Richard Wagner

**Season 1982-1983**

*Ariadne auf Naxos*, by Richard Strauss

*Il Trovatore*, by Giuseppe Verdi

*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini

**Season 1984-1985**

*Prima la musica, poi le parole*, by Antonio Salieri

*The Impresario*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

**Season 1985-1986**

*Agrippina*, by George Frederic Handel

*Façade*, by William Walton

*La Voix Humaine*, by Francis Poulenc

*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini

**Season 1986-1987**

*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi

*The Rake's Progress*, by Igor Stravinsky

**Season 1987-1988**

*Maria Stuarda*, by Gaetano Donizetti

*The Turn of the Screw*, by Benjamin Britten

**Season 1988-1989**

*The Portrait of Manon*, by Jules Massenet

*Thérèse*, by Jules Massenet

*Dialogues des Carmélites*, by Francis Poulenc



**Season 1989-1990**

*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*The Flying Dutchman*, by Richard Wagner  
*La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi

**Season 1990-1991**

*La fille du regiment*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*Ariadne auf Naxos*, by Richard Strauss  
*Regina*, by Marc Blitzstein

**Season 1991-1992**

*La Cenerentola*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*Lost in the Stars*, by Kurt Weill  
*The Tales of Hoffman*, by Jacques Offenbach

**Season 1992-1993**

*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Beatrice and Benedict*, by Hector Berlioz  
*Wuthering Heights*, by Carlisle Floyd

**Season 1993-1994**

*I Puritani*, by Vincenzo Bellini  
*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet  
*The Postman Always Rings Twice*, by Stephen Paulus

**Season 1994-1995**

*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*Candide*, by Leonard Bernstein

**Season 1995-1996**

*Faust*, by Charles Gounod  
*Falstaff*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Xerxes*, by George Frideric Handel

**Season 1996-1997**

*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Il re pastore*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*L'elisir d'amore*, by Gaetano Donizetti

**Season 1997-1998**

*Lucia di Lammermoor*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*The Ballad of Baby Doe*, by Douglas Moore  
*Werther*, by Jules Massenet

**Season 1998-1999**

*La traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Roméo et Juliette*, by Charles Gounod  
*Le nozze di Figaro*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

**Season 1999-2000**

*Aïda*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Akhnaten*, by Philip Glass  
*Die Zauberflöte*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, by Lucas Foss

**Season 2000-2001**

*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Don Giovanni*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*Salome*, by Richard Strauss  
*Die Zauberflöte*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

**Season 2001-2002**

*Don Carlos*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Resurrection*, by Tod Machover  
*Don Pasquale*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*La Fille du Régiment*, by Gaetano Donizetti

**Season 2002-2003**

*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet  
*Il barbiere di Siviglia*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*La Rondine*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Die Fledermaus*, by Johann Strauss II

**Season 2003-2004**

*Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Così fan tutte*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*Hansel and Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck

**Season 2004-2005**

*L'Italiana in Algeri*, by Gioachino Rossini  
*The Little Prince*, by Rachel Portman (East Coast premiere)  
*Eugene Onegin*, by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
*Flight*, by Jonathan Dove  
*Die Zauberflöte*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

**Season 2005-2006**

*Lucie de Lammermoor*, by Gaetano Donizetti

*La traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Thaïs*, by Jules Massenet  
*La Fille du Régiment*, by Gaetano Donizetti

**Season 2006-2007**

*Madama Butterfly*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*Un ballo in maschera*, by Giuseppe Verdi  
*Le nozze di Figaro*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*The Barber of Seville*, by Gioachino Rossini

**Season 2007-2008**

*La Bohème*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*L'elisir d'amore*, by Gaetano Donizetti  
*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*Hansel and Gretel*, by Engelbert Humperdinck

**Season 2008-2009**

*Les contes d'Hoffmann*, by Jacques Offenbach  
*Rusalka*, by Antonín Dvořák  
*Don Giovanni*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*Die Zauberflöte*, Mozart

**Season 2009-2010**

*Carmen*, by Georges Bizet  
*Ariadne auf Naxos*, by Richard Strauss  
*Idomeneo, re di Creta*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*The Turn of the Screw*, by Benjamin Britten

**Season 2010-2011**

*Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini  
*The Emperor of Atlantis*, by Viktor Ullmann  
*Agrippina*, by George Frederic Handel  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, by Benjamin Britten

Opera Boston<sup>293</sup>

**Opera Unlimited—June, 2003**

*Powder Her Face*, by Thomas Adès  
*Full Moon in March*, by John Harbison  
*Touissant Before the Spirits*, by Elena Ruehr  
*The Cask of Amontillado*, by David Pinkham  
*Garden Party*, by David Pinkham

---

<sup>293</sup> “Opera Boston Repertory,” [http://www.operaboston.org/operas\\_history.php](http://www.operaboston.org/operas_history.php) (accessed September 14, 2009).

**Season 2003-2004**

*South Pacific*, by Richard Rogers

*Candide*, by Leonard Bernstein

*Nixon in China*, by John Adams

*Luisa Miller*, by Giuseppe Verdi

**Season 2004-2005**

*La Vie Parisienne*, by Jacques Offenbach

*Alceste*, by Christoph Willibald Gluck

*The Crucible*, by Robert Ward

**Season 2005-2006**

*The Consul*, by Gian Carlo Menotti

*L'étoile*, by Emmanuel Chabrier

*Lucrezia Borgia*, by Gaetano Donizetti

**Opera Unlimited—June, 2006**

*Angels in America*, by Peter Eötvös (North American Première)

**Season 2006-2007**

*La clemenza di Tito*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

*The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, by Kurt Weill

*The Pearl Fishers*, by Georges Bizet

**Season 2007-2008**

*Ainadamar*, by Osvaldo Golijov

*Semele*, by George Frideric Handel

*Ernani*, by Giuseppe Verdi

**Season 2008-2009**

*Der Freischütz*, by Carl Maria von Weber

*The Nose*, by Dmitri Shostakovich

*The Bartered Bride*, by Bedřich Smetana

**Season 2009-2010**

*Tancredi*, by Gioachino Rossini

*Madame White Snake*, by Zhou Long (World Première)

*La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, by Jacques Offenbach

**Season 2010-2011**

*Fidelio*, by Ludwig van Beethoven

*Cardillac*, by Paul Hindemith (Boston Première)

*Maria Padilla*, by Gaetano Donizetti (Boston Première)

## APPENDIX D

### TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT OPERATIC EVENTS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON: 1750-2010

#### **1750**

The Massachusetts legislature passes (by a large majority) a law prohibiting any theatrical performance.

#### **1792**

William Haliburton publishes a pamphlet *Effects of the Stage on the Manners of a People and Encouraging A Virtuous Theater*. He proposes a theater seating 6,200 people (a quarter of the city's population at that time), which he hopes will be a community institution where music would "lend its divine aid, softening the savage heart and lift the rapt soul to God." He also insisted, however, that there would be "no unintelligible Italian airs, trills, affected squeaks and quavers."

#### **1794**

The Federal Theater is built. It has strict rules of conduct including: women were to remove their hats, there were to be no encores, and no requests for tunes which would "destroy the arrangements."

#### **1798**

When The Federal Theater burns, it is replaced by the Haymarket Theater, designed by Charles Bullfinch (who designed the Massachusetts Statehouse). The theater would remain a Boston landmark until 1852.

#### **1833**

Boston Academy of Music founded by Lowell Mason (composer and a leading figure in American church music) to train teachers of music and spread and cultivate music in the city.

#### **1851**

Jenny Lind makes her Boston debut. It is partly sponsored by the Boston Saturday Club, whose members included, Oliver Wendall Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Louis Agassiz. Managed by P. T. Barnum, Lind's tour becomes the first major manifestation of the power of publicity to create a "mass" middle class following for a respected figure of a more or less elite musical culture (and to make a lot of money).

#### **1854**

The Boston Theater opens. Its features include open seating (3,140 seats) except for eleven family boxes, a red and gold interior, a paneled dome with brightly colored representation of the seasons, and portraits of Shakespeare and Mozart. Auber's *Fra Diavolo* and Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl* are among the first operas presented.

#### **1869**

National Peace Jubilee and Music Festival is held. In a large wooden building in Back Bay (alleged to be the largest structure in America) 1,000 musicians are surrounded by 10,000 choristers. Banners, flags, pennants along with huge pictures of Handel and Beethoven wave over the stage. At 3:00pm 12,000 listeners are gathered. One hundred anvils are arranged at the front of the stage. Drum corps, bells, and cannons (just outside the hall) stand at the ready. Filing in two-by-two, 100 helmeted, red-shirted Boston firemen stride to the stage, each shouldering a blacksmith's hammer, and the highlight of the afternoon's program is essayed (and encored)—the Anvil Chorus from Verdi's *Il Trovatore*.

### **1902**

The New England Conservatory forms an opera department, known as the NEC School of Opera, under the direction of Oreste Bimboni.

### **1908**

Boston Opera Company is founded by Henry Russell as General Director and Eben D. Jordan as President of the Board.

The New England Conservatory provides the manager, conductors, solo artists, orchestral players, chorus, library, and rehearsal space for the Boston Opera Company run by Henry Russell.

The cornerstone for the original Boston Opera House is laid on November 30, 1908 by Eben D. Jordan.

### **1909**

The Boston Opera Company opens its first season with *La Gioconda*, by Amilcare Ponchielli, on November 9, 1909.

### **1910**

*The Sacrifice*, by Frederick Converse, has its World Première with the Boston Opera Company.

### **1915**

Because of an ill-fated trip to Paris and World War I, the Boston Opera Company is forced to declare bankruptcy, liquidate all contracts, and leave the Boston Opera House.

The Boston Grand Opera Company with Max Rabinoff as General Manager is founded and opens with *L'Amore dei tre re* by Italo Montemezzi.

### **1917**

The Boston Grand Opera Company declares bankruptcy.

### **1918**

The Boston Opera House is bought by the Shubert organization of New York City.

**1928**

American première of Igor Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* on February 24, 1928, with Serge Koussevitzky, conducting at Symphony Hall, Boston.

**July 1, 1933**

The Boston Conservatory merges with the National Associated Studios of Music and creates the first "grand opera" department in the United States.

**1935**

*Porgy and Bess* by George Gershwin has its first run-through performance at the Colonial Theater on September 30, 1935. World Premiere was in New York City on October 10, 1935.

**February 22, 1943**

Boris Goldovsky establishes the New England Opera Workshop. The group gives the first opera productions in Boston in more than a decade.

**1952**

Sarah Caldwell moves to Boston and becomes head of the Boston University Opera Workshop.

**February 17, 1956**

*Mathis der Maler*, by Paul Hindemith, is given its American première by the Boston University Opera Workshop under the direction of Sarah Caldwell.

**1957**

The Boston Opera House is condemned and the Shuberts sell it to S. and A. Allen Construction Company for \$135,000. The Allen Construction Company then sells it to Northeastern University for \$160,000.

**1958**

The Opera House is torn down in the summer and a dormitory is built in its place.

Boris Goldovsky's former protégée Sarah Caldwell (with James Stagliano and Linda Cabot Black) form a new company first known as the Boston Opera Group and later as the Opera Company of Boston. The company opens with *Le Voyage dans la Lune* by Jacques Offenbach.

**1966**

*Moses und Aron* by Arnold Schoenberg is given its United States première after Sarah Caldwell is able to persuade Gertrud Schoenberg to sign over the rights to the performance.

**1969**

The Opera Company of Boston gives the United States première of *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, *The Miraculous Mandarin*, and *The Wooden Prince* by Béla Bartók, as a three-part opera, as Bartók intended.

**1970**

Associate Artist Opera Company is founded by Ernest Triplett. Precursor to the Boston Lyric Opera. First African-American director of a union-affiliated professional opera company.

**1972**

The unabridged version of *La Prise de Troie et les Troyens*, by Hector Berlioz, has its U.S. première by the Opera Company of Boston.

**1976**

The Boston Lyric Opera is founded.

**1977**

The Boston Lyric Opera is incorporated and gives its first performance of *Zaïde*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Opera New England of Cape Cod is founded. *Rigoletto*, by Giuseppe Verdi, opens the season.

*Ruslan and Ludmila*, by Mikhail Glinka, is given its U.S. premiere by the Opera Company of Boston.

**1980**

Boston Early Music Festival is founded.

**1981**

*L'incoronazione di Poppea*, by Claudio Monteverdi, is performed by the Boston Early Music Festival at the Boston University Theatre.

**1982-1983**

*Der Ring des Nibelungen*, by Richard Wagner, is presented by the Boston Lyric Opera to critical acclaim.

**1987**

Boston University Opera Institute is founded by Dean Emeritus Phyllis Kurtin and Director of Opera Programs Sharon Daniels.

**1991**

Opera Company of Boston declares bankruptcy and ceases operation.



*Ariadne auf Naxos*, by Richard Strauss, is produced by the Boston Lyric Opera and the performances launch Deborah Voigt's career.

**1995**

Concert Opera Boston founded (performs operas in a concert setting and not staged).

**1999-2000**

Boston Lyric Opera presents an Egyptian season, in partnership with the Museum of Fine Arts and Boston Ballet, to critical success.

**September 21-22, 2002**

The Boston Lyric Opera produces *Carmen*, by Georges Bizet, which is performed on Boston Common for 140,000 people, setting an attendance record for an outdoor opera.

**2003**

The New England Chamber Opera Series is founded with an emphasis on chamber opera sung in English. *The Telephone*, by Gian Carlo Menotti; *A Hand of Bridge*, by Samuel Barber; and *The Women*, by Thomas Pasatieri, all are presented.

**June, 2003**

Opera Unlimited, a week-long opera celebration is instituted by Opera Boston. Includes performances of *Toussaint Before the Spirits*, by Elena Ruehr, the New England première of *Powder Her Face*, by Thomas Adés, and *A Full Moon in March*, by John Harbison.

**2006**

Boston Opera Collaborative founded.

**June, 2006**

*Angels in America*, by Peter Eötvös, has its North American Première by Opera Boston at the Opera Unlimited outdoor festival.

**2007**

Seventh performance (normally six) of *La Bohème*. American Express sponsors the concert. Targeted at young professionals and launches Boston Lyric Opera's Bravo! Program.

**May, 2007**

Guerilla Opera is founded, a professional chamber opera company in residence at The Boston Conservatory. It was founded by Artistic Directors Rudolf Rohahn and Mike Williams. *No Exit* (Adapted from the play by Jean-Paul Sartre), by Andy Vores, is the first production.

**Spring 2008**

Boston Symphony Orchestra, with soloists and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, gives complete concert performances of Berlioz's *Les Troyens*.

**September, 2009**

*Say it Ain't so, Joe!* By Curtis K. Hughes, is premiered by Guerilla Opera.

**2009-2010 Season**

The Boston Lyric Opera will produce *Carmen*, by Georges Bizet, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, by Richard Strauss, *Idomeneo re di Creta* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and *The Turn of the Screw*, by Benjamin Britten.

Opera Boston will produce *Tancredi*, by Gioachino Rossini, *Madame White Snake*, by Zhou Long (World Première), and *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, by Jacques Offenbach.

## WORKS CITED

- “A Bright Spot.” *Wall Street Journal*, August 4, 1913, national edition.
- Allison, Robert J. *A Short History of Boston*. Beverly, MA: Commonwealth Editions, 2004.
- Appleby, Joyce. *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2010.
- Bartlet, M. Elizabeth C. "Grand opéra." In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/11619> (accessed December 5, 2009).
- Boston Lyric Opera, *Quick Facts about Boston Lyric Opera*, November 2008. [http://www.blo.org/about\\_BLO.html](http://www.blo.org/about_BLO.html) (accessed April 6, 2009).
- “Boston Opera.” *Boston Daily Globe*, August 1, 1909, 30.
- “Boston Opera is Sold to Parking-Lot Firm” *New York Times*, September 5, 1957.
- “Boston welcomes coming of its own opera with a magnificent audience in new house,” *Boston Daily Globe*, November 9, 1909.
- Bowles, Edmund A. “Karl Muck and His Compatriots: German Conductors in America during World War I (and How They Coped).” *American Music*, vol. 25, No. 4 (Winter, 2007), 405-440.
- Bretting, Agnes, “‘Little Germanies’ in the United States.” In *Germans to America: 300 years of Immigration 1683 to 1983*, edited by Günter Moltmann, 145-151. Stuttgart, Germany: Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, 1982.
- Broyles, Michael. “Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 44, no. 3 (Autumn 1991): 451-493.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Music of the Highest Class: Elitism and Populism in Antebellum Boston*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Burkat, Leonard, et al. "Boston (i)." In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03674> (accessed July 30, 2009).
- Carter, Randolph and Robert Reed Cole. *Joseph Urban: Architecture, Theatre, Opera, Film*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1992.

- Carter, Tim and Dorothea Link. "Da Ponte, Lorenzo." In Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online,  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07207>  
 (accessed April 28, 2009).
- Crawford, Richard. *America's Musical Life: A History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.
- Daniel, Peggy. *Tanglwood: A Group Memoir*. New York: Amadeus Press, 2008.
- Dawson, Jan C. "Puritanism in American Thought and Society: 1865-1910." *The New England Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (December 1980): 508-526.
- Dimaggio, Paul. "Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Boston: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America." *Media Culture Society* 4, (1982): 33-50.
- Dizikes, John. *Opera in America: A Cultural History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Downs, Robert B., *Heinrich Pestalozzi: Father of Modern Pedagogy*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975.
- Durgin, Cyrus. "Boston: Operapathy on-the-Charles." *Theatre Arts*, January 1958: 72,73, 92.
- Dwight, John Sullivan. "The History of Music in Boston," in *The Memorial History of Boston including Suffolk County, Massachusetts 1630-1880*, edited by Justin Winsor, 415-464. Vol. 4. Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1886.
- Eaton, Quaintance. *The Boston Opera Company*. New York: Appleton-Century, 1965.
- "Eben D. Jordan's Estate." *Wall Street Journal*, February 10, 1917.
- "Eben D. Jordan Died Yesterday: Merchant was father of Grand Opera in Boston." *Boston Daily Globe*, August 2, 1916.
- Faust, Albert Bernhardt. *The German Element in the United States: with special reference to its political, moral, social, and educational influence*. New York: The Steuben Society of America, 1927.
- Ferguson, Niall. *The Pity of War: Explaining World War I*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- Fiedler, Johanna. *Molto Agitato: The Mayhem Behind the Music at the Metropolitan Opera*. New York: Doubleday, 2001.

- French, Hollis and Allen Hubbard. Letter to Messrs. Wheelwright & Haven. December 27, 1909.
- Gerstle, Gary. *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Gibson, Campbell, and Kay Jung. *Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850 to 2000*. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, February 2006.
- Grout, Donald Jay, J. Peter Burkholder, and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*. 7th ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.
- Grout, Donald Jay, and Hermine Weigel Williams. *A Short History of Opera*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Hall, Alexandra. "The New Brahmins" Boston Magazine, [www.bostonmagazine.com/articles/the\\_new\\_brahmins/](http://www.bostonmagazine.com/articles/the_new_brahmins/), May 2004 (accessed March 20, 2009).
- Hamm, Charles. *Music in the New World*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1983.
- Hart, Philip. *Orpheus in the New World: The Symphony Orchestra as an American Cultural Institution*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973.
- Harvey, George W. Letter to Messrs. Haven & Hoyt. October 8, 1913.
- Hennion, Antoine. "Music and Mediation: Toward a New Sociology of Music." In *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*. Edited by Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton, 80-91. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- "Henry Russell Returns." *New York Times*, November 28, 1914.
- "Here are Boston's Big Taxpayers." *The Boston Daily Globe*, April 7, 1916, 18.
- "History of the Colonial Theater." <http://www.bostonscolonialtheatre.com/History.html> (accessed on March 10, 2010).
- Hitchcock, H. Wiley. *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000.
- Horowitz, Joseph, "Reclaiming the Past: Musical Boston Reconsidered." *American Music* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 18-38.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Artists in Exile: How Refugees from Twentieth-Century War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Post-Classical Predicament*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Wagner Nights: An American History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Howe, M.A. DeWolfe. *The Boston Symphony Orchestra: 1881-1931*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931.
- Jackson, Frank H. *Monograph of the Boston Opera House*. Boston: W.A. Butterfield, 1909.
- Johnson, James H. *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Johnson, Victoria. "What is Organizational Imprinting? Cultural Entrepreneurship in the Founding of the Paris Opera." *American Journal of Sociology* 113 no. 1(July 2007): 97-127.
- Jordan, Eben D. "The New Boston Opera and its Meaning." *New England Magazine*, October, 1909, 137-149.
- Kay, Jane Holtz. *Lost Boston*. 3rd Edition. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006.
- Kessler, Daniel. *Sarah Caldwell: The First Woman of Opera*. Toronto: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2008.
- King, Donald C. *The Theatres of Boston: A Stage and Screen History*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005.
- Levine, Lawrence W. *Highbrow Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Locke, Ralph P. "Living with Music: Isabella Stewart Gardner." In *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860*, edited by Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr, 90-121. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.

- Loewen, James W. *Lies Across America: What our Historic Sites Get Wrong*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007.
- Macdonald, Hugh. "The Frescoes of Piero della Francesca." *Boston Symphony Orchestra Program Book 2009-2010, week 4*. Arlington, MA: Hecht Design, 2010.
- Martorella, Rosanne. *The Sociology of Opera*. South Hadley, MA: J.F. Bergin Publishers, Inc., 1982.
- Maxwell, Richard Howland. "Pilgrim and Puritan: A Delicate Distinction." *Pilgrim Society Note*, Series Two (March 2003), <http://www.pilgrimhall.org/PSNoteNewPilgrimPuritan.htm> (accessed February 25, 2010).
- McKay, David. "Opera in Colonial Boston." *American Music* 3, no. 2 (1985): 133-142.
- Molotsky, Irvin. *The Flag, the Poet and the Song: The Story of the Star-Spangled Banner*. New York: Dutton, Penguin Group, 2001.
- Morison, Samuel Eliot. "The Plymouth Colony and Virginia." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 62, no. 2 (April 1954): 147-165.
- "Music and Musicians." *The Boston Daily Globe*, November 7, 1909, 47.
- Narodny, Ivan. "Music in America: Not Relished by the Masses as in European Countries." *New York Times*, March 7, 1915.
- "New England Conservatory of Music Timeline" New England Conservatory, <http://necmusic.edu/about-nec/history/timeline> (accessed on September 13, 2009).
- "Opera Agreement." *Boston Daily Globe*, May 1, 1908.
- O'Connor, Thomas H. *Bibles, Brahmins, and Bosses: A Short History of Boston*. 3rd Edition. Boston: Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, 1991.
- "Opera Trust to Lower Exorbitant Salaries of Singers." *New York Times*, July 31, 1910.
- "Opera War Averted." *Boston Daily Globe*, May 24, 1914.
- Rapaport, Diane. *The Naked Quaker: True Crimes and Controversies from the Courts of Colonial New England*. Beverly, MA: Commonwealth Editions, 2007.
- Reidy, Jr., Maurice A. Letter to Boston Building Department. July 17, 1958.

- “Rivalry in Paris Opera.” *New York Times*, June 7, 1914.
- Robinson, Harlow. “Operatic Intrigue: The Comic, Tragic, True Tale of Opera on Huntington Avenue.” *Northeastern University Magazine*. [www.northeastern.edu/magazine/9911/opera.html](http://www.northeastern.edu/magazine/9911/opera.html)(accessed September 21, 2008).
- Roediger, David R. *Working Toward Whiteness: How America’s Immigrants Became White*. New York: Basic Books, 2005.
- Ross, Casey. “Law, Mugar group agrees to buy Hub theaters.” [http://www.boston.com/business/ticker/2009/05/live\\_nation\\_agr.html](http://www.boston.com/business/ticker/2009/05/live_nation_agr.html) (accessed October 1, 2009).
- Rubin, Emanuel. “Jeannette Meyers Thurber and the National Conservatory of Music.” *American Music* 8, no. 3 (Autumn, 1990): 294-325.
- “Russell’s Foe Guilty.” *New York Times*, March 15, 1913.
- Russell, Henry. Letter to Parkman B. Haven. April 17, 1909.
- Russell, Henry. Letter to Parkman B. Haven. August 4, 1909.
- Russell, Henry. *The Passing Show*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926.
- Sabine, Wallace C. Letter to Parkman B. Haven. January 1, 1909.
- Sabine, Wallace C. Letter to Parkman B. Haven. January 18, 1909.
- Stearns, Peter N. “Trumpeting down the Walls of Jericho: The Politics of Art, Music and Emotion in German-American Relations, 1870-1920.” *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 3(Spring, 2003): 585-613.
- Takaki, Ronald. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008.
- Taleb, Nassim Nicholas. “The Roots of Unfairness: the Black Swan in Arts and Literature.” *Literary Research, Journal of the International Comparative Literature Association*(2004): 1-6.
- Taruskin, Richard. *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Vol 2 of *The Oxford History of Western Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Taruskin, Richard. *Music in the Nineteenth Century*. Vol 3 of *The Oxford History of Western Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.



- Tawa, Nicholas E., *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001.
- Taylor, Chas H. "Eben D. Jordan." *The Boston Daily Globe*, August 2, 1916.
- Tischler, Barbara L. "One Hundred Percent Americanism and Music in Boston During World War I." *American Music* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 164-176.
- Tucker, Edward A. Letter to Messrs. Geo. W. Harvey Co. December 18, 1908.
- United States Government. *Population*. Vol 2. of *Fourteenth Census of the United States taken in the year 1920*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922.
- Walker, Darwin E. *Teaching Music: Managing the Successful Music Program*, 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Schirmer/Thompson Learning, 1998.
- "When 'the best temple of music' graced Boston." *The Boston Herald American*, March 27, 1977.
- Woodward, Henry. "February 18, 1729: A Neglected Date in Boston Concert Life." *Notes, Second Series* 33, no. 2 (December 1976), 243-252.
- Zietz, Karyl Lynn. *The National Trust Guide to Great Opera Houses in America*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996.